

# BIRDING TRIP REPORT

## Colorado

**13 April – 21 April 2006**

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### Introduction

The timing of our trip was very much focused around seeing the various species of grouse and Rosy-Finches and hence, we were just a bit too early for many of Colorado's summer visitors. The trip proved very successful on all fronts and we saw all our targeted grouse namely, **Greater and Lesser Prairie Chicken, Greater and Gunnison's Sage Grouse, Blue Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse and White-tailed Ptarmigan**. We had little difficulty in finding **Brown-capped, Grey Crowned and Black Rosy-Finches**, and we also caught up with other target birds such as **McCown's Longspur, Chestnut-collared Longspur and Mountain Plover**.

We flew non-stop from London Heathrow to Denver with British Airways and flights were booked online at [www.ba.com](http://www.ba.com). We pre-booked a Chevrolet TrailBlazer via Alamo through [www.wildwings.co.uk](http://www.wildwings.co.uk) and whilst a 4WD may not be absolutely essential, there were several occasions (such as Guanella Pass) when we would have really struggled to access the site using a non-4WD.

### Site/Field Guides

*'A Birder's Guide to Colorado'* by Harold Holt was an essential companion throughout and the vast majority of sites we visited are detailed in this guide. *'The North American Bird Guide'* by David Sibley helped to solve a few id challenges, whilst Geoffrey Keller's *'Bird Songs of the Rocky Mountain States and Provinces'* is probably the best CD to use.

### Daily Itinerary

#### Day 1 – Thursday 13 April

Left Cardiff mid morning to travel up to London Heathrow for our 15.25 flight to Denver. We arrived in the States at around 18.30 local time and by the time we had cleared customs it was just about getting dark. After collecting our vehicle from the Alamo Rental Office, we headed south via Interstate 25, to Garden of the Gods, Colorado Springs where we spent the night at a Super 8 Motel.

#### Day 2 – Friday 14 April

A quick scout around our motel at first light, produced the expected **House Finches, Black-billed Magpies and Northern Flickers**. We then headed south on Interstate 25 towards Pueblo and a stop at exit 116 to view some roadside pools, gave us **Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Western Meadowlark** and large numbers of **Icterids** which included **Yellow-headed Blackbird**. Moving onto the nearby Pueblo Reservoir, we quickly connected with **Scaled Quail and Say's Phoebe**, along with **Redhead, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Northern Diver** and the hoped for **Western and Clark's Grebes**. Some roadside birding around the reservoir, produced **Burrowing Owl**, lots of **Horned Larks, Sage Thrasher, Vesper's Sparrow** and a single **Brewer's Sparrow**.

A stop at Rock Canyon Creek Recreation Area, added a pair of **Great Horned Owls, Hairy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, White-crowned Sparrow** and **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (both **Myrtle and Audubon's**).

Late Morning we headed off towards the Comanche National Grasslands, via Pueblo & La Junta, stopping on the way at Fowler for lunch. En route, we added **Brown-headed Cowbird**, **Chipping Sparrow** and **Song Sparrow**, and upon arrival in Springfield, after finding somewhere to stay, we headed south on Colorado 285 towards Washington Work Centre. It didn't take us too long to locate our main target - 3 **Mountain Plovers** and after returning to Springfield for petrol, we hot-footed it back down to Campo, to try and catch the **Lesser Prairie Chicken** lek. During the last hour of sunlight we enjoyed great views of 6 birds from the car and nearby, we also had the added bonus of a pair of **Lark Buntings**. Night at Starlite Motel, Springfield.

### **Day 3 – Saturday 15 April**

Setting off after breakfast, first stop of the day was Cottonwood Canyon. However, throughout the day we were severely hampered by a strong gusting wind. This made birding in the Canyon difficult and despite much effort we could not locate one of our main targets, **Lewis's Woodpecker**. Nevertheless, we did manage to see **Eastern Phoebe**, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Bushtit**, **Pine Siskin**, **Townsend's Solitaire**, **Hermit Thrush** and **Wild Turkey**. Overhead, **Turkey Vulture**, **Golden Eagle** and **Sharp-shinned Hawk** were noted and late morning we departed the Canyon and headed back towards the **Lesser Prairie Chicken** lek near Campo. Viewing was still difficult, due to the strong wind and resulting dust storms, however, we did manage to get decent views of **Vesper Sparrow** and **Lark Bunting** from the car. Returning to Springfield, after stopping for lunch, we commenced the long drive to Gunnison, via Lamar, La Junta, Pueblo and Canon City.

We broke the journey up with several stops on the way, first of which was Goose Lakes near Hasty, where an excellent selection of wildfowl included, **Snow Goose**, **Bufflehead**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Canvasback**, **Shoveler** and **Gadwall**. Other birds noted were **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, **White-faced Ibis**, **American White Pelican** and a solitary **Wilson's Phalarope**.

A brief visit to nearby John Martin Reservoir failed to produce much and eventually we moved onto Adobe Creek Reservoir (Blue Lake State Wildlife Area), stopping briefly to watch a roadside **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** in Las Animas and a **Ferruginous Hawk** on the road up to the reservoir. A small roadside pool, not far from the shore, gave us good views of **Long-billed Dowitcher**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, as well as **Least**, **Baird's**, **Semi-palmated** and **Western Sandpipers**. We also added **Snowy** and **American Golden Plovers** down at the reservoir shore. After stopping near Pueblo for something to eat, we completed our journey to Gunnison, arriving at our pre-booked Super 8 Motel, late in the evening.

### **Day 4 – Sunday 16 April**

A very early start saw us up at 04.30. Neither calling **Tengmalm's** or **Great Horned Owls** could be lured to the motel car park by playback, so we headed off to the **Gunnison Sage Grouse** lek site, near Waunita Hot Springs. As the first bit of light appeared, we could just about start making out the first of 30+ birds several hundred yards from the car, displaying in the meadow opposite. A hunting **Coyote** failed to spook the lek and the males remained on site for over an hour, before one by one, they took flight, into the nearby sage brush, with several birds flying directly over the car.

After breakfast back at our motel, we moved onto Mount Crested Butt, where we spent a very productive morning birding in and around the town. Our primary target, the **Rosy-Finches**, were easily seen by driving around the town and checking the various feeders. Large flocks of **Brown-capped Rosy Finches**, also contained several **Black** and **Grey-crowned Rosy Finches**. Other birds of note included **Mountain** and **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Steller's Jay**, **Red-naped Sapsucker**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Belted Kingfisher** and **Sharp-shinned Hawk**.

Returning to Gunnison for lunch, we then headed west along Route 50 towards Black Canyon of the National Monument. Several stops on the way gave us **White-throated Swift**, **Violet**

**Green Swallow, Cooper's Hawk, Golden Eagle** and another **Red-naped Sapsucker**. Birding at Black Canyon during the late afternoon/early evening proved slow going, although we did manage to add **Spotted Towhee, Western Scrub-Jay, Downy Woodpecker** and **Clark's Nutcracker**. Additionally, on the way out at dusk, we also found a male **Blue Grouse**, feeding on the side of the road. Night at Super 8 Motel, Grand Junction.

### **Day 5 – Monday 17 April**

We spent all morning at Colorado National Monument, although generally, the birding was slow, mainly due to a strong gusting northerly wind. Nevertheless, we did see a few new birds. A stop at the West Entrance, gave us **Gambell's Quail** and a good flock of **Pinyon Jays**, whilst a quick loop through Glade Park produced great views of **Western Bluebird**. Finally, a stop at Black Ridge Hunter added our only **Black-throated Grey Warbler** of the trip. After lunch back in Grand Junction, we commenced our drive to Craig via Interstate 70 and Route 13. A quick detour at Cameo, into Coal Canyon, proved pretty fruitless, although we did encounter several **Chukar**. A further stop at Rio Blanco Lake, west of Meeker, produced **Tree, Violet Green, Barn & Northern Rough-winged Swallows** and **Sand Martin**, along with **Redhead, American Wigeon, Gadwall** and **Western & Black-necked Grebes**. Heading on to Craig, roadside stops yielded both **American Dipper** and **Bald Eagle**. After checking into our hotel, we set off for the **Sharp-tailed Grouse** lek, south of Hayden. Unfortunately, once on site, we ran into a heavy snow blizzard, which pretty much wiped out any chance of connecting with our target and eventually we gave up and returned Craig, where we spent the night at the Holiday Inn.

### **Day 6 – Tuesday 18 April**

Up early again this morning to try the Timber Lake lek, north of Craig for **Greater Sage Grouse**. Yet again, we were hampered by heavy snow, and upon arrival, visibility was particularly poor, with little prospect of scoping the lek. However, we struck lucky when a female **Greater Sage Grouse** suddenly appeared from the gloom, on the edge of the track we had just driven down. We had great views as it sheltered from the snow in front of the car and with no prospect of the weather clearing, we cut our losses and returned to Craig for breakfast.

Following an hour or two chilling out at our hotel, waiting for the snow to stop, we headed off to Oxbow Wildlife Area, via Maybell. Several stops on the way produced **Brewer's Sparrow** and large numbers of **Mountain Bluebirds** and upon arrival at Oxbow, we quickly located our two main targets, **Sage Sparrow** and **Sage Thrasher**, along with a flock of **Pinyon Jays**. Back in Craig, a stop at ponds on the east side of town produced good numbers of **Ring-necked Ducks** and **Tree Swallows**, as well as a singing **Marsh Wren**.

Late afternoon, we ventured north of Hayden on CR80 in search of **Grouse**. This was very successful and in complete contrast to yesterday's wipe out, we had great views of a party of **Sharp-tailed Grouse**, as well as a superb displaying **Blue Grouse**. A stop east of Hayden, gave us better views of **Marsh Wren** and some more **Yellow-headed Blackbirds**. Finally, a visit to Coal Montt Lek, south of Walden in search of **Greater Sage Grouse** gave us good views of another female, although we could find no sign of a lek. Night at Eastin Hotel, Kremmling.

### **Day 7 – Wednesday 19 April**

A quick drive around Kremmling after breakfast checking the feeders failed to produce anything of real note. However, we did encounter a group of 50+ **White-faced Ibis** and several **Cinnamon Teals** on a nearby pool. Heading off towards Georgetown and the Guanella Pass, the first proper stop of the day was at Windy Gap Reservoir, where we stumbled into our only **Moose** of the trip. The birding proved very productive and we added a number of new trip birds such as **Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser** and **California Gull**. A brief stop near Winter Park gave us nothing of note and upon reaching Georgetown we headed straight for the feeders on the west side of the town, where there were plenty of birds such as **Steller's Jay, Mountain** and **Black-capped Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Dark-eyed Junco**. After sorting out somewhere to stay, we took the winding mountain road up to Guanella Pass,

stopping at several sites on the way. Whilst the forest birding was pretty slow, we did see **Cassin's Finch** and **Clark's Nutcracker**.

Up at the pass, after parking at the highest point, it took much stumping around and some two hours to find a single, very tame, **White-tailed Ptarmigan** east of trail 603, several hundred yards past the signing-in box. Returning back down towards Georgetown, we added **Grey Jay**, before venturing up to Loveland Pass. Great view, no birds! A quick stop at Silver Plume, to check feeders was pretty fruitless, although we did connect with two **Big-horned Sheep** en route back to Georgetown. We spent the final hour of daylight back up on the road to Guanella Pass and whilst birds were few and far between, we did manage to finally connect with **Fox Sparrow**. Night at Super 8 Motel, Georgetown.

### **Day 8 – Thursday 20 April**

First stop today was Genesee State Park just off exit 254 on Interstate 70, where we easily found our two targets, **Williamson's Sapsucker** and **Pygmy Nuthatch**. Other birds included plenty of **Western Bluebirds**, **Cassin's Finch** and a displaying **Cooper's Hawk**. After passing through Denver, we stopped briefly at Lower Latham Reservoir near Greeley, where a good selection of waders in flooded fields included **American Avocet**, **Wilson's Phalarope**, **Least Sandpiper**, **Semi-palmated Sandpiper** and **Willet**. Viewing the reservoir distantly we could just about make out **Forster's Tern**, **American White Pelican**, **Clark's Grebe** and **Bonaparte's Gull**.

Moving onto the Pawnee Grasslands (Murphy's Pasture), **McCown's Longspurs** seemed to be everywhere and after a little bit of searching, we found a superb male **Chestnut-collared Longspur**, as well as a single **Mountain Plover**. We also had our second rather distant **Ferruginous Hawk** of the trip.

Final stop of the day was just north of Wray, 1.7 miles east of Route 385, along CR 45, where we scoped up to 16 **Greater Prairie Chickens** displaying on the brow of a distant sandhill. Leaving this site for the long drive to Colorado Springs, we came across several **Northern Bobwhites**, which pretty much completed the set of Colorado game birds. Night at Super 8 on south side of Colorado Springs.

### **Day 9 – Friday 21 April**

Today we concentrated on two missing birds, namely, **Lewis's Woodpecker** and **American Three-toed Woodpecker**. It didn't take us too long after arriving in Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City, to find a single **Lewis's Woodpecker** and other additions to the trip list included, **Blue Jay**, **Evening Grosbeak** and **Orange-crowned Warbler**. After a long drive, we spent several hours in the afternoon looking for **American Three-toed Woodpecker** at Pine Valley Ranch Park near Denver (just south of Conifer on Route 285). However, whilst this proved unsuccessful, we did locate our third **Red-naped Sapsucker** of the trip, along with several more **Pygmy Nuthatches**, before finally heading off to Denver International Airport for our evening flight back to the UK.

## **SYSTEMATIC LIST**

The list below follows the 'Clements 5<sup>th</sup> Edition – '2005' sequence, nomenclature and taxonomy.

### **Common Loon (Great-northern Diver) *Gavia immer***

A single bird at Pueblo Reservoir.

### **Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps***

3 Goose Lakes and 1 on the river near Gunnison on 16/4.

**Eared (Black-necked) Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis***  
Regular sightings, maximum 50 at Pueblo Reservoir.

**Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis***  
2 Pueblo Reservoir, 1 Rio Blanco Lake and 1 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Clark's Grebe *Aechmophorus clarkii***  
1 Pueblo Reservoir and 1 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos***  
1 Pueblo Reservoir, 60 flying high over Goose Lakes and 6 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus***  
Seen on 3 days only, maximum of 20 on 20/4.

**Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias***  
Seen regularly.

**Snowy Egret *Egretta thula***  
Only 2 sightings.

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***  
4 birds in total.

**White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi***  
30 Goose Lakes, 6 en route from Gunnison to Black Canyon, 2 between Cameo and Rio Blanco Lake and 50+ birds at Kremmling.

**Snow Goose *Chen caerulescens***  
15 at Goose Lakes were the only birds of the trip

**Canada Goose *Branta canadensis***  
Common.

**Wood Duck *Aix sponsa***  
A flighty pair at Cottonwood Canyon.

**American Wigeon *Anas americana***  
Small numbers seen at quite a few locations. Maximum of 20 on 19/4.

**Gadwall *Anas strepera***  
Fairly common. Daily maximum of 50.

**Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca***  
Common, maximum of 25 on 18/4.

**Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***  
Common, seen daily.

**Northern Pintail *Anas acuta***  
8 Goose Lakes and 2 en route from Maybell to Craig.

**Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors***

30 Goose Lakes and 4 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera***

10 Goose Lakes, 4 Gunnison area, 2 near Craig and 4 Kremmling.

**Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata***

Regular sightings, with a maximum of 100 on 15/4.

**Canvasback *Aythya valisineria***

A single bird at Goose Lakes.

**Redhead *Aythya americana***

4 at Pueblo Reservoir, 2 Rio Blanco Lake and 5 Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris***

Seen on 4 dates, maximum of 51 at Craig on 18/4.

**Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis***

3 Goose Lakes, 12 Windy Gap Reservoir and 4 near Denver.

**Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula***

1 Goose Lakes and 50 Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica***

At least 5 birds amongst the Common Goldeneyes at Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola***

2 Goose Lakes, 1 en route from Cameo to Rio Blanco Lake, 6 north of Craig and 2 Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus***

A distant female at Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Common Merganser (Goosander) *Mergus merganser***

Regular sightings. Maximum of 17 on 18/4.

**Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis***

12 en route from Pueblo to Springfield and 6 Goose Lakes.

**Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura***

Common.

**Osprey *Pandion haliaetus***

A total of 6 birds seen during trip.

**Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus***

1 en route from Meeker to Craig, 1 flew over the female Sage Grouse on 18/4 and 1 Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus***

Seen on 4 dates, maximum of 6 on 20/4.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus***

1 at Cottonwood Canyon, another at Mount Crested Butt and a single bird on 17/4.

**Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii***

1 en route from Gunnison to Black Canyon of the National Monument and 1 at Genesee State Park.

**Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni***

A fairly common sight, particularly in the 'prairie' eastern part of the state.

**Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis***

The common Buteo.

**Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis***

Singles at Adobe Creek Reservoir and Pawnee National Grasslands.

**Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos***

8 birds seen in total.

**American Kestrel *Falco sparverius***

Common.

**Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus***

6 birds seen.

**Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo***

14 Cottonwood Canyon and 3 near Wray.

**Blue Grouse *Dendragapus obscurus***

A single bird at Black Canyon of the National Monument and another north of Hayden.

**White-tailed Ptarmigan *Lagopus leucurus***

A single bird at Guanella Pass gave excellent close range views.

**Greater Sage-Grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus***

Due to adverse weather, we were unable to view Timber Lake Lek, north of Craig. However, we did get good views of a female bird that wandered onto the track, close to the car. We also saw another female later the same day at Coal Montt near Walden.

**Gunnison Sage-Grouse *Centrocercus minimus***

31 birds watched at the Gunnison Lek site.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse *Tympanuchus phasianellus***

A party of 7 birds north of Hayden.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken *Tympanuchus cupido***

16 birds at Wray Lek.

**Lesser Prairie-Chicken *Tympanuchus pallidicinctus***

6 birds at Campo Lek.

**Scaled Quail *Callipepla squamata***

7 Pueblo Reservoir.

**Gambel's Quail *Callipepla gambelii***

3 Colorado National Monument.

**Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus***

7 roadside birds just north of Wray.

**Chukar *Alectoris chukar***

4 birds Coal Canyon near Cameo.

**Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus***

3 birds from car during drive from Pawnee Grasslands to Wray.

**Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis***

All sightings Craig/Hayden area, maximum of 64 on 18/4.

**American Coot *Fulica americana***

Maximum count of 70 on 15/4.

**Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus***

2 birds Goose Lakes.

**American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana***

10 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**American Golden-Plover *Pluvialis dominica***

A single bird at Adobe Creek Reservoir.

**Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus***

4 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus***

Common.

**Snowy Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus***

3 birds at Adobe Creek Reservoir.

**Mountain Plover *Charadrius montanus***

3 birds in fields by Washington Work Centre, south of Springfield and 1 Murphy's Pasture, Pawnee National Grasslands.

**Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata***

Singles south of Colorado Springs and at Mounted Crested Butt.

**Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus***

2 birds in flooded fields south of Colorado Springs and 36 Adobe Creek Reservoir.



**Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus***

7+ birds Comanche National Grasslands and 2 with Sandhill Cranes near Craig on 18/4.

**Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes***

5 in flooded fields south of Colorado Springs, 8 Adobe Creek Reservoir and 15 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus***

A single bird Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla***

10 Adobe Creek Reservoir and 1 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri***

1 Adobe Creek Reservoir.

**Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla***

3 Adobe Creek Reservoir and 8 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii***

6 Adobe Creek Reservoir and 3 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor***

1 Goose Lakes and 2 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis***

2 Pueblo Reservoir and 1 Adobe Creek Reservoir.

**California Gull *Larus californicus***

6 Windy Gap Reservoir and 4 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia***

2 Pueblo Reservoir, 4 Rio Blanco Lake and 3 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan***

Regular sightings, with a maximum of 50 on 15/4.

**Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri***

2 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Rock Pigeon *Columba livia***

Seen every day bar one.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto***

Small numbers seen.

**Mourning Dove *Zenaidura macroura***

Common.

**Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus***

A pair in broad day light near Pueblo Reservoir and a bird calling just before first light in Gunnison.

**Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia***

7 birds in and around Comanche National Grasslands.

**Boreal (Tengmalm's) Owl *Aegolius funereus***

A single bird heard at Gunnison.

**White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis***

First seen en route from Gunnison to the Black Canyon of the National Monument. Common at monument itself, with 100+ birds seen in total during 16/4. 50+ the following day at Colorado National Monument and 8+ birds on final day at Greenhorn Meadows.

**Belted Kingfisher *Ceryle alcyon***

A total of 7 individuals seen during trip.

**Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis***

Surprisingly we missed this bird at Cottonwood Canyon, so we had to try again at Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City, where an early morning visit produced good views of a single bird.

**Williamson's Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus thyroideus***

2 pairs seen at Genesee State Park.

**Red-naped Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis***

1 Mount Crested Butt, 1 en route from Gunnison to the Black Canyon of the National Monument and 1 at Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens***

1 Black Canyon of the National Monument, 1 Genesee State Park and 4 birds during final day visits to Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City and Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus***

A single bird at Rock Canyon Creek Recreation Area, near Pueblo Reservoir.

**Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus***

Commonest Woodpecker.

**Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe***

3 birds Cotton Wood Canyon.

**Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya***

Small numbers seen most days.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens***

Just the one in Cottonwood Canyon.

**Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis***

2 birds Cottonwood Canyon.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus***

1 spotted from the car as we headed through Las Animas, gave good views on a road side fence on 15/4.

**Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris***

One of the commonest birds of the trip. All over the prairies!

**Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor***

Good numbers seen at Rio Blanco Lake and in Craig area, with 100+ on both 17 & 18/4. Small numbers elsewhere.

**Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina***

3 birds en route from Gunnison to Black Canyon of the National Monument, 5 Rio Blanco Lake and 3 at Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City on 21/4.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis***

Regular sightings.

**Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia***

15 Rio Blanco Lake and 2 Craig.

**Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota***

Seen on 4 dates, daily maximum of 20.

**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica***

Regular sightings of this distinctive American subspecies. Daily maximum of 50.

**American Pipit *Anthus rubescens***

Seen on two occasions. 12 birds on flooded fields south of Colorado Springs and 15+ birds at Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula***

Singles at Cottonwood Canyon, Black Canyon of the National Monument and Genesee State Park.

**American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus***

A single bird between Meeker and Craig and one on the river at Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Rock Wren *Salpinctes obsoletus***

2 Cottonwood Canyon and 3 Colorado National Monument.

**Bewick's Wren *Thyromanes bewickii***

3 Cottonwood Canyon and a further 3 at Colorado National Monument.

**Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris***

Singles at Craig and near Hayden.

**Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos***

2 birds near Campo Lek on 15/4.

**Sage Thrasher *Oreoscoptes montanus***

2 Pueblo Reservoir, 2 Oxbow Wildlife Area and 2 near Murphy's Pasture, Pawnee National Grasslands on 20/4.

**Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana***

2 Colorado National Monument and 4 Genesee State Park.

**Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides***

The first sighting at Colorado National Monument was followed by good numbers in and around Craig, with a maximum of 40 on 18/4.

**Townsend's Solitaire *Myadestes townsendi***

2 Cottonwood Canyon were followed by a further 2 at Colorado Monument. Other sightings including 1 on road up to Guanella Pass and 1 at Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus***

The only sighting of the trip was of two birds at Cottonwood Canyon.

**American Robin *Turdus migratorius***

A common sight throughout.

**Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus***

2 Cottonwood Canyon, 1 Black Canyon of the National Monument, 4 Colorado National Monument and 2 at Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City on 21/4.

**Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapilla***

1 Mount Crest Butt, 1 Craig, 2 Georgetown and 2 Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City.

**Mountain Chickadee *Poecile gambeli***

5 Mount Crested Butt, 4 Georgetown, 6 Genesee State Park and 4 Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Juniper Titmouse *Baeolophus ridgwayi***

1 Cottonwood Canyon.

**Pygmy Nuthatch *Sitta pygmaea***

7 Genesee State Park and 5 Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis***

1 Georgetown, 2 Genesee State Park and 2 Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis***

1 Rock Canyon Creek Recreation Area near Pueblo Reservoir, 1 Mount Crested Butt, 2 Genesee State Park and 2 Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Brown Creeper *Certhia americana***

Singles at Black Canyon of the National Monument and Pine Valley Ranch Park on 21/4.

**Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus***

Regular sightings, with a maximum of 10 on 14/4.

**Grey Jay *Perisoreus canadensis***

2 along road between Georgetown and Guanella Pass.

**Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stellerii***

1 at Mount Crested Butt, was followed by small numbers at Georgetown, Genesee State Park and Pine Valley Ranch Park.

**Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata***

2 Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City.

**Western Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma californica***

At least 5 birds at Black Canyon of the National Monument, were followed by 3 birds at Colorado National Monument.

**Pinyon Jay *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus***

34 birds at Colorado National Monument and a flock of 40 birds Oxbow Wildlife Area.

**Black-billed Magpie *Pica hodsonia***

Common.

**Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana***

2 Black Canyon of the National Monument and 1 on road up to Guanella Pass.

**American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos***

Common.

**Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus***

10 birds Cottonwood Canyon.

**Common Raven *Corvus corax***

Common.

**European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris***

Seen daily.

**Orange-crowned Warbler *Vermivora celata***

1 Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata***

Commonest warbler. Even so, sightings were limited to 3 days only. 5 birds at Rock Creek Recreation Area were followed by 4 at Cottonwood Canyon and a further 4 at Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City. Both 'Audubon's' and 'Myrtle' Warblers seen.

**Black-throated Grey Warbler *Dendroica nigrescens***

Good views of a single bird at Colorado National Monument.

**Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas***

1 female near Crested Butt.

**Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus***

2 Black Canyon of the National Monument, 2 near Oxbow Wildlife Area and up to 3 at Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City.

**Canyon Towhee *Pipilo fuscus***

2 Pueblo Reservoir and 3 Cottonwood Canyon.

**Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina***

Seen on five dates, with a maximum of 10 on 20/4.

**Brewer's Sparrow *Spizella breweri***

1 Pueblo Reservoir, 4 between Maybell and Oxbow Wildlife Area and 2 Murphy's Pastures, Pawnee National Grasslands.

**Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus***

Commonest Sparrow – good numbers seen.

**Sage Sparrow *Amphispiza belli***

4 birds at Oxbow Wildlife Area

**Lark Bunting *Calamospiza melanocorys***

A male and female near the Lesser Prairie Chicken lek at Campo, followed by a female there the next day.

**Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis***

2 Lower Latham Reservoir.

**Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca***

2 birds seen from road side, between Georgetown and Guanella Pass were of the 'Interior West form' (Slate Coloured Sparrow).

**Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia***

Small numbers seen.

**White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys***

25+ seen on first day, thereafter only seen on another 3 dates.

**Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis***

Pretty common, particularly up in the Rockies, with both 'Pink-sided' and 'Grey-headed' forms seen.

**McCown's Longspur *Calcarius mccowni***

At least 25 birds at Murphy's Pasture, Pawnee National Grasslands included many breeding plumaged males.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur *Calcarius ornatus***

A stunning male at Murphy's Pasture, Pawnee National Grasslands.

**Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus***

Common.

**Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta***

Common.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus***

Seen on 5 dates with maximum of 30 birds south of Colorado Springs on 14/4.

**Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus***

6 south of Colorado Springs and 3 near Springfield.

**Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula***

Common, particularly in low lying parts of the state.

**Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus***

All sightings in the far east of the state. 20+ in Springfield area and a single bird near Wray.

**Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater***

Seen on 4 dates, with a maximum of 30 on 15/4.

**Grey-crowned Rosy Finch *Leucosticte tephrocotia***

3 birds picked out amongst the large number of Rosy Finches visiting feeders in Mount Crested Butt.

**Black Rosy Finch *Leucosticte atrata***

At least 6 birds Mount Crested Butt.

**Brown-capped Rosy Finch *Leucosticte australis***

200+ Mount Crested Butt. Easily seen as we drove around the town checking feeders.

**Cassin's Finch *Carpodacus cassinii***

25+ Mount Crested Butt, 5 Georgetown area and 4 Genesee State Park.

**House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus***

Common.

**Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra***

1 heard Black Canyon of the National Monument and another seen at Genesee State Park.

**Pine Siskin *Carduelis pinus***

6 Cottonwood Canyon, 2 Mount Crested Butt, 2 Georgetown and 2 Genesee State Park.

**Lesser Goldfinch *Carduelis psaltria***

Single bird at Kremmling.

**American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis***

6 birds in fields with the Mountain Bluebirds near Oxbow Wildlife Area.

**Evening Grosbeak *Coccothraustes vespertinus***

4 birds Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Common.

**Mammals**

**Pronghorn** *Antilocapra americana* – Fairly common on prairies.

**American Beaver** *Castor canadensis* – Rock Canyon Creek Recreation Area.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** *Cynomys ludovicianus* – Numerous Comanche National Grasslands.

**Black-tailed Jack Rabbit** *Dusicyon griseus* – Seen just the once.

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes* – Several seen.

**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus* – Regular sightings.

**Coyote** *Canis latrans* – A single animal at Gunnison Sage Grouse lek.

**Yellow-bellied Marmot** *Marmota flaviventris* – Several roadside animals near Craig.

**Moose** *Alces alces* – Just the one, at Windy Gap Reservoir.

**Big Horn Sheep** *Ovis canadensis* – 2 seen from viewing area near Georgetown.

**Abert's Squirrel** *Sciurus aberti* – Just the one sighting.

**Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus tridecemlineatus* – Several seen..

**Acknowledgements**

A special thanks to Colorado birders, Richard Stephens and Bill Schmoker for advising on our proposed itinerary. Also to Richard, for kindly fielding our phone calls whilst in Colorado and pointing us in the right direction on a few missing birds, particularly, Lewis's Woodpecker and Williamson's Sapsucker.

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