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Highlights from September 17 Bird Walk to Bear Creek Lake Park – Evergreen Audubon

4 minutes

When eight of us arrived at Bear Creek Lake Park on Saturday, September 17, we found that we were just in time for the commencement of the Bear-It-All Off-Road Triathlon. The parking lots were packed; Big Soda Lake was full of people swimming furiously hither and yon; and starting lines, finish lines, and loud music were dominating the scene right next to my initial destination for our bird walk.

So, did we just cash it in and go have breakfast at Denny's? No! We hauled scopes past dripping wet-suit clad swimmers and carried on undaunted. And, before the morning was over, we were highly rewarded, having managed to have a few additional highlights, other than race contestants, and tallying 42 species (see list below).

One special highlight surpassed all others, and clearly was the bird of the day. In fact it was so special that due to its rarity in Colorado, we were initially unable to even identify it. However, after a bit of homework we determined that it was a female **Northern Parula.**



These two photos, *courtesy of Arthur Grosset*, come very close to looking like the bird we observed. Note the broken, pale eye-arcs; the pure yellow chin and breast; the greenish-yellow back patch surrounded by blue-gray, and the bright, white wingbars.

Here is a distribution map from the Birds of North America website (birdsna.org), so you can see that a Northern Parula showing up in Colorado is not a common occurrence.

All in all, a great morning!

Best regards,

Chuck Aid

Bear Creek Lake Park, Sep 17, 2016

42 species

- Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) 78

- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 11
- Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) 12
- American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) 2
- Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) 1
- Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) 3
- Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) 6
- Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) 6
- Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) 14
- Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (*Columba livia* (Feral Pigeon)) 7
- Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) 1
- Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) 11
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) 3
- Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) 3
- Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) 2
- Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) 8
- Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) 5
- Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 10
- American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 1
- Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) 13
- Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) 5
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*) 1
- House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) 2

- American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) 11
- Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) 1
- European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 8
- Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*) 3
- Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*) 1
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) 1
- Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) 4
- Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) 6
- White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) 7
- Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*) 1
- Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) 5
- Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) 2
- Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) 2
- Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) 5
- Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) 4
- Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) 15
- House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) 24
- Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*) 15
- American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) 4