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## Highlights from June 17 walk to the Bergen Peak State Wildlife Area – Evergreen Audubon

4-5 minutes

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Before the nine of us had even begun to huff and puff our way up the steep trail into this area, we ran into a young woman with two dogs on-leash who reported that on one of the trail options ahead of us was a Black Bear sow with two little cubs. As it was not the direction I had intended for us to take, we bypassed our opportunity for a bear encounter, but it was nice to know that they were in the area. Two years ago on another Evergreen Audubon bird walk we did get to see and photograph a sow and cubs in pretty much the same spot.



Western Tanager (c) Rob Raker

As to the birds, we tallied 32 species (see list below), and availed

ourselves of many mini-seminar opportunities. Our most numerous species was the House Wren. They were singing all over the place, and busy nest building – or at least filling up old woodpecker cavities with sticks such that they might have been nest building. It's hard to say, as House Wrens (and some other wrens) are known to build “dummy nests,” that is nests that may not be used at all. This may be a predator avoidance device, or since it's the male that commences nest building, he may just be trying to make his prospective territory more attractive to a female, or maybe the dummy nest becomes the male's “man cave” once the female starts incubating, or maybe he is just trying to bogart a particularly choice piece of real estate and take all available nest sites. At any rate the female, once she's on the scene, chooses which nest she prefers and she concludes the nest building.



Black-headed Grosbeak (c) Bill Schmoker

Other highlights included great views of singing Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak.

Dramas observed included a family of four Red-breasted Nuthatches scurrying around on the ground and low on tree

trunks as the adults fed the youngsters. We also got to witness a very assertive Common Raven giving a Golden Eagle “what for” while a soaring Red-tailed Hawk kind of got caught in the middle of things.

The real highlight of the morning was the great looks we had of male and female Williamson’s Sapsuckers taking turns bringing food to their nest to feed their loudly begging nestlings.

On a personal note, I once again got schooled by an Olive-sided Flycatcher whose three-note call can sound, at least to my ear, very like the three-note call of a Red Crossbill. Fortunately, we were able to see the Olive-sided Flycatcher, plus it began to sing its highly distinctive “Quick-Three-Beers” song.

Oh, and by the way, to those of you on the walk, the feather we found was from a Red-tailed Hawk.

I hope to see you soon on another bird walk!

Chuck Aid, Director of Bird Monitoring

Bergen Peak SWA, Jun 17, 2017

32 species

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) 1

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) 1

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) 1

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) 16

Williamson’s Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) 4

Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) (*Colaptes auratus* [cafer Group])

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Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) 1

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) 1

Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*) 6  
Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) 6  
Steller's Jay (Interior) (*Cyanocitta stelleri* [diademata Group]) 4  
Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 5  
Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) 3  
Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) 4  
Mountain Chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*) 11  
Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) 7  
White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) 2  
Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*) 2  
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) 15  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) 4  
Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) 5  
American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) 8  
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) 1  
Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) 1  
Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed) (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) 11  
Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) 5  
Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) 2  
Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) 7  
Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) 1  
Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) 1  
Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) 1  
Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) 1