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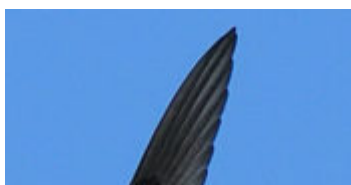
Highlights from June 7 walk to Red Rocks Park – Evergreen Audubon

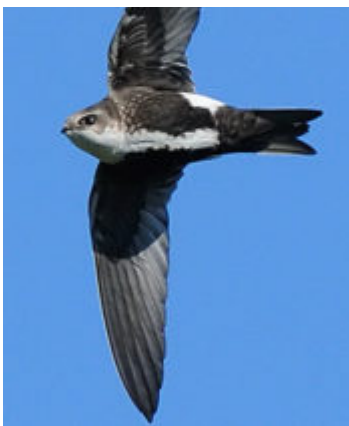
4-5 minutes



Canyon Wren (c) Bill Schmoker

Thirteen of us had a spectacular morning at Red Rocks, tallying 34 species (see list below). The female Cooper's Hawk was sitting high in her nest and moving around quite a bit, indicating the likelihood of active nestlings being present. We had great looks at White-throated Swifts, Say's Phoebes, Violet-green Swallows, Canyon Wrens, Yellow Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, and Bullock's Orioles – just to name a few.



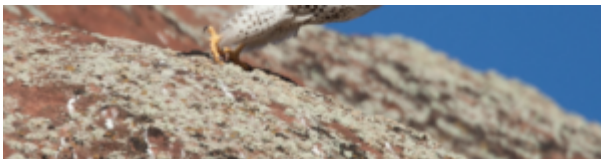


White-throated Swift (c) Bill Schmoker

A little bit of info on swifts and swallows. Swifts, along with Hummingbirds, belong to the order Apodiformes (“without feet” or “footless”) because their feet are so little and really only useful for perching. Swifts superficially resemble swallows, and both groups get their groceries by foraging for flying insects. However, swifts are faster flying, with a rapid, flickering flight reminiscent of bats, they rarely fly in a straight line – giving the impression that their wings are flapping alternately, their sickle-shaped wings are more swept back, and their “wrist” appears proportionally closer to the body.

Swallows are in the large Passeriformes order – “Perching” birds – which includes over half the birds in the world. They have broader, shorter wings, and have a more relaxed wing-beat. Both the species we were seeing, White-throated Swift and Violet-green Swallow, have rumps with white sides, so this can take a bit of work sorting these out.





Prairie Falcon (c) Rob Raker

The highlight of the day was, of course, getting to see two Peregrine Falcons up on Creation Rock and Ship Rock, and the family of five Prairie Falcons on Cave Rock – mom, pop, and three youngsters restlessly flapping around with their short wings. A note on the Peregrines – they were not hanging out together and we saw no sign of any interaction or breeding activity. It's not too late for them to kick it into gear (if in fact we have both a male and a female), but they better get going soon as the whole routine from egg-laying to fledging youngsters takes 10-11 weeks, and then the youngsters still hang out with the parents for another few weeks before becoming independent.

[Addendum: Evidently the Peregrines do have two young somewhere on Ship Rock, and we just failed to see them.]

See you soon! Chuck

Red Rocks Park, Jun 7, 2017 – 34 species

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) 5

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) 1

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (*Columba livia* (Feral Pigeon)) 2

White-throated Swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) 18

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) 6

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) 1

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) 2

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) 5

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) 1

Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*) 3
Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) 6
Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) 2
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*) 7
Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 9
American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 2
Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) 1
Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) 35
Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) 3
Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*) 2
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) 7
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*) 4
American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) 7
Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) 2
Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) 7
Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) 6
Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) 1
Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) 10
Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) 6
Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) 6
Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) 3
Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) 3
Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) 9
House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) 3
Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*) 2