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Highlights from May 3 Bird Walk to Chatfield State Park – Evergreen Audubon

4-5 minutes

The intent of this walk was to visit the bird banding station that's run by the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies at Chatfield State Park for five weeks each spring. Banding stations are generally placed in areas where migratory birds tend to congregate. Using mist nets birds are harmlessly trapped, they're removed from the nets, data is collected on them, a small, numbered band is placed on a leg, and then they're released. Occasionally, these birds are recaptured elsewhere, thus providing information on the timing and route of that species' migration.

Sounds like a fun way to spend a morning, right? Well, when the weather is too inclement as it was this past Wednesday, then the decision has to be made not to open the nets and try and catch birds that day; it's just not safe for them.

However, our intrepid group of tough Evergreen birders were not to be dissuaded, and chose to go birding in the wind and rain regardless, and we hope that we'll be able to visit the banding station another time. So, we spent two hours exploring along the South Platte, and even though the birds were pretty hunkered
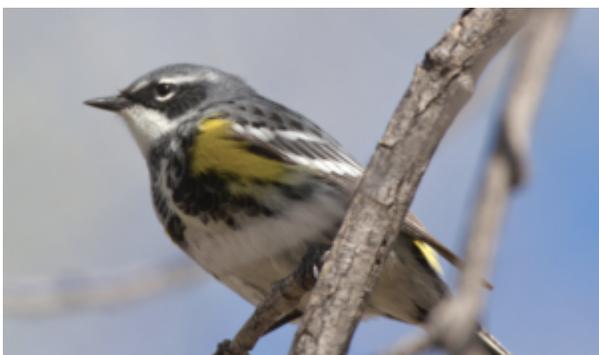
down we did manage to see 25 species (see list below). Among the highlights were a single Orange-crowned Warbler, a couple of Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a few other Yellow-rumps of indeterminate race.

Orange-crowned Warbler (c) Rob Raker

A bit more on these warblers. With regard to the Orange-crowned Warbler, while it is among the most drab of all warblers, and its orange crown virtually impossible to see, it is distinguished by: the faint streaking on the breast, yellow under-tail coverts, a short dark eyeline, broken eye-ring, and a light supercilium (eyebrow).

As for the Yellow-rumped Warblers, there are two races north of Mexico, Audubon's and Myrtle, which historically have been viewed as separate species, and are likely to become such again. We have both here in Colorado, though Audubon's predominates up in the mountains. Audubon's Warbler has a uniformly gray head and yellow throat, with males

Myrtle Warbler male (c) Rob Raker

having a nearly solid black breast and solid white wing panel. Myrtle Warbler has a dark auricular (ear-patch), an obvious light supercilium (eyebrow), and a white throat that extends back under the ear-patch, with males having a streaky black breast and two distinct white wing-bars.

And then there are always the females to try and sort out.

There is always a bit more to this identification game, but that should keep you busy for a while.

Hope to see you on an upcoming walk,

Chuck Aid

Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers females (c) Bill Schmoker

Chatfield State Park –Audubon Center & Trails

May 3, 2017

25 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose (Branta canadensis) 12

Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) 4

Common Merganser (Mergus merganser) 1

Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax) 1

Swainson's Hawk (Buteo swainsoni) 1

Eurasian Collared-Dove (Streptopelia decaocto) 2

Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 2

Broad-tailed Hummingbird (Selasphorus platycercus) 3

Eastern Phoebe (Sayornis phoebe) 1

Say's Phoebe (Sayornis saya) 1

Audubon's Warbler male (c) Rob Raker

American Crow (Corvus brachyrhynchos) 3 Tree Swallow (Tachycineta bicolor) 1

Black-capped Chickadee (Poecile atricapillus) 2

Bushtit (Psaltriparusminimus) 1

House Wren (Troglodytes aedon) 6

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Polioptila caerulea) 1

Orange-crowned Warbler (Oreothlypis celata) 1

Yellow-rumped Warbler (Setophaga coronata) 5

Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (Setophaga coronata auduboni) 2

Song Sparrow (Melospiza melodia) 5

Spotted Towhee (Pipilo maculatus) 8

Red-winged Blackbird (Agelaius phoeniceus) 10

Western Meadowlark (Sturnella neglecta) 1

Brown-headed Cowbird (Molothrus ater) 1

House Finch (Haemorhous mexicanus) 2

American Goldfinch (Spinus tristis) 1

Save