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## Highlights from November 1 Bird Walk to South Platte Park – Evergreen Audubon

4-5 minutes

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Ring-necked Duck (c) Mick Thompson

A great morning down along the South Platte, where ten of us tallied 40 species (see list below). Highlights included eleven species of ducks. We started the day with the good fortune of seeing a single Surf Scoter on South Platte Reservoir, and ended the morning with six glorious Wood Ducks. Except for the Shovelers, all the other species looked to already be in prime breeding plumage – quite spectacular!





Wood Duck (c) Mick Thompson

And, here's the good news, the duck show is going to continue to get more spectacular as we head on into winter. There are still several wintering species that haven't shown up yet, or at least not in great numbers. The *Aythya* genus (all divers) includes Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, and Lesser Scaup. We had a single male Ring-necked Duck, just to remind us what a neat group this is, and we didn't see any of the others. BUT, we will in short order as their numbers increase locally. Another fun genus of wintering ducks is the *Bucephala* (from ancient Greek "ox-head") which includes Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Bufflehead. We had plenty of Buffleheads on Wednesday, but no Goldeneyes yet.



Northern Shrike (c) Mick Thompson

We had two other species that have just recently arrived in the area, and which I hadn't seen since last winter – both are very handsome and always appreciated: Northern Shrike and

American Tree Sparrow. The Northern Shrike breeds in the taiga (boreal coniferous forest) and taiga-tundra ecotone of the Northern Hemisphere. In the Nearctic (New World) they tend to winter sparingly as far south as northern Colorado. However, every 3-6 winters they tend to exhibit an irruptive behavior that can take them as far south as Arizona and New Mexico.



American Tree Sparrow (c) Bill Schmoker

The American Tree Sparrow has an unfortunate misnomer based on its superficial resemblance to the Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Our Tree Sparrow actually breeds primarily in the shrubs, small conifers and tundra near the arctic tree-line. They then winter in large numbers throughout the northern United States and south to northern Arizona and New Mexico.

So, it was a good morning, and the forecasted high winds never materialized. Yay!

Good birding!

Chuck Aid

South Platte Park–C470 area

40 species

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) 130

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) 6  
Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) 36  
Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) 65  
American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*) 90  
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 45  
Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) 3  
Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) 1  
Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) 1  
Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) 50  
Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) 14  
Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) 15  
Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) 7  
Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) 2  
Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) 3  
Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) 1  
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) 4  
American Coot (*Fulica americana*) 20  
Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) 16  
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (*Columba livia* (Feral Pigeon)) 11  
Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) 2  
Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) 6  
Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) 2  
Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) 6  
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) 1  
Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis*) 1  
Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) 5  
Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 14  
American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 12  
Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) 26

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) 1  
White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) 4  
Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) 2  
American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*) 2  
Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed) (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) 1  
White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) 8  
Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) 6  
Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) 3  
House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) 8  
American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) 5