


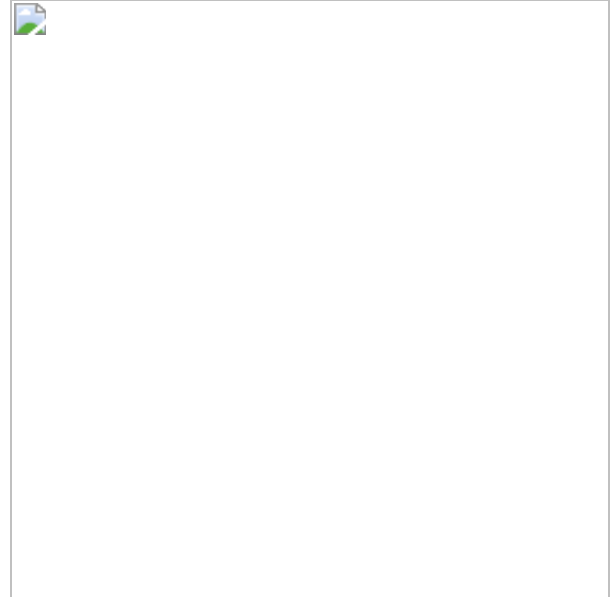
Highlights from April 22 Birding Foray to Weld County

 evergreenaudubon.org/highlights-from-april-22-birding-foray-to-weld-county

Chuck Aid

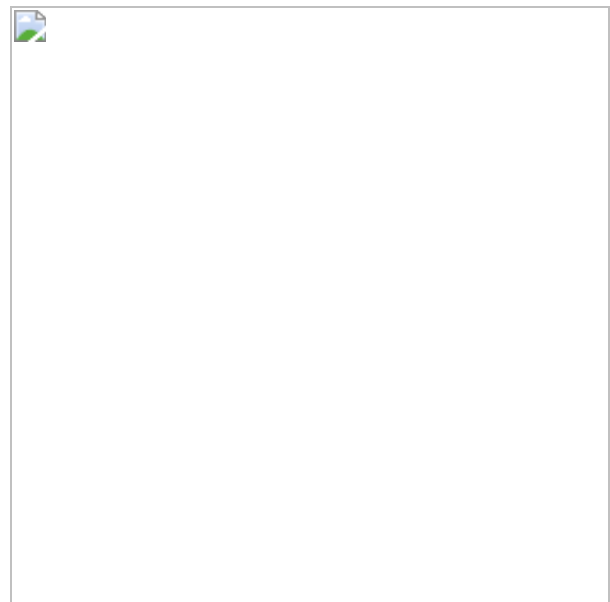
April 28, 2018

What a special day seven of us had at several wetlands and ponds northeast of Denver – 71 species (see list below)! To begin with, we recorded sixteen species of ducks, and had multiple views of such crowd-pleasers as Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, and Ruddy Duck. The two teal species are especially welcome at this time of year, because we can see the other fourteen duck species during the winter, but we only have Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal during migration and summer, and it is only during spring migration that we get to see so many of them. We had 23 Blue-winged Teal and 21 Cinnamon Teal! What a marvelous treat! And while we may see Ruddy Ducks during the winter, we don't get the full Ruddy Duck treatment until now, when the males are in their full breeding plumage.



Blue-winged Teal (c) Mick Thompson

Then, we saw four species of grebes, Pied-billed, Horned, Western, and Clark's. The Pied-billed and Western are always relatively easy to find, but it generally takes some looking around during the breeding season to get good looks at Horned, Eared, and Clark's Grebes. It was especially gratifying to get exceptional looks at a Clark's Grebe, and to be reminded that with a brighter yellow-orange bill and an eye surrounded by white they really do look different from their congener, the Western Grebe.



Clark's Grebe (c) Mick Thompson

Of course, one of the main purposes of our outing was to try and find some waders and shorebirds, and we were not disappointed. To begin with we had two incredible White-faced Ibis with their dark maroon-chestnut bodies that can flash metallic green and bronze, and

with wings that have hints of purple, and the bare facial skin turns red in breeding season. It's all so subtle and outrageous at the same time.

And, then, we had eleven shorebird species, starting with the truly elegant Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, and Wilson's Phalaropes – just to show us that some shorebirds can be identified pretty easily. And we did pretty well with the Killdeer and Wilson's Snipe. But, from there, things got a little bit trickier, and we had to do some work to come up with identifications for the “peeps” that we could feel confident about. They do take some work sometimes, particularly with heat waves shimmering off the surrounding landscape.

Two, of the really big surprises for the day were the huge numbers we had for Great-tailed Grackles (134) and especially for Yellow-headed Blackbirds (414). And, that 414 number for the Yellow-headed Blackbirds was conservative; we could easily have had over 600 of them. Time and again flocks of fifty or more birds would festoon an individual tree. Quite an eyeful! Really, it was the experience of a lifetime!

So, I'm not sure how anyone can stay inside these days. Seems like there is some new incredible treat to witness almost every moment. Hope you are able to get out and grab a little of it.

Best, Chuck Aid

Weld County, April 22

Canada Goose 77

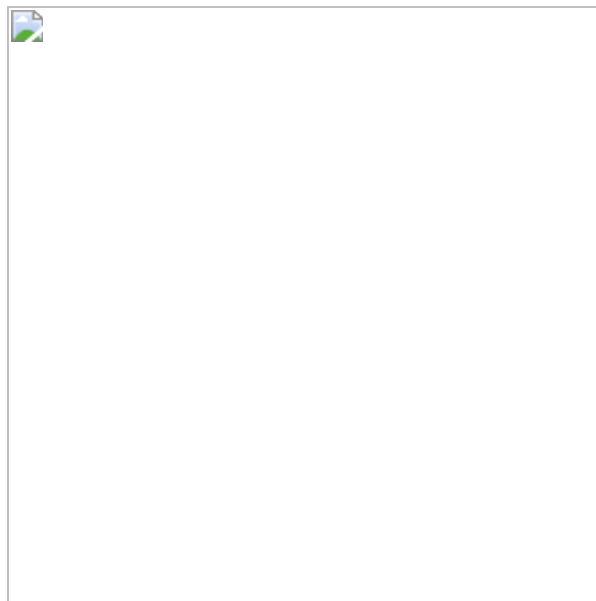
Blue-winged Teal 23

Cinnamon Teal 21

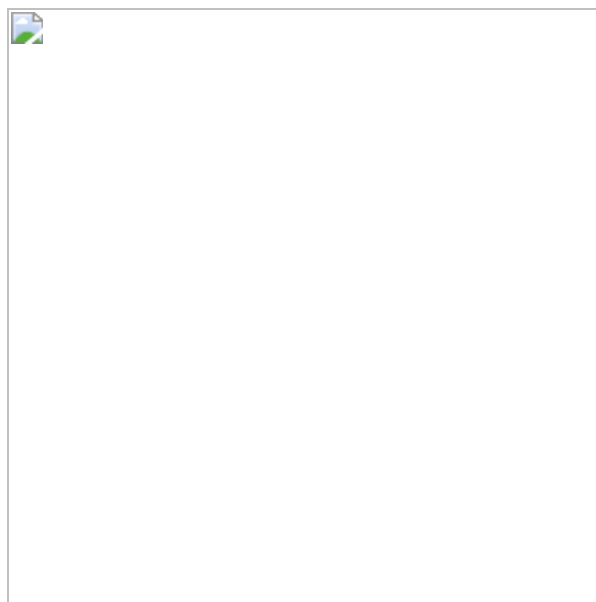
Northern Shoveler 66

Gadwall 94

American Wigeon 78



Black-necked Stilt (c) Mick Thompson



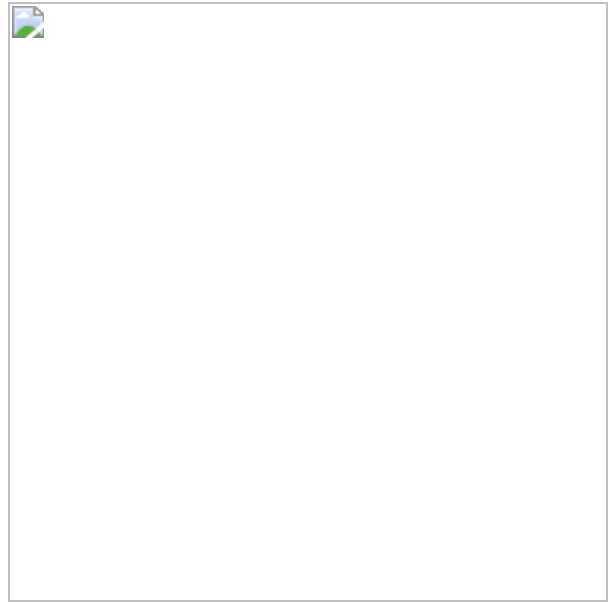
American Avocet (c) Mick Thompson

Mallard 62
 Northern Pintail 1
 Green-winged Teal 36
 Canvasback 13
 Redhead 15
 Ring-necked Duck 5
 Lesser Scaup

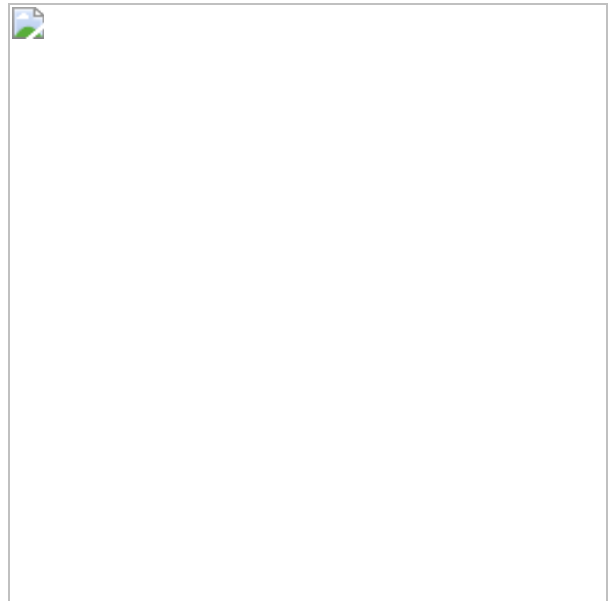
 Bufflehead 12
 Common Goldeneye 3
 Hooded Merganser 1
 Ruddy Duck 158
 Ring-necked Pheasant 1
 Pied-billed Grebe 13
 Horned Grebe 3
 Western Grebe 34
 Clark's Grebe 1
 Double-crested Cormorant 6
 American White Pelican 16
 Great Blue Heron 9
 White-faced Ibis 2
 Northern Harrier 6
 Bald Eagle 4

 Swainson's Hawk 4
 Red-tailed Hawk 24
 American Coot 141
 Black-necked Stilt 25
 American Avocet 28
 Killdeer 53
 Baird's Sandpiper 3
 Least Sandpiper 21
 Semipalmated Sandpiper 2
 Semipalmated/Western Sandpiper 5
 Wilson's Snipe 1
 Wilson's Phalarope 29
 Spotted Sandpiper 1

 Greater Yellowlegs 3
 Lesser Yellowlegs 12
 Franklin's Gull 30
 Ring-billed Gull 22
 Rock Pigeon 35



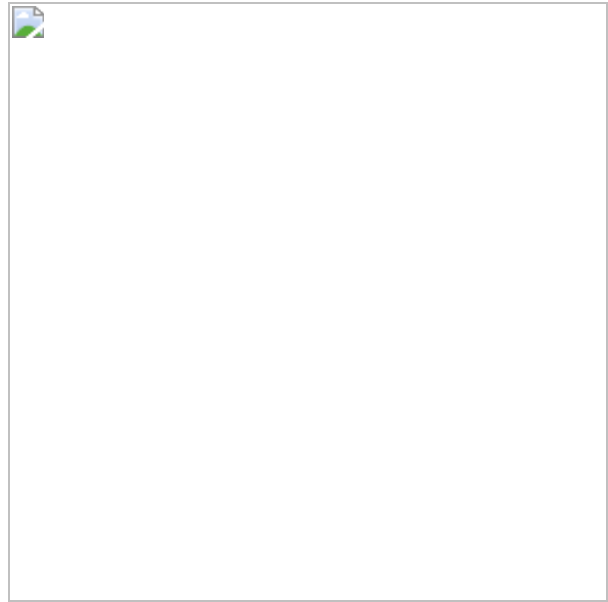
Wilson's Phalarope – female above and male below (c) Bill Schmoker



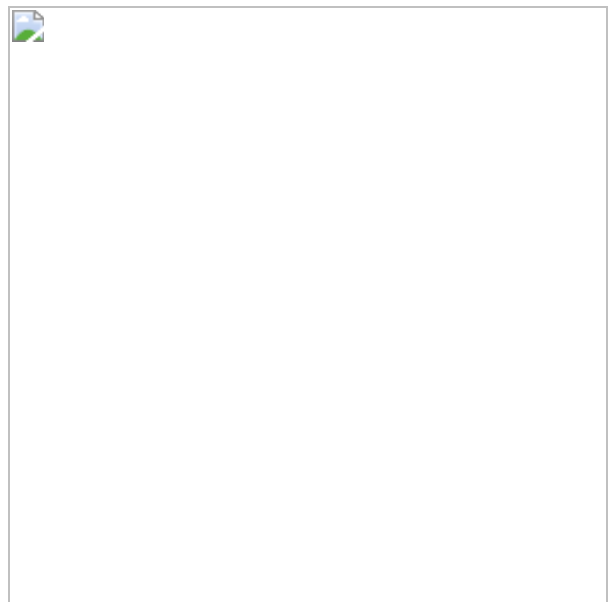
Yellow-headed Blackbirds (c) Rachel Hutchison

Eurasian Collared-Dove 17
Mourning Dove 4
Belted Kingfisher 2
Northern Flicker 1
American Kestrel 3
Say's Phoebe 1
Western Kingbird 1
Blue Jay 2

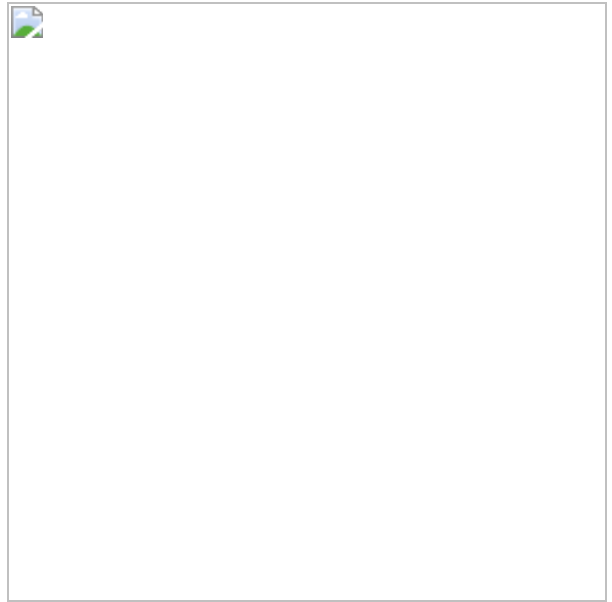
Horned Lark 4
Tree Swallow 2
Violet-green Swallow 1
Barn Swallow 7
Cliff Swallow 95
Marsh Wren 2
Mountain Bluebird 1
American Robin 15
European Starling 82
White-crowned Sparrow 35
Vesper Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 11
Yellow-headed Blackbird 414
Western Meadowlark 39
Red-winged Blackbird 243
Common Grackle 12
Great-tailed Grackle 134
House Sparrow 51



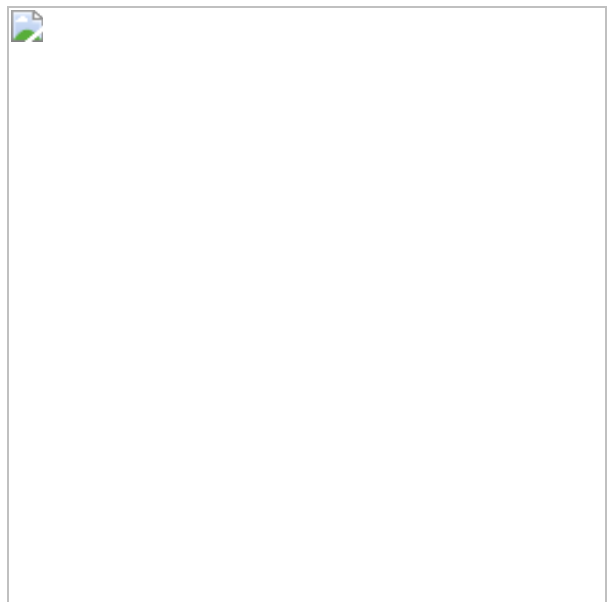
Yellow-headed Blackbird (c) Bill Schmoker



Lesser Yellowlegs (c) Mick Thompson



Least Sandpiper (c) Mick Thompson



Semi-palmated sandpiper (c) Mick Thompson