

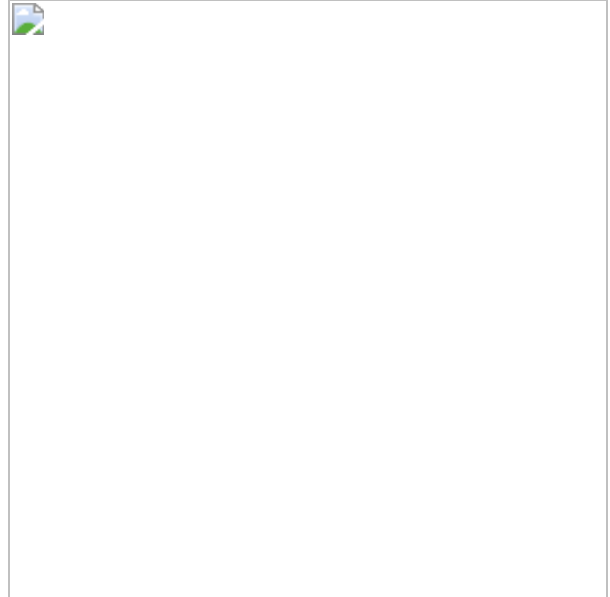
Highlights from Bird Walk to the South Platte at 88th Ave

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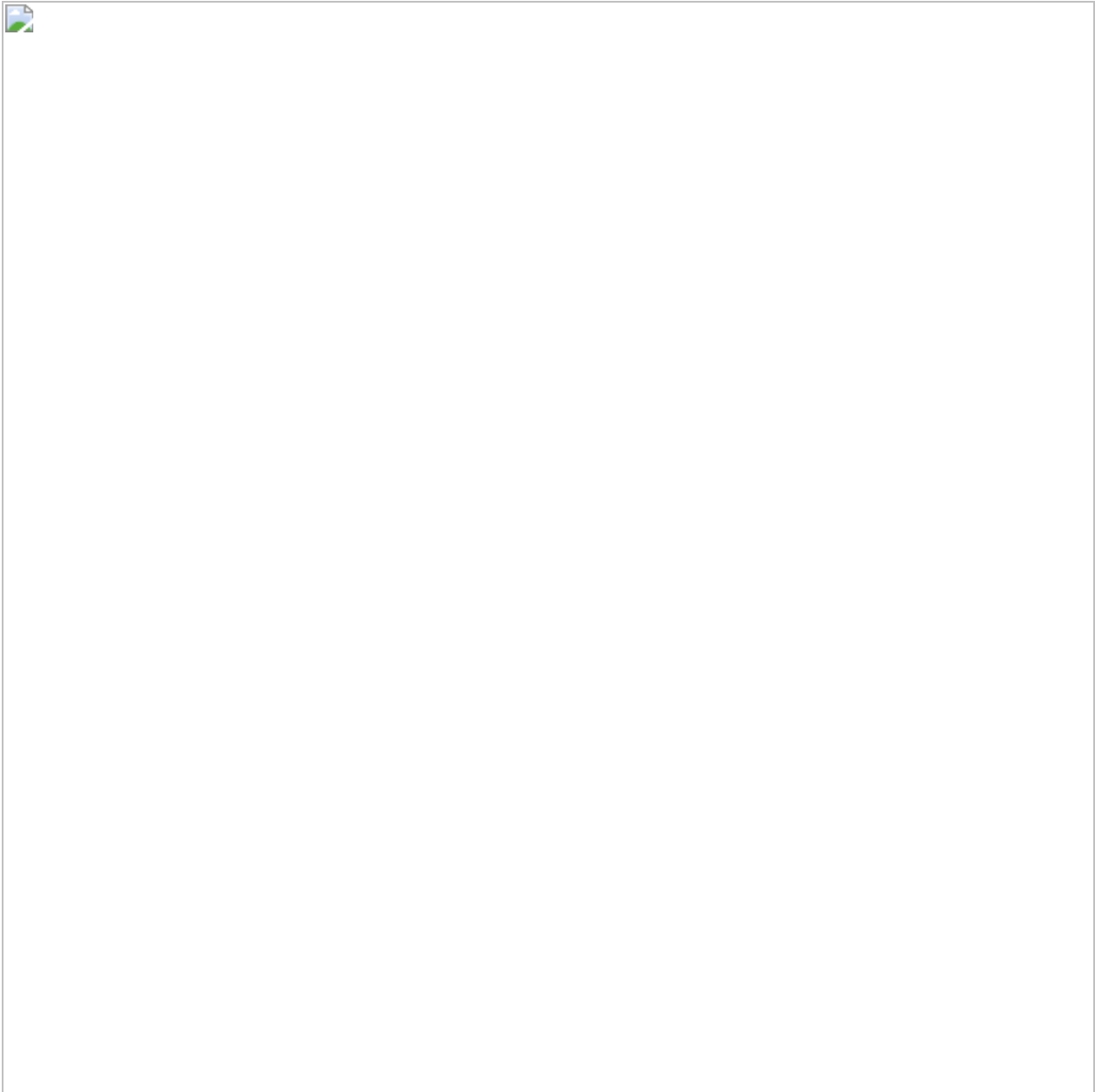
Chuck Aid

March 9, 2018

We are now entering the peak for springtime waterfowl (roughly March and April), and a small group of us had a rewarding morning (Mar 7) taking in the show while basking in the sunshine down along the South Platte below Commerce City. Between the river and a couple of nearby reservoirs we found 1 species of goose (the ubiquitous Canada Goose), and 14 species of ducks. We had great looks at all of these, and were particularly pleased to see American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, etc... Well you get the idea! They all just look so great!



Common Merganser (c) Mick Thompson



Barrow's Goldeneye (c) Mick Thompson

We had two waterfowl highlights. First of all, we had great looks at two male and two female Barrow's Goldeneyes all hanging together as a group with several nearby Common Goldeneyes. This was particularly gratifying for me, because I've never seen two female Barrow's that were more easily identified than these two girls with their obvious yellow-orange bills and steep foreheads.

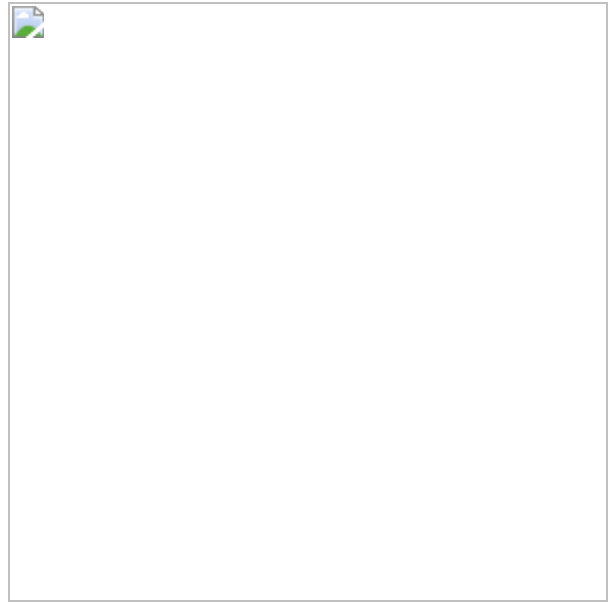
Our other waterfowl highlight was an individual bird, seen at a distance, that looked to be an Eared Grebe in the early stages of acquiring its breeding plumage – dark head with wispy yellow plumes (and a fluffy butt).

We also saw a bunch of Ring-billed Gulls, and mixed in with them was a single California Gull – a bit larger than the Ring-bills, with a slightly darker gray back, a dark iris, and a slightly larger yellow bill with red and black marks on it.

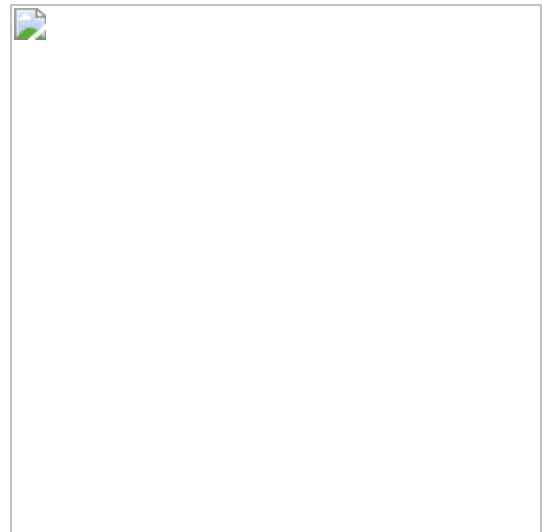
Good birding! Chuck Aid

South Platte River–88th Ave area, 41 species

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) 41
Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) 1020
Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) 240
American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*) 1
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 27
Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*) 7
Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) 31
Redhead (*Aythya americana*) 15
Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) 16
Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) 214
Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) 24
Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) 66
Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) 4
Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) 18
Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) 48
Horned Grebe – *Podiceps auritus* 11
Horned/Eared Grebe – *Podiceps auritus/nigricollis*
1
Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)
26
Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) 3
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) 8
American Coot (*Fulica americana*) 15
Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) 4
Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) 220
California Gull (*Larus californicus*) 1
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (*Columba livia* (Feral
Pigeon)) 5
Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) 2
Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) 3
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) 1
Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) 1
Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 7
American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 3
Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) 1
American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) 2
European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 7
Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) 1
White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) 3



Eared Grebe (c) Bill Schmoker



California Gull (c) Bill Schmoker

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) 8
Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) 2
Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) 9
House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) 6