

# Highlights from June 6 Bird Walk to Red Rocks Park

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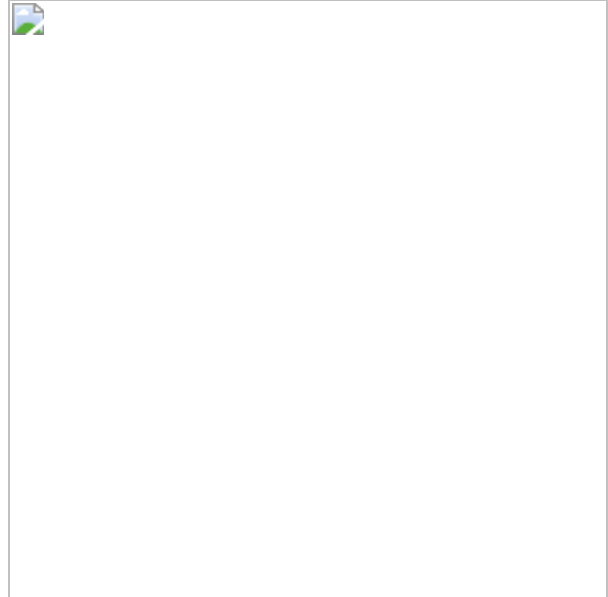
Chuck Aid

June 7, 2018

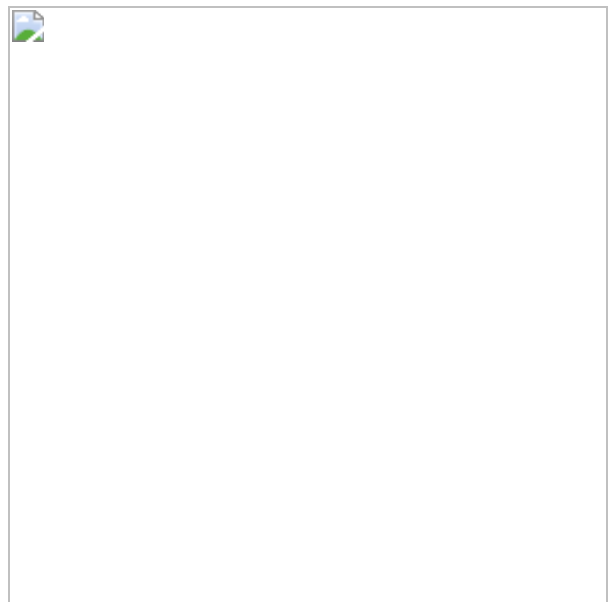
Five of us had a most enjoyable morning at Red Rocks, but let me just start with the bad news first. We didn't see hide nor feather of either the Prairie Falcons or the Peregrine Falcons. Generally, the Prairie Falcons start incubating their eggs sometime in early April, with the chicks hatching by early May, and then they are ready to fledge by about mid-to-late-June. Peregrine Falcons run about a month later with incubation beginning in mid-to-late-May and with youngsters ready to fledge by mid-July. So, we should have seen them, right?

Furthermore, no less an authority than Marilyn Rhodes tells me that both species are there, and that Prairie Falcons nestlings have been observed cavorting on their ledge. Well, so much for our powers of observation. Can we move on now?

In fact, other than whiffing on the big falcons, we did really well with a number of cool birds. First, we had great looks at White-throated Swifts, some of which were engaged in incredible mid-air boy-girl stuff. Similar activity was also noted among the numerous Violet-green Swallows, only not in mid-air. Up here in Evergreen we have come to associate nesting of Violet-green Swallows with old woodpecker cavities in aspen. However, over ten percent of the V-G nests noted in The Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas were in cliff and bank cavities, and we had ample evidence of that as we saw the swallows retreating time and again into holes in the cliffs.



Red Rocks (c) Rachel Hutchison



White-throated Swift (c) Bill Schmoker

While Say's Phoebes only occasionally build nests on cliff faces, they do seem to like to forage in their vicinity and we heard their sweet plaintive call throughout the morning. In a couple of different instances we had Black-capped Chickadees carrying food, and we had a riot of plentiful House Wrens leading us to believe that they had already successfully pulled off their first broods of the season. I loved getting to pick-up on the peevish call of the Blue-gray Gnatcatchers – old friends that I don't see often enough these days. Inga Brennan helped us zero in on the song of a Gray Catbird – another great vocalization! And, she tried to get us to single out a loon singing Lazuli Bunting. We had better luck with the Yellow Warblers!

However, the vocalizing winners of the morning have to have been the Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Bullock's Orioles. Be still my beating heart! What an ongoing chorus we had! Terrific! And, of course, a trip to Red Rocks would not be complete without hearing the song of the Canyon Wren! Yay!

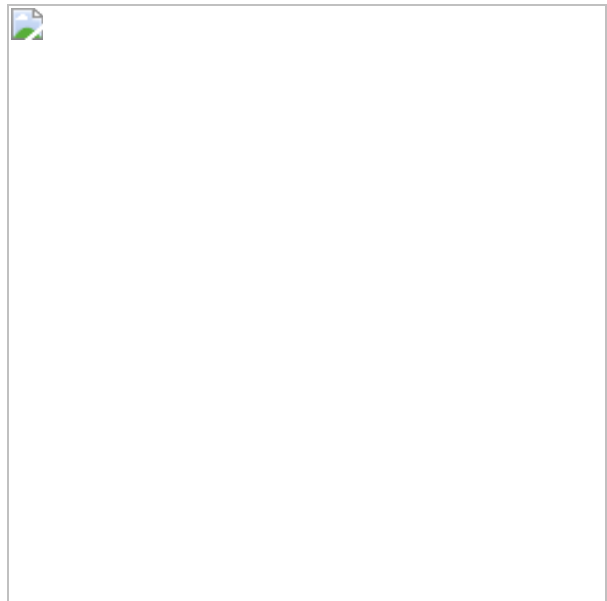
Finally, I think we heard and saw one or two Spotted Towhees. They seem to like it there!

Cheers!

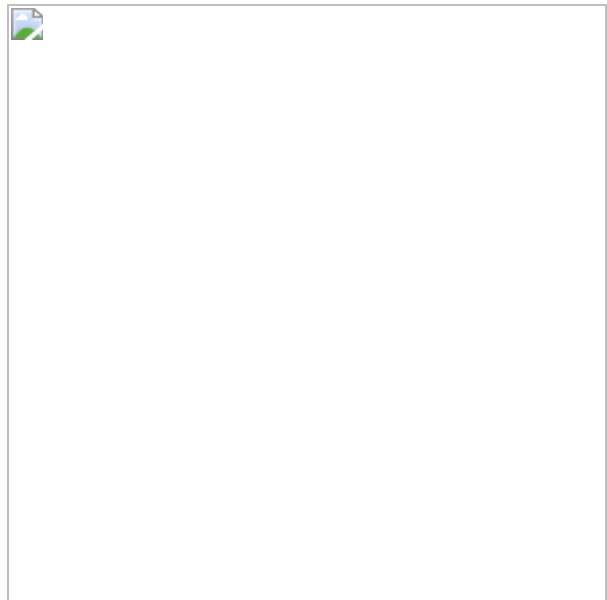
Chuck Aid  
Director of Bird Monitoring

Red Rocks, June 6, 2018  
30 species

Eurasian Collared-Dove 1  
Mourning Dove 1  
White-throated Swift 18  
Broad-tailed Hummingbird 3  
American Kestrel 1  
Cordilleran Flycatcher 3

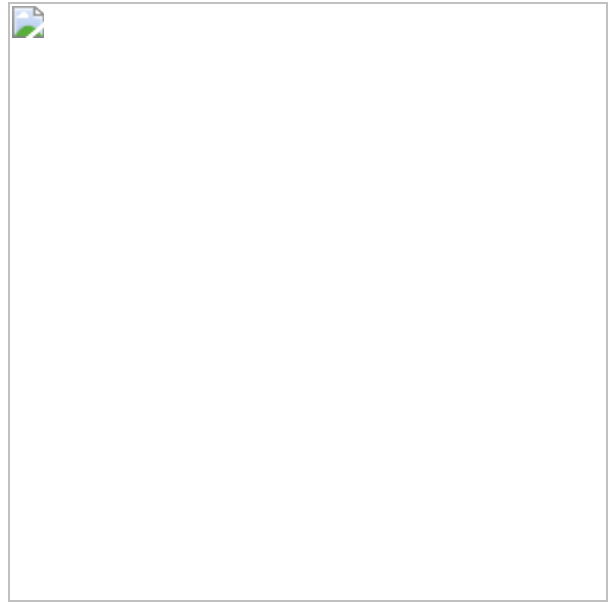


Yellow Warbler (c) Rachel Hutchison

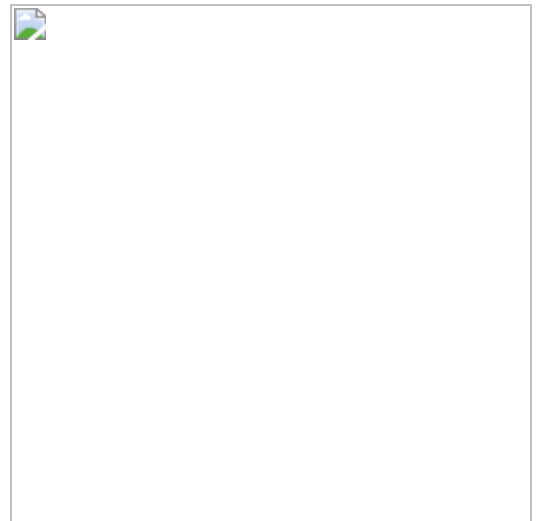


Bullock's Oriole (c) Rachel Hutchison

Say's Phoebe 8  
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay 9  
Black-billed Magpie 18  
American Crow 2  
Common Raven 4  
Violet-green Swallow 52  
Cliff Swallow 1  
Black-capped Chickadee 10  
White-breasted Nuthatch 1  
Canyon Wren 3  
House Wren 21  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 6  
American Robin 15  
Gray Catbird 1  
Yellow Warbler 11  
Song Sparrow 3  
Spotted Towhee 26  
Yellow-breasted Chat 8  
Black-headed Grosbeak 7  
Lazuli Bunting 1  
Western Meadowlark 4  
Bullock's Oriole 9  
Brown-headed Cowbird 8  
House Finch 7



Black-headed Grosbeak (c) Rachel Hutchison



Spotted Towhee (c) Rachel Hutchison