

Highlights from March 17 Bird Walk to the South Platte and 74th Ave

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Chuck Aid

March 18, 2018

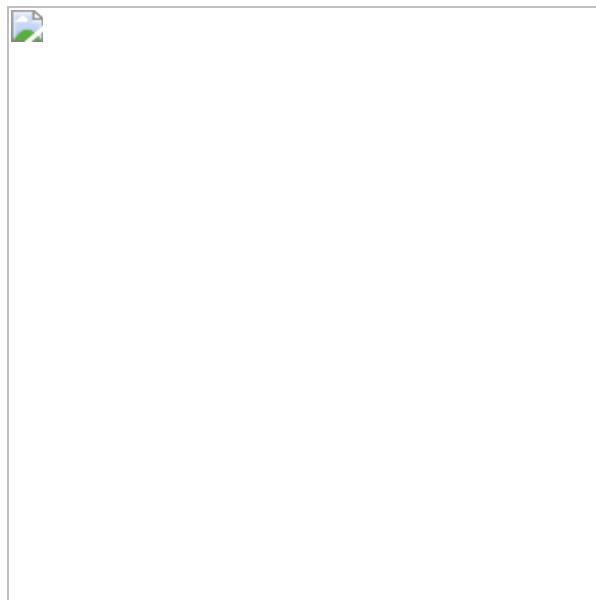
Eleven of us had a great morning partaking of some urban birding along the South Platte just downstream from the Denver waste water treatment plant. The air smelled a bit peculiar, but the birds didn't seem to mind.

We had a good mix of ducks, with a single male Wood Duck perhaps being the highlight. Another interesting duck was a first-year male Common Goldeneye (brown head, splotch of white by the bill, and mishmash of gray and white on the flanks). We had one challenging bird, which was either a female Common or Red-breasted Merganser, but when all we got to see was the rear end of a bird swimming away from us that complicated things.

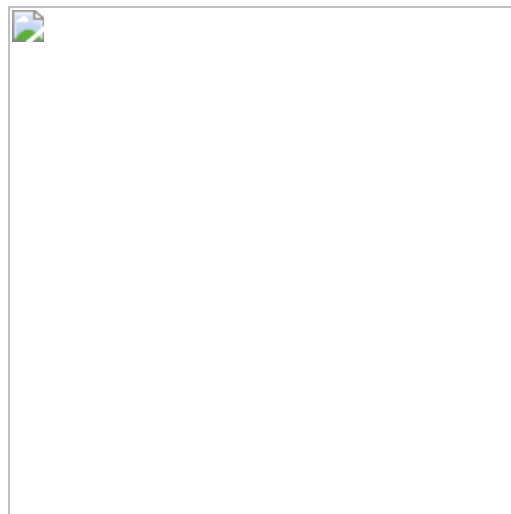
One of the reasons for going to this particular stretch of river is that it seems to always have a few Black-crowned Night-Herons, and we were able to find five of them – a mix of adults and juveniles.

We had several views of a pair of courting Red-tailed Hawks – hanging out at the nest site together, perched side by side, and flying together. She was noticeably bigger, and in flight he was dropping his feet down – an invitation to lock talons as part of their courtship. We also saw a pair of American Kestrels hanging out side by side.

One of the real treats was the number of Yellow-rumped Warblers we saw, though not in breeding plumage quite yet. Those which we got good enough looks at to identify to sub-species appeared to all be Audubon's Warblers – plain head with relatively small pale throat (Myrtle Warblers have slightly darker ear patches, a pale eyebrow, and the pale throat is more extensive – wrapping around the side of the neck.



Wood Duck (c) Mick Thompson

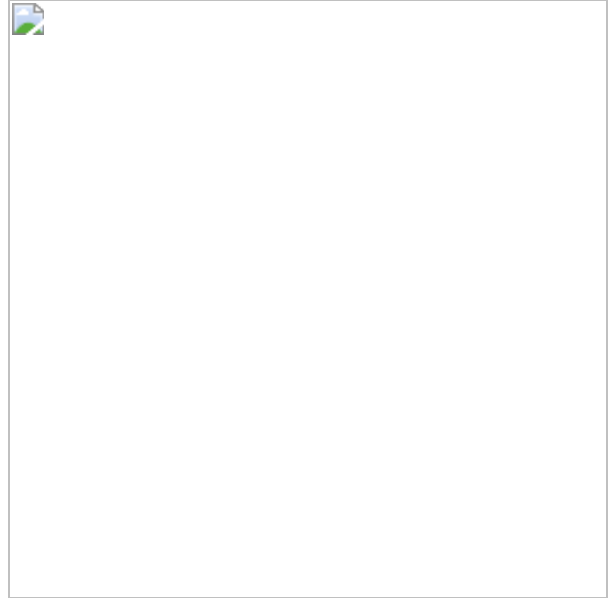


Black-crowned Night-Heron (c) Rachel Hutchison

Good birding! Chuck Aid

South Platte River & 74th Ave, Mar 17, 2018
37 species (+3 other taxa)

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) 12
Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) 1
Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) 350
Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) 256
American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*) 30
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 37
Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*) 4
Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) 19
Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) 6
Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) 19
Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) 6
Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) 46
Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) 8
Common/Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus
mergamser/serrator*) 1
Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) 2
Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) 9
Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) 5
Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) 1
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) 2
Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) 3
Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) 123
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (*Columba livia* (Feral Pigeon)) 3
Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) 9
Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) 3
Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) 2
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) 3
Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 7
American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 1
Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) 14
American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) 14
European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 16
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Setophaga coronata) 8
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) 5
Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) 3
Dark-eyed Junco (Pink-sided) (*Junco hyemalis mearnsi*) 1
Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) 4



Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers (c) Bill
Schmoker

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) 13
House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) 2
House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) 1