

Highlights from October 20 Bird Walk to South Platte Park

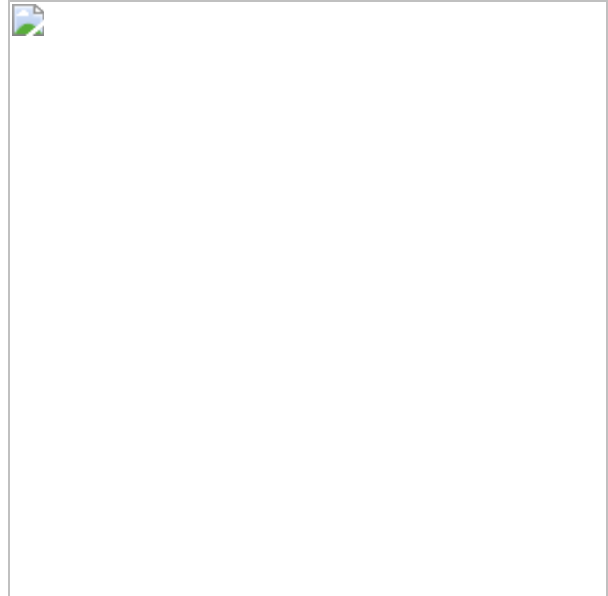
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Chuck Aid

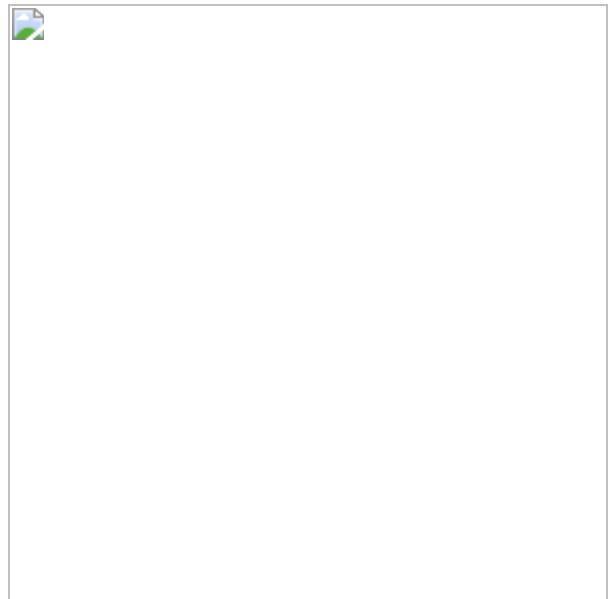
October 22, 2018

Great morning! Great weather! Great group! Can't dance, might as well go bird watching! And, what a grand time we had! First of all, one of the big highlights was having 4th grader, Maggie, and her 7th grader brother, Vincent along – a couple of budding avian ecologists, so enthusiastic, intelligent, and just a joy to spend time with.

As for the birds, we ended up with 35 species, which is pretty fair for South Platte Park in mid-October. Starting with the waterfowl, we had NO Canada Geese. A bit hard to fathom, but there you have it. We did have nine species of ducks, so we're definitely moving out of the Summer Duck Doldrums, and starting to see increased variety. Of particular note were all the Buffleheads, which typically start showing up in big numbers around the middle of October. And then, as usual, I'm always thinking about what we didn't see, which included all the *Aythya* species: Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, and Lesser Scaup. We saw none of these. Redheads and Ring-necked Ducks should already be around in good numbers, and Canvasbacks should be around though a bit more difficult to find. Lesser Scaup should have just been arriving in the last week or so, but we didn't luck into any. Finally, Greater Scaup tend to not make an appearance until around the first of November. All of these will be around throughout the winter, and we certainly look to get luckier with them on future outings.



Bufflehead (c) Mick Thompson



Green-winged Teal (c) Mick Thompson

Other birds of note, included a single diving Osprey. These guys seem to be doing well, with an expanding range in North America, and they have been documented breeding in every state except Hawaii. Our Colorado birds tend to arrive in early April, and then leave by the end of October, so we were lucky to catch this late individual.

Another interesting find was that we had three Great Blue Herons. These birds have non-migratory populations in the Pacific Northwest and in southern Florida, but over most of North America as winter approaches they have a general movement south away from the northernmost parts of their breeding range. So, here in Colorado that movement seems to happen right around the third week in October. We will continue to have Great Blues throughout the winter, but at somewhat lower numbers than we had during breeding season.

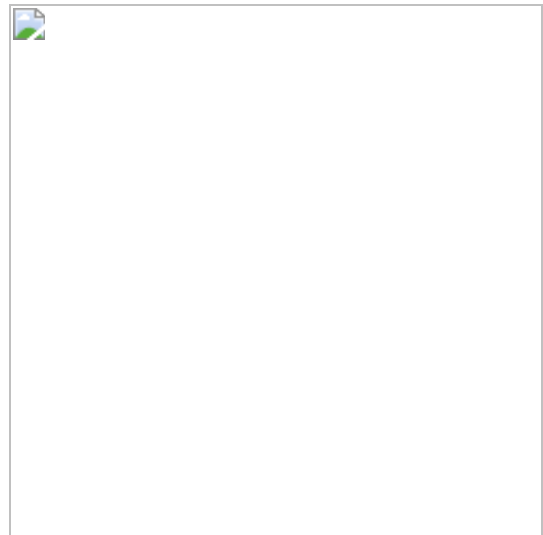
Hope you all are getting out and enjoying fall migration!

Good birding!

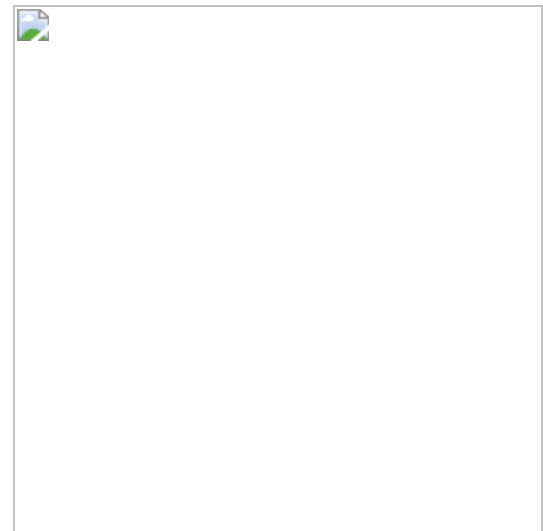
Chuck Aid
Director of Bird Monitoring, Evergreen Audubon

South Platte Park–C470 area, Oct 20, 2018
35 species

Wood Duck 1
Northern Shoveler 7
Gadwall 52
American Wigeon 71
Mallard 17
Northern Pintail 2
Green-winged Teal 14
Bufflehead 26
Ruddy Duck 5
Pied-billed Grebe 5
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 3
American Coot 8
Ring-billed Gull 13



Osprey (c) Mick Thompson



Great Blue Heron (c) Sherman Wing

Double-crested Cormorant 37
Great Blue Heron 3
Osprey 1
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Belted Kingfisher 3
Downy Woodpecker 3
Northern Flicker 1
American Kestrel 1
Blue Jay 1
Black-billed Magpie 9
American Crow 7
Common Raven 1
Black-capped Chickadee 14
Bushtit 5
White-breasted Nuthatch 1
American Robin 4
European Starling 13
House Finch 13
White-crowned Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 3
Spotted Towhee 3
Red-winged Blackbird 4