

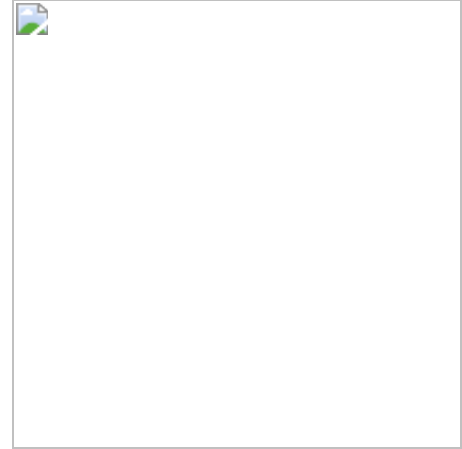
Highlights from Sept 5 Bird Walk to Chatfield State Park

 evergreenaudubon.org/highlights-from-sept-5-bird-walk-to-chatfield-state-park

Chuck Aid

September 6, 2018

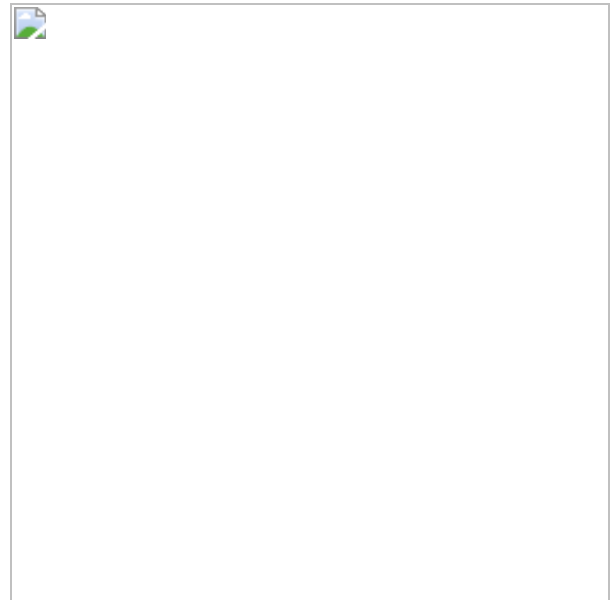
Chatfield is in the process of huge transformations, and it is a bit alarming to see all that has been done and is being done. One can only hope that enough of the fine cottonwood gallery forest will be maintained for the wildlife. When we were down there on Wednesday it was interesting to see the contrast between the low volume of the South Platte as it enters the reservoir, and the high volume of water currently impounded in the reservoir. I have never seen the water so high, or the prospect for shorebirds so limited. Presumably, given our drought conditions, they are trying to make sure that enough water is on hand to get the city through these dry times.



Great Blue Heron (c) Rachel Hutchison

So, eight of us, despite area closures, had a fine morning!

Ducks are still limited and still in eclipse plumage. However, right on schedule, we were able to find a small group of American Wigeon. These are always among the first migratory ducks to show up in the fall – generally during the first week of September, and then they will be around through the winter. Our shorebirds for the day were limited to Spotted Sandpipers and Killdeer. Not quite what I was hoping for on the opening day of Global Shorebird Week, but at least we got a couple.



Spotted sandpiper (c) Mick Thompson

One of the highlights of the morning was that we were given the opportunity to wrestle with the identification of fall sparrows (adults and juveniles) – an event not to be missed.

Woohoo! However, as it turns out, we were given three fairly easy species with which to deal. Savannah Sparrows are crisply marked with a white belly and well delineated chest streaking. They have a short, notched tail and the adults have yellowish lores (the area between the eye and the bill). Vesper Sparrows are about the same size as a Savannah, but they have a longer tail, bright white outer tail feathers, and a white eye-ring. Lark Sparrow adults are very striking with their boldly patterned heads. They have a unique pattern of white in their tail which also can be quite

helpful. A more esoteric aspect of their appearance has to do with the pale patch in the wings, which can be seen in the photo of the first-year individual.

Yet another highlight was the single male Yellow-headed Blackbird that momentarily perched beside us.

Overall, though, the main highlight of the day was the number of species. Forty-seven species is a good morning, and it's wonderful that Chatfield has such a diversity of habitats that we get to see so many different birds there.

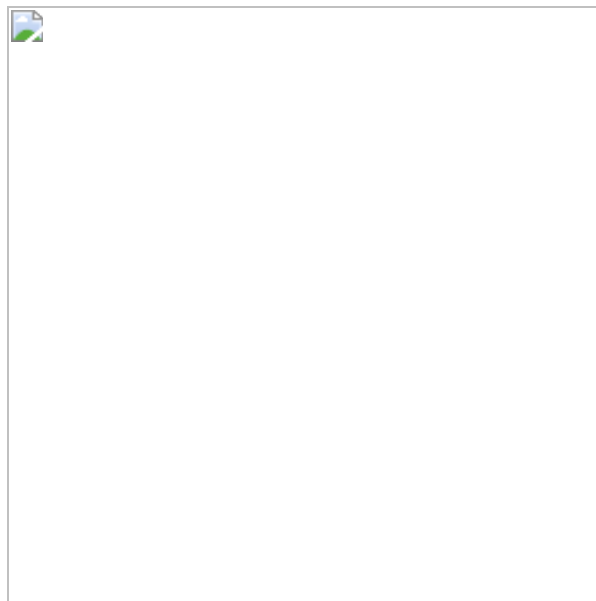
On a personal note, I've now heard Northern Pygmy Owls calling at my house (7700 ft) early on four different mornings in recent weeks, so keep that window by the bed cracked open a wee bit.

Good Birding!

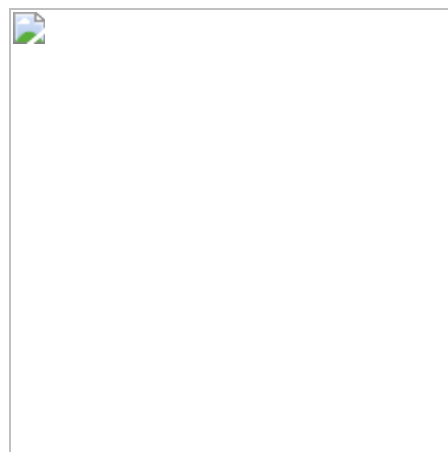
Chuck Aid
Director of Bird Monitoring
Evergreen Audubon

Chatfield State Park, Sept 5
47 species (+2 other taxa)

Canada Goose 46
Wood Duck 2
Blue-winged Teal 1
American Wigeon 16
Mallard 49
Common Merganser 11
Western Grebe 7
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 1
Mourning Dove 3
hummingbird sp. 1
American Coot 15
Killdeer 8
Spotted Sandpiper 2
Ring-billed Gull 80
California Gull 10



Lark Sparrow (c) Rachel Hutchison



Western Kingbird (c) Rachel Hutchison

tern sp. 1
Double-crested Cormorant 37
American White Pelican 15
Great Blue Heron 7
Snowy Egret 29
Turkey Vulture 3
Osprey 3
Cooper's Hawk 1
Swainson's Hawk 3
Belted Kingfisher 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 8
Western Wood-Pewee 2
Say's Phoebe 2
Western Kingbird 2
Black-billed Magpie 38
American Crow 5
Horned Lark 1
Violet-green Swallow 27
Barn Swallow 7
Black-capped Chickadee 18
White-breasted Nuthatch 2
American Robin 1
House Finch 1
Lesser Goldfinch 15
American Goldfinch 1
Lark Sparrow 3
Vesper Sparrow 5
Savannah Sparrow 9
Song Sparrow 1
Yellow-headed Blackbird 1
Western Meadowlark 1
Brown-headed Cowbird 1
Common Grackle 11