

Highlights from September 15 Bird Walk to the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt

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Chuck Aid

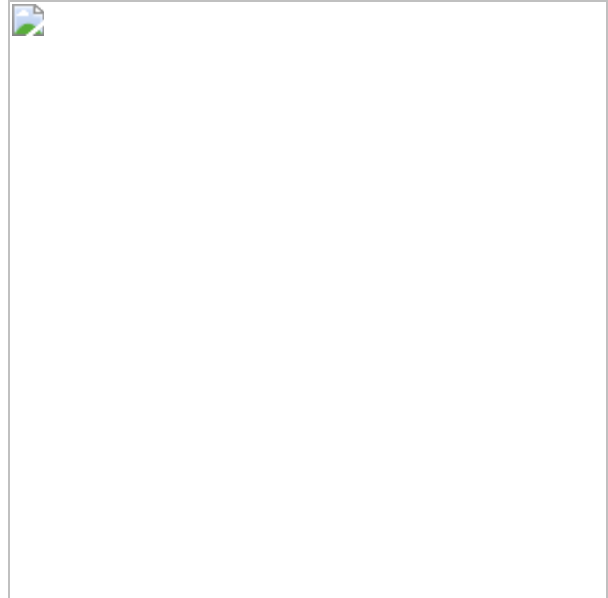
September 16, 2018

For starters, I have never seen Clear Creek look so low. The mean flow for September 15 over the past 43 years has been around 118 cubic feet per second (cfs). Currently, it's at 53 cfs. Evidently in 2002 things were even worse as the rate on September 15 that year was 47 cfs, but it sure looks bad now, and some of the gravel-pit ponds are very low as well.

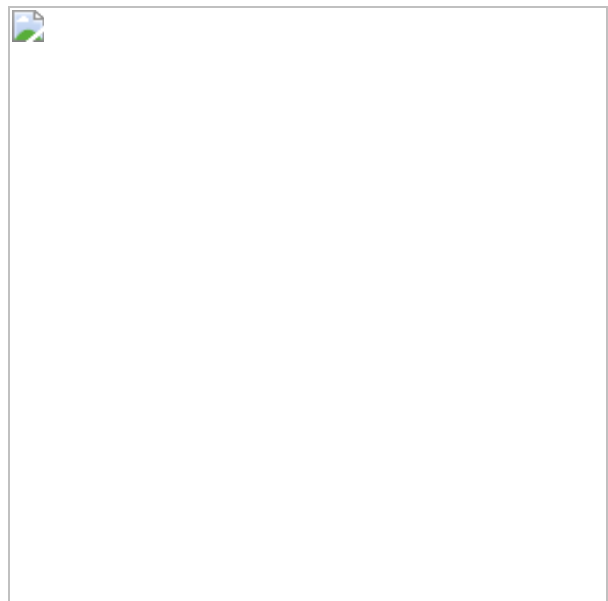
Evidently, all this is making a difference to the ducks as we only recorded two species, Wood Ducks and Mallards, and every body of water was almost devoid of any activity. But then, strangely enough, while we were lamenting the paucity of birds we somehow managed to rack up forty species – an amazing surprise for us to discover at the end of our walk.

So, what did we see? Well, for starters, we had a family group of three Pied-billed Grebes, a group of three juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons, and four Belted Kingfishers, two of which were doing some serious mid-air cavorting. Northern Flickers were ubiquitous, and we had two family groups of seven birds each, foraging on the ground. We also had Blue Jays all over the place.

One fun discovery was of a group of Bushtits. Are there four? No, there's another one. Maybe six. Yep, I think they're six. And, then, when they flew across a gap from one tree to another, it turned out that there were sixteen. What fun! We also had a nice group of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers which were part of a mixed-species flock including a Yellow Warbler and two Wilson's Warblers.



Black-crowned Night-Heron (juvenile) (c) Bill Schmoker



Wood Duck (juvenile male) (c) Bill Schmoker

Finally, we were fortunate to catch one of the last Bullock's Orioles for the year. September 15 is pretty much the cutoff date for their presence in the state, though a few rare individuals have been recorded into December.

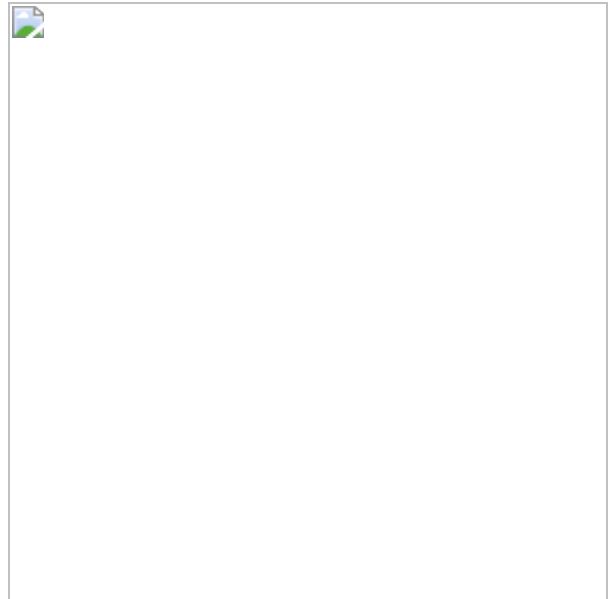
On the home front, when we got back to the Bergen Park-and-Ride around noon, there was a very active flock of Audubon's Warblers moving through the Ponderosas at the park there.

Good birding!

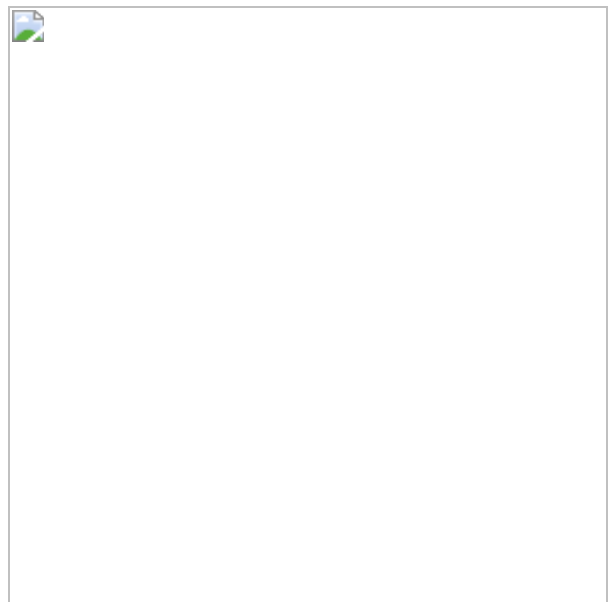
Chuck Aid
Director of Bird Monitoring

Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Sep 15, 2018
40 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 30
Wood Duck 6
Mallard 70
Pied-billed Grebe 3
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 4
Mourning Dove 8
hummingbird sp. 1
Virginia Rail 1
Killdeer 5
Spotted Sandpiper 1
Ring-billed Gull 25
Double-crested Cormorant 9
Black-crowned Night-Heron 3
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Belted Kingfisher 4
Downy Woodpecker 4
Northern Flicker 20
Blue Jay 12
Black-billed Magpie 7
American Crow 4
Barn Swallow 30
Cliff Swallow 4
Black-capped Chickadee 22
Bushtit 16

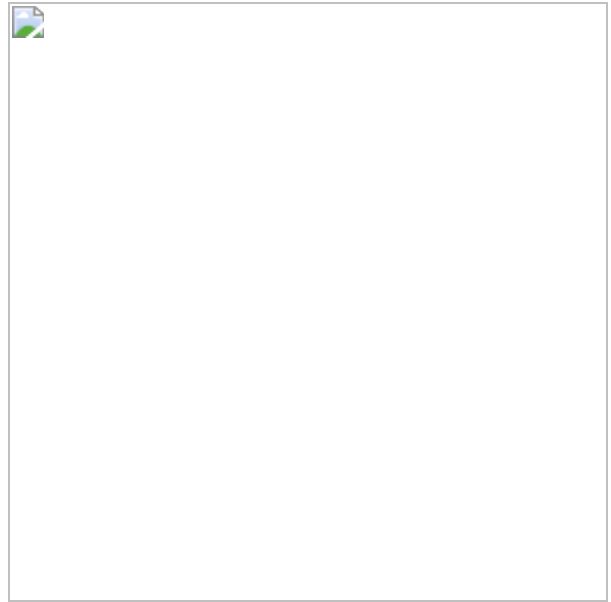


Pied-billed Grebe (c) Bill Schmoker



Bushtit (c) Bill Schmoker

White-breasted Nuthatch 3
Marsh Wren 1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 8
American Robin 6
Cedar Waxwing 2
House Finch 13
Lesser Goldfinch 1
American Goldfinch 7
Chipping Sparrow 6
Vesper Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 5
Spotted Towhee 1
Bullock's Oriole 1
Red-winged Blackbird 22
Yellow Warbler 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler 1
Wilson's Warbler 2



Audubon's Warbler (c) Bill Schmoker