

Highlights from visit to Chatfield Banding Station: May 9, with Chuck Aid and Meredith McBurney

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Chuck Aid

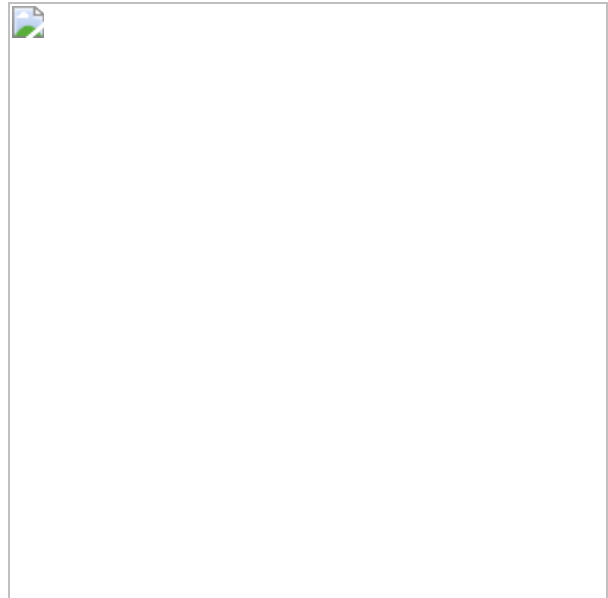
May 12, 2018

Seven of us enjoyed a truly great morning – first briefly checking out the birds at the feeders at the Denver Audubon Nature Center, and then visiting with Meredith McBurney as she banded birds at the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies’ banding station. The Conservancy has been banding birds at Chatfield in the spring and at Barr Lake in the fall for almost thirty years, and Meredith has played a major role in that endeavor. She is not only accomplished at what she does, but she has a multitude of interesting facts and stories to relate.

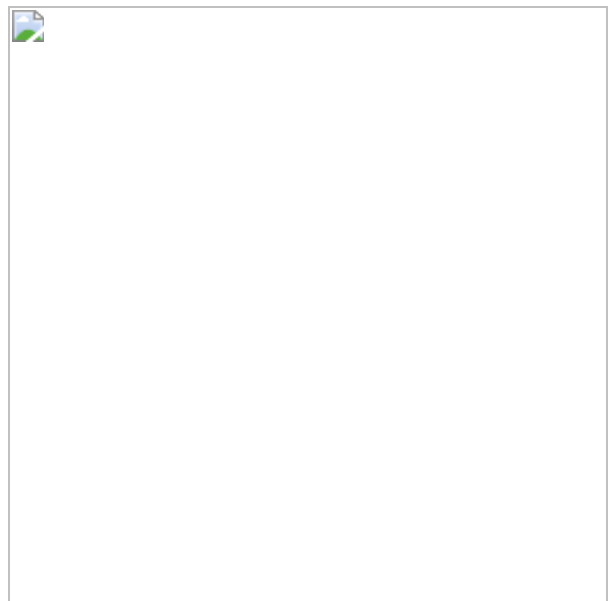
These two banding stations, at Chatfield and Barr, have been located in places where migratory birds tend to congregate. Using mist nets, birds are harmlessly trapped, they’re removed from the nets, data is collected on them, a small, numbered band is placed on a leg, and then they’re released. Each of these bands has a unique number on it so that if the bird is recaptured somewhere else we can know where and when it was banded, thus learning a bit about the timing and route of that species’ migration.

For the morning, Meredith and her assistants caught 25 birds; four of these were returns that had been banded previously at Chatfield (one Yellow Warbler that was originally banded in 2014), and 21 were newbies. She had twelve species overall, several of which were the first for this year (FOS).

Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay
House Wren 6
Orange-crowned Warbler 2



Meredith McBurney (c) Bird Conservancy of the Rockies



Common Yellowthroat and Yellow Warbler (c) Rachel Hutchison

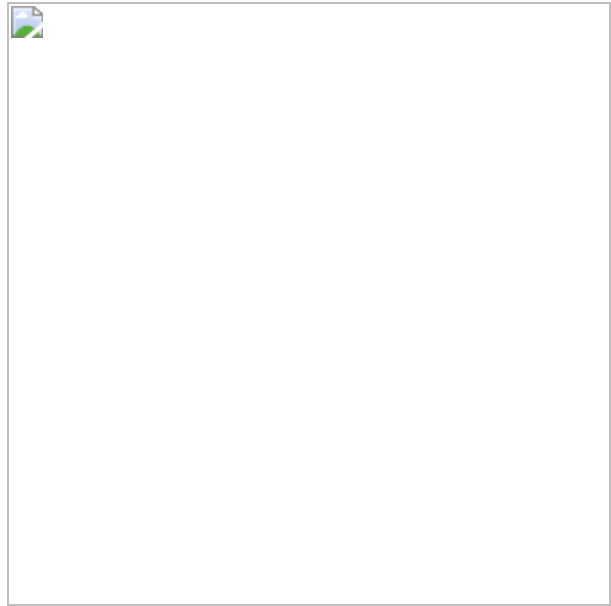
Yellow Warbler 5 new, 2 prior
Northern Waterthrush 1 FOS
MacGillivray's Warbler 1 FOS
Common Yellowthroat 2
Wilson's Warbler 1 FOS
Yellow-breasted Chat 1, banded 2016
Spotted Towhee 1, banded 2017
Lincoln's Sparrow 1
Red-winged Blackbird 1

Here's a link to a video of Meredith banding birds – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTXpVL_XjD4.

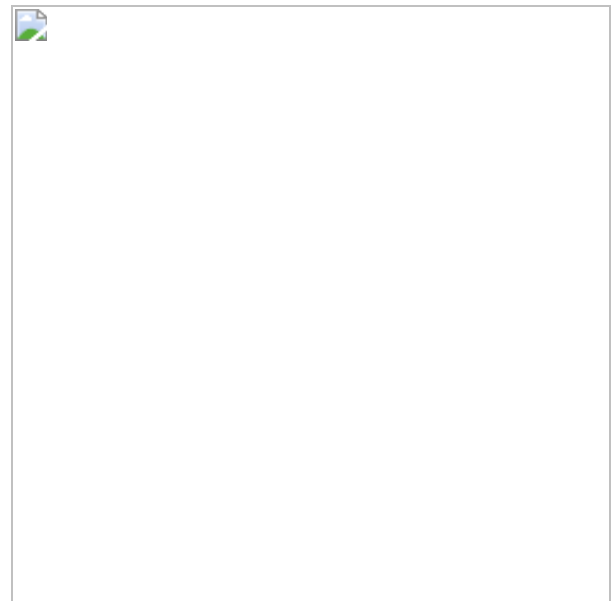
Beyond our great visit with Meredith, where we got to see most of the species she banded (missing the Mac Warbler), we ended up tallying 50 species (see list below). The morning was dominated by House Wrens, Yellow Warblers, Spotted Towhees, and Red-winged Blackbirds. We also had good numbers of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Least Flycatchers, Tree Swallows, Song Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Western Meadowlarks, and American Goldfinches.

Less numerous but in evidence were a few special birds – beyond the ones that we saw with Meredith: Golden Eagle (juv), American Kestrel, Say's Phoebe, Cliff Swallow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, Bullock's Oriole, Pine Siskin, and Lesser Goldfinch. Most of these were special because they've just been arriving in the area in the last week or so – they will start to seem more common as the breeding season progresses.

On a personal note, I really appreciated getting to see a Northern Waterthrush in the hand. For some reason, despite having seen several through the years, I have always thought they were a larger bird, closer in size to a small thrush almost. I was so surprised at how small the bird was – only 18 g. In comparison an average Yellow-rumped Warbler weighs about 12 g, and a Hermit Thrush weighs about 31 g. Interesting to get this new perspective on the relative size of these guys.



Northern Waterthrush (c) Rachel Hutchison



Yellow-breasted Chat (c) Rob Raker

What a terrific morning!

Chuck Aid

Director of Bird Monitoring

Chatfield Bird Banding Station, May 9

50 species

Canada Goose 6

Gadwall 4

Mallard 5

Double-crested Cormorant 1

Great Blue Heron 3

Golden Eagle 1

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Mourning Dove 3

Broad-tailed Hummingbird 8

Belted Kingfisher 1

Downy Woodpecker 1

Northern Flicker 2

American Kestrel 2

Least Flycatcher 4

Say's Phoebe 1

Blue Jay 2

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay 1

Black-billed Magpie 1

American Crow 1

Common Raven 1

Tree Swallow 15

Barn Swallow 3

Cliff Swallow 1

Black-capped Chickadee 6

House Wren 28

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1

American Robin 8

Gray Catbird 2

European Starling 1

Northern Waterthrush 1

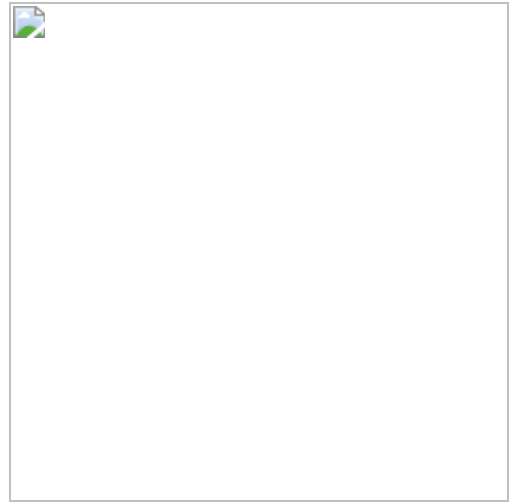
Orange-crowned Warbler 2

Common Yellowthroat 5

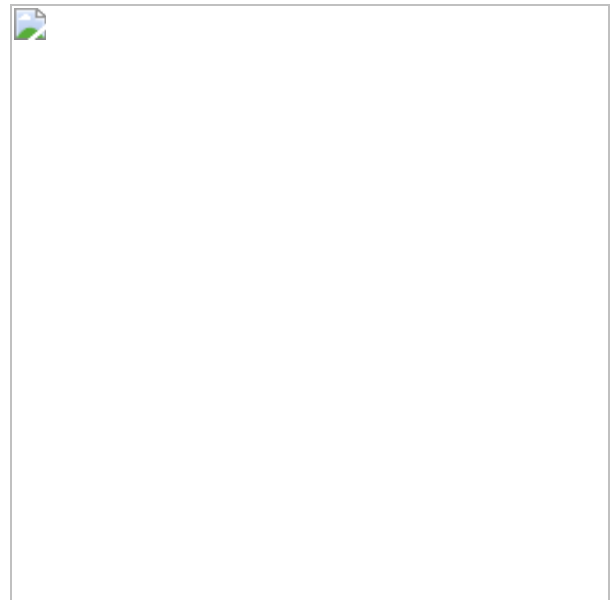
Yellow Warbler 33

Yellow-rumped Warbler 1

Chipping Sparrow 2

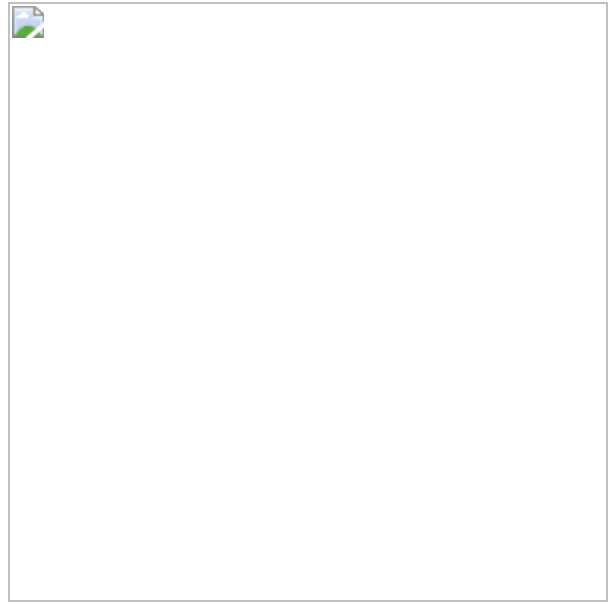


Say's Phoebe (c) Bill Schmoker



Northern Waterthrush (c) Bill Schmoker

White-crowned Sparrow 2
Song Sparrow 6
Lincoln's Sparrow 1
Green-tailed Towhee 1
Spotted Towhee 23
Yellow-breasted Chat 14
Black-headed Grosbeak 4
Western Meadowlark 5
Bullock's Oriole 1
Red-winged Blackbird 80
Brown-headed Cowbird 4
House Finch 10
Pine Siskin 1
Lesser Goldfinch 1
American Goldfinch 9



Woodhouse's Scrub Jay (c) Rachel Hutchison