

Highlights from October 12 Bird Walk to Hine and Harriman Lakes

evergreenaudubon.org/highlights-from-october-12-bird-walk-to-hine-and-harriman-lakes

Chuck Aid

October 17, 2019

By visiting two different reservoirs on Saturday we ended up with a nice mix of ducks, grebes, shorebirds, and landbirds. A month or so ago you would have been hard pressed to come up with more than a handful of duck species. We ended up with twelve. Those species already here through the summer were the Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, and Green-winged Teal. The others, though they may be seen occasionally in the summer, were for the most part the newly arrived migrants – Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Ruddy Duck. The best duck of the morning, and perhaps the best bird of the morning, was a single male Canvasback.



Canvasback (c) Bill Schmoker



Eared Grebe (c) Bill Schmoker

Harriman Lake always seems to be a hotbed of activity for Pied-billed Grebes. I believe this is due to the apparent plethora of crayfish in the area. It seems as though every time I turn around there's another Pied-billed trying to decide whether to eat a crayfish head-first or tail-first. Pied-billed Grebes breed in Colorado and are not too hard to find in the summer. However, a good portion of them move south starting in mid-November, leaving a few behind to make it through the winter months. Eared Grebes also breed in Colorado, but in more specialized habitats, and in limited locations. As a result, we really only see them in the Denver area during spring and fall migration.



Long-billed Dowitcher (c) Bill Schmoker

With regard to shorebirds, we only see the large majority of them during migration, and for them fall migration is definitely winding down. A few Killdeer will stay in our area through the winter (Wilson's Snipe being the only other shorebird present year-round), but most move a bit farther south. Our other two migrant shorebirds that we saw on Saturday were several Long-billed Dowitchers and one Lesser Yellowlegs. The Dowitchers breed in northern Alaska and Siberia, and then winter along both coasts of NA down as far south as Guatemala and El Salvador. The Lesser Yellowlegs breed in Alaska and northwestern Canada and winter along the southern coasts of North America all the way to Tierra del Fuego.



White-crowned Sparrow – Gambel's (c) Mick Thompson

Finally, I want to talk about the White-crowned Sparrows we saw. Here in Colorado we have two predominant subspecies. The *oriantha* ones have black lores (the area between the bill and the eye) and they breed up in the highest willow carrs and krummholz – right at timberline. They then spend winters in the southwest US and northern Mexico. The *gambelii* ones, which is what we saw, have white lores, breed in far northern Alaska and Canada, and many pass through Colorado in the fall on their way to winter in Oklahoma and Texas. However, we can still have good numbers of both subspecies locally in the winter out on the eastern plains.

Hope to see you on another walk soon!

Chuck

Hine & Harriman Lakes, Oct 12, 2019

Number of Taxa: 36

(1): Hine Lake

Date: Oct 12, 2019 at 7:33 AM

(2): Harriman Lake Park

Date: Oct 12, 2019 at 9:05 AM

26 Canada Goose – (1),(2)

3 Blue-winged Teal – (1)

22 Northern Shoveler – (1),(2)

37 Gadwall — (1),(2)
48 American Wigeon — (1),(2)
102 Mallard — (1),(2)
37 Green-winged Teal — (1),(2)
1 Canvasback — (2)
86 Redhead — (1),(2)
374 Ring-necked Duck — (1),(2)
6 Lesser Scaup — (2)
33 Bufflehead — (2)
15 Ruddy Duck — (1),(2)
24 Pied-billed Grebe — (1),(2)
2 Eared Grebe — (2)
1 Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) — (2)
1 Eurasian Collared-Dove — (2)
162 American Coot — (1),(2)
5 Killdeer — (1),(2)
17 Long-billed Dowitcher — (1)
1 Lesser Yellowlegs — (1)
20 Ring-billed Gull — (1),(2)
1 Red-tailed Hawk — (2)
1 Downy Woodpecker — (2)
4 Northern Flicker — (1),(2)
6 Blue Jay — (1),(2)
4 Black-billed Magpie — (2)
14 American Crow — (1)
1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet — (2)
16 European Starling — (1),(2)
11 House Finch — (1),(2)
1 Pine Siskin — (1)
1 American Goldfinch — (2)
7 White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's) — (2)
18 Western Meadowlark — (1)
581 Red-winged Blackbird — (1),(2)