

## Highlights from Sept 12 Birding Trip to Prewitt Reservoir

Chuck Aid. 09/16/2020 :

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Prewitt Reservoir (c) Sibylle Hechtel

Prewitt Reservoir in northeastern Colorado was constructed just prior to World War I, and, when full, has a surface area of about 2400 acres. It is managed as a re-charge impoundment, meaning that outflows to the South Platte River are strategically timed to offset reduced river flow caused by aquifer pumping and irrigation of crops. Starting in the late 1950's and 1960's the many reservoirs along the South Platte gradually became part of the State Wildlife Areas program, providing opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other recreation, including great bird watching. During the current drought and irrigation season the reservoir has been drawn down significantly creating vast mudflats for migrating waterfowl. The reservoir and its inlet canal also have a substantial cottonwood gallery forest attractive to migratory and resident landbirds.

On Saturday our group started the morning in the forest along the inlet canal, then in late morning we did the mud trudge out to the current water's edge, and then wound things up in the early afternoon down below the dam. We had numerous landbird highlights including three species of raptors (Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, and American Kestrel), four species of woodpeckers (including Red-headed Woodpecker), seven species of flycatchers (including Olive-sided Flycatcher and Eastern Phoebe), two species of nuthatches, two species of wren (including Rock Wren), four species of sparrows, and eight species of warblers (including MacGillivray's Warbler, American Redstart, and Northern Parula). Additional fun birds included a Warbling Vireo, a group of Cedar Waxwings, and a Western Tanager. It was clearly evident that migration was in full swing, and except for a few of the raptors, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and sparrows most of these birds will continue to move south for the winter.



Marbled Godwit (c) Bill Schmoker

When we got out on to the mudflats we had a whole new suite of birds including three additional species of raptors (Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon), ten shorebird species (including Black-bellied Plover, Marbled Godwit, and Red-necked Phalarope), two gull species, two tern species (Black and Forester's), plus Double-crested Cormorants, American White Pelicans, Great Blue Herons, and Snowy Egrets.



Baird's Sandpiper (c) Sibylle Hechtel

Fall migration can be tricky for birders. There are many drably plumaged juveniles, many adults are not quite as brightly colored as they were a few weeks back, and there are some species that are a bit unfamiliar to us as we only see them in eastern Colorado during fall migration. However, as we found at Prewitt, there can be these waves of multiple species that are deliciously overwhelming. There's this bird, and that bird, and another bird over there, and it can just go on and on until you walk away exhausted but very fulfilled.



Eastern Kingbird (c) Bill Schmoker

Good birding to you all!

Chuck



The Mud Sludge at Prewitt (c) David Wald

Prewitt Reservoir, Sep 12, 2020

Number of Taxa: 79

- 10 Canada Goose
- 1 Blue-winged Teal
- 25 Blue-winged/Cinnamon Teal
- 6 Mallard
- 6 Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)
- 4 Eurasian Collared-Dove
- 7 Mourning Dove
- 13 American Avocet
- 2 Black-bellied Plover
- 2 Killdeer
- 2 Marbled Godwit
- 150 Stilt Sandpiper
- 250 Baird's Sandpiper
- 30 Least Sandpiper
- 20 Pectoral Sandpiper
- 1 Long-billed Dowitcher
- 1 Red-necked Phalarope
- 35 Franklin's Gull
- 84 Ring-billed Gull
- 23 Black Tern

3 Forster's Tern  
10 Double-crested Cormorant  
250 American White Pelican  
25 Great Blue Heron  
10 Snowy Egret  
1 Osprey  
1 Northern Harrier  
4 Bald Eagle  
1 Swainson's Hawk  
4 Red-tailed Hawk  
7 Red-headed Woodpecker  
3 Downy Woodpecker  
1 Hairy Woodpecker  
5 Northern Flicker  
4 American Kestrel  
1 Peregrine Falcon  
1 Olive-sided Flycatcher  
18 Western Wood-Pewee  
1 Willow Flycatcher  
1 Dusky Flycatcher  
1 Cordilleran Flycatcher  
2 Empidonax sp.  
1 Eastern Phoebe  
6 Western Kingbird  
3 Eastern Kingbird  
1 Warbling Vireo  
12 Blue Jay  
1 Black-billed Magpie  
19 Barn Swallow  
2 Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
3 Red-breasted Nuthatch  
4 White-breasted Nuthatch  
1 Rock Wren  
18 House Wren  
7 European Starling  
3 Gray Catbird  
2 Brown Thrasher  
2 Swainson's Thrush  
9 American Robin  
8 Cedar Waxwing  
4 House Finch  
7 American Goldfinch  
11 Chipping Sparrow  
1 Lark Bunting  
3 Vesper Sparrow

2 Song Sparrow  
2 Lincoln's Sparrow  
3 Spotted Towhee  
4 Western Meadowlark  
12 Red-winged Blackbird  
4 Orange-crowned Warbler  
2 MacGillivray's Warbler  
3 Common Yellowthroat  
1 American Redstart  
1 Northern Parula  
3 Yellow Warbler  
26 Yellow-rumped Warbler  
40 Wilson's Warbler  
1 Western Tanager