

Highlights? from Aug 21 Bird Walk to Lost Creek

Chuck Aid. August 25, 2021 :

The lack of birds on our foothill and mountain outings this summer has persisted, and we had to work hard to come up with the few birds we found on our Lost Creek hike. There are so many questions to be answered regarding this summer's decline in birds. Is this a local phenomenon we're experiencing or are our Bear Creek Watershed findings indicative of something going on throughout the state or throughout the Southern Rockies? Is this a carry-over from the large die-off of birds that was witnessed early last fall across the Southwest? Could we perhaps see more birds as we move through fall migration? What will next summer bring? If there is to be a rebound in numbers, where will those birds come from? What will our winter bird numbers look like? Is this an aberrant year, or is it the new normal? Why does it seem to be our mountain birds that are so absent, and things don't seem quite as dire out on the plains? I look forward to hearing from others on all this in the coming months. For now, it is believed that wildfire smoke and toxic gasses along with some extreme weather events and lack of insects for food were factors in last year's die-off, but there are other causes being investigated including viruses, bacterial fungi, and parasites. Just to be on the safe side, please remember to clean your bird feeders regularly with a 10% bleach solution.



Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*) (c)

Chuck Aid

The real highlights for our walk came from the profusion of wildflowers and fruiting shrubs that have come in the wake of so much welcome moisture this year. Also, it seems as though there is a bumper crop of

Douglas-fir cones. As for the birds, the most unexpected sighting was of a flock of eighteen Canada Geese flying west up the Bear Creek valley. Hard to say where they may have been heading. Hopefully our outing next month will provide us with a few more avian identification problems to contend with. That's part of why we do this, right? For the joy of wrestling with each identification, and to gradually find ourselves having a bit more familiarity with at least a few species.



Wild Geranium (*Geranium caespitosum*) (c) Chuck Aid



Fairy Trumpet or Scarlet Gilia (*Ipomopsis aggregata*) (c) Chuck Aid

Good birding! Chuck

Lost Creek, Aug 21, 2021

15 species

Canada Goose 18

Broad-tailed Hummingbird 5

Red-tailed Hawk 2

Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) 1

Steller's Jay (Interior) 8

Common Raven 2
Mountain Chickadee 19
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1
Golden-crowned Kinglet 1
Red-breasted Nuthatch 1
Pygmy Nuthatch 6
American Robin 2
Chipping Sparrow 1
Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed) 6
Yellow Warbler 1