

# **COLORADO GROUSE**

**APRIL 14 – 23, 2006**

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**14-23 April 2006**

**Leaders: Marshall J. Iliff and Brian Patrick Gibbons**

Compiled by: Marshall J. Iliff

This was a historic Colorado Grouse trip, enjoying better weather and a higher total species list than any of our previous trips. Despite the slightly earlier date, our group managed to record some 203 species, which was three better than the previous record and 13 better than the next best. It is worth remembering that we have conducted this trip for almost 20 years!

First and foremost, we had excellent experiences with all six of our target grouse species. We began with Gunnison Sage-Grouse, which is the most distant lek, and often the most difficult species to observe well. This year's show went on for about 45 minutes after sunup, and was the best show that either of the leaders had seen. Some females lurking around the edges of the lek kept activity high, and everyone had good views of the birds through scopes.

Two days later we greeted dawn at the Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek. Despite our fears about the declining population and low counts recently recorded, we had at least 12 birds on the lek, including eight animated males facing off, quarreling, and trying to impress several females that were strolling around looking generally disinterested. When the birds finally departed, we were all grateful to be able to take a restroom break at last!

A couple of days later we were comparing the displays of Greater Prairie-Chickens with those of the Lessers. The low hooting sounds produced by the Greater gives an eerie and less frenetic feel to the lek, in comparison with the bubbling and cackling of the Lessers. The highlight at the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek was watching a Northern Harrier come lazing over the lek and suddenly shift into attack mode as it stooped and swooped on prairie-chickens. Since the chickens probably weigh more than the harrier, this was a surprise to us all. The harrier was persistent, as were the chickens; immediately after escaping the talons of the harrier, the male chickens would return to continue their displays. This in turn gave the harrier multiple chances to bag a chicken, but despite at least 15 passes and two very near misses, the harrier went away hungry.

Two mornings later the rising sun illuminated perhaps the most impressive grouse lek of our trip: on the road in front of us and on both sides stood some 75 Greater Sage-Grouse, some as close as 10 feet from the van! Over the course of our morning's observation, we saw males contest the valuable central spots on the lek with running charges that looked like a perfect hit in football or ice hockey. Other males sidled up to one another and delivered slaps to the face with their opposing wings. Still others engaged in staring matches until the weaker bird backed down. Some of us also got to see a rare copulation—remember that it may be just 5% of the males at a given lek that perform 95% of the copulations. In grouse this is a quick affair, with the entire process taking less than 15 seconds from her wings down presentation pose to the parting of the ways. That evening we worked hard for our fifth species of grouse, the Blue Grouse. Blues do not lek the way the prairie grouse do; instead, they congregate loosely along ridges and attract females with their low hooting noises. After a couple of hours of beating the bushes, we finally came up with several males that put on great shows for us. In fact, once they started displaying, they barely let us leave for our dinner reservations!

The next morning we watched the choreographed dance of the Sharp-tailed Grouse, with males wheeling in circles with their wings held out jet-plane-style, tails cocked straight up, and their purplish air sacs producing their own odd, gargling sound. For icing on the cake, we managed to find (for only the second time ever on this tour) a male White-tailed Ptarmigan in its snowy white plumage atop Loveland Pass. Unfortunately the bird was high up on a trail and required a strenuous hike to reach it, but most of the group got to see this crème-de-la-crème of the Colorado grouse.

Our list will reveal a host of other avian highlights, but I'll stress just a few here: all three rosy-finches at point-blank range; an aggressive Grasshopper Sparrow right outside the window; three rare flycatchers, plus Carolina Wren and Northern Parula in the southeast; both longspurs doing their aerial displays on the Pawnee; a surprise Three-toed Woodpecker at Cameron Pass; a Glossy Ibis; and, most amazing of all, a very lost Mexican (Mallard)

Duck at Walden. Thanks to you all for being such a fun and genial group. This will be my last Colorado Grouse trip for a while, and it was great to end it on such a high note.

**Day 1, 14 Apr:** arrival in Gunnison; dinner at Mario's Pizza.

**Day 2, 15 Apr:** morning visit to Wuanita Lek; post-breakfast birding at feeders in Crested Butte, which were swarming with rosy-finches; stop at Franz Lake SWA for Black Phoebe (none) and waterfowl; lunch at First Street Café in Salida; drive down Arkansas River to Cañon City; Temple Canyon Park in Cañon City (almost birdless in high winds); Black Phoebe stop at Mackenzie Ave in Cañon City; CO-120 near Penrose (Lewis's Woodpecker); dinner at Rosario's. (70 species)

**Day 3, 16 Apr:** IL Road near Boone (Mountain Plover); Lakes Meredith and Henry; lunch at La Junta Pizza Hut; Lake Cheraw; John Martin Res area; dinner at truck stop in Springfield. (86 species, 116 total)

**Day 4, 17 Apr:** morning visit to Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek at Comanche Grasslands; post-lek birding around Campo; breakfast at Campo Café; birding east to Carrizo Canyon, with a picnic lunch in Cottonwood Canyon; optional evening birding in Springfield; dinner at Longhorn Steakhouse. (77 species, 150 total)

**Day 5, 18 Apr:** breakfast at truck stop; Two Buttes Reservoir; picnic lunch at Lamar Community College (C.C.); drive to Wray via Bonny Reservoir, with fierce inter-van competition en route; afternoon on the Bledsoe Ranch; dinner at hotel restaurant. (72 species, 164 total)

**Day 6, 19 Apr:** morning Greater Prairie-Chicken viewing on the Bledsoe Ranch; breakfast at Demi's; Wray Fish Hatchery; Haxtun Sewage Ponds; detour to look for White Ibis (no dice) near Jumbo Reservoir and birding the Platte near Tamarack Ranch; lunch at Sterling Village Inn; afternoon birding at Crow Valley Campground (slow) and the Murphy's Pasture area of Pawnee National Grasslands; dinner at Thai Pepper in Ft. Collins. (71 species, 176 total).

**Day 7, 20 Apr:** huge breakfast at The Silver Grill in Ft. Collins; birding up Poudre Canyon with stops in Poudre Park and below Cameron Pass; Gould area; afternoon birding at Walden Reservoir and Delaney Butte; dinner at Moose Creek Café. (79 species, 188 total)

**Day 8, 21 Apr:** morning visit to awesome! Greater Sage-Grouse lek; breakfast at Moose Creek Café; post-breakfast birding at Walden Res; lunch at Village Inn in Steamboat Springs; afternoon birding near Hayden and along California Park Rd, with Blue Grouse being the major highlight; dinner at Old West Steakhouse in Steamboat Springs. (77 species, 193 total)

**Day 9, 22 Apr:** morning visit to Sharp-tailed Grouse lek on 20 mile Rd; Return trip via Oak Park for Evening Grosbeaks; brief stop at Wolford Mountain Reservoir; lunch in Dillon; successful White-tailed Ptarmigan search on Loveland Pass in the warmth and sunshine; final birding at Genessee Park (Brown Creeper, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird); dinner at hotel. (64 species, 203 total)

**Day 10, 23 Apr:** departure for home

## BIRD LIST (203 species)

Tour highlights in ALL CAPS; especially memorable sightings underlined

**Snow Goose** - flock of 8 near John Martin Res

**Ross's Goose** - single white adult at Haxtun Sewage Ponds

**Canada Goose** - common, seen almost daily. At least three tree nests (and one atop a pile of hay bales) west of Walden seemed unusual, although geese will occasionally occupy such sites.

**Wood Duck** - 2 at Two Buttes and 2 flybys in Wray

**Gadwall** - common, seen 4 days

**American Wigeon** - common, seen 3 days

**Mallard** - common, seen daily. One at Walden Res 20-21 Apr was apparently a male "**Mexican Duck**" (*A.p. diazi*), a vagrant to Colorado with two prior reports from the extreme southeast.

**Blue-winged Teal** - fairly common, seen 6 days

**Cinnamon Teal** - great looks on 6 dates

**Northern Shoveler** - fairly common, seen 5 days

**Northern Pintail** - fairly common, seen 4 days

**Green-winged Teal** - fairly common, seen 3 days

**Canvasback** - seen 3 days

**Redhead** - just one seen east of the mountains, but up to 40 on Walden Res

**Ring-necked Duck** - seen on 4 days

**Lesser Scaup** - fairly common, seen 3 days; especially common on Walden Res (200+)

**Bufflehead** - 6 at Lake Meredith, 6 at Haxtun Sewage Ponds, and up to 10 at Walden Res

**Common Goldeneye** - more common than usual this year, with 5 total on 3 dates

**Common Merganser** - seen in numbers in mountains

**HOODED MERGANSER** - one female at Franz Lake in Salida was a tour rarity

**Ruddy Duck** - fairly common, seen most days

**Ring-necked Pheasant** - total of 22 seen on 4 dates

**Greater Sage-Grouse** - Voted favorite bird of the tour, we were treated to continuous displays by up to 67 birds as close as 10 feet away. We got to see linebacker charges, bloody altercations, and even a copulation! Sex and violence on the high plains!

**Gunnison Sage-Grouse** - excellent views of 13 birds doing their morning display until well after daybreak was made for a most enjoyable morning.

**WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN** - one in its elegant winter dress on Loveland Pass was seen by those who were willing and able to make the steep climb at 12,000 ft elevation. This was only the second ever for this tour!

**Blue Grouse** - It took some work, but we finally had looks at 3 stunning male on California Park Rd; this is the Rocky Mountain form that will be known as the **Dusky Blue-Grouse** in the upcoming August 2006 supplement to the AOU Check-List which will split Rocky Mountain birds from Pacific Coast birds, which will be known as the Sooty Blue-Grouse.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken** - 60+ birds put on a good morning display and a somewhat weaker evening show

**Lesser Prairie-Chicken** - 8 males and 4 females at the Campo Lek put on a great performance

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** - 17+ males displaying on the lek, plus a couple close flybys

**Wild Turkey** - Carl spotted our first near Pueblo, and we saw a total of 10 on three dates

**Scaled Quail** - fair numbers were seen, including our first in a "Quick-E-Mart" parking lot

**Northern Bobwhite** - good looks at 4 near Campo, one near Wray; one heard at Tamarack Ranch

**Common Loon** - one at Lake Meredith

**Pied-billed Grebe** - 5 total on 3 dates

**Horned Grebe** - 3 on 16 Apr; not seen every year

**Eared Grebe** - several at Lake Cheraw, Bonny Res, Walden Res, and elsewhere; their courtship displays were observed on Walden Res

**Western Grebe** - seen 3 days; their courtship displays were observed on Walden Res

**Clark's Grebe** - 30+ at Lake Meredith and near John Martin Res and 1 at Walden Res 21 Apr

**American White Pelican** - seen on several days

**Double-crested Cormorant** - seen on a few days, with numbers at Bonny Res and Walden Res (where nesting)

**Great Blue Heron** - seen almost daily

**Cattle Egret** - one near Gunnison was a tour rarity, and especially unusual in the mountains

**Snowy Egret** - one at Franz Lake near Salida and one at Walden Res 21 Apr

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** - one at Two Buttes was our only one

**GLOSSY IBIS** - one at Walden Res was a true rarity for Colorado, although this species is an ever-increasing visitor west of its normal range. This was the second time we've had it on tour. Thanks to Harvey for the great spotting. Also present was one apparent **Glossy x White-faced Ibis** hybrid, with Glossy features except for a reddish eye, pink tint to the pale facial skin borders, and some pink at the base of the facial skin.

**White-faced Ibis** - seen most days, including 120 total on 16 Apr

**Turkey Vulture** - seen daily

**Osprey** - one on a nest near Silverthorne 23 Apr, along with 3 others

**Bald Eagle** - one adult east of Lamar was apparently from a historic nesting area, but no recent nesting has been recorded; did a pair return this year?

**Northern Harrier** - seen almost daily; 17 total. One of the most amazing sightings of the trip was watching a female harrier at the Bledsoe Ranch repeatedly swoop upon prairie-chickens with obvious intent to kill. Harriers seem such docile birds that it was truly amazing to watch one in hot pursuit of such large prey.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** - total of 3 seen, including one sitting in a farm field near Tamarack Ranch

**Cooper's Hawk** - 4 seen on 3 dates

**Swainson's Hawk** - common and seen almost daily, light and dark morphs seen, along with some nests

**Red-tailed Hawk** - common and seen daily

**Ferruginous Hawk** - pair at a nest on the Pawnee was a late save

**Rough-legged Hawk** - one light bird in flatlands just before Rabbit Ears Pass was a last minute save

**Golden Eagle** - total of 9 seen; 5 around Walden included one nest on a cliff and one in a tree along a river

**American Kestrel** - common, seen daily

**Merlin** - One female *columbarius* seen well near Boone

**Prairie Falcon** - pair on cliffs near Delaney Buttes

**Peregrine Falcon** - one adult near Wolford Mt. Reservoir

(h) **Virginia Rail** - heard near John Martin Res

**American Coot** - common and seen almost daily

**Sandhill Crane** - one Greater Sandhill (*G. c. tabida*) near Tamarack Ranch was a late migrant; nesters near Hayden included a pair with an egg at a small drainage pond

**Snowy Plover** - 6 at Lake Cheraw

**Semipalmated Plover** - 1 at Lake Cheraw

**Killdeer** - common and seen daily

**Mountain Plover** - A pair seen very well at IL Road; one more seen on the Pawnee

**Black-necked Stilt** - 6 seen 16 Apr

**American Avocet** - total of 29 seen over 4 days

**Greater Yellowlegs** - total of 20 on 3 dates

**Lesser Yellowlegs** - one at Lake Cheraw, 10 near Jumbo Res, and one side-by-side with a Greater at Walden Res

**Spotted Sandpiper** - one at Wray Fish Hatchery was our only one

**Willet** - one at Lake Cheraw; subspecies *inornatus* ("Western Willet").

**Long-billed Curlew** - 17 seen on 4 dates

**Marbled Godwit** - one at Walden Res was pointed out by two visiting Japanese birders - how had we missed it?

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** - 3 at Lake Cheraw

**Western Sandpiper** - 8 at Lake Cheraw

**Least Sandpiper** - 6 at Lake Cheraw

**Baird's Sandpiper** - 9 at Lake Cheraw, 8 near Jumbo Reservoir, and one at the Wray Fish Hatchery

**Wilson's Snipe** - seen on 4 dates, including winnowing birds near Steamboat Springs. This species (*Gallinago delicata*) is a recent split from Old World Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).

**Wilson's Phalarope** - one female near Jumbo Res

**Franklin's Gull** - groups seen on several dates, including birds that were incredibly brilliant pink. This is the best time of the year to see them so bright. Our best group was about 90 in a plowed field near Bonny Res.

**Bonaparte's Gull** - 40 at Lake Meredith were our only ones

**Ring-billed Gull** - seen on 4 dates

**California Gull** - large numbers nesting around Walden, with two near Crested Butte  
**Herring Gull** - one at Lake Meredith  
**Rock Pigeon** - common seen daily  
**Eurasian Collared-Dove** - this species continues to expand! Numerous birds seen in Gunnison, the Arkansas River Valley, Springfield, Campo, and Wray, with two in Hayden and one in Walden being tour firsts for the northern mountain parks. I counted 120 total; this species was new to Colorado in 1998!  
**Mourning Dove** - common, seen daily  
**Greater Roadrunner** - Never before have we done so well with this species. Susan spotted our first pair near Boone 16 Apr, followed by 6 the next day which included birds near the Campo Lek and four together in Cottonwood Canyon. Finally, one van had two more at Two Buttes the next day. Perhaps the warm weather brought these birds out hunting for lizards and snakes, but otherwise we cannot explain why we usually miss the species and this year had 10!  
**Barn Owl** - one seen well at Two Buttes was first spotted by Maggie, breaking a longstanding jinx for her and Steve  
**Great Horned Owl** - nests with young seen at Two Buttes (cliff) and Jumbo Res (in a tree)  
**Burrowing Owl** - 10 near Lake Meredith and 3 south of Springfield  
**Long-eared Owl** - one flushed at Bonnie Res was a gift from the WINGS tour, but we found our own at California Park Rd and got repeated looks in flight  
**Chimney Swift** - singles in Lamar and Sterling were our only ones  
**White-throated Swift** - good looks over Arkansas River Canyon, Poudre Canyon, and Delaney Buttes  
**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** - 3 in Poudre Park  
**Belted Kingfisher** - just 4 seen on 3 dates  
**Lewis's Woodpecker** - one near Penrose was a key stakeout since they were absent from Cottonwood Canyon!  
**Red-bellied Woodpecker** - one at Lamar C.C. was a good bird for Colorado  
**Red-naped Sapsucker** - great show by one at Poudre Park  
**Williamson's Sapsucker** - three cooperative birds at Blue River SWA were a highlight of our last day  
**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** - two in Cottonwood Canyon and two at Two Buttes  
**Downy Woodpecker** - one in Lamar was a surprise, but several at Two Buttes Res were more expected  
**Hairy Woodpecker** - 5 seen on 5 dates; those at Lamar C.C. were more like the eastern *villosus* subspecies, while those at Crested Butte and Blue River SWA were more like the Rocky Mountain subspecies *septentrionalis*. Note, however, that Pyle (1997) describes only *septentrionalis* from Colorado.  
**AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** - A responsive female (and another drumming) at Cameron Pass were a tour first for us and gave brief but good looks. The perfect, windless, conditions atop Cameron Pass were certainly partly responsible for our good luck.  
**Northern Flicker** - seen almost daily — most were “**Red-shafted**” (*collaris*), but we had several “**Yellow-shafted**” intergrades as well  
**Eastern Phoebe** - 4 in Cottonwood and Carrizo Canyons and two at Two Buttes Res  
**Say's Phoebe** - two seen on 16 Apr  
**BLACK PHOEBE** - a pair at a bridge (Mackenzie Ave) east of Canon City 15 Apr was a stakeout, but one that Amy found in Carrizo Canyon 17 Apr was a surprise and extremely rare for southeast Colorado. This was a tour second and a state bird for both Brian and Marshall!  
**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** - A female at the cemetery just east of Lamar was a tour second and another vagrant flycatcher!  
**Ash-throated Flycatcher** - one migrant in a ranchyard near the Campo lek  
**Western Kingbird** - three in Lamar and Springfield on 17 Apr  
**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** - Brian spotted one just east of John Martin Reservoir on 16 Apr; this was a tour second and a vagrant to this part of Colorado; 16 Apr was a remarkably early date.  
**Loggerhead Shrike** - seen almost daily  
**Gray Jay** - Two seen at Blue River SWA 22 Apr  
**Steller's Jay** - seen 3 days in the mountains. These interior birds (*macrolopha*) have white eyebrows lacking in coastal forms  
**Blue Jay** - several seen in eastern Colorado, best at the Lamar Cemetery  
**Western Scrub-Jay** - 1 near at Temple Canyon Park (by some) and one (leaders only) at California Park Road; these were *suttoni*, a member of the distinct interior group sometimes known as Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay.  
**Black-billed Magpie** - common; seen almost daily except in Baca County; our *Pica hudsonia* now split from Old World Magpie (*Pica pica*)  
**American Crow** - seen almost daily, seemed to have rebounded already from last year's dip in numbers

**Chihuahuan Raven** - total of 12 on 2 dates, all in extreme southeast Colorado

**Common Raven** - common, seen most days

**Horned Lark** - seen almost daily, with large numbers on the plains; most were probably subspecies *enthymia*

**Tree Swallow** - seen 4 days

**Violet-green Swallow** - seen 15 Apr only

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** - 5 seen on the plains on 3 dates

**Bank Swallow** - one seen near Jumbo Res by some

**Cliff Swallow** - numbers seen on 2 dates

**Barn Swallow** - our most common swallow; seen almost daily

**Bushtit** - Three in Cottonwood Canyon were surprisingly cooperative, while one at Two Buttes was even more of a surprise since they are not known from that location - a vagrant Bushtit!

**Black-capped Chickadee** - 9 total on three days

**Mountain Chickadee** - fairly common in mountains

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** - 2 in Poudre Park

**White-breasted Nuthatch** - 6 in Poudre Park were of the Rocky Mountain subspecies *nelsoni*, which has a longer bill, darker back, whiter face, and different call from eastern and Californian birds

**Pygmy Nuthatch** - several at Genessee Park

**Brown Creeper** - one at Genessee Park on our last day; probably subspecies *montana*

**Rock Wren** - total of 6 in eastern Colorado

**Canyon Wren** - one in Cottonwood Canyon and another at Two Buttes Res

**CAROLINA WREN** - a pair at Lamar C.C. 18 Apr was a supreme rarity for Colorado; state bird for Marshall and a tour first

**Bewick's Wren** - Carrizo and Cottonwood Canyons (3), plus two migrants (!) on the plains near Lamar

**House Wren** - one at Lamar C.C.

**American Dipper** - fantastic looks at a pair nest-building at Pinnacle Rock along the Arkansas River; in past years this pair was feeding young, so perhaps the nest was washed away earlier this year prompting a re-nesting attempt. Also seen along Poudre Canyon.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** - 11 seen on 4 dates

(h) **Golden-crowned Kinglet** - several heard at Cameron Pass

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** - 3 seen on two dates

**Eastern Bluebird** - pair in Carrizo Canyon

**Western Bluebird** - pair at Genessee Park

**Mountain Bluebird** - great looks at this stunner, especially around Walden

**Townsend's Solitaire** - very low numbers; single flybys seen on 20 and 22 Apr only

**Hermit Thrush** - 6 at Two Buttes and one at Cottonwood Canyon

**American Robin** - common, seen daily

**Northern Mockingbird** - 11 seen on three dates

**Sage Thrasher** - seen very well around Walden

**Brown Thrasher** - one at Lamar C.C. was seen by Merriam only

**Curve-billed Thrasher** - Amy spotted one from the road near Boone, but it was seen by only one van

**European Starling** - seen daily

**American Pipit** - one seen beautifully along the Arkansas River at Pinnacle Rock and two at Loveland Pass; all appeared to have the unstreaked pinkish breast of *alticola*, the Rocky Mountain breeding subspecies

**Cedar Waxwing** - two in Lamar were our only ones

**NORTHERN PARULA** - one female (!) at Lamar C.C. was rare and early 18 Apr, especially so for a female.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** - 5 seen on three dates in southeast; these were probably *orestera*

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** - common; seen most days and especially common on the plains. We saw both 12 western "Audubon's" (*auduboni*) and 50 eastern "Myrtle" (*coronata*) types, along with several intergrades

**Wilson's Warbler** - one in Springfield 17 Apr and two at Lamar C.C. 18 Apr

**Common Yellowthroat** - one male was out of place in scrub near Cottonwood Canyon

**Green-tailed Towhee** - fantastic scope views at 20-mile road

**Spotted Towhee** - seen at Two Buttes, Poudre Canyon, and around Hayden

**Canyon Towhee** - 1 on IL Rd near Boone were a surprise for the unusual habitat ; 8 others at Cottonwood Canyon were more expected

**Cassin's Sparrow** - great looks at this songster near Campo; my favorite song in the United States

**Rufous-crowned Sparrow** - 3 in Cottonwood Canyon

**Chipping Sparrow** - seen 4 days  
**Brewer's Sparrow** - 10 seen near Campo on 17 Apr; one singing near California Park Rd 21 Apr  
**Vesper Sparrow** - common, seen 4 days with over 100 on 17 Apr  
**Lark Sparrow** - 10 southeast of Campo  
**Lark Bunting** - total of 25 in two groups 17 Apr was our best total ever  
**Savannah Sparrow** - 5 birds seen on 3 dates, including 3 at Walden Res  
**Grasshopper Sparrow** - one near Campo gave an amazing response and in your face views from the van  
**Fox Sparrow** - two at Gould were of the “**Slate-colored**” group (subspecies *schistacea*)  
**Song Sparrow** - just 9 on two dates  
**White-crowned Sparrow** - common; seen almost daily. Most birds we saw were of the migrant subspecies *gambelii* although there were two *leucophrys/oriantha* at Two Buttes  
**Dark-eyed Junco** - seen daily in the mountains; all were “**Gray-headed**” types (subspecies *caniceps*)  
**McCown's Longspur** - We saw 75+ on the Pawnee, many giving their butterfly-like displays. One gave an incredible tape response and approached within 20 ft or so.  
**Chestnut-collared Longspur** - It took some effort, but we had 6 at long last on the Pawnee, including point-blank looks  
**Red-winged Blackbird** - common, seen daily  
**Western Meadowlark** - common and seen daily, but beautiful visually and aurally  
**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** - one singing at the Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek in Baca County and another seen along the road on our way out were exciting, as this species is only recently discovered here in Colorado. We identified them as the Southwestern *liliana* subspecies, known as Lilian’s Meadowlark.  
**Yellow-headed Blackbird** - we saw flocks of males near Lake Meredith and Walden  
**Brewer's Blackbird** - seen on 5 dates  
**Common Grackle** - common, seen almost daily; subspecies *versicolor*  
**Great-tailed Grackle** - seen on plains daily 16-20 Apr, with tallies 3,10,10,5, and 10, respectively — this species is really expanding. Three in Salida 16 Apr were at a new location for us.  
**Brown-headed Cowbird** - common and seen daily  
**Brown-capped Rosy-Finch** - fortuitously some feeders at Crested Butte still had rosy-finches. Brown-capped were the common species there.  
**Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** - About 6 at the Crested Butte feeders were of the Sierra subspecies group (lacking the gray face of “Hepburn’s”)  
**Black Rosy-Finch** - Usually the rarest Rosy-Finch, we had 20 at Crested Butte along with one sick bird at Gould  
**Pine Grosbeak** - wonderful looks at these birds at the Gould, some within feet of us at the feeders; these were of the Rocky Mountain subspecies *montanus*, which has extensively gray flanks and belly.  
**Cassin's Finch** - 40 at Crested Butte and 50 at Moose Pass were noteworthy counts  
**House Finch** - common and seen daily  
**Red Crossbill** - Two at moose Pass were a nice surprise  
**Pine Siskin** - seen 5 days, with surprising numbers on the plains including 150 total on 18 Apr from Two Buttes and Lamar, primarily.  
**Lesser Goldfinch** - one female at Poudre Park, seen by Susan and Steve, was our only one  
**American Goldfinch** - seen several days  
**Evening Grosbeak** - A surprisingly hard bird to get on this tour, we cashed in on a tip from a friend and found 20 in Oak Park, southwest of Steamboat Springs.  
**House Sparrow** - seen daily

## LEADER ONLY

**Lincoln’s Sparrow** - one in Lamar

## MAMMALS (27 species)

Gunnison area = Gu; southeast = SE; northeast = NE; mountains = Mts (including valleys at Walden and Steamboat)

**White-tailed Jackrabbit** - Mts

**Black-tailed Jackrabbit** - SE

**Desert Cottontail** - SE

**Mountain Cottontail** - Mts (one in Poudre Park)

**Eastern Cottontail** - NE (Bonny Res - leader only)

**Gunnison Prairie-Dog** - Gu  
**Black-tailed Prairie-Dog** - SE, NE  
**White-tailed Prairie-Dog** - Mts  
**Least Chipmunk** - Mts (Moose Pass Visitor's Center)  
**Golden-mantled Ground-Squirrel** - Mts (one at California Park Rd)  
**Wyoming Ground-Squirrel** - Gu (not mapped here), Mts (recent split from Richardson's Ground-Squirrel)  
**Thirteen-lined Ground-Squirrel** - NE (one seen well on Pawnee)  
**Rock Squirrel** - SE (Cottonwood Canyon)  
**Eastern Fox Squirrel** - SE, NE, Mts (several in Oak Park seemed out of place; also in Poudre Park)  
**Muskrat** - Mts (very common this year)  
**(Beaver** - didn't get any this year; an unfortunate miss)  
**Yellow-bellied Marmot** - Mts, near Crested Butte (thanks to Carl) and Hayden  
**North American Porcupine** - Mts (Cameron Pass, night drive)  
**Coyote** - Gu (near Crested Butte), Mts  
**Red Fox** - Gu, Mts (night drive)  
**BADGER** - Mts (one seen distantly by some at California Park Rd)  
**MOOSE** - Mts, 1 east of Walden  
**Mule Deer** - SE, Mts  
**White-tailed Deer** - NE, three near Ft. Collins  
**Pronghorn** - SE, NE, Mts  
**Elk** - Mts, best on 20 mile Rd and California Park Rd  
**Bighorn Sheep** - SE, small group in Cottonwood Canyon (Desert Bighorns) and Poudre Canyon (Rocky Mountain Bighorns), the latter including some large males  
**MOUNTAIN GOAT** - Mts (Marie scoped one at Loveland Pass, which made for our best mammal sighting and a tour first!)

Roadkill: Ord's Kangaroo Rat (IL Rd) , Opossum

#### **REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS**

**TEXAS HORNED LIZARD** - one in Campo was a tour first!  
**Boreal Chorus Frog** - calling in abundance in Pueblo, Walden and Steamboat Springs

#### **BUTTERFLIES**

*A few species were noted casually*

**Black Swallowtail** - SE (Susan had one, apparently this species)  
**Orange Sulphur** - SE  
**blue sp.** - one in Cottonwood Canyon  
**Variegated Fritillary** - SE  
**Mourning Cloak** - SE  
**duskywing sp.** - common in Cottonwood Canyon  
**Monarch** - two in SE