

COLORADO SUMMER WEEK

JUNE 11-17, 2007

**LEADERS: BRENNAN MULROONEY
AND BARRY ZIMMER**

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Leaders: Brennan Mulrooney and Barry Zimmer

ITINERARY:

June 11: Tour orientation and dinner at our airport hotel.

June 12: Picnic breakfast in Castlewood Canyon State Park was cancelled due to the prospect of rain in the area, but luckily the little town of Parker happens to be home to the International House of Pancakes. Breakfast was followed by morning birding in and around the park; after lunch back in town we made a brief visit to "Parker Park" then started north. We attempted to bird Barr Lake State Park in a gale and then found some productive puddles around Lower Latham Reservoir en route to Greeley; dinner at Coyote Southwest Grill.

June 13: Early morning Mountain Plover and Ferruginous Hawk searches were fruitless, but after a picnic breakfast at Crow Valley Campground we had better luck; remainder of morning birding the Pawnee National Grassland; picnic lunch back at Crow Valley; then afternoon birding (Fort Collins and Big Thompson Canyon) en route to Estes Park; dinner at Nicky's.

June 14: Breakfast at the Big Horn; morning birding on Trail Ridge Road (esp. Medicine Bow Curve and Lava Cliffs); lunch at the Sundeck; afternoon birding in Upper Beaver Meadows; dinner at Nicky's.

June 15: Breakfast at the Big Horn; morning return to Trail Ridge road birding at Rainbow Curve and Many Parks Curve then the rest of the morning in Endovalley; lunch at the Estes Park Brewery; afternoon birding at Moraine Park, in particular the Cub Lake and Fern Lake trails; dinner at the Dunraven Downtown.

June 16: Last breakfast at the Big Horn; morning birding at Lily Lake and Wild Basin before heading south and west to Lyons. After some brief birding around town we had lunch at the Stone Cup and started working our way toward Union Reservoir then on to our airport hotel for our farewell dinner.

June 17: Departures for home.

BIRDLIST

Note: Species that are underlined are birds of special note that are either rare, local specialties, or are otherwise generally hard to find. Bird List order is according to the 47th Supplement to the AOU Check-list as published in *The Auk* 123:926-936 (2006).

Abbreviations:

CC - Castlewood Canyon State Park

BL - Barr Lake State Park

LL - Lower Latham Reservoir Area

CV - Crow Valley Campground

PG - Pawnee National Grasslands

RM - Rocky Mountain National Park

UR - Union Reservoir and other ponds on day 5

SWANS, GEESE, AND DUCKS

Canada Goose

Gadwall - just a couple, best at Lily Lake

Mallard - seen everyday

Blue-winged Teal - LL and UR

Cinnamon Teal - LL and UR

Northern Shoveler - LL

Northern Pintail - PG; 3 spotted in flight by Barry

Green-winged Teal - LL and UR

Redhead - LL and UR

Ring-necked Duck - Lily Lake, one even showing its neck ring

Common Merganser - CC and Estes Park

Ruddy Duck - LL and UR

PHEASANTS, GROUSE AND TURKEYS

Ring-necked Pheasant - several heard in Parker

White-tailed Ptarmigan - walking out onto the tundra it wasn't long before Barry had spotted a male sitting quietly doing an uncanny impression of a rock. As usual, this was the runaway favorite bird of the trip.

GREBES

Pied-billed Grebe - LL

Western Grebe - many UR providing good comparison with...

Clark's Grebe - a few at UR showed well

PELICANS

American White Pelican - a few at BL but much better looks at a group feeding at UR all wearing their black summer hats.

CORMORANTS

Double-crested Cormorant - a few scattered across the eastern front

BITTERN AND HERONS

Great Blue Heron - fairly common and widespread

Cattle Egret - a small group hanging with the cattle around LL

Black-crowned Night-Heron - Leader only near LL

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS

White-faced Ibis - a flock in a pond near LL showing their white "faces"

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Turkey Vulture - seen daily

HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES

Bald Eagle - an immature bird at BL was a surprise

Northern Goshawk - seen twice briefly in RM, both times carrying food, probably feeding young, not seen by everybody

Swainson's Hawk - fairly widespread on the eastern front

Red-tailed Hawk - seen daily

Ferruginous Hawk - two seen on the PG were the first for a couple of years

FALCONS

American Kestrel - a few scattered about, mostly on the prairie

Prairie Falcon - a great way to start the tour, we had great looks the first morning in CC

RAILS, COOTS, LIMPKIN, AND CRANES

Virginia Rail - one responded to tape at UR and eventually came in so we could see it

Sora - multiple birds calling at UR, but seen only by me

American Coot - a few scattered on prairie reservoirs

PLOVERS AND SANDPIPERS

Killdeer - fairly common on the prairie

Mountain Plover - after our first stakeout was a no-show, we were treated to remarkable views of a male, then got very lucky with a female that crossed the road in front of us soon after on the PG

AVOCETS AND STILTS

Black-necked Stilt - LL

American Avocet - LL, including several cute fluffy babies!

SANDPIPERS

Spotted Sandpiper - best in Endovalley where we had close looks at a bird in breeding plumage

Lesser Yellowlegs - one in a marsh at LL

Long-billed Curlew - one in flight over the PG was the first I've seen on this tour

Wilson's Snipe - heard only at Endovalley

Wilson's Phalarope - several gorgeous females in a pond at LL

GULLS

Franklin's Gull - we saw about twenty of these pinkish prairie gulls on ponds and in fields around LL

Ring-billed Gull - several on the larger reservoirs

California Gull - same as above

PIGEONS AND DOVES

Rock Pigeon - seen daily

Eurasian Collared-Dove - not yet common in CO, but we saw them in several locations

Mourning Dove - seen almost daily

OWLS

Burrowing Owl - we saw several of these charismatic little owls on the prairie just about everywhere we found dog towns

NIGHTJARS

Common Nighthawk - PG, seen briefly when flushed by our first Ferruginous Hawk

SWIFTS

Black Swift - a courting group of 4 or 5 birds were a fantastic surprise in Endovalley

White-throated Swift - we saw flocks at CC and in RM

HUMMINGBIRDS

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - these are the only breeding hummer in this part of the Rockies and we heard the males trills almost everywhere we went, we had several good close studies

KINGFISHERS

Belted Kingfisher - just a brief flyby in Big Thompson Canyon

WOODPECKERS

Red-naped Sapsucker - excellent looks at several in RM

Williamson's Sapsucker - finding a nest close to the trail in Upper Beaver Meadows allowed us fantastic looks at both the male and the strikingly different looking female

Downy Woodpecker - we ran into a couple in riparian areas of the foothills

Hairy Woodpecker - seen or heard daily, including a nest in Upper Beaver Meadows

Northern Flicker - we saw several of the "Red-shafted" form

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Western Wood-Pewee - several scattered in the foothills and few at higher altitudes

Hammond's Flycatcher - we got repeated good looks in Upper Beaver Meadows at this diminutive Empid, but more importantly we heard its song and call to compare with the following

Dusky Flycatcher - very similar in appearance to the former, but its diagnostic "dew-hic!" call was heard well

Cordilleran Flycatcher - a relatively easy Empid to ID, they were at CC and Wild Basin

Say's Phoebe - we saw them above CC and around UR

Western Kingbird - abundant at lower elevations

Eastern Kingbird - not as many as the former, but we saw several on the prairies

SHRIKES

Loggerhead Shrike - just a brief look for a few on the PG

VIREOS

Plumbeous Vireo - several good looks at CC, the Rocky Mtn version of the former Solitary Vireo

Warbling Vireo - common and conspicuous (by voice anyway) in aspen groves in RM, seen best in Upper Beaver Meadows

Red-eyed Vireo - CC

CROWS AND JAYS

Steller's Jay - fairly common in RM, this subspecies *macrolopha* shows bold white markings in the face

Blue Jay - a few at CV and also in Lyons, one seen by Terry in RM was out of range

Western Scrub-Jay - only at CC

Clark's Nutcracker - fairly common and very vocal (but not all that cooperative this year) at the high altitudes of RM

Black-billed Magpie - we had great looks at this charismatic corvid, seen daily

American Crow - seen daily

Common Raven - seen daily

LARKS

Horned Lark - abundant on the PG and also up above timberline in RM

SWALLOWS

Tree Swallow - seen almost daily

Violet-green Swallow - scope views of perched birds at CC, plus many elsewhere

Northern Rough-winged Swallow - CC

Cliff Swallows - many nesting under bridges on the prairie and in RM

Barn Swallow - seen daily

CHICKADEES AND TITMICE

Black-capped Chickadee - concentrated around riparian habitat

Mountain Chickadee - more common in coniferous forests, seen daily

LONG-TAILED TITS

Bushtit - a single bird in CC was the only time I've seen a *single* Bushtit

NUTHATCHES

Red-breasted Nuthatch - we only saw a couple, best at Wild Basin

White-breasted Nuthatch - fairly common

Pygmy Nuthatch - seen well at CC and RM, a top contender for cutest bird in North America

WRENS

Rock Wren - seen well at CC

House Wren - seen or heard every day

Marsh Wren - heard around LL

DIPPERS

American Dipper - fantastic looks at a family group just upstream from Nicky's

KINGLETS

Ruby-crowned Kinglet - RM; fairly common, but hard to see

GNATCATCHERS

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - very vocal and active at CC

THRUSHES AND ALLIES

Western Bluebird - seen best above CC

Mountain Bluebird - fantastic looks at CC and esp. in the afternoon light in RM

Townsend's Solitaire - good looks at a perched singing bird in RM

Swainson's Thrush - seen well at Wild Basin

American Robin - ubiquitous, seen daily

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS

Northern Mockingbird - PG

Brown Thrasher - common around CV

STARLINGS

European Starling

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS

American Pipit - Great looks at displaying birds up on the tundra in RM

WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing - a few scattered pairs in the lowlands

WARBLERS

Virginia's Warbler - fast and furtive foothill species, we found one early at CC

Yellow Warbler - fairly common in riparian habitats

Yellow-rumped Warbler - we found several of the colorful Audubon's race

MacGillivray's Warbler - after working hard for the first one we had several good looks

Common Yellowthroat - mostly heard only around prairie ponds

Wilson's Warbler - good looks in the willow habitats of RM

Yellow-breasted Chat - one very squirrely individual in Parker

TANAGERS

Western Tanager - several good looks at this gorgeous western specialty in RM

SPARROWS AND ALLIES

Green-tailed Towhee - great views of a singing male in CC and then stunning views of a bird gathering food right at my feet in RM

Spotted Towhee - seen well at CC

Chipping Sparrow - common in the pine habitats

Brewer's Sparrow - good looks at a couple of them on the PG

Lark Sparrow - who said sparrows are drab? we saw many of these striking birds at CC

Vesper Sparrow - good looks on the fences above CC

Lark Bunting - these showy birds enlivened the endless open expanse of the PG

Savannah Sparrow - LL and UR

Grasshopper Sparrow - a single backlit bird up and singing on the PG

Fox Sparrow - unfortunately this bird was mostly heard only, the form that breeds in the Rockies is called Slate-colored Fox Sparrow

Song Sparrow - common and widespread

Lincoln's Sparrow - good looks at a couple in mountain meadows of RM

White-crowned Sparrow - we saw several on our ptarmigan search in RM

Dark-eyed Junco - good looks at the "Gray-headed" race in CC and RM

McCown's Longspur - rather common in the shortest grass areas of the PG, we saw several performing their parachuting flight songs

Chestnut-collared Longspur - much less common than the former, preferring taller grass habitats on the PG, we had fantastic looks at two different males

CARDINALS AND ALLIES

Black-headed Grosbeak - CC

Blue Grosbeak - great looks at a stunning male in CC

Lazuli Bunting - great looks in CC and Parker, what a stunner!

BLACKBIRDS AND ALLIES

Bobolink - a rare breeder in CO, we had a very cooperative bird above CC

Red-winged Blackbird - common and widespread around water

Western Meadowlark - common in the lowlands
Yellow-headed Blackbird - several around LL and UR
Brewer's Blackbird - common especially in the lower altitudes
Common Grackle - seen daily
Great-tailed Grackle - only around LL
Brown-headed Cowbird - seen daily
Orchard Oriole - a few at BL and mostly heard at CV
Bullock's Oriole - best at CC and BL, also at CV

FINCHES

Brown-capped Rosy-Finch - thanks to Becky we had great leisurely looks at a female feeding along the edge of a snow field in RM
Pine Grosbeak - superb views of a female with the crossbills, then a small flock lower down had a stunning red male
Cassin's Finch - never easy to find, we had great scope views of a male at Upper Beaver Meadows
House Finch - common in the lowlands
Red Crossbill - amazing close-up views of a flock of about 30, with red males, yellow females and streaky juveniles in RM
Pine Siskin - seen best in the crossbill flock
Lesser Goldfinch - common in the foothills
American Goldfinch - less common than the lessers, but we had several

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

House Sparrow - seen daily

TOTAL: 152

MAMMALS

American Pika (*Ochotona princeps*) - we were lucky to see this elusive and unusual mammal in the talus below Rainbow curve
Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)
Snowshoe Hare (*Lepus americanus*) - leader only from Trailridge Rd
Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)
Uinta Chipmunk (*Tamias umbrinus*)
Yellow-bellied Marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*)
Wyoming Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus elegans*) - common in RM
Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*) - one on the PG
Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus lateralis*) - looks like a chipmunk on steroids, common in RM
Black-tailed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*)
Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) - including a black morph in Lyons
Red Squirrel (Pine Squirrel, Chickaree) (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) - not especially red
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
Swift Fox (*Vulpes velox*) - we were very lucky to see two pups playing at the entrance to their burrow on the PG

Elk (Wapiti) (*Cervus elaphus*) - common in RM, in fact Barry counted 72 in one herd

Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

Pronghorn (*Antilocarpa americana*) - despite all that you've heard, not really an antelope, classified in its own family Antilocapridae

Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) - only seen as distant blobs in the scope

BUTTERFLIES

Western Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio rutulus*)

Pale Swallowtail (*Papilio eurymedon*)

Checkered White (*Pontia protodice*)

Western White (*Pontia occidentalis*)

Mustard White (*Pieris napi*)

Cabbage White (*Pieris rapae*)

Large Marble (*Euchloe ausonides*)

Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*)

Blue sp.

Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*)

Variiegated Fritillary (*Euptoieta claudia*)

Atlantis Fritillary (*Speyeria atlantis*)

Silvery Checkerspot (*Chlosyne nycteis*)

Field Crescent (*Phyciodes campestris*)

Hoary Comma (*Polygonia gracilis*)

Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*)

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

Common Ringlet (*Coenonympha tullia*)

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

Duskywing sp. (*Erynnis sp.*)

Common Checkered-Skipper (*Pyrgus communis*)

Common Sootywing (*Pholisora catullus*)

OTHER CRITTERS

Greenback Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*) - the fish we saw at Lily Lake, one of only two native trout species remaining in Colorado