



Field Guides Tour Report

COLORADO GROUSE II 2013

Apr 14, 2013 to Apr 24, 2013
Megan Crewe & Eric Hynes

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, [please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.](#)



Our last morning at the Greater Sage-Grouse lek was an experience of a lifetime. (Photo by guide Eric Hynes)

Mother Nature apparently never received the memo this year that our Colorado Grouse tour is in spring! We endured some serious cold, snow, and wind, but it did not stop us from having a fantastic adventure. After covering a huge part of Colorado, we ended up with a very respectable total of 162 bird taxa and a score of mammals as well.

Our odyssey commenced with the unwanted attention of the U.S. Army while we searched for Mountain Plover and culminated with a mystical morning in the sage and snow outside Walden at the Greater Sage-Grouse lek.

Our highlights were numerous but some standouts most deserving of acknowledgement were: the amazing sounds of the Greater Prairie-Chickens, meeting Fred Dorenkamp and Bob Bledsoe, the swirling cloud of Chestnut-collared Longspurs, the feeder extravaganza in Silverthorne, the fishing American Dipper, the Dusky Grouse coming to us, the dancing prowess of the Sharp-tailed Grouse, and the waterfowl smorgasbord at Walden Reservoir.

All the many miles were a delight from start to finish thanks to a wonderful group of birders. Megan and I truly appreciated the respect and kindness our group showed each other along the way. We sincerely hope to share another birding adventure with all of you! Take care and be well.

--Eric

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

SNOW GOOSE (*Chen caerulescens caerulescens*) – Two immature white morphs were lingering at Sweitzer Lake.

ROSS'S GOOSE (*Chen rossii*) – A pleasant surprise! One individual flew in and joined some Sandhill Cranes outside Gunnison.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – An everyday bird; some pairs claiming territories on still frozen wetlands

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – The roadside pond en route to Craig along Route 13 came through with a pair

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – Almost an everyday bird

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – Almost an everyday bird
MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Almost an everyday bird
BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – More days than not but never numerous
CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*) – A few good looks at this gorgeous dabbler
NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Almost an everyday bird
NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – One of the more uncommon dabblers migrating through Colorado at that time
GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – Almost an everyday bird but never numerous
CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – Our best looks were at Walden Reservoir
REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – Our best looks were at Walden Reservoir
RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – Jackpot! - at the roadside pond en route to Craig
LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Fairly common
BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*) – Daily on the second half of the tour
COMMON GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala clangula*) – Seen on a couple of the larger reservoirs
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala islandica*) – Tough to tease out of the distance and distortion on Blue Mesa Reservoir
HOODED MERGANSER (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) – Just one hen on Sweitzer Lake
COMMON MERGANSER (*Mergus merganser*) – More days than not but never numerous
RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Everyday in small numbers during the second half of the trip

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

SCALED QUAIL (*Callipepla squamata*) – What a great way to start our first full day of birding on IL Road outside Boone
GAMBEL'S QUAIL (*Callipepla gambelii*) – Several birds were teed up and calling at the entrance to the Colorado National Monument

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*) – A few were spotted when we were out on the eastern plains [H]
GREATER SAGE-GROUSE (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) – Alison did a remarkable job of spotting our first but the show the next morning was simply magnificent.
GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE (*Centrocercus minimus*) – The Wuanita blind sheltered us on a chilly morning and the birds thankfully stuck around long enough to get a good view
DUSKY GROUSE (*Dendragapus obscurus*) – Tony and Alison were our ace spotters for this species. Thank goodness that bird flew right to the road, giving us tremendous views!
SHARP-TAILED GROUSE (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*) – A blue ribbon for the fanciest footwork. Their displays were particularly energetic and entertaining.
GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN (*Tympanuchus cupido*) – Bob Bledsoe's introduction was interesting in its own right but the sounds of the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek were second to none.
LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) – Fred Dorenkamp guided us by bus to our first lek experience and the Northern Harriers added an eliminate of risk to the performance.
WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – A lone tom roadside on our way to Wray was our first encounter

Gaviidae (Loons)

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*) – Who could forget that bird in breeding plumage frantically splashing about as it bathed and preened at Sweitzer Lake.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – We all got a good look at the bird at the far end of Sweitzer Lake.
EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – An everyday bird during the second half of the trip. Some individuals were just starting to molt out of winter plumage and others were already in high breeding plumage.
WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) – Numerous on some of the reservoirs
CLARK'S GREBE (*Aechmophorus clarkii*) – Only a few individuals; we had our best comparison at Sweitzer Lake where the pale flanks; brighter, orangish yellow bill and extensive white feathering around the eye stood out. We also saw a likely hybrid showing intermediate field marks.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – We first encountered them around Evans

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – Seen on several occasions toward the end of the tour

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Almost an everyday bird
SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – A solitary figure at the edge of the pond outside Gunnison.
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (AMERICAN) (*Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*) – An adult asleep along the shoreline of Walden Reservoir

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – Our first good look was at the McCabe Lane Wetlands

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – An everyday bird

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Seen more days than not

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – We had some great looks at this majestic raptor including a bird incubating on a nest en route to Carrizo Canyon

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – Normally a beloved species, we were all wishing they would go away at the Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – Some people may have been in position to view the bird in flight as we were driving in Lamar

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Almost an everyday bird

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Primarily associated with the larger rivers with the cottonwood stands and reservoirs in the north; we saw several nests

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – More common on the eastern plains than at elevation

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – An everyday bird

FERRUGINOUS HAWK (*Buteo regalis*) – Only one but it makes the list; that individual flying away when we stopped for the Burrowing Owls in the extreme SE

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK (*Buteo lagopus*) – Presumably the unending winter kept more of these birds around than usual. Typically most have already headed north for their tundra breeding grounds. We had 13 in one stretch along Route 14 as we head south from Walden.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – They became numerous towards the end of the tour.

Gruidae (Cranes)

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) – Lots of great looks at these statuesque birds but hearing them call while the Sharp-tailed Grouse danced was really special.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Almost an everyday bird

MOUNTAIN PLOVER (*Charadrius montanus*) – It took some searching but eventually caught up to a pair on IL Road.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A few were tucked into the corner of one of wetland cells along the Yampa River just south of Craig.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – What a gorgeous shorebird; we had great looks in that little wetland next to the Arkansas River outside Lamar

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – Among the Wilson's Snipe in the roadside beaver impoundment on our drive up to Crested Butte

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A few roadside wetlands

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – A few roadside wetlands

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – A nice study along the state road as we headed north to Lamar from Carrizo Canyon; some folks saw a surprisingly large flock in flight at the Bledsoe Ranch

MARBLED GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) – Two in the back of the marsh at Lower Latham Reservoir

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – Arguably the most unlikely species of the tour; an individual (breeding-plumaged female?) working the shore of Walden Reservoir; great spot and ID Meegs!

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – A small flock came up out of the wetland along the Arkansas River and flew over us.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*) – Pat G. sure has an eye for picking them out of the muck (in the marsh at Lower Latham reservoir).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – A Northern Harrier played spoiler on our first flock near Lamar but we did see another one at a scope-testing distance outside Craig.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BONAPARTE'S GULL (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – At Sweitzer Lake and Walden Reservoir

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – The backdrop was not aesthetically pleasing but the views we had along the road approaching Evans were outstanding. Some birds in fresh plumage had glowing pink bellies.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – Almost an everyday bird

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*) – Few and far between

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – An everyday bird [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Also an everyday bird

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Almost an everyday bird

Strigidae (Owls)

GREAT HORNED OWL (*Bubo virginianus*) – We heard one as we stepped out of our hotel in Lamar predawn and flushed one the morning we left Gunnison.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) – The most memorable sighting was the bird that flew into the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek temporarily disturbing the performers.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – Great looks at these acrobatic flyers while standing at the overlooks in Colorado National

Monument.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – Several males were heard as they buzzed by and one during our Devils Kitchen picnic was briefly in view

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – Just a few individuals

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*) – Nice look at a male in Carrizo Canyon

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Heard drumming away in Carrizo Canyon but we could never get it in the bins [*]

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*) – At the feeders in Silverthorne

HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Picoides villosus*) – At the feeders in Silverthorne

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – Almost an everyday bird

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – The concentration along Route 34 east of Evans was mind-boggling! How many do you think we saw over the course of our adventure?!

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – Two flyovers - one at Lower Latham Reservoir and a particularly dark individual flew over the entrance to Colorado National Monument

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Alain had a heck of a pick of a bird in a cavity on the cliffs of Colorado National Monument. One van had a flyby in Denver and we all saw the bird in flight at Blue Mesa Reservoir.

PRAIRIE FALCON (*Falco mexicanus*) – Three times we saw this uncommon falcon in flight but each sighting was a b.v.d. (better view desired)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*) – The lead van got on one in Carrizo Canyon.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – Seen more days than not

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – A great look on the fence as we exited Sweitzer Lake State Park

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – A few participants in Eric's van spotted an individual on a wire on our way to the Dorenkamps. Unfortunately it had moved on by the time we got turned around. This was one of our more unlikely finds as the species just barely sneaks into SE Colorado.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – A number of individuals were spotted while we were on the eastern plains.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

PINYON JAY (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) – Our first look was just north of Buena Vista but the noisy flocks at the entrance to Colorado National Monument were more memorable.

STELLER'S JAY (INTERIOR) (*Cyanocitta stelleri macrolopha*) – At the feeders in Silverthorne and a few more places; this was the interior race with the subtle white markings on the head

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – A few people heard them the first full day in the field. [*]

WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (WOODHOUSE'S) (*Aphelocoma californica woodhouseii*) – We enjoyed good looks on multiple occasions

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (*Pica hudsonia*) – An everyday bird

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER (*Nucifraga columbiana*) – Up close and personal view at the feeders in Silverthorne

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Almost an everyday bird

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Almost an everyday bird

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – I bet you've never seen so many in your life.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Common during the second half of the tour

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Our best looks were at Sweitzer Lake

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Seen about every other day

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – A few colonies

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE (*Poecile atricapillus*) – Our first was a lone bird when we stopped for Common Mergansers in the river after lunch in Leadville.

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE (*Poecile gambeli*) – The "fierce" chickadee

JUNIPER TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*) – Good looks in Colorado National Monument

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (INTERIOR) (*Psaltriparus minimus plumbeus*) – A great study of the bluish interior form in Colorado National Monument when we walked the campground loop.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*) – Working the cottonwood trunks outside Gunnison

PYGMY NUTHATCH (*Sitta pygmaea*) – Coming to the suet and seedcakes up at Silverthorne

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – First encountered in Carrizo Canyon

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – The tape that wouldn't turn off at the Devils Kitchen picnic area in Colorado National Monument

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – What a remarkably responsive bird we enjoyed in Colorado National Monument

Cinclidae (Dippers)

AMERICAN DIPPER (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – We were treated to the works at the bridge over the Gunnison River: flying, calling, singing, submerging, and most dramatically -- fish capturing, thrashing, and swallowing!

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

WESTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia mexicana*) – Nice comparison with Mountain Bluebird on the fence line during the drive from Leadville to Gunnison

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia currucoides*) – The males are simply stunning. Our best looks were probably up at Crested Butte.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes townsendi*) – They were thick in Carrizo Canyon but we saw a fair number after that as well.

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – Just one low in the roadside shrubs at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

AMERICAN ROBIN (*Turdus migratorius*) – Almost an everyday bird

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

SAGE THRASHER (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) – Good scope views our first morning out on IL Road

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (EASTERN) (*Toxostoma curvirostre oberholseri*) – Good scope views our first morning out on IL Road

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Almost an everyday bird [I]

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – Great looks at their peachy buff bellies in breeding plumage at Lower Latham Reservoir and Walden Reservoir

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Only in Lamar

Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings)

CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR (*Calcarius ornatus*) – The flock of ~300 birds along Route 385 south of Burlington was spectacular in flight with all those black bellies.

MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*) – Good looks on our drive from Lamar to Wray but even better roadside views on our way back to Evans from Lower Latham Reservoir

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Just an individual fighting the strong south wind while we were enjoying a picnic in Kim the first day

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE (*Pipilo chlorurus*) – Megan and a couple of participants briefly got on a bird in Colorado National Monument.

SPOTTED TOWHEE (*Pipilo maculatus*) – Good looks at singing and foraging birds in Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

CANYON TOWHEE (*Melospiza fusca*) – Megan and a few of the participants got on a calling bird in Carrizo Canyon

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – At the visitor center in Colorado National Monument

VESPER SPARROW (*Poocetes gramineus*) – Most days during the first half of the tour

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – Roadside after leaving the Dorenkamps

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – A couple of super cooperative singers at the entrance to the Colorado National Monument

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Just a few

FOX SPARROW (SLATE-COLORED) (*Passerella iliaca schistacea*) – Our first good look was along the banks of the Gunnison River. The kicking and scratching individual in the campground at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park was special.

SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*) – Most encountered during the second half of the journey

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – Quite a few in the southeast

DARK-EYED JUNCO (SLATE-COLORED) (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) – Under the feeders in Silverthorne

DARK-EYED JUNCO (OREGON) (*Junco hyemalis oregonus*) – The "hooded" junco seen several days toward the end of the tour

DARK-EYED JUNCO (PINK-SIDED) (*Junco hyemalis mearnsi*) – Maybe the prettiest subspecies; seen everyday during the second half of the trip

DARK-EYED JUNCO (GRAY-HEADED) (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*) – Not the "red-backed," even though it has a red back; separated by bill color, these were all pink

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Common

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) – Ubiquitous in open country

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – A gorgeous Icterid

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) – Our first sighting was at the feedlot en route to Lamar

COMMON GRACKLE (BRONZED) (*Quiscalus quiscula versicolor*) – Well, common

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – When we were in the southeast

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – A scattering throughout

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH (HEPBURN'S) (*Leucosticte tephrocotis littoralis*) – The "gray-faced" ones on the feeders at Silverthorne. This subspecies is migratory and breeds at elevation in the coastal ranges from California to Alaska.

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH (GRAY-CROWNED) (*Leucosticte tephrocotis tephrocotis*) – The ones with just the gray head band. They are widespread and highly migratory in the inland continental mountain ranges

BLACK ROSY-FINCH (*Leucosticte atrata*) – What a striking finch! A few up at Silverthorne made a couple of favorite lists.

BROWN-CAPPED ROSY-FINCH (*Leucosticte australis*) – Hundreds at Silverthorne

PINE GROSBEAK (*Pinicola enucleator*) – A striking pair at the feeders in Silverthorne

CASSIN'S FINCH (*Haemorhous cassinii*) – Hard to come by this for some reason but we had good looks outside the visitor center in Colorado National Monument

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) – Almost an everyday bird

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – Some folks saw a few around Fruita

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Everyday bird unfortunately **[I]**

MAMMALS

NUTTALL'S (MOUNTAIN) COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus nuttalli*) – Quite a few roadside sightings as we entered Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) – The first mammal of the tour as we were exiting Denver Airport

WHITE-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus townsendi*) – Great looks near the Greater Sage-Grouse lek outside Walden

BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT (*Lepus californicus*) – One individual almost brought the vans together at dawn as we headed to the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek at Bledsoe Ranch

LEAST CHIPMUNK (*Tamias minimus*) – Scurrying around the campground at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

YELLOW-BELLIED MARMOT (*Marmota flaviventris*) – Just a few of us spotted one on our drive toward Craig

WYOMING GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus elegans*) – Several encounters of small colonies toward the end of the tour

ROCK SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus variegatus*) – Our first was in Carrizo Canyon but we saw it again in Colorado National Monument

GOLDEN-MANTLED GROUND SQUIRREL (*Spermophilus lateralis*) – The "big chipmunk"

BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE DOG (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) – Some impressive colonies on the eastern plains

WHITE-TAILED PRAIRIE DOG (*Cynomys leucurus*) – Our first sighting was after lunch in Montrose at the Red Barn en route to Fruita. The one with the blackish face.

GUNNISON PRAIRIE DOG (*Cynomys gunnisoni*) – Around Gunnison of course

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*) – In the woods along the river in Lamar

ORD'S KANGAROO RAT (*Dipodomys ordii*) – Several hopping about on our drive out to the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek at Bledsoe Ranch

MUSKRAT (*Ondatra zibethica*) – In a pond in Steamboat Springs

RED FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*) – A few quick looks while driving

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – Loved those sightings to and from Crested Butte

ELK (*Cervus canadensis*) – Craig claims to be the Elk (hunting) Capital of the World

MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*) – By the hundreds during the second half of our tour

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – In the riparian corridors in the east at the start of the trip

PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana*) – Early and late in the adventure with the best right around the vans at the Greater Sage-Grouse lek our last morning

BIGHORN SHEEP (*Ovis canadensis*) – A few around Idaho Springs

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Cerulean blue and slate gray

that would be the Pinyon Jay

Deep black, electric yellow

that very handsome blackbird fellow!

Akimbo wings and vibrating tips...

fierce fighter-plane males

of the grouse with sharp tails!

A relative newbie, I don't really list,

And yes, indeed, the dipper I missed.

But 51 new birds I really did see

A pretty good trip, if you're asking me!

By participant Beth Leslie Glasser

Totals for the tour: 162 bird taxa and 22 mammal taxa