

# WildWings Colorado Grouse Tour report 2017

by Tour Leader Dick Filby



*Dusky Grouse, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

## Summary

I am very pleased to report yet another very successful tour, with all the major target species (and many more) seen very well. The grouse-leks were spectacular as always, and wherever possible we were, again on private land and the only people present! The weather led to some last minute re-arrangements, mainly to take advantage of it, especially for a Rosy Finch spectacular, in a year when an early spring had meant that Rosy Finches were almost unobtainable. Just after the trip finished, a series of spring snowstorms swept across the state, dumping 1 to 2 feet of snow, most especially in SE Colorado. Having run this tour for almost a decade it is getting harder and harder to record new species, but this year we managed one – an out-of-range Carolina Wren. The total species list reached 200 birds for the first time, but of course it is not about the numbers, it's about the quality: species, views, sites/scenery, people and experiences. I pride myself on making this trip as good as possible in all of those, and this year was no exception. Also, this trip always excels in the mammal department, and this year major highlights included Black Bear, American Badger (buzzed by a Prairie Falcon), American Marten, Moose, and many more. A total of 29 mammal spp were recorded.

Not all species that we saw are mentioned in the day by day below – especially as this year's total of 200 species seen beat the previous record by a full 12! A full species list is enclosed.

## Day 1

Everyone arrived safely at Denver airport and after a welcome greeting by two Great Horned Owls calling to each other on the motel roof at dusk, it was early to bed.

## Day 2

An early start saw us heading up to northeast Colorado. Private lands in the vicinity of the Pawnee National Grasslands soon provided us with good views of several target birds, most especially Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs, and Mountain Plover – all in breeding plumage. The

sheer numbers of one longspur flock that we encountered in one of my traditionally favoured spots was extremely impressive, with 2000 being the conservative estimate, mainly McCown's. We paused close(ish) to a Bald Eagle's nest, viewing it from inside the van, and the adult gave us little more than an interested glance. Swainson's Hawks were frequent along the roadside, and we had a single, moulting Ferruginous Hawk too, as well as many Vesper Sparrows which gave us some excellent views. A roadside pond gave us an opportunity to start on our blackbird list – and pretty much clean-up in one master class session: Red-winged, Yellow-headed, Brewer's Blackbirds, alongside Common Grackles, Brown-headed Cowbirds, all to the strident liquid song of the omnipresent Western Meadowlarks. As we drove we saw at least three Loggerhead Shrikes, as well as hundreds of Horned Larks, many in excellent plumage, and giving great views at times. Pronghorn Antelopes are very striking creatures, and we saw many of these too. We continued onto Wray, arriving in good time to explore the area before an early dinner. We enjoyed Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, a female Hooded Merganser, three Wild Turkeys, several American Avocets, as well as three Lesser Yellowlegs, and three gorgeous Wilson's Phalaropes, lots of Mourning Doves – which would be the case on every day out east, five Burrowing Owls – we would see plenty more of these too, a Belted Kingfisher, three Downy Woodpeckers, several American Kestrels – this beautiful bird was then seen daily, our first Say's Phoebe, a couple of Eastern Bluebirds – our only Eastern's of the trip – but we were to see all three species, of course many American Robins, and our first – of many – White-crowned Sparrows, which included some already singing. Also singing was our only Northern Cardinal of the trip – this species at the extreme western edge of its range in Eastern Colorado. It was a warm afternoon and butterflies and dragonflies were on the wing, providing additional interest for several members of the group. After an early dinner, it was early to bed, excited to be heading to our first lek in the morning.

### Day 3



*GreaterPrairie-Chicken, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

Met by our local guide, we set off early to be in position in a hide at our Greater Prairie-Chicken lek before first light. With the setting moon as a backdrop in front of us, it wasn't long before we heard the first Burrowing Owls, then the male Greater Prairie-Chickens calling out in front of us, as well as Horned Larks and Western Meadowlarks. It was an exceptional, unforgettable, dawn chorus. The sky grew lighter from behind us, and we could soon make out the shapes of the owls and the chickens, some only a few yards away. As the light improved, the displays could be seen, and we realised that

there were at least two females, as well as 27 or more males vying for their attention, giving us an amazing, noisy, display, as well as the 16 or more Burrowing Owls on the lek – my best ever number for them at this spot. As the sun climbed higher, and after the females had left, the activity died down, and some birds left, then so did we, heading back into town for breakfast and the journey south. We had good fun in the cafe with the locals – but I won't expand on that here!

The drive south was punctuated with a few roadside stops, which included, notably, us finding not one but two Harris's Sparrows – here at the western edge of their wintering range, a Wilson's Snipe, several more Wild Turkeys, yet another Ferruginous Hawk, this one not in moult, many Swainson's Hawks and plenty more Horned Larks amongst the other birds that we had already seen the previous day. A lunchtime stop at the Great Plains reservoirs that I had scouted the previous week was most productive. The water level on these reservoirs varies considerably from year to year, and from one lake to the next, and sometimes one can provide good birding if you go to the right one. We enjoyed an excellent visit, with, thousands of duck and many waders and several gulls: highlights included eight Snow Geese – last ones around this early spring, 13 spp of ducks incl Buffleheads and a pair of Hooded Mergansers, five spp of grebes: Pied-billed, Horned, Eared, Western and Clark's, plus American White Pelicans, White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Killdeer, Marbled Godwit, Baird's, Least, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, Wilson's Phalaropes, Franklin's, Ring-billed and California Gulls, a nesting pair of Great Horned Owls and several Savannah Sparrows. Later we saw two Broad-winged Hawks as we drove, one perching on roadside wires, as well as a cracking Northern Harrier – we saw three in total today.

On arrival at the motel that evening there were Chimney Swifts over the motel, and a single Merlin. Again, it was early to bed after dinner, in expectation of our second lek tomorrow.

#### Day 4



*Lesser Prairie-Chicken, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

Heading out early we were on our way to a Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek, pausing briefly en-route to watch two Raccoons foraging in a stubble field. These chickens have been in constant decline for years, due to various factors, not least amongst them habitat loss and weather – drought causing poor breeding success, wildfires, and then a massive blizzard in 2006 that left a lot of their range under

four to five feet of snow - for two months. The species is almost extinct in SE Colorado, so today we were at a lek in Kansas that I had only scouted out a week previously – on a 1400 mile round trip from Carbondale. In some 50 hours I not only scouted this lek, but also the Great Plains reservoirs for the lunchtime stop yesterday. That massive effort proved well worthwhile as I then knew exactly where to park and angle the van in the pitch dark of pre-dawn, in order that we could watch safely from inside without disturbing the birds, whilst still getting good views. We were not disappointed, and five males showed up to give us a great display. A female Northern Harrier threatened to put a dampener on the spectacle, landing right in the middle of the lek at one point, but it soon moved on having caused only minor disturbance. The Lesser Prairie-Chickens carried on, with much jumping and antagonistic display action, loving to perch up on any available piece of vegetation, all of which is quite different from the Greater Prairie-Chickens. Remarkably we also saw two Upland Sandpipers on the lek – early migrants! Another advantage of my pre-tour scouting of this lek was some exploratory birding in the general area, enabling me to drive straight to a spot for Grasshopper Sparrows, which duly performed very well indeed for us, right next to the van. The ammodramus sparrows are notoriously secretive through the rest of the year, so to see them well is always a treat. After an encounter where I helped a rancher recapture a runaway foal, we then stopped at my next, newly scouted site, where we had four Sandhill Cranes, terrific views of many “peeps”, notably Baird’s, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, a stonking Piping Plover (major rarity), both species of Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Brown Thrashers (our only ones of the trip), and our first warblers – the expected Yellow-rumped as well as at least two Orange-crowned Warblers. Nick, the ever inquisitive all-round naturalist lifted up a piece of corrugated metal to find an extremely lethargic and very photogenic Prairie Massasauga Rattlesnake. In all the years it was only the second rattler I have ever seen. Indeed, it was so good, that we all went back for more views and photos as we headed back to the van. The snake was torpid on a cool morning, and seemed totally disinterested in moving. Never-the-less we paid it the respect that it deserved!

We headed back into SE Colorado and skirted the Comanche Grasslands to the ranch on the edge of the canyonlands where we would spend the night. It was a great break on what would otherwise have been a very long drive, and the weather was idyllic, calm, sunny, and neither cold nor hot. A late afternoon drive, interspersed with short walks, resulted in many great birds, the highlights of which included a fall of Chipping Sparrows – several hundred in a small area, with at least one Brewer’s Sparrow among them. Two Roadrunners performed for ages very close to the van, giving splendid views and some great photo opportunities.



*Greater Roadrunner, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

There followed a trifecta of wrens, with Canyon, Rock and Bewick’s all giving us good views, as well as a couple of Canyon Towhees. White-tailed and Mule Deer, and some Bighorn Sheep were all

located, showing well, and finally, just before setting off back to the ranch, a Ladder-backed Woodpecker showed very well on some Cottonwood trees right next to us.



*Ladder-backed Woodpecker  
WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

After dinner in the ranch house we headed out for a night drive, seeing several splendid Grey Foxes, some very well indeed, as well as more Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer and Bighorn Sheep. Not quite so early to bed, but we could have a lie-in tomorrow!

## **Day 5**

Driving out at dawn we were immediately enjoying good luck on an idyllic morning, and a Black Bear was a great way to start! It was moving along the canyon floor, just ahead of us, but soon went out of sight into a side canyon. Rufous-crowned Sparrows were singing from the nearby hillsides and it wasn't long before we saw our first. The Canyon Towhees showed well, too, and Rock and Canyon Wrens sang incessantly, no doubt revelling in the calm morning, almost as much as we. Eastern Phoebes (**photo**) perched out in the open, and a line of Cottonwoods held a small group of Yellow-rumped Warblers, of both the eastern form, Myrtle, and the more colourful western form, Audubon's. It wasn't long before we latched onto a Northern Parula with them – what a colourful treat! Nearby, a Carolina Wren sang from atop a bush, a first record for this tour. Soon, we were heading back to a hearty ranch breakfast, but not until we had paused to enjoy yet two more Roadrunners right next to the van. Back at the ranch we saw our first



Curve-billed Thrashers, a great way to round off a great meal. It was interesting to chat to the owners about their way of life and to truly appreciate how green it was, compared to a few years back when the place was seriously dry, though not as dry as when the famous dustbowl of the 30's was seated very close-by.



*Greater Roadrunner*  
*WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

Heading west, it wasn't long before we were looking up the Rocky Mountains ahead, and after a couple of brief pauses, most notably for a nice covey of Scaled Quail, we were up into the mountains, and stopping in search of American Three-toed Woodpeckers in the snow, which, after a little perseverance, we were all able to see. Thence on down into the Gunnison Basin, a sea of Sagebrush, surrounded by hills covered in mixed Aspen and spruce-fir forest. We checked on the lek site before heading into town and an early dinner before a good night's sleep.



## Day 6

Heading out to the lek before dawn, we were soon seated in our hide and awaiting the Gunnison Sage Grouse. As first light approached we were able to get scopes trained on the birds, which, unlike a few years ago, now lek quite some distance away from the hide, but endangered species status means that this is the only lek that one is allowed to visit, so we were grateful for our scopes and the opportunity to use them in the comfort of the hide. Eventually we got half-decent views, being able to clearly see the thick tuft of filoplumes, the dramatic white and black tail feathers erect in a fan, and the head-bobbing, throat-pouch-emptying display. Afterwards we headed back to the motel and thence onto a spot for Sage Thrasher, several of which performed wonderfully, before stopping to admire a Gunnison Prairie Dog colony, and thence onto the wonderful, dramatic birding spot of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. Here we took our time, first in search of Dusky Grouse, enjoying good views of singing Green-tailed and Spotted Towhees and Fox Sparrows, before finally thrilling to the spectacle of a Dusky Grouse "booming" at us at a few yards range (**photo**). What an amazing spectacle! Thence we enjoyed some stunning views of the canyon, complete with wheeling White-throated Swifts, some at



very close range, the recently split Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, and took a picnic lunch, before we headed down to the Delta area and some lakeside birding where highlights included Osprey, singing Marsh Wrens, a flock of White-faced Ibis, around 18 Marbled Godwits – I always love to hear them call, 25 Franklin's Gulls, all in gorgeous breeding plumage, flushed pink, a Prairie Falcon gave us a good view on a flyby and a Muskrat swam idly past by the bank. Not far away we stopped to admire a Golden Eagle on a tree nest, surprisingly close to a house, and close to the road.

Later, as we paused on McClure pass, we got great views of Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Finch, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and then some gaudy Evening Grosbeaks, but alas no Beavers on view at an impressive series of dams and ponds. Soon after we were in Carbondale, where there was a flyover Goshawk displaying over town. Now that was lucky! Being hosted for dinner at Mary and Shep's gorgeous home was a treat, and thanks too to my wife Denise who helped out with the cooking.



*Western Meadowlark, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

## Day 7

Well, we hadn't originally planned to be in Carbondale until the next day, but the weather forecast of snow caused me to switch things around at the very last moment (yesterday afternoon to be precise) in order to give us the best possible chance of seeing Rosy-Finches. Denise had been putting in great efforts to feeding them at a friends house, a 50 mile round trip from



ours, but due to the early, warm spring, they were not coming to the feeders as often as we would have liked. Stories from across the state were of people failing to see any, or just one species in low numbers. However, as everyone knows (?), when it snows in the high country, everything heads for the feeders, so this early morning we found ourselves in falling snow, thrilling to hundreds of Rosy-Finches, of all three species, just yards away at the aforementioned feeders.

Effort repaid! **Photos** above of Black Rosy-Finch (in flight) and Brown-capped Rosy-Finch. It was quite the spectacle and we enjoyed it for some time, along with Steller's Jays, Hairy Woodpecker, yet more Evening Grosbeaks, and finally a Red-naped Sapsucker. The Beavers failed to perform, but we were certainly impressed by the dam and lodge that they had built.

We searched the Roaring Fork river for American Dipper, soon seeing another amazing 40 Evening Grosbeaks, in roadside trees, followed swiftly by great views of three Lewis's Woodpeckers (**photo**) – one of the world's most bizarrely coloured birds, over the tavern that Mary and Shep had built. Soon afterwards we stopped further along and found two American Dippers! We paused at roadside lake and enjoyed Violet Green Swallows before heading for our house, where Denise was preparing a hearty brunch. The garden feeders were the planned distraction to an excellent meal, and amongst many birds were our first Lesser Goldfinches, in the



company of several American Goldfinch and Pine Siskins. Heading out for more local birding, we soon found a Clark's Nutcracker, swiftly followed by several Barrow's Goldeneyes, another Lewis's Woodpecker, watched Red-tailed Hawks on the nest, and saw a stunning Black-throated Gray Warbler, and a flock of the ever elusive Pinyon Jays, as well as more Woodhouse's Scrub Jays. A final cup of tea at home, and we set off for our next stop, high in the hills at a ski resort. As we headed down the Colorado River valley, we passed several nests of Osprey and Bald Eagles, before turning into the hills and up to our condominiums where we would stay the night. In the Aspen trees by the buildings there were Cassin's Finches and Red-naped Sapsuckers, and singing Dark-eyed Juncos of the local breeding form, Gray-headed, with their splendid chestnut-backs. After an early dinner most of us headed outside at dusk in search of owls, but to no avail, despite a wonderfully calm and dark evening. The temperature was plummeting and the rest of us soon headed to bed as well.

### Day 8

Up early we headed out in search of Gray Jays, and hopefully Pine Grosbeaks too, although the latter have virtually disappeared from most of their regular haunts this last winter. Well, our luck was in on this cold morn (-12C), and within minutes we were watching both species! Heading back for breakfast in the condos we then packed up and set off for the Colorado National Monument, arriving mid morning. Despite the cool weather, little was singing as we arrived, but with some patience we were able to find the dramatic looking Black-throated Sparrows (**photo**), for which we had come, as well as Juniper Titmouse, a single Black-chinned Hummingbird and several more White-throated Swifts. The scenery, insect life and botany wasn't too bad either! Heading yet further west we were soon nearly at the Utah border, where we duly found more Sage Thrashers, singing Brewer's Sparrows, and the recently split Sagebrush Sparrow.



It was soon time to head east and north, up to the sagebrush county of northwest Colorado, but we paused enroute at my favourite Bald Eagle's nest, scoping it from a bluff across the river, getting excellent scope views (crippling scope views even) at eye level of an adult and chicks in the nest.

We arrived in the intermontane plain of North Park late afternoon, a sea of Sagebrush, pastures, wetlands all surrounded by snowcapped, forested mountains, and after checking into our motel, enjoyed an early meal and early to bed.

## Day 9



Lek time! We drove out of town to be in position in our private hide at a Greater Sage Grouse lek before first light. As the dawn crept up over our shoulders, the Sage Thrashers started to sing, and the grouse started to display, even before there was scarcely a hint of light in the eastern sky. They were close, close enough that you could hear their wings swishing against their flanks as they expelled air from their huge throat sacs with ear popping noises. Over fifty males on the lek, as well as at least two females,



kept an incredible show going until well after sunrise, until a Golden Eagle showed up and they all scattered. Well, all except one, which must have crouched motionless whilst the Goldie circled overhead, because once the eagle had gone, it too flew off. Wyoming Ground Squirrels and White-tailed Prairie Dogs (**photo**) were the other occupants of the lek area, one of the latter being extremely curious and confiding when we finally drove away.

Back in town we had breakfast, checked out and headed to the hills again. Enroute we were treated to an American Badger (**photo**) close by the road in a pasture, that gave us prolonged views, and was even buzzed by a Prairie Falcon – a highlight of the trip for sure. Soon afterwards we were watching an American Marten (**photo**) at close quarters for several minutes, yet another singing Fox Sparrow, and several chipmunks that provided wonderful photo opportunities too. Just a few minutes later there was a Moose close to the road, and shortly after that, a pair of Northern Harriers, yet another Goshawk, plus several Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks.



All of this and virtually not a soul to be seen. Stopping in at the reservoir, there were hundreds of American White Pelicans and California Gulls preparing to breed on the islands, several Canvasbacks amongst the scores of other ducks, and a small group of Forster's Terns. After lunch we headed off to our next stop, Craig, seeing several Sandhill Cranes and Bald Eagles enroute, before we headed early to bed, ready for a Sharp-tailed Grouse lek in the morning.



*American Badger, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

### **Day 10**

Don't expect good news when your phone rings at 2:20am! It was my friend who was going to take us onto private property to the Sharp-tailed Grouse lek, telling me that the persistent rain of the past hour would mean that the lek would be inaccessible. Drat! However, that's why you have plan B, and come to that plan C and plan D too. Well, thanks are due to my WildWings colleague Richard, who had forewarned me that one of the other options was proving extremely unreliable this year, and from previous experience I knew that the road to yet another lek would also likely be impassable in such conditions, so I was pleased to have plan D – even tho' it was a lek that I had never been to! I promptly consulted the county road maintenance plan online, and it looked like the roads to it would quite likely be OK, so we duly set off before dawn to give it a try, and reached it without too much problem, the dirt roads being greasy but not totally un-driveable. The weather was clearing up, four Sharp-tailed Grouse were on the lek, and they were displaying a little too. We got nice looks in the scopes without leaving the van, and even had one perched up in a roadside bush as well. Nearby a herd of Elk slowly disappeared into the Gambel Oak shrub, wary of our presence. Sandhill Cranes called nearby, but we couldn't see them, and a Golden Eagle flew over – keeping the grouse from being too active for obvious reasons.

Thrilled with our success, we headed east again, and with a view to looking for White-tailed Ptarmigan in the afternoon. Driving conditions were good, and having checked in early to our hotel, we met our guide who took us up to his favourite roadside viewing spot and we duly climbed out of the van and started scanning. It only took a few minutes for Mick to spot one flying in over the brow of a hill (trust a stalwart raptor watcher to manage that!) and we all duly got great scope views from by the van, even after some skiers with two dogs had walked close by the bird, causing it to scurry out of view. When it reappeared, there were three! After yet more scope views, we were soon heading back down the road, and proceeded to bird in a nearby valley, where we spotted some Mountain Goats high on the hill above, and had terrific looks at a Golden-crowned Kinglet, as well as several Moose that we got excellent views of, watching them at close range from the safety of the “mobile hide” (our van)!



*Moose, WildWings Colorado Tour 2017*

Soon we were back at the motel, dinner and early to bed – as usual, but with a celebratory note, as we had completed our ‘grouse and grouse-like birds’ list with 100% success. Tomorrow could be a little more relaxing, safe in that knowledge, and that we could bird locally instead of having to retrace our steps to some far flung corner of the state!

### Day 11



A relaxed start saw us heading down into the Front Range hills just west of Denver, into the Ponderosa Forest, in search of several speciality birds. It was a chilly, but almost windless morning, and within minutes we were enjoying rapid fire success with pretty much all of our target species: Pygmy Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebirds, and, perhaps best of all, Williamson’s Sapsucker (**photo**). All these species gave us excellent, prolonged views, and it was a happy crew that set off for breakfast. After eating we headed into Red Rocks Park, where the dramatic scenery was a great setting for a close look at a Prairie Falcon, a perched Peregrine, some excellent close, flyby White-throated Swifts, a Song Sparrow, a singing House Wren and a pair of Bushtits carrying nesting material. We then moved on to view a suburban lake that I have found excellent for late Hooded Mergansers and we were not disappointed, with at least four pairs giving us some very good views. Nearby we watched a tree full of nesting Double-crested Cormorants and Black-crowned Night Herons, and several Blue Jays here were our first sighting of this eastern species on the trip, and this is a good site for Northern Rough-winged Swallows too, which we found

as soon as we stepped out of the van. Our final site for the day was Cherry Creek State Park, an excellent site of mixed habitats, and here we had many birds seen earlier on the trip, plus some new species too, including 10 summer plumaged Spotted Sandpipers, several small groups of Western Willets (**photo**), again in summer plumage, a couple of Bonaparte's Gulls, and an American Herring Gull, along with yet more Franklin's and Ring-billed Gulls. A squall late afternoon 'downed' large numbers of hirundines, and as they were all now flying low over the water it was easy to look through them and get great views. We found our only Bank Swallow (aka Sand Martin) of the trip, and had some excellent views of Violet-Green Swallows too. We headed off to our last night's stay in high spirits.



## Day 12

Leaving the motel on a clear sunny morning, we headed back to Cherry Creek for some final birding. A Yellow Warbler was singing as we got out of the van, and it was due to Gordon's perseverance that we all got to see this beauty. Thank-you Gordon! Soon after, with some patience, we all had some good looks at a Virginia Rail, and soon after, a Sora too. It was very pleasant to enjoy the many species on the water and in the woods, recap views always being worthwhile, and before long it was time to drive back to the motel, take advantage of the late checkout that I had arranged so everyone could have a final shower and brushup before the flight home.

Thanks all – it was a great trip, with a great team. I look forward to seeing you all again soon, and to doing the Colorado trip again as soon as next year. If you are reading this report with a view to joining the trip, then contact the office soon, as the trip usually fills up quickly, sometimes more than a year in advance.

Dick Filby  
Tour Leader

Full Species List for 2017 below

Species seen 2017

**SNOW GOOSE**

*Chen caerulescens*

**CANADA GOOSE**

*Branta canadensis*

**WOOD DUCK**

*Aix sponsa*

**GADWALL**

*Anas strepera*

**AMERICAN WIGEON**

*Anas americana*

**MALLARD**

*Anas platyrhynchos*

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL**

*Anas discors*

**CINNAMON TEAL**

*Anas cyanoptera*

**NORTHERN SHOVELER**

*Anas clypeata*

**NORTHERN PINTAIL**

*Anas acuta*

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL**

*Anas crecca*

**CANVASBACK**

*Aythya valisineria*

**REDHEAD**

*Aythya americana*

**RING-NECKED DUCK**

*Aythya collaris*

**LESSER SCAUP**

*Aythya affinis*

**BUFFLEHEAD**

*Bucephala albeola*

**COMMON GOLDENEYE**

*Bucephala clangula*

**BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**

*Bucephala islandica*

**HOODED MERGANSER**

*Lophodytes cucullatus*

**COMMON MERGANSER (Goosander)**

*Mergus merganser americanus*

**RUDDY DUCK**

*Oxyura jamaicensis*

**SCALED QUAIL**

*Callipepla squamata*

**GAMBEL'S QUAIL**

*Callipepla gambelli*

**RING-NECKED PHEASANT**

*Phasianus colchicus*

**GREATER SAGE-GROUSE**

*Centrocercus urophasianus*

**GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE**

*Centrocercus minimus*

**WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN**

*Lagopus leucura*

**DUSKY GROUSE**

*Dendragapus obscurus*

**SHARP-TAILED GROUSE**

*Tympanuchus phasianellus*

**GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN**

*Tympanuchus cupido*

**LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN**

*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*

**WILD TURKEY**

*Meleagris gallopavo*

**PIED-BILLED GREBE**

*Podilymbus podiceps*

**HORNED (Slavonian) GREBE**

*Podiceps auritus*

**EARED (Black-necked) GREBE**

*Podiceps nigricollis*

**WESTERN GREBE**

*Aechmophorus occidentalis*

**CLARK'S GREBE**

*Aechmophorus clarkii*

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT**

*Phalacrocorax auritus*

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN**

*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

**GREAT BLUE HERON**

*Ardea herodias*

**SNOWY EGRET**

*Egretta thula*

**CATTLE EGRET**

*Bubulcus ibis*

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON**

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

**WHITE-FACED IBIS**

*Plegadis chihi*

**TURKEY VULTURE***Cathartes aura***OSPREY***Pandion haliaetus***BALD EAGLE***Haliaeetus leucocephalus***NORTHERN HARRIER***Circus cyaneus***SHARP-SHINNED HAWK***Accipiter striatus***COOPER'S HAWK***Accipiter cooperii***NORTHERN GOSHAWK***Accipiter gentilis***BROAD-WINGED HAWK***Buteo platypterus***SWAINSON'S HAWK***Buteo swainsoni***RED-TAILED HAWK***Buteo jamaicensis***FERRUGINOUS HAWK***Buteo regalis***GOLDEN EAGLE***Aquila chrysaetos***VIRGINIA RAIL***Rallus limicola***SORA***Porzana carolina***AMERICAN COOT***Fulica americana***SANDHILL CRANE***Grus canadensis***BLACK-NECKED STILT***Himantopus mexicanus***AMERICAN AVOCET***Recurvirostra americana***PIPING PLOVER***Charadrius melodus***KILLDEER***Charadrius vociferus***MOUNTAIN PLOVER***Charadrius montanus***SPOTTED SANDPIPER***Actitis macularia***GREATER YELLOWLEGS***Tringa melanoleuca***WILLET***Tringa semipalmata***LESSER YELLOWLEGS***Tringa flavipes***UPLAND SANDPIPER***Bartramia longicauda***MARbled GODWIT***Limosa fedoa***BAIRD'S SANDPIPER***Calidris bairdii***LEAST SANDPIPER***Calidris minutilla***PECTORAL SANDPIPER***Calidris melanotos***SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER***Calidris pusilla***WESTERN SANDPIPER***Calidris mauri***LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER***Limnodromus scolopaceus***WILSON'S SNIPE***Gallinago delicata***WILSON'S PHALAROPE***Phalaropus tricolor***BONAPARTE'S GULL***Larus philadelphia***FRANKLIN'S GULL***Larus pipixican***RING-BILLED GULL***Larus delawarensis***CALIFORNIA GULL***Larus californicus***(AMERICAN) HERRING GULL***Larus (argentatus) smithsonianus***FORSTER'S TERN***Sterna forsteri***FERAL (ROCK) DOVE***Columbia livia***EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE***Streptopelia decaocto***MOURNING DOVE***Zenaida macroura***GREATER ROADRUNNER***Geococcyx californianus***GREAT HORNED OWL***Bubo virginianus*

**BURROWING OWL***Athene cunicularia***CHIMNEY SWIFT***Chaetura pelagic***WHITE-THROATED SWIFT***Aeronautes saxatalis***BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD***Archilochus alexandri***BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD***Selasphorus platycercus***BELTED KINGFISHER***Ceryle alcyon***LEWIS' WOODPECKER***Melanerpes lewis***WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER***Sphyrapicus thyroideus***RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER***Sphyrapicus nuchalis***LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER***Picoides scalaris***DOWNY WOODPECKER***Picoides pubescens***HAIRY WOODPECKER***Picoides villosus***AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER***Picoides dorsalis***NORTHERN FLICKER***Colaptes auratus***AMERICAN KESTREL***Falco sparverius***MERLIN***Falco columbarius***PEREGRINE FALCON***Falco peregrinus***PRAIRIE FALCON***Falco mexicanus***EASTERN PHOEBE***Sayornis phoebe***SAY'S PHOEBE***Sayornis saya***ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER***Myiarchus cinerascens***WESTERN KINGBIRD***Tyrannus verticalis***LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE***Lanius ludovicianus***GRAY JAY***Perisoreus canadensis***PINYON JAY***Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus***STELLER'S JAY***Cyanocitta stelleri***BLUE JAY***Cyanocitta cristata***WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY***Aphelocoma woodhouseii***CLARK'S NUTCRACKER***Nucifraga columbiana***BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE***Pica hudsonia***AMERICAN CROW***Corvus brachyrhynchos***CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN***Corvus cryptoleucus***(Common) RAVEN***Corvus corax***HORNED LARK (Shorelark)***Eremophila alpestris***TREE SWALLOW***Tachycineta bicolor***VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW***Tachycineta thalassina***NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW***Stelgidopteryx serripennis***BANK SWALLOW (Sand Martin)***Riparia riparia***CLIFF SWALLOW***Petrochelidon pyrrhonota***BARN SWALLOW (Swallow)***Hirundo rustica***BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE***Poecile atricapillus***MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE***Poecile gambeli***JUNIPER TITMOUSE***Baeolophus griseus***BUSHTIT***Psaltriparus minimus***RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH***Sitta canadensis***WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH***Sitta carolinensis*

**PYGMY NUTHATCH***Sitta pygmaea***ROCK WREN***Salpinctes obsoletus***CANYON WREN***Cartherpes mexicanus***HOUSE WREN***Troglodytes aedon***MARSH WREN***Cistothorus palustris***CAROLINA WREN***Thryothorus ludovicianus***BEWICK'S WREN***Thryomanes bewickii***BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER***Polioptila caerulea***AMERICAN DIPPER***Cinclus mexicanus***GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET***Regulus satrapa***RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET***Regulus calendula***EASTERN BLUEBIRD***Sialia sialis***WESTERN BLUEBIRD***Sialia mexicana bairdi***MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD***Sialia currucoides***TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE***Myadestes townsendi***AMERICAN ROBIN***Turdus migratorius***CURVE-BILLED THRASHER***Toxostoma curvirostre***BROWN THRASHER***Toxostoma rufum***SAGE THRASHER***Oreoscoptes montanus***NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD***Mimus polyglottos***(European) STARLING***Sturnus vulgaris***AMERICAN PIPIT***Anthus rubescens alticola***CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR***Calcarius ornatus***MCCOWN'S LONGSPUR***Rhynchophanes mccownii***ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER***Oreothlypis celata***NORTHERN PARULA***Setophaga americana***YELLOW WARBLER***Setophaga petechia***YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (Myrtle)***Setophaga coronata coronata*Yellow-rumped Wblr (**Audubon's** form)*Setophaga coronata auduboni***BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER***Setophaga nigrescens***GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE***Pipilo chlorurus***SPOTTED TOWHEE***Pipilo maculatus***RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW***Aimophila ruficeps***CANYON TOWHEE***Melospiza fusca***CHIPPING SPARROW***Spizella passerine***BREWER'S SPARROW***Spizella breweri***VESPER SPARROW***Pooecetes gramineus***LARK SPARROW***Chondestes grammacus***BLACK-THROATED SPARROW***Amphispiza bilineata***SAGEBRUSH SPARROW***Artemisiospiza nevadensis***SAVANNAH SPARROW***Passerculus sandwichensis***GRASSHOPPER SPARROW***Ammodramus savannarum***FOX SPARROW (Rocky Mountain form)***Passerella iliaca schistacea***SONG SPARROW***Melospiza melodia***HARRIS'S SPARROW***Zonotrichia querula***WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW***Zonotrichia leucophrys*

**DARK-EYED JUNCO**

(Gray-headed form)

*Junco hyemalis dorsalis*

**NORTHERN CARDINAL**

*Cardinalis cardinalis*

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD**

*Agelaius phoeniceus*

**WESTERN MEADOWLARK**

*Sturnella neglecta*

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD**

*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**

*Euphagus cyanocephalus*

**COMMON GRACKLE**

*Quiscalus quiscula*

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE**

*Quiscalus mexicanus*

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD**

*Molothrus ater*

**GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH**

*Leucosticte tephrocotis tephrocotis*

**BLACK ROSY-FINCH**

*Leucosticte atrata*

**BROWN-CAPPED ROSY-FINCH**

*Leucosticte australis*

**PINE GROSBEAK**

*Pinicola enucleator*

**HOUSE FINCH**

*Haemorhous mexicanus*

**CASSIN'S FINCH**

*Haemorhous cassinii*

**(Red) CROSSBILL (heard only)**

*Loxia curvirostra*

**PINE SISKIN**

*Spinus spinus*

**LESSER GOLDFINCH**

*Spinus psaltria*

**AMERICAN GOLDFINCH**

*Spinus tristis*

**EVENING GROSBEAK**

*Coccothraustes vespertinus*

**HOUSE SPARROW**

*Passer domesticus*

200 spp of birds seen, plus 1 heard

2 new in 2017 - Carolina Wren & Yellow Warbler

Next page: mammals

## MAMMALS

### **COTTONTAIL spp**

*Sylvilagus spp*

### **BLACK-TAILED JACKRABBIT**

*Lepus californicus*

### **WHITE-TAILED JACKRABBIT**

*Lepus townsendii*

### **LEAST/COLORADO CHIPMUNK**

*Tamias spp*

### **YELLOW-BELLIED MARMOT**

*Marmota flaviventris*

### **WYOMING GROUND -SQUIRREL**

*Spermophilus elegans*

### **GOLDEN-MANTLED GROUND -SQUIRREL**

*Spermophilus lateralis*

### **ROCK SQUIRREL**

*Spermophilus variegates*

### **GUNNISON PRAIRIE-DOG**

*Cynomys gunnisoni*

### **WHITE-TAILED PRAIRIE-DOG**

*Cynomys leucurus*

### **BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE-DOG**

*Cynomys ludovicianus*

### **FOX SQUIRREL**

*Sciurus niger*

### **PINE SQUIRREL (Red Squirrel)**

*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*

### **ORD'S KANGAROO-RAT**

*Dipodomys ordii*

### **COMMON MUSKRAT**

*Ondatra zibethicus*

### **COYOTE**

*Canis latrans*

### **RED FOX**

*Vulpes vulpes*

### **GRAY FOX**

*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*

### **BLACK BEAR**

*Ursus americanus*

### **RACCOON**

*Procyon lotor*

### **AMERICAN MARTEN**

*Martes americana*

### **AMERICAN BADGER**

*Taxidea taxus*

### **ELK**

*Cervus elaphus*

### **MULE DEER**

*Odocoileus hemionus*

### **WHITE-TAILED DEER**

*Odocoileus virginianus*

### **MOOSE**

*Alces alces*

### **PRONGHORN**

*Antilocapra americana*

### **MOUNTAIN GOAT**

*Oreamnos americanus*

### **MOUNTAIN SHEEP (Bighorn Sheep)**

*Ovis canadensis*

29 spp of mammals

1 new in 2017 – Mountain Goat