

COBirders—

Below is an excerpt from a report I wrote for the Wet Mountain Tribune (Westcliffe). The article describes the annual Arkansas Valley Audubon field trip held last week in Custer County. I mention the sighting of species with reference to our Wet Mountain Valley checklist. We spotted a possible juvenile Little Green Heron that Dave Silverman is contemplating on writing up to the CRBC for their judgement. -Note the “rarities” mentioned below are in reference to Custer County (elevation 8,000 - 14,000 feet), not elsewhere. For a copy of the complete list please contact me directly.

On September 26 twelve birders participated in the annual field trip sponsored by the Arkansas Valley chapter of the National Audubon Society led by Dave Silverman of Rye. Although the number of birders was lower the number of species identified was 97, close to the yearly goal of 100 or more. If the level of Lake DeWeese had been lower to expose the mudflats that usually exist, the group would have seen many shorebird species that were absent this year. However, the Valley’s excellent variety of habitats enhanced the opportunities to find many other species elsewhere.

There were several rarities to delight the observers. Those were Common Loon, Bald Eagle (while the more common Golden Eagle was not sighted), Black-chinned Hummingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Cassin’s Vireo, and Lark Bunting (Colorado’s State Bird).

The species that caught the most attention was a white, juvenile wading bird. There was much discussion about whether it was a Snowy Egret—a species that is considered unusual at this time of year—or a Little Blue Heron which has never been recorded previously in the Wet Mountain Valley. Dave Silverman suggests the bird be listed temporarily as a Snowy Egret until the Colorado Rare Birds Committee of the Colorado Field Ornithologists decides which species it is.

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