

The Lake Isabel/Spanish Peaks CBCs are now posted on the Audubon CBC website. Lake Isabel held its historic 47th Count(1-2-17) & Spanish Peaks its 28th(12-31-16).

11 birders in 5 parties tallied 58 species on the Lake Isabel Count, somewhat below average. The Count was hampered by strong mountain winds & a troublesome decline in area bird numbers led by a plunge in once common Red-winged Blackbird & Pine Siskin numbers. Only 2 of the former & none of the latter were seen. But some species bucked the trend with a Count high of 15 White-winged Doves found by Margie Joy & Star Jorgensen just west of Lake Beckwith. Other nice finds: 2 Red Crossbills turned up for Star, Leon & Treva Bright, plus a Winter Wren & Lesser Goldfinch in Beulah for Van & Lee Truan. Pearle Sandstrom & Clif Smith found a drumming Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Rye. Steve Olson & I had a rather slow day until sunset, when we spotted 5 female Red-breasted Mergansers on Lake Beckwith. These are new birds for the Count, & finding new ones are tough after 47 count years.

In contrast to Lake Isabel, a record high 59 species were tallied by 11 birders in 4 parties on the Spanish Peaks CBC. 3 new ones were added to the Count: a Canyon Towhee found by Leon Bright with grandson Eric & Joe Boyle in the picturesque Huahatolla Valley; 2 Scaled Quail in west La Veta spotted by Tom Doerk; & the day's best bird, a 1st winter male Surf Scoter scoped & photoed by Paul & Polly Neldner just east of La Veta. Bald & Golden Eagles are not rare in Colorado, but both perched in the same tree? Ask Beverly Jensen & Margie Joy who photoed 1 of each just feet apart NW of La Veta. Star Jorgensen saved one of her best birds for last at day's end: 2 Rusty Blackbirds just beyond the NW corner of Grandote Golf Course in La Veta; this bird has been seen only one other time on the 28 Counts. Special thanks to Tom Doerk and Paul & Polly Neldner for their respective & gracious hospitality, which provided a warm homey setting for lunch & compilation.

Dave Silverman, compiler

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