

Yellowstone Spring Species List | May 28 – June 3, 2026 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Hugh Simmons with Wes Larsen. Our clients included Brad, Fio, Georgia, Guy, Hans, Jim, Katie, and Mary Jo.

The first three full days of our trip we were based in Gardiner, MT. From there we spent a morning with Quinn from Wolf Tracker finding wolves and bears, explored Mammoth Hot Spring, Grand Prismatic Spring, Old Faithful, The Hayden Valley and the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. By the third day we had seen 6 Black Bears, 4 Grizzly Bears, 3 Gray Wolves, Moose, Elk, Big Horn Sheep and Rocky Mountain Goat as well as the ubiquitous American Bison and Pronghorn. Bird highlights included striking Harlequin Ducks, American Dipper, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon at her nest, Trumpeter Swan, Western Grebe, and Bald Eagle.

We then moved our base of operations to Cooke City, MT for the rest of the trip. This gave us easy access to the Lamar Valley, known as the Serengeti of North America, and Beartooth Pass where we found Black Rosy-Finch, American Pipit and Horned Lark in the tundra and snow at nearly 11,000 feet. We had a close Moose cow and yearling calf and long looks at a Bull Moose at Pebble Creek. There was a roadside Grizzly, a American Badger at her den with a kit, a great, close American Dipper at Pebble Creek, Calliope Hummingbird and MacGillivray's Warbler at Slough Creek and more Black and Grizzly Bears. All in all, an amazing trip with lots of great wildlife sightings and stunning scenery.

BIRDS 83 species were recorded of which 5 were heard only, and 2 were introduced. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details the 83 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Yellowstone Spring | May 28 – June 3, 2026 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Family or Species Common Name: Scientific Name — ()

BIRDS: (83)

DUCKS, GEESE, AND WATERFOWL: Anatidae — (15)

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* — (seen frequently on rivers and ponds)

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator* — (day one at Emigrant Ponds and reliably at Swan Lake)

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera* — (first seen Day 1 at Emigrant Ponds and then several times on park ponds)

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* — (First seen at the Hayden Valley River Overlook)

American Wigeon *Mareca americana* — (Seen in both the Hayden and Lamar Valleys)

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* — (seen repeatedly on park ponds)
Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* — (Spotted by Hans at Swan Lake)
Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* — (On pond on North Entrance Road)
Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* — (Present widely on ponds)
Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* — (Widely present on ponds)
Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* — (10 seen well and performing for us at LeHardy Rapids)
Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* — (multiple sightings including Swan Lake, Floating Island Pond and Indian Pond)
Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica* — (Day 4 on Indian Pond)
Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* — (Regularly seen on Soda Butte Creek)
Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* — (Seen at Floating Island Pond and Indian Pond)

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae — (1)

Rock Pigeon (I) *Columba livia* — (Bozeman and Gardiner, MT)

HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae — (1)

Calliope Hummingbird *Selasphorus calliope* — (Day 5 – good looks at two males and a female on the Slough Creek trail)

RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS: Rallidae — (1)

American Coot *Fulica americana* — (seen frequently on park ponds)

CRANES: Gruidae — (1)

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis* — (Swan Lake, one flying down-river at LeHardy Rapids and two with a colt at Blacktail Ponds on the last day)

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS Charadriidae — (1)

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* — (Day 3 – reliably present feeding in the runoff at Mammoth Hot Springs)

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae — (2)

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata* — (Surprised to find two, roadside on the Beartooth Highway, no marsh, pond or wet area in sight)

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* — (Their distinctive call and stiff wingbeat helped us find them at the Lamar Valley River Trail and Pebble Creek)

GULLS, TERNS, AND SKIMMERS: Laridae — (1)

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* — (Seen from rocky shore of Yellowstone Lake at Sedge Bay)

GREBES: Podicipedidae — (1)

Western Grebe *Aechmophorus occidentalis* — (Nice find in Yellowstone Lake near the Mary Bay Picnic Area)

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS: Ardeidae — (1)

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* — (Multiple sightings. First seen at Emigrant Ponds on the road from Bozeman)

PELICANS: Pelecanidae — (1)

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* — (Barely seen over a berm in a pond at the Mary Bay Picnic Area on Yellowstone Lake)

NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae — (1)

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* — (Multiple Sightings)

OSPREY: Pandionidae — (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* — (Seen at nest on Firehole Canyon Drive and multiple flyby sightings)

HAWKS, EAGLES, AND KITES: Accipitridae — (4)

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* — (Seen during hike on Slough Creek Trail)

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* — (Several sightings including Yellowstone Lake, Indian Pond, Slough Creek)

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni* — (Seen during hike on Slough Creek Trail)

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* — (Floating Island Pond and Slough Creek)

KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae — (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* — (spotted at LeHardy Rapids)

WOODPECKERS: Picidae — (1)

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus* — (heard several times, seen on the Travertine Road above Gardiner, MT)

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae — (2)

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* — (Quick fly-by view on the North Entrance Road)

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* — (Good scope views of adult at nest sight on Calcite Cliffs)

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae — (4)

Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii* — (Heard at the Lamer River Trail, Guide only sighting)

Hammond's Flycatcher *Empidonax hammondii* — (Several sightings including Slough Creek Trail and at our Picnic stop on the way back from Beartooth Pass)

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis* — (roadside near the Lamar River Stock Cutoff Trail parking area)

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus* — (First seen huting from a stick perch at Emigrant Ponds)

VIREOS, SHRIKE-BABLERS, AND ERPORNIS: Vireonidae — (1)

Western Warbling Vireo *Vireo swainsoni* — (Heard in multiple locations and finally seen on our Slough Creek Trail hike)

CROWS, JAYS, AND MAGPIES: Corvidae — (4)

Black-billed Magpie *Pica hudsonia* — (widespread)

Clark's Nutcracker *Nucifraga columbiana* — ()

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos* — (Seen often in Gardiner)

Common Raven *Corvus corax* — (Widespread, common and, at times, boldly begging)

TITS, CHICKADEES, AND TITMICE: Paridae — (1)

Mountain Chickadee *Poecile gambeli* — (Heard at Old Faithful. Seen at our picnic stop on the Beartooth Highway)

LARKS: Alaudidae — (1)

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* — (First seen Day 1 on the Old Yellowstone Road in Gardiner. Also on the Beartooth Highway)

SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae — (5)

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* — (Seen in Gardiner and at Floating Island Pond)

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina* — (nesting and flying about in Silvergate)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* — (Seen around several park ponds including the North Entrance Road and Floating Island Pond)

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — (First seen at Emigrant Ponds and then at multiple locations throughout the trip)

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* — (Nesting and flying about at Lamar River Stock Cutoff Trail restroom area)

KINGLETS: Regulidae — (1)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Corthylio calendula* — (Heard in many locations but annoyingly difficult to find. Finally seen at our Picnic Stop on the Beartooth Highway)

WRENS: Troglodytidae — (1)

Northern House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* — (a pair were seen well on the Slough Creek Trail)

DIPPERS: Cinclidae — (1)

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus* — (First a very unsatisfying view across then Yellowstone River at Lehardy Rapids. Then the best view ever at Pebble Creek with an individual posing for photos less that 20 feet away)

STARLINGS: Sturnidae — (1)

European Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris* — (Seen in developed areas, Bozeman and Gardiner)

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae — (1)

Sage Thrasher *Oreoscoptes montanus* — (Heard Only along the NE Entrance Road)

THRUSHES AND ALLIES: Turdidae — (2)

Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides* — (Good looks at Mammoth Hot Springs and Sedge Bay on the banks of Yellowstone Lake)

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* — (Widespread)

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae — (1)

House Sparrow (I) *Passer domesticus* — (Seen in Gardiner on evening walk)

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae — (1)

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens* — (Seen above the tree line on Beartooth Pass)

FINCHES, EUPHONIAS, AND ALLIES: Fringillidae — (5)

Black Rosy-Finch *Leucosticte atrata* — (At least ten individuals seen at the Beartooth Pass Summit)

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus* — (Seen in Gardiner)

Cassin's Finch *Haemorhous cassinii* — (Several singing in Silvergate and Cooke City)

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* — (Heard widely. Seen in Gardiner, Mammoth Hot Spring and our Beartooth Highway picnic stop)

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis* — (Heard in Gardiner and several locations. Seen at our Picnic Stop on Beartooth Highway)

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae — (7)

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina* — (Seen in multiple locations including Fountain Paint Pots and Slough Creek)

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* — (Seen at our Picnic Stop on the Beartooth Highway)

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* — (Seen at Fountain Paint Pots and in the town of Silvergate)

Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus* — (Heard in many locations in the Lamar Valley and seen while we were up on a hillside in the Lamar Valley, scanning for bear)

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* — (Heard many times the Lamar Valley but not seen)

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* — (Heard in many locations and seen at the Lamar Valley River Trail)

Green-tailed Towhee *Pipilo chlorurus* — (Heard only at the Lamar Valley River Trail and other locations in Lamar)

TROUPIALS AND ALLIES: Icteridae — (6)

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* — (First seen at Emigrant Ponds and a regular sight at Park ponds)

Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta* — (First seen on Day 1 on the Old Yellowstone Road in Gardiner and then at Swan Lake)

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* — (First seen at Emigrant Ponds and a regular sight at Park ponds)

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater* — (Often seen hanging out with the American Bison in the Lamar Valley)

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* — (Common Blackbird often around developed areas, parking lots)

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula* — (A few were spotted at Mammoth Hot Spring)

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae — (4)

MacGillivray's Warbler *Geothlypis tolmiei* — (Beautiful male singing on the Slough Creek Trail)

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* — (First heard at Emigrant Ponds and then at multiple locations in the park but never seen)

Northern Yellow Warbler *Setophaga aestiva* — (Seen in Gardiner and on the Slough Creek Trail)

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata* — (Good looks at LeHardy Rapids and the Lamar Valley River Trail)

CARDINALS AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae — (1)

Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* — (Good looks at our Picnic Stop on the Beartooth Highway)

MAMMALS: (20)

Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana* — (Reliably seen in the Lamar Valley)

American Bison *Bison bison* — (Hundreds, if not thousands, in the Lamar Valley. Also the Hayden Valley and random places you might not expect)

Bighorn Sheep *Ovis canadensis* — (A ewe with a tiny lamb were seen on the cliff face at Calcite Cliffs)

Rocky Mountain Goat (I) *Oreamnos americanus* — (Multiple adults and a couple of little kids on the cliffs on the Northeast Entrance Road)

Moose *Alces alces* — (Amazing looks at a cow and yearling calf in Silvergate and then a nice bull munching on willows in a field at Pebble Creek.)

Elk *Cervus elaphus* — (Seen almost daily. The first were in the parking lot of our hotel in Gardiner)

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus* — (Random roadside sightings mostly along the Northeast Entrance Road)

Coyote *Canis latrans* — (First seen on Day 2. Then one, very close, walking down the edge of the road in Lamar Valley)

Gray Wolf *Canis lupus* — (Three seen on Day two. Then one black Gray Wolf was seen very well and for about 15 minutes along the Northeast Entrance Road between Tower Junction and Slough Creek)

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* — (Staking out a known den two kits were seen up on a hillside and then the adult was seen hunting in the town of Silvergate.)

American Badger *Taxidea taxus* — (We spent some time watching a known den in Slough Creek and our patience paid off. We watched the female go out on several hunting forays while the kit poked its head out of the den hole. Amazing!)

American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* — (In all, 11 Black Bear were seen on four out of six days. Some were quite close and some at distance. We watched a relatively close one munch on an old Bison skull for about 15 minutes. Another scratched its back on tree stump.)

Brown (Grizzly) Bear *Ursus arctos* — (12 Grizzly Bear were seen including one very close, ambling down the road.)

Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Callospermophilus lateralis* — (Seen multiple times, especially around the thermal areas)

Yellow-bellied Marmot *Marmota flaviventris* — (Great looks at one perched on a rock while on a walk in the Upper Geyser Basin)

Yellow-pine Chipmunk *Tamias amoenus* — (Seen in Silvergate)

Least Chipmunk *Tamias minimus* — (Seen frequently)

American Red Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* — (Seen near Yellowstone Lake and at Pebble Creek)

Uinta Ground Squirrel *Urocitellus armatus* — (frequently seen and heard, especially in the Lamar Valley)

Western Cottontail Rabbit *Sylvilagus audubonii* (In Gardiner)

REPTILES: (3)

Bullsnake *Pituophis catenifer sayi* (Mammoth Hot Spring)

Western Terrestrial Garter Snake *Thamnophis elegans*

Sagebrush Lizard *Sceloporus graciosus* (Lamar Valley)

INSECTS: (1)

Glovers Silkmoth *Hyalophora gloveri* (at Absaroka Lodge in Gardiner, MT.)