

## Birding and Nature at Zapata Ranch

### Species List

June 13-19, 2021

With guides Ted Floyd & Pat Lueders; and Hannah Floyd

And 18 participants: Richard, Cathy, Karen, Elisabeth, Brett, Mark, Jane, Debbie, Jim, Deirdre, Jackie, Oscar, Trina, Wayne, Doris, Heidi, Linda, & Mark

Our group spent the week at the Nature Conservatory's Zapata Ranch in the beautiful San Luis Valley outside of Alamosa, Colorado. We visited local wildlife refuges, state parks, and the Medano and Zapata Ranches enjoying the birds, mammals, insects, and scenery of this breathtaking part of the country. Delicious food, horseback riding, and comradeship contributed to making this week an unforgettable experience!

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(I)=introduced

#### **BIRDS (131 species recorded, of which 7 were heard only):**

##### **DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (12)**

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*—Seen on the levees at Monte Vista NWR & Blanca Wetlands

**Blue-winged Teal** *Spatula discors*—Seen twice; at Monte Vista NWR & Alamosa NWR

**Cinnamon Teal** *Spatula cyanoptera*—Seen in pairs at Monte Vista NWR, Blanca Wetlands, Alamosa NWR

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*—Only spotted once, at Monte Vista NWR

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*—In breeding plumage, seen at Monte Vista NWR, Blanca Wetlands, Smith Reservoir

**American Wigeon** *Mareca americana*—Seen twice; at Monte Vista & Blanca Wetlands

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*—Seen often in small numbers at all locations with water

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*—Group spotted in the grass at Monte Vista NWR

**Redhead** *Aythya americana*—Scope views of large numbers at Monte Vista, Blanca, & Smith Reservoir

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*—Only seen once, pair at Monte Vista NWR

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*—Female with 13 juveniles at Smith Reservoir

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*—Seen often in brilliant birding plumage at all locations with water

##### **PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS AND ALLIES: Phasianidae (1)**

**Ring-necked Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus* (I)—(HO) Heard on a morning walk at Zapata Ranch

##### **GREBES: Podicipedidae (4)**

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*—Seen at Monte Vista, Russell Lakes, & Alamosa NWR

**Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*—In breeding plumage! Three seen at Smith Reservoir

**Western Grebe** *Aechmophorus occidentalis*—Great scope views at Russell Lakes SP & Smith Reservoir

**Clark's Grebe** *Aechmophorus clarkii*—Good scope looks with Western for identification comparisons at Russell Lakes & Smith Reservoir

**PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (3)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* (1)—Seen during drives through local towns

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* (1)—On utility pole at Russell Lakes SP & various towns

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*—Seen & heard daily at all locations

**NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (1)**

**Common Nighthawk** *Chordeiles minor*—Seen & heard daily around the lodge; found roosting in the trees for good scope looks

**SWIFTS: Apodidae (2)**

**Black Swift** *Cypseloides niger*—We hiked to the Zapata Falls at sunrise & were rewarded, seeing 14 of these rare swifts emerging from their nests behind the falls.

**White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis*—Best seen on trip to Hell's Gate soaring above the cliffs

**HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (2)**

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri*—Males & females seen at feeders at Zapata Ranch

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus*—Heard often, seen perched on visit to Zapata Falls

**RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (3)**

**Virginia Rail** *Rallus limicola*—(HO) Heard at all visits to marsh areas

**Sora** *Porzana carolina*—Quick scope views during visit to Monte Vista NWR

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*—Seen often with colorful young at visits to all marsh habitats

**STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (1)**

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*—Seen in breeding plumage in good numbers at Monte Vista & Blanca Wetlands

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae (2)**

**Snowy Plover** *Charadrius nivosus*—We visited Blanca Wetlands specifically to see this species that breeds there; we enjoyed a tour from the manager who helped us spot two plovers along the shore

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*—Seen three times in small numbers; at Blanca, Russell Lakes & Smith Reservoir

**SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (3)**

**White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*—In breeding plumage, a surprise finding of this rare migrant sandpiper for Colorado; seen at close range on a sand bar at Smith Reservoir

**Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*—Good scope views of two individuals at Monte Vista NWR

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*—Heard & quick looks at a flying individual at Blanca Wetlands

**GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (4)**

**Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan*—A surprise sighting, loafing on a sand bar with other gulls at Smith Reservoir

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*—Individuals seen at Blanca Wetlands & Smith Reservoir

**California Gull** *Larus californicus*—Best seen on a sand bar with other gulls at Smith Reservoir

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*—Spotted feeding in tern behavior over the marsh at Russell Lakes

**CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (1)**

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*—A few seen actively feeding at Smith Reservoir

**HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (5)**

**American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus*—One ran low across the road at Alamosa NWR

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*—Seen flying over the marsh at Russell Lakes State Wildlife Area

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*—Only seen once, at Russell Lakes WMA

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*—In breeding plumage, on the sand bar at Smith Reservoir

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*—Seen twice, at Blanca Wetlands & Russell Lakes

**IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (1)**

**White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi*—Seen flying at Monte Vista & Blanca, close looks at one on the ground feeding at Smith Reservoir

**NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (1)**

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—Seen soaring daily including the Zapata ranch, Blanca, Hell's Gate, & Smith Reservoir

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

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*—Identified from the photo, seen soaring between the cliffs at Hell's Gate

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*—Seen flying low over the marsh at Monte Vista & Russell Lakes

**Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni*—On a nest with young at Blanca, seen often at other locations

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—Seen often soaring; rare hybrid with **Ferruginous** on the nest, identified with photos, on trip to Medano/Zapata Ranch

**OWLS: Strigidae (1)**

**Great Horned Owl** *Bubo virginianus*—This was a Great Horned Owl tour! Seen with juveniles at Modano/Zapata Ranch, at John James Canyon being mobbed by a Raven, and scope views at Blanca Wetlands

**WOODPECKERS: Picidae (5)**

**Red-naped Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*—Two pair nesting at the Zapata Ranch; seen & photographed daily in their nest hole

**Lewis's Woodpecker** *Melanerpes lewis*—To the groups' delight, this pair of rare woodpeckers was nesting a short distance from the Zapata Lodge, watched & photographed daily

**American Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides dorsalis*—**(HO)** We heard the diagnostic tapping on our hike at Moon Pass but couldn't find this rare woodpecker

**Hairy Woodpecker** *Dryobates villosus*—Seen & heard in the trees at Zapata Ranch

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*—Numerous, seen daily at all locations

**FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (3)**

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*—Pair seen often in the fields at Zapata Ranch

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*—Wow! We had great looks at this rapid flyer on our trip to Hell's Gate canyon

**Prairie Falcon** *Falco mexicanus*—What luck! We were watching white wash on the cliff through the scope at John James Canyon when this falcon returned to the rock & then joined another one in the field! A real treat to watch the falcon's speed as it flew over the fields!

#### **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (7)**

**Western Wood-Pewee** *Contopus sordidulus*—Heard daily on the Zapata Ranch grounds

**Hammond's Flycatcher** *Empidonax hammondii*—Close looks along the trail at Zapata Falls

**Dusky Flycatcher** *Empidonax oberholseri*—Heard first, & then spotted in the pines, on a morning walk at Zapata

**Cordilleran Flycatcher** *Empidonax accidentalis*—Seen often during walks at the Zapata Ranch; nesting & vocalizing around the buildings

**Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*—Vocalizing for great looks on the barn roof on trip to Medano/Zapata Ranch

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens*—(HO) Heard & taped on hike at John James Canyon

**Western Kingbird** *Tyrannus verticalis*—Seen on utility wires during travel; in the parking lot at Alamosa NWR

#### **VIREOS: Vireonidae (2)**

**Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo plumbeus*—Close looks at an individual vocalizing on the Zapata Falls hike

**Warbling Vireo** *Vireo gilvus*—Heard vocalizing at all locations; seen best on Zapata grounds

#### **SHRIKES: Laniidae (1)**

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Scope views of an individual perched on the utility wire at Medano/Zapata Ranch

#### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (6)**

**Pinyon Jay** *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*—(HO) Heard vocalizing in John James Canyon & Zapata Ranch

**Steller's Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri*—(HO) Heard on our hike at Moon Pass

**Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma woodhouseii*—A cooperative pair was seen daily at the top of the pines at the entrance to Zapata Ranch

**Black-billed Magpie** *Pica hudsonia*—Seen daily at all locations including nesting pairs at Zapata Ranch

**Clark's Nutcracker** *Nucifraga columbiana*—Spotted perched by one of the vehicles near Zapata Falls

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—Seen daily at most locations

#### **TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae (1)**

**Mountain Chickadee** *Poecile gambeli*—Heard & then good looks on walks at the Zapata ranch

#### **LARKS: Alaudidae (1)**

**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*—Seen often, especially well at Blanca Wetlands

#### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (4)**

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*—Perched for great looks at its beautiful colors at Monte Vista NWR

**Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina*—This beautiful swallow was especially numerous flying & perched at Zapata Ranch

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*—Seen daily feeding over the fields

**Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*—Nesting under the barn roofs at Medano/Zapata Ranch

**LONG-TAILED TITS AND BUSHTITS: Aegithalidae (1)**

**Bushtit** *Psaltriparus minimus*—Seen twice on morning walks at Zapata ranch & at Zapata Falls

**KINGLETS: Regulidae (1)**

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*—Heard vocalizing on hike at Hell's Gate & seen on Zapata ranch walks

**NUTHATCHES: Sittidae (1)**

**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*—Seen often on morning walks at Zapata Ranch

**GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (1)**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*—A surprise! We found a pair on the hike at John James Canyon

**WRENS: Troglodytidae (3)**

**Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus*—Great looks at perched individuals on hike at John James Canyon

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*—Nesting at Zapata Ranch; heard & seen daily

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*—Very plentiful & cooperative on hikes around marshes, especially at Russell Lakes

**DIPPERS: Cinclidae (1)**

**American Dipper** *Cinclus mexicanus*—Always a group favorite! This unique bird was seen in the open on the rocks in the stream at Zapata Falls

**STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae (1)**

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* (1)—Seen often at many locations

**MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (2)**

**Sage Thrasher** *Oreoscoptes montanus*—Scope views at perched individuals at the Medano/Zapata Ranch

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*—Seen often at many locations

**THRUSHES: Turdidae (5)**

**Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*—Nesting pairs seen on walks at Zapata Ranch

**Mountain Bluebird** *Sialia currucoides*—Spotted while traveling, perched along the roadsides

**Townsend's Solitaire** *Myadestes townsendi*—Spotted perched at tree top by one of the vehicles at Zapata Falls

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*—Individual seen on the rocks near the Zapata Falls

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*—Many individuals seen often at all locations

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* (1)—A surprise finding at the Modano/Zapata corral; seen often at other locations

**FINCHES: Fringillidae (5)**

**Evening Grosbeak** *Coccothraustes vespertinus*—(HO) Flyover on hike at Zapata Falls

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*—Pairs seen at entrance to Monte Vista NWR

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*—Found vocalizing & flying in the pines on visit to Moon Pass

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*—Spotted in the field on early walk at Modano/Zapata Ranch  
**American Goldfinch** *Spinus tristis*—A number of individuals seen well at Blanca Wetlands

#### **NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (12)**

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*—Seen best at Modano/Zapata Ranch & Zapata Falls  
**Brewer's Sparrow** *Spizella breweri*—Vocalizing & perched on Modano/Zapata Ranch trip  
**Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata*—A target species! Great looks at two individuals on hike at John James Canyon  
**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*—Pairs carrying food seen on top of bushes at John James Canyon  
**Lark Bunting** *Calamospiza melanocorys*—Lucky spotting! Male was perched on a fence on the road from Smith Reservoir  
**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*—Seen at Hell's Gate and Zapata Falls  
**Sagebrush Sparrow** *Artemisospiza nevadensis*—Target species on trip to Medano/Zapata Ranch, we had good looks at three individuals found by their vocalization  
**Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*—Seen perched on trip to Medano/Zapata Ranch  
**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*—Nice scope looks at Medano/Zapata Ranch  
**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*—Hear often, seen best perched & vocalizing at Russell Lakes  
**Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo chlorurus*—A group favorite, seen well on morning walk at Zapata Ranch  
**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—Pairs seen & heard often on Zapata Ranch property

#### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae (7)**

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*—Seen in large numbers at numerous marsh locations  
**Western Meadowlark** *Sturnella neglecta*—Heard & seen daily on grounds of Zapata Ranch  
**Bullock's Oriole** *Icterus bullockii*—Nesting in the Cottonwoods on the Zapata Ranch  
**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—Seen in good numbers at all marsh locations  
**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*—Seen often at many locations  
**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—Nesting pair on grounds of the Zapata Ranch  
**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—First seen at Monte Vista; also at Blanca, Russell Lakes & Smith Reservoir

#### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (6)**

**Virginia's Warbler** *Leiothlypis virginiae*—**(HO)** Heard on the hike on the Montville Trail  
**MacGillivray's Warbler** *Geothlypis tolmiei*—Heard, & quick looks by some, at Moon Pass  
**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*—Heard & seen often at all marsh locations  
**Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*—Nesting in Cottonwoods at Zapata Ranch  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*—Audubon's; seen by all at Zapata Falls  
**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*—Male seen in the willows at Moon Pass

#### **CARDINAL, GROSBEAKS, AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (3)**

**Western Tanager** *Piranga ludoviciana*—Seen best in the open on dead pine at Zapata Falls  
**Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus*—Seen perched, male & female, at Zapata Falls  
**Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea*—Heard vocalizing, then spotted tree top, at Alamosa NWR

## Mammals (11 species)

**Elk** *Cervus elaphus*—Seen on trip to Blanca Wetlands

**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus*—Many on the Zapata Ranch property

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*—Seen often during drives

**Pronghorn** *Antilocapra Americana*—Close looks on our drive to Russell lakes

**Coyote** *Canis latrans*—Heard nightly & seen on horseback rides

**White-tailed Jackrabbit** *Lepus townsendii*—Surprise sighting of this nocturnal species on the Medano/Zapata Ranch near the lake

**Desert Cottontail** *Sylvilagus audubonii*—Residents in the yard at Zapata Ranch

**Utah Prairie Dog** *Cynomys parvidens*—Prairie dog village behind the barn at Zapata Ranch

**Rock Squirrel** *Otospermophilus variegatus*—Best seen on hike at Zapata Falls

**American Red Squirrel** *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*—Seen in John James Canyon

**Colorado Chipmunk** *Neotamias quadrivittatus*—Cute! Resident at Zapata Ranch

## Reptiles (5 species)

**Plateau Fence Lizard** *Sceloporus tristichus*—Seen at various locations

**Greater Short-horned Lizard** *Phrynosoma hernandesi*—Photographed at John James Canyon

**Bull Snake** *Pituophis catenifer sayi*—Colorful! Two seen on hike at John James Canyon

**Western Terrestrial Garter Snake** *Thamnophis elegans*—Seen twice, on Medano/ Zapata Ranch

**Great Plains Toad** *Anaxyrus cognatus*—Recognized as a distinct species, seen on Medano/Zapata Ranch

And a host of fascinating invertebrates, many logged on to iNaturalist by Hannah Floyd.