

Field Trips

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Green-tailed Towhee, and a variety of warblers. We will hike to the burn area where Lewis's Woodpeckers nest.

We will return to cars and drive a short distance to South Boulder Cherryvale Open Space. We can hope to see Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrows in this location.

Bring snacks, water, lunch, sunscreen, and bug spray. State Parks pass necessary for vehicles carpooling. **Register online or contact leader.**

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, June 11

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP.

From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd. to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles.

Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly. Bring water and snacks; lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome. **Register online or contact leader.**

Northeastern Breeding Bird Trip Saturday, June 17

5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

Chris Goulart (Email: cgoulart001@comcast.net
Phone: 586-764-2126)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

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Last Month's Program: *Cinereous Owl*

Dave Hill

Nathan Pieplow is the author of the newly published, *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America*. When he is not doing research on birds, he is a Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Nathan's talk at the April DFO meeting focused on his latest adventures in Mexico and on one particular bird in Mexico.

Nathan began his talk with an overview about how most of what we know about birds came to be. In the 19th century, ornithologists studied birds by shooting them, taking careful notes about the bird, and putting the specimen in a museum collection. By studying these specimens and field notes, scientists classified birds into groups creating a taxonomy.

Nathan then focused in on the specific bird he is interested in. The scientific name is *Strix varia*, a species with three subspecies: Northern Barred Owl (native to the Eastern United States), Mexican Barred Owl (native to Central Mexico) and Fulvous Barred Owl (native to Guatemala.)

With slides of owls, maps, and sound recordings, Nathan introduced us to all three of the subspecies. He described how the Fulvous Barred Owl ended up being classified as a separate species.

The most mysterious of the three is the Mexican Barred Owl. No one knew what its call was like. That prompted Nathan to go to Mexico and search for the bird.

He shared with us how he pinpointed likely habitats in the mountains of Mexico and, with his birding colleague Andrew Spencer, mapped out an itinerary.

They went to central Mexico, playing various owl calls, in hopes that something similar, but different, would reveal itself. They saw lots of interesting birds and heard Spotted Owls and Mottled Owls, but no new owl species.

On the last night of their trip they arrived in Rancho La Noria. Nathan described how he and Andrew hiked in the dark, playing calls and listening. They heard something different, but it was far away.

While moving toward the distant adult, a screeching juvenile revealed itself. It begged over and over, but the adult never approached. At 4:00 a.m. they returned to the same site and, just before dawn, while playing the previous night's recording of that distant adult, it flew in. Their cameras launched into action.

But that is only the beginning of a much longer story. At this point, there were three ideas about this owl:

It could be the Mexican Barred Owl, a subspecies of *Strix varia*. It could be its own species, *Strix sartorii*, what Steve Howell (author of *Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico*) calls the Cinereous Owl. Or, it could be a subspecies of *Strix fulvescens*, the Fulvous Owl.

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Nathan Pieplow was the April program presenter.

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Nathan is confident that the image he and Andrew captured and the audio they recorded proves that this is a separate species—the Cinereous Owl.

A return trip to Mexico in 2016 continued the exploration. We were treated to images of many cool birds and insects and lots of tips about great birding sites in Mexico. But, no Cinereous Owls were found.

In January 2017, Nathan returned with his friend, Manuel Grosselet. They made 44 stops in 6 days, but not a single Cinereous Owl was discovered. This raised many questions.

Why are Cinereous Owls found only at Rancho La Noria, where up to 3 pairs have been reported? Why are Cinereous Owls not present in Mexico's pine forests, today?

Nathan plans to publish a paper outlining his ideas about this species. The Cinereous Owl appears to be critically endangered and Nathan suspects that some answers lie in habitat loss from logging and grazing. You can see and hear Nathan's talk by going to the [Past Programs](#) section of our website.

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund: *Christie Tew, Robert and Allison Waters*

Field Trips

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Directions: We will meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office at 6060 Broadway.

Take the 58th Street exit from I-25 and drive 2 blocks west to Broadway. Go 2 blocks north on Broadway over the railroad tracts. The DPW offices are on the right (east) side.

We will be exploring North-eastern Colorado. Likely stops will include Tamarack Wildlife Area, Prewitt Reservoir, Enfield State Game Area, Red Lion State Game Area, and Jumbo Reservoir.

Target birds will be breeding Bell's Vireo, Field Sparrow, Great-crested Flycatcher, Northern Bobwhite, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal, and Baltimore Oriole.

We will be doing a very long drive so be prepared to be in the car for an extended period of time. Pack a lunch and dress in layers. **Register online or contact leader.**

Staunton State Park (Jefferson County) Sunday, June 18 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Park-n-Ride at southwest corner of Hampden (CO 285) and Wadsworth to carpool to the park.

State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a moderate level hike with potential for short, steep inclines. We will hike 2-4 miles on either the Davis Ponds Trail or a portion of the Mason Creek Trail.

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