



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JANUARY 2017/VOL 53 NO 1 [HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

Field Trips

**Nearby Christmas Bird Counts,
December 31 and January 2.
See details on p. 10.**

**Mini Birding Derbies
Saturday, January 7
7:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

Chris Rurik (Email: chrisrurik@gmail.com Phone: 253-225-7104)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet in the parking lot near the lake. Belmar Historic Park is at 800 S Wadsworth Blvd in Lakewood.

From Alameda and Wadsworth go south on Wadsworth, turn west at the light on West Ohio Ave. Drive a short 2 blocks to the parking lot.

Join for some friendly birding competition. At three or four SW Denver hotspots we will split into three random teams (there will be guest leaders), set a time limit, and see who can come up with the most species.

At the next place we'll split into new teams and go at it again! Come for the fun strategy and

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The teal housewives of Monte Vista

by Casey Setash

With single-minded focus, I weave my way through 7-foot tall cattails in search of my quarry. The beeping of the telemetry equipment grows louder and louder until, suddenly, the delicate form of a female Cinnamon Teal erupts from the shadows and flaps erratically away, framed by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

As a graduate student at Colorado State University, I have been tracking Cinnamon Teal as a part of an ongoing, flyway-wide project assessing the duck's population dynamics. This research is currently focused on Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, which boasts one of the highest breeding densities of Cinnamon Teal in the nation.

The primary objective of this project is to develop more accurate and reliable survival estimates for both nesting adults and ducklings. In addition to survival, the bird's nesting success and the effects of large and fine scale habitat factors on these parameters are being studied as well.

This study is being conducted in concert with a large scale pre-season (hunting season, that is) banding operation coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program. It is also addressing important

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Newly hatched Cinnamon Teal fitted with a webtag. June 2015. Casey Setash

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fast-paced birding. It will also be a great way to start off your 2017 year lists.

Bring water, snacks, sun-screen. Scopes will not be allowed. **Register online or contact leader.**

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76 Sunday, January 8 7:45 AM - 1:00 PM

Ira Sanders & Tammy Sanders
(Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

From I-76 take E 88th Ave exit, go west on 88th for 1.6 miles, then turn south at Colorado Blvd.

Turn left again into the parking lot for the South Platte River Greenway Trailhead.

We will start at 88th and Platte parking lot and drive to multiple parking areas along the river. Anticipate up to three miles of walking on paved and trails and adjacent areas.

We should see plenty of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents.

Bring water, hat, sunscreen, snack, binoculars/scope. Come prepared for weather. **Register online or contact leader.**

South Platte Park Tuesday, January 10 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the south end of South Platte Park near C-470.

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wetland management and waterfowl concerns from the San Luis Valley NWR Complex's recently released Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

With the help of funding from Denver Field Ornithologists, I was able to hire two undergraduate field technicians in 2016 to assist with this research. This funding gave them the opportunity to gain valuable skills in the field of wildlife research that will be invaluable on their paths to becoming wildlife biologists.

Cinnamon Teal are an understudied dabbling duck unique to the western Americas. They are the only dabbling duck that breeds in both North and South America, and are a coveted species by hunters and birders alike.

Accurate survival estimates are unavailable because there are no operational monitoring programs to estimate Cinnamon Teal abundance. Historically, data on Cinnamon Teal have often been combined with those on Blue-winged Teal because the hens and molting drakes of the two species are so difficult to differentiate. Therefore, long-term trends and the effects of harvest pressure are poorly known.

It is essential to have a thorough understanding of the factors that drive population growth in any species, but especially one that is harvested on an annual basis.

Nest success has been shown repeatedly to be extremely influential to overall population growth in a variety of duck species (Coluccy et al. 2008, Hoek-

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A technician (Adam Braddock) attempting to get the best vantage point while tracking Cinnamon Teal hens using radio telemetry. July 2015. Casey Setash



Male Cinnamon Teal captured during banding efforts carried out by the refuge. Male teal start to lose their namesake cinnamon color in late July, making them extremely difficult to differentiate from Blue-winged Teal. August 2015. Casey Setash

How to cancel participation in a field trip

by Karen von Saltza

There is a very simple way to remove your name from a field trip list if you find that you are unable to attend.

On the DFO website, go to FIELD TRIPS on the top header of the home page. Click on Upcoming Field Trips (<http://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/UpcomingTrips.aspx>).

At the upper left side, you will see a big blue box that says SHOW/EDIT MY FIELD TRIPS. Click and a popup window will appear with a list of the field trips you are currently registered to attend. On the right hand side of each trip on your list you will find links for EDIT/DELETE. Find the trip you wish to cancel and hit DELETE. You will be asked if this is something you really want to do. Hit OK and your name will be removed from the participant list.

Why is this important? Often our field trips have wait lists. If you remove your name from the trip list, a wait-listed participant will be moved immediately to confirmed status.

Secondly, some groups are very small. If only 2 or 3 participants are signed up for a trip and everyone decides not to attend at the last moment, this leaves a frustrated leader at a meeting spot waiting for no-shows. This actually happened to one of our dedicated field trip leaders not long ago. Common courtesy dictates that a participant who decides not to attend should either cancel participation on the website or contact the leader directly.

A REMINDER: Each DFO member has a personal SHOW/EDIT MY FIELD TRIPS. This guarantees that you will not inadvertently cancel someone else from the trip. So please, use this wonderful technology that is designed for your convenience.

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man et al. 2002, Koons et al. 2006). Because of this, management efforts are often focused on improving nest success in order to increase overall population size of a given species.

If we can understand whether this trend holds for Cinnamon Teal and which factors affect nest success, we will better understand how to manage the landscape in order to manage Cinnamon Teal populations.

During the first two field seasons in 2015 and 2016, I located 80 Cinnamon Teal nests and captured many of the attending hens, fitting them with radio transmitters to track their movement and survival.

Nest success rates were 14.4% and 16.6% in 2015 and 2016, respectively. While these rates may seem extremely low, they are actually quite representative of most small-bodied dabbling ducks.

All species, but especially small waterfowl that often fall prey to avian and mammalian predators, must make trade-offs in order to maximize their survival and reproduction. They must choose whether to breed early and often

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From C-470 take the Platte Canyon Rd/South Platte Park exit. From Platte Canyon Rd at Depew Street turn southeast onto the entrance road for South Platte Park.

Continue past a 90 degree left turn and the first parking lot, and meet in the second parking lot.

Late afternoon trip timed to see what gulls show up on South Platte Reservoir, and interesting waterfowl may be present.

We will also check the Platte river corridor area. Dress warm for waiting for gulls. Scopes recommended. **Register online or contact leader.**

Pueblo and Cañon City Areas

Saturday, January 14

7:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com)

Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Division of Parks and Wildlife (DPW) parking lot 2 blocks north of E. 58th Ave on the east side of Broadway: 6060 Broadway, Denver CO 80218.

This will be a **TWO-DAY** birding event. We will bird the Pueblo area Saturday, stay overnight, and then bird the Canon City area Sunday.

Carpool from the Denver area (DPW parking lot) on Saturday morning to Pueblo on I-25.

Bring a sack lunch for Saturday. Bring water, scopes, and sunscreen.

Arrangements for staying in the area Saturday night will be made 2 weeks prior. We will eat dinner together on Saturday evening.

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in the hopes of producing offspring before being killed, or whether to forego breeding efforts in order to survive and have the opportunity to try again another year.

Cinnamon Teal are typically associated with the former strategy, leading to relatively frequent but unsuccessful breeding attempts.

In addition to monitoring nests, I have been webtagging ducklings and tracking birds with transmitters to determine duckling survival and recruitment.

The webtags are small metal tags, each with a unique identification number, that are clipped to the webbing of hatching ducklings' feet. These can subsequently be used in mark-recapture studies to estimate duckling survival over time.

I also take morphological measurements and blood samples from each captured bird, which I hope to eventually use to learn about the genetics of the Cinnamon Teal in the San Luis Valley.

This project will continue through the 2017 breeding season, when we will be adding a video surveillance aspect in order to study nest attendance patterns and predation events on Cinnamon Teal.

I look forward to continuing to learn about the patterns that drive Cinnamon Teal survival and abundance in the future, and to better inform waterfowl management practices in Colorado and the rest of the Intermountain West.

All photos were taken by Casey Setash.

Literature Cited

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A webtag placed on a Cinnamon Teal during hatch that was subsequently recaptured as an adult. August 2016.

Nearby Christmas Bird Counts

Douglas County Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 31, 2016

Nancy Crews, Compiler (302-842-2833, nbcrews46@msn.com)

Birders of all abilities are encouraged to join us for the count. Please call Roxborough State Park Visitor Center at 303-973-3959 to sign up for the count. Please call between the hours of 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Birders will be assigned to a team before count day and the Team leader will call them with the time and place to meet.

There will not be a chili dinner this year, but there will be light refreshments and hot drinks for leaders and participants at the Roxborough State Park Visitor Center between 3:30–4:30 p.m. while we do the compilation of birds.

You may also contact Nancy Crews if you have any questions about the count.

Barr Lake Christmas Bird Count

Monday, January 2, 2017

Alie Mayes, Compiler (303-659-4348 x10, alexandra.mayes@birdconservancy.org)

Tyler Edmondson, Co-compiler (303-659-4348 x15, tyler.edmondson@birdconservancy.org)

Meet at Old Stone House (Bird Conservancy Headquarters) at 7 a.m. to organize for field activity. The headquarters is at the north end of Barr Lake State Park at 14500 Lark Bunting Ln. in Brighton. Coffee, hot cocoa, tea, and donuts will be available as we organize for the count. Participants can register online (preferred) at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count> or contact Alie Mayes.