

# WFO 2006

## *31st Annual Western Field Ornithologists Meeting*

**Boulder, Colorado  
21–24 September 2006**

### **Field Trip Schedule and Conference Itinerary**

*Please Note: Exact times subject to change. For example, field trip meeting times may vary depending on unforeseen changes in local birding conditions or unexpected weather phenomena. Any changes will be clearly communicated to you when you pick up your registration materials.*

### **Thursday, 21 September 2006**

- **5:00 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip to Eastern Plains of Colorado. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 5:00 p.m. or earlier. 200+ miles of driving, round trip.*
- **5:00 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip to Wyoming Migrant Traps. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 5:00 p.m. or earlier. 300+ miles of driving, round trip.*
- **6:00 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip for High-elevation Specialties. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 3:00 p.m. or earlier. This trip involves a strenuous hike at high elevations and is suitable only for the physically fit. 100 miles of driving, round trip.*
- **6:30 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip to Foothills and Farm Country. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 3:00 p.m. or earlier. <100 miles of driving, round trip; easy-going pace.*
- **2:00 p.m.** *WFO Board of Directors Meeting. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn. Current members of WFO are welcome to attend and participate in the meeting in a non-voting capacity, including nominating potential board members from the floor and participating in bylaws revision discussions. Updated bylaws will be available on this website prior to the meeting. To attend, please make arrangements beforehand with David Yee. If you would like to participate in the nominations or the bylaws prior to the meeting, which is strongly encouraged, please contact Gjon Hazard.*
- **6:00 p.m.** *Field Trip Leaders Meeting. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn. This is a short, important, and mandatory meeting for all field trip leaders and WFO board members.*
- **7:00 p.m.** *Welcome and introduction by WFO President David Yee. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn.*
- **7:15 p.m.** *Social hour. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn. Modest hors d'oeuvres and light drinks provided.*
- **8:00 p.m.** *Leaderless owl prowl. Assemble at Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn. Carpool short distance to Cottonwood Marsh for Eastern*

Screech-Owl, rails, night-herons, and other things that go bump in the night.  
No trip leader, no prior organization, lots of fun.

### Friday, 22 September 2006

- **6:00 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Barr Lake State Park.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 100 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:00 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Chatfield State Park.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 100 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:30 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Mesa Trail Open Space.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 25 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:30 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Walden Ponds Nature Study Area.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. <25 miles of driving, round trip.
- **8:00 a.m.** *Workshop: Birding by Ear—Visually.* Workshop leader: Arch McCallum. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn.
- **8:30 a.m.** *Depart for short trip to Gregory Canyon.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 10 miles of driving, round trip.
- **1:00 p.m.** *Scientific paper session.* Session convenes at Mountain View Methodist Church, 355 Ponca Place. Please arrive on time, as the first paper will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. Formal scientific paper session concludes at 4:15 p.m., and is followed at 4:30 p.m. by the Expert Panel: Sounds (for more details, see "Information about Panels", below).
- **7:00 p.m.** *Expert panel: Slides.* Panel convenes at Mountain View Methodist Church, 355 Ponca Place. Yes, we'll be indoors. But bring your binoculars, all the same, for close-up inspection of the mystery photographs. For more details on the Expert Panel, see "Information about Panels", below.

### Saturday, 23 September 2006

- **6:00 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Barr Lake State Park.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 100 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:00 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Chatfield State Park.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 100 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:30 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Mesa Trail Open Space.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 25 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:30 a.m.** *Depart for half-day trip to Walden Ponds Nature Study Area.* Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. <25 miles of driving, round trip.
- **8:00 a.m.** *Mastering Digital Photography of Birds.* Workshop leader: Bill Schmoker. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn.
- **8:30 a.m.** *Depart for short trip to Gregory Canyon.* Assemble in Best Western

Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns at 11:45 a.m. 10 miles of driving, round trip.

- **1:00 p.m.** [Scientific paper session](#). Session convenes at Mountain View Methodist Church, 355 Ponca Place. Please arrive on time, as the first paper will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. Formal scientific paper session concludes at 4:15 p.m., and is followed at 4:30 p.m. by the BRC Panel (for more details, see "Information about Panels", below).
- **7:00 p.m.** *Banquet, Members' Meeting, and Keynote Address*. Meet at Mountain View Methodist Church, 355 Ponca Place. At the members' meeting, there will be a vote on a change in WFO's Bylaws, including a new board formulation and term limits, and a vote on a slate for the Board of Directors. The slate of Directors will have been nominated at the Thursday afternoon board meeting (see above, 21 September 2006, 2:00 p.m.), to which all WFO members are invited to attend as non-voting participants. Note that board members may be nominated from the floor, as well as by the board. Other business of the organization will be conducted at this time, too. We are delighted that our keynote speaker will be **Dr. Jessica Young**, a central figure in the discovery of the **Gunnison Sage-Grouse**. The Gunnison Sage-Grouse was added to the A.O.U. Check-list in 2000, and was the first nova avis (new bird species) in the United States in more than 100 years. In her [keynote address](#), Dr. Young will bring us up to date on her active research program on the courtship behavior, genetics, and conservation of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse.

### **Sunday, 24 September 2006**

- **5:00 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip to [Wyoming Migrant Traps](#)*. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 5:00 p.m. or earlier. 300+ miles of driving, round trip.
- **5:00 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip to [Eastern Plains of Colorado](#)*. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 5:00 p.m. or earlier. 200+ miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:00 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip for [High-elevation Specialties](#)*. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 3:00 p.m. or earlier. This trip involves a strenuous hike at high elevations and is suitable only for the physically fit. 100 miles of driving, round trip.
- **6:30 a.m.** *Depart for all-day trip to [Foothills and Farm Country](#)*. Assemble in Best Western Boulder Inn parking lot. Trip returns by 3:00 p.m. or earlier. 100 miles of driving, round trip; easy-going pace.
- **8:00 a.m.** *Workshop: [Empidonax Demystified](#)*. Workshop leader: Arch McCallum. Flatirons Conference Room, Best Western Boulder Inn.

### **Information about Field Trips**

- Many field trips involve travel to destinations that require an **entrance fee**. You do not have to worry about this. When you register for the conference, you will pay for all entrance fees and other costs related to site access. It is a WFO tradition for **all non-driving participants** to help pay for fuel!

- What about food? The hotel will provide the basics for breakfast: juice, cereal, English muffins, bagels, donuts, fresh fruit, and coffee. The conference staff is working to provide some snacks for the road (granola bars, sodas, etc.). We will have complete information on **food for field trip participants** at the registration table. On a general note of advice, we encourage all field trip participants to provision themselves with any special favorites (elk jerky, maple-roasted tofu, fresh-squeezed avocado juice, whatever). Lunch is on your own (pack a lunch for full-day trips, grab a bite to eat after the half-day trips).
- Please note that **all field trips depart promptly** at the designated departure times. Arrive at the departure sites at least 15 minutes early, to give yourself enough time to pick up your breakfast (if you have signed up for one), find your leaders and caravan, and go to the bathroom one last time.
- Please further note that **all field trips will return on time**. If you wish to stay out longer (and if the other occupants of your vehicle are compliant), you are welcome to do so. However, all leaders will bring their trips back to the Best Western Boulder Inn at or before the "official" time of the conclusion of the trip.
- Many of the field trips are destinations that are suitable for **listening to nocturnal migration**. It is unrealistic, because of the unknowns of weather conditions and participant interest, to schedule beforehand special early sessions for nocturnal migration. Instead, if you are interested, please be in touch with a field trip leader the day prior to your departure, to see about the possibility of arranging a special session for nocturnal migration.
- WFO field trip leaders endorse and abide by the [ABA Code of Birding Ethics](#). Also, WFO recognizes and seeks to minimize the environmental impact of car-based birding. To this end, all field trip participants are encouraged to **carpool as efficiently as possible**.
- A comment about the **tempo and style of WFO field trips**. We recognize that every birding and ornithological organization has its own approach to field trips. WFO field trips are easy-going affairs, but we are serious about finding good birds and having a good time afield. Our goal on each field trip is to engage in the study of field ornithology—to get great looks at birds, to discuss field identification, etc. We do not rush from bird to bird, but rather savor each and every sighting.
- **Field Trip Destinations**. Please note that all field trip destinations, except for those in Wyoming, are thoroughly described on the [Colorado County Birding website](#). Brief descriptions of each field trip destination are provided herewith:
  - **Barr Lake State Park**. *Half-day trip, Friday & Saturday*. Generally good for gulls and shorebirds; possibilities include jaegers, Sabine's Gull, Red Phalarope, etc. Woodlands around Barr Lake are good for a wide variety

of passerines, with eastern strays regular in late September. Flat terrain, some insects, possibility of getting muddy.

- **Chatfield State Park.** *Half-day trip, Friday & Saturday.* Offerings similar to those presented by Barr Lake. This site is heavily visited by birders in fall migration, with several "stakeout" rarities usually present. (Let someone else do the work for you!) Flat terrain, some insects, can be heavily congested.
- **Mesa Trail Open Space.** *Half-day trip, Friday & Saturday.* Observe resident and migrant passerines in delightfully high numbers. Diligent searching often results in an eastern stray. Breathtaking scenery. Mountainous terrain, lots of cacti and some snakes if you wander off the trails; this outing requires sturdy footwear and some amount of physical exertion.
- **Walden Ponds Nature Study Area.** *Half-day trip, Friday & Saturday.* A superb introduction to birding the Front Range region. Excellent close-up viewing of a wide diversity of aquatic species; passerines and other landbirds galore; always the possibility of a rarity. Flat terrain, some insects.
- **Relaxed Birding Trip, Gregory Canyon.** *Half-day trip, Friday & Saturday.* This offering has been designed with our more civilized clientele in mind. Enjoy a real breakfast, catch the morning news, and then travel a short distance from the hotel to stunningly gorgeous Gregory Canyon. Excellent studies of Canyon Wren, Pygmy Nuthatch, raptors, etc. A few steep spots, but we'll go slow.
- **Eastern Plains of Colorado.** *Full-day trip, Thursday & Sunday.* Exact itinerary will depend on recent reports and local conditions. We will visit at least one major shorebird hotspot (1,000s of birds) and one major landbird migrant trap. Likely (not guaranteed) focal point of this trip will be Prewitt Reservoir State Wildlife Area. Flat terrain, a fair bit of walking, some insects, potentially lots of mud; the bulk of the driving will be getting there and getting back.
- **Foothills and Farm County.** *Full-day trip, Thursday & Sunday.* We will check out a variety of habitats in and around the foothills and farm country of Boulder County. One or more destinations may be the same as those slated for the half-day trips. Expect a long list of migrants and residents, drawn from a wide variety of taxa. Flat terrain, some insects; several stops, with short drives (15 miles) in between.
- **High-elevation Specialties.** *Full-day trip, Thursday & Sunday.* Our plan is to summit Mt. Audubon. We'll start out at Brainard Lake (elevation 10,060 feet) and proceed to the summit (13,223 feet; on the Continental Divide). There are no guarantees on this trip, but possibilities include

Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (erratic), White-tailed Ptarmigan (fairly likely), and Boreal Owl (unlikely, but y'never know). Do expect breathtaking scenery and a punishing workout. Steep terrain, thin air; bring warm clothes, sun protection, snacks, aspirin, and copious quantities of water.

- **Wyoming Migrant Traps.** *Full-day trip, Thursday & Sunday.* We'll start out at the extraordinary Wyoming Hereford Ranch (large numbers of common migrants, vagrants likely) just outside Cheyenne. Then, depending on recent reports and local conditions, we'll visit shorebird and landbird hotspots north and east of Cheyenne. Flat terrain, lots of driving, fairly intense pace.

We realize that you may be unable to attend conference field trips on one or more days, due to conflicts with workshops or other activities. In such instances, please consult the [Colorado County Birding](#) website for ideas about self-guided or informal small-group trips of your own making. Start with the Boulder County webpage (click on 'Birding by County', then click on 'Boulder') and take it from there. Or start with some other county, farther afield, if you are more ambitious.

- **How to Get There.** Maps and directions to all field trip destinations will be provided with the materials that you pick up **at the registration table**. Please bring the relevant printouts to each field trip, even if you are not a driver.
- **Field Trip Leaders.** WFO is very grateful to the following individuals, who have volunteered to be **local leaders**: Andy Boyce, Doug Faulkner, Nick Komar, Norm Lewis, Tony Leukering, Mark Peterson, Nathan Pieplow, Larry Semo, Scott Severs, Bill Schmoker, and Andrew Spencer. Please note that most field trips are also **co-led by a WFO board member**. Field trip participants are encouraged to introduce themselves to WFO board members and give them a piece of their mind.