

Supplement to Birds Observed In Solera and Lone Tree, February 2009

Introduction

As our community matures, more species of birds check it out! As a consequence, additional birds are now being seen.

This supplement adds those new birds seen since February 1, 2008, adding five new birds, as well as adding new information about a split of the Canada Goose into two local subspecies, both observed here.

The grand total has now reached 96 when including the Canada Goose split, the two subspecies of the Yellow-rumped Warbler, and the inclusion of the three sub-species of Dark-eyed Junco.

An additional photo of the American Avocet is included. It shows the plumage most often observed locally during the winter months. The original photo is taken with the bird in breeding plumage.

It should be noted that the Barn Swallow was omitted in the original Table of Contents under Swifts & Swallows

Goose-size Swimmers

Canada Goose



Sub-species *moffetti*



Subspecies *hutchinsii*

In 2008, those who govern the birding species determination broke the Canada Goose into a number of sub-species.

The normal “Canada Goose” seen in our community is the larger new sub-species *Moffetti*. The more mid-size goose is the new sub-species *hutchinsii*. But these sub-species mingle, so check to see if there are any smaller birds. If you see both sizes, the only way to further distinguish the two is the shape of the head. The *moffetti*'s head seems to be flatter on top and the neck extends up to join it at an angle. The *hutchinsii* has a more rounded head which continues in a curve connecting with its neck. If you have doubts, it's safe to just call the goose a “Canada Goose” and not worry about sub-species.

Wading Birds

Little Blue Heron



© William L. Newton / CLO

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
				R		R	R				

A rare visitor, usually alone, to the edge of our ponds. The immature birds, which are

the only ones observed here to date, are always white. At first appearance, they resemble a Snowy Egret, but they have a more stiff-necked posture, extended forward and its bill is often pointed downward. It's also much less active than the Snowy. They have a thick tapered bill, grayish near the face and almost blue-black at the tip. The legs are a pale dull green.

Shorebirds

Spotted Sandpiper



Breeding



Non-breeding

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
C	C	C	C	C	R	C	C	C	C	C	C

Commonly seen on our ponds, particularly on steep banks near the waters edge picking into the wet soil. Constantly “teeters,” raising and lowering its rear body. It appears to be crouching because of its relatively short legs and neck. Dark patch on its breast, gives it an appearance of a white, or a lighter, notch in front of its wing.

American Avocet



Non-breeding

This is the coloration of the birds most often seen locally during the mid-winter months. The photo on page 14 of the original document is the coloration most often observed in the spring as the birds migrate through.

Woodpeckers

Gilded Flicker



© Arthur Morris / Birds As Art

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

This bird is most commonly seen on a saguaro cactus, and is often mistaken for the Northern Flicker. However, there are subtle differences: the Gilded Flicker had a brown crown with no red behind it, whereas the Northern Flicker has a gray crown. In flight, the Northern Flicker most common here shows red under its wings. The Gilded shows yellow. Be careful though, there are rare sightings of the Yellow-shafted Flicker, which is identical to the Northern Flicker

except for a red crescent on the nape of its neck, and a brown instead of gray neck.

Perching Landbirds

Vermillion Flycatcher



July 2006 © Peter LaTourrette
Male



July 2006 © Peter LaTourrette
Female

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Forages for small flying insects from an open perch, a tree, post or other feature with a height advantage. Only the male has been seen in our community, but, since these birds are fairly common year-round, the female might also appear. The male is unmistakable, being sparrow-size, crimson overall, with a black bill, back and tail. The female resembles a Say's Phoebe, acting much the same way. However, the

flycatcher has a slightly streaked whitish-gray breast with orangish flanks.

Sparrows

The Dark-eyed Junco is always listed in the Sparrow section of bird books. There three sub-species that have been observed in the winter months in our community. Often in small flocks among low shrubs, foraging on the ground for seeds. The three subspecies may mingle, and all three sub-species foraging together is not uncommon.

Dark-eyed Junco



July 2006 © Peter LaTourrette
"Oregon" male



July 2006 © Peter LaTourrette
"Oregon: female

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
C	C	C	F					C	C	C	C

The "Oregon" is the most likely to be seen in our community. It is readily recognized by the distinctly marked sooty head and neck.



Robert Royce

“Gray-headed”

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
F	F	F	F	R					F	F	F

The “Gray-headed” is also distinct in that it has little dark-gray, but has a distinct rusty colored mantle.



© J. R. Woodward/CLO

”Slate-colored” male



© J. R. Woodward/CLO

“Slate-colored” Female

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
R	R	R							R	R	R

The “Slate-colored” lives up to its name – it’s pretty much slate-colored overall except for its stomach and flanks, which are off-white or white.

All have a distinct “seed-eating” pinkish-white or off-white bill.

All also have white outer tail feathers that are obscured when perched or foraging, but flash conspicuously in flight.