

Highlights from July 23 Bird Walk to Wigwam Creek

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Broad-tailed Hummingbird female (c) Anne Craig. Note tail longer than wings, buffy flanks, and spotted cheeks.

It's always a treat to go out and have a day in which four woodpecker species are found! Through the years Evergreen Audubon has recorded nine species in the Bear Creek Watershed, so it shouldn't be that hard to get four, or more, in a day, but for me it just doesn't seem to happen all that often. And, I love woodpeckers! So, of our four species at Wigwam Creek only one was one of our resident species, the Red-shafted race of the Northern Flicker. These guys were fairly vocal throughout the morning, and though we didn't see any

juveniles (or at least I didn't), I think we can be confident that there were some out there in the vicinity. Also, FYI, our two other resident woodpeckers are??????? You're right, the Hairy and Downy.



Red-naped Sapsucker (c) Anne Craig

We, then, also had a female Red-naped Sapsucker hanging out with her three kids. Historically, the Red-naped Sapsucker was considered a subspecies of the continent-wide Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Then, in 1983 the Yellow-bellied was split into three species. Now, the name Yellow-bellied is reserved for the eastern species, the Red-breasted Sapsucker is the Pacific Coast species, and the Rocky Mount and Great Basin species is the Red-naped. On Saturday the mom, with her red and white chin and throat, was systematically visiting her sap wells in a willow (see photo), and having to chase off an occasional Broad-tailed Hummingbird. Her youngsters were not quite as focused, being sometimes in the willow with her but mostly hanging on the trunks of nearby ponderosas. They were already intermediate in developing some adult plumage characteristics with a bit of red on the crown, a hint of red on the chin of one, but still mostly mottled gray on the breast and belly.



Red-headed Woodpecker (c) Anne Craig

For our third woodpecker species we had a pair of adult Lewis's Woodpeckers – red-face, pale gray collar, pink belly, and what I call “smoking jacket green” back and wings. While these have been regularly reported breeding in the Wigwam area, we failed to note any nesting behavior or see any juveniles. Finally, we had a beautiful knock-your-socks-off pair of adult Red-headed Woodpeckers intermittently taking food to their nestlings high in a cavity in one of the old burned snags that are so prevalent in the area.

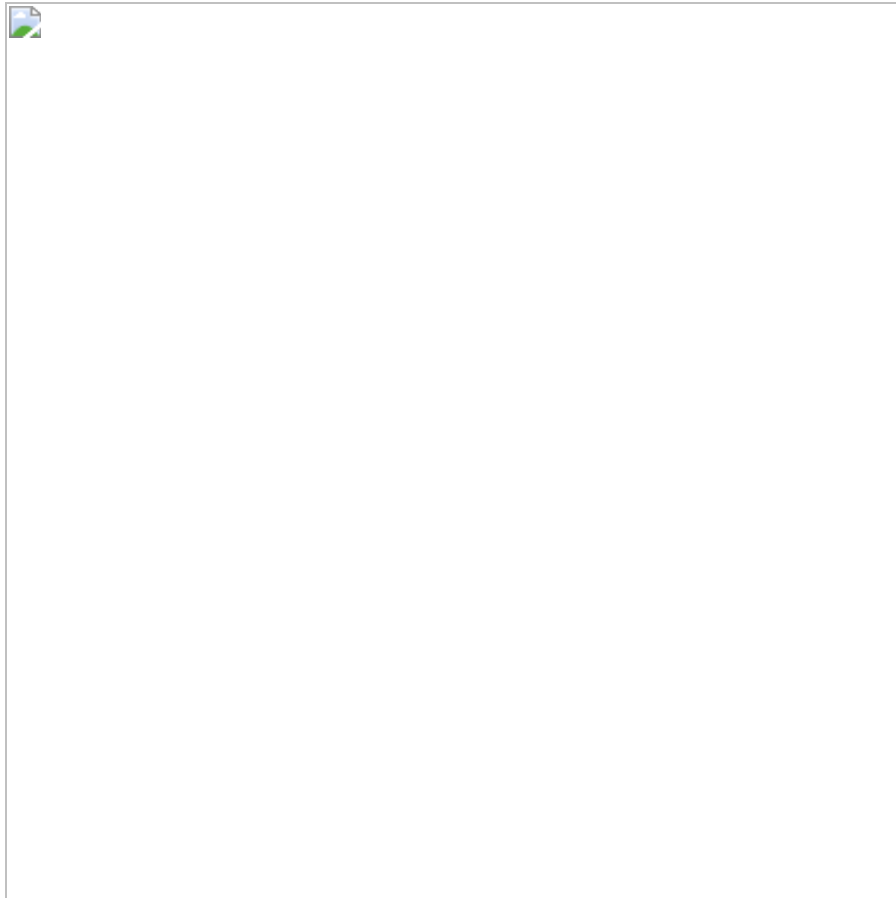


Olive-sided Flycatcher (c) Steve Wickliffe

Some fun additional sightings were provided by Mountain Bluebirds feeding their young out in the open and by a male Western Bluebird carrying food to its nestlings in another snag cavity and then immediately carrying off a fecal sac. A definite highlight was the number of Olive-sided Flycatchers that kept singing, “Quick-Three-Beers” throughout the morning. This is a species that has undergone a moderately rapid decline in the last half century and is classified as Near Threatened on the Red List of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The IUCN’s Red List is an important resource to be aware of as, since it was established in 1964, it has become the world’s most comprehensive source on the global extinction risk status of animal, fungus, and plant species. Overall, little is known to explain the decline in Olive-sided Flycatcher numbers. Pesticide use may be a factor, but

there is no hard data to substantiate that. We do know that they have exhibited a preference for post-fire communities, forest edges rather than forest interiors, clear-cut patches, and high availability of snags. Obviously, the Wigwam Creek area meets these criteria with its extensive post-fire, snag-filled habitat having occasional patches of original forest, and apparently the Olive-sideds have responded accordingly. We certainly saw more there in one day than we are apt to see over a whole year in the Evergreen area. What is less well known is what is happening on their South American wintering grounds and along their migration routes.

Good birding! Chuck



American Kestrel (c) Mick Thompson

Wigwam Creek, July 23, 2022

Number of Taxa: 31

Number of participants: 11

2 Mallard

9 Mourning Dove

11 Broad-tailed Hummingbird

1 Double-crested Cormorant

5 Turkey Vulture

4 Red-naped Sapsucker
2 Lewis's Woodpecker
2 Red-headed Woodpecker
5 Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)
8 American Kestrel
11 Olive-sided Flycatcher
14 Western Wood-Pewee
6 Cordilleran Flycatcher
2 Plumbeous Vireo
2 Warbling Vireo
4 Mountain Chickadee
1 Tree Swallow
12 Violet-green Swallow
19 Pygmy Nuthatch
2 Rock Wren
3 House Wren
3 Gray Catbird
2 Western Bluebird
14 Mountain Bluebird
10 Red Crossbill
3 Pine Siskin
1 Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed)
2 Vesper Sparrow
2 Song Sparrow
3 Western Tanager
1 Black-headed Grosbeak