

SOUTHEASTERN  
COLORADO  
TRAIL GUIDE



COLORADO

BIRDING TRAIL

# Meet the Partners

## Audubon Colorado

Audubon Colorado exists to inspire and work with people to conserve, restore and enjoy natural habitats in our state. We focus on birds and other wildlife through education, research, careful use of our resources, and by serving as strong voices for the natural world. <http://co.audubon.org>



## Colorado Division of Wildlife

Our mission is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state and provide people the opportunity to enjoy them. The watchable wildlife program promotes wildlife stewardship and awareness through positive viewing experiences. [www.wildlife.state.co.us](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us)



## Colorado Field Ornithologists

CFO is a non-profit statewide organization open to anyone interested in birds, including recreational birders and professional ornithologists. The diversity of our members' interests creates a dynamic organization and offers learning opportunities for all. [www.cfo-link.org](http://www.cfo-link.org)



## Colorado State Parks

Our mission is providing outdoor recreation through the stewardship of Colorado's natural resources for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of present and future generations. [www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us)



## Great Outdoors Colorado

Known as GOCO to its friends, this board provides Colorado Lottery funds for worthwhile projects, statewide. Without the GOCO funds allocated for the printing of this Colorado Birding Trail Guide, the project could not have been completed. Show your support for wildlife by playing the Colorado Lottery! [www.goco.org](http://www.goco.org)



## National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. Colorado features 12 unique NPS sites. [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)



## Playa Lakes Joint Venture

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture's (PLJV) mission is to conserve playa lakes, other wetlands and associated landscapes through partnerships for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people. [www.pljv.org](http://www.pljv.org)



## Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Our mission is to conserve birds of the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, and Intermountain West and the habitats on which they depend through research, monitoring, education, and outreach. [www.rmbo.org](http://www.rmbo.org)



## USDA Forest Service

Our mission is to lead in the conservation and wise use of the nation's forests and grasslands. We provide outdoor enthusiasts with amazing opportunities on 11 National Forests and 2 National Grasslands in Colorado. <http://www.fs.fed.us/>



## CryBaby Design

CryBaby Design is a design studio specializing in web design & development, branding and print design for clients ranging from non-profit organizations to the Fortune 500. A great deal of their work focuses on conservation, ecology, wildlife and organic/natural lifestyle industries. [www.crybabydesign.com](http://www.crybabydesign.com)



## Bill Schmoker

Bill Schmoker is a science teacher, birder, and skilled photographer. Many of the wildlife images in this guide are provided through his generosity. You can learn more about Bill by visiting his website. [www.schmoker.org](http://www.schmoker.org)

## Additional Credits:

*Nathan Pieplow and Andrew Spencer for all their hard work, Jennifer Kleffner, Dave Lovell, John Kosbak from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Renee Herring, Glenn Giroir for additional photography, and the friendly people of Colorado who have embraced and implemented the Colorado Birding Trail vision for healthy wildlife resources and vigorous economies in their communities.*

# The Colorado Birding Trail

Join us on the Colorado Birding Trail to experience a wildlife adventure of your own! Explore Colorado's incredible diversity of wildlife and the habitats they depend on in unbelievably spectacular settings. From the dry grasslands of the short-grass prairie to the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains, Colorado has nearly 1,000 species of wildlife for you to seek in an endless variety of fantastic habitats.

Colorado's wildlife - It's something to see! From the sleek pronghorn antelope of the vast, high plains prairie to the camouflaged White-tailed Ptarmigan of the alpine tundra, an exciting outdoor adventure awaits you on the Colorado Birding Trail. The easily-navigated web site, Birding Trail Guide and trail maps will assist you in planning your personalized wildlife viewing experience.



## Amenities Legend

- \* Site may require a fee to visit. Please see below for information on visiting particular sites.
- Some handicapped facilities are available.
- Hiking trails provide access to wildlife habitats.
- On-site services available.
- On-site facilities available.
- Staffed facility available during business hours.
- Provide enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities for visitors.
- On-site facilities available.
- Camping permitted - sites may vary from primitive camping to RV sites with hook-ups. There may be an additional fee for camping. Call specific sites for more information.
- Hunting licenses are required for all hunters.
- A fishing license is required for people between the ages of 16 and 64. Free licenses are available for seniors, age 64 and older.

## \*Admission:

**State Wildlife Areas (SWA):** No Fee. Open to the public for wildlife-based recreation subject to management closures, as posted.  
**State Parks:** You must purchase a day pass or have a State Parks Annual Pass for your vehicle.  
**National Parks:** You must purchase a day pass or have an Annual Pass for your vehicle.  
**US Forest Service:** Most picnic and campgrounds require a user fee.  
**Private Sites:** For most sites, contact the owner at least 48 HOURS prior to visit. Fee depends upon services/facilities provided. Please remember, many private sites are working ranches as well as a private residence, and there may be times when the landowner cannot accommodate visits. While you are on a private site, remember to stay on roads, leave gates as you find them (whether open or closed), and refrain from taking anything off the ranch or leaving trash behind.

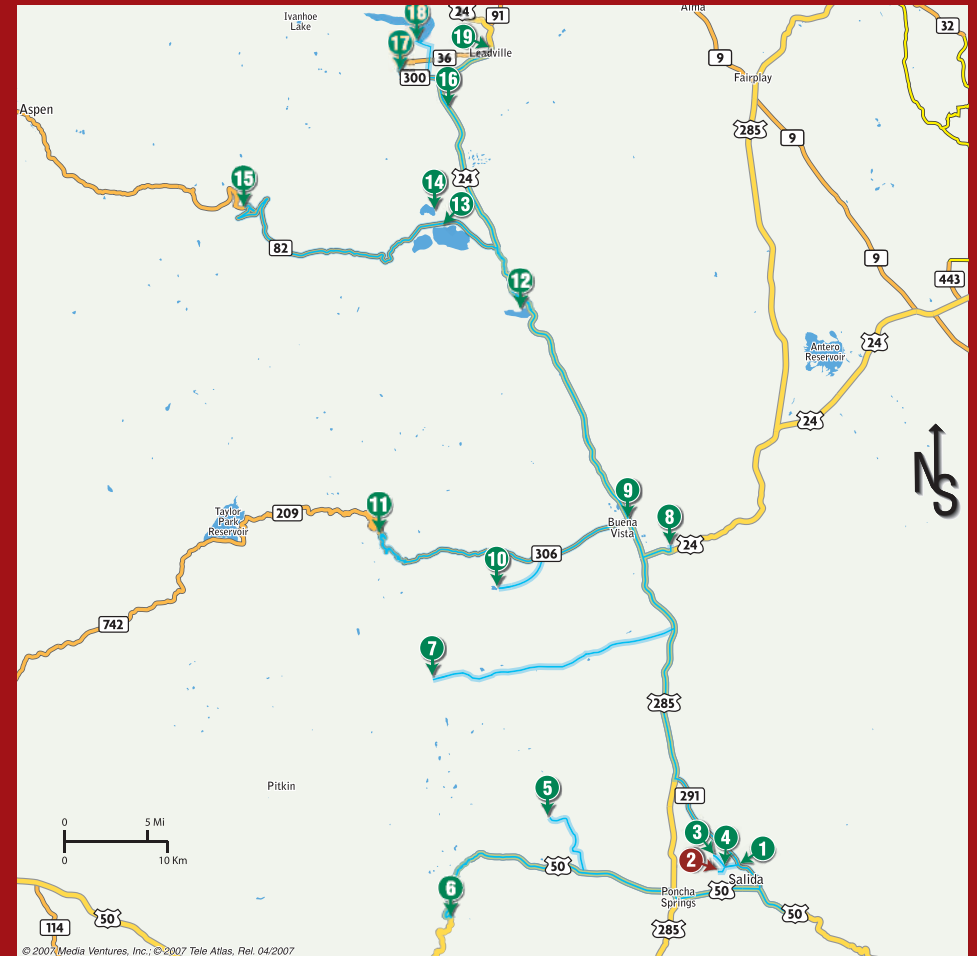


# Headwaters Trail



## Wildlife of the Upper Arkansas Valley

The Arkansas River, the lifeblood of southeast Colorado, starts high in the Sawatch Range, meandering through mountain valleys and thundering through steep-sided gorges before finally streaming across the southeast plains. This trail follows the upper portions of the Arkansas from its origins above treeline down to pinyon-juniper covered hills and shallow canyons. Wildlife along the trail varies accordingly, with chances to spot ptarmigans or mountain goats on Cottonwood Pass, Pinyon Jays at the Fourmile Travel Management Area, and wintering eagles or waterfowl on the lakes on the floor of the valley. But birds are not the only reason to drive this route. The scenery features the highest peak in the state (Mount Elbert), the largest peak in the state (Mount Massive), one of the most distinctive peaks in the state (Mount Princeton), as well as the beginnings of what becomes the Royal Gorge further down-stream. The Upper Arkansas valley is a destination that will enthrall any nature lover.



## Sites on the Headwaters Trail:

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Sands Lake SWA                                    | 11. Cottonwood Pass                  |
| 2. Fairview Cemetery                                 | 12. Clear Creek Reservoir SWA        |
| 3. Mount Ouray SWA                                   | 13. Twin Lakes (Lake County)         |
| 4. Mount Shavano State Fish Hatchery and Frantz Lake | 14. Mount Elbert Forebay             |
| 5. North Fork Reservoir Road                         | 15. Independence Pass                |
| 6. Monarch Pass                                      | 16. Crystal Lakes                    |
| 7. St. Elmo/Chalk Creek Canyon                       | 17. Leadville National Fish Hatchery |
| 8. Fourmile Travel Management Area                   | 18. Turquoise Lake                   |
| 9. Buena Vista                                       | 19. Leadville                        |
| 10. Cottonwood Lake                                  |                                      |



**1. Sands Lake SWA**

**Description:**

Sands Lake is one of the best birding lakes in Chaffee County. The willows around the lake can be good for migrants. The lake retains open water year-round, and so can be good for waterfowl, particularly during the colder months.

**Directions:**

From Highway 50 in Salida turn north on Oak St./291. Drive through downtown; Sands Lake will be on your right just beyond the ball fields.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**2. Fairview Cemetery**

**Description:**

This cemetery contains dense underbrush, both coniferous and deciduous, along a manmade watercourse. Mountain Bluebirds can be seen in the field along the entrance road, and mule deer can be numerous in the area.

**Directions:**

From Hwy 291 just north of Salida, turn west at CR 154 and drive past the hatchery and Frantz Lake. Turn left on CR 160; at the top of the hill, turn right onto CR 144, and go .5 miles to CR 142. Turn right to get to the cemetery.

**Access:**

Open all year, as posted

**3. Mount Ouray SWA**

**Description:**

A former fish hatchery, this State Wildlife Area includes several small ponds, a nice wetland area, and access to a stretch of the Arkansas River. It is a good place to look for sparrows, rails, wrens, and occasionally raptors including Bald Eagle.

**Directions:**

From Highway 291 north of Salida, turn west on CR 154 and drive past the hatchery and Frantz Lake. Turn right on CR 160 and go 1.5 miles to the SWA.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**4. Mount Shavano State Fish Hatchery and Frantz Lake SWA**

**Description:**

Frantz Lake can sometimes be good for waterfowl, and in migration you may see Ospreys from the boardwalk or along the nearby Arkansas River. In spring and fall, look for migrants in the trees on the lake's south side. The adjacent Mount Shavano State Fish Hatchery is open to the public, and grants access to the river.

**Directions:**

From Hwy 291 just north of Salida, turn west on CR 154. Hatchery is on the right, .5 miles from 291. Beyond the hatchery to the east is the SWA.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**5. North Fork Reservoir Road**

**Description:**

This road is well-maintained as far as the Angel of Shavano Trailhead. The area around the trailhead can be good birding, with some nice forests of mixed conifers and aspens. The willows on the left about a half-mile before the trailhead have breeding Fox Sparrow among other specialties.

**Directions:**

Take US 50 about seven miles west of Poncha Springs, and turn right onto CR 240.

**Access:**

Trailhead: year-round; campground: May-Sept



**6. Monarch Pass**

**Description:**

Although it is a high mountain pass, Monarch Pass is not above treeline. Flocks of crossbills and other mountain birds have been seen on and near the pass, and the campground can provide good birding also.

**Directions:**

Monarch Pass is at the crest of the Continental Divide on Highway 50 between Poncha Springs and Gunnison.

**Access:**

Open all year; campground early June-early Sept



**7. St. Elmo/Chalk Creek Canyon**

**Description:**

This canyon is full of natural beauty and historic interest. Far up the canyon is the historic mining town of St. Elmo, now mostly a ghost town. The high forests here could provide views of American Three-toed Woodpecker or Pine Grosbeak. The Mt. Princeton Hot Springs provide a nice way to relax when you're done exploring the area.

**Directions:**

From the junction of Hwy 285/24 west of Johnson Village, go south on 285 about 5 miles to Nathrop. Turn west on CR 162, Chalk Creek Canyon Road.

**Access:**

Open all year



**8. Fourmile Travel Management Area**

**Description:**

This large area includes BLM, Forest Service and state lands. The western part of this area, just east of Johnson Village near the Collegiate Peaks Overlook, has the best pinyon-juniper habitat in the county and is a classic spot for Pinyon Jay among other specialties.

**Directions:**

Head east on US 24/285 from Johnson Village a little under two miles to CR 304 on the left, signed for the overlook.

**Access:**

Open all year



**9. Buena Vista**

**Description:**

This lovely little town has several nice riverside parks and nature trails as well as some ponds worth checking. Right downtown is McPhelimy Park, with great mature trees for migrant passerines, a duck pond, and a stream complete with willows. Lewis's Woodpeckers aren't difficult to find on the outskirts of town.

**Directions:**

Buena Vista is along US 285, about 3 miles north of Johnson Village.

**Access:**

Open all year



**10. Cottonwood Lake**

**Description:**

This beautiful lake at approximately 9,600 feet has a campground and many fine montane habitats, including mixed-conifer forest with scattered aspen and a large willow carr just upstream from the lake; watch for Wilson's Snipe, Fox Sparrow and Cooper's Hawk. The cliffs opposite the lake can provide views of mountain goats.

**Directions:**

From the traffic light in Buena Vista, go west on CR 306 to CR 344 and turn left. The lake is in about three miles.

**Access:**

Campground open mid-May to mid-Sept



**11. Cottonwood Pass**

**Description:**

The road from Buena Vista is paved up to the Continental Divide at Cottonwood Pass, a stunning high-elevation pass that gets high above treeline and provides nice access to alpine tundra. If you are prepared for some strenuous high-altitude hiking, you might find White-tailed Ptarmigan and Brown-capped Rosy-Finch in summer. The pass is closed in winter.

**Directions:**

Cottonwood Pass is a little under twenty miles west of Buena Vista along CR 306.

**Access:**

Summer

**12. Clear Creek Reservoir SWA**

**Description:**

This State Wildlife Area is centered around the largest lake in Chaffee County, which has breeding birds including Common Merganser, Osprey and sometimes California Gull. There is a large area of willows just upstream from the lake that can also provide good birding.

**Directions:**

From Buena Vista, go 13 miles north on US 24, then .5 mile west on CR 390.

**Access:**

Open all year





### 13. Twin Lakes (Lake County)

**Description:**

The Twin Lakes are probably the best birding spot in Lake County. Large numbers of waterbirds sometimes congregate in fall. Ospreys can be seen in summer. The White Star Campground has Ponderosa Pine forest that might attract Western Tanager and Pygmy Nuthatch.

**Directions:**

Follow US 24 south from Leadville about fifteen miles to CO 82, and turn left. The lakes are on the south side of the road in about a mile.

**Access:**

Open all year (facilities closed in winter)



### 14. Mount Elbert Forebay

**Description:**

This small lake just north of the Twin Lakes is usually empty of birds, but sometimes you can find grebes, mergansers or goldeneyes here, especially in the late fall.

**Directions:**

Follow US 24 south from Leadville about fifteen miles to CO 82, and turn left. In four miles, turn north on CR 24C. Follow CR 24 to the Forebay.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk

### 15. Independence Pass

**Description:**

Independence Pass is one of the few places in the state where you can ascend above treeline on a paved road. There is a paved trail here through beautiful alpine tundra. In summer you should find American Pipits and White-crowned Sparrows. If you hike across the tundra, you might stumble across White-tailed Ptarmigan or Brown-capped Rosy-Finch.

**Directions:**

Follow US 24 south from Leadville about fifteen miles to CO 82, and turn left. The pass is about fifteen miles west on 82.

**Access:**

Summer



### 16. Crystal Lakes

**Description:**

The small Crystal Lake can attract diving ducks and maybe even shorebirds. Many nest boxes around the parking lot host Mountain Bluebird and Tree Swallow families in summer. The sagelands to the southwest should be checked for Horned Lark, Sage Thrasher and even Brewer's Sparrow.

**Directions:**

From Leadville, head south on US 24 about 4.5 miles until you pass between two ponds, and turn right at the sign for Crystal Lakes and follow the road around the buildings to the parking lot.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 17. Leadville National Fish Hatchery

**Description:**

Leadville National Fish Hatchery is the second-oldest federal hatchery in the nation. Its grounds are open to the public for hiking and wildlife viewing, and include willow thickets, subalpine (spruce-fir) forest, and two public fishing ponds which can attract waterfowl, especially in late fall.

**Directions:**

From Leadville, head 3.5 miles south on US 24 to CO 300; turn right and head 2.2 miles to the hatchery.

**Access:**

Open all year, 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM



### 18. Turquoise Lake

**Description:**

This very large lake is scenic, but often has few waterbirds. However, grebes and loons are regular in late fall, along with a few ducks. The spruce-fir forest around the lake can be good in summer for high-elevation birds.

**Directions:**

From Leadville, head west on 6th Ave. for 3.5 miles to a three way intersection. Take the right fork, which reaches the lake shortly or follow signs from US 24 south of Leadville.

**Access:**

Open all year (facilities closed in winter)



### 19. Leadville

**Description:**

Leadville is a picturesque old mining town at the foot of Colorado's highest mountains. At the elevation of 10,152 ft., it has all the amenities. Feeders around town can attract birds including Pine Grosbeak and Rosy-Finches in winter. Along the highway south of town, look for raptors, including Rough-legged Hawk in winter, as well as elk and deer.

**Directions:**

Leadville is along US route 24, 34 miles north of Buena Vista, and 23 miles south of I-70.

**Access:**

Open all year



# Did You KNOW?

## Colorado's State Fish Greenback Cutthroat Trout



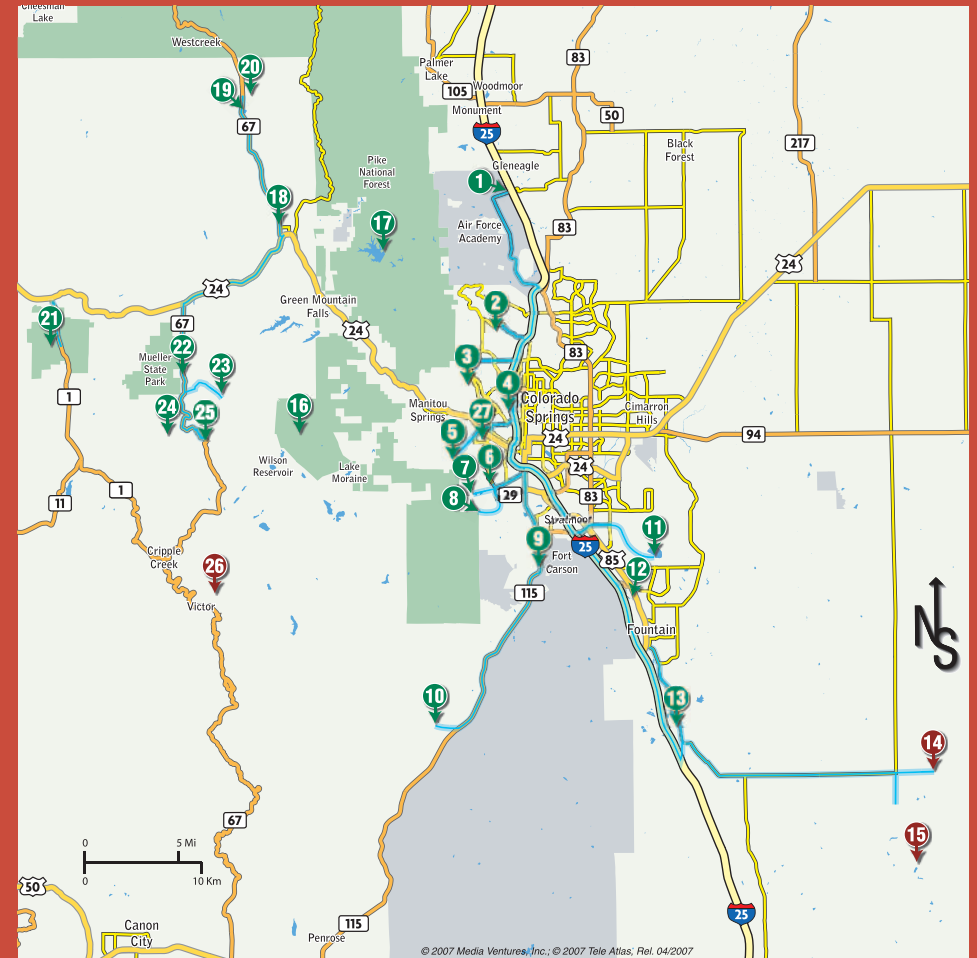
Colorado's state fish is known as the Greenback Cutthroat Trout. By the early 1900's they were nearly extirpated from the state due to habitat loss, unregulated fishing pressure and competition from non-native trout stocked into lakes and streams. Recovery efforts by the CDOW and National Fish and Wildlife Service have returned these "natives" to the streams they once inhabited. You may find Greenback Cutthroat Trout at a few sites along the Colorado Birding Trail, including the Headwaters, Spanish Peaks and Greenhorn Trails.

# Pikes Peak Trail



## Wildlife Watching in the Shadow of Pikes Peak

Pike's Peak is quintessential Colorado. The monarch of the Colorado Springs skyline is visible from almost as far away as Kansas. But this trail includes much more than the chance to admire and even drive to the top of "America's Peak." It also features one of the most scenic canyon drives in the state, as well as Colorado's premier migrant trap, a little-visited national monument with an amazing collection of fossils, the internationally renowned Garden of the Gods, and even one of the best reservoirs on the Front Range. Birders will find much to occupy them: Flammulated Owls at the Experimental Forest, Mountain Plovers on the high plains ranches, wintering waterbirds on Big Johnson Reservoir. Visitors to the Pikes Peak area will soon discover that quintessential Colorado is much more than just mountains!



### Sites on the Pikes Peak Trail:

1. Air Force Academy
2. Ute Valley Park
3. Garden of the Gods
4. Sondermann Park
5. Bear Creek Canyon Park
6. Stratton Open Space
7. North Cheyenne Canyon Park
8. Old Stage Road
9. Cheyenne Mountain State Park
10. Aiken Canyon
11. Big Johnson Reservoir/Blue Stem Open Space
12. Fountain Creek Regional Park
13. Clear Springs Ranch
14. Hanover Road
15. Chico Basin Ranch
16. Pikes Peak
17. Rampart Reservoir
18. Woodland Park
19. Manitou Lake and Trout Creek
20. Experimental Forest
21. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument
22. Mueller State Park
23. The Crags
24. Dome Rock SWA
25. Horsethief Falls
26. Goldfield
27. Bear Creek Regional Park and Nature Center



### 1. Air Force Academy

#### Description:

The Air Force Academy is a major nature preserve and tourist attraction. It has traditionally been an "open base" that allows a great deal more public access than most military installations. Due to heightened security, please call the Visitor's Center for the most recent information and trail maps: 719-333-2025. Birders can access the Falcon Trail, a 13 mile loop through mixed forest and grassland habitats that provide viewing for towhees, warblers, bluebirds and more.

#### Directions:

The public may enter the Air Force Academy through the Northgate or Southgate entrances off I-25, just north of Colorado Springs.

#### Access:

Open all year, visitor center: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM daily



### 2. Ute Valley Park

#### Description:

Craggy bluffs isolate this area from urban sprawl. The park contains good foothills scrub habitat, and breeding birds such as Plumbeous Vireo, Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee and others are well represented. Deer, rock squirrels, black bear and rattlesnakes also live in the park, though the last two are rare.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 147, take Rockrimmon Blvd 1.5 miles west, then go west 0.7 miles on Vindicator Drive.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 3. Garden of the Gods

#### Description:

World-famous scenery and good birding. Pinyon-juniper and foothills scrub have Lazuli Bunting, Spotted Towhee, and Virginia's Warbler. The rocks have nesting White-throated Swift, Prairie Falcon, and Canyon and Rock Wrens. Hummingbird feeders are busy in late summer. Mule deer, rock squirrels, bighorn sheep or rattlesnakes might be seen if you come early enough to beat the crowds. Visit in February for the Bighorn Sheep Festival. Rock Ledge Ranch across 31st Street is a worthwhile stop for kids of all ages.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 146, go west on Garden of the Gods Road, then left on 30th Street 2.2 miles to the park.

#### Access:

Open all year, 5:30 AM to 9:00 PM



### 4. Sondermann Park

#### Description:

An oasis of wilderness within the city of Colorado Springs. Trails access good foothills scrub and some riparian growth, with species such as Lazuli Bunting, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Black-headed Grosbeak, and others present. Keep an eye out for rattlesnakes along the path, in addition to deer, beaver, squirrels and raccoons.

#### Directions:

West on Fontanero Street from I-25 exit 144; first right onto Chestnut Street; watch for small entrance sign on left.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 5. Bear Creek Canyon Park

#### Description:

Ponderosas and other conifers dominate this steep and primitive park, which is popular with mountain bikers and other recreationists. It is a great place to find jays, as well as deer, squirrels, bears (occasionally) and the rare Rydberg's golden columbine.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 141, west on US 24, then left on 21st St., right on Lower Gold Camp Road, then left on Bear Creek Road to its end.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 6. Stratton Open Space

#### Description:

A large open space with foothills scrub, ponderosa, small reservoirs, and riparian habitats. Birds include foothills breeders, all three nuthatches, many corvids, and sometimes ducks in winter; rock squirrels, coyotes and deer are often seen. This is one of the few locations in Colorado with breeding Ovenbirds.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 141, west on US 24, then left on 21st

St. until it becomes Cresta Road; to just past the high school, then right on La Veta Way to its end.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 7. North Cheyenne Canyon Park

#### Description:

Adjacent to Stratton Open Space, with comparable birdlife. Two visitor centers; one is the Starsmore Discovery Center which has many nature exhibits. Feeders attract many hummingbirds - Hummingbird Festival in May. If you are lucky, you might see a Band-tailed Pigeon. There is an entrance fee to Helen Hunt Falls, but the rest of the park can be visited free of charge.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 140, south on Tejon Ave, which bends southwest to become N. Cheyenne Blvd, which enters the park 2.5 miles from the interstate.

#### Access:

Starsmore Discovery Center: April to Oct



### 8. Old Stage Road

#### Description:

A long winding road that traverses many elevations. Habitat includes ponderosa, mixed conifer woodland, spruce-fir, and aspen. Look for Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsuckers, Dusky Flycatchers, Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet, and Northern Pygmy-Owls, and many others. Mammals may include chipmunks, deer and elk.

#### Directions:

Note: route can be tricky to follow. From I-25 exit 140B, south on Nevada Ave, then west on Lake Ave to Old Broadmoor Rd. Turn left at the roundabout and follow Old Broadmoor Rd which will turn into W. Cheyenne Mountain Blvd. Follow this to a confusing multi-street intersection and go basically straight onto Old Stage Rd.

#### Access:

Open all year, weather permitting

### 9. Cheyenne Mountain State Park

#### Description:

Miles of trails wind through a terrific sample of habitats of the southern foothills, with extensive scrub oak and Ponderosa Pine woodlands as well as cliff faces with Canyon and Rock Wrens, Virginia's Warblers, swallows and swifts, nesting raptors and

rattlesnakes. Look for Wild Turkey, deer and elk. Excellent views.

#### Directions:

The park is south of Colorado Springs (south of Academy Boulevard) on CO 115.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Aiken Canyon

#### Description:

This Nature Conservancy preserve has some of the best pinyon-juniper habitat in the area, and can be a good place to look for specialties including Juniper Titmouse, Bushtit, and Ash-throated Flycatcher. In addition to birds, look for reptiles and large mammals such as deer and coyote.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 140B, south on Nevada Ave, which becomes CO 115, approximately 15 miles to Turkey Canyon Ranch Road and the property entrance on the west side of CO 115.

#### Access:

Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays, dawn to dusk



### 11. Big Johnson Reservoir/Blue Stem Open Space

#### Description:

Big Johnson is the best reservoir in the area, and during migration and winter is teeming with ducks of many species, gulls, and sometimes loons and grebes. Also keep an eye out for prairie-dogs and Burrowing Owl around the reservoir, and Scaled Quail by the parking area.

#### Directions:

From I-25 exit 135, head east/north on Academy to Bradley Rd. Take Bradley, which changes to Goldfield Dr, 4.4 miles to the Blue Stem Open Space.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 12. Fountain Creek Regional Park

#### Description:

A top birding spot in the area, with marshes, riparian groves, and thickets. The bird list includes many eastern migrants, many riparian breeders, and rails and Marsh Wren. In winter look for sparrows, and ducks on the small ponds, plus foxes, squirrels, deer, muskrat



and beaver. The Visitor Center has excellent displays.

**Directions:**

From I-25 exit 132, take CO 16 east to US 85/87 south. Travel 0.6 miles to Peppergrass Lane and park near the visitor center.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**13. Clear Springs Ranch**

**Description:**

A good migrant trap on Fountain Creek. Trails with interpretive signage access cottonwood riparian groves, good thickets and agricultural fields. Look for Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Red-headed and Lewis's Woodpeckers, and migrants, as well as deer, beaver and squirrels. Muddy creek beds can be a good place to look for animal tracks.

**Directions:**

From I-25 exit 123, head east and follow signs to parking area.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**14. Hanover Road**

**Description:**

This road goes through some excellent grassland with good cholla patches. Species such as Scaled Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher, Cassin's Sparrow and Chihuahuan Raven can be found. This is one of the few locations in the area for Ladder-backed Woodpecker.

**Directions:**

From I-25 exit 122, head east on Old Pueblo Road about 1.5 miles to Hanover Road and continue east.

**Access:**

Open all year

**15. Chico Basin Ranch**

**Description:**

This privately managed, state-owned ranch has an excellent migrant trap where the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory bands birds each spring. Migration here can be stunning, with landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds represented. Mountain Plovers and Burrowing Owls breed here, and sparrows are present during the winter.

**Directions:**

Follow above directions to Hanover Rd. Head east

12.3 miles to Peyton Hwy, then right (south) about 2 miles to ranch HQ to check in and pay fee.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**16. Pikes Peak**

**Description:**

At 14,110 feet, Pikes Peak is a beautiful backdrop for Colorado Springs. Dusky Grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan and all three Rosy-Finches can be found on the peak road (Brown-capped Rosy-Finch in summer, the others in late fall and early spring). Look for pika and marmots. A cog railway ascends the peak in summer. Views from the summit are unbelievable.

**Directions:**

From I-25 exit 141, west on US 24 about 9.5 miles to the Pikes Peak Toll Road exit; turn left and follow signs.

**Access:**

Open all year, but snow may block access in winter



**17. Rampart Reservoir**

**Description:**

This mountain reservoir is the largest in El Paso County. The surrounding forest is excellent, and most mountain birds including American Three-toed Woodpecker can be found. The Rainbow Gulch Trail is especially good birding. Keep an eye out in the area for pine squirrels, chipmunks and porcupines.

**Directions:**

From Woodland Park, north on Baldwin St, which becomes Rampart Range Rd, 2.9 miles, then right on Loy Creek Rd about 1.5 miles, then right on Rampart Range Rd (FR 300) 2.4 miles to parking area. Walk 1.2 miles on Rainbow Gulch Trail to reservoir.

**Access:**

Open all year



**18. Woodland Park**

**Description:**

This town is a gateway to the rolling Ponderosa Pine forests surrounding Pikes Peak. This is the population center of Teller County, with all the amenities. Feeders in town can attract doves,

finches, nuthatches, and occasionally Band-tailed Pigeons in summer. Deer, elk and the distinctive Albert's Squirrel live here also.

**Directions:**

Woodland Park is 18 miles west of Colorado Springs along US 24.

**Access:**

Open all year



**19. Manitou Lake and Trout Creek**

**Description:**

The finest birding spot in the county. This is a great place to find breeding Red-naped Sapsuckers and flycatchers, and many species of warbler and other landbirds migrate through in spring and fall. Deer, elk and beaver inhabit the area. Visitors will not be disappointed!

**Directions:**

From Woodland Park, north 7.3 miles on CO 67 to the Manitou Lake entrance. Forest Service campgrounds are located nearby.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**20. Experimental Forest**

**Description:**

The Manitou Experimental Forest serves as an area for biological research adjacent to Manitou Lake. Although part of it suffered during the huge Hayman Fire of 2002 (the largest forest fire in Colorado's recent history), the forest still hosts many mountain birds, including the elusive Flammulated Owl, which can be heard here after dark during May and June. The forest is open to birders, but the facilities here are not open to the public. Services are available at nearby Manitou Lake.

**Directions:**

Follow above directions to Manitou Lake. The Experimental Forest entrance is on the right just past Manitou Lake.

**Access:**

Open all year

**21. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument**

**Description:**

In addition to a wonderful museum/visitor center and historic homestead, birding amid the ponderosa woodland mixed with aspen and open

meadows can be productive, with Williamson's Sapsucker, Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Green-tailed Towhee, and Red Crossbill among the more likely species. Wildflower displays in summer can be spectacular. Watch for elk grazing among the fossilized stumps of giant prehistoric trees.

**Directions:**

US 24 west of Woodland Park to Florissant, then left (south) on CR 1 (Florissant Road) about 2 miles to entrance.

**Access:**

Open all year; Visitor Center open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM



**22. Mueller State Park**

**Description:**

This is a good place to come looking for sapsuckers (both Williamson's and Red-naped) and Dusky Grouse, which requires some luck to find. Deer and elk can be found also, and pine squirrels are numerous; a lucky few might see bear, mink or porcupine. Many hiking trails.

**Directions:**

US 24 west of Woodland Park to Divide, then left (south) 3.9 miles on CO 67; park entrance on right.

**Access:**

Open all year



**23. The Craggs**

**Description:**

This 2-mile trail on the west side of Pikes Peak affords a spectacular scenic climax with a relatively easy 600-foot climb. It is a good spot to look for mountain birds, including Clark's Nutcracker, Gray Jay, Red-naped Sapsucker and others. Squirrels, chipmunks and even weasels can be seen along the trail.

**Directions:**

Follow above directions to Mueller State Park; just past the park, turn left and follow steep and narrow dirt road 3 miles to the campground.

**Access:**

Open all year







#### 24. Dome Rock SWA

##### Description:

The scenery is great along this former stage road, and birders can find a variety of montane birds including eagles and other raptors, as well as beavers, mule deer and elk. Bighorn sheep breed in the area, and the sharp-eyed might spot them. Some trails closed December through July, as posted.

##### Directions:

US 24 west of Woodland Park to Divide, then left (south) 5.75 miles on CO 67, then right on poorly-marked Fourmile Rd about 2 miles.

##### Access:

Open all year, except as posted, dawn to dusk



#### 25. Horsethief Falls

##### Description:

Rather strenuous 1.5 mile hike to falls passes through montane forests with Williamson's Sapsucker and Red Crossbill. A spur trail from this one leads all the way up to the high Sentinel Point on Pikes Peak, where Brown-capped Rosy-Finch can occasionally be seen.

##### Directions:

US 24 west of Woodland Park to Divide, then left (south) 9 miles on CO 67 to summit of pass; parking area on left (east) just beyond summit.

##### Access:

Open all year



#### 26. Goldfield

##### Description:

In winter, this tiny hamlet may be the most reliable spot in the county for Rosy-Finches. If present, the flock should not take long to find, as it usually spends a good deal of time perched in the tops of the few spruce trees. Flocks here may be 80% or more Black Rosy-Finch.

##### Directions:

US 24 west of Woodland Park to Divide, then left (south) 13.5 miles on CO 67, then left on CR 81 for 5.5 miles.

##### Access:

Open all year

#### 27. Bear Creek Regional Park and Nature Center

##### Description:

Since 1976, this nature center and its 1,235 acres crisscrossed with foothills and riparian trails has provided an oasis for nature lovers on the west side of Colorado Springs. The nature center has interpretive displays, self-guided nature trails, interpretive programs and naturalists on duty. The park features scrub oak thickets, patches of coniferous forest, open meadows dotted with native grasses, and cottonwoods and willows along Bear Creek that provide outstanding habitat for wildlife. This is definitely a don't miss birding site.

##### Directions:

From I-25 take exit 141 West to Cimarron Street (Hwy 24), go left (West) on Cimarron to S. 21st Street, turn left (South) to Lower Gold Camp Road, turn right (West) to Bear Creek Road, go left (South) about 0.2 miles, turn left (East) at 245 Bear Creek Rd. For more information call 719-520-6387 or visit their website:

<http://adm.elpasoco.com/Parks/Facilities.htm>.

##### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk, Nature Center open Tuesday-Saturday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM



## Colorado's Ecosystems Alpine Tundra

The alpine tundra is the fragile community of grasses, sedges and dwarf plants that occurs above treeline in the Rockies. In Colorado, treeline is typically somewhere in the neighborhood of 11,500 feet. There is no other place besides the tundra to find White-tailed Ptarmigan. In summer, the most conspicuous breeding bird is usually American Pipit. Brown-capped Rosy-Finch is also found above treeline in summer, usually around exposed rock faces and permanent snowfields. It is more likely to be found in the steeper, rockier areas, while ptarmigan and pipits favor the grassier areas. Golden Eagles and Common Ravens hunt on the strong winds above this habitat, which is frequented by bighorn sheep, yellow-bellied marmot, and the cute little rabbit-like animal called the pika.

The wildflowers of the tundra are legendary for putting on a dramatic show in the summer. To cope with the extreme weather conditions, many of them have evolved to become far tinier than their downslope relatives. You will want to get down on your hands and knees to fully appreciate the beauty of moss campion, alpine avens, alpine primrose, alpine forget-me-not, and big-rooted springbeauty.

Because the tundra is so fragile, it is very important to treat it with care. Stay on the trail whenever possible, or walk on rocks or snow rather than on the plants. If you must walk on the plants, try not to blaze any new trails through them; when hiking off-trail in a group, hike abreast of one another instead of single-file.

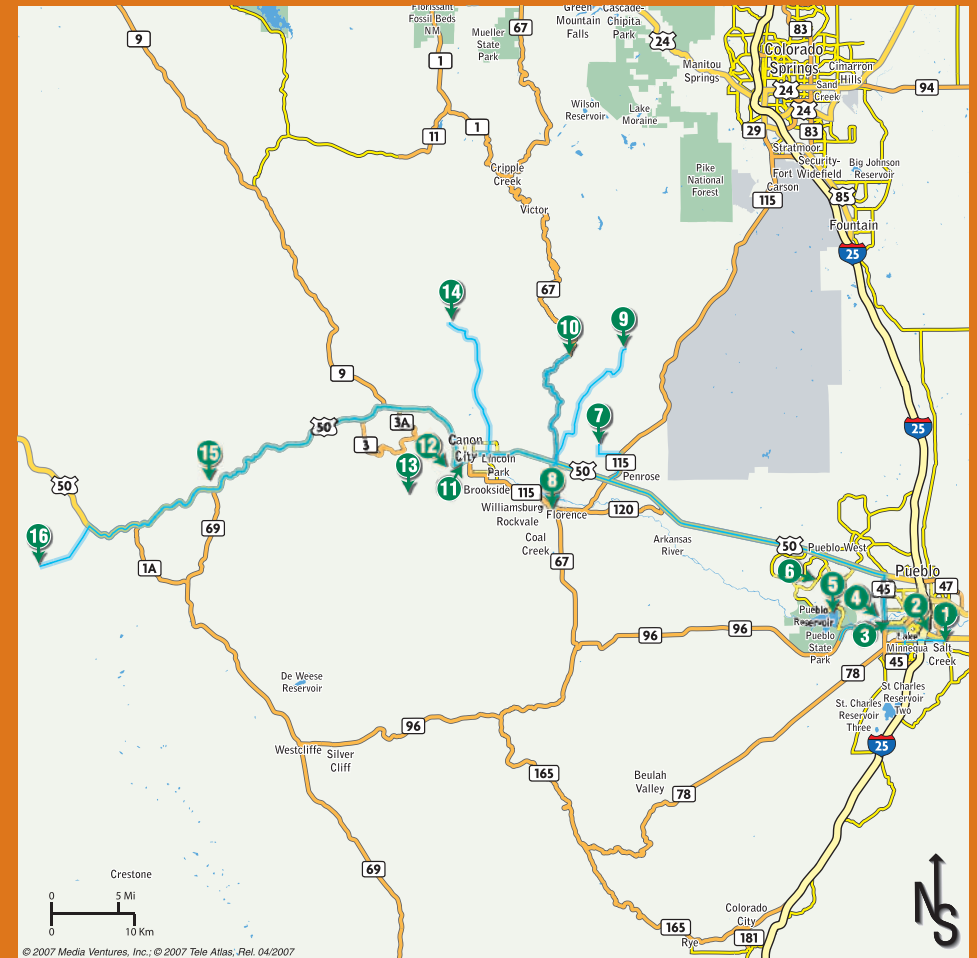




# Whitewater Trail

## Birding the Arkansas Canyon

Perhaps no area in Colorado offers as wide a variety of birds as the area along the Arkansas River from Pueblo up to Canon City and beyond. Famous for its whitewater rafting, the Arkansas Canyon offers an amazing variety of wildlife viewing opportunities in a spectacular setting. Here, species characteristic of the Arizona deserts meet species of the plains, the Great Basin and the high Rockies. Pueblo Reservoir is one of the best birding lakes in the state, and the area around it harbors wildlife ranging from roadrunners to tarantulas. Farther up the valley, you can find sapsuckers, tanagers and bighorn sheep. It's not for nothing that the Arkansas Canyon is one of the most popular destinations in Colorado, for people of any persuasion!



## Sites on the Whitewater Trail:

- |                                       |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Roselawn Cemetery                  | 9. Beaver Creek SWA         |
| 2. Runyon Lake SWA                    | 10. Phantom Canyon          |
| 3. Pueblo City Park                   | 11. Canon City Riverwalk    |
| 4. Greenway & Nature Center of Pueblo | 12. Tunnel Drive            |
| 5. Pueblo Reservoir area              | 13. Temple Canyon Park      |
| 6. Pueblo West                        | 14. Red Canyon Park         |
| 7. Brush Hollow Reservoir and SWA     | 15. Texas Creek             |
| 8. Florence                           | 16. Hayden Creek Campground |



### 1. Roselawn Cemetery

#### Description:

Roselawn Cemetery in Pueblo is full of huge old trees that can attract migrants in spring and fall and flocks of mountain birds in search of evergreens in winter. In addition, there is a small duck pond that can attract waterfowl.

#### Directions:

From Exit 98B on I-25, drive east on Business Rte 50 2 mi. to Aspen St. Turn right and drive 0.25 mi. to the cemetery entrance.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 2. Runyon Lake SWA

#### Description:

Runyon Lake State Wildlife Area in Pueblo can be an excellent place to find birds; this is particularly true in winter, when warm water keeps the place attractive to waterfowl and gulls. Look for Hooded Merganser, cormorants, and Black-crowned Night-Heron in winter. In summer, look for the breeding Mississippi Kites. In spring and fall, look for migrant landbirds in the deciduous trees.

#### Directions:

From Exit 98B on I-25, drive .2 miles east on Santa Fe Ave. to Locust St. Turn left and drive .5 miles to the parking lot.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 3. Pueblo City Park

#### Description:

The focus of the birding here is often the duck pond and its associated shade trees. The area around the Frisbee golf course is the best spot in the park for migrants. Other great birding areas include the Goodnight River Trail and Olive Marsh, both along the Arkansas River.

#### Directions:

From the intersection at US 50, drive 3.5 mi. south on Pueblo Blvd. to Goodnight Ave. Turn left into the park.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 4. Greenway & Nature Center of Pueblo

#### Description:

The Greenway & Nature Center of Pueblo is a wonderful oasis along the Arkansas River just west of Pueblo. The Arkansas River Trail runs right past the Center, passing through nice riparian forest along the way, underneath cliffs where you might find Canyon Towhees and other rock-loving creatures.

#### Directions:

From the intersection at US 50, drive 2.5 miles south on Pueblo Blvd. to Nature Center Rd. Turn right and drive 1.0 miles to the Nature Center.

#### Access:

Open all year, Raptor Center: Tuesday-Sunday  
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM



### 5. Pueblo Reservoir area

#### Description:

Pueblo Reservoir at Lake Pueblo State Park is great for ducks, grebes, loons and gulls. The colder months are best for waterbirds, but summer can be productive also. The arid habitats on the land around the reservoir host Canyon Towhee, Juniper Titmouse, Scaled Quail, and Greater Roadrunner. The State Wildlife Area is located along the north and south shores of the reservoir at its west end and upstream along the Arkansas River. Pueblo Eagle Day Festival is held in early February.

#### Directions:

From I-25 go four miles west on U.S. 50 to Pueblo Blvd. Go south four miles to Thatcher, and head to the State Park. Also accessible via US 50 from Pueblo West. The Swallows Wildlife Viewing area is located west of Pueblo West on south side of US 50.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Pueblo West

#### Description:

Pueblo West is a sprawling suburb of Pueblo. Driving the residential roads gives you a good chance of finding coveys of Scaled Quail scurrying between the cholla patches, and with some luck, you might find Curve-billed Thrasher. Also keep an eye out for Greater Roadrunner, Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk and Lark Bunting.

#### Directions:

From I-25 travel west on US-50 for 7.5 miles to McCulloch Blvd., on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 7. Brush Hollow Reservoir and SWA

#### Description:

Brush Hollow State Wildlife Area is centered on Brush Hollow Reservoir, which provides good birding, except during the summer. Check the water for waterfowl and the edges in spring and fall for shorebirds. In the pinyon-juniper forests on the west side of the lake, look for Bushtit, Juniper Titmouse, and Pinyon Jay.

#### Directions:

Take C-115 north of US-50 and head west on 3rd St. to CR F42. Head north on CR F42 to the reservoir.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Florence

#### Description:

Florence is a good birding town along the Arkansas River. To the east of town is Florence River Park, which can attract migrant landbirds in spring and fall. In the marsh, look for herons, egrets, and rails. Additionally, Florence Mountain Park is located west of CO 67 south of Florence in the foothills of the Wet Mountains.

#### Directions:

Florence is along C-115 a few miles south of US-50. To get to Florence River Park, coming in from the east on 115, cross over the river, take the next right, turn right at the 90 degree turn into the park.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Beaver Creek SWA

#### Description:

Much of this SWA is a deep, remote canyon that can be accessed only by hiking. Lower Beaver Creek flows through beautiful meadows with red rocks on the hillsides. Dippers can be found along the stream along with many middle and high-elevation riparian species.

#### Directions:

From Canon City, head east on US 50, then turn left (north) on CO 67, then right (east) onto CR 123 for a quarter of a mile. Turn left (north) onto CR 132 and follow it to its end.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Phantom Canyon

#### Description:

One of the most awe-inspiring roads in Colorado. It rises from cholla grassland outside the canyon to lowland riparian forest, soaring canyon walls with pinyon-juniper forest along the fringe, and eventually mixed-conifer woods with aspen groves and mountain meadows.

#### Directions:

Head east on US 50 for 3.5 miles from Canon City, and turn north on CR 67 (Phantom Canyon Road).

#### Access:

Spring through fall



### 11. Canon City Riverwalk

#### Description:

The Riverwalk is a walking and bike trail with interpretive signage that extends along the Arkansas River in downtown Canon City. It offers access to a good deal of excellent riparian habitat and several adjacent wetland areas.

#### Directions:

To reach the western access point to the riverwalk, take US-50 into the center of town and turn south on 9th St. Cross over the river and park on the left by Sells Ave. To reach the Reynolds Ave access points, turn right onto Reynolds Ave on the east side of town and follow it south, across the river, to various parking lots on the left side of the road.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 12. Tunnel Drive

#### Description:

Tunnel Drive is a fascinating road on the outskirts of Canon City. It leads to a trail that ascends cliffs via an old railroad grade, with scenic views of the Arkansas River below. The rocky areas along the



trail are famous for Rufous-crowned Sparrows. More common birds include Canyon and Rock Wrens and White-throated Swift.

**Directions:**

Follow US-50 through the center of Canon City, and take a left onto Tunnel Drive just past the prison.

**Access:**

Open all year, dawn to dusk



**13. Temple Canyon Park**

**Description:**

Temple Canyon, a Canon City Park outside the city limits, is excellent in summer for pinyon-juniper birds including Gray Flycatcher, Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Juniper Titmouse, Bushtit, Scaled Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and others.

**Directions:**

From Canon City, turn south onto 1st St., and follow it south out of town. At one mile, at a 'T', take a right to stay onto CR 3. The park is in 6 miles.

**Access:**

Open all year



**14. Red Canyon Park**

**Description:**

This Canon City Park, which is several miles from town, is a good place to come looking for typical birds of the pinyon-juniper forest, including Gray Flycatcher, Virginia's and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Juniper Titmouse, Bushtit and Plumbeous Vireo.

**Directions:**

From US-50 in the center of Canon City, head north on Field Ave for 10 miles to CR F24. Take a left and follow this road to the park.

**Access:**

Open all year



**15. Texas Creek**

**Description:**

If you can get to this scenic piece of BLM canyonland early on a summer morning, you're likely to encounter Broad-tailed and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, Cassin's Kingbird, Gray and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Pinyon Jay, Western Scrub-Jay,

Black-throated Gray Warbler, Bushtit and Juniper Titmouse.

**Directions:**

Texas Creek is along US 50 about 25 miles west of Canon City.

**Access:**

Open all year



**16. Hayden Creek Campground**

**Description:**

The road up to this beautiful campground is accessible by passenger car in the warmer months. It goes through mixed conifers and pinyon-juniper past some very nice picnic areas. Breeders in the area of the campground include Hammond's Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Hermit Thrush, Virginia's and MacGillivray's Warblers, Western Tanager and Black-headed Grosbeak.

**Directions:**

From US 50 at Coaldale, head south on CR/FR 6 to the campground.

**Access:**

Spring through fall



## Colorado's Ecosystems Subalpine Forest

This habitat is also called boreal forest or spruce-fir forest, since its dominant trees are Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Both of these are high-elevation conifers with pointy tops and short needles. The latter is a distinctive tree with shiny silver bark marked by short horizontal lines. If you are in an area with a good number of large subalpine firs, you can be confident that you are somewhere between about 9,500 and 11,000 feet, in the highest of the true forest zones, traditional home of Boreal Owl, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Hammond's Flycatcher, Gray Jay, and Pine Grosbeak. Other birds you could see here include Red and White-winged Crossbills, Dusky Grouse, Mountain Chickadee, Clark's Nutcracker, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Mammals at this elevation include porcupine, bear, and elk. The Canada lynx has recently been reintroduced to this habitat. Butterfly enthusiasts who venture to this altitude may encounter Frigga, Atlantis, Silver-bordered, Bog, and Purple Fritillaries, Scudder's and Queen Alexandra's Sulphurs, and Common Alpine.

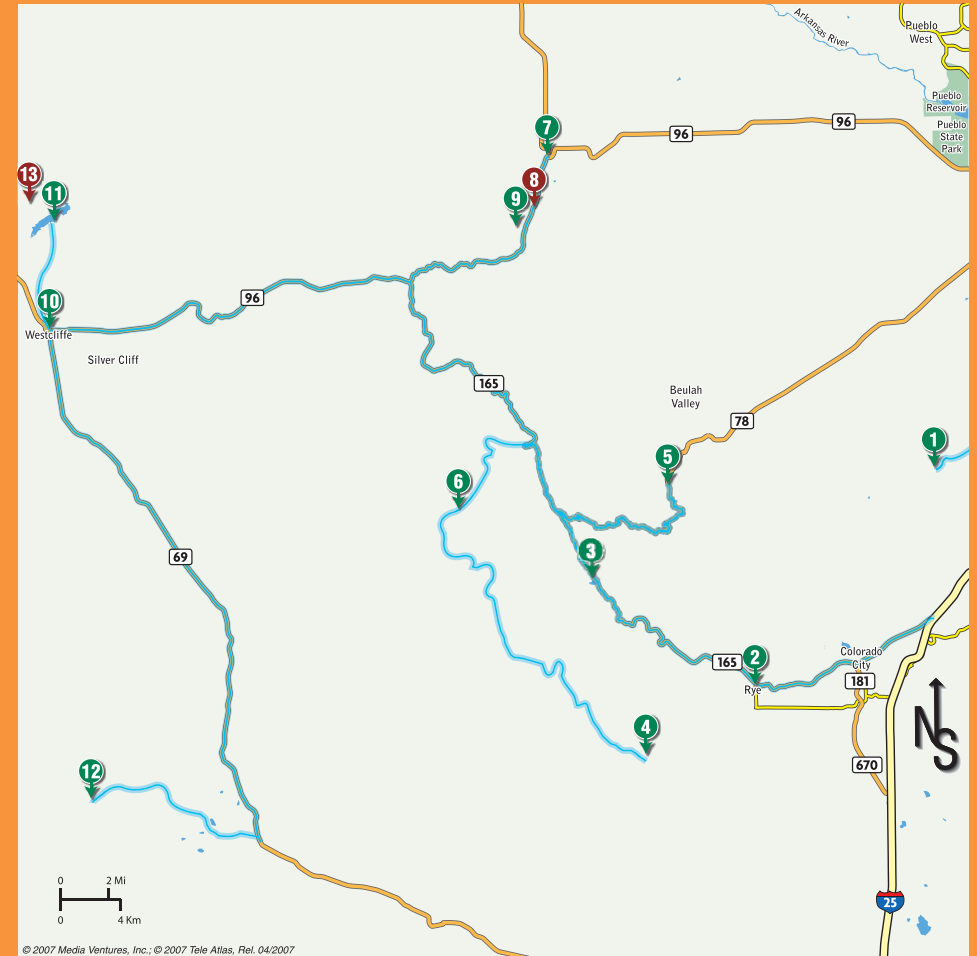
Treeline is not an abrupt transition in most areas. Rather, as you move up towards and above 11,000 feet, you will notice the spruces and firs becoming noticeably smaller, until they start to assume bush form. This stunted forest is often called the krummholz. The birds in this habitat tend to be a mix of spruce-fir and tundra birds, but the dominant species is definitely White-crowned Sparrow. This habitat is best accessed in late summer and early fall, since many of the roads are snowed in at other times of year.



# Greenhorn Trail

## Explore the Wet Mountain Valley

In the shadow of Greenhorn Mountain, the beacon peak that anchors the southern end of the Wet Mountain range, this trail highlights a part of Southeast Colorado that is off the beaten path, but not remote. Framed on the west by the dramatic Sangre de Cristo range, and rippled in the east by the lower, gentler peaks of the Wet Mountains, the Wet Mountain Valley area is within easy striking distance of Pueblo and Canon City, but receives far fewer visitors. Pronghorn race across the valley floor, while owls of several species nest in the forests just above. Eagles and hawks are a common sight in the skies above this trail. If you visit, you'll be surprised that this part of Colorado has escaped attention for as long as it has!



## Sites on the Greenhorn Trail:

- |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Burnt Mill Road area  | 8. Greenwood area               |
| 2. Colorado City and Rye | 9. Lewis Creek Trail            |
| 3. Lake Isabel           | 10. Westcliffe and Silver Cliff |
| 4. Greenhorn Peak        | 11. DeWeese Reservoir SWA       |
| 5. Pueblo Mountain Park  | 12. Medano Pass Road            |
| 6. Ophir Creek Road      | 13. Lawrence Family Ranch       |
| 7. Wetmore area          |                                 |



### 1. Burnt Mill Road area

#### Description:

This county road outside Pueblo passes through many of Southeast Colorado's habitats, including cholla grassland, shortgrass prairie, pinyon-juniper forest and Ponderosa Pine forest. Where the road crosses the Saint Charles River, Black and Eastern Phoebes have nested under the bridge.

#### Directions:

Burnt Mill Road is reached by heading south from Pueblo on I-25 to the Burnt Mill Road exit (exit 88).

#### Access:

Open all year

### 2. Colorado City and Rye

#### Description:

Colorado City and Rye are close together and provide access to many exciting bird areas. Lake Beckwith can attract large numbers of waterfowl in migration and often retains open water and therefore birds all winter long. Greenhorn Meadows Park contains an excellent patch of deciduous riparian habitat that can attract migrating warblers and other landbirds. Rye Mountain Park, on the west edge of Rye, contains pine and oak habitat good for flycatchers, Western Tanager and MacGillivray's Warbler.

#### Directions:

Colorado City is just west of I-25, exit 74. Rye is 5 miles to the west of Colorado City along CO 165.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. Lake Isabel

#### Description:

This small and scenic lake is surrounded by good ponderosa and mixed-conifer woodland. There are also some extensive tracts of willow surrounding the lake, where MacGillivray's Warbler can be common.

#### Directions:

Lake Isabel is just off of CO 165, 18 miles west of I-25.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Greenhorn Peak

#### Description:

The peak of this mountain can be accessed in summer and fall via a winding forest road that approaches from the north and west. Birding along this road can be great for montane forest birds such as Dusky Grouse, Northern Goshawk and Pine Grosbeak.

#### Directions:

From I-25 follow CO 165 west for 25 miles to Ophir Creek Road. Follow Ophir Creek Road for 8 miles to Greenhorn Mountain Road. Follow this road for 18 miles to the peak.

#### Access:

Summer to early fall



### 5. Pueblo Mountain Park

#### Description:

This Pueblo City Park protects a large swath of Ponderosa Pine forest and Gambel Oak scrub, and the higher parts of the park include mixed-conifer forest also. Look along the stream for American Dipper and in the pines for sapsuckers, nuthatches, Western Tanager, and the scarce Abert's Squirrel.

#### Directions:

From I-25 and CO 165, follow CO 165 west for 21 miles to CO 78. Follow CO 78 north for 10 miles to the park.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Ophir Creek Road

#### Description:

This road runs through a variety of interesting montane habitats, including aspen groves, high riparian areas, mixed conifer forests and mountain meadows. Look for Dusky Grouse and elk during the day and listen for Flammulated and Saw-whet Owls at night.

#### Directions:

From I-25 and CO 165, follow CO 165 west for 25 miles, to Ophir Creek Road, on the south side of the road.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 7. Wetmore area

#### Description:

A small town in far northeast Custer county, the area around Wetmore contains some of the only lowland habitat in the area. Most of the habitat is scrub-oak and grassland, but there is some roadside pinyon-juniper and riparian groves. Look especially for Lewis's Woodpecker and Western Bluebird.

#### Directions:

Wetmore is along CO-96, 25 miles east of Silver Cliff, and 27 miles west of Pueblo.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Greenwood area

#### Description:

Greenwood Road, which runs a residential loop off CO 96, is a public road through private land. It runs through some excellent Ponderosa Pine forest with Gambel Oak understory, and Narrowleaf Cottonwood along Hardscrabble Creek. Look for species such as Evening Grosbeak and Cassin's Finch.

#### Directions:

Greenwood Road loops for 2 miles east of CO-96, with the northern entrance 1.7 miles south of Wetmore, and the southern entrance 2.7 miles south of Wetmore.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 9. Lewis Creek Trail

#### Description:

This trail gets into an area of National Forest with an interesting forest mix, including Ponderosa Pine, White Fir, Blue Spruce, Gambel Oak and pinyon-juniper habitat. Pygmy Nuthatch is abundant, and Band-tailed Pigeon has been seen here; hikers are likely to encounter pine squirrels and chipmunks, and the lucky might even see a bear.

#### Directions:

The entrance to FR 310 is 2.2 miles south of Wetmore along CO-96, on the west.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Westcliffe and Silver Cliff

#### Description:

These charming mountain towns barely have

a separate identity. Feeders in town should be checked for finches, and Eurasian Collared-Doves can be found. These are good towns from which to base yourself when exploring the area.

#### Directions:

Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are at the junction of CO 96 and CO 69.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 11. DeWeese Reservoir SWA

#### Description:

This lake often holds large flocks of both dabbling and diving ducks, and when low, shorebirds. Look for sparrows on the grassy knolls around the lake. Hummingbird feeders in the small town on the south side of the lake can contain up to four species of hummers.

#### Directions:

From Westcliffe, head on CO 69 and take your first right onto Lake DeWeese Rd. Go 4.5 miles to the lake.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 12. Medano Pass Road

#### Description:

The National Forest along this road has beautiful aspen groves and mixed-conifer forest where you will find a variety of mountain birds, and possibly elk, mule deer, and even bighorn sheep as well. There is free primitive camping along this road inside the National Forest.

#### Directions:

From Westcliffe, head south on CO 69 for 24 miles to Huerfano CR 550. Head west and follow this road for 7 miles to the good habitat.

#### Access:

Open all year, limited access in winter





### 13. Lawrence Family Ranch

#### Description:

At the foot of the spectacular Sangre de Cristo Mountains, this 700+ acre private ranch offers birding in habitats from the hay meadows of the Wet Mountain Valley floor to the alpine tundra of the San Isabel National Forest. Local birds include: Wild Turkey, raptors, jays, Pygmy Nuthatch, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Belted Kingfisher, woodpeckers and owls. Three creeks, manmade ponds and beaver ponds provide riparian habitat. Rustic cabins and tours are available. This ranch is adjacent to the San Isabel National Forest and the famous Rainbow Trail.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch, lodging and to get directions, please call 719-372-7281 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



# Did You KNOW?

## Colorado's State Tree Colorado Blue Spruce



This beautiful tree can be found in moist areas along streamsides in riparian areas from the foothills to subalpine forest. It grows in small, scattered groves or singly among ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, alpine fir and Englemann spruce. This tree is known for its stately, majestic, symmetrical form and its beautiful silver-blue color. Its color ranges from green to blue to silver, and is sometimes called the Silver Spruce. It is known as the Colorado Blue Spruce.

Look for the Colorado Blue Spruce at many sites along the Colorado Birding Trail, including the Headwaters, Spanish Peaks, Pikes Peak, and Greenhorn Trails.

## Colorado's Ecosystems Montane Shrubland

Large areas of the foothills and mesas in the southern and western parts of Colorado are covered by a mix of deciduous shrubs, including scrub oak, manzanita, serviceberry, mountain mahogany, skunkbrush, snowberry, and bitterbrush. These areas are usually found at elevations just above the pinyon-juniper habitats and just below the ponderosa pine forest, though they can intergrade with both those habitat types. The often-impenetrable montane shrubland thickets tend to be characterized by a relative lack of conifers, though Rocky Mountain juniper can be associated with them.

Montane shrubland thickets are the best places to find Virginia's Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Green-tailed Towhee. They can also support birds such as Black-headed Grosbeak, Spotted Towhee, and Western Bluebird. Large mammals including deer, elk, and black bear may feed here, and butterflies may include beauties like Black Swallowtail, California Tortoiseshell, and Coronis Fritillary.

Large parts of Colorado are covered with nearly pure stands of the native scrub oak, which rarely grows higher than 10 or 15 feet. No birds are restricted to this habitat, but it can produce foothill specialists like Western Scrub-Jay, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lazuli Bunting, Spotted Towhee, and Virginia's Warbler (the latter in areas with some ponderosa). Especially in the northwest part of the state, the oaks can be a good place to find Dusky Grouse displaying in spring. Colorado's lovely and uncommon state insect, the Colorado Hairstreak, whose violet wing panels are bordered by black and orange, is restricted to this habitat.



# Spanish Peaks Trail

## Running the Gamut of Colorado Habitats

Following the Highway of Legends Scenic Byway for much of its length, and circumnavigating the stunning Spanish Peaks, this trail nearly runs the gamut of Colorado habitats. It includes landscapes as diverse as the rim-rock canyons etched into the plains east of Walsenburg, the arid pinyon-juniper woodlands and riparian cottonwoods of Lathrop State Park, the subalpine firs and spruces on Cordova Pass, the scrub oak hills of Bosque del Oso, and the vast open waters of Trinidad Lake. With such wildlife highlights as Dusky Grouse and Gray Jay in the mountains, roadrunners and raptors in the canyons, and pronghorns and jackrabbits on the high plains, this trail offers a little bit of every reason you should come to southeast Colorado.



## Sites on the Spanish Peaks Trail:

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Walsenburg                     | 12. Spanish Peaks SWA                |
| 2. Lathrop State Park             | 13. Trinidad Lake State Park         |
| 3. La Veta                        | 14. Lake Dorothy SWA                 |
| 4. MacDonald's Reservoir          | 15. Trinidad                         |
| 5. Wahatoya Valley                | 16. Welch Ranch                      |
| 6. Devil's Stairsteps             | 17. Rancho Largo                     |
| 7. Cucharas Creek Road            | 18. Roberts Cordova Ranch            |
| 8. Cordova Pass                   | 19. Apishapa SWA                     |
| 9. North Lake SWA/North Fork Road | 20. Tim Williams Ranch               |
| 10. Stonewall area                | 21. Chicosa Canyon Bed and Breakfast |
| 11. Bosque del Oso SWA            |                                      |





### 1. Walsenburg

#### Description:

The county seat and cultural center of Huerfano County, with many amenities. The Masonic Cemetery in the NW part of town attracts migrants, and the Cucharas River has good riparian habitat. Most of its banks are privately owned, but you can bird it from a dirt road across the river from the City Park.

#### Directions:

Walsenburg is at the junction of Interstate 25, US 160 and CO 10, about 40 miles south of Pueblo.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Lathrop State Park

#### Description:

Lathrop has the widest variety of birds in the area. The lakes have hosted loons, swans and scoters; riparian and dryland birds are here too, including Greater Roadrunner and Pinyon Jay. On the south side of the lakes, good stands of yucca sometimes produce Ladder-backed Woodpecker.

#### Directions:

Lathrop State Park is about three miles southwest of Walsenburg along US 160.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. La Veta

#### Description:

A great birding town. The Public Nature Area near downtown has produced finches and grosbeaks, while the Town Lakes just southeast of town can be good for waterfowl and Bald Eagles in fall and winter, as can the Wahatoya State Wildlife Area east of town.

#### Directions:

La Veta is 13 miles west of Walsenburg on US 160, then 5 miles south on CO 12.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. MacDonald's Reservoir

#### Description:

This lake is private but easily viewed from the road. Continuing to the end of the road, you'll find good scrub oak/ponderosa habitat which could have the locally rare Grace's Warblers and Hepatic Tanagers, but please respect private property while exploring.

#### Directions:

In La Veta, take Cuchara Street 1 mile east and bend south with it, then turn right onto CR 361 and go 2.5 miles to the lake.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 5. Wahatoya Valley

#### Description:

A day's hike here could turn up Dusky Grouse, American Three-toed Woodpecker, sapsuckers, snowshoe hares, pine squirrels, chipmunks, and other mountain specialties. In the dense spruce canyon of Cuchara-Wahatoya Camps, old log cabins and big spruces with nuthatches and kinglets can be found.

#### Directions:

In La Veta, take Cuchara Street 1 mile east and bend south with it, then go left on CR 362 about 0.5 mile and turn right on CR 360.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Devil's Stairsteps

#### Description:

This amazing rock formation extends for miles and the view is worth the trip. Golden Eagles and other raptors and White-throated Swifts often perch on and soar along it. CO 12 is a narrow winding road, so please find safe places to park and walk while viewing the Stairsteps.

#### Directions:

From La Veta, continue south on CO 12 about 6 miles to the Stairsteps.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 7. Cucharas Creek Road

#### Description:

Some of the premier road-accessible high-elevation habitats in the county can be found along Cucharas Creek near Cucharas Pass. Willow and aspen habitats are well-represented along with spruce-fir

forest. The road also provides access to a trailhead for the 13,517-foot Trinchera Peak, where ptarmigan may await the determined hiker.

#### Directions:

Cucharas Creek Road (FR 413/FR 422) heads west from CO 12 about two miles north of Cucharas Pass.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Cordova Pass

#### Description:

Best road access to high-mountain forests in the area, plus magnificent views of the Spanish Peaks and their many dikes radiating out like spokes in a wheel. Practically all high-elevation birds can be found here, including Gray Jay, Dusky Grouse, and American Three-toed Woodpecker.

#### Directions:

Take CO 12 to the Huerfano/Las Animas County line and head east along FR 415 (signed for Cordova Pass).

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. North Lake SWA/North Fork Road

#### Description:

Expect excellent willow tangles and aspen stands, along with some ponderosa, oak and mixed conifer habitats. The stream has American Dippers, and birding along the road at night might produce Flammulated or Saw-whet Owls. Elk, deer, bear, pine marten, mink, and porcupines live in this area.

#### Directions:

From the top of CO 12 along the Huerfano/Las Animas County line, travel south for 2.3 miles to FR 34.

#### Access:

No winter access up North Fork Road (SWA is on Hwy 12 and is accessible all year)



### 10. Stonewall area

#### Description:

Most of the land around this picturesque town is private, but birding from the roads can net you birds including Plumbeous Vireo, Pygmy Nuthatch and Western Bluebird. Scrub oak and pinyon-juniper woodland line the road to Tercio south of

town. Russell Lake northeast of town can be good for ducks.

#### Directions:

Stonewall is 32 miles west of Trinidad along CO 12.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 11. Bosque del Oso SWA

#### Description:

This huge State Wildlife Area boasts pinyon-juniper woodland with some mixed-conifer forests and riparian groves along the Purgatoire River. Look especially for the common Lewis's Woodpeckers and Band-tailed Pigeons (summer) and for Wild Turkey. Bear and elk can also be seen here, as can (rarely) bobcat or even mountain lion.

#### Directions:

The east entrance heads south from the middle of the town of Weston, 9 miles east of Stonewall.

#### Access:

Closed Dec. 1-Mar 31 except to licensed hunters



### 12. Spanish Peaks SWA

#### Description:

Spanish Peaks State Wildlife Area is remote and beautiful. Pinyon-juniper, scrub oak and ponderosa birds can all be found here, including Western Scrub, Pinyon and Steller's Jays, Spotted Towhee, Bushtit, and Mountain and Western Bluebirds. Watch for turkey poults (chicks) in early summer, and for elk, mule deer, black bear, and jackrabbit.

#### Directions:

This SWA is difficult to find; be patient and watch for directional signs. From Cokedale 6 miles west of Trinidad, take CR 57.7 north about 7 miles; at a fork in the road, bear left on CR 30.1 for about 3 miles to a sharp right-hand turn onto CR 43.5, which leads to the SWA.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 13. Trinidad Lake State Park

#### Description:

A state park with miles of hiking trails. Some waterbirds show up here in migration. The south side has Long's Canyon Watchable Wildlife Area, with a 1.25

mile trail through a pinyon-juniper canyon with cottonwoods. Bird blinds overlook a marsh where you may spot birds, muskrats, frogs and turtles.

**Directions:**

From the center of Trinidad, head west 3 miles on CO 12 to the east entrance of the State Park.

**Access:**

Open all year

**14. Lake Dorothy SWA****Description:**

Little-visited and accessible only through New Mexico, this SWA boasts great ponderosa woodland and scrub oak. Look for Dusky Grouse, Lewis's Woodpecker, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Tanager and Virginia's Warbler, as well as elk, black bear, mule deer and pocket gopher.

**Directions:**

From Trinidad, go south on I-25 to Raton, New Mexico, then 4 miles east on NM 72, then 6 miles north on NM 526.

**Access:**

Open all year

**15. Trinidad****Description:**

A charming historic downtown and all the amenities. The highlight of birding in town is the Purgatoire River trail, which follows the river through some nice riparian habitat. The best stretch is east of downtown, downstream from the parking area on Linden Street.

**Directions:**

Trinidad is along I-25, 12 miles north of the New Mexico border.

**Access:**

Open all year

**16. Welch Ranch****Description:**

This spectacular ranch includes the north end of the Apishapa Canyon, which is worth a visit just for the scenery. Raptors nest in the canyon, and the northern part of the ranch has prairie-dog towns

with breeding Burrowing Owls. Greater Roadrunner and Scaled Quail occur, as do deer and coyote.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call Andy Welch at 719-263-4388 or 719-263-5514 at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit

**17. Rancho Largo****Description:**

This private working ranch has a seasonal playa that can be excellent for migratory waterbirds and high-quality grassland with breeding Long-billed Curlews, as well as scenic canyons, some permanent waterholes with associated deciduous growth, excellent cholla, and plenty of pinyon-juniper. You are likely to see pronghorn and deer, among other mammals.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please contact Grady Grissom at 719-738-1699 or gradyg@hughes.net at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Contact owner prior to visit

**18. Roberts Cordova Ranch****Description:**

This ranch adjacent to the Apishapa SWA shares the wonderful canyon scenery, along with the pinyon-juniper woodland. Cholla grassland here is of high quality, with Curve-billed Thrasher, Scaled Quail, and Greater Roadrunner. A small stand of cottonwoods could attract migrants, and the abundant rimrock has wrens and Rufous-crowned Sparrows.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call Tim Roberts at 719-738-2453 at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Contact owner prior to visit

**19. Apishapa SWA****Description:**

Deep canyons, abundant pinyon-juniper woodland, some riparian groves, and good grassland are home

to Rock and Canyon Wrens, Canyon Towhee, Bushtit, and Juniper Titmouse, among others. Bighorn sheep are often seen. Reptiles include rattlesnakes and even soft-shelled turtles in the river; and sometimes in the fall tarantulas can be seen migrating across the road.

**Directions:**

From Walsenburg take I-25 to CO 10, go east 18.5 miles, then south on CR 77 for 7 miles, then east on CR 90 for 11 miles.

**Access:**

Open all year

**20. Tim Williams Ranch****Description:**

There's lots of Rufous-crowned Sparrow habitat here, and maybe you could turn up a Gray Vireo or some other low-density pinyon-juniper breeder. A seasonal pond may attract waterbirds when full. Golden Eagles have nested, and the ranch has fine dinosaur tracks and an old Pony Express station.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and get directions, please call Tim Williams at 719-738-6263 at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit

**21. Chicosa Canyon Bed and Breakfast****Description:**

This rural B & B in a country setting lies between pinyon-juniper covered canyon walls, just northwest of Trinidad. Nearby roads and trails for hiking, biking and horseback rides provide opportunity for viewing jays, other songbirds, raptors, Scaled Quail, roadrunner and many other species. Historical stone structure houses a full-service B & B. Birders may access the area for birding and/or lodging.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access to this B & B, lodging and to get directions, please call 719-846-6199 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit. Or check out [www.chicosacanyonbb.com/](http://www.chicosacanyonbb.com/)

**Access:**

Open all year, call owner



# Did You KNOW?

## Colorado's State Mammal Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep



Colorado's state mammal, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, is named for the massive curling horns of adult rams. Young rams (males) and females have smaller horns. The females are known as ewes and the young are lambs.

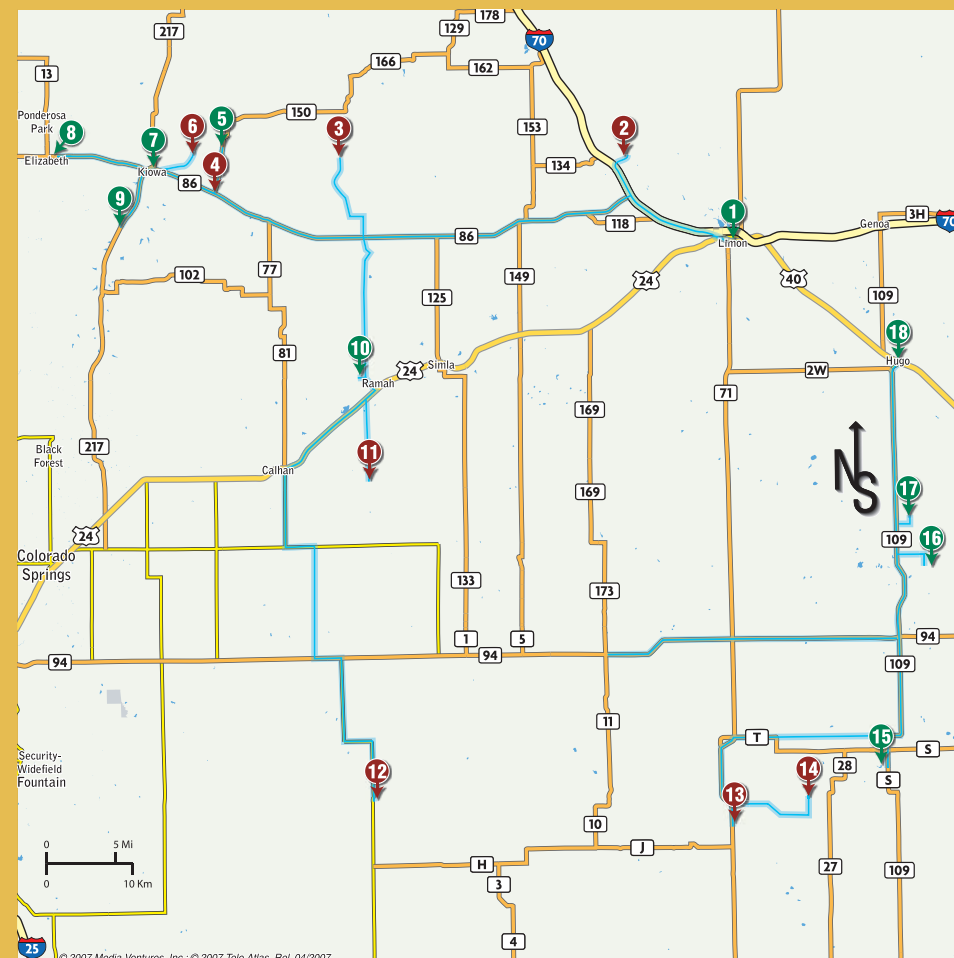
You can look for bighorn at many sites, including the Whitewater, Headwaters,, Pikes Peak, Spanish Peaks and Prairie Canyons Trails throughout the year.



# Kingbird Trail

## Birding the Black Forest

Those visiting Denver with a hankering to experience the high plains need look no farther. These rolling grasslands and treeless horizons are home to coyotes, badgers, swift foxes, pronghorns, Golden Eagles, Mountain Plovers and kingbirds – three species of which fiercely defend territories along this trail. It's not all treeless, however – the western portion of this trail runs through the Black Forest region, where Ponderosa Pines tower proudly over the plains atop eroded bluffs and ridges, and Abert's Squirrels chide Steller's Jays and bluebirds for imaginary offenses. This trail is full of fresh air from start to finish.



## Sites on the Kingbird Trail:

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Limon                          | 10. Ramah SWA                 |
| 2. Calkum Ranch                   | 11. Sears Range               |
| 3. Ridge Road (CR 99 and CR 101)  | 12. P & P Cattle Company      |
| 4. Pond east of Kiowa             | 13. Karval Area Ranches       |
| 5. Comanche Creek Road (CR 61-69) | 14. Peyton Place              |
| 6. Mi Tierra                      | 15. Karval SWA                |
| 7. Kiowa area                     | 16. Hugo SWA                  |
| 8. Elizabeth                      | 17. Kinney SWA (Kinney Tract) |
| 9. Elbert Road and Elbert         | 18. Hugo                      |



### 1. Limon

#### Description:

A major population center in east-central Colorado, with all the basic services. Look for migrant landbirds in the trees around town. The highlight of birding in Limon is the Limon Wetlands, which are reached via the Doug Kissel Fishing Ponds. A paved trail extends south half a mile to an interpretive kiosk, gazebo and viewing blind overlooking the wetlands.

#### Directions:

Limon is along I-70 about 90 miles east of Denver.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Calkum Ranch

#### Description:

Located only an hour from metro Denver, the Calkum Ranch offers a unique and quick getaway from the hustle and bustle of the Front Range. The park-like setting of the juniper trees and sandstone formations makes the ranch an ideal escape for birders and rockhounds alike.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call Mary and Leonard Calkum at 719-775-2405 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

By appointment, closed during deer season



### 3. Ridge Road (CR 99 and CR 101)

#### Description:

This scenic road is an excellent place to look for Cassin's Kingbird, as well as other grassland species amid the yucca covered hills. Some ponderosa groves can provide Mountain and Western Bluebirds. Coyotes and foxes may be seen hunting in the grassy areas.

#### Directions:

From Kiowa, go 13.5 miles east on state route 86 to CR 93, north 2 miles to CR 122, then east 1.6 miles to Ridge Road on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 4. Pond east of Kiowa

#### Description:

This is the only body of water in the area, and can concentrate a good number of waterbirds and shorebirds. This is a good 10 minute stop on your way from Limon to Kiowa. Park in the large pullout on the north side of the road and scan from there.

#### Directions:

The pond is between seven and eight miles east of Kiowa on the south side of CO 86.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 5. Comanche Creek Road (CR 61-69)

#### Description:

This road parallels its namesake for several miles, and although the lowland riparian habitat is private, there are several places close enough to the road to be easily birdable. This area has the likes of Cassin's Kingbird, Spotted Towhee and Black-headed Grosbeak.

#### Directions:

From CO 86 about five miles east of Kiowa, head north on Comanche Creek Road (CR 61-69). CR 150 is about 5.5 miles north of the highway.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 6. Mi Tierra

#### Description:

This working ranch is nestled in towering Ponderosa Pines on a high ridge located approximately 15 miles northeast of Kiowa. Birdlife is likely to include breeding Cassin's Kingbird, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting and many prairie birds. There are multiple lodging options at the ranch.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact Bernie and Celia Welch at 303-621-2291 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Open all year; hosts available 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM, contact owner prior to visit



### 7. Kiowa area

#### Description:

Kiowa is a rather charming town that can have wandering mountain birds in winter and migrants

in spring and fall. It is also a good place to get food or other essentials. Check out hummingbird feeders around town in season. The road from Kiowa north to Bennett runs through some nice yucca habitat with breeding Cassin's Sparrows.

#### Directions:

Kiowa is along CO 86 seven miles east of Elizabeth.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Elizabeth

#### Description:

Drive around this quaint little town looking for busy feeders. The cemetery on the south side of CO 86 in the middle of town is worth checking for conifer-loving birds as well as migrants. The city park also has some large trees worth a look.

#### Directions:

Elizabeth is along CO 86, 8.5 miles east of Franktown, and 7.5 miles west of Kiowa.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Elbert Road and Elbert

#### Description:

This road runs south of Kiowa to the town of Elbert, and has in recent years been the most reliable place near Denver for Dickcissel, and is good for other grassland and edge species. The town of Elbert itself, in the heart of Elbert County's Black Forest is Ponderosa country, good for Pygmy Nuthatch, Steller's Jay and Western and Mountain Bluebirds.

#### Directions:

Elbert Road runs from CO 86 just west of Kiowa south to the town of Elbert and then south to US 24 in El Paso county.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Ramah SWA

#### Description:

When there is water in this remote reservoir, it is an excellent location for birding. The large riparian area on the west side can be birded from the road, and should be checked for migrants and a few breeding species of birds. The lake, when low, is among the

best shorebird spots in the area.

#### Directions:

From I-25, take Highway 24 East approximately 24.7 miles to the entrance of Ramah SWA.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 11. Sears Range

#### Description:

This site offers over 250 acres of ungrazed short-grass prairie. It is a new ranch being managed for conservation purposes, and currently the only domestic inhabitants are three friendly, rescued llamas. This is a good location for grassland specialties, one of the closest places to Colorado Springs where you might find Grasshopper Sparrow, Cassin's Sparrow, and many other birds.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call 719-749-2100 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 12. P & P Cattle Company

#### Description:

P & P Cattle Company offers viewing opportunities for many regional specialties including Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover and Ferruginous Hawk, and is also home to no fewer than nine playas, that when wet, may host a number of migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call Gary Paul at 719-478-2039 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 13. Karval Area Ranches

#### Description:

In combination, these three ranches offer unparalleled access to the heart of Colorado's shortgrass prairie. All three ranches are dominated by native blue grama and buffalo grass rangeland and host



the suite of prairie birds. A portion of Horse Creek runs through the Stogsdill and Davis ranches, with a cottonwood canopy that makes excellent birding habitat. All three ranches have playa lakes that when wet can make for remarkable birding. The Thornton Ranch is home to a 43 acre playa that is 3 miles from the nearest road. Each April, the community hosts the Karval Mountain Plover Festival.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access to these ranches and to get directions, please call Carl and Cherry Stogsdill at 719-446-5354 or email them at rainbowvalley@estra.com a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

**Access:**

Spring through fall, by appointment only, contact owner prior to visit



**14. Peyton Place**

**Description:**

A series of ponds makes this a truly special place for birding. This ranch lies on a hillside between short-grass prairie and sandsage breaks, several miles south of Karval. Besides grassland birds you can see waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, shorebirds and raptors.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact Dan Merewether at 719-446-5403 or dmerewet@plains.net a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



**15. Karval SWA**

**Description:**

This very remote State Wildlife Area is scenic, with some small bluffs and a medium-sized lake. It is one of the better locations in the county for migrating shorebirds and ducks. Look for Rock Wren, Golden Eagle, Scaled Quail, pronghorn, coyote and jackrabbits. The SWA offers free primitive camping.

**Directions:**

From Highway 94 twelve miles east of Punkin Center, go south on 32 road about 10 miles to the entrance.

**Access:**

Open all year



**16. Hugo SWA**

**Description:**

The several ponds in this SWA are small, as are the trees below the dam, but they are so isolated that they tend to attract good migrants. Burrowing Owls live in the prairie-dog town just west of the entrance, and Mountain Plovers can occasionally be seen. Look also for mule and white-tailed deer, pronghorn, red fox, coyote, cottontail rabbits, jackrabbits, and muskrat.

**Directions:**

Go south from Hugo on 32 road to 2G road. Turn east on 2G and go 2 miles to the entrance. From the south, go north on 32 road from Highway 94. Turn east on 2G and go 2 miles to the entrance.

**Access:**

Open all year



**17. Kinney SWA (Kinney Tract)**

**Description:**

The trees right around the parking lot of this SWA and the Russian-Olives along the east shore provide shade and can be good for migrating flycatchers, warblers and sparrows. A stand of willows on the southwest shore of the lake is worth checking, too. Marsh birds congregate in the cattails at the far north end of the lake.

**Directions:**

From the north, go south from Hugo on 32 road to 2J road. Turn east on 2J and go 1 mile to the entrance.

**Access:**

Open all year



**18. Hugo**

**Description:**

In the town of Hugo, make your way to the southeast corner and look for the town's Wild Turkeys. They can be found in peoples' yards and in the middle of the streets. Migrants can also show up in the city park and in neighborhoods with mature trees.

**Directions:**

Hugo is along US-40/285 southeast of Limon.

**Access:**

Open all year



## Colorado's Ecosystems Montane Forest

The name "Montane Forest" is a very broad designation that applies to several different forest types that grow between about 6,000 and 9,000 feet in Colorado. Most of these are coniferous or mixed forest types. Ponderosa Pine is typically the dominant tree from about 6,000-8,000 feet. A few species of birds, such as Pygmy Nuthatch and Grace's Warbler, are so strongly associated with Ponderosa that they are rarely found away from it. Many other typical species include Band-tailed Pigeon, Flammulated Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Williamson's Sapsucker, Plumbeous Vireo, Western Bluebird, and Western Tanager.

Quaking Aspen is one of Colorado's most unmistakable trees, especially considering that white birches, which look similar, do not occur in the state. Scattered individual aspens may grow in the ponderosa and lodgepole belts, or entire hillsides may be covered by pure stands, some of which may be the result of the vegetative spread of a single individual. Some of these huge interconnected aspen stands are considered the largest organisms in the world. Many birds rely on cavities in aspens for nesting purposes, and therefore the wildlife watching tends to be best in the most mature groves - the ones where the trees have the largest diameter.

Many coniferous forests in the state contain a mix of several conifer species, especially Douglas-Fir, Blue Spruce, Limber Pine and Bristlecone Pine. Various montane birds may inhabit mixed-conifer forest, such as Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Dusky and Hammond's Flycatchers, Black-headed Grosbeak, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches, Dusky Grouse, and Brown Creeper. Elk, deer, bear, weasels, bobcats and mountain lions may inhabit these forests, as well as the state flower, Colorado Columbine.

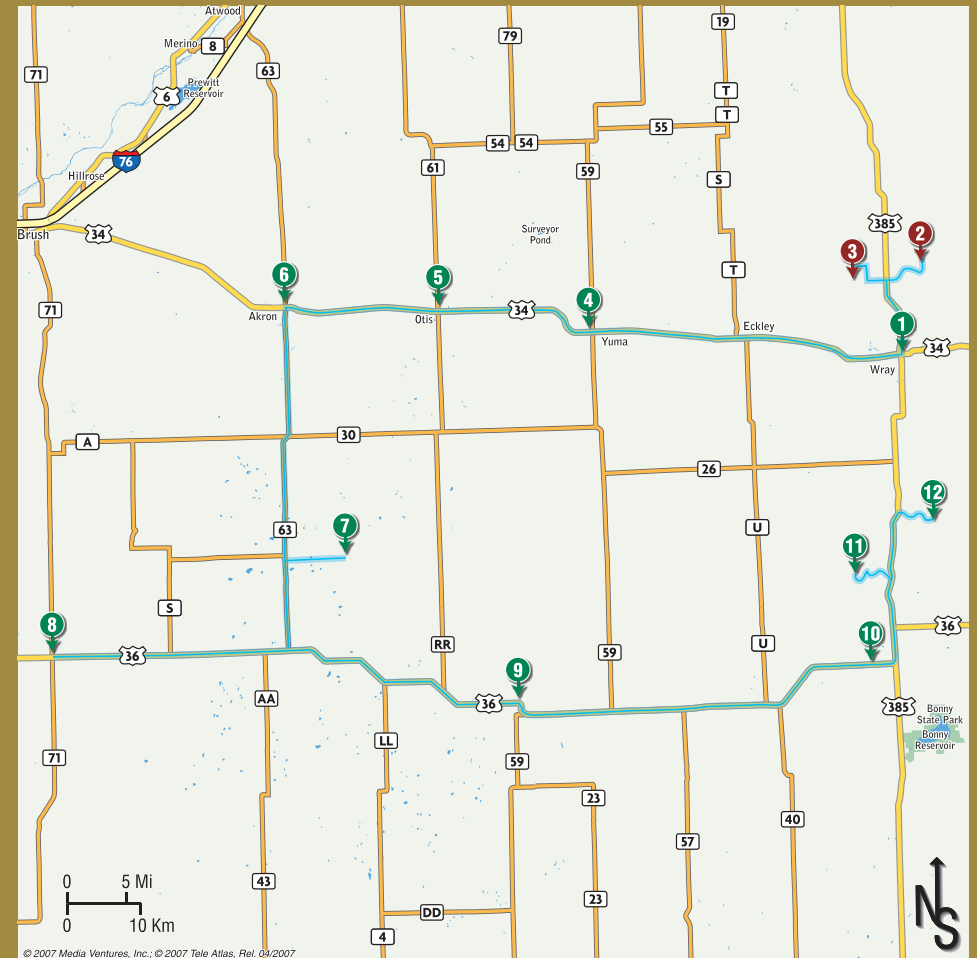




# Greater Prairie-Chicken *Trail*

## Who Said Chickens Can't Dance?

**W**hooping and cackling like fiends, leaping into the air and puffing out their inflatable necks like frogs, the male Greater Prairie-Chickens put on a show each spring unrivaled in the animal kingdom. This is their stronghold in Colorado, the sandsage prairies of Yuma County, a landscape they share with meadowlarks, Cassin's Sparrows and coyotes. These prairies are not all flat; in many places river bluffs tower a hundred feet above the river, and rich corridors of cottonwoods and willows line the major river corridors, attracting eastern wildlife like White-tailed Deer, Blue Jay, and occasionally cardinals, while Wild Turkeys stalk the edges of the woods and towns. Here where east blends with west, the landscape is always ready to serve up some kind of surprise.



## Sites on the Greater Prairie-Chicken Trail:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Wray Area                     | 7. Longspur and Plover areas in Washington County |
| 2. Greater Prairie-Chicken areas | 8. Last Chance                                    |
| 3. Lazy LW Ranch                 | 9. Cope   |
| 4. Yuma                          | 10. Idalia  |
| 5. Otis                          | 11. Sandy Bluffs State Trust Land                 |
| 6. Akron                         | 12. Beecher Island area                           |



### 1. Wray Area

#### Description:

Great birding town. Greater Prairie-Chickens lek nearby, with tours each spring, and Rainbow Park in town attracts migrants. Nearby Wray State Fishing Unit and Stalker Lake are good for migrants and resident eastern species like Eastern Bluebird and Red-bellied Woodpecker. Mississippi Kite is sometimes seen in town.

#### Directions:

Wray is at the junction of US 34 and US 385. Rainbow Park is on US 34 in town.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Greater Prairie-Chicken areas

#### Description:

Greater Prairie-Chickens only occur on private land near Wray. When displaying on spring mornings, they are easy to hear from the road but difficult to see. DO NOT LEAVE ROADS - this is private property. Many landowners offer private tours to view birds up close; see [www.wraychamber.net](http://www.wraychamber.net) for details.

#### Directions:

North on US 385 from Wray about eleven miles and turn right (east) onto CR 45. Follow the winding road.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 3. Lazy LW Ranch

#### Description:

The Wilsons have a Greater Prairie-Chicken lek on their property; viewing can be arranged. The ranch is a reliable spot for Loggerhead Shrike and Northern Bobwhite. Shelterbelts may attract migrants. Visit [www.lazylw.com](http://www.lazylw.com) for more information.

#### Directions:

To request access and directions, call Dee Wilson at 970-332-5407 or email [wilsonranch@plains.net](mailto:wilsonranch@plains.net) at least 48 hours in advance.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 4. Yuma

#### Description:

Good-sized town with all the amenities, plus lots of mature deciduous trees. City park in north part of town has a nice duck pond. The cemetery northeast of town may be worth a look. The sewage ponds south of the cemetery can be excellent for waterbirds.

#### Directions:

Yuma is along US 34 at its junction with CO 59.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 5. Otis

#### Description:

Small prairie town with a few mature deciduous trees. The cemetery south of town has juniper hedgerows worth a look in winter or migration. East of town, the small sewage pond can attract various waterfowl and ibis.

#### Directions:

Otis is along US 34 thirteen miles east of Akron and thirteen miles west of Yuma.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Akron

#### Description:

The county seat and largest town in Washington County, Akron has some decent large trees worth checking in migration. It also has more amenities than most of the other small towns in the area.

#### Directions:

Akron is along US 34, about 25 miles east of Brush.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 7. Longspur and Plover areas in Washington County

#### Description:

Chestnut-collared Longspur has bred on private land on Road KK between Road 19 and Road 20. McCown's Longspur and Mountain Plover may occur; pronghorn and jackrabbit are very common; also look for badger. Private property; stay on public road.

#### Directions:

From Akron, 21 miles south on CO 63 to CR 20; turn left (east). Road KK is 7 miles east.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk

### 8. Last Chance

#### Description:

Tiny town without services, but the dense grove behind the rest stop is a legendary migrant trap. Don't drive past it without stopping in spring and fall—you never know what you might find.

#### Directions:

Last Chance is at the intersection of US 36 and CO 71. Rest stop is on SW corner.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Cope

#### Description:

Small but charming town with lots of big trees, but few amenities. Eurasian Collared-Dove is abundant and rare doves sometimes occur. Look also for migrating landbirds in spring and fall and sapsuckers in winter.

#### Directions:

Cope is along US 36 at its junction with CO 59.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Idalia

#### Description:

Small town with lots of big trees, both deciduous and coniferous, and all basic amenities. Look for Eurasian Collared-Dove and Great-tailed Grackle. Migrant landbirds move through in spring and fall; some rarities have been found here. Closest hotel to Bonny State Park.

#### Directions:

Idalia is along US 36 two miles west of US 385.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 11. Sandy Bluffs State Trust Land

#### Description:

Sandy Bluffs overflows with sandsage, yucca slopes, and eroded outcrops, with mature cottonwood forest along the Arikaree River. Watch for Rock Wren, raptors, and sparrows. Coyotes, pronghorn, jackrabbits and even bobcats and porcupines occur. Access September 1 to June 14 only.

#### Directions:

North from Idalia on CR DD about 8 miles to the property. Obey posted limits on access.

#### Access:

Sept 1 - June 14



### 12. Beecher Island area

#### Description:

Beecher Island Battleground, a National Historic Register Site, is on private land that permits public access. A one-mile nature trail visits mature river-bottom cottonwoods, native sandsage prairie, and river bluffs. Look for woodpeckers, nuthatches, owls and migrant landbirds.

#### Directions:

From US 36 a few miles west of Kansas, go north on CR LL about 10 miles to the battleground.

#### Access:

Open all year

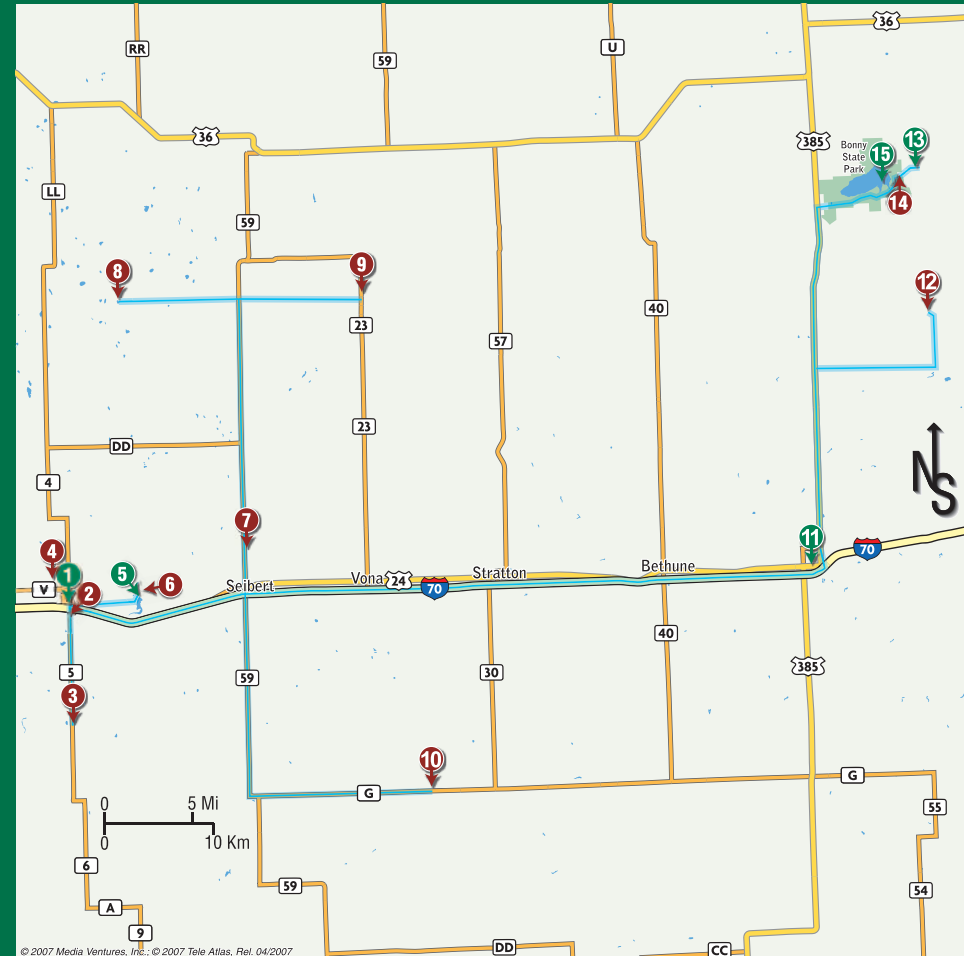


# Playa Trail



## Where the Buffalo Wallow

**N**amed for the shallow prairie lakes that appear and disappear with the unpredictable rains, the Playa Trail showcases ephemeral beauties. Come in spring to catch the migrants in the trees around the lakes, and to catch the shortgrass prairie at its most enchanting season. Come in summer to see the amber waves of grain and the Lark Buntings in song display. Come in fall to catch the shorebirds as they crowd around the water's edge. Come in winter to see the waterfowl thronging Bonny Reservoir, and flocks of Lapland Longspurs bouncing over the hills. This is a land many travel through, but few really take the time to appreciate. Your efforts will be rewarded.



## Sites on the Playa Trail:

- |                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Flagler                       | 9. Klassen Farms           |
| 2. Mossland Memorial Golf Course | 10. Mills South            |
| 3. Grimes Ranch                  | 11. Burlington             |
| 4. Grant Ranch                   | 12. Rhoades Brothers Ranch |
| 5. Flagler Reservoir SWA         | 13. South Republican SWA   |
| 6. Crystal Springs Ranch         | 14. Riverside Farms        |
| 7. Hickman Farm                  | 15. Bonny Reservoir area   |
| 8. Loutzenhiser Farms            |                            |





### 1. Flagler

#### Description:

Flagler is almost the only town in the area with a place to stay and to stock up on food. The many large trees around town can be good for birds, and the small pond on the golf course just south of town often holds a few ducks. Known as "The Birdseed Capital of the World" for the local birdseed packing plants.

#### Directions:

Flagler is along I-70, 34 miles east of Limon and 43 miles west of Burlington.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Mossland Memorial Golf Course

#### Description:

Enjoy a round of golf as well as watching birds at Flagler's golf course! This property contains a 9-acre lake and surrounding marsh area in a location with otherwise sparse water resources. Look for the specialties Ruddy Duck and Black Tern in addition to other migrant and resident wildlife. Free to birders by appointment.

#### Directions:

The golf course is just southeast of I-70 Flagler exit. Admission is free to birders; to inquire about access to this site and to get directions, please contact the golf course at 719-765-4659.

#### Access:

Spring through fall, dawn to dusk



### 3. Grimes Ranch

#### Description:

A large ranch with shortgrass prairie, miles of frontage on Sand Creek, and unique bluffs that rise more than 50 feet above the creek bed. Check the high areas for Sprague's Pipit in spring and fall migration.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 719-765-4351.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 4. Grant Ranch

#### Description:

A working ranch with extensive shortgrass prairie and playa lakes. Burrowing Owls nest here. Spring and fall migration bring huge concentrations of waterfowl and shorebirds, including Long-billed Curlew. The owner is sometimes available to provide tours and regale you with tales about local history and wildlife.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 719-349-9857.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 5. Flagler Reservoir SWA

#### Description:

The water and large trees here make an excellent migrant trap. The best trees are below the dam. The lake itself can be good for ducks and shorebirds. Look also for Wild Turkey, deer, pronghorn, rattlesnakes and the Regal Fritillary butterfly. Many hunters in fall.

#### Directions:

From Flagler, go east on CR U four miles to the property.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Crystal Springs Ranch

#### Description:

This working ranch borders Flagler State Wildlife Area to the north. A flowing natural spring and two ponds attract all kinds of wildlife. Rails can be found in some of the wetter areas, and the trees on the property are worth birding at any season. Prairie birding here is good also.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 719-765-4884 or email [lingerctl@esrta.com](mailto:lingerctl@esrta.com).

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 7. Hickman Farm

#### Description:

In the mixed-grass prairie and cultivated land with scattered trees, watch for Ring-necked Pheasant, Lark Bunting, Mountain Plover, Northern Harrier, Grasshopper Sparrow, Cassin's Sparrow and possibly Short-eared Owl. Playas, when wet, attract shorebirds. Mammals include red and swift fox, mule and white-tailed deer, pronghorn and badger.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 970-664-2243.

#### Access:

Feb – Nov 1, contact owner



### 8. Loutzenhiser Farms

#### Description:

A working farm with several playas that offer migratory shorebird viewing. This is a must-hit spot when the playas are full, as the concentrations of shorebirds can be impressively dense. Mountain Plovers have been seen using these farm fields as a staging ground just prior to migration.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 719-765-4752.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 9. Klassen Farms

#### Description:

This site offers extensive shortgrass and sand-sage prairie with Greater Prairie-Chickens. Four farmsteads on the property have migrant trap hedgerows. Mountain Plover and Burrowing Owl can often be seen in summer; Barn Owl has nested in the grain bin. Stay at the guesthouse and wake up to life on a working farm.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this farm and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 970-358-4259.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 10. Mills South

#### Description:

This working farm offers several areas that offer excellent hiking and prairie wildlife-viewing. The owner is sometimes available to give tours, and is very knowledgeable about local natural and cultural history.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact the landowner at 719-348-5652.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 11. Burlington

#### Description:

This large town has all the amenities, and can also have excellent birding. The sewage ponds just south of town can be excellent for ducks and other assorted waterbirds. The cemetery north of town has attracted vagrants. Town itself has many large trees that are worth a look in migration.

#### Directions:

Burlington is at the junction of US 385 and I-70, 77 miles east of Limon.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 12. Rhoades Brothers Ranch

#### Description:

About 15 miles north of Burlington, this ranch has thousands of acres of unexplored prairie near Bonny Reservoir, home to Burrowing Owls, Ferruginous Hawks, and Grasshopper Sparrows, among others. Around ranch headquarters, breeding Barn and Long-eared Owls have both been recorded.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and get directions, contact Bobby Rhoades at 719-346-7350 or [bsbb@rebeltec.net](mailto:bsbb@rebeltec.net).

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 13. South Republican SWA

#### Description:

Below the dam at Bonny, habitat varies from yucca grassland and large hedgerows to lowland riparian. The Hale Ponds area is excellent for Eastern Screech-Owl, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite and migrants, not to mention white-tailed deer. Grassland areas can have Cassin's and Grasshopper Sparrows, among others.

#### Directions:

At the south end of Bonny Dam, CR 2 winds east to a T intersection with CR LL.5. Turn left (north); soon, CR 4 heads east to the Hale Ponds area.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 14. Riverside Farms

#### Description:

This ranch offers rolling shortgrass prairie with sandsage, prairie-dog towns, and the Republican River - a draw for local and migrant birds. More than 250 bird species have been recorded in the area, including Northern Cardinal and Eastern Bluebird. Upland areas have Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, and Cassin's Sparrow. Viewing blind.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access and get directions, contact Don, Myrna or Nathan Andrews 970-354-7487 or northhill@plainstel.com at least 48 hours in advance.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 15. Bonny Reservoir area

#### Description:

Bonny Reservoir is excellent for waterbirds and shorebirds. The woods around the lake can produce migrants, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Bell's Vireo, Field Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole. Mule and white-tailed deer are common, and you might see jackrabbits, kangaroo rats, and opossums.

#### Directions:

Bonny State Park is just east of US 385 about 22 miles north of Burlington.

#### Access:

Open all year



# Did You KNOW?



## Colorado's State Bird Lark Bunting

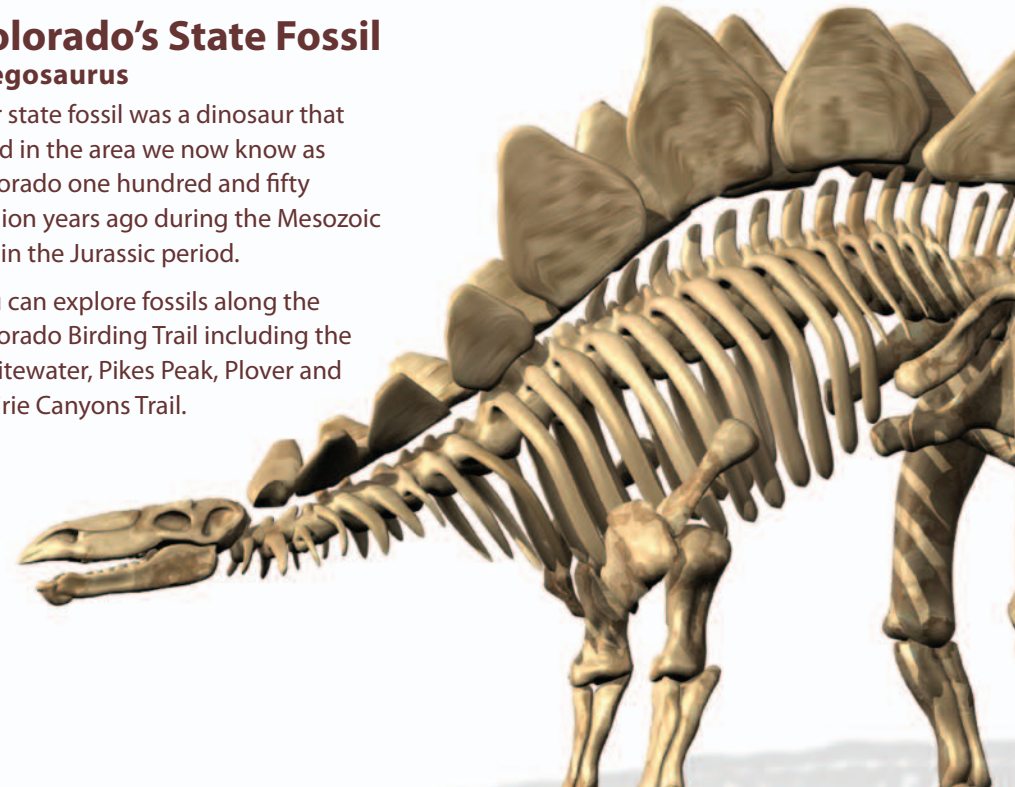
Colorado's state bird is a fairly common sparrow of the High Plains, known as the Lark Bunting. The male Lark Bunting is distinctive with its black body and white wings. After breeding, it is the only sparrow that changes completely out of its dramatic breeding plumage into a drab gray-brown and white striped winter one much like the female.

You can look for these sparrows at many sites, including the Comanche, Kingbird and Playa Trails from May through August.

## Colorado's State Fossil Stegosaurus

Our state fossil was a dinosaur that lived in the area we now know as Colorado one hundred and fifty million years ago during the Mesozoic era in the Jurassic period.

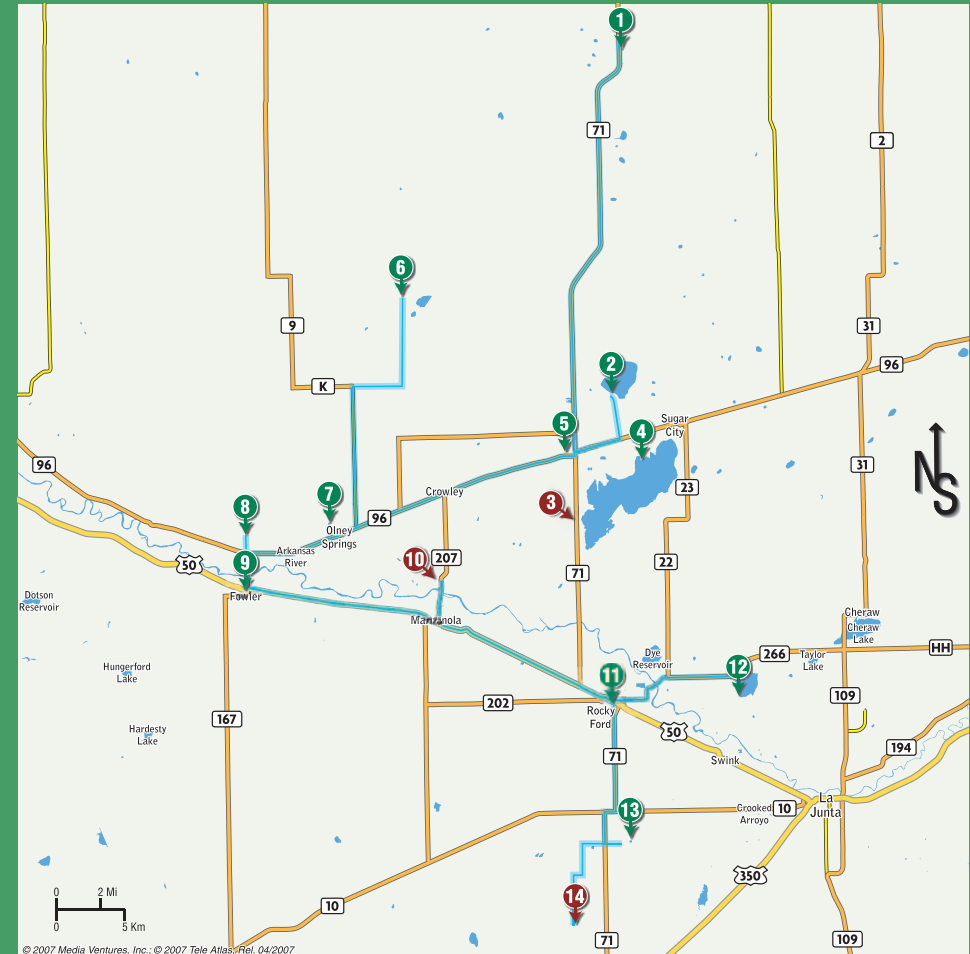
You can explore fossils along the Colorado Birding Trail including the Whitewater, Pikes Peak, Plover and Prairie Canyons Trail.



# Pronghorn Trail

## Wonderful Prairie Birding

The Arkansas River Valley is so thickly packed with top-notch places to view wildlife that it sometimes boggles the traveler's mind. This trail is in the middle of it all, with an immense variety of destinations squeezed into a very manageable space. Around the edges are the high plains semideserts, with miles of cholla cactus and spiky yucca plants, pronghorn herds, horned lizards, Scaled Quail and even roadrunners. A little closer in are some of Colorado's premier reservoirs, important stopover points for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, and the isolated groves of trees where warblers and flycatchers can "fall out" in large numbers after a hard night of migration in spring or fall. Through the center of it all runs the Arkansas River, giving life to cottonwood corridors and human settlements, and making this one of the most rewarding destinations on the eastern plains still close to the beaten path.



## Sites on the Pronghorn Trail:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Box Springs                             | 8. Cholla patch near Fowler |
| 2. Lake Henry SWA                          | 9. Fowler                   |
| 3. Gray Ranches                            | 10. Triple M Bar Ranch      |
| 4. Lake Meredith SWA                       | 11. Rocky Ford              |
| 5. Ordway                                  | 12. Holbrook Reservoir SWA  |
| 6. Cholla stands in western Crowley County | 13. Timpas Creek SWA        |
| 7. Olney Springs Reservoir SWA             | 14. McComber Ranch          |



### 1. Box Springs

#### Description:

Very small pond surrounded by only 3-4 trees, but so isolated that it frequently attracts great birds. Look for ducks, Black-crowned Night-Herons, rails, and the occasional migrant warbler. Mountain Plovers may be seen on the surrounding plains. Surrounded by private land; stay on public road.

#### Directions:

On the southeast corner of CO 71 and CR BB, about 18 miles north of Ordway.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk

### 2. Lake Henry SWA

#### Description:

A jewel of a birding spot. Lake attracts many waterbirds, including American White Pelican, herons, cormorants, gulls, terns and shorebirds. Burrowing Owls nest along the entrance road. Look also for pronghorns, coyotes and foxes. Do not drive the dam road if it has rained recently.

#### Directions:

From CO 71 at Ordway, 2 miles east on Highway 96 to CR 20 and turn left (north); follow signs.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. Gray Ranches

#### Description:

Gray Ranch, a working private ranch, is located along the south and west shores of Lake Meredith, one of the finest shorebird and waterbird hotspots in Colorado. Look for Burrowing Owls in the prairie-dog town. Primitive camping.

#### Directions:

To request access and directions, call or stop by JR's Country Store in Ordway: 719-267-3262.

#### Access:

April 1 to Nov 1; contact owner prior to visit



### 4. Lake Meredith SWA

#### Description:

Largest body of water in the county; attracts huge concentrations of waterbirds in migration, including thousands of shorebirds. Closed from November 1 through the last day of waterfowl season (usually late February). When open, it allows primitive camp-

ing. Mammals include mule deer, white-tailed deer, coyotes and prairie-dogs.

#### Directions:

From CO 71 at Ordway, three miles east on Highway 96 to CR 21 and turn right (south).

#### Access:

Late Feb to Oct 31



### 5. Ordway

#### Description:

The population center of the county, with all amenities. Conestoga Park in town hosts breeding Mississippi Kites in summer. Ordway Reservoir State Wildlife area, just north of town, has a pond worth checking for waterbirds.

#### Directions:

Ordway is at the junction of CO 71 and CO 96 about 10 miles north of Rocky Ford.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Cholla stands in western Crowley County

#### Description:

One of Colorado's best examples of semidesert shrubland, dominated by spiny cholla tree cactus. Birds include Scaled Quail, Curve-billed Thrasher, and if you're lucky, Greater Roadrunner. A few Mountain Plover breed here too. Jackrabbits and pronghorns are plentiful.

#### Directions:

From north end of Ordway, go left (west) 8 miles on CR H; turn right (north) and bird along CR 10 for 12 miles; then left (west) on CR V and right (north) on CR 8.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk

### 7. Olney Springs Reservoir SWA

#### Description:

Small SWA with a little pond and some good trees. Look for sparrows in the colder months and flocks of migrants in spring and fall. Mammals include mule and white-tailed deer, rabbits, red fox and coyotes.

#### Directions:

From town of Olney Springs about twelve miles west of Ordway, go north on CR 7 about a mile.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 8. Cholla patch near Fowler

#### Description:

Small, privately owned patch of cholla that has desert birds like Curve-billed Thrasher, Scaled Quail and Greater Roadrunner (all uncommon). Look also for Wild Turkey, Northern Mockingbird and even Coyote. Private property; stay on public road.

#### Directions:

From US 50 in Fowler, north on CO 167 to CO 96; the cholla "field" is the NE corner of this intersection.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk

### 9. Fowler

#### Description:

The town can have migrant landbirds, but the best birding is at the sewage ponds. The two western-most ponds can be scanned in basic fashion from outside the fence, and can be swarming with birds, especially in spring and fall.

#### Directions:

The sewage ponds are just north of town on the east side of CO 167.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Triple M Bar Ranch

#### Description:

This ranch offers a shady cottonwood gallery along the Arkansas River to explore for waterfowl and waterbirds as well as migrating songbirds. Great area for family picnics. The ranch also offers direct market, fresh, all natural lamb (October through March), lambing tours (April), and raises livestock guard dogs.

#### Directions:

To request access and directions, contact Mary Miller at 719-462-5255, 719-469-2233 or ranch-hand@triplembar.com.

#### Access:

August-April, contact owner prior to visit



### 11. Rocky Ford

#### Description:

An excellent birding town, with many large trees. The sewage ponds just northeast of town can be great for shorebirds and waterbirds. Dickcissels nest nearby. Rocky Ford State Wildlife Area has excellent riparian habitat, thickets and river access; look for sparrows, migrants, Western Screech-Owl, squirrels, muskrat and deer.

#### Directions:

Rocky Ford is fifty miles east of Pueblo. To get to sewage ponds, take CO 266 north from town and turn left on CR 20.5. To get to SWA, continue on CO 266 across the river.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 12. Holbrook Reservoir SWA

#### Description:

Excellent birding lake; can be awesome for shorebirds, terns, or waterbirds, and the grove is a first rate migrant trap. Check southern shore for Black-necked Stilt and other shorebirds. Note that all trees south of CR FF are on private property and must be birded from the road.

#### Directions:

From Rocky Ford, take CO 266 north and east 5 miles. Just before a left turn in the highway, turn right (south) onto CR 25.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 13. Timpas Creek SWA

#### Description:

This SWA has some small but dense groves of trees that can contain migrants, and the canal with its large cottonwoods could have Mississippi Kites, among others. The small ponds are worth a look for ducks, and the trees can harbor rabbits and squirrels.

#### Directions:

From Rocky Ford, south 4 miles on CO 71, east 1.5 miles on CO 10, south 1 mile on CR 21, then west on CR Z.

#### Access:

Open all year





#### 14. McComber Ranch

##### Description:

On the prairie here you may find Mountain Plover and Long-billed Curlew, with luck; pronghorns are numerous. Family-style bunkhouse sleeps 4 to 5 adults and 2 kids. Two kids can also sleep in the old-time sheep wagon. Campfires and chuckwagon cooking when time and weather allow. Watch horse training and western leather-working on site.

##### Directions:

To request access and directions, call 719-980-2987 at least 48 hours in advance.

##### Access:

Spring and fall, by appointment only, contact owner prior to visit



## Did You KNOW?

### Colorado's State Grass Blue Grama



Blue Grama can be found from the High Plains to the subalpine forest, but it is most abundant on the plains in the dry, short-grass prairie. Along with native Buffalo Grass, this grass is an extremely important food source for wildlife and livestock grazing. Its seeds grow in comb-shaped seed heads. Blue Grama is the state grass of New Mexico and Colorado.

Look for Blue Grama Grass at many sites along the Colorado Birding Trail, especially on the Greater Prairie-Chicken, Kingbird, Pronghorn, Playa, Snow Goose, Comanche and Prairie Canyon Trails.

## Colorado's Ecosystems Semidesert Shrubland

Semidesert Shrubland is another broad category that includes a number of distinct plant associations in Colorado. It is found mostly at lower elevations on both slopes, as well as in the flat bottoms of the intermountain parks, the San Luis Valley, and the Gunnison basin.

The most widespread type of semidesert shrubland is the sagebrush steppe. Sagebrush is the collective name for a number of similar shrubs which are recognizable by the distinctive blue-green coloration of their tiny leaves. Sagebrush dominates the lower, drier elevations of the state, particularly on the West Slope and in the mountain parks. Birds that breed mostly in sagebrush in Colorado include Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Sage Thrasher, and Brewer's, Black-throated and Sage Sparrows. Other birds that can often be found in areas of sage include Western Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark, Western Meadowlark, and Brewer's Blackbird.

Greasewood and saltbush, which are superficially similar but unrelated to sagebrush and to each other, also blanket large areas of the state. They are particularly common in the San Luis Valley, where there is relatively little sagebrush. There they support Sage Thrasher and Brewer's and Sage Sparrows, in addition to other common birds of the shrub-steppe environment. In many places, flowering rabbitbrush can turn the semidesert steppe into a sea of yellow in late summer.

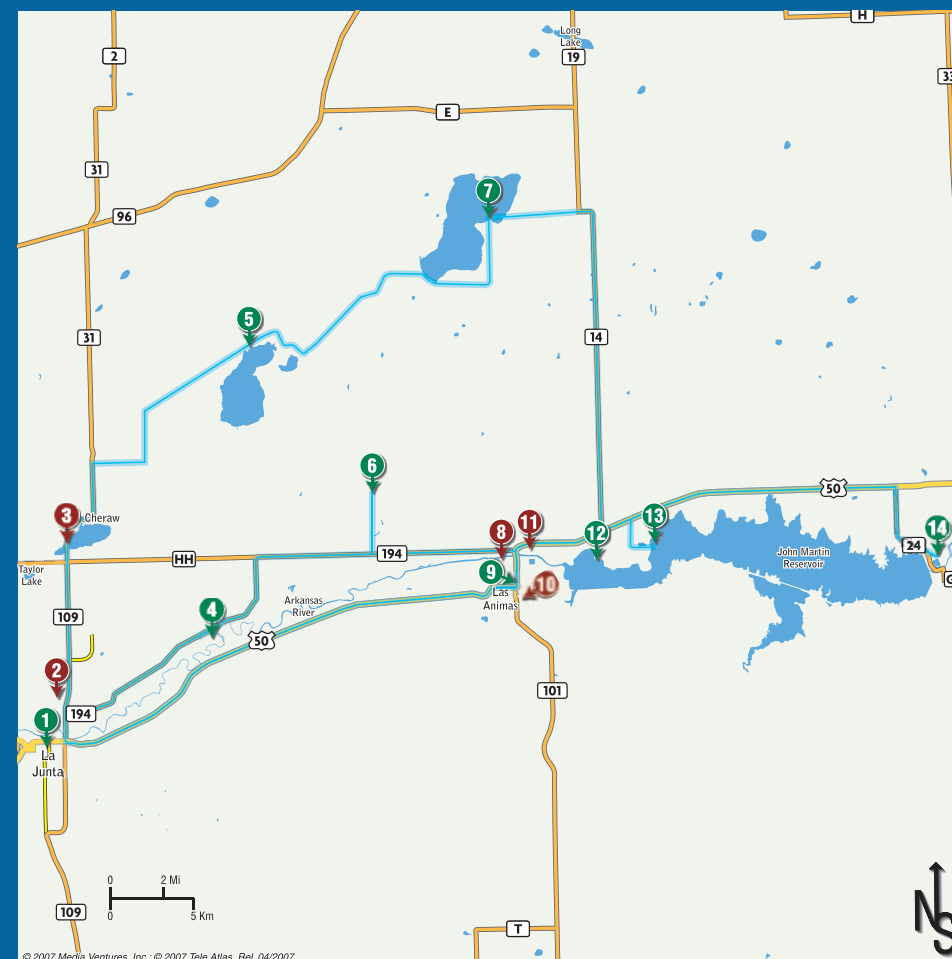
Cholla cactus is typical of semidesert shrublands in the southeastern part of Colorado. It is the cactus you least want to come into physical contact with. These treelike plants are armed with some truly evil spines. That's probably why Scaled Quail and Curve-billed Thrasher like them so much! Among the cholla, look also for roadrunners, rattlesnakes, short-horned lizards, tarantulas, woodrats and other creatures often associated with the southwestern deserts.



# Plover Trail

## The Trail That Has It All

We could have called this trail by many names: the Rail Trail, after the Black, Virginia and Sora rails that live in the huge John Martin marshes; the Cottonwood Trail, after the Arkansas River and its excellent corridor of riparian forest; the Lake Trail, since this small area has more large reservoirs and playa lakes than any other part of the state; or the Old Santa Fe Trail, for its immense historical significance. But instead we call it the Plover Trail, after the Mountain Plovers that breed in the high deserts away from the river, the endangered Piping and Snowy Plovers that nest alongside Least Terns on the shores of the alkali lakes, the Semipalmated, Black-bellied and American Golden-Plovers that migrate through in spring and fall, and the Killdeers that can be found sometimes even in winter. The diversity of plovers belies a much greater diversity of mammals, reptiles, weather patterns, natural landscapes and human cultures. We could even call this trail “The Trail That Has It All.”



## Sites on the Plover Trail:

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. La Junta                              | 8. Shane's Place                     |
| 2. Terry Ranch                           | 9. Las Animas                        |
| 3. Lake Cheraw                           | 10. Camp Walk – About Wildlife Area  |
| 4. Bent's Old Fort and Oxbow SWA         | 11. Bent's Fort Inn -- Best Western  |
| 5. Horse Creek Reservoir SWA             | 12. Fort Lyon SWA                    |
| 6. Las Animas State Fishing Unit         | 13. Fort Lyon area                   |
| 7. Adobe Creek Reservoir SWA (Blue Lake) | 14. John Martin Reservoir State Park |



### 1. La Junta

#### Description:

The largest town in southeastern Colorado is also a fine birding town, with a good sized city park, many large trees, and a good cemetery with many conifers. The town park, which has many large but sparse trees and a small pond, is worth a look in migration.

#### Directions:

La Junta is along US 50 east of Pueblo, between Rocky Ford and Las Animas.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Terry Ranch

#### Description:

The Terry Ranch is the perfect spot for folks who want to experience the rugged terrain of southeastern Colorado without venturing far from US 50. The ranch offers shortgrass prairie pastures and sandstone canyons and bluffs. In the uplands look for Cassin's Sparrow and Lark Bunting; in the canyons, check the cottonwoods for Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl and American Kestrel.

#### Directions:

To arrange a visit to the ranch, stop by or contact Deborah Terry at the La Junta Inn and Suites at 719-384-2571 or LaJuntaInn@hotmail.com.

#### Access:

Open all year, by appointment only, contact owner prior to visit



### 3. Lake Cheraw

#### Description:

Medium sized and very alkaline, Lake Cheraw is an excellent location to look for all varieties of waterbirds. Large flocks of ducks and geese can be found on the lake practically all year. Shorebirds are often common during the spring and fall, and Snowy Plover breeds here. This is an exceptionally good spot for Clark's Grebe.

#### Directions:

From US 50 on the east side of La Junta, take CO 109 north. The lake is on the right side of CO 109, seven miles north of La Junta.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 4. Bent's Old Fort and Oxbow SWA

#### Description:

The reconstructed Bent's Old Fort along the old Santa Fe Trail is the focus of a National Historic Site. The site preserves a nice area of riverbottom cottonwood forest and the terrific marsh where Black Rail was first found in the state. There is also an excellent riparian corridor along the river. Adjacent to the fort property to the east, both north and south of the river, is the Oxbow SWA, which contains more acreage of riverbottom habitats.

#### Directions:

From US 50 in La Junta, head north on CO 109 to CO 194. Head east for six miles to the park. To get to Oxbow State Wildlife Area, take US 50 east from La Junta about seven miles to the turnoff for the SWA on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year, summer 8:00 AM - 5:30 PM; winter 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM



### 5. Horse Creek Reservoir SWA

#### Description:

Also known as Timber Lake, this large reservoir's water levels can vary between completely dry and very full. When there is water it can be excellent for waterbirds, and when the water is low, for shorebirds. The sparse trees around the lake can be worth a look. Pronghorn can abound on the surrounding plains.

#### Directions:

From La Junta, head north on CO 109 to the town of Cheraw. Continue east through Cheraw to CR 33 and turn north; the reservoir is in about 10 miles.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 6. Las Animas State Fishing Unit

#### Description:

The two ponds in this complex can be good shorebird locations when the water levels are appropriate. In season, waterbird potential is high as well. The ponds on either side of CR 5.5, a mile and a half south of the SFU, can be excellent for grebes, egrets, rails and even American Bittern.

#### Directions:

From US 50 in Las Animas, head west on CO 194 five miles to CR 5.5, and then head north 2.2 miles.

#### Access:

Open all year

### 7. Adobe Creek Reservoir SWA (Blue Lake)

#### Description:

This large lake is an excellent spot to look for waterbirds and shorebirds, especially during migration. Water level varies widely, but there is usually some mudflats for shorebirds. There are Least Terns and Piping Plovers nesting here; the grassland nearby is quite good.

#### Directions:

From Las Animas, US 50 west CO 194, then take a nearly immediate right onto CR 10.5. Head north to CR UU, turn west to the lake.

#### Access:

Closed during winter waterfowl season



### 8. Shane's Place

#### Description:

This site offers over 100 acres of marsh, stream, and riverfront wildlife watching. The riparian area along the Arkansas River tributary will catch migrants in the spring and fall, while marsh-dwelling species can be found year-round. The adjacent shortgrass prairie will round out this site's birding experience.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please contact 719-456-1466 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 9. Las Animas

#### Description:

This large town is an excellent place to base yourself for a trip to SE Colorado. It is centrally located to a number of excellent birding spots. In and around town itself, check the cemetery on CO 101 just south of town, which has lots of big trees, and the river crossing over the Purgatoire River on CO 101.

#### Directions:

Las Animas is along US 50, approximately eighteen miles east of La Junta.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Camp Walk – About Wildlife Area and Campgrounds

#### Description:

Camp Walk-About contains over 360 acres of shortgrass prairie and pasture, as well as a riparian area. The prairie-dog towns attract Burrowing Owls, and the ungrazed pastures should yield a variety of prairie birds, including quail and turkey. Walk along the riparian corridor to look for migrants.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call 719-456-1296 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 11. Bent's Fort Inn – Best Western

#### Description:

You might be surprised to find a motel listed for its birding opportunities, but this is one stop that won't disappoint. Located on the banks of the Arkansas River, there are plenty of species to look for and a nature trail to follow along the river. Visit in mid-May for the "Bent on Birding" Birding and Heritage Festival. No charge for access to birding trail along river.

#### Directions:

Bent's Fort Inn is located just east of Las Animas on the south side of US 50. Call 719-456-0011 or visit [www.bentcounty.org](http://www.bentcounty.org) for more info on the Bent on Birding Festival.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 12. Fort Lyon SWA

#### Description:

This wildlife area is a westward continuation of the marsh at Fort Lyon, and an excellent place for Black Rail. All of the species listed for the marsh at Fort Lyon have been seen or heard here, as well.

#### Directions:

The State Wildlife Area is a short distance west of the town of Ft. Lyon on the south side of CR HH.

#### Access:

Open all year





**13. Fort Lyon area**

**Description:**

Just east of Fort Lyon is the Fort Lyon Wildlife Easement, a large tract of riparian habitat, a good spot for migrants, and Barn and Western Screech-Owls. At the corner of CRs HH and 16 are the John Martin Marshes, listen here for Black Rail; other species usually heard at the marsh include Marsh Wren, Virginia Rail, Sora, and American Bittern.

**Directions:**

Head east from Las Animas on US 50 about five miles and turn south on CO 183. One mile south, in the town of Fort Lyon, turn left onto CR HH to the Easement and marshes.

**Access:**

Open all year



**14. John Martin Reservoir State Park**

**Description:**

The largest reservoir in SE Colorado. A blind overlooks the Santa Fe Trail slough just west of the Visitor Center. To scan the reservoir, walk out along the dam road, or scan from the overlooks on the north side near the Visitor's Center. Below the dam, the Lake Hasty Campground has an excellent riparian area, and Lake Hasty can be good as well. Don't miss the excellent interpretive exhibits at the Park Visitor Center and the Army Corps of Engineers Visitor Center just south of the river, below the dam.

**Directions:**

The John Martin Reservoir complex is south of US 50 between the towns of Las Animas and Lamar.

**Access:**

Open all year, Visitor Center 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily



# Did You KNOW?

## Colorado's State Reptile Western Painted Turtle



Colorado's mountain herps (reptiles and amphibians) are limited mainly to garter snakes, salamanders and Boreal Toads. But, Colorado's state reptile can be found in riparian areas on the plains. Known as the Western Painted Turtle - it's named for the colorful markings on its bottom shell or plastron. They are usually active from March through mid-November, hibernating underwater during the winter months.

You can look for painted turtles at many sites, including the Plover, Snow Goose, Playa and Two Buttes Trails during late spring, summer and early fall.

## Colorado's Ecosystems Riparian

"Riparian" means "streamside." Riparian habitats are those found along rivers and other watercourses, and they have the greatest biodiversity of any habitat in the West. Colorado has fairly distinct low-altitude, medium-altitude, and high-altitude riparian zones. In the low-altitude zone, below about 6,000 feet, riparian habitats usually consist primarily of cottonwoods and other deciduous trees, often with associated underbrush. Characteristic birds include Downy Woodpecker, Eastern and Western Screech-Owls, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, Song Sparrow, and Bullock's Oriole.

In the medium-altitude riparian zone, rivers are lined with narrowleaf cottonwood, river birch, alder, willows, and the state tree, Colorado blue spruce. Typical birds of this habitat include American Dipper, Hermit Thrush, and Yellow-rumped and MacGillivray's Warblers. Much other wildlife can be found here as well.

The high-altitude riparian zone consists mostly of low-growing willows, which sometimes form large swamps called willow carrs. In these areas one may find breeding Willow Flycatcher, Wilson's and MacGillivray's Warblers, and White-crowned, Fox, and Lincoln's Sparrows. Beavers often dam the streams at this elevation, creating ponds that moose may wallow in.

Wetlands provide habitat for a wide variety of birds. True marshes are usually dominated by cattails or bulrushes. Wet meadows differ from marshes in being less permanently flooded. They are usually dominated by low grasses or sedges.



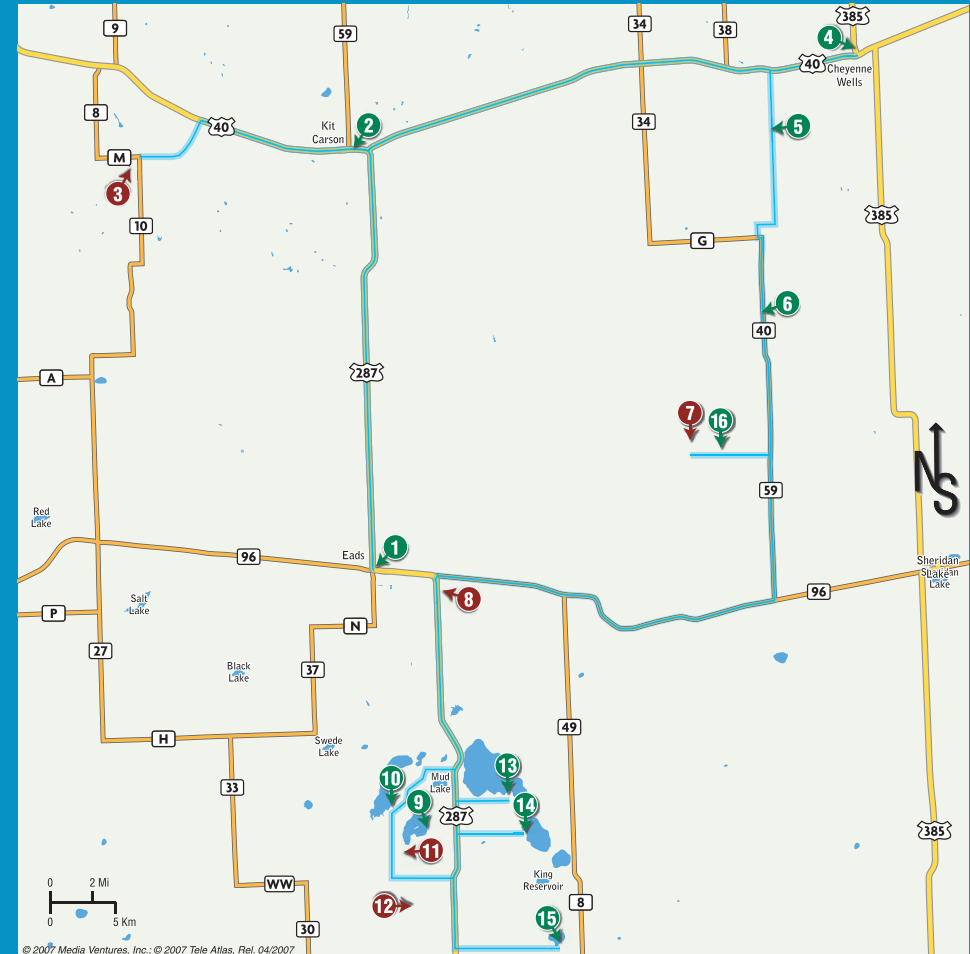




# Snow Goose Trail

## Spectacular Birding Year Round

The playa lakes and manmade reservoirs of this section of Southeast Colorado are magnets for waterbirds of every stripe. Plovers, sandpipers, cranes, egrets, grebes, gulls, terns and ducks all congregate here in huge numbers in migration, and the waterfowl (including tens of thousands of Snow and Ross's Geese) stay all winter, to star as the main attraction in Lamar's annual Snow Goose Festival. Summer brings breeding grassland birds like Dickcissel, Mountain Plover and Ferruginous Hawk. A Burrowing Owl might pop out of any prairie-dog burrow. Year-round residents include Ring-necked Pheasants, prong-horns and coyote. At any season of the year, the Snow Goose trail is sure to produce.



## Sites on the Snow Goose Trail:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Eads                                    | 9. Neegronda Reservoir                      |
| 2. Kit Carson                              | 10. Neesopah Reservoir                      |
| 3. Hammer Ranch                            | 11. Rogers Ranch                            |
| 4. Cheyenne Wells                          | 12. Tempel Ranch                            |
| 5. Cheyenne CR M                           | 13. Neenoshe Reservoir                      |
| 6. Cheyenne CR 40                          | 14. Queens Reservoirs                       |
| 7. Bowen Ranch & Sand Creek Battle Grounds | 15. Thurston Reservoir SWA                  |
| 8. Slidin'W Ranch                          | 16. Sand Creek Massacre Nat'l Historic Site |



## 1. Eads

### Description:

The largest town in Kiowa County is a good spot to stop for lunch or as a base for birding the area. The small town park should be checked for migrants. The sewage ponds and the Kiowa Creek Natural Area, just south of town sometimes have a few ducks on them as well.

### Directions:

Eads is along CO 96 where US 287 joins it from the north.

### Access:

Open all year



## 2. Kit Carson

### Description:

Kit Carson can be a good birding town. Its shade trees can attract migrants; the best trees are in the southwest quadrant of town, and on the east edge of town north of US 40. South of town on CR 20, a bridge crosses Big Sandy Creek (usually dry).

### Directions:

Kit Carson is along US 40 where US 287 splits off and heads south.

### Access:

Open all year



## 3. Hammer Ranch

### Description:

A large working ranch 5 miles south of Wild Horse, the only private site on the Colorado Birding Trail in Cheyenne County. The ranch consists of rolling sandstone hills, as well as one mile of riparian cottonwood gallery. A prairie-dog town hosts Burrowing Owls. Ranch headquarters has an abundance of Scaled Quail, and an alkali pond nearby.

### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call Tony Hammer at 719-962-3197 a minimum of 48 hours in advance.

### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



## 4. Cheyenne Wells

### Description:

The largest town in Cheyenne County. It has a number of trees which can produce birds like Eurasian Collared-Dove and Great-tailed Grackle as well as the occasional good migrant. Food, lodging and gas can be found here.

### Directions:

Cheyenne Wells is along US 40 where it intersects with US 385.

### Access:

Open all year



## 5. Cheyenne CR M

### Description:

Cheyenne County Road M accesses some nice prairie habitat. All of it is privately owned, so please remain on the road. Look especially for Dickcissel and Mountain Plover in this area.

### Directions:

CR M is 4 miles south of Cheyenne Wells; head west from US 385.

### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk

## 6. Cheyenne CR 40

### Description:

There is some nice remnant shortgrass prairie in the first three miles of County Road 40 north of the Kiowa County border. Burrowing Owl, Long-billed Curlew and Grasshopper Sparrow all breed here, but the land ownership is private, so please stay on the roads.

### Directions:

From Cheyenne Wells, go south on US 385 9 miles to CR G, then west 6 miles to CR 40, on your left.

### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk

## 7. Bowen Ranch & Sand Creek Battle Grounds

### Description:

This private ranch provides an array of natural and cultural features to explore. Large tracts of sandstone and shortgrass prairie and more than a mile of Big Sandy Creek offer a variety of habitats for prairie-dogs, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover, Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle. Artifacts from the Sand Creek Massacre have been found along the banks of the Big Sandy Creek on the ranch.

### Directions:

The Bowen Ranch is only open to guided tours, including wagon tours by request. Call Chuck or Sheri Bowen at 719-336-5082 for more information or visit [www.sandcreektours.com](http://www.sandcreektours.com).

### Access:

Open all year, contact owner 48 hours prior to visit



## 8. Slidin' W Ranch

### Description:

This ranch offers self-guided walking tours on 160 acres of shortgrass prairie. The prairie-dog town consistently hosts Burrowing Owls as well as other prairie species. Look for Mountain Plover, Scaled Quail, Lark Bunting, Long-billed Curlew and Grasshopper Sparrow.

### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call 719-438-5907 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



## 9. Neegronda Reservoir

### Description:

The westernmost of the Indian Reservoirs. Depending on water levels, can be good for waterbirds, shorebirds, or gulls. The grassland along the road on the western side of the reservoir is quite good, and in season you may see Horned Larks, Mountain Plovers, longspurs, coyotes, jackrabbits and deer here.

### Directions:

Turn west off US 287 south of Eads onto the dirt road 1.5 miles north of CR E. Follow this road as it curves south and west to the reservoir.

### Access:

Open all year



## 10. Neesopah Reservoir

### Description:

This is another large reservoir that can be quite productive, especially in winter, when huge flocks of light and dark geese and large numbers of Bald Eagles can congregate here. The north side is owned by a private campground, and the trees here can

be good for migrants, if you are staying here or pay the access fee. A short, easy trail leads to a viewing blind at Mud Lake with interpretive signage, located off of US 287, just south of Neenoshe entrance.

### Directions:

From Eads, head south on US 287 past CR E to the turnoff on the right (west) with the small sign for Neegronda Reservoir.

### Access:

Open all year, NO ACCESS, Dec 1 - last day of waterfowl season



## 11. Rogers Ranch

### Description:

This ranch has several shortgrass prairie pastures along with a wonderful diversity of shorebirds along its one-and-a-quarter miles of shoreline on Neegronda Reservoir. This site also has nesting Piping Plover and Least Tern.

### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call 719-829-4028 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



## 12. Tempel Ranch

### Description:

This site, located about 20 minutes from the town of Lamar, has extensive tracts of shortgrass prairie, shoreline frontage on Neegronda reservoir, and a long stretch of tree-lined Fort Lyon canal. Possible sightings include Least Tern, Piping Plover and Snowy Plover, as well as shortgrass specialties and a concentration of migrants along the canal in spring and fall.

### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call 719-829-4424 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit





### 13. Neenoshe Reservoir

#### Description:

Neenoshe Reservoir is the largest of the Indian Reservoirs. The weedy brush along the south shore is quite good for sparrows. The grove on the eastern side of the lake is made up of larger trees, and is excellent for migrants.

#### Directions:

To get to the Locust Grove, turn east off of US 287 on CR E and go west 1.5 miles to CR 46, then north to the grove. To scan the water of Neenoshe, drive to the southern parking lot, and then drive 'into' the dry shoreline of the reservoir (at low water, only - please use caution).

#### Access:

Open all year



### 14. Queens Reservoirs

#### Description:

Neeskah Reservoir is probably the reservoir in the area that gets the most shorebirds and can also be good for ducks, gulls, and an astounding number of Black Terns, in season. The riparian grove on the southern end of the reservoir can be well worth a stop.

#### Directions:

Turn east on CR E from US 287, onto CR 46.5, and go south to CR C, then east to the lake.

#### Access:

Open all year, NO ACCESS, Dec 1 to the end of waterfowl season



### 15. Thurston Reservoir SWA

#### Description:

In recent years this lake has run low (even dry) and large parts of it have grown up in cattails; good habitat for rails and bitterns. Nearby fields can attract huge flocks of Sandhill Cranes in migration, and there are sometimes thousands of Snow Geese here in the winter.

#### Directions:

From Lamar, go 8 miles north on Highway 196, 1 mile west on County Road TT, and 1/2 mile north on County Road 7.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 16. Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

#### Description:

Birding and history literally go hand in hand at Colorado's newest National Park site. About 1200 acres of high plains grassland and riparian river-bottom habitat are protected, featuring interpretation of one of the most profound moments in Colorado history. The Cheyenne and Arapaho village that was encamped here in November of 1864 was brutally attacked by a force of nearly 700 Volunteer Militia, killing 160 Indians. Park Service staff provides site interpretation, and a self-guided trail leads visitors to an overlook of the site. Many prairie and riparian birds to see. There is no entrance fee at the site. Donations are accepted.

#### Directions:

The Sand Creek Massacre is located in Kiowa County. To visit the site from State Highway 96, turn north 1/2 mile east of Chivington onto County Road 54 and follow signs. (Total distance from Eads approximately 23 miles. For more information call 719-383-5051 or visit their website: [www.nps.gov/sand/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/sand/index.htm).)

#### Access:

Open all year, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily



## Colorado's Ecosystems Grassland

Colorado's native prairie once covered nearly half the state, and is still one of the most intact grasslands remaining in the Great Plains region. Ranching and farming are the primary agricultural practices that occur in this region. Plants and animals on the eastern plains of Colorado evolved with grazing, and under good management, cattle will increase the health of a prairie ecosystem. Private landowners provide habitat for more than 70% of the wildlife species in the state. Although the buffalo are gone, many mammals still roam the plains, including pronghorn, mule deer, badger, coyote, jackrabbit, and Ord's Kangaroo Rat. Prairie-dogs still burrow under the surface of the prairie in many areas.

Sometimes the avifauna provides the best indicator of how "native" a particular patch of prairie is. McCown's Longspur and Long-billed Curlew tend to be associated with the highest-quality patches. Mountain Plover and Burrowing Owl are often found in or near prairie-dog towns, the plover thanks to its fondness for extremely short grass, the owl thanks to its fondness for prairie-dog burrows, and Ferruginous Hawks for their fondness for eating prairie-dogs. Prairie-dogs also provide habitat for rattlesnakes, rabbits, and tiger salamanders to mention a few.

The most notable and abundant wetlands on the eastern plains are playa lakes. Playas are shallow, seasonal wetlands that lie in the lowest point of a closed watershed and collect and hold water from rainfall and runoff. In Colorado, there are more than 2,500 playa wetlands ranging in size from less than one acre to more than 50 acres. Playas are the centers of biodiversity in this arid region, supporting more than 200 species of birds and other wildlife.

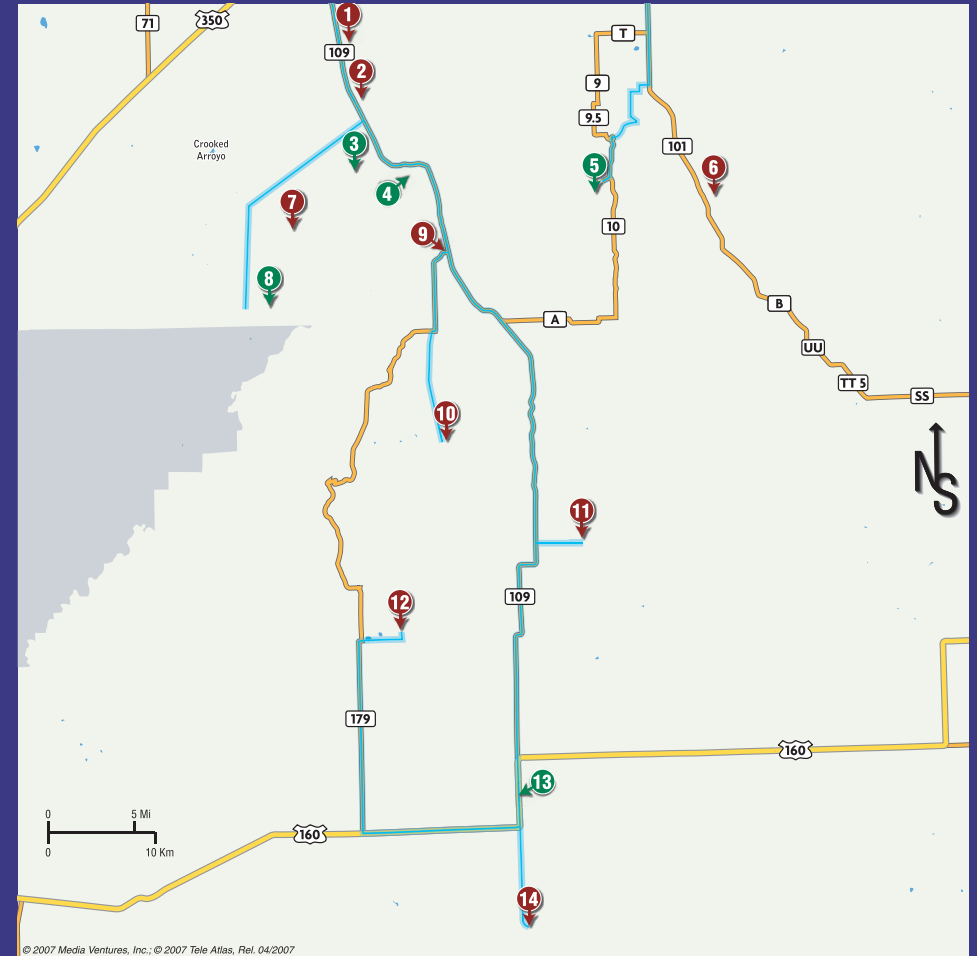




# Prairie Canyons Trail

## Eastern Colorado is not completely flat?

First-time visitors often say when they venture south of La Junta. “I thought Eastern Colorado was supposed to be flat.” Flat it’s not, south of the Arkansas River, where the land folds in upon itself and twists into a maze of rimrock canyons filled with juniper and pinyon pine. In this arid forest is found wildlife more typical of the desert Southwest, like horned lizards, Cassin’s Kingbirds, roadrunners, rattlesnakes and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. The geography here is harsh and spectacular, and the people are far-flung but friendly. Of all the wonderful places hidden in Southeast Colorado, this trail might just run right past the most surprises.



## Sites on the Prairie Canyons Trail

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Van Landingham Ranch     | 8. Picket Wire Canyon     |
| 2. Leininger Ranch          | 9. Otero CR E             |
| 3. Vogel Canyon Picnic Area | 10. Bader Ranch           |
| 4. Higbee Cemetery          | 11. Swanson Ranch         |
| 5. Setchfield SWA           | 12. Everett Jackson Ranch |
| 6. Wilson Ranch             | 13. Kim                   |
| 7. Walter & Klein           | 14. Mayfield Ranch        |



### 1. Van Landingham Ranch

**Description:**

This ranch offers birding opportunities on short-grass prairie and limestone bluffs with scattered junipers. The east end of the ranch comprises a hill-side with vast prairie views providing a perch from which to scan the black-tailed prairie-dog colony for Burrowing Owls and other shortgrass specialists.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please contact 719-384-2942 or dianev@arkvi.com at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Contact owner prior to visit



### 2. Leininger Ranch

**Description:**

Thousands of unexplored acres of shortgrass prairie, cedar-lined bluffs and canyons, and many stock ponds and arroyos. Birds include Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Scaled Quail and Greater Roadrunner; Vermilion Flycatcher has appeared.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please contact Zane and Barb Leininger at 719-384-9634 or Barz11@hughes.net at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 3. Vogel Canyon Picnic Area

**Description:**

This scenic out-of-the-way spot features picnic sites, interpretive signs and rock art. The riparian habitat here attracts Eastern Phoebe by the water, nesting Great Horned Owl, and Common Poorwill. Other habitats are pinyon-juniper, rimrock and cliffs and extensive cholla grasslands with pronghorn, jackrabbits, coyotes and box turtles. Four hiking trails.

**Directions:**

From La Junta, south on CO 109, then right (south-west) 1.5 miles on GR 802 (David Canyon Road), then left (south) onto GR 31.

**Access:**

Open all year



### 4. Higbee Cemetery

**Description:**

A small cemetery amid cholla and pinyon-juniper near a few cottonwood trees and some agricultural fields. Greater Roadrunner, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Curve-billed Thrasher, Scaled Quail, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow are possible, along with some spectacular mammals, and even scorpions and tarantulas. Drive farther up the canyon for Wild Turkey along the Purgatoire River.

**Directions:**

From La Junta, about 12 miles south on CO 109 (signed for Pritchett and Kim), then 1 mile right (west) on a dirt road (CR 804). Watch for cemetery on left (south) side.

**Access:**

Open all year

### 5. Setchfield SWA

**Description:**

This remote site is filled with juniper woodland and rimrock, and is a good place to see things like Canyon Towhee, Rock Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, and Ladder-backed Woodpecker, not to mention rattlesnakes and several species of lizard. A small riparian area can be found below the old dam.

**Directions:**

South from Las Animas on CO 101, then west on CR P; bend south in 1 mile, west in another mile, and take a quick left onto CR 11/CR 10, which winds several miles south to the SWA.

**Access:**

Open all year



### 6. Wilson Ranch

**Description:**

Vast shortgrass prairie and numerous canyons for exploration, with Burrowing Owl, Cassin's Sparrow, Long-billed Curlew and, in mid to late summer, many Mountain Plovers. The scenic canyons take most visitors by surprise. Intermittent streams with willow/cottonwood groves; old homesteads and rock houses to explore. Managed for an abundance of wildlife.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call Max and Vanessa Wilson at 719-456-1051 at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 7. Walter & Klein

**Description:**

Working farm/ranch with beautiful scenery in the canyon country of the Comanche grasslands. Barely explored areas host diverse grassland and shrubland birds. The canyonlands are home to many nesting raptors, including Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon. This area is rich with Native American and Wild West lore.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call 719-384-5841 at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 8. Picket Wire Canyon

**Description:**

Foot and bike access are allowed to this wide canyon with scenery, rock art, permanent water, pinyon-juniper, saltbush, and cottonwoods. 1-mile hike to the river and 7.5 miles to the famous dinosaur tracks. Birds include Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Curve-billed Thrasher, Scaled Quail, Rufous-crowned and Black-throated Sparrows, and Cassin's Kingbird.

**Directions:**

From La Junta, south on CO 109, then right (south-west) on GR 802 (David Canyon Road), then left (south) six miles on GR 25.

**Access:**

Open all year



### 9. Otero CR E

**Description:**

The small area of saltbush and sagebrush flats here support one of the only southeast Colorado populations of Black-throated Sparrow. Both Brewer's and Cassin's Sparrows could also be seen, along with coyotes and jackrabbits. Checking the small riparian corridor from the bridge over the Purgatoire River may also be productive.

**Directions:**

From La Junta, south on CO 109 eighteen miles to CR E on the right (west).

**Access:**

Open all year

### 10. Bader Ranch

**Description:**

Excellent pinyon-juniper woodland and cholla grassland, with unbelievably beautiful canyons more typical of SE Arizona than SE Colorado. Only accessible breeding site of Hepatic Tanager in Colorado; also look for Gray Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, Cassin's Kingbird, Pinyon Jay, and Curve-billed Thrasher. Elk and snakes sometimes seen.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call Randy or Kelly Bader at 719-384-8624 at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Contact owner prior to visit



### 11. Swanson Ranch

**Description:**

A perfect setting for secluded-yet-modern lodging for group or family birding trips among pinyon-juniper canyons, shortgrass prairie and vast cedar breaks. Lodging includes a large ranch house that sleeps up to 10 and an adjacent guest house that sleeps 4. Forested and prairie setting far off the beaten path.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call Miles Swanson at 719-529-6795 or swanson\_miles@yahoo.com at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 12. Everett Jackson Ranch

**Description:**

When full, a seasonal playa along the entrance road attracts large flocks of migrating ducks, shorebirds, ibis, and the like, along with raptors. Grasslands have breeding Long-billed Curlew and Mountain Plover in addition to sparrows. Also numerous pinyon-juniper canyons, rimrock, and fascinating positive impressions of dinosaur tracks. Guided tours available.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please contact Everett or Flo Jackson at 719-643-5435 or Flo@rural-com.com at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Contact owner prior to visit





**13. Kim**

**Description:**

The epitome of a remote plains village. A fun, informal restaurant at the only gas station in the area makes this a good stop while driving through. Eurasian Collared-Doves, Great-tailed Grackles and occasionally Cassin's Kingbirds can be seen in town, and in season, Black-chinned Hummingbirds are common at local feeders. WPA stone school buildings are historic.

**Directions:**

Kim is along US 160, 73 miles east of Trinidad.

**Access:**

Open all year, gas station is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM



**14. Mayfield Ranch**

**Description:**

This ranch has more than a mile of riparian deciduous growth along a permanent stream. Pinyon-juniper forest flanks the shallow rimrock canyon. Along the creek, look for birds like Eastern Phoebe, Bewick's Wren and Ladder-backed Woodpecker, and in migration for eastern vagrants galore. Hummingbirds and turkeys swarm feeders. Good lodging options.

**Directions:**

To inquire about access and directions, please call Mary or Gary Mayfield at 719-643-5303 or gandgm@hughes.net at least 48 hours in advance.

**Access:**

Contact owner prior to visit



# Did You KNOW?

## Colorado's State Flower Colorado Columbine



Our state flower is truly beautiful. This easy to identify wildflower can be found in moist areas in clearings, the edges of pine forests, in aspen groves, along roadways, and mountain drainages, from the foothills to the alpine tundra. It is known as the Colorado Columbine, a strikingly eye-catching flower with its lavender and white blossoms.

Look for the Colorado Columbine at many sites along the Colorado Birding Trail, including the Whitewater, Spanish Peaks, Pikes Peak, and Greenhorn Trails.

## Colorado's Ecosystems Pinyon-Juniper Woodland

Pinyon-Juniper woodland, affectionately nicknamed "PJ", dominates the slopes above the sagebrush and below the ponderosa pines in southern and western Colorado. This dry forest is highly distinctive both in appearance and in biodiversity. Neither the pinyon nor the juniper usually grows higher than about 10 feet tall, and both tend to grow widely spaced. Bird species that breed almost exclusively in or near pinyon-juniper in Colorado include Black-chinned Hummingbird, Cassin's Kingbird, Gray Flycatcher, Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Bewick's Wren, Juniper Titmouse, Bushtit, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Black-throated Sparrow, and the rare Scott's Oriole.

The highest diversity in this habitat is probably along the Utah line, where species like cliff chipmunk barely enter the state. The high-quality pinyon-juniper habitats closest to Denver are in the Radium area (Grand and Eagle counties), the Buena Vista area (Chaffee County), and the Canon City area (Fremont County).

Rimrock is the term for the distinctive outcrops that can run for miles in the same geological layer, forming the rims of valleys and mesas in the southwest part of the state, parts of the Arkansas River Valley, and other scattered locations. Characteristic of some of the state's most scenic areas, including Colorado and Dinosaur National Monuments and Mesa Verde National Park, rimrock tends to be associated with pinyon-juniper habitats. Birds associated to a strong degree with rimrock in Colorado include Chukar, Greater Roadrunner, Canyon Wren, Canyon Towhee, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Raptors often nest on the cliff faces, and rimrock can also be a good place to look for wildlife including bighorn sheep, mountain lion, collared lizard, and the rarely-seen ring-tailed cat.

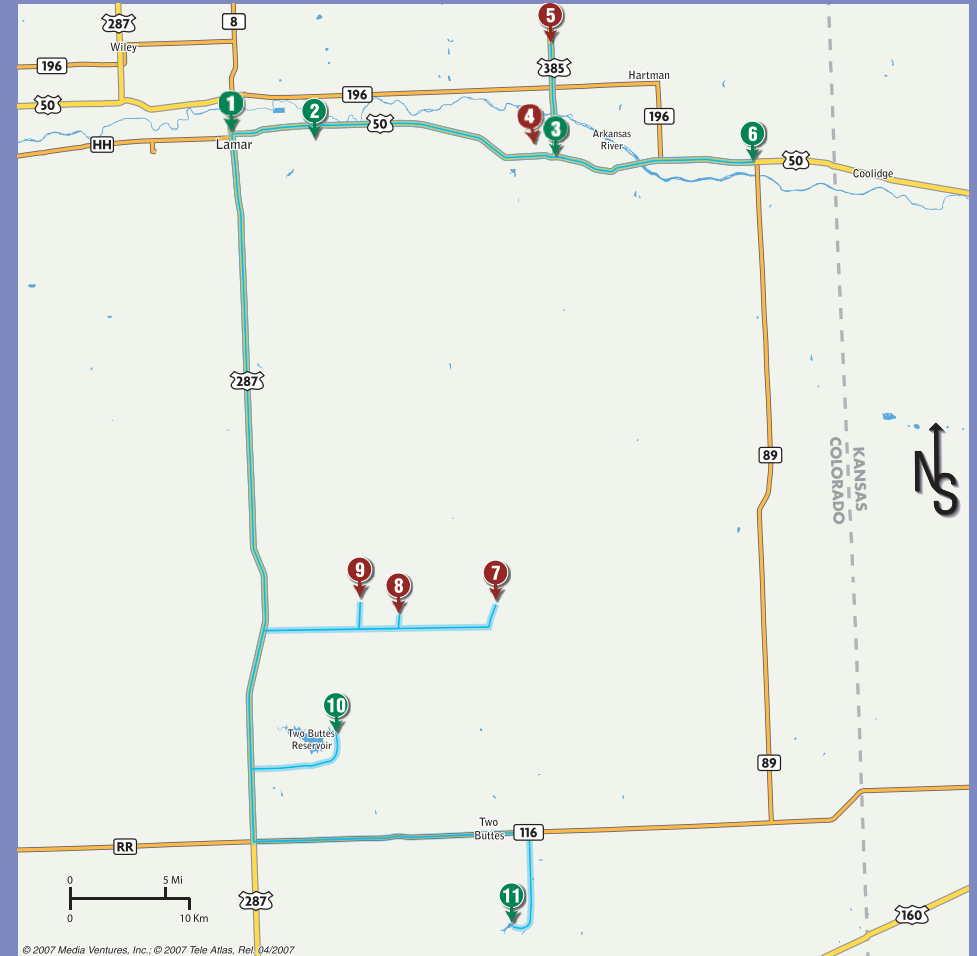


# Two Buttes Trail



## A Wonderful Trail To See Migrants

Among Colorado birders, this area of Prowers and northern Baca Counties is nearly synonymous with migration. Isolated from each other by miles of high prairie, the city parks and cemeteries of Lamar, Granada and Holly, the woodlots and stream corridors of the private ranches in the area, and the magical canyon at Two Buttes State Wildlife Area are magnets for tired birds passing through in spring and fall. Add to this the prairie-chicken leks, the huge seasonal concentrations of Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes, the pronghorns and the deer, and the subtle prairie scenery, and you've got a top-flight destination for naturalists of all kinds.



## Sites on the Two Buttes Trail

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lamar              | 7. Rocking 7K Ranch |
| 2. Mike Higbee SWA    | 8. Taylor Ranch     |
| 3. Granada            | 9. Frank Ranch      |
| 4. Arena Dust Tours   | 10. Two Buttes SWA  |
| 5. Terry Family Farms | 11. Turk's Pond SWA |
| 6. Holly area         |                     |



### 1. Lamar

#### Description:

One of the best birding destinations in the state. Mississippi Kite and Red-headed Woodpecker breed in summer. Fairmount Cemetery and the woods behind the community college are legendary migrant traps, sometimes hosting eastern birds such as Northern Cardinal or Carolina Wren. Every February, Lamar hosts the Snow Goose Festival.

#### Directions:

Lamar is along the Arkansas River at the intersection of US 50, US 287 and US 385.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 2. Mike Higbee SWA

#### Description:

Hedgerows around the maintenance buildings can attract large flocks of sparrows, and reeds along the creek support Virginia Rail, Sora, Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher and Common Yellowthroat. You might also see Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, Northern Bobwhite, muskrat and amphibians.

#### Directions:

Mike Higbee SWA is four miles east of Lamar on the south side of US 50/US 385.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk



### 3. Granada

#### Description:

Granada has some large shade trees for birding; nearby is the Amache Japanese Internment Camp, which has many small trees and a sobering historical significance. Tours of Amache can be arranged through Arena Dust Tours – the Granada-based business that also offers Lesser Prairie-Chicken viewing tours in April: [www.arenadusttours.com](http://www.arenadusttours.com).

#### Directions:

Granada is on US 50/US 385, sixteen miles east of Lamar.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 4. Arena Dust Tours

#### Description:

Fred and Norma Dorenkamp run prairie-chicken tours each spring out of their home six miles northeast of Granada. The Dorenkamps, longtime residents of this area, partner with several private landowners who own ranches with Lesser Prairie-Chicken leks. The only way to see prairie-chickens in Prowers County is on an Arena Dust tour. Local heritage tours also available.

#### Directions:

To schedule a tour for any day in April, contact Fred or Norma Dorenkamp at 719-734-5226 or [www.arenadusttours.com](http://www.arenadusttours.com)

#### Access:

Lesser Prairie-Chicken tours March and April, other tours available all year



### 5. Terry Family Farms

#### Description:

North of Grenada, Terry Farms offers a unique open bay style lodging opportunity for groups of 3 to 30, as well as gourmet meals, farm tours and horseback riding. An ideal place for groups or families to stay during the High Plains Snow Goose Festival, Lesser Prairie-Chicken viewing season, or anytime. Call well in advance.

#### Directions:

For reservations and directions, contact the farm at 719-384-2571 or [terryfamilyfarms@hotmail.com](mailto:terryfamilyfarms@hotmail.com).

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 6. Holly area

#### Description:

Holly is a charming town with good habitat for birds. Gateway Park attracts migrating warblers. The cemetery northeast of town can also be good for migrants, and sometimes Great Horned Owls. Three miles east of town is a little highway rest stop with a nice combination of trees and brush.

#### Directions:

Holly is along US 50 just west of the Kansas border.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 7. Rocking 7K Ranch

#### Description:

This 5,000 acre, 5th generation working ranch offers vast shortgrass prairie with rocky outcrops and cedar-lined bluffs. North Butte Creek and the trees around ranch headquarters may be the best migrant trap in the area. The ranch has many archaeological resources, with guided tours, lodging and meals upon request.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access and directions, please call 719-734-5245 at least 48 hours in advance.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk, contact owner prior to visit



### 8. Taylor Ranch

#### Description:

This working ranch hosts all the native prairie birds, including Mountain Plover and many raptors. Arroyos, natural springs, and frontage along Two Buttes Creek make this a beautiful site to hike and bird. The ranch's livestock include rare British White cattle and Arabian horses.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access and directions, please call 719-336-9897 at least 48 hours in advance.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 9. Frank Ranch

#### Description:

Prairie-dog towns here house both Mountain Plover and Burrowing Owl and the old homesteads often yield Barn Owls. The area around headquarters is treed and may be a good migrant trap. Grasslands host Grasshopper Sparrows and Northern Harriers and sometimes Short-eared Owl. The ranch also has a unique fossilized oyster bed.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access and directions, please call David Frank at 719-336-3494 at least 72 hours in advance.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk, contact owner prior to visit



### 10. Two Buttes SWA

#### Description:

A crown jewel of birding spots. When there is water, the reservoir can be good for ducks, grebes and shorebirds. Below the dam is a wonderland of underbrush, tall trees, marshy ponds and grassy areas; the vagrant list for this area is truly impressive. Roadrunners are regular, as are many reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.

#### Directions:

From Lamar, south 30 miles on US 287/385 to Prowers CR B.5, then east 4 miles, then right (south) on CR 12 about 2 miles..

#### Access:

Open all year



### 11. Turk's Pond SWA

#### Description:

Check the pond for ducks in fall and spring, and shorebirds if water is low. The few trees around the lake can contain migrants in season and sparrows in winter. Other wildlife here includes white-tailed deer, rabbits, foxes, raccoons, reptiles and amphibians.

#### Directions:

From Lamar, 37 miles south on US 287/385, left (east) 14 miles on CO 116, south 5 miles on CR 39 to CR LL.

#### Access:

Open all year, dawn to dusk, closed during the winter waterfowl season





# Comanche Trail



## What Southeast Colorado Is All About

There are places in the Comanche National Grasslands where you can stop your car by the side of the road, get out and spin 360 degrees, without seeing a single sign of human presence anywhere besides the road. And if you continue to stand there as night falls across the prairie, you likely won't hear a single motor, nor see artificial light on the horizon. Come morning, with the Lesser Prairie-Chickens dancing and the Cassin's Sparrows skylarking, you'll think the shortgrass and yucca stretches on forever – until you get in your car and drive a mile down the road, to the edge of an unexpected cliff, where you'll stand on the lip of a rimrock band and look three hundred feet down to the stream that carved this gorge out of the grasslands, where a herd of bighorn sheep might be watering. Some places on the plains are an acquired taste, but this is not one of them. This is what Southeast Colorado is all about.



## Sites on the Comanche Trail

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Blue Rose Ranch                 | 8. Picture Canyon Picnic Area |
| 2. Springfield                     | 9. Campo                      |
| 3. End of 'U' Ranch                | 10. Campo Lek                 |
| 4. Carrizo Canyon Picnic Area      | 11. Comanche Grasslands       |
| 5. Everett Ranch – Canyon Journeys | 12. Santa Fe Trail Hunts      |
| 6. Cottonwood Canyon               | 13. Burchfield SWA            |
| 7. Lazy UO Ranch                   | 14. Walsh                     |



### 1. Blue Rose Ranch

#### Description:

Seasonal Bear Creek winds ¾ mile through this working horse ranch, with cottonwoods, shrubs and grassland habitats providing outstanding birding, especially during migration. Two ephemeral ponds attract a variety of waterfowl and water birds after rains. Conveniently located just west of US Hwy 297/385 the ranch is home to Blue Rose Ranch Horse Rescue and Adoption. An optional high-end B&B with meals and hot tub, horse training, horse-back riding and tours are all available.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, call John and Cheryl Webb at 303-796-7739 at least 48 hours in advance. or email [directors@blueroseranch.org](mailto:directors@blueroseranch.org) <mailto:directors@blueroseranch.org>. Ranch website is [www.blueroseranch.org](http://www.blueroseranch.org) <<http://www.blueroseranch.org>>.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 2. Springfield

#### Description:

The largest town in Baca County has some trees worth checking. Mississippi Kite, Great-tailed Grackle and Eurasian Collared-Dove breed in town. Check the trees in the city park and around the Baca County Courthouse. The only hotels in all of Baca County are here.

#### Directions:

Springfield is along US 287/385 about 47 miles south of Lamar.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 3. End of 'U' Ranch

#### Description:

A wonderfully secluded property named for its position in relation to county road U. 13 miles south of the town of Pritchett, the End of 'U' offers good birding for species such as Cassin's Sparrow and Scaled Quail. Primitive camping available.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call Tom and Denise Werner at 719-523-4105 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 4. Carrizo Canyon Picnic Area

#### Description:

A large permanent spring and a good lowland-riparian grove make this a great site. Along with picnic sites, interpretive signs and rock art, there is also some good pinyon-juniper forest and yucca grassland. Birds are similar to those at Cottonwood Canyon. This can be an excellent area for reptiles and amphibians, including softshell turtles.

#### Directions:

Follow the directions for Cottonwood Canyon, but turn left into the picnic area 22 miles along CR M from US287/385.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 5. Everett Ranch – Canyon Journeys

#### Description:

One of Baca County's oldest working cattle ranches, the Everett Ranch sits along East Carrizo Creek with habitats including rolling prairie, canyons, bluffs and creek with year-round live water and cottonwoods. Multiple seeps and springs in adjacent canyons insure the ranch is rich with wildlife including deer, fox, bobcats, coyotes, and several hundred turkeys that take up residence in the fall and winter months. Along with the birding opportunities, you'll stumble across historical and pre-historical sites hidden in the trees. The ranch offers lodging in a renovated historic sandstone post office, heritage tours, hiking trails, trail rides and workshops throughout the year.

#### Directions:

Please call Casey or Laneha Everett for reservations and directions at 719-643-5414 at least 48 hours in advance or email [laneha.everett@hotmail.com](mailto:laneha.everett@hotmail.com). Visit [www.canyon-journeys.com](http://www.canyon-journeys.com) for more information.

#### Access:

Open all year, contact owner prior to visit



### 6. Cottonwood Canyon

#### Description:

Remote and beautiful, habitat is mostly lowland riparian, cliff/rimrock, and pinyon-juniper. Please respect private property. This is among the best places to see Mississippi Kite, Lewis's and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Western Screech-Owl. The variety of reptiles and amphibians at this site is among the best in the state. Bighorn sheep are often seen in this canyon.

#### Directions:

From Springfield, south on US 287/385 to CR M (18 miles), west on CR M 27 miles to the campground at the beginning of the Canyon, on the left.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 7. Lazy UO Ranch

#### Description:

The Lazy UO comprises nearly twelve miles of West Carrizo Canyon. Though water flows most of the year through the canyon, it contains relatively few cottonwoods. Instead, expect huge cliffs, nesting raptors, all the southeast specialty rimrock and pinyon-juniper birds. A few stretches of cattails by the stream may harbor rails.

#### Directions:

To inquire about access to this ranch and to get directions, please call Everett or Flo Jackson at 719-643-5435 a minimum of 48 hours in advance of your potential visit.

#### Access:

Contact owner prior to visit



### 8. Picture Canyon Picnic Area

#### Description:

Abundant pinyon-juniper woodland and rimrock/cliff habitat featuring rock art, as well as excellent permanent springs, with associated riparian growth, and some high-quality yucca grassland. A nice system of trails allows access to all these habitats which leads into Oklahoma and back. Look for Rufous-crowned and Cassin's Sparrows, Eastern Phoebe, and Long-billed Curlew.

#### Directions:

South on US 287/385 to CR M, west on CR M 8 miles to GR 18, south about eight miles to turn on right onto the entrance road (signed).

#### Access:

Open all year



### 9. Campo

#### Description:

Campo is the gateway to the Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek located east of town, and Picture Canyon and Carrizo and Cottonwood Canyons west of town. An isolated town with a few trees; look for migrants on your way back from the lek and stop for a tasty breakfast or lunch if the local cafe is open.

#### Directions:

Campo is on US 287/385 about 66 miles south of Lamar.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 10. Campo Lek

#### Description:

Call the US Forest Service Springfield office 719-523-1711 for an update on lek viewing or visit their website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/coma>). The only publicly accessible Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek in the state, best between mid-March and mid-April. A key to the blind can be obtained from the Forest Service, or the lek can be viewed from your car from the parking lot. Please observe lek etiquette.

#### Directions:

From Springfield, south on US 287/385 21.5, east on CR J 8 miles, south on CR 36 2 miles east on CR G 4 miles to a small two-track on the right, marked by a large sign. Follow the two-track over 1/4 mile to a large parking lot on the right.

#### Access:

Open all year, birds lek mid-March to early May



### 11. Comanche Grasslands

#### Description:

Grasslands with a high percentage of yucca, unlike grasslands further north. Look for hawks, including Ferruginous. March to April, McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs are possible. Mountain Plover is found in areas with very short grass; Long-billed Curlews breed in larger, less disturbed pastures.

#### Directions:

The Grasslands stretch across much of southern Baca County, and almost any road off of US 385 could be good; try CR C.

#### Access:

Open all year



### 12. Santa Fe Trail Hunts

**Description:** Santa Fe Trail Hunts is based on the Witcher Ranch in the extreme southeast corner of Colorado, and offers guided tours to Lesser Prairie-Chicken leks in spring. Included in the price is an evening meal, an overnight stay in the luxury lodge, use of the lodge's hot tub, and a guided tour of the prairie-chicken lek in the morning, followed by breakfast.

**Directions:** To schedule a tour and get directions, call Emma Sneed at 719-324-9258 or visit their website ([www.santafetrailhunts.com](http://www.santafetrailhunts.com)) prior to your visit.

**Access:** Contact owner prior to visit



### 13. Burchfield SWA

**Description:** Remote SWA, this spot has the potential to be a first-class migrant trap. Tall cottonwood groves and a dense willow understory define this location. There is some good brush along the small creek, and a small pond. This is a good spot to find Red-bellied Woodpecker.

**Directions:** From Walsh, go east on CR DD for 12 miles to the entrance on the right.

**Access:** Open all year



### 14. Walsh

**Description:** A small town in far eastern Baca county, Walsh has a surprising number of trees, worth a check for migrants. It is also the only place around to get gas or food.

**Directions:** From Springfield, go east on US 160 for 18.5 miles to the town of Walsh. Sewage ponds are just east of N. Hawaii Street along a small track.

**Access:** Open all year



## Southeast Colorado's Heritage Sites

As a cultural crossroads, the stories of Southeast Colorado are staggering in their significance: the opening of the West, the Santa Fe Trail, the Great Dust Bowl, and more. And the natural history here is equally splendid. You can view more than 400 of the 625 bird species that nest in North America in Southeastern Colorado—in its canyons, upon its plains, and along its watercourses. But most inviting is the fact that while you bird here, you can explore landscapes as diverse as the stories set against them. Southeast Colorado readily invites those who want to experience a unique intimacy with authentic places. It's an intimacy afforded to those who would know the very soul of a place and its inhabitants past and present; animal and human.

- **Bent's Old Fort on the Plover Trail:** In the 1830's, Bent's Old Fort was established as the westernmost American trading outpost.
- **Boggsville on the Plover Trail:** A National Historic Site sitting near the confluence of the Purgatoire River and the Arkansas, along the Santa Fe Trail.
- **Camp Amache on the Two Buttes Trail:** During World War II, 7,500 Americans of Japanese decent were forcibly detained in the primitive dirt-floored barracks and communal buildings at Camp Amache.
- **Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site on the Snow Goose Trail:** The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site memorializes the 160 Cheyenne and Arapahoe elders, women, and children who were massacred by cavalry forces while camped along this quiet stretch of Big Sandy Creek.

• **Vogel and Picket Wire Canyon on the Prairie Canyons Trail:** The cliff faces of these canyons are resplendent with ancient rock art. In Picket Wire Canyon, a quarter-mile plain containing over 1,300 brontosaurus and allosaurus footprints is a must-do exploration for paleontologists of all ages.

• **WPA and Dust Bowl Sites on the Comanche Trail:** Pick up a driving tour map of historic schools, bridges and buildings in Springfield and head out to ranching country, where early homesteads lie in the shadows along canyon bottoms.



To find out more: [www.secoloradoheritage.com](http://www.secoloradoheritage.com)



## Understanding the signs and routes along the Colorado Birding Trail

As you travel the backroads and byways of the Colorado Birding Trail, watch for the brown on white Birding Trail Logo on the site ID signs. These signs will help you locate the public birding trail sites all along the trail. Some private sites may have ID signs to assist you in locating them, but some will require you to call prior to visiting to get directions from the landowner.

Additionally, Colorado Birding Trail Interpretive Kiosks and signs will be located along some of the trails as you travel through the state. These large, full color signs will provide roadside information to assist you in selecting trails and sites to visit along your route. Look for them at Colorado Welcome Centers, National Parks sites and other locations along the Colorado Birding Trail.

Look for the brown binocular signs that designate other great wildlife viewing areas along our roadsides.

If you are traveling on one of Colorado's 24 Scenic and Historic Byways, you will be following the blue "Columbine" signs that designate our state Byways. These Byways promise interesting heritage, culture, and historic sites throughout the state, as well as some of our most scenic driving routes. Visit [www.coloradobyways.org](http://www.coloradobyways.org) for more information.

### Colorado Division of Wildlife Service Centers [www.wildlife.state.co.us](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us)

Northeast Region	Northwest Region	Southeast Region	Southwest Region
303-291-7227	970-255-6100	719-227-5200	970-247-0855
6060 Broadway	711 Independent Ave	4255 Sinton Rd.	415 Turner Drive
Denver, 80216	Grand Junction, 81501	Colorado Springs, 80907	Durango, 81301

- Brush:** 970-842-6300
- Fort Collins:** 970-472-4300
- Glenwood Springs:** 970-947-2920
- Gunnison:** 970-641-7060
- Hot Sulphur Springs:** 970-725-6200
- Lamar:** 719-336-6600
- Meeker:** 970-878-6090
- Monte Vista:** 719-587-6900
- Montrose:** 970-252-6000
- Pueblo:** 719-561-5300
- Salida:** 719-530-5520
- Steamboat Springs:** 970-870-2197



[www.wildlife.state.co.us](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us)

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for protecting and managing wildlife and habitat, and providing wildlife related recreation. The Division is funded by hunting and fishing license fees, federal grants, and Colorado Lottery proceeds through Great Outdoors Colorado.