

OBA Spruce Grouse Field Trip Report

8-18-19

Seven OBA members ventured up to McCully Creek in Wallowa County to try our luck with Spruce Grouse on Sunday, Aug 18. All but one of us were sadly denied the joy of finding any Grouse. One party member managed to briefly hear and see a hen and 3 chicks scamper through the thicket, but the rest of the group was unable to get on the birds before they disappeared. McCully's lack of cooperative grouse was made up for by a wide variety of passerines. Among them include Wilson's, Townsend's, Nashville, MacGillivray's, "Audubon" Yellow-rumped, and Orange-crowned Warblers, in addition to "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow, a county bird for several members. (Full list here: <https://ebird.org/pnw/view/checklist/S59095896>)

After lunch at the McCully trail head, we decided to check Kinney Lake, which lies roughly northeast of McCully, for any migrant shorebirds. To our surprise, Kinney Lake was almost completely full, with only very slight edges appearing. This high water level is most likely due to the unusually late and heavy snow fall in the Wallowa Mountains. Kinney Lake's only shorebirds were several Spotted Sandpipers and Killdeer, but it held a wide variety of waterfowl, including good numbers of American Wigeon, and two Double-crested Cormorants. (Full list here: <https://ebird.org/pnw/view/checklist/S59095915>)

Continuing our search for shorebirds we meandered to the Joseph Sewage Ponds. En route we encountered two Ferruginous Hawks along Dobbin Rd. The Sewage Ponds held larger numbers of Spotted Sandpipers and Killdeer than Kinney Lake, but still no other peeps were found. Assorted ducks were spread across the ponds and a juvenile Savannah Sparrow provided for a good study of tricky fall sparrow plumage. A few members also got glimpses of a fox. (Full list here: <https://ebird.org/pnw/view/checklist/S59095936>)

We then continued on to the Enterprise Fish Hatchery where we located a single Solitary Sandpiper and a handful of Wilson's Snipe, in addition to a female Wood Duck, Dusky Flycatcher, and several kettling Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks. (Full list here: <https://ebird.org/pnw/view/checklist/S59095943>)

Despite a grouseless day, we all enjoyed what Wallowa County had to offer and each other's company.

In total, the group observed 75 species in the day.

Nolan Clements

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