

Rio Grande Nature Center Bird Notes: September 2011

September list adds five new species of birds to 2011 tally. Two “usual suspects” were not recorded during September.

The month of September added five species of birds that previously had not been recorded during the weekend bird walks during 2011: Cassin’s vireo; Townsend’s warbler; clay-colored sparrow; Brewer’s sparrow; and yellow-headed blackbird. Bird walk leaders recorded a total of 75 species during the month, the second most of the year, just five species fewer than the August total of 80 different species.

These new September species bring the cumulative total number of bird species recorded during weekend bird walks in 2011 to 140. Two species that probably were present at the RGNC were not recorded during the September bird walks: Spotted towhee and red-winged blackbird.

Here is the January-through-September 2011 checklist of bird walk species, with the light yellow bars indicating species seen every month and the rose-colored bars representing the September additions to the list:

RGNC 2011 checklist of birds	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
Ross’s Goose				X					
Cackling Goose	X	X		X					
Canada Goose	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wood Duck	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gadwall		X		X	X	X			X
American Wigeon				X	X				X
Mallard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blue-winged Teal				X	X				
Cinnamon Teal		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Northern Shoveler	X	X	X	X	X				X
Northern Pintail	X	X							
Green-winged Teal	X	X	X	X	X				
Canvasback	X		X	X					
Ring-necked Duck	X	X	X	X	X				
Greater Scaup			X						
Lesser Scaup	X	X	X	X					X
Bufflehead		X	X	X					

Common Goldeneye	X								
Hooded Merganser	X	X	X		X				
Common Merganser	X								
Ruddy Duck	X		X	X	X		X	X	
Ring-necked Pheasant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pied-billed Grebe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Neotropic Cormorant					X				
Double-crested Cormorant			X		X	X			
American White Pelican				X					
Great Blue Heron						X			X
Great Egret						X			
Snowy Egret				X	X	X	X	X	X
Cattle Egret					X	X	X	X	
Green Heron				X	X	X	X	X	X
Black-crowned Night-Heron			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
White-faced Ibis				X	X	X	X		X
Turkey Vulture				X	X				X
Bald Eagle	X	X							
Northern Harrier	X		X				X		X
Sharp-shinned Hawk			X						
Cooper's Hawk	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swainson's Hawk				X	X				
Red-tailed Hawk	X	X	X						
American Kestrel		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Virginia Rail					X				
American Coot	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sandhill Crane	X	X	X	X					

Killdeer		X		X	X	X	X	X	
Spotted Sandpiper					X		X	X	X
Solitary Sandpiper								X	X
Wilson's Snipe		X		X					X
Ring-billed Gull		X							
Rock Pigeon		X	X			X		X	
White-winged Dove	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mourning Dove	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greater Roadrunner			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Barn Owl			X						
Great Horned Owl		X	X	X					
Common Nighthawk							X	X	
Black-chinned Hummingbird				X	X	X	X	X	X
Broad-tailed Hummingbird								X	X
Rufous Hummingbird								X	X
Belted Kingfisher				X	X		X	X	X
Downy Woodpecker	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hairy Woodpecker	X	X	X		X				
Northern Flicker	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Olive-sided Flycatcher					X	X		X	X
Western Wood-Pewee					X	X	X	X	X
Willow Flycatcher								X	
Hammond's Flycatcher					X				
Gray Flycatcher					X				X
Dusky Flycatcher					X				X
Black Phoebe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eastern Phoebe				X					

Say's Phoebe	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Ash-throated Flycatcher					X	X	X	X	X
Cassin's Kingbird							X	X	
Western Kingbird					X	X	X	X	X
Gray Vireo				X					
Plumbeous Vireo					X				
Cassin's Vireo									X
Warbling Vireo					X				
Western Scrub-Jay			X	X					
American Crow	X	X	X	X					X
Common Raven			X						
Tree Swallow				X					
Violet-green Swallow				X	X	X			X
Northern Rough-winged Swallow				X	X	X	X	X	X
Cliff Swallow					X	X		X	X
Barn Swallow			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Black-capped Chickadee	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Mountain Chickadee	X	X	X						X
Bushtit		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
White-breasted Nuthatch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brown Creeper	X					X			
Bewick's Wren	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marsh Wren	X						X		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	X	X	X	X					
Eastern Bluebird	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Western Bluebird	X	X	X				X	X	
Hermit Thrush	X	X	X						

American Robin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gray Catbird					X				
Northern Mockingbird					X		X		
Curve-billed Thrasher			X	X		X	X		
European Starling					X				
Cedar Waxwing						X		X	X
Orange-crowned Warbler								X	X
Yellow Warbler					X			X	X
Yellow-rumped Warbler		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Black-throated Gray Warbler					X				
MacGillivray's Warbler					X	X			X
Common Yellowthroat					X		X		X
Yellow-breasted Chat							X		
Black-and White Warbler				X					
Townsend's Warbler									X
Wilson's Warbler				X	X	X		X	X
Green-tailed Towhee					X				X
Spotted Towhee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chipping Sparrow					X				X
Clay-colored Sparrow									X
Brewer's Sparrow									X
Lark Sparrow								X	X
Savannah Sparrow			X	X					
Song Sparrow	X	X	X		X				
Lincoln's Sparrow	X	X	X		X				
White-crowned Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X				X
Dark-eyed Junco	X	X	X	X					

Summer Tanager						X	X	X	X
Western Tanager					X			X	X
Black-headed Grosbeak					X	X	X	X	X
Blue Grosbeak					X	X	X	X	X
Lazuli Bunting								X	X
Red-winged Blackbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Western Meadowlark	X	X							
Yellow-headed Blackbird									X
Great-tailed Grackle		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Brown-headed Cowbird					X	X	X		
Bullock's Oriole					X	X		X	X
House Finch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesser Goldfinch	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
American Goldfinch	X	X		X					
House Sparrow	X			X	X	X		X	X
Monthly total	52	56	60	70	80	58	55	62	75
January-September 2011 total number of species: 140									

### ***Updated RGNC checklist is finished!***

The updated checklist has been finished and will soon be printed by the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center. This project was the effort of a group of staff and volunteers who worked during the past few months to update the Checklist of Birds. The new checklist includes all 302 species of birds that have been recorded at the Nature Center, and it also includes all 64 species that are known to nest in or adjacent to the center. *Note: The sora was removed as a breeding species in the new checklist.* The new checklist includes up-to-the-minute changes to the order in which the birds are listed in accordance with the *American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds*, 7th edition (1998) as amended through the 52nd Supplement. We hope to publish it this month.

### ***From whence came the Cassin's?***

Four birds sometimes seen at the RGNC during the year bear the name Cassin: Cassin's vireo; Cassin's kingbird; Cassin's sparrow; and Cassin's finch. Just who was Cassin?

**John Cassin** (September 6, 1813 – January 10, 1869) was an American ornithologist. He is considered to be one of the giants of American ornithology, and was America's first taxonomist, describing 198 birds not previously mentioned by Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon. Cassin drew, printed and hand-colored many of the illustrations for the Pacific Railroad Surveys as the western regions of the United States were explored. He

was named curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences in 1842, and after John T. Bowen's death, he took control of the Academy. His "Illustrations" was intended to be a 3-volume work, but financial considerations prevented more than one volume being published.

Cassin was born near Philadelphia on September 6, 1813 to a Quaker family whose members had distinguished military and naval service. From his early youth, however, John's favorite study was ornithology. He contributed descriptions of new species of birds and synoptical reviews of various bird families to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science. His publications included "Birds of California," a handsome octavo volume, containing descriptions and colored engravings of fifty species not given by Audubon; a "Synopsis of the Birds of North America"; "Ornithology of the United States Exploring Expedition"; "Ornithology of the Japan Expedition"; "Ornithology of Gillis' Astronomical Expedition to Chili"; and the chapters on rapacious and wading birds in the "Ornithology of the Pacific Railroad Explorations and Surveys."

The best known of Cassin's many publications are his *Illustrations of the Birds of California, Texas, Oregon, British and Russian America* (1853-56), and *Birds of North America* (1860), co-authored with Spencer Fullerton Baird and George Newbold Lawrence.

He is memorialized through the names of several North American birds, all of which breed in the western U.S.: Cassin's Auklet, Cassin's Kingbird, Cassin's Vireo (formerly a subspecies of Solitary Vireo), Cassin's Sparrow and Cassin's Finch.

***From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.***