

Hi Durango Bird Club,

Here is a preview of upcoming events in February, and a review of birding in our area for the month of January:

1. Upcoming Events

a. February 14. Winter 2026 American Dipper Count at 10 a.m. on the Animas River Trail next to the Powerhouse Science Center (1333 Camino del Rio). Each February, we count dippers along the Animas River from 32nd Street to the High Bridge as part of the [American Dipper Project](#). We'll split into groups with each covering a section of the river. Plan for two to three hours. Bring binoculars. Wear good walking shoes and clothing suitable for the conditions that day. **Please RSVP to shelleysilbert@gmail.com and sm3662@gmail.com**, so that we can let you know if there are any changes. Send any questions to the same email addresses. See you there!

b. February 18. Learning the Language of Birds presentation at 6:00 p.m. by ornithologist, Aimee Way. Fort Lewis College Education and Business Hall, Room 055: Aimee will share tips on learning songs and calls; she will help you turn on recognition of bird language in your brain.

c. February 21. Meet up at Rotary Park at 9 a.m. Join other bird club members for a stroll around the Fish Hatchery area and up to Rank Park.

d. February 28. Field Trip to Pastorius Reservoir at 9 a.m. If the lake is entirely frozen we will pick a different location for the February field trip, but with hunting season over it could be a good time to get good views of dabbling duck species in particular.

e. March 6-8. [Monte Vista Crane Festival](#). I know there was at least one taker to my prior email about the crane festival - my wife Emilee who signed us up for some of the art events! Hope to see some other DBC members over there!

2. January by the Numbers. 84 eBirders birded in La Plata County this month, who contributed 500 checklists and observed 98 species. Billie Smith, Kurt Hillman, Ryan Votta, and Brice Ward all submitted over one checklist/day!

3. January Field Trips. We had two bird club events in January - a meet up at Rotary Park along the river trail, and also a field trip to Farmington Lake this afternoon. We had about 10 birders join for the meet up for a cold but otherwise enjoyable walk along the Animas River Trail. Today we had about 12 birders at Farmington Lake. When we arrived the gulls were present but near the other shore of the lake where we got distant scope views. We spent some time with the large snow goose flock at the North end of the lake where we picked out a few Ross's Geese and the blue morph snow geese. However, a pair of Bald Eagles ended up flushing all of the gulls off the lake before we got around to get closer looks of them. There were a lot of Common Mergansers on the lake but few other ducks - we did find one Ruddy Duck and one male Red-breasted Merganser mixed in with the Common Mergansers. Here is [our checklist](#).

4. Monthly Notables:

There were a few late-staying birds observed in La Plata County this month who are usually not present this time of year: a female/immature **Common Yellowthroat** at Pastorius Reservoir found by Steffen Horwath, and a **Black Phoebe** down in the Santa Rita Park area found by Luke Scott.

Around the Four Corners, some highlights were the continuing **Red-shouldered Hawk** on Road G, and **Crissal Thrasher** at Lower Yellowjacket in Montezuma County.

5. Favorite Media.

There were a lot of great photographs posted to eBird this month in La Plata County. Many birders got good photos of a [Northern Pygmy Owl](#) that was hanging out on the Animas River Trail for a good chunk of January. I really enjoyed [Sherri Rees' shot of a Wilson's Snipe](#) on CR 215 from January 3. Melissa May got some [cool pictures of a Bald Eagle eating a fish](#) at Santa Rita Park on Jan 10, and a [Cooper's Hawk with an unlucky bird clenched in its talons](#) later in the month. Kurt Hillman had a [terrific photo of a Sharp-shinned Hawk](#) from January 13 where you can see many of the features that distinguish it from a Cooper's Hawk well: the ice-cream scoop, no-neck head, small beak, bulging eye, and square corners of the tail.

Hope to see you out there in February!

Cheers,

Stephen