

Wet Mountain Valley Field Trip

17 participants attended the 35th annual Wet Mountain Valley(WMV) Field Trip 8-24-19. 60 species of birds were reported, far below the average of about 100 usually tallied on this field trip. Was this a temporary blip or an indication of permanent environmental degradation in the Valley and along the vast migratory routes birds must travel to reach nesting areas? Each person who answers will no doubt respond by their level of concern, indifference, or denial regarding environmental problems.

Despite the poor tally, there were some nice birds spotted. A juvenile Black Tern made several passes around Lake DeWeese. It belied its name because juveniles are mostly white. This tern is not often seen in the Valley. Perhaps Colorado's least common swallow, a Bank Swallow, cooperatively perched on a power line displaying its white throat contrasting with a dark breast band. A Bald Eagle was also seen by early arriving participants. A lucky close-up photo was taken of a juvenile Red-naped Sapsucker below DeWeese dam where 5 species of warblers delighted birders.

Other birds of interest were a White Pelican and White-faced Ibis at Lake DeWeese, plus a Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal at the Beckwith ranch pond. The Wet Mountain Valley also shared the population explosion of Red Crossbills in Colorado this year as they flew over many venues we visited.

The WMV Field Trip is sponsored by the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society(AVAS) which also sponsors an annual XMAS bird Count in the Valley + many other bird counts and field trips. Check the AVAS website for all field trip schedules.