

Colorado – California

From 10/04/2014 till 26/04/2014

Mammals trip report.

Michel Watelet.



Bobcat

Participants: André Cornet and Michel Watelet (michel.watelet@scarlet.be).

Purpose of this trip:

For a long time, my desire was to go to Colorado to see some grouses displaying (Gunnison's SG, Greater SG, Greater Prairie-Chicken and Sharp-tailed Grouse). I saw Lesser Prairie-Chicken before in New Mexico. Others targets were: Northern Pygmy-Owl, Easter Screech-owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, Brown-capped and black Rosy-Finch. I'm very interesting by mammals also and the target was the Bobcat.

Itinerary:

10-04: Flight from Brussels to San Francisco via Philadelphia. 10.45 am – 9.10 pm. Night in the airport.

11-04 : Flight San Francisco to Denver. 7 am – 10.30 am.

We took our big 4x4 rental car and drove to Gunnison. Observations around Crested Butte and night at Waunita in the car. Waunita is a special place to see Gunnison Sage-Grouse.

12-04 : Observations of Gunnison Sage Grouse early morning. Afternoon we visited the Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP. After we drove to Maybell (west of Craig). We found a lek of Greater Sage-Grouse during a Night drive! Night in the car, south of Maybell along the road 7.

13-04 : Get up at 5 am and we went to the Greater Sage-Grouse lek. Breakfast at Craig at 11am. We went to the Sharp-tailed Grouse site along the road 27 (south-east of Hayden). We tried the road 80 north of Hayden but the weather was very bad. Late afternoon, we drove on the road 13, north of Craig. We came back at 7 pm to Craig for the night in a Motel.

14-04 : Sharp-tailed Grouse lek early morning along the road 27. Breakfast at Steamboat Spring and road to Kremmling. Observations along the road 134 to Toponas and come back to Kremmling. Night in a Motel after a night drive for birds and mammals.

15-04 : Get up at 5.30 am. We took the road 9 (and some little roads) to Silverthorne where we saw the 3 species of Rosy-finches. After lunch we went at Loveland Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan. Afternoon we drove north, road 119, 72 and 7 to try Northern Pygmy-Owl without success. Night at Loveland in a Motel.

16-04 : Get up at 6.30 am. We started the day along a lake at Loveland and after, we went to Wray. We saw our first Greater Prairie-Chicken along the CR 45 road. With luck, we meet the owner of a big ranch. We went with him to a Greater Prairie-Chicken lek. Night in the car, close to the lek after a night drive.

17-04 : Observations at the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek early morning. After we drove to Grand Island area in Nebraska. We visited Rowe Sanctuary, ... Night in the car, north-west of Grand Island close to a lek of Greater Prairie-Chicken. Night drive.

18-04 : Get up at 5.15 am. We found two leks of the Greater Prairie-Chicken, 10 birds each.

Nebraska wasn't very nice to birding at this time of the year and we decided to come back in Colorado. We drove to the Barr Lake State Park for birding (East of Denver).

We drove late afternoon to Pine south-West of Denver. We found Northern Pygmy-Owl at the west of Pine. Night in a caravan at Pine.

19-04 : Birding around Pine and road 285 to Grand. Night in a Motel at Grant.

20-04 : Get up at 5.30 am. We took the little road (CR62) to Guanella pass until it was possible. The Pass is closed until late May because of the snow. We drove to Gunnison and after to Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP. Night in the car in the NP, after a night drive.

21-04 : Get up at 6.15 am. Observations of the Dusky Grouse displaying. Afternoon we took the roads 92 and 133 (and others little roads) to Carbondale. Night in a lodge.

22-04 : Get up at 6.30 am. We drove to Sylverthorne and Leveland Pass, where we saw six White-tailed Ptarmigans. We went to Georgetown where we took the Guanella Pass road until it was possible. We came back to Georgetown for dinner. Late afternoon we went in the south of Denver, in a place to see Eastern Screech-Owl. We came back to the airport. Night in the airport.

23-04 : Flight Denver to San Francisco. 06h00 – 07h30. We took our car and we went to point Reyes National Seashore. It is a nice place for birds, mammals and landscape. We saw 3 Bobcats along the Pierce point road. The first one was near the Pierce Point Ranch at 2 pm ! Night in the car after a night drive.

24-04 : Get up at 6.30 am. Observations at Point Reyes until 15.30 pm. It was foggy in the morning. The Black-Backed Woodpecker was a sought after bird for me since a long time! I had a place to see this bird in Nevada and we went to Reno where we arrived around 8.30 pm. Night in a bad hotel at Reno.

25-04 : Get up at 6 am. I walked a long way in the mountain south-west of Reno. The weather was very bad with rain and snow. With luck, I found a male of Black-Backed Woodpecker up in the mountain. After, we tried some little roads but the weather was very bad so we decided to come back to San Francisco. We had a problem to cross the Rocky Mountains with the snow. We were in the traffic jam more or less one hour and a half, but we crossed the Mountain. After a good dinner north of San Francisco, we went to the airport. Night in the airport.

26-04 : Flight San Francisco to Brussels via Philadelphia at 8.20 am.

27-04 : Landing at Brussels airport at 8.05 am.

Colorado – California: April 2014.	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Mammals trip list:															
Virginia Opossum							1								
American Pika											1				
Mountain Cottontail										x					
Desert Cottontail								1							
Eastern Cottontail								1							
Black-tailed Jackrabbit													1		
Common Muskrat								1							
American Beaver								1							
Yellow-bellied Marmot		2								1					
Eastern Fox Squirrel						x	x	x							
Abert's Squirrel								1*							
Red (Pine) Squirrel		x			x					1		x			
Gunnison's Prairie Dog		x							x	x					
Black-tailed Prairie Dog								x							
Rock Squirrel											1				
Wyoming Ground Squirrel			x	x						x					
Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel							1								
Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel										1	x				
Least Chipmunk		x									x				
Colorado Chipmunk											x	x			
Mouse sp															
Bobcat													3		
Coyote	1	2		2							x		1	x	
Gray Fox													2		
Raccoon	1*									x			3		
Striped Skunk		1*											1		
California Sea Lion													x		
Harbor Seal													x	x	
Northern Elephant Seal													x		
Pronghorn	x	x	x	x											
Bighorn Sheep										x					
Elk	x	x	x	x	x					x	x		x	x	
Mule Deer	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
White-tailed Deer							x	x					x	x	x

1* = 1 Dead.