

## 2023 Raptorthon on Dinosaur Ridge Riley and the Mile High Raptors

Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO) participated in our second Raptorthon on April 16. Despite hazy blue skies making for challenging spotting, raptor diversity was excellent. Team members Emma Riley, Aarohi Barman, and Carol Cwiklinski, accompanied by several volunteers, tallied a total of 14 raptor species highlighted by a migrating Osprey carrying a fish and a Peregrine Falcon escorted along by a resident Peregrine. Non-raptor sightings included a formation of 31 American White Pelicans and White-throated swifts entertaining us throughout the watch with their acrobatic flight.

We had concerns that the recent wildfire would affect the Raptorthon count. High winds downed a nearby power line on March 30 and the fire spread around and over the viewing platform at the top of the ridge. However, shortly after, many of our local passerines were active in the burn area including the sweetly vocal Townshend Solitaire contrasting with the raspy calls of the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay already paired up and busy collecting nesting materials. (The fire had the unexpected benefit of improving the view to the south.)

Susan Blansett, DFO President, and Janet Peters, Hawk Watch Committee Co-chair birded nearby riparian habitat from sunrise to sundown in the Bear Creek watershed (visible from Dinosaur Ridge). Species of note there include Greater Yellowlegs, a nesting Great Horned Owl with owlets, Horned Grebe, and the recently arrived Say's Phoebe. We counted a total of fifty-eight species.

DFO will use half of the \$1,660 raised to engage a highly skilled seasonal counter and additional staff to supplement the volunteer base.



*Burn View, Mike Lupini*



Riley and the Mile High Rthon team, Mike Lupini