Jeremy Molley

My Future Path, Thanks to the Colorado Bird Camp

Five years ago, I went to the Festival of the Cranes in Socorro. I met Raymond VanBuskirk and he taught me how to identify the Bufflehead and gave me a bird book. I soon fell in love with birds and went on every bird watching event I could. This last summer, with the help of the Ryan D. Beaulieu Youth Memorial Scholarship from CNMAS, I was able to attend the ABA Camp Colorado bird camp. I had the time of my life! I met so many friends and added quite a few birds to my life list. I really enjoyed traveling around the mountains of Denver, learning about bird identification, and finding and watching interesting birds. When we arrived at 5 pm, we did a bird walk around the camp, made our introductions, and told our worst g-rated jokes. The next day we started really traveling and doing some hardcore birdwatching. Right off the bat, we saw a Williamson's Sapsucker in the Rocky Mountain National Forest. I also saw my first lifer of the trip--the American Dipper. Wednesday was the big day in which we tried to identify as many birds as possible over multiple different elevations and ecosystems. We saw 96 different species, including a very large flock of Mountain Plovers. Thursday, we hiked into the high elevations of Rocky Mountains National Park and saw two White-tailed Ptarmigans! The best part of that day occurred when we found a family of Three-toed Woodpeckers. While we were watching them, a traffic jam developed on the road because people stopped to see them too. Our leaders called it a "Bird Jam". Finally on Friday, we went to the foothills to get a look at Lazuli Buntings, Cedar Waxwings, and Swainson's Hawks. The next day we all said goodbye, but the impact this experience has had on my life will always be there. The last five years have sparked an interest in me, but now, because of this camp, and the people I met, I have decided to make ornithology my future career. Thank you, CNMAS, for providing me the Ryan Scholarship so I could have this opportunity.