

WARREN LAKE, FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

As the President of the Colorado Field Ornithologists, I have been extremely impressed with the increased number of birds recorded at Warren Lake Fort Collins, Colorado in recent months.

Over the winter, the lake supported about 300 diving ducks (fish-eating common merganser and common goldeneye). Also several hundred gulls mainly Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were observed. For the first time to my knowledge, large numbers of Bald Eagles congregated at the lake (more than 30 individuals on some days), attracted by the large number of fish.

The increased variety and number of birds is largely attributed to the increasing fish and wildlife population, which is a result of the Warren Lake remediation programme that focused on reducing the presence of harmful algae blooms (HABs) and re-establishing a productive food chain. HABs, along with destratification and low oxygen levels, have previously posed a significant threat to the natural aquatic food chain, diminishing the food supply for these birds of prey.

The interventions initiated by the community to work with Clean-Flo and SIS.bio, the providers of the remediation program, have reversed this situation. The solutions introduced have clearly worked not only to prevent domination of nutrient uptake by algae, weeds and cyanobacteria but also to improve the fish life that these birds prey upon. This is paying dividends for Warren Lake. I (and many other birders) record our observations at eBird.org. Warren Lake is a location ("hotspot") where all data are accumulated from all observers.

We look forward to seeing the return of more bird species in the coming years.

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