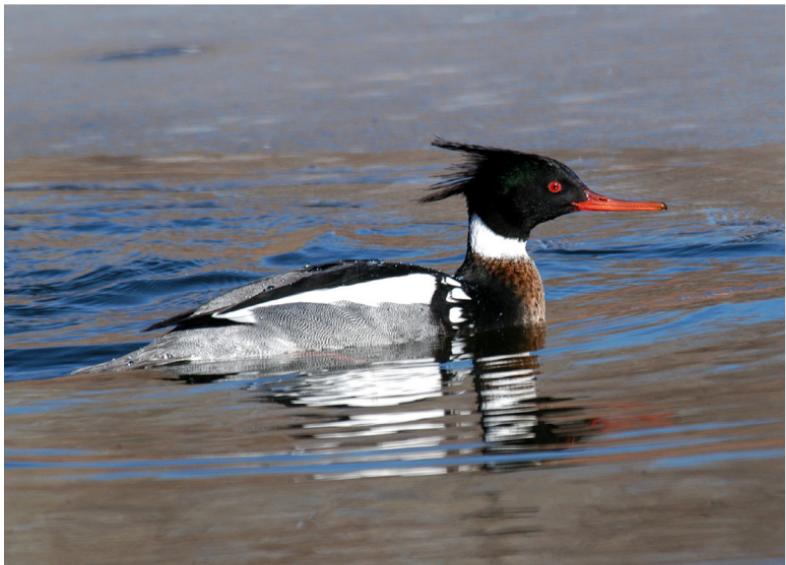


# Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly

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Vol. 38, No. 2

April 2004

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## CFO BOARD MINUTES

Lisa Edwards, Secretary

The regular quarterly meeting was held January 17, 2004, at 11:00 A.M. Board members present were: President Peter Gent, Vice President Norm Lewis, Secretary Lisa Edwards, Treasurer elect David Waltman, Treasurer ex BB Hahn, and Directors Sharon Dooley, Rich Levad, Bill Schmoker, and Mark Yaeger. Also participating in the meeting was Doug Faulkner, Colorado Birds Editor. The minutes of the November 2003 meeting were approved.

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Peter Gent welcomed our newest board member, Treasurer David Waltman. Peter reminded everyone that our biggest focus right now is finalizing the details of the CFO Convention to be held over Memorial Day weekend.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

CFO's current assets are \$30,025.72. BB and David reviewed the books on Friday and she has transferred the Treasurer's responsibilities to him. The treasurer's report was approved. A motion was made and passed to thank BB for the five years of hard work and dedication that she has given to CFO.

### WEBSITE

Rachel Hopper reported the following via e-mail:

- 1) COBirds is running fine with approximately 648 members. The request to join/moderation combination is working well to keep junk off the list.
- 2) CFO website - Two template pages are prepared for the new CFO website.

### CBRC

Tony Leukering reported on the following via e-mail:

- 1) CBRC website - The work continues on developing the software for the online submission and review system.
- 2) 2001 records - The January 2004 issue of *Colorado Birds* contains the second installment of the report on the 2001 records circulation; an additional 25 records are discussed (five of which are from the 2002 batch). Additional 2001 records await completion and/or a Committee meeting.
- 3) 2002 records - The main 2002 circulation has started.
- 4) 2003 records - Will circulate nearly concurrently with the 2002 circulation.
- 5) A report had been started for inclusion in the journal *Western Birds*. It follows the last CBRC report to that journal (by Gent in 1987) and is intended to update that readership with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd records for individual species that have occurred since 1985. The period covered is 1986-2000 (15

years).

6) CBRC members - Both Chris Wood and Tony Leukering will complete a second term on the CBRC at the end of this year. Tony will submit, at the next Board meeting, two names for consideration to fill the vacancies.

### AWARDS

Rich Levad reported that no nominations have been received for awards.

### FIELD TRIPS

Norm Lewis updated the Board on the various field trips that are scheduled for the spring and summer months. These include a butterfly trip, several owling trips, and possibly a Black Swift trip. The Ruffed Grouse trip is still being considered. The June 2004 pelagic trip has 13 reservations.

### COLORADO BIRDS

Doug Faulkner reported that the January issue includes the membership insert and the Birder's Code of Ethics.

### MEMBERSHIP

Raymond Davis reported via e-mail that 64 memberships expired in December 2003. He has e-mailed reminders and will also send out postcards. Thirty people have renewed their memberships in the last month.

### PROJECT FUND

Cheryl Day reported via e-mail that two letters have been sent to her summarizing research of various birds made possible via CFO Project Funds.

### NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Proposed replacements for Rich Levad and Mark Yaeger, whose terms end at the 2004 convention, were discussed.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### 2004 Convention Details

- 1) Mark Yaeger is working with local artist Don Radovich to provide the artwork for the convention tee shirts.
- 2) Rich Levad will enlist help and have a checklist of possible convention birds available for all attendees.
- 3) Stump the Chumps will be held on Friday night.
- 4) The paper session will have four or five papers presented. Some of the planned presenters are Nick Komar, Jeff Price, Ron Ryder, and Greg Hayward.
- 5) The field trips have been set up.

- 6) The sales booth will not be open during field trip time.
- 7) The banquet will be held on Sunday.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Landowner Appreciation Plaque - Doug Faulkner nominated a landowner to receive a plaque for their long-term dedication to developing bird habitat and the willingness to share it with everyone in the Colorado birding community.

The next Board meeting will be held on Saturday, April 17, at the RMBO headquarters, Brighton, CO at 11:00 A.M.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.



Colorado Field  
Ornithologists

**LETTERS FROM PROJECT FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS**

(Editors note: Text has been edited for content and space.)

Dear CFO Committee:

In 2003, we continued our studies of Mountain Plovers (*Charadrius montanus*) on the eastern plains of Colorado. The objective of the project was to further evaluate the impacts of agricultural practices on chick survival and habitat shifts during the brood-rearing period. In 2003, we focused our research efforts on black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) towns. This data can then be compared with our research findings in 2002 on agricultural crop fields and with those results found by Dr. Fritz Knopf on rangeland without prairie dogs conducted in the early 1980s. The Colorado Field Ornithologists provided support for 6 radio transmitters. Additional support was provided by Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Farm Bureau, the Lois Webster Fund of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver , US Geological Survey Biological Resources Division, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

We concentrated our efforts in Lincoln County and Weld County, Colorado. Our efforts were concentrated primarily on prairie dog towns in these counties. We placed radio transmitters on adults at or near the time the eggs hatched. The radio transmitters were purchased from Advanced Telemetry Systems (ATS) and weighed approximate 2.2 grams. The transmitters were affixed by applying a light coating of five-minute epoxy to the upper back feathers. This technique allows the radio transmitters to eventually drop off during the molting season, July and August. The average life of the radio transmitters is 56 days. The adults with radio transmitters were checked every one to two days to determine status and number of young and habitat location until signals were lost.

We would like to thank the Colorado Field Ornithologists for their support. We greatly appreciate the financial support you have provided our research in trying to better understand the breeding ecology of the Mountain Plover. A better understanding will hopefully lead to the recovery of this species.

Chris W. Mettenbrink  
Research Associate  
Colorado Natural Heritage Program

Dear CFO Project Fund Committee,

Thank you for supporting my research on the avian response to fire in Rocky Mountain National Park. With your generous support, I was able to provide housing to two field assistants during the avian breeding season. With this increased labor force, we were able to find 103 Green-tailed Towhee nests this year, compared to 82 nests last year. I have not yet completed the data analysis for my thesis, but I wanted to send you a report of my accounting.

The money that I received from the CFO Project Fund was dispersed as follows:

Housing for Gretchen Jehle, Matt Champoux, and Jennifer Shanahan at the seasonal Research Dorm at Rocky Mountain National Park: May 25- August 12 (6 biweekly periods for 3 people = 15 @ \$54.08): Total = \$973.44. The remaining \$26.56 was spent to assist with supporting one field assistant.

Thank you again for your generous support.

Gretchen Jehle  
MS Candidate  
Colorado State University

## CFO Project Fund

Help support avian research in Colorado. Support the CFO Project Fund with your tax-deductible donation. Make checks payable to Colorado Field Ornithologists, clearly marked "Project Fund". Send to: BB Hahn, 8230 Mule Deer Drive, Pueblo, CO 81004.

Remember that CFO is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation and members can designate the CFO Project Fund in estate planning or wills.

## VOCAL MIMICRY BY LESSER GOLDFINCHES

Hugh E. Kingery

P. O. Box 584

Franktown, CO 80116-0584

Several species of Colorado birds mimic other species while singing, issuing alarm calls, or in other ways. Well-known examples include Northern Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*) and jays that imitate the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) cry. Not as well known, Lesser Goldfinches (*Carduelis psaltria*) also have an extensive assortment of mimicry.

The authors of the Birds of North America Lesser Goldfinch account (Watt and Willoughby 1999) cite Dawson (1923) as the first person who documented this trait. Remsen et al. (1982) identified at least 30 species mimicked in California, and Goldwasser (1987) recorded 39 bird species plus a Rock Squirrel (*Citellus variegatus*). His detailed article provided estimates of repertoire sizes, most frequently imitated species, and other details of this behavior. "Mimicked phrases made up >50% of an average song; the other 2 types of phrases in songs were call notes and unique phrases - unrecognized mimicry, modified mimicry, or uniquely goldfinch. Phrases were rarely repeated in a song unless it contained many (>15) phrases" (Watt and Willoughby 1999).

Goldfinches mimicked species that did not occur in their breeding habitat (one bird mimicked a Mexican species never recorded in the U.S.), and often the goldfinches did not imitate the most common species in their breeding habitat. Yet the Arizona birds mimicked some local species that California birds did not (Goldwasser 1987). Watt and Willoughby (1999) urged more information, especially from other geographical areas.

Responding to this suggestion, I started recording the species imitated at our home in Franktown, Colorado, and asked on the COBirds listserve for other observers to contribute their observations. Table 1 lists 25 species mimicked in Colorado (plus one in Mexico). Cobirds responses also included four species without details: Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*), and Red Crossbill (in Arizona; *Loxia curvirostra*).

Part of the puzzle relates to birds not imitated. The table indicates whether or not the mimicked species occurs near the location. In our yard and within a

quarter of a mile, regular singing or calling species that I have not detected in Lesser Goldfinch songs are the following: Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), Common Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*), Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*), Northern Flicker, American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*), Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*), Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), and American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*). Very possibly, elements of some of those species will infiltrate a goldfinch song this summer.

I invite readers of *Colorado Birds* to contribute their observations to this litany. Collectively, we have the opportunity to add to our knowledge of this intriguing species.

### Contributing Observers

Merlynn Brown, Raymond Davis, Doug Faulkner, Hugh Kingery, Karen Metz, Alan Versaw, and Ronda Woodward.

### Literature Cited

- Dawson, W. L. 1923. The Birds of California. Vol. 1. South Moulton Co., Los Angeles, CA.
- Goldwasser, S. 1987. Vocal appropriation in the Lesser Goldfinch. Unpub. master's thesis, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson.
- Remsen, J. V., G. Kimball, and R. A. Erickson. 1982. Vocal copying in Lawrence's and Lesser Goldfinches. *Western Birds* 13:29-33.
- Watt, D. J., and E. J. Willoughby. 1999. Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 392 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

Table 1. Species vocally mimicked by Lesser Goldfinches in Colorado.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Sound mimicked</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Grand Junction</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>June 2001</u>	<u>Nearby?</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Cooper's Hawk	nestling-begging call	Franktown		19 July 2000	yes		
American Kestrel	call	Lyons		June	occ.		
American Kestrel	ek-ek-ek call	Colorado Springs		16 April 2000	yes		
Downy Woodpecker	whinny call	Franktown		26 July 2002,	yes		
Hairy Woodpecker	pic call			3 June 2003	rarely		
Northern Flicker	call	Grand Junction		April 2002	yes		
Western Wood-Pewee	pee-eer call	Colorado Springs		26 May 2000	yes		
Western Wood-Pewee	pee-eer call	Franktown		26 June 2000,	in migration		
Cordilleran Flycatcher	call	Franktown		23 May 2003			
Plumbeous Vireo	call	Franktown		23 May 2002	yes		
Plumbeous Vireo	one element of song	Franktown		9 July 2000	yes		
Plumbeous Vireo	couplet notes of song	Elbert Co.		July	yes		
Western Scrub-Jay	call	Franktown		9 Aug 2003	yes		
Black-capped or	“dee dee dee” call	Franktown		26 July 2002	yes		
Mountain Chickadee				25 June 2000	yes		
Black-capped or							
Mountain Chickadee	call	Franktown		26 July 2002	yes		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	yank yank call	Grand Junction					
Rock Wren	trill	Franktown					
House Wren	chatter	Franktown		25-26 June,	yes		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	nasal call	Franktown		4 July 2000	yes		
Western Bluebird	call	Pike Nat Forest		26 July 2002	yes		
				Summer 2003	yes		
				23 Aug 2001	yes		

Table 1. cont'd.

Species	Sound mimicked	Place	Date	Nearby?	Notes
American Robin	alarm call	Franktown	25 June 2000, 23 May 2003	yes	
Gray Catbird	mewing and alarm call	Pine Valley Ranch Park	29 Aug 2001	yes	3
Gray Catbird	mewing call	Chatfield SRA	Sept.	yes	
Ovenbird	teacher song	Franktown	25 June 2000	yes	4
Western Tanager	call	Franktown	9 July 2000	yes	
Western Tanager	song	Franktown	26 July 2002	yes	
Black-headed Grosbeak	young pee-ooo call	Franktown	31 July 2003	yes	
Lazuli Bunting	one trill element from	Franktown	9 June 2003	yes	
White-crowned Sparrow	a bunting singing contemporaneously	Franktown			
Western Meadowlark	first few notes of song	Grand Junction	14 Jan 2004	yes	
House Finch	“pluk” call	Franktown		no	
American Goldfinch	call	Franktown	3 June 2003	yes	5
White-collared Seedeater		Grand Junction Oaxaca Mexico	Summer 2003	yes	

(1) 26 July 2002. LEGO singing in dead aspen for 10 minutes. He repeatedly included in his repertoire the calls of Western Scrub-Jay and Black-capped or Mountain Chickadees. Both occur in the area.

(2) 12-15 Lesser Goldfinches (male and female), slowly foraged with both Western and Mountain Bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. The Lesser Goldfinches repeatedly mimicked Western Bluebirds (though not, curiously, Mountain Bluebirds).

(3) Observation: 1 male LEGO, while sitting on a telephone wire, persistently mimicked the Gray Catbirds who were foraging in the bushes underneath. This lasted approx. 8-9 minutes. Note: while there were perhaps 6-7 other LEGOs in the immediate vicinity, I could not hear any others engaging in this behavior.

(4) An Ovenbird sang from a hillside about 500 yards away during this summer. It did not return, and I have not heard Lesser Goldfinch mimicry in subsequent years.

(5) Single bout of singing (1-2 minutes).

## FIRST COLORADO RECORD FOR BLACK SKIMMER

Duane Nelson  
Las Animas, CO

As an avid birder in Colorado in the early 1980s, I became intrigued with records of vagrant birds from surrounding states. I knew that there was probably no greater predictor of new birds that might one day occur in Colorado than previous sightings in nearby states. I had a revelation when I read about a Black Skimmer (*Rhyncops niger*) sighting from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in the 1970s. That revelation was “if it could show up there, there is no logical reason that it will not eventually appear somewhere in Colorado”.

I put that thought into the deepest recesses of my mind for over two decades. However, on 11 July 2001, I met Tony Leukering and Nancy Gobris (Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory biologists) to show them a sub-adult, white-morph Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*) at Neenoshe Reservoir in Kiowa County. Also, I wanted to show them my efforts to elevate a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) nest above rising water levels at the same time (I work as a biologist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Colorado Division of Wildlife conducting monitoring and recovery efforts for endangered Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melanotos*) and Least Terns).

As we drove away from Neenoshe Reservoir and back to their vehicle, we made small talk about first state records we might expect to find in Colorado. Tony predicted that Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) was overdue. I told him I was expecting a Black Skimmer.

One week later, I found a Black Skimmer across U.S. 287 from Neenoshe Reservoir. I do not what cosmic forces might have been in play.

### Finding a Black Skimmer in Colorado

On 18 July 2001, I observed a single, fledged Piping Plover with one adult at the northwest corner of Neenoshe Reservoir. When I returned on 19 July to this spot, I could find no trace of either the young or adult plover. The habitat there was rapidly shrinking as the water level rose, and the birds were apparently displaced. I decided to check the nearest body of water, a private part of Neesopah Reservoir, locally referred to as “Jett Lake” when water levels drop and it is cut off from the rest of the lake. With landowner permission, I walked down to the alkali shore, set up my tripod, and scanned beyond a flock of gulls, terns and shorebirds, focusing on habitat suitable for

Piping Plovers. When I looked away from my scope, I spotted an adult Black Skimmer less than 100 feet in front of me. Unlike most sightings of rare birds that are out-of-range, I did not have to spend any time eliminating similar species. About all I could say to myself, repeated multiple times, and possibly with a few extra adjectives was, "I am looking at a Black Skimmer".

### Description

The Black Skimmer loafed on a sandbar in the southeast corner of Jett Lake. It was with a group of gulls, mostly Ring-billed (*Larus delawarensis*), California (*L. californicus*) and Franklin's (*L. pipixcan*), but also including an adult Laughing Gull (*L. atricilla*) and an adult Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*), as well as Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*), and several species of shorebirds. It was a large, slim bird, much smaller than the Great Black-backed Gull, nearly the same size as a Ring-billed Gull, and towering above the Black Terns.

The bird was tri-colored. The crown (including the area surrounding the eye), nape, back, and wings were jet black (the lack of paler edges to wing feathers indicated this was an adult bird). The long wings extended far beyond the tip of the tail. The forehead, throat, breast, and belly were immaculate white. The short, stout legs were bright red, as was the proximal third of the stout bill.

The bill was long and, characteristically, the lower mandible was approximately one inch longer than the upper mandible. When the bill was viewed head-on, it was not symmetrical, bending toward the left (the bird's right) at the tip.

As I was watching the bird from a distance, careful not to flush it, the bird rose once and circled the playa before landing in exactly the same spot. In flight, the wings were very long, and the primaries and secondaries had bold white tips. The short tail was slightly forked. The central retrices were black, while the outer retrices were white at the base, and darker toward the tips. The wing beats were very slow. I got to see the bird attempt to fish by "skimming" with its lower mandible before it landed.

### Viewing Circumstances

My access to private property for work is the result of years of cultivation of relationships with landowners and my sponsors. It is important that I not jeopardize my access just for the temporary benefit of birders. Therefore, before I could announce the sighting to the Colorado birding community, I needed to contact the landowners, John and Katie Philpy, about access and conditions of visitation. I was lucky and found John almost immediately. They

were open to visitation, on the condition that permission was for this event only, and that potential viewers needed to park on the county road and walk in from the main road. I made these conditions clear in my postings to the Colorado Rare Bird Alert and COBirds (the statewide Internet voice of the Colorado birding community).

The Black Skimmer spent a considerable amount of time away from Jett Lake, although no one ever found out where it went when it was gone. It was seen by one person on the evening of 19 July, seen and photographed by three birders at dawn on 20 July, but absent the rest of the day. This absence may have discouraged some birders from making the long drive to southeast Colorado on 21 July.

On 21 July, the Black Skimmer was present at dawn on the spit in Jett Lake, and roosted non-stop throughout the entire day. At least 15 birders got to see it that day. As I left the site at 3:30 P.M. with Peter Gent (the only person that was ever with me when I was looking at it), the bird had the lake to itself. It was not seen after that time.

### **Other Black Skimmer Observations in the Interior United States**

There are a surprising number of interior sightings of Black Skimmer in the United States. The relative abundance of sightings from Arizona, New Mexico, northeast and west Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas were great indicators that Black Skimmer was indeed overdue in Colorado. Although it may be many years before another Black Skimmer is reported in Colorado, it is a likely future event.

#### New Mexico: Four sightings

1. 1 immature at Lake McMillan, 5-7 August 1964
2. 1 adult at Elephant Butte Lake, 1 May 1993
3. 1 adult at Morgan Lake, 15 May 1996 (only a few miles from southwest Colorado, by far the closest previous sighting to Colorado)
4. 1 adult at Bitter Lake, 10-11 June 2001

#### Kansas: A minimum of two sightings

1. Specimen collected in Douglas County, 24 May 1968
2. one bird observed intermittently between 28 June and 2 August 1977 at Cheyenne Bottoms and Russell County (may have been more than one bird)

#### Oklahoma: Three sightings

1. 1 seen at Lake Overholser near Oklahoma City, 14 May 1967

2. 1 at Draper Lake near Norman, 1-3 October 1971 (specimen)
3. 1 photographed at Lake Overholser, 4 June 1991

Texas: Fourteen total inland sightings from northeast and north-central Texas.  
No records from panhandle.

Arizona: Seven records involving eight birds

1. 1 North of Yuma, 12 June 1977
2. 1 at Lake Havasu, 1-4 September 1977
3. 2 at Willcox, 4 August 1984
4. 1 at Willcox, 15 May 1996
5. 1 at Painted Rock Dam, 14 July 1993
6. 1 unpublished report from August 1979
7. 1 in east Tucson 9 May 2002

#### Additional Inland Sightings

I have chosen not to include sightings within 100 miles of the Atlantic Coast, although there are inland records from Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. There are two Indiana records, two Tennessee records, and four Ontario records, including North America's northernmost record at Lake of the Woods, Kenora, Ontario in August 1982. Nevada has one record of two birds seen together in Clark County in August 1997. There are nesting records from the Salton Sea, reports of sightings in the Central Valley in King's County, and of nesting in the Tulare Lake Basin, all in California.

#### Acknowledgments

Brandon Percival helped solicit comments from birders across North America, including Margaret Bain (Ontario), Ken Brock (Indiana), Luke Cole (California), Allen Contreras (Oregon), Peter Donaldson (Hawaii), Doug Faulkner (Colorado and Wyoming), Robb Hamilton (California), Paul Lehman (California), Tony Leukering (Colorado), Mark Lockwood (Texas), Guy McCaskie (California), Steve Mlodinow (Washington) Sebastian Patti (Kansas), Bob Paxton (Hudson-Delaware Region), Dan Purrington (Louisiana), Mike Rogers (California), Larry Semo (Colorado and Texas), Chris Sloan (Tennessee), Mark Stevenson (Arizona), Peter Taylor (Manitoba), and Sartor Williams III (New Mexico). This publication would not have been possible without their help.



Colorado Field  
Ornithologists

## YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS IN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

Jill Lucero  
Bureau of Land Management  
[jill\\_lucero@blm.gov](mailto:jill_lucero@blm.gov)

Alison Cariveau  
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory  
[alison.cariveau@rmbo.org](mailto:alison.cariveau@rmbo.org)

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) biologists detected Yellow-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus americanus*) on four occasions during the breeding season at McIntire Springs, Conejos County, Colorado, indicating probable breeding. Alison Cariveau, Wetlands Program Coordinator for RMBO, detected a cuckoo by call at 7:32 A.M. on 6 June 2003. Marguerite Lomow, also of RMBO, had a second detection at 6:30 A.M. on 23 June 2003 at another point count station located about 400 meters away from the previous detection. Marguerite heard calls simultaneously in two directions and believes there were two birds in close proximity. In addition, Jeremiah Martinez, with the BLM, detected cuckoos on two other occasions. He first detected a single cuckoo on 25 June 2003. On 21 July, while observing an apparent cuckoo pair, he heard a third cuckoo calling a short distance away. All of his detections occurred along the entrance road just north of Pike's Stockade. Finally, Jill Lucero, also of the BLM, detected two birds in a location 0.5 mile to the east of the other locations at McIntire Springs on 2 July 2003.

These detections were made along the Conejos River in mature cottonwood gallery forest with a dense, large-statured, willow understory and pools of standing stagnant water. McIntire Springs is managed by the BLM for the benefit of birds, including waterfowl and a large population of Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*). Jeremiah's detections were on state land near Pike's Stockade, managed by the State Historical Society.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are considered casual in the mountain parks, with a single breeding season record in 1980 from Monte Vista, Rio Grande County, approximately 35 miles from McIntire Springs (Andrews and Righter 1992). During the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, no cuckoos were reported from the San Luis Valley (Carter 1998). We know of only one other published report of this species in the valley; Scott Hutchings found a road-kill specimen in southeastern Rio Grande County near Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge

on 4 June 1998 (Ely 1999).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos of both the western (*C. a. occidentalis*) and eastern (*C. a. americanus*) subspecies are believed to have declined in Colorado and detections of probable breeding pairs are therefore noteworthy. It will be interesting to determine if Yellow-billed Cuckoos are indeed on the comeback, or if these detections merely indicate an isolated breeding population in an area previously not well-monitored.

#### Literature Cited

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- Carter, M. F. 1998. Yellow-billed Cuckoo. In Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (H.E. Kingery, ed.). Colorado Bird Atlas Partnership and Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver.
- Ely, D. C. 1999. The Summer 1998 Report (June and July). *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 33:72.



This Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at Walden Ponds, Boulder, 3-11 October 2003. Randy Siebert took this photo on the 6th. Randy wrote that, according to Alex and Gillian Brown, compilers of the Boulder County Audubon bird inventory, this is the first record for that county since 1999.

### CFO SUPPORTS ETHICS CODES

The Colorado Field Ornithologists is dedicated to the conservation of avian species and to increasing the public awareness of human impact on birds. As one step toward achieving these goals, the CFO Board has endorsed the American Birding Association's (ABA) *Birding Code of Ethics* and the Ornithological Council (OC) of North American Ornithological Societies' *Code of Ethics*.

### A BIT OF JOURNAL HISTORY

#### *10 Years Ago in the Journal...*

The article "Harold Holt: A Birders Guide" described how Harold became involved in the Lane Guide Series.

#### *15 Years Ago in the Journal...*

Clinton Jeske recounted two occurrences of Surf Scoters in the San Luis Valley during fall 1988.

#### *20 Years Ago in the Journal...*

Frank Preston provided a thorough, quantitative analysis of observer efficiency in detecting birds.

#### *30 Years Ago in the Journal...*

Investigations into winter raptor populations use of three habitat types in northeastern Colorado were reported on by Stahlecker and Behlke.

## LIST OF PUBLISHED REPORTS OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE, 1973 - 2004

Tony Leukering  
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory  
14500 Lark Bunting Lane  
Brighton, CO 80603  
[cbrc@cfo-link.org](mailto:cbrc@cfo-link.org)

Lawrence S. Semo  
9054 Dover St.  
Westminster, CO 80021  
[lsembo@swca.com](mailto:lsembo@swca.com)

As the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC or Committee) anticipates initiating a high-tech, online method of both receiving and reviewing reports of rare birds in the state, we started to think about the current system of reporting CBRC results to the Colorado Field Ornithologists' membership. We believe that there is still a place for hard-copy, published reports in this journal. However, as the CBRC's new system comes online, it will permit more rapid report review and more rapid publication of results. We believe the Committee will be able to produce more and smaller reports in order to get those results out to the membership in a more timely fashion than has been possible of late.

In the past, all reports were titled according to the year in which the reports were (primarily) received. As the new review system will make the old titling system obsolete, we considered how to title future reports. We believe that a simple numbering system, starting from the very first CBRC report (Reddall 1973a) counted as #1 and counting them in chronological order of appearance, would do the trick. However, what number were we on? So, the two of us endeavored to locate each of the published reports and came up with the list below. We considered the important aspect to be the location and listing of each of the primary reports, that is, those reports that first informed the public about a particular set of results. We did not consider those few reports that were intended as summaries of CBRC actions for a wider audience and which were published in the journal, *Western Birds*. One of these, however, seems to have been the primary publication, as we cannot find any other publication of the circulation of 1976 reports. Thus, prior to this issue of *Colorado Birds*, there have been 36 publications of CBRC results.

Since we did the work and because we believe that at least a few *Colorado Birds* readers would find it interesting, we here present the list of all the articles that provided the results of CBRC deliberations.

### **Primary CBRC reports**

1. Reddall, J. 1973a. Reports from the CFO Official Records Committee. *Colo. Field Ornithol.* No. 15:9-15.
2. Reddall, J. 1973b. Reports from the CFO Official Records Committee. *Colo. Field Ornithol.* No. 16:19-26.
3. Reddall, J. 1973c. Reports from the CFO Official Records Committee. *Colo. Field Ornithol.* No. 18:9-20.
4. Reddall, J. 1974a. Reports from the CFO Official Records Committee. *Colo. Field Ornithol.* No. 19:11-37.
5. Reddall, J. 1974b. Reports from the CFO Official Records Committee. *Colo. Field Ornithol.* No. 21/22:28-34.
6. Reddall, J. 1975. Reports from the CFO Official Records Committee. *C.F.O. Journal* No. 23:17-34.
7. Reddall, J. 1976a. CFO Official Records Committee 1975 report. *C.F.O. Journal* No. 27:5-19.
8. Andrews, R. 1979. CFO Records Committee report 1976-1977. *Western Birds* 10:57-70.
9. Chase, C. A., III. 1981a. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report - 1977-1980 - Part 1. *C.F.O. Journal* 15:24-30.
10. Chase, C. A., III. 1981b. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report - 1977-1980 - Part 2. *C.F.O. Journal* 15:54-59.
11. Chase, C. A., III. 1982. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report - 1980-1981. *C.F.O. Journal* 16:46-52.
12. Chase, C. A., III. 1983. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report - 1981. I. *C.F.O. Journal* 17:75-82.
13. Gent, P. 1984. The CFO Records Committee report for 1982. *C.F.O. Journal* 18:51-57.
14. Gent, P. 1985a. The CFO Records Committee report for 1983. *C.F.O. Journal* 19:28-33.
15. Gent, P. 1985b. The CFO Records Committee report for 1984. *C.F.O. Journal* 19:82-87.
16. Gent, P. 1986. The CFO Records Committee report for 1985. *C.F.O. Journal* 20:44-50.
17. Bunn, R. L. 1988. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report for reports submitted in 1986. *C.F.O. Journal* 22:85-90.
18. Bunn, R. L. 1989a. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report for reports submitted in 1987 (Part I). *C.F.O. Journal* 23:13-18.

19. Bunn, R. L. 1989a. Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee report for reports submitted in 1987 (Part II). *C.F.O. Journal* 22:114-120.
20. Nelson, D. 1991. The C.F.O. Records Committee report for 1989. *C.F.O. Journal* 25:119-125.
21. Nelson, D. 1992. The CFO Official Records Committee report for 1990. *C.F.O. Journal* 26:91-97.
22. Gent, P. R. and D. L. Nelson. 1992. The CFO Official Records Committee report for records submitted in 1988. *C.F.O. Journal* 26:137-142.
23. Nelson, D. 1993. The C.F.O. Records Committee report for 1991. *C.F.O. Journal* 27:49-56.
24. Prather, B. 1994. The report of the Records Committee for 1992. *C.F.O. Journal* 28:157-168.
25. Prather, B. 1996. The CO Bird Records Committee report for 1993. *C.F.O. Journal* 30:20-30.
26. Prather, B. 1997. Report of the CO Bird Records Committee for 1994. *C.F.O. Journal* 31:23-31.
27. Janos, M. 1997. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 1995 reports. *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 31:139-153.
28. Janos, M. 1998. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 1996 reports. *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 32:173-187.
29. Janos, M. 1999. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 1997 reports. *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 33:241-252.
30. Lisowsky, B. 2000. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 1998 reports. *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 34:168-184.
31. Lisowsky, B. 2001. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 1999 reports. *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 35:23-39.
32. Leukering, T. and C. Wood. 2002. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 2000 reports. *J. Colo. Field Ornith.* 36:82-113.
33. Leukering, T. 2003a. Jaegers in Colorado: a report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee. *Colorado Birds* 37:73-91.
34. Leukering, T. 2003b. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: A wanderer rejoins the official Colorado list. *Colorado Birds* 37:202-206.
35. Leukering, T. and L. S. Semo. 2003. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 2001 reports, part I. *Colorado Birds* 37:138-155.
36. Leukering, T. and L. S. Semo. 2004. Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: 2001 reports, part II. *Colorado Birds* 38:14-21.

#### **Additional CBRC publications concerning records**

- Reddall, J. 1976b. Colorado Field Ornithologists Official Records Committee report 1972 through 1975. *Western Birds* 7:81-97.
- Gent, P. R. 1987. Colorado Field Ornithologists' Records Committee report for 1978-1985. *Western Birds* 18:97-108.

## THE 37TH REPORT OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Tony Leukering  
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory  
14500 Lark Bunting Lane  
Brighton, CO 80603  
[cbrcc@cfo-link.org](mailto:cbrcc@cfo-link.org)

Lawrence S. Semo  
9054 Dover St.  
Westminster, CO 80021  
[lsembo@swca.com](mailto:lsembo@swca.com)

The Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter, CBRC or Committee) here provides the 37th report of its deliberations on submissions to the CBRC for documentation and archival purposes. In this article, we provide the results of the circulation of 96 reports submitted by 47 observers documenting 52 occurrences of 44 species. This article, which deals primarily with 2002 occurrences but with reports dating back to 1999, is comprised almost entirely of reports for which the Committee received strong photographic support. Thus, we report here only accepted records. Per CBRC bylaws, all accepted records received final 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept. The documents reviewed here include reports on three species previously unrecorded from the state, Arctic Loon, Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, bringing the total of accepted species to 476. Committee members voting on these reports were: Coen Dexter, Tony Leukering, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, Larry Semo, John Vanderpoel, and Christopher L. Wood.

### Documenting and Reviewing Rarities

The primary purpose of the CBRC is to archive reports of occurrences of species that are considered rare in the state. Secondarily, the Committee's purpose is to provide a scientific context for accepting records of birds, primarily sight records, to the official state list of species that have occurred in the state. To complete the second task, the CBRC requests that the birding public submit documentation on such occurrences to be reviewed by that committee. The review is primarily to ascertain whether the documentation submitted supports, in the consideration of seven state experts, the identification presented. Thus, the primary pieces of information that the Committee requires is a written description of the bird(s) and how similar species were ruled out. Most reports that the CBRC does not accept as

correctly identified were simply not described well enough for the Committee members to be certain of the correct identification; it is probable that very few were incorrectly identified. See the article that will appear in the July issue.

Current photographic technology has greatly increased the number of photographs (particularly, digital) that the CBRC has received and these photos greatly assist the Committee in ascertaining whether the documentation provided supports the identification. However, this technological benefit has a disadvantage. Some observers are now simply submitting photographs with date and location with no written description. While the photographs certainly prove the identification, the lack of a written description leaves at least some of the CBRC members feeling uneasy. In fact, one member refuses to vote to accept any report without at least some written description. Without written descriptions, many pieces of information are lost forever. While pictures are great and you will not hear a single CBRC member complain about too many photographs, those photos are single images of a bird or flock of birds; they may not convey everything that a thorough, well-written description could provide. Remember, the CBRC is primarily an archive and with only a single picture as documentation for an individual rarity occurrence, future researchers may not be able to determine the age or sex of a given rarity; something that may be considered important in the future.

When submitting photographs to the CBRC, please use information in the picture title that will help us remember the important pieces of information: who, what, where, when. We suggest titling pictures in this manner: meguseeleylake-11-02-02-tl. In this example, the picture is of a Mew Gull (you can use the full name of the species, rather than the four-letter code) taken at Seeley Lake on 2 November 2002 by Tony Leukering.

### Corrigenda

When dealing with large amounts of information, most of us find that we, unfortunately, make mistakes; the authors are no different. We here wish to correct a few such mistakes that crept into a previous report – part I of the 2001 reports (Leukering and Semo 2003) – for which we heartily apologize to those affected.

- The finder of the Black Scoter on Blue Mesa Res., Gunnison (2001-119), was not indicated; that person was Brian Gibbons.
- The Carolina Wren in *El Paso* (2001-56) was seen on 24 December 2000, not in 2001.
- The “Western” Palm Warbler at Pastorius Reservoir, *La Plata* (2001-110), was found on 13 October 2001 by Jim Beatty, not 4 October by Susan Allerton, who did document the

bird, but on the 14th. Jim Beatty did provide documentation, so his initials should have been first and underlined.

- Jim Beatty also found (and documented) the Prothonotary Warbler at Pastorius Reservoir, *La Plata* (2001-111), so, again, his initials should have been included first and underlined.

### Committee Functions

All reports received (written documentation, photographs, videotapes, and/or sound recordings) by the CBRC are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO 80205, where they remain available for public review. The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its review list, both the main and supplementary lists (Semo et al. 2002, Semo and Leukering 2004), and for reports of species for which Colorado has no prior accepted records. The mailer of this journal has a documentation form on it and the CFO website ([www.cfo-link.org](http://www.cfo-link.org)) has two electronic versions. Documentary materials should be e-mailed ([cbrc@cfo-link.org](mailto:cbrc@cfo-link.org)) or snail mailed (current address: PO Box 660, Brighton, CO 80601) to the Chair of the CBRC. However, when it becomes available later this year, the CBRC would greatly appreciate submission via the soon-to-be-available, check-out-the-bells-and-whistles, wonderful new CBRC website. The members' term-expiration dates are printed in this journal's masthead.

### Report Format

The organization and style of this report follow that of Leukering and Semo (2003), with some alterations, particularly as we report here no non-accepted records. The nomenclature and sequence of these lists follow the A.O.U. (1998, 2003). An asterisk (\*) preceding a species' name indicates that the species is not currently on any CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002), but are unseasonable or locally very rare. Those species' names preceded by the pound, or number, sign (#) are species that are rare in certain parts of the state and for which the CBRC requests documentation from those areas (Semo et al. 2002, Semo and Leukering 2004). The plus sign (+) indicates those species not on any review list and not particularly out-of-season but for which the CBRC circulated for review a record of some interest, due to location, date, plumage, etc., but for which documentation would not be required.

If present, the numbers in parentheses following a species' name represent the total number of accepted records for Colorado followed by the number of accepted records in the past ten years (1992-2001). The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria for a species' placement on the main CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002). However, note that the number of

accepted records will decline for some species as the CBRC tackles the backlog of determinations as to how many of the accepted records are simply recurrences in subsequent years of a known individual.

Within each species account, records are listed chronologically by first date of occurrence. Each record presents as much of the following information as we have available: number of birds, age, sex, locality, county, and date or date span. In parentheses, we present the initials of the contributing observer(s), the official record number, and the vote tally in the first round and, if relevant, second round (with the number of “accept” votes on the left side of the dash).

The initials of the finder(s) of the bird(s) are underlined, if known with certainty, and are presented first if that person (those people) contributed documentation; additional contributors’ initials follow in alphabetical order by name. If the finder(s) is (are) known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture have a dagger (†) following their initials and initials of those that submitted videotape are indicated by a lower-case, italicized “v” (v). Thus, the parenthetical expression “(JD v, RA†, TL, JV, CW; 2001-36; 4-3, 5-2)” means: JD found the bird(s) and submitted documentation (including video) and as the finder, is first in the list of those that submitted details with initials underlined; RA, though alphabetically first of the five submitting observers, was not the finder, so comes second; RA submitted, at least, photographic documentation; the record number assigned to the occurrence was 2001-36; and in the three rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four “accepted” votes and three “not accepted” votes, the second-round vote was 5-2 in favor of accepting the report, and since this report was listed in Part I, the report was accepted at a CBRC meeting. The decision on most reports is completed on the first round.

In this report, county names are italicized, in keeping with the style established for the *News from the Field* column in this journal (e.g., Semo and Wood 2003). We have attempted to provide the full date span for individual records, with the seasonal reports in *North American Birds* and this journal being the primary sources of those dates. The Committee has not dealt with the question of full date spans as compared to submitted date spans.

Abbreviations used in this report are: **ACR**=Adobe Creek Reservoir (a.k.a. Blue Lake), *Kiowa/Bent* (county indicated in account); **BPNWR**=Brown’s Park National Wildlife Refuge, *Moffat*; **LCC**=Lamar Community College, *Prowers*; **LSP**=Lathrop SP, *Huerfano*; **Res.**=reservoir

**RECORDS ACCEPTED**

BRANT - *Branta bernicla* (11/5). An adult visited Woods Lake, Weld, 30 November - 6 December 2001 (DF †; 2002-16; 7-0), though with submitted documentation covering only the first date of that span. Though the pictures provided were sufficient to prove the identity to species, the CBRC, in a split vote, was unable to convince itself that the bird was definitely a "Black Brant" as it was reported. See Semo and Leukering (2004) for a discussion concerning the undescribed "Gray-bellied Brant" that could cause identification problems.

TRUMPETER SWAN - *Cygnus buccinator* (22/13). An adult was sightseeing in *Boulder* in the winter of 2002-03, being first found on 19 November 2002 (BS †, CLW †, AH; 2002-120; 7-0). The two documentations received by the CBRC were from Fentress Lake, near Niwot, on 19 December and from Valmont Res. on 31 December. Apparently, the bird graced quite a few other locations in that county.



Adult Arctic Loon on 18 November 2002 at Walker Pit, Franktown, *Douglas*. Photo by Ric Olsen.

ARCTIC LOON - *Gavia arctica* (1/1). Though some members of the Colorado birding community had been discussing the possibility of Arctic Loon occurring in the state, the actual occurrence of an adult in transition from alternate to basic at Franktown, *Douglas*, 17-20 November 2002 (HK, UK, DF †, RH †, TL †, RO †, DWa †, GW; 2002-105; 7-0) was still quite surprising. This acceptance provides the first record of Arctic Loon in North America away from Pacific coastal states. The bird was seen to fly north away from Walker Pit on the 20th and was, apparently, found at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, the next day. However, the CBRC did not receive any documentation of the bird's presence at that location, despite the extensive

documentation received of its presence in *Douglas*. Given the extreme rarity in North America of the species away from the Pacific coast, and given the lack of documentation from *Arapahoe*, the Committee does not endorse this individual's occurrence in that county. As with all first state records, we hope that the particulars involved in this event will see fit to publish in this (or another) journal an account of this incredible occurrence.

**YELLOW-BILLED LOON - *Gavia adamsii* (16/7).** A juvenile graced Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, 3-13 November 2002 (BS †, NKr; 2002-93; 7-0) and Chatfield Res., *Douglas* and *Jefferson*, 17-23 November 2002 (BS †; 2002-110; 7-0). Despite being seen by numerous observers at both places, Schmoker was the only one to document it, in either location! Bill also provided a pictorial side-by-side comparison of the bird at the two locations, with the pictures (and the submitted documentation detailing the occurrences) on the 5th at Boyd Lake and on the 23rd at Chatfield. Interestingly, what may have been the same individual was seen at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, on 24 November (Gent 2003), when the bird was definitely not present at Chatfield. Unfortunately, the CBRC did not receive documentation on this occurrence. Due to the species' rarity and the timing of the occurrences at various water bodies along the Front Range, the CBRC voted by a simple majority to consider the two accessioned reports as pertaining to the same individual bird. Thus, these reports will be placed in the CBRC archive under the former accession number (2002-93).



Juvenile Yellow-billed Loon. Photo taken by Bill Schmoker on 23 November 2002 at Chatfield Reservoir, *Douglas/Jefferson*.

+ RED-NECKED GREBE - *Podiceps grisegena*. Wright provided details and

a photograph of one of the few well-documented West Slope records for Red-necked Grebe, a bird in basic plumage at Highline Res., *Mesa*, 28 December 2002 (DW<sup>r</sup> †; 2002-118; 7-0). Apparently, this bird spent the entire period of 12 December 2002 to 9 July 2003 at this location (Righter et al. 2004). Since this species is almost unknown in the state in summer, the lack of any additional documentation submitted to the Committee is unfortunate. It is never too late, however.

BROWN PELICAN - *Pelecanus occidentalis* (13/7). A pelican in (apparently) first-basic plumage tarried at LSP 7 August - 7 September 2002 (TL †; 2002-169; 7-0) and was seen by numerous Colorado birders. Unfortunately, only one observer submitted documentation, that detailing the bird's presence on 5 September.

#LITTLE BLUE HERON - *Egretta caerulea*. An adult stalked about 10 miles east of Gunnison, *Gunnison*, 20 April 2002 (BZ †, KZ; 2002-64; 6-1). Andrews and Righter (1992) report no previous county records.

TRICOLORED HERON - *Egretta tricolor* (20/8). A juvenile on the Meredith Res. outlet canal, *Crowley*, 15-31 August 2002 (SO v, LS †; 2002-168; 7-0) was probably the same bird found at Lake Cheraw, *Otero*, on 13 August. Unfortunately, the CBRC received no documentation on the *Otero* sighting. The documentations received covered 15-25 August.

REDDISH EGRET - *Egretta rufescens* (7/5). Nickell photographed a juvenile dark-morph Reddish Egret at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, 1 September 2002 (KN †, JK; 2001-77; 7-0).

GLOSSY IBIS - *Plegadis falcinellus* (28/24). Three different adults were in a large flock of White-faced Ibis on Buckley Road just southwest of Barr Lake 2-3 May 2002 (DF, TL, CLW; 2002-131; 7-0). This count represents the largest number of Glossy Ibis found in the state at one time and place. *El Paso* finally recorded its first accepted Glossy Ibis record when Maynard found an adult at Big Johnson Res. 4 May 2002 (BM †; 2002-69; 7-0). Finally, an adult still in full breeding colors at Loloff Res., *Weld*, 27 August 2002 (KN †; 2002-196; 6-1) provided a first accepted fall record for the species in Colorado.

#BROAD-WINGED HAWK - *Buteo platypterus*. An adult photographed in *Custer* on 19 July 2002 a "few miles north of Wetmore" (BKP in litt.; CLW †; 2002-186; 6-1) provided a first county record.

GYRFALCON - *Falco rusticolus* (9/8). An adult gray-morph visited the area between Gould and Walden in North Park, *Jackson*, in February 2002, with the dates of known occurrence being the 20th and the 25th when Hopper saw it on both dates (RH †; 2002-27; 6-1). This record is the first accepted away from the eastern plains.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** - *Porphyrrula martinica* (2/1). An adult spent the last week of August 2002 in the yards of a Loveland, Larimer, neighborhood (DF, PG, RH †, RO, CM; 2002-73; 7-0). Specific dates of occurrence are 26 August - 3 September and documentation dates are 27-31 August. This bird provided the second state record, with the first record being of a bird in August 1978 near Durango, La Plata.

**COMMON MOORHEN** - *Gallinula chloropus* (8/2). An adult alternately frustrated (by remaining out of sight) and delighted (by allowing itself to be glimpsed) a small number of observers that could get to a small, marshy pond in the vicinity of Barbour Ponds State Wildlife Area, Weld, on 4 May 2002 (RMe, CO, RH, AS †; 2002-50; 7-0). The bird had probably dropped into the site the night before and, as the marsh was probably not conducive for a long stay, the bird departed the next night, as it was not seen again.

**RED KNOT** - *Calidris canutus* (20/8). An individual wholly in basic at ACR, Bent, 24 March 2002 (DN †; 2002-203; 6-1), photographed but not described, was a complete surprise. Red Knots are rare migrants through the state, spring and fall, but spring birds usually arrive in late April and May and are typically found in alternate plumage. Nelson states (pers. comm.) that the reservoir was frozen for most of the previous winter, so the bird did not winter at the site. What the bird was doing at this location on this date in this plumage is mostly incomprehensible. Andrews and Righter (1992) depicts one previous late March record, but does not provide any details on what would be an anomalous record.

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** - *Tryngites subruficollis* (25/10). A juvenile allowed itself to be photographed at Milton Res., Weld, 6 September 2002 (RO †; 2002-82; 7-0).

**RED PHALAROPE** - *Phalaropus fulicaria* (25/9). An individual in some transitional plumage foraged at Jackson Res., Morgan, 11-18 August 2002 (DE, RH †; 2002-197; 7-0), though was documented only on the 11th. Whether the bird was a full adult already very far along in its pre-basic molt (such that it had fairly little remaining red plumage) or was a first-cycle bird that had not attained full red plumage is undetermined.

**LAUGHING GULL** - *Larus philadelphia* (29/17). A sub-adult visited Boyd Lake, Larimer, 23 April 2002 (RH †; 2002-137; 7-0). Contrary to the account of this occurrence in Wood and Semo (2002), the pictures submitted to the CBRC illustrate an individual with some black in the tail and too much black in the wingtip for the bird to be an adult; it probably was in second-basic plumage. An alternate-plumaged adult

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vember 2002 (TL †,  
2002-157; 7-0).

Adult Mew Gull at Seeley Lake, Weld, on 2 November 2002. Photo by Tony Leukering.

#EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Two birds in La Porte, Larimer, from at least April 2001 (RH †, TL, KV, TV; 2002-57; 7-0) provided the first record for the county.

\* WHITE-WINGED DOVE - *Zenaida asiatica*. Though the Committee decided to remove this species from all review lists effective 1 January 2002, we here detail results of one of the few reports that we received from the 2002 invasion. The first report of the year detailed, with photographs and nice sketches, two birds at Pueblo, Pueblo, from at least 18 January to 12 February 2002 (RM †; 2002-20; 7-0).

INCA DOVE - *Columbina inca* (13/10). The Committee received a single photo (with no description) of an adult at Rye, Pueblo, 20 July 2002 (CLW †; 2002-158; 6-1).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (15/2). A first-cycle individual (that is, a bird in its first spring) flopped into a mist net run by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory at LCC on 27 May 2002 (BG; 2002-150; 7-0). The date fits well with typical spring-migration periods of *Coccyzus* cuckoos at this latitude.

**SNOWY OWL - *Bubo scandiaca*** (10/3). In the best flight into Colorado in recent memory, at least six Snowy Owls winged their way into the state in the winter of 2002 (Gent 2002). Of these, the CBRC has received documentation on five and we here detail the results of the circulation of one. The first of the "invasion" was a juvenile female that posed for numerous pictures near Riverside Res., Weld, 15-29 February 2002 (JK †, TB, DE, JG, PH, RH †, NKr, AM, RO, BS †, DS; 2002-6; 7-0). One report on this bird mentioned a second individual Snowy Owl with it, but it was the only report to do so and did not sufficiently describe the second individual for acceptance. All pictures that the CBRC received appear to show the same individual. Finally, the account of this occurrence in Gent (2002) cites dates of occurrence only through 24 February; one documentation that the CBRC received places the bird at this location at least until the 29th.

**BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD - *Cynanthus latirostris*** (1/1). One of the most amazing occurrences of the crazy fall of 2002 was the discovery of a female Broad-billed Hummingbird at a feeder in Clifton, Mesa (DF †, TL †, DN †, RO, GW †, CLW †, SB, BM; 2002-100; 7-0). Wood, particularly, provided exceedingly thorough photographic and written details. Though the bird had apparently been present since at least July, the birding community only found out about it in November when Bouricius went to check out the report of a very late "Black-chinned Hummingbird". The most amazing aspect of this occurrence is that the bird had been banded in Louisiana the previous January. Hopefully, the particulars involved in this story will put pen to paper (or phosphor to screen) and get the details published in this journal.

**MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD - *Eugenes fulgens*** (9/5). An adult male exposed its bright green gorget to Korte at a feeder in Collbran, Mesa, 4-5 July 2002 (NKe †; 2002-71; 7-0) and provided a second county record: the first, a male in May 1965, at Colorado National Monument (Righter et al. 2004). This record was not mentioned in Andrews and Righter (1992) and predates the CBRC, so has not been reviewed. Another Magnificent, this time a female, was present at a feeder at "The Tunnel Camp" about 4 miles north of Chambers Lake, Larimer, on 9 July 2002 (HH †; 2002-113; 6-1). The CBRC thanks Ron Ryder for forwarding the latter report.

**#BLACK PHOEBE - *Sayornis nigricans***. While scouting a field trip for the Durango CFO convention, Leukering found a Black Phoebe along Piedra Creek above Navajo Res., Archuleta, 24 May 2002 (TL, LS †; 2002-83; 7-0). The field trip on the 26th turned up a second bird there

and the CBRC received documentation covering both dates.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** - *Pyrocephala rubinus* (21/8). Schmoker photographed quite nicely a male in first basic at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, that was present 11-18 May 2002 (BS †, TL; 2002-58; 7-0). The bird spent much of the eight days that it was present conducting flight displays, but, apparently, never attracted a female to the site and no one could find it after the 18th. However, an adult male was nearby (<0.5 miles away) in September (N. Gobris), so perhaps it had summered on the Ranch somewhere.

**SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** - *Myiodynastes luteiventris* (1/1). Of the set of incredible records from the amazing, rarity-filled fall of 2002, the occurrence of an adult Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher at ACR, *Bent*, 18-19 September 2002 (DN †, RH †, TL †; 2002-77; 7-0) is arguably the least expected of the lot and the most likely not to be repeated. Though numerous Colorado birders searched for the bird all day on the 20th, it was not seen again, despite the vague rumor that a single observer reported seeing the bird very briefly that day. The bird's confiding, unretiring habits on the two days that it was present suggest that it had departed and was not simply skulking among the dense tamarisk stand.

Ageing *Myiodynastes* flycatchers can be difficult. However, since adults molt on the winter grounds and thus have worn flight feathers in fall and since juveniles are recently fledged so have fairly fresh flight feathers in fall (Pyle 1997), critical views can produce an accurate assessment of a bird's relative age. The ACR bird is certainly an adult. In addition, the long and wide dark shaft streak on the outermost rectrix also proves the age (Pyle 1997). See the back cover of this journal for pictures of this bird that illustrate both of these features. Expect to see additional details published in this journal.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** - *Tyrannus forficatus* (18/13). A pair set up housekeeping at the tall tower on the east side of US 287 about 10 miles south of Lamar, *Prowers*, 5 May - 11 July (at least) 2002 (TB †, RO †; 2002-54; 7-0) and the two submissions received span the dates of known occurrence. One of the reporters mentioned the presence of three ready-to-fledge nestlings on 11 July, but did not describe them. However, that reporter did provide a photograph of the nest, though the nestlings are not discernible in the photo.

#**JUNIPER TITMOUSE** - *Baeolophus ridgwayi*. One visited the Davis yard in *Larimer* only 200 feet north of *Boulder*, northwest of Lyons, on 15 April 2002 (RD †; 2002-42; 7-0).

#BROWN THRASHER - *Toxostoma rufum*. One visited a feeder near Olathe, Montrose, from October 1999 to at least late February 2000 (DG †, AR; 2002-9; 6-1) and provided a first reviewed and accepted county record.

#CURVE-BILLED THRASHER - *Toxostoma curvirostre*. One spent the winter of 2001-2002 in Windsor, Weld, but was documented only on 5 January 2002 (RH †, MM; 2002-59; 7-0). What was, undoubtedly, the same individual has been present at the site in each of the two succeeding winters, though has not been documented as such. Some speculated that the bird might be referable to the Mexican and southern Arizona subspecies, *palmeri*, but the fairly bright white throat visible in one of the three pictures submitted suggest that it is, instead, referable to the subspecies resident in Colorado, *oberholseri*. Andrews and Righter (1992) report only one previous Weld occurrence.

#PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - *Protonotaria citrea*. Hollingsworth caught and banded an individual in his yard in Woodland Park, Teller, 17 October 2001 (JH †; 2002-213; 7-0). The report stated that the bird was an immature female, but it described a “bright deep yellow-orange head and breast” which, in the Committee’s opinion, is more male-like. Additionally, one of the two submitted photos shows the underside of the tail reasonably well and the amount of white visible on the inner web of the outermost rectrix is consistent with that of male Prothonotary Warblers and inconsistent with that of females, at least according to Pyle (1997). We suggest that the bird was a male, but do not provide conjecture on the age of the bird.

KENTUCKY WARBLER - *Oporornis formosus* (29/12). A male skulked along the South Platte River upstream from Kingfisher Bridge in Chatfield State Park, Douglas, 7 May 2002 (NP, AS †; 2002-204; 7-0).

HEPATIC TANAGER - *Piranga flava* (17/5). An adult male was a surprise find at Golden, Jefferson, 9 September 2002 (BB †; 2002-173; 7-0). Andrews and Righter (1992) reported no previous county records.

#SUMMER TANAGER -*Piranga rubra*. A mostly yellow individual graced the housing area at BPNWR 6 October 2002 (SH †, AH; 2002-101; 7-0). The description states that the “bird had splotches of pale red all over her body” and the provided pictures illustrate some of those. Adult males are always red and immature males are typically splotchy, but usually not this extensively until initiation of their pre-alternate molt in March (Pyle 1997). Additionally, the splotches of red on an immature male are bright and contrast strongly with the yellow plumage, an aspect which does not match the features shown

by this bird. Therefore, the reporter's assessment of sex, female, may very well be correct and, if so, then the bird is an adult female (immature females do not have red in the plumage). Additionally, if it is an adult female, then the bird is most likely referable to the eastern race, *rubra*, rather than either of the two western races, *cooperi* and *ochracea*, in which females usually do not exhibit red plumage (Pyle 1997).

Finally, for whatever reason accounts for the recent increase in submissions to the CBRC from Browns Park NWR (probably the arrival of Suzanne Halvorson and her husband as employees there), the Committee is very much appreciative of the increase in reports (see the Rose-breasted Grosbeak account, below) from this distant and under-birded corner of the state.

**EASTERN TOWHEE - *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (10/8).** A first-cycle female scratched around just south of John Martin Res., *Bent*, for the entire winter of 2002-2003 (DN †, DF †, BM †, GW †; 2002-115; 7-0). Documentation dates span 20 December 2002 - 16 March 2003, but Nelson found the bird on 7 December and last saw it in spring. The CBRC received at least nine pictures of the bird which illustrate well the various plumage features identifying the species – except for the patch of white at the base of the primaries, which is, amazingly, covered by other feather tracts in every picture! Of interest, though, is that every picture that shows the secondaries well, shows the same patch of pale brown, retained, juvenal inner secondaries that contrast strongly with the darker replaced tertials and outer secondaries. These retained feathers prove the age of the bird as an immature in first-basic plumage (Pyle 1997).

\***CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - *Spizella pallida*.** An individual that spent the winter of 2001-2002 at LCC (DL †; 2002-174; 7-0) provided one of few, if not the first, acceptable winter records for the state. The Committee received a single documentation detailing the bird's occurrence 18 December 2001 - 2 January 2002, but the bird was apparently still present on 21 March 2002. Unfortunately, the single photograph, though proving the identification, does not provide any of the details necessary to age the bird.

#**FIELD SPARROW - *Spizella pusilla*.** An individual at the Boulder Community Gardens, *Boulder*, 9-10 December 2002 (BS †, RT; 2002-111; 7-0) provided one of very few acceptable winter records for the state, a rare record for *Boulder*, and, most importantly, the first state record of an individual apparently referable to the eastern subspecies, *pusilla* (as opposed to the expected western subspecies

*arenacea*). The brightness and strong rufescent aspect of the plumage of this bird lead to the subspecific conclusion.

#BLACK-THROATED SPARROW - *Amphispiza bilineata*. One of the more unexpected records of 2002 was of a pair of Black-throated Sparrows that apparently nested successfully along the Devil's Backbone Trail above Loveland, Larimer, in summer 2002 (RH †, DBY; 2002-198; 6-1). The Committee received only one documentation (pictures only, no description) of a sighting on 3 July and only of a singing male.

\* ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Apparently the same adult male visited feeders at BPNWR 9-11 November 2002 and at a residence in Sunbeam, Moffat, 25 November - 7 December 2002 (SH, DP †; 2002-117; 7-0), with the two submitted photos taken at the second location. There is more than 20 miles between the two locations; one has to be amazed that the bird was ever seen again after leaving the refuge! The extensive pink breast patch prove the age and sex.

PAINTED BUNTING - *Passerina ciris* (24/16). The year 2002 saw a passel of Painted Buntings occur in southern Colorado. The first, a green bird, visited the Brenneman yard in La Junta, Otero, 16 May 2002 (DBn, GB †; 2002-68; 7-0). Just visible in the single photo were molt limits in both the secondaries and primaries (old, retained inner secondaries and old, retained outer primaries, both contrasting with green-edged replaced feathers), indicating a bird in its first plumage cycle - that is, less than one year old. Pyle (1997) indicates for Painted Buntings in this plumage that, "unless there are some red or blue body feathers present, the sexes usually are not separated reliably by plumage alone...." Thus, though the bird appeared to be a female, and may very well have been, we are here reporting it as an unknown-sex subadult.

The second bird was another first-cycle green bird, caught at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's banding station at the LCC 22 May 2002 (BG †; 2002-181; 7-0) that was sexed in hand as a female. Molt limits are visible in the pictures of this bird, too. The third was the only party-colored bird of the lot, an adult male at a feeder in Placerville 23-26 July 2002 (JS; 2002-81; 7-0) that provided, obviously, the first county record in greatly under-birded San Miguel. The final Painted Bunting of the year was another green bird, this one brightening a few birders' day at LSP 8 September 2002 (BKP; 2002-133; 7-0).

#WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL - *Loxia leucoptera*. One graced the feeders

at the Nelson house in Las Animas, *Bent*, 31 December 2001 - 6 January 2002 (RO †, DN; 2002-26; 7-0), but with submitted documentation covering only 4 January. This event kicked off one of the largest invasions of the species onto the plains in the state's birding history. For details on some aspects of this flight, see Leatherman and Nelson (2003).

As the submitted picture was not of high quality, Olson's written description was important in determining the age and sex of the bird. His description seems to support the contention that the bird was an immature male, as he described streaking on the rump and flanks (retained juvenal plumage feature) and a "brownish salmon" color on the head and back (first basic plumage feature). It is through details like these, items that are unimportant in establishing the correct identification to species, that the CBRC is able to determine age and sex of individual rarities. This is also why the Committee prefers detailed plumage descriptions and NOT just a brief listing of species-identification-relevant field marks in documentations. Now if we can just get more observers to learn about the critical importance of molt and molt limits (see Pyle 1997) in age (and, therefore, sex) determination in birds. These data would greatly assist science in determining what features of age and sex are correlated with vagrancy in birds.

### Acknowledgments

Also, thanks to both Susan Allerton and Jim Beatty for making us aware of a few mistakes in an earlier CBRC report. Any continued mistakes are certainly ours and we doubt that those included here are the last to be found.

### Reporters and Cited Observers

Steve Bouricius, David Bray (DBy), Daniela Brenneman (DBn), George Brenneman, Tamie Bulow, Brenda Burrell, Raymond Davis, Donna Emmons, Doug Faulkner, Dave Galinat, Brian Gibbons, Joan Glabach, Adam Halvorson, Suzanne Halvorson, Paula Hansley, Hank Henry, James Hollingsworth, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Hugh Kingery, Urling Kingery, Nick Komar (NKr), Nik Korte (NKe), Dave Leatherman, Tony Leukering, Marcia Maeda, Richard Mendez (RMe), Rich Miller (RMi), Ann Molison, Cyndi Mosch, Bob Myers, Duane Nelson, Kent Nickell, Ric Olson, Brandon K. Percival, Dottie Petrini, Andrea Robinsong, Bill Schmoker, Larry Semo, Debra Sparn, Andrew Spencer, Jeanne Stewart, Richard Trinkner, Kurt VerCauteren, Tammy VerCauteren, Glenn Walbek, Dave Waltman (DWa), Dave Wright (DWr), Christopher L. Wood, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer.

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## FIELD NOTES

With this issue, *Colorado Birds* starts a new section that seeks short notes of field observations by CFO members and readers. Editor Faulkner and I invite you to send in simple notes about field observations that you would like to share. Notes can cover behavior during nesting, migration, winter or feeding, nest locations (unusual or not), predation, cowbird hosts, mimicry, tool use, odd plumages, deadly incidents, interactions with other species (bird or animal or insect), or any other subject that you observed during a field trip or in your backyard. Notes can be "Gee Whiz" events or simple behavioral items.

Examples of notes include two published in the past year, viz. the standoff at a Chatfield marsh (Vol. 37, p. 190) and tool use by a European Starling (Vol. 37, p. 71). You can write long or short ones - see the articles included in this issue. Notes like this can add to our knowledge and understanding of life histories. Seemingly innocuous events may shed light on how birds live and survive.

We encourage you to send in short notes; don't worry about style, just write up your observation in your own words. Please submit notes to Hugh Kingery, PO Box 584, Franktown, CO 80116 in writing or by e-mail at [ouzels@juno.com](mailto:ouzels@juno.com). Hugh will edit the column (and supply scientific names if you don't have them) including checking back with you about the final form of the note.

### Request for Information

The Field Notes section also proposes to collect information about two things that our collective eyes can document: prey of accipiters and victims of cowbird parasitism.

**Accipiters:** We would like to collect information about accipiter prey species. If you observe a Sharp-shinned or Cooper's Hawk actually with prey, please report to the Field Notes editor. Provide the following information:

1. Whether Sharp-shinned or Cooper's
2. Date of observation
3. Location (specific, city, county)
4. Habitat
5. Prey species
6. Other relevant information

**Cowbirds:** We want to collect information about species parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds in Colorado. Provide the following information (as much as you have) to the Field Notes editor:

1. Date of observation
2. Location (specific, city, county)
3. Habitat
4. Parasitized species
5. If your observation involves a nest with eggs
  - a. How many eggs of parasitized species in nest before cowbird egg
  - b. How many of parasitized species' eggs in nest after cowbird egg
    - b. How many cowbird eggs in nest
6. If your observation involves a nest with young
  - a. How many host species' young
  - b. How many cowbird young
  - c. If you follow the nest, how many young of each species fledge
7. If your observation involves a fledged cowbird fed by a host species
8. Additional notes as appropriate

These two data collection sets will appear in *Colorado Birds* as spreadsheets, probably with only a few additional notes.

#### **Different Techniques by Red-breasted Merganser and Common Goldeneye Feeding on Crayfish**

On Monday, 16 February 2004, I visited Prospect Pond just north of the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt in Jefferson County, Colorado. I was following up on Bob Spencer's report from the day before of easily-observed Red-breasted Mergansers (*Mergus serrator*), and I was pleased to find nine stunning males, all within 25 meters of shore in an open pocket of the otherwise frozen pond.

While some of the mergansers were sleeping and preening in the far corner most of the time, one would occasionally join a Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) in an even smaller patch of open water surrounding a floating dock to hunt. Sitting quietly on the dock, I was able to observe and photograph the birds from about five meters away. I observed each species surface with crayfish (Cambaridae; Common Goldeneye several times, Red-breasted Merganser twice), and it was interesting to compare the differences in how they dealt with their quarry.

When the Common Goldeneye surfaced with a crayfish, it would squirt forward in a short sprint before relaxing and gulping down its meal. Presumably, this is a mechanism to avoid losing one's lunch (if you will pardon the phrase) to an opportunistic gull. I have seen goldeneyes react this way as gulls were actively harassing them at other locations, but the only gulls present during this episode were ten or so Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) standing quietly on the ice. At least in this instance, it seemed

as though the Common Goldeneyes would rather be safe than sorry, making their mad little dashes despite the lack of imminent threat.

When a Red-breasted Merganser would surface with a crayfish, it acted quite differently. Both times, I witnessed one capture a crayfish, the merganser appeared to play with its catch, dropping and re-grabbing it a few times, apparently to position it suitably. Satisfied with the alignment, it vigorously shook its head back and forth, sometimes in the surface of the water with droplets flying around. The bird paused now and then as if to consider the condition of the crayfish. When the bird eventually began swallowing the crayfish, the claws had been flayed off.

The Common Goldeneye's diet consists mostly of invertebrates, many with hard shells, such as crustaceans and mollusks (Kaufman 1996). The robust bill of a Common Goldeneye can crush prey like crayfish, avoiding later injury from the claws. Red-breasted Mergansers, on the other hand, eat mainly fish, although they sometimes take other prey such as crustaceans. This diet is reflected by their long, skinny, serrated bill that is ideally suited for capturing struggling prey which is swallowed live. Seemingly, when eating crayfish, Red-breasted Mergansers may compensate for their piscivorous bill by removing the hazard of an unexpected pinch.

Bill Schmoker  
3381 Larkspur Dr.  
Longmont, CO 80503  
[bill.schmoker@bvsd.k12.co.us](mailto:bill.schmoker@bvsd.k12.co.us)

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#### **Red-winged Blackbird and Bullfrog**

On my ranch near Franktown, Douglas County, a one-acre pond with some marsh vegetation around the edge attracts migrating waterfowl and a few nesting Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). On 7 Aug 2003, I discovered a dead Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) in the pond with a Red-winged Blackbird in its mouth (also dead).

Ron Kmiecik  
575 N. Highway 83  
Franktown, CO 80116

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD: FALL 2003 REPORT (AUGUST - NOVEMBER)

Peter R. Gent  
55 South 35th Street  
Boulder, Colorado 80305  
[gent@ucar.edu](mailto:gent@ucar.edu)

Fall 2003 was very dry in Colorado. Denver International Airport recorded 0.08 inches of precipitation in October and a paltry 0.05 inches in November. Both were the fifth driest October and November recorded in Denver. The four month precipitation total was 1.63 inches, compared to the average of 4.93 inches. At the beginning of August, the Denver precipitation was 1.92 inches above normal, but by the end of November it was 1.38 inches below normal. The temperature was variable, with August and October warmer than normal, and September and November colder than normal. Late October was particularly warm with new record highs in the mid-80s F set on the 19th, 21st and 22nd. In contrast, a new record low of 29 F was set on September 14th. October and November were rather cloudy, with the percentage of possible sunshine seen in November being 40%, compared to the normal of 64%.

The most surprising bird seen in Colorado this fall was the Kelp Gull. It was first found at Jackson Reservoir on September 17th, but it took a day or two to be correctly identified. It stayed at Jackson for several weeks, and then moved west to the northern Front Range. It was seen sporadically for the rest of the season in the Fort Collins and Loveland areas. I was surprised to learn that a very small population of this Southern Hemisphere species had been breeding for almost a decade on islands south of the Louisiana coast.

The other newly documented species for Colorado was Smith's Longspur. This species had been on the state list about 30 years ago, but had been removed because of inadequate documentation. Undoubtedly, this species occurs in very small numbers most years in Colorado, but this year birders documented two on the far Eastern Plains. The first was found on the shore of Neenoshe Reservoir on October 11th by a group of eight birders, and the second was found on October 18th by Chris Wood and Bill Schmoker in the area of Sedgwick County where Sprague's Pipits are sometimes found. Larry Semo also reports seeing a Cave Swallow on the north side of Colorado Springs on August 9th. This follows a couple of reports in the Fall of 2002. However, all reports have been by single observers, and so cannot be used to add this species to the State List. This species should be looked for carefully,

especially in the southeast corner of the state.

It was also a very good fall for rare hummingbirds in Colorado. A Green Violet-ear was seen and photographed in Conifer on October 3rd and 4th, and a Costa's Hummingbird was banded at Pingree Park in the Poudre Canyon west of Fort Collins on August 4th. These records are the second photographic documentation of both these species in Colorado. Other rare species seen were American Woodcock in Fort Morgan on November 8th, an immature Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Nucla on September 27th and 28th, an Anna's Hummingbird at Tina Jones' feeder in Denver between October 4th and November 30th, and a Sedge Wren at Fountain Creek Regional Park between October 17th and 20th. This last individual gave many birders a real treat as it came within 2-3 feet of their feet! Other very unusual species reported were Red-throated Loon, Tricolored Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Red Phalarope, Long-tailed Jaeger, Arctic Tern, Black-billed Cuckoo, Magnificent Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Bendire's Thrasher, Sprague's Pipit, Yellow-throated Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, LeConte's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Snow Bunting and Purple Finch.

Several reporters observed that there seemed to be few birds around most of the Fall, with reduced numbers of Black-billed Magpies, crows, and small passerines in backyards. This was often attributed to the severe summer outbreak of the West Nile Virus. However, when the cold weather came in November, numbers of these species increased. Their earlier absence could have also been partly due to a very good wild food crop, especially in the mountains, after a wet spring and early summer. Many backyard feeders, including my own, seemed to attract smaller numbers of birds than usual throughout the Fall of 2003.

Thanks to everyone who sent me their sightings, and to all the people who collected the postings off Cobirds and elsewhere. The reader of this report should be aware that many of the sightings used in this report were taken from postings to the Cobirds electronic bulletin board. Not all of the rare and unusual species have been supported by documentation sent to the Colorado Bird Records Committee. Underlined species are those for which the committee desires written documentation. If you need an electronic version of the rare bird documentation form, it can be retrieved from the CFO web site at <http://www.cfo-link.org/leadpage.html>. If you need a hard copy, use the one on the inside of this journal's mailer. Documentation should be sent to the chairperson, Tony Leukering (address on the form).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There were three reports from the West Slope. One was seen in Moffat County between 21 and 24 Oct (FL), one was at Vallecito Res., *La Plata*, on 21 Nov (JBy), and one was at Connected Lakes State Park, *Mesa*, on 23 Nov (LA).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Two were seen at Barr Lake, *Adams*, between 15 and 17 Nov (EZ, DF), three were at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*, on 24 Nov (JBn), and four were at Barker Res., *Boulder*, on 25 and 26 Nov (LEl, DEg), and were seen later at Boulder Res. on 27 and 29 Nov (BMi, GG, m.ob.). Six were seen at Highline State Park, *Mesa*, on 26 Nov (DWr), four at Cattail Pond in Loveland, *Larimer*, on 28 and 29 Nov (NK), two at Broomfield Water Treatment Plant, *Broomfield*, on 30 Nov (EZ), and three at Lake Maria, east of Walsenburg, *Huerfano*, also on 30 Nov (DSi).

**Tundra Swan:** There were more sightings than usual this fall, with some quite large flocks seen. Eleven were at Elkhead Res., *Routt/Moffat*, on 31 Oct and 1 Nov (FL, DH), six at Pastorius SWA, *La Plata*, on 26 and 27 Nov (PD, SA, JBy), two at Brown's Park NWR, *Moffat*, on 27 Nov (DH), three at Boulder Res. on 29 Nov (GG), and seven at Lake Maria, *Huerfano*, between 28 and 30 Nov (RMi, DSi).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** An adult female was seen west of Pagosa Springs, *Archuleta*, on 18 Nov (JBy).

**Surf Scoter:** A very good flight with a total of 26 reports, two from the West Slope. One was seen near Blue Mesa Res., *Gunnison*, on 14 Nov (TL), and one was at Lake Lenore, *Ouray*, on 15 Nov (TL).

**White-winged Scoter:** A total of 17 reports this season, again with two from the West Slope. One was seen at Pastorius SWA, *La Plata*, between 13 and 24 Nov (JBy, SA, PD), and one was at Blue Mesa Res., *Gunnison*, on 14 Nov (TL).

**Black Scoter:** A female was seen at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, *Adams*, on 25 and 26 Oct (DR, U&HK), a male was at Elevenmile Res., *Park*, on 10 Nov (MP, AB), two immatures or females were at Pueblo Res., on 13 Nov (BKP, MP, AB), and a female was at the Rocky Ford sewer ponds, *Otero*, between 18 and 23 Nov (SO, DN), a first for *Otero*.

**Long-tailed Duck:** One was seen at Craig, *Moffat*, between 7 and 9 Nov (FL, DH), one was near Larimer County roads 19 and 70 on 20 Nov (CSu), one was at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 24 Nov (GW), and one was at Chatfield

Res., *Douglas*, between 25 and 29 Nov (NL). Five were seen at Jerry Creek Res., *Mesa*, on 29 and 30 Nov (RL), a female was at Pella Crossing Park, near Hygiene, *Boulder*, on 29 and 30 Nov (JPt), and one was at Lake Maria, *Huerfano*, on 30 Nov (TL).

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** High counts were 40 at Shadow Mountain Res., *Grand*, on 2 Nov (AS, NP), and 33 at Jerry Creek Res., *Mesa*, on 29 and 30 Nov (RL).

**Red-throated Loon:** One was seen at Elkhead Res., *Routt*, on 1 Nov (FL, DH), and one was at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*, on 30 Nov (LS).

**Pacific Loon:** High counts were five at Trinidad Lake, *Las Animas*, on 9 Nov (BKP, MP), and four at Lathrop State Park, *Huerfano*, between 28 and 30 Nov (RMi, DSi).

**Common Loon:** The high count was 34, Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 13 Nov (BKP).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Two or three were present at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 7 and 30 Nov (BKP, MA).

**Western Grebe:** The high count was 2,246 at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*, on 8 Nov (LS).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** An immature was reported from Mount Olivet Cemetery, *Jefferson*, on 6 Aug (BSp).

**Tricolored Heron:** A juvenile was seen at Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on 2 Aug (M&SP), another juvenile was at Verhoeff Res., *Bent*, between 3 and 9 Aug (DN), one was reported from Timnath Res., *Larimer*, on 15 Aug (DSm), and one was at Lathrop State Park, *Huerfano*, on 2 Nov (SA).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** A juvenile was seen at Bell Res., *Elbert*, on 31 Aug (AS), another juvenile was west of Valco Ponds in *Pueblo* between 18 Sep and 6 Oct (RMi, m.ob.), a third juvenile gave many observers stunning views at Belmar Park, Lakewood, *Jefferson*, between 19 Sep and 11 Oct (KSf, m.ob.).

**Glossy Ibis:** One was seen at Ridgway Res., *Ouray*, on 8 Sep (CLW, TL).

**Mississippi Kite:** Reports from farther north than usual were one seen at

Glenmere Park in Greeley, *Weld*, on 5 Aug (BSc, CLW), two seen in Sterling, *Logan*, on 24 Aug (BSc, BGi), and at least two seen in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, between 1 and 9 Sep (JBn, BWh, Dsm).

**American Golden-Plover:** One was seen at Fossil Creek Res., *Larimer*, on 21 Sep (NK), two were at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, between 22 and 29 Sep (DAL, BSc, m.ob.), one was at Pueblo Res. on 29 Sep (RMi), and three were at Lake Henry, *Crowley*, on 3 Oct (BKP, MP). One was seen at Neenoshe Res., *Kiowa*, on 4 Oct (BGi, JT), one was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 4 Oct (BKP, MP, LEd), one was at Lake John, *Jackson*, on 2 Nov (NP, AS), and one was at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 15 Nov (LK).

**Piping Plover:** A juvenile was seen at Barr Lake, *Adams*, between 8 and 10 Aug (BSc, DF, TL), and perhaps the same bird was seen on 23 Aug (RS).

**Whimbrel:** One was seen at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 5 Sep (NL, JDu).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** One was seen at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 29 Aug (DF, BB, LAB), and one was at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on 7 Sep (BK).

**Red Knot:** Two were seen at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, between 18 and 21 Sep (TL, BSc, CLW, DF, GW, m.ob.), and one was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 24 Sep and 2 Oct (BKP, SM, m.ob.).

**Dunlin:** One was seen at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 26 Oct (MP, BKP, MA), one was at Lagerman Res., *Boulder*, on 28 Oct (BK, CDo), amazingly up to eleven were at John Martin Res., *Bent*, between 3 and 9 Nov (DN, JT). I have never heard of this large a flock of Dunlin before in Colorado. One was seen at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 5 Nov (BKP), four were at Lake Henry, *Crowley*, on 6 and 7 Nov (BKP, AS, m.ob.), two were at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 14 and 21 Nov (RMi, m.ob.), and one was at Lake Holbrook, *Otero*, on 18 Nov (SO).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Another impressive flock of shorebirds was six seen at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on 24 Aug (BSc, BGi), and two were still there on 7 Sep (JK). Other observations of this species were one at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 29 Aug (BB, LAB, DF), one at Ramah SWA, *El Paso*, on 30 Aug (BMa), and one seen near Kiowa, *Elbert*, on 31 Aug (AS).

**American Woodcock:** One of this very unusual species in Colorado was seen at Fort Morgan, *Morgan*, on 8 Nov (PW, fide JRI).

**Red Phalarope:** There were an amazing five reports of this species this fall; frequently there are one or no sightings in a year. One was seen at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, on 30 Aug (GW, JK, IS, LK), one was at Elevenmile Res., *Park*, on 18 and 19 Oct (AS, NP, BKP, BBH), one was at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, on 5 and 6 Nov (JK), one was at Lake Henry, *Crowley*, on 6 and 7 Nov (AS, BKP, SO, MA), and one was at Trinidad Lake, *Las Animas*, on 8 Nov (BKP, MP).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** One sub-adult was seen at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, between 5 and 14 Nov (JK, m.ob.).

**Long-tailed Jaeger:** A juvenile was at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 31 Aug (TL, BGi).

**Mew Gull:** There were seven reports this fall. One was seen at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 7 Oct (U&HK), a 2nd year bird was at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, on 14 Oct (JSc, KSm), a 1st-year bird was at Lagerman Res., *Boulder*, on 28 Oct (BK), a juvenile was at the Larimer County Landfill on 29 Oct (CLW, JLD), another juvenile was seen at Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, on 2 Nov (NK), a third juvenile was at Warren Lake, *Larimer*, between 11 and 29 Nov (NK), and an adult was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 30 Nov (TL, BKP).

**Glaucous Gull:** An adult was seen at Spinney Mountain Res., *Park*, on 4 Nov (AS), one was at Douglas Res., *Larimer*, on 9 Nov (NK, JBn), and one was at Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, on 24 Nov (Rhn).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** The adult returned once again to Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 22 and 30 Nov (BKP). This bird is now over 11 years old, as it was first found here as a 1st-winter bird in March 1993.

**Kelp Gull:** The find of the season was a sub-adult seen at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, between 17 and 27 Sep (U&HK, SMe, CLW, TL, DF, BSc, m.ob.). The same bird was subsequently seen at various large reservoirs in Larimer County between 19 Oct and 20 Nov (NK, RHn, m.ob.).

**Sabine's Gull:** An average year for this species, with 40 reports all the Eastern Plains.

**Caspian Tern:** One was seen at Bell Res., *Elbert*, on 31 Aug (AS), one was at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 31 Aug (LK, TL, BGi), and one was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 1 and 3 Sep (RMi, m.ob.).

**Common Tern:** There was an unprecedented large flight of this species on the Eastern Plains on 13 Sep. Eighty-six were counted at Boulder Res., *Boulder*, (CLW, BSc), 50 at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, (JSc, KSm), and 14 at Union Res., *Weld*, (CLW, BSc). The birds at Chatfield were seen through 18 Sep.

**Arctic Tern:** There were three reports of this rare species in Colorado. An adult was seen at Union Res., *Weld*, on 13 Sep (CLW, BSc), another adult was at Boulder Res., *Boulder*, on 13 Sep (CLW, BSc), and a third adult was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 23 Nov and 30 Nov (BKP, m.ob.).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** New locations for the San Luis Valley this season were two seen at Del Norte, *Rio Grande*, on 5 Aug (VS), and two at Antonito, *Conejos*, on 30 Aug (CG, RL).

**White-winged Dove:** Two adults and a juvenile were seen in Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, between 1 and 19 Aug (GK), and up to seven were in Norwood, *San Miguel*, between 6 Sep and 30 Nov (CDe, BWr, TL, CLW, GS, m.ob.).

**Inca Dove:** One was seen at the usual location in Rocky Ford, *Otero*, on 19 Sep (BKP, RS), one was in Mymm Ackley's yard in *Pueblo* between 13 and 30 Nov (MA, m.ob.), and four were in Lamar, *Prowers*, between 23 and 30 Nov (JT).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** One of this rare species in Colorado was seen at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 30 Aug (BSc, CLW).

**Green Violet-ear:** A juvenile male was photographed at a feeder in Evergreen, *Jefferson*, on 3 and 4 Oct (RP, fide KN). This is the second occurrence of this Central American species in Colorado.

**Magnificent Hummingbird:** A juvenile male was seen at Rye, *Pueblo*, on 17 Sep (DSi).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** A juvenile male was photographed at Nucla, *Montrose*, on 27 and 28 Sep (CDe, BWr). This species is extremely rare on the West Slope.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** Farther north than usual was a female seen at Greeley, *Weld*, on 2 and 3 Aug (RMa, m.ob.).

**Anna's Hummingbird:** A female of this rare species in Colorado was seen

and photographed by many birders in Tina Jones's yard in Littleton, *Jefferson*, between 3 Oct and 30 Nov (TJ, m.ob.).

**Costa's Hummingbird**: A juvenile male was photographed and banded at Pingree Park, *Larimer*, on 4 Aug (TJ, LM, CE, BWi). This is the second photographed occurrence of this species in Colorado.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: Single juveniles were seen at Fort Lyon Wildlife Easement, *Bent*, on 12 Oct (BKP, RHn, SO, DSi), at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 28 Oct (DSi), in Lamar, *Prowers*, between 2 and 25 Nov (DAL, JT), and at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 14 Nov (BKP, PAG, MP). Other juveniles were seen at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 14 Nov (DEm), at Grandview Cemetery, *Larimer*, in Fort Collins on 23 Nov (DAL), at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 26 Nov (BKP, AB), and an adult male was at Pueblo City Park between 27 and 30 Nov (DSi).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee**: One was seen and heard calling at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 30 Aug (BSc, CLW, NG).

**Black Phoebe**: Two were seen in Canon City, *Fremont*, between 4 Aug and 30 Sep (SM), which is not a regular location for this species in Colorado.

**Eastern Phoebe**: Three reports from considerably west of its usual range were one seen at Canon City, *Fremont*, between 10 Aug and 29 Sep (SM), one on Burnt Mill Road, *Pueblo*, on 23 Aug (RMi), and one at Valco Ponds in *Pueblo* between 28 Aug and 14 Sep (BKP).

**Vermilion Flycatcher**: A female was seen at Canon City, *Fremont*, between 12 and 14 Sep (SM, m.ob.).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**: A juvenile was seen near Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on 2 Aug (BSp), and another juvenile was at the intersection of Elbert County Roads 154 and 101 on 31 Aug (AS).

**Blue-headed Vireo**: A good year with five reports. One was seen at Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, on 31 Aug and 1 Sep (GM), one was at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 3 and 4 Sep (BGi, DAL), one was at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 7 Sep (AS, NP), one was at Carrizo Canyon Picnic Area, *Baca*, on 16 Sep (BKP, RS), and one, possibly two, in Lamar, *Prowers*, between 4 and 8 Oct (BGi).

**Philadelphia Vireo**: An exceptional season for this very unusual species with six reports. One was seen at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 29 Aug (GW, DF), one was

at Dixon Res., *Larimer*, on 31 Aug (JBn), one was at Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, on 6 Sep (JRo), one was at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 7 Sep (NP, AS), one was at Last Chance, *Washington*, on 7 Sep (LK), and another was at Dixon Res., *Larimer*, on 8 Sep (Jde).

**Blue Jay:** One in the far northwest was seen in Craig, *Moffat*, on 29 Sep (FL).

**Purple Martin:** Two reports this season from the Eastern Plains, where this species is rare. One was seen at Ramah SWA, *El Paso*, on 21 Aug (MP), and five were at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 17 Sep (BGi, BKP, RS).

**Cave Swallow:** One was seen north of Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 9 Aug (LS). This species is not on the Colorado state list, and this is another single observer sighting without photographs.

**Carolina Wren:** One was seen and heard in Pueblo on 2 Sep (DSi).

**Sedge Wren:** One was very cooperative and seen well by many at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, between 17 and 22 Oct (MP, BKP, m.ob.).

**Eastern Bluebird:** A large flock of at least 25 were at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 14 Nov (DAL), and many were seen along the Front Range this fall.

**Bendire's Thrasher:** One of this rare species was reported in its only known Colorado location west of LaGarita, *Saguache*, on 6 Aug (JBy, PD).

**Sprague's Pipit:** One was seen in the best Colorado location for this species near Julesburg, *Sedgwick*, on 18 Oct (CLW, BSc, BGi).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** One was seen in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 28 Oct (JT, BGi) for the only sighting of the fall.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One was seen at the Holy Cross Abbey in Canon City, *Fremont*, on 29 and 30 Nov (MP, LEd).

**Pine Warbler:** A male was seen at Valco Ponds in *Pueblo* between 4 and 8 Sep (BKP, MY), and another male was at the Lake Hasty Campground, *Bent*, on 21 Nov (DN).

**Palm Warbler:** A very good season for this species with six reports. One was

seen in Estes Park, *Larimer*, on 11 Aug (GM), one was at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 21 Sep (BKP), one was in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 11 Oct (DAL), one was in Fort Lyon, *Bent*, on 12 Oct (BKP, DN, RHO, DSi), one was in Estes Park, *Larimer*, on 2 Nov (SR), and one was seen at Highlands Ranch, *Douglas*, on 2 Nov (BB).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** One was seen at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 6 Sep (GR, LK).

**Mourning Warbler:** A very good season for this species with five reports. One was seen at Rock Canyon in *Pueblo* on 28 and 29 Aug (BKP), one was at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 30 Aug (GW, IS, LK), two were at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso/Pueblo*, on 30 Aug (CLW, m.ob.), and one was at Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, on 31 Aug (GM).

**Hooded Warbler:** There were two West Slope reports this fall. A female was seen along the Animas River in Durango, *La Plata*, on 2 Sep (JBy), and one was at Ridgway Res., *Ouray*, on 5 Sep (CLW, TL).

**Canada Warbler:** An exceptional season for this rare species with four reports. A female was seen at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 30 Aug (CLW, m.ob.), both a male and female were at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 31 Aug (DF, GR), and a female was at Middle Bijou Creek, *Elbert*, on 31 Aug (AS).

**Summer Tanager:** A female or immature was seen in La Plata County on 28 Aug (JBy, m.ob.), one was at Perry Park, *Douglas*, on 18 Sep (AC), and one was at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, between 22 and 26 Nov (KP, m.ob.).

**Scarlet Tanager:** One was seen at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, on 6 Sep (KP, m.ob.), and one was at the Wheatridge Greenbelt, *Jefferson*, on 25 Oct (U&HK).

**Field Sparrow:** One was at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 21 Sep (BD, BBH), and up to two were in Lamar, *Prowers*, between 6 Oct and 9 Nov (BGi, DAL, JT).

**Black-throated Sparrow:** One was seen east of Monument, *El Paso*, on 19 Oct (CL), which is farther north than usual on the Eastern Plains.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Two were seen at the best location for this species, which is near Fort Lyon, *Bent*, on 12 Oct (BKP, RHO, DSi, SO).

**Fox Sparrow:** Individuals from the eastern subspecies were seen in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 6 Oct (BGi), in Colorado City, *Fremont*, between 26 and 28 Oct (DSi), at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 14 Nov (BKP, MP, PAG), and very unusually from the West Slope in Nucla, *Montrose*, between 26 and 30 Nov (CDe, BWr).

**Swamp Sparrow:** There were many reports of this species from eastern Colorado this season.

**White-throated Sparrow:** This species was also seen in many places in eastern Colorado this season.

**Harris's Sparrow:** A report from the West Slope was one seen in Grand Junction, *Mesa*, between 22 and 30 Nov (LA). There were quite a few reports from eastern Colorado this season.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** An adult was seen at Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, on 19 Oct (DAL).

**Smith's Longspur:** One was seen at Neenoshe Res., *Kiowa*, on 11 Oct (DN, BSc, RHo, DSi, GR, JMa, SMA), and one was near Julesburg, *Sedgwick*, on 18 and 19 Oct (CLW, BSc, BGi, JK, AS). This species is currently not on the Colorado state list.

**Snow Bunting:** One was seen at Elevenmile Res., *Park*, on 10 Nov (MP, AB), and 15 Nov (MP, BKP) and one was also at Spinney Mountain Res., *Park*, on 15 Nov (MP, BKP).

**Rusty Blackbird:** One was seen at Valco Ponds in *Pueblo* on 21 Nov (BKP).

**Baltimore Oriole:** An immature male was seen in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 1 Sep (DAL).

**Purple Finch:** A male was seen at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 29 Oct (MA), and two were in Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 9 Nov (MP).

**White-winged Crossbill:** After a number of reports in the summer, this species continued to be seen throughout the fall. Three were seen near Moon Pass, *Saguache*, on 6 Aug (JBy, PD), three were at Shaw Lake, *Conejos*, on 3 Aug (JSt), at least eight were at La Manga Pass, *Conejos*, between 29 Aug and 7 Sep, more were seen near Cumbres Pass on 7 Sep (JSt), and at least five were at Slumgullion Pass, *Hinsdale*, on 25 Oct (AS, NP). There were also reports from Gunnison and Mesa counties this season.

**Common Redpoll:** One was seen at the YMCA in Estes Park, Larimer, on 28 Nov (SR).

### Contributing Observers

Mym Ackley, Susan Allerton, Henry Armknecht, Larry Arnold, Jason Beason (JBN), Jim Beatty (JBy), Nick Block, Bill & Sylvia Brockner (B&SB), Bob Brown, Lea Ann Brown (LAB), Allan Burns, Allan Crockett, Art Dahl, Justin Dee (JDe), Peter Derven , Coen Dexter (CDe), Bob Dickson, Chuck Doolittle (CDo), Jim Duggan (JDu), Jon Dunn (JLD), Lisa Edwards (LEd), Libby Ellis (LEl), Dave Elwonger (DEl), Dorothy Emerling (DEg), Donna Emmons (DEM), Carol English, Doug Faulkner, Fern Ford, Mike Foster, Peter Gaede (PAG), Peter Gent (PG), Brian Gibbons (BGi), Nancy Gobris, Gregg Goodrich, Bob Goycoolea (BGy), Carolyn Gunn, BB Hahn (BBH), Roy Halpin (RHn), Paula Hansley, Jack Harlan, Dona Hilkey, Dean & Mona Hill (D&MH), Rachel Hopper (RHo), Tina Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Kevin Keirn, Joey Kellner, Loch Kilpatrick, Urling & Hugh Kingery (U&HK), G. Klingler, Nick Komar, David Leatherman (DAL), Tony Leukering, Rich Levad, Norm Lewis, Charles Loeffler, Forrest Luke, Joe Mammoser (JMa), Steve Mammoser (SMA), Gary Matthews, Bill Maynard (BMa), Richard Maxfield (RMa), Jack Merchant (JMe), Steve Messick (SMe), Bill Miller (BMi), Lynne Miller, Rich Miller (RMi), SeEtta Moss, Duane Nelson, Kayleen Niyo, Stan Oswald, Ken Pals, Brandon Percival (BKP), Mark Peterson, Nathan Pieplow, Myron & Suzi Plooster (M&SP), John Prather (JPt), Jeff Price (JPc), Robert Pyon, Scott Rashid, Warner & Ruth Reeser (W&RR), Dave Rhoades, Joe Rigli (JRi), Joe Roller (JRo), Gene Rutherford, Ira Sanders, Pearle Sandstrom-Smith (PSS), Bill Schmoker (BSc), Jim Schmoker (JSc), Karen Schmoker (KSm), Karleen Schofield (KSf), Larry Semo, Randy Siebert, Dave Silverman (DSi), Virginia Simmons, Clif Smith (CSm), Dixie Smith (DSm), Andrew Spencer, Bob Spencer (BSp), George Steele, John Stump (JSt), Carol Sullivan (CSu), Janeal Thompson, Lois Torres, Van Tuau (VAT), Glenn Walbeck, Peter Walker, David Waltham (DWa), Brian Wheeler (BWh), Brenda Wiard (BWi), Christopher Wood (CLW), Brenda Wright (BWr), Dave Wright (DWr), Mark Yaeger, Sherrie York, Vie Zeng, Eric Zora (EZ), Many observers (Mo)

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