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Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



Cheyenne County, Golden-crowned Warbler
CFO Convention 2018
Forty Years of Birding in Colorado



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Golden-crowned Warbler, Cheyenne County, 18 May 2018. Photo by Rob Raker.

As we move into the fall birding season, I thought it would be useful to let the CFO membership know what we will be working on this year. CFO officially starts its new year with its first meeting following the close of the annual CFO convention; this year that took place on August 25.



David Gillilan

At the meeting I was pleased to welcome our new board members, Wendy Wibbens, who will be serving as our new secretary, and Nick Komar, who fills a board position that became vacant after board member Christy Payne became the new editor of our journal. Together with the return of our vice-president, Christy Carello, from a six-month sabbatical in Costa Rica, we have a full board.

I also laid out at our meeting what I believe to be the three most important subjects that will need to be addressed by the board this year:

(1) getting more help in putting together our annual convention; (2) determining whether CFO should move to a two-tier household membership structure based on whether individual members want to continue receiving print copies of our quarterly journal (higher cost), or to access the journal online through the CFO website (lower cost); and (3) recruiting new officers and board members to fill several vacancies that will occur at the end of the next convention.

The convention takes up most of the board's time, now that we regularly have 200-plus attendees and expanded events, field trips, and venues. Indeed, planning for each convention starts almost immediately after the end of the most recent convention. We would like to find ways to involve more CFO members in putting together these conventions, both to provide opportunities to be more involved with CFO, and to lighten the load of the board members. The hope is that we will be able to recruit longer-term volunteers to go along with the short-term volunteers we have already been using at the actual convention.

And oh, for those of you who like to plan ahead, we expect to have the 2019 convention take place in Montrose, June 13-16, though we are still nailing down the venues and other logistics.

As to the journal, recent changes in the way that journals are now printed, and new associated cost structures, make it much more feasible to print journals only for those who prefer to read them on paper, while others can read the journal online. This potentially has both financial and environmental advantages for CFO, and for CFO members, but needs additional investigation; both goals and details surrounding this subject took up most of our time at the most recent board meeting.

And finally, with respect to the need to fill several board positions at the end of our working year: I am planning to put together a committee composed of both current and former CFO board members to find and vet new potential candidates who are willing and capable of carrying forward CFO's stated missions. I expect that the committee will produce candidates that, along with the continuing board members, will ably take the organization well into the future.

Thoughts or suggestions? Feel free to contact me or other members of the board at the email addresses listed on the inside cover of the journal.

-David

A note to our readers: It came to our attention that due to a spreadsheet error, a number of members received copies of the journal addressed to the wrong individual, or no copy at all. We believe the issue has been resolved and all members have now received the Spring issue. However, if you believe you did not receive the Spring issue in error, please contact Gloria Nikolai, CFO Membership Committee Chair, at the email address listed on the inside cover of the journal.

Photo Editor Needed

If you are knowledgeable about Colorado's birds, have experience with digital photos (including the skills and software to do basic editing: cropping, resizing, etc.), and have a few hours to spare for each quarterly issue, please consider volunteering as the *Colorado Birds* Photo Editor. If you are interested, please contact Christy Payne, Editor (editor@cobirds.org).

Greetings bird lovers!

The Colorado Field Ornithologists runs an annual convention which features bird art from a different Colorado artist each year. We would like to expand opportunities for artists interested in being considered for the 2019 convention. To view previous art, see <https://cobirds.org/CFO/Conventions/>

Project Description

The 2019 convention will be in Montrose. We would like a southwest Colorado bird featured in the artwork.

Artist Eligibility

* The contest is open to artists who have not provided art within the last five years.

* The art must be an original two-dimensional piece produced by the entrant. Compositions based on a photograph cannot be a copy of someone else's photographic work.

Size/Medium

* Medium may include: water color, graphic media design, oil or acrylic painting, graphite, pencil etching, gouache and more.

* At this time, we are not considering photography. Compositions based on a photograph are acceptable but the photograph must be captured by the person completing this contest entry.

* Art must be submitted by digital file no larger than 5 MB. A sketch of an intended final project is acceptable. Up to 2 draft images may be submitted per artist. The final digital file of the completed work must be provided no later December 31, 2018.

* All entries must be accompanied by a minimum of 2 examples from your art portfolio.

Deadline

Entries must be submitted no later than September 30, 2018 to membership@cobirds.org. The selected artist will be announced no later than October 31, 2018.

The winning artist will be provided with a small stipend and is asked to donate the completed art piece to CFO for auctioning at the convention to raise money for scholarship opportunities. If selected, the artist must submit a high-resolution file of the completed artwork to be used in all publicity for the convention and for printing of t-shirts.

Please send questions to: membership@cobirds.org .

Thanks for your interest and we hope to hear from many artists!

Colorado Field of Ornithologists Board of Directors

News from the Field: Fall 2017

DAVID DOWELL

News from the Field contains reports of rare birds found in Colorado. These reports are compiled from eBird (ebird.org), the COBirds listserv (cobirds@googlegroups.com), and the West Slope Birding Network (wsbn@yahoo.com). The reports contained herein are largely unchecked, and the editors do not necessarily vouch for their authenticity. Species in capitals are those for which the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) requests documentation. Please submit your sightings of these “review” species through the CFO website at www.coloradobirdrecords.org.



Season Overview

Colorado birding in fall 2017 was memorable for many

reasons. First, from late August into the fall and winter, birders documented an irruption of “montane” species onto the eastern plains. These species included Pygmy Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red Crossbill, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cassin’s Finch, and Evening Grosbeak. Pygmy Nuthatches seldom venture far from the ponderosa pine forests of the foothills and mountains, but in fall 2017 these lively critters were found dozens to even hundreds of miles away from their usual habitat. Pygmy Nuthatches were reported at seven different locations on the eastern plains of Colorado and as far away as western Kansas and west-central Nebraska. Large flocks of Red Crossbills and Red-breasted Nuthatches were also found on the plains. At Glenmere Park in Greeley, up to 32 Red Crossbills and 56 Red-breasted Nuthatches were tallied.

In western Colorado, fall 2017 provided good opportunities to observe sea birds. Common Tern was found at five different locations in the western half of the state, where it would typically be a very rare species. Surf and White-winged Scoters were found in good numbers in San Miguel, Montezuma, Mesa, Delta, Eagle, and Gunnison.

Unusually warm weather may have encouraged warblers and other migrant passerines to linger in Colorado late in the season. Two locations in the Boulder area captured the attention of Colorado birders in November. In southwest Boulder, a narrow section of Skunk Creek in an otherwise urban setting attracted

Golden-crowned Kinglet, Prowers County, 05 Nov 2017. Photo by Janeal Thompson.

Yellow-throated Warbler, Varied Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Black-throated Gray Warbler during a one-week period in mid-November. Northeast of Boulder, the Twin Lakes neighborhood hosted Nashville Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and Hammond's Flycatcher in late November. (For further discussion of these sites, see Dave Leatherman's essay on COBirds, 21 November 2017.)

Several outstanding individual birds were found in Colorado in fall 2017. Tropical Kingbird was documented at two locations – at Chico Basin Ranch (El Paso) by David Tønnessen and at Nucla (Montrose) by Brenda Wright and Coen Dexter. Tropical Kingbird would be a new species for the state list if confirmed by the CBRC. Elsewhere, a Swallow-tailed Kite in Lamar and a Crested Caracara in the Denver area were a bit elusive but delighted those who managed to see them. Equally rare was a White-rumped Sandpiper found in Bent in November; normally, this species visits Colorado only in late spring and early summer. A Snowy Owl in Morgan in late November previewed an upcoming good winter for observing this species in the central US.

In the list of reports below, county names are italicized, and the following abbreviations are used: CFO – Colorado Field Ornithologists; CG – campground; DFO – Denver Field Ornithologists; m.ob. – many observers; NA – Natural Area; NHS – National Historic Site; NG – National Grassland; NP – National Park; NWR – National Wildlife Refuge; Res. – Reservoir; SP – State Park; STL – State Trust Lands; SWA – State Wildlife Area.

Ross's Goose: 1 at Totten Res., Montezuma, 25 Nov (Erik Henderson). 1 in Craig, Moffat, 29 – 30 Nov (Nic Korte, m.ob.).

Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 in Cortez, Montezuma, 14 Nov (James Beatty).

BRANT: 1 at Bar CCC Park and nearby locations in Parker, Douglas, 11 – 29 Nov (Cheri Phillips, m.ob.).

Trumpeter Swan: 1 at Stagecoach Res., Routt, 18 Mar – 19 Nov (Katie Weeks, Megan Ahlgren, m.ob.). 1 in Montrose, Montrose, 18 Oct (Bruce Ackerman, Jon Horn). 1 in Weld east of Fort Collins, 26 Oct (Lori Pivonka).

Tundra Swan: 26 at Highline Lake SP, Mesa, 13 Nov (Kathleen McGinley, JoAnn Riggle). As many as 25 at Antero Res., Park, 25 Nov (Nick Moore, Jack and Ryan Bushong). Other reports from Adams, Boulder, Douglas, El Paso, Jackson, Larimer, Las Animas, Logan, Mesa, Moffat, Park, and Weld, 26 Oct – 27 Nov.

EURASIAN WIGEON: 1 male at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 31 Oct (Brandon K. Percival, Bill Maynard, John Drummond).

Surf Scoter: 18 near Kim, Las Animas, 5 Oct (Glenn Walbek, Dave Hadersbeck). 10 at Miramonte Res., San Miguel, 22 – 27 Oct (Eric Hynes, m.ob.). 22 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 29 Oct (group led by Joey Kellner). Other reports from Adams, Arapahoe, Bent, Boulder, Custer, Delta, Denver, Douglas, Eagle, Fremont,

Gunnison, Jefferson, Larimer, Logan, Mesa, Montezuma, Morgan, Park, Pueblo, Routt, San Miguel and Sedgwick, 5 Oct – 28 Nov.

White-winged Scoter: As many as 6 at Miramonte Res., San Miguel, 23 – 18 Nov (Brenda Wright, Coen Dexter, m.ob.). As many as 6 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 28 Oct – 19 Nov (Glenn Walbek, m.ob.). 8 at Prewitt Res., Washington, 5 Nov (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell). As many as 6 at Vega Res., Mesa, 8 – 19 Nov (Denise and Mark Vollmar, m.ob.). Other reports from Arapahoe, Custer, Fremont, Grand, Mesa, Montezuma, Park, Pueblo, Routt and Teller, 24 Oct – 28 Nov.

Black Scoter: As many as 3 at Antero Res., Park, 28 Oct – 14 Nov (Glenn Walbek, m.ob.). 2 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 31 Oct – 8 Nov (John Drummond, Brandon K. Percival, Bill Maynard). 1 at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, 2 Nov (Glenn Walbek). 1 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 11 – 15 Nov (Michael McCloy, m.ob.). 1 at Spinney Mountain Res., Park, 11 Nov (Michael McCloy). 1 at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt--Tabor Lake, Jefferson, 21 – 23 Nov (Bruce Snyder, m.ob.). 1 at Aurora Res., Arapahoe, 22 Nov (David Dowell).

Long-tailed Duck: 1 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 4 – 22 Nov (group led by Joey Kellner, m.ob.). 3 at Brush Hollow Res., Fremont, 7 Nov (Jerry DeBoer). 1 at Vega Res., Mesa, 10 Nov (JoAnn and Bob Riggle, Katey Buster). 1 at Huerfano Res., Pueblo, 10 Nov (Rich Miller). 1 at Boulder Res., Boulder, 12 Nov (Christian Nunes). 1 at Lake Henry, Crowley, 15 – 26 Nov (David Chaffin, m.ob.). 1 at Whitewater ponds, Mesa, 25 – 30 Nov (Coen Dexter, Brenda Wright, m.ob.). 2 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 27 Nov (Brandon K. Percival).

Red-throated Loon: 1 at Marston Res., Denver, 27 Oct (Loch Kilpatrick, Jeff Dawson). 1 at Timnath Res., Larimer, 3 – 5 Nov (Bob Righter, m.ob.). 1 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 5 Nov (Brandon K. Percival, Renee Casias). 1 at Jumbo Res., Logan, 5 Nov (Steven Mlodinow). 1 at Woods Lake, Weld, 7 Nov (Steven Mlodinow). 1 at Lake Henry, Crowley, 25 – 29 Nov (Kathy Mihm Dunning).

Pacific Loon: 1 in Craig, Moffat, 5 – 12 Oct (Forrest Luke, m.ob.). Other reports from Adams, Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Kiowa, Larimer, Park and Weld, 15 Oct – 30 Nov.

Common Loon: 13 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 9 Nov (Chuck Aid, Michael Kiessig). 20 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 10 Nov (Riley and Heather Morris)

Red-necked Grebe: 1 at Terry Lake, Boulder, 27 Sep – 3 Oct (David Dowell, m.ob.). 1 at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, 14 Oct – 18 Nov (Glenn Walbek, m.ob.). 1 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 28 Oct – 11 Nov (Glenn Walbek, m.ob.). 1 at Union Res., Weld, 28 – 29 Oct (Bill and Inez Prather, m.ob.). 1 at Holbrook Res., Otero, 31 Oct – 14 Nov (Stanley Oswald, m.ob.). 1 at Marston Res., Denver, 3 Nov (Matt Clark). 3 at Antero Res., Park, 25 Nov (Ryan and Jack Bushong). 1 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 25 Oct and 25 – 30 Nov (Brandon K. Percival, Steven Mlodinow, David Tønnessen). 1 at Dry Creek Res., Larimer, 29 – 30 Nov (Nick Komar, Walter Wehtje, David Wade).

LEAST BITTERN: 1 at Stewart's Pond near La Salle, Weld, 1 Aug (Tony Leukering, Steven Mlodinow).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: 1 at Stalker Lake, Yuma, 15 Sep (Dan Brooke, Cheryl Teuton, Charles Lawrence, Joey Kellner, Kathy Mihm Dunning).

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE: 1 in Lamar, Prowers, 10 – 24 Aug (Bryant Will, m.ob.).

Broad-winged Hawk: 1 in Craig, Moffat, 31 Aug (Forrest Luke). 1 near Nucla, Montrose, 26 Sep (Brenda Wright, Coen Dexter). 1 in Maybell, Moffat, 11 Oct (Steve Weston). Other reports from front range and eastern plains, 13 Aug – 6 Oct.

Black-bellied Plover: 2 at Summit Res., Montezuma, 4 Oct (Erik Hendrickson). 2 at Antero Res., Park, 8 Oct (John Drummond). 1 at Adobe Creek Res., Bent, 26 Nov (group led by Joey Kellner). Other reports from front range and eastern plains, 12 Aug – 5 Nov.

American Golden-Plover: As many as 4 at Prewitt Res., Washington, 8 Sep – 6 Oct (group led by Joey Kellner, Heather and Riley Morris, Jason St. Pierre, m.ob.). 2 at Lower Queens Res., Kiowa, 10 Sep – 8 Oct (Steven Mlodinow, m.ob.). 2 at Jackson Res., Morgan, 12 Sep – 1 Oct (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell, Lorraine Lanning). 2 at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 16 – 20 Sep (Ryan and Jack Bushong, Steven Mlodinow). 1 near Timnath, Larimer, 16 Sep (Nick Komar). 2 at Barr Lake SP, Adams, 17 Sep – 3 Oct (Francis Commerçon, Brandon Nooner, Megan Miller, Danny Montalvo, Kim Mauritz, m.ob.). 3 at Jumbo Res., Sedgwick and Logan, 18 Sep (Steve Larson). 1 at Antero Res., Park, 8 Oct (John Drummond). 1 at Adobe Creek Res., Bent, 2 Nov (Janeal W. Thompson).

Mountain Plover: 35 near Arriba, Lincoln, 29 Aug (Glenn Walbek). 102 near Lyan, Baca, 10 Oct (Janeal W. Thompson).

Ruddy Turnstone: 1 at Jumbo Res., Sedgwick, 22 Aug (Steve Larson). 1 at Lower Queens Res., Kiowa, 2 Sep (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell). 1 at John Martin Res., Bent, 16 Sep (Jack and Ryan Bushong). 1 at Lake Meredith, Crowley, 17 Sep (Jack and Ryan Bushong). 1 at San Luis Lakes SP, Alamosa, 18 Sep (Lisa Rawinski).

RED KNOT: 1 at Chatfield SP, Jefferson, 20 Sep (Matt Clark, Susan Bonfiglio, m.ob.). 1 at Lower Queens Res., Kiowa, 7 – 8 Oct (Steven Mlodinow, m.ob.).

Dunlin: 1 at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 19 Aug (Steven Mlodinow). 2 at Barr Lake SP, Adams, 16 – 23 Sep (Tammy and Ira Sanders, Adam Vesely, m.ob.). 1 at Prewitt Res., Washington, 1 Nov (Norm Lewis). 1 at Adobe Creek Res., Bent, 4 Nov (Cheryl Teuton, Dan Brooke).

White-rumped Sandpiper: 1 at Adobe Creek Res., Bent, 4 Nov (Cheryl Teuton, Dan Brooke).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 1 at 18 Island Res., Jackson, 27 Aug (Steven Mlodinow). As many as 3 at Prewitt Res., Washington, 8 Sep – 1 Oct (Glenn Walbek, Nick

Moore, Dean Shoup, Joey Kellner, m.ob.). 2 at Lower Queens Res., Kiowa, 10 Sep (Steven Mlodinow). 1 at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 20 Sep (Steven Mlodinow).

Red Phalarope: 1 at Chatfield SP, Douglas, 11 Sep – 4 Oct (Frank Farrell, m.ob.). 1 at Jackson Res., Morgan, 21 Sep – 12 Oct (David Dowell). 1 at Timnath Res., Larimer, 22 Sep (Dean Shoup, Todd Deininger, Joey Kellner, Kathy Mihm Dunning). 1 at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 26 Sep (Steven Mlodinow). 1 near Kit Carson, Cheyenne, 27 Sep (Mark Peterson, Glenn Walbek). 1 at Lagerman Res., Boulder, 1 – 3 Oct (Jonathan Bent, Christian Nunes, m.ob.)

POMARINE JAEGER: 1 at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 19 Sep (Steven Mlodinow). 1 dark-morph juvenile at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, 20 Oct (David Hill, Cynthia Madsen).

PARASITIC JAEGER: 1 in Comanche NG, Las Animas, 2 Oct (Glenn Walbek). 1 dark-morph juvenile at Timnath Res., Larimer, 3 – 4 Nov (Josh Bruening, m.ob.). 1 dark-morph juvenile at Windsor Lake, Weld, 6 – 10 Nov (Kathy Buckley, Josh Bruening, m.ob.).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: 1 juvenile (dark gray) at Antero Res., Park, 26 Aug (Steven Mlodinow). 1 juvenile (light gray) at Antero Res., Park, 31 Aug – 4 Sep (Kathy Mihm Dunning, m.ob.). 1 juvenile at Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo, 9 – 11 Oct (Bill Maynard, Brandon K. Percival, m.ob.).

Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 adult at Lake Beckwith, Pueblo, 28 Oct (David Silverman). 1 adult at Lake Henry, Crowley, 4 Nov (Stanley Oswald). 1 adult at Jumbo Res., Sedgwick, 14 - 16 Nov (Cole Wild, m.ob.).

Sabine's Gull: 1 at Buena Vista Ice Pond, Chaffee, 1 Oct (Christian Hagenlocher). 1 at Miramonte Res., San Miguel, 18 – 21 Nov (Eric Hynes, Katie Triest, Joe Cullen, m.ob.). Other reports from Adams, Arapahoe, Bent, Boulder, Broomfield, Custer, Douglas, Jefferson, Kiowa, Larimer, Las Animas, Logan, Morgan, Pueblo, Sedgwick, Washington, and Weld, 1 Sep – 20 Oct.

LITTLE GULL: 7 juveniles at Upper Queens and Lower Queens Res., Kiowa, 13 – 14 Aug (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell, Janeal W. Thompson). 2 juveniles at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 16 Aug (Jay Withgott, m.ob.).

Laughing Gull: 1 immature at Upper Queens and Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 9 Jul – 21 Oct (Steven Mlodinow, Sean Walters, m.ob.). 1 at LUNA Res., Weld, 29 Sep (Steven Mlodinow, Gene Rutherford).

Mew Gull: 1 at Horseshoe Res., Larimer, 14 Aug and 24 – 29 Sep (Nick Komar, David Wade, Brandon Nooner). 1 at Boyd Lake, Larimer, 31 Aug (Nick Komar). 1 at Lake Loveland, Larimer, 4 Nov (Walter Wehtje, Nick Komar). 1 at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, 18 Nov (Glenn Walbek). 1 at Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo, 25 Nov (Steven Mlodinow, David Tønnessen).

Great Black-backed Gull: 1 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, for the 24th consecutive winter, 7 Nov – 13 Mar (Brandon K. Percival, Heather and Riley Morris, m.ob.).

Common Tern: 1 at San Luis Lakes SP, Alamosa, 25 Aug (Steven Mlodinow). 2 at Vega Res., Mesa, 15 Sep (Nic Korte). 1 at Ridgway Res., Ouray, 22 Sep (JoAnn Riggle). 2 at Totten Res., Montezuma, 1 Oct (Erik Hendrickson). 1 at Stagecoach Res., Routt, 4 Oct (JoAnn Riggle).

ARCTIC TERN: 1 at Union Res., Weld, 17 – 19 Oct (David Dowell, Steven Mlodinow, Nick Moore).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO: 1 at Melody Tempel Grove, Bent, 8 Sep (Lynne Miller, Jeannie Mitchell, John Drummond). 1 at Upper Queens Res., Kiowa, 10 Sep (Steven Mlodinow).

SNOWY OWL: 1 in Fort Morgan, Morgan, 25 Nov (David Dowell, Lauren Migalski, Hannah Crowley, Anne Price, Steve Rash).

Black Swift: 26 near Telluride, San Miguel, 9 Aug (Kathy Mihm Dunning).

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD: 1 in Lamar, Prowers, 2 Sep (Janeal W. Thompson).

CRESTED CARACARA: 1 in the Denver metro area, seen first near Chatfield SP (Douglas) and then at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR (Denver), 24 – 25 Aug (Lowell Baumunk, m.ob.).

YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER: 1 at Melody Tempel Grove, Bent, 7 Sep (Duane Nelson, Janeal W. Thompson, Jane Stulp). 1 at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, 20 Sep (Richard Bunn, Aaron Yappert, Bill Maynard, Greg Levandoski).

Hammond's Flycatcher: 1 at Cottonwood Canyon, Baca, 6 Nov (Janeal W. Thompson). 1 at Twin Lakes in Gunbarrel, Boulder, 14 – 26 Nov (Frank Farrell, Mark Chavez, m.ob.).

Vermillion Flycatcher: 1 near Norwood, San Miguel, 7 Oct (George Steele, Brenda Wright, Coen Dexter).

TROPICAL KINGBIRD: 1 at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, 17 Sep (David Tønnessen). 1 at Nucla Sewage Lagoons, Montrose, 2 – 3 Oct (Coen Dexter, Brenda Wright).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: 1 at Upper Queens Res., Kiowa, 2 Sep (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell). 2 at Picture Canyon, Baca, 6 Sep (Jeremy Webster). 1 in Comanche NG, Las Animas, 4 Oct (Glenn Walbek).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 18 at Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, 4 Sep (Joey Kellner, Kathy Mihm Dunning, David Dowell, Steven Mlodinow). 16 at Mitchek Ranch, Cheyenne, 21 Sep (Glenn Walbek). 20 at Grandview Cemetery, Larimer, 26 Sep (David Leatherman). As many as 56 at Glenmere Park in Greeley, Weld, 3 Oct – 21 Nov (Steven Mlodinow, Nick Moore). 11 at Fairview Cemetery in Burlington, Kit Carson, 15 Oct (Todd Deininger, Joey Kellner, Tim Smart, Kathy Mihm Dunning).

Pygmy Nuthatch: 2 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 27 Aug – 15 Oct (Mark Peterson, Glenn Walbek, m.ob.). 2 at Jackson Res., Morgan, 30 Sep (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell). 1 at Pawnee NG, Weld, 1 Oct (Gene Rutherford). As many as 6 at Glenmere Park, Weld, 3 Oct – 6 Jan (Steven Mlodinow, Nick Moore, Gene

Rutherford). 1 at Flagler Res. SWA, Kit Carson, 12 Oct (Mark Peterson). 1 at Rocky Ford Cemetery, Otero, 16 Oct (Stanley Oswald). 3 in Holyoke, Phillips, 4 Nov (Heather and Riley Morris)

PACIFIC WREN: 1 at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, 23 Sep (Aaron Yappert, David Tønnessen, Bill Maynard). 1 at Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, 23 – 29 Sep (Steven Mlodinow, Mark Peterson).

Carolina Wren: 1 at Two Buttes SWA, Baca, 17 – 27 Aug (Austin Hess, Nick Komar, m.ob.). 1 in Stratton, Kit Carson, 26 Aug (Glenn Walbek). 1 (Aug 26 – 27) and then 2 (Oct 31) at Lamar Community College, Prowers (Joey Angstman, Lisa Edwards, Kara Carragher, Janeal W. Thompson). 1 at Melody Tempel Grove, Bent, 21 Oct (Dale and Joel Adams). 1 near Evergreen, Jefferson, 5 Nov (Bruce Cyganowski). 1 in Pueblo, Pueblo, 15 Nov – 12 May (Van Truan, Brandon K. Percival, m.ob.).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Reports from 24 different locations in Baca, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Kit Carson, eastern Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Prowers, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, and Yuma, 10 Sep – 28 Nov.

Wood Thrush: 1 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 3 – 7 Oct (Mark Peterson, m.ob.)

Varied Thrush: 1 at Skunk Creek / Basemar in Boulder, Boulder, 11 – 14 Nov (Topi Martinez, m.ob.). 1 near Greeley, Weld, 28 Nov (Shawn Mason).

Sprague's Pipit: 1 south of Flagler, Kit Carson, 26 Sep (Glenn Walbek, Mark Peterson). 2 at Hale / Pipit Hill area, Yuma, 15 Oct (Todd Deininger, Tim Smart, Kathy Mihm Dunning, Joey Kellner). 1 north of Deer Trail, Arapahoe, 25 Oct (Mark Peterson).

Bohemian Waxwing: 80 at Stagecoach Res., Routt, 16 Nov (Thomas Litteral). 1 in Longmont, Boulder, 16 Nov (Steven Mlodinow). 1 near Hygiene, Boulder, 17



Pacific Wren, Lincoln County, 29 September 2017. Photo by Glenn Walbek.

Nov (Robert King). 22 at Rocky Mountain NP, Larimer, 21 Nov (Sue Riffe).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: 1 at Rito Hondo Res., Hinsdale, 28 Sep (Kathy Mihm Dunning).

Golden-winged Warbler: 1 in Steamboat Springs, Routt, 19 – 22 Aug (Michael San Miguel, Mary Keithler). 1 at Ridgway Banding Station, Ouray, 8 Sep (Linnea Rowse).

Blue-winged Warbler: 1 at Pawnee NG, Weld, 4 Sep (Gene Rutherford).

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 at CSU Environmental Learning Center, Larimer, 25 – 26 Nov (Damion Strommer, m.ob.). Other reports 19 Aug – 2 Oct.

Prothonotary Warbler: 1 at Two Buttes SWA, Baca, 5 Sep (Brandon K. Percival).

Tennessee Warbler: 1 at Twin Lakes in Gunbarrel, Boulder, 17 Nov (Leslie S.). Other reports 2 Sep – 4 Oct.

Nashville Warbler: 1 at Twin Lakes in Gunbarrel, Boulder, 13 – 20 Nov (Leslie S., m.ob.). Other reports 9 Aug – 13 Oct.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER: 1 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 3 Oct (Mark Peterson).

MOURNING WARBLER: 1 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 27 Aug (Glenn Walbek, Mark Peterson). 2 at Mitchek Ranch, Cheyenne, 29 Aug (Mark Peterson, Glenn Walbek).

Hooded Warbler: 1 at Rocky Ford SWA, Otero, 22 Oct (David Dowell, Joey Kellner, Kathy Mihm Dunning).

Bay-breasted Warbler: 1 at Prewitt Res., Washington, 8 – 9 Sep (group led by Joey Kellner, Glenn Walbek, m.ob.).

Blackburnian Warbler: 1 at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, 11 Sep (Glenn Walbek). 1 at Grandview Cemetery, Larimer, 28 – 30 Sep (David Leatherman, m.ob.). 1 at Barr Lake SP, Adams, 7 Oct (Megan Miller).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 2 at Colorado River SP (Fruita section), Mesa, 11 – 16 Nov (Mike Henwood, m.ob.). 1 in Pueblo, Pueblo, 15 – 30 Nov (Brandon K. Percival, Paul Hurtado, m.ob.). 1 in Arvada, Jefferson, 26 Nov (Lorraine Lanning). Other reports 13 Aug – 10 Sep.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: 1 at Pastorius Res., La Plata, 20 Aug (James Beatty). 1 at Stulp Ranch near Lamar, Prowers, 5 Oct (Jane Stulp). 1 at Waterton Canyon, Jefferson, 19 Oct (Tom Wilberding). 1 at Skunk Creek / Basemar in Boulder, Boulder, 13 – 15 Nov (William Kaempfer, m.ob.).

Palm Warbler: 1 at Upper Queens Res., Kiowa, 10 Sep (Steven Mlodinow). 1 in Englewood, Arapahoe, 7 Oct (Art Hudak). 1 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 8 Oct (Mark Chavez, Frank Farrell). 1 at Flagler Res. SWA, Kit Carson, 12 Oct (Mark Peterson). 1 at DeWeese Res., Custer, 23 Oct (Rich Miller).

Yellow-throated Warbler: 1 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 22 – 24 Sep (Brandon K. Percival). 1 in Colorado Springs, El Paso, 12 Oct (David Tønnessen). 1 at University of Colorado campus (Oct 27 – 29) and then at Skunk Creek / Basemar

(Nov 6) in Boulder, Boulder (Nick Moore, David Dowell, m.ob.). 1 in Lakewood, Jefferson, 19 Nov (Tyler Roberts). 1 at Pueblo City Park, Pueblo, 19 Nov – 14 Dec (Mark Yaeger, m.ob.).

Black-throated Gray Warbler: 1 at Skunk Creek / Basemar in Boulder, Boulder, 13 Nov (William Kaempfer, Loch Kilpatrick). Other reports 1 Aug – 10 Sep.

Black-throated Green Warbler: 1 at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, 7 – 9 Sep (Brandon K. Percival). 1 at Arapahoe Bend NA, Larimer, 24 – 25 Sep (Michael McCloy, Danny Montalvo, m.ob.). 1 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 1 – 6 Oct (Dean Shoup, Tim Smart, Joey Kellner, m.ob.). 2 at Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, 5 Oct (Mark Peterson).

LECONTE'S SPARROW: 1 south of Seibert, Kit Carson, 18 Oct (Glenn Walbek). 1 at Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, 20 Oct (Mark Peterson).

Fox Sparrow (Red): 1 in Fort Collins, Larimer, 8 – 10 Oct (David Wade). 1 north of Kit Carson, Cheyenne, 12 Oct (Mark Peterson). 1 north of Durango, La Plata, 15 – 18 Oct and 26 Nov (Amanda and Jason St. Pierre). 1 in Durango, La Plata, 20 – 21 Oct (Ryan Votta). 1 at deKoevend Park in Centennial, Arapahoe, 8 – 10 Nov (Jared Del Rosso).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: 1 in Centennial, Arapahoe, 2 – 3 Oct (Jared Del Rosso).

Harris's Sparrow: 1 north of Craig, Moffat, 19 Nov (Jan Leonard). 1 in Craig, Moffat, 20 – 22 Nov (Judith Orton, Jan Leonard).

Swamp Sparrow: 1 at Loudy-Simpson Nature Trail in Craig, Moffat, 18 Oct (Jan Leonard). 1 at Lake George, Park, 20 Oct – 11 Nov (group led by David Elwonger and Diane Luck, m.ob.).

Evening Grosbeak: 4 north of Kim, Las Animas, 26 Oct (Glenn Walbek). 2 in Lamar, Prowers, 16 – 17 Nov (Janeal W. Thompson). 1 northwest of Fort Morgan, Morgan, 26 Nov (Myron Gerhard).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: 150 at Elevenmile Res., Park, 25 Nov (Ryan and Jack Bushong).

PURPLE FINCH: 1 in Stratton, Kit Carson, 17 Oct (Glenn Walbek).

Cassin's Finch: 1 near Arriba, Lincoln, 25 Sep (Glenn Walbek). As many as 4 at Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, 29 Sep – 13 Oct (Mark Peterson, Glenn Walbek). 1 at Ramah Res. SWA, El Paso, 30 Sep (David Tønnessen). 2 south of Ninaview, Las Animas, 18 Oct (Tyler Stuart). 4 north of Kim, Las Animas, 26 Oct (Glenn Walbek). 4 at Cottonwood Canyon, Baca, 6 Nov (Janeal W. Thompson). 5 at Plum Canyon, Otero, 22 Nov (Stanley Oswald). 2 at Vogel Canyon, Otero, 25 Nov (Kathy Mihm Dunning).

Common Redpoll: 1 at Pawnee NG, Weld, 29 Oct (Gene Rutherford). 1 near Stagecoach SP, Routt, 31 Oct (Tresa Moulton). 2 at Stulp Ranch near Lamar, Prowers, 8 Nov (Jane Stulp). 1 at North Sterling Res., Logan, 16 – 18 Nov (Aaron Yappert, William Kaempfer, John Vanderpoel). 1 at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, 18 Nov (David Tønnessen). 1 at Vogel Canyon, Otero, 25 Nov (Kathy Mihm

Common Redpoll, Pueblo County, 30 October 2017. Photo by Janeal Thompson

Dunning). 35 at Crow Valley CG, Weld, 28 Nov (David Leatherman). 1 at Pawnee NG, Weld, 28 Nov (Steven Mlodinow). 4 at Rocky Ford SWA, Otero, 30 Nov (David Dowell). Other reports from 12 different locations in Adams, Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld, 6 – 24 Nov.

Red Crossbill: 1 at Ramah Res. SWA, El Paso, 13 Aug (David Tønnessen). 1 at Two Buttes SWA, Baca, 17 Aug (Austin Hess, Joshua Smith, Caleb Strand, David Tønnessen, Nick Komar). 4 at Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 1 Oct (Joey Kellner, Dean Shoup, Tim Smart). 1 at Jackson Res., Morgan, 12 Oct (David Dowell). 1 at Fox Ranch, Yuma, 14 Oct (group led by William Kaempfer). 20 in Stratton, Kit Carson, 19 Oct (Glenn Walbek). As many as 32 at Glenmere Park in Greeley, Weld, 19 Oct – 21 Nov (Nick Moore, Steven Mlodinow). 1 at John Martin Res., Bent, 21 Oct (Joel and Dale Adams). 6 at Flagler Res. SWA, Kit Carson, 24 Oct (Bruce Neuman, Mark Amershek). 1 north of Kim, Las Animas, 26 Oct (Glenn Walbek). 5 in Pawnee NG, Weld, 29 Oct (Gene Rutherford). 13 at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, Prowers, 30 Oct (Janeal W. Thompson). 3 at Stulp Ranch near Lamar, Prowers, 28 Oct (Jane Stulp). 8 in Ovid, Sedgwick, 5 Nov (Steven Mlodinow, David Dowell). 2 in Fort Morgan, Morgan, 9 Nov (Nick Moore). 30 in Julesburg, Sedgwick, 9 Nov (Nick Moore). 4 at Picket Wire Canyon, Otero, 19 Nov (Jonathan Lautenbach). 13 at Plum Canyon, Otero, 22 Nov (Stanley Oswald).

White-winged Crossbill: 6 near Franktown, Douglas, 12 Aug (Kathy Dressel). 1 near Evergreen, Jefferson, 26 Sep (Chuck Aid). 2 near Ridgway, Ouray, 24 Oct (Ira Sanders).

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Red Crossbill, Prowers County, 30 October 2017. Photo by Janeal Thompson.



Sabine's Gull, San Miguel County, 18 November 2017. Photo by Brenda Wright.

Update on Forty Years of Birding in Colorado

PETER R. GENT

I arrived in Colorado on September 1st, 1976 and have lived in Boulder ever since. I wrote an article about birding in the first year after I arrived, which was published in Volume 13, Issue 1 of *Colorado Birds* in 1979. Now 40 years later, I thought it was time to write an update of that article because I am frequently asked what has changed in Colorado birding and birds since that time.

There are two large changes in birding over those 40 years. The first is the sheer number of active birders now compared to 1976. I was lucky to quickly become part of a reasonably sized group of birders in Boulder, which was less than ten. I was first taken to Sawhill and Walden ponds by Cathy and Bruce Boswell, who now live in Fort Morgan, and soon met Jeannie Conry and Bruce Webb, who lived in Chatauqua. Steve Larson, who is still active, was also in the group. On my first trip to Barr Lake in late September I met Bob Andrews who I birded with recently in Boulder County. However, the number of active Colorado birders now is surely more than twenty-, if not more like forty-times the number in late 1976.

However, even more revolutionary since that time is how birders communicate with rare bird sightings and birding matters in general. In the late 1970s people went to the far eastern plains for the day or over a weekend. If a rare bird was found on these trips, then the person might call some friends over fixed land lines when they returned on Sunday evening, or more likely on the Monday. Really rare birds would be documented on a hand-written rare bird form and mailed by snail mail to the CFO Records Committee chairman. On the first weekend of October, 1976 I went for the first time to Bonny Reservoir with a small group of friends. On Sunday October 3rd, we were lucky enough to see a Groove-billed Ani near Highway 385 just west of the reservoir. I was told that this was so rare a sighting that birders on the Front Range had to be informed. So, we drove over 30 miles to a phone booth in Burlington to call some people. I think several birders drove out the next day to try to see the bird, but without success. When we returned, I was informed about the Records Committee and rare bird forms, and in due course submitted my first documentation to that committee.

Compare that to when a rare bird is found now. With cell phones and the email listserv COBirds, I can learn of a sighting sometimes less than a minute or two after the bird is found and identified!! How sweet and convenient is that?! I can be off to try to see the bird in a very short time. This makes seeing rare birds in either Boulder County or Colorado so much easier and more efficient than it was forty years ago. The main reason is that the quicker one arrives at the scene of a rare bird sighting, then so much greater the chance one has of seeing the bird. In the late 1970s, one really had to mostly find rare birds oneself or with friends.

Whereas now, most of the rare birds I see are found by others who I may know, but quite likely do not. Think “Purple Sandpiper”, “Red-breasted Sapsucker”, and “California Quail” to name a few recent examples of birds I’ve seen in Colorado found by people I didn’t know.

The other question I am frequently asked is have the Colorado bird distributions changed in the last 40 years? The answer is clearly ‘yes’, and the distributions are now much better known because of the Lat long Study in the 1980s and the two Breeding Bird Atlases that have been published more recently. For example, it was in 1981 that Ron Ryder and his students first documented Boreal Owl near Cameron Pass, and breeding there in 1982. The reason was that Cameron Pass used to be unpaved and closed in winter but was paved in 1980. In addition, the first Breeding Bird Atlas documented that Barrow’s Goldeneye breeds in the Flattops Wilderness area, and the second Breeding Bird Atlas documents that Lucy’s Warbler breeds in the southwest corner of Colorado. I was one of the people who rushed down to Rocky Ford in 1996 when the first Eurasian Collared-Doves were seen, just in case they were never seen in the state again! I also went to a feeder in Niwot when the first one showed up in Boulder County; now they are frequently the first species I see when I leave my house! Their rapid spread west and north across North America mirrored their rapid spread west and north across Europe in the 1940s and 1950s; an amazing expansion in the bird’s range over the past 80 years.

In the late 1970s, Great-tailed Grackles were rare in the San Luis Valley, and I remember a Lat long trip to document them occurring at Ice Pond in Buena Vista: now, I see them frequently in Boulder County, often in large numbers. White-winged Doves used to be rare in the 1970s, but now they are common in the Pueblo area, and small numbers breed in the northern Front Range such as Boulder County. My article 40 years ago talks about seeing the first Lesser Black-backed Gull in Colorado in 1977. Now they are quite common in winter, with several being seen at the same time at some large Front Range reservoirs. Great Black-backed Gull was first seen in Colorado in 1980, but now a few are seen every year, and the same individual spent 13 consecutive winters hanging out at Pueblo Reservoir. The first record for Glossy Ibis was in 1986 but now they are expanding westwards, and several are seen annually throughout Colorado.

In several regions around the Northern Hemisphere, it has been documented that spring migration is occurring earlier than it used to as Earth’s climate warms. Is that also occurring in Colorado? I haven’t done a thorough study of this, but my impression is that there is so much variability in Colorado weather, especially in spring, that I haven’t noticed the migration occurring earlier. As with changes in the climate in general, it is more difficult to be certain that there is a significant trend occurring when the natural variability is large. However, what I have noticed is that the Colorado winters are milder than they were 40 years ago, with less frequent really cold air outbreaks that last for several days. For the birds, this means that more species are being seen in December before

cold weather forces them to go south. For example, water birds such as grebes, Double-crested Cormorant, and American White Pelican hang around longer before the lakes freeze over. In addition, birds like White-throated Swift, Band-tailed Pigeon, and Lesser Goldfinch are being seen in small numbers throughout the winter, although the last species might be aided by more people feeding birds in winter.

However, there have been more subtle changes in bird distributions that I can't account for by blaming the weather. Forty years ago, one had to go to Cottonwood Canyon or Two Buttes in southeast Colorado in order to see Eastern Phoebes. Then, quite suddenly they were nesting along the Front Range south of Chatfield Reservoir. Only about 2 years after I saw my first one in Boulder County, they were found breeding there, and now there are at least 10 pairs breeding in the County in very conspicuous locations. What caused that, when other eastern species such as Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, and Northern Cardinal have not made the same move to the Front Range? In the late 1970s, Eastern Bluebirds were only regularly seen in far eastern Colorado. Now, thanks to Christian Nunes, I know where they breed in Boulder County. Were they nesting in the county 40 years ago but unknown, or have they spread westwards as a breeding species? Also in the late 1970s, Mississippi Kites were regularly seen only in Lamar but now they have spread north to Sterling and west along the Arkansas River to Pueblo and thence north to Colorado Springs. Black Phoebe has also expanded its range in Colorado significantly over the past 40 years. Sadly, Prairie Grassland species have seen a significant decline over the last 40 years, with species like the iconic Mountain Plover becoming much harder to find than they were, although the first Breeding Atlas documented them in more places in the central plains than was known before. However, even 10 years ago no-one would have believed that Baird's Sparrow was a regular breeder in Colorado grasslands.

The number of species well documented in Colorado has increased greatly over the last 40 years and is now over 500. I think this is mostly due to the much larger number of birders covering nearly all areas of the state at all times of the year. There have been some amazing sightings of truly unexpected species that I have been privileged to see over the last 40 years. What was that Pyrrhuloxia, a bird of the southwest deserts, doing at 9500 feet elevation just north of Kenosha Pass? Along the Front Range, I have seen a Tropical Parula in Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins, a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, a Brambling and Garganey in east Boulder and a Ross's Gull at Cherry Creek State Park in southeast Denver. Further afield, I have seen a Black Skimmer and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher in the Arkansas River Valley (both found by Duane Nelson), and on the West Slope a Lawrence's Goldfinch in Grand Junction and a Harlequin Duck in Durango. Most recently, what was a Golden-crowned Warbler, a species that is usually only seen in very small numbers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in winter, doing in spring out on the Colorado Plains? Thanks

from me, and well over 100 other birders, go to Glenn Walbek for finding this bird that wasn't on anyone's radar, as far as I know.



Golden-crowned Warbler, Cheyenne County, May 2018. Photo by Bill Maynard.

I have spent countless hours and days with many of Colorado's delightful birders. However, I have one axe to grind with their use of some words. Many, if not most, say they "need" a bird that they haven't seen, and then say they "got" it when they see it. This always smacks of a pure listing mentality to me, that always grates with me. I "need" to win the Colorado lottery, and then could give lots to bird and environmental organizations when I "got" the money, but that seems very unlikely. I always try to remember to say that I would like to see a bird, and then that I saw and/or heard it when my eyes and/or ears detect it. End of beef.

Peter R. Gent, 55 S 35th St, Boulder, CO 80305

The Hungry Bird: European Earwig

DAVID LEATHERMAN

Every piece of “fake news” has an originator: politician, big money donor, newscaster, kid in a junior high hallway, anonymous source, plea bargainer, snitch, Pliny the Elder. Yes, the Roman author who attempted in the first century A.D. to synthesize all knowledge of living things into his famous *Naturalis Historia* is perhaps the first person to put on paper a persisting urban legend about earwigs. Contrary to what he wrote, no matter how authoritative Latin sounds, they do not routinely crawl in our ears and burrow into our brains, sometimes leading to death. They are physically harmless (pinches and phobias don’t count) to humans. Also, going against his “truth”, the cure for such unwanted entries into our ear canal, which certainly might happen on rare occasions, is not “...make no more ado but spit into the same (i.e. “eare”), and it will come forth anon.” (Holland 1601, Murphy 2004, Bostock). Were he still alive, Pliny would go viral daily. Can you imagine his YouTube productions?

The origin of the term “earwig” is disputed. It might derive from Old English translations of the words ear (“eare”) and beetle (“wicga”). This version of the term is attributed to Swedish entomologist Charles DeGeer (DeGeer, 1773). It might come from the fact that the shape of unfolded hind wings resemble that of a human ear, thus, “ear wing”. Then there are the writings of Pliny the Elder. Suffice it to say “ear” is in there somewhere.

Earwigs are in the order Dermaptera, which means “skin wing”, traceable to the forewings being reduced, below which protrude the transparent hindwings. This order, comprised of 2000 species occurring worldwide except for Antarctica, is mostly predaceous on other small insects. However, when insects are scarce, many species feed on plant foliage, flowers, and fruits. Thus, while they cannot hurt us, they might chew something we eat or otherwise value. A few non-North American species are parasites of bats and rodents. Many earwig species tend to their young. Most secrete noxious substances of use in their defense (Borror 1964, Eaton 2007).

The subject of this article is the European Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*), introduced into northeastern North America in the early 1900s (Eaton, 2007). It is by far our most abundant and commonly observed earwig in Colorado. Other earwig species on this continent are generally obscure, occurring mostly along beaches, on manure, and sometimes in stored food materials or plant roots (Borror 1964). The Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity at Colorado State University contains specimens collected in our state of three species of earwig, all introduced from Europe (Kondratieff pers. communication). In addition to the European Earwig, our eastern counties have produced specimens of the Ring-legged Earwig (*Euborella annulipes*) and *Labia minor*. Both are somewhat

familiar in appearance to the European Earwig and mostly have the same habits (Engel 2003).



Figure 1. *Male European Earwig showing reddish head, “see-through” tegmina, and distinctive caliper-like cerci. Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins. Photo by David Leatherman.*

Adult European Earwigs are about 16mm long, dark brown with reddish heads. They have reduced, clear forewings (tegmina), exposing the hindwings. Perhaps their most famous feature is a pair of cerci (also called “forceps” or “pincers”) at the rear of the abdomen (Figure 1). When an earwig is handled, the cerci can produce a pinch leading to at least part of their “creepy” reputation. Earwigs undergo incomplete metamorphosis and, thus, have three life stages: egg, nymph, and adult. Five molts are required to reach full size. Earwig nymphs are usually lighter in color, being whitish immediately following a molt (Figure 2).

The European Earwig is mostly predaceous, feeding on small insects like aphids and other arthropods. It is usually found near the ground, hiding by day in all manner of dark, moist places, inside rolled leaves, under debris, behind flaps of loose plant bark.

It is generally considered a pest because plants and crops important to humans are within its diet. They feed on lettuce, certain flowers, tender leaves of tree seedlings, and other plant parts on



Figure 2. *Male American Robin with food for delivery to young that includes at least one pale, freshly-molted European Earwig. Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins. Photo by David Leatherman*

occasion. Finding one among corn ear tassels (there's that word "ear" again) is not something most people relish.

Another potential negative associated with earwigs is their tendency to be attracted to food provided at bird feeding stations. One solution provided on-line involved a straight-sided container filled with 3-5cm of cinnamon suspended between the earwig access point and the feeder (<https://www.thriftyfun.com/tf44353309.tip.html>). The reader is directed to the CSU Extension Fact Sheet 5.533 regarding management of other problematic earwig issues in the home and garden.

But by objective analysis, despite their reputation deserved or otherwise with us, earwigs are mostly beneficial. Preying on insects we often consider pests is one of them. Another is their place in the diets of birds. When the insects or their acrid exudates are purposefully rubbed on feathers by birds, a third benefit might be the prevention/reduction of ectoparasites (Waldbauer, 1998).

The extensive Birds of North America (BNA) database overseen by Cornell University unfortunately no longer supports key word searches. Before current "upgrades", searching for the word "earwig" might well have produced some hits in the "Diet and Foraging" portion of its 700+ accounts. In researching this article, random checks of logical bird species accounts in BNA produced few direct references to earwigs. A similar query of the internet for "birds eating earwigs" revealed much more in the way of photos and anecdotes. The following is a summary of web nuggets mined from the ore, followed by my personal experiences.

Given that earwigs were introduced to Colorado by humans, probably in the 1950s, and that they do best in moist, plant-dominated habitats like gardens and areas of ornamental and native trees, the list of birds known to eat them makes sense (Cranshaw 2014). Wrens are prominent earwig eaters (Johnson 2014). So are chickadees, nuthatches, bluebirds, thrushes, mimic thrushes, creepers, and woodpeckers.

In the way of specific anecdotes, photographer T. Grey has a wonderful photo of an American Pipit in Palo Alto, CA with an earwig in its beak (Grey, 2018). Rick Derevan's Flickr page shows an adult Nuttall's Woodpecker delivering a load to nestlings in the Morro Bay area of California (Derevan, 2018). The Dutch photographer Roeselien Raimond, obviously lying prone on a lawn, captured a wonderful birds'-eye-view of an adult European Starling introducing earwigs to a gaggle of adoring dependents (Raimond, 2018). Reinhardt Rose comments about a Northern Mockingbird following him as he mows his overgrown lawn following vacation. The bird's attraction was to myriad earwigs now revealed down in the turf. Allan Block's blog titled "Feather Tailed Stories" nicely

portrays both a Red-breasted Nuthatch and a fledgling Eastern Bluebird holding earwigs in their mandibles (Block, 2013).

My personal anecdotes involve both American Robins (Figure 2) and House Wrens providing European Earwigs to their young at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins.

During summer 2017 House Wrens took up residence in an old apricot tree growing along the irrigation ditch that flows north-to-south through Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins. Depending who one talks to, the tree is either



Figure 3. Parent House Wren bringing adult European Earwig to nest cavity in an apricot tree along the irrigation ditch north of the Grandview Cemetery entrance, 26 June 2017. Photo by David Leatherman.

“decadent and in the way” or “has character”, and if you ask me, is also a valuable habitat for cavity-nesting birds. Those in favor of the tree’s removal belong to the cemetery maintenance crew who frequently have to maneuver (i.e. squeeze past) maintenance vehicles and carts of debris between the tree and a security fence. The foremost champion of the tree is the City Parks Director who oversees the cemetery operation and likes the way the somewhat gnarly, bent over, sterile apricot looks. Then along comes yours truly who finds nesting House Wrens. Cemetery crew, you are outvoted 2-1 (8-1 if the wrens are registered).

Between 25 and 28 June 2017 I spent several hours standing quietly by the tree photographing food deliveries by the parent wrens to their brood of four young (Figures 3 and 4). An estimated 75% of the biomass fed to these nestlings toward the end of their time in the dark (they had fledged by 4 July) was earwigs! Other

items included spiders, harvestmen (“daddy-longlegs”), moth bodies, caterpillars, a fly, and a few UFOs (unidentified food objects).

So, earwigs are a mixed bag, but one that clearly does not include the hyperbole of Pliny the Elder. Yes, ears are part of the story. Brains, too, but only in the sense that birds are smart to recognize them as food, and us to encourage a few wrens to hang in the yard if we loathe earwigs. Rest easy, birds and birders, your gray matter is safe.



Figure 4. Adult House Wren with a trio of earwig nymphs for its nestlings at Grandview Cemetery, 26 June 2017. Photo by David Leatherman.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Hybridization Among *Aechmophorus* Grebes and Implications for Identification



STEVEN G. MLODINOW AND TONY LEUKERING

All photographs by Steven G. Mlodinow

The *Aechmophorus*¹ grebes, Western (*A. occidentalis*) and Clark's (*A. clarkii*), are among the most distinctive breeding-bird species of Colorado, with their relatively large size and striking plumage. Western Grebe is a widespread breeder on larger water bodies in the state (Ortega, 2016a), while Clark's Grebe is rare in Colorado in the breeding season away from the eastern plains (Righter et al., 2004; Ortega, 2016b).

Western and Clark's Grebes were considered color morphs of a single species until they were given separate species status (AOU 1985) based on evidence that these taxa had a high degree of assortative mating (Ratti, 1979; Nuechterlein, 1981) and a strongly bimodal distribution of visual characters (Storer and Nuechterlein, 1985). Reproductive isolation appears to be based on differences in vocalizations (Nuechterlein, 1981; Nuechterlein and Storer, 1982) rather than other aspects of the complex courtship displays, which seem identical in the two species (Nuechterlein and Storer, 1982). Supporting this conclusion is that hybrids with vocalizations of one species or the other were far more likely to find a mate (73%) than those giving an intermediate call (20%) (Nuechterlein and Buitron, 1998). Playback experiments suggest that mate choice becomes less selective late in the breeding season (Nuechterlein and Buitron, 1998), reducing reproductive isolation as a whole. Because of the near-identical structure and very similar plumage patterns of the two species, particularly in basic plumage, hybridization between the two species can result in an identification quandary for birders.

Rates of hybridization among Aechmophorus grebes

The rate of hybridization can be indirectly measured by the percent of mixed pairs in a population. This rate was found to be 1.2% in Utah (Ratti, 1979) and 1.1% at Tule Lake, California (Nuechterlein, 1981). A more-direct, but more-

¹ From the ancient Greek meaning "spear-bearer"

difficult, assessment of that rate can be obtained by determining the number of hybrids at individual locations. The percentage of *Aechmophorus* grebes appearing to be hybrids at breeding locations include 1.5% in Manitoba (Eichhorst and Parkin, 1991), \approx 3% in Manitoba/Minnesota (Nuechterlein and Buitron, 1998), 3.2% in the Klamath Basin (Kontner, 2011), and 6.5% in northern Utah (Kontner, 2012).

There are, apparently, few or no data on rates of mixed pairs or percentage of hybrids from Colorado in the ornithological literature. On 2 July 2009, Mlodinow was able to closely observe 149 nesting *Aechmophorus* grebes at Potholes Reservoir, Grant County, Washington and found 2.5 % of pairs were mixed and 1.9% of individuals appeared to be hybrids (Mlodinow, unpubl. data).

Identification of *Aechmophorus* grebes

Storer and Nuechterlein (1985) provided what has become the standard for differentiating Clark's Grebes from Western Grebes, albeit only in alternate plumage (roughly from April into October). Western Grebe has its red eyes completely surrounded in black and a yellow-green to yellow bill with a diffusely dusky culmen. Clark's Grebe has its red eyes completely surrounded in white and a bright yellow-orange to orange bill with a sharply defined black stripe along the culmen. Ratti (1981) added the whiter sides of Clark's Grebe and, to a lesser extent, that species' paler back as useful, though not diagnostic, criteria for differentiating the two taxa. Importantly, diagnostic criteria for these species in non-breeding plumage (mostly from October into April) are murkier, with a number of field guides and other sources (e.g., Storer and Nuechterlein, 1985) vaguely stating that bill color is duller then and loreal pattern less reliable (more likely to be dusky in Clark's or show whitish in Western). Additionally, regarding individuals of both species in their first plumage cycle (which runs into/through September of their second calendar year) have less-distinct plumage patterns (Pyle, 2008): The lores can have a dusky wash, the black upperparts plumage can be mixed with worn brownish feathers, and with the back feathers having pale fringes. These birds also lack the elongated lateral crown feathers that create the flaring crown of adults. Such immature birds also sport brownish eyes as late as their first December and with some not developing the typical bright red eyes until their second September.

The criteria for identifying *Aechmophorus* grebes have been refined somewhat since the publication of Storer and Nuechterlein (1985). Below are criteria that we have worked out based on experience in California, Washington, and Colorado, and based upon discussions with our birding colleagues. The following should be read with reference to Figures 1-4.

Head Pattern

Alternate plumage: Differences in the black-and-white head pattern have long



Figure 1. This Western Grebe is in alternate plumage and shows all of the classic features of the species. The yellow-green bill has dark top and bottom edges, the red eyes are entirely enclosed in black, the hind-neck stripe is wide, the back is quite dark, and the sides and flanks are almost entirely dark. Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Jackson County, Colorado; 4 July 2014.



Figure 2. Also in alternate plumage, this Clark's Grebe exhibits the typical features of a bill that is strongly orange with a distinct dark culmen stripe, the eyes surrounded by white, red loreal stripes, thin hind-neck stripe, back noticeably paler than the hind-neck stripe, and the sides and flanks having substantial white plumage. Windsor Lake, Weld County, Colorado; 22 April 2013.

been a primary character for separating Clark's from Western Grebe. These differences are most obvious when birds are in alternate (breeding) plumage, mostly from April into October. Alternate-plumage Clark's Grebes have a black crown that does not extend onto the face, so that the eyes are totally encompassed by white. In alternate-plumage Western Grebes, the black of the crown extends onto the face, fully encompassing and "hiding" the eyes. Of note, in a small minority of alternate-plumage Westerns, the lores look diffusely gray rather than black. Additionally, during courtship displays both species lift their crown feathers, which in Western Grebes leads to white or pale gray appearing above the eye.

Basic plumage: When not in alternate plumage, the border between the dark and light is often less crisp in Western Grebes, with most having some gray or mottling in the face, lores, and/or forehead, all areas that are black during the summer. The eyes are somewhat visible in some Westerns, and a few may show white between the eye and maxilla ("upper mandible") in basic plumage. Conversely, Clark's Grebes usually maintain a sharp demarcation between black and white areas, but the black of the cap often reaches the very top or the upper rear portion of the eyes. However, a "pure" winter Clark's should not have dark in the loreal region or below the eye.

The loreal stripe (a strip of bare skin extending from the eye to the bill) is an oft-useful character that is rarely noted in the identification literature. In Clark's Grebe, the loreal stripe is nearly always brightly colored in breeding condition, varying from bright yellow to nearly red, though seeing the loreal stripe can be difficult, depending on angle, distance, and lighting. During winter, the loreal stripe can be bright, but is often dull, rarely black. In Western Grebe, the loreal stripe is never brightly colored (usually black, sometimes gray). During summer, the stripe is engulfed by the black of the face and is typically invisible. During winter, when the face is often mottled or grayish, the loreal stripe is sometimes apparent.

Bill Color and Pattern

Another standard mark for telling Western and Clark's Grebes apart is bill color. Western Grebes have dull yellow to yellow-green bills. Clark's Grebes have bright yellow-orange to orange bills, often with intense orange-red at the base of the mandible, especially during breeding season. Western Grebes never show this orange-red color. Clark's Grebes have duller-colored bills during the winter, whereas there seems little seasonal difference in this character among Western Grebes. Observers should be wary, however, of the effects of lighting, which can cause a the dull yellow of a Western Grebe's bill to gleam yellow-orange or obscure the bright coloration of a Clark's Grebe's bill. Beyond color, Western Grebes have a diffusely dusky culmen and dusky along the bottom edge of the bill; in both cases, the dark is more prominent and extensive proximally. In

Clark's Grebes, the culmen has a narrow black stripe with sharply defined edges and no dusky along the lower edge of the bill.

Body Color

Western Grebes tend to be darker overall than Clark's. When looking over a mixed flock of *Aechmophorus* grebes, the darker birds usually are Westerns and the paler ones Clark's. This distinction is mostly due to a disparity in darkness on the birds' sides, though the differences in back shading contributes. The sides of alternate-plumage Clark's Grebes often look nearly white, whereas Western Grebes are typically medium to dark gray. When in basic plumage, many Clark's are darker, decreasing the usefulness of this character. More importantly, the angle and brightness of light can wreak havoc upon the observer, causing white-sided Clark's to sometimes look wholly dusky and dark-sided Westerns to gleam as if white. To properly assess the darkness of a grebe's side, the bird should be sitting in neutral position (not preening, swimming quickly, diving, or courting) on relatively flat water in good lighting.

Hind-neck Stripe

The hind-neck stripe is narrower in Clark's Grebe than in Western. At its narrowest point, the hind-neck stripe of basic-plumage Western Grebes is 15-20 mm wide while in Clark's Grebes it is 10-15 mm wide (Pyle, 2008). Furthermore, the apparent width changes with position in both species, the stripe appearing narrower when the neck is extended. This field mark is truly adjunctive and should not be considered definitive when making an identification.

The Hybrid Issue

This portion of this essay should be read with reference to Figures 3-5 here in the text and Figures 6-7 on the back cover.

We know that Western and Clark's Grebes hybridize with each other (Kontner, 2011) and that "pure" birds will breed with hybrids. Three percent would seem a reasonable estimate of hybrids among the United States/Canada breeding populations of *Aechmophorus* grebes, given the data presented above. So, when should we consider an *Aechmophorus* grebe a hybrid as opposed to an "odd" Western Grebe or Clark's Grebe? Or simply as unidentifiable?

Kontner (2012) labeled birds (in July) as hybrids using identification criteria set forth by Storer and Nuechterlein (1985), differentiating species by 1) bill color and the presence of black or white 2) in the lores, 3) above the eye, 4) below the eye, and 5) behind the eye. If an individual displayed more than one mark at odds with identification to either species, it was considered a hybrid; individuals with only one incorrect character were left as indeterminate. Side color, loreal stripe, and width of hind-neck stripe were not considered.

Most *Aechmophorus* grebes seen in Colorado are in alternate plumage. For such birds, we mostly adopt Kontner's approach, except that we factor in side color



Figure 3. The left bird has a typical Clark's Grebe bill but has black reaching the top and rear of the eye. Additionally, the loral stripe is black and the upperparts and sides appear darker than those of its mate (right); it is obviously intermediate, thus a hybrid [in eBird parlance, "Western x Clark's Grebe (hybrid)"]. That mate looks typical of Clark's Grebe in most respects, excepting the black loral stripe, which breeding-condition Clark's should not show. The right-hand bird could (possibly correctly) be considered a Clark's Grebe, but a safer identification may be, in eBird parlance, a "Western/Clark's Grebe." This photo also nicely illustrates the typical size difference notable between males and females of the two *Aechmophorus* grebes. Most mensural characters in these species show only a small amount of overlap in ranges between the two sexes; the left bird is almost certainly the female of the pair. Upper Queens Reservoir, Kiowa County, Colorado; 10 June 2017.

and, to a lesser degree, hind-neck stripe. Therefore, an indeterminate bird by Kontner's (2011) standards that favors Western Grebe but has distinctly pale sides, we would consider as a hybrid. Likewise, a grebe with dark sides, that Kontner (2011) would have labeled indeterminate, we consider to be a hybrid. The neck stripe is added into the equation only in birds at either end of the spectrum: very wide or very narrow. Additionally, in our opinion, a brightly colored loral stripe or bright orange-red at the base of the mandible indicate the presence of Clark's Grebe genes so that a bird otherwise resembling a Western Grebe with either of these features would be considered a hybrid. Conversely, a bird resembling a Clark's Grebe with dusky along the lower edge of the mandible would be considered a hybrid. Unfortunately, genetic studies on *Aechmophorus* grebes have proved inconsistent (Kontner, 2012), and field-identification help from that realm will not be soon forthcoming.

As of 16 July 2018, there were some 188 Colorado records of Western x Clark's Grebe hybrids housed in eBird (eBird 2018). These records are scattered across 27 counties with the vast majority from the eastern plains (particularly Weld County). However, there are also records from relatively lightly-birded parts of western Colorado, such as Archuleta, Eagle, Moffat, and Montezuma counties. While the preponderance of the eBird records are from warmer seasons, the period in which the genus is most abundant in the state, there are also many.



Figure 4. This hybrid has white lores and the areas below and behind the eye is mostly white, much like a basic-plumage Clark's Grebe. However, the black along lower edge of bill and the darkness of the sides and flanks favor Western Grebe. The bill color seems intermediate. Frederick, Weld County, Colorado; 28 October 2012.



Figure 5. With dark sides, dark along the lower edge of the bill, and shading encompassing the eye, this grebe could be easily passed over as a Western Grebe. However, this bird is in alternate plumage. Thus, with the bird's eye being encompassed by dusky (rather than black) and with the spur of white just touching the eye below and in front, the possibility of the bird being a hybrid should be considered. The bill is more orange than that of a Western Grebe, and there was a hint of red (not visible in this photo) at the very base of the mandible. Windsor Lake, Weld County, Colorado; 30 April 2013.

from winter, including the bird during the 2017-2018 winter on Brush Hollow Reservoir, Fremont County, that was so widely reported as a Clark's Grebe.

Conclusion

Though considered separate species, Western and Clark's Grebes do hybridize, and hybrids likely compromise 1% to 5% of the overall *Aechmophorus* grebe population in the United States and Canada (the status in the Mexican breeding populations is unknown). The presence of hybrids turns an otherwise straightforward identification into a challenge. Identification of these grebes should be based on a suite of characters that includes facial pattern, bill color and pattern, loreal stripe and its color, and shading of sides. Even using this array of features, distinguishing between hybrids and parental species is not always possible. Therefore, any out-of-season or stray *Aechmophorus* grebe should be carefully evaluated before an identification is made.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Marshall Iliff for his review, on short notice, of a previous draft of the manuscript. We also thank the host of eBirders that continue to enlarge and refine our understanding of geographic and temporal distribution of birds.

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Figure 6. This alternate-plumage hybrid could be easily passed over as a Clark's Grebe, but for the black of the cap touching (or very nearly so) the eye both from above and behind. Additionally, the loreal stripe is black. Windsor Lake, Weld County, Colorado; 30 April 2013. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow.

Figure 7. The left bird bears a strong resemblance to Western Grebe, with darker sides and a duller bill than its Clark's Grebe mate (right). However, the bill color is rather bright and orange for Western Grebe plus there is orange-red at the base of the mandible. Once those anomalies are noticed, the white immediately below and behind the eye, dusky in front of the eye, and black above the eye lead to its identification as a hybrid. It also has an anomalous small dark ring encircling the eye and, unlike Clark's Grebe, has loreal stripe of dark feathering. Potholes Reservoir, Grant County, Washington; 2 July 2009. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow.

Can variation within the song of the American Robin be similar to the typical song of the Black-headed Grosbeak's?

ROBERT RIGHTER



American Robin, El Paso County, 26 February 2013. Photo by Bill Maynard.

On June 19, 2018 I was birding on the east side of Moraine Park, 8060 feet in Rocky Mountain National Park (40-20-52N, -105-31-7W). From the spruce-fir-ponderosa association around me, I heard a song like that of the typical Black-headed Grosbeak's (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), a song sometimes referred to as 'sounding like a revved-up American Robin's song'. I obtained a 42-second recording of the song, but when I looked in the direction of the sound all I could see were American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*). There were lots of robins in the vicinity, perhaps upward of thirty, all actively singing and moving about, some of their songs sounding similar to what was recently recorded. From an adjacent willow thicket I heard and saw one Black-headed Grosbeak.

That evening at 8 p.m. at Horseshoe Park, within Rocky Mountain National Park; (40-408-511N, -105-638-494W); at approximately 8100 feet, there was another large gathering of 30-40 robins at the Alluvial Fan pullout. All were singing, some with song patterns similar to the Black-headed Grosbeak's. All of these events were posted on June 21st to the Colorado Field Ornithologist's list serve,

COBirds, the Google listserv for Colorado Field Ornithologists. On June 24th Jim Nelson from Bethesda, Maryland responded to my post on COBirds, stating that in early June 2017 of the previous year, while in Rocky Mountain National Park he experienced the same phenomenon: hearing Black-headed Grosbeaks but only seeing American Robins. He even speculated... “whether hearing grosbeaks singing influenced song development in the nearby robins.” Coincidentally, Jim Nelson and I were both in Rocky Mountain National Park during the same time frame but during different years at a time when, presumably, young male robins would have just fledged and were eager to hear what their new voices could sound like.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Birds of North America profile for American Robin states “...it has been shown experimentally (as well as in the wild) that young males both imitate song components of neighbors as well as invent new song elements....Song elements were more similar among birds from the same location than in birds from different locations, suggesting some imitation. However, most elements of a Robin’s song (up to 85%) were found to be unique, indicating that individuals largely invent song elements.”

Conclusion

Most of the information in this paper is circumstantial and not proven, nevertheless there is a level of circumstantial information to make one start to wonder if there is any limit in the vocal range and repertoires for the American Robin? Furthermore, is there a timeframe during song development when experimental song starts to become more established? Perhaps this experimental song could lead to a regional dialect, and is there an element of fluidity in early American Robin song development where song patterns change inconsistently season to season?. There is a lot we don’t know about song development, but maybe the American Robin can show us how to proceed.

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Robert Righter, Denver Colorado

2018 Annual CFO CONVENTION

Longmont BOULDER COUNTY Colorado



175 Checklists
14 Counties
2 States

228 Species in Colorado
103 Species in Wyoming

County Stats: Species

Weld: 149	Douglas: 73
Boulder: 145	Adams: 64
Larimer: 119	Gilpin: 55
Lincoln: 108	Clear Creek: 48
Albany (WY): 103	Cheyenne: 37
Broomfield: 92	Arapahoe: 34
Morgan: 84	Denver: 18



	May 17	May 18	May 19	May 20
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No. of Species	95	185	170	206
No. Individuals	567	5,792	11,721	16,861
No. Checklists	6	48	49	72

34,941

Birds Recorded

252

Species

4

Days

2018 CFO Convention: Longmont Colorado

The 2018 Colorado Field Ornithologists Convention was held at the Best Western Plus Plaza and Convention Center in Longmont, Boulder County, Colorado from May 17 – 20, 2018. With far afield trips like the Soapstone Prairie, Pawnee National Grasslands, Brett Gray Ranch, and high elevation destinations like Gilpin County, the 2018 Convention truly covered some ground.

The Convention kicked-off with ‘arrival trips’ and a welcome picnic on Thursday evening at the Boulder County Fairgrounds. Full day field trips began on Friday and the day concluded with a happy hour and reception at the Best Western. Challenging weather that forced some cancellations and detours may have created unique bird observations as spring migrants foraged within easy view.

Another rainy day, Saturday brought both excellent birding and a full slate of interesting and educational presentations about birds at the Paper Sessions. A silent Auction was also held during the Paper Sessions. The Saturday evening Banquet was held that evening at the historic Dickens Tavern and Opera House, where our weather-weary membership was able to mingle and mix before a riveting keynote address by Dr. Scott Taylor on avian hybridization and speciation. In the spirit of celebration, three prestigious awards were presented to Diana King (for her extraordinary efforts in organizing the 2018 Convention), Ann Bonnell (Lifetime Achievement Award 2018), and Lynn Wickersham (Ron Ryder Award). Our membership further demonstrated their generosity at this event, and a hearty ‘thanks’ goes to them for their contributions for the “Pass the Hat” donations.

Sunday brought us back to our roots with full-day trips. Many took advantage of previously spotted specialties, including the legendary Golden-crowned Warbler that delighted and mystified all who were able to see it.

A hearty ‘thanks’ to the field trip leaders, CFO’s all-volunteer board of directors, our donors, and volunteers, without whom this extraordinary event would not be possible.



*Homo sapiens,
Boulder
County, 19
May 2018.
Photo by Rob
Raker.*

Keynote Address

Dr. Scott Taylor delivered the Keynote address at the 2018 CFO convention. Dr. Taylor is a new assistant professor at the University of Colorado Boulder and was previously a postdoctoral fellow at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Dr. Taylor presented some of his research on avian hybridization and speciation. He spoke about recent findings from using whole genome sequencing to study Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers and their hybrids, highlighting that the two species are very similar at the level of the genome: only six small differentiated regions distinguish the two species, and many of these are likely involved in plumage variation. Dr. Taylor also spoke about his work studying hybridization between Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees, as well as between Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees. For these species, it appears that breakdowns in metabolic function in hybrids might be playing a role in low hybrid fitness and the maintenance of species boundaries. Dr. Taylor is in the process of developing local field sites studying interactions between Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees spanning from the city of Boulder up to the Mountain Research Station on Niwot Ridge and is particularly interested in getting blood samples from potential hybrids between the two species.



Plumbeous Vireo seen during the 2018 CFO Convention, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County. 20 May 2018. Photo by Peter Burke.

Convention Contribution: Diana King

Diana King receiving her award at the banquet, 19 May 2018. Photo by Rob Raker.

Diana King was presented with an award for CFO's appreciation for her efforts on the 2018 Convention. Diana contacted every venue used for the convention, set-up tours and meetings with the people in charge of groups at every location, arranged for the picnic food, lunches and breakfasts, reserved the port-a-lets, sampled and chose all of the food items to ensure best options for the best price, kept records of contacts, helped with the contracts, communicated effectively and in a timely fashion to each person helping with the convention, and just basically made it all happen. Really, the convention wouldn't have happened without Diana; and all on volunteer time. Thank you Diana!

CFO's Lifetime Achievement Award: Ann Bonnell

As a naturalist at Roxborough SP, the guiding light of Tuesday Birders, and a relentless activist for environmental preservation, Ann has earned the love and respect of the Front Range birding community. She is, in all respects, and as CFO has written, "a person of character, who has gained the respect of birders in their community through decades of service to birders and birding."

Her father built his career in the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Her mother was a women's rights and community activist. Perhaps, it was destined that Ann would spend decades inspiring new generations of birders and frustrating agencies bent on disrupting bird habitat.

Steeped in knowledge of wildflowers and birds, Ann began volunteering at Roxborough State Park in 1986, before the park opened to the public, and was among the first park naturalists. As a seasonal staff member for more than 25 years, she became a familiar face to visitors. As a volunteer naturalist she has also filled roles at South Platte Park, Denver Botanic Gardens, and the Audubon

Society of Greater Denver. Her favorite activity is always working with bird-related programs.

Ann is a long-time member of ASGD where she continues to serve on the board. In the early days of her involvement with Denver Audubon, the office moved frequently as the Board searched for a site for a nature center. In 1999, Ann heard about an old homestead that might be available in Chatfield SP and urged the board to lease it as a permanent site for Audubon's environmental education efforts. ASGD has since renovated the homestead and it now serves the Denver metro area as the Audubon Center at Chatfield. Audubon's office is now installed at Chatfield, as well.

As an active birder, Ann has been most visible as a long-time leader of Tuesday Birders, leading 50 or so, bird outings a year. Her other birding activities include directing monthly surveys at the Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms, maintaining 49 bird boxes there, and annually documenting nesting activity. She also leads groups on the Denver, Douglas County, and Denver Urban Christmas Bird Counts.

Her environmental activities have included service as a PLAN JeffCo Board Member, a participant in the Save-the-Mountain-Backdrop-Project, and a member of the Restoration Advisory Board for the Air Force Superfund site, owned by Lockheed Martin.

In recent years, Ann has been highly visible as an active advocate in ASGD's effort to first evaluate, then halt, the Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project. The project is impacting extensive cottonwood forest, wetlands and other habitat around Chatfield Reservoir, one of the best-known birding sites on the Front Range. Ann was the first environmental voice at meetings with project proponents, and with her extensive knowledge of bird life at the reservoir, she challenged the bird impact



Ann Bonnell receiving the CFO Lifetime Achievement Award at the banquet, 19 May 2018. Photo by Rob Raker.

analysis of the Army Corps of Engineers. She is currently a dedicated member of ASGD's team that guides legal action against the Corps.

Her lifetime of work in Front Range bird education, field work, and conservation has merited CFO's Lifetime Achievement Award.

David Hill

***Ronald A. Ryder Award for Distinguished Service to Colorado Field Ornithology:
Lynn Wickersham***

As a Leader who fosters citizen science, Lynn Wickersham received enthusiastic support from a number of prestigious members of Colorado's birding community, all willing to attest to their belief that she deserved the "Ron Ryder" award. The Ron Ryder Award selection process requires the recipient to meet a set of Selection Criteria. In support of Lynn's nomination, these community members outlined how Lynn met each of these criteria.

For distinguished service to the Colorado Field Ornithologists' organization and its goals.

Lynn handled the second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (Atlas II) with enthusiasm, skill, efficiency, tact, and patience. The project represents the ultimate in field ornithology, one that involved a substantial number of CFO members plus many others in the state's birding community.

Her efforts culminated with Atlas field work completed in six years, compared with nine years for Atlas I, and yet with comparable effort and completion. She supervised the work of 26 Regional Coordinators who in turn recruited and encouraged 646 registered field workers, plus a considerable number who did not register.

Use of the Cornell website added a different and challenging level of complexity compared with Atlas I's more primitive data collection process; Lynn handled this relationship deftly. She enlisted students at Fort Lewis College to assist in data processing and data proofing.

CFO supported the project, in the journal and financially. At the CFO convention Lynn reported annually on Atlas progress and with periodic articles in the Colorado Birds journal. She beautifully produced the quarterly Atlas newsletter, featuring fabulous photos and lively stories. Each issue reported on Atlas progress and encouraged Atlasers to continue their field work, complimenting them on their prodigious contributions.

Of course she herself completed field work in a collection of Atlas blocks both in her home area around Durango as well as the under-represented or difficult-to-survey Atlas blocks in various parts of Colorado.

For scholarly contributions to the Colorado Field Ornithologists and to Colorado field ornithology.

Atlas II offers a new dimension of scientific data available to researchers, environmental consultants, government agencies, conservationists, and birdwatchers. Although Atlas II stands alone, the comparison with Atlas I provides valuable and unique information on population and geographic trends. It will have an important impact on, and contribution to, the conservation of Colorado birds.

For sharing knowledge of Colorado field ornithology with the people of the state of Colorado.

Even before completion and proofing of field work, the project was made available to the public (on its website) preliminary range and status maps. The project recorded 265 confirmed breeders in the state (271 in Atlas I). It has 265,776 species reports (86,707 in Atlas I).

She completed an incredible amount of work in order to complete the project: supervising windup of field work data, documentation and processing rare bird reports, and preparing the final products. The products consist of two major items: the book, *The Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas*, and an on-line website. Putting together the Colorado book required imagination and coordination with Species Account authors, special section authors, book designer, and publishing agency.



Lynn Wickersham receiving the Ronald A. Ryder Award for Distinguished Service to Colorado Field Ornithology at the banquet, 19 May 2018.

Photo by Rob Raker.

The website makes raw Atlas data and specific parts of the data (species, geographical sections, habitat) available to researchers and users.

All in all, she has performed extremely well and supervised a complex project that involved many people and many new ideas. Lynn follows in Ron's footsteps by involving and embracing people of all backgrounds to participate in and to support this prodigious, historic, and significant paragon of Colorado field ornithology.

Hugh Kingery



Bay-breasted Warbler seen during the CFO Convention, Boulder County, 18 May 2019. Photo by Rob Raker.

Cheyenne County, Golden-crowned Warbler

GLENN WALBEK



May 15, 2018, was a glorious day! Working outside on the eastern plains of Colorado affords one with opportunities. Opportunities to witness some interesting birds, bird behavior, movements, and so forth. This has been my job and career over the past 4 years. Not only do I get to see badgers, swift foxes, prairie-chickens, Sandhill Cranes, grassland birds, shorebirds, and the like, but also birds using unexpected habitats, insane numbers of staging, wintering and migrating birds, storm fallouts, seasonal arrivals and departures, and rarities. Experiencing these avian spectacles throughout the years has been amazing. But May 15, 2018 takes the cake.

I have a protocol for surveying wildlife, mostly birds, in and around a study area; a slab of ground where wind-powered turbines could help slow global warming (ha) and make folks some money while harnessing the seemingly relentless wind that blows there. I had finished working Kit Carson County survey points late in the afternoon. I was off the clock! Should I go back to my room and take a nap?

Wait, it is May 15th and there was still 2.5 hours of daylight left! Besides, I was already having a good day. Earlier, at a small woodlot south of Burlington, smack dab in the middle of my study work site, I saw and photographed a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird and a White-eyed Vireo. At the Burlington water treatment plant, a Laughing Gull. All very nice birds that should be further east. I figured there must be some other seasonal goodies out there. When you work on the plains you have 'spots' to check for goodies: places you have seen and heard rare birds in the past, or places you know may host a gem on the right day. Mitchek Ranch is one of those spots.

Mitchek Ranch is no longer owned by the Mitchek family, but the name has endured. It's a patch of mixed trees, running water, ponds, understory and prairie grass. And it's in the middle of nowhere, Cheyenne Co. My birding companions and I have birded there for many years and have found some lovely rarities. But that is for another article. I was only about 30 minutes away, so that was where I decided to spend the end of the day.

I arrived at Mitchek and I left my truck without my camera. With some superstition, I have learned that leaving a camera is the best way to ensure I'll find something good. While walking untethered along County Road 9, one of the first birds I saw was a female Hooded Warbler in the chokecherries along the roadside swale. This was a good bird, good enough to make me immediately returned to the truck to grab my camera. I wouldn't want to miss a chance to photograph a Northern Parula, Black-And-White Warbler, Fan-tailed Warbler, etc. So, with camera in tow I went looking for more birds. Bird activity was high, always exciting when your drug of choice is glassing birds. I had noticed some movement, low in another patch of chokecherry bushes. I pushed up a Wilson's Warbler. No need to lift my camera. Next I pushed up a small, yellow bird with a yellow-orange central crown stripe, bordered on both sides by dark lateral stripes, grayish-olive-colored back and face, and broken, pale eye ring. Huh? That's not a Wilson's Warbler, I thought. *Tick, tick, tick, tick...* it's a Golden-crowned Warbler! And it's not supposed to be here! So, I started taking pictures of it. The bird was cooperative and within 30 seconds, I had several identifiable photographs, some of which were pretty good.

I stood there for several minutes in disbelief, knowing I had photographed a bird that had not been in the state before, and had only rarely been in the ABA area. This was surreal. What should I do? Try and get better photos? No, I had better let someone else know about it. I sent a text to Mark Peterson who was working further north. 'GCWA at Mitchek'. He knew my propensity for screwing up banding codes and assumed this was one of those times. He texted back, 'Golden-cheeked Warbler, Golden-crowned Warbler?' I said 'yes'. He asked if I was in Texas. Ok, this wasn't going to be easy. I elected to take a phone picture of the bird in my camera's screen and send this to several people at once. This would save time and eliminate the sarcasm and harassment I would have

received had I sent a text about such a bird without a picture. Great idea, but the cell service in this remote part of the state would not allow a photo to send. It was stuck 'sending'. Now what? I jumped in my truck and started driving towards I-70. I would drive until 'sending' became 'sent'. I drove 15 miles in the mud until 'sent' appeared. I also posted a message to Cobirds with a photo and location, while I had good cell service. The last thing you want is being hated-on by one or more of your closest 800 buddies for not telling them about a good bird. So, I got the word out.

Now what? The roads were horrible, the word was out, my relationships with the landowners with whom I work was at stake. Euphoria was turning to stress. Wait a minute, I have photos of a Golden-crowned Warbler! Euphoria returned and guided my senses.

I had to warn the homeowners living there. They had seen me birding before and always smiled and waved. But I just invited 800+ people with binoculars to their front yard. I hoped they would be understanding. I told them what was going on and what to possibly expect. They stated they were more than happy to host the many people to come, and they were.

A few hardcore birders arrived that evening, amidst thunderstorms and treacherous roads and just before dark. The bird was not seen but was heard once by ears keener than mine. The next morning a handful of birders arrived, though the roads were muddy and hazardous. At last the bird had been re-found, and the rain had stopped. This began a chain of positive sightings and reports that continued for 10 days. Birders gladly sent updates over the wires, allowing more to make the decision to wander far afield for this gem. Regarding the homeowners/renters, the many kids living there went as far as to set up a lemonade and coffee stand to capitalize on potential customers that suddenly overran their normally quiet country road. Most importantly, no one had perished on account of my Cobirds post, and I was still employed. Euphoria, or better yet, elation!

By all eBird accounts, the bird was enjoyed by well over 100 birders. Many took fabulous photos of this Central American treasure, which I narcissistically ogle from time to time on eBird. Being able to share this rare warbler with so many has been incredibly satisfying. I am still pinching myself!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to David Leatherman, whose article in the last CFO journal describes with science and levity, the potential food sources of the Cheyenne County, Golden-crowned Warbler, while precisely predicting the departure of my find. Dave was cleared (possibly unbeknownst to him), to gather the insect samples he needed, making his report possible and impressive! Thanks to Tyler Stuart who verified the grammar and corrected the humor in this article.

Golden-crowned Warbler (Basileuterus culicivorus) is a resident of Mexico, Central and South America. In Mexico, it occurs north to Nayarit to the west and Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon to the east (Phelps, et. al, 2018). Golden-crowned Warbler has occurred in the ABA area, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, and once in eastern New Mexico (Phelps 2012).

LITERATURE CITED

Phelps, J., A. M. ET AL. (2012). *Golden-crowned Warbler* (*Basileuterus culicivorus*), version 1.0. In *Neotropical Birds Online* (T. S. Schulenberg, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/nb.gcrwar.01>

Glenn Walbek

Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly

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The articles in this journal reflect the research and opinions of the individual authors. As such, the articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions or positions of the Officers, Directors, or other representatives of CFO.



Figure 6



Figure 7

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