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Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly

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Black-capped Chickadee Movements

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The Colorado Birding Trail: A Call to Adventure

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Front cover: American Robin, Ft. Collins, Larimer County, February 18, 2007. *Photo by Rachel Hopper*

A Call to Adventure

Nathan Pieplow

On February 24, in a gray and chilly Lamar temporarily cut off from the rest of the world by ferocious winds and snow, the ribbon was cut on the Colorado Birding Trail, a major ecotourism initiative that has the potential to change the way birders of all skill levels travel to Southeast Colorado.

The concept of birding trails is hardly new to most readers of this journal. Most of us have heard of the original birding trail in coastal Texas, and many of us have even birded it. We've seen the websites and the booklets, and we're all in favor of ecotourism, especially when we get to be the tourists. But many avid birders don't take birding trails too seriously in their home states. Birding trails have traditionally marketed themselves towards casual and novice wildlife watchers and those from out-of-town; we natives, on the other hand, fancy that we already know where to watch birds in Colorado. What could a birding trail really do for us?

Colorado Birding Trail Home Page. Crybaby Design

The answer is very exciting. The Colorado Birding Trail is going where few birding trails have ventured before—onto private land. Following and building on the successful model of the Texas trails, the Colorado Birding Trail has reached out to include over fifty private ranches in Southeast Colorado that have never granted access to birders before.

Did you ever wish there were more migrant traps between Two Buttes and Lamar? Well, there are—and two of them, on the Frank and Rocking 7K ranches, are now open to birders. Ever wanted to walk the upper 13 miles of Carrizo Canyon? To scan for rare shorebirds on the southern half of Lake Meredith? Need Greater Prairie-Chicken for your Kit Carson County list? How about Rufous-crowned Sparrow for Huerfano?

Hepatic Tanager for the state? All of these are accessible now, for fees of $10 or less.

Lazy UO Ranch, Colorado Birding Trail, Las Animas County. Photo by Seth Gallagher

Why are these landowners suddenly opening their doors to birders? The primary reason is the trust that they have in the Prairie Partners program at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, whose staff (Dana Ripper, Seth Gallagher and Tammy VerCauteren) has been instrumental in convincing these landowners that birders are not a frightening group, and that conservation of birds and other wildlife can have a benefit that is not merely aesthetic, but economic. To many of these landowners, prairie-dogs have traditionally meant a threat to cattle and therefore to livelihood. When prairie-dogs come to mean Mountain Plovers and Burrowing Owls and supplemental income from the birders who want to see them, that's when conservation becomes a bigger priority in the agricultural community. And that's where birders come in.

Granted, birders will never be the sole economic salvation of this struggling region of the state. But every little bit helps, and if we visit in numbers, at $10 per person per day, we could help quite a lot. It's one (good) thing to insert a bill or a check into an envelope and drop it into an impersonal little metal slot somewhere on public land. It's quite another to put that money in the hands of a rancher who lost a thousand head of cattle this winter and is wondering whether he can afford to keep from digging out the playa lake on his property so that his remaining herd might be able to drink from it year-round. Southeast Colorado is harsh country, as hard to live in as it is thrilling to visit, and we need to make sure that we support the people out there who are protecting what we want to protect. They're on the front lines of conservation, but it's up to us to back them up. Paying these entrance fees doesn't just buy us an exhilarating birding experience—it buys us allies.

To see what kind of tremendous birding potential can be opened up when a ranch grants access on the Eastern Plains, one need look no farther than the now-legendary Chico Basin Ranch, which gets hyped as a

vagrant paradise where rarities (paradoxically) abound. Does every private place on the birding trail have that kind of promise? I'm sure not all of them do. But every one has something to offer, and some are simply remarkable. The next Cottonwood Canyon, the next Two Buttes, and the next Lamar Community College woods are all somewhere out there on this trail. Without exaggeration, I can assure you that this is the single biggest opportunity for nature lovers to explore new territory in Colorado's modern history. We should take advantage of it, and we should do it this year.

Leininger Ranch, Colorado Birding Trail, Otero County. Photo by Seth Gallagher

If you haven't yet been to the CBT website (www.coloradobirdingtrail.org), you owe yourself a visit. Scott and Erika Hutchings of Crybaby Design have created one of the most visually striking websites I have ever seen. Here you will find descriptions of all the sites on the Trail, both public and private, with interactive maps, directions, photos, and contact information for all the private ranches. You'll also find a schedule of guided field trips to various properties on the CBT, running from April through June, which will provide an excellent introduction to some of these amazing places.

If you like what you see on the birding trail this year, be sure to express your appreciation to its primary sponsor, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and let them know how much you would like to see this initiative expanded from the Southeast into DOW's other three regions (Southwest, Northwest, and Northeast). While you're at it, don't forget about the project's other main partners: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Audubon Colorado, the Playa Lakes Joint Venture, Crybaby Design, and, yes, your very own Colorado Field Ornithologists. And if you visit any private ranches, express your gratitude to the landowners. They are taking an admirable risk this year, one that could benefit us, them, and the birds. Let's make sure their risk pays off.

Nathan Pieplow, 4745-B White Rock Circle, Boulder, CO 80301, 303-245-8421, editor@cfo-link.org

Explore The Colorado Birding Trail with CFO

Karval Mountain Plover festival · April 28-29

Join the CBT for the First Annual Mountain Plover festival in Karval, Colorado! Support the Karval Community and the economic development of rural Lincoln County through eco-tourism. $75 pays for birding tours, camping, and meals on Saturday and Sunday. Visit the RMBO website for more details: www.rmbo.org/moup.pdf

Landbird Migrant trip to the Two Buttes area · May 5-6

This trip is planned for the last weekend of April or first weekend of May. In addition to the usual public fallout spots along the Lamar/Two Buttes axis, we will stop at three private ranches in southern Prowers County that have extensive riparian corridors and/or woodlots. Trip leader: Peter Gent. For more information, contact Nathan Pieplow, npieplow@indra.com.

Southeast Canyonland Breeders trip to ranches east of Walsenburg in early June · June 16-17

Several ranches in the area around Apishapa State Wildlife Area have extensive habitat where one is sure to find things like Cassin's Kingbird, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Curve-billed Thrasher, Scaled Quail, Greater Roadrunner and lots of other PJ canyon and rimrock birds; there's always the possibility of finding breeding Scott's Oriole, Gray Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, Hepatic Tanager or other goodies. Trip leader: Tony Leukering. For more information, contact Nathan Pieplow, npieplow@indra.com.

Hepatic Tanager and migrants trip to ranches in the Kim area · May 12-13

This trip was a HUGE success when Mark Peterson led it for Colorado Field Ornithologists last June, and a May visit should be even better. Trip leaders: Norm Erthal and Tony Leukering. For more information, contact Nathan Pieplow, npieplow@indra.com.

La Junta area trip · April 28

Timed to take advantage of shorebird conditions on the south shore of Lake Meredith, also hitting various other good birding ranches in Otero County. Trip leader: Andrew Spencer. For more information, contact Nathan Pieplow, npieplow@indra.com.

A hiking-intensive trip into Picketwire Canyon · late May

Possibly including lodging at the Reynolds Ranch facility in the bottom of the canyon. Goal will be to walk all the way down to the dinosaur tracks, but also bird along the way. Black-throated Sparrows breed in the canyon, as do all the other southeast specialties. Trip leaders: Peter Gent and Roger Linfield. For more information, contact Nathan Pieplow, npieplow@indra.com.

The Northwest Territory: Colorado's Forgotten Corner

Norm Lewis

Colorado. In many, the name of our state evokes a powerful, perhaps even romantic, reaction. It is a place of majestic mountains, vast canyons, and sweeping prairie vistas. To those of us fortunate enough to live here, it is all of those things and more. To those of us fortunate enough to live here *and* be birders, it is much more even than that: it is the birding crossroads of America. It is a place where almost anything avian is possible. Ask a Colorado birder about birding in Colorado, and you will hear tales of eastern warblers in Baca County, the desert denizens of the canyons of Colorado National Monument, the Great Plains suite of the Pawnee National Grasslands and the spectacle of the Sandhill Cranes of the San Luis Valley. But ask about the northwest corner of Colorado, and you will likely be greeted with a look of bemusement.

The northwest corner is possibly the most "underbirded" part of Colorado. It is a region of diverse habitats and spectacular landscapes, but it is also far from population centers and main travel routes. In its isolation lies much of its appeal; field trips that will run from the upcoming convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists will visit

Membership Directory to be Published

Important notice: In the July 2007 issue, *Colorado Birds* will again publish the CFO membership directory as a removable insert. Meant to facilitate networking and communication within Colorado's birding community, this insert has traditionally listed all active members along with their cities of residence, phone numbers, and email addresses. Due to privacy concerns, the membership directory has not been published since January 2004, but we intend to reinstate it as an annual addition to the journal.

If you do not wish your contact information to be published, please inform Nathan Pieplow, editor@cfo-link.org, prior to June 1, 2007. Your name and city of residence will still appear in the membership directory.

areas that are distant from human habitation and only occasionally visited by birders. Many birders who are well-versed in the "hotspots" of Colorado have never seen some of these sites. Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge lies in about as remote a location as Colorado has to offer, while nearby Dinosaur National Monument presents a treasure trove of pinyon-juniper species in a beautiful high-altitude desert setting. North Park features Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge with its Greater Sage-Grouse and its wide variety of nesting waterfowl. Rabbit Ears Pass offers opportunities for high altitude birding, as do Trappers Lake, home of breeding Barrow's Goldeneye, and Ripple Creek Pass, above which Purple Martins soar in summer. The riparian areas of Carpenter Ranch along the Yampa River host breeding species that are difficult to find elsewhere in Colorado, such as Veery. The entire region around Craig is draped in the sagebrush sea, a habitat which is vital to many bird species, but which is under severe and increasing pressure from oil and gas field development.

Greater Sage-Grouse, North Park, Jackson County, April 13, 2003. Photo by Glenn Walbek

Come join us in Craig for CFO's annual convention, June 8-11, 2007, and witness the wonders of the birds and landscapes of northwest Colorado. Stay at the Holiday Inn for the special convention rate of $82 per night by calling (970) 824-4000 and mentioning CFO. Enjoy the local cuisine, featured in this issue's installment of "The Hungry Birder" (see page __). And top it all off with an evening with CFO guest speaker Victor Emanuel, founder of VENT (Victor Emanuel Nature Tours), who will tell us about "The Ten Best Places to Bird in the World."

See you in Craig!

Norm Lewis, President, Colorado Field Ornithologists, 852 S. DeFrame Way, Lakewood, CO 80228, president@cfo-link.org

February 3, 2007
SWCA Environmental Consultants Office
Broomfield, Colorado

Lisa Edwards, CFO Secretary

The regular quarterly meeting was held February 3, 2007 at 11:13 AM. Board members present were President, Norm Lewis; Vice President, Bill Schmoker; Secretary, Lisa Edwards; outgoing Treasurer, David Waltman; directors Jim Beatty, Cheryl Day, Rachel Hopper, Tom McConnell, Mark Peterson, Larry Semo, and Glenn Walbek. Incoming Treasurer Maggie Boswell and director Nathan Pieplow sent their regrets. The minutes of the November meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

CFO's current liquid assets are $37,844.54. The retail value of the merchandise inventory is $5,582.00. The Treasurer's report was approved.

David reviewed 3 items of interest:

1. Colorado Birds cost about $16.00/member/year to print and mail.

2. Expenses for COBirds and the website expenses were at $3700 for 2006 vs. $2500 for 2005.

3. Due revenue is about $1275 less in 2006 compared to 2005.

The board thanked David for his years of service as CFO Treasurer. Maggie Boswell will be the Treasurer going forward finishing David's term.

Committee Reports

COBirds—Mark Peterson. The list is running very well. We have over 800 subscribers. Mark mentioned that people can now subscribe to COBirds via the CFO website.

CFO website—Rachel Hopper. Discussed the possibility of linking some Colorado Bird articles to the website. Rachel is continuing to explore various options to upgrading the site and has met with several different vendors. She and Larry will develop a timeline and cost estimate for the improvements that are needed for both the CBRC and CFO websites. To approve any of the projects the entire board will have to respond when voting occurs. A section will be added to all forms of communication for donations.

Colorado Birding Trail—Rachel Hopper. Meetings are open to the public. The website is under construction. The domain is currently owed and managed by CFO. This expires in August and the DOW is planning to take it over at that time.

Colorado Birds—Rachel Hopper. Nathan Pieplow, Rachel Hopper, and Glenn Walbek have joined forces as editor, production, and photo editor respectively to produce the journal. The February issue will be mailed around the middle of the month. The production number has been increased to 600 copies per issue. The March-April issue has 3 feature articles, and several new features.

CBRC—Larry Semo. 2005 records are now being reviewed. Rachel Hopper has joined the CBRC in January replacing Brandon Percival, whose term ended in December. Peter Gent starts a new term as a member of the CBRC. He recently completed the term of an-

other person who left the CBRC early.

Special Awards—Tom McConnell. A landowner plaque has been ordered for Sheldon Zwicker, the Hooded Oriole landowner west of Cortez. Joe Roller and Norm Erthal will present the plaque to him later this spring.

Nominating Committee—Glenn Walbek. Glenn will talk with all board members who have a term expiring this year to see if they are interested in serving another term.

Field Trips—Bill Schmoker. Field trips under consideration for the coming year include Pacific pelagic trips; NE Colorado private ranches; Owl Prowl; Bohart Ranch; Gull workshop; and a Wyoming trip. The Colorado Birding Trail will also be hosting several trips beginning in April.

Project Fund/Youth Fund—Cheryl Day. Project Fund—The board approved $3300.88 for projects in 2006. Five projects were presented to the board to consider for approval. Two projects were approved: Tyler Hicks, Automated Listening Stations/Boreal Owls at $1400.00 and Kim Potter, Rosy-Finch Banding Project, Vail Mountain at $400.00. Youth Fund—Applications are due by May 30th.

Membership—Jim Beatty reported that there are 444 active members. Cheryl will interview Norm Lewis in April during the monthly Black Canyon of the Gunnison Audubon radio show. Board members are to get ideas with regards to increasing membership to Jim by April 1st.

2007 Convention—The brochure is almost ready to go. A reminder should be sent to COBirds and put on CFO's website about the need to remind the membership to reserve rooms early for the convention.

Old Business

Digital Archiving of Colorado Birds—Norm will discuss this topic with Rachel Hopper and Andrew Spencer. Mark also volunteered to work with Andrew on the project.

New Business

CBRC Chair—A motion was made and passed by the board to extend Larry Semo's term on the CBRC by one full term to December of 2010.

The next board meeting will be held in Broomfield at the SWCA Environmental Consultants Office beginning at 11 am on April 21, 2007. The board meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

CFO Emergency Meeting

February 12, 2007

On February 7, 2007, President Norm Lewis called an emergency meeting of the board of directors per article IV, section 4 of the CFO bylaws to discuss the status of CFO director Cheryl Day due to concerns about potential inappropriate conduct. The meeting was conducted electronically. On February 12, the board voted to remove Cheryl Day from her position on the CFO board of directors and from her position as chair of the Project Fund/Youth Scholarship Committee.

Norm Lewis, CFO President

Bill Schmoker

This episode of *Across the Board* profiles CFO president Norm Lewis. Norm grew up in Indiana and later attended Indiana University, where he earned a B.S. in geology. To this day he is an IU basketball fanatic, in addition to being past president of the Indiana Alumni Association of Denver. Graduate school brought Norm west to the Rocky Mountains to pursue his M.S. in geology at Northern Arizona University.

Norm began birding in 1984 while visiting his brother at the University of Louisville. Spurred by an elective ornithology class, his brother took Norm on a birding outing. The first bird out of the starting gate was a Yellow Warbler, and Norm was immediately hooked. As a newer birder, Norm went on almost all of Jack Reddall's birding outings from the Denver Museum of Natural History (now the Denver Museum of Nature & Science), and Jack became his birding mentor. When Jack stopped leading the trips in 1993, Norm took over and has continued to lead them for the last fourteen years. In addition to day trips, Norm has also led tours for the museum to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Upper Texas Coast, Southwest Florida, Monterey and the Central California Coast, Yellowstone, Nebraska's South Platte, the Inside Passage of Alaska and British Columbia, and to Bosque del Apache in New Mexico. Never one to rest on his past accomplishments, Norm is working with Leisure West Tours as they plan museum trips to Costa Rica in April and a tour of the Sierra Nevada in September. Another Inside Passage cruise for 2008 is also in the planning phases.

Norm Lewis with Grandson, Braiden

Norm has held several other key leadership positions in the Colo-

rado birding community, including terms as vice president and president of the Denver Field Ornithologists. Prior to his presidency of CFO, Norm was the organization's vice president, a role where he coordinated, organized, and led field trips. As president, Norm has spearheaded the effort to upgrade, standardize, and streamline many of the "signature operations" of CFO, including the website, *Colorado Birds*, COBirds, and CBRC online reporting. His vision has been to make much of the behind-the-scenes work of these organizational aspects more sustainable and less time-consuming for the officers, directors, and volunteers involved.

Like many of us, Norm has had a progression of memorable birding experiences since his first "zinger" bird, that Yellow Warbler. Among his birding highlights, Norm lists several first visits to famous North American birding sites: Corkscrew Swamp in Florida, the legendary Madera and Ramsey Canyons in Southeast Arizona, High Island on the Texas Coast, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge for Whooping Cranes, and sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley including Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Sabal Palm Grove, and Falcon Dam. Norm will always remember seeing certain fantastic birds in classic settings, like Great Gray Owl in Yellowstone, Harlequin Ducks in the Misty Fjords, Yellow-billed Loon in Glacier Bay National Park, and albatrosses and shearwaters with Debi Shearwater in Monterey Bay.

When his brother took Norm on a birding outing, the first bird out of the starting gate was a Yellow Warbler, and Norm was immediately hooked.

Norm has great personal news that he will be getting married in May to his companion of fifteen years, Debbie Westbrook. Debbie joins Norm on many of his adventures across North America. They have two grandchildren, Braiden (5) and Trevin (2), who occupy much of their time. Norm is proud to report that Braiden already has his first pair of "'noculars." The CFO board is sure our membership shares our thanks for his leadership and our congratulations on his upcoming wedding.

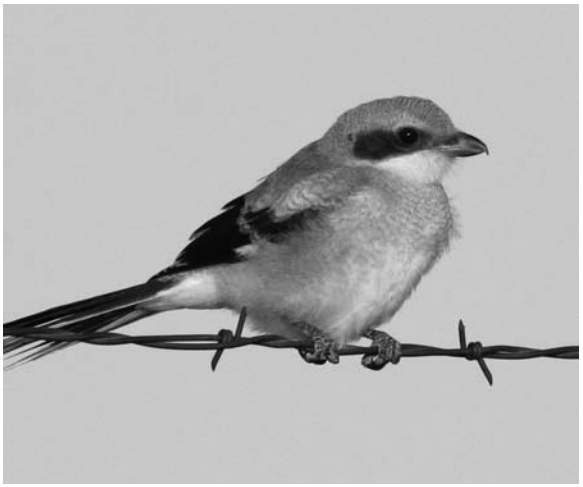
Bill Schmoker, 3381 Larkspur Drive, Longmont, CO, bill.schmoker@gmail.com

Loggerhead Shrikes in El Paso County, Colorado: A history of local abundance versus continental decline

Susan H. Craig

Overview and History

From a historic standpoint into current times, the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) has been a common summer resident on the eastern Colorado plains, breeding in sufficient numbers that early ornithologists collected numerous specimens and eggs (Aiken, 1914; Knorr, 1959; Bailey, 1965). Across much of the North American continent, however, this species has been in decline for years (Sauer, 2006; Pruitt, 2000). Many eastern states and Canadian provinces list the Loggerhead Shrike as Endangered or Threatened. In contrast, reproduction in a handful of western states has been so successful that shrikes have not only maintained population but are increasing in number. Breeding shrikes have invaded southward over recent years, nesting in some counties along the Texas Gulf Coast and the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas (Brush, 2005). Colorado currently has no conservation designation for this species, although previously it was considered a Species of Special Concern.



Loggerhead Shrike, Pawnee National Grasslands, Weld County, July 4, 2006. Photo by David Leatherman.

Depending on the reference consulted, there are from 7 to 12 subspecies of Loggerhead Shrike in North America (Miller, 1928; Phillips, 1986; Yosef, 1996; Clements, 2000; Pruitt, 2000). Continental distribution of subspecies is currently being investigated by several researchers using DNA markers (Chabot, in proc.) and isotopic anal-

ysis. The common breeding shrike in El Paso County is the Great Plains subspecies, *L. l. excubitorides*. The eastern subspecies, *L. l. migrans*, occurs from the east coast as far west as central Kansas, and is considered the most threatened. In eastern Colorado, interbreeding by these two adjacent subspecies often confounds subspecific identification.

Shrikes are early spring migrants; in mild winters, they may begin appearing on El Paso County breeding territories in late February. Nests with eggs may appear as early as mid-March (pers. obs.), although peak nesting occurs from mid-April into May (Porter, 1975; Kingery, 1998). Average number of eggs per nest is 5-6; number of chicks fledged averages 3.4 (Yosef, 1996). Survival for young shrikes is difficult; my winter studies in Texas and Florida show only 38% of young shrikes survive into their first winter.

Early nests are often lost to spring snows and hail storms, but shrikes are persistent re-nesters, rebuilding as many as three times in order to bring off a single brood. If early nesting is successful, El Paso County shrikes may rarely attempt a second brood; in the two instances observed, both nests were abandoned in mid-July when monsoonal rains began (pers. obs.).

Loggerhead Shrikes exhibit what is called aggregate breeding behavior, which is to say they form loose clusters of breeding pairs. This adaptive behavior increases survival potential in various ways: from their nearby neighbors, shrikes learn about foraging conditions and availability of acceptable nesting locations (Etterson, 2003). One such aggregate can be found east of the intersection of Dearing and Squirrel Creek Roads in El Paso County (Craig, 2002).

Numbers of breeding Loggerhead Shrikes fluctuate with weather and foraging conditions. Conforming to species preference, El Paso County shrikes prefer short-grass prairie with intermittent small trees or large shrubs for nesting. Cattle pasturage with a few stunted trees along a fence line is highly favored, and trees protected from cattle rubbing are especially attractive. During recent drought years (2001-2006), trees in some historic nesting sites died, causing shrikes to seek requisite habitat elsewhere.

Utility lines and fences are necessary as hunting perches, with adequate numbers of invertebrates and small reptiles for food. A shrike's diet consists mainly of invertebrates (Yosef, 1996), with grasshoppers and beetles topping the menu. Colorado's recent drought has been a boon for shrikes in this regard; in wet springs, young grasshoppers are susceptible to fungus, resulting in fewer arthropods and reduced reproductive success for nesting shrikes.

Fall migration begins very early for El Paso County's shrikes.

When chicks fledge in late June/early July, adult molt begins soon after, prompting local shrikes to begin moving southward in mid-July. Peak migration occurs during the first week of August (pers. obs.); on one memorable August 4th, I caught 25 birds in one day. Shrikes sometimes travel in family groups, as the attending parent (usually the female) continues to feed the chicks along the way. Late nesters, stragglers, and shrikes nesting north of El Paso County continue to pass through the area during the fall, but most are gone by October.

El Paso County's shrikes winter in eastern New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas (Miller, 1926; Yosef, 1996). Supporting this historical data, a bird I banded in Calhan during August 2001 was found dead in central Texas in November of that year. The endangered subspecies *L. l. migrans* winters farther east, along the upper Gulf Coast. In December and January, I've recaptured previously banded shrikes close to their breeding or natal areas in eastern El Paso County, but only a few remain to spend the entire winter.

Methods and Results

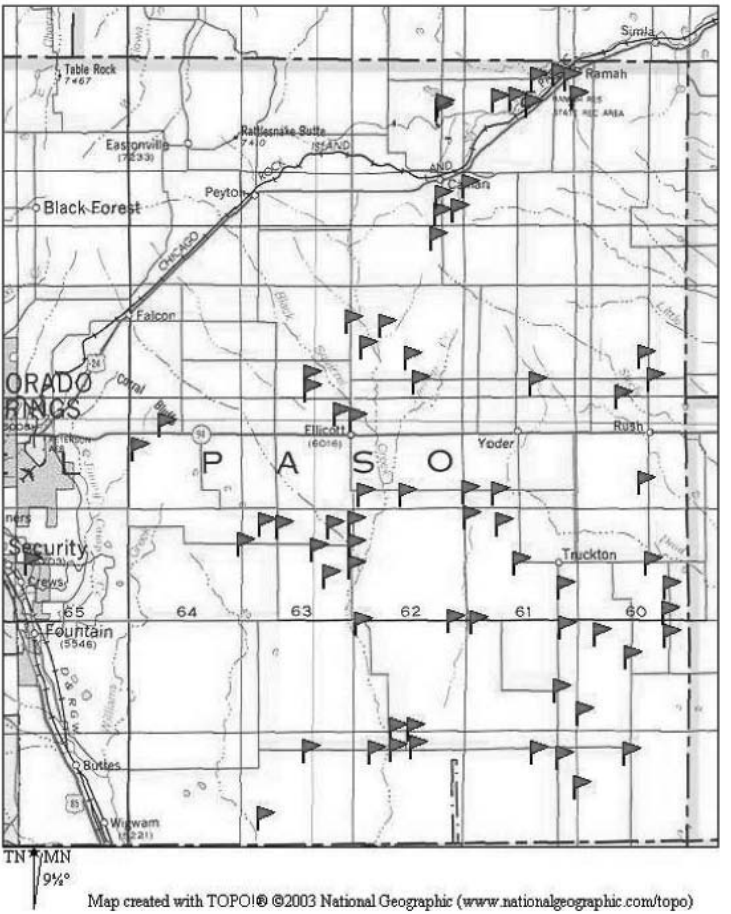
There have been numerous studies of Loggerhead Shrikes in the past 50 years; most have been observational studies of behavior, habitat, reproductive success, and the like. Not many researchers want to handle shrikes because they are vicious biters. A shrike caught in a mist net is a tough customer to untangle, and bloody fingers are usually a guaranteed result. Not only is a shrike hard to handle, but using the bander's standard bag method is unsatisfactory due to the bird's hyperactivity and exhaustive struggling.

Given these challenges, I created a small walk-in trap baited with a live mouse (Craig, 1996). The trap is deployed from the car window onto the roadside; upon seeing the mouse, the shrike enters the trap and is caught. Safe for bird, bander and mouse, and very effective, the trap is now used by shrike banders in many states, plus Canada and Mexico. For in-hand management, I use a modified toilet-paper tube to restrain the bird; this prevents the bird from thrashing and protects the bander from being bitten.

While I have banded shrikes all around the state, my primary focus has remained on shrikes nesting east of Colorado Springs. Supplemental to actual banding field work, I mapped and documented the actual number of nest sites observed since 1993, both current and historic. Nest locations (see map) represent only those that could be seen or heard from public roadsides; I did not attempt to access private property. In reality, there may well be twice as many nests as reported in this area. In 2006, a typical year, study routes totaled over 2200 miles, usually following quiet dirt roads in likely habitat.

Over the years, drought and wet weather have significantly affected reproductive success. Some years produced many breeders and fledged young; in other years there were fewer birds and chicks. As an example, due to ongoing drought, shrikes were late to arrive in 2006. In previous years, breeding territories were usually occupied by mid-April, but in 2006 very few shrikes were to be found during April. Many of the sites slowly filled during May, and breeding success was remarkably good. Most pairs fledged at least two chicks; I found three pairs that fledged five chicks.

The map indicates a significant density (86 nest sites) in El Paso County. Approximately 10% are historical sites no longer in use. The westernmost documented nest is at the west side of Big Johnson Reservoir near Widefield. Even further west, a few shrikes nest in the



southern portion of Fort Carson Army Base, which was not accessible to me due to security restrictions (R. Bunn, pers. comm.). Nests may be found in the central part of El Paso County, with density increasing east of the Ellicott Highway to the western edge of Lincoln County. Exploring adjacent counties, I've found excellent nesting habitat, but I have not found shrikes nesting in the same numbers.

Discussion

When I began this study, I expected to find a trend of decline in Colorado as indicated by some continental and eastern studies (e.g., Haas, 1987; Haas, 1989; Yosef, 1996; Lefranc, 1997; Harris, 2000; Sauer, 2005). Perhaps in response to those eastern trends published in the second half of the twentieth century, Colorado conferred a Special Concern status on shrikes that has since been revoked. Although I did find some troubling population fluctuations from year to year, my overall results follow the encouraging trends revealed by the North American Breeding Bird surveys (Sauer, 2006). Based on my study and recent BBS reports, it is apparent that shrikes are doing very well in southern Alberta, Colorado, and some nearby western states, including parts of Wyoming, North and South Dakota, central Montana, western Nebraska, and south Texas. Interestingly, these areas correspond closely to the known range of *L. l. excubitorides*, which may suggest that this subspecies enjoys an adaptive capability absent in other subspecies.

By way of contrast, as close as the Bartlesville area in northeastern Oklahoma—less than 500 miles east of El Paso County—shrikes have declined precipitously. In the 1980s, a detailed study by M. Droege (unpub.) indicated that breeding shrikes were common to abundant in typical habitat. Twenty years later, only 25% of these breeding birds remain. There has been some habitat loss due to encroaching civilization, but 75% of the habitat remains intact. The population decline in eastern Oklahoma mirrors the trend in most eastern states and provinces.

Eastern subspecies are not the only ones adversely affected. Shrike subspecies west of the Great Plains (*L. l. gambeli* and *L. l. nevadensis*) are declining also. New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, and Utah have all seen losses over several decades (Sauer, 2006). What is happening to these birds? Speculation as to the cause of this decline runs the gamut from habitat loss to pesticides, fire ants, pollution, and increased highway traffic (Haas, 1989; Lymn, 1991; Flickinger, 1993; Yosef, 2000). All these factors can be included in the equation,

but we must ask why Colorado's shrikes are doing so well while those in some nearby states are not.

We must ask why Colorado's shrikes are doing so well while those in some nearby states are not.

Could the answer to this mystery lie in the winter range and/or environmental factors? In much of Florida, liberal doses of biocides are used to control weeds and insects in lawns, golf courses and orange groves; these foraging areas are favored by shrikes in all seasons of the year. Since most prey is taken on the ground, shrikes are frequently exposed to various toxic chemicals. During a banding trip to Florida in the winter of 1997, I banded nearly 200 shrikes in two weeks. Of these birds, nearly 14% exhibited deformities of the bill, legs or feet. In contrast, Texas shrikes (of which I have banded over 500 to date) exhibited very few problems. These disturbing deformities in Florida suggest that shrikes, like other top-of-the-heap predators, may ingest more toxins due to their foraging habits. And since the cumulative effect is largely unknown, these observed deformities may be the only outward signs of serious damage to reproductive and other physiological functions.

Conclusion

El Paso County's Loggerhead Shrikes present an encouraging success story for a species whose populations are dropping across most parts of the continent. Despite some loss of habitat and fluctuating weather conditions, shrikes appear to be thriving on the eastern plains of Colorado, benefiting from an environment that most humans find inhospitable. My limited explorations into adjacent counties have not found shrikes nesting in the same densities, a fact which is perhaps explained by agricultural practices or precipitation, or by increased human habitation. In western Lincoln and Elbert Counties, ranchers seem to discourage trees from growing along fence lines, preferring a more barren open range. In northern Pueblo County, suitable trees are scarce due to arid, sandy soils. Crowley County is sparsely inhabited with fewer roads, limiting discovery of nesting sites.

A credible threat to the continued breeding success of eastern Colorado's shrikes is developmental encroachment. However, recent drought conditions with attendant wildfire hazard have slowed housing development and the creation of small (5-25 acre) ranchettes in eastern areas of the county. As the water table falls, an increasingly questionable source of water becomes a serious deterrent to home building.

Living conditions on the prairies are often harsh: hail storms, blistering heat, near-constant wind, and blizzards all contribute to

inhospitable prairie habitat. With limited annual precipitation in eastern portions of the county, El Paso County's ranchers have long understood that the high plains are suitable for raising cattle, prairie-nesting birds, and little else. These climatic limitations may serve as unintended salvation for Loggerhead Shrikes by discouraging would-be settlers from invading the prairie to build homes; in recent years many smaller 5-acre plots with trailers have been abandoned.

Another encouraging recent development is the nation's growing demand for organically-raised beef and produce. This may serve to benefit shrikes and other declining species by reducing the amount of biocides used in orchards, pasturage and open fields.

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Bird Streamer as the Probable Cause of a Bald Eagle Electrocution

Richard Harness and Gail Kratz

Abstract

Transmission lines can be susceptible to power outages caused by bird streamers, long conductive streams of bird feces. Streamers create flashovers when a large bird mutes, either perched or in flight near a transmission line tower, spanning the entire distance or a sufficient part of the distance between a grounded surface and a high voltage energized conductor. Although birds can be electrocuted during this process, it is rare due to modern electrical relaying. This paper discusses one such suspected event in Morgan County, Colorado. Mitigation for this problem entails perch management, primarily using perching discouragers to shift birds out of critical areas.

Introduction

Raptors are vulnerable to electric shocks and electrocutions on certain pole configurations in favorable habitat (Benson 1981, Harness 1997, Lehman 2001, Schomburg 2003, Dwyer 2004, Platt 2005). Two factors make certain configurations more hazardous to raptors. The first is the separation of the energized wires. The second risk factor is the separation between a single energized wire and any grounded hardware. Electric shocks and electrocutions can occur if these distances allow a bird to simultaneously span two energized wires, or to span the distance between one energized wire and a ground point.

Electrical spacing is determined by the National Electrical Safety Code. As voltages increase, so do spacing requirements. Accordingly, raptor electrocutions are typically associated with distribution voltages (APLIC 1996). Distribution voltages are defined as those less than 115,000 volts or 115-kV. Many Colorado distribution voltages are rated at 12-kV. Raptor electrocutions are associated with lower-voltage distribution lines because the clearances are smaller. By contrast, transmission electrocutions occur less frequently due to the greater clearances of transmission lines. For a more in-depth discussion, refer to the latest issue of *Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: State of the Art in 2006* (APLIC 2006).

Bird Streamers and Electrocutions

Although transmission electrocutions are infrequent, one fault-

Fig. 1. Osprey producing a streamer. Photo by Shawn Carey

ing mechanism that has been largely overlooked is bird streamer (Burnham 1995, Taylor et al. 1999). Bird streamers are long streams of excrement (Figure 1), and these are conductive (West et al. 1971, Burger and Sadurski 1995). Streamers can create flashovers when the excreta released by large birds, either perched or in flight near a transmission line tower, span the entire distance or a sufficient part of the distance between a ground plane and a high voltage energized conductor (van Rooyen and Taylor 2002). In the case of lattice tower structures, when a streamer fills the critical gap, electricity may flash across the mute to the lattice metal (Figure 2).

Physiologically, only larger birds such as eagles can produce the volume of excrement needed to cause most streamer faults (EPRI 1988). Although electrocution as the result of a bird-streamer-induced fault is a rare occurrence, it does occur (van Rooyen and Taylor 2002).

Fig. 2. Red-tailed Hawk Photo by Shawn Carey

Bald Eagle Electrocution in Morgan County

A Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) admitted to the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program (RMRP) on 2 July 2003 was suspected of suffering from a streamer shock. The immature Bald Eagle was found north of

Fort Morgan, Colorado. The injured bird was slightly underweight at 3.9 kg and was missing most of the skin over the ventral surface of the left wing. The bird also had missing/necrotic muscle and missing tendons on the same wing. Abrasions on the right foot (P1 and P3) also were noted. P1, P2, P3, and P4 refer to the toes (phalanges) of the raptor. P1 is the hallux or larger back toe and the numbering goes from there medially (along the inside) to the outside of the foot. Due to the severity of these injuries the eagle was euthanized and a necropsy performed (see Table 1).

Table 1. Bald Eagle Necropsy Findings

Organs	Condition
Lungs	Right lung distal portion discolored gray
	Left lung lateral portion discolored gray
Kidneys	Right superior portion discolored and much firmer
Intestine	Greenish/black nearly throughout
Cloaca	Empty and discolored
Subcutaneous	No subcutaneous space; skin was adhered very tightly to flesh
Musculoskeletal	Large hole in skin 17.8 cm at left elbow encompassing mid-shaft humerus and mid-shaft radius/ulna
Liver	Discolored and very firm; appeared to be cooked
Spleen	Discolored and firm

Based upon the necropsy, it is suspected electricity entered through the vent and traveled through the liver, kidneys, and lungs and then exited through the left pectoral muscle close to the wingpit (axillary). The electricity then traveled down the left wing, exiting the body at the elbow.

Discussion

Bird streamer outages are hard to detect and leave very little evidence on the structures. It is almost impossible to see one happen, and in most instances the bird is uninjured and flies away. This is because the bird is often leaving the structure when it defecates and is therefore a substantial distance away from the resulting flashover. Birds may also escape injury partially due to modern electrical relaying. In the past, when mechanical fault relays lasted around 8 cycles, flashovers caused a ball of fire that placed birds at greater risk. Speeding up the trip time with new electronic equipment may reduce the chance of killing a bird because as relays respond more quickly there is less heat generated, so a bird may have a greater chance of escape (Graves 2007).

If dead birds with burn marks are found under transmission struc-

tures *with sufficient clearances to preclude any possibility of the bird having physically bridged the air gap with its body or wings*, it is a strong indication the bird was electrocuted via a bird streamer flashover (van Rooyen and Taylor 2002). Mitigation of problematic structures can be accomplished by shifting birds to more favorable portions of the structures using a variety of perching discouragers, as illustrated in Figure 3 (Vosloo and van Rooyen 2001, Harness et al. 2002). Other mitigation options include placing fecal barrier shields in strategic locations to intercept fecal streams. Shields must be positioned so that during rain, fecal runoff does not accumulate on other critical structure parts.

Fig. 3. Golden Eagle next to a Mission Environmental perch discourager. Photo by Rick Harness.

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Movement of Banded Black-capped Chickadees Along Trout Creek

Patrick Gould and David Elwonger

Site fidelity of many bird species is well documented. Local and long distance movements by the same species are less well understood and data in the literature on home ranges of Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*) are scarce (Smith 1993). During three years of banding birds along Trout Creek in Teller County, Colorado, we obtained some information on their movement patterns. Although obtaining enough data to establish statistical trends takes many years, examining individual cases from short-term studies can be instructive.

The information in this report is from a study conducted along Trout Creek in the Pike National Forest and Manitou Experimental Forest, Teller and Douglas Counties, Colorado (Gould *et al*, 2005). Mist netting and banding were conducted at three sites within the riparian community surrounding Trout Creek, from Road 339, approximately two miles north on Highway 67 from the city limits of Woodland Park, to approximately five miles north from the city limits (Figure 1). The three banding stations were MEF3 at Road 339, MEF4 at the bridge crossing Trout Creek on Spruce Road about 2.7 miles north of MEF3, and MEF2 about 0.7 miles north of MEF4 (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

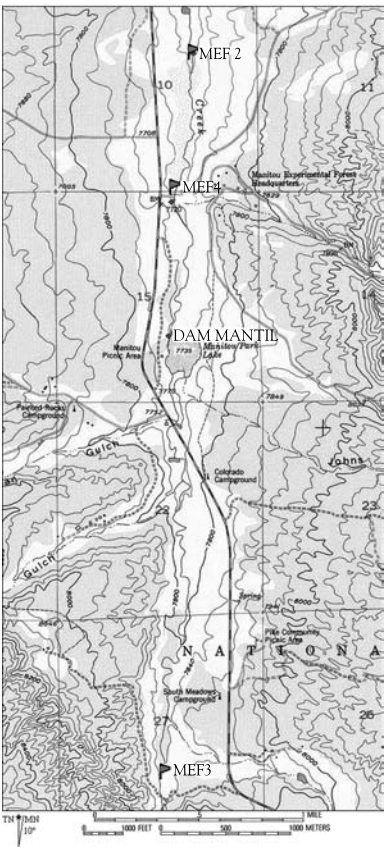

Fig. 1. Trout Creek Survey Banding Sites, Manitou Experimental Forest. Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic.

Results

Eighty Black-capped Chickadees were mist-netted during this study. Twenty-two (27.5%) of these were recaptured at least once. Eleven (50% of total individuals recaptured) were recaptured only once, with the interval be-

Table 1. Banding station locations

Station	Latitude	Longitude	Elevation (feet)
MEF2	39 06.556 N	105 05.725 W	7600
MEF3	39 03.573 N	105 05.878 W	7800
MEF4	39 05.936 N	105 05.846 W	7700

tween banding and recapture ranging from five to 294 days (only four intervals were longer than 30 days). The largest number of recaptures of the same bird was ten, with the interval between its banding and recaptures ranging from 13 to 822 days.

Most recaptures occurred within the immediate vicinity of the banding location. However, seven birds (31% of the 22 individuals recaptured) were recaptured at least once 0.7 to 2.7 miles from the original banding site. Most of these longer distance recaptures occurred in the fall and winter; since we only banded a few times during the winter, longer distance movements are probably more common than our data suggest. Although seven birds is hardly a large enough sample size to understand movement patterns of Black-capped Chickadees within the Trout Creek corridor, looking at individual cases can aid in developing hypotheses that can be more rigorously tested in the future.

First, let us examine the bird that was most frequently recaptured. This individual was identified as an ASY (after second year) male. It was captured at station MEF3 in May, June, July, August, and September of 2002; May, August, and September of 2003; and August of 2004. During this period the bird's weight ranged between 11.7 and 12.6 g (mean = 12.1 g, well above the overall mean of 10.9 g for Black-capped Chikadees along Trout Creek). This certainly suggests a healthy bird of high status remaining on territory during at least three successive years. Another ASY (sex unknown) Black-capped Chickadee was banded at MEF3 in May of 2002 and recaptured there in September 2002, May 2003, and April and June 2004, suggesting the same pattern as the bird captured ten times. It is tempting to say that these two birds constituted a mated pair, but that idea remains unproven.

Of the seven birds recaptured at least 0.7 miles from the place of banding, four were judged to be AHY (after hatching year) and three were judged to be HY (hatching year). Three birds moved 0.7 miles, two moved 2.7 miles, and two (one AHY and one HY) moved over a distance of 3.4 miles The AHY bird moved 3.4 miles from MEF2 upstream to MEF3 between 18 and 23 October, 2004.

The most interesting movement pattern, however, was that of the

HY bird banded at MEF4 on 12 September 2003 and recaptured on 29 January 2004, 2.7 miles upstream at MEF3. On 28 April and 8 May of that year it was back at MEF4. Then, on 27 October, it had moved 0.7 miles downstream to MEF2. We only obtained three good weights for it (29 January = 10.6 g; 28 April = 10.3 g; 8 May = 10.5 g), but these suggest that it was maintaining weight and not starving. However, it was below the mean weight for Black-capped Chickadees along Trout Creek (10.9 g), which could indicate a low status bird, a hypothesis supported by its age and movement pattern, as discussed below.

Black-capped Chickadee, Douglas County, February 15, 2007. Photo by Glenn Walbek

Discussion

Black-capped Chickadees generally remain mated for life, and once established a pair usually remains within a home range which encompasses its initial breeding territory (Smith 1993). Young Black-capped Chickadees disperse from their natal area once they reach two or four weeks of age (Glase 1973), and Weise and Meyer (1979) recorded them covering distances up to 11.2 km (median = 0.8 km). Dispersing young birds may form temporary associations with other young birds and eventually join higher status adults, thus forming small flocks that have a linear dominance heirarchy (Smith 1993). Most young become regular members of one flock. These flocks may contain 3-8 individuals (Smith 1993, Dhondt and Lowe 1995), and sometimes more in food-supplemented areas (Hamerstrom 1942), depending on such factors as geographic area; presence or absence of congeners such as Mountain Chickadees (*Poecile gambeli*), which inhabited our study area; available food; and the dominance structure of individuals within the flock.

In the spring, low-ranking individuals may be driven out of the area due to territorial behavior of the high-ranking pair (Smith

1993). Smith (1993) reports a low-ranked female being driven from an area and settling into a breeding population over 20 km away, and Desrochers *et al.* (1988) reported a subordinate yearling female having moved 39 km in five days. Winter ranges of individuals reportedly vary from 5.7 to 38.9 ha (Brewer 1978) and flock ranges vary from 8 to 22.6 ha (Odum 1942 and Glase 1973). Local food supply is an important factor determining size of range, but the birds with the largest home ranges are likely either low-ranking individuals who do not become regular members of one flock (floaters), or high-ranking flock regulars with expanded home ranges (dominant wanderers). A winter floater may not be a permanent member of any flock, and may have a home range that includes the ranges of 3-6 flocks (Smith 1993).

Was our wandering youngster looking for a social space of its own or was it merely moving around a lot to find enough food? All in all, the movement pattern of our bird suggests it was a floater, moving from flock to flock because of its low social rank.

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Cañon City's Common Black-Hawk

SeEtta Moss

It started as just an ordinary fall afternoon when I stopped at the MacKenzie Avenue bridge over the Arkansas River near Cañon City on 7 September 2006 to check on the Black Phoebes that had bred in that area. I remember hearing a distant gunshot, then seeing a hawk fly out of the trees on the south side of the river and perch on a snag 200 feet or so away. It glanced back at me, then disappeared as it quickly flew off into the middle of the tree canopy. This would be the first of five occasions on which I would observe this subtropical hawk over the three-week period that it remained in the Cañon City area.

Though Rich Miller had seen this hawk several days before my sighting, I was unaware of that fact and unsure of what I had seen during the few seconds that my first sighting lasted. After I posted my sighting on COBirds, it was not long before I was made aware that this was a Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*). And soon birders from around Colorado, and even a few from out-of-state who were in the area, converged at the MacKenzie Avenue bridge.

Though the Common Black-Hawk is "frequently reported to be tame and easily approachable in the southern portion of its range, it is rare and secretive to the north" (Schnell 1994). The hawk that visited Cañon City was definitely very secretive as well as shy. Having watched this Common Black-Hawk flush from its perch twice as soon as it saw people watching it, I put forth a lot of effort being stealthy to get some photos of it when I spotted it standing on a gravel bar in the river. I must have been quite a sight to those driving by as I got down on my knees so I could hide behind the bridge railing, and walked on my knees (boy, all that debris on

Common Black-Hawk, Cañon City, Fremont County, September 18, 2006. Photo by SeEtta Moss

the concrete bridge made this hurt) about 15 feet to a location that afforded an unobstructed view of the hawk.

As 2006 was the second consecutive year that Rich Miller saw a Common Black-Hawk in this area around the same time frame, I think there is some possibility that this bird, if it is the same bird, may return again, possibly to attempt a range expansion into the Cañon City area. There are only an estimated 220-250 breeding pairs in the United States, and this species is experiencing a loss of appropriate riparian habitat (Schnell 1994). However, since Black Phoebes have found the riparian areas around Cañon City to be good enough habitat to support at least two successful breeding pairs in both 2005 and 2006, it seems possible to me that Common Black-Hawks could also find our riparian area and our usually balmy climate sufficiently hospitable to call home. If they do, they would join not only Black Phoebes but other mainly southwest specialties including Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Curve-billed Thrashers, Chihuahuan Ravens and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers that are found in this area.

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The 43rd Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee—Decision Summary: Acceptance of Kelp Gull to List of Colorado Birds

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Introduction

This 43rd report presents a summary of the acceptance of Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) by the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) as species number 481 on the official list of Colorado birds. The actual state list at this time includes 482 species with the CBRC's recent acceptance of Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*). A summary of the acceptance of that species as well as other recent CBRC decisions will be presented in a future article.

The review and debate process regarding the Colorado Kelp Gull record (2003-78) was extensive, with final acceptance following second-round voting (7-0). Progression to the second round stemmed from a 5-2 vote following first-round deliberations, as acceptance of a record requires six or more "accept" votes (i.e., 7-0 or 6-1). The two dissenting voters in the first round voted not to accept at that time based on issues stemming from possible hybridization and lack of interior vagrancy records. Additional evidence regarding those two subjects was located and distributed to all Committee members during the second round, at which point the dissenting voters changed their opinion. Committee members voting on this record were Coen Dexter, Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Joey Kellner, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, and Larry Semo. Over the past four years since the Kelp Gull's occurrence in 2003, a number of issues have been raised and investigated regarding this controversial bird; this report provides the results of the CBRC analysis.

It was the intent of the CBRC to ensure that all available observer information and reference material were gathered prior to initiating the review process. Adherence to CBRC protocols allowed voting members to conduct a thorough and fair review and analysis of the documentation submitted. In the research process, the CBRC consulted with several authorities who have expertise in various aspects of Kelp Gull and general gull biology: Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff from Louisiana State University Museum of Natu-

ral Science, who have extensively studied the Louisiana Kelp Gull population; Alvaro Jaramillo, a specialist in South American birds; Klaus Malling Olsen, a noted authority of larid identification; and Tony Leukering, who provided valuable information on gull molt. Rachel Hopper also conducted a detailed analysis of the history of captive Kelp Gulls in the U.S. and provided that information to the Committee for review.

Field Encounters

On 17 September 2003, Hugh and Urling Kingery observed a distant dark-mantled gull at Jackson Reservoir in western Morgan County, Colorado, and first identified it as a Lesser Black-backed Gull (*L. fuscus*), though they noted that a few characteristics were not consistent with that species. Photographs by Steve Messick posted to the web soon thereafter drew the attention of Christopher L. Wood, who opined that the bird appeared most similar to a Kelp Gull. The following day, Christopher and Tony Leukering arrived at the site and determined the bird to be a Kelp Gull. Word of this discovery quickly spread and birders arrived *en masse* to Jackson Reservoir. Public agreement was that indeed the bird was a Kelp Gull, a primarily Southern Hemisphere gull with recent vagrant appearances in North America. The bird remained at that location until at least 27 September. For nearly a month the bird could not be relocated and was presumed gone from the state. However, on 19 October, Nick Komar rediscovered it at Fossil Creek Reservoir in Larimer County, roughly 54 miles west-northwest of Jackson Reservoir. The bird spent nearly another month splitting its time between Fossil Creek Reservoir and nearby Donath Reservoir, with the last observation occurring on 20 November 2003.

Description of the Bird

Size, structure, and bare parts

The Colorado Kelp Gull was similar to a Herring Gull in overall size and proportion, save for bill shape and eye size, stockiness, tarsus length, and potentially primary length. Direct comparisons with nearby Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) suggested that the Kelp Gull was approximately one-third larger in height and length. When standing, the wing tips projected quite well beyond the tail, with the tail tip equal to the tip of primary (P) 8. The orangish-yellow bill was heavy, bulbous-tipped and showed a deep gonydeal angle colored in red. The bill was parallel-edged where the maxilla and mandible meet. The head was square and broad with flattened crown. The eyes

appeared small relative to head size, with irides a pale gray and with red orbital rings. The neck and chest were heavy and robust and the back was somewhat humped. The legs were pale yellow-green with long tarsi, which made the gull look characteristically tall.

Plumage

The bird's head, neck, breast, belly, vent, and rump were immaculate white with no apparent streaking. The upperparts were a very dark black, even a shade darker than Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*), matching only Kelp Gull and the *fuscus* subspecies of Lesser Black-backed Gull.

A defining characteristic of most large larids is a series of white scapulars that form a scapular crescent. Large gulls of the Pacific coast—Glaucous-winged (*L. glaucescens*), Western (*L. occidentalis*), Yellow-footed (*L. livens*), Kelp, and Slaty-backed (*L. schistisagus*)—typically display that characteristic. The scapulars of the Colorado bird were primarily black, although one broad white scapular was present. Analysis of numerous photographs of Kelp Gull across its range indicated that the limited white in the scapulars is characteristic of the species and distinguishes it from many other large gulls. A point that will be made later in this paper is that the Colorado bird was in active flight feather molt of the inner primaries during its stay. The question could be posed whether the limited white in the scapulars was due to active scapular molt as well. However, in large gulls, active inner primary molt succeeds body molt, indicating that the scapulars on the Colorado bird were new and fully formed.

In addition to the scapular crescents, all species in the group of large Pacific coast gulls mentioned above usually display broad, white tertial crescents. The Colorado Kelp Gull was in full conformance with that trait, its tertials being rounded, prominent, and roughly half as wide as the bill was long.

When the bird was standing, the primaries appeared long, pointed, and a slight shade darker than the upperparts. When present at Jackson Reservoir, the bird was in obvious flight feather molt, with the right wing displaying missing secondaries (S) 1-3 and P6 demonstrating roughly 1/3 growth. The left wing was similar, with missing S1-3 as well as missing P6 and 7. When standing, the bird exhibited no white tips or mirrors to any of the primaries during its Jackson Reservoir tenure. However, when the bird appeared in Larimer County, flight feather molt had advanced, with white tips present on newly grown P 8 and 9 on the right wing (P10 remaining old), while the left wing expressed a visible white tip on P10 as well as a white mirror. This pattern of molting outer primaries, from P10 lacking a white

Kelp Gull, Jackson Lake SP, Morgan County, October 25, 2003. Photo by Bill Schmoker

Kelp Gull, Jackson Lake SP, Morgan County, October 25, 2003. Photo by Bill Schmoker

Kelp Gull, Jackson Lake SP, Morgan County, September 18, 2003. Photo by Bill Schmoker

Kelp Gull, Jackson Lake SP, Morgan County, October 25, 2003. Photo by Andrew Spencer

Kelp Gull, Jackson Lake SP, Morgan County, October 25, 2003. Photo by Bill Maynard

tip or mirror to at least one P10 with a white tip and white mirror, is evincive of the age progression from 3rd alternate to 4th basic.

From beneath in flight, the contour feathers of the wings were bright white, contrasting with very dark gray primaries and secondaries that gradually darkened toward the outer primaries. The trailing edge to all flight feathers (both above and below) was broadly tipped with white, forming a distinct thick band.

Identification and Expert Opinion

Separation from Similar Species

When attempting to eliminate congener species from identification contention, only those species with dark mantles need to be analyzed. The lack of pink legs, smaller size, darker mantle, and lack of broad white tip to P10 easily eliminated Great Black-backed Gull. Western Gull also has pink legs and differs additionally in having a lighter mantle that contrasts with the black in the outer primaries. Lesser Black-backed, which does have yellow legs, is usually smaller than the Colorado bird, has a much narrower bill with less gonydeal angle, has larger eyes relative to head size, is less robust overall, and generally has a lighter mantle, except members of the nominate *fuscus* group. Slaty-backed Gull also has a lighter mantle, pink legs, a larger mirror to P10, and streaked head/neck in basic plumage. Black-tailed Gull (*L. crassirostris*) is smaller and more elongated, lacks mirrors on P10, has a streaked head in basic plumage, and has a red-tipped bill bordered by black. Yellow-footed Gull is the species that most closely resembles Kelp in the Northern Hemisphere. Yellow-footed Gull normally has brighter yellow legs, unlike the yellow/green legs of Kelp Gull. The mantle color of Yellow-footed is lighter in shade and contrasts with the black primaries. The orbital ring on Yellow-footed Gulls is yellow, unlike the red orbital ring displayed by Kelp Gull and by the Colorado bird.

In the Southern Hemisphere, there are two other large larids with dark mantles: Pacific Gull (*L. pacificus*) from Australia and Dolphin Gull (*L. scoresbii*) from southern South America. Neither of those species has occurred in the Northern Hemisphere. Pacific Gull has an enormous orange-red bill, considerably larger than that of Kelp Gull; lacks white tips or mirrors to the primaries; and shows a black band across the inner rectrices of the tail. Dolphin Gull has a reddish bill, lighter mantle coloration, red legs, and long wings and tail, and it lacks white tips and mirrors to the primaries.

Dittmann and Cardiff (2006) agreed that the Colorado bird was indicative of Kelp Gull and noted that the Colorado bird was similar

to Louisiana's single Kelp specimen, which on P10 also had a tiny mirror on the right wing and a barely visible white patch on the left.

Alvaro Jaramillo stated "there is nothing I can see in this bird that suggests it is not a Kelp Gull." He did note that the bill size of the Colorado bird was not quite typical in being so large and deep-based. He did acknowledge, however, that it was within the range of variation of the species. He considered the red orbital ring and lack of head/neck streaking in basic plumage classic for the species.

Klaus Malling Olsen offered his opinion that the Colorado bird indeed looked like a perfect Kelp Gull. The heavy bill ruled out Lesser Black-backed Gull. Though both heavy bill and light eye are characters found in Great Black-backed Gull, that species would not display the combination of: 1) upperparts too black for Great Black-backed (blacker than in all but nominate *fuscus* and a few *intermedius* Lesser Black-backed Gulls); 2) almost solid black "hand," including too little white in the wingtip for Great Black-backed Gull; 3) a very broad white trailing edge to the secondaries, broader than in the primaries, and covering a larger area than in any of the other black-backed gull species; and 4) yellowish legs, which are very rare in Great Black-backed. It probably spent some time in the Northern Hemisphere, as the primary molt fits the schedule of Northern Hemisphere gulls, although differences in molt timing from what is expected have recently been documented as regular in stragglers (Olsen 2007).

Age

Dittmann and Cardiff (2006) judged that the Colorado gull was four years old based on the very small mirror present on the left P10 and lack of visible mirror on the right P10. The bird was molting from alternate to definitive plumage, as P1-5 were new, P6 was in active growth, P7 was missing/erupted, P8-10 were old, S1-2(3) were missing/erupted, and there was no observed tail molt. They felt that the reduced/absent mirror on P10 suggested immaturity and therefore maintained that the plumage best fit a fourth-year bird, although they acknowledged that some Kelp Gulls have advanced molt/maturation so the Colorado individual may in fact have been younger. Based on photographic review of the Colorado bird, they could not ascertain other characters of immaturity, such as dark marking in the upper primary coverts. The soft part coloration (especially leg color) indicated to them that the bird was at least sexually mature, which also suggests it was approximately four years old.

Though the CBRC will never know where the Colorado bird was hatched, if it was four years old during autumn of 2003, it most likely hatched in 1999.

Sex

Cardiff and Dittmann judged the Colorado Kelp Gull to be male based on the size and structure of the bill. The CBRC certainly agrees with that opinion and adds that the bird's bulkiness and flat-topped crown are also indicative of its being a male.

Subspecific Identification

Dittmann and Cardiff (2006) suggested that the pale iris of the Colorado bird possibly indicated it to be of the wide-ranging nominate subspecies (*L. d. dominicanus*).

Status and Distribution of Kelp Gull

The Kelp Gull is a mainly coastal, four-year gull widely distributed throughout the Southern Hemisphere (Harrison 1983) inhabiting seacoasts, estuaries, rivers, and lakes from sea level to 1,500 m (Banks et al. 2002). It is resident in South America from southwestern Ecuador and southeastern Brazil south to Tierra del Fuego; in Africa from central Namibia and eastern South Africa south to the Cape; in southern Australia; in New Zealand; and on islands in the southern oceans. Two subspecies are widely recognized. The nominate race of the Kelp Gull (*L. d. dominicanus*) occurs along the coasts of South America; Australia, where it overlaps with a somewhat similar species, the thicker-mandibled Pacific Gull (*Larus pacificus*); New Zealand, where it is known as the Southern Black-backed Gull; and many islands as well. The subspecies found along the southern African coastline, *L. d. vetula*, is sufficiently different from the nominate race that some consider it a full species (University of Cape Town, South Africa 2007). The differences between the two subspecies include *dominicanus* having usually smaller size, red orbital rings, light irides, thick white tips to mid-primaries, and yellower legs, compared to the orange-yellow orbital rings, dark irides, and greener legs of the larger *vetula* (Olsen and Larsson 2004).

The Kelp Gull is abundant and widely distributed in coastal Patagonia in South America and has increased in number at many locations during the last decade (Yorio et al. 1998). The species has also increased in distribution and abundance in New Zealand (Fordham 1970), South Africa (Steele and Hockey 1990), and Australia (Blakers et al. 1984).

Though generally coastal in distributive affinity, it is known to nest at continental wetlands away from the coast in Argentina (Yorio et al. 1998) and on remote plains in the Falkland Islands (IPCWG 2007). It ventures far inland in some parts of its range. For example, in New Zealand it occurs on lakes in the mountains and is widespread

as a scavenger in farmland; the population in the country is estimated at over one million birds. In Argentina, it occurs on large lakes in the Andes (University of Cape Town, South Africa 2007). Seasonal movements between coastal and non-coastal areas have been noted (Blanco et al. 1996).

As the species has increased in population in its core range, northerly range expansions have also occurred. In Africa, it is now casual north to Senegal, Kenya and Mauritania (Pineau et al. 2001). South American populations now erratically extend north to Central America and the Caribbean. In Panama, at least five birds were seen together at one time in 2001 (MDCRC 2003), while in the Caribbean, two adult birds were found in 2000 in Trinidad and Barbados (Lewis 2007). Records from the Gulf Coast arrived as early as 1987, when two were seen on the coast of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula (ABA 1997). Records have occurred in the Yucatan since then, especially in 1991, 1993, and 1994 (Howell et al. 1993). In the central Pacific, one even reached Christmas Island in 1999 (Rauzon and Lee Jones 2005).

The U.S. history of Kelp Gull began in 1989 with the discovery of a territorial pair on Curlew Island, one of the Chandeleur barrier islands off the coast of Louisiana (Dittmann & Cardiff 2005). The following year, at least three birds were found on the Chandeleurs, including Louisiana's first records of inter- and intraspecific breeding. The pair of breeding Kelp Gulls remained at that location through 1994, when surveys revealed its presence as well as that of an additional pair. Nesting Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) were also discovered, including Kelp x Herring first filial generation offspring. First filial generation (F1) refers to the progeny produced from a parental mating. The subsequent generation produced by the breeding the F1 offspring together is termed the F2 generation. Interbreeding the offspring of each generation will then result in F3, F4, F5 generations, etc.

Texas obtained its first and second records in 1996 with the presence of a pure adult at Galveston Island, found in January, that remained into April; the same bird returned to Galveston later in the same year, returning in November and wintering at that location until April 1997 (M. Lockwood, pers. comm.). The second Texas record was of a bird present on North Padre Island in May 1996 (M. Lockwood, pers. comm.). The first record away from the Gulf Coast was an adult observed in October 1996 at Hammond, Indiana on the south shore of Lake Michigan. Based on extensive study of documentations, photographs, references, and correspondence with experts, the Indiana Bird Records Committee concluded the bird to be phe-

notypically of pure heritage (Hess 2004). Between 1998 and 1999, another adult Kelp Gull was present in St. Mary's County, Maryland, and remained at that location until at least 2004 (Lewis 2007). After exhaustive analysis, the Maryland Bird Records Committee voted to accept the bird as pure and of wild provenance.

Meanwhile, back in Louisiana, surveys in 1998 revealed the presence of at least three remaining pure Kelp Gulls, of which one was collected and deposited at Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science. During that year, up to 14 hybrid Herring x Kelp F1 and backcrosses were noted. In 1999, three pure Kelps were discovered on the Chandeleurs, including two newly detected birds, possibly the progeny of the original nesting pair. Up to eight different pure Kelp Gulls were known from Louisiana during the period 1989 – 1999. By 2000, however, only one pure Kelp Gull remained on the Chandeleurs (Dittmann & Cardiff 2005), and none have been recorded since (S. Cardiff, pers. comm.).

Critical Questions and Debates

Acceptance of a Southern Hemisphere bird from Colorado raises significant questions as to the validity of that decision, including provenance, potential for hybrid heritage, and molt cycle determination. Results of in-depth analysis and voter opinion on these key questions are presented below.

Captive vs. Wild Origin

When confronted with the question of whether a vagrant species was of captive or wild origin, bird records committees usually look at degree of tameness, feather wear, presence/absence of a leg band, and whether the bird is free-flying or shows signs of having had its wings clipped. The Colorado Kelp Gull exhibited plumage and behavior fully consistent with that of wild provenance, indicating that if it was captive, it had not been banded, had lost its dependence upon humans for sustenance, and had been "wild" for some time. To test that hypothesis, the CBRC is grateful to Rachel Hopper, who conducted a thorough review of the history of captive Kelp Gulls in the U.S. Results of her investigation are presented herein (Hopper 2006).

In 1983, Scott Dreichman, on behalf of Sea World, collected Kelp Gull eggs from Nelson Island, part of the South Shetland island chain north of the Antarctic Peninsula in the Southern Ocean. To Scott's knowledge, these eggs were the first ever brought into the United States. All of these eggs were hatched and the chicks hand-reared by Sea World. From this initial stock, nine Kelp Gulls remain to date

in public collections, all the rest having died in captivity or being accounted for by Sea World. None of the original birds was ever bred or loaned out.

Sea World of Orlando, Florida currently has three Kelp Gulls in a totally enclosed exhibit. These birds are all over 20 years old, free-flying, and banded. There have been no escapes from this facility. Sea World of San Antonio, Texas currently has two Kelp Gulls. These birds are both over 20 years old, free-flying, and banded, and there have been no escapes from this facility. In 1996, Sea World of San Diego, California had four Kelp Gulls. These were all free-flying, banded birds. In 1996, those gulls were donated to the John Ball Zoological Gardens in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The four Kelp Gulls at the John Ball Zoological Gardens are, as with all other Kelp Gulls derived from the original egg collection, over 20 years old, and remain free-flying and banded. One of these birds briefly escaped the exhibit in 1996 by walking out an open door and onto the grounds of the zoo. The bird was immediately caught and no other birds have escaped since.

In a Decision Summary written by Paul O'Brien and Phil Davis in November of 2003 (MDCRC 2003), the Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee referred to a Kelp Gull with an unknown subspecies background. This bird was acquired by the Louisville Zoo in Kentucky in 1969 from an importer in Miami, Florida. The bird died in 1992 after producing a hybrid offspring with a captive Ring-billed Gull in 1987. The hybrid was subsequently taken by a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*). The importer of the Kelp Gull is now deceased and attempts by the Maryland/District of Columbia Bird Records Committee failed to acquire any additional information on that import. To our knowledge, this is the only known captive Kelp Gull on record in the U.S. that did not originate from the initial Sea World collection.

The Federal Register has an extensive website including searchable archives from 1995-2006. Among their archived documents are requests for permits for the importation of wild birds from Antarctica under the "Notice of Permit Applications Received Under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-541)". The National Science Foundation is the agency responsible for receiving and granting all such permits. A search of that entire database revealed that in 1997 there was a single request to "take" or "salvage" up to three Kelp Gulls from Antarctica to be brought into the United States as specimens for educational purposes. There were two requests for permits to sample the tissue and blood of Kelp Gulls in Antarctica, and one to capture and release Kelp Gulls for a scientific study in Antarctica.

No permits were requested for the importation of live Kelp Gulls or Kelp Gull eggs into the United States during that time period.

In regards to private collections, Sherry Branch, the Curator of Birds at Sea World Orlando and the "Avian List Tag" Chair for a group of bird curators throughout the country, is in touch with most private individuals with major bird collections in the United States and has never heard of or encountered a private collector with a Kelp Gull. Likewise, Scott Dreichman (the original Kelp Gull egg collector on Nelson Island) owns Wildlife Concepts International, a business that helps zoos, aquaria, and private collectors acquire and manage penguin collections. He deals extensively with private collectors and states that he as well has never encountered a private collector with a Kelp Gull.

The Louisiana Bird Records Committee accepted the origin of their birds as 'natural' based on recent patterns of expansion and posited that a captive origin did not seem probable for the occurrence of Kelp Gulls on Louisiana's barrier islands (Dittmann and Cardiff 2006).

Based on this extensive analysis and the fact that no captive Kelp Gulls are known to have escaped, it was the opinion of CBRC members that the Colorado gull was wild and unassisted by humans.

Molt Cycle

Molt timing is determined by hormonal changes linked to photoperiod. Increased daylight in spring induces most bird species to molt from basic to alternate plumages. Likewise, in late summer and autumn, decreased daylight prompts birds to molt from alternate back to basic plumages. This is true for Northern and Southern Hemisphere species of birds (McWilliams 2007). Since molt timing is determined by environmental factors rather than genetics, the timing of those molts is dependent upon which hemisphere the bird is actually in, rather than the one in which it originated. Southern Hemisphere birds begin molt from basic to alternate in our autumn (their spring) and subsequently begin molt from alternate to basic in our spring (their autumn). When confronted with a bird that began its life with a Southern Hemisphere molt cycle, one must consider whether the bird still retains that molt cycle or has adapted that cycle to conform with northern latitudes. It has been postulated that a Southern Hemisphere-bred vagrant may take a year or two in northern latitudes to adapt to a Northern Hemisphere molt cycle (Olsen 2007). In the context of the Colorado gull, if the bird exhibited a Southern Hemisphere molt cycle, it would suggest that the bird was hatched in that latitude. All Louisiana Kelp Gulls were on a Northern Hemisphere

molt schedule (Dittmann and Cardiff 2006), being in full alternate plumage April-June. Onset of body and primary molt began in mid-June, and therefore corresponded to their breeding cycle. Texas Kelp Gulls, as well as those on the Yucatan Peninsula, were also believed to be on a Northern Hemisphere molt schedule (Dittmann & Cardiff 2006).

The Colorado Kelp Gull displayed active flight feather (primary/secondary) molt. In Northern Hemisphere birds, flight feather molt occurs in late summer and can continue through fall. The flight feathers are the last to be molted during a molt cycle. The inner primary molt on the Colorado bird is indicative of the bird being on a northern molt cycle, suggestive that the bird was either hatched in the Northern Hemisphere or had at least been here for a few years. If the bird still retained a Southern Hemisphere molt schedule, it would not exhibit inner primary molt until roughly April.

Hybridization

The CBRC acknowledges that it cannot prove with certainty that the Colorado Kelp Gull did not possess mixed species heritage. Our decision to accept it as pure was based on detailed analysis of phenotypic traits available for observation as well as expert opinion. Our decision begs the question, however, "How can birders or scientists confirm with 100 percent accuracy that an individual is of pure pedigree?"

Regarding potential hybrid combinations that should be analyzed in the case of the Colorado subject, we focused only on Herring Gull x Kelp Gull pairings, as that combination is the only cross-breeding combination involving Kelp Gull in the Northern Hemisphere. The CBRC looked at pairing combinations of F1, F2, and F2 backcrosses with Kelp.

Herring x Kelp F1 offspring appear generally intermediate between the parental species (Dittmann and Cardiff 2005). Offspring of such pairings have gray mantles and inner wings contrasting with black wingtips, unlike the jet black mantle of the Colorado bird. Dittmann and Cardiff (2005) go on to note that in flight, F1 birds are similar to many Lesser Black-backed Gulls or Yellow-footed Gulls in primary pattern and dorsal coloration. All primaries on those offspring are also white tipped, unlike those of the Colorado bird. By virtue of the dark flight feathers on those offspring, the upper primary coverts look relatively dark in comparison to the white underwing linings, but they contrast with the blacker outer primaries. This contrast is a good mark separating this hybrid type from Kelp Gull, which has blacker dorsal coloration and shows less contrast with the outer primaries.

In addition, the parallel-edged commissure of the bill was quite unlike the slightly decurved, slightly drooped bill of Herring Gull. One would speculate that a Herring x Kelp would display a bill shape intermediate between the two species.

Further hybrid matings of all other hybrid offspring with each other (F1 x F1, F1 x F2, etc.) apparently grade more and more toward Herring-type birds or simply birds with various degrees of gray mantles and inner wings contrasting with black outer primaries, which differ from those of the Colorado gull.

The difficulty in disproving hybridization with the Colorado gull would be Kelp x F1 hybrid backcrosses, and (even more problematic) matings involving Kelp with post-F1 birds. According to Dittmann & Cardiff (2005), specimens of those Kelp x F1 hybrid backcrosses express mantles almost as dark as pure Kelp and may actually fall within the normal range of mantle color variation of a pure bird. Progeny of Kelp and post-F1 hybrids, especially those post-F1 hybrids that backcrossed with F1s, could conceivably be virtually identical phenotypically to a pure Kelp Gull.

Expert opinion on the Colorado gull could not positively state that the bird was not of hybrid origin, and hybrid origin cannot be completely ruled out, considering we will never know the DNA composition of the bird. Dittmann and Cardiff (2006) asked, "Is the CO 'Kelp' actually a hybrid?" Their answer was possibly, but if it was, it was one of relatively few individuals produced by Louisiana Kelp X F1 pairs. In this case, they maintained that it seems pretty clear that the Colorado individual was a pure Kelp or a Kelp backcross hybrid. They went on to say that the bird appeared to be a pure Kelp Gull based on mantle coloration, since the photos supported the bird's being dark enough to be a pure Kelp Gull, acknowledging, however, that hybrids can appear that dark. They noted that there are many factors to consider in addition to apparent morphology. They believed that the probability that it was one of Louisiana's Kelp x Herring hybrids seemed remote because of the small population size of that state's hybrids and Kelps. Klaus Malling Olsen stated that the bird should be identified as what it looks like. In this case, he saw nothing wrong for Kelp Gull. He maintained that the different molt from what would be expected is explained by the bird having adopted a Northern Hemisphere molt cycle, probably after having spent some years here. He indicated that with gull identification, there is a trend toward not being able to identify anything for sure. But he felt that to argue that the Colorado bird was a (probably multigenerational) backcross hybrid, there should at least be evidence supporting the idea. Judging from the photos, Olsen found no such evidence.

Thus, empirical evidence supports the idea that the Colorado Kelp Gull was pure; however, we will never be able to prove that assertion as no data exist to disprove the alternative hypothesis. The CBRC decision, however, is consistent with those in all other states that have records of Kelp Gull. Unless or until additional information becomes available on provenance and characteristics of hybrid pairings of Kelp and Herring Gulls in North America, the CBRC is forced to evaluate this record based solely on phenotypic attributes of the bird. Bird Records Committees are limited to the use of field ornithology to identify species.

The use of DNA sequencing is not an option in this case, and even if we were able to procure genetic material from the bird, MtDNA analysis only looks at maternal inheritance and not the complete genetic makeup of the bird in question. Thus even if MtDNA analysis showed the mother of the bird to have been a pure Kelp Gull, we still would not know what the father was. It is the role of Bird Records Committees to form a consensus on the identity of a bird based on the best current knowledge showing that a given bird fits the characteristics of a named population; such is the case with the Colorado Kelp Gull. It was the opinion of all seven members of the CBRC that the bird exhibited true Kelp Gull characteristics and there was no indication that there was hybridization involved. Experts within the field suggest that it was, indeed, a pure Kelp Gull, but as a matter of prudence, acknowledge that without DNA, they cannot tell for sure. The preponderance of evidence in this case indicates Kelp Gull and no expert testimony provided evidence leading to reasonable doubt. If the Committee shifts its methods to require absolute proof of a species' heritage, then it would have to reconsider many records currently on the official list, including those of both Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers (*Vermivora pinus* and *V. chrysoptera*), Glaucous-winged (*L. glaucescens*), Thayer's (*L. thayeri*) and many other gulls, and, in fact, all species that have proven to hybridize with another species (which is not an inconsequential number).

Interior Vagrancy

One may argue that there is no clear interior pattern of vagrancy for Kelp Gull. For the most part that is true, as Kelp Gull is mainly coastal. However, Indiana's accepted record was certainly not coastal in the sense of being marine. Furthermore, as noted earlier in this document, the species does wander inland within its normal range. In addition, recent records of Streaked Shearwater and Lesser Frigatebird in Wyoming (Faulkner 2006a, 2006b) demonstrate remarkable evidence of vagrancy patterns previously unknown within this

region. When considering inland vagrancy, one must also remember that Kelp Gulls are very rare in North America. There has been little chance to develop a pattern of vagrancy due to the limited population size.

Documenting Observers

The CBRC graciously appreciates documentation of the Colorado Kelp Gull offered by the individuals listed below. To remain consistent with previous CBRC reports, the names of the finders of the bird are underlined and are presented first; additional contributors' names follow in alphabetical order by surname. Observers submitting a photograph have a dagger (†) behind their names.

Hugh & Urling Kingery, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper (†), Tony Leukering (†), Bill Maynard (†), Nathan Pieplow, Bill Schmoker (†), and Andrew Spencer (†).

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A Birder's Dining Guide to the Yampa Valley

Forrest Luke

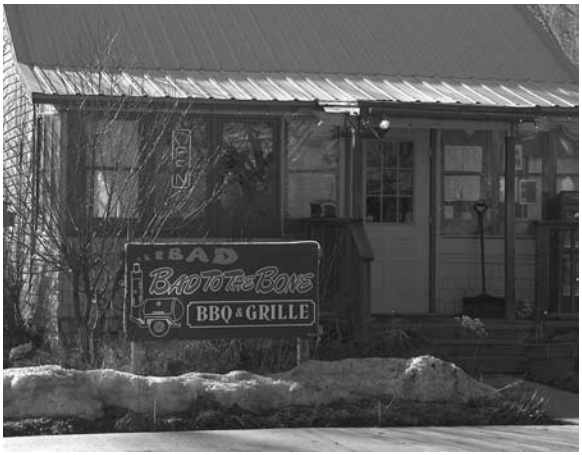
Let me just say up front that no one will starve during the CFO annual convention in Craig, June 8-11, 2007. On the other hand, I hope no one is coming primarily for a potential fine dining experience. If that is your expectation, then it might be best to stop in Steamboat Springs on your way out or back.

CRAIG

Craig has many of the usual fast food chains—McDonald's, Wendy's, Subway, KFC, Taco Bell, Domino's, Pizza Hut and Village Inn (open until midnight). For you coffee aficionados, I am told that a Starbuck's will soon be added to the local Safeway store. In addition, the following non-chain eateries are located in Craig.

Applejack's Bar & Grill, 690 West Victory Way. This is a relatively new family restaurant in Craig, converted from a poorly-managed Burger King that went belly-up when Wendy's moved in. I must admit that I have not actually eaten there, but I have been assured that the cuisine is nothing to write home about and is a little overpriced.

Backwoods Diner, 337 West Victory Way. This smallish restaurant is sandwiched in between an insurance office and a beauty parlor. It is open for breakfast and lunch only and, I am told, is one of the better options in Craig for breakfast.



Bad to the Bone, Craig. Photo by Forrest Luke

Bad to the Bone BBQ & Grille, 572 Breeze Street. This small café is located in a converted house in an older residential part of Craig not far from downtown. There is a small outdoor patio dining area and, if you like barbecue, the food is consistently good. I know Chris Wood has taken his Wings tour groups there on occa-

sion and I have heard good reports.

Carelli's, 465 Yampa Avenue. This "pizzeria-pasta" restaurant is probably one of the better dining options in Craig. The calzones and stromboli are very good and their sandwiches are among the best in town. I am also informed through my intelligence network that the chef's salad is a nice option and the daily specials are typically good. They have four different beers on tap.

Backwoods Diner, Craig. Photo by Forrest Luke

Casa Loya, 351 S Ranney Street. I have eaten at this Mexican restaurant on only a couple of occasions and found the Mexican food relatively bland and a little skimpy. To be fair, I have spoken with friends who have really enjoyed the food there and think it is the best Mexican food in town. Bear in mind, however, how far north of the border we are in Craig.

Golden Cavvy Restaurant & Lounge, 538 Yampa Avenue. This establishment is a favorite of many native Craigites. I have eaten there a few times, mainly for business engagements, and I still marvel at what the possible attraction could be. It is certainly not the ambience or the food. In the interest of full disclosure, my son reports the breakfast burritos are huge and quite tasty.

The Galaxy Restaurant, 520 Yampa Avenue. This Asian restaurant gets mixed reviews from members of my own family. Before they moved on to college, it was always my kids' favorite place to eat in Craig. On the other hand, it has always been one of my wife's least favorite places. Since the Galaxy has a popular lunch buffet that includes a Mongolian barbe-

Carrelli's, Craig. Photo by Forrest Luke

J.W. Snacks Gulf Coast Bar and BBQ, Craig. Photo by Forrest Luke

cue, I think the food critique discrepancy might be a quantity-versus-quality thing. I am somewhere in the middle of the argument and would give it a passing grade. Several new Thai offerings have recently been added to the menu that I hear are decent.

Holiday Inn, 300 South Highway 13. (Note: I will try to work through my neurotic aversion to hotel restaurants in writing this review.) The quality of food served at the Holiday Inn restaurant has varied tremendously over the 14 years that I have lived in Craig, depending mainly on the skill of the extant chef. Word on the street is that the current chef, while neither French nor related to Emeril Legassi, is not bad. If you are staying at the hotel and don't feel like venturing out, one could do worse.

J.W. Snacks Gulf Coast Bar and BBQ, 210 East Victory Way. This is another recently opened restaurant that features spicy Cajun and barbecue cuisine. I have heard uniformly good reports of the food there. The homemade soups are said to be worth trying.

La Plaza Restaurant, 994 Yampa Avenue. My son reports that the chips and salsa are a local favorite, while opining that the food overall is only mediocre. A friend reports that the crab-based chili relleno is a decent option (better than it sounds, I hope).

Mather's Lounge & Café (The Boardroom), 420 Yampa Avenue. This is one of the more popular bars in town with the café being something of an afterthought. However, they recently hired the chef away from the Tin Cup Grill and that has been positive for them (though negative for Tin Cup Grill). Specifically, I have heard the steaks are consistently good, but to avoid the Philly steak sandwich.

Ocean Pearl Chinese Restaurant, 425 West Victory Way. Again bearing in mind how far Craig is from any real "Chinatown," Ocean Pearl serves up pretty good Chinese cuisine. My friend's teenage daughters recommend the sesame chicken.

The O.P. Bar and Grill, 534 East Victory Way. The O.P. (Other Place) has a definite sports bar atmosphere, although it also has an

outdoor dining option with a nice view of imported Siberian elm trees along Fortification Creek. They serve up a tasty burger and reportedly have good smothered burritos.

Serendipity Coffee Shop, 576 Yampa Avenue. This small café has a charming ambience and might be the best option for anyone looking for a vegetarian meal in Craig. They specialize in baked goods, including very large and very good cinnamon rolls that are also very pricey. They have a different quiche option for breakfast and a different panini lunch option every weekday. Their sandwich and soup offerings are a little skimpy and overpriced, though. They are open for breakfast and lunch.

Tin Cup Grill (Yampa Valley Golf Course), 2179 Highway 394. If you decide on this restaurant, try to get a window seat overlooking the scenic Yampa Valley Golf Course (although I cannot understand how someone could waste time golfing when birding options are available). This is a safe bet for a good steak in Craig. The restaurant manager also owns an animal processing shop in town and so can pick and choose fresh cuts of meat. If you are not on a current diet, try the nacho plate as an appetizer. If you are on a diet, get the nachos anyway and just take an extra lap around the Loudy-Simpson Park nature trail.

Windy City Dogs and Beef, 905 West Victory Way. I have heard mixed reports on this cracker box of an establishment. One friend mentioned the Polish sausage sandwiches and gyros are good, while another felt the dogs were average and over-priced.

HIGHWAY 40 WEST OF CRAIG

For CFO birders heading west on Highway 40 during the conference, there are dining options if you drive far enough. In Dinosaur, you are only three miles from the Utah border. If you head northwest from Maybell on Highway 318 toward Browns Park, bring a picnic basket and extra gasoline. The only option for food and gasoline is the Browns Park Store, an old converted mobile home with

Serendipity, Craig. Photo by Forrest Luke

a few packaged food items, pricey gas and other necessities located all by itself a short drive from the highway. This little place has been in existence as far back as I go in this region and you have to admire the tenacity of the owners to keep it open.

Maybell Restaurant, Main Street (Highway 40), Maybell. This restaurant was recently reopened under new ownership. It is a family style restaurant with good, hearty fare. Prime rib is served on Friday and Saturday nights along with bingo (Fridays) and dancing (Saturdays).

Massadona Tavern & Steakhouse, 22927 East Highway 40, Massadona. It is hard to imagine a more isolated eating establishment anywhere in Colorado. According to my sister who lives in Rangely, the steaks and burgers are "pretty good, but not great." However, given the strategic location for wandering birders, it might be a decent option under certain circumstances.

B&B Restaurant, 124 Brontosaurus Boulevard, Dinosaur. To quote Dona Hilkey, "Kate [Dona's daughter] and I hesitated to eat here because of the neglected look of the place but we did and they served us the best hamburger and fries that we'd ever eaten."

Miner's Café, 420 East Brontosaurus Boulevard, Dinosaur. To again quote Dona: "I had breakfast here once and had no complaints. The food was OK, sort of a diner-type place."

MEEKER

If you venture into the Meeker area during the conference, there are a few decent dining options. Quick options include a Pizza Hut and a pretty good deli sandwich counter at the local grocery store (Watt's Ranch Market) on the east end of town. Otherwise, the following restaurant options are available.

Clark's Big Burger, 858 Market Street. A few weeks ago I had a cable guy turn down a chance to share in a casserole with my wife and me for the opportunity to eat at Clark's on his way home to Grand Junction. I have eaten at Clark's a few times myself, and while I will admit to a weakness for small-town, family-owned greasy fries-and-burger joints, I don't think it is worth passing up one of my wife's casseroles. My daughter, however, reports that the shakes are "yummy."

Dade's Family Restaurant, 10th and Market Street. [Review by Meeker's own Dona Hilkey.] Small family restaurant, service is sometimes rather slow. Closed on Sundays.

Gary's Steak House, 624 Market Street. [Review by Dona Hilkey.] Has a variety of steak and seafood. Wednesday night is all-you-can-eat crab night and Friday night is all-you-can-eat peel-and-eat shrimp. The specialty is baby back ribs with "awesome" homemade BBQ sauce.

Ma Famiglia, 410 Market Street. [Review by Dona Hilkey.] Argu-

ably the most popular restaurant in Meeker, Ma Famiglia is located on the south side of the highway as you drive though town. This family owned Italian restaurant has good, affordable food and friendly service. It is known for good pizza. Open for lunch and dinner seven days a week.

Meeker Café, 560 Main Street. [Review by Dona Hilkey.] Located on Main Street across from the courthouse. Good breakfasts. Not open on Sunday.

Sleepy Cat Guest Ranch, 16064 County Road 8. The best place to eat in Craig or Meeker (or Rifle or Rangely for that matter) is actually not in any of these towns. It is at the Sleepy Cat Restaurant. This rustic restaurant, which includes a great view of the Flattops, is located about 17 miles east of Meeker along the White River. This place has changed ownership a few times in recent years but from the intelligence I have gathered it apparently still remains a viable option for a good steak or seafood dinner.

HAYDEN

If you happen to get caught midway between Craig and Steamboat when the food alarm goes off, one of several Hayden restaurants might be your salvation. Another option would be to follow my usual pattern and stop at the local Kum & Go convenience store to get a self-serve soft ice cream cone to stave off starvation until arriving in Craig. The ice cream machine is functioning at least half of the time when I stop (perhaps up to 70% of the time) and has a chocolate/vanilla swirl option that is a personal favorite.

Creekside Café and Grill, 131 11th Street (across from the post office). A newer establishment with average prices and the usual café fare.

Food Mill Restaurant, 107 West Jefferson Avenue. To quote my second daughter, "The Food Mill has a really good French toast combo breakfast with thick, yummy French toast; not healthy, but good." Overall, it appears to be a typical small-town diner with decent food.

Full Belly Deli, 168 South Walnut Street. The deli sandwiches are pretty average and a little overpriced.

Wolf Mountain Pizza, 175 West Jefferson Avenue. According to friend from Hayden, "Wolf Mountain Pizza *is* good, though a bit pricey. Walk in off the street and you could easily pay $15 for a pie. More expensive than Domino's or Pizza Hut varieties but also tastier. Little to no seating available inside. A table or two outside when weather is good."

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Fall 2006 (August-November)

Peter R. Gent

Colorado had a mixed bag of temperatures during the fall of 2006. The Denver region was near normal in August and October, but September was cool, with an average temperature of 58.9° F, which is 3.5° F below normal. The maximum temperature at Denver International Airport on November 8 was 80° F, which is the highest November temperature ever recorded in Denver; records begin in 1872. However, November ended with a real cold snap over the last two days, which froze many lakes and reservoirs along the Front Range. The precipitation in Denver during the fall was 3.34 inches, which is 1.59 inches below average. The 2006 total through November was 7.43 inches, which was the same as in 2002, which turned out to be the driest year ever recorded; the total that year was 7.48 inches. However, I write this on December 21, having just shoveled nearly two feet of snow out of my sidewalk and driveway!

A number of very rare species were seen in Colorado this fall. Top of the list must be the Pacific-slope Flycatcher, which was caught and banded by Starr Nicely of Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory at Barr Lake in Adams County. This is the first report of this species in Colorado, which can sometimes be reliably differentiated from Cordilleran Flycatcher by measurements in the hand. There was a report of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher near Crow Valley Campground in Weld County, and of a possible Cave Swallow at Valco Ponds in Pueblo. These species are presently not on the Colorado state list, although reports of the flycatcher are currently under review by the Colorado Bird Records Committee. There were also two reports of Smith's Longspur: one near Hugo in Lincoln County and one near Bonny Reservoir in

Errata:

Spring 2006 report (vol. 40, no. 4):

Omitted was a Nashville Warbler found by ABu at Sondermann Park, *El Paso* on 4 May that lingered at least until 6 May.

The Hooded Warbler from near Sondermann on 29 May should have been reported as found by ABu and TE.

The Prairie Warbler found near Nederland, *Boulder* was actually seen 15-20 June, not 15-20 May, and should therefore have appeared in the Summer report rather than the Spring report (*fide* DHa).

Summer 2006 report (vol. 41, no. 1):

The tone of the report of the possible American Black Duck was a little too certain for the observer (BKP), who cautioned that the identification was inconclusive.

The breeding record of Eastern Meadowlark near Colorado City on 8 July should have included KL and BMa as additional observers.

Yuma County. This species has just been added to the Colorado state list with one accepted record from the fall of 2003.

Other rare species seen during the fall included a Black Brant in Pueblo, a Eurasian Wigeon in Grand Junction, an amazing nine reports of Red-throated Loons, two Yellow-billed Loons (at Spinney Mountain Reservoir and in Lafayette), a Brown Pelican in the northern Front Range, a Common Black-Hawk east of Cañon City, a Gyrfalcon in North Park, a Whooping Crane in Kiowa County, a Ruff in Lincoln County, five Red Phalaropes (at Lake DeWeese, Big Johnson Reservoir, Fossil Creek Reservoir, Cherry Creek Reservoir, and Elevenmile Reservoir), a Long-billed Murrelet at Blue Mesa Reservoir, three Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at Prewitt Reservoir and near Lamar, two Costa's Hummingbirds near Lamar, three Sedge Wrens in Kit Carson and Cheyenne Counties, a Scarlet Tanager at Prewitt Reservoir, an Eastern Meadowlark north of Two Buttes Reservoir, and finally a Purple Finch at Last Chance.

Thanks to everyone who sent in their sightings, and to all the people who collected the postings off COBirds and elsewhere.

Note 1: *The reader of this report should be aware that many of the sightings of rare and unusual species used in this report have not been supported by documentation sent to the CFO Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC); those that have been documented are noted in the text. Underlined species are those for which the committee desires written documentation and/or photographs. You should now submit your sightings through the CBRC web site at* http://www.cfo-link.org/CBRC/login.php. *This is the preferred method of submitting records. However, if you need a form, use the one on the inside of this journal's mailer. Documentation should be sent to the chairperson, Larry Semo (address on form).*

Note 2: *The name of the county is typically listed in italics only the first time each location is mentioned in the report. County names are usually not mentioned in subsequent records except to specify the placement of birds within sites bisected by county lines.*

Note 3: *Abbreviations used in this report:* Co - County, CR - County Road, doc - documentation submitted to the CBRC, m.ob. - many observers, Res - Reservoir, SP - State Park, SWA - State Wildlife Area.

Greater White-fronted Goose: The only West Slope reports were two seen at Crawford Res, *Delta*, on 13 Nov (JBs) and another two at Hunter's Run Gun Club, *La Plata*, on 19 Nov (JBt).

Ross's Goose: All the reports were from the Eastern Plains, with a high count of 40 at Prewitt Res, *Washington*, on 17 Nov (DAL).

Cackling Goose: The largest flock seen this fall was estimated to be 2275 at Union Res, *Weld*, on 20 Nov (TLe).

Brant: A black-bellied individual was seen at the Rock Canyon swim beach pond, *Pueblo*, between 7 and 25 Nov (BKP, m.ob., doc).

Trumpeter Swan: Two were seen at Boulder Res, *Boulder*, on 17 Nov (TF), two were seen at Stagecoach Res, *Routt*, on 18 Nov (RS, TLi), an adult and juvenile were at Fentress Lake, *Boulder*, on 25 Nov (DWa), and the final pair was seen at Bud Mielke Res, *Larimer*, on 28 Nov (CW, doc).

Tundra Swan: A banner year for this species, with over 50 birds reported. On the West Slope, four adults were seen in Craig, *Moffat*, between 31 Oct and 3 Nov (FL, DHi), one was at Spring Park Res, *Garfield*, on 25 and 26 Nov (DFi, VZ), and the high count was an amazing flock of 17 seen at Union Res on 26 Nov (IS, TLe, doc).

Eurasian Wigeon: One was seen in Grand Junction, *Mesa*, on 8 Nov (RL, doc), which is the first record in that county.

Surf Scoter: This was a bumper year for this species with well over 50 birds reported. The high count was 11 at Antero Res, *Park*, on 29 Oct (JK, AS, NE, JR, DSc), and West Slope reports were two seen on Narraguinnep Res, *Montezuma*, and Electra Lake, *La Plata*, between 29 Oct and 20 Nov (M&DH, SA, JBt), a female at Highline Res, *Mesa*, on 31 Oct (DWr), and one at Groundhog Res, *Dolores*, between 17 and 19 Nov (M&DH, NP), which is a first county record.

White-winged Scoter: A very good year for this species, with 19 birds reported. The most unusual report was a female type at La Veta Town Lakes, *Huerfano*, between 18 and 29 Nov (MP, BKP, LE, BSt, m.ob.).

Red-throated Loon, Chatfield SP, Douglas/Jefferson Counties, November 2, 2006. Photo by Joey Kellner

Black Scoter: Also a very good year for this species, again with 19 birds reported. West Slope reports were two at Taylor Park Res, *Gunnison*, on 18 Oct (TH), and a male at Navajo Res, *Archuleta*, on 28 Oct (TLe). Other unusual reports were a female type at Lake DeWeese, *Custer*, on 10 Nov (RM), which is a first county record, and one at Dillon Res, *Summit*, on 17 Nov (JK, GW).

Long-tailed Duck: Single females were seen at Ish Res, *Boulder*, between 22 Oct and 20 Nov (SL), at Union Res between 17 and 23 Nov (I&BP, m.ob.), and at US 85 and CR 6, *Weld*, on 18 Nov (TLe). Single males were seen at Cherry Creek Res, *Arapahoe*, between 22 and 30 Nov (SK, GW, m.ob.), and at Union Res on 25 and 26 Nov (BS, RHo).

Red-throated Loon: A banner year

for this species, with nine birds reported. One was seen at Cherry Creek Res between 21 Oct and 4 Nov (GW); one was at Antero Res, and another at Elevenmile Res, *Park*, between 29 Oct and 5 Nov (JK AS, NE, JR, DSc); one was at Adobe Creek Res, *Kiowa*, between 2 and 4 Nov (MP, DN); and one was at Chatfield Res, *Jefferson/Douglas*, also between 2 and 4 Nov (GW, JK, DSc). One was at Union Res on 5 Nov (BGb, doc); a juvenile was at Pueblo Res, *Pueblo*, on 7 Nov (JD); one was at John Martin Res, *Bent*, on 17 Nov (DN); and finally one was at Cherry Creek Res on 25 Nov (GW, LK, m.ob.).

Yellow-billed Loon: One was seen at Spinney Mountain Res, *Park*, on 22 Oct (AS, JK, AH, TJ, NK), and an immature was seen at Erie Res in Lafayette, *Boulder*, between 22 and 30 Nov (WS, m.ob., doc).

Red-necked Grebe: There were ten reports this fall, which is well above average. They were seen along the Front Range, except for a first-year bird at Elevenmile Res on 17 Nov (JK, GW).

Brown Pelican: An immature bird, first seen in Fort Collins at the end of May, spent the whole fall season along the northern Front Range. It was seen by numerous Colorado birders at a number of locations, such as Fossil Creek Res, *Larimer*, Lake Loveland, *Larimer*, Boyd Lake SP, *Larimer*, Jackson Res, *Morgan*, Union Res, and at the end of November it spent three days at Lake McIntosh in west Longmont, *Boulder* (NK, IS, I&BP, TF, m.ob., doc).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: One was seen at Lake Meredith, *Crowley*, on 14 Aug (KPa, m.ob.), and a juvenile was seen at Bonny Res, *Yuma*, on 4 Sep (PJ, doc).

Yellow-billed Loon, Erie Reservoir, Boulder County, November 24, 2006. Photo by Bill Maynard

Common Black-Hawk: An adult was seen along the Arkansas River just east of Cañon City, *Fremont*, between 2 Sep and 12 Oct (RM, SMo, m.ob., doc). This is the first time this species has been seen for more than a day or two, and many birders saw it in Colorado for the first time.

Broad-winged Hawk: A juvenile was near Lake Catamount, *Routt*, on 13 Sep (TLi, m.ob.). This is a first county record, and only the fourth record of this species in western Colorado.

Gyrfalcon: A juvenile was seen in North Park, *Jackson*, on 5 Nov (AS, NK, SR, doc).

Whooping Crane: An adult was seen flying with a flock of Sandhill

Cranes near Neegronda Res, *Kiowa*, on 1 Nov (BKP, JR, JD, DN). There are only a few Colorado records of birds from the flock that breeds at Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada and winters at Rockport in Texas.

Black-bellied Plover: From the West Slope, one was seen in Grand Junction between 5 Aug and 2 Sep (RL, m.ob.), one was seen at Lake Catamount on 18 Oct (FL), which is a first county record for Routt, and another was seen at Stagecoach Res on 19 Oct (TLi). On the Eastern Plains, there was a very large flock of 33 at Jackson Res on 15 Oct (JK, DSc, LK, CLa).

American Golden-Plover: Several were seen at Jackson Res between 29 Sep and 15 Oct, with a high count of six on the last date (JK, m.ob.); one was seen at Bonny Res on 30 Sep (NP, AS, ABo); one was seen at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 30 Sep and 1 Oct (SB); a juvenile was at Chatfield Res on 2 Oct (JK); and one was at Jumbo Res, *Sedgwick*, on 29 Oct (HA). A new county record was furnished by two seen in Craig, *Moffat*, on 4 and 5 Nov (FL, DHi).

Piping Plover: A juvenile was seen at Prewitt Res between 7 and 19 Aug (BGb, TF, ABu).

Ruddy Turnstone: One was seen at Prewitt Res on 1 Aug (AM, TLe), one was seen at Jackson Res between 25 and 29 Aug (JK, DSc, m.ob.), and two were seen at Barr Lake on 29 Aug (WF).

Dunlin: One was seen at Lake DeWeese on 23 Oct (RM) for a first Custer County record, one was seen in Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 23 and 24 Oct (DSi), up to three were seen at Prewitt Res between 12 and 17 Nov (CW, DAL, m.ob.), and one was seen at Highline Res, *Mesa* on 27 Nov (LA).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Jackson Lake SP, Morgan County, October 1, 2006. Photo by Bill Maynard

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Normally, this species passes through Colorado in very late August through the first half of September, but this year many birds passed through nearly a month late. A juvenile was seen at Jackson Res on 28 Aug (BGb), and two were seen at the same location between 24 Sept and 1 Oct (TLe, m.ob., doc); one was seen at Big Johnson Res, *El Paso*, on 28 Sep (JD, MP); and finally one was seen at the Plum Creek Delta of Chatfield Res on the extremely late date of 8 Oct (AS).

Ruff: One was seen and photographed at Evilsizer Lake, *Lincoln*, on 27 Sep (BGb, MP, doc). This is the

third record of this species in Colorado.

Red Phalarope: One was seen at Lake DeWeese on 5 Aug (FL), providing a second Custer County record. One was seen at Big Johnson Res between 22 Aug and 2 Sep (MP, m.ob.), one was at Fossil Creek Res on 21 Sep (AS), one was seen at Chatfield Res on 8 Oct (JK, m.ob., doc), and one was at Elevenmile Res on 24 Oct (JD).

Laughing Gull: An adult in basic plumage was at the water treatment plant east of Greeley, *Weld*, between 1 and 14 Oct (SMe, m.ob., doc).

Little Gull: An adult in basic plumage was seen at Lake Meredith on 10 Sep (GW, JK, doc), another was seen at Neegronda Res between 29 Oct and 3 Nov (MP, BKP), which is a first record for Kiowa, and another adult was seen at Pueblo Res on 11 Nov (MY, BKP, m.ob.).

Mew Gull: An adult in basic plumage was seen at Douglas Res, *Larimer*, between 23 and 25 Nov (RHo, TLe), and the regular adult with the gimpy leg was at Union Res on 27 Nov (CW, IS, doc).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: An adult was seen near Rifle, *Garfield*, between 24 Sep and 5 Oct (AD, KPo, VZ). This is the first West Slope record of this species.

Glaucous Gull: An immature was seen at Boyd Lake between 3 and 11 Nov (JL, m.ob.), and another was at College Lake in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 8 Nov (NK).

Great Black-backed Gull: An adult was seen at Cherry Creek Res between 22 Sep and 5 Oct (BBo), another adult was at Pueblo Res between 10 and 28 Nov (BKP, m.ob., doc), and a second-cycle bird was also at Pueblo Res between 11 and 14 Nov (BKP, LE, doc). One was seen at Williams Fork Res, *Grand*, on 20 Nov (SK), which is the first West Slope record of this species, and finally a juvenile was seen at Prewitt Res on 20 Nov (IS).

Sabine's Gull: Around 30 birds were reported this fall, which is about average. All were seen along the Front Range, except for three West Slope reports: two were seen in Grand Junction between 8 and 22 Sep (LA, BBa, m.ob.), an adult was seen at Big Meadows Res, *Mineral*, on 9 Sep (JBt), and a juvenile was at Pastorius Res, *La Plata*, on 14 Sep (SA).

Black-legged Kittiwake: An adult and a juvenile were seen at Cherry Creek Res between 2 and 10 Nov (GW, PP, m.ob.), another juvenile was seen at Lathrop SP, *Huerfano*,

Ruff, Evilsizer Lake, Kiowa County, September 27, 2006. Photo by Bill Maynard

Black-legged Kittiwake, Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe County, November 5, 2006. Photo by Glenn Walbek

between 18 and 21 Nov (BKP, MP, LE, BSt, m.ob., doc), and finally a juvenile was photographed at Mount Elbert Forebay, *Lake*, on 20 Nov (SY, RHa, doc), for a first county record.

Common Tern: A rare West Slope sighting was an immature seen at Pastorius Res on 14 Sep (SA). The high count for the fall was 15 at Bonny Res on 8 Oct (BKP, MP, LE, BSt).

Arctic Tern: A juvenile was seen at Union Res between 17 and 20 Sep (I&BP, m.ob.), another juvenile was seen at Fossil Creek Res on 21 Sep (NK, AS, doc), and an adult was seen and photographed at Lake Beckwith in Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 22 and 23 Sep (DSi, m.ob., doc).

Pomarine Jaeger: An immature bird was seen at Cherry Creek Res between 5 Sep and 4 Oct (GW, m.ob., doc), and another immature was at Chatfield Res between 4 and 8 Oct (JR, GW, m.ob.).

Long-tailed Jaeger: A juvenile was seen and photographed at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*, between 26 and 28 Sep (IS, LS, DFa, NE, doc).

Long-billed Murrelet: One was reported at Blue Mesa Res, *Gunnison*, on 18 Nov (TH). This is only the third record for the state, but the second record for western Colorado: the first was found near Aspen in August 1982.

Inca Dove: Janeal Thompson reports a flock of 4 to 5 birds seen irregularly at her house in Lamar, *Prowers*, throughout the fall (JT), and two or three were seen in Rocky Ford, *Otero*, on 1 and 12 Nov (SO, BKP, JD, JR).

Lesser Nighthawk: This was an amazing season for this species on the West Slope. At least four were present in Nucla, *Montrose*, between 1 Aug

Pomarine Jaeger, Chatfield SP, Douglas/Jefferson Counties, October 5, 2006. Photo by Glenn Walbek

and 24 Sep (CD, BW, doc), an adult female was seen at Dolores Ponds, *Montezuma*, on 16 Aug (JBt, doc), and another was found as a road kill in Gateway, *Mesa*, on 11 Sep (CD).

Magnificent Hummingbird: A female, which first arrived during the summer, was seen north of Durango, *La Plata*, on 4 Aug (BKP, doc).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: A juvenile was seen and photographed at Prewitt Res on 1 Sep (SL, GW, JK, NE), an immature male was seen in Lamar between 3 and 10 Sep (JT), and an adult male was at Linda Paulsen's farm north of Lamar on 23 Sep (LP).

Costa's Hummingbird: A female was photographed at the Stulps' farm south of Lamar on 22 and 23 Sep (J&JS, doc), and a second female was seen at Linda Paulsen's farm north of Lamar also on 23 Sep (LP).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: A total of nine birds were reported this fall, which is more than usual. One was found at Manitou Lake, *Teller*, on 28 Sep (MP), a juvenile was at Lathrop SP on 12 Oct (MP), two were found on the Fox Ranch, *Yuma*, on 14 Oct (TF, BSc, MP, BSt), an adult female was seen in Pueblo City Park on 22 Oct (MY), and a juvenile was seen at the same location between 22 Oct and 26 Nov (BKP, m.ob.). An adult male was seen at Holy Cross Abbey in Cañon City on 12 Nov (MP, BKP, SMo), and a juvenile was in Wetmore, *Custer*, also on 12 Nov (MP, BKP).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: One was seen along Boulder Creek just west of 75th Street, *Boulder*, between 5 and 22 Aug (TF, m.ob.), and another was at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, on 18 Sep (BMa, BKP, MP).

Magnificent Hummingbird, LaPlata County, July 30, 2006. Photo by Mark Peterson

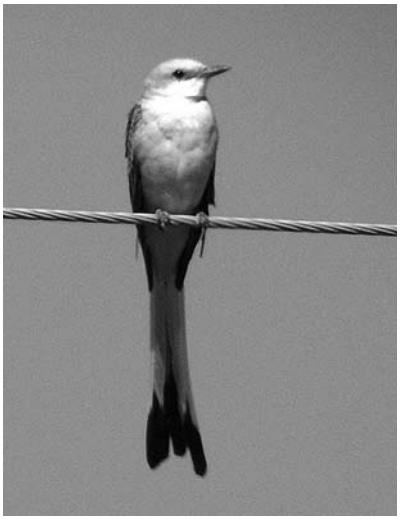
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: One was reported from near Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, on 15 Sep (NK, GW, doc).

Pacific-slope Flycatcher: One was caught, measured, and banded at the RMBO Barr Lake banding station on 1 Sep (SN, doc). Pending CBRC acceptance, this will be the first record of this species in Colorado.

Black Phoebe: Away from the usual locations in Colorado, an adult and juvenile were seen in Salida, *Chaffee*, between 19 Aug and 6 Sep (SY, BT, BMi), one was seen in Trinidad, *Las Animas*, on 12 Sep (RM), and one was seen in Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 16 Sep (DSi).

Eastern Phoebe: Birds farther west than usual were one seen in Colorado City on 17 Sep (DSi) and one in Salida on 31 Oct (RM).

Great Crested Flycatcher: Well west of its normal range was one at Valco Ponds in Pueblo between 26 and 29 August (RM, BKP).



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Otero/Pueblo Counties, September 24, 2006. Photo by Brandon Percival

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: An adult was seen at CR 1 and CR KK, *Otero*, between 19 and 29 Sep (BGb, m.ob., doc).

White-eyed Vireo: One was seen at Wetmore on 29 Oct (RM).

Bell's Vireo: A report well west of its usual range was one seen in Rye, *Pueblo*, on 26 Aug (DSi).

Blue-headed Vireo, Barr Lake SP, Adams County, September 6, 2006. Photo by Steven Brown

Cassin's Vireo: An extremely large fallout was the total of 17 seen at Prewitt Res on 27 Aug (JK, m.ob.).

Blue-headed Vireo: One was banded at the Barr Lake banding station on 6 Sep (SN, doc); one was at CR 9, *Cheyenne*, on 17 Sep (BKP, MP, ABu), which is the first report from that county; one was seen at Valco Ponds in Pueblo on 20 Sep (BKP); and another was at the Lake Hasty Campground, *Bent*, on 29 Oct (MP, BKP).

Philadelphia Vireo: There were eight reports of this species along the Front Range this fall. One was at Prewitt Res from 27 to 29 Aug (JK, m.ob., doc), one was at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 2 Sep (JD), one was at Ramah Res, *El Paso*, on 8 Sep (MP), one was at Florence River Park, *Fremont*, on 8-9 Sep (MP), one was at Valco Ponds in Pueblo on 12 Sep (BKP), another was at Greenhorn Meadows Park, *Pueblo*, on the same day (DSi, doc), one was at the Cañon City Riverwalk on 15 Sep (BKP, MP), and finally one was at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, on 19 Sep (CLe). On the West Slope, one was seen at the Roaring Judy Fish Hatchery, *Gunnison*, on 30 Aug (JBt), and a first record for *Moffat* was another seen at Loudy-Simpson Park in Craig on 23 Sep (FL).

Cave Swallow: A possible immature of this species was seen at Valco Ponds in Pueblo, on 16 Sep (BKP). This species is currently not on the Colorado state list.

Carolina Wren: A pair nest-

ed at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, this year, and was present throughout the fall (DAL).

Winter Wren: There were 18 birds reported this fall, all from the Eastern Plains, except for one banded at the RMBO banding station in Grand Junction on 19 Oct (GG).

Sedge Wren: Two were seen at Flagler SWA, *Kit Carson*, on 17 Sep (MP, BKP, LE, ABu), and one was seen at the Kit Carson sewage pond, *Cheyenne*, on 2 Nov (MP).

Wood Thrush: One was banded at the Barr Lake banding station on 7 Oct (SN, doc), and another was seen at Crow Valley Campground also on 7 Oct (SMe).

Varied Thrush: A male was seen at Poudre Park, *Larimer*, on 28 Oct (SD).

Sprague's Pipit: There were reports of 10 birds this fall, which is well above average. One was seen near Hugo SWA, *Lincoln*, on 14 Sep (BGb), one was at the Fox Ranch on 26 Sep (TF, m.ob.), two were seen east of Bonny Res on 8 Oct (BKP), three were seen in southwest *Washington Co* and two were at the playa straddling the *Washington/Kit Carson* county line all on 13 Oct (BGb, doc), one was near Hugo on 14 Oct (BGb), and finally one was near Briggsdale, *Weld*, on 16 Oct (BGb, doc).

Blue-winged Warbler: One was seen at the Waterton Bridge, *Jefferson*, on 9 Sep (HK), and a first-fall bird was seen at Neenoshe Res, *Kiowa*, on 3 Nov (JBt) for a first county record.

Golden-winged Warbler: One was seen on the Uncompahgre Plateau, *Montrose*, on 18 Aug (AR), and a male was at the Cañon City Riverwalk also on 18 Aug (RM).

Northern Parula: A very late bird was seen at Valco Ponds in Pueblo on 22 Nov (PH, MY).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: There were six reports. A female was seen at Lewis, *Montezuma*, on 8 Oct (M&DH), a male was seen in Salida on 13 Oct for a new Chaffee County record (RM), and one was seen in Carbondale, *Garfield*, on 23 Oct (DC), which is also a new county record.

Black-throated Green Warbler: One was reported from the Roaring Judy Fish Hatchery on 30 Aug (JBt), and one was seen in Salida on 3 Nov (SY).

Blackburnian Warbler: Seven were seen on the Eastern Plains this fall, which is more than usual, and one was in Nucla on 9 Sep (BW, TLe, CD), which is a new Montrose County record.

Pine Warbler: One was seen at Prewitt Res between 27 and 29 Aug (AS, m.ob., doc), one was at the Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar on 25 Sep (DAL), a male was at Neenoshe Res between 1 and 4 Nov (BKP, DN, JD, JR), a male was in Pueblo City Park between 19 and 28 Nov (MY, m.ob.), and finally one was at the Evergreen Cemetery in *El Paso* on 23 Nov (MP, BKP, BMa).

Palm Warbler: One was seen at Endovalley in Rocky Mountain National Park, *Larimer*, on 23 Aug (BGl), one was seen in Silverthorne, *Summit*, on 29 Oct (JK, AS, NE, JR, DSc), and one was seen at Neenoshe Res on 3 Nov (JBt).

Bay-breasted Warbler: An immature bird was seen at Crow Valley Campground on 10 Sep (DAL), and one was seen in southern Kit Carson County on 17 Sep (BKP, MP, LE, ABu).

Prothonotary Warbler: An immature female was banded at the Barr Lake banding station on 24 Oct (SN).

Worm-eating Warbler: One was banded at the RMBO banding station in Grand Junction on 19 Oct (GG). This is the third record of this species for western Colorado.

Canada Warbler: An immature male was seen at Crow Valley Campground on 25 and 26 Aug (JK, DAL, m.ob., doc), one was seen at Prewitt Res on 27 Aug (AS, JK, m.ob., doc), one was along Boulder Creek below CU, *Boulder*, on 3 Sep (SL), and one was photographed at Lake DeWeese on 24 Sep (RM), for a first Custer County record.

Summer Tanager: Only two reports from the fall, the first banded at Barr Lake SP on 16 October (SN), the other a male that frequented a feeder and bird bath in Colorado Springs from 2 to 8 November (PT, GW).

Canada Warbler, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, August 25, 2006. Photo by David Leatherman

Prothonotary Warbler, Barr Lake SP, Adams County, October 24, 2006. Photo by Tony Leukering

Scarlet Tanager: A first year bird was seen at Prewitt Res on 29 Sep (JK, GW).

Field Sparrow: Unusual reports further west than usual were one at the home of Tina Jones, *Jefferson*, on 29 Oct (TJ) and one in Colorado City on 1 Nov (DSi).

LeConte's Sparrow: One was seen at Fox Ranch on 14 Oct (BSc, TF, MP, BSt), and two birds were seen in marshes near Fort Lyon, *Bent*, between 27 and 29 Oct (MP, BKP).

Fox Sparrow: A bird of the red eastern race was banded at Barr Lake on 13 Oct (SN), one was seen at Neenoshe Res between 29 Oct and 3 Nov (BKP, MP, JBt), and one was near John Martin Res on 16 Nov (DN). The CBRC requests documentation of "Red" Fox Sparrows in Colorado.

Summer Tanager, El Paso County, November 8, 2006. Photo by Glenn Walbek

Swamp Sparrow: Only 15 birds were reported this fall, which is much fewer than usual. The only West Slope reports were one seen in Grand Junction on 13 Oct (JBs) and one seen in Paonia, *Delta*, on 22 Oct (JBs).

White-throated Sparrow: About 40 birds were reported this fall, with the only West Slope reports those of an adult in Nucla between 25 Sep and 25 Nov (CD, BW) and one near Cortez, *Montezuma*, on 3 Nov (M&DH).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: One was seen near Fruitgrowers Res, *Delta*, between 29 Oct and 30 Nov (DG), returning to the location for a fourth year.

Smith's Longspur: One was seen near Hugo SWA on 14 Sep (BGb), and one was seen near Bonny Res on 30 Sep (AS, ABo, doc).

Snow Bunting: One was seen at South Park Ponds, *Jackson*, on 7 Nov (SP), a female was seen at Prewitt Res on 17 Nov (DAL), and two birds were seen there on 18 Nov (JK, m.ob.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: An unusual West Slope report was one seen in Paonia between 18 and 26 Nov (JBs).

Northern Cardinal: Well west of its usual range was a male in the garden of Ken Pals, south of the Garden of the Gods, *El Paso*, between 31 Oct and 30 Nov (KPa, m.ob.).

Eastern Meadowlark: One was singing a little north of Two Buttes Res, *Prowers*, on 5 Oct (SMo).

Rusty Blackbird: A female was seen at the Lamar Community College on 23 Oct (DAL), two were at Eliot SWA, *Logan*, on 19 Nov (SL), and one was at Cherry Creek Res on 21 Nov (BBo).

Purple Finch: A female was seen at Last Chance, *Washington*, on 28 Sep (DAL).

White-winged Crossbill: Two were seen on Wolf Creek Pass, *Mineral*, on 4 Aug (BKP), and four were seen on Ripple Creek Pass, *Rio Blanco*, on 11 Aug (LS).

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IN THE SCOPE

Female Eurasian Wigeon

Tony Leukering

Tips for a Tricky Colorado Identification

Eurasian Wigeon is of annual occurrence in Colorado, though it is a review species (Semo et al. 2002). All 26 Colorado records of the species refer to males, usually among large numbers of American Wigeon. Additionally, except for a couple from Delta County and 3-4 from Rio Grande County, all accepted records are from eastern Colorado, with most of those being found in Front Range counties from Larimer to Pueblo, inclusive. With all these male Eurasian Wigeon records, one would suspect that there ought to be some females violating Colorado airspace. However, though separation of male Eurasian and American Wigeons is fairly straightforward (excepting hybrids), identification of female Eurasian Wigeon is not particularly easy. Female Eurasian Wigeons are, for most intents and purposes, similar in shape to female American Wigeons, excepting slight differences in head shape that can be difficult to use in identification. The Colorado Bird Records Committee is unlikely to accept a record based solely on head shape, so this paper endeavors to point out plumage features useful in separating these two very similar species.

Often, the first clue that the female wigeon one is eyeballing is a Eurasian is the overall ruddy aspect to the head, creating little or no contrast with the reddish-brown chest—unlike the fairly strong head-chest contrast in female American Wigeon. Eurasian's face is usually quite plain, unlike American's, which sports dark mottling around the eye extending in a swath behind the eye (mirroring the green coloration of a male) that contrasts with a paler crown and forehead, creating a vaguely black-eyed look. Additionally, Eurasians typically lack the vague dark speckling on the head typical of Americans. Once you have glommed onto a suspect wigeon, check the bill pattern—American Wigeon usually has a thin black border (usually not complete) at the very base of the bill and Eurasians completely lack this character. However, this mark should be used in combination with other characteristics, as some Americans lack this black border.

Moving down from the head, note the color of the sides and the contrast or lack thereof with the color of the chest; American shows fairly strong contrast, Eurasian not much. In fact, the overall color tone of female Eurasian Wigeon is just much more even than that of American Wigeon. Finally, the last bit that I will point out on the perched or swimming bird is the color of the innermost secondary, which often shows if the wing is at all drooped (and which is pointed out by a yellow arrow on the back cover photos of the two species). On Eurasian, this feather is white; on American, it is pale gray, though it can often appear white—beware of strong lighting. Interestingly, this color difference is opposite that of the best in-flight character—the color of the axillars. On American Wigeon, these feathers are white and create a brighter and paler inner wing; on Eurasians, these feathers are gray and often mottled, giving the wing a much more muted appearance and, again, matching that species' overall duller tone. As with the innermost secondary, beware of strong lighting that may make the entire underwing look white. On the back cover, I have provided pictures of both species flying and not, with the axillars and the innermost secondary highlighted with yellow arrows.

For a much more in-depth treatment of these species, please refer

The species: Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)
The context: Migration and winter, anywhere in Colorado
The problem: Although males are easy to spot, females are usually passed over as American Wigeons.
(See photos on back cover.)

to the excellent article by Cox and Barry (2005), which one can access online at the URL listed below. I cannot recommend it highly enough. And the next time you find yourself in the presence of a male Eurasian Wigeon, look around the flock for a female (or two)!

Table 1. Features separating female Eurasian and American Wigeons.

Feature	Eurasian	American
Head color	Warm brown with minimal darker markings	Gray-brown with vague dark flecking; a minority have pale tan heads
Face pattern	Even-colored and quite plain	Pale forehead and crown contrast with dark mottling around eyes and extending behind the eyes; immature females show less than do adults
Bill pattern	Base of blue bill lacks black margin	Thin, black margin at base of blue bill, though incomplete in many and lacking in some
Head-chest contrast	Slight	Fairly strong
Chest-sides contrast	Slight	Fairly strong
Color of sides	Reddish-brown to brown, usually lacking orange or pinkish tones.	Bright rufous-brown
Axillars	Gray, with dark shaft streaks and mottling	White
Innermost secondary	White	Pale gray

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