

Vol. 42 No. 3 July 2008

# Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly

*Remembering Rich Levad:*  
1941–2008





Colorado Field Ornithologists  
P.O. Box 481, Lyons, Colorado 80540-0481  
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*Colorado Birds* (USPS 0446-190) (ISSN 1094-0030) is published quarterly by the Colorado Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 481, Lyons, CO 80540-0481. Subscriptions are obtained through annual membership dues. Periodicals postage paid at Lyons, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Colorado Birds*, P.O. Box 481, Lyons, CO 80540-0481.

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**Annual Membership Dues (renewable quarterly):** General \$25; Youth (under 18) \$12; Institution \$30. Membership dues entitle members to a subscription to *Colorado Birds*, which is published quarterly. Back issues/extra copies may be ordered for \$6.00. Send requests for extra copies/back issues, change of address and membership renewals to Raymond Davis, P.O. Box 481, Lyons, CO 80540; make checks out to Colorado Field Ornithologists. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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# Colorado Birds

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Rich Levad on  
a Long-eared  
Owl banding  
trip, 30 April  
2007. Photo by  
Todd Patrick

## Convention 2008: Cañon City

*Bill Schmoker*

I'm penning this note on the heels of our annual convention, my thoughts full of great memories of the birds and folks I connected with over the long weekend of 16-19 May in Cañon City and surrounding areas. The success of such a convention depends on many people, and I'd like to start by thanking Mark Peterson, who took the lead in this year's arrangements. Mark lined up the Quality Inn, which served as a great base of operations for our convention, and also captained what is arguably the most important task: coordinating field trips. Thanks to him, nearly all of the convention's 140 attendees got their first choice of field trips. Mark picked up everyone's lunches early each morning and was even on the team repairing the sound system during the banquet, screwdriver and soldering iron in hand, so that our speaker could be heard.

I would also like to thank Richard Crossley for his engaging talk at our banquet and for leading the photo trip on Saturday morning. His presentation gave our attendees a unique insight into his background and the events that led to his emergence as a prominent birder and bird photographer. I'm sure most folks hearing his talk appreciated his engaging style (enhanced by his Yorkshire accent), inspiring photographs, and riveting stories. People come at birding from many direc-

tions, but it was especially fascinating to me to learn more about the British birding scene and to gain insight into Cape May's emergence among the upper echelon of birding areas, particularly from someone as animated as Richard.

Richard was also incredibly helpful and encouraging to everyone on the photo trip, which brings me to the next group I'd like to acknowledge. Our annual convention



*Joe Roller stands squarely in the sights of an angry bull during a CFO convention field trip. Photo by Gregg Goodrich*

simply couldn't run without all of the volunteer field trip leaders, who have my deep admiration and appreciation. Field trip leaders have a lot of extra things to think about, beginning with the pressure to find birds and help with bird identification. They have to keep caravans together, maintain a balance in the trip's pace that keeps everyone together without feeling overly rushed or laid-back, adapt on the fly to changing weather and/or birding conditions, and generally oversee the safety and happiness of trip participants. While the final convention list is still being compiled as of my deadline, our trips amassed around 240 species with some amazing highlights—including Glaucous Gull, Alder Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Bay-breasted Warbler, seven species of owl, nearly 100 Blackpoll Warblers, and thousands of Red-necked Phalaropes!

I think a highlight for many was the presentation of awards—thanks to Kim Potter for coordinating these. I'd like to congratulate Bob Spencer on receiving our Lifetime Achievement Award (see page 164 of this journal), and I'd like to thank Joe Roller for his eloquent presentation of the award during the banquet. I was very pleased to see Tony Leukering receive CFO's Ron Ryder Award (the fifth given), which recognizes his distinguished service to our organization and its goals, his scholarly contributions to Colorado field ornithology, and his sharing of knowledge with the birders of the state. I appreciate Rachel Hopper's expressive presentation of this special award. Thanks also to Larry Semo for providing the computer projection setup, to Nathan Pieplow for hosting the paper session, and to Tony Leukering for another great edition of "Stump the Chumps." Particular thanks go to our paper session presenters: David Leatherman, who spoke on "Birds and the Mountain Pine Beetle"; Kim Potter, who discussed "The Coolest Bird: the Black Swift"; and Lynn Wickersham, who presented in detail the goals and progress to date of the current Breeding Bird Atlas (see page 187 of this journal).



*"Wild Bill" Maynard attempts to rescue Joe.*  
Photo by Rachel Hopper





*Convention-goers learn the finer points of bird photography from Richard Crossley and Bill Schmoker. Photo by Bill Schmoker*

Before any one of these things could happen, folks had to be able to register for the convention and select trips to participate in. Several people deserve special thanks for this, including Rachel Hopper, for putting together the brochure and for streamlining the on-line registration process, and Maggie Boswell, for crunching all of the registrants' information and handling finances. Connie Kogler had family

obligations that precluded her attendance, but she still prepared the registration packets. Finally, everyone on the board helped with months of planning before the convention and performed many varied tasks that I didn't mention in order to make it all run so successfully.

Another facet of our annual convention is the end of some board members' tenure and the beginning of their replacements' terms. I extend my sincere thanks for the efforts that Lisa Edwards, Kim Potter, and Glenn Walbek have contributed in their positions on the CFO board of directors. I'll miss their many talents, their valuable perspectives, and their friendly faces at board meetings



*CFO banquet keynote speaker Richard Crossley photographs Colorado birds. Photo by Dave Leatherman*

(and pre-meeting birding jaunts), but it is healthy for a board to have annual turnover and I know they'll enjoy some newfound time to bird! Glenn's last job as nominations chair was to put together a slate of new directors to replace the outgoing crew, and I was very happy to have the convention attendees assent to the nominations of Allison Hilf, Larry Modesitt, and Brad Steger as incoming board members. I'm grateful for their commitment to CFO, I look forward to working with them in the coming year, and I know they will appreciate your support, input, and thanks as they learn and perform their new roles.

I look forward to our next annual convention, to be held in Alamosa next year. While we don't have the date officially set yet, I'd at least pencil in Memorial Day weekend, 2009. Stay tuned!

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

## CFO BOARD MINUTES

5 April 2008

Center for Innovation and Creativity  
University of Colorado  
Boulder, Colorado

*Lisa Edwards, CFO Secretary*

*The regular quarterly meeting was held at 11:05 a.m. Board members present were President, Bill Schmoker; Secretary, Lisa Edwards; Treasurer, Maggie Boswell; and directors Rachel Hopper, Bill Kaempfer, Nathan Pieplow, and Glenn Walbek. Vice President Jim Beatty and directors Connie Kogler, Mark Peterson, Kim Potter, and Larry Semo sent their regrets. The minutes of the February 2008 meeting were approved.*

### **President's Report**

Things are progressing nicely for the 2008 convention, which will be held in Cañon City next month.

### **Treasurer's Report**

CFO's current liquid assets are \$38,884.73. The Treasurer's report was approved. The IRS has notified

us that we will need to update our non-profit tax exempt status.

### **Committee Reports**

A. CBRC—The site is running very well. Records are being reviewed and voted on in a very timely manner.

B. Special Awards—A landowner plaque will be ordered for the hospi-

tality of landowners hosting a Routt County bird. In addition, the board voted on and approved a nomination for the Annual Lifetime Achievement Award, to be given at the annual convention this year in Cañon City. There are some nominations for the Ron Ryder award this year; due to the timing of the nominations, the board will have to vote via email.

C. Nominating Committee—Glenn Walbek. Glenn Walbek submitted his resignation effective at the end of May. His term runs through the end of May 2009. Larry Modesitt has agreed to fill one of the two vacancies on the board. Continued discussion was held about other possible candidates.

D. Project Fund—Bill Kaempfer. Letters have been sent to the grant recipients conferring the grants and requesting articles for Colorado Birds.

E. Youth Fund—Bill Kaempfer. The board will change the deadline

for submission of youth scholarship requests to 31 March starting in 2009.

F. COBirds—Mark Peterson. The listserv is up to 908 members. The board is evaluating the prospect of moving to a different site as costs continue to go up with Net Atlantic.

G. CFO website—The county birding page is being updated, including site information and county checklists.

H. Colorado Birds—Nathan Pieplow. The April issue is ready to go to the printers and the July issue is more than full. Nathan continues to receive many great articles submitted by Colorado birders.

I. 2008 Convention—There was general discussion about the convention to tie up loose ends before the big event.

The next board meeting will be held in Rifle, Colorado on 23 August 2008 at 11:00 a.m. The board meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

## Minutes of the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Colorado Field Ornithologists

17 May 2008

Quality Inn

Cañon City, Colorado

The meeting was called to order at 8:19 p.m. by President Bill Schmoker.

The hat was passed around the banquet room for donations to the Project Fund and Youth Scholarship Fund.

Bill thanked three people who will be leaving the board—Lisa Edwards, Glenn Walbek, and Kim Potter—for their contributions to CFO. Bill presented three people to be elected to the board to fill the vacancies: Brad



Steger, Allison Hilf, and Larry Modesitt. There were no nominations from the floor and the Officers and Directors were elected by voice vote.

Bill Schmoker talked about East High School in Denver and how the decision of the board to fund its request for supplies for the year will help CFO get new people interested in birds.

Bill announced that the 2009 convention will be held in Alamosa—dates to be announced.

Joe Roller presented the second

annual CFO Lifetime Achievement Award to Bob Spencer, thanking him for his many years of contributions to Colorado birding.

Rachel Hopper presented the Ron Ryder award to Tony Leukering for his many scholarly achievements and services to CFO and its members.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. and Bill introduced the keynote speaker, Richard Crossley. His presentation was “Past, Present, and Future.”

## ACROSS THE BOARD

### Rachel Hopper

*Bill Schmoker*

Rachel grew up in the inner city on the south side of Chicago with two sisters and two brothers. Her family was not nature- or outdoor-oriented at all. (In fact, after walking across Europe as a medic in World War II, her father was determined never to camp again. The first time Rachel ever really hiked or even used a sleeping bag was in her freshman year in college, during a trip to the Grand Canyon.) Following the war, her father became a physician, but also struggled for years with alcohol and drug abuse issues. However, Rachel is proud to say he was clean and sober for five years before his death in 1990. Rachel's mother has always been involved in politics and at the age of 79 continues to be an activist for world peace. The single greatest influence in Rachel's life was her grandfather, whose child-like spirit, love of life, gentleness, and compassion got her through a difficult childhood.

When she was little, Rachel's parents had a coffee-table book of Audubon color plates. She was absolutely fascinated with the kingfishers and became determined to see some of them during her life. As Rachel got older, she was introduced to the natural world through a family friend and decided she wanted to become a biologist. At about age 13, Rachel read *Darwin and the Beagle* by Alan Moorehead,



*The Gentoo Penguin Colony, Damoy Point, Antarctica, 30 January 2003.*

and the concept of evolution was a stunning revelation to her. That book has been one of her most prized possessions ever since; it made visiting the Galapagos Islands a major goal in her life.

Rachel moved to Colorado in 1979 to go to college, but financial difficulties forced her to stop going to school in order to work full-time. As soon as she found herself working as an EMT with a private ambulance service in Denver, Rachel knew she had found her lifelong career. After finishing advanced training at Swedish Medical Center in Denver, Rachel moved to Greeley to become the first female paramedic ever hired by Weld County.

She worked ground ambulance full-time for a total of 15 years and flew part-time with Air Life of Greeley as a flight paramedic for five years. In addition, she taught as an EMS instructor at Aims Community College for much of that time and was chair of her department for a while.

In 1994, Rachel noticed a kestrel hovering and decided to learn more about raptors. That led to an interest in ducks...which led her to realize that there were smaller and harder-to-identify birds in Colorado. She was soon obsessed with birding. She finally retired from EMS in the mid-1990's and became a full-time birder.

On a VENT tour in 1998, Rachel achieved her lifelong dream of visiting the Galapagos Islands, which also got her hooked on world birding. She ranks Antarctica as the best birding destination she has ever visited, with Kenya as a close second. By the end of this year she will have birded six continents. World birding has allowed her to visit places and experience cultures that she would never have seen otherwise.

One day, shortly after Rachel had subscribed to COBirds, the table of contents for the CFO Journal was published to the list. She knew nothing about CFO, so queried the sender of the post about it. After receiving a free issue of the journal, she joined and soon became actively involved with the organization. Rachel developed

CFO's first website and continues to oversee its upgrades, additions, and maintenance. She was COBirds administrator for many years and was involved with the development of the Colorado Birding Trail and CFO County Birding websites. Rachel has attended conventions and served on the board for several years; she is currently finishing her third and final term. She also serves as a member of the Colorado Bird Records Committee. Rachel considers her biggest accomplishments with CFO to be her role in moving the organization forward through the development of our website and her work with other board members to improve Colorado Birds.

Rachel has been with husband George for 23 years and is step-mother to two children and step-grandmother to four grandchildren. Rachel's brothers and sisters live all over the country and not one of them is interested in birds!

Rachel hopes her future holds more world birding, ongoing involvement with CFO, and continuing involvement in the great Colorado birding community, where she continues to learn and grow as both a birder and a person. After she is off the board, Rachel would like to continue in her webmaster role. She sees this as one of the major ways to help CFO grow and to maintain its leading role as one of the most forward-thinking and innovative field ornithology organizations in the country.

I hope you will join me in thanking Rachel for the countless hours she has spent and continues to spend behind the scenes serving and improving CFO.

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

## CFO Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient: Bob Spencer

*Joe Roller*

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Lifetime Achievement Award is intended to honor people who have for decades given selflessly for the benefit of Colorado birders and birding and who are held in the highest regard by their friends and colleagues. Last year Joe Himmel was the recipient, which was fitting and proper, as Joe illustrates the kind of person of character the award is intended to honor.

At the 2008 CFO convention in Cañon City, I had the honor of presenting the second annual Lifetime Achievement Award to one of CFO's charter members, Robert Arnold Spencer, our "Bob" Spencer.

It is impossible not to like, admire, and respect Bob Spencer. Bob moved to Denver from Buffalo, New York, in 1952, as an active birder – a Young Turk! Ever since, Bob has shown great commitment to the Colorado birding community, serving on the Denver Field Ornithologists' Board and as its President, leading countless birding field trips, and going out of his way to inspire young birders to "get out into the field." Bob is a delight to be with.



*Bob Spencer (left) receiving the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from Joe Roller during the 2008 CFO Convention banquet.*

When I asked people to describe Bob Spencer, the words that came up were old-fashioned values: dignity, integrity, optimism, and good humor. Good humor? Who among us has not been dazzled by Bob's wit? Who has not heard one of Bob's brilliant puns? (One, or more?) Dick Schottler recalls the day when Bob made a good pun. It was 1976. At Barr Lake a shallow bay was drying up, and the spawning

fish were thick. Dick said, "Look how many carp there are!" Came Bob's reply, "Those fish are so thick, they form a CARPET!"

Bob Spencer also holds the record for the number of birds seen on a DFO field trip. The total count for a nocturnal visit to the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt Eastern Screech-Owl spot yielded zero birds heard, zero birds seen!

Bob was a great father, raising two sons: Bob, who attended the convention with his father and was present for the awards ceremony, and Jimmy. Bob was devoted to his wife, Shirley, and cared for her during her long illness until she passed away two years ago. Bob has faced adversity with courage.

Bob, CFO appreciates you as a birder, as a leader, and most of all as a person. Thanks for all you do.

Joe Roller, 965 S. Garfield Street, Denver, CO 80209, [pergrn@aol.com](mailto:pergrn@aol.com)

## IN MEMORIAM

# Remembering Rich Levad

*Jason Beason, Glenn Giroir, and Carolyn Gunn*

Richard G. Levad passed away on 27 February 2008. He was a force of nature in Colorado field ornithology. After retiring from teaching, Rich Levad turned his love of birding into a vocation when he began working full-time for Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO). His colleagues, friends, and family recognized his dedication in 2005 when he received the Ronald A. Ryder Award from Colorado Field Ornithologists, a Certificate of Appreciation for years of outstanding service to Audubon Colorado, and the inaugural Richard G. Levad Award from Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. In the face of ongoing challenges presented by his struggle with Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS), Rich retired from RMBO in July 2006. With more time to pursue his own projects, he began writing "The Coolest Bird," a natural history of the Black Swift, a bird that he had spent several years studying and tracking throughout Colorado and New Mexico. Meticulously typing with just one finger, he completed the manuscript, which is now being considered for publication by Oregon State University Press.

The contributions that Rich Levad made to ornithology in Colo-

rado are too numerous to list in one article. Before he came along no one really understood the abundance and range of Black Swift or Purple Martin in the state. Rich was a master at rediscovering information that had been archived and made several important discoveries just by conducting literature searches. Rich also started Project ColonyWatch, and by organizing volunteers and the information they gave him, he was able to monitor all of Colorado's colonially nesting bird species.

Rich's legacy includes many stories from those he influenced and taught in the classroom and in the field. Here are some of the ones that we remember him by.

**I**t was July of 2001 and I had just finished a season of doing point counts throughout Colorado for Tony Leukering as part of Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's "Monitoring Colorado's Birds" project. I asked Tony, "What's next? Do you have any more work for me?"

He said, "Yes, Rich Levad wants you to hike to waterfalls and look for Black Swifts."

Being an avid hiker/backpacker, I had to ask Tony to pinch me so that I would wake up. How lucky could I get?

That year Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory had decided to increase its effort in the search for new breeding locations for Black Swifts. They held a training session in Telluride, inviting interested people from across the state to come learn about the search protocol, and hired several field technicians to assist with the search. I had not met Rich yet and had never seen a Black Swift. The first morning of training I woke up early to see what birds were around. One of the first things I saw was a small group of Black Swifts coursing over the valley. Lifer!

Later that morning I got to meet Rich, and I must admit that I felt intimidated at first. I had heard so much about him, and now I was going to be working for him and trying to find swifts for him. The training session was amazing—we were able to see several Black Swift nests and even discover a few new ones. I remember Rich saying joyfully, "I knew that if we got all these eyes out here we would find some new nests!"

At the end of the session, Rich handed me a stack of sheets with directions to waterfalls from Marc Conly's book *Waterfalls of Colorado*, telling me, "I am hoping that you are going to answer a lot of questions that I have. There should be a few new swift breeding sites in the San Juans. I hope you like to hike!"

I said, "Yes, Rich, I hope I can find some swifts for you."



By September, I had made it to 19 waterfalls or wet caves, and 16 of them had swifts! Two of the 16 sites were known historic breeding locations, so I had discovered 14 new Black Swift breeding sites in just over a month. I remember contacting Rich around mid-August, after finding the 10<sup>th</sup> new site, and finding him strangely quiet. I think that he was wondering if I was making things up!



*Rich Levad and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Photo by Glenn Giroir*

Rich rarely left his binoculars at home, and he found 302 species of birds in Mesa County. Rich and Coen Dexter are the only individuals so far to have broken the 300 species barrier in a county on the West Slope (both did it in Mesa County). Rich found Flammulated Owls in 19 counties and Black Swifts in 16 counties. Those totals are going to be difficult to beat!

I was very lucky to have had the experience of searching for Black Swifts for Rich Levad. Thank you, Rich!

*- Jason Beason*

**M**uch of my work with Rich involved his favorite bird, the Black Swift, a bird that formed a great link in our friendship. His ability to get volunteers to do his bidding was not lost on me, and my first summer as a volunteer for RMBO's Colony Watch saw me hiking miles and miles into the wilderness in pursuit of this bird. From there, he gradually eased me into surveying for Lewis's Woodpeckers, Purple Martins, Scott's Orioles, and owls. But despite his best efforts, I resisted learning the shorebirds, a great disappointment and personal affront to him, I'm sure.

I am left with so many wonderful and hilarious memories of these trips. Rich was notorious for his early starts. Sometimes I would hear him scrabbling around camp as early as 3:00 a.m., but he always wait-

ed patiently for me to finally drag myself out of my tent—I was in charge of morning coffee and toasted bagels. But I could tell that he was itching to get on the trail!

He only got mad at me once during all our trips, for failing to wake him up in the middle of the night when I heard a Western Screech-Owl calling. “Never let me sleep through an owl calling! Unless it is a Great Horned Owl, wake me up no matter what time it is!” Yes, sir! I heard about that for months!

Once on the trail, Rich seemed to require no food, water, or rest stops, so I would usually have to start whimpering to make him sit down while I ate and rested. However, he never seemed to mind stopping and eating my trail mix, M&Ms, and granola bars. But in his headlong rush down the trail he didn’t miss much. Rich was a man who could smell the roses without having to stop.

Rich just couldn’t wait. Couldn’t wait for the rest of us to get up and go birding. Rich, wherever you are, I hope you are adding many unimaginable birds to your list.

*- Carolyn Gunn*

**I**t is a beautiful fall afternoon as we pull into a small parking area in Silverton, Colorado. Three of us step out of the car and start walking toward the mouth of a deep canyon. We quickly realize that we will have to cross the Animas River, but oh well: this is the stuff of adventures. Rich looks at a spot in the rushing whitewater and says, “this looks good.” We nod in agreement, or doubt, as Rich removes his boots, rolls up his pants, and plunges right in. In the middle of the river, knee-deep, Rich stops to wave at the passengers on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge train as the old steam engine chugs by. Then it is our turn. About halfway across we realize with admiration, or irritation, what Rich has led us into. Rich smiles and says, “come on!”

We reach the other side with frozen feet but otherwise okay. We

## Contribute to the Levad Memorial Fund

Recently, Rich and his family created the Richard G. Levad Memorial Fund to fund work based on Rich’s wishes/interests. To make a donation, send a check to RMBO, P.O. Box 1232, Brighton, CO 80601-1232. Please write “Levad Memorial Fund” in the memo line.

hike a few miles to a small creek, scramble up a rock wall, and find ourselves at the base of a hidden waterfall. Rich immediately lies on his back and scans the ledges near the waterfall. Suddenly he jumps to his feet, points at a dark nook, and says, "that looks like a nest." We can't say. We try not to look as Rich climbs the steep wall to get a better look, smiles, and gives us a thumbs-up. We repeat this several times and then begin our trek back. We decide this time to avoid the river by walking near the narrow gauge tracks. With the San Juan Mountains spread out before us, we quickly lose ourselves in the scenery.

Suddenly we are jarred back to reality as we feel the ground shake, hear a loud rumble, and see a large, billowing smoke cloud approaching from around a tight bend. We clamber up the rocks beside the tracks and once again wave at the passengers of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge train, this time much more intimately. We laugh as the engineer blows his whistle and rounds another bend. What an adventure!

Those of us who were fortunate enough to know Rich understand that every data point that Rich collected comes with a story. And like all good stories, Rich's are filled with character, courage, humor, happiness, sometimes sadness, and, yes, adventure. These stories are what we will carry with us to tell around campfires, share with friends, and live with in our hearts. We all miss Rich greatly, but are grateful for the wonderful memories that he has given us.

*- Glenn Giroir*

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Carolyn Gunn, P.O. Box 791, Dolores, CO 81323

# Nest Cavity Displacement of a Boreal Owl by a Northern Saw-whet Owl: Do These Species Limit Each Other's Range?

Tyler Hicks and Dr. Patrick Magee

## Introduction

The genus *Aegolius* is represented by four species of owl worldwide. Only in parts of North America are two *Aegolius* species sympatric: the Boreal or Tengmalm's Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) and the Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*; del Hoyo et al. 1999). Northern New Mexico and southern Colorado represent the southern terminus of the Boreal Owl's range (Stahlecker and Rawinski 1990, Hayward and Hayward 1993), and the first documented breeding of Boreal Owl in Colorado didn't occur until 1983 (Palmer and Ryder 1984). However, the perceived rarity of this species is most likely a byproduct of the inaccessibility of its subalpine breeding habitat during the winter breeding period.

Boreal Owls in the Rocky Mountains are generally found at higher elevations than Northern Saw-whet Owls. However, the two species overlap in the lower part of the altitudinal range of Boreal Owl (Hayward and Garton 1988). In the Rocky Mountains, Boreal Owls are found primarily in cool and moist forests of Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) as well as nearby transition forests (Palmer 1986, Hayward et al. 1987). Studying habitat preferences of Northern Saw-whet Owls and Boreal Owls in northern Colorado, Palmer (1986) found that Boreal Owls tend to occupy spruce-fir forests with dense canopy, while Northern Saw-whet Owls tend to occupy more open forests, often associating with aspen groves. However, habitat selection studies are lacking for both owl species in southern Colorado.

In the Cochetopa Pass region of Saguache County, Colorado, we found Boreal Owls using less traditional dry forest sites dominated by bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). This suggests that at least at the southern end of their range, Boreal Owls may use atypical habitat. However, a detailed analysis of habitat preferences was not completed as part of this study. It should be noted that although suitable subalpine forest exists farther south in central New Mexico and Arizona, Boreal Owls are absent from these areas (Johnsgard 1988). In addition, Koopman et al. (2007),

based on genetic evidence, found that Boreal Owls appear to be capable of dispersing across large distances of unsuitable habitat. This evidence suggests that factors other than forest type may be limiting their range. We hypothesize that competition for cavities with Northern Saw-whet Owls may be one important factor limiting Boreal Owl range.

## Methods

In spring 2007, 23 territorial vocal male Boreal Owls were located in subalpine forests rimming the Gunnison Basin in southwest Colorado. Male singing trees, located during nocturnal surveys without the use of playback, were marked with flagging, and their locations were logged into a Global Positioning System (GPS) device. We found most singing male Boreal Owls easy to approach, and many continued to sing when researchers were within 20 meters of the singing tree. Observers returned the following day and attempted to locate nesting cavities during daylight hours. Male Boreal Owls typically sing within 10-50 meters of their nesting cavities (Meehan 1980, Hayward and Hayward 1993), and cavities of suitable size were found near most male singing sites.

Automated listening stations (ALS) were placed within 10 meters of nest cavity trees. If a cavity could not be located, the ALS was placed near the original singing site. The ALSs utilized in this study, designed by Dr. Dan Mennill of the University of Windsor, were identical to those used in northern Florida in the search for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (*Campephilus principalis*; Hill et. al 2006). Depending on ambient air temperature, the batteries provided sufficient power for 60 to 80 hours of recording. Audio data were recorded in 16-bit MP3 format at 44.1 kHz and 80-160 kbps onto a Hitachi 3 or 4 gigabyte microdrive card. Depending on weather conditions, batteries and cards were changed every four to nine days.

Three of the 23 male Boreal Owls were monitored from late March to late May using ALSs. An ALS was established near a territorial male Boreal Owl's singing site on 25 March 2007 in the Mill Creek region of the West Elk Wilderness, Gunnison County, Colorado. The Mill Creek site was located at approximately 3,100 meters in a large aspen stand with Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir stands in close proximity. Two additional ALSs were established on 29 March 2007 in the Cochetopa Pass region of Saguache County, Colorado. These two stations were located in the Lujan Creek (Gunnison National Forest) and Spanish Creek (Rio Grande National Forest) drainages at approximately 3,000 and 2,800 meters above sea level, respectively. Both sites were associated with large mature aspen stands in drain-

ages surrounded by a mosaic of wet meadows and forests of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), bristlecone pine, and Douglas-fir. However, significant stands of Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir exist within a kilometer of both cavities. In addition, large portions of the forest near both sites were recently logged. ALSs were in operation at both sites from 29 March until 29 May 2007 and recorded approximately 900 hours of audio data each. The Mill Creek ALS was in operation from 25 March until 21 May 2007 and recorded approximately 800 hours of audio data.

Field recordings were split into one-hour consecutive increments for analysis. These files were then imported into Audition software (Adobe, San Jose, California) and converted into visual spectrograms. Additional analysis of audio files was completed in Syrinx-PC (J. Burt, Seattle, Washington). Spectrograms were visually scanned twice and all owl vocal events were annotated and saved in a separate database.

## Results

At both the Lujan Creek and Spanish Creek sites, we recorded both Boreal and Northern Saw-whet Owls singing. Other species of owls recorded at or near Boreal Owl cavities included Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*), Northern Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma californicum*), and Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*). However, Northern Saw-whet Owl was the most frequently recorded owl besides Boreal.

The Lujan Creek Boreal Owl was discovered on the evening of 28 March 2007 vigorously broadcasting its primary song, the song largely involved in attracting mates (Bondrup-Nielsen 1978, Meehan 1980). Based on the presence of female call types and the extensive usage of the prolonged song, the song that functions primarily in pair bonding (Bondrup-Nielsen 1978, Meehan 1980), we concluded that when recording began on 29 March 2007 at the Lujan Creek site, the male had already attracted a mate sometime during the night of 28 March 2007. On 3 April 2007, a Northern Saw-whet Owl was recorded singing near the Lujan Creek Boreal Owl cavity. Over the next 11 days we recorded nearly 20 intrusions by one or more individual Northern Saw-whet Owls on this site. Each time, the male Boreal Owl responded with his primary song. We continued to monitor the Lujan Creek Boreal Owl, recording juvenile begging calls into late April and early May. We assume that after juvenile begging calls subsided, the young fledged and dispersed far enough away from the microphone to go unrecorded. After 14 April 2007 we did not record any Northern Saw-whet Owl intrusions until 12 May 2007. This was after the Boreal Owl young had fledged and Boreal Owl vocal activity had begun to decline.



The Spanish Creek Boreal Owl, discovered on 28 March 2007, was first recorded on the ALS singing his primary song on 29 March. On that night and the subsequent two nights he was visited by at least one female on several occasions. Call notes were recorded suggesting pair bond formation and copulation. These included soft peeping calls and an undescribed "twitter" that was observed in the field to be associated with food exchange and possibly copulation. On 1 April 2007 he switched primarily to his prolonged song. On 4 April 2007, there occurred an aggressive first encounter with a male Northern Saw-whet Owl. Both birds were in close proximity to each other and the microphone, based on the amplitude of the songs. In addition, we recorded sounds of wing slapping in vegetation, suggesting that the birds may have been aggressively pursuing each other or potentially making physical contact.



*Northern Saw-whet Owl, Boulder County, March 2007. Photo by Bill Schmoker*

After the first contact between the two male owls at the Spanish Creek site, the male Boreal Owl returned to using his primary song. This suggests that the female was visiting other males, chose another male, or perhaps was depredated (Bondrup-Nielsen 1978, Meehan 1980). Singing by the male Boreal Owl subsided to 18% of its previous frequency. No vocalizations were recorded from the Northern Saw-whet Owl from 6-9 April 2007. However, between 13 and 20 April 2007, over 30 vocal conflicts were recorded between the two owl species. Both males sang incessantly on the night of 15-16 April, with the male Boreal Owl singing nearly continuously for over 240 minutes. After 20 April 2007, the male Boreal Owl occupying the Spanish Creek site was not recorded again. The male Northern Saw-whet Owl occupied the cavity, and on 26 April 2007 attracted a female to that cavity, based on the cross-referencing of our audio recordings with the functions of published Northern Saw-whet Owl vocalizations (Cannings 1993). Recordings of Northern Saw-whet Owls continued at the Spanish Creek site into late May.

## Discussion

Hayward and Hayward (1993) suggested that there may be interspecific competition for cavities between Boreal and Northern Saw-whet Owls. However, little published literature has supported this claim. Lane and McKeown (1991) documented a singing male Boreal Owl in a cavity that was subsequently occupied by Northern Saw-whet Owls on several visits. Based on Lane and McKeown (1991) and our observations of the displaced Spanish Creek Boreal Owl, we believe that despite the smaller size of male Northern Saw-whet Owls (75 g, Hayward and Hayward 1993), they are sometimes capable of successfully displacing Boreal Owls (94-135 g, Hayward and Hayward 1993) from their nesting cavities.

In southern Colorado, at least, it appears that Boreal Owls can occupy forest types other than subalpine spruce-fir forests. This may be due in part to the fact that here, at the southern limit of the Boreal Owl's range, appropriate subalpine habitat may be limited to the tops of high mountain peaks. At the same time, the warmer climates of southern latitudes may allow appropriate Northern Saw-whet Owl habitat to occur at higher altitudes. This could lead to increased competition between the two species and may limit the ranges of Boreal Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl. In support of this hypothesis, Hayward and Garton (1988) found that Northern Saw-whet Owls tend to be less common in subalpine forests than in lower to mid-elevation forests, where Boreal Owls are typically absent. In addition, in subalpine habitats, Northern Saw-whets are typically confined to riparian areas with higher aspen densities (Hayward et al. 1993, Cannings 1993).

Two factors may force Boreal Owls and Northern Saw-whet Owls into using aspen cavities as nesting sites that could potentially increase contact and conflict between the two species. First, neither Boreal nor Northern Saw-whet Owls typically use the same cavity year after year (Hayward 1989, Cannings 1993). This increases demand for cavities within the home range of both owl species. Second, old-growth montane forest (200+ years old) has been altered and reduced in the southern Rocky Mountains (Mehl 1992). Both species seem to favor old growth stands for breeding, as these tend to provide sufficiently large and abundant dead standing trees with cavities (Hayward 1997, Cannings 1993). The decline of these forests may have forced both owls into aspen stands, where sufficiently large cavities are more likely to occur naturally or be excavated by Northern Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*; Li and Martin 1991).

Additional research on the habitat requirements of both species in the southern Rocky Mountains is needed. Further study of interactions between these two species could reveal important factors for forest man-

agement. Southern Colorado may represent an ideal location to study interactions between the two species of owl because it seems they are more likely to occur sympatrically in this region. In addition, this region offers an excellent opportunity to test other proposed limiting factors to Boreal Owl range, including heat stress, competition for nest cavities with species other than Northern Saw-whet Owl, prey abundance, and predation (Hayward et al. 1993, Hayward pers. comm.). The continued monitoring of Boreal Owl nest cavities using ALSs and remote cameras could shed light on the factors that limit the Boreal Owl's range.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Funding for this project was provided in part by the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Project Fund, the Colorado Chapter of the Wildlife Society's small research grants, and the Western State College of Colorado Thornton Foundation. Further support was provided by the Western State College of Colorado Department of Natural and Environmental Sciences.

The editors thank Greg Hayward and Bill Lane for their scientific review of this research.

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## FLIGHT CALLS

# Nocturnal Migration Over Lafayette, Colorado: July–November 2007

*Ted Floyd*

I listened to and quantitatively documented the passage of nocturnal migrants over Lafayette, Boulder County, Colorado, on 36 dates during a 106-day period running from 21 July 2007 to 3 November 2007. My objective was straightforward: to acquire basic knowledge about nocturnal migration over Colorado, a phenomenon that is poorly understood and virtually undocumented (Floyd 2007). I hope to replicate the study in years to come, with the eventual expectation of obtaining a good quantitative record of the fall passage of nocturnal migrants over Lafayette.

## Study Site

Felicitously, my driveway is a good place for hearing nocturnal migrants on fall passage. The site is near Greenlee Preserve and Waneka Lake, close to the intersection of Baseline Road and U.S. Highway 287 in eastern Boulder County. In the early morning hours, noise from traffic is minimal at the site. Also, I suspect that calling rates are somewhat elevated in the immediate vicinity of my driveway because of the juxtaposition of the well-lit local neighborhood and the unlit preserve and lake. C. Cox (pers. comm.) has pointed out to me that nocturnal migrants may become disoriented at the interface of well-lit and unlit places, causing an increase in calling frequency.

## Methods

An extensive introduction to techniques for detecting and documenting nocturnal migrants in Colorado is given by Floyd (2007) and references therein.

My method in the present study was very simple: I stepped outside at some point between midnight and sunrise, and listened for birds migrating overhead. On all but a few nights of the study, I listened for a minimum of 15 minutes. On most nights, I noted cloud cover, wind speed, and temperature. My sampling was neither systematic nor randomized. Rather, the method that I employed goes by the name of convenience sampling (McCormack and Hill 1997). In a nutshell, I listened to nocturnal migrants whenever I had the opportunity to do so—for example, when my part-time research partner, Andrew K. Floyd, was awake. (He was 220 days old on the first day of the study and 326 days old by the end of the study.)

I counted all flight calls during the period of observation, and I attempted to identify each flight call to species. I assigned one of three levels of certainty to each identification: Certain, Probable, and Hypothetical. With much practice, I have gotten to the point that I am reasonably **Certain** of the calls of several common species that frequently give distinctive flight calls; examples include Yellow Warbler and Lark Bunting. For other species, I am more comfortable assigning a **Probable** identification to their flight calls; I am still uncertain (and maybe I always will be) about the distinction between Clay-colored and Brewer's Sparrows (see Floyd 2007), and both C. Cox and W. Russell (pers. comm.) have cautioned me that Virginia's and Orange-crowned Warblers may not be separable by their flight calls. I treat as **Hypothetical** the identification of flight calls that I may have been way off on. There are two categories of hypothetical flight calls. First are the flight calls of species that I just don't have enough experience with; an example is MacGillivray's Warbler, whose flight call I would

like to study in more detail during the daylight hours. Second are the flight calls of species that are regionally uncommon and that I didn't hear well enough to be certain of; an example is a distant flight call that I heard one night which matched the distinctive flight call of Yellow-billed Cuckoo, but that I rendered as hypothetical because of observer uncertainty and species rarity.

I hasten to point out that the boundaries between Certain, Probable, and Hypothetical are fuzzy. Even species with ordinarily distinctive flight calls—for example, Swainson's Thrush and Lark Sparrow—can be tricky. I have had daytime experiences with flight calls that I was "certain" of, only to find, on actually seeing the bird in question, that I was quite wrong. Another issue is probabilistic. When I say that I am reasonably certain that Yellow Warbler has a distinctive flight call, I am making that statement in context; Blackpoll Warbler, for example, is quite similar (C. Cox, W. Russell, pers. comm.), but it is highly unlikely that one would hear Blackpoll Warbler flight calls at a rate of 10+ per hour in Colorado in early August. I do not want to give the impression that the Certain category implies 100% accuracy; rather, it implies a high degree of confidence on my part.

I accept that there is a fair degree of error associated with the observations reported here. At the same time, I believe that the data are good enough to make sense of my observations. There is a lot of statistical "noise," but there is also a strong enough "signal" to make basic quantitative inferences (see Floyd 2000).

## Results

The results of my study are presented in Table 1. Each entry contains some shorthand, so it is appropriate to work the reader through an actual example. Here is the entry for 2 September 2007:

14. 2 September 2007 (Day 44). 0435–0510. TE, AF. Scattered clouds; calm.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 2  
**Yellow Warbler** 1  
Townsend's Warbler 1  
*MacGillivray's Warbler* 1  
**Wilson's Warbler** 11  
**Chipping Sparrow** 13  
Clay-colored Sparrow 1  
Brewer's Sparrow 1  
Bobolink 2  
Bullock's Oriole 1  
FC/hr=58. 5DFA=69.  
(Mallard 1)



And here is what it all means:

14. — The 14<sup>th</sup> night on which I made observations.

2 September 2007 — The date of my observations.

(Day 44.) — The 44<sup>th</sup> day of the study period.

0435–0510. — My starting and finishing times, in “military time format,” Mountain Daylight Time.

TF, AF. — The observers. TF denotes me; AF denotes Andrew Floyd.

Scattered clouds; calm. — Weather conditions as I noted them at the time of observation.

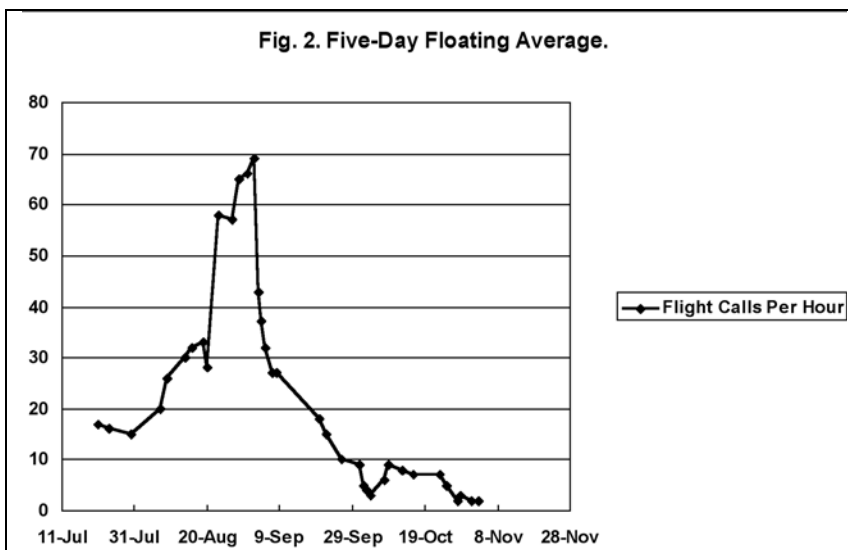
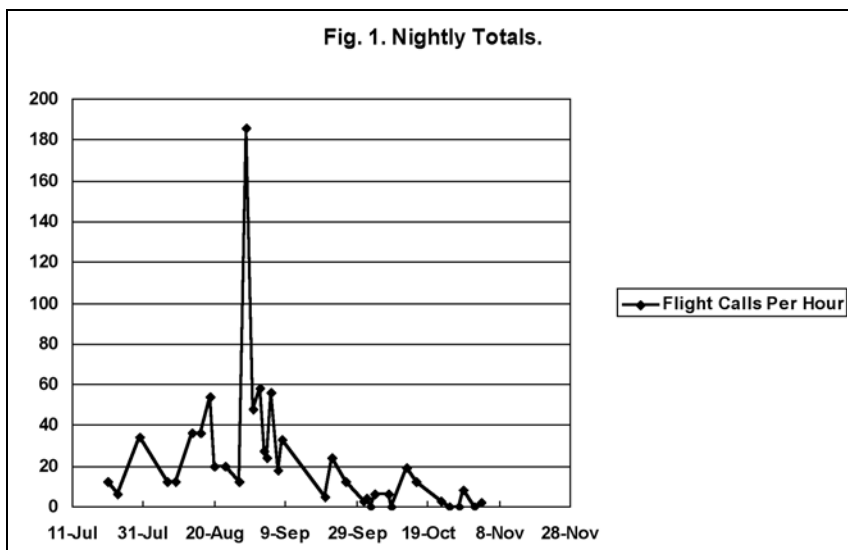
Orange-crowned Warbler 2, **Yellow Warbler** 1, Townsend’s Warbler 1, *MacGillivray’s Warbler* 1, **Wilson’s Warbler** 11, **Chipping Sparrow** 13, Clay-colored Sparrow 1, Brewer’s Sparrow 1, Bobolink 2, Bullock’s Oriole 1.

— Species detected and the number of flight calls heard. Species indicated in boldface are ones whose identification I was reasonably certain of, species in regular type are ones whose identification I classified as probable, and species indicated by italicized type are ones whose identification I classified as hypothetical (see Methods section for additional detail on these three levels of identification). The shorthand here translates into “two probable Orange-crowned Warblers, one Yellow Warbler, one probable Townsend’s Warbler, one hypothetical MacGillivray’s Warbler, 11 Wilson’s Warblers,” etc.

FC/hr=58. — Flight Calls Per Hour. I heard 34 flight calls during 35 minutes (0.58 hours), for a FC/hr rate of  $34/0.58 \approx 58$ .

5DFA=69. — Five-Day Floating Average. This statistic is the arithmetic mean of flight calls per hour on the night of observation, the two previous nights of observation, and the two following nights of observation. In the present instance:  $(186+48+58+27+24)/5 \approx 69$ .

(Mallard 1) — Species in parentheses are those detected that were known or presumed not to be nocturnal landbird migrants. In this instance: one Mallard.



A graphical summary of the results is depicted in Figs. 1 & 2. Fig. 1 is a plot of flight calls per hour on a per-night basis, and Fig. 2 is a plot of a five-day floating average of flight calls. The five-day floating average is a conceptually straightforward “curve-smoothing” function. Both plots are composites of all flight calls given by all species.

# Discussion

Nocturnal migration was detectable on most nights throughout the study period. Nocturnal migration was detectable by late July, and I detected the greatest number of flight calls in late August and September, a result implied by Floyd (2007). Num-



*The sun is down and Yellow Warblers, Wilson's Warblers, Chipping Sparrows, and Lark Sparrows are on the move. Photo by Glenn Walbek*

bers dropped slowly and reasonably steadily after early September (Table 1). Inferences of a more refined nature cannot realistically be made at this point, but I hope that more-detailed analyses will be feasible after repeating the study for several years.

Anecdotally, I sense that nocturnal migration over Lafayette is stronger and steadier than most Colorado birders might have expected. I have noted elsewhere (Floyd 2007) that there are several ways in which a "cultural bias" of sorts may have prevented many birders, myself included, from having appreciated the magnitude of nocturnal migration over Lafayette and elsewhere in Colorado. In due course, I hope, Colorado field ornithologists will embrace nocturnal migration studies as a valuable tool for monitoring avian population trends, as proposed by Farnsworth (2005).

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**Table 1. Nocturnal Migration Over Lafayette, Boulder County, Fall 2007.**  
Observers: AF, Andrew Floyd; TF, Ted Floyd

1. 21 July 2007 (Day 1). 0115–0120. TF, AF. Thin, high clouds; calm; warm.  
**Lark Sparrow 1**  
FC/hr=12. 5DFA=17.

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2. 24 July 2007 (Day 4). 1245–1255. TF. Thin, high clouds; calm; warm.  
**Chipping Sparrow** 1  
FC/hr=6. 5DFA=16.
  3. 30 July 2007 (Day 10). 0100–0130. TF. Clear; calm; warm.  
**Chipping Sparrow** 17  
FC/hr=34. 5DFA=15.  
(Great Horned Owl 1)
  4. 7 August 2007 (Day 18). 0450–0500. TF. Mostly clear; calm.  
**Yellow Warbler** 2  
FC/hr=12. 5DFA=20.  
(Barn Swallow 2)
  5. 9 August 2007 (Day 20). 0155–0225. TF. Mostly clear; light north wind.  
**Yellow Warbler** 5  
**Chipping Sparrow** 1  
FC/hr=12. 5DFA=26.
  6. 14 August 2007 (Day 25). 0125–0140. TF. Clear; light north wind.  
**Yellow Warbler** 1  
**Chipping Sparrow** 8  
FC/hr=36. 5DFA=30.
  7. 16 August 2007 (Day 27). 0500–0505. TF. Clear; calm.  
Townsend's Warbler 1  
**Chipping Sparrow** 2  
FC/hr=36. 5DFA=32.
  8. 19 August 2007 (Day 30). 0345–0405. TF, AF. Clear; calm.  
**Yellow Warbler** 1  
Townsend's Warbler 1  
**Wilson's Warbler** 1  
**Chipping Sparrow** 10  
Brewer's Sparrow 5  
FC/hr=54. 5DFA=33.
  9. 20 August 2007 (Day 31). 0415–0430. TF. Moderate west wind.  
*Yellow-billed Cuckoo* 1  
*MacGillivray's Warbler* 1  
**Chipping Sparrow** 2  
Brewer's Sparrow 1  
FC/hr=20. 5DFA=28.
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10. 23 August 2007 (Day 34). 0255–310. TF. Partly cloudy; calm.  
**Chipping Sparrow** 4  
**Lark Bunting** 1  
FC/hr=20. 5DFA=58.
11. 27 August 2007 (Day 38). 0250–0300. TF. Mostly clear; moderate west wind.  
**Wilson's Warbler** 1  
**Chipping Sparrow** 1  
FC/hr=12. 5DFA=57.
12. 29 August 2007 (Day 40). 0150–0200. TF. High haze; light north wind.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 1  
**Wilson's Warbler** 15  
**Chipping Sparrow** 10  
Clay-colored Sparrow 2  
Brewer's Sparrow 2  
Black-headed Grosbeak 1  
FC/hr=186. 5DFA=65.  
(Great Horned Owl 1)
13. 31 August 2007 (Day 42). 0440–0500. TF. Clear; light north wind.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 1  
Townsend's Warbler 1  
**Wilson's Warbler** 6  
**Chipping Sparrow** 5  
Clay-colored Sparrow 1  
Brewer's Sparrow 2  
FC/hr=48. 5DFA=66.  
(Great Horned Owl 1)
14. 2 September 2007 (Day 44). 0435–0510. TF, AF. Scattered clouds; calm.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 2  
**Yellow Warbler** 1  
Townsend's Warbler 1  
*MacGillivray's Warbler* 1  
**Wilson's Warbler** 11  
**Chipping Sparrow** 13  
Clay-colored Sparrow 1  
Brewer's Sparrow 1  
Bobolink 2  
Bullock's Oriole 1  
FC/hr=58. 5DFA=69.  
(Mallard 1)
- 

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15. 3 September 2007 (Day 45). 0515–0535. TF, AF. A few high clouds; calm.

**Wilson's Warbler** 4

**Chipping Sparrow** 4

Clay-colored Sparrow 1

FC/hr=27. 5DFA=43.

16. 4 September 2007 (Day 46). 0505–0525. TF, AF. Mostly clear; calm.

**Swainson's Thrush** 2

**Wilson's Warbler** 2

**Chipping Sparrow** 3

Clay-colored Sparrow 1

FC/hr=24. 5DFA=37.

17. 5 September 2007 (Day 47). 1240–1255. TF, AF. Thin, high haze; calm.

**Wilson's Warbler** 5

**Chipping Sparrow** 7

Clay-colored Sparrow 1

**Vesper Sparrow** 1

FC/hr=56. 5DFA=32.

18. 7 September 2007 (Day 49). 0330–0340. TF. High haze; light west wind.

**Wilson's Warbler** 2

**Chipping Sparrow** 1

FC/hr=18. 5DFA=27.

19. 8 September 2007 (Day 50). 0520–0540. TF. Clear; light north wind.

Orange-crowned Warbler 1

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** 3

**Wilson's Warbler** 3

**Chipping Sparrow** 1

**Vesper Sparrow** 3

FC/hr=33. 5DFA=27.

20. 20 September 2007 (Day 62). 0525–0550. TF. Calm.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** 1

**Wilson's Warbler** 1

FC/hr=5. 5DFA=18.

(Canada Goose 2, Mallard 1, Killdeer 1, Great Horned Owl 1)

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21. 22 September 2007 (Day 64). 0415–0425. TF. Light north wind.  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler 2**  
**Wilson's Warbler 1**  
**Vesper Sparrow 1**  
FC/hr=24. 5DFA=15.  
(Canada Goose 2, Great Horned Owl 1)
22. 26 September 2007 (Day 68). 0500–0605. TF, AF. Clear; calm.  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler 2**  
**White-crowned Sparrow 1**  
FC/hr=12. 5DFA=10.  
(Canada Goose 2, Mallard 1, Great Horned Owl 2)
23. 1 October 2007 (Day 73). 0315–0335. TF. A few high clouds; calm.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 1  
FC/hr=3. 5DFA=9.  
(Canada Goose 1, Mallard 1, Great Horned Owl 1)
24. 2 October (Day 74). 0550–0605. TF. Scattered clouds; west wind.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 1  
FC/hr=4. 5DFA=5.
25. 3 October 2007 (Day 75). 0555–0610. TF. Light west wind.  
FC/hr=0. 5DFA=4.  
(Canada Goose 1, Mallard 1, Killdeer 1, Great Horned Owl 3)
26. 4 October 2007 (Day 76). 0535–0545. TF.  
**White-crowned Sparrow 1**  
FC/hr=6. 5DFA=3.  
(Canada Goose 1, Great Horned Owl 1)
27. 8 October 2007 (Day 80). 1220–1240. TF. High haze; calm.  
Orange-crowned Warbler 2  
FC/hr=6. 5DFA=6.  
(Canada Goose 2, Mallard 1)
28. 9 October 2007 (Day 81). 0415–0430. TF. Thin high clouds; calm.  
FC/hr=0. 5DFA=9.  
(Canada Goose 2, Great Horned Owl 1)
- 

*Table continued on next page*

29. 13 October 2007 (Day 85). 1240–105. TF. Low cloud cover; thin fog.

**Swainson's Thrush** 7

**Wilson's Warbler** 1

FC/hr=19. 5DFA=8.

(Gadwall 2, Mallard 1)

30. 16 October 2007 (Day 88). 1240–1255. TF. Hazy; calm.

American Tree Sparrow 2

**White-crowned Sparrow** 1

FC/hr=12. 5DFA=7.

(Canada Goose 2, Great Horned Owl 1)

31. 23 October 2007 (Day 95). 0135–0155. TF. Cold; calm.

**White-crowned Sparrow** 1

FC/hr=3. 5DFA=7.

(Canada Goose 20, Mallard 2)

32. 25 October 2007 (Day 97). 0130–0145. TF. Clear; calm.

FC/hr=0. 5DFA=5.

(Canada Goose 40, Gadwall 1, American Wigeon 1, Mallard 1)

33. 28 October 2007 (Day 100). 0100–0115. TF. Hazy; calm; cool.

FC/hr=0. 5DFA=2.

(Canada Goose 10)

34. 29 October 2007 (Day 101). 0140–0155. TF. High haze; light north wind.

**Dark-eyed Junco** 2

FC/hr=8. 5DFA=3.

(Canada Goose 30, Gadwall 2, American Wigeon 2, Mallard 1, Great Horned Owl 1)

35. 1 November 2007 (Day 104). 0300–0315. TF. Mostly clear; cool; a light south wind.

FC/hr=0. 5DFA=2.

(Canada Goose 50, Gadwall 1, American Wigeon 1, Mallard 2, Common Loon 1, Great Horned Owl 1)

36. 3 November 2007 (Day 106). 0100–0115. TF. Clear; cool; calm.

FC/hr=0. 5DFA=2.

(Canada Goose 5, American Wigeon 1, Mallard 2)

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Cameron Cox, Andrew Farnsworth, Nathan Pieplow, Will Russell, and Chris Wood for making helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. In the field, I enjoyed the companionship of my research partner, Andrew Floyd.

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## BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

# Project Status and Partial Results Entering Year Two

Lynn E. Wickersham

Project Manager, Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II

## Introduction

The Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II Project (CO BBA II) has entered into its second year, and I am pleased to report that the project is continuing to build momentum and stability. Both volunteer participation and data reporting have increased steadily during the first half of 2008, and the Project Management team has been working diligently with statewide Regional Coordinators to continue recruitment efforts and to sustain the level of enthusiasm exhibited by existing volunteers as we enter into Year Two of data collection. In this issue of *Colorado Birds*, I provide an overview of CO BBA II's funding, project management and administration, regions and Regional Coordinators, technical support and guidance, and volunteer effort, as well as partial results from the 2007 and 2008 field seasons.

## Funding

Funding to initiate Year One of CO BBA II was contributed by the

Colorado Bird Atlas Partnership, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose charter sponsors include Audubon Colorado and its chapters, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Field Ornithologists, Denver Field Ornithologists, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, ERO Resources Corporation, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, SWCA Inc., the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,



*Black-chinned Hummingbird, Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso County, 18 May 2008. Photo by Abby Modesitt*



*Great Horned Owl, Adams County, 13 June 2006. Photo by Larry Semo*

and hundreds of private volunteers. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has committed funds for the next four years, which will cover just under half of the total financial needs of the project. Over the next four years, the project management team will seek funding for unmet needs, including project management, supplies, travel for the project manager, fees to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for hosting the website, and paid Atlas field work in regions with low volunteer participation and difficult access. The management team is accepting tax-deductible donations, such as a gift donated by the Boy Scouts of America (Longs Peak Council). Instructions for donations can be found on the official Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas website: [www.COBreeding-BirdAtlasII.org](http://www.COBreeding-BirdAtlasII.org).

## Project Management and Administration

In December 2007, management of the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II Project (CO BBA II) was awarded to the San Juan Institute of Natural and Cultural Resources (San Juan Institute) at Fort Lewis College in Durango, after a competitive process overseen by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Heading up the team at the San Juan Institute are Lynn Wickersham, Project Manager, and Catherine Ortega, Project Administrator. Lynn Wickersham has a B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University and an M.S. in Biology from Arkansas State University. She has 13 years of experience as an avian ecologist, with expertise in the population ecology of passerine birds. Catherine Ortega is Director of the San Juan Institute. She has a Ph.D. in Biology from the Department of Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and has over 25 years' experience conducting bird research. Both the Project Manager and Administrator are pleased to be taking on a large-scale project with such importance to Colorado's wildlife managers and



*Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Gunnison County, 14 June 2007. Photo by Larry Semo*



*Mourning Dove, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 8 July 2007. Photo by David Leatherman*

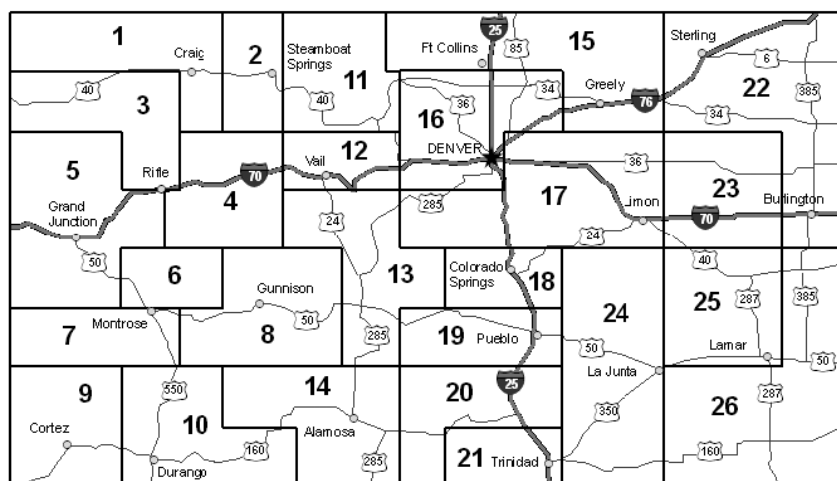


Fig. 1. Map of Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II Regions

biologists, and look forward to the challenge of bringing CO BBA II to completion.

### CO BBA II Regions and Regional Coordinators

Field work for CO BBA II began in the spring of 2007, with project volunteers collecting valuable Atlas data throughout the 26 Atlas Regions across the state (Fig. 1). Heading up these regions are volunteer Regional Coordinators, who recruit and train project volunteers, manage and review Atlas data, and maintain organization of the field efforts in their respective regions. CO BBA II is pleased to boast a conscientious and attentive network of Regional Coordinators (Table 1), without whom the project would not be suc-

REGION	NAME	REGION	NAME	REGION	NAME
1	Forrest Luke	10	Susan Allerton	19	Mark Yaeger
2	Allison Hilf	11	Jim Liewer	20	Vacant
3	Kim Potter	12	Hugh Kingery	21	Tim Crisler
4	Tom McConnell	13	Chuck Hundertmark	22	Steve Larson
5	John Toolen	14	Vacant	23	Hugh Kingery
6	Cheryl Day	15	Connie Kogler	24	John Drummond
7	Coen Dexter	16	Steve Jones	25	Vacant
8	Lori Brummer	17	Hugh Kingery	26	Vacant
9	Paul Morey	18	Brad Steger		

Table 1. Regional Coordinators for the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II Project.

cessful. The following CO BBA II volunteers also served as Regional Coordinators, but have recently stepped down from their positions: Doug Faulkner (Region 12), Sherrie York (Region 13), Bill Kaempfer (Region 16), Tony Leukering (Region 20), and Duane Nelson (Region 25). Each of these volunteers played an important role in the recruitment of volunteers and the management of efforts and data in their regions, and I extend a big “thank you” to all of them for their efforts.

## Technical Committee

The CO BBA II Technical Committee was developed to provide guidance and assistance on all aspects of the project, from project logistics to scientific expertise, and to facilitate the project from its early stages through its final publication. The Technical Committee members were selected to provide the Project Manager and Administrator with diverse perspectives from a variety of agencies, institutions, and other organizations, as well as expertise on atlas-ing, science, and Colorado’s birds.

- Karen Baud (ERO Resources)
- John Demboski (Denver Museum of Nature & Science)
- Beth Dillon (CO BBA I Regional Coordinator and Volunteer)
- Ted Floyd (American Birding Association)
- Clinton Francis (University of Colorado, Boulder)
- David Hanni (Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory)
- Aran Johnson (Southern Ute Indian Tribe)
- Hugh Kingery (CO BBA I Editor and Volunteer)
- David Klute (Colorado Division of Wildlife)
- Pat Magee (Western State College)
- Pete Plage (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
- Mike Seruto (CO BBA II Volunteer)



*Townsend's Solitaire, Montezuma County, 23 July 2007. Photo by David Leatherman*

Priority Blocks	1,883
Blocks Assigned	~650
Blocks Assigned (Website)	517
Blocks with Data	517
Blocks Complete	8
Block Effort Hours	4,031
Total Auto Miles	45,081
Total Data Submissions	21,244
Registered Participants	234

*Table 2. Summary of CO BBA II Volunteer Effort 2007-08. Based on data entered in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology data entry website as of 30 May 2008.*

- Charlie Sharp (Bureau of Land Management)
- Susan Skagen (U.S. Geological Survey)
- Robert Skorkowsky (U.S. Forest Service, Region 2)
- Ken Strom (Audubon Colorado)
- John Toolen (CO BBA I Regional Coordinator and Volunteer)

### **Summary of Field Effort**

Currently, over 300 participants conduct CO BBA II field work in approximately 650 priority blocks throughout Colorado. This effort represents approximately one-third of the Atlas work to be completed during the five years of the field effort (there are 1,883 priority blocks in all). Project participants are primarily volunteer birders; however, there are also numerous biologists collecting Atlas data who are affiliated with Federal and State agencies, non-profit and for-profit environmental organizations, academic institutions, and tribes.

One of the primary objectives in 2007 was to launch the project's data entry website, hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. After initial delays, the website finally opened to the public in January of 2008; since then, the data have been pouring in. Table 2 provides a summary of the field effort reported on the website for 2007-08. These data are an underestimate of the work that has actually been conducted, as numerous project participants have yet to register on the data entry website and enter their data from the 2007 field season.

### **Partial Results: 2007-08**

These partial results of CO BBA II are based on data submitted to



the Cornell Lab of Ornithology data entry website by project participants as of 28 May 2008. To date, 253 species have been reported statewide during atlas-ing in 2007-08. Of these species, 202 species have been confirmed as breeders (Table 3). As with the Summary of Field Effort (see above), these data are an underestimate of the work that has actually been conducted.



*Northern Saw-whet Owl, Coulton Creek, Routt County, 16 June 2007. Photo by Larry Semo*

SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
Canada Goose	33	16	14	6
Wood Duck	1	5	3	0
Gadwall	6	16	9	0
American Wigeon	0	5	5	2
Mallard	36	57	38	1
Blue-winged Teal	3	17	5	1
Cinnamon Teal	2	11	6	2
Northern Shoveler	0	13	8	2
Northern Pintail	1	5	1	1
Green-winged Teal	2	8	6	1
Canvasback	2	0	0	0
Redhead	1	7	2	1
Ring-necked Duck	1	5	1	0
Lesser Scaup	0	6	0	0
Bufflehead	0	0	0	1
Barrow's Goldeneye	0	1	0	0
Hooded Merganser	0	1	0	0

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*Table 3. Partial CO BBA II Results from 2007-08. Based on data entered in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology data entry website as of 28 May 2008.*

Table continued from previous page

SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
Common Merganser	5	0	6	1
Ruddy Duck	0	6	1	2
Chukar	1	0	0	0
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	5	14	0
Greater Sage-Grouse	2	0	3	1
Gunnison Sage-Grouse	1	0	0	0
White-tailed Ptarmigan	1	0	2	0
Dusky Grouse	10	3	15	0
Greater Prairie-Chicken	0	1	1	0
Wild Turkey	3	8	22	1
Scaled Quail	1	5	7	0
Gambel's Quail	0	0	5	0
Northern Bobwhite	0	1	1	0
Pied-billed Grebe	8	3	9	0
Eared Grebe	5	2	2	0
Western Grebe	5	5	4	2
Clark's Grebe	0	2	1	0
American White Pelican	3	0	1	4
Double-crested Cormorant	5	0	14	7
American Bittern	0	0	0	1
Great Blue Heron	7	2	35	11
Snowy Egret	1	2	2	1
Green Heron	0	0	3	0
Black-crowned Night-Heron	0	0	3	3
White-faced Ibis	0	0	1	2
Turkey Vulture	0	1	85	15
Osprey	13	1	2	2
Mississippi Kite	2	3	5	0
Bald Eagle	6	1	1	1
Northern Harrier	0	5	16	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	2	13	1
Cooper's Hawk	12	5	28	3
Northern Goshawk	3	4	8	0
Swainson's Hawk	28	22	48	1
Red-tailed Hawk	48	30	111	2
Ferruginous Hawk	6	3	11	1
Golden Eagle	13	5	27	6

SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
American Kestrel	22	28	72	2
Peregrine Falcon	1	3	4	0
Prairie Falcon	3	2	15	2
Black Rail	0	2	0	0
Virginia Rail	1	4	4	0
Sora	0	4	11	0
American Coot	18	2	19	3
Sandhill Crane	2	3	2	0
Snowy Plover	0	1	0	0
Killdeer	40	22	51	2
Mountain Plover	3	2	2	0
Black-necked Stilt	0	1	1	0
American Avocet	5	3	6	2
Spotted Sandpiper	7	9	25	1
Willet	2	2	0	0
Long-billed Curlew	0	6	2	1
Marbled Godwit	0	0	0	1
Wilson's Snipe	1	27	11	0
Wilson's Phalarope	0	9	9	1
Franklin's Gull	1	0	0	0
California Gull	1	0	1	3
Black Tern	0	0	1	1
Forster's Tern	2	0	1	1
Rock Pigeon	9	16	43	0
Band-tailed Pigeon	0	5	5	0
Eurasian Collared-Dove	6	15	22	0
White-winged Dove	0	1	3	0
Mourning Dove	39	109	81	1
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	0	2	0	0
Black-billed Cuckoo	0	1	0	0
Greater Roadrunner	0	0	9	0
Barn Owl	8	1	2	0
Flammulated Owl	2	14	7	0
Western Screech-Owl	1	1	3	0
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	0	1	0
Great Horned Owl	36	11	29	2
Northern Pygmy-Owl	2	2	9	0
Burrowing Owl	13	6	12	0
Long-eared Owl	7	5	4	1

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SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
Short-eared Owl	0	0	0	1
Boreal Owl	0	5	3	0
Northern Saw-whet Owl	3	12	7	0
Common Nighthawk	5	43	35	1
Common Poorwill	1	8	21	0
Black Swift	1	0	1	2
Chimney Swift	1	0	2	0
White-throated Swift	2	10	28	2
Black-chinned Hummingbird	3	10	22	2
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	10	36	66	4
Belted Kingfisher	3	3	16	0
Lewis's Woodpecker	5	3	6	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	3	2	8	0
Acorn Woodpecker	0	0	1	0
Red-bellied Woodpecker	0	1	0	0
Williamson's Sapsucker	14	3	11	0
Red-naped Sapsucker	33	5	18	0
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	2	1	7	0
Downy Woodpecker	13	18	38	0
Hairy Woodpecker	24	13	41	2
American Three-toed WP	7	7	3	0
Northern Flicker	52	37	97	2
Olive-sided Flycatcher	7	9	30	0
Western Wood-Pewee	25	28	56	2
Willow Flycatcher	1	2	3	0
Least Flycatcher	0	0	1	0
Hammond's Flycatcher	5	5	14	0
Gray Flycatcher	4	11	12	0
Dusky Flycatcher	17	18	26	0
Cordilleran Flycatcher	19	15	28	1
Black Phoebe	1	0	4	0
Eastern Phoebe	8	4	7	0
Say's Phoebe	27	11	76	0
Ash-throated Flycatcher	13	23	45	1
Great Crested Flycatcher	0	1	0	0
Cassin's Kingbird	3	39	13	0
Western Kingbird	40	49	51	0

SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
Eastern Kingbird	7	11	19	0
Loggerhead Shrike	14	7	25	0
White-eyed Vireo	0	0	1	0
Bell's Vireo	0	0	1	0
Gray Vireo	2	5	11	0
Plumbeous Vireo	13	8	28	1
Warbling Vireo	28	33	36	1
Gray Jay	6	8	8	0
Steller's Jay	17	6	62	0
Blue Jay	6	10	16	0
Western Scrub-Jay	7	4	42	0
Pinyon Jay	4	6	32	0
Clark's Nutcracker	5	2	43	0
Black-billed Magpie	43	6	49	4
American Crow	14	8	44	3
Chihuahuan Raven	5	1	24	0
Common Raven	21	23	119	4
Horned Lark	26	68	48	1
Purple Martin	8	1	1	0
Tree Swallow	29	2	29	3
Violet-green Swallow	45	13	49	1
No. Rough-winged Swallow	14	6	32	0
Bank Swallow	7	0	1	0
Cliff Swallow	67	10	55	2
Barn Swallow	45	8	57	1
Black-capped Chickadee	19	7	32	0
Mountain Chickadee	37	20	50	0
Juniper Titmouse	7	13	31	0
Bushtit	11	2	17	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	15	6	41	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	21	11	57	1
Pygmy Nuthatch	19	3	16	1
Brown Creeper	6	3	24	0
Rock Wren	15	34	43	3
Canyon Wren	3	10	32	0
Bewick's Wren	8	22	22	0
House Wren	57	23	36	0
Marsh Wren	0	2	4	0
American Dipper	13	0	7	1

*Table continued on next page*

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SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	4	14	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	11	26	26	0
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	18	14	38	3
Eastern Bluebird	0	0	3	0
Western Bluebird	22	12	6	0
Mountain Bluebird	54	25	25	3
Townsend's Solitaire	18	11	32	0
Veery	0	1	0	0
Swainson's Thrush	2	4	4	0
Hermit Thrush	15	19	31	0
American Robin	119	44	60	1
Gray Catbird	5	9	6	2
Northern Mockingbird	8	40	31	1
Sage Thrasher	6	2	4	1
Brown Thrasher	1	2	17	0
Curve-billed Thrasher	2	0	3	0
European Starling	68	12	39	0
American Pipit	5	2	1	0
Cedar Waxwing	7	2	9	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	4	5	21	0
Virginia's Warbler	8	9	14	0
Lucy's Warbler	0	1	0	0
Yellow Warbler	20	30	45	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	23	25	38	2
Black-throated Gray Warbler	8	6	13	0
Grace's Warbler	4	2	3	0
Ovenbird	0	1	2	0
MacGillivray's Warbler	9	14	22	1
Common Yellowthroat	2	9	18	0
Wilson's Warbler	6	5	14	1
Yellow-breasted Chat	4	18	16	0
Hepatic Tanager	1	3	3	0
Summer Tanager	0	0	8	0
Western Tanager	18	22	29	5
Green-tailed Towhee	26	20	27	3
Spotted Towhee	20	26	37	1
Canyon Towhee	2	4	13	0

SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
Cassin's Sparrow	2	18	11	0
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	0	2	2	0
Chipping Sparrow	47	26	53	11
Brewer's Sparrow	14	13	21	0
Vesper Sparrow	31	24	23	1
Lark Sparrow	41	39	54	1
Black-throated Sparrow	3	1	4	0
Sage Sparrow	4	3	2	0
Lark Bunting	17	41	18	2
Savannah Sparrow	3	7	14	1
Grasshopper Sparrow	1	7	1	0
Fox Sparrow	5	3	6	0
Song Sparrow	17	22	26	2
Lincoln's Sparrow	19	13	9	0
White-crowned Sparrow	14	9	10	1
Dark-eyed Junco	47	21	17	0
McCown's Longspur	1	3	0	0
Black-headed Grosbeak	19	26	39	0
Blue Grosbeak	6	20	33	0
Lazuli Bunting	5	10	29	1
Lazuli/Indigo Bunting (hybrid)	0	2	1	0
Indigo Bunting	0	1	0	0
Painted Bunting	0	0	1	0
Dickcissel	0	1	0	0
Bobolink	1	0	1	0
Red-winged Blackbird	48	37	44	1
Western Meadowlark	37	99	52	0
Yellow-headed Blackbird	10	6	19	2
Brewer's Blackbird	37	10	19	3
Common Grackle	28	15	57	1
Great-tailed Grackle	6	4	5	0
Brown-headed Cowbird	15	51	80	3
Orchard Oriole	7	8	4	0
Bullock's Oriole	54	24	45	0
Baltimore Oriole	1	0	1	0
Scott's Oriole	0	0	1	0
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	2	1	0	0
Pine Grosbeak	5	7	11	1
Cassin's Finch	5	17	34	1

*Table continued on next page*

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SPECIES	NUMBER OF BLOCKS REPORTING:			
	CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	OBSERVED
House Finch	27	26	56	1
Red Crossbill	5	9	34	1
White-winged Crossbill	0	0	2	0
Pine Siskin	11	19	68	0
Lesser Goldfinch	6	15	28	0
American Goldfinch	5	15	26	0
Evening Grosbeak	5	5	6	0
House Sparrow	41	9	27	0

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Clint Francis for compiling CO BBA II data from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website and summarizing it in Table 3 of this article. Thanks to Catherine Ortega and John Wickersham for providing preliminary reviews of this manuscript. A sincere thanks to all CO BBA II volunteers, Regional Coordinators, and members of the Technical Committee, and to Project Administrator Catherine Ortega, for the time and effort they have put into this project. CO BBA II would not be successful without your participation, and we hope you will continue your efforts with the project until field work has been completed.

Lynn E. Wickersham, San Juan Institute of Natural and Cultural Resources, Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO 81301, wickersham\_l@fortlewis.edu

## CBRC REPORT

# The 47<sup>th</sup> Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: Partial Results of Spring 2008 Circulations

*Lawrence S. Semo*

Chair, Colorado Bird Records Committee

### Introduction

This 47<sup>th</sup> report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on partial results of circulations held during spring 2008. This article



provides results of the circulation of 171 reports submitted by 28 observers documenting 123 occurrences of 66 species. Per CBRC by-laws, all accepted records received final 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept. Each report that was not accepted received fewer than four votes to accept in the final vote. Those records with four or five “accept” votes have transcended to a second round of deliberations, and results of those records will be published at a later date.

Three potentially new species to the state list are still pending within the CBRC: Vaux’s Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*), Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*E. flaviventris*).

Committee members voting on these reports were Coen Dexter, Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Bill Maynard, and Larry Semo.

### **Committee Functions**

All reports received by the CBRC (written documentation, photographs, videotapes, and/or sound recordings) are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO 80205, where they remain available for public review. The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its review list, including both the main and supplementary lists (Semo et al. 2002), and for species with no prior accepted records in Colorado. Those lists can be found at <http://www.cfo-link.org/birding/lists.php>. Documentary materials should be submitted online at the CBRC website (<http://www.cfo-link.org/CBRC/login.php5>).

### **Report Format**

The organization and style of this report follow those of Leukering and Semo (2003), with some alterations. If present, the numbers in parentheses following a species’ name represent the total number of accepted records for Colorado, followed by the number of accepted records in the ten-year period preceding the submission. The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria for a species’ continuance on or removal from the statewide Main Review List (Semo et al. 2002).

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists’ Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds (AOU 1998) through the 48<sup>th</sup> Supplement (Banks et al. 2007). Each record presents as much of the following information as we have available: number of birds, age, sex, locality, county, and date or date span. In parentheses, we present the initials of the contributing observer(s), the official record number, and the vote tally

in the first round and, if relevant, second round (with the number of “accept” votes on the left side of the dash).

The initials of the finder(s) of the bird(s) are underlined, if known, and are presented first if that person (those people) contributed documentation; additional contributors’ initials follow in alphabetical order by name. If the finder(s) is (are) known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture have a dagger (†) following their initials; initials of those that submitted videotape are indicated by a lower-case, italicized “v” (v); and those who submitted sonograms or recordings are indicated by a lower-case, italicized “s” (s). Thus, the parenthetical expression “(JD v, RA†, TL, JV, CW; 2001-36; 4-3, 6-1)” means: JD found the bird(s) and submitted documentation (including video) and, as the finder, is first in the list of those that submitted details with initials underlined; RA, though alphabetically first of the five submitting observers, was not the finder, so comes second; RA submitted, at least, photographic documentation; the record number assigned to the occurrence was 2001-36; and in the three rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four “accept” votes and three “do not accept” votes, and the second-round vote was 6-1 in favor of accepting the report. The decision on most reports is completed in the first round.

In this report, county names are italicized in keeping with the style established for the *News from the Field* column in this journal (e.g., Semo and Wood 2003). We have attempted to provide the full date span for individual records, with the seasonal reports in *North American Birds* and this journal being the primary sources of those dates. The Committee has not dealt with the question of full date spans as compared to submitted date spans when documentations do not provide such. The CBRC encourages observers to document the final date on which a rare species was seen, as that provides historical evidence of the true extent of its stay.

## **RECORDS ACCEPTED**

**Brant** – *Branta bernicla* (17/8). An immature member of the *nigricans* race was at Long Pond and near City Park in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, between 18 Dec 2005 and 21 Jan 2006 (DFa †, LS; 2006-11, 7-0). Providing a first for well-birded Pueblo, an adult *nigricans* was at Rock Canyon below Pueblo Res,

Pueblo, on 7 Nov 2006 (BKP †, 2006-156; 7-0).

**Eurasian Wigeon** - *Anas penelope* (32/14). Three additional Eurasian Wigeons have been accepted, all males. One was at Alamosa NWR, *Alamosa*, on 1 Apr 2006 (BKP †; 2006-27; 7-0). Another was at Grand Junction, *Mesa*, on 8 Nov 2008 (RLe;

2006-157; 7-0). Thirdly, a male graced West Valco Pond between Rocky Ford and Swink in Otero on 17 Dec 2006 (BM †, DN, SO; 2006-172; 7-0).

**Ruffed Grouse** – *Bonasa umbellus* (5/3). First discovered in Colorado on Hoy Mountain, Moffat, in 1988, Ruffed Grouse appears to be regular at that location. The CBRC recently accepted two new accounts of the species' occurrence. The first was from 25 Sep 2005, when a single bird was seen (NP, AS; 2005-99; 7-0). On 21 Jul 2006, another (or the same bird?) was seen there (AS; 2006-111; 7-0).

**Red-throated Loon** – *Gavia stellata* (33/10). A first-cycle Red-throated Loon was photographed at Chatfield Res, Douglas, on 2 Nov 2006 (JK †; 2006-150; 7-0). A nice set of birthday gifts was presented to Mr. Percival when he spotted not one, but two Red-throated Loons at Pueblo Res on 17 Apr 2007 (BKP †, BM †; 2007-23; 7-0). One was in basic plumage and the other was in alternate, a plumage rarely detected in Colorado.

**Arctic Loon** – *Gavia arctica* (2/2). Following on the heels of Colorado's (and the interior U.S.'s) first record of Arctic Loon, Spencer discovered an alternate-plumaged *Gavia* at Chatfield Res in Douglas and Jefferson on 28 Sep 2005. Poor photographs were obtained that convinced the majority of the Committee that the bird



*White Ibis*, Logan County, 15 April 2006. Photo by Bill Schmoker

was indeed an Arctic Loon, based on head/neck shape, bill size, extent of white along the flanks, and the lack of an undertail vent strap (AS †, GW †; 2005-100; 6-1). Although attempts were made to consult outside experts on the species, none responded.

**White Ibis** – *Eudocimus albus* (7/6). An adult was photographed near Red Lion SWA, Logan, where present between at least 10 and 15 Apr 2006 (NP, BSc†, CWi †, CLJ, NH; 2006-29; 7-0). Another adult was at Pueblo Res SWA, Pueblo, between 22 and 23 Jul 2006 (BKP †, AS†; 2006-112; 7-0).

**Glossy Ibis** – *Plegadis falcinellus* (43/31). The incredible expansion of Glossy Ibis to the Rocky Mountain region continues. The CBRC recently accepted four new occurrences. Providing a first for Moffat, one was photographed near Maybell on 10 May 2006 (DFa, LS †; 2006-45; 7-0). In El Paso, one was near the intersection of Hanover and Old Pueblo Roads on 13 May 2006 (BM †; 2006-

51; 7-0). Another was near Red Lion SWA, Logan, on 29 May 2006 (DFa; 2006-91; 7-0). More recently, two Glossies were at CBR, Pueblo, on 12 Apr 2007 (BM †; 2007-22; 7-0). As the occurrence rate of this species has surpassed the average of three records per year over a 10-year period, the Committee will deliberate on whether to retain the species on the main review list. However, until a decision has been reached, the species should still be documented.

**Common Black-Hawk** – *Buteo-gallus anthracinus* (6/4). An adult was at Cañon City, Fremont, between 10 and 12 Sep 2006 (BM †, AS, PG, NP, RM; 2006-123; 7-0).

**Sandhill Crane** – *Grus canadensis*. Establishing the first breeding record for Weld, a pair of cranes raised one young at Lower Latham Res, where documented on 22 May 2005 (NK † CWi; 2005-58; 7-0).

**Snowy Plover** – *Charadrius alexandrinus*. Very late was the bird photographed at NeeNoshe Res, Kiowa, on 2 Nov 2006 (NK †; 2006-149; 7-0).

**Hudsonian Godwit** – *Limosa haemastica* (27/7). Establishing the second record for Larimer, an alternate-plumaged Hudsonian Godwit was at Duck Lake between 27 and 29 May 2006 (NK †, RHo †, NP, CWi †; 2006-90; 7-0).

**Least Sandpiper** – *Calidris minutilla*. A rare winter record was afforded by the bird present along the Arkansas River below Pueblo Res, Pueblo, between 16 and 23 Dec 2006 (BKP †, BM †; 2006-171; 7-0).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** – *Tryn-gites subruficollis* (29/9). A juvenile

was at Jackson Res, Morgan, on 1 Oct 2006 (BM †, BKP †; 2006-138; 7-0). The bird was apparently first found on 29 Sep, but no details of that account were provided to the CBR.

**Ruff** – *Philomachus pugnax* (3/2). Very rare in Colorado, a juvenile was at Evilsizer Lake in Lincoln on 27 Sep 2006 (BGi †, BM †; 2006-135; 7-0).

**Short-billed Dowitcher** – *Limno-dromus griseus*. Unusual was the group of eight at Broomfield, Broomfield, on 18 May 2006 (DFa †, SD, DE, EZ; 2006-70; 7-0). Apparently the flock was discovered the day prior and was then larger in number; unfortunately, the Committee received no documentation of that occurrence.

**Red Phalarope** – *Phalaropus fu-licarius* (35/17). A bird in definitive basic plumage was at Chatfield Res, Douglas and Jefferson, on 8 Oct 2006 (AS †, JK; 2006-143; 7-0).

**Laughing Gull** – *Larus atricilla* (34/17). A definitive alternate bird at Pueblo Res on 13 May 2006 (BKP †; 2006-52; 7-0) is the third record for Pueblo. A definitive basic bird, the fifth for Weld, was at a cattle pond at the intersection of CR 51 and CR 62.5 near Greeley on 2 Oct 2006 (NK †, SM; 2006-139; 7-0). Apparently the bird was seen at this location on later dates, though no details were submitted to the Committee.

**Little Gull** – *Larus minutus* (26/12). A first-cycle bird was at Pueblo Res on 13 Sep 2006 (BKP †, 2006-91; 7-0), providing the third record for that county. A bird in definitive basic plumage was near Lake Meredith on 10 Sep 2006 (GW †; 2006-124; 7-0), a first for Crowley.

**Thayer's Gull** – *Larus thayeri*. Establishing the latest date for Colorado, a second-cycle bird was at Cherry Creek Res, *Arapahoe*, on 3 Jun 2004 (JO †; 2004-125; 7-0). In contrast, a first-cycle bird at Horseshoe Res, *Larimer*, on 9 Oct 2005 was extremely early for fall (NK †; 2005-152; 7-0).



**Black-legged Kittiwake** – *Rissa tridactyla* (31/10). A first-cycle bird was at Cherry Creek Res between 2 Nov and 15 Dec 2006 (GW †, TL †; 2006-151; 7-0). A first-cycle kittiwake was also found at Lathrop SP, *Huerfano*, on 18 Nov 2006 (BKP †, 2006-160; 7-0) and was apparently present until 23 Nov, but no documentation on the entire length of stay was provided

*Black-legged Kittiwake, Twin Lakes Forebay Lake, Lake County, 20 November 2006. Photo by Randy Hancock*

to the Committee. The strangest occurrence was that of another first-cycle bird at the Twin Lakes Forebay in Lake on 20 Nov 2006 (RHa †, SY, 2006-161; 7-0).

**Least Tern** – *Sterna antillarum*. Out-of-range birds recently accepted include one at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 25 Apr 2006 (BKP †; 2006-40; 7-0) and two birds at Big Johnson Res, *El Paso*, on 2 Jun 2006 (BM †, BSi; 2006-96, 7-0).



*Royal Tern, Big Johnson Reservoir, El Paso County, 17 June 2004. Photo by Rachel Hopper*

**Arctic Tern** – *Sterna paradisaea* (12/9). An alternate-plumaged bird graced Lake Beckwith, *Pueblo*, on 22 Sep 2006 (DSi, BKP †; 2006-131; 7-0).

**Royal Tern** – *Sterna maxima* (2/2). Establishing the second record for Colorado, Peterson found an alternate-plumaged



*Costa's Hummingbird*, Prowers County, 22 September 2006. Photo by Jane Stulp

adult at Big Johnson Res on 17 Jun 2004 (RHo †, LS †, MP; 2004-126; 7-0).

**Pomarine Jaeger** – *Stercorarius pomarinus* (22/12). A juvenile was at Cherry Creek Res on 14 Sep 2005 (AS †, GW; 2005-93; 6-1).

**Black-billed Cuckoo** – *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (22/7). Andrew Spencer recently unearthed two historical specimens of female Black-billed Cuckoos housed at the Department of Zoology at Colorado State University in Fort Collins that were collected by L.E. Burnett near Loveland, Larimer. One was collected on 9 Jun 1902 (2007-110; 7-0) and the other on 13 Jun of the same year (2007-111; 7-0).

**Whip-poor-will** – *Caprimulgus vociferus* (10/1). While birding CBR, El Paso, on 20 May 2006, Semo flushed a Whip-poor-will. The bird landed

on a tree limb, but flew again soon thereafter into the thickets. Despite intensive searches by birders during the remainder of the daylight, the bird could not be re-found. However, as a small group of birders stood guard at dusk, the bird began calling intently, identifying itself as a nominate *vociferus* from the east. The bird remained present until the evening of 21 May, when other birders were also able to see it, hear it, and make audio recordings of its call (LS, BKP, NP s, CWi; 2006-73; 7-0). This is the second record of this species for El Paso, the previous one being from July 1981.

#### **Magnificent Hummingbird**

– *Eugenes fulgens* (12/8). A female captured in the mist nets at CBR, El Paso, on 19 May 2002 was a first for the Eastern Plains (TL †; 2002-41; 7-0). In 2006, a female was at Durango Mountain Ski Resort, La Plata, between at least 24 and 27 Jul (JBy, NP, AS †, RB; 2006-113; 7-0). The bird was apparently at this location until well after 27 July, but we received no information on that extended length of stay.

**Costa's Hummingbird** – *Calypte costae* (5/5). Very unusual was the female or immature photographed five miles south of Lamar, Prowers, on 22 Sep 2006 (JS †; 2006-133; 7-0).

**Red-naped Sapsucker** – *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*. Although the species is a rather common breeder, winter records in the state are scanty at best. Rare was the adult male photographed in Trinidad, Las Animas, on 21 Jan 2006 (BKP †; 2006-10; 7-0).

**Alder Flycatcher** – *Empidonax al-norum* (18/8). Two records of Alder Flycatcher from 2006 were recently accepted. One was banded and photographed at CBR, *El Paso*, on 16 May (BGi †; 2006-68; 7-0) and an unbanded bird was photographed at the same location on 20 May (TL†; 2006-76; 7-0).

**Black Phoebe** – *Sayornis nigricans*. Black Phoebes continue to expand their distribution across Colorado. The CBRC reviewed and accepted three new records away from known breeding areas. One was at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, between 12 and 26 Mar 2006 (CS, BM †, BKP †; 2006-24; 7-0). Another was near Mesa, *Mesa*, on 10 May 2006 (RB; 2006-46; 7-0). Thirdly, one spent at least a good part of the winter of 2006-07 at Valco Ponds below Pueblo Res, where present between at least 1 Dec 2006 and 3 Jan 2007 (BKP †, BM †; 2007-1; 7-0).

**Great Crested Flycatcher** – *Myiarchus crinitus*. Westerly was the bird discovered at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 20 May 2006 (BGi; 2006-77; 7-0).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** – *Tyrannus forficatus* (28/20). A male was near Lake Hasty, *Bent*, on 16 Apr 2006 (BGi †; 2006-32 7-0). Later that same month, a female-type bird was photographed at Estes Park, *Larimer*, where present on 23 Apr (RHo †, SR, JW; 2006-39; 7-0).

**Blue-headed Vireo** – *Vireo solitarius* (17/16). An adult female was banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 15 May 2006 (BGi †, CWi †; 2006-60; 6-1), establishing the first accepted spring record of the species in Colorado

and the first for the county. Another Blue-headed Vireo was banded later that same year on 6 Sep at Barr Lake, *Adams* (SN †; 2006-122; 6-1).

**Philadelphia Vireo** – *Vireo philadelphicus* (31/14). One at Prewitt Res, *Washington*, on 27 Aug 2006 (AS, SL, JoR; 2006-116; 7-0) was a first for that county. Another was at Greenhorn Mountain Park near Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 12 Sep 2006 (DSi; 2006-125; 7-0).

**Purple Martin** – *Progne subis*. Martins are very rare on the Eastern Plains. The CBRC recently accepted two new records from that region. On 23 May 2006, three female-type birds were at CBR, *El Paso*, where photographed (BGi †; 2006-83; 7-0). Although the hypothesis cannot be confirmed, close examination of the birds' throat and forehead coloration in the submitted photographs suggests that they were spillovers of the breeding montane race *arboricola*. Although some Coloradoans on the Eastern Plains have installed martin nest boxes with the hope of someday drawing a nesting colony, there were few (if any?) indications of success prior to April 2006, when Leatherman found two second-year males tending a martin nest box in Lamar. The birds remained present until at least 4 Jun (LS †, DAL; 2006-179; 7-0). Based on behavior (associating with a nest box, unlike *arboricola*) and throat and forehead coloration, it appears the Lamar birds were of the easterly nominate *subis*.

**Bewick's Wren** – *Thryomanes bewickii*. Providing a very rare record for *Larimer*, one was photographed at Es-

tes Park on 14 Apr 2006 (RHo †, SR, JuR; 2006-31; 7-0). The bird was apparently discovered the previous day, although the Committee received no details of that account.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush** - *Catharus minimus* (45/20). One of the most noteworthy events during the spring of 2006 was the incredible push of Gray-cheeked Thrushes through eastern Colorado. Although many more were reported than documented, the CBRC accepted seven new records of 14 birds. All birds except one were seen during a six-day period in the middle of May. Two birds were at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 11 May (BKP †; 2006-48; 7-0). One was at a private ranch near Briggsdale, *Weld*, on 12 May (GW †, JK; 2006-49; 7-0). Another was nearby at Crow Valley Campground (CVCG) on 14 May (NK, CWi †; 2006-53; 7-0). On 15 May, two thrushes were banded at CBR, *El Paso* (BGi †; 2006-59; 7-0). Three Gray-cheeks were at CVCG on 16 May (NK †; 2006-63; 7-0), while an additional four were banded at CBR, *El Paso* on that date (BGi †; 2006-65; 7-0). Later that autumn, one was banded at Barr Lake on 11 Oct (SN †; 2006-144; 7-0).

**Curve-billed Thrasher** - *Toxostoma curvirostre*. Northward was the bird present at Lakewood, *Jefferson*,

on 19 May 2006 (MC†; 2006-72; 6-1). As expected, photographs indicated that the bird was of the *oberholseri* race, the subspecies regular nearest to *Jefferson*.

**Long-billed Thrasher** - *Toxostoma longirostre* (4/2). It seemed incredible enough that Colorado had twice hosted Long-billed Thrashers prior to 2006, but to have two additional birds show up in the state during that winter seemed inexplicable. The first was discovered at CBR, *El Paso*, on 14 Jan and was documented as occurring until at least 3 Feb (BKP †, DFa, PG, BM †, AS †, CWi; 2006-6; 7-0). However, although no details were submitted to the Committee, the bird apparently remained at that location until at least April, when it was banded. The second bird was found in a residential yard in urban Denver, *Denver*, where it was documented for the period of 21-25 Feb (LS †, AS †,



*Long-billed Thrasher, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 31 March 2006. Photo by Bill Maynard*





*Blackburnian Warbler*, Weld County, 21 May 2006.  
Photo by Rachel Hopper

CWi †, SA; 2006-18, 7-0), although the homeowner reportedly discovered the bird the day prior.

**Phainopepla** – *Phainopepla nitens* (10/3). Providing a very rare record for the state and the first for *Pueblo*, a female discovered seven miles south of Beulah was present between at least 5 and 15 Jun 2006 (MA†, BM †; 2006-99; 7-0).

**Blue-winged Warbler** – *Vermivora pinus*. Although Blue-winged Warbler is not on the state review list, out-of-season occurrences should be documented. As a point in case, an adult female was at the NeeNoshe Res Locust Grove in *Kiowa* on the late date of 3 Nov 2006 (JBy; 2006-152; 6-1).

**Lucy's Warbler** – *Vermivora luciae* (7/5). Lucy's Warblers continue to be found along Yellowjacket Creek in *Montezuma*. Birds were detected again in 2006 when three were found

on 4 Jul (AS; 2006-105; 7-0).

**Northern Parula** – *Parula americana*. Extremely late, a female or immature male was found dead on or slightly before 15 Jan 2006 in Boulder, *Boulder* (BSc †, AC; 2006-7; 7-0).

**Cape May Warbler** – *Dendroica tigrina* (22/5). A stunning alternate-plumaged male was along Boulder Creek in Boulder between 12 and 15 May 2004 (LK, RLi,

RHo †; 2004-31; 7-0).

**Blackburnian Warbler** – *Dendroica fusca* (41/19). An alternate-plumaged male was near the intersection of County Roads 57 and 100 in *Weld* between 20 and 21 May 2006 (CWi, RHo †, SM; 2006-74, 7-0). Another alternate-plumaged male was photographed at Last Chance on 25 May of that same year; it was a first for *Washington* (LS †; 2006-178; 7-0).

**Yellow-throated Warbler** – *Dendroica dominica* (32/13). A bird in alternate plumage graced Palmer Lake in Monument, *El Paso*, on 15 Apr 2006 (BM †; 2006-33; 7-0). The bird was reported a day or so prior by out-of-country visitors, but we received no details on that original sighting. Another, found at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 3 May 2007 (BKP †, AS †s, SH; 2007-31; 7-0), is the second record for that very location.



*Yellow-throated Warbler*, Lamar Cemetery, Prowers County, 4 May 2007. Photo by Andrew Spencer

**Pine Warbler** – *Dendroica pinus* (31/17). As Colorado birders will note, there has been an apparent increase in Pine Warblers in the state during the past five years or so. The CBRC recently circulated and accepted five new records of the species. An alternate-plumaged male was at Pueblo City Park on 20 Apr 2004 (TL †; 2004-74; 7-0). Another male, a first for *Jefferson*, was seen at an office complex in Denver West, where seen between 5 and 12 Feb 2005 (TL †, BKP †, BSc †, KS; 2005-7; 7-0). A first-cycle bird was at a feeder at Long Pond between 12 Dec 2005 and 8 March 2006 (RHo †; 2005-142; 7-0). In 2006, two birds were seen: an adult in Boulder between 14 and 16 Jan (TL†, BSc, NG; 2006-5; 7-0) and an adult male at Prewitt Res on 27 Aug (AS, NP; 2006-117; 7-0), the first for *Washington*.

**Prairie Warbler** – *Dendroica discolor* (27/16). An alternate male sang at

Arapaho Ranch along Middle Boulder Creek at a high elevation near *Nederland*, Boulder, where present between 15 and 20 May 2006 (DH †; 2006-62; 7-0).

**Bay-breasted Warbler** – *Dendroica castanea* (38/11). A second-year male was at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 22

May 2006 (BGi †, BKP †, SSH; 2006-79; 7-0). That fall, a first-fall male was at Flagler, *Kit Carson*, on 17 Sep (BKP; 2006-129; 7-0).

**Mourning Warbler** – *Oporornis philadelphia* (24/11). An alternate-plumaged male was photographed at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 14 May 2006 (BGi †; 2006-54; 6-1) and another alternate male was near the intersection of County Roads 51 and 100 in *Weld* on 21 May of that same year (RHo; 2006-78; 7-0).

**Canada Warbler** – *Wilsonia canadensis* (30/12). An adult female or first-cycle male was at CVCG on 26 Aug 2006 (AS, JK; 2006-115; 7-0). On the following day, a bird of the same plumage type was at Prewitt Res, *Washington* (AS, NP; 2006-118; 7-0), representing the first accepted record for that county.

**Hepatic Tanager** – *Piranga flava* (21/6). Although the species has long been suspected of breeding in Colo-

rado, nesting was finally confirmed in 2006 when a pair and two young were found at the Bader Ranch near Kim, *Las Animas*, on 18 Jul 2006 (AS †, CWi †, MP; 2006-110; 7-0). Evidently the pair was found earlier in the season, although no details were provided to the Committee.

**Summer Tanager** – *Piranga rubra*. Quite rare (but increasing?) in southwestern Colorado, two alternate-plumaged males were along Yellowjacket Creek in *Montezuma* on 4 Jul 2006 (AS, BKP, JK; 2006-106; 7-0).

**Scarlet Tanager** – *Piranga olivacea* (31/16). An alternate-plumaged male brightened CBR, *Pueblo*, where photographed on 14 May 2006 (BGi †, BKP; 2006-57; 7-0). A second alternate male was in Fort Collins on 23 May of that same year (NK †; 2006-82; 7-0). Thirdly, a basic-plumaged male was seen at Prewitt Res, *Washington*, on 29 Sep 2006 (JK, GW; 2006-136; 7-0).

**Eastern Towhee** – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (14/11). An adult male was at CBR, *El Paso*, between 6 Jan and 3 Feb 2006 (TL †, BKP †, AS †, DE, NK, CWi, MPe; 2006-2; 7-0). An adult female was at CVCG on 23 May 2006 (CWi †, JoR; 2006-85; 7-0). This bird was apparently discovered the previous day but no documentation was submitted to the Committee.

**Field Sparrow** – *Spizella pusilla*. The CBRC requests details on Field Sparrows away from the eastern edge of the state. During the recent circulation, four significant records of the species were accepted. Quite clearly establishing a first for *Archuleta*, and

a very late one at that, a Field Sparrow was at Navajo SP on 21 Jan 2006 (JB; 2006-12; 7-0). Two Field Sparrows were at CBR in 2006, one on the *Pueblo* side on 11 May (BGi; 2006-47; 7-0) and another in *El Paso* on 20 May (BGi †, TL; 2006-75; 7-0). Lastly, a territorial bird was atop North Table Mountain in Golden, *Jefferson*, on 16 Jun 2006 (DH; 2006-100; 7-0).

**Sage Sparrow** – *Amphispiza belli*. Rare in northeast Colorado, one was photographed near Loveland, *Larimer*, on 10 Mar 2006 (CK †; 2006-23; 7-0).

**Fox Sparrow** (*Passerella iliaca*). Three birds of the northern “Red” group (*P. i. iliaca/zaboria*) were recently accepted. One was at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 5 Apr 2006 (BM †, BKP †; MPe; 2006-28; 7-0). One was banded at Barr Lake on 13 Oct 2006 (SN †; 2006-145; 7-0). A third bird was at the NeeNoshe Res Locust Grove on 3 Nov 2006 (JB; 27 Dec. 2006-153; 7-0).

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** - *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (19/11). A first-cycle bird was at Parrish Ranch near Berthoud, *Boulder*, between 27 and 28 Dec 2006 (TL †, BSc †, PO; 2006-175; 7-0). Although the bird was evidently first discovered on the Longmont CBC on 16 Dec, no details were submitted for that earlier date.

**Painted Bunting** – *Passerina ciris* (29/16). At what is becoming a normal summer location for the species, an alternate male was again at Cottonwood Canyon in *Las Animas* on 18 Jul 2006 (AS †, CWi †; 2006-109; 7-0).



*Golden-crowned Sparrow, Boulder County, 1 January 2006. Photos by Tony Leukering*

### **RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED**

The Committee recognizes that its decisions may upset some observers. We heartily acknowledge that those who make the effort to submit documentation certainly care whether or not their reports are accepted. However, non-accepted records do not necessarily suggest that the birder misidentified or did not see the species. A non-accepted record only indicates that the documentation was not complete or convincing enough to catalogue on the list of confirmed bird records for the state. Non-accepted reports may provide evidence that does not mention certain requisite field marks or indicates that the conditions of the observation did not permit the proper study of all necessary traits. All non-accepted records are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

**Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*)— Details on an alternate-plumaged bird at Fruitgrowers Res, Delta,

on 23 May 2006 (2006-84; 2-5) noted a dark eye with no trace of white facial feathering. Although the report noted that the legs were dark and red only at the tibia-tarsi joints, no blue facial pattern to the face was seen. As second-cycle ibis may not display full alternate plumage, it is not known whether the bird may have been a White-faced in that age bracket or a hybrid. The observer did not comment on the possibility of its being a hybrid, despite the fact that the field marks noted were suggestive of such.

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Little CBRC endorsement was given to the report of an Osprey at Connected Lakes in Grand Junction on the very strange date of 25 Jan 2006 (2006-15; 2-5). Although most of the description could indicate Osprey, it could also refer to a third-cycle Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), which was not eliminated as a possible contender. Another key factor in the lack of acceptance was that the observer commented on the great wingspan length, but then noted that the bird

was about the size of a Peregrine Falcon, which an Osprey should certainly surpass in size.

**Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*)—Although it most certainly referred to a Painted Bunting, the description of a female-type bird seen at CBR, *El Paso*, on 16 May 2006 provided very little information to the Committee as to the bird's identity (2006-64; 3-4). The only details noted were that it was small, had a thick bill, and had light green upperparts and yellowish underparts. Those details alone could describe an escaped Budgerigar.

**Eastern Meadowlark** (*Sturnella magna*)—A calling bird seen briefly at Soapstone Ranch near Carr, *Larimer*, on 6 Jun 2006 failed to gain much CBRC support (2006-98; 1-6), as the

information provided was extremely brief and failed to completely rule out Western Meadowlark (*S. neglecta*).

**Baltimore Oriole** (*Icterus galbula*)—The report of an adult female from Soapstone Ranch from 24 May 2006 may have been a Baltimore (2006-87; 3-4); however, as Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles (*I. bullockii*) interbreed frequently along their zone of sympatry, and as various degrees of introgression through backcrossing exist, identification of a wayward Baltimore requires careful analysis of why the bird exhibited phenotypic traits of the species. Although the description was suggestive of a Baltimore, the observer did not provide the Committee with any rationale as to why the bird was not of hybrid origin.

## REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

The CBRC graciously thanks the following individuals for submitting records of or discovering rare species in Colorado that prompted this circulation: MA: Mymm Ackley; JBy: Jim Beatty; RB: Richard Brown; AC: Alan Carpenter; MC: Mark Chavez; SD: Stephen Dinsmore; DE: Dave Ely; DF: Doug Faulkner; NG: Nelda Gamble; PG: Peter Gent, BGi: Brian Gibbons; RHa: Randy Hancock; DH: Derek Hill; RHo: Rachel Hopper; JK: Joey Kellner; LK: Loch Kilpatrick; CK: Connie Kogler; NK: Nick Komar; DAL: David A. Leatherman; TL: Tony Leukering; RLe: Rich Levad; RLi: Roger Linfield; BM: Bill Maynard; SM: Steve Messick; RM: Rich Miller; SN: Starr Nicely; BKP: Brandon K. Percival; MPe: Mark Peterson; NP: Nathan Pieplow; SR: Scott Rashid; JuR: Julie Roederer; SR: Scott Roederer; JoR: Joe Roller; BSc: Bill Schmoker; CS: Chris Schoenfelder; KS: Karleen Schofield; LS: Larry Semo; SSh: Scott Shaum; DSi: David Silverman; AS: Andrew Spencer; BSt: Brad Steger; JS: Jane Stulp; GW: Glenn Walbek; CWi: Cole Wild; JW: Judie Wright; SH: Sherrie York.

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## THE HUNGRY BIRDER

### North Park

*Nathan Pieplow and Andrew Spencer*

Lekking Greater Sage-Grouse. Winter flocks of Rosy-Finches. Singing Boreal Owls on Cameron Pass. Some of Colorado's best wetlands, home to waterbirds that breed nowhere else in the state. The chance for a rare gull or shorebird or a wintering Gyrfalcon. Moose wallowing in swampy draws. Stunning scenery that you rarely have to share with anybody else.

At any time of year, there is a reason for birders to go to North

Park. But even though it is only two hours or so from the northern Front Range, this beautiful high mountain valley can seem as remote as the moon. Jackson County has only one town of any size—Walden—and relatively few services. The area doesn't offer many choices of places to eat, but it's got some decent quality.

We'll start off our restaurant review with a brief requiem for the dearly de-



*North Park, Jackson County.* Photo courtesy of the USDA Forest Service

parted. Our favorite place to eat in North Park is serving food no more: the Rand Yacht Club in the tiny hamlet of Rand, south of Walden, was a surprisingly upscale little restaurant, with a rustic atmosphere and a well-stocked menu. Perhaps absence makes the heart grow fonder, but we do remember the place as a diamond in the rough. The property has been for sale for several years now,

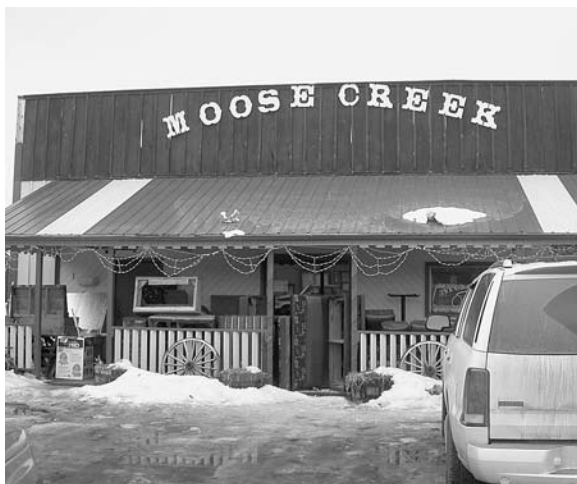


*Greater Sage-Grouse, North Park, Jackson County, 26 April 2008. Photo by Bill Schmoker*

and the very remote possibility does exist that someone might buy it and start the kitchen up again—but I wouldn't hold my breath.

Now that the Yacht Club is gone, the only other place to eat in the county outside Walden is the Drifter's Cookhouse in Gould. I'll start with the caveat that I've only eaten here once, but my single experience was not a particularly good one. The Cookhouse has the ambience of a small-town sports bar, small and cluttered, but homey. Steaks and burgers seem to be the specialty here, with some Mexican food as an afterthought, to judge by the menu. The prices seemed high—the cheapest burger was \$8—and the \$11 elk burger that I ordered was worth maybe half of what I paid for it. It was supplemented with serviceable fries and bowls of peanuts and stale pretzels that were already on the table. When I was finished with my meal, I walked outside to find that while I was eating, all the air had leaked out of one of my tires—perhaps a fitting metaphor for the experience inside.

In Walden, you have four dining options in the summer and three in the winter. The first option is the bowling alley, at the south end of Main Street, which serves a basic burger, according to the locals—we've never stopped by to try it ourselves. The additional summer option is Four Winds Pizza in the pink building at 496 Main, which is open May to October, every day except Tuesday. The owner makes all her 6" to 16" pizzas and doughs from scratch, with the most expensive being the deluxe pizza for \$22.65. There is an antique shop in the building where one can browse while waiting for the pizza. Our sole



*Moose Creek Restaurant, Walden. Photo by Andrew Spencer*

contact in town isn't a huge fan of the food here, but we've never eaten it ourselves, so it may be worth a try.

The Moose Creek Café, at 508 Main Street, is perhaps the best place to stop for a quick lunch or late breakfast after watching the Greater Sage-Grouse display. This restaurant has a standard café feel, not too fancy but more than adequate, and the service here is quick and good. Good burgers

and sandwiches range from \$6 to \$9. Dinner options include a variety of hand-cut steaks in the \$10-\$18 range; for dessert there are homemade pies. A few Mexican options round out the menu; try the Moose Creek Burrito for breakfast or the Desperado Burrito for lunch. While the ambience may not be top-of-the-line, you can't really go wrong with this restaurant if you're just looking for a solid meal before, during, or after a day of birding. For those whose birding day went so well or so poorly as to merit an alcoholic beverage, the Moose Creek also offers a full bar.

Perhaps the most upscale dining in the county is found at the River Rock Café at 460 Main Street, which replaced the Coffee Pot Café when that local landmark was destroyed in a fire in 2002. The River Rock has a modern western ambience, with an eclectic menu and decent service. The breakfast menu includes "famous" cinnamon rolls, oatmeal, omelettes, French toast, and even eggs Benedict, while the lunch and dinner fare ranges from trout almondine for \$7.95 to burgers and sandwiches in the \$6-\$8 range. Naturally, there are also some Mexican dishes on the menu, in accordance with the rural Colorado standard. Appetizers include Rocky Mountain oysters (why not?) for \$6.95, and for dessert there are fresh pies and cakes. We've been pleased with the food here on the several occasions we've tried it—and it does bear mentioning that this is the only place in the county where you can purchase a reuben sandwich.

The upstairs portion of the River Rock is called the Antlers Inn,



and it provides easily the nicest accommodations in town—the standard rate for a single room is \$79, with the “Presidential Room” going for \$108—but asking for “Al’s Rate” when you make your reservations will knock \$10 off all your lodging rates. Al, the owner, is eager to promote his town and his establishment to birders, and you won’t be disappointed with the quality of the rooms.

In a state packed full of places worth visiting, Jackson County is one of the best—overlooked by many, adored by the rest. We love birding in North Park, and we enjoy eating there too. We hope that some of our enthusiasm might rub off on our readers!

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*Great Horned Owl by Joe Rigli*

**Winter 2007–2008 (December–February)**

*Peter R. Gent*

This report is dedicated to the memory of Rich Levad, who died on 27 February 2008. Rich contributed sightings to numerous News from the Field reports, and contributed enormously to our knowledge of birds on Colorado's Western Slope. He will be sorely missed.

The winter season started off a little warm, and a Denver International Airport (DIA) temperature record was set when the high temperature on 4 December reached 72° F. However, the average December temperature was 3.6° F below normal, and the DIA temperatures were near normal in January and February. December was the sixth snowiest recorded in Denver, with 21 inches of snow, including a record snowfall of 8 inches on Christmas Day. The precipitation for the season at DIA was 0.86 inches of water, which was just over half the normal of 1.66 inches. Although the Eastern Plains were quite dry over the winter, the mountains saw plenty of snow, with snowfall well above average in all of Colorado's mountain ranges.

As for the season's birds, pride of place must go to the female Streak-backed Oriole that was seen at the Koglers' house in southwest Loveland between 8 December and 2 January. This first state record was seen by a large number of birders from Colorado and elsewhere. Also noteworthy this year was a real invasion of Bohemian Waxwings, which were seen in good numbers throughout the state. Good-sized flocks were seen in the mountains, but the largest flocks, of over 2000 birds, were seen along the Front Range and in Salida, where introduced trees and shrubs in urban areas provide the largest food source for these birds. There was also an interesting invasion of Purple Finches this winter. They were seen in many places on the Eastern Plains, with up to 30 seen at Bonny Reservoir.

Other rare species seen this winter included a Brant in Broomfield; a Red-throated Loon at Pueblo Res; a Yellow-billed Loon at Pueblo Res; three Iceland Gulls, at Valmont Res, Cherry Creek Res, and McClellan Res; two Glaucous-winged Gulls, from Cherry Creek Res and McClellan Res; two Inca Doves, in Loveland and Colorado City; single Varied Thrushes in Delta and Steamboat Springs; a Brown Thrasher near Fruita; a Tennessee Warbler in Fort Collins; a Black-throated Blue Warbler in Grand Junction; a Pine Warbler in Denver West; a Scarlet Tanager in Fort Collins; three Golden-crowned Sparrows, from Cañon City, Archuleta County, and Colorado Springs; a Snow Bunting in Rio Blanco County; and Common Redpolls near Meeker and Hayden.

**Note 1:** The reports contained herein are largely unchecked, and the report editor does not necessarily vouch for their authenticity. Underlined species are those for which the Colorado Bird Records Committee requests documentation. You should now submit your sightings through the CFO website at <http://www.cfo-link.org/CBRC/login.php5>. 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 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 that lie within multiple counties.

**Abbreviations:** CBC: Christmas Bird Count; doc: documentation submitted to the CBRC; m.ob.: multiple observers; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; Res: Reservoir; SWA: State Wildlife Area.

**Brant:** An immature was seen at Glasser Res, *Broomfield*, on 1 Dec (EZ).

**Trumpeter Swan:** It was another very good year for this species, with 13 birds reported. Four adults were seen at Browns Park NWR, *Moffat*,

between 11 and 24 Jan (DH, VZ, doc), one was seen at North Poudre #3, *Larimer*, between 15 and 26 Jan (RH, JM), one was at the pond on County Road 163, *Chaffee*, on 27 Jan (RM), two were at Cherry Creek Res, *Arapahoe*, on 11 Feb (GW), and an adult and two juveniles were seen at John Martin Res, *Bent*, between 19 and 22 Feb (DN).

**Tundra Swan:** One was present in the Grand Valley, *Mesa*, on 31 Jan (LA), while three were at Lake Maria east of Walsenburg, *Huerfano*, and an adult and juvenile were near Lathrop State Park, *Huerfano*, all on 2 Dec (PN). One was seen at Lake DeWeese, *Custer*, on 3 Dec (RM), an adult



*Trumpeter Swan, Ft. Collins, Larimer County, 13 December 2007. Photo by Nick Komar*

was at Zink's Pond, *La Plata*, on 1 and 2 Jan (H&RM, JB), another adult was at Browns Park NWR between 11 and 24 Jan (DH, VZ), and two first-year birds were at Walker Pit near Franktown, *Douglas*, between 22 and 29 Feb (TH, GW).

**Surf Scoter:** A female/ immature was seen on Woodmoor Lake near Monument, *El Paso*, on 3 Dec (JD), another was seen at Valmont Res, *Boulder*, on the CBC on 16 Dec (JV), and an immature male was on Pueblo Res, *Pueblo*, between 1 Jan and 29 Feb (JK, GW, BKP, m.ob.).

**White-winged Scoter:** A female/immature was seen on Baseline Res, *Boulder*, between 1 and 6 Dec (PG, LS), and another was at John Martin Res between 6 and 20 Dec (DN, TLe, MP, m.ob.).

**Black Scoter:** Two female/immatures were also seen at John Martin Res between 2 and 20 Dec (DN, m.ob.).

**Long-tailed Duck:** An adult female and an immature were seen at Baseline Res between 1 and 6 Dec



*Tundra Swan, Weldona, Morgan County, 22 December 2007. Photo by Steve Larson*



*Red-throated Loon, Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo County, 4 January 2008. Photo by Brandon Percival*

(PG, LS), a female was at McIntosh Lake, *Boulder*, also on 1 Dec (CN, AS), another female was at Cherry Creek Res between 13 and 18 Dec (GW), three were seen at John Martin Res between 18 and 20 Dec (TLe, MP), and two immatures were seen at



*Least Sandpiper, Larimer County, 27 January 2008.*  
Photo by Glenn Walbek

Pueblo Res between 23 Dec and 29 Feb (PH, BKP, m.ob.).

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** 14 were again seen at Sands Lake in Salida, *Chaffee*, on 20 Dec (TLe), and a very large flock of 170 was seen on 3 Jan in Carbondale, *Garfield* (DFi, AL), comprising perhaps the largest flock ever seen in Colorado.

**Red-throated Loon:** An adult was seen at Pueblo Res between 3 Jan and 26 Feb (BKP, m.ob., doc).

**Yellow-billed Loon:** A juvenile was seen at Pueblo Res between 1 and 13 Jan (JK, GW, m.ob., doc).

**Red-necked Grebe:** One was seen at John Martin Res between 4 and 10 Dec (DN, m.ob.), one was seen at Pueblo Res on 20 Dec (MP, TLe, BKP), and one was again at Pueblo Res between 3 and 19 Jan (BKP, m.ob.).

**Least Sandpiper:** Very unusual in winter was one seen in Fort Collins,

*Larimer*, between 6 Jan and 12 Feb (NK, doc).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Two were seen at John Martin Res on 1 Dec (DN).

**Dunlin:** Four were seen at John Martin Res between 1 and 6 Dec (DN).

**Mew Gull:** An adult and two first-year birds were seen at Pueblo Res on 15 Dec, with the adult continuing to 2 Feb (TLe, m.ob.) and one of the first-years

seen into Jan. In addition, an adult was seen at Valmont Res on 16 Dec during the Boulder CBC (JV), and a first-year bird was again seen at Pueblo Res on 29 Feb (BKP, VT, doc).

**Thayer's Gull:** One was seen at Confluence Park in Delta, *Delta*, on 28 and 29 Feb (DFi, TL, DFa, m.ob.), which is the first well-documented record of this species in western Colorado.

**Iceland Gull:** An immature was seen at Valmont Res between 2 and 10 Feb (BKP, MP, doc), one was reported from Cherry Creek Res on 10 Feb (IS, TS), and a first-year bird was at McClellan Res, *Douglas*, on 12 Feb (IS).

**Glaucous-winged Gull:** A first-winter bird was seen at Cherry Creek Res between 9 and 17 Feb (GW, m.ob.), and probably the same bird was at McClellan Res on 18 Feb (TH, GW).

### **Great Black-backed**

**Gull:** An adult was seen at Pueblo Res throughout the season (BKP, m.ob., doc), another adult was seen at John Martin Res on 18 Dec (TLe, MP), an adult was at Valmont Res on 3 Feb (GW, LK), one was at Cherry Creek Res between 9 and 17 Feb (JR, LM), and one was at Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, on 27 Feb (WR).

**Inca Dove:** Away from their usual locations in the Arkansas River Valley, one was heard in Loveland, *Larimer*, on 18 Dec (CWi), and one was seen in Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 21 Dec (DE).

**Red-naped Sapsucker:** Very unusual in winter was a male seen at the Holy Cross Abbey in Cañon City, *Fremont*, between 19 and 26 Jan (NE, MP).

**Black Phoebe:** Two again spent most of the winter in the Rock Creek and Valco Ponds area in Pueblo, *Pueblo*, between 15 Dec and 26 Feb (MP, BKP, TLe, SR, m.ob.).

**Carolina Wren:** The resident bird again spent the winter at the Cañon City Riverwalk, where reported between 1 Dec and 29 Feb (RM, BKP, CWo, m.ob.).

**Winter Wren:** Only three birds were reported this season. One was seen in Cottonwood Canyon, *Las Animas*, between 2 and 7 Dec (PJ, GF), one was seen in Loveland on 3 Dec (CWi), and one was seen on



*Thayer's Gull*, Confluence Park, Delta County, 29 February 2008. First West Slope record of this species. Photo by Jason Beason

the Cañon City Riverwalk on 23 Jan (RM).

**Varied Thrush:** One was seen at Chatfield Res, *Douglas*, on the Denver CBC on 15 Dec (UK, m.ob.), a female was seen in Delta on 24 Dec (MB), which is a first *Delta* record, a female was seen in Steamboat Springs, *Routt*, between 26 Jan and 29 Feb (J&VS, TLi, doc), which is again a first county record, and another female was seen in the Prathers' yard near Union Res, *Weld*, on 27 Feb (I&BP).

**Brown Thrasher:** One member of this casual winter species on the West Slope was seen at Horsethief Canyon SWA, *Mesa*, between 19 Jan and 10 Feb (CD, m.ob.).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** This was a big invasion year, with birds reported throughout the state. The largest concentrations were along the Front Range, with nearly 1000 on the Boul-

der CBC, *Boulder*, on 16 Dec (BSc, m.ob.), and 1390 reported on the *Loveland* CBC on 1 Jan (CK, m.ob.). However, the prize for the largest number goes to the *Salida* CBC, which tallied 3025 on 22 Dec (SY, m.ob.).

**Tennessee Warbler:** One was found dead in southeast Fort Collins on 5 Dec (LG).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** An adult male was found on the Grand Junction CBC, *Mesa*, on 16 Dec (JC, LA).

**Pine Warbler:** One was again seen in the Denver West Office Park, *Jefferson*, between 2 and 31 Dec (MC, m.ob., doc).

**Summer Tanager:** A female was seen in *Florence, Fremont*, between 16 and 24 Dec (MP, BMa, m.ob.).

**Scarlet Tanager:** One was seen in southwest Fort Collins on 2 and 3 Dec (CL-J, doc).

**Western Tanager:** A male was seen in *Glenwood Springs, Garfield*, on 15 Dec (VZ, m.ob.), which is only the second West Slope winter record, and a female was seen at the Kogler house in *Loveland* between 4 and 9 Feb (CK).

**Field Sparrow:** One much farther west than normal was seen at *Rock Canyon* in *Pueblo* on 15 Dec (BMa).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Just like last winter, only 14 birds were reported



*White-throated Sparrow, Goodrich residence, Adams County, 9 December 2007. Photo by Gregg Goodrich*

this season, which is well below average. Away from the Eastern Plains, one was seen on the *Salida* CBC on 20 Dec (SY), an adult was seen near Zink's Pond between 23 Dec and 2 Jan (SA, PD, m.ob.), one was seen in *Grand Junction* on 2 Jan (LA), and one was at *Horsethief Canyon SWA* on 25 Jan (RL, VZ).

**White-throated Sparrow:** There were 15 reports this winter, which is about average. At the most unusual location was one seen in *Empire, Clear Creek*, between 22 Dec and 23 Feb (LM).

**Harris's Sparrow:** There were 25 birds reported this winter, which is above average. West Slope reports were of two seen in *Carbondale* between 17 and 30 Dec (DFi, m.ob.), one seen at *Horsethief Canyon SWA* on 13 Jan (LA, MA), and two seen at a feeder in *Steamboat Springs* between 29 Dec and 29 Feb (TLi, m.ob.).



*Purple Finch, Bonny SP, Yuma County, 2 February 2008. Photo by Glenn Walbek*

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** An adult was seen at Tunnel Drive in Cañon City between 29 Dec and 29 Feb (DC, m.ob., doc), another adult was seen near Navajo Res, *Archuleta*, on 27 Jan (H&RM), and an immature was seen in Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 23 Feb (MW, BMa, doc).

**McCown's Longspur:** Fifteen were seen on the John Martin Res CBC on 18 Dec (*fide* DN).

**Snow Bunting:** Only one bird was reported this winter, in *Rio Blanco* between Meeker and Rifle, on 26 Dec (DH).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Another very good year for this species. An incredible flock of 12 was seen at the Pueblo Nature Center between 2 and 15 Dec (BKP, BMC, m.ob.), which is the largest flock I have ever heard of in Colo-

rado. One was seen on the Fort Collins CBC on 15 Dec (RS, AP), one was seen on the Cañon City Riverwalk on 16 Dec (CWo, TLe), three were seen north of Swink, *Otero*, on 19 Dec (TLe), one was at Vine-land, *Pueblo*, between 31 Dec and 31 Jan (DS, m.ob.), one was at Plaster Res, *Broomfield*, on 3 Jan (EZ), and finally one was again seen in Cañon City on 12 Jan (MP, BSt).

**Streak-backed Oriole:** Colorado's first state record was a female seen at the Kogler house in Loveland between 8 Dec and 2 Jan (CK, m.ob., doc). Connie reports that about 450 people came to see this exceptional bird, bright orange against the snow.

**Black Rosy-Finch:** Quite large flocks were seen on the West Slope this year: 150 were seen in *Dinosaur*, *Moffat*, on 31 Jan (FL), and 90 were seen in *Rifle*, *Garfield*, between 6 and 29 Feb (AD, m.ob.).

**Purple Finch:** This was an invasion year for this species, with over 50 birds seen on the Eastern Plains. This is more birds than in any year I can remember during the last 30 years. Up to 30 birds were seen around Bonny Res, *Yuma*, between the CBC on 21 Dec and 10 Feb (GW, NP, AS, SL, BSt, MP, doc). There were also sightings in *Logan* (doc), *Larimer*, *Washington*, *Morgan*, *Otero*, *Kit Carson*, *El Paso* (doc), *Fremont* (doc), *Pueblo*, and *Custer*.

**White-winged Crossbill:** A single female was seen in Grandview



Cemetery in Fort Collins on 5 Dec (CW<sub>i</sub>).

**Common Redpoll:** It was a good year for this species, with sightings from all parts of the state. Two were seen near Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, between 15 Dec and 11 Jan (DH, VZ, m.ob.), one was at the Cañon City Riverwalk on 16 Dec (CWo, BKP), one came to a feeder in Colorado City between 17

Dec and 6 Jan (DS, m.ob.), and one was seen on the Sterling CBC, *Logan*, on 21 Dec (GM, BK). One was seen near Carlton, *Prowers*, on 11 Jan (VT), three were seen in Hayden, *Routt*, between 17 Jan and 29 Feb (NM, TL<sub>i</sub>), which is a first county record, one was at Pueblo Res on 5 Feb (BKP), and finally a male was seen in Colorado Springs on 16 Feb (NN).

### Contributing Observers:

SA: Susan Allerton; LA: Larry Arnold; MA: Missy Arnold; JB: Jim Beatty; MB: Maggie Boswell; DC: David Chartier; JC: Jacob Cooper; AD: Art Dahl; PD: Peter Derven; CD: Craig Dodson; JD: John Drummond; DE: Donna Emmons; NE: Norm Erthal; DF<sub>a</sub>: Doug Faulkner; DF<sub>i</sub>: Dick Filby; GF: Gregg Friesen; PG: Peter Gent; LG: Larry Griffin; TH: Tom Halverstadt; DH: Dona Hilkey; RH: Rachel Hopper; PH: Paul Hurtado; PJ: Pete Janzen; BK Bill Kaempfer; JK: Joey Kellner; LK: Loch Kilpatrick; UK: Urling Kingery; CK: Connie Kogler; NK: Nick Komar; CL-J: Cheyenne Laczek-Johnson; RL: Ron Lambeth; SL: Steve Larson; TLe: Tony Leukering; AL: Al Levantin; TL<sub>i</sub>: Tom Litteral; FL: Forrest Luke; JM: Joe Mammoser; GM: Gary Matthews; BMa: Bill Maynard; BMc: Bill McGurn; NM: Nancy Merrill; RM: Rich Miller; LM: Larry Modesitt; H&RM: Heather and Riley Morris; NN: Nancy Neale; PN: Polly Nelder; DN: Duane Nelson; CN: Christian Nunes; AP: Arvind Panjabi; BKP: Brandon K. Percival; MP: Mark Peterson; NP: Nathan Pieplow; I&BP: Inez and Bill Prather; WR: Warner Reeser; JR: Joe Roller; SR: Saraiya Ruano; IS: Ira Sanders; TS: Tammy Sanders; BSc: Bill Schmoker; LS: Larry Semo; J&VS: Jan and Vic Serafy; DS: David Silverman; RS: Rob Sparks; AS: Andrew Spencer; BSt: Brad Steger; VT: Van Truan; JV: John Vanderpoel; GW: Glenn Walbek; CW<sub>i</sub>: Cole Wild; MW: Marty Wolf; CWo: Chris Wood; SY: Sherrie York; VZ: Vic Zerbi; EZ: Eric Zorawowicz.

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# Neotropic Cormorant

Tony Leukering

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) is a common and widespread resident of the Americas. It has recently been expanding its range north, with a more extensive area of regular occurrence in both Texas and Arizona, as well as more extensive vagrancy to the north and east. Its occurrence pattern in Colorado has changed in the same direction. Including the first record in Adams in 1899, the species has been accepted by the Colorado Bird Records Committee as occurring in the state 15 times, with eight of those occurrences happening since 1990.

Though the species has been reported nearly annually in the state since the mid-1990s, the species is probably underreported in Colorado. I suspect that this phenomenon may be due to the facility with which birds can be identified as cormorants, coupled with the difficulty of picking out Neotropics when looking through the hordes of Double-crested. Thus, I would bet that few of us really study cormorants. With reference to the pictures on the back cover of this issue, I provide below a synopsis of plumage and structure features of older immature (subadult) Neotropic and Double-crested Cormorants useful in separation of the two species.

Identification of alternate-plumaged adult Neotropic Cormorants is fairly straightforward, particularly since in most of the species' range, including the areas to which it wanders as a vagrant, only one other cormorant species occurs: Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*). Unfortunately, Double-crested is in many regards the species most similar to Neotropic in the ABA area, and older immatures of the two can be more similar than many birders may know. Additionally, the fairly extreme variation in size within Double-crested Cormorant can cause at least some consternation.

When tackling the identification of a cormorant in Colorado, the first task, as it is with so many taxa, is to determine the bird's age and plumage:

- 1) If the cormorant in question has a mostly whitish throat and chest, then the bird can be safely called a Double-crested, and a juvenile at that;
- 2) If the bird's supraloral area is solidly orange from the bill to the top of the eye and the plumage is entirely glossy black, this, too, is a Double-crested, and an adult;
- 3) If the plumage is a mix of black and brown or nearly entirely dark brown, your bird is probably a Double-crested and a subadult.

However, this is the plumage that can be most similar to that of Neotropical Cormorant, and it deserves at least a bit more scrutiny.

Particular features to check when looking for Neotropical Cormorant or confirming an identification of such include:

**Size:** generally 80% of the length of Double-crested (but beware of great size variation in Double-crested);

**Tail length:** about 60% of the length of the back from base of neck to base of tail (only about 40% in Double-crested);

**White behind gape:** typically pronounced and V-shaped on Neotropical, nonexistent or barely noticeable on Double-crested;

**Angle of orange at gape:** acute in Neotropical, with the little orange present above the gape angling toward the eye and the orange below the gape angling forward. In Double-crested, the angle is obtuse, with the orange edge cutting vertically down from the gape, and with the upper edge of the extensive patch of orange above the gape angling toward the eye;

**Neck/head shape in flight:** Neotropical has a small and rounded head that is not much wider than its neck, giving the impression when the bird is in flight that the bill is pasted onto the end of a long, single-width tube. Double-crested's head is usually considerably larger relative to its neck width, so that the head creates the appearance of a bulge in that tube right behind the bill.

The top picture on the back cover of this journal shows a fairly typical subadult Neotropical Cormorant. Note that it exhibits most of the traits typical of the species, including the white "V" behind the gape (though much of the top part of the "V" seems non-existent), the near lack of orange above the level of the gape behind the eye, and the lack of orange in the supraloral area. Unfortunately, the long tail is less apparent in this picture.

The lower left picture shows a subadult Double-crested Cormorant with the classic facial pattern of the species, including the extensive

**The species:** Neotropical Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*).

**The context:** Larger lakes, especially in southern and eastern Colorado.

**The problem:** Neotropical Cormorants, especially subadults, are probably overlooked due to their similarity to Double-crested Cormorants (*P. auritus*).

(See photos on back cover.)

patch of orange above the level of the gape behind the eye, the large patch of bare orange skin in the supraloral area, the vertical meeting of feathering and facial skin below the gape, and the lack of white behind the gape. It also shows the fairly short tail of the species.

The lower right picture on the back cover gives an indication of the range of variation in Neotropic Cormorant. Caution is warranted when identifying a bird like this one. Some individual Neotropics can be more difficult than others to separate from Double-crested Cormorant, and the bottom picture illustrates just such an individual. This bird sports some bare orange facial skin in the supraloral area, a feature that is thought of by many as virtually diagnostic for Double-crested. If one were scanning through flocks of cormorants looking for individuals lacking orange above the lores, one might readily pass this bird by, despite the fact that it exhibits all of the other traits typical of Neotropic: long tail, white "V" behind gape, and acutely-angled meeting of feathering and orange facial skin at the gape. As with most birds, using a large suite of features to identify cormorants will more often bring one to the correct identification than will a smaller suite, particularly if that smaller suite totals just one character. Remember: using only one field mark, one cannot separate Red-eyed Vireo from Black-crowned Night-Heron!

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# Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly

## Instructions for Contributors to *Colorado Birds*

*Colorado Birds* is devoted to the field study of birds in Colorado. Articles and short notes of general or scientific interest are welcomed; potential authors are encouraged to submit any materials that contribute to the enjoyment and understanding of birds in Colorado. The preferred submission format is electronic, via email attachment or on CD. However, typed or hand-written manuscripts are also accepted.

Photos or art: submit black & white or color material. Photos & graphics printed inside the journal will typically be printed in black & white; cover art is printed in color. Graphics can be submitted as prints, slides, or electronically. Electronic submissions can be sent in JPEG (\*.jpg), PDF (\*.pdf), PSD (\*.psd) or TIFF (\*.tif) format. Photos must be submitted in JPEG, PSD or TIFF; maps, tables and other non-photographic material may be submitted as PDF. Photos should be sent in their original format without editing, cropping or color correction. Cover art must be of the highest quality. Cover photos should be a minimum 5.75" wide by 8.75" tall at 300 dpi (1725 × 2625 pixels). Minimum size for interior photos is 3" by 2.5" (900 × 750 pixels or 750 × 900 pixels). For best reproduction, photos can be larger and higher resolution, but they cannot be smaller. Submit electronically via email or on CD. Include information about artist or photographer, subject, date, location and medium used.

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Manuscripts reporting formal scientific research are sent out for peer review.

Contributors who are not members of CFO will, upon request, receive a complimentary copy of the issue of *Colorado Birds* in which their articles appear.

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Submissions of photos or graphics not accompanied by articles are welcomed. Send these to Glenn Walbek, gwalbek@comcast.net.



Neotropic Cormorant, Austin, TX, 8 April 2008.  
*Photo by Michael O'Brien*



Subadult Double-crested Cormorant, Belmar Park, Jefferson Co., CO, September 2003. *Photo by Bill Schmoker*



Subadult Neotropic Cormorant, Galveston, TX, 1 April 2006. *Photo by Jeff Bouton*