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Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



Red Crossbill Specimens

Shade-grown Coffee and Birds

The Adventures of Robert Niedrach



Colorado Field Ornithologists
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Colorado Bird Records Committee: Dates indicate end of current term. An asterisk indicates eligibility to serve another term. Terms expire 12/31.

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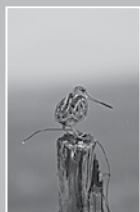
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Photo by Abby
Modesitt

Bill Schmoker, the Alamosa Convention, and Bird Conservation

Jim Beatty

First, on behalf of the Colorado Field Ornithologists and all Colorado birders, I salute our now immediate past president, Bill Schmoker, for his many years of exceptional service to the CFO community as board member, field trip organizer, field trip leader, convention planner, vice president, and president. His energy and enthusiasm are inspiring and infectious. As president he helped orchestrate two very successful annual conventions in Cañon City and Alamosa. He assembled a strong and dedicated board with many complementary talents and abilities, and he vigorously supported continued improvements to this already first-class state birding publication, *Colorado Birds*. He oversaw important behind-the-scenes improvements to COBirds and the outstanding CFO website, and still had time to help initiate the early planning stages of an exciting new venture, Colorado Birds Online, a project still in its infancy. And he did all this while fulfilling his responsibilities as a middle school science teacher, a husband and a parent, and a professional photographer. He has accomplished all of this with ease, grace, and a smile. Willy, we thank you for a job well done!

There's only one way to describe the 2009 CFO Convention in

Alamosa — as an outstanding success! We had a near-record attendance of 134 happy birders and conducted over thirty field trips that scoured



Russell Lakes SWA provided CFO convention-goers with outstanding birding opportunities, 24 May 2009. Photo by Bill Schmoker

the San Luis Valley, including several locations where access is normally restricted, like The Nature Conservancy's Medano-Zapata Ranch and the BLM's Blanca Wetlands. The birds cooperated, with 199 species "officially" seen on convention field trips and several more observed by participants coming to and leaving Alamosa. Reported SLV firsts and rarities included Yellow-throated Vireo, Sprague's Pipit, Worm-eating Warbler, White-winged Crossbill, and Scott's Oriole, along with a nice assortment of lingering shorebirds and vagrant warblers.

Indoors activities included favorites like "Stump the Chumps," with the pre-high school Such brothers serving on the expert panel; informative paper sessions; book signings by Ted Floyd for his new Smithsonian Field Guide and John Rawinski for his guide to the birds of south-central Colorado; and, of course, the convention banquet. Bill Schmoker presented well-deserved awards: first, the Distinguished Service award to Raymond Davis, known simply as "Davis," for his many years of single-handed effort in maintaining the membership duties, including the mailing of *Colorado Birds*; second, the Lifetime Achievement Award to Warren Finch for his countless years of contributions to the Colorado birding community; and, lastly, the Ron Ryder Award to David Leatherman for outstanding scientific contributions to Colorado birding. It is vital that CFO recognize the important contributions of those who have labored not for recognition, but rather for the pure personal knowledge, enjoyment, and satisfaction of their individual efforts and accomplishments, which have in turn enriched and benefited the rest of us.

The tireless and ebullient Ted Floyd, who as far as I can tell rarely sleeps (and provides new meaning to "24/7"), delivered an outstanding keynote address with his thoughtful and perceptive insights into how birding is and will continue changing with the introduction and



CFO convention-goers at Zapata Ranch, 23 May 2009.
Photo by Bill Schmoker



Black Terns, Conjeos County, 23 May 2009. Photo by Bill Bevington

field use of new technology and the awesome data collection and data crunching abilities of computers. His presentation was the perfect high point to a great convention.

Finally, I'd like to encourage you, the members of CFO and readers of this journal, to make your personal contribution to bird conservation. No, I'm not asking for money, but I am asking for your time—as much or as little as you can afford. With that time and with your birding expertise, you can help gather important data on bird distribution and abundance by participating in the Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) and/or Colorado's Breeding Bird Atlas II Project. Data is the keystone of bird conservation. Without it, federal officials, landowners and managers, and conservationists can make less-than-optimal, maybe even poor, decisions. Your

orderly and systematic observations can help. If you wonder where this information might go and how it is used, look at the U.S. Department of Interior's *State of the Birds* report, which was released on 19 March 2009 by Secretary Ken Salazar, at <http://www.stateofthebirds.org/>. The most recent BBS newsletter is at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/Whatsnew/>. If you want to own a Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II Project priority block, or just help out with one, go to www.cobreedingbirdatlasii.org. There, you can read about the objectives of the project, view maps of block assignments, download project materials (e.g., the field manual, the data forms, and the data entry manual), and obtain contact information for the Project Manager (Lynn Wickersham) and the Regional Coordinators. Interested birders should contact the appropriate Regional Coordinator to get more information and sign up for atlas blocks.

If you have any comments, thoughts, or ideas for CFO, please contact me or any director. I hope to see you in the field.

Jim Beatty, 165 Twelve Point Buck Trail, Durango, CO, 81301, jdbbeatty@bresnan.net

11 April 2008
The Old Stone House
Barr Lake State Park

Bill Schmoker, CFO President

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m. Board members present were President, Bill Schmoker; Treasurer, Maggie Boswell; and directors Rachel Hopper, Mark Peterson, Nathan Pieplow, Joe Roller, and Larry Semo. Vice President Jim Beatty and directors Connie Kogler, Larry Modesitt, and Brad Steger sent their regrets.

President's Report

Bill Schmoker expressed regret in having to postpone the meeting from the previous week due to winter storm warnings and travel advisories, understanding that it was impossible for many directors to attend the rescheduled meeting. Bill Schmoker proposed that Joe Roller fill the vacant position on the Board of Directors created by Allison Hilf's resignation. By unanimous vote (including Connie Kogler's proxy given to Bill Schmoker), Joe Roller was appointed to the vacancy on the board of directors (per Article IV, 7) until the general membership meeting in Alamosa in May. Larry Modesitt has agreed to serve as Secretary, for which he has the President's and the Board's approval and sincere appreciation. Joe Roller's role (and other board members' roles) will be determined at the first board meeting after the general membership meeting in Alamosa in May.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the 31 Jan 2009 board meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

We look on track to hit our budget

this year. We are currently ahead on assets because dues, convention registration, etc. have been coming in but expenses (convention, CB issues, etc.) are still to come. Form 990EZ has been filed with the IRS, and we will complete our change from fiscal year accounting to our new schedule for calendar year accounting.

2009 Convention

We are approaching 100 registrants. Vendors still being recruited. Field trips filling—some full, some not filling. Some popular trips being split, e.g., Zapata Ranch. Last minute details still being arranged, final trip leaders assigned, etc. A reminder email will be sent announcing the 15 April regular-rate cutoff.

Old Business

A. The Board thanks Jim Beatty for his article on "The Laws of Birding" and Rachel Hopper for putting it on our website.

B. Joe Roller will draft a letter encouraging DMNS to restore the position of Curator of Ornithology. Pending board approval by email or at the next board meeting, this will then be forwarded to DMNS.

C. Birds Of Colorado online—Rachel Hopper is still waiting to receive an example species account format. All CFO journals are now scanned and available for research in PDF format—thanks, Andrew Spencer! Next step is to split out articles instead of just having whole journal issues. These can then be indexed. Once done these can be uploaded to the website. Robert Righter is seeking permission to get the original and now out-of-print Birds of Colorado scanned and online. Rachel Hopper has researched grants to support this project, but this is a difficult area to find funding in now.

D. Bylaw revision suggestions that were begun by Allison Hilf were completed by Larry Modesitt. A straw-poll email vote tally on proposed changes was helpful in seeing where we were in agreement. After final discussion, a motion was made to strike the clause “and shall be a member ex-officio of all committees except the Nominating Committee” in Article V, 4. Reasons were that the designation as ex-officio member is unnecessary as the President already “oversees the activities of all committees” and that committee recommendations are acted on by the board, over which the President presides. Additionally, a motion was made and approved to strike the proposed tie vote clause from article V, 6 (“In case of a tie vote, the Immediate Past President shall be permitted to vote.”) Reasons were that we generally seek consensus and wouldn’t like one person to be the “swing vote” if a decision was equally split. A motion was made and

approved to adopt updated bylaws as submitted by Larry Modesitt with the above changes. Revised bylaws will be published in *Colorado Birds*.

E. Larry Modesitt also submitted the job descriptions that he has received for various board member roles including President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership, Project Fund, Journal Editor & Staff, and Webmaster. Larry also has descriptions for the Ron Ryder Award Committee, Instructions for Mailing the Journal, and the Bylaws of the Colorado Bird Records Committee of the CFO. Larry Modesitt and the Board extend their thanks to those who have submitted job descriptions, as they will be very helpful in guiding existing and new directors’ activities. Those job descriptions that we still lack will be solicited to complete this resource. A suggestion was made that the secretary’s job description include initiating the regular review of bylaws per Article XII, 1 (perhaps when new presidents come on board, for example.)

Committee Reports

A. CBRC—Site is working well, the voting system is working, etc. Larry still has steady requests (typically several per week) for online access to CBRC records. This illustrates the need to get journals and CBRC records online.

B. Awards—Brad has received a nomination for the Ron Ryder Award. A motion was made and approved to award this nominee, to be announced at our annual convention in Alamosa in May.

C. Nominations—All board positions that will be left vacant in May have nominations to fill them: Joe Roller, Robert Righter, and Ted Floyd will be submitted as new board members at the general membership meeting in Alamosa. Larry Modesitt also has mapped out potential board roles for directors to fill after the new board is elected at the general membership meeting. Mark indicated that he is willing to transition into the Nominations chair and Connie has indicated a willingness to take on Conventions, but lacking all new directors' input, this helpful proposal was tabled until the August board meeting when the new board convenes. At that time final decisions on board roles can be decided.

D. Field Trips—Two trips are announced and posted: Lamar including Two Buttes and Kit Carson County with a possible extension to Bonny Reservoir. A third trip is being planned for John Martin Reservoir in June.

The Kit Carson trip was just announced this week and responses will go to Mark Peterson and/or Bill Kaempfer. Duane Nelson may lead a John Martin Reservoir trip for Piping Plover, Least Tern, and rails. Will see if we can field a Fox Ranch trip in the fall again this year. Last year this was a very good trip and was combined with the Crystal Springs Ranch on Sunday. We have been exploring a workshop with David Leatherman.

Any ideas about fall field trips and/or workshops would be appreciated.

E. Project Fund/Youth Scholarship—A motion was made and ap-

proved to award \$500 to Marcel Such for a scholarship to attend 2009 Camp Cascades VENT/ABA youth birding camp in Washington in late July and early August. Ideas to increase exposure for our youth scholarship were explored. For example, contacts in local bird clubs and/or using the ABA's young birder blog could increase our exposure, generating more applications.

F. Membership report—In January of 2009 we had 503 members. With non-renewals and new members we now have 486 active members. In February and March we had 28 new members, all of whom received welcome cards and our CFO sticker.

We have 47 members expiring on 3/31/09 who will get April's journal and then a reminder postcard. Folks at Birds & Brews picked up a bunch of brochures, so we may get a few new members from that.

Peter Wilkinson lives in the UK and won the one-year subscription. It was agreed that we should send him journals despite the added cost.

G. COBirds—Googlegroups is working well. Active subscriptions now at 536. Mark is ready to move on so we need to recruit a new moderator. Mark and Rachel will remain owners of the list but a new moderator could manage the list. Ideas will be sought for a decision to be made at the next board meeting; email Mark with nominations.

H. Website—Up to date. County list updates on the way. Some discussion about updating sites on County Birding Page. As site updates come in, Rachel Hopper can update them

with the admin tool. Google Mapping capability is progressing and may be ready soon—this will re-order numbering of sites. The mystery photo quiz is going great, totally managed by quizmaster Tony Leukering now. We applied for but did not receive a grant for upgrades to our CBRC web site. We were encouraged to re-submit the grant in September. While a database-driven CBRC website is our ultimate goal, in the meantime we'd like to get a searchable historical records function online sooner rather than later. This may be in the form of searchable PDFs, potentially with links to photos, etc. Rachel, with the help of Mark Peterson, Larry Semo and Nathan Pieplow, will begin investigating ways to do this.

I. Colorado Birds—Village Printer changed ownership and is changing costs. To streamline the process, printing costs were re-bid and to get the best combination of cost, quality, and simplification of printing & mailing,

we are trying Duncan Business Services.

The July issue is looking good, should be full if all promised and received articles are OK.

New Business

A. CFO received a letter from the Colorado Division of Wildlife seeking input as they update their Lesser Prairie-Chicken recovery plan. Later this summer we will receive a draft of their conservation strategies, at which time they will solicit our comments. The comment period will be open for approximately 90 days.

B. Our 2010 annual convention will be in the northern Front Range, headquartered in Fort Collins.

Tentatively, our next board meeting will be 22 August 2009 at the Bonny Reservoir DOW bunkhouse. Larry Semo will look into availability of the bunkhouse for our meeting and lodging.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m..

Minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Colorado Field Ornithologists

24 May 2009

Inn of the Rio Grande
Alamosa, Colorado

Larry Modesitt, CFO Secretary

The Annual Meeting was held at the Inn of the Rio Grande in conjunction with the CFO Annual Convention. Board Members pres-

ent were: President Bill Schmoker; Vice President Jim Beatty; Secretary Larry Modesitt; Treasurer Maggie Boswell; and Directors Bill Kaempfer,

Nathan Pieplow, Mark Peterson, and Brad Steger. Joe Roller, who had been elected in a previous Board meeting, attended his first meeting. Directors Connie Kogler and Larry Semo were unable to attend.

Bill began by having people stand up based upon the distance traveled, and it showed people will travel a long distance to come to a quality convention. He then asked people to stand up based on the number of life birds seen. The winner left standing was Victor Germain, who saw 48 life birds during the convention. The next convention will be in Ft. Collins.

President Bill Schmoker thanked the officers who assisted him in his two-year term as President: Jim Beatty as Vice President, Maggie Boswell as Treasurer, and Allison Hilf as Secretary. He also thanked the Board for their many contributions during his tenure. He announced he will now be moving to the position of Immediate Past President.

Bill Schmoker presented the slate of Officers for the 2009-2010 year—Jim Beatty as President, Bill Kaempfer as Vice President, Larry Modesitt as Secretary, Maggie Boswell as Treasurer—and the group

was elected unanimously by the membership.

Bill Schmoker presented two new board members to replace the outgoing board members Rachel Hopper and Bill Schmoker. The membership unanimously elected Ted Floyd and Bob Righter.

Three awards were presented. Davis received a Distinguished Service Award, Warren Finch received the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Dave Leatherman received the Ron Ryder Award. Warren Finch delivered a gracious acceptance speech, acknowledging the support of fellow birders, and Dave Leatherman delivered a memorable and heartfelt speech summing up his powerful emotional experiences from nature and from other people.

Ted Floyd gave a rousing keynote address, highlighting developments in birding and suggesting what the future might hold. He plugged especially what can be heard during nighttime migratory flights. He described how much can be learned by stepping out of our normal patterns of observation. The compilation of data posted to eBird is expanding the knowledge of birds' nesting and migration and yielding some surprising results.

Bylaws of the Colorado Field Ornithologists

Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be Colorado Field Ornithologists (hereinafter, "CFO" or the "Organization").

Article II. Objectives

Colorado Field Ornithologists promotes the field study, conservation, and enjoyment of Colorado birds; reviews sightings of rare birds through the Colorado Bird Records Committee; maintains an authoritative list of Colorado birds; publishes the quarterly journal Colorado Birds; conducts field trips and workshops; and holds an annual convention.

Article III. Members

1. Requirements: Any person or organization interested in the educational and scientific aspects of field ornithology may become a member of CFO upon payment of dues.
2. Rights: Each member shall receive a subscription to Colorado Birds, may attend field trips and meetings of the Organization, and shall be entitled to one vote at the annual meeting.
3. Classes and Dues: The classes of membership in CFO and annual dues required for each class shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors. All memberships begin upon receipt of dues and expire twelve months later. Dues may be paid for one, two or three years.
4. Life Memberships: The Board of Directors may confer Life Memberships as it deems appropriate. Life Members shall have all the privileges of regular members, without paying annual dues.

Article IV. Board of Directors

1. Powers: The control of the property and the conduct of the business and administrative affairs of Colorado Field Ornithologists shall be vested in a Board of Directors (the "Board"). The Board may delegate appropriate responsibility and authority to individual Officers or Directors or to committees to carry out specific duties.
2. Number: The Board shall be composed of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary and the Treasurer (hereinafter, the "Officers"), six Directors elected at large, the Editor of Colorado Birds, the Chairman of the Colorado Bird Records Committee, and the Immediate Past President. Only members of CFO in good standing shall be members of the Board.
3. Meetings: The Board shall meet once each quarter of each year, and at such times as may seem appropriate or necessary, on the call of the President. Such meetings may be in person, by telephone, by correspondence, by email, or by whatever means of communication the President may find advisable, including combinations thereof. Business requiring immediate attention may be presented to, and voted upon by, the Board by email or telephone. Business approved by email or telephone will be presented to the board at the next formal meeting for inclusion in the minutes, thereby establishing a permanent record of the issues and associated decisions.

4. Quorum and Voting: At any meeting of the Board, a quorum shall consist of seven members of the Board. When a quorum is present at any meeting, the vote of the majority of the Board members present shall be sufficient to take any action on behalf of the Board, except to the extent that a larger number is required by law or by these Bylaws.
5. Special Meetings: Special Meetings of the Board may be called by the President or any four members of the Board in case of emergency. Notice of such meeting shall be given to each member of the Board by mail, telephone, or email, preferably at least 48 hours in advance.
6. Removal: The Board may remove, for cause, Officers, Directors, the Editor of Colorado Birds, or the Chairman of the Bird Records Committee if their performance or conduct is deemed unacceptable by a vote of a two-thirds majority of all other members of the Board.
7. Vacancies: Vacancies in Board positions, for whatever cause, shall be filled by a vote of a majority of the remaining members of the Board, even though less than a quorum. Any Officer or Director appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of the position being filled or until a successor is elected.
8. Compensation: No member of the Board shall receive compensation for their service to the Organization, except that the editor of Colorado Birds shall be compensated as determined by the Board; in addition, members of the Board may be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred by them in the performance of their duties for the Organization.

Article V. Officers

1. Number: The officers of the Organization shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. Qualifications: The President and Vice President shall have prior experience on the Board.
3. Election and Terms of Office: Officers shall be elected by the general membership at the Annual Meeting. They shall serve for periods of two years, and may be reelected in accordance with Term Limits (Article VII). Officers take office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected.
4. President: The President shall be the chief executive of the Organization and the Chairperson of the Board and shall preside at all meetings of the Board and at all meetings of the Organization. The President directs and administers all affairs of the Organization and supervises all phases of its work subject to the direction of the Board. The President shall, with the approval of the Board, appoint chairpersons of all committees and oversee the activities of all committees. After completion of his or her term as President, the President shall serve as Immediate Past President and shall remain as a member of the Board for an additional term of one year.
5. Vice President: The Vice-President shall, at the President's request, assist in carrying out the duties of the President. In the event the President is temporarily unable to serve, the Vice President shall assume the duties of the President. The Vice President shall chair a committee.
6. Immediate Past President: The President, unless he or she was removed from office in accordance with the Removal section herein, shall serve as

Immediate Past President, ex-officio, for a term of one year. In the event the President and the Vice-President are both temporarily unable to serve, the Immediate Past President shall assume the duties of the President

7. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings of the Organization and of the Board and shall retain the minutes of these meetings as well as any reports submitted by Officers or committee chairpersons. At least seven days prior to each Board meeting, the Secretary shall provide each Board member with the Agenda for the upcoming meeting, and with a draft of the minutes of the previous meeting. The Secretary shall keep on file the articles of incorporation, the bylaws, any formal agreement entered into by the Organization, a record of the expiration dates of the terms of all Board members, duplicate financial records as required, and such other records as the society may have, and transmit them to the Secretary's successor.
8. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall receive and safely keep all Organization funds and securities and shall place custody of them in such bank or banks as are approved by the Board. The Treasurer shall disburse the Organization's funds as the Board may direct. The Treasurer may be bonded in an amount determined by the Board.

The Treasurer shall file and receive all legally required reports. At the request of the Board, the Treasurer shall prepare an Annual Budget, shall prepare periodic summaries of the financial condition of the Organization, shall present them at Board meetings, shall secure backup copies of critical records, and shall make all financial records available for audit.

If the Treasurer shall for any reason be unable to sign checks, the President or Secretary shall be empowered to do so. The signatures of these officers shall be registered, as may be required, to implement this provision.

Article VI. Directors

Directors: There shall be six Directors elected for terms of three years each. Elections shall take place at Annual Meetings. Directors shall take office at the close of the meeting at which they are elected. Terms of two directors shall expire each year.

Article VII. Term Limits

1. Intent: The intent of term limits is to promote turnover in Officers and Directors. Retiring Officers and Directors are encouraged to remain active in the Organization through participation in committees or other activities.
2. Limits: Officers and Directors shall be subject to Term Limits of a maximum of six years. For the purposes of calculating Term Limits, any time during which an Officer or Director is initially appointed to the Board to fill a vacancy shall not count towards a term. Any Board member who has served on the Board for six years (not counting any time served in order to fill a vacancy) shall not be eligible to succeed themselves or fill a vacancy on the Board until at least two years have passed since the completion of their last term.
3. Modifications: The Board may temporarily modify or suspend all or portions of these Term Limits. Such a change must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the current Board and such change shall be clearly recorded in the min-

utes, including a specific description of the change and the duration for which it applies.

Article VIII. Publications

General: The official periodical of the Organization is Colorado Birds. Special publications may also be issued with the approval of the Board. Articles shall be encouraged that are both understandable and useful to the membership and make a contribution to scientific literature. Published studies should be accomplished in or have a direct importance to Colorado or adjacent areas.

Article IX. Editor

1. The President, with approval of the Board, shall appoint an Editor of Colorado Birds, who shall continue in office at the discretion of the Board. The Editor shall be a member of the Board.
2. The Editor shall be responsible for the preparation and publication of Colorado Birds, and shall establish the criteria for submission, acceptance, and publication of materials in Colorado Birds. With the approval of the Board, the Editor shall contract services and appoint and direct Assistant Editors.

Article X. Committees

1. The President, with the approval of the Board, shall appoint committee chairs for the activities of the Organization. The terms of the committee chairs begin when appointed and continue as determined by the Board.
2. Standing committees shall consist of the following: Colorado Bird Records Committee, Convention Committee, Electronic Communications Committee (COBIRDS/Webmaster), Field Trip Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, and the Special Projects/Awards Committee.
3. Ad hoc committees may be established as necessary to carry out the business of the Organization and their duties shall be outlined by the Board.
4. Committee chairpersons shall be members of the Board, as specified in Article IV 2. Committee chairpersons may appoint Organization members to committees. Any member of a committee may be removed by the Board if, in the judgment of the Board, the best interests of the Organization would be served.
5. Each committee may adopt rules for its own procedures that are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Due to the unique nature of the Colorado Bird Records Committee, it shall have bylaws that are approved by the Board.

Article XI. Society Meetings

1. An Annual Meeting of the Organization membership shall be held at a time and place determined by the Board. The purposes of the Annual Meeting shall be the election of Officers and Directors and the transaction of other business as may be brought before the membership. Notice of Annual Meetings shall be given to members at least 30 days in advance.
2. In addition to Annual Meetings special meetings of the Organization may be called by the Board, or by fifty members in good standing, with notice given to all members at least fifteen days in advance.

3. Twenty percent of the membership, present in person or by written proxy, shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of Organization members.

Article XII. Bylaws

1. The Bylaws shall be reviewed regularly by the Board of Directors.
2. The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Board, or by a two-thirds vote of the members attending the Annual Meeting. New bylaws and amendments shall be published in *Colorado Birds* as soon as practicable.
3. The Secretary shall provide each new Board member with a copy of the Bylaws.

Article XIII. Parliamentary Procedure

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Organization in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of the Organization.

ACROSS THE BOARD

The Once and Future Gyr: Bill Kaempfer

Bill Schmoker

In June 1981 Bill Kaempfer was just finishing up a two-year stint on the faculty at the University of Washington before a move to Boulder when he took a trip to Alaska. The itinerary called for a couple of days in the Anchorage area, four or five nights in Denali National Park, and then a couple of days in Fairbanks. The vacation had a lot of promise, but the ensuing life transformation wasn't expected.

Bill arrived at Denali Junction for a transfer to the mini-busses that would provide transportation across the park on the 90-mile gravel road to the Wonder Lake area. Fortunately, the cold driving rain that had dominated the weather in Alaska since his arrival was clearing, and Mount McKinley was poking from the evaporating mist. As the trek started, Bill was initially disappointed, because all of the grizzlies that the drivers had described from their drive east had vanished. Not to worry, a different face of nature was on the road ahead.

Midway through the trip the busses stopped at the Eielson Overlook to allow the 20 or so passengers a view of the spectacular moun-

tain soaring up to over 20,000 feet only 50 miles away. (To put this in Colorado perspective, the road's elevation is only about 2,000 feet, so the elevation gain was two to four times greater than the gain we are used to when gazing at fourteeners.) Suddenly, there was silence. Bill found himself more-or-less alone looking at the mountain. Everyone else was crowded around some telescope-type thing on a tripod on the other side of the parking lot, looking at a nearby cliff. Wandering over, Bill took a look through their scope at a bird in a nest, wondering why they would turn their backs on a magnificent view of the highest peak in North America, which many visitors are never able to see due to cloud cover. The mountain was dominating the cloudless western sky, but these people were turned to look at some bird.



Bill Kaempfer

It turns out that Camp Denali, the private lodge that was Bill's destination, was also the destination for a tour group sponsored by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Over the next few days, Bill's much-anticipated hiking was accompanied with discussion like, "Rock Ptarmigan up in front" and "Did you see that Long-tailed Jaeger swoop down on that Surfbird nest?" The leader of the tour group was a fellow named Noble Proctor, a mega-lister from Connecticut and a faculty member at Central Connecticut College, who talked about where to look for Arctic Warbler and Siberian Tit. Noble was as fascinating and charismatic a leader as one could imagine. "How can I emulate this guy?" Bill wondered. Since they were both already college professors, Bill made up his mind to take up birding.

An easterner by birth (born outside Philadelphia, educated in Michigan, Ohio, and North Carolina), Bill had yet to be farther west than Madison, Wisconsin when he earned his Ph.D. in Economics from Duke University and crossed the Mississippi for the first time en route to Seattle for his position at "U-Dub." His "first sight of the mountains" took place in Sheridan, Wyoming, planting an outdoors/hiking bug firmly in place. But all of those long wet treks in the

Olympics and Sierras failed to bring any birds to Bill's attention until he happened upon Noble Proctor.

After arriving in Boulder in August 1981 to begin an Assistant Professorship at the University of Colorado, Bill finally got the courage to show up for a bird walk sponsored by the Boulder Bird Club. The BBC's mid-November outing along the east side of Baseline Reservoir provided first glimpses of Common Mergansers and Western Meadowlarks. That first trip broke the dam, and Bill was soon going on every trip in the Boulder area that he could get to. On Bill's first CBC, when he was to join Peter Gent in working the Valmont block, he spent most of the day trying to find the elusive Peter Gent! Soon Bill was involved in a bird census of the Indian Peaks area—an ongoing pursuit.

Within a few short years of the Denali experience, Bill was leading field trips for Boulder Audubon and the Boulder Bird Club, maintaining the Boulder County Wildlife Inventory records, and

Bill's birding interests stem from an encounter with a birder, not a bird.

compiling the Boulder CBC. Leading field trips has always been a passion for him. He currently leads fifteen to twenty outings per year, including the four-season Indian Peaks counts, now in their 28th year, and longstanding trips to the Pawnee Grasslands and to the northeastern reservoirs along the Platte. During the past CBC season, Bill managed to fit in eight different Colorado CBCs. He also runs three different Breeding Bird Survey routes.

Professionally, Bill has been on the faculty of the University of Colorado at Boulder since his arrival in 1981. After rising through the professorial ranks and serving a term as chair of the Economics Department, Bill moved to the CU administration, where he is currently Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Budget and Planning—a position just important enough to be interesting and sufficiently insignificant to keep Bill out of the headlines.

Bill was invited to join the CFO Board of Directors in 2007 and has since managed CFO's Project Fund and Youth Scholarship Fund. In this capacity he hopes to help fund research projects among field practitioners, students, and faculty who have an impact on Colorado birds, as well as to help raise the interest of young birders by assisting them with funding to attend summer bird camps and conferences.

Just as Bill's birding interests stem from an encounter with a birder, not a bird, it has been birding with others that has always been most satisfying for him. Over the years it has been great fun for Bill to bring lots of the Front Range's top birders, like Ted Floyd, Bill Schmoker, Christian Nunes, and Joe Roller, up to his "turf" around

picturesque Ward. In addition, he has learned lots from birding and even co-leading trips with David Sibley, Steve Howell, Jon Dunn, Paul Lehman, Kenn Kaufmann, and many others. But it was not until the American Birding Association's 2000 Convention in Fort Collins that Bill finally was able to hook up again with Noble Proctor, who was the keynote speaker. Nineteen years earlier, what bird had Noble shown Bill on its nest at the Eielson Overlook? A Gyrfalcon, and Bill is still looking for his second one.

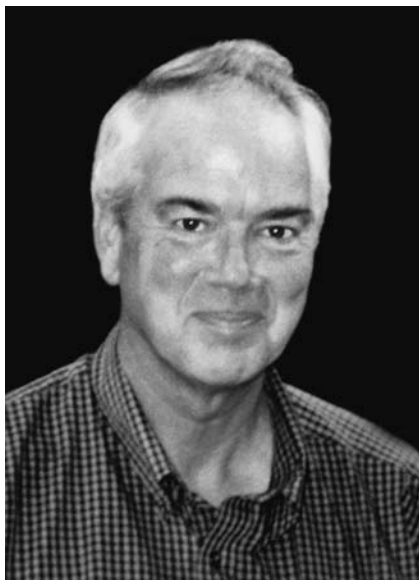
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CFO AWARDS

Ron Ryder Award Recipient: David Leatherman

by Rachel Hopper

David Leatherman was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. Always interested in nature, he began collecting insects at age 8 or 9. Specific episodes that forever shaped his interest in nature were watching a cecropia moth emerge from its cocoon in his living room, looking at protozoans from a nearby pond through a microscope, and seeing a Blackburnian Warbler at eye level off the Lane Avenue bridge near the OSU football stadium after he began watching birds in junior high school. His father, who was an electrical engineer, recognized Dave's profound interest in nature and made it his mission to accommodate that interest. For that, and the tolerance of salamanders in the bathtub by his mother, Dave will be forever grateful.



David Leatherman

Dave attended Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio on a basketball scholarship and majored in biology. After getting his B.S. from Marietta in 1971, he went to Duke University and received a Master of Forestry degree in 1974, specializing in Forest Protection, with an emphasis on entomology but with considerable coursework in pathology.

Dave's first and only job was as Forest Entomologist for the Colorado State Forest Service in Fort Collins. He worked there from 1974 to 2005. Since CSFS is part of Colorado State University, his job involved agency program management and educational approaches to interpreting and improving forest health. As such, the great majority of his publications are not research papers but informational items intended for consumption by practicing foresters and the public.

Mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) was the dominant focus of Dave's years with CSFS, but he also had considerable responsibility for efforts directed at western spruce budworm, smaller European elm bark beetle, spruce beetle, engraver beetles in the genus *Ips* (including the pinyon ips), large aspen tortrix, and western tent caterpillar. He directed CSFS's annual statewide 1500-trap survey for gypsy moth for 21 years. Late in his career he also conducted aerial surveys of five million acres annually, and helped teach a junior-level class at CSU titled "Integrated Forest Pest Management." Over his last decade with CSFS he gave about 75 presentations per year to various publics, ranging from pre-schoolers to foresters to pesticide applicators to college students to forest landowners. With CSFS, he traveled just under a million miles within our state and, as such, had the fortune to see its biodiversity as few people ever do. Dave was the primary author of CSFS's 2009 Forest Health Report, written for state legislators and the general public.

Dave has discovered approximately five insect species new to science, including *Dipogon kiowa*, a pompilid wasp only known to occur in Lamar, Colorado. Collecting began as fun and remains that way for Dave, but he now feels a sense of urgency to properly document our rich forest insect fauna before it is potentially lost or altered by human development and other environmental changes. Dave has deposited several thousand specimens in the Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity at CSU, many of them first state records.

An avid birder, Dave has seen 435 species within Colorado and has been part of the finding of three first state records: Slaty-backed Gull, Tropical Parula, and Brown-crested Flycatcher. He was the editor of the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Journal in the mid-1990's. His favorite birds are the warblers, vireos, Merlin, shrikes, sapsuckers, small owls, Winter Wren, and crossbills. His favorite birding activity

is seeking passerines during migration on the Eastern Plains of Colorado, and his hobby within birding is trying to document the food habits of birds. While editor of the CFO Journal, he ran a ten-issue column on this subject. Trying to figure out what a particular bird is eating has become an addiction for Dave, as is teaching people about this aspect of bird biology.

Dave has learned from many professional and amateur naturalists, but would have to single out Dr. Boris Kondratieff, Dr. Ron Ryder, Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, Dr. Paul Opler, Dr. Robert Stevens, Dr. John Schmid, and Dr. Howard Ensign Evans as being most influential and helpful. He considers it a privilege and honor to have known Thompson Marsh and Bill Brockner. And he also feels his long-term birding buddies David Ely, Joe Mammoser, Bill Lisowsky, and Ken Ecton certainly deserve mention.

Dave is also a skilled photographer and has had his photos published on two national journal covers (*Western Birds*) and on several covers of this journal. He won the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Non-game Photo Contest in 1986. One of his photos is on the cover of *The Garden Insects of North America* by Whitney Cranshaw, and he has contributed hundreds of other photos to various other natural resource publications.

His service to CFO includes the leading of field trips at many conventions and giving a talk on pine beetles and birds at the 2008 convention in Cañon City. As a field trip leader, Dave is a careful and patient mentor, and he is always happy to share his vast knowledge of natural history with people. His posts to COBirds are regularly among the most influential and educational of all messages to that group. He is also quick to share his knowledge in other ways: organizations for which he has led trips or given presentations include the Boulder County Nature Association, Fort Collins Audubon, Aiken Audubon, Denver Audubon's Master Birder Class, Denver Field Ornithologists, and the American Birding Association, just to name a few.

A remarkably skilled finder and dedicated documenter of rare birds, Dave has always supported the Colorado Bird Records Committee. Since 1981, he has regularly submitted documentation of his finds to the CBRC, and nearly 100 of his records have been accepted. In 2006, his meticulous documentation of over 30 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker records in Colorado resulted in the species' being removed from the state review list.

Lastly, and most importantly, Dave and Joan (his former spouse of 24 years) have three boys (Matthew, Nathan, and Grant), one grandson (Trey), and one granddaughter (Alyvia).

Without doubt, Dave Leatherman meets all the criteria for the Ron Ryder Award: distinguished service to CFO, scholarly contributions, and the sharing of knowledge. It has been my privilege to know him as a teacher and birder, but most importantly he is a remarkable human being whom I am honored to call a true friend.

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LETTER TO CFO

Thank You

Dave Leatherman

Author's note: This is a more polished version of the remarks of acceptance I gave at the Alamosa Convention and hopefully better conveys what I tried to say that night under the influence of emotion.

Of late, two things continually hit me over the head. One is that, unlike human beings, Nature never lets you down. Repeatedly, I go out with eyes and ears open and am never disappointed. As a result, I go back to the well, over and over. At least during migration, that can leave little time for anything or anyone else.

Then, invariably, the second "truth" reveals itself—that the best things we can feel as a person come from other people. Being susceptible to the first truth often leads, at least in my life, to a sort of imbalance in regards to the other.

On a CFO Convention field trip on the day of the banquet, I was made aware of how imbalanced I had become. Somebody in a car ahead of ours kept announcing over the walkie-talkie a certain duck that none of the rest of us was seeing. After the trip I went up to the car where the duck reports were originating and tried to be tactful. "Tried" and "succeeded" are two different things. It dawned on me later that in my efforts to sort out the correct identity of a duck, I had failed to find out the name of the person standing two feet in front of me. I apologize to that human being.

Darn CFO, anyway. I was not planning on attending the convention this year. There was the excuse of my extra money just having been spent on another trip I probably should not have made to

Florida. The news keeps bombarding us about a recession. And there might be a Connecticut Warbler at Crow Valley, or I should wash my car. But somebody told me I should go to the convention, not saying why, really. I went. Once there, I figured it was Truth #1 coming through again. It was seeing a Yellow-throated Vireo, then a Worm-eating Warbler, killer looks at Sage and Black-throated Sparrows, the SLV's first Scott's Oriole. Or was it the Glossy Ibis?

No, maybe the reason I was supposed to go was Truth #2. I needed to see up close again the class of folks like Bill Kaempfer, Marcia Maeda, Peter Gent, Larry and Jane Griffin, John Rawinski, and Bob Righter. Or maybe it was getting an infusion of hope about the future from Joel and Marcel Such and Nathan Pieplow. Perhaps it was the contagious enthusiasm of Vic Zerbi, Sue Riffe, and Coen Dexter. Maybe it was seeing old friends like Scott and Diane Seltman and their son Steven.

Then I got an award named for a man I respect to the utmost. The birding corollary to "what would Jesus do?" is "what would Ron do?" He is the complete ornithologist. He gets along with everybody from academics to district wildlife managers to listers to bird club members to backyard millet pushers. Having my name associated with his is a great honor.

The reason I was supposed to attend the convention? All of the above. I thank CFO and its members for this recognition. But mostly I am grateful for all that you and the birds have taught me over the years. I look forward to the next lesson, comfortable or otherwise.

Finally, I have to say that I miss Bill Brockner and that we should not forget Sylvia.

PROFILE IN ORNITHOLOGY

The Adventures of Robert J. Niedrach

Saraiya Ruano

Once in a while, if I can catch a breath between schoolwork, I leaf through my copy of *Birds of Colorado* by Alfred Bailey and Robert Niedrach. One-hundred and twenty-four watercolor plates from twenty-three bird artists decorate this two-volume treasure. This particular copy, gifted to me by Bailey's grandson, is signed.

A few years ago I researched and wrote about the life and adven-

tures of Alfred Bailey, interviewing his daughter, who, coincidentally, lived within five minutes of me. Besides telling me about her father, she told me about her Uncle Bob, Robert Niedrach, who, she said, had a keen ear and was responsible for locating many of the birds and nests Bailey photographed. Now, looking at that second signature on the inside cover, I am curious to know the other half of the story, the life and adventures of Robert J. Niedrach.

Niedrach's love for nature began in the Hackensack meadows of New Jersey, where, as a youth, he became interested in studying the nearby waterbirds. He must not have been particularly fond of school, for he dropped his academic education after his third year in high school. His education in the natural sciences, however, had just begun. Robert, or Bob, as his friends called him, took up the art of taxidermy. Sportsmen would bring Niedrach specimens and he would mount them. Eventually Niedrach came under the influence of Frank M. Chapman, founder of the modern-day *Audubon* magazine. Notorious as a biological collector on numerous expeditions, for his service in various education programs, and for his involvement in the preparation of lifelike museum habitat groups for the American Museum in Chicago, Chapman's life foreshadowed Niedrach's in many respects.

In 1910, Niedrach came to Denver to pursue further his interest in taxidermy. Just two years later he became the assistant to Frederick C. Lincoln, the Curator of Birds at what is now known as the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. After a brief service in the Army during World War I, Niedrach returned to the Denver museum, which would continue to be a base for his field work and expeditions for many years to come.

Niedrach became acquainted with W. C. Bradbury, Honorary Curator of Oology at the museum, in 1914 and accompanied Bradbury on several trips. Although Niedrach had a keen ear and well-honed observation skills for all wildlife, he had a particular knack for finding bird nests. On 21 June 1917, Niedrach, Bradbury, and one other man set out in search of White-tailed Ptarmigan and Brown-capped Rosy-Finch in Gilpin County. As they were climbing up the side of a hill, the men noticed a sprightly Brown Creeper flitting from one tree to the base of another. After a second creeper joined it, Niedrach decided to search for a possible nest. After thirty minutes, his companions, surely tired from chasing the birds with no results, decided to move on. "We had gone but a short distance, however, before being recalled by Niedrach's lusty signaling" (Bradbury 49). Niedrach had, of course, found the nest. In the end, they collected seven eggs, the first creeper eggs to be taken in Colorado, completing the museum's rep-

resentation of the five-subspecies taxon. Thanks in part to Niedrach, Bradbury eventually collected what is considered to be one of the greatest oological collections in the country, given to the museum upon his death.

On 26 March 1918, Niedrach married a woman he had met through friends at a Christmas party, Alice Nicholas Davis. They had just one child, Elizabeth. At home, Niedrach was known for his kind heart toward sick or injured animals. He nursed back to health a number of creatures, several of which ended up staying on as pets. Among Niedrach's patients were two red foxes, Smokey and Boots, a tame eastern gray fox named Reny, various raccoons, skunks, and

kit foxes, and even a bobcat named Sugar. After his release, Smokey hung around the property, which is now occupied by Niedrach's granddaughter Betsy, and Reny became an amiable pet. Rarely was the Niedrach household devoid of intimate wildlife, for he even had a feeder outside the dining room window, perfect for watching birds while he ate. Perhaps one of the few non-wild pets he owned was a parakeet by the name of Mr. Chips who rode about the house on his shoulder.

Niedrach acquired his most bizarre friendship, however, while out fossil hunting with J.D. Figgins, curator of the museum, near the Kansas state line. Bob noticed a raven flying in the distance and soon identified it as a white-necked raven, now known as Chihuahuan Raven. At the time, white-necked ravens were thought to be extirpated from Colorado. Thus the sighting provided a rare opportunity and they followed the bird to a windmill where it had a nest. There Niedrach met for the first time Dick the raven, who would become a most loyal and mischievous companion. He took this young raven home to Denver, where he would foster it to adulthood.

Dick became nearly human in habits; he would even ride in the



Niedrach with Dick the raven

car with his master. Never was the bird confined to a cage and instead roamed the country at will. Dick possessed a number of larcenous tendencies, among them pulling up flowers in Niedrach's garden, pulling shingles off the neighbor's roof, and picking clothespins off the laundry hanging in nearby yards. Jim Wadell, the husband of Niedrach's granddaughter Karen, tells the following story: "Bob and Nana had a neighbor who would periodically get drunk and decide to take his car apart. He would usually pass out before he put anything back together. The raven would take any parts he could lift and fly around the neighborhood and drop them down the chimneys of the houses. After [the neighbor] sobered up, he had to make the rounds to recover the missing parts."

An article in the *Denver Post* covered a few more of Dick's crazy antics. For example, during a study of Burrowing Owls, Niedrach had dug into a burrow and failed to find the owl he was looking for. Dick abandoned his chase of grasshoppers to pitch in with the effort, and succeeded in finding the owl hiding in a corner of the tunnel. Niedrach told the *Denver Post*, "Like a dog....Dick seems to have some sense by which he can detect the presence of something he cannot see" (Shaw 1940). Niedrach believed Dick to be incredibly smart. In the hands of someone with more time, he believed, the raven could have been taught far more.

Perhaps a more serious friendship is the one Niedrach shared with Alfred Bailey, fellow Colorado ornithologist and field companion. Much of their work in ornithology appears in museum records and publications with both men as authors. Bailey said of Niedrach, "I was so indebted to him because of his outstanding ability as a field man, that everything I wrote, I made him co-author" (Annual Report 1974). They traveled all over the state and the world together in pursuit of bird knowledge. After Niedrach's death, Bailey remembered, "He had a most remarkable memory and could recall names of people and details of incidents regarding our field work together through the years" (Bailey 1975).

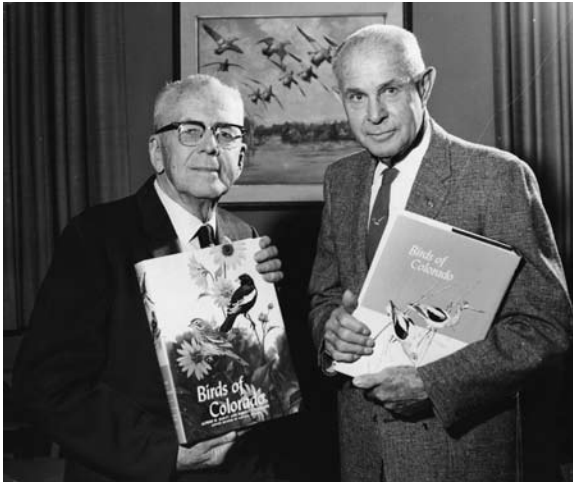
In 1933, Bailey and Niedrach wrote several articles for *Natural History*. Among these was a study of nesting Mountain Plovers in the prairies just east of Denver. The men had visited the site just once before, during a group expedition. During that expedition they had learned how well-hidden the plover nests are: at one point, a fellow naturalist had lain down, hoping the plovers would be less intimidated and approach closer to reveal their nesting location. After an hour, the naturalist finally gave up and backed away, at which point

a nervous-looking plover scurried to its nest lying what would have been an arm's length away from the man's previous position. This time, Bailey and Niedrach hoped to capture on film what they called the "home affairs" of the plovers. Through rain, shine, and even snow, the two diligently sat behind their blinds, practically living with the initially uncooperative plovers. After the young had hatched and began moving about on their own, Niedrach and Bailey had an impossible time catching the birds on film. Every time they neared the chicks, the adults would call their young to them faster than the men could get their cameras rolling. Even so, the documentation they did acquire was remarkable considering the rough time they endured.

In another article for *Natural History*, Bailey and Niedrach focused on the life history of the slender-legged American Avocet. To find the avocet's nest, they first flushed the shorebirds, then backed off and waited to see where the birds flew back to. A particularly tame avocet became victim to a unique study. They named this cooperative female "Old Faithful" for the daunting task she was to carry out. Old Faithful had a nest of four brown-flecked eggs. One at a time, Bailey and Niedrach replaced her eggs with chicken eggs. They hypothesized, after observing massive numbers of terns and shorebirds on a previous expedition, that birds do not recognize their own eggs, for they would be impossible to pick out in a nesting colony where every bird's eggs look similar. Instead, they know their nest by location. Each time an egg was replaced, Old Faithful did not notice that her own eggs had suddenly turned large and white. She incubated them despite the discrepancy. By the end of the study, the authors report the avocet's crippled gait, as though the bird had rheumatism, probably from trying to cover the oversized eggs with her body. Nonetheless, Old Faithful succeeded in hatching one of the chicks. After Bailey and Niedrach tried approaching the chick, Old Faithful anxiously fell into a broken wing display and tried to distract them. To their astonishment, the chick even crawled beneath her wings as young avocets sometimes do. The experiment raises interesting questions concerning learned or inherent behavior.

The two men collaborated on a number of small projects, including observation of a Golden Eagle nest just thirty miles from Denver and securing a pictorial record of Colorado's first known nesting Chestnut-collared Longspurs. Their most renowned work together, however, is the two-volume *Birds of Colorado*, published in 1965. This landmark publication, a natural result of the tremendous amount of time the two men spent in the field together, would be the project both men were remembered most for.

Although Niedrach knew Colorado birds like the back of his



Bailey and Niedrach

hand, he was also a well-traveled man outside the states. In 1935, Niedrach headed an expedition to Central America, including Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Panama. The expedition returned with enough specimens to fill fifteen new cases in the Denver museum, including a Harpy Eagle from the Barro Colorado island and all but one species of monkey native to the

region. Among the dioramas resulting from the expedition were the Cloud Forest habitat group in the Denver museum and the museum's depiction of Upland Geese, a bird which sheep ranchers extirpated in some locations because they believed the grazing birds destroyed grasslands.

The return home turned out to be a panicky situation, for they arrived in New Orleans with only an hour to make shipping arrangements, clear customs, and settle bills. They barely caught the train to Denver. Expedition members were clearly enthused at the thought of home. In a Denver Post article, Niedrach expresses his distaste for the native food during his stay in Central America: beans and rice for breakfast, beans and rice for lunch, and beans and rice for dinner. Upon his return, he immediately took a shower and made a cup of coffee. Niedrach reported to the Denver Post, "There we were in Guatemala—the place where the world's finest coffee is grown. But, believe it or not, just once did we get any coffee fit to drink" (Lindberg 1936).

But his world travels did not stop there. In 1952, Niedrach and Bailey set out for Australia to collect specimens for the Barren Falls, the Red Desert, and the Tree Fern habitat groups, among others. Niedrach again employed his knack for nest-finding. The group located and took photographic records of the nests of several Australian species, including the Black-backed Blue Wren—"one of the most colorful of all Australian birds" (Annual Report 1952)—and the Tawny Frogmouth. A trip to Phillip Island brought their Australian journey

to a close. Niedrach asserts, "Possibly the highlight of the trip to Phillip Island was the novel experience of watching the landing of fairy penguins upon the smooth sands of a protected cove, and the parade of white-breasted fellows upon the wave-washed beach past the row of observers and on into the tangle of tussock grass to their nesting burrows" (Annual Report 1952).

A widely published ornithologist in his time, Niedrach even saw his field work make two appearances in *National Geographic*. In 1940, an article written by Bailey described an expedition to Baja California with Niedrach along as photographer aboard a ship named the *Kinkajou*. The article, appropriately titled "Cruise of the Kinkajou," describes the crew's adventures as they encounter elephant seals, Black-footed Albatross, and even a Red-billed Tropicbird. In 1951, a lengthier article by Harold Edgerton, Walker Van Riper, and Niedrach described an exhaustive photographic and motion film study of various hummingbird species from Colorado to California to Arizona. The article, titled "Freezing the Flight of Hummingbirds," features several of Niedrach's own photos and even a picture of Niedrach exercising his bird-finding skills as he prods a female Broad-tailed Hummingbird off her nest. Testing new stroboscopic photography equipment, made electrical expressly for the purpose of getting rid of cumbersome wires for use on natural subjects in the field, they visually proved that hummingbirds *can* fly backwards. (In 1867, the Duke of Argyll had boldly stated that hummingbirds cannot fly backwards, dismissing what the eye sees as a mere optical illusion.)

Although Niedrach's travels abroad were extensive and exciting, his work here in Colorado was equally commendable. Niedrach is responsible for a number of first state record specimens in the collection at the Denver museum, including those of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Cerulean Warbler. Another state first was a set of cormorant eggs, the first nesting record of what was then considered a rare bird for Colorado. Niedrach took three cormorants from the nests he found and released them in the lake at the City Park Zoo, just next to the museum. Later, two of the cormorants were shot after they were caught killing and eating young ducks, but interestingly, if one visits the ponds in the park by the museum and zoo today, one will find a rookery of Double-crested Cormorants and Black-crowned Herons generating a great cacophony of young birds begging to their parents.

While remaining active in the field, Niedrach also participated in a number of educational programs. In 1926, he supervised and initiated the creation of the first traveling exhibits of some of the museum's specimens. These were circulated to various public schools

in Denver. He began Saturday morning programs on birds and wildlife, often incorporating his and Bailey's motion films into the presentations. He devoted his free time on evenings and weekends to the education of young and old alike. Active as a scout master for a local troop in the Boy Scouts of America, Niedrach also served as a consultant to the Camp Fire Girls and proved instrumental in founding the Junior Mountain Club. Perhaps what means most to the reader, however, is his founding of the Colorado Bird Club, now known as the Denver Field Ornithologists. To this Niedrach devoted much personal time, leading trips and giving lectures. Niedrach never left his love for birds behind the doors at work. Rather, it was integrated into every day of his life and he enjoyed sharing it with all.

Niedrach received a number of awards, among them an Honorary Master of Science degree and an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder. Upon the presentation of this honor, he was commended as an "academically self-educated, modest, and self-effacing" man. In addition, the City Club of Denver honored both him and Waldo Love with a Fine Arts Medal in recognition of their outstanding habitat groups at the museum. Niedrach became respected for his acute attention to detail and lifelike reconstructions in his dioramas. In one exhibit of tropical Australia, he reported using twenty-three different gradations of green to achieve its realistic effect. Today, all his habitat groups are still standing and in top condition, as startlingly real now as they were upon their creation.

After his death in 1975 at the age of 84 and after over 60 years at the museum, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation dedicated a trail to him at Barr Lake State Park, one of Niedrach's favorite birding haunts. Fellow ornithologist Richard Beidleman said of Niedrach, "His collecting expeditions exceeded Chapman's, taking him and his colleagues from the Red Center of Australia and pampas of South America to the Alaskan Peninsula and sub-Antarctica" (Beidleman 1982). At Bob's retirement celebration in 1970, a colleague exclaimed, "Dr. Niedrach is as close to being an all-around naturalist (a vanishing species!) as can be found in any age of specialists" (Annual Report 1970). In his lifetime, he established his reputation as an expert field ornithologist and pioneer in the field of realistically crafted habitat groups.

Now, having researched the other author of *Birds of Colorado*, I realize there is actually much more to the story than Niedrach's collections, publications, and dioramas. The life of this ornithologist was chock-full of adventures and exciting new discoveries to be shared with all who have an ear.

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MUSEUM RESEARCH

Specimens of Rare Red Crossbill Types from Colorado

Andrew Spencer

Groth (1993) demonstrated that the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) represents up to eight different “types” across North America. Since then, one or two more types have been discovered (Benkman et. al. 2009, K. Irwin pers. comm.). Types 2 and 5 are regular residents in the state, while Type 4 occurs occasionally (Benkman 2007). Type 3 has been documented in Colorado only once (Spencer 2008, Semo 2009).

Bailey & Niedrach (1965), in their landmark work *The Birds of Colorado*, listed three specimens from Colorado of what they called *L. c. sitkensis* and six of *L. c. stricklandi*. Groth (1993) considered *sitkensis* one of the synonyms of Type 3 and *stricklandi* a synonym of Type 6. Type 6 has never been documented in Colorado. There are specimens identified as *stricklandi* from as far north as Oregon (Phillips et. al. 1964), but the validity of the identification of these specimens is unknown.

For the most part Red Crossbill specimens cannot be identified to

type; recordings of the calls are usually required. However, due to the outlying measurements of types 3 and 6 (on the small end for 3 and large end for 6), “museum workers using study skin measurements will be able to separate most Type 3 and Type 6 specimens from other North American crossbills” (Groth 1993).

Despite this, the differences between even these types and the next closest in measurements is still minor, and with potential differences in measurements depending on the measurer, caution is warranted in making a determination to type. Since bill depth is the most heritable characteristic (Summers et al. 2007), with the least overlap between types, that measurement might carry the most weight.

Additionally, Type 10 had not yet been distinguished from Type 4 when Groth published his initial research; measurements obtained from this type show a range lower than that of most other types, overlapping more widely with those of Type 3 (K. Irwin, unpubl.). This makes determination of Type 3 from measurements more difficult, though it still places many specimens out of range for any types other than 3 and 10.

Specimens of rare Red Crossbill types, including measurements by Andrew Spencer (AS) and Bailey & Niedrach (B&N).

| Specimen | Location | Date | Age & Sex | Bill Depth (AS) | Bill Depth (B&N) | Wing Chord (AS) | Wing Chord (B&N) |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1632 | near Breckenridge, <i>Summit</i> | Feb 1878 | adult male | 8.2 | 8.1 | 85.9 | 85.7 |
| 1648 | near Breckenridge, <i>Summit</i> | 18 Feb 1878 | adult male | 8.4 | 8.1 | 87.6 | 88.0 |
| 1649 | near Breckenridge, <i>Summit</i> | 20 Mar 1878 | adult female | 8.3 | 8.2 | 81.2 | 80.8 |
| 4294 | <i>Boulder</i> | 20 Feb 1915 | post-juv male | 10.8 | 10.8 | 94.9 | 95.1 |
| 4296 | <i>Boulder</i> | 20 Feb 1915 | adult male | 11.3 | 11.2 | 99.2 | 99.0 |
| 4297 | <i>Boulder</i> | 20 Feb 1915 | adult female | 11.9 | 12.0 | 96.5 | 96.1 |
| 4300 | <i>Boulder</i> | 20 Feb 1915 | adult male | 12.0 | 12.0 | 99.6 | 101.0 |
| 7418 | <i>Aurora, Adams</i> | 2 Nov 1919 | adult male | 11.8 | 12.0 | 104.3 | 104.1 |
| 25983 | <i>El Paso</i> | 22 May 1874 | adult male | 11.4 | 11.3 | 99.4 | 97.5 |

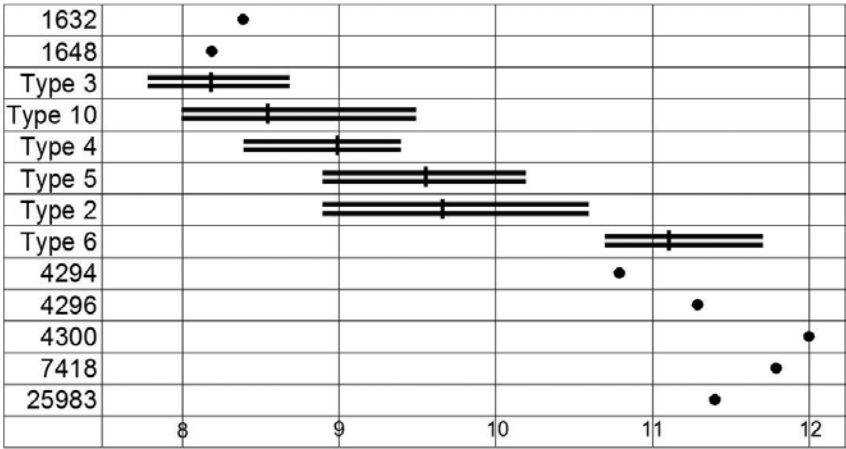


Fig. 1. Bill depth measurements by Spencer in millimeters (black dots) charted against Groth's (1993) and Irwin's (*unpubl.*) ranges of variation for each type (double horizontal bars). Vertical bars represent the mean.

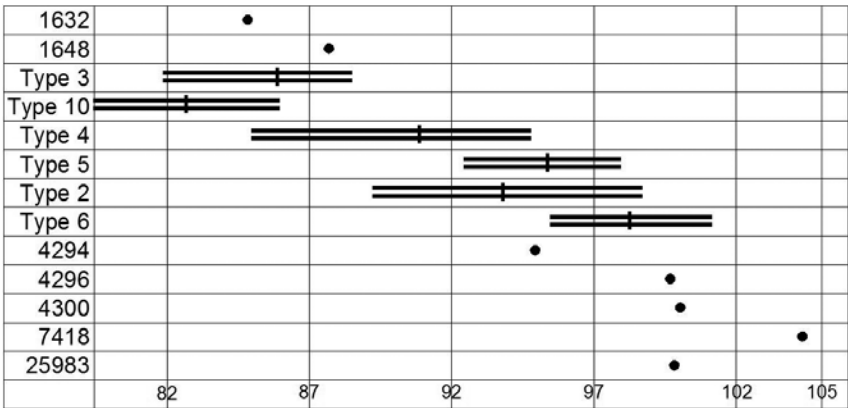
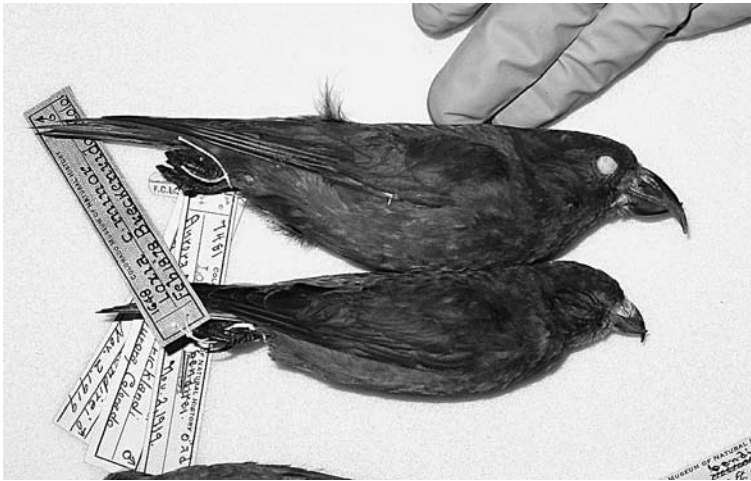


Fig. 2. Wing chord measurements by Spencer in millimeters, charted against Groth's (1993) and Irwin's (*unpubl.*) ranges as in Fig. 1.

At the Denver Museum of Nature and Science on 30 January 2009, I examined the specimens mentioned by Bailey and Niedrach. I measured the depth of the bill at the anterior end of the nares, as well as the wing chord. I compared these to the measurements of the same specimens in Bailey & Niedrach (1965; Table 1), as well as to the ranges of measurements given for all types in Groth (1993; Fig. 1, Fig. 2). The results are summarized in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2. These charts include the male specimens only; females have different ranges and



A comparison of the extremes in Red Crossbill size. Top: a probable Type 6 male (#7481). Bottom: a Type 3 or Type 10 male (#1648). Photo by Andrew Spencer

mean measurements, and including them would skew the charts. I was able to conclude that specimens #1632, 1648, and 1649 were representatives of Types 3 or 10, and that specimens #4294, 4296, 4297, 4300, 7418, and 25983 were representatives of Type 6.

Groth (2003) used only a very small sample size of Type 6 birds ($n=8$ males), so the range and mean measurements for that type are likely less representative than those of, for example, Type 2 ($n=188$ males). This perhaps explains the measurements that fell outside the range of any known type, i.e., that of wing chord on #7418.

Type 3 Red Crossbill, which specializes on the cones of hemlock (*Tsuga* spp., Benkman 1993), is probably a rare but regular vagrant to Colorado. During the winter of 2008-2009, the author saw and audio recorded a few on the Grand Mesa in Mesa and Delta Counties. They likely occur during years of high-quality Engelmann Spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) cone crops, and should be looked for where White-winged Crossbills or Type 4 Red Crossbills are being seen.

Type 6 Red Crossbill is probably at best an extremely rare accidental vagrant to Colorado. There are few or no records of this species in the United States outside of southeastern Arizona, though whether this is due to the difficulty in detecting it or a true absence of vagrant birds is unknown. The most likely time for it to reappear in the state would be during times when it is also irrupting into Arizona from Mexico; given the loss of forest in Mexico during the last century,

however, it may have become less likely than in the past that individuals will be seen north of the border.

Type 10 is a proposed new type (K. Irwin unpubl.) that specializes on the cones of Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), which occurs along the Pacific Coast from northern California through Alaska. "Type 10" birds were originally lumped by Groth with Type 4. This proposed type has been recorded at widely scattered locations across the country, and would be a plausible, though likely rare, vagrant to Colorado. Like Type 3, it is probably most likely to occur in years of good Engelmann spruce cone crops.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

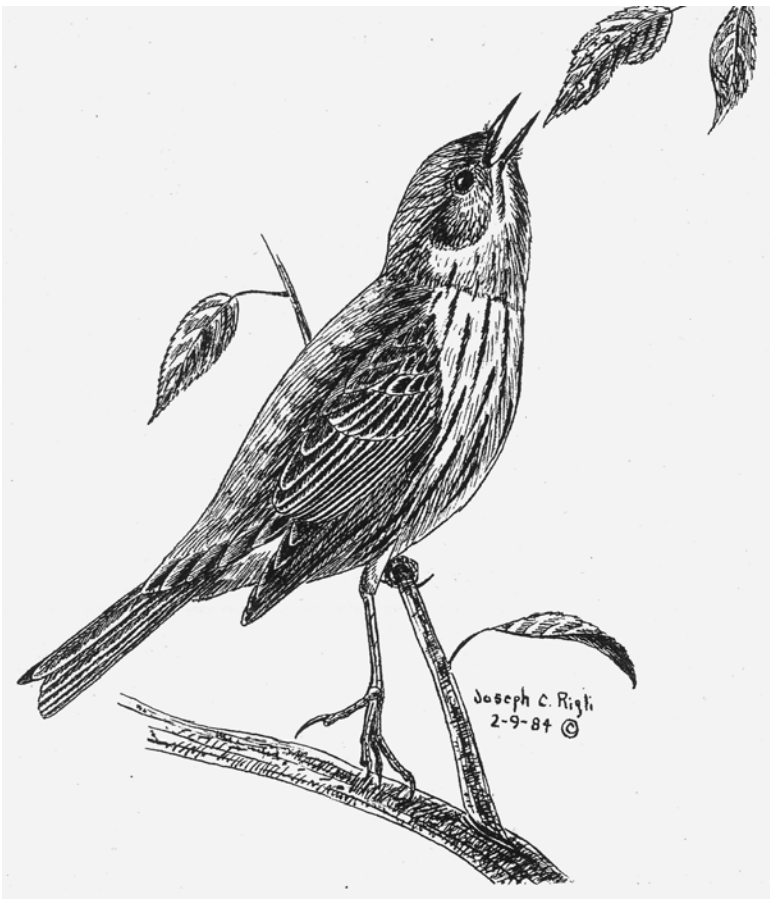
The author would like to thank the Denver Museum of Nature and Science for access to its collections, and permission to photograph and measure specimens.

The editors thank Craig Benkman and Matt Young for their technical reviews of multiple drafts of this manuscript.

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Yellow Warbler by Joe Rigli

The 51st Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

Lawrence S. Semo

Chair, Colorado Bird Records Committee

Introduction

This 51st report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on partial results of circulations held during early 2009. This article provides results of the circulation of 82 reports submitted by 26 observers documenting 66 occurrences of 38 species from the period 2006 through 2008, although all but one record treated here pertain to 2008 records. Two records involving seven individuals were not accepted because of insufficient documentation or because descriptions were inconsistent with known identification criteria. 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.

Highlights of this report include the ninth record of Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*), the tenth record of Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*), and the eleventh record of Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*).

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

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 reports of 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.php>).

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 49th Supplement (Banks et al. 2008). 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 who 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 who 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 two rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four "accept" votes and three "do not accept" votes, while 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. 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.

For this report, the CBRC abbreviations are used for campground (CG), Chico Basin Ranch (CBR), County Road (CR), Reservoir (Res.), and State Park (SP).

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Eurasian Wigeon – *Anas penelope* (35/15). Representing the first record for *Moffat*, a male was at Offield Res. near Dinosaur on 25 Oct 2008 (AS †, GW; 2008-126; 7-0).

Yellow-billed Loon – *Gavia adam-sii* (21/8). The second Yellow-billed Loon record accepted for *Park* came from Antero Res., where a juvenile swam on 29 Oct 2008 (BM †, AS, CW; 2008-128; 7-0).

Reddish Egret – *Egretta rufescens* (9/5). Only the ninth for the state, but the second for *Kiowa*, a subadult bird that had transitioned mostly to adult plumage was at NeeNoshe Res. on 21 May 2008 (AS †; 2008-72; 7-0).

Glossy Ibis – *Plegadis falcinellus* (48/31). The Committee accepted two additional Glossy Ibis records during this past circulation. One was near Las Animas, *Bent*, on 30 Apr 2008 (TL; 2008-37; 7-0) and another was nearby on the same date at the

Las Animas Fish Hatchery (TL, MP; 2008-39; 7-0).

Gyr Falcon – *Falco rusticolus* (10/4). A gray-morph juvenile, the first for *Jackson*, was present at Walden Res. between 5 Nov and 24 Dec 2006 (AS, NK; 2006-155; 5-2, 7-0). The 5 Nov date represents the only fall record of the species.

Laughing Gull – *Larus atricilla* (35/14). An adult was at Duck Lake in *Larimer* on 3 Jun 2008 (NK; 2008-84; 7-0), providing the third record for that county.



Yellow-billed Loon, Antero Reservoir, 29 Oct 2008. Photo by Bill Maynard



Reddish Egret, NeeNoshe Reservoir, Kiowa County, 21 May 2008. Photo by Andrew Spencer

Glaucous-winged Gull – *Larus*

glaucescens (14/7). The first record of Glaucous-winged Gull in Colorado came from Antero Res. in Park in 1981. The same location hosted its second in 2008, that being a first-cycle bird that was seen on 31 Oct (AS, GW; 2008-129; 7-0). A record of another first-cycle bird was accepted from John Martin Res., where it was photographed on 22 Dec 2008 (AS †; 2008-147; 7-0).

This establishes the first record for Bent.



Northern Saw-whet Owl, Elbert County, 25 May 2008. Photo by Glenn Walbek

Northern Saw-whet Owl – *Aegolius acadicus*. Although this species is a regular breeder across montane portions of the state, nesting records from the Eastern Plains are sparse. Notable was the recently fledged juvenile photographed at Ball Res., in Elbert, roughly 22 miles northwest of Limon, on 25 May 2008 (LE †; 2008-76; 7-0).

Lesser Nighthawk – *Chordeiles acutipennis* (21/8). A female was well photographed during its stay at CBR from 25 to 28 May 2008 (BGi †; BM †; BKP †; GW †; 2008-75; 7-0) and provides the second record for Pueblo. Another female was present at the now seemingly annual location of the Nucla sewage ponds in Montrose, where it was photographed on

8 Jun 2008 (AS †, CD; 2008-86; 7-0).

Whip-poor-will – *Caprimulgus vociferus* (11/3). CBR continues to amaze birders with the number of wayward species that drop into that vagrant trap. The ranch now claims two of the three Whip-poor-will records from the past ten years. One was photographed on the *Pueblo* side of the ranch, providing a first for that county, on 5 Sep 2008 (BGi †; 2008-101; 7-0). The previous record was from the *El Paso* portion of the ranch in 2006 and was ironically also observed by the same documenting observer as for the 2008 record.

Magnificent Hummingbird – *Eugenes fulgens* (14/9). Two Magnificent Hummingbird records were accepted from the summer of 2008. A first-cycle female, the second for *El Paso*, was at Manitou Springs between 6 and 8 July (BM †, RH †, BKP †, BS †; 2008-90; 7-0). The bird may have remained at that location until 9 Jul, but no details on that later date were submitted to the CBRC. A first-cycle male was at Maysville, *Chaffee*, on 8 Jul (BGe †; 2008-91; 7-0), representing a first record for that county.

Calliope Hummingbird – *Stellula calliope*. Very rare in spring, a female was documented from La Veta, *Huerfano*, on 3 May 2008 (BJ †; 2008-45; 6-1). A male was also noted in the documentation as being present, although the observer did not provide any specific details on that bird.

Eastern Wood-Pewee – *Contopus virens* (22/7). Representing the second record for *Pueblo*, a singing bird was present at Lake Beckwith in



Lesser Nighthawk, *Chico Basin Ranch*, *Pueblo County*, 25 May 2008. Photo by Brian Gibbons

Colorado City on 25 May 2008 (DS; 2008-74; 7-0). Interestingly, Mr. Silverman was the observer of the first record for *Pueblo* in 1992.

Alder Flycatcher – *Empidonax alnorum* (26/16). The Committee deliberated on and accepted three additional Alder Flycatcher records during the past circulation. One was seen and heard giving its diagnostic call note (a loud “pip”) at Crow Valley CG in *Weld* on 28 May 2008 (RH †, DAL; 2008-79; 7-0). Another was observed singing and calling at Tamarack Ranch SWA in *Logan* on the same date (SL; 2008-80; 7-0). Lastly, one was banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 3 Sep 2008 (BGi †; 2008-98; 7-0).

Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans*.

Providing a first record for both *Douglas* and *Jefferson*, one sallied across the South Platte River at Kingfisher Bridge in Chatfield SP on 5 May 2008 (GW†, CH; 2008-50; 7-0). The bird was apparently first found near that location on 23 Apr, though no details on that earlier date were submitted to the Committee.



Great Crested Flycatcher – *Myiarchus crinitus*. Quite far west of their usual range in Colorado, two were at CBR on 12 Sep 2008, one on the *Pueblo* side (BGI †; 2008-105; 7-0) and one on the *El Paso* portion of the ranch (BGI †; 2008-106; 7-0).

Magnificent Hummingbird, Manitou Springs, El Paso County, 8 Jul 2008. Photo by Rachel Hopper

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – *Tyrannus forficatus* (32/22). Three additional Scissor-tailed Flycatcher records were recently accepted. A male was at a private ranch near Aroya, *Cheyenne*, on 4 May 2008 (RO, JK †; 2008-49; 7-0) and provides the first record for that county. A male was at CBR in *Pueblo* on 11 May 2008 (BM †, BGI †; 2008-57; 7-0). Lastly, one was along State Highway 128 in northern *Jefferson* on 7 Jun 2008 (SP; 2008-85; 7-0).



Great Crested Flycatcher, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 12 Sep 2008. Photo by Brian Gibbons

Blue-headed Vireo – *Vireo solitarius* (21/18). A first for *Washington*, a singing bird was photographed at Prewitt SWA on 13 May 2008 (GW †; 2008-58; 7-0). The first

record for *Arapahoe* was also obtained with the bird photographed at Cher-



Blue-headed Vireo, Prewitt SWA, Logan County, 13 May 2008. Photo by Glenn Walbek

ry Creek SP on 4 Sep 2008 (GW †; 2008-99; 7-0).

Philadelphia Vireo – *Vireo philadelphicus* (36/17). There was a good showing of Philadelphia Vireos in Colorado in 2008 and the CBRC accepted four additional records. One was at CBR, *El Paso*, between 7 and 8 May (BGi †, BM †; 2008-53; 7-0) and another was in the same county at Fountain Creek Regional Park on 17 May (SSh; 2008-67; 6-1). There was only one previous record of the species in *El Paso*. The *Pueblo* side of CBR hosted one between 17 and 22 May (NK †, BM †, GW †; 2008-68; 7-0); there are now six records for *Pueblo*. Finally, the third record for *Weld* was the bird photographed at a small grove at the intersection of *Weld* CRs 100 and 57 on 19 Sep (AS †, JK; 2008-108; 7-0).

Chihuahuan Raven – *Corvus cryptoleucus*. Once common across all of the Eastern Plains of Colorado (Bailey and Niedrach 1965), Chihuahuan Ravens now are known regularly only

from the southeastern portion of the state, although there have been occasional, and seemingly increasingly regular, reports of individuals across the northern edge of the Front Range. The Committee has had difficulty in accepting wayward Chihuahuan Raven records because separation from Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) is extremely difficult. However, the CBRC has recently accepted a record of Chihuahuan Raven in Fort

Collins, *Larimer*, from 28 May 2008 (TH; 2008-82; 7-0) based on the observer's combined description of the call, shape of the neck feathers, presence of white basal neck feathers, and extent of nasal bristles, eliminating Common Raven from contention.

Gray-cheeked Thrush – *Catharus minimus* (49/19). Three additional records were accepted from 2008, all from CBR. One was banded on the *El Paso* side of the ranch on 14 May (BGi †; 2008-60; 7-0), another was photographed on the *Pueblo* side on the same date (BGi †; 2008-61; 7-0), and a third bird was banded on the *El Paso* side on 17 May (BGi †; 2008-66; 7-0).

Wood Thrush – *Hylocichla mustelina* (29/17). One was nicely photographed at Lake Hasty SP, *Bent*, on 3 May 2008 (AS †, TL; 2008-149; 7-0) and represents the third record for the county.

Varied Thrush – *Ixoreus naevius* (37/25). A male was at Crow Valley CG between 1 and 2 Oct 2008

(MF †, CW †; 2008-111; 7-0). This is the second record for that location and the fourth for *Weld*. A first-basic female was at a Colorado Springs residence on 3 Dec 2008 (BM †; SC; 2008-137; 7-0) and provides the third record for *El Paso*.

Cape May Warbler – *Dendroica tigrina* (25/7). Two Cape May Warblers were discovered in 2008, quite a notable number for a species that has been less than annual during the past decade. A female was at Fountain Creek Nature Center in *El Paso* on 17 May (SSh; 2008-65; 6-1) and a male was photographed at CBR in *El Paso* on 27 May (BM †, BKP †; 2008-78; 7-0). These two records are the second and third for the county.

Blackburnian Warbler – *Dendroica fusca* (44/15). *Pueblo* hosted a first-cycle female at CBR on 6 Sep 2008 (BGi, BM; 2008-102; 7-0), the sixth for the county.

Yellow-throated Warbler – *Dendroica dominica* (34/14). An alternate-plumaged male near Wiley, *Bent*, on 3 May 2008 (AS, TL, JK; 2008-47; 7-0) was the third for the county.

Grace's Warbler – *Dendroica graciae*. Grace's Warblers are extremely rare away from their southwestern and south-central breeding grounds in Colorado. Notable in 2008 was the presence of two adult males on

the Eastern Plains, both representing first county records. One was at Crow Valley CG on 1 May 2008 (RH †, AS; 2008-40; 7-0), and the other was at Olney Springs in *Crowley* on 2 May 2008 (AS †; 2008-43; 7-0).

Prairie Warbler – *Dendroica discolor* (29/14). A second-year male at Greenlee Preserve, *Boulder*, on 25 May 2008 (TE; 2008-77; 7-0) was the fourth for the county. An adult female, apparently unmated, was discovered building a nest in Castlewood Canyon SP, where it was documented between 17 and 20 Jun 2008 (SSh †, GW †, GC; 2008-89; 7-0), representing the first record for *Douglas*.

Bay-breasted Warbler – *Dendroica castanea* (40/10). A male at Crow Valley CG on 1 Oct 2008 (AS; 2008-110; 7-0) was the fourth for *Weld*. Another male, the seventh for *El Paso*, was at CBR on 5 May 2008 (BGi; 2008-110; 7-0)



Grace's Warbler, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 1 May 2008. Photo by Rachel Hopper

Kentucky Warbler – *Oporornis formosus* (34/10). The second record of Kentucky Warbler for *Baca* was obtained with the bird present below the dam of Two Buttes Res. between 1 and 2 May 2008 (AS; 2008-41; 7-0).

Mourning Warbler – *Oporornis philadelphia* (27/12). Three new records were recently accepted. A second-year female was at CBR in *Pueblo* on 23 May 2008 (GW

†; 2008-73; 6-1), representing the fifth record for the county. An immature female at Cherry Creek SP on 5 Sep 2008 (SS; 2008-100; 7-0) was the first for *Arapahoe*. Another immature bird along Boulder Creek in *Boulder* on 11 Sep 2008 (WS; 2008-104; 6-1) was the third for that county.

Canada Warbler – *Wilsonia canadensis* (31/10). A male, a first for *Pueblo*, was at CBR on 28 May 2008 (BM †, BKP †, GW †; 2008-81; 7-0).

Hepatic Tanager – *Piranga flava* (22/7). A female, surprisingly the first for *Baca*, was photographed below the dam of Two Buttes Res. on 4 May 2008 (AS †; 2008-48; 6-1).

Fox Sparrow – *Passerella iliaca*. Two additional records of “Red” Fox Sparrow



Prairie Warbler, Castlewood Canyon SP, 20 Jun 2009. Photo by Andrew Shaum

(*P. i. iliaca/zaboria*) were accepted. One was in rural Castle Rock, *Douglas*, on 22 Dec 2008 (RO †; 2008-125; 7-0) and another was at Bear Creek County Park in Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 3 Nov 2008 (BM †; 2008-131; 7-0).

Golden-crowned Sparrow – *Zono-*



Canada Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo County, 28 May 2009. Photo by Glenn Walbek

trichia atricapilla

(25/15). An immature Golden-crowned Sparrow was at a feeder at a residence in Lakewood on 11 Oct 2008 (NL †; 2008-119; 7-0) and was the third for *Jefferson*. An adult was at CBR, *El Paso*, on 15 May (BGi †; 2008-63; 7-0) and was the second for the county; the first was only earlier that same year. Finally, the immature that showed up at Tunnel Drive in Cañon City, *Fremont*,

during the winter of 2007 returned as an adult to the same location, where it was documented on 22 Dec 2008 (LS †, RM; 2008-148; 7-0). The bird was apparently first detected on 17 Dec and remained into 2009, though no details were provided to the CBRC on the true date span of its presence.

Painted Bunting – *Passerina ciris* (32/16). Two were recently accepted. An adult female was photographed five miles south of Lamar on 5 May 2008 (JS †; 2008-51; 7-0) and an immature female was at Rye in *Pueblo* on 20 Aug 2008 (DS; 2008-96; 7-0).

Bobolink – *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. Rare in *Prowers*, an alternate-plumaged male was photographed five miles south of Lamar on 18 May 2008 (JS †; 2008-70; 7-0).

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

The Committee recognizes that its



Golden-crowned Sparrow, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Jefferson County, 8 Nov 2008. Photo by Norm Lewis

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 which 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 and may be reconsidered by the Committee if new information is provided (e.g., photos, documentation from other observers).

We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

Eurasian Wigeon – *Anas penelope*.

The report of an amazing six Eurasian Wigeons of both sexes in Boulder on 18 Oct 2008 gained little Committee endorsement (2008-150; 1-6). The observer's description of the males included that they had buff crown stripes, a green eye stripe, white markings on the side of the body, a whitish beak, green flecking along the flanks, and distinct black and white "bottoms." The females were only described as brown with mottled feathers and white beaks. The description of the females could apply to females of many waterfowl species, and the description of the males actually matches that of American Wigeon (*A. americana*). No mention of the buffy-orange head pattern or the

gray sides of a male Eurasian Wigeon was provided.

Snow Bunting – *Plectrophenax nivalis*.

A bird described from a feeder in Windsor, Larimer, on 11 Oct 2008 as being about the size of a House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) with a dark beak and extensive white featheration with patches of brown turned out to be a leucistic House Finch, as evidenced by the submitted photograph of the bird (2008-121, 0-7). The Committee cautions observers that leucism (presence of an abnormal amount of white featheration on a bird) occurs to a fair extent in many species and that additional physical features besides color should be used to determine the specific identity of a bird. In this case, the bird sported the normal thick, convex bill and the noticeably forked tail of a House Finch.

REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

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THE HUNGRY BIRDER (SPECIAL EDITION)

A Colorado Birder's Guide to Bird-Friendly Coffee

Katherine Morrison

Introduction

Much has been written lately on how consumers can effect environmental change by examining the way they eat. For American bird lovers this idea is especially relevant, since the way in which coffee is produced can profoundly affect migratory bird diversity (Rice & Ward 1996). Certain types of coffee plantations in Central and South America act as important refuges for birds. By choosing to drink the coffee from these plantations we can help preserve key habitat for migratory songbirds.

However, finding the most bird-friendly cup of coffee in Colorado is anything but straightforward. Confusing labels, misleading marketing, misinformation from individuals in the coffee industry, and lack of product availability can discourage even the most enthusiastic environmentalist. The following is an attempt to explain how your morning "cuppa" relates to migratory songbird survival, how to interpret coffee labels, and, most importantly, where to find the most bird-friendly cup of coffee in Colorado.

Shade-grown vs. Full-sun Coffee

Coffee originated in Africa and was introduced to Latin America in the eighteenth century. The coffee plants were planted in the heavily shaded understory of already existing forests which contained a mix of fruit trees, towering hardwoods, and forbs. Traditional growing methods passed down by generations create a fairly stable equi-



Chestnut-sided Warbler is one species that benefits from shade-grown coffee. Photo by David Waltman, Boulder County, 7 Jun 2009

librium between humans and land. For example, the canopy of trees fixes nitrogen in the soil and provides shade and leaf litter. The leaf litter serves as compost, mulch, and erosion control. The leaf litter also houses beneficial insects that feed on nematodes that can damage coffee. Weeds are less prevalent in shaded areas and are controlled with machetes. This way of growing coffee is referred to today as

“traditional,” “rustica,” or “shade-grown” and is often used on small, family-run plantations. Reducing or eliminating the need for fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, coffee farming in this manner has been cited as one of the most environmentally benign forestry systems in existence (Rice & Ward 1996).

Many of these traditional coffee plantations, often overlooked by conservation biologists, are located in very significant areas for biodiversity, especially for birds. Hundreds of millions of birds representing more than 120 species migrate annually through northern Latin America, including 60-80% of the species that inhabit forests throughout the eastern United States and Canada (Rice & Ward 1996). One study in the state of Chiapas, Mexico showed that traditionally managed coffee plantations supported at least 180 species of birds, a number far higher than that of other agricultural lands and exceeded only by levels found in undisturbed forest (Dietsch et al. 2004).

Changes in coffee production in Central and South America in the 1970s involved the sweeping conversion of diverse shaded coffee plantations to monoculture full-sun agroforests. Originally called technification, these changes were introduced to increase productivity of coffee plants and to improve disease resistance. However, the sun-grown coffee plants carry with them a whole new set of problems. They require fertilizer to increase their productivity because there are no trees fixing nitrogen in the soil. Without leaf litter to act as

mulch, the soil erodes and pests need to be killed off with toxic agrochemicals. Lack of shade encourages weeds to grow, requiring herbicides. Since the 1970s over 50% of all rustica-type farms have been converted to sun-grown coffee farms (SMBC 2009).

The loss of shade trees during the conversion of rustica to sun plantations is a form of deforestation, causing habitat loss for many species, especially birds. In the 1990s the International Coffee Congress declared, "Industrial transformation of the coffee sector [in Columbia and Mexico] threatens the traditional coffee agroecosystem though the loss of biodiversity, habitat fragmentation, pesticide poisoning, and soil erosion" (Rice & Ward 1996). Further loss of traditional shade-grown coffee plantations will likely mean loss of bird numbers and diversity.

Marketing Biodiversity

Fortunately, human rights groups, conservationists, and scientists have been working to help small farmers continue to grow coffee using traditional methods. The most compelling of their strategies is to create a market for traditional shade-grown coffee. By educating consumers and linking conscience with consumption, many groups have been successful in creating a market niche that could protect small farmers and biodiversity. The United States consumes one-third of the coffee grown in the world, and organic coffee is the fastest-growing part of the specialty coffee market (SMBC 2009). A recent study in Seattle by the Audubon Society showed that 75% of Seattle coffee drinkers would switch coffees if they understood the link between their coffee and biodiversity (Craves 2009). While this news is promising, there is still a long way to go. Most coffee drinkers are unaware of any link between their coffee and the songbirds they enjoy.

Perhaps the biggest cause of coffee consumers' confusion is the myriad of labels and claims on coffee packages. Because multiple advocacy groups are pushing multiple priorities, and since some coffee roasters make misleading and self-promoting claims, a consumer must be highly motivated to try to find the "best" coffee. Historically, most birders have relied on the label "shade-grown" to help them pick out bird-friendly coffee. However, while that label is meant to signify coffee grown on shaded farms using traditional growing methods, roasters have misused the term and it can now mean heavily pruned shade monoculture that doesn't support any diversity (Pennybacker 1996).

A Brief Guide to Coffee Certifications

Some certifications convey a great deal of trustworthy information

to the consumer. The most common of these are Fair Trade (FT), Rain Forest Alliance (RFA), USDA Organic, and Smithsonian Bird Friendly Certification (SBFC). From a bird-friendly/biodiversity perspective, each of these labels has a slightly different ability to preserve bird habitat.



Fair Trade is mostly oriented toward social justice, but it does have some environmental stipulations. Fair Trade doesn't insist that farmers certify as "organic" but does require them to use environmentally-friendly integrated pest management (IPM) and move towards other sustainable practices. It guarantees a certain price per pound of coffee and pays extra for organic. One hundred percent of the coffee labeled Fair Trade has to adhere to these principles. Mark Overly, owner of Kaladi Coffee in Denver, says that by supporting Fair Trade, "you are supporting democratic organization of small family farms. The farms are usually five to ten acres, entirely managed by the family, and have the best land stewardship models I have witnessed. It's also hard to put a value on the community organization that Fair Trade supports." Fair Trade has a lot of consumer support and is growing rapidly (Rice 2008).



The Rain Forest Alliance (RFA) focuses on both social and ecological issues. Based in New York City, it is a non-governmental organization that has developed relationships with local governments throughout Latin America. It also recommends IPM and advocates for the use of less toxic synthetic chemicals in smaller amounts. Its habitat-related criteria are far more stringent than those of the Fair Trade or Organic certifications, requiring a certain percentage and diversity of native tree species in addition to a two-layer canopy. However, for a package of coffee to carry its certification, only 30% of the coffee in the bag has to meet these criteria. More supportive of medium-sized businesses than family-owned farms, it is also rapidly growing (Rice 2008).



USDA Certified Organic coffee is focused on the health of the soil. It uses no synthetic chemicals. It encourages farmers to grow coffee in a traditional fashion and specifies percentage of foliage cover and enforces rules about native tree species. While its biodiversity criteria are not as stringent as the Rain Forest Alliance's, it does require 100% of the coffee to meet the criteria. USDA Organic certification certainly doesn't guarantee that the coffee is grown using traditional methods, but it

would be much more difficult to grow organic coffee without employing shade as a strategy. As mentioned before, it is the fastest-growing segment of the specialty coffee industry (SMBC 2008).



The Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) is an organization that certifies products as USDA Organic but has slightly stricter criteria for biodiversity preservation than other certifying agencies, and so provides a slightly higher standard for certification.



Smithsonian Bird Friendly Certification (SBFC) is viewed as the industry's gold standard for preserving biodiversity. Developed in the 1990s by the scientists at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, it is the first certification to link marketing, conservation, and science. It focuses on the "shade coffee-as-habitat" idea and grew directly out of field work. Its criteria are the most detailed and stringent regarding a plantation's biophysical profile, with specifications for canopy layers, native species diversity, and buffer zones. All of its coffee must be certified organic.

Armed with all of this information about SBFC certification and thinking that I would like to try some of this coffee, I drove out to the one roaster in Denver that carries it: Kaladi Coffee on Evans Street. After searching in their freezer for the now-familiar bird-friendly label, I was surprised to find none. Mark Overly offered me a long explanation. He used to carry the SBFC coffee, but recently stopped. Initially very enthusiastic about the certification, he helped promote it at various events around Denver. At the time, he felt that it was the right thing to do, along with supporting fair trade and organic coffee growers.

However, there were a number of problems. To use labels such as USDA Organic or Fair Trade, a coffee roaster such as Mark has to pay the organization that owns and tracks the certification to put it on his coffee packages. So, for example, a roaster pays \$0.05 per pound of coffee to the USDA to use its Organic label and \$0.10/lb to the Fair Trade organization to use the Fair Trade label. The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center requires the roaster to pay \$0.25/lb. Mark has concerns about where the \$0.25/lb goes as well as some questions about the structure of the program. He found that they did not return his calls when he had questions, didn't seem to be on top of tracking the use of their label, and, perhaps most discouragingly, seemed to do a very poor job at marketing. "No one came in to ask for the coffee," he said, and after years of trying to educate his customers himself, he let it go.

I called a researcher at the SMBC to discuss some of Mr. Overly's concerns and to find out why their coffee wasn't more widely available. The researcher I spoke to, Mr. Rice, referred to SBFC as "the program that won't die." Citing lack of funds and small staff as the reason that the coffee isn't being marketed more widely or effectively, he said that the scientists go out to the community and promote the coffee. When I asked Mr. Rice to send me information about how the bird-friendly money was being spent, he sent a brief outline of the research that the staff was doing but no other details. When I asked for more information, he did not return my emails. I find the lack of transparency and communication troubling.

There is one promising sign for SBFC certification: recently a group of volunteer marketers and well-known birders in the Northeast launched a program called Birds and Beans (www.birdsandbeans.com) to try to raise public awareness about the bird-friendly certification.



UTZ Certification was developed in the Netherlands and is used by the Peet's Coffee chain. The UTZ standards are thought to be much weaker than the other mentioned certifications, and only 90% of the coffee needs to meet the criteria (Conroy 2007). It mainly calls for no deforestation in the two years before certification. It is one of the fastest-growing certifications, perhaps because its standards are so low.

Starbucks C.A.F.E. Principles: Starbucks carries at least one Fair Trade and one Organic certified coffee. It also follows a set of guidelines called C.A.F.E. (coffee and farmer equity) principles. These principles, which are not a certification, concern coffee purchases and address coffee plantation as wildlife habitat. Coffee bought using these guidelines comprised 77% of Starbucks' total purchases by 2008 (Starbucks 2009). Because these are principles, not a third-party verified certification, conflict of interest may be a cause for concern.

Recommendations

When I started writing this paper, I thought it would be a simple task to develop an environmental ranking of coffees and a resource guide on where to buy them. However, as you can see, things are quite complicated. While SBFC may have the best criteria to ensure biodiversity, the program, ironically, seems to lack sustainability itself. Buying the best coffee for the environment might also have to take into account the consumer's philosophy on how to effect change in the world. For example, do you ignore certifications but try to per-

Table 1. Coffee Certification Rankings

| Best Choices | Good Alternatives | Choose Carefully* | Avoid |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| SBFC + Fair Trade ("triple-certified") | Organic + RFA | Fair Trade | Mass-produced coffees (Dunkin' Donuts, Maxwell House, Folgers, etc.) |
| SBFC | Organic (USDA or, preferably, OCIA) | Single-estate coffee from a reputable source | Coffee from Brazil and Vietnam |
| Organic + Fair Trade ("double-certified") | Fair Trade + RFA | Shade-grown coffee sold by a knowledgeable roaster | Sun-grown coffees and robusta varieties |

* Choose from this category only if you have a lot of confidence in the source and in your ability to evaluate the grower/roaster.

suade Starbucks, the coffee company that buys 160 million metric tons of coffee per year, to change its practices? Do you buy SBFC coffee in the hopes that it will catch on? Do you stand in the middle and support Rainforest Alliance or Fair Trade, groups with less stringent environmental standards but a business model that might make better use of your consumer dollars? Do you develop a relationship with a local roaster and trust them when they tell you that their buyer only buys from traditional plantations that prioritize biodiversity and sustainability? Philosophies aside, where and how does one buy the most bird-friendly coffee in Colorado?

If you want to be a purist, you can order SBFC coffee online. To be extra good, order SBFC with Fair Trade coffee. Because the SBFC is already organic, SBFC plus Fair Trade is referred to as a triple-certified coffee. Triple-certified coffee is only available online. If you want to buy coffee in Colorado, I suggest one of the following strategies:

1. Buy Organic and Fair Trade coffee (referred to as double-certified) or at least Organic coffee.
2. Buy coffee from a single estate, where you are more likely to be able to get information on how the coffee is grown. In addition, this helps you ensure that you are not buying from some of the countries that do the worst environmental damage, such as Brazil or Vietnam.
3. Develop a relationship with a knowledgeable roaster whom you trust, and ask about coffee that preserves biodiversity. One warning about this last strategy: many of the baristas and customer

service people I talked to were uninformed or misleading about where they get their coffee and how it helps preserve biodiversity. Educate yourself so that you will have an idea of where they might be leading you astray or leaving out information. The Coffee and Conservation website (www.coffeehabitat.com) has an excellent entry on how to evaluate non-certified coffee for sustainability.

4. Avoid cheap mass-market coffee such as Folgers, Maxwell House, and Dunkin' Donuts (the largest coffee roaster in the United States). While you might pay less for this coffee, it is often at the expense of the environment and farm laborers. The origins of these coffees are often untraceable, but they are likely to be grown on sun coffee farms and often are inferior in taste.

Table 1 summarizes your choices of coffee certifications, and the sidebar describes where to buy coffee in Colorado.

Choosing the “best” coffee can be a challenge, but I feel it is possible to find coffee that will help the birds that we love. Their habitat is clearly at risk, and by supporting growers and roasters who support biodiversity, we can help them. In an age threatened by rapid global climate change and loss of biodiversity, using our consumer dollars thoughtfully is likely to be at least as effective as the ballot.

Where to Buy Coffee in Colorado

Triple-certified coffee (only available online):

- Cafe Ibis: www.cafeibis.com
- Beans for the Birds: www.birdsandbeans.com

Double-certified coffee

Roasters (selling online and in some Colorado stores)

- Buy Well Coffee, Colorado Springs: www.buywellcoffee.com
- Coffee Jones, Boulder: www.coffeejones.com
- Conscious Coffees, Boulder: www.consciouscoffees.com
- The Unseen Bean, Boulder: www.theunseenbean.com

Retailers

- Kaladi Coffee, 1730 E. Evans Ave., Denver, CO 80210: www.kaladicoffee.com
- Vitamin Cottage (25 locations statewide): www.vcnfm.com
- Whole Foods Market (18 Front Range locations): www.wholefoodsmarket.com

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Winter 2008–2009 (December–February)

Jim Beatty

The winter season started colder than normal, with December temperatures in Denver averaging 26.7°F, 3.6°F below average. However, the average January and February temperatures rebounded with January averaging 5.7°F above normal and February 4.1°F above normal. Denver and the Front Range were considerably drier than normal, with December at 0.24" of precipitation, which is 0.39" below normal. January and February were also drier than normal with only 0.13" in January (0.38" below normal) and 0.04" in February (0.45" below normal). Although the Front Range and Eastern Plains were quite dry over the winter, the Rockies and Western Slope saw normal or above-normal snowfall early in the period.

Overall the winter season was rather quiet, without any notable

invasion of species like Bohemian Waxwings or Purple Finches. However, a good assortment of gulls was found on the Front Range and a few out-of-season warblers made brief appearances at widely separated locations. A high count of 150 White-winged Doves in Pueblo reinforces that species' continued range expansion into Colorado.

Other rare species seen this winter included Brant on the Denver Christmas Bird Count; both Trumpeter and Tundra Swans; numerous Mew Gulls at many locations; five Iceland Gulls; a possible Slaty-backed Gull at Cherry Creek SP; four Glaucous-winged Gulls; a Common Ground-Dove at Fort Lyon; a Varied Thrush at Colorado Springs; an Orange-crowned Warbler in Rocky Ford; a Northern Parula in Carbondale; a Black-throated Blue Warbler in Durango; Pine Warblers in Denver and Estes Park; an Eastern Towhee at Fort Lyon; Le Conte's Sparrows at John Martin Reservoir; two Golden-crowned Sparrows; and White-winged Crossbills at Grand Mesa and Steamboat Springs.

Note 1: The reports contained herein are largely unchecked, and the report editor does not vouch for their authenticity. Underlined species are those for which the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) requests documentation. Please submit sightings online through the CFO web site at <http://www.cfo-link.org/CBRC/login.php5>. This paperless method of submitting records is preferred. If needed, the paper form on the inside of this journal's mailer can be used and should be mailed to the CBRC 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; CR: county road; m.ob.: multiple observers; no doc: no documentation was submitted to the CBRC as of 1 Jun; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; Res.: Reservoir; SP: State Park; SWA: State Wildlife Area.

Brant: Two were recorded during the Denver Urban CBC, *Denver*, on 1 January 2009 (*fide* HK; no doc.)

Trumpeter Swan: It was another good year for this species. Two adults were seen in the Carbondale area, *Garfield*, between 1 Dec 2008 and 28 Feb (TMc, DFi, no doc.); six were

at Lake Maria, *Huerfano*, between 3 Dec and 15 Feb (VT, m.ob.); five (four adults, one immature) were at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*, on 1 & 2 Jan (LS); two adults were along CR 163, *Chaffee*, on 3 Feb (RM); and five (four adults, one immature) were seen at Lower Church Lake, *Jefferson*, be-



Tundra Swan, Confluence Park, Delta County, 17 Jan 2009. Photo by Jason Beason

tween 7 and 21 Feb (KM-D), which may have been the Standley Lake birds.

Tundra Swan: Seven were present at Spring Valley Res., *Eagle*, from 12-20 Dec 2008 (DFi). Six were at Bear Creek Lake, *Jefferson* (MH), nine were at Chatfield SP, *Jefferson/Douglas* (JK), and two were at Marston Res., *Denver* (TJ, LS), all on 5 Dec 2008. Four were at Standley Lake on 6 Dec 2008 (LS). A single immature was at Cerise Lake Pond, *Garfield*, from 10-14 Dec (TMc, DFi) and another was on the Colorado River near Glenwood Springs, *Garfield*, from 12-22 Dec (TMc, DFi). One was reported on the Urban Denver CBC on 1 Jan (no details). On 3 Jan an immature was photographed at Runyon Lake, *Pueblo* (VT, SC). A single bird was reported in Mesa from 5-20 Jan (JMc, m.ob.)

Surf Scoter: A female/immature

was seen on Baseline Res, *Boulder*, on 7-12 Dec (PG) and an immature female was on Pueblo Res, *Pueblo*, between 1 Jan and 4 Feb (MP, LE, m.ob.).

White-winged Scoter: A female/immature continued at a gravel pond at 88th and Dahlia in Thornton, *Adams*, until 2 Dec (MC). Another was at Thomas Res., *Boulder*, between 29 Dec and 3 Jan (GM, WS). Four females were at Valmont Res.,

Boulder, 10 Jan through 1 Feb (MB, m.ob.) and three immature/females were at Baseline Res., *Boulder*, on 24 Jan (CN).

Long-tailed Duck: Four including an adult male were seen at Timnath Res. on 2 Dec (AS). Three were "one-day wonders" on 7 Dec: one at Lake Catamount, *Routt* (TM, TLi), which may be a first county record; one, an immature male, at Baseline Res. (PG); and another, a female/immature, at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe* (RR). As many as three were on John Martin Res., *Bent*, between 16 - 22 Dec (DN, m.ob.), while four were seen at Pueblo Res. between 18 Dec and 2 Feb (TL, m.ob.) and one immature was seen at Pella Crossing Park, *Boulder*, on 3 Jan (MM). A single female was at NeeNoshe Res., *Kiowa*, on 20 Feb (DN).

Barrow's Goldeneye: Seventeen reports were submitted from thir-

teen counties ranging from Routt to Logan to Pueblo. A large flock of 77 was seen on the Coryell Ranch pond near Carbondale, Garfield (DFi).

Pacific Loon: A rare find on the West Slope was a basic-plumaged bird at Naraguinnep Res., Montezuma (PD, SA) from 4-6 Dec. A single bird was at Standley Lake on 6 Dec (LS).

Red-necked Grebe: Two basic adults were at Chatfield Res., Jefferson/Douglas, on 5 Dec (JK).

Turkey Vulture: Very unusual in winter were one seen in Fort Collins, Larimer, between 1 Jan and 10 Feb (DK) and one (perhaps the same individual?) seen from 30 Jan to 9 Feb in Boulder, Boulder (CN).

Greater Yellowlegs: Unusual in winter, single birds were widespread this season, with sightings at Walden Ponds, Boulder, on 7 Dec (WS, NP), Fruitgrowers Res., Delta, from 24-28 Feb (DG), and Lake Holbrook, Otero, on 27 Feb (VT).

Dunlin: Two were seen at Cherry Creek Res. on 5 Dec (GW). A single bird was on the S. Platte south of Chatfield Res., Douglas/Jefferson, from 20 Dec through 16 Jan (JK, m.ob.) and another was at Jumbo Res., Sedgwick/Logan, on 17 Feb (RH, CK).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Unusual in winter was a single bird at Nor-



Dunlin, Chatfield SP, Douglas County, 31 Dec 2008.

Photo by Bill Maynard

wood, San Miguel, on 22 Feb (GSt).

Mew Gull: There were twelve different sightings, each of one to three birds, along the Front Range. One was at Cherry Creek Res. on 13 Dec (GW, no doc.); two were at John Martin Res. from 16-22 Dec (DN, m.ob., no doc.); an adult and a first-year bird were at Lake Meredith, Crowley, on 17 Dec (MP, TL, doc.); three (two adults and a first-year) were at Pueblo Res. from 18 Dec to 17 Jan (TL, m.ob., doc.); and one adult was at Cherry Creek Res. on 23 Dec (GW, AS, no doc.). One adult stayed at Prospect Lake, El Paso, from 26-28 Dec (MP, LS, m.ob., doc.); one was at Marston Res., Denver, on 9 Jan (TJ, no doc.); an adult was at Valmont Res., Boulder, on 17 Jan (TF, m.ob., doc.); an adult was at Big Johnson, El Paso, on 23 Jan (MP, no doc.); and an adult lingered from 15-28 Feb at Walden Ponds, Boulder (WS, no doc.). A single bird was seen

at Jim Hamm Park, *Boulder*, from 18 - 22 Feb (BG, no doc.) and a first-cycle bird was at Jumbo Res., *Sedgwick*, on 25 Feb (CW, doc.)

Thayer's Gull: Sixteen reports were submitted, all from along the Front Range from *Larimer* to *Bent*. The high count of nine was recorded at Lake Loveland, *Larimer*, from 7 - 13 Dec (CW), while eight were at both Pueblo Res. from 6 Dec through 16 Feb (MEM, TL, LS, m.ob.) and John Martin Res. from 16 - 22 Dec (DN, m.ob.).

Iceland Gull: A first-cycle bird was seen at Horsetooth Res., *Larimer*, on 3 Dec (NK, no doc.) and perhaps the same bird was seen again at Lake Loveland on 6 Dec (SoM, CW, no doc.). An adult "Kumlien's" was at Lake Loveland on 7 Dec (CW, AS, doc.) and single juveniles were at Pueblo Res. from 18 Dec through 23 Jan (TL, m.ob., doc.) and Midway Landfill, *El Paso*, from 22 Dec through 10 Jan (TL, m.ob., no doc.)

Slaty-backed Gull:

A first-cycle bird, possibly of this species and possibly the same individual seen at Sixmile Res., *Boulder*, earlier in the fall, was seen at Cherry Creek Res. on 13 Dec and then (perhaps the same bird?) again on 13 Feb (MN, GW, BSc, no doc.).

Glaucous-winged Gull: A first-cycle

bird was at John Martin Res. on 22 Dec (AS, CW, doc.), another was at Midway Landfill from 10-20 Jan (BSt, BMa, m.ob., no doc.), and still another was at Pueblo Res. from 12-23 Jan (DC, m.ob., no doc.). Finally, a possible sighting came from Aurora Res., *Arapahoe*, on 18 Jan (GW, LK, m.ob., photos), which may have referred to a Glaucous-winged × Herring hybrid.

Great Black-backed Gull: There were eleven reports for the season, with two individuals reported from Pueblo Res. from 1 Dec through 1 Feb (RM, m. ob., no doc.). Single birds were at Aurora Res. on 18 Jan (GW, LK, no doc.), John Martin Res. from 16-22 Dec (DN, m.ob., no doc.), Lake Loveland on 3 Dec (CW, AS, no doc.), Horseshoe Lake on 13 Dec (AS, NK, no doc.), and Carter Lake, *Larimer*, on 1 Jan (BK, doc.). A first-cycle bird was at Teller Lake, *Boulder*, on 14 Dec (SSe, m.ob., no



Iceland Gull, Pueblo City Park, Pueblo County, 11 Jan 2009. Photo by Joyce Kellner



Winter Wren, Morgan County, 15 Feb 2009. Photo by Glenn Walbek

doc.), and an adult at Aurora Lake on 18 Jan (LK, GW, no doc.). One was at McIntosh Res., Boulder, on 2 Feb (BZ, MB, doc.), Stearns Lake, Boulder, and adjacent Broomfield, on 3 Feb (TSM, no doc.), and Jumbo Res. on 17 Feb (RH, CK, no doc.).

White-winged Dove: A surprising 150 were reported at Sunset Park in Pueblo, Pueblo, on 20 Dec (MP, m.ob.) for a record Colorado high count.

Inca Dove: Up to six were seen at their normal location in Rocky Ford, Otero, from 17 Dec through 14 Feb (MP, m.ob.).

Common Ground-Dove: One was reported at the Fort Lyon SWA marsh, Bent, on 2 Dec (DN, no doc.).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: An adult female lingered at the Holy Cross Abbey, Cañon City, starting 3 Dec, and an adult male stayed at Centennial Park, Cañon City, from 3 Dec

through 20 Jan (SM, m.ob.). Another male was in Lion's Park, Florence, Fremont, on 10 Dec (SM). Three stayed in Nucla from 18 Dec through 8 Jan (CD, BW, m.ob.). Single birds were in Colorado Springs on 20 Dec (DVH), Pueblo on 3 Jan (DK), and Hotchkiss, Delta, on 4 Jan (JB).

Red-naped Sapsucker: Unusual in winter were three individuals: an adult male in Cañon City, Fremont, on 21 Dec (LS), an adult female in Beulah, Pueblo, on 17 Jan (MP), and an individual at Trinidad, Las Animas, on 24 Jan (TL, BSt, MP).

Black Phoebe: One was seen east of Cañon City, Fremont, on 7 Dec (SM), and perhaps the same individual was on the Riverwalk on 21 Dec (LS). Another individual was sighted in the Rock Creek and Valco Ponds area in Pueblo, Pueblo, between 13 Dec and 13 Feb (MJ), and a third individual was at Runyon Lake, Pueblo, from 22 Dec through 3 Jan (VT).

Blue Jay: Unusual was the single bird in Glenwood Springs on 5 Dec (VZ).

Winter Wren: Eight individuals were reported, including one on 3 Dec at S. Boulder Creek and 17th, Boulder (NG); another on 12 Dec at S. Boulder Creek and 75th, Boulder (PG); and three separate sightings on 1 Jan—at Pueblo City Park, Pueblo

(MY); along the S. Platte River near C-470, *Arapahoe* (SSt); and at Morey Open Space, *Larimer* (CW). Another was spotted on 4 Jan on CR 67 near Florence, *Fremont* (CW). The Fort Morgan CBC turned up another that continued until 17 Feb (CB, NE, m.ob.). Finally, on 23 Feb, one was seen on Boulder Creek below the CU campus (WS).

Sedge Wren: One was found at the Lamar Community College woods, *Prowers*, on 4 Feb (SS, no doc.).

Eastern Bluebird: Up to 17 birds were at Hasty Campground, *Bent*, from 10 Dec through 14 Feb (DN, m.ob.). Eight were found on the Fountain Creek CBC on 14 December and another 10 were found on the Penrose CBC on 21 Dec (*fide* MP). As many as eight were on the Cañon City Riverwalk from 12 Dec through 24 Jan (RM). Another five were at the Teller Farm Trailhead, *Boulder*, on 28 Dec. (PG, JKI).

Varied Thrush: A female was seen 3-6 Dec at Susan Craig's home in Colorado Springs, *El Paso* (SC, m.ob.).

Brown Thrasher: Five were seen from December until the end of February, with one each in *Boulder*, *Prowers*, and *Bent*, and two in *El Paso*.

Bohemian Waxwing: Things returned to normal this season with only two sightings. A large flock of

275 was seen 14 Dec at Steamboat Springs (Yampa Valley Bird Club). A single bird was found 21 Dec at Jackson Res., *Morgan* (CW).

Orange-crowned Warbler: One was found on 22 Dec in Rocky Ford (AS, CW).

Northern Parula: One stayed in David Clark's yard 1-13 Dec in Carbondale, *Garfield* (DCl, m.ob.).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: An early Christmas present on 24 Dec was a male at the Durango DOW Fish Hatchery, *La Plata* (RMO).

Pine Warbler: One was seen in Overland Pond Park, *Denver*, on 8 Dec (DCr, MH, doc.). A second was found during the Estes Park CBC, *Larimer*, and stayed from 20 Dec through 24 Jan (D&JC, m.ob., no doc.).

Western Tanager: One continued from fall until 3 Dec eating Russian olives at Fort Collins, *Larimer* (JBi).

Eastern Towhee: A female was



Pine Warbler, Estes Park residence, Larimer County, 6 Feb 2009. Photo by Glenn Walbek



Le Conte's Sparrow, Bent County, 5 Feb 2009. Photo by Loch Kilpatrick

seen from 18 Jan until 16 Feb at CRs 16 and JJ near Fort Lyon, *Bent* (VT, m.ob., doc.).

Le Conte's Sparrow: Two birds delighted many birders at John Martin Res. from 31 Jan through 20 Feb (DN, m.ob., no doc.).

Fox Sparrow: An individual showing some signs of being intermediate between the "Red" group and the "Slate-colored" group was observed and well photographed at the Bonny CBC (BSc, m.ob.). It may have been the same individual found and photographed on the 2006 Bonny CBC.

Swamp Sparrow: Like last winter, fourteen sightings were re-

ported this season, which is well below average. Away from the Eastern Plains, one was seen in Grand Junction from 23 to 28 Feb (m.ob.).

White-throated Sparrow: There were eleven reports this winter, which is below average. Those in the most unusual locations were one seen in Steamboat Springs, *Routt*, between 20 Dec and 14 Jan (GN, TLi, FL) and one in Grand Junction, *Mesa*, 14-23

Jan (DCa, JC).

Harris's Sparrow: There were only seven birds reported this winter, which is below average. The only West Slope report was of one seen in



Fox Sparrow, likely of the Canadian Rockies population, Bonny SP, Yuma County, 27 Dec 2008. Photo by Bill Schmoker

Nucla, Montrose, on 19 Dec (CD). Two lingered at Paulsen's farm near Lamar, Prowers, from 2 Dec through 6 Feb (LP, m.ob.), two were seen on the Penrose CBC, Fremont, on 21 Dec (MP), and single birds were found at John Martin Res. on 10 Dec (DN) and Fountain Creek CBC, El Paso, on 14 Dec (BSt, BBr).



Common Redpoll, Boulder County residence, 14 January 2009. Photo by David Waltman

Golden-crowned Sparrow: An immature was seen in Nucla, Montrose, on 18 Dec (CD, no doc.) and an adult again frequented the Tunnel Drive area in Cañon City from 18 Dec until 27 Feb (RM, m.ob., doc.).

McCown's Longspur: There was one report from Adobe Creek Res., Bent, on 20 Feb (*fide* DN).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Two were sighted near Vilas, Baca, on 27 Jan (VT).

Snow Bunting: One bird stayed 19-27 Jan near CR 23, Weld (*fide* GL, RH, ED). Two different sightings were reported on 21 Jan on CR 6, Logan, and CR 6, Morgan (CW).

Northern Cardinal: One was seen on 27 Dec at Bonny Res., Yuma (LS, TL) and a male was at the Lamar Community College woods 11-24 Jan (DL, m.ob.).

Rusty Blackbird: One was seen on 17 Dec during the Sterling CBC,

Logan, and another was found on the Penrose CBC, Fremont (*fide* MP). Two were observed during the Pueblo CBC on 3 Jan (DK). Three were found at Lathrop SP, Huerfano, where they are rare, from 24 Jan through 5 Feb (TL, BSt, MP).

Bullock's Oriole: An unusual winter record was established by the one that stayed 14-30 Dec in Grand Junction, Mesa (*fide* LA).

Black Rosy-Finch: Unusual were reports of two birds on CR 29, Weld, on 4 Dec (AS) and a single bird on 13 Jan in Colorado Springs, El Paso (DE).

Purple Finch: There were only two reports this season: two females were at Paulsen's farm, Prowers, 4 - 6 Dec (LP) and one female-type was at Fruita, Mesa, 5-7 Dec (AR, m.ob.).

Red Crossbill: Type 4 Red Crossbills were audio recorded on the Grand Mesa, Mesa, on 5 Feb (AS, NP), and crossbills that were probably

of this type were also reported near Eldorado Springs, *Boulder*, throughout much of the season (CN). A Type 3 Red Crossbill was also audio recorded on the Grand Mesa, *Mesa*, on 5 Feb (AS); this is the second recording of this type in Colorado.

White-winged Crossbill: Up to ten were found from 1 Dec through 28 Feb on the Grand Mesa, *Mesa/Delta* (JB, m.ob.), and at least one was in

Steamboat Springs, *Routt*, on 14 Dec (Yampa Valley Bird Club).

Common Redpoll: One was at Jumbo Res. on 18 Dec (AS, CW). The only West Slope report came from Fruita, *Mesa*, 2-10 Jan (GP). Single birds were at Poudre Canyon, *Larimer*, on 10 Jan (ET-M), Pinebrook Hills, *Boulder*, 12-14 Jan (DW), and Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 25 Jan, the latter a female bird (RV).

REGIONAL COMPILERS

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Lilian's Meadowlark: A Cryptic Species (?) and a Rare Colorado Breeder

Tony Leukering and Nathan Pieplow

Introduction

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) is a polytypic species, breeding from southeastern Canada through the Great Lakes region, south to Florida and the Caribbean islands, west through the Great Plains, southwest to southeastern Arizona, and thence south, locally, through Middle America into South America (Lanyon 1995). Nominate *magna* is the breeding form in the north and the similar *argutula* and *hoopesi* are found, respectively, in the southeastern U.S. and south Texas. The paler form *liliana*, "Lilian's Meadowlark," is the subspecies of the desert grasslands of the southwest U.S. from western Texas to southeastern Arizona, and through much of northern interior Mexico. At least thirteen other subspecies occur south of the U.S., including *auropectoralis*, a form closely related to *liliana* (Barker et al. 2008).

The history of Eastern Meadowlark's occurrence in Colorado is recent, yet spotty and checkered. Bailey and Niedrach (1965) listed the species as "probably [a] casual breeding bird of the eastern counties," yet provided enough caveats and questioning comments to suggest that they thought its local occurrence was not definitively proven. At the time, there were no Colorado specimens, and though song learning by meadowlarks was known, apparently the innate nature of blackbird call notes was not. By the time of the publication of Andrews and Righter (1992), Eastern Meadowlarks had been found annually for a number of years at Red Lion State Wildlife Area (SWA) in Logan County (though breeding had not been confirmed there), and other records were listed for Two Buttes Reservoir in Baca County and Platteville in Weld County. The 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium saw scattered records, particularly in well-birded Larimer County, but the Red Lion colony had vanished. The Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas project confirmed breeding in the area now known as the Arkansas River SWA in Prowers County in 1992 (Kingery 1998).

What is Lilian's Meadowlark?

Barker et al. (2008) compared genetic data (mitochondrial genes cytochrome *b* and ND2 and an intron of the sex-linked gene aconitase

1) from various taxa of Eastern and Western Meadowlarks throughout their ranges. Among these samples were 34 from “typical” Eastern Meadowlarks (from 12 subspecies, including samples taken from Wisconsin south to Brazil), 11 from *liliana*e (including *auropectoralis*), and eight from Western Meadowlark (from Montana, Oregon, California, and Texas). The primary findings were that *magna* was more closely related to South American forms of Eastern Meadowlark than it was to *liliana*e and that the three groups formed distinct clusters. While there are many interesting aspects of Barker et al.’s overall results, it is the apparent distinctness of Lilian’s Meadowlark, well-supported by their genetic data, which motivates this paper.

Lilian’s Meadowlark in Colorado

Prior to 2005, no published work had speculated that *liliana*e might occur in Colorado. The first suggestion that it might was the result of Leukering’s field work for the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. At the behest of the U.S. Forest Service, he surveyed grassland birds in parts of the Kiowa National Grassland in northeastern New Mexico in 1998. He found scattered Lilian’s Meadowlarks singing as if on territory throughout the area surveyed, but found them in larger numbers on certain high-structure grasslands, where they even outnumbered Western Meadowlarks. As this area is less than 50 miles from the Colorado border, and considering that similar high-structure grasslands occur in southeastern Colorado, Leukering considered it likely that Lilian’s could be found in the state.

In April 2002, while conducting additional field work, Leukering and Nancy Gobris visited a Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek just east of the public lek south of Baca County Road G. Leukering heard a typical Lilian’s Meadowlark song and they tried to track the bird down, resulting in sightings of two meadowlarks, one of which showed the classic large amount of white in the tail typical of Lilian’s (Fig. 1). As he obtained no pictures and the sightings were so brief, he left the observations as slightly uncertain. The following 27-28 April, Michael Patten visited the public lek and noted multiple Lilian’s Meadowlarks singing there; that record (2003-22) was accepted by the Colorado Bird Records Committee (Leukering and Semo 2005). Since then, numerous observers have noted individuals at and near the G Road public lek in multiple springs. The extent of definite sightings in Baca County, however, covers an area of only some 5-10 square miles centered on that public lek. These observations beg the question of whether some of the earlier Eastern Meadowlark records (particularly the one from Two Buttes Reservoir) might have pertained to Lilian’s, but that may never be known.

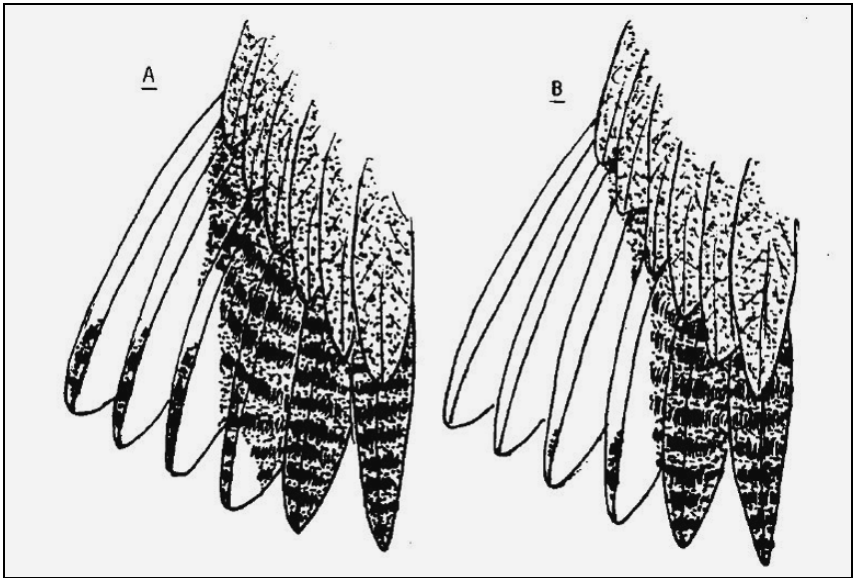


Fig. 1. Typical tail patterns of Western (A) and Lilian's (B) Meadowlarks from New Mexico. Reprinted from Hubbard (1983) with permission from the New Mexico Ornithological Society.

In the latter half of this decade, Lilian's Meadowlarks have been found farther afield. David Silverman found multiple such birds in Pueblo Co. in June 2006, with those birds apparently breeding and present at least into August. In June 2007, Leukering found a singing male in Huerfano County, a bird that Andrew Spencer later sound-recorded, though those recordings have apparently been lost (Spencer pers. comm.). Finally, SeEtta Moss photographed an individual in southern Prowers County near Two Buttes SWA in 2007. It should be noted here that the two or three Eastern Meadowlarks found in spring 2006 by Van Truan near Poncha Springs, Chaffee County, were typical Easterns (seen and heard well by Leukering), probably referable to *magna*, and definitely not Lilian's.

Lilian's Meadowlark should be looked for in southeastern Colorado in high-structure grasslands like those on the Comanche National Grassland. In addition, any Eastern Meadowlarks found in Colorado should be carefully documented, with Lilian's Meadowlark being taken into consideration.

Lilian's Meadowlark identification by plumage

In Colorado, the vast majority of meadowlarks are Western, so

an observer's first task is always to rule that species out. In terms of plumage, a well-known field mark is the color of the malar region: usually partly yellow in Western, white in both Eastern and Lilian's Meadowlarks. Caution is warranted, however, because some Western Meadowlarks, particularly females, can show greatly reduced yellow in the malar. If a bird has yellow in the malar, it is almost certainly a Western Meadowlark, but a lack of yellow does not necessarily make it an Eastern or Lilian's.

Another mark to separate *neglecta* Western from other meadowlarks is the color of the auriculars: darker and usually indistinctly streaked in Western, whitish in Lilian's and Eastern. In addition, the stripes on the head and behind the eye tend to be browner in Western Meadowlark and much blacker in Lilian's and, especially, Eastern. However, note that females of all forms may have paler head stripes than males. The typical differences in head stripes, auricular pattern, and malar color are well-illustrated in the photos on the back cover.

Lilian's tends to differ from the nominate races of both Eastern and Western Meadowlarks in having slightly buffier background color to the flanks and reduced or absent streaks on the undertail coverts. In its paler brown upperparts and paler brown, lightly barred tertials and central rectrices, it more closely resembles Western than nominate Eastern Meadowlark.

A key field mark for all meadowlarks is the extent and pattern of white in the tail, which can be difficult to get a good look at in the field. Western has the darkest tail, with white restricted mostly to the outer two tail feathers. Nominate Eastern has the three outer tail feathers mostly white. As the photos on the back cover make clear, Lilian's has the most white in the tail, with extensive white on the outer *four* tail feathers, and frequently (not always) a complete lack of dark markings at the corners of the tail. On a spread tail, the dark area created by the central rectrices looks narrow and square on a Lilian's, narrowly trapezoidal on a *magna* Eastern. Fig. 1 reproduces the "classic" tail patterns of *neglecta* and *lilianae* as Hubbard (1983) sketched them from a study of specimens collected in New Mexico. Note that these and other subspecies' tail patterns are also well-illustrated by Thomas Schultz in recent editions of the National Geographic Society field guide (e.g., Dunn and Alderfer 2006).

Table 1 provides a summary of plumage characteristics of the three forms of meadowlark recorded in Colorado.

Lilian's Meadowlark identification by voice

Barker et al. (2008) and other sources have widely cited Cassell's (2002) finding of statistically significant differences in the songs of

Table 1. Plumage characteristics of “Lilian’s” Meadowlark compared with the nominate races of Eastern and Western Meadowlarks.

| | <i>neglecta</i> Western | <i>liliana</i> e “Lilian’s” | <i>magna</i> Eastern |
|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| malar region | usually partly yellow | white | white |
| auricular region | indistinctly streaked (blurry-looking) | whitish | whitish |
| lateral crown stripes and post-ocular stripes | brownish or blackish | dark brownish or black | black |
| background color of flanks | white | whitish to buffy | white |
| upperparts color | paler brown | paler brown | warmer brown |
| undertail coverts | distinctly streaked | lightly marked or unmarked | distinctly streaked |
| tertials | pale and finely barred | pale and finely barred | dark-centered and tawny |
| central rectrices | pale and finely barred | pale and finely barred | dark-centered and tawny |
| shape of dark part of spread tail | broadly trapezoidal (limited white) | narrow, square | narrowly trapezoidal |

Eastern and Lilian’s Meadowlarks. In the field the differences are subtle, but with care and experience, most Lilian’s Meadowlark songs should be separable from Eastern Meadowlark songs by ear (Cassell 2002, Pieplow 2009a). Although the patterns of both songs are very similar, the key difference is that Lilian’s averages significantly lower-pitched. Most observers will perceive this difference in pitch as a difference in tone quality: Lilian’s songs tend to have at least some rich, mellow notes that approach the tone quality of Western Meadowlark songs, while Easterns tend to compose their songs entirely of higher-pitched, thinner notes.

Due to the intermediate pitch and tone quality, observers may need to take care not to mistake certain Western Meadowlark songs for those of Lilian’s. In general, Lilian’s conserves the simpler pattern of Eastern Meadowlark: 5-8 clear musical whistles, frequently ending on a “ringing” monotone whistle. Neither Eastern nor Lilian’s typically sing with the complex “gurgled” phrases so typical of the ending of Western Meadowlark’s song.

One caveat to remember is that all individual meadowlarks sing a

Listen Online

Songs and calls of Lilian's and Eastern Meadowlarks can be heard online at the following sites:

- <http://www.earbirding.com/blog>
- <http://www.xeno-canto.org>
- <http://macaulaylibrary.org/index.do>
 - Catalog #174, 20852-20854, and 56852-56853 are Lilian's.

repertoire of several songs. Interestingly, individual Western Meadowlarks have repertoires of fewer than twelve songs, averaging seven (Davis and Lanyon 2008), while individual Eastern Meadowlarks sing 50-100 songs (Lanyon 1995). The repertoire of Lilian's has not been investigated, but initial evidence indicates that it falls closer to the Eastern end of the spectrum, as Andrew Spencer recorded one individual in New Mexico singing at least nineteen different songs (Pieplow 2009a). The number of songs that each bird knows is unlikely to be useful in field identification, but the important lesson is that if you hear a bird singing an odd song, make the identification based on *all* the songs you've heard it give, not just one, since meadowlarks can learn the "wrong" song from time to time (Lanyon 1995).

In general, the calls of Lilian's and Eastern Meadowlarks are similar to each other (Lanyon 1995), but they are quite different from the calls of Western Meadowlark. The rough, buzzy "bzeit" of Eastern and Lilian's is easily distinguished from the rich, almost musical "chup" of Western. The rattle calls also differ slightly, Eastern's being higher-pitched than Western's, but this difference is more subtle.

It is possible that Eastern and Lilian's might differ by call in systematic ways, but if so, those differences are sure to be slight, and likely difficult to detect in the field (Pieplow 2009b).

Conclusion

Lilian's and Eastern Meadowlarks are not too difficult to distinguish from Western Meadowlark by plumage and vocalizations. However, Lilian's is much more difficult to separate from nominate Eastern Meadowlark; the identification requires experience, patience, and (especially) good views of the tail. Any form of Eastern Meadowlark is a rare bird in Colorado, and good documentation, including photographs and sound recordings, would help to clarify the status of both the Eastern and Lilian's forms in the state.

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Colorado Birds

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



Above left: Western Meadowlark, Barr Lake, Adams County, 25 Feb 2006. Above right: Eastern Meadowlark (race *magna*), Cattail Ponds, Larimer County, 3 Jun 2007. Photos by Glenn Walbek



Above left and right: Lilian's Meadowlarks (two individuals), near Sonoita, AZ, 4 Jun 2009. Photos by Andrew Spencer

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