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# Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



*Birds of Wyoming*  
*Subalpine Diversity*  
*Remembering Mona Hill*



Colorado Field Ornithologists  
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**Secretary:** Doug Faulkner, Arvada, 2010

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The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly Vol. 44 No. 4 October 2010

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE..... 212**

Jim Beatty

**CFO BOARD MEETING MINUTES ..... 213**

Larry Modesitt

**ACROSS THE BOARD: JOE ROLLER ..... 217**

Jim Beatty

**RON RYDER AWARD RECIPIENT:**

**ALEXANDER CRUZ ..... 220**

Bill Kaempfer

**BOOK REVIEW: BIRDS OF WYOMING**

**BY DOUG FAULKNER ..... 222**

Robert Righter

**REMEMBERING MONA HILL ..... 225**

Bill and Inez Prather

**BIRD DIVERSITY IN THE**

**COLORADO SUBALPINE ..... 227**

Erin E. Posthumus, Alexander Cruz, and Jameson Chace

**FIELD NOTE: CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER**

**NESTLING DEATH ..... 238**

Dave Leatherman

**THE 56<sup>TH</sup> REPORT OF THE CBRC..... 240**

Lawrence S. Semo and Doug Faulkner

**THE HUNGRY BIRD: GIZZARD SHAD ..... 254**

Dave Leatherman

**THE HUNGRY BIRDER: SALIDA ..... 258**

Sherrie York

**NEWS FROM THE FIELD: SPRING 2010 ..... 262**

Joel and Marcel Such

**IN THE SCOPE: WINTER AND PACIFIC WRENS..... 281**

Tony Leukering and Nathan Pieplow

Photos (on back cover) by Steven Collins and Ted Ardley



Front cover:  
Ferruginous  
Hawk, Castle  
Rock, Douglas  
County, 25  
February  
2010. Photo  
by Glenn  
Walbek

## **CBRC Chair and Electronic Media Needs**

*Jim Beatty*

### **CBRC Bylaws Review and Prospective Changes**

The Board is currently reviewing the Bylaws of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC), which is a very important part of CFO and certainly the most important of its scientific functions. This is timely and appropriate on two counts. First, the current chair, Larry Semo, is term-limited at the end of this year; second, the Bylaws require a periodic review.

As you have noticed in previous issues of *Colorado Birds*, the CBRC under Larry's leadership has steadily improved the timeliness of its reports and now is reviewing records for the current year. This substantial improvement has been due to the diligence of the committee, the installation of an electronic review system that allows records to be transmitted and voted on by email, and Larry's vision and fine leadership.

At the August board meeting, three options were discussed. First, make no changes to CBRC term limits, which would require the mandatory retirement of the current chair and the selection of a new chair; second, eliminate term limits for all members of the CBRC; and third, eliminate term limits for the chair only. The Board voted to proceed with the third option (to eliminate term limits for just the CBRC chair) and is now developing the detailed bylaws language to formally adopt those changes, which we will vote on at our next meeting on 6 November. While the Board fully recognizes the value of term limits in organizational renewal, we felt that the benefits of retaining Larry Semo as chair significantly outweighed any shortcomings. He has expressed interest in retaining the position, and the board is aware that several other states have similar records committee arrangements to retain important continuity in leadership, direction, and performance of their rare bird records committees. Of course the CFO Board would retain the ability to change the chair for cause, should circumstances warrant it.

I welcome any comments from members with their views on this prospective action by the board.

### **Call for Volunteers with Expertise in Electronic Media**

In August 2009 I reported that we have made many significant advances in electronic information exchange to better serve our

members and customers. Our COBirds subscriber emails about Colorado birds and birding, our CFO website, our online Colorado Bird Records Committee reporting, and our county birding internet site are all first-class efforts. However, maintaining them is not easy, simple, or free. We have made continuous improvements to all of these mainly with volunteer effort and a few out-of-pocket dollars, yet more improvements are needed to stay current.

Now, as many have requested, we are investigating ways to make all CBRC records available online. However, we have not yet defined the cost of this ambitious project in dollars and effort-hours.

While our past practice was to seek out interested volunteers with birding skills and interest, it is becoming very apparent that we must add "electronic media" expertise to the job descriptions of several of our roles. This need will continue to increase as the complexity of our systems continues to grow.

So, if you have some interest in developing new systems, some higher level computer expertise, and some free time, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact me or any board member.

*Jim Beatty, 165 Twelve Point Buck Trail, Durango, CO, [jdbeatty@bresnan.net](mailto:jdbeatty@bresnan.net)*

## **CFO BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

21 August 2010  
SWCA Office  
Broomfield, CO

*Larry Modesitt, CFO Secretary*

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 11:15 A.M. by President Jim Beatty. Officers and directors present were President Jim Beatty, Vice President Bill Kaempfer, Secretary Larry Modesitt, and Treasurer Maggie Boswell. All directors were present: Ted Floyd, Brenda Linfield, Nathan Pieplow, Bob Righter, Joe Roller, Larry Semo, Debra Sparn, and Brad Steger.

### **Secretary's Report**

Minutes of the 17 April 2010 board meeting and 22 May 2010 annual meeting were approved.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Maggie noted that the convention did extremely well, as records for attendance and income were set.

Convention income for 2010 was 50% higher than in 2009, while convention expenses were 42% higher. The main expense for the remainder of the year is publication of two more issues of *Colorado Birds*. Given the financial gain from the successful convention, we should clear about \$4,500 for 2010. Bill Kaempfer noted that having a big cash reserve is useful if we have a future need for the funds, but currently there are no such major requirements. This stimulated the request for adding all CBRC records online. Larry Semo, Brenda, and Mark Peterson will discuss this and make a presentation to the board at a later meeting. Maggie also noted a concern that many members have not renewed their memberships.

#### **Convention Review—Jim Beatty**

Overall, this was a very successful convention, and participants generally enjoyed the trips, venue, leaders, camaraderie, birds, speakers, and exhibitors. The main criticism was that Stump the Chumps was too hard, although adding the audio was appreciated. The objective should be about learning and having fun. Debra presented the questionnaire comments received from attendees, and Larry Modesitt summarized the directors' "continuous improvement" comments. Other participants also sent letters.

Jim Beatty, Maggie Boswell, and Larry Modesitt will combine the suggestions from the different sources and present a final summary. Improvements agreed upon for 2011 will be

included in a future President's letter in *Colorado Birds*. Online registration is preferred, as the post office once again severely delayed delivery of several registrations which were received after some trips were full. Paper presentations were better attended, and we agreed to publicly issue a call for papers through COBirds and by notifying universities. We will issue guidelines for submission and then select the paper presenters. Nathan agreed to be in charge of publishing the announcements and selecting the participants.

#### **Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) Chair Term Limits— Jim Beatty**

Jim noted that there are three options regarding the term of the Chair of the CBRC. One option is to continue with the current CBRC Bylaws requirement for the Chairman to retire at the end of two terms. A second option is to eliminate term limits for everybody. The third option is to eliminate the term limit for only the Chair. Bill Kaempfer moved to accept the third option, and Ted Floyd seconded. It is crucial to have continuity in such an important position. The CBRC chair is a difficult and important job, and much is demanded of a person's qualifications and time. The board agreed that other members, despite their impressive skills, should continue to be rotated. The motion carried, and Larry Semo was requested to circulate a draft of recommended CBRC bylaw changes to the board for review at the November meeting.

## **Color Photographs in *Colorado Birds*—Nathan Pieplow**

Nathan reported that we can add up to four color pages per issue for \$120 with a degree of flexibility for placement in each issue. This would allow us to select which pages should be printed in color. Paper quality is already sufficient. Bill Kaempfer moved and Joe Roller seconded adding the color pages. The motion carried. Color pages will be added to the next issue.

## **Key Indicators—Jim Beatty**

Jim noted that it would be useful to have numerical measures to track long-term trends, understand them, and act accordingly. Brad Steger will develop a format for presenting metrics. Each committee chair will review potential metrics, make suggestions for inclusion, and attempt to get a 5-year history. The board will make the final decision on what measures to include, and some may be published regularly in *Colorado Birds*.

## **Committee Reports**

A. CBRC—Larry Semo. The CBRC system is running well. Two new species have been added to the Colorado list: Mexican Whip-poor-will and Pacific Wren, birds resulting from splits by the American Ornithologists' Union. Pacific Wren has had one submission accepted and two are pending. The Colorado list now totals 492. CBRC members Peter Gent, Joey Kellner, and Doug Faulkner are term-limited when their terms expire at the end of 2010. Candidates for replacement must be members of CFO,

knowledgeable about bird identification, and supporters of the CBRC as shown by past CBRC submissions. Larry encouraged more documentation of review species sightings, as there are many birds that could be removed from the review list if people submitted documentation. Mark Peterson continues to help with any CBRC programming glitches.

B. eBird—Ted Floyd, an eBird reviewer responsible for reviewing the accuracy of flagged sightings, pointed out that he will be recommending to eBird that any flagged species in Colorado be put into limbo until the CBRC has reviewed the records. This could greatly increase the number of CBRC reviews, as there are five times more eBird review submissions than actual CBRC submissions. Larry would enjoy the extra publicity for submitting reports and the expectation to review more sightings. Traveling birders generally use eBird rather than COBirds. eBird gets 10,000 individual records in Colorado on a monthly basis. Bill recommended that some instructions go to the CFO website on how to use eBird, which is a complimentary service. Ted will be presenting a talk to DFO later in 2010 on the use of eBird.

C. Website—Brenda Linfield reported that the website has been revised with updated navigation. The main priority is to put membership into a database, and Brenda is working with Maggie and Debra on membership data. Brenda will be adding programming for automatic emails to be sent out to people whose memberships will be expiring. When a person

joins, the information will be added to the online database. The goal is to have financial information added to QuickBooks.

D. *Colorado Birds*—Nathan Pieplow. A membership list will be published in the October issue. Joel and Marcel Such will be doing “News from the Field” for October. Brad mentioned the value of pointing out to readers the advantages of the CFO website, which could link people to more photographs, sound recordings, and so forth.

E. *The Coolest Bird*, Rich Levad’s book on the Black Swift, now can be downloaded from the ABA website. Recommendations poured forth for this excellent account of this fascinating bird.

F. Project and Youth Funds—Bill Kaempfer. There were three youth scholarships awarded this year.

G. Membership—Debra Sparn. We have 414 individual, 60 family, and 4 student members for a total of 540 individuals, plus 17 institutional members. We have 21 people whose memberships have expired recently.

H. Field trips—Brad Steger. Bill Kaempfer will be leading a CFO trip to northeast Colorado on August 27. The CFO Fox Ranch trip will be in early October.

I. Awards—Joe Roller. No report.

J. Nominating—Jim and Larry Modesitt will review board terms to verify that no directors will be term-limited in 2011.

## New Business

1. 2011 Convention—Hotel. Jim

compared proposals from four hotels for hosting the Grand Junction convention. We need to avoid Memorial Day because of the junior college baseball tournament. We approved the weekend of 20-22 May. Jim will begin detailed negotiations with the best two proposals.

Artwork—Maggie made some suggestions for an artist, and Bill will follow up. The original artwork will be sold at auction. The selected artist will receive publicity, a fee, and the opportunity for a free vendor booth. We wish for a maximum of five colors.

Speakers—We discussed a potential keynote speaker for the convention, and Ted will follow up.

2. Mr. Bill Quiz—the consensus is that “Mr. Bill” needs to be re-designed, because fewer people are responding. Brenda will head up a study to review options and make recommendations.

3. Request for an Ornithology Fellowship contribution from Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Larry Modesitt will get information from the museum to determine if there is an end date for matching funds and to learn whether the full \$10,000 must be received for the match from Jack Ferguson to be effective. Our approach will be to request donations from CFO members and from CO-Birds subscribers as well.

4. CFO’s role in reporting rare or unusual birds on private land. We have a scientific obligation to document sightings. Users of CFO regional reports of rare and unusual sightings are “News from the Field,” *North American Birds*, and the CBRC.



We also have an obligation to protect each landowner's property rights. Notifying recreational birders is an additional goal. The ABA Code of Ethics provides clear guidance for ethical birding for protection of the birds and landowner's rights. We determined that published information on location will be kept vague and

the finders anonymous, when that information might compromise the landowner's rights or the safety of the birds.

Our next meetings will be 13 November 2010 and 29 January 2011. President Beatty adjourned the meeting at 3:02 P.M.

## ACROSS THE BOARD

### Joe Roller

*Jim Beatty*

I first met Joe Roller in September 2003 at Jackson Reservoir while I was searching for the then recently-discovered Kelp Gull. When I pulled into the parking area in the northeast corner, Joe was the only person there and looking at the gull. He immediately vigorously waved for me to join him. Joe's enthusiasm for birding is infectious, to say the least. He enjoys birding alone, with a buddy, and with a group. And he loves to tell birding stories which he vows are all true—although he admits to some mild embellishments with a twinkle in his eye.

Joe was raised in Hannibal, Missouri, where House Wrens nested in a box behind the garage, Purple Martins chattered from the neighbor's martin house, and Wood Ducks led their downy young in a procession past his home toward the Mississippi River every summer. Joe recalls the day when his younger brother, Jim, noticed and identified two birds in their yard with the help of his new pamphlet, a *Golden Nature Guide*, which pictured 129 birds in their habitats. Jim had found a Rufous-sided Towhee scratching in fallen leaves and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak singing in full sun from a maple tree. Their family and neighbors knew robins, doves, hawks, and "Canadian" Geese, but the towhee and grosbeak seemed to have revealed themselves only to Joe and Jim that morning. It was as if they had come across unexpected treasures in the attic, hidden among dusty boxes of National Geographic. They were twelve and ten on that spring morning in 1957. Joe has enjoyed "treasure" hunts for birds ever since.

One of Joe's many joys in birding is the pleasure found in seeing something—almost anything—for the first time. "So that's what the *female* Painted Bunting looks like!" After seeing both white and blue Little Blue Herons, he found it "a kick" to see the "calico" form. According to Joe, this love of seeing a new form can be called "neotaxophilia." (I think he coined the term for this article.) He explains it as the joy of deciphering an age or molt class of a bird, or the thrill of taking on new identification challenges like butterflies, dragonflies, and snakes.

Scouting was a big part of Joe's teenage life and he achieved the top rank of Eagle Scout. On one memorable scout camping trip, Eastern Whip-poor-will calls filled the oak woods at night. The next morning he saw his first warbler: a Blackburnian! On a family vacation to Estes Park at age fourteen, Joe cajoled his parents into awakening early enough to drive him to a guided field trip in Rocky Mountain National Park. For the first time he saw Steller's Jays and Pygmy Nuthatches. In fact Joe still has that field trip list, written on a brown paper bag. As the ranger called out the name of a flitting swallow with a green back and a white belly, he dutifully wrote down, "Valley Green Swallow."

At the University of Missouri Joe joined the local Audubon Society, which was the start of his "formal" bird training. While he majored in chemistry, he joined the wildlife management and biology graduate students for field trips. For two summers he tramped through tall-grass prairies surveying for Short-billed Marsh Wrens (now called Sedge Wrens) and Henslow's Sparrows. Joe also played trombone in the university band. He still plays a lively Dixieland trombone with the "Jubilee Hot 7" in the Denver metro area.

While at Case Western Reserve Medical School in Cleveland, Joe didn't have much time for birding, but when the spring warbler waves came through, he found time to search for them at Shaker Lakes. During his medical residency at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, he birded the Outer Banks and the Great Smoky Mountains, and he's enjoyed travel for birds ever since.

His final two years of medical training brought him to Colorado in 1974 with new habitats to explore and new birds to see. He joined CFO and DFO and states emphatically that he will never leave Colorado. After completing his fellowship in gastroenterology, he joined two other specialists and worked for 34 years in private practice in Lakewood and at St. Anthony Central Hospital, where he served as Chief of Medicine. He notes that a career in gastroenterology involved challenges and rewards similar to birding—of looking through glass (fiber-optic endoscopes) and making identifications (diagno-

ses)—although his patients benefitted more from his professional expertise than the birds he has spotted.

In the mid-seventies he tagged along with Bruce Webb, Peter Gent, and Steve Larson, who taught him a lot. It was exciting to see Colorado's first Little Gull, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Lesser Black-backed Gull, all found by Bruce.

In the late 1970's Joe met and fell in love with Mary Anne, and they have now been married for 31 years. One of



*Joe Roller*

their first dates was a pelagic trip in Monterey Bay, California. Mary Anne was beguiled by birds, and later, at a cold, wind-swept estuary on Point Reyes, after Joe had given up scanning, she persevered and spotted the distant Emperor Goose. Joe had truly found his life's mate. Together they raised two wonderful sons, Dan and Tom. Both love the outdoors and are Eagle Scouts, hikers, skiers, and triathletes.

While Joe's birding simmered on the back burner during the 1980's, it came to a boil in the 1990's. He has birded in every county in the Centennial State, to most corners of the United States, and to all seven continents. A short list of Joe's birding highlights includes:

- climbing the Dakota Hogback with Duane Nelson to see a Peregrine Falcon soon after Duane had discovered this magical hawk-watch site in 1990;
- getting "the call" from Dick Schottler and witnessing a Red-faced Warbler at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt;
- photographing Chinstrap Penguins on the Antarctic Peninsula;
- scoping a Curlew Sandpiper on the mudflats of Prewitt Reservoir with Joey Kellner;
- feeling awestruck as a white Gyrfalcon circled a headland in Newfoundland;
- watching the stately walk of a Secretary Bird in Kenya with Norm Erthal;

- listening for rails with Joe Himmel at Lower Latham Reservoir;
- seeing one colorful tanager after another with Larry and Abby Modesitt at the headwaters of the Amazon in Ecuador;
- birding anywhere with Glenn Walbek and Lock Kilpatrick;
- hearing the rolling “garrooo-a-a” calls of Sandhill Cranes high over NeeGronda Reservoir in Kiowa County with Brandon Percival, Duane Nelson, and John Drummond—and then looking up to see the adult Whooping Crane migrating with them.

Recently Joe has caught the “Atlas” bug, so he has plenty of birding ahead. He enjoys leading trips for beginning birders, but he tries go with a buddy with better hearing—which is almost anyone, according to him! He also serves on the board of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.

When asked “what’s next?” Joe quickly responds, “let’s go birding!”

*Jim Beatty, 165 Twelve Point Buck Trail, Durango, CO, jdbeatty@bresnan.net*

## CFO AWARDS

# Ron Ryder Award Recipient: Alexander Cruz

*Bill Kaempfer*

How many of these names do you recognize?

Jerry Freeman, Associate Professor of Biology at Adams State. Richard Adams, Professor of Biology at UNC. Catherine Ortega, Professor of Biology at Ft. Lewis College and the primary investigator on the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II. Jameson Chace, assistant professor at Salve Regina University. Heather Swanson, Cary Richardson, Bruce Webb, the late John Prather, Bob Andrews.

Besides a strong interest in birds, what do all of the above people have in common? All of them were students of Professor Alexander Cruz of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and I should say all of them and many, many more.

In fact, if you were to carefully examine Alex’s very impressive 33-page academic resume, you would discover that about a third of it is devoted to his many students—doctoral, masters, honors, indepen-

dent study and so forth. Of the more than 125 papers Dr. Cruz has published since 1970, 44 have been co-authored with students. Of course, he is also world renowned for his research on cowbirds, brood parasitism, noise impacts on avian communities, and, more generally, ecology and conservation of birds and fish both along the Front Range and in the West Indies. It is for this remarkable career that Dr. Cruz was awarded the Hazel Barnes Prize, the highest teaching and research award at the University of Colorado, in 2006. A prize, I might note, that comes with a \$20,000 check!

The highest award granted by the Colorado Field Ornithologists is the Ronald A. Ryder Award for Distinguished Service to Colorado Field Ornithology. The selection criteria are:

- Distinguished service to the Colorado Field Ornithologists' organization and its goals;
- Scholarly contributions to the Colorado Field Ornithologists and to Colorado field ornithology;
- Sharing knowledge of Colorado field ornithology with the people of the state of Colorado.

On behalf of the board of the CFO, I was honored to present the Ron Ryder Award to my good friend and colleague, Dr. Alexander Cruz, at the annual convention in Fort Collins on 22 May. We greatly appreciate all Alex has done in carrying out and disseminating 40 years of bird research and educating a generation of Colorado ornithologists, and hope that the Ron Ryder award adequately expresses our appreciation—even though it doesn't come with a check!

*Bill Kaempfer, William.Kaempfer@colorado.edu*

## Call for Papers: CFO Convention 2011

The annual convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists will be held 20-22 May 2011 in Grand Junction, Colorado. We invite proposals for presentations to be given during the scientific paper session. Speakers are expected to have between 30 and 45 minutes to present and answer questions. Topics of interest include ongoing research into Colorado birds or their habitats, advances in field identification of Colorado birds, and new information regarding their status or distribution. Submit abstracts electronically to Nathan Pieplow (npieplow@gmail.com) prior to 15 March 2011.

## *Birds of Wyoming* by Doug Faulkner

Robert Righter

*Birds of Wyoming* is a well-conceived and informative book that fills in a large chunk of knowledge about the status and distribution of the bird life in the Rocky Mountain cordillera. This book is a major contribution, particularly since Wyoming is the ninth largest state. Its large size and low population necessitated a significant commitment from a relatively small cadre of field ornithologists, biologists, and birders who worked together, under Doug Faulkner's authorship and Robert Berry's vision, to make this book a possibility.

*Birds of Wyoming* is clothed in an attractive spruce green cover with a drop-dead photo of a Great Gray Owl. This emblematic bird for the state gently reminds those of us living to the south of where we can travel to see this beauty. The book is in full color, so the pages sparkle as one thumbs through it.

As I only have a general knowledge of Wyoming's avifauna, I will not attempt to critique the accuracy of the ever-changing status and distribution of each species; however, I note that the back of the book contains thirteen pages of references representing about 560 citations. Judging by this long list of citations, it appears that little, if anything, was overlooked.

The book opens with six informative essays pertaining to different aspects of the biology and ornithology of the state. In reading the essays one gains a more holistic perspective of the birds in Wyoming and how they fit within the topography of the state.

The first essay, "History of Wyoming Ornithology" by Jane Dorn, thoroughly documents the earlier expeditions and naturalists who traveled through the region. Included is a lengthy summary about the first two naturalists to travel the Oregon Trail, Thomas Nuttall and John Kirk Townsend, who were assigned to Nathaniel Wyeth's 1834 expedition. This section also includes summaries of the birds collected on both of Hayden's expeditions in the late 1800s and even the interesting ornithological notes from General Custer's 1874 expedition to the Black Hills in Wyoming. This essay demonstrates an appreciation of all those early naturalists; their input, by way of specimens and notes, is reflected in the status and distribution in the species accounts of this book.

"Conservation of Birds in Wyoming" by Bob Oakleaf and others outlines all the monitoring and research efforts that have occurred in the state since the mid-1800s and points to specific programs that have helped the populations of Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle,

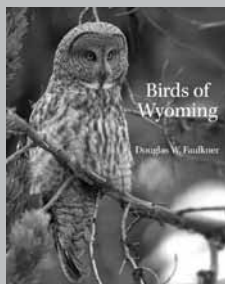
and Greater Sage-Grouse. Meanwhile, Richard Hutto's very informative essay "Stand-Replacement Fire: For the Birds?" describes in a straightforward style how fires may not always be detrimental to birds; in fact, many groups of birds have greatly benefited from the effects of fires in the state.

After Terry Rich's article on "Sagebrush," Scott Gillihan takes on what is probably Wyoming's largest and most critical biome, the shortgrass prairie, in "Shortgrass Prairie Management." The article points out the beneficial role that birds and other critters play in keeping the grasslands healthy. It further points out how the grasslands have changed over the eons, and proposes thirteen steps to keep the grasslands vital.

The last essay, "Landforms and Vegetation," is written by Robert Dorn, who expresses an intimate understanding of the subtle relationships among Wyoming's various life zones, landforms, and habitats.

The core of the book is the species accounts, which are divided into sections for resident and non-resident species. In the Resident section each account has a large color photo and a generously-sized color range map. While the text naturally varies in size for each species account, the photo and the range map consistently remain the same size, creating an overall effect that is very pleasing to the eye as one flips through the book's pages. The text for each species account is divided into four subsections: Status, which offers an overview of the bird's occurrence in each season; Distribution, depicting its relative abundance within different habitats and geographic regions; Taxonomy, offering a synopsis of the various subspecies known from the state, and Conservation status, which suggests the threat level for each species in Wyoming.

Using three colors, the range maps clearly show the seasons and areas in which each species is present in the state. The range map also cleverly frames the boundaries of Wyoming by including portions of the surrounding states. For example, if all we were shown for the Sharp-tailed Grouse was just the Wyoming range map, we would see that the species is present in the northeast, southeast, and a very small portion of the south-central part of the state, but absent from



### ***Birds of Wyoming***

**Douglas W. Faulkner**  
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the vast western portion. However, by viewing Wyoming in a wider context, we get a totally different impression of the bird's status in the region. Just to the west of Wyoming's border we now see the Sharp-tailed Grouse's range in Idaho and northern Utah, leading us to question why the grouse isn't present in western Wyoming, and whether the reasons for its absence are environmental or human-caused.

One small criticism about style is that at times the Distribution section becomes somewhat unwieldy, mainly because it attempts to describe both distribution and habitat preferences, sometimes at the expense of the habitat preferences. At least with some species, it may have been clearer if information on distribution and habitat had been presented separately.

The sexiest section in the book is the Non-Resident Species section, which describes 183 migrants, rare breeders, and vagrants. This section houses some amazing records of rarities. Before you get to page 293, it may be a good idea to sit down and prepare yourself for a monumental shock: a recently-dead Streaked Shearwater was found near Medicine Bow in Carbon County on 13 June 2006. This is a shearwater whose range is limited to the seas of the western Pacific Ocean from Japan to northern Australia. Very rarely is it detected off America's Pacific coast, and when it is spotted, boats are quickly launched loaded with hopeful bird watchers all confessing their sins in order to increase their chances of catching a glimpse of it. Not many state bird books can boast a record like that.

I offer one cautionary note regarding the layout. If one wanted to check the status of the Baird's Sandpiper in Wyoming, a natural inclination would be to start at the beginning of the book, thumb to sandpipers, discover that the Baird's Sandpiper is not in the shore-bird section, and then mistakenly assume that its migration pattern probably doesn't include Wyoming. In fact, Baird's is discussed in the Non-Resident Species section, since its breeding range does not include Wyoming. Once the reader understands that resident and non-resident species are discussed in separate sections, the layout becomes more user-friendly.

Make no mistake about it—*Birds of Wyoming* is an important contribution not only to the ornithology of Wyoming but to that of all the Rocky Mountain states. Everyone involved with this book should be proud of this accomplishment.

*Robert Righter, 2358 S. Fillmore Street, Denver, CO 80210*



## Remembering Mona Hill

*Bill and Inez Prather*

Mona Hill died unexpectedly on Monday, 24 May 2010. She and her husband Dean have been valuable members of CFO for many years. From 1991 to 1993 Mona served as editor of this publication, a job that is surprisingly difficult and unappreciated, and at the time was mostly a one-person responsibility. She did a great job. She understood the power of words—how the wrong words could bore or hurt and the right words could educate and amuse—and she was good at selecting just the right words. She also knew how to meet a deadline, no matter how many obstacles had to be overcome. She had a very strong sense of what is right and very little tolerance for what is wrong, yet she could be very gracious and helpful to people, even those she didn't agree with. Dave Leatherman remembers how she often seemed to be the only one with a sense of humor at CFO board meetings. In one excruciatingly long discussion about whether or not someone would be right for a certain organizational job, Mona finally suggested, "Maybe we could just ask him."

She was much more than an editor. She was the ultimate student of life. When she got interested in a subject, she had to know it all. Consequently, she often ended up knowing and understanding more than the person who had started out as her teacher, and became the person to ask if you wanted to find some obscure information. When John Prather had the idea that Lucy's Warblers must breed in a certain habitat in southwestern Colorado, Mona was the person who tracked down the first record, found the habitat that John was looking for, and figured out how to get there. Then it was just a matter of walking in and discovering them. She and John were terrific collaborators; they seemed to operate on a level of understanding that the



*Mona Hill.* Photo by Helen Woodard

rest of us could not match. If they had been given enough time I'm sure they would have figured out how to find those Hermit Warblers on Sleeping Ute Mountain.

Mona took the responsibility of teaching very seriously, whether it was leading field trips or doing research for a number of organizations, or just reading to her third graders weekly at the local school while wearing a set of earrings that perfectly matched the story. While traveling in their part of the state, many of us took advantage of the well-stocked base camps she and Dean created in Durango and Lewis. Many trips to add birds like Harlequin Duck, Hooded Oriole, and Lucy's Warbler to state and life lists involved a stay with or help from the "Two Gray Hills."

Mona was very unusual in that she took on the role and responsibility of the eldest among her siblings even though she was one of the younger ones. A story that her older sister told is illustrative of how she took care of her family, and the rest of us. It seems she and her sister had to share a room and her sister decided how it was going to be. She drew a line in the room and everything that belonged to Mona was on one side and everything that belonged to the sister was on the other. She then carefully explained that Mona was not to go on the sister's side. Mona sized up the situation and said, "it's okay if you go on my side." That was the way Mona handled life. Thanks, Mona! We will all miss you in so many ways.

Thanks to Dean Hill and Dave Leatherman, who contributed suggestions to this article.

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# The Influence of Habitat Type on Bird Diversity in the Colorado Subalpine

Erin E. Posthumus, Alexander Cruz, and Jameson Chace

## Abstract

We studied the influence of habitat type on bird diversity in subalpine habitats of the Colorado Front Range during the 2004 breeding season. In ten transects of five points surveyed six times in the subalpine, we observed a total of 33 species, with quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) stands and spruce-fir (*Picea-Abies-Pseudotsuga*) forests showing a significantly greater avian diversity than lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) forests. Spruce-fir had a significantly higher canopy height and percent cover (< 50 cm) than aspen or lodgepole, which could account for the high bird diversity and richness observed in spruce-fir. Spruce-fir also showed a significantly higher amount of ground cover than lodgepole pine. Six species were found only in aspen stands, including the Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*), House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*), and Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*). The higher bird diversity found in aspen is probably associated with greater amount of nest cover, relative abundance of tree cavities for nesting, and high numbers of invertebrate prey. The current tendency towards fire suppression, coupled with encroachment of conifers into aspen habitat, may have detrimental effects on species that inhabit aspen stands, and it could lead to a decrease in overall avian richness and diversity in the Colorado subalpine.

## Introduction

The factors influencing avian species richness and diversity have been widely studied (e.g., Cody 1974; Bohning-Gaese 1997; Rahbek and Graves 2001). At broad spatial scales the environmental factors that are thought to affect avian species richness, evenness, and abundance include precipitation levels, elevation, temperature, and vegetation (Root 1988). At smaller spatial scales, habitat characteristics have been proposed to be the most influential factors determining avian community composition (Bohning-Gaese 1997).

The structure and complexity of a habitat can greatly affect avian species richness and diversity (Robinson and Holmes 1982; Mayer and Cameron 2003). Avian community composition in forests depends at least partially on habitat characteristics, including tree density and



*Dark-eyed Junco, gray-headed form, Castle Rock, Douglas County, 27 Oct 2006. Photo by Glenn Walbek*

maturity (Sedgwick 1987), shrub density and tree type (Hobson and Bayne 2000), and types of ground cover (Rutledge and Conner 2002). Avian species richness tends to increase with forested landscape heterogeneity and forest structural diversity (Manuwal 1983; Mitchell et al. 2006). Forests with a diversity of tree species have higher avian diversity than monoculture forests

(Hobson and Bayne 2000). However, the relative importance of forest floristics versus forest structure on bird community composition is contested (Holmes and Robinson 1981; Rice et al. 1984; Strong and Bock 1990). Beyond just meeting the structural requirements of foraging, nesting, and roosting birds, species-specific vegetation may influence avian community structure by providing specific food requirements (Rotenberry 1984), offering natural cover and protection (Lima 1990; Repasky and Schluter 1994), or attracting birds with specific nesting requirements (Richardson and Heath 2004).

Though avian community composition and the influences of habitat characteristics on these communities have been widely studied, few avian community studies have been conducted in the subalpine of the Colorado Rockies (but see Johnston 1943; Snyder 1950; Eckhardt 1979; Turchi et al. 1995; Hallock 2004). The presence of different habitats in close proximity makes the subalpine an ideal place to study differences in bird community composition between closely spaced habitat types with sharp boundaries. The objectives of this study were to compare avian species richness (the actual number of species detected in a given area) and diversity (an index that includes the number of species and the number of individuals of a given species) during the breeding season in the subalpine habitat types of aspen, spruce-fir, and lodgepole pine, and to analyze vegetation structure in these habitat types to determine the cause of any differences observed in avian community composition.

## Methods

**Study Area.** The study was conducted in the Roosevelt National Forest and the Niwot Ridge Biosphere Reserve, Boulder County, Colorado, administered jointly by the US Forest Service and the Mountain Research Station of the University of Colorado. Three dominant subalpine habitat types were used in this study, including quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) stands, lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) forests, and spruce-fir forest that included Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), lodgepole pine, and occasionally limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*). Lodgepole pine and aspen stands dominate between 2400 and 3050 m and Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir, intermixed with Douglas-fir, are found from 2900 to 3350 m. Lodgepole and spruce-fir forest stands tended to be larger (greater than 100 m in diameter) than aspen stands (less than 100 m in diameter) that were located within either lodgepole or spruce-fir forest.

**Point Counts.** Point counts, following Ralph et al. (1993), were conducted from June-August 2004. Point counts were conducted along transects at 2750 m (lodgepole and aspen), 2900 m (lodgepole, aspen, and spruce-fir), 3050 m (lodgepole, aspen, and spruce-fir), 3200 m (spruce-fir), and 3350 m (spruce-fir). One transect was chosen for each habitat at each elevation, for a total of three transects each for aspen and lodgepole pine, and four transects for spruce-fir (due to a greater range



*Red-naped Sapsucker*, Poncha Springs Cemetery, Chaffee County, 25 May 2009. Photo by David Leatherman

in elevation). Five different elevations were chosen as it gave a minimum of three different elevations for each habitat type. A handheld GPS (Global Positioning System) was used to maintain elevation along the transects as well as to estimate distance. Five point count stations >200 m apart were selected on each transect, and each station was surveyed a total of six times for a total of 300 point counts. We waited two minutes after arriving at a point count station before beginning the counts, which lasted for ten minutes. All birds heard or seen within an estimated 50 m radius were recorded, though birds flying overhead were not included. Point counts were not conducted in adverse weather such as heavy wind (> 15 mph), steady rain, hail, or fog.

*Vegetation Surveys.* Vegetation structure was measured at each of the point count stations following a modified BBIRD field protocol (Martin et al. 1997). Plots were laid in circles of 5 m radius and 11.3 m radius. Measurements in the 5 m circle included tree species, number of trees in two classes defined by diameter at breast height (DBH < 2.5 cm and > 2.5 cm), and percent ground cover (all vegetation < 50 m in height). Measurements in the 11.3 m plot included tree species and number of trees in three classes (DBH 8-23 cm, 23-38 cm, > 38 cm). Percent canopy cover (estimated using a convex densitometer), average top canopy height (estimated using a clinometer), and dominant/codominant canopy species were also recorded.

*Data Analysis.* Avian diversity was determined using the Shannon-Weiner Index for Diversity (MacArthur and MacArthur 1961). A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA,  $P < 0.05$ ) measured changes in richness and diversity by habitat types. Tukey's HSD (Honestly Significant Differences) Test was employed to separate differences between groups.

## Results

Of the 33 avian species recorded, 25 were found in aspen, 25 in spruce-fir, and 17 in lodgepole (Table 1). Dark-eyed Junco, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Mountain Chickadee (scientific names provided in Table 1) were the most commonly recorded species in all habitat types. Avian species diversity and richness showed the same trend. Bird diversity was significantly different between habitat types ( $F_{2, 297} = 11.34$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Figure 1), and showed the same trend as avian richness. Species richness was significantly different between habitat types ( $F_{2, 297} = 11.7$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

*Aspen Community.* The aspen community had a higher avian diversity than lodgepole pine ( $t_{178} = 4.03$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and a greater avian species richness than both spruce-fir ( $p < 0.05$ ) and lodgepole pine ( $p < 0.05$ ). Twenty-five species were observed in aspen habitats sampled

Table 1. Avian species occurrence in three habitats of the subalpine of Colorado.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Aspen	Spruce-fir	Lodgepole
<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	American Robin	P	P	P
<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	Black-capped Chickadee	P	NP	P
<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	Black-headed Grosbeak	P	NP	NP
<i>Dendragapus obscurus</i>	Dusky Grouse	P	NP	NP
<i>Selasphorus platyceris</i>	Broad-tailed Hummingbird	P	P	P
<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i>	Clark's Nutcracker	P	P	NP
<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	Common Nighthawk	NP	NP	P
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common Raven	NP	P	P
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Cooper's Hawk	P	NP	NP
<i>Empidonax occidentalis</i>	Cordilleran Flycatcher	P	NP	NP
<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Dark-eyed Junco	P	P	P
<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>	Gray Jay	P	P	P
<i>Picoides villosus</i>	Hairy Woodpecker	P	P	P
<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	Hermit Thrush	P	P	P
<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	House Wren	P	NP	NP
<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	Lincoln's Sparrow	P	P	NP
<i>Sialia currucoides</i>	Mountain Bluebird	NP	P	NP
<i>Poecile gambeli</i>	Mountain Chickadee	P	P	P
<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	Mourning Dove	NP	P	NP
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Northern Flicker	P	NP	NP
<i>Spinus pinus</i>	Pine Siskin	NP	P	NP
<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	Red-breasted Nuthatch	P	P	P
<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>	Red-naped Sapsucker	P	NP	NP
<i>Regulus calendula</i>	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	P	P	P
<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	Rufous Hummingbird	P	NP	P
<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	Steller's Jay	P	P	P
<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>	Vesper Sparrow	NP	P	NP
<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	Violet-green Swallow	P	P	P
<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	Warbling Vireo	P	NP	NP
<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	Western Tanager	NP	NP	P
<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	White-crowned Sparrow	NP	P	NP
<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Wilson's Warbler	P	P	NP
<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	Yellow-rumped Warbler	P	P	P
	Total Number of Species:	25	21	17

P = Present, NP = Not present.

from 2750 m to 3050 m. The most commonly occurring species for aspen included Dark-eyed Junco, House Wren, and Warbling Vireo. Six species were found only in aspen stands, including Black-headed Grosbeak, Cordilleran Flycatcher, House Wren, Northern Flicker, Red-naped Sapsucker, and Warbling Vireo.

*Spruce-fir Community.* The spruce-fir community had a higher avian diversity than lodgepole pine ( $t_{208} = 4.23, p < 0.05$ ) and a higher avian species richness than lodgepole pine ( $p < 0.05$ ). Twenty-one species were observed in spruce-fir habitats sampled from 2900 m to 3350 m. The most commonly occurring species for spruce-fir forest included Dark-eyed Junco, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

*Lodgepole Pine Community.* The lodgepole community had the lowest avian species richness and diversity of all habitats in which point counts were conducted. Seventeen species were observed in lodgepole habitats sampled from 2750 m to 3200 m. The most commonly occurring species for lodgepole pine forest included Dark-eyed Junco, Mountain Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

*Vegetation Analysis.* The three subalpine habitats were found to be significantly different in terms of canopy cover ( $F_{2,47} = 6.40, p < 0.05$ ), canopy height ( $F_{2,47} = 37.3, p < 0.05$ ), ground cover ( $F_{2,47} = 4.74, p < 0.05$ ), and tree density ( $F_{2,47} = 12.5, p < 0.05$ ). Paired *t*-tests showed spruce-fir to have a greater percentage of canopy cover than both lodgepole pine ( $t_{33} = 2.37, p < 0.05$ ) and aspen ( $t_{33} = 3.07, p < 0.05$ ). Spruce-fir also had a higher average canopy height than both lodgepole pine ( $t_{33} = 4.53, p < 0.05$ ) and aspen ( $t_{33} = 8.07, p < 0.05$ ). Lodgepole pine had a higher average canopy height than aspen ( $t_{28} = 4.15, p < 0.05$ ). Spruce-fir had a greater amount of ground cover than lodgepole pine ( $t_{33} = 3.24, p < 0.05$ ), while no significant difference was found between other pairings. Spruce-fir had a lower tree density than both lodgepole pine ( $t_{33} = 5.29, p < 0.05$ ) and aspen ( $t_{33} = 3.55, p < 0.05$ ).

## Discussion

Aspen stands, followed by spruce-fir forests, showed a significantly greater avian diversity than lodgepole pine. This result corresponds with studies showing the importance of aspen stands (Winternitz 1980; Peet 1981; Enoksson et al. 1995; Griffis-Kyle and Beier 2003) and mixed forests (Hobson and Bayne 2000) to high bird species numbers. We found spruce-fir to have a significantly higher canopy height and percent canopy cover than aspen or lodgepole. Height and amount of canopy cover have been shown in several studies to increase bird numbers (Kirk et al. 1996; Scott et al. 2003), which

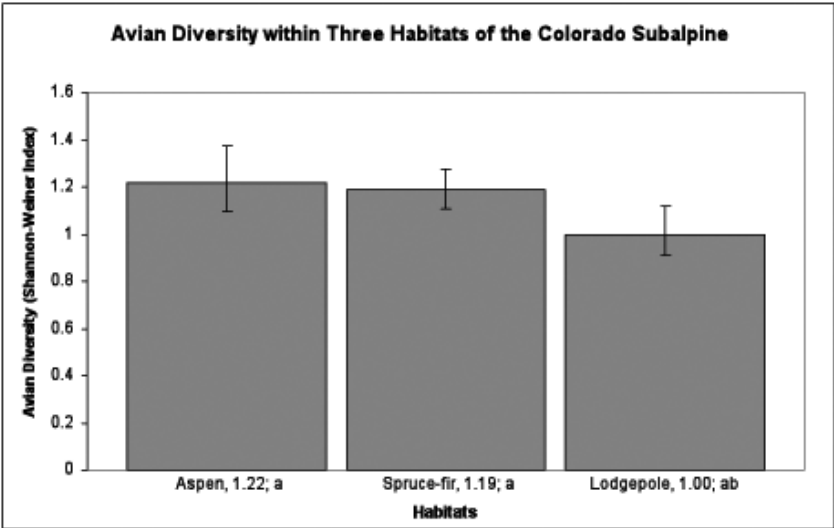


could account for the high bird diversity and richness observed in spruce-fir. This closed-canopy forest with high amounts of coverage may be preferred by interior forest species (Chettri et al. 2001). Spruce-fir also showed a significantly higher amount of ground cover than lodgepole pine. Ground cover was not significantly higher in aspen than in lodgepole in our study. The lack of significance might be attributed to the absence of shrub analysis in our vegetation study; in previous studies shrub cover accounted for a high percentage of species richness (Turchi et al. 1995).

While some bird species may prefer the closed canopy forest of spruce-fir, still others prefer open canopy forest provided by aspen (Winternitz 1980; Beedy 1981; Richardson and Heath 2004). Aspen has been found in many studies to be a center for avian diversity and richness. The high bird numbers found in aspen have been attributed to favorability for nest camouflage, relative abundance of tree cavities for nesting, and high numbers of invertebrates (Winternitz 1980, Debyle 1985, Schimpf and MacMahon 1985, Daily et al. 1993, Richardson and Heath 2004). Being one of the only deciduous forest types in the subalpine of this area, aspen is an important habitat for species such as the Red-naped Sapsucker and Warbling Vireo (Winternitz 1980), both of which were found exclusively in aspen in our study.

The low diversity in lodgepole pine stands is most likely explained

Figure 1. Avian Diversity within the three habitats aspen, spruce-fir, and lodgepole. Diversity index shown for each habitat, along with significance.



by the low number of snags for nesting, poorly developed shrub layer, and high tree density in the lodgepole stands (Hagar et al. 2004, Waterhouse and Armleder 2007). Despite relatively small sample sizes in one season, our results are similar to those of other studies that have found that species richness and diversity are lower in lodgepole stands compared to other forest types (Austin and Perry 1979, Hein 1980, Waterhouse and Armleder 2007). This suggests that avifaunal communities in these three Rocky Mountain subalpine forest types are distinct and relatively stable based on the different habitat structures that the forests provide for breeding birds. Changes to the forest structure through changes in climate, fire regime, insect outbreaks, and herbivory in the understory would have consequential impacts on the avian community dynamics in the Front Range (Keane et al. 2002, Bigler et al. 2007, Sibold et al. 2007, Klutsch et al. 2009).

### Summary

Bird diversity and species richness showed a strong differentiation between habitat types of the Colorado subalpine. The high bird diversity and richness observed in aspen and spruce-fir reiterates the importance of maintaining a diversity of forest types. Our study, as well as the results of a twenty-year bird monitoring effort in the area (Hallock 2004), suggests that the overall avian community composition of this area of the Colorado subalpine has remained relatively unchanged since the late 1940s (Cassel 1952). However, the current tendency towards fire suppression (Keane et al. 2002) may have detrimental effects on species that inhabit aspen stands in the future, as fire is a stimulant for aspen growth (Dieni and Anderson 1999, Richardson and Heath 2004). Another threat to the bird species which inhabit aspen stands is the encroachment of Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir stands into aspen habitat (Korb and Ranker 2001). Continued decrease of aspen would have significant consequences on the bird species that use these stands, and could lead to a decrease in overall avian richness and diversity in the Colorado subalpine. Future longitudinal studies are recommended to monitor the continued diversity in this area, including the more recent impact of pine beetle infestations on lodgepole stands in this area.

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# Mites Cause Cordilleran Flycatcher Nestling Death

Dave Leatherman

A friend of mine, Steve Den, lives in Poudre Park in lower Poudre Canyon, west of Fort Collins in Larimer County, Colorado. During the summer he was following the progress of a Cordilleran Flycatcher nest on his shed. By his estimate, the four young were about a week from fledging when, on 9 July 2010, the parents rather suddenly stopped coming to the nest. Upon inspection, the four nestlings appeared dead in the nest cup. When Steve touched them to confirm his suspicion, his hand was quickly overrun with tiny crawling mites.

On 11 July he brought me a sample of the mites in isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol and I took them to my friend Dr. Boris Kondratieff at the Gillette Arthropod Museum at Colorado State University. Boris tentatively identified these as northern fowl mites (*Ornithonyssus sylviarum*), a type of blood-sucking mite that in all likelihood was the cause of nestling mortality. Subsequently, a sample was sent to Dr. Heather Proctor of the University of Alberta, who graciously confirmed the identification and provided CSU with a voucher slide of the mites for future reference.

This mite (in the order Acarina, which also includes the ticks, and the family Dermanyssidae, the so-called “red mites”) has been reported from 22 bird species including two flycatchers: Great Crested Flycatcher and Eastern Phoebe (Peters 1936). The other species include swallows, corvids, thrashers, vireos, wrens, warblers, and sparrows. These mites hide and reproduce in the nest and feed on their hosts at night. The *Birds of North America* account for Cordilleran Flycatcher (Lowther 2000) contains rather sparse information on nestling parasites and does not mention the northern fowl mite specifically. There are, of course, other ectoparasites on birds and in their nests, including other mites from at least three other families, cimicid bugs (related to bedbugs), hippoboscids, etc.

Many trials and tribulations, both biological and environmental, challenge nesting birds. When you see a fledgling bird that actually made it through the gauntlet, rejoice.

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## Project Fund Application Deadline: 1 December 2010

The CFO Project Fund has a limited amount of money for grants to qualifying individuals or organizations for projects that will have a lasting benefit to Colorado birds and the habitats upon which they rely. Grants typically range from \$600 to \$1500, although we will consider partially funding grants. Often CFO Project Fund grants are considered as matching funds for other larger grants. The Project Fund Committee requires that the recipients of funding publish their work in Colorado Birds, publish in another peer-reviewed scientific journal, and/or present some of their findings at the CFO convention in the next calendar year.

### Grant Schedule

- All applications must be postmarked no later than 1 December 2010.
- Successful applicants will be notified after the March 2011 CFO board meeting.
- Following completion of the project, the applicant must submit a final report in writing by February of the next calendar year. This report should include a full description of the project activities and an accounting of the money spent.

Please see the following page on the CFO website for all Project Fund guidelines: [http://cfo-link.org/about\\_CFO/project\\_fund.php](http://cfo-link.org/about_CFO/project_fund.php).

# The 56th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

*Lawrence S. Semo*

Chair, Colorado Bird Records Committee

*Doug Faulkner*

Secretary, Colorado Bird Records Committee

## Introduction

This 56<sup>th</sup> report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on partial results of circulations held in 2010. This article provides results of the circulation of 43 reports submitted by 19 observers documenting 35 occurrences of 19 species from the period 2001 through 2010. Seven occurrences involving seven different species were not accepted because of insufficient documentation or because descriptions were inconsistent with known identification criteria. Per

**Correction:** On page 183 of the 55<sup>th</sup> report (volume 44, number 3), the photo of the Pine Warbler from Lamar was incorrectly attributed to Brandon Percival; it was actually taken by Thomas Heinrich. We apologize for the error.

CBRC bylaws, 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 first accepted Colorado record of Pacific Wren, the formal separation between the two species of Whip-poor-will, and the second state record of Anhinga. With the recent taxonomic splits by the American Ornithologists’ Union (Chesser et al. 2010), “Whip-poor-will” was removed from the official state list and replaced with Eastern Whip-poor-will and Mexican Whip-poor-will. Pacific Wren was also split from Winter Wren; both of the resulting species have been documented in Colorado. This expands the total state list to 492 species.

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

## 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 (DMNS), 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 51<sup>st</sup> Supplement (Chesser et al. 2010). 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 audio spectrograms 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 documenta-

tion; 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), Reservoir (Res.), State Park (SP), and State Wildlife Area (SWA).

## **RECORDS ACCEPTED**

**Dusky Grouse** – *Dendragapus obscurus*. Quite low in elevation was a male at Chatfield SP, *Jefferson*, on 11 Apr 2001 (NP; 2003-156; 6-1).

**Anhinga** – *Anhinga anhinga* (1/2). Establishing only the second accepted record for Colorado, an adult female was at Barr Lake, *Adams*, on 3 May 2003 (GB, RS: 2003-54; 6-1). The previous record, a specimen now at DMNH, was collected in *Aurora*, *Adams*, in Sep 1931. Bailey and Niedrach (1965) listed an additional record from *Aurora* collected in Sep 1927. Phillips (1984) analyzed the specimen and determined it to actually be an Australian Darter (*Anhinga novaehollandiae*) and deemed it an escape. The CBRC apologizes to the observers for the extreme delay in deliberating on this fantastic Barr Lake record.

**Glossy Ibis** – *Plegadis falcinellus*

(37/60). The CBRC has recently accepted seven new records of Glossy Ibis for the state. One was at Red Lion SWA, *Logan*, on 21 May 2005 (SL; 2010-46; 7-0). One was at Beebe Draw, *Weld*, on 12 May 2009 (ML †, LS †; 2009-33; 7-0). Union Res., *Weld*, hosted a bird on 4 Apr 2010 (CN †, BPR; 2010-75; 7-0). In *La Plata*, one was at Pastorius Res. on 25 Apr 2010 (JBY †; 2010-17; 7-0). Another in *Silt* on 4 May 2010 (CD; 2010-77; 7-0) furnished the first accepted record for *Garfield*. One foraged in *Colorado City*, *Pueblo*, on 17 May 2010 (DS; 2010-82; 7-0). Lastly, one was at Red Lion SWA on 21 May 2010 (JD †; 2010-36; 7-0). As interbreeding is known to occur and believed to be increasing between Glossy and White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*), the Committee urges observers of hybrids to provide details, as it may become more and more difficult to separate individu-

als of multi-generation cross-breeding.

**American Golden-Plover** – *Pluvialis dominica*. A juvenal-plumaged bird was at Lake John SWA, Jackson, on 2 Nov 2003 (AS, NP; 2003-1004; 7-0), representing a first for the county and North Park.

**Black-billed Cuckoo** – *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (8/24). Two additional records of Black-billed Cuckoo have been accepted.

One at Julesburg SWA near Ovid on 6 Jun 2005 (SL; 2005-162; 7-0) provides the second record of the species for Sedgwick. Another pleased birders at Crow Valley CG, Weld, where it was documented on 15 Jun 2010 (NK †, CWi; 2010-85; 7-0); this represents the second record for Weld as well. The bird was first reported on 8 Jun and was seen by many; it is unfortunate that the historical database will reflect the bird's stay as being only one day. It is interesting that there have been ten accepted records of the species in Colorado from 2000 to 2010, yet only one record was obtained during the period 1990-2000.

**Eastern Whip-poor-will** – *Caprimulgus vociferus* (2/10). With the recent split of "Whip-poor-will" (Chesser et al. 2010), records of members of the *vociferus* group have been officially reclassified as Eastern Whip-poor-will. The species split was based on differences in vocalizations (Hardy et al. 1988, Cink 2002), mi-



Acorn Woodpecker, Niwot, Boulder County, 26 May 2010. Photo by Bill Schmoker

tochondrial and nuclear DNA, and morphology. Accepted records of Eastern Whip-poor-will have mostly been from the eastern portion of the state from 1903 to 2008, from Larimer, El Paso, Las Animas, Sedgwick, Crowley, Moffat, and Pueblo. Acceptance of these records as Eastern Whip-poor-will was based on specimen examination and/or voice descriptions provided by observers.

**Mexican Whip-poor-will** – *Caprimulgus arizonae* (0/1). The one accepted record of Mexican Whip-poor-will for Colorado was of a calling bird tape-recorded at Fosset Gulch, Archuleta, on 22 Jun 1999.

**Acorn Woodpecker** – *Melanerpes formicivorus*. An adult male dined on peanut butter at a residential yard in Niwot, Boulder, where it was present on 25 and 26 May 2010 (DFI, BSc †; 2010-41; 7-0). This is the first record for Boulder and the second northernmost record in the state, the northernmost being of a bird present in

Loveland, *Larimer*, during the fall of 1995. The species still regularly resides in a small colony near Durango, *La Plata*, where documentation to the CBRC is not necessary.

**Alder Flycatcher** – *Empidonax alnorum* (22/32). The CBRC recently deliberated on and accepted three Alder Flycatcher records. In 2007, one was banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 23 May (BM †, SB; 2010-59; 6-1) and another was banded at the same location on 23 May 2009 (BG †; 2009-108; 7-0). This past spring, one was excellently detailed from the town of Hereford, *Weld*, on 19 May 2010 (DAL †; 2010-30; 7-0). One may hypothesize that Alder Flycatch-



*Alder Flycatcher*, Hereford, Weld County, 19 May 2010. Photo by David Leatherman

ers are becoming more prevalent in Colorado, considering that 70% of the records have occurred in the past 10 years; however, it may simply be an artifact of increased education about how to separate it from Willow Flycatcher (*E. traillii*). Although somewhat subjective and inconsistent, the characteristics of a very thin, complete white eyering and overall greener coloration on Alder Flycatchers may sometimes allow for species separation. Many observers now know the difference between the “pip” call of Alder Flycatcher and to the “whit” call of Willow Flycatchers. The publication of Pyle (1997) has also been a great asset to banders, as some measurements also differ between the two species, with Alders generally having slightly longer and more pointed wings and smaller bills, although there is overlap.

**Black Phoebe** – *Sayornis nigricans*. Adding to the historical archive of records for the southwest, an adult was photographed at Lone Dome SWA near Cahone, *Dolores*, on 27 Apr 2002 (AS †; 2002-201; 7-0) and a pair was discovered in Escalante Canyon, *Delta*, on 7 Apr 2007 (NP; 2007-19; 7-0). More recently, Percival provided documentation of continued winter presence of the species in Rock Canyon below Pueblo Res, *Pueblo*, where he photographed one on 1 Dec 2009 (BKP †; 2009-64; 7-0). Establishing the second record for *Boulder* (and only by a year), one was at Twin Lakes in Gunbarrel on 9 May 2010 (WS, MB †, EK; 2010-24; 7-0).

**Blue-headed Vireo** – *Vireo solitar-*

*ius* (18/26). One was at Valco Ponds in Pueblo, *Pueblo*, on 25 Sep 2009 (BKP †; 2009-88; 7-0) and another was at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 6 May 2010 (BKP †, BM; 2010-21; 7-0).

**Pacific Wren** – *Troglodytes pacificus* (1/1). The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) recently split (Chesser et al. 2010) North American populations of Winter Wren (formerly *T. troglodytes*) into two species: Winter Wren (*T. hiemalis*) and Pacific Wren (*T. pacificus*) based on differences in vocalizations (Kroodasma 1980, Hejl et al. 2002), mitochondrial DNA (Drovetski et al. 2004), and the absence of free interbreeding and maintenance of genetic integrity within their contact zone (Toews and Irwin 2008). The "Winter Wren" in the original sense is known to occur in Colorado rarely but regularly, mainly during the winter (Bailey and Niedrach 1965; Andrews and Righter 1992; Righter et al. 2004). The first written mention of a "Winter Wren" in Colorado was in Ridgway (1873), which compiled birds known from Colorado through the specimen collections of Henry Henshaw, Charles Aiken, Martha Maxwell, and others. Marsh (1931) noted that the first record of "Winter Wren" was of a bird recorded by Edwin James in 1802 at Fountain Creek, *El Paso*, on the strange date of 15 Jul, although Phillips (1986) asserted that this first discovery was erroneous.

Based on only three Colorado specimens, Bailey and Niedrach (1965) placed Colorado populations within the *pacificus* group. They also indicated that populations in the

states of Nebraska and Kansas were of *hiemalis*, while birds from Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico were *pacificus*. Phillips (1986) reanalyzed the Colorado specimens and maintained that they actually pertained to *hiemalis* rather than *pacificus*. Andrews and Righter (1992) did not provide information as to the subspecific status of "Winter Wrens" in Colorado, but did suggest that "Winter Wren" was an annual rare fall migrant and winter resident, especially on the Eastern Plains, with fewer than ten reports each year. Farther west, Righter et al. (2004) indicated that there were approximately a dozen records for the far western portion of Colorado and also commented that "Winter Wren" was a rare breeder in the Uinta Mountains of eastern Utah, not far from the Colorado state line.

Chesser et al. (2010) suggested that *hiemalis* winters in eastern Colorado, and indeed, most reports of "Winter Wren" from this portion of the state have been believed by the observers to be of that species. Chesser et al. also noted that summer records of "Winter Wren" in the mountains of Colorado are presumed to be *pacificus*, and based on their analysis, the Utah population would presumably be Pacific Wrens. They did not include Colorado to be within the known wintering range of the species, however.

During the past CBRC circulation, Semo analyzed the three Colorado specimens of "Winter Wren" at the DMNS (all Eastern Plains records, from *Baca*, *Sedgwick*, and *Denver*) and concluded that they are

*hiemalis*, based on plumage patterns. There have been previous reports of Pacific Wren from Colorado, especially during the past decade, when observers started understanding the differences in plumage patterns and calls between the two species. There is one accepted record in the CBRC database of "Winter Wren" from late autumn and early winter in Hotchkiss, *Delta*, in 2002. The CBRC will reanalyze that record soon to attempt to determine which species it may have been. However, no documentation for Pacific Wren was submitted to the CBRC until recently.

The Committee received three records of Pacific Wren in 2010 and has concluded deliberation on one. This bird, barring the discovery of additional specimens from the state, becomes the first established record of Pacific Wren for Colorado. On 2 Jan 2005, a Pacific Wren was found downstream of Two Buttes Res., *Baca* (TL †, CWO; 2010-88; 7-0). The bird clearly displayed the ruddier upperparts coloration and the buffier underparts than an eastern Winter Wren and also voiced its distinctive call, a short, high-pitched doubled "czit" different from the more fluid call of an eastern Winter Wren.

As the occurrence of Winter Wren (*T. hiemalis*) in Colorado is well-supported by specimen evidence as well as annual reports, the CBRC will not require documentation for that species in the state, although we strongly support the documentation of any eastern Winter Wren from western Colorado. However, as we have little information as to the status and dis-

tribution of Pacific Wren, we have now placed the species on the state review list and request full details of all observations until its status and distribution are more fully known.

**Varied Thrush** – *Ixoreus naevius* (25/40). A first for CBR was one on the *Pueblo* side of the ranch on 15 Oct 2009 (BKP †, BM; 2009-117; 7-0). An immature female came to a feeder in south Boulder, *Boulder*, from 1 Nov through 5 Dec 2009 (AI †; 2009-107; 7-0). Another female, this one an adult, came to a feeder in Boulder on 6 Jan 2010 (BM †; 2010-02; 7-0).

**Worm-eating Warbler** – *Helminthos vermivorus*. Although the species is not on the state review list, documentation was received of one from CBR, *Pueblo*, where it was discovered on 9 May 2010 (BKP †, KS; 2010-25; 7-0). This is the first record for CBR and the third for *Pueblo*. The previous two records for the county were from 1973.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (14/28). An immature bird was near the intersection of CRs 20 and 61 in *Sedgwick* on 8 Oct 2005 (SL; 2010-62; 7-0). The Committee apologizes to the finder for its tardiness in circulating this record. Returning for its third year, the Golden-crowned Sparrow at Tunnel Drive, *Fremont*, was documented from the period 20 Dec 2009 through 19 Apr 2010 (BKP †, RM; 2009-112; 7-0). Another was discovered at Red Rocks near Morrison, *Jefferson*, and was documented on 3 Jan 2010 (BSc †, BB; 2010-01; 7-0). It is disconcerting that the bird was first found ear-

## Color Photo Gallery



Cape May Warbler, Stulp Farm,  
Prowers County, 26 Apr 2010.  
Photo by Jane Stulp



Wood Thrush, Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo  
County, 2 May 2010. Photo by Bill May-  
nard



Common Black-Hawk, Foun-  
tain Creek Regional Park, El Paso  
County, 17 May 2010. Photo by  
Kirk Huffstater



Short-eared Owl, Washington County, 15  
May 2010. Photo by Mark Chavez

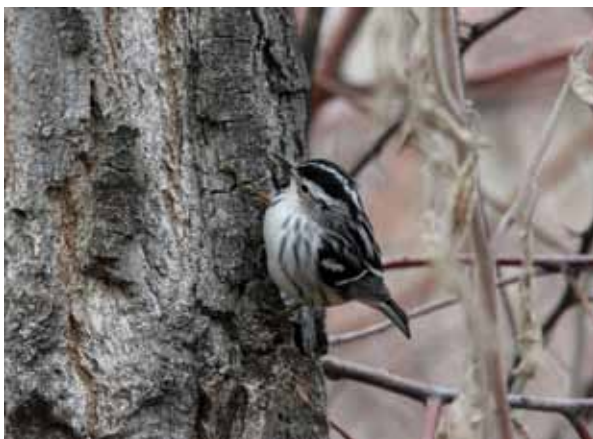


*Summer Tanager,*  
*Cope, Washington*  
*County, 24 Apr*  
*2010. Photo by*  
*Christopher Wood*



*Swainson's Warbler,*  
*Cheyenne County, 7*  
*May 2010. Photo by*  
*Joey Kellner*

*Black-and-white War-*  
*bler, Lamar Commu-*  
*nity College, Prowers*  
*County, 23 Apr 2010.*  
*Photo by David*  
*Leatherman*







*Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso County, 17 Apr 2010. Photo by Bryan Patrick*



*Yellow-throated Warbler, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 10 April 2010. Photo by Joe Roller*



*Kentucky Warbler, Stulp Farm, Prowers County, 22 Apr 2010. Photo by Jane Stulp*



*Northern Parula, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 1 May 2010. Photo by Bryan Patrick*



*Eastern Wood-Pewee,  
Grandview Cemetery,  
Prowers County, 22  
May 2010. Photo by  
David Leatherman*

*White-eyed Vireo,  
Lamar Community Col-  
lege, Prowers County,  
30 April 2010. Photo  
by Glenn Walbek*



*Tennessee Warbler, Last  
Chance, Washington  
County, 13 May 2010.  
Photo by Mark Chavez*



lier during the Denver CBC and remained into spring, yet posterity will only know that it was present for one day, as no other documentation of its stay was submitted.

### **RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED**

The Committee recognizes that its “not accepted” decisions may upset those individuals whose documentations did not receive endorsement as state records. We heartily acknowledge that those who make the effort to submit documentation certainly care whether or not their reports are accepted. However, non-accepted reports do not necessarily suggest that the observer misidentified or did not see the species. A non-accepted report only indicates that the documentation did not provide enough evidence to support the identification of the species reported in the opinion of at least three of the seven Committee members. Many non-accepted reports do not adequately describe the bird(s) observed or adequately rule out similarly looking species. The Committee recommends that observers refer to the article written by Tony Leukering on documenting rare birds (Leukering 2004), which is available online through the CBRC website ([http://www.cfo-link/records\\_committee/CBRC\\_articles.php](http://www.cfo-link/records_committee/CBRC_articles.php)). All non-accepted reports 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.

**Red-throated Loon** – *Gavia stellata*. This is yet another highly probable report of a rare species to not be accepted by the Committee due to a deficient written description. In this case, the documentation for a Red-throated Loon in basic plumage at Pueblo Reservoir on 30 Nov 2007 contained a 12-word written description and an even briefer rationale for eliminating similar species (2007-1886; 3-4). Support for the report centered on three photos submitted by the observer. However, in the opinion of most Committee members, the photos were of poor quality and, although suggestive, not diagnostic by themselves. Several dissenting Committee members expressed their regret that the written description was not more thorough.

**Glossy Ibis** – *Plegadis falcinellus*. The observer of a pair of *Plegadis* ibis at Bighorn Lake, Eagle, near Vail, on 2 May 2010, admitted to the uncertainty of the birds’ identity (2010-19; 0-7). Any ibis is rare in Colorado’s high mountains, and the observer apparently submitted this report due to that rarity. Unfortunately, there was too little detail in the report for the Committee to determine specific identity and the documentation received no support as the reported species.

**Swallow-tailed Kite** – *Elanoides forficatus*. The report of one over Boulder on 17 Oct 2009 mentioned only that the bird had a long, swallow-like tail (2009-105; 0-7). The reporting individual noted that the bird’s coloration was not obvious

(the observation occurred while the observer was driving at dusk), but the bird appeared to be dark overall. Since Swallow-tailed Kites are strongly patterned black and white, and the only characteristic noted was the tail shape, most Committee members felt that there was too little information to accept this as the state's fifth record and the first since 1993.

**Little Gull** – *Larus minutus*. The documentation of a Little Gull at Chatfield State Park, Douglas/Jefferson, on 20 Sept 2002, provided more enlivened comments than most contentious reports in recent memory (2002-180; 4-3, 4-3, 4-3). Spurring some of this debate was the bird's description as antithetical to the reported age. The observer, reporting the gull's plumage as juvenal, provided a description that more closely allied itself to that of 1<sup>st</sup> winter plumage. This brings to light an interesting dilemma that the Committee occasionally must tackle – that is, a bird described as a different age or sex than reported. The reasonable presumption is that the majority of identifications are based on plumage, so the dichotomy between reported age/sex and the written description rightly calls into question the overall species identification. This report contained no photos and the majority of Committee members felt that there were significant, irresolvable issues regarding the bird's identity.

**Unknown Species.** Documentation of a bird of unknown identity coming to a residential feeder in Brighton, Adams, on 20 Jul 2009, did not pass the Committee despite

submission of photos (2009-76; 1-6). The majority of Committee members stated their belief that the bird was possibly a lovebird (*Agapornis* sp.). The Committee is charged with reviewing submitted documentation, even if the observer is uncertain of the bird's identity, to 1) try to establish an identity, and 2) ascertain provenance and suitability as a naturally occurring vagrant. It is conceivable that an observer may submit documentation of a bird unknown to them that the Committee may identify and accept to the state list (e.g., a photographed storm-petrel). In this case, identity could not be fully established.

**Snow Bunting** – *Plectrophenax nivalis*. The report of 12 Snow Buntings along Highway 50 in Delta on 13 Jan 2010 received minimal support from the Committee (2010-06; 1-6). Dissenting members felt that the description of these birds as "mostly white with light-brown markings" and "underside of bird and wings were white" was inconsistent with winter-plumaged Snow Buntings. Snow Buntings have dark gray/black primaries that are sharply demarcated by white on both upper- and underwing. The description provided in the report is more reminiscent of Horned Lark. Further suggesting a probable misidentification is the observer's note that she sees Snow Buntings on "almost every trip....to Grand Junction during the winter." Righter et al. (2004) states that Snow Buntings are very rare in western Colorado and it is hard to imagine that all but one of the West Slope's birders is miss-

ing this species on their drives along Highway 50 in winter.

**Blackburnian Warbler** – *Dendroica fusca*. This is the second report of an adult male Blackburnian Warbler to not be accepted by the Committee in the past year (see Semo and Faulkner 2010 for the other report) due to a too brief description (2010-23; 3-4). Observers of both birds focused their descriptions on the bright orange underparts coloration with minimal additional information. For this report of one at Boulder on 8

May 2010, in addition to the bird's warbler-like size the observer noted, "deep, bright orange throat, black and orange head, black and white wings" for the entire extent of the written description. This certainly describes a Blackburnian Warbler, but it can also describe an adult male Olive Warbler. We reiterate the Committee's necessary lack of imagination and urge observers to provide thorough descriptions in light of the fact that Committee members were not there to see the bird.

## REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

The CBRC graciously thanks the following individuals for submitting records of or discovering rare species in Colorado that prompted this circulation: JBy: Jim Beatty; MB: Michael Blatchley; Maureen Briggs; BB: Bob Brown; GB: Glenda Brown; SB: Steven Brown; CD: Coen Dexter; JD: John Drummond; DFL: Dave Fletcher; BG: Brian Gibbons; AJ: Arlette Julian; EK: Elena Klaver; NK: Nick Komar; Catherine Labio; SL: Steve Larson; DAL: David A. Leatherman; ML: Mark Lockwood; BM: Bill Maynard; RM: Rich Miller; CN: Christian Nunes; BKP: Brandon K. Percival; NP: Nathan Pieplow; BPr: Bill Prather; Anna Richards; BSc: Bill Schmoker; Heather Schultz; LS: Larry Semo; KS: Kelly Shipe; RS: Randy Siebert; DS: David Silverman; AS: Andrew Spencer; WS: Walter Szeliga; CWi: Cole Wild, CLW: Christopher L. Wood.

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## THE HUNGRY BIRD

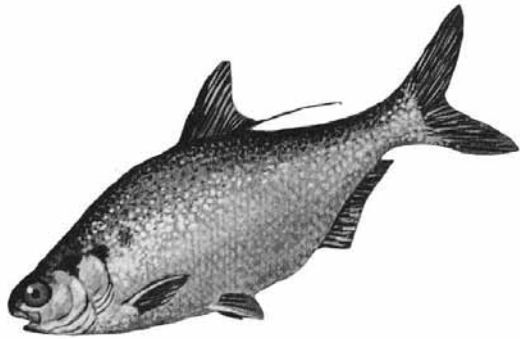
### Gizzard Shad

*Dave Leatherman*

If you like to watch and/or photograph diving ducks, cormorants, pelicans, loons, grebes, gulls, terns, jaegers, and waders—or like to eat walleye, catfish, or crappie—it would behoove you to learn about your local gizzard shad, a favorite food fish of the species above.

One of the first phrases out of Steve Flickinger's mouth during our conversation about gizzard shad was "fish boils." Gizzard shad is the

organism behind the chaos when fish “boil” at the water’s surface and are then pursued by birds. Shad are often the reason for huge congregations of mergansers and gulls on some of our reservoirs and lakes in late autumn and early winter. Likewise, following ice melt in late winter and early spring, shad often form the



*Gizzard Shad (Dorosoma cepedianum)*. Illustration by Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

bulk of “fishkills” leading to ephemeral, but sometimes spectacular, build-ups of avian scavengers. It is quite likely that most of us got our first Colorado Mew or Glaucous Gull, cormorant lacking two crests, uncommon loon, or jaeger due (directly or indirectly) to shad.

The gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*) belongs to the same family, Clupeidae, as seven other North American freshwater species of herrings, shad, and alewife. Nearly 200 additional clupeid species reside in saltwater, including some of our most valuable commercial species, like menhaden and sardines. Clupeids are compressed laterally and lack a lateral line along the body and scales on the head. Their body scales are cycloid, meaning they have round rear edges and are smooth to the touch, but along the bottom of the body the scales come together like roof shingles, forming a rough “keel.” Clupeids have one dorsal fin and fatty, conspicuous eyelids that close from the front and back like curtains. Perhaps the easiest way to recognize the gizzard shad is its round shape, plain silvery coloration, black blotch behind and a little above the gills, mouth set somewhat below the very front of the head, and uniquely shaped dorsal fin. This top fin is a triangular, spineless structure with a very long, drawn out last ray that extends like a boom over the body, well over halfway to the front of the tail (Fig. 1).

Despite its name, this fish does not have a true gizzard, but does possess a highly muscular stomach used to separate food items from the bottom “ooze” and detritus they ingest. These stomachs (a.k.a. “gizzards”) are often sold as persistent bait to people fishing for predators of the shad, like catfish.

Gizzard shad probably never occurred naturally in Colorado, but they have been introduced into many of the familiar big birding reservoirs on the Eastern Plains. On occasion they can also be found in small impoundments and even some streams. Under the right conditions, these warmwater fish can become abundant and form key links in local, low-elevation food chains. Shad usually spawn in late spring and early summer, with each female laying an impressive 200,000 to 500,000 eggs that hatch in three to seven days, depending on female size and water temperature, respectively. Interestingly, young shad are tubular and have teeth for capturing small zooplankton prey, but when they reach about one inch in length, they lose their teeth, flatten out, and settle into their mode of feeding on the bottom and straining detritus.

While gizzard shad can grow to 18 inches (the world record is over three pounds), Colorado shad average smaller. This is because of population setbacks caused by periodic winters cold enough to cause ice cover exceeding 100 days. The way Dr. Flickinger put it, "Unlike southern states where gizzard shad grow quickly, in Colorado young-of-the-year will be 2-4 inches by fall: Age 1 specimens will be 4-8 inches, making gizzard shad vulnerable for two summers to predators that have to swallow prey whole." The smaller growth habit of Colorado shad is good for birds, because a lot of little food fish benefit more individual birds of more species than a somewhat stagnant population of big fish. When birders bemoan a water body not being as good for rare birds this year as it was in the past, a depletion of shad over a cold winter may be the explanation. Shad live about 6-7 years, at most.

Among the fish that eat shad are so-called "temperate basses" in the family Moronidae (striped bass, white bass, and hybrids like "wipers"); members of the family Centrarchidae (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and crappie); members of the family Percidae (walleye and others); and catfish in the family Ictaluridae. Trout are not important shad predators.

When predaceous fish pursue a school of shad, the potential prey often respond by surfacing. According to John Goettl, Jr., shad tend to spend the day in tight schools, usually below the surface, but late in the day may distribute themselves rather evenly and closer to the surface. Regardless of what brings them to the top, the resultant flash of many tasty, live fish is visible to swimming waterfowl. Mergansers and large grebes are among the more conspicuous species commonly capitalizing on shad. Flying birds such as Osprey and eagles can see surfaced shad, either alive or floating, and often respond. Kleptoparasitic birds, particularly non-diving types like gulls, tend to key in



on the activities of bird species directly feeding on shad, and often launch into thievery mode. Then there are the specialized scoundrels like jaegers, who steal from the stealers, chasing down a fish-carrying gull and forcing it to give up its pilferage. What flies around comes around.

When the ice disappears from water bodies in late winter and early spring, shad often constitute a goodly percentage of the floating bounty for scavengers. This is when larophile networks work overtime to identify productive hunting grounds, with the best locations often changing daily. It is hard to find something more attractive to gulls than a landfill, but a reservoir full of belly-up shad gives it a run.

To find shad-laden water, check as many lakes and reservoirs as you can in October and November for concentrations of mergansers, Ring-billed Gulls, and “fish boils.” Read between the lines on the RBA or posts on COBirds. Since the Colorado Division of Wildlife routinely does fish censuses via netting or electroshocking, you might get to know your local District Wildlife Manager and ask what these surveys noted about the presence or absence of shad. Regardless of how you find shad, rest assured that if you persist in checking situations where they are abundant, either alive or dead, before long you will find a spectacle or two, and eventually rarities.

Here is a final anecdote to emphasize the attractiveness of shad to birds. John Goettl, Jr., told of his experience during a CDOW survey at North Sterling Reservoir in the 1980's, when an American White Pelican approached the team's 5-gallon bucket full of 2-4 inch shad, ate the entire contents (well over 20 pounds of fish), and could not fly until it brought them back to the surface yet again.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I greatly appreciate Dr. Steve Flickinger, formerly of Colorado State University's Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology Department, and John Goettl, Jr., former Fisheries Biologist with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, for letting me interview them on 31 August 2010 and 7 September 2010, respectively. Any factual errors presented above are mine.

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# Salida

*Sherrie York*

If all you see of Salida is the Highway 50 “strip,” you’re missing the laid-back charm of our historic downtown. You’re probably also missing birding hotspots Sands Lake and Frantz Lake. Get off the highway and stay awhile, and check out the following downtown favorites. (If you really have to get on down the road, I’ll list some Highway 50 options, too.)

## Downtown

F Street is the main drag from Highway 50 to the Arkansas River. The one and only downtown traffic light is at the intersection of F and 1<sup>st</sup> Streets. All of the following options are within two or three blocks of that intersection. Of course there are plenty more places to check out, but start here!

**Salida Café** (formerly Bongo Billy’s Salida Café), 300 W. Sackett, next to the river. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Baked goods, full breakfast menu, soup, salad, and sandwich meals with some specialty dinners (like Thai food nights). Full menu of coffee drinks, tea, beer, and wine. Brunch menu only on Sundays. Live music most weekend nights, outside deck and seating area next to the river. Bird from your table! Free Wi-Fi.

**Boat House Cantina**, 228 N. F Street (on the river, end of F Street at the bridge). Sandwiches, salads, tacos, burgers, chili, full

bar. Service can be uneven and food is generally “bar fare,” but if you get a seat by the river you can watch the dippers under the bridge.

**The Fritz**, 113 E. Sackett (across from Riverside Park). New in town, the Fritz is a tapas bar, serving sandwiches



*Salida Cafe*

for lunch, small and large plates in the evening.

**Mama D's**, 140 N. F Street. Lunch only. Inexpensive sandwiches, hot dogs, salads, soft-serve ice cream (seasonally). Mama D's is the closest you'll come to fast food downtown. Hint: The 3" sandwich is



*Café Dawn*

more like 5"; I like the chicken salad on rye with everything. Get your meal to go and have a picnic down the street in Riverside Park.

**Benson's Tavern**, 128 N. F Street. Lunch and dinner; soup, salad, sandwiches, burgers, some full entrees. A good reuben sandwich and fries can be had here. Full bar, outside patio, live music on the weekends.

**First Street Café**, 137 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (corner of 1<sup>st</sup> & E). Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Hours vary by season. Usually closed Mondays, and often closed for about a month in the autumn. Their Monte Cristo sandwich has a loyal following; I like the grilled tuna steak.

**Simmering Cup**, 105 F Street (near the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> & F). Breakfast, sandwiches, baked goods, Boulder ice cream, coffee. We give it an A for chic décor, but the household coffee drinker gave the brew a C. Can't beat Boulder ice cream, though. Coconut crunch, *mmmm!* Free Wi-Fi.

**Café Dawn**, 203 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (corner of 1<sup>st</sup> & G). Breakfast and lunch, happy hour (6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. daily). Coffee, tea, baked goods, light lunch offerings, beer and wine. Café staff take great care with every cup of coffee and pot of tea! Free Wi-Fi. (Note: Cash or checks only, no plastic.)

**Amica's**, 136 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (between F and E Streets). Lunch and dinner. Wood-fired pizza, calzones, panini, salads, and their own microbrews. The beer drinker in this house likes the IPA and the chili beer. The non-beer drinker likes the house-brewed root beer. (They'll make you a fabulous root beer float with it!) It's all good. Can be really busy, especially evenings, but they've got a system and keep things moving.



*Amica's*

**Moonlight Pizza**, corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and G Streets. Pizza with superpowers! We eat our share of Full Moon and Spicy Chicken Moon pies at this house. Eat in, take out or local delivery.

**Great Wall Chinese**, 139 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> (along 3<sup>rd</sup> between F and G). Decent Chinese food at a good price, especially lunch. Lunch menu items include entrée,

rice, egg roll, and soup for \$7-9 dollars. Service is fast and friendly.

### Highway 50 Options

Highway 50 hosts the usual assortment of fast food chains, but we also like a few options for local eateries:

**Quincy's**, 710 Milford Ave. (Highway 50 and Milford). Dinner only. Fixed menu. Filet mignon, starting at \$7.95, is served Monday through Thursday and prime rib, starting at \$9.95, is served Friday and Saturday. All dinners include a dinner salad, a baked potato with choice of butter and/or sour cream, and bread.

**Manjati's** (formerly the Windmill), 720 E. Rainbow Blvd. (Highway 50). Lunch and dinner. Italian and pizza. Manjati's is a new personality and menu for the more than 25-year-old restaurant at this location.

**Patio Pancake Place**, 640 E. Rainbow Blvd. (Highway 50). Breakfast and lunch. Solid homestyle food; great pancakes and hash browns. Service is quick, even when the place is packed, which it often is on weekends. Reasonably priced.

**Sacred Ground/Mountain Phoenix Coffee Roasters**, 216 W. Rainbow Blvd. (Highway 50 at G Street). Local coffee roaster, open mornings and early afternoons only. Coffee, tea, baked goods. Breakfast burritos. Free Wi-Fi.

**Country Bounty**, 413 W. Rainbow Blvd. (Highway 50 at Holman Ave.). Breakfast, lunch, dinner, homemade pies. Extensive and varied menu, primarily "American" fare. Outdoor patio. Popular with families and large groups.

**Twisted Cork**, 8048 Highway 50 (west of and opposite Wal-Mart). Lunch and dinner. Sandwiches, rice and noodle dishes including pad thai, curries, and shrimp scampi. Dinner entrees range from filet mignon to several tasty fish dishes. Wines from the local Mountain Spirit Winery. Outdoor patio on the “Little” Arkansas.

**Los Girasoles**, 135 W. Highway 50 (in Poncha Springs; look for the big chrome horse). Lunch and dinner. Quick and friendly service; good Mexican food for a reasonable price. I like the chile rellenos; other favorites in this house are the burrito Colorado and the Number Twelve (taco and enchilada combo). Lunch specials.

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## Spring 2010 (March–May)

*Joel and Marcel Such*

Another spring has come and gone, and with it the many colorful, rare, and intriguing migrants that birders long for during the drab winter months. And what a spring it was, with numerous reports of such birds as Northern Parula, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, and Northern Waterthrush, which were among the thirty-nine species of warblers found this spring. Also, there were an astonishing three reports of Connecticut Warblers. One was banded at the legendary Chico Basin Ranch in *El Paso*, another was reported from Lamar Community College in *Prowers*, and the third was found at Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, where it stayed for a couple of days to be seen by a few lucky and persistent people. These birds will make the tenth through twelfth state records, if accepted by the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC). This spring also had the ninth state record of a well-documented Common Black-Hawk in *El Paso*.

The shorebirds were quite diverse this year, with twenty-six species being reported, the highlight being a single Hudsonian Godwit found in *Weld*. In *Boulder*, Clover Basin Reservoir was just another medium-sized, barbed-wire encased, privately-owned reservoir until it was transformed almost overnight into the shorebirding Mecca of the Front Range as the lake was drained for dam repair. It claimed an incredible twenty-two species of shorebirds over the month-long period of its drainage, including a Piping Plover which stayed for two days, and which many people were able to see.

As for the season's weather (NWSFO, 2010), March started the period off with an average of 41°F, 1.4 degrees above the norm in the Denver area. April had an average of 47.8°F, only 0.2° above normal. It was looking like it was going to be in the top ten driest Aprils, except for some large rainstorms late in the month, bumping the precipitation number up to 2.51 inches, 0.58 above the average. May started out as one of the top ten coldest Mays Denver has seen, but warmer temperatures brought the average back up to 54°F, only 3.2 degrees below the norm. Overall, the weather was fairly ho-hum, with only a couple mediocre fronts and resulting songbird fallouts, though there were still some impressive shorebird and waterbird numbers. On a slightly different note, many migrants were a week or two late, no doubt due to colder temperatures south of the Colorado border.

"News from the Field" contains news and reports of birds sighted

in Colorado. The news is compiled from online discussion groups and rare bird alerts (RBAs), with valuable contributions from a large network of statewide informants.

We would like to thank the many regular contributors for sharing their sightings, as well as the regional compilers for adding their insight to county and regional rarities and breeding species. No matter what your level of expertise, you are encouraged to send your bird reports to COBirds, [cobirds@googlegroups.com](mailto:cobirds@googlegroups.com), eBird, <https://ebird.org/ebird/>, and/or West Slope Birding News, [wsbn@yahoogroups.com](mailto:wsbn@yahoogroups.com), where all sightings are compiled and tabulated by your regional compilers and the Chair of the CBRC, who then sends them in taxonomic order, along with comments, to the "News from the Field" editor for summary.

**Note 1** – The reports contained herein are largely unchecked, and the report editors do not necessarily vouch for their authenticity. Underlined species are those for which the Colorado Bird Records Committee requests documentation. You should submit your sightings through the CFO website at <http://www.cfo-link.org/CBRC/login.php5>. This is the preferred method of submitting rarity records. However, if you are "technologically impaired" and need a hard copy form, use the one on the inside of this journal's mailing cover. Mailed documentation of rarities should be sent to the chairperson, Larry Semo (address on form).

**Note 2** – The name of the county is listed in *italics*.

**Abbreviations:** **CBR** – Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso/Pueblo*; **CBRC** – Colorado Birds Record Committee; **CR** – county road; **CVCG** – Crow Valley Campground; **FCRP** – Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*; **LCCW** – Lamar Community College Woods, *Prowers*; **m.ob.** – many observers; **doc.** – documentation was submitted to the CBRC; **no doc.** – no documentation was submitted to the CBRC; **NWR** – national wildlife refuge; **Res** – Reservoir; **RMNP** – Rocky Mountain National Park; **SP** – state park; **SLV** – San Luis Valley; **SWA** – state wildlife area; **WS** – western slope.

### **Greater White-fronted Goose:**

Seven reports totaling thirty-nine individuals came this season from five counties (*Fremont, La Plata, Mesa, Montrose, and Weld*). The high count of sixteen came from Walter Walker SWA, *Mesa*, on 25 Mar (DSH). A report of a single bird in Nucla, *Montrose*, on 26 Apr (CDe, BW) was a

first for that county. This last report is rendered even more notable as this species is generally casual after 1 Apr.

**Snow Goose:** A single late bird in Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 8 May (BKP, VT) was considered likely to summer. (Note: It did indeed summer, but you're not supposed to know that until the next issue of this journal.)

**Ross's Goose:** A rare dark-morph Ross's Goose was reported on CR 2 near the Yuma county line in *Phillips* on 6 Mar (JRo, RL). There were three additional reports of "regular" white-morph birds from both *Fremont* and *Montezuma*.

**Trumpeter Swan:** The only report this season was of a single bird in Gunnison, *Gunnison*, on 28 Mar (KSc). As a note of warning, some of these swans in Colorado are escapees from captivity, and the usual caution should be observed.

**Tundra Swan:** There were three reports of this bird for the season. The first, of two to four birds, came from Grand Junction, *Mesa*, 1-17 Mar (m.ob.). The second, of two birds, was from CBR, *Pueblo*, on 6 Mar (BM). The last, of a single adult, came from Monte Vista NWR, *Rio Grande*, 6-10 Apr (JRa, LR, JP).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** There were three reports of this rare dabbling. The first was of an adult male in Grand Junction, *Mesa*, 14-15 Mar (LS, m.ob., no doc.). The second was of a male found at Turks Pond near Walsh, *Baca*, on 28 Mar (MP, BS, NMo, no doc.). The third was the only report of a female, from Haxtun, *Phillips*, on 2 Apr (TD, doc.).

**Eurasian × American Wigeon:** There was only one report of this hybrid, from Thurston Res., *Prowers*, on 28 Mar (MP, BS, NMo, no doc.).

**"Mexican Duck":** There were two reports of this rare southern subspecies of Mallard. Surprisingly, both reports came on the same day (6 Apr), but from opposite sides of the state: the first from Walden Ponds, *Boulder*

(WSz, no doc.), and the other from Monte Vista NWR, *Rio Grande* (JRa, LR, JP, no doc.).

**Blue-winged × Cinnamon Teal:** A very interesting individual of this combination returned to Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, for its ninth season in a row starting on 6 Apr (WSz).

**Cinnamon Teal:** A second or third county record was provided by two found at Silverton Ponds, *San Juan*, on 2 May (RL).

**Greater Scaup:** There were three reports of this generally oceanic diving duck, totaling four birds. The first report, of a male and female, came from Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, 23-24 Mar (BKP); the second, of a female, from Lake Beckwith, Colorado City, *Pueblo*, 25-26 Mar (DSi); and the third, of a male, from Denny Lake, *Montezuma*, on 9 Apr (JG, DG).

**Long-tailed Duck:** There were three reports totaling five individuals. The high count of three, one male and two females, came from 88<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Colorado Blvd., *Adams*, 3-11 Mar (BPa). The last two, both from 6 Mar, came from Pueblo Res., *Pueblo* (BKP) and Big Johnson Res., *El Paso* (DC).

**Common Goldeneye:** A single bird on CR 2 near the Yuma line on 6 Mar (JRo, RL) was a very rare find for *Phillips*.

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** There were nine reports in eight counties (*Boulder*, *Eagle*, *Fremont*, *Garfield*, *Jefferson*, *Larimer*, *Moffat*, *Pueblo*) this season. The high count was of 52+ at Spring Park Res., *Eagle*, 22 Apr-11 May (DFi).

**Hooded Merganser:** There were two somewhat late reports this spring.



The first came from Home Lake, *Alamosa*, on 18 Apr (JBe); and the second, of a female-type bird, came from CBR, *Pueblo*, on 12 May (BKP).

**Hooded Merganser × Common Goldeneye:** A male of this very rare and interesting hybrid was found at the “southwest corner pond” of Chatfield SP, *Jefferson*, on 13 Mar (TD).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** There were three reports of late migrants representing at least five individuals. At least two females were found at Rifle, *Garfield*, on 4 Apr (AD), and two males were found at Harvey Gap Res., *Garfield*, also on 4 Apr (AD). The last report was of a single male at Denny Lake, *Montezuma*, on 30 Apr (JG, DG).

**Ruddy Duck:** Some wintered in the Denver area; a single early migrant male was seen at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, 23-24 Mar (BKP).

**Dusky Grouse:** In a very odd sighting, a probable Dusky Grouse was found at the Nix Natural Area, near downtown Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 23 May (fide ED). This would be about 1,000 feet lower in elevation than would be generally expected (Andrews, 1992), and certainly in the wrong habitat. However, the pictures clearly depict a grouse with thick, short legs, slate gray back and neck, and a dark tail with a broad terminal light-gray band.

**Gambel's Quail:** Six of this southwestern species were found at the Ute Mountain Tribal Park, *Montezuma*, on 14 May (JBe, m.ob.) during the Cortez Birding Festival. The population in extreme southwestern Colorado is local and not regularly reported, al-

though observations appear to be increasing.

**Common Loon:** With fifteen reports totaling thirty-one birds, this species was seen in nearly all the major regions of the state in a total of twelve counties. The high count of five came from Rifle Gap Res., *Garfield*, on 4 Apr (AD).

**Least Bittern:** There was only one report this season, which came from Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, on 24 May (MAR, doc.).

**Great Egret:** A rare Yampa Valley bird was one found in Steamboat Springs, *Routt*, on 6 Apr (CDo).

**Little Blue Heron:** With three reports totaling four birds, this season was right around average for this southeastern wader. One adult, and sometimes two, were found at Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, 12 Apr-25 May (WSz), which was a very long stay for this bird. Another adult was found at Sheridan Lake, *Kiowa*, on 24 Apr (DM). The final report of the season came from Teller Lake, *Boulder*, on 6 May (JLa).

**Tricolored Heron:** With two reports of single birds, this season was right around average. The first was found at Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, 5-6 May (LG, MF, TFr, ED, doc.). A first record for *Fremont* was furnished by a bird at Holicum Wetlands, *Portland*, 18-23 May (RM, m.ob., doc.).

**Cattle Egret:** This season had eight reports away from this largely terrestrial egret's usual haunts on the eastern plains. These reports came from *Broomfield*, *Chaffee*, *Custer*, *Fremont*, *La Plata*, and *Routt*.

**Green Heron:** There was a single

bird at DeWeese Res., Custer, 11-25 May (RM). A rare find for *La Plata* was of one at the Mercy Hospital Wetlands on 30 May (EL, PL).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** There were two reports of this eastern heron. The first came from Hanson Nature Area, Fountain, *El Paso*, 16-22 Apr (KL, m.ob., doc.). The second report came from Fort Collins, *Larimer*, 20-21 Apr (DE, RHo, doc.).

**Glossy Ibis:** This southeastern species has expanded rapidly, and so too have the number of reports. Nearly unheard of before the turn of the century, this species and its hybrids aren't too terribly hard to find if you spend a lot of time examining every flock of White-faced Ibis you encounter on the eastern plains. There were twelve reports (only five of which were documented) totaling sixteen birds across the state. The East Slope counties that had reports are *Arapahoe*, *Bent*, *Logan*, *Otero*, *Prowers*, *Pueblo*, and *Weld*. There were four reports from the WS. The first, of up to three birds, came from Pastorius SWA, *La Plata*, 24 Apr-12 May (SA, JBe, doc.). Three birds were found at Yampa River SWA, *Routt*, 6-9 May (CDo, FL, TL, no doc.). The other WS counties that had reports were *Eagle* and *Garfield*.

**Glossy × White-faced Ibis:** There was only one bird reported this season, at CR 6 and Highway 6 in *Washington* on 19 May (TJ, no doc.). There were likely many more mistakenly passed off as "regular" or pure White-faced Ibis, or simply not reported.

**White-faced Ibis:** The spectacular high count of 500+ came from Yampa

River SWA, *Routt*, 6-7 May (FL, CDo, TL).

**Mississippi Kite:** Two individuals of this small, insect-eating raptor species were found out of range at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 16 May (BM, m.ob.).

**Common Black-Hawk:** An excellent and rare find was one found and enjoyed by many at FCRP, Fountain, *El Paso*, 16-17 May (KL, LE, m.ob., doc.).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** With a whopping thirty reports representing up to thirty-seven individuals, this season had an excellent showing. The first report came on the very early date of 5 Mar at Lee Martinez Park, Fort Collins, *Larimer* (RS); given that the species hadn't even been reported in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas at that point, the CBRC would like to request documentation on this individual. The last report of the season came on 25 May at Frog Pond, Colorado City, *Pueblo* (DSi). The high count of eight came from Dinosaur Ridge Hawkwatch, *Jefferson*, on 1 May (SS).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** The last bird reported this season was seen on *Routt* CR 80, *Routt*, on the late date of 18 Apr (CDo).

**American Kestrel:** A single female of this uncommon species for *San Juan* was found there on 2 May (RL).

**Gyrfalcon:** A very rare spring find, a "light, almost tan" Gyrfalcon at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, *Jefferson*, on 6 Mar (IS, MC, no doc.) was also possibly seen at Table Mountain, *Jefferson*, on the same date (DM, no doc.).

**Black Rail:** There were two reports of this tiny, elusive rail this season,

both from the highly productive location of the marshes around Fort Lyon, *Bent*. Six were found on 27 Apr (BKP) and two were found on the later date of 2 May (DM).

**Sandhill Crane:**

An uncommon sighting in *La Plata* was of six spring migrants at Zink's Pond on 2 Mar (JZ).

**Black-bellied Plover:** Rare in the Yampa Valley, at least five separate birds were found at Yampa River SWA, *Routt*, 1-13 May (CDo, FL, TL). The species is also uncommon in the SLV, where one was found at San Luis Lake, *Alamosa*, on 24 May (JBe).

**American Golden-Plover:** There were two reports of this rare "grass-piper." The first came from Clover Basin Res., *Boulder*, on 6 May (JT). The second report came from Yampa River SWA, *Routt*, 9-10 May (TL, FL, CDo), providing a first *Routt* record.

**Snowy Plover:** There was only one report of this species, of ten individuals at Lake Cheraw, *Otero*, on 27 Apr (BKP).

**Semipalmated Plover:** There were two reports of this species on the WS, where it is somewhat uncommon. One came from Pastorius SWA, *La Plata*, 28 Apr-2 May (JBe, m.ob.). The other came on 6 May from Yampa River SWA, *Routt* (CDo, FL).

**Piping Plover:** There was only one report of this plover, from Clover Basin Res., *Boulder*, 6-7 May (JT).



*Tricolored Heron, Holcim Marsh, Fremont County, 22 May 2010. Photo by Bill Maynard*

**Black-necked Stilt:** The first reports of the season came on 11 Apr at both Lower Latham Res., *Weld* (SRi), and Rio Blanco Res., *Rio Blanco* (DH). The other counties in which they were found away from their southeastern Colorado stronghold were *Fremont*, *La Plata*, *Moffat*, and *Pueblo*.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Early was one found at Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on 1 Apr (MHd, DK). An uncommon spring report for *Moffat* was of a bird at Loudy- Simpson Park in *Craig* on 7 May (FL).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** A very early report was of one found at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 3 Mar (MK et al.).

**Willet:** Five were found at the Colorado 149 Ponds in *Mineral* on 1 May (RL), possibly furnishing a first county record. Additionally, six more were found at the Silverton Ponds, *San Juan*, on 2 May (RL), which is yet another possible county first.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Two birds

were found on CR 78 between 257 and the *Larimer* line in *Weld* on 10 Apr (SRi).

**Whimbrel:** The high count of nine came from Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on 13 May (CK, m.ob.). A very rare sighting for the Yampa Valley was of one at Yampa River SWA in Hayden, *Routt*, on 7 May (FL). Other counties with sightings include *Adams*, *Boulder*, *Kiowa*, and *Pueblo*.

**Long-billed Curlew:** The high count of twelve came from Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, on 19 Apr (DH). Other counties with sightings include *Custer*, *Moffat*, *Pueblo*, and *Routt*.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** An excellent find was a single bird at Beebe Draw, *Weld*, on 14 May (JH, no doc.).

**Marbled Godwit:** The first report of the season came from *Rio Blanco* Res., *Rio Blanco*, on 5 Apr (AT). The astounding high count of 131, far above average, was from Hayden's Merrill Ranch, *Routt*, on 28 Apr (NMe et al.).

**Sanderling:** The first report of the season came from Pastorius SWA, *La Plata*, on 29 Apr (SA, JBe).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** An uncommon sighting for southwest Colorado was of one found at Pastorius SWA, *La Plata*, on 16 May (JBe, SA).

**Least Sandpiper:** Very late was one found at Yampa River SWA, *Routt*, on 28 May (FL, CDo).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Another uncommon sighting for southwest Colorado was of one at Ferris Lake, *Dolores*, on 4 May (GD).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** The first known spring record of this species for the Yampa Valley was found at Yampa

River SWA, *Routt*, on 8 May (CDo, FL).

**Dunlin:** There were two reports this spring. The first came from Lake Cheraw, *Otero*, on 24 Apr (DM); the second came from NeeNoshe Res., *Kiowa*, on 1 May (DM).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** There were four reports of this less common dowitcher. The first, of an adult *hendersonii* in alternate plumage, came from Cherry Creek SP, *Arapahoe*, 2-3 May (KSJ). This bird was identified based on its brief two-noted "tutu" given upon taking flight. Another report of an adult came from Lake Holbrook, *Otero*, on 5 May (DM). The third report, and the only mountain report, came from Lake Estes, *Larimer*, on 14 May (SRo), with Long-billed Dowitchers present for direct comparison. The final report came from Beebe Draw, *Weld*, again on 14 May (BPr, IP). Short-billeds are likely more common in the state than reports are showing, with most being passed off as "just another Long-billed." We think it would definitely pay off to search those dowitcher flocks, no matter how arduous it may be, for the Short-billed in every hundred or so Long-billeds.

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Numbers were low for this species. The first report came from Spring Park Res., *Eagle*, on 29 Apr (DF). The high count, of a measly fifty as compared to last year's 400 and 2008's thousands, came from San Luis Lake, *Alamosa*, 18-25 May (JBe).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The first report of the season was of two in basic plumage at Walker Pond, *Douglas*, on 27 Mar (GW). The high count of seven

was reported at Craig's WPMC Ponds, Moffat, on 10 Apr (FL).

**Laughing Gull:** An adult in alternate plumage was found at Lake Meredith, Crowley, on 11 May (DM, no doc.).

**Herring Gull:** An uncommon sighting for southwest Colorado was an immature of this species found at Pastorius SWA, La Plata, on 6 Apr (SA).

**Thayer's Gull:** There were four reports of seven individuals this season. One was seen at Deadman Lake, Larimer, on 15 Mar (ED). Two were found at Windsor Lake, Weld, on 27 Mar (NK). Two others were found at Black Hollow Res., Weld, on 4 Apr (NK, CW). Two were also found at the North Weld Landfill, Weld, on 4 Apr (NK, CW).

**Iceland Gull:** All four reports of this species were from Weld, and there was likely some overlap in individuals. The first report was of two first-cycle birds at Windsor Lake, 27-28 Mar (NK, JBr, doc.). One second-cycle individual was found at the North Weld Landfill on 3 Apr (MM, no doc.). Two first-cycle birds were reported at Black Hollow Res. on 4 Apr (NK, CW, no doc.), and two first-cycle birds were reported from the North Weld Landfill on 4 Apr (NK, CW, no doc.).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Four reports totaling six birds came from two counties, Weld and Boulder. The high count of three came from Valmont Res., Boulder, on 3 Mar (CN).

**Slaty-backed Gull:** An odd-looking, ultimately unidentified gull somewhat resembling a first-summer Slaty-backed or Glaucous-winged was

reported at the North Weld Landfill on 6 Apr (NK).

**Glaucous-winged Gull:** There were three reports of this gull, all of which came from Weld. The first one was found at the North Weld Landfill on 3 Apr (NK, MM, no doc.); the second was at Black Hollow Res. on 4 Apr (NK, MM, no doc.); and the last one was reported at the North Weld Landfill on 10 Apr (SRi, no doc.).

**Glaucous Gull:** There were three reports this fall, all of which were from Weld. The first, of a first-cycle bird, came from Windsor Lake on 27 Mar (NK); the second, of an adult, was from the North Weld Landfill, 3-4 Apr (MM, NK, CW); and the last report, of a second-cycle bird, came from Windsor Lake on 4 Apr (NK, CW).

**Black Tern:** There were two reports of this uncommon species for Moffat totaling six individuals. On 15 May, one bird was found at Big Bottom in Craig (AT). From 15 to 23 May, there were five birds at CMS Pond in Craig (FL, CDo).

**Common Tern:** The only report of the season was of an adult in alternate plumage at Lake Holbrook, Otero, on 5 May (DM).

**Caspian Tern:** There were five reports of this species. The first was found at Rocky Ford SWA, Otero, on 24 Apr (DM). One was at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, on 26 Apr (BKP). Rare for La Plata was an adult at Pastorius SWA on 4 May (SA, m.ob). One was found in Florence, Fremont, on 7 May (RM); and the last report was from Flagler SWA, Kit Carson, on 17 May (CW).

**White-winged Dove:** There were

thirteen reports of this expanding southern species. The first came from a Gunbarrel neighborhood, *Boulder*, where it was reported from 11 Mar through the end of the season (NP), with two males reported countering. Another report pertaining to breeding came from Florence, *Fremont*, on 21 Apr (MP), with a pair building one of their typical dilapidated-looking dove nests. Other counties with reports include *Adams*, *Arapahoe*, *Broomfield*, *Douglas*, *Prowers*, *Pueblo*, and *Weld*.

**Inca Dove:** The only report of the season was of two birds found at Boyd Lake SP, *Larimer*, 7-19 May (WR, no doc.).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** There were four reports of individual birds. One came from Mitchek Ranch, *Cheyenne*, on 6 May (GW, JRo, LK). Another came from Carrizo Canyon, *Baca*, on 25 May (DM); the third came from LCCW, *Prowers*, on 26 May (DM). The final report came from Thompson Ranch, *Lincoln*, on 28 May (RO, JRo, JK, m.ob.).

**Greater Roadrunner:** One was reported at the interesting location of the Ace Hardware Parking Lot, Cañon City, *Fremont*, on 6 Mar (RM).

**Long-eared Owl:** There was one report this spring, which came from CVCW, *Weld*, on 10 Apr (GW, LK).

**Lesser Nighthawk:** With a grand total of five reports, this was a good spring for this bird. The first report, of a female, came from Mitchek Ranch, *Cheyenne*, on 6 May (JRo, GW, LK, doc.). The second, of a calling/singing male, came from Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, on 11 May (DM, no doc.). An

interesting report of a road-killed bird came from Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 15 May (DSi, doc.). The next report came from Pueblo, *Pueblo*, on 17 May (VT, no doc.). The last report came from Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, on 29 May (BGu), with two birds hunting at dusk.

**Black Swift:** There was one report of this super-cool, waterfall-dwelling wraith. This bird was seen near Keota, *Weld*, on 24 May (DK, MG), no doubt on the move based on both the easterly location and the early date. As it could represent the easternmost observation for Colorado, the CBRC would like details on this extremely unusual sighting.

**Calliope Hummingbird:** A rare spring migrant, this delicate bird, the smallest in North America and second smallest in the world, had two reports. The first came from the Dahl feeders in Rifle, *Garfield*, on 9 May (AD). The second was of a female found in a banding net at CBR, *El Paso*, on 17 May (BM, et al.).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird:** Very rare in far eastern Colorado was one found at the LCCW, *Prowers*, on 9 May (MP).

**Lewis's Woodpecker:** There were two reports of this declining woodpecker. The first came from the Hilkey yard in Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, on 8-12 May (DK). The second came from Craig, *Moffat*, on 23 May (KH), where it is rare.

**Acorn Woodpecker:** There were reports of four birds at "the usual spot" at Rafter J, Durango, *La Plata*, throughout the reporting season (m.ob.). There was another report of

a single male at a Niwot residence, *Boulder*, 25-26 May (DFI, PF, doc.).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** There were five reports outside of their eastern Colorado strongholds. The first came from the very odd location of Wilkerson Pass at 9500 feet in elevation (about 4000 feet higher than would be expected) in *Park* on the extremely early date of 3 Mar (RT). The next report came from Twin Lakes, *Boulder*, on 10 May (WSz, MB). Another report came from Poudre River Trail, Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 19 May (RS); a report of an immature came from southeast Loveland, *Larimer*, on 20 May (observer unknown); and the final report came from another mountain location, Wetmore, *Custer*, on 30 May (RM).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** There were four reports of this eastern species away from their northeastern Colorado territory, all from LCCW, *Prowers*, and all likely representing the same individual(s).

**American Three-toed Woodpecker:** Providing a rare low-elevation record, an adult male was found on the Mallory Cave Trail at about 7000 feet in elevation (1000 feet lower than normal) in the Boulder foothills, *Boulder*, on 2 Mar (CN).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** There were five reports this spring. One report came from Pueblo, *Pueblo*, on 17 May (VT, no doc.); a male was reported from Grandview Cemetery, *Larimer*, on 22 May (DL, doc.); a singing bird was found at Prewitt SWA, *Washington*, on 25 May (TJ, no doc.); and another was at the same location on 28 May (JK, GW, JRo, no doc.). A sing-

ing bird was also found at Rock Canyon, below Pueblo Res. dam, *Pueblo*, on 26 May (BKP, no doc.).

**Alder Flycatcher:** An excellent year for this species saw six reports of single birds, a third of which were documented. The first came from a private ranch in *Lincoln* on 17 May (CW, no doc.). The next report of a calling bird came from CBR, *Pueblo*, on 19 May (MP, JDr, m.ob., doc.); another bird was found on the same date at Hereford, *Weld* (DL, doc.). The fourth report came from Tamarack Ranch SWA, *Logan*, on 21 May (JDr, doc.). A bird was banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 22 May (BGi, doc.). The last report was of a singing bird at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 27 May (JDr, no doc.).

**Least Flycatcher:** One was found singing at Rye, *Pueblo*, on 26 May (DSi); the late date suggested a territorial bird.

**Gray Flycatcher:** The counties in which this flycatcher was found away from its breeding areas were *Baca*, *Boulder* (four reports), *Douglas*, *El Paso*, *Garfield*, *Jefferson* (two reports), *Larimer*, and *Pueblo*.

**Black Phoebe:** There were ten reports of this species, which is expanding northward. A second county record was provided by a male found at Twin Lakes, *Boulder*, on 9 May (WSz, doc.). Other counties with reports were *Chaffee*, *Custer*, *Douglas*, *Jefferson*, and *Pueblo*.

**Eastern Phoebe:** There was a grand total of ten reports this spring, equal to the number of reports of Blacks. These reports came from *Bent*, *Boulder*, *Custer*, *Fremont*, *Larimer* (two reports), and *Pueblo* (four

reports) between the dates of 3 Apr and 22 May.

**Vermilion Flycatcher:** There were two reports of this vivid southwestern flycatcher this spring. The first report, of an adult male, came from 0.2 miles west of Road 21 and Road J, *Baca*, on 3 Apr (EE, no doc.). The second report was of a sub-adult male south of Las Animas, *Bent*, 24-25 May (DN, no doc.).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** There were two reports from northeast Colorado this spring. One came from Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, on 9 May (CSt); another report from the CU Boulder campus, *Boulder*, on 15 May was later determined to pertain to a Say's Phoebe. Returning for their third season in a row, a pair was found in the South Bay area of Horsetooth Res., *Larimer*, on 26 May (DSt, CSi). Last year's nesting produced three fledged birds.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** There was only one report of this species, from the expected location of LCCW, *Prowers*, on 9 May (PH).

**Eastern Kingbird:** A very early report was of one found in Cañon City, *Fremont*, on 12 Apr (RM). There were two reports this spring from southwest Colorado, where the species is uncommon. The first came from Denny Lake, *Montezuma*, on 16 May (BNM, m.ob.). The second came from Zink's Pond, *La Plata*, also on 16 May (BR, SA).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** There were two reports this spring. The first report was of a male west of Last Chance, *Washington*, seen between the dates of 29 Apr and 4 May (GW,

m.ob., doc.). The second report came from 14.5 miles south of Las Animas along Hwy 101, *Bent*, on 25 May (DM, no doc.).

**Northern Shrike:** The last report of the season came from Browns Park NWR, *Moffat*, on 15 Mar (TL). It was reported to be singing, something that is not heard very often.

**White-eyed Vireo:** There were five reports of this eastern vireo this spring. The first came from Thurston Res., *Prowers*, on 28 Apr (DL). Another was found at LCCW, *Prowers*, 30 Apr-3 May (DM, SLn, GW, m.ob.). One was seen at the Akron golf course, *Washington*, on 20 May (NEI, JK, m.ob.); and another was found at the very odd location of the Cub Lake Trail in RMNP, *Larimer*, on 25 May (JDi). The last report came from Clear Springs Ranch, *El Paso*, on 30 May (SRu).

**Bell's Vireo:** One was reported at Gregory Canyon, *Boulder*, on 19 May (EM, SW); the species is very rare along the Front Range, and the CBRC requests documentation of this potentially significant report.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** With an outstanding eleven reports, this spring was above average. The first report came from Chatfield SP's Plum Creek Delta, *Douglas*, 17 Apr through 17 May (JK); and the last report came from Grandview Cemetery, *Larimer*, on 22 May (DL). Other counties with reports include *Broomfield*, *Cheyenne*, *Fremont*, *Kiowa*, *Lincoln*, and *Pueblo*.

**Cassin's Vireo:** With nine reports, this spring was around average. Five of the reports came from *Prowers*, and the rest came from *El Paso* (two), *Jef-*



fer, and *Pueblo*. The first bird was seen at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 22 Apr (DL), and the last was seen at CBR, *El Paso*, on 12 May (BG).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Two birds were reported this spring, the first at LCCW, *Prowers*, on 30 Apr (DM, no doc.). The other was at CBR, *Pueblo*, an adult male on 6 May (BKP, et al., doc.).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** With three reports, this spring was above average. The first report came from Burchfield SWA, *Baca*, on 4 May (DM, doc.). The second, a male, came from the Poudre River Trail, Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 19 May (RS, doc.). The last report came from Dixon Res., *Larimer*, on 20 May (ED, no doc.).

**Purple Martin:** Of interest on the eastern plains was an adult male at NeeNoshe Res., *Kiowa*, on 1 May (DN, no doc.).

**Tree Swallow:** The high count this season came from Spring Park Res., *Eagle*, on 11 May (DF), where an incredible 2000 were seen.

**Juniper Titmouse:** A single adult male was singing at the Dinosaur Ridge Hawkwatch, *Jefferson*, between the dates of 7 Mar and 2 Apr (KC, JLu).

**Cactus Wren:** There was one report of this large, raucous southwestern wren from Cottonwood Canyon, *Baca*, on 15 Apr (MHn, KR, no doc.). If it were documented and accepted, this would be a first state record.

**Carolina Wren:** There was a total of six reports this spring, making for a higher than average year. The first report came from Rye, *Pueblo*, 1-2

Mar (DSi); and the last came from Centennial Trail, *Boulder*, on 31 May (TFI). The counties that had sightings are *Pueblo*, *Prowers* (two), and *Boulder* (three).

**Winter Wren:** This species was split by the American Ornithologists' Union in July (Chesser et al. 2010) into two species, the eastern Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) and western Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*). Both reports this spring were of *Troglodytes hiemalis*. The first, of a singing bird, came from FCRP, *El Paso*, on 3 Apr (KL). The other report, of a singing male, came from the Big Thompson River Trail, Loveland, *Larimer*, on 8 Apr (EC).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** A rare find on the plains was one at CVCG, *Weld*, on 14 May (JK, SLn, NEI, RO, DSc, KMD, JRo).

**Eastern Bluebird:** There were eight reports away from this species' stronghold in far eastern Colorado during the season. The first came from Rock Canyon, *Pueblo*, on 3 Mar (BKP); the last came from CVCG, *Weld*, on 27 May (DK). The other counties with reports were *El Paso*, *Fremont*, and *Washington*.

**Veery:** There were fourteen reports of migrants this spring between the dates of 13 and 21 May. The counties with reports were *Bent*, *El Paso* (eight reports), *Prowers*, *Pueblo*, *Washington* (two reports), and *Weld*.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** With eight reports, none of which were documented, this spring was above average. The first report of the season came from Tempel Grove, in the northeast part of *Bent*, on 6 May (DN,

DM, no doc.); one was seen at this same location again on 12 May (DM, no doc.). The next reports came from Weld on 14 May, with one being found at Norma's Grove (JK, SLn, NEL, RO, DSc, KMD, JRo, no doc.) and another at a private ranch (same obs., no doc.). One was found in Siebert, *Kit Carson*, on 17 May (CW, no doc.); another was at a private ranch in *Lincoln* on the same date (CW, no doc.); and one more was in Last Chance, *Washington*, again on the same date (CW, no doc.). The last report came from Dixon Res., *Larimer*, on 21 May (NK, no doc.).

**Swainson's Thrush (Russet-backed):** One individual of this subspecies, rarely reported from the state, was found at CBR, *El Paso*, on 13 May (BG, doc.).

**Wood Thrush:** With a spectacular four reports, this season was far above average. The first was found at CBR, *Pueblo*, between the dates of 29 Apr and 3 May (BKP, doc.). The next bird was found at Tempel Grove, *Bent*, 12-15 May (DN, DM, no doc.); and another was found singing at Meadowcreek, Colorado City, *Pueblo*, 19-31 May (DSi, m.ob., doc.). The last bird was found at Sondermann Park, Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, 20-21 May (RHj, KL, m.ob., doc.).

**Sprague's Pipit:** There were two reports of single birds. The first, of a singing bird, came from "near Burlington" in *Cheyenne* on 18 Apr (SS, doc.); and the second came from CR 2G, *Lincoln*, on 1 May (SRi, no doc.).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** There were two reports of this species. The first

report, of a male, came from Rocky Ford SWA, *Otero*, on 15 May (JDr); and the second, of a female, came from Rock Canyon, below Pueblo Res. dam, *Pueblo*, on 26 May (BKP).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** There were two reports of this species, with the first being of a singing male at LCCW, *Prowers*, on 16 May (MM). The other report, of a female, came from the Animas River near Four Corners River Sports in Durango, *La Plata*, on 20 May, for a potential first county record (HM, SA, doc.).

**Tennessee Warbler:** This was the third good year in a row, with twelve reports this season spread all throughout the eastern side of the state. The first report came from CBR, *Pueblo*, on 5 May (BKP, GR), and the last came again from CBR, *El Paso*, on 21 May (BG). The counties with reports are *El Paso* (two), *Lincoln*, *Otero*, *Phillips*, *Pueblo* (three), and *Washington* (four).

**Nashville Warbler:** There were fifteen reports this season, which was a bit above average. The first report, of an eastern race bird, came from Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 22 Apr (DL); and the last report, of a male and a female, came from Home Lake, *Rio Grande*, on 15 May (GW). The counties with reports were *Bent*, *Broomfield* (two), *Cheyenne*, *El Paso* (two), *Prowers* (six), *Pueblo* (two), and *Rio Grande*.

**Virginia's Warbler:** A good find on the eastern plains was a male at CVCG, *Weld*, on 11 May (DL).

**Lucy's Warbler:** A breeding pair was at the expected location of Yellowjacket Creek, *Montezuma*, be-

tween the dates of 15 and 31 May (m.ob.).

**Northern Parula:** With the impressive number of reports tallied to thirty-three, of which thirty were from all across the East Slope, this season was nearly off the charts in terms of seasonal averages. The

first was found at CBR, Pueblo, on 8 Apr (GK, GC);

the last was seen at Loudy-Simpson Park in Craig, Moffat, on 23 May (FL), where it furnished a first spring record and third overall for the park. The other reports from the WS and mountains were of one along the Animas River behind Four Corners River Sports, Durango, La Plata, on 10 May (GG) and one at Frantz Lake, Chaffee, on 21 May (RM).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** There were eight sightings this season. The first report, of a male, came from LCCW, Prowers, on 8 May (DN); the last sighting came from Dixon Res., Larimer, on 20 May (ED). The other counties with sightings included Baca, Bent, Custer, Douglas, and Pueblo.

**Magnolia Warbler:** There were eight sightings this year, which is about average. The first sighting came from Home Farm, Westminster, Adams, on 7 May (MAN); the



*Black-throated Gray Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 16 May 2010. Photo by Bryan Patrick*

last came from the unlikely mountain location of Sprague Lake in RMNP, Larimer, on 24 May (*fide* SRO). The other counties with sightings included Bent, El Paso, Kit Carson, Otero, and Prowers.

**Cape May Warbler:** There were two sightings this season. A male was found at the Stulp Farm south of Lamar, Prowers, 26-27 Apr (JS, m.ob., doc.). The other report came from Thompson Ranch, Lincoln, 16-17 May (GW, JRo, MC, NEL, CW, doc.).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** With a total of seven reports, this spring was excellent for this neotropical migrant. The first report came from the Highline Canal near Raines Park in Northglenn, Adams, on the early date of 18 Apr (SLa); the last report came from Flagler SWA, Kit Carson, on 30 May (PJB). Other counties with reports included Bent, Cheyenne, Kiowa (two), and Larimer.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler:**

There were ten individuals of this pinyon-juniper species reported away from its nesting areas in the western section of the state. These came from the counties *El Paso*, *Fremont*, and *Pueblo* between the dates of 22 Apr and 20 May.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:**

With five reports, this season was slightly above average. The first report, of a male, came from LCCW, *Prowers*, 8-12 May (DN). Another came from Grandview Cemetery, *Larimer*, 10-11 May (DL); another male was found at CBR, *El Paso*, on 14 May (BM); and a female was at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 17 May (BKP, BM, DM). The final report came from Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 17 May (RR, et al.).

**Townsend's Warbler:** This season had a decent tally of eight reports, which is around average. The first report came from Tempel Grove, *Bent*, 30 Apr-4 May (RO, DM); the last came from CBR, *Pueblo*, on 16 May (BG, m.ob.). The counties with sightings were *Baca* (three), *Bent*, *Cheyenne*, and *Pueblo* (three).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** There was only one report of this flame-throated warbler. It was a male found in Boulder, *Boulder*, on 8 May (CL, doc.).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** There were a total of four reports. The first report came from CVCW, *Weld*, 9-10 Apr (BSh, WF, m.ob., doc.); the second report, of a singing male, came from LCCW, *Prowers*, 3-8 May (DM, KJD, no doc.); the third, also of a singing male, came from Fairmount

Cemetery in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 15 May (DN, no doc.); and the final report came from LCCW, *Prowers*, on 7 May (KM, GW, LK).

**Grace's Warbler:** There was only one bird reported away from its normal breeding range—one in the Mason Gulch area near Wetmore, *Custer*, 22-23 May (BKP, GR, m.ob.).

**Pine Warbler:** There were two birds reported this season. Originally found in the winter, a first-year female was at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 6 Mar (BKP, DC, doc.). The second bird was found in Frederick, *Weld*, on 12 May (TD, doc.).

**Prairie Warbler:** A single singing male at LCCW, *Prowers*, on 3 May (DM, no doc.) was an excellent find.

**Palm Warbler:** There were five birds reported this season, which was a bit below average. The first report came from Turks Pond near Walsh, *Baca*, on 1 May (DM). The second report came from Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 9 May (MP). The third report was of a western race bird from the Poudre River Trail, Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 19 May (ED); another western race bird was at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 20 May (BM). On 21 May, a CFO convention field trip found a Palm Warbler in Murphy's Pasture, just east of the junction of *Weld* CR 96 and 69, without a tree in sight (SRU, m.ob.).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** Though not as good as the spring of 2008 when there were 168 individuals reported, this spring was still an excellent year for this species with 34 reports representing 62 birds in a total of seventeen counties. Last spring there were only 37 birds reported. They were

seen between the dates of 7 May and 30 May this year. The high count of nine (six males and three females) came from Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on 14 May (JK, SL, NEI, RO, DSc, KMD, JRo).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** There was a total of sixteen birds reported this spring, which was a bit below average. They were seen between the dates of 9 Apr and 25 May, and were all found on the East Slope.

**American Redstart:** It was an excellent season for this eastern migrant, which was almost common this spring, with 40 reports representing 47 birds. The first sighting was of a first-year male found at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 29 Apr (BKP). The counties with reports were *Bent* (six), *Boulder*, *Chaffee*, *El Paso* (nine), *Jefferson*, *Kiowa*, *Kit Carson*, *Larimer* (four), *Lincoln*, *Moffat*, *Prowers* (six), *Pueblo* (seven), and *Washington*.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** There was only one sighting this season, which came from the Loveland Recreational Trail, *Larimer*, on 15 May (EC).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** There were five birds reported this spring, with the first from South Mesa Trail near Eldorado Springs, *Boulder*, on 5 May (CN), and the second from Mitchek Ranch, *Cheyenne*, on 6 May (GW, LK). One was found at LCCW, *Prowers*, on 6 May (DM); another was at CBR, *Pueblo*, on 9 May (KSh, JMi, m.ob.). The final report came from Chatfield SP near the Kingfisher Bridge in *Douglas* on 17 May (GW).

**Swainson's Warbler:** One of these elusive, low-lying phantoms of the underbrush was found at Mitchek

Ranch, *Cheyenne*, on 7 May (SLn, JK, GR, m.ob., doc.).

**Ovenbird:** The first of eleven reports this season was of two birds banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 6 May (NG).

**Northern Waterthrush:** It was yet another excellent spring for this water-loving warbler; there were 49 reports of 79 individuals from eighteen counties. In *La Plata*, where it is uncommon, one was found along the Animas River near Four Corners River Sports on 10 May (HM, RMo).

**Kentucky Warbler:** Four birds were reported this season, which is a bit above average. The first report came from the Stulp Farm south of Lamar, *Prowers*, on 22 Apr (JS, doc.); another was found at LCCW, *Prowers*, 6-8 May (DM, no doc.); the third came from the odd location of DeWeese Res., *Custer*, 11-17 May (RM, no doc.); and the final report came from *Pueblo, Pueblo*, on 15 May (TI, RC, no doc.).

**Connecticut Warbler:** One of the highlights of the season, incredibly, was the three reports of this very rare eastern warbler. The first bird was an adult male caught and banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 17 May (BG, SB, doc.). The second bird was an adult female reported from LCCW, *Prowers*, on the same day (CW, no doc.). The third was found at Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, 22-23 May (WSz, doc.).

**Mourning Warbler:** The only report this spring was of a female found at LCCW, *Prowers*, on 3 May (DM, no doc.).

**Hooded Warbler:** With eleven re-

ports totaling thirteen birds, this year was a little bit below average. The first report came from CBR, *El Paso*, where a male was found on 16 Apr (BKP, BM, m.ob.), and the last report was of a female at Sprague Lake in RMNP, *Larimer*, on 24 May (SRo). A first county record of a female came from Holyoke, *Phillips*, on 11 May (JRo).

**Wilson's Warbler:** An early male of this somewhat uncommon spring migrant was found on the Arkansas River Trail near Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 14 Apr (BKP).

**Canada Warbler:** A rare find was an adult male at Hatchet Ranch east of Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 8 May (BBH, no doc.).

**Field Sparrow:** A meager three birds were reported. The first report, of a western race bird, came from Last Chance, *Washington*, on 6 May (GW); the second came from Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 9 May (MP); and the last report came from a private ranch in *Lincoln* on 17 May (CW).

**Black-throated Sparrow:** This rare *Baca* species was found west-northwest of Campo on 12 Apr (BG). Also rare in *Huerfano* was a pair found in the Hayden Butte atlas block on 30 May (DSi).

**Sage Sparrow:** There were seven reports of this species away from its nesting areas on the WS and in the SLV. These reports came from *Arapahoe*, *Boulder*, *Custer*, *Douglas*, *Jefferson*, *Pueblo*, and *San Juan*. Very rare in *Pueblo* was a bird found at Pueblo Res. on 26 Mar (BKP). The report from *San Juan* was a first county record, from Silverton on 16 Apr (BB).

**Swamp Sparrow:** There was only one report this spring, from CVCG, *Weld*, on 10 Apr (GW, LK, PP).

**White-throated Sparrow:** There were only seven reports representing seven or eight birds this season. These reports came from between the dates of 27 Apr and 14 May.

**Harris's Sparrow:** With twelve reports of this hefty sparrow, this spring was right around average. The first report was of a "maturing juvenile" found at Rocky Mountain Arsenal, *Adams*, on 7 Mar (KH), and the last came from CBR, *El Paso*, on 13 May (BG, BKP).

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** There were two reports this spring, both of birds lingering from the winter. The first came from Tunnel Drive in Cañon City, *Fremont*, 1 Mar-19 Apr (RM, m.ob., doc.). The second report came from the Red Rocks Park Trading Post, *Jefferson*, 15 Mar-14 May (MHD, et al., doc.). This individual was documented in winter and molted into alternate plumage in late spring.

**Summer Tanager:** Among the nineteen reports this season was a first county record for *Phillips*, a female from Holyoke on 11 May (JRo).

**Scarlet Tanager:** There were two reports this spring, both of females. The first report came from LCCW, *Prowers*, 11-13 May (DN, no doc.); the second came from Cherry Creek SP, *Arapahoe*, on 13 May (FNH, no doc.). The adult male that had frequented Gregory Canyon, *Boulder*, for the past three summers did not return this year.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** There was a total of 21 reports this spring. Among the more interesting reports were three sightings for *Garfield*, as well as a sighting of a male at Rainbow Bridge near Durango, *La Plata*, 11-15 May (EL), where the species is rare.

**Indigo Bunting:** There were five sightings this spring from *El Paso*, *Las Animas*, *Prowers* (two), and *Pueblo*.

**Bobolink:** There was a total of five mountain and WS reports this spring. The first was of four adult males near Zink's Pond, *La Plata*, 14-15 May (SA, m.ob.), where it is very rare; the next report was of six birds from Steamboat Springs, *Routt*, on 17 May (YVBC, TL); then a report of three males came from Mount Ouray SWA, *Chaffee*, on 20 May (RM). An interesting sighting of six females came from Lake Estes, *Larimer*, on 25 May (SRO); and the final report of the season came from Yampa River SWA, *Routt*, from 29 May to the end of the period (FL).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** The only report this season came from CR 29 and CR 2, *Phillips/Yuma*, on 2 Apr (TD, doc.).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** A male sighted at a Snowden Street feeder on 2 May (RL) provided an uncommon find for *San Juan*.

**Rusty Blackbird:** Two of this declining species were reported at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, *Jefferson*, on 5 Mar (MC) and remained until at least 23 Mar (m.ob.).

**Orchard Oriole:** A first-spring male at FCRP, *El Paso*, on 14 May (KL, BKP) was a rare find for that lo-



*Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Boulder County, 25 May 2010. Photo by David Waltman*

cation. Also, an immature male was found at Lake Estes, *Larimer*, on 29 May (JW), which was another unusual location.

**Baltimore Oriole:** A male found in Colorado City and Rye, *Pueblo*, on 8 May (JMu, DSi) was rare for *Pueblo*.

**Scott's Oriole:** An interesting report from Jim Canyon, *Garfield*, on 27 May (CDe, BW) was likely of a nesting male.

**Pine Grosbeak:** Two birds that were found at the Fort Lewis College chapel in *La Plata* on 20 Mar (SA) were unusual in Durango at less than 7000 feet of altitude. They were probably driven to lower elevations by heavy snowfall in the mountains. Another that was found on Old Lake Isabel Road, *Pueblo*, on 8 May (BKP, VT) was an uncommon sighting for *Pueblo* in the spring.

**White-winged Crossbill:** The only sightings were of the now famous Grandview Cemetery pair, *Larimer*, which was seen all throughout the season (DL, et al.). Dave Leatherman originally found this pair during the winter, and he continued to carefully monitor their activities during the spring. After a suspected nest failure, a juvenile was found on 2 May. A second nest-building endeavor was underway by 7 May, with a second nesting in progress by 13 May. This is a low elevation record of breeding for this species in the state.

**Common Redpoll:** One bird was

found on 29 Mar at Filby's feeders in Carbondale, *Garfield* (DF), where it is rare.

**Evening Grosbeak:** This year is definitely an irruption year for this mountain finch. The high count was of 200 seen all throughout the reporting period in Steamboat Springs, *Routt* (TL). There were three rare plains sightings. The first came from CBR, *El Paso*, on 17 May (BG); the second came on the same date of two birds at a private ranch in *Lincoln* (CW). On 21 May, a CFO convention field trip found a solo female at CVCG, *Weld* (SRu, NP, m.ob.).

## REGIONAL COMPILERS

Without the compilation of sightings from these volunteer regional compilers, "News From the Field" could not be written. Continued appreciation goes to Jim Beatty (southwest), Coen Dexter (west central), Forrest Luke (northwest), Brandon Percival (southeast and SLV), Bill Schmoker (Front Range), Larry Semo (east central and northeast), and Glenn Walbek (north central); and many thanks to all of you who share your sightings with the birding community.

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## IN THE SCOPE

# Pacific and Winter Wrens

*Tony Leukering and Nathan Pieplow*

Winter Wren, in the larger sense, is of annual Colorado occurrence in riparian bottomlands in fall and winter, with some wintering individuals extending their stays into spring and with a very few individuals arriving on spring migration. It is considerably more common, or found more frequently, in the low elevations of the state's east side than on the West Slope. A very small number (<5) have been noted singing in the mountains in summer, and we might look for some form to breed in the abundant suitable habitat there, since

the species has recently been found breeding in Arizona (Corman and Wise-Gervais 2005).

Until this summer, most Colorado birders were happy to simply see a Winter Wren in the state. However, this July, as anticipated, the American Ornithologists' Union accepted a proposal to split the species in North America into two full species (AOU 2010). The western form—breeding in wet forests on the Pacific slope from Alaska south to southern California—has been named Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*). The AOU retained “Winter Wren” (*T. hiemalis*) for use as the eastern species' name, despite its own rules forbidding the use of the original name for a new species resulting from a split (AOU 1998, p. xiii). Birders still need a name for “Winter Wrens” in the original sense, and thus, we use “Stub-tailed Wren” hereafter to refer to both species together.

If they didn't before, Colorado birders will now want to scrutinize these Stub-tailed Wrens. Despite their assignment to *pacificus* by Bailey and Niedrach (1965), Phillips (1986, p. 139) found all Colorado specimens to be referable to *hiemalis*. However, recent careful scrutiny of Stub-tailed Wrens in the field has turned up a few good reports of Pacific Wren, with an individual heard well and photographed at Two Buttes SWA, Baca, on 2 January 2005 (T. Leukering and C. L. Wood); this record has been accepted by the CBRC as the state's first (see p. 233 of this journal).

In addition, multiple Pacific Wrens were noted (though few were documented) along the Front Range in winter 2009-2010. Personal experience with the species pair in eastern Colorado suggests that Winter Wren is much more likely there than is Pacific Wren, but all bets are off once one moves west of I-25. We suggest that Pacific Wren may be the more likely taxon on the West Slope and we encourage birders there to spend some effort on searching for these little dynamos, taking careful notes, obtaining photographs and/or sound recordings, and reporting findings to the seasonal editors of News From the Field (in this journal) and to the Colorado Bird Records Committee.

### Taxonomy

Pacific Wren is represented by seven subspecies, five of those being resident Alaskan island endemics. Western *pacificus* (sw. Alaska south and east to s. California; Pyle 1997) is possibly partially migratory, but eastern *salebrosus* (interior c. British Columbia and w. Montana south to e. Oregon; Pyle 1997) is decidedly so and is arguably the more likely form of the species to occur in Colorado. Winter Wren is represented by only two subspecies, one of which is a south-

ern Appalachians breeder that is unlikely to occur here; nominate *hiemalis* almost certainly accounts for all Colorado records.

### Plumage Differences

The following is intended to be used in concert with the two photographs on the back cover of this issue, of Pacific Wren (above) and Winter Wren (below); additional treatment can be found online (Sibley 2010). This treatment ignores the various Alaskan island races, which do not occur in the state and are unlikely to do so. While typical individuals of the two species are often readily separable (given reasonable views, of course), individual variation in both species makes for a difficult field problem. As with most such problems, it is expected that even highly-skilled birders will leave some individuals unidentified to species.

Unfortunately, *salebrosus*, the form more likely to occur in Colorado, is much more similar to Winter Wren than is *pacificus*. However, both forms of Pacific Wren are typically darker and ruddier overall than is Winter Wren, and show less or less-obvious barring/mottling on the upperparts than Winter Wren exhibits. All the other features described in Table 1 are qualitative (except for voice; see below), so using as many physical field marks as possible is more likely to lead to a correct identification. That written, particular attention should be paid to two features:

- 1) The degree of contrast in color from throat to breast and belly—strong contrast indicates Winter Wren and uniformly rufous underparts prove Pacific Wren; intermediate contrast is much less definitive.

- 2) The color of the pale spots on the outer primaries (forming bars on the closed wing)—in Winter Wren they tend to be strongly, contrastingly paler than the color of those spots on the secondaries, which are cinnamon to warm buff. In Pacific Wren, the primary and secondary spots are nearly concolorous. This character, too, is subject to individual variation and some Winter Wrens overlap in appearance with that of Pacific Wren (and vice-versa) in that they sport warm buff or even cinnamon spots on the outer primaries. However, if an individual has whitish spots or the spots are obviously paler than the color of the superciliary and loreal area, it is probably a Winter Wren.

### Vocal Differences

Vocal differences are the best way to tell Pacific Wren from Winter Wren. Both the songs and the calls are distinctive, but identifying the two forms by song takes some experience. The calls are easier

to separate and also more likely to be heard from wintering birds in Colorado, so that's where we'll start.

## Calls

Both Pacific and Winter Wrens give simple, one-syllabled calls that are often paired or, when the birds are agitated, run into chattering trills. The Winter Wren's call is a very brief nasal squeak, quite similar in sound to the distinctive call of Song Sparrow. The call of the Pacific Wren, meanwhile, is an even briefer noisy "chk," quite similar in quality to the call of Wilson's Warbler and reminiscent of the "chittit" call of Ruby-crowned Kinglet. There is nothing even the least bit squeaky about the call of a Pacific Wren; the quality is closer to that of two pebbles being hit together, although not quite as harsh.

The differences in these calls are quite obvious when they are heard in direct comparison, but it may take a little bit of experience to separate them with confidence in the field. See below for a list of websites where you can listen to the two calls online. In addition, beware the chattering trills of agitated birds: in both species the individual notes are higher-pitched and briefer they are when given

*Table 1. Identification characters for Pacific Wren (two subspecies) and Winter Wren occurring or possibly occurring in Colorado, as presented in Pyle, 1997.*

	Pacific Wren		Winter Wren
Feature	<i>pacificus</i>	<i>salebrosus</i>	<i>hiemalis</i>
Colorado occurrence	possible	likely accounts for the few records	annual fall to spring in east at low elevations, possible elsewhere
Upperparts	dark rufous-brown to dusky rufous <sup>1</sup>	medium brown with rufous wash <sup>1</sup>	medium brown with rufous tinge <sup>1</sup>
supercilium and loreal area	warm to pale buff	warm to pale buff	pale buff to grayish-white, often warmer and darker than throat
neck sides	reddish, with little or no patterning <sup>2</sup>		pale buff to whitish with often extensive patterning <sup>2</sup>
chin and throat	cinnamon to warm buff	warm to pale buff, often palest part of plumage	grayish-white to pale buff, always palest part of plumage
breast	dull rufous-brown <sup>1</sup> , usually lightly marked	medium-pale brown <sup>1</sup> , usually lightly marked	lightly washed brownish <sup>1</sup> , typically extensively mottled
flanks	cinnamon, barred blackish, sometimes with some white flecking	cinnamon to warm buff, barred blackish, sometimes with some white flecking	warm buff barred dark brown, often with some to extensive white flecking
outer primaries pale spots	cinnamon	cinnamon to warm buff	rarely cinnamon to warm buff, usually pale buff to whitish

<sup>1</sup>from Pyle (1997)

<sup>2</sup>from Sibley (2010)

individually, and in particular, an agitated Winter Wren sounds more like a Pacific than normal. Waiting for the bird to calm down and give individual calls should resolve any potential confusion.

### *Songs*

Both of these wren species figure among North America's very finest avian vocalists. The song of both species is quite similar: a remarkable, high-pitched cascade of jumbled notes and trills that never seems to end. Song strophes may last 30 seconds or more without perceptible pauses. The combination of the high pitch, fast delivery, lack of pauses, and mix of trills and short notes means that singing Pacific and Winter Wrens are extremely unlikely to be mistaken for any other species besides each other.

The key to telling the songs of the two species apart is tone quality. Many people consider the song of Pacific to be "drier"—or, in the words of Sibley (2000), "more mechanical-sounding" and "buzzy" with "hard trills." Although Pacific Wren is actually singing the more intricate and varied song, because it sings so much faster than Winter Wren, our ears perceive a difference in musicality. Practically every single note in a Winter Wren's song has a bell-like, musical quality, while the Pacific Wren's notes, especially its trills, are much less musical.

A good way to think of the difference in tone quality is to listen for the trills inside the wren songs and compare them in your head to the the "classic" song of Dark-eyed Junco and the "classic" song of Chipping Sparrow (themselves, of course, often difficult to separate by ear). The Winter Wren tends to sing the more musical, junco-like trills, while the Pacific Wren tends to sing unmusical, Chipping Sparrow-like lisping rattles, or even a Brewer's Sparrow-like buzz.

The pattern of song delivery also differs. Winter Wren males have only a few stereotyped songs in their repertoire; successive strophes of song are almost always identical. Pacific Wren males sing with far more song types, and they also recombine their songs — the beginning notes of successive strophes are frequently identical, but the endings vary widely. However, due to the extraordinary complexity and length of the songs, only those with an exceptional auditory memory will be able to ascertain the pattern of delivery.

### *Listen online*

Nathan Pieplow's blog, Earbirding.com, has a pair of articles on separating these two species by song and call:

<http://earbirding.com/blog/archives/774>

<http://earbirding.com/blog/archives/826>

Many other songs and calls of Winter and Pacific Wrens can be heard online at Xeno-Canto and the Macaulay Library. As of this writing, they have not updated their sites to follow the new taxonomy, so be aware that a search for “Pacific Wren” may come up empty, while “Winter Wren” may bring up both North American species plus the European birds:

<http://www.xeno-canto.org/>

<http://macaulaylibrary.org/index.do>

Also note the excellent and detailed treatment of these two species' songs in Donald Kroodsmas's book *The Singing Life of Birds* (2005), including spectrograms and audio recordings on the accompanying CD.

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# Colorado Birds

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Winter Wren, Columbia, MD, 19 January 2009. *Photo by Steve Collins*



Pacific Wren, Victoria, BC, 8 December 2008. *Photo by Ted Ardley*