

Vol. 46 No. 2 April 2012

# Colorado Birds

**The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly**



**Breeding Bird Atlas Finale**  
**Butterflies of the Front Range**  
**Wintering Loggerhead Shrikes**



Colorado Field Ornithologists  
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# Colorado Birds

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Orange variant Scarlet  
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Photo by Brian  
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# Trinidad Convention, Breeding Bird Atlas, and the CBRC

*Jim Beatty*

## **2012 Convention in Trinidad – CFO's 50<sup>th</sup>!**

That's right, the convention in Trinidad will be the 50<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. However, the organization known as CFO will not celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday until 2015. This apparent contradiction will be explained in an upcoming article on CFO's history, so stay tuned.

The CFO Board met in Trinidad in January. The scenery surrounding this historic mining town with its Victorian downtown was very impressive, even for Colorado, and the winter birding produced some good sightings. Our meeting confirmed that the planning and preparations for the 2012 annual convention are proceeding well.

The Trinidad & Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce has been very helpful in arranging our event, and the City of Trinidad Tourism Board has rolled out the proverbial "red carpet" with a welcoming barbecue dinner planned for Thursday evening as we arrive in Trinidad. With the help of Tim Crisler, a local birder and Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II regional coordinator for Region 22, and continued strong support from The Nature Conservancy, we have an outstanding selection of field trips that includes several private properties not normally open to birders.

Now, if the birds cooperate, we'll have a very special and enjoyable visit to Trinidad, Las Animas County, and the surrounding areas, including parts of northern New Mexico.

## **Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II Project**

As we enter the final year of fieldwork for the Atlas II Project, CFO strongly encourages all members and friends to finish their blocks and help with those blocks that need additional work. This very important project will yield valuable insights into the health and changes of the breeding bird populations within our state boundaries. Project manager Lynn Wickersham reports on p. 102 of this issue that Atlas II is now closer to completion than Atlas I was at this point – and coverage of the entire state is tantalizingly within reach!

Still, several portions of the state need additional work, including the southeastern section. CFO has been working with Lynn Wickersham to recruit new volunteers in Trinidad and Las Animas County, where there are open blocks that need block owners and field work.

We will be using the 2012 convention to recruit, train, and deploy local area residents interested in bird conservation. We plan to use local newspapers and radio along with convention publicity to stimulate local interest and attract new volunteers.

Finally, remember that the COBBA II project still needs financial support if you're able to contribute. The final product will be well worth it. The project website can be found at [www.cobreedingbird-atlasii.org](http://www.cobreedingbird-atlasii.org).

## CBRC

Six months ago I reported that Doug Faulkner had graciously agreed to chair the Colorado Bird Records Committee, and a status report is now in order. If you've been reading the recent issues of *Colorado Birds*, you already know that the transition has been completed seamlessly and the committee under Doug's leadership is functioning very well.

Doug and the CBRC have appointed Rachel Hopper as a non-voting secretary to help manage the many administrative and technical matters that the committee needs to accomplish to fulfill its mission. The CBRC Bylaws authorize this position, and recent experience proves that it is extremely valuable to have a capable individual such as Rachel fill this role.

*Jim Beatty*, 165 Twelve Point Buck Trail, Durango, CO, 81301, [jdbeatty@bresnan.net](mailto:jdbeatty@bresnan.net)

## CFO MEETING MINUTES

28 January 2012  
Holiday Inn  
Trinidad, CO

*Larry Modesitt, CFO Secretary*

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 11:11 A.M. by President Jim Beatty. Officers and Directors present: President Jim Beatty, Vice President Bill Kaempfer, Secretary Larry Modesitt, and Treasurer Maggie Boswell. Directors Lisa Edwards, Brenda Linfield, Christian Nunes, Bob Righter, and Joe Roller were present. Directors Doug Faulkner, Ted Floyd, and Nathan Pieplow sent their regrets and submitted written reports regarding their committee responsibilities.

### **Secretary's Report—Larry Modesitt**

Minutes of the 15 October board meeting were approved.

### **Treasurer's Report—Maggie Boswell**

Maggie's year-end report for 2011 was approved. Net income from the convention was lower than usual because of unusual expenses: advertising in *Birding* and the expensive audio-visual fees from the hotel. Larry Modesitt noted that aside from these unusual expenses, actual expenses were quite accurately forecast in the 2011 budget. *Colorado Birds* is the major expense and is covered by dues. Convention income pays for all other expenses and services. Donations in general are down, but thankfully last year's total was exceeded with a \$1,000 donation from a generous member. Pass-the-hat donations, however, are holding steady. Lisa Edwards suggested listing donors, but not amounts, in *Colorado Birds*.

The 2012 budget is pending information on projected costs for CBRC revision and website revision. Mark Peterson knows the CBRC system and its flaws and will be submitting a bid for the work. Maggie submitted our 990N report, and it was approved by the IRS. The annual report due February 2012 has been filed with the Secretary of State.

### **Convention Planning—Jim Beatty**

**Field Trips:** Jim reported exciting news. Tim Crisler, who lives in Trinidad, told us about the arrangements for many of the special field trips for this year. He was instrumental in arranging access to Ted Turner's prop-

erty—Vermejo Park, 900 square miles of excellent habitat. A ranch biologist will be joining the trip. Willard and Mary Ann Loudon of the Mesa de Maya Ranch have 50,000 acres of mixed pinyon-juniper forest, with lower cottonwood canyons and higher ponderosa forests. Both Long-billed Curlews and Hepatic Tanagers nest there. Limited access Nature Conservancy ranches also will be excellent hikes. Bill Kaempfer moved to charge a \$10 fee for participants of all Nature Conservancy properties, Mesa de Maya, and Vermejo Park, and that CFO will offer a donation of 50% of the fees. Second: Larry Modesitt. Carried. Bill has lined up great leaders for field trips, and this year's field trips will be different and excellent.

**Arrangements:** The Tourism Board generously offered to host a barbeque dinner on Thursday night at Trinidad Lake State Park. We will insert a map in the registration materials, so that people can locate the Mitchell Museum and State Park easily. Based upon the excellent facilities available at the Holiday Inn, we decided to have the Team ID Challenge and paper session there.

**Brochure:** It is nearly camera ready and should be sent to the printer within a few days.

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Brian Linkhart of Colorado College, the foremost expert on Flammulated Owls, will be our speaker.

**Publicity:** Ted Floyd. Postings will be made to COBirds and other nearby state listservs.

**T-shirts:** Bob Righter. They will be ordered after the quantity is determined.

**Exhibitors:** Larry Modesitt is arranging exhibitors and site plans.

**Programs:** Nathan Pieplow is handling both the Team Identification Challenge and paper sessions.

**Book Signings:** Joe Roller. There are no plans for this. Bill Kaempfer mentioned that book signings work best when the keynote speaker has books to sign.

**Awards:** Joe Roller. The Directors made decisions regarding the Ron Ryder and Lifetime Achievement Awards, and this information will be disclosed at the convention. Bill Kaempfer suggested, and all agreed, that the ranch owners who are hosting field trips and the head of the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Board should be given free banquet dinners and recognition.

**Lunches, registration, and banquet:** Menus have been determined, and food will be handled through the hotel.

#### **CFO Website—Brenda Linfield**

When we release the document for printing, Brenda will post the brochure online in PDF format. This is an incentive for online registration.

#### **Social Media Site—Christian Nunes**

The CFO Twitter account is available now, and an increasing number of followers are visiting it. There are more reviewers of eBird now, and the filters are less conservative, so this will make record acceptance more timely. Marcel Such and Nathan Pieplow are sending information out for review before publication of News from the Field, and this has enabled more input and more accuracy. News from the

Field, COBirds, eBird, and CBRC, however, are not always coordinated. This topic will be revisited in succeeding meetings.

#### **Membership Database Transition—Lisa Edwards**

The new website is working well. Around 450 members receive *Colorado Birds*, with an additional 25 complimentary copies to other state bird organizations and libraries. Lisa is sending out email notices in advance of subscriber expiration, and people are responding to her prompts.

#### **Key Indicators—Jim Beatty**

We are interested in both cash balances and membership at defined times. Brenda Linfield could give website hits. Christian Nunes can tell how many people read Twitter. The key is to establish valid starting points.

#### **CBRC Status—Doug Faulkner**

Doug submitted a full report in his absence. This indicated considerable progress in organizing data, keeping records, and establishing criteria. By the end of 2012, the goal is to be reviewing reports as they are submitted. The CBRC approved Rachel Hopper as Secretary. She has been busy combining through the paper documentations and other materials left by Larry Semo and other former chairs. She is discovering numerous past documentations CBRC has not yet reviewed. CBRC's goal is for one central master database on the CFO website to contain the entire history of the voting records of the CBRC, with all of it available to the public.

## Rare Bird Reporting to CBRC— Doug Faulkner

Doug has assigned accession numbers for all documentations submitted for 2011 (169 potential records). The CBRC has completed voting on 76 of the 2011 records with 71 accepted (93%) to date.

Doug will be starting the next CBRC report (for the April 2012 issue of *Colorado Birds*) in the next week with a draft anticipated for peer review on 18 February and a final for submission on 3 March. This report will contain the following highlights: subspecific identity of *Pitkin's* Curve-billed Thrasher (possible first record of *palmeri* for the state), Greater Roadrunner range expansion, CBRC struggles with Pacific Wren, and some mega-rarities like Blue-throated Hummingbird, Common Black-Hawk, Crested Caracara, Phainopepla, and Purple Gallinule.

One particularly perplexing example is of a Green Violetear (Conifer, Jefferson County) in 2003. The bird was documented by three observers as a Magnificent Hummingbird, but photos suggested otherwise. The CBRC voted to not accept as the reported species in 2004, with five members expressing opinions that it was a Green Violetear. The documentation was not re-submitted to the Committee until this month. The Committee accepted it [6-1] as a Green Violetear (Colorado's second).

The state review list needs to be reviewed, as several species are close to the three-records-per-year criterion for removal from the list and possibly should be removed. The CBRC has

struggled with several issues recently. These include the following: Is the Mexican Duck a legitimate species? (Both the ABA & AOU say no.) What is the role of the CBRC to review "oddities" such as hybrids? Is it the role of CBRC to review rare/uncommon subspecies such as "Russet-backed" Swainson's Thrush, "Taiga" Hermit Thrush, and *lutescens* Orange-crowned Warbler, or is this a role for academics or other members of the ornithological community? Should multiple individuals of rare (but generally solitary) species at the same location on the same date be considered different records?

Perhaps another forum (eBird?) is a more appropriate venue for "documenting" unusual dates/locations of common species. Doug hopes to have the CBRC tackle these questions in 2012.

## Committee Reports

**Colorado Birds:** Nathan Pieplow is always looking for new articles. Archives of all of the CBRC reports from 1973 to January of 2012 are now available on the CFO website. Some actions have begun to have old "In the Scope" articles posted on the website.

**Publicity:** Ted Floyd is publicizing the convention. The *Winging It* ad will be run again. Ted also is publishing many Twitter reports.

**Project and Youth Funds:** Bill Kaempfer. Bill is keeping records of all projects to see what is published and what the results have been. One project has been received. Bill recommended and Joe seconded a motion to approve this project, and the mo-



tion carried. A high school teacher requested funding for a school feeding station, but the group decided this did not meet the criteria for a CFO award. Bill forwarded the request to other potentially appropriate organizations with a hope that this request could be funded.

**CFO Field Trips:** Bill Kaempfer. Chris Pague of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) would be interested in visiting the northwesternmost site in Colorado where Lesser Prairie-Chicken can be found. We will pursue this. Ted Floyd submitted a report suggesting that CFO partner with TNC on certain surveys.

**Nominations:** Joe Roller. There is no activity to report, although Bob Righter's term is ending in 2012. While Bob is eligible for reelection, he is looking forward to full retirement.

**Awards:** Joe Roller. The board discussed possibilities for upcoming

awards, both those given at our convention and landowner appreciation awards. Announcements will be made at the convention.

### New Business

Joe Roller pointed out that there have been complaints about some of the corrections given to people about errors in using COBirds. We want to remind folks to abide by the "rules of the road" by properly identifying birds, locations, and themselves, as repeat offenders may be placed on moderation.

Our next meeting will be 14 April 2012 in Boulder. The meeting after the Annual Meeting was tentatively suggested for 11 August in Durango.

President Beatty adjourned the meeting at 3:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Larry Modesitt, Secretary

## ACROSS THE BOARD

### Nathan Pieplow

*Edited by Jim Beatty*

With this issue of *Colorado Birds*, his 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nathan Pieplow becomes the longest-serving editor in the 46-year history of the journal. I first met Nathan at Pastorius State Wildlife Area in La Plata County. Andrew Spencer and Nathan had invited me to join them for part of a day as they blitzed across Colorado at a frenetic pace, adding county ticks with sewing machine-like precision and rapidity. They joined Willa and me for dinner, but declined our invitation to stay overnight at our home, as it was late April and the owls in the San Juan National Forest were waiting for them.



Nathan Pieplow birding by peque-peque along the Caura River in Venezuela, 4 January 2007. Photo by Christian Nunes

According to Nathan, his life as a birder (which is a significant portion of his entire life story) can be divided into four chapters, each of which was precipitated by an important encounter with a different bird species—but he only knows what three of those species are.

### **Common Redpoll: Starting the list**

At an early age Nathan knew the common birds of eastern South Dakota—cardinals, chickadees, juncos, nuthatches—because his grandparents kept feeders in the yard and a bird book on the windowsill. Another book of theirs, *The Birdwatcher's Bible*, explained that birders kept something called a “life list.” Nathan didn’t think he’d seen any species worth listing, and decided to wait until something special came along. When a winter invasion brought Common Redpolls to

the feeder, the listing began.

He realized early that the woods behind his house mostly had feeder birds, so he begged his mother to drive him to places where he could rack up more lifers. Within a year or two, the 10-year-old’s life list sported over 400 species. Then tragedy struck. Nathan learned about the concept of “uncountable” birds. He would have to cross 350 species off his list, and give up his favorite birding hotspots—aviaries, pet shops, and zoos.

### **Red-breasted Merganser: Joining the club**

In ninth grade, Nathan made an astonishing discovery in the Sioux Falls Public Library: a book called *The Birds of South Dakota*. Its implications were frightening. For one thing, it claimed that fantasy creatures like Red-eyed Vireos and Chestnut-sided Warblers should be easy to find in Sioux Falls at the right time of year. Either the book was wildly exaggerating, or Nathan’s birding skills weren’t really very good. Slightly suspicious, he went out to the woods to test the book’s predictions about fall migration. To his shock, he found the fantasy creatures.

The book’s other implication was just as disconcerting. There must

be other birders in South Dakota. The South Dakota Ornithologists' Union (SDOU), publishers of the book, sounded like a formidable bunch. Intimidated, Nathan continued birding alone for a year, with just *The Birds of South Dakota* as his guide and mentor.

Then came the Red-breasted Mergansers on Lake Alvin on 4 March 1992. Not only were they life birds, but they beat the earliest-ever spring sighting in the book by nearly three weeks. Wanting to spread the news, Nathan finally made contact with the SDOU—and Red-breasted Merganser became the bird that symbolized his entry into the birding community, and the beginning of his understanding that birding could be not just an excuse for alone time in nature, but also a social activity. To this day, Nathan makes sure to go birding every year on 4 March, his own personal birding holiday.

With each successive move through his young adult years—college in Massachusetts, grad school in Oregon, a teaching job in Colorado—Nathan became gradually more involved in the local birding communities. His life list, his level of confidence as a birder, and his number of birding friends steadily grew. But birding was still just a hobby. It had yet to ignite into an obsession, and then into a life's work.

### **Smew: Hitting the road**

It was January of 2001, and Nathan had been teaching high school in Boulder for six months, when a COBirds message landed in his inbox about a weekend roadtrip to see a Smew in St. Louis, offering two seats in the car to anyone willing to share driving duties and expenses. That's how Nathan ended up climbing into a van on a Friday afternoon with three people he'd never met—Ira Sanders, his partner Tammy, and a high school student named Andrew Spencer—for a whirlwind 48-hour twitch.

It turned out that Andrew and Nathan had a lot in common, including unquenchable wanderlust, cheapskate tendencies, a desire to get as far as possible away from high school whenever it wasn't in session, and of course high-grade birding addictions. Andrew didn't yet have a driver's license or a car, so he was completely dependent on borrowed rides. Nathan, caught in the slow process of burning out on his high school teaching job, was glad of an excuse to escape from Boulder every weekend. Despite his youth, Andrew was the better birder. His fierce competitiveness could be grating, but it also forced Nathan to step up his game, teaching him to spot birds more quickly and identify them more skillfully.

For the first year or so of their weekly roadtrips, Andrew tried unsuccessfully to recruit Nathan to county listing. One day, over a

reuben sandwich at a restaurant in Lake City, Nathan admitted that the idea of county listing was tempting, but part of him still felt that trying to see a particular bird in every county was just as ridiculous as, say, attempting to eat a reuben sandwich in every county.

Perhaps he secretly felt that county listing was not ridiculous *enough*. Somehow—he's still not quite sure how—Nathan emerged from that conversation not only a county lister, but also committed to a mad quest to eat a reuben in each of Colorado's 64 counties.

For almost three years, Andrew and Nathan kept up the birding binge, haunting Colorado's backroads, vaulting onto county listing leaderboards, and ordering reubens for Nathan in 63 counties. (As of this writing, the sole reuben quest holdout is Washington County.) Along the way, they conceived an ambitious project to catalog the state's birding hotspots. Writing half the text themselves and commissioning the rest from local volunteers, they put together the Colorado Field Ornithologists' County Birding Website, perhaps the most complete online state birding site guide in the nation. This labor of love led to a contract to write the text for the Colorado Birding Trail, which they are completing in four stages under the direction of Colorado Parks & Wildlife. The southeast portion of the birding trail was completed in 2007, with the southwest region following in 2010; the northwest section is currently under development.

At the height of his county listing zeal, Nathan found himself becoming a little disillusioned with the whole game. Fun though it was, county listing provided no benefit to anyone except the lister. Nathan started to slow down, looking for a new direction, another ambitious bird-related project. He had quit his high school job and was now teaching writing at the University of Colorado. He thought of writing a book—maybe a field guide—but he couldn't see any ways to improve on the information or the layout of existing books. The basic problems of bird identification were pretty well understood, except perhaps for some detail work. Who needed a new field guide?

### **Unidentified bird: Heading to the drawing board**

A moment of failure answered the question.

It was 2003, and Nathan was in southern Mexico, standing, for the first time in his life, in a fragment of primary rainforest. He'd spent months preparing by listening to CDs of rainforest bird songs over and over while writing pages of notes. All these notes were in his backpack, and so were the CDs and a portable player. He felt as well-prepared for this new environment as a birder could possibly be.

And then he heard a song he recognized—a distinctive, high-pitched, repetitive pattern from somewhere high in the trees—but he

couldn't remember which one it was. In fact, he realized with growing frustration as he flipped through his notes, he couldn't even say whether it was a raptor or a flycatcher or a woodcreeper or a shrike-vireo. His two CDs, with 99 tracks apiece, were effectively useless without some way to narrow the possibilities down.

He thought, "I need an index."

Six months later, he began studying for his next trip to the tropics. He took notes again, but this time he copied key descriptive terms—such as "robin-like" or "booming" or "upslurred whistle"—and put them into an alphabetical list with references to the appropriate species. In Costa Rica, he field-tested the index. It wasn't perfect, but it worked.

By the end of the trip, Nathan had begun to plan a revolutionary new field guide to bird sounds, one that allowed readers to look up unfamiliar sounds the way one might look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary. Arriving back home, he set out to become qualified to write it.

He registered for the Macaulay Library's annual Sound Recording Course, saved up for recording equipment, and began learning to read spectrograms. He started writing and blogging about bird sounds. He purchased graphic design software and began experimenting with field guide layouts. Friends, family, even local Audubon chapters became guinea pigs for his various attempts to boil the complexities of sound identification down to their most fundamental principles. Eventually he got an agent, and, in 2011, an offer from a publisher. With luck, his field guide to bird sounds will be hitting bookstore shelves in late 2014.

Nathan is supported in his writing endeavors by his wonderful fiancée Molly, and he supports her in return by helping her cope with the disabilities caused by systemic lupus. In the coming years, as Nathan continues to write and teach, he hopes to continue serving CFO as the editor of its journal and a member of its board, which he considers an honor and a pleasure.

Under Nathan's leadership, *Colorado Birds* is one of the premier state birding publications in the United States and it continues to improve. While some state journals have elected to publish online and forego a collectible edition, CFO has so far chosen to continue to offer our membership a very tangible, hard copy publication with articles ranging from scientific to practical, thanks to Nathan.

CFO is very fortunate to have an ornithologist, writer, editor, and board member with Nathan's skills and commitment.

*Jim Beatty, 165 Twelve Point Buck Trail, Durango, CO 81301*

## CFO Thanks Dave Madonna for the Biggest Event in Colorado Birding History

*Ted Floyd*

On January 8, 2011, birding history was made at the Valmont Reservoir complex in Boulder County. For sure, the birding was great that overcast winter afternoon: goodies seen that day included Tundra Swan, Greater Scaup, Eared Grebe, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Mew, Thayer's, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and American Pipit.

Those great birds are *not*, however, what made January 8 a day for the record books.

Instead, January 8 of that year was record-setting in a *human* sense. By noon that day, two hundred twenty-seven (227) birders had signed in for a bird walk around the grounds of Xcel Energy's Valmont Station in Boulder. As the afternoon progressed, other folks continued to arrive. We estimate that as many as 300 birders joined us for the outing that afternoon.

How on earth did that ever happen?



*Night has fallen, but Dave Madonna (left) is still "on duty" at Gullapalooza 2011 with Ted Floyd (right). Photo by David Such*



*Each year, the annual Gullapalooza outing produces rare birds. Folks at the January 2010 event, depicted here, found such goodies as Mandarin Duck, Prairie Merlin, Iceland Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull. Photo by Bill Schmoker*

Various factors were at play, and you can learn more online ([blog.aba.org/2011/01/227.html](http://blog.aba.org/2011/01/227.html)). For now, though, we'd like to focus on one key element—perhaps *the* key element—in the success of a mid-winter birding event that has come to be known as Gullapalooza. That key element—or, rather, that key *person*—is Dave Madonna, an engineer (and birder) with Xcel Energy. In a nutshell, Dave's role as Instrumentation & Controls Supervisor is to make sure that millions of people in the Front Range get energy. That's important, but what's especially important to Front Range birders is that Dave also makes sure that hundreds of people get to enjoy one of the great highlights of the birding year in Colorado.

It's hard enough to supervise the activities of a dozen birders on a nature trail in a wildlife refuge. Now multiply that number by 25 and add a ton of understandable rules and regulations, plus the danger of falling into a vat of hot ash or getting run over by a humongous coal truck. (Also, there is the crossing of the “icy plank of death”—well known to all Gullapalooza alumni.)

Dave deals with all of that. And the paperwork. And the lawyers.

And when it's all said and done, *we have a fantastic time out there.*

The trip always goes off without a hitch. The “serious” birders get their rare gulls and aberrant plumages. The casual birders *ooh* and *ah* at the plenteous Bald Eagles and Hooded Mergansers. Folks just out for the exercise enjoy a brilliant afternoon. And folks who aren’t able to exercise as the rest of us do—that is to say, folks with limited mobility—are likewise accommodated at Gullapalooza.

We at Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) are greatly impressed with and tremendously grateful for all of Dave Madonna’s efforts on behalf of the Colorado birding community, and for that reason, the board of directors of CFO recognized Dave with its 2011 Appreciation Award—presented to Dave at the CFO convention in Grand Junction.

Thanks, Dave, for making winter birding so exciting for Colorado birders from the Front Range region and beyond!

*Ted Floyd, 2009 South Fork Drive, Lafayette, CO 80026, tedfloyd57@hotmail.com*

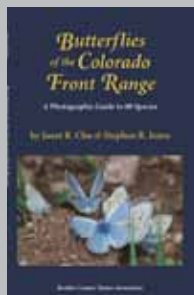


*A few of the participants at Gullapalooza 2010. Photo by Bill Schmoker*



# *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range* by Janet R. Chu and Stephen R. Jones

Christian Nunes



## *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*

Janet R. Chu and Stephen R. Jones  
Boulder County  
Nature Association, 2011  
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There are certain dangers that all birders face while in the field. Venomous snakes lurk at our feet. West Nile Virus pumps through our blood. No matter how confident we are behind the wheel, we've all allowed ourselves to be more distracted by a raptor sitting on a telephone pole than we care to admit. But one of the dangers we face is so benign, so deceptive, that we barely notice when it is eroding into our precious hobby. The danger

is the inevitable distraction of butterflies.

Butterflies are a natural extension of the naturalist's scope. Many a birder has been seduced by the siren song of the butterfly. Their brilliant colors, varied movements, and seasonal abundance make them one of the more interesting natural subjects to be studied in the summer months. However, with some 250 species of butterfly in Colorado, it can be a daunting task to learn them all.

The Boulder County Nature Association recently published the handy photographic guide *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*. Written by two of the most experienced naturalists in the region, Jan Chu and Steve Jones, this concise guide covers 80 of the most commonly encountered butterflies in the Front Range environs. Instead of plate after plate of skippers that make *Empidonax* flycatchers seem like they are wearing name tags, this guide points out the most likely species that one will encounter. For the nascent lepidopterist, this guide will build a strong foundation for learning the butterflies of the region.

The introduction to the guide gives a thorough overview of the

anatomy, ecology, and conservation that are essential to the understanding of butterflies, as well as some techniques for observing them. Each species account includes notes on the habitat, appearance, larval host plant, life cycle, and a description of any similar species that may or may not be covered in the guide. The authors supply anecdotal information for each species based on their years of experience and research. Each account is accompanied by a photograph that was taken within the geographic scope of the guide, so the local variations of each species are depicted. A glossary and an anatomic diagram of butterfly parts define all of the pertinent butterfly jargon. Of particular use is the checklist and flight time table in the back of the guide. Each species has a frequency histogram for each of the four main habitats in the Front Range, the plains, foothills, montane, and alpine zones.

This compact guide can be purchased through the Boulder County Nature Association's web site (<http://www.bcna.org>) for the price of \$12.50. Grab a copy, throw it in your pack next to your bins, and enjoy the six-legged winged creatures of summer!

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## **BREEDING BIRD ATLAS**

# **Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II: The Final Push**

*Lynn E. Wickersham*

Project Manager, Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II

After five productive years of data collection for the Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (COBBAIL), it seems fitting to quote the words of Edgar Allan Poe: "Quoth the raven, nevermore." We have reached the home stretch of the Atlas, and, as Poe's famous poem "The Raven" so directly states, "This is it, and nothing more."

This season is your last opportunity to contribute to a comprehensive effort that will be central to the long-term management and conservation of Colorado's breeding birds. Many CFO members have participated in data collection for COBBAIL, and for that I am sincerely thankful. For those of you who have yet to volunteer, don't



*Red-winged Blackbird, Lower Latham, Weld County, 18 June 2010. Photo by Joel Such*

miss this final opportunity to get involved. For five years, COBBAIL has been carried by the talented, dedicated, and tireless birders of Colorado, and as we head into the final season, I hope you will join me in carrying this project all the way to the finish line.

While Breeding Bird Atlases are typically conducted over a five-year period, the First Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (COBBAI; Kingery 1995) was completed in nine years due to the enormity of the survey area and the scarcity of field workers in remote portions of the state. The progress of COBBAI was initially slow, with just under half of the blocks completed after the initial five-year period. The progress of COBBAIL in its first five years has far surpassed that of the first

Atlas in the number of blocks worked and completed, with only a marginally higher number of block effort hours (Table 1). These data suggest that atlasers may be more efficient than they were in COBBAI, which is not surprising given that many current volunteers are veterans of the first Atlas.

The objectives for the sixth and final year of COBBAIL are to match or exceed the number of blocks with data (1,745) and number of blocks completed

*Table 1. Comparison of COBBAI and COBBAIL priority block effort per project year.*

Atlas Year	Blocks Worked		Blocks Completed		Effort Hours	
	Atlas I	Atlas II	Atlas I	Atlas II	Atlas I	Atlas II
1	225	<sup>a</sup>	50	<sup>a</sup>	4,723	<sup>a</sup>
2	418	<sup>a</sup>	91	34	13,395	8,336
3	583	<sup>a</sup>	177	260	20,281	16,839
4	806	<sup>a</sup>	273	536	27,163	22,653
5	976	1,527	442	1,155	35,965	37,654
6	1,207		614		43,595	
7	1,427		927		55,246	
8	1,734		1,645		67,642	
9	1,745 <sup>b</sup>		1,650 <sup>b</sup>		68,057	

<sup>a</sup> Priority and non-priority block statistics were lumped from 2007–2011; exact data in priority blocks undetermined at this time.

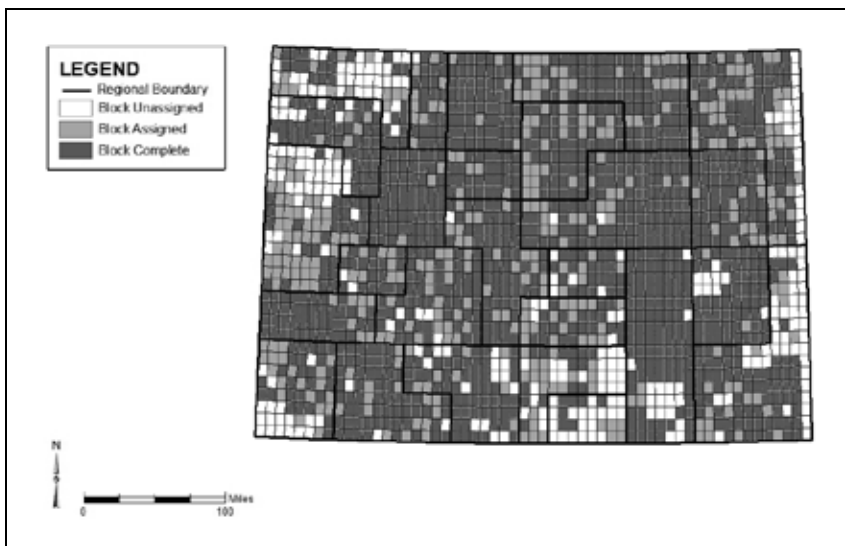


Fig. 1. Block status for the Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, 2007–2011

(1,650) during COBBAI. We appear to be on track to do just that in 2012. Currently, 1,548 priority Atlas blocks have been assigned to volunteers, and 1,155 have been completed. Atlasers have reported 291 species statewide, confirming 259. At this time, we have exceeded the number of species reported during COBBAI by 11 species, but are just shy of the 266 species confirmed.

The COBBAI database is flush with records in the populated portions of the state. Significant data gaps remain, however, in more remote, less populated areas. Most of the gaps cluster in four distinct regions of the state (Fig. 1):

- 1) Northwest: Craig to Dinosaur
- 2) West-central: North of Grand Junction
- 3) South-central: Eastern San Luis Valley to Trinidad/Walsenburg
- 4) Southeast: East of Lamar

Most of these blocks will require significant time and travel for atlasers. However, they offer the opportunity to bird some of the most breathtaking country in Colorado, where few birders have roamed. The rugged, maze-like canyons of the northwest are alluring, with opportunities to confirm several raptor species, as well as the often seen but rarely confirmed Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*). In south-central Colorado, the Culebra Range entices the adventurous birder

with the opportunity to gain access to private lands that are seldom accessible to birders. The plains blocks provide the perfect excuse for county birders to visit some counties where their lists may be lacking.

In addition to these fantastic birding opportunities, there are smaller data gaps across the state for which Atlas data are needed. While no one particular block is more important than another, each represents an integral piece of our knowledge of distribution, habitat use, and breeding phenology of Colorado's birds. For those of you who have completed your blocks or who have yet to participate, please consider adopting an Atlas block in 2012. This will be the last opportunity for you to contribute to the Atlas. "Quoth the raven, nevermore."

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend a sincere thanks to all COBBAIL volunteers, the Regional Coordinators, and the Technical Committee for your time and effort. The Atlas would not be successful without you.

### LITERATURE CITED

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*Dusky Grouse, Cub Lake, Boulder County, 23 June 2010. Photo by Joel Such*



*American Dippers, Wild Basin, Boulder County, 24 July 2009. Photo by Joel Such*

# The 62<sup>nd</sup> Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

*Doug Faulkner*

Chair, Colorado Bird Records Committee

## **Introduction**

This 62<sup>nd</sup> report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) presents the results of deliberations of the CBRC involving 115 reports submitted by 37 observers and documenting 89 occurrences of 63 species (or recognizable forms) from the period February 2010 to August 2011. Per CBRC bylaws, all accepted records received a final 7-0 or 6-1 vote to accept. Each report that was not accepted received five or fewer votes to accept.

Highlights of this report include second state records for Green Violetear and Pacific Wren, third state records for Tufted Duck, Crested Caracara, and Purple Gallinule, a fourth state record for Pyrrhuloxia, and multiple West Slope records including Common Black-Hawk, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Curve-billed Thrasher, Worm-eating Warbler, and Cassin's Sparrow. With publication of this report, the state list remains at 493 species.

Committee members voting on these reports were Coen Dexter, John Drummond, Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Joey Kellner, Bill Maynard, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, Bill Schmoker, Larry Semo, David Silverman, and Glenn Walbek.

## **Committee Functions**

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its review list, including both the main list ([http://www.cfobirds.org/records/review\\_list.htm](http://www.cfobirds.org/records/review_list.htm)) and the conditional lists (Semo et al. 2002; <http://www.cfobirds.org/records/reports.htm>), and for reports of species with no prior accepted record in Colorado. Documentary materials should be submitted online at the CBRC website (<http://www.cfobirds.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 during the most recent full 10-year time period (2002–2011). The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria for a spe-

cies' 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 52<sup>nd</sup> Supplement (Chesser et al. 2011). 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, the second and third rounds (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 (or people) contributed documentation; additional contributors' initials follow in alphabetical order by last name. If the finder(s) is (are) known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are underlined and presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture have a dagger (†) following their initials; initials of those who submitted video 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 is listed second; RA submitted, at least, photographic documentation; the record number assigned to the occurrence was 2001-36; and in the two rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four "accept" 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 first and final dates on which a rare species was seen, as that provides historical evidence of the true extent of its stay.

For this report, abbreviations are used for Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Crow Valley Campground (CVCg), Highway (Hwy.), Reservoir (Res.), State Park (SP), State Wildlife Area (SWA), and Weld County Road (WCR).



*Yellow-crowned  
Night-Heron, Glen-  
mere Park, Weld  
County, 12 June  
2011. Photo by  
Doug Faulkner*



*Crested Caracara,  
near Hasty, Bent  
County, 7 July  
2011. Photo by  
Joey Kellner*

*Purple Gallinule,  
Country Club Hills,  
Logan County, 7  
June 2011. Photo  
by Mack Hitch*







*Eastern Wood-Pewee, Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso County, 15 May 2011. Photo by Bill Maynard*



*Blackburnian Warbler, Two Buttes SWA, Baca County, 7 May 2011. Photo by Joe Roller*



*Hepatic Tanager, near Kim, Las Animas County, 5 June 2011. Photo by John Drummond*

## RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Tufted Duck** – *Aythya fuligula* (3/1). A female-plumaged bird with a prominent tuft captivated birders for hours during its brief one-day stay at Golden Ponds, *Boulder*, 17 January 2011 (DF†, PG†, BM†, NP, BS†, SM; 2011-18; 7-0). The length of the bird's tuft prompted many birders to conclude that it was an immature male; however, European birders who reviewed photos considered it to be an adult female. Colorado's previous two records were both of adult males in alternate plumage.

**Red-throated Loon** – *Gavia stellata* (45/15). A stunning individual in alternate plumage graced Cherry Creek SP, *Arapahoe*, 19 April 2011 (CT; 2011-35; 7-0). This represents the eighth spring record and only the third April record of this predominantly late fall visitor to the state.

**Horned Grebe** – *Podiceps auritus*. Remarkably finishing a first county record, two Horned Grebes were observed at Smith Res., *Costilla*, 28 March 2011 (TE; 2011-23; 7-0).

**Neotropic Cormorant** – *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (21/8). The Committee accepted three records of this species observed in spring and summer 2011. An immature cormorant lingered at the Cherry Creek SP marina, *Arapahoe*, at least 8-15 April (NB†,

JD†, NP; 2011-25; 7-0). An adult in non-breeding plumage was observed at the High Plains Sportsman Club pond near Ordway, *Crowley*, 24 June 2011 (BKa; 2011-94; 7-0). A pond adjacent to Prewitt Res., *Washington*, hosted a single immature Neotropic Cormorant on 10 July and two immature cormorants on 6 August (SM†; 2011-100; 7-0).

**Brown Pelican** – *Pelecanus occidentalis* (21/9). A lucky observer watched an adult gliding onto a sewage lagoon at Kit Carson, *Cheyenne*, 11 May 2011, where it stayed for about 15 minutes before taking off (BKa; 2011-46; 7-0).

**Reddish Egret** – *Egretta rufescens* (12/6). Present for a week, a white-morph adult was documented for Huerfano Res., *Pueblo*, 14–20 May 2011 (DS, BKa, BKP v; 2011-52; 7-0), establishing the fourth state record of the white-morph form and the twelfth record of the species. Notably, the race



*Tufted Duck*, Golden Ponds, Boulder County, 17 January 2011. Photo by Doug Faulkner

from western Mexico (*dickeyi*) has no white morph (E. Palacios, in litt.), suggesting that at least Colorado's four white-morph Reddish Egrets, and possibly most or all of the rest, are from Gulf of Mexico populations (subspecies *rufescens*).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – *Nyctanassa violacea* (25/10). One attended a nest at Glenmere Park in Greeley, Weld, during the summer of 2011, possibly paired with a Black-crowned Night-Heron. Unfortunately, the CBRC received documentation only for the dates of 10–12 June 2011 (DF†, BKa, SM†; 2011-87; 7-0). The CBRC asks for additional documentation pertaining to this rare event of a nesting Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Colorado.

**Glossy Ibis** – *Plegadis falcinellus* (66/39). The Committee accepted documentations for five occurrences of seven Glossy Ibis in spring 2011. *La Plata* had its fifth record in six years, and its sixth overall, with documentation of two adults observed at Pastorius Res., 21 April (JB†; 2011-36; 7-0). *Weld*, and particularly the Beebe Draw and Greeley area, appears to be a good place to find this species in spring, as the remaining four accepted occurrences in this circulation were from that area: two adults at Beebe Draw, 26 May (SM†; 2011-62; 6-1); one adult at Beebe Draw, 2 June (SM†; 2011-78; 7-0); one adult along Hwy 263 east of Greeley, 11 June (SM; 2011-88; 6-1); and one adult along WCR 54 near Spanish Village, 18 June (SM; 2011-91; 7-0).

**Common Black-Hawk** – *Buteo galus anthracinus* (10/6). An adult was observed for about 25 minutes soaring

over Confluence Park, *Delta*, 23 June 2011 (MQ†; 2011-93; 7-0). Of Colorado's ten records, half are from the West Slope – one each for *La Plata*, *Mesa*, and *Montrose*, and two for *Delta*. All of the West Slope records have occurred since 2001.

**Red-tailed Hawk (Krider's)** – *Buteo jamaicensis krideri*. An adult showing classic features for this subspecies—particularly the white tail base, according to an outside expert's opinion—was photographed near Union Res., *Weld*, 28 March 2011 (SM†; 2011-24; 7-0).

**Crested Caracara** – *Caracara cheriway* (3/2). Only nine months after Colorado's single-observer second state record in *Chaffee* in October 2010, the state's birders were treated to a longer visit by an adult on private land near *Hasty, Bent*, 7–9 July 2011 (DE, PG†, JK†, BM†, BKP†, DN; 2011-98; 7-0). There has been a dramatic increase in Crested Caracara vagrancy since the late 1980s, stretching from Canada's Maritime Provinces to the Pacific Coast of North America, so additional records from Colorado are to be expected (Brinkley and Lehman 2003, San Miguel and McGrath 2005, Mlodinow and Aanerud 2008).

**Purple Gallinule** – *Porphyrio martinica* (3/2). An adult was photographed at a pond in the Country Club Hills area near *Sterling, Logan*, 7 June 2011 (MHi†; 2011-83; 7-0). The reporting observer checked the pond three times the following day without refinding the gallinule. The state's previous two records (in *La Plata* and *Larimer*) were first discovered in August, but only the cooperative *Larimer* bird stayed for

more than a couple days (27 August – 10 September 2002).

**Snowy Plover** – *Charadrius alexandrinus*. Documentation of an adult male photographed at Smith Res. on 4 June 2011 constitutes the first record for *Costilla* (SM†; 2011-80; 7-0).

**Pectoral Sandpiper** – *Calidris melanotos*. Establishing a first county record, an adult was carefully documented at San Luis Lake, *Alamosa*, on the unusually early date of 27 March 2011 (TF; 2011-21; 7-0).

**Short-billed Dowitcher** – *Limnodromus griseus*. Adults were documented from two locations on the same date of 1 May 2011. An adult was photographed at Cherry Creek SP, *Arapahoe* (BKo†; 2011-42; 7-0), while another three adults were at Lake Holbrook, *Otero* (SM; 2011-43; 7-0).

**Black-legged Kittiwake** – *Rissa tridactyla* (45/19). A long-staying first-cycle individual resided at Windsor Lake, *Weld*, from 16 April through 26 May 2011 (SM†, CW; 2011-16; 7-0). A second first-cycle kittiwake visited Windsor Lake, where the two were photographed together, on the single date of 5 May 2011 (SM†; 2011-33; 7-0).

**Laughing Gull** – *Leucophaeus atricilla* (42/15). A first-cycle Laughing Gull was observed at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on the single date of 9 May 2011 (BKP†; 2011-45; 7-0).

**Greater Roadrunner** – *Geococcyx californianus*. A first for *Morgan*, one was observed at Jackson Res., 10 July 2011 (SM; 2011-99; 7-0). The only other northeastern Colorado report is of one near Peetz, *Logan*, 15 July 1946 (Bailey and Niedrach 1965).

**Lesser Nighthawk** – *Chordeiles acu-*

*tipennis* (25/10). The third record for the Nucla, *Montrose*, area was provided by a male and a female observed at the sewage lagoons one mile west of town on multiple occasions from 30 May to 16 August 2010 (CD; 2011-2; 7-0). These lagoons appear to be a reliable location for the species, as it has been the site of each of the three Nucla records, all since 2006.

**Green Violetear** – *Colibri thalassinus* (2/1). In 2004, the CBRC reviewed documentation for a Magnificent Hummingbird that had visited feeders at a private residence in Conifer, *Jefferson*, from 12 September to 4 October 2003. Several Committee members commented that the photos included with the documentation did not support the reported species, but were of a Green Violetear. The CBRC voted 0-7 to not accept the documentation as the reported species (2003-7; 0-7). For reasons unknown to this Chair, the report was not re-circulated as a Green Violetear despite majority support for the identification from the CBRC at that time. The question about the status of the documentation surfaced in January 2012 when a co-author of an upcoming book on rare birds in North America inquired about the report. The Chair solicited outside expert opinion and the CBRC reviewed the original documentation as a Green Violetear. The current CBRC has accepted the report as pertaining to that species (BB†, MK, PW, RP; 2003-7 as amended by Chair to Green Violetear; 6-1), the state's second record.

**Blue-throated Hummingbird** – *Lampornis clemenciae* (13/1). A female was a one-day visitor at a private resi-

dence in No Name, Garfield, 30 June 2010 (TM; 2011-1; 7-0), representing a first for the county and Colorado's first since 2001.

**Magnificent Hummingbird** – *Eugenes fulgens* (17/10). A female was at Tunnel Campground, Roosevelt NF, Larimer, 21-24 July 2011 (BS†, CK; 2011-103; 7-0). This is also the location of an adult female in 2010 (2010-91) and an adult male in 2002 (2002-113).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** – *Archilochus colubris* (13/8). Representing a first for Huerfano, an adult male visited feeders at a private residence near La Veta, 12-13 May 2011 (PN†, BKP†; 2011-50; 7-0).

**Red-headed Woodpecker** – *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*. Two adults of this striking species were discovered on the West Slope in June 2011. The first was near Carbondale, Garfield, on the single date of 5 June 2011 (TM; 2011-82; 7-0). The second adult was found during Breeding Bird Atlas work on private property in the Escalante Forks area, Mesa, 14 June 2011 (MHe; 2011-89; 7-0). Righter et al. (2004) consider the species to be a rare non-breeding visitor to western Colorado, with approximately a dozen reports in late spring and early summer.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** – *Melanerpes carolinus*. Rare along the Front Range, one was photographed at a private residence north of Lyons, Larimer, 28 May 2011 (MS†, LL; 2011-68; 7-0).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee** – *Contopus virens* (24/8). A singing individual was observed at Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso, 15-16 May 2011 (BM†, BKP†; 2011-53; 7-0).

**Alder Flycatcher** – *Empidonax alnorum* (35/23). A male sang and foraged in the willows at a small pond along Boulder Creek on the University of Colorado's East Campus, Boulder, 29 May 2011 (BS†, CN; 2011-66; 7-0). Two individuals were observed at Pre-witt Res., Washington, 29 May 2011, approximately a half mile apart (SM; 2010-70; 7-0) and (SM; 2010-71; 6-1).

**Gray Flycatcher** – *Empidonax wrightii*. Rarely reported in far eastern Colorado, one was at Van's Grove, Bent, 1 May 2011 (SM†; 2011-41; 7-0).

**Vermilion Flycatcher** – *Pyrocephalus rubinus* (43/21). A first for Montrose, an adult female was just west of Nucla, 23 April 2011 (CD; 2011-39; 7-0). A singing adult male first found in late May at the Thompson Ranch near Limon, Lincoln, was documented for 8-9 June 2011 (DF†, TL†, MP; 2011-85; 7-0).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** – *Tyrannus forficatus* (37/19). An adult male remained several days near Marston Res., Denver/Jefferson, 13-16 May 2011 (MHe; 2011-51; 7-0). This is the first record for Denver and the third for Jefferson.

**Philadelphia Vireo** – *Vireo philadelphicus* (38/13). An adult captured and banded at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory banding station at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, on 12 May 2011 was observed through 26 May (BM†, BKP†, JD, NG; 2011-49; 7-0).

**Purple Martin** – *Progne subis*. Very rare anywhere along the Front Range, an adult male and a female were observed flying over the Kodak SWA near Windsor, Weld, 26 May 2011 (SM; 2011-63; 7-0). Male Purple Martins

are very difficult to assign to race, but the female appeared to be of one of the western North American races, not the eastern race *subis*.

**Pacific Wren** – *Troglodytes pacificus* (2/2). Representing Colorado's second record, one was in Greenhorn Meadows Park, Colorado City, *Pueblo*, 27 December 2010 (DS; 2010-179; 7-0), and possibly later.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush** – *Catharus minimus* (52/18). Single thrushes were documented for Fox Ranch, *Yuma*, 29 May 2011 (TF; 2011-67; 7-0) and Van's Grove, *Bent*, 4 June 2011 (SM, TL; 2011-79; 7-0).

**Wood Thrush** – *Hylocichla mustelina* (35/18). One was at the Thompson Ranch near Limon, *Lincoln*, 19–20 May 2011 (KD; 2011-74; 7-0). Another serenaded a birder along Greenhorn Creek in Colorado City, *Pueblo*, 24 May 2011 (DS; 2011-60; 7-0).

**Curve-billed Thrasher** – *Toxostoma curvirostre*. Furnishing the West Slope's second record and a first for *Pitkin*, one stayed most of the winter at a private residence along the Crystal River near Carbondale, where it was documented for the period from 5 December 2010 through 1 April 2011 (TM†, M&PP; 2010-161; 7-0). This individual is referable to the subspecies *palmeri*, which occurs in the southwestern U.S., due to the grayish basal coloration on the throat and breast not contrasting with the grayish breast spots (Pyle 1997). Curve-billed Thrashers east of Arizona, subspecies *oberholseri*, have a whitish basal coloration that contrasts with the dark gray breast spots. While these subspecies intergrade in southeastern Arizona where their ranges meet and

a hybrid cannot be entirely ruled out, the *Pitkin* individual is phenotypically similar to *palmeri*. This represents the second state record for *palmeri*, the first pertaining to one at Grand Junction, *Mesa*, on 9 June 2004 (2004-85).

**Phainopepla** – *Phainopepla nitens* (11/2). Colorado's eleventh "Phaino" was found during Breeding Bird Atlas work in Cottonwood Canyon, 16 June 2011 (RS†; 2011-90; 7-0). Not only did the observer see a great bird for the state, he also saw it in both *Las Animas* and *Baca* as the bird flew across the county line at this popular birding locale.

**Worm-eating Warbler** – *Helminthophila vermivorum*. Very rare on the West Slope and providing the first record for *Mesa*, a singing Worm-eating Warbler was found during the CFO annual convention along the Palisade River Trail in Palisade, *Mesa*, 21 May 2011 (RM, DL; 2011-58; 7-0).

**Black-and-white Warbler** – *Mniotilta varia*. A singing male was a surprising find during Breeding Bird Atlas work southwest of Saguache, *Saguache*, 3 July 2011 (LW; 2011-95; 7-0). The mid-summer date suggests that this individual was neither a late spring nor an early fall migrant, although it clearly represents a first county record.

**Mourning Warbler** – *Geothlypis philadelphia* (29/9). Representing the first record for *Fremont*, an adult male was photographed along the Cañon City Riverwalk, 21 May 2011 (BKP†, KC; 2011-57; 7-0).

**Bay-breasted Warbler** – *Setophaga castanea* (44/11). A minor fallout of the species appears to have occurred along the lower Front Range in late

May 2011. The CBRC accepted three documentations for this species, all of individual adult males: near Colorado City, *Pueblo*, 27 May (DS, BKP†; 2011-65; 7-0); at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, 28–29 May (BM†; 2011-15; 7-0); and again at Chico Basin on the *El Paso* side, 28 May (BM†, LE; 2011-69; 7-0).

**Blackburnian Warbler** – *Setophaga fusca* (51/15). A male was photographed at Two Buttes SWA, *Baca*, 7 May 2011 (RO†, CN; 2011-44; 7-0). Another male was found along Boulder Creek on the University of Colorado's East Campus, *Boulder*, 25 May 2011 (MB, BKa; 2011-61; 7-0).

**Pine Warbler** – *Setophaga pinus* (40/22). Of Colorado's rare warbler species, Pine Warbler may be one of the most likely to occur in winter. Colorado's 40<sup>th</sup> record, and the species' 17<sup>th</sup> record from winter (December – March), is represented by an immature male photographed along the Bluff Trail in Cañon City, *Fremont*, 17 February 2011 (JD†; 2011-19; 7-0).

**Yellow-throated Warbler** – *Setophaga dominica* (38/13). Included in the list of rarities found along Boulder Creek on the University of Colorado's East Campus, *Boulder*, in 2011 was a male of this species, 22–24 April (BKa, PG; 2011-37; 7-0).

**Prairie Warbler** – *Setophaga discolor* (31/10). A singing male was documented for Corwina Park, *Jefferson*, 18–21 June 2011 (DF†, BM†; 2011-92; 7-0). The original report, which came from a posting to eBird, mentioned the possibility of two males and a female, but neither of the reporting observers saw more than one male.

**Cassin's Sparrow** – *Peucaea cassinii*.

The first record for the West Slope was provided by documentation, including an audio recording, of a singing male near Paonia, *Delta*, 5–7 July 2011 (JBs s; 2011-97; 7-0). Cassin's Sparrow had an irruption year in 2011, with first state records in Arkansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Ohio, and a second record for Illinois. Arizona birders reported a widespread incursion into the northern part of the state in summer 2011 (perhaps the source of the *Delta* bird?) where the species is considered casual (Arizona Field Ornithologists 2011).

**Black-throated Sparrow** – *Amphispiza bilineata*. Documentation of a non-vocalizing individual on Eight Mile Mesa near Pagosa Springs on 1 June 2011 provided a very rare *Archuleta* record for this species (SA; 2011-77; 7-0). The species' range extends northeasterly into western Colorado, where it is most commonly found along the border with Utah north to Garfield (Kingery 1998, Righter et al. 2004). The first Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas showed only one possible breeding record for *Archuleta* (Kingery 1998).

**"Red" Fox Sparrow** – *Passerella iliaca/zaboria* (20/19). One found on private property in *Boulder* on the Boulder CBC (19 December 2010) stayed through 3 March 2011. However, the CBRC received documentation from only one observer for the lone date of 4 February 2011 (BS†, JBa; 2011-28; 7-0).

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (30/15). One in first-winter plumage was documented for Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, 15 October 2010 (DL†; 2010-173; 7-0),

though it was reported to have been there on subsequent dates. The CBRC received a single documentation for the overwintering Golden-crowned Sparrow at Teller Farms east of Boulder, Boulder, the second for the county, from an observer who saw the bird only on 2 April 2011 (SM†; 2011-31; 7-0).

**Hepatic Tanager** – *Piranga flava* (23/7). Three males were heard singing on 29 May 2011 and an apparent mated pair observed on 5 June 2011 from County Road 177.9 above Reed Canyon near Kim, Las Animas (JD†; 2011-75; 7-0).

**Summer Tanager** – *Piranga rubra*. As incredible as three Summer Tanagers on the West Slope in the same year may sound, the three documented to the CBRC in 2011 were all first-cycle males. The first feasted on grape jelly at a private residence in Glenwood Springs, Garfield, documented for 17–19 May (TM†, RH; 2011-73; 7-0). Chalking up another interesting find from Breeding Bird Atlas work, Henwood found a first-cycle male on private property in the Escalante Forks area, Mesa, 7 June (MHe; 2011-86; 7-0). The third was described as large-billed and the observer considered it to be of the southwestern subspecies *cooperi*. This individual was near Nucla, Montrose, 5 July (JC; 2011-101; 7-0). This, or possibly another, individual was reported approximately two miles away on 9 July. Additional 2011 sightings, without documentation, of first-cycle males on the West Slope included one in Carbondale, Garfield, on 7 May, and another, or possibly the same as 2011-73, in Glenwood Springs on 1 June.

**Scarlet Tanager** – *Piranga olivacea*

(35/12). A female was observed at Rose Pond on Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo, 26 May 2011 (BM†, BKP†, KC; 2011-64; 7-0).

**Pyrhuloxia** – *Cardinalis sinuatus* (4/1). An adult female was observed near Alamosa, Alamosa, by a private landowner from 8 June to 17 June 2011, and documented by the reporting observer 8–10 June (JR†; 2011-84; 7-0). While many of us are motivated to “chase” rare birds for different reasons, we must also take care to be good representatives of the broader birding community and respect the wishes of private landowners who don’t want to be disturbed by visiting birders. The reporting observer honored the landowner’s request not to publicize this bird’s presence during its stay, and the CBRC respects his decision to do so.

**Baltimore Oriole** – *Icterus galbula*. A phenotypically pure adult male made a one-day appearance on 1 June 2011 at a private residence in La Veta, Huerfano (PN†; 2011-76; 7-0).

**Scott’s Oriole** – *Icterus parisorum*. Providing Boulder’s second record, an adult male visited a private residence in the city of Boulder on the lone date of 16 May 2011 (DW†; 2011-54; 7-0).

## 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



CBRC believes the observer misidentified or did not see the species. A non-accepted report only indicates that, in the opinion of at least two of the seven Committee members, the documentation did not provide enough evidence to support the identification of the species reported. Many non-accepted reports do not adequately describe the bird(s) observed or adequately rule out similarly looking species. For more information on what the CBRC considers during its review, the Committee recommends that observers consult Leukering (2004), which is available through the CBRC website at <http://www.cfobirds.org/records/reports.htm>, when writing documentation of a rare bird.

All non-accepted reports may be reconsidered by the Committee if new information is provided (e.g., photos, supplemental documentation). We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

**Brant (Black)** – *Branta bernicla nigricans*. Documentation of a juvenile at Jumbo Res., Sedgwick, 28 November 2010, did not receive endorsement from the CBRC (2010-155; 4-3, 2-5). Several Committee members commented that the observer did not sufficiently rule out juvenile dark-morph (i.e., “blue”) Snow Goose or Ross’s Goose, and that the brief description did not allow the CBRC to make that determination itself.

**Eurasian Wigeon** – *Anas penelope*. A female was reported from the Haxtun sewage ponds, Phillips, 2 April 2010 (2010-15; 0-7). Identification of female Eurasian Wigeon has challenged Colorado birders, as evidenced by the fact

that all of the state’s 38 records are of adult males. The description provided for this individual did not include salient characteristics necessary for the CBRC to accept. These characteristics include axillary (underwing) coloration (gray or white) and presence or absence of a black gape border. The CBRC encourages birders to review Cox and Barry (2005) to familiarize themselves with the identification challenges posed by female-plumaged wigeons.

**Red-throated Loon** – *Gavia stellata*. The description provided from a 30-second view of a distant adult loon at Boyd Lake, Larimer, 5 November 2010, reported as a Red-throated did not adequately eliminate similar species in the opinion of the CBRC (2010-140; 3-4). One Committee member was concerned with an inconsistency within the observation itself. The observer reported that the loon was “consistently diving” and yet “could never refound [sic] it after it dove for the first time.” While such inconsistency is not enough to warrant non-acceptance of a report as a state record, it may cause heightened suspicion by the CBRC about the accuracy of other details provided in the report.

**Neotropic Cormorant** – *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*. The brief description of a juvenile cormorant at Lake Henry, Crowley, 15 May 2010, caused several Committee members to comment that there was not enough information to objectively conclude that it was a Neotropic (2010-107; 2-5). As with some other non-accepted sightings discussed herein, the documentation for this bird was written months (in this case seven months) after the sighting without sup-

port of photos or written notes at time of the sighting.

Documentation of an immature at Lake Holbrook, Otero, 15 May 2010, required three rounds of voting (2010-106; 4-3, 4-3, 4-3). Ultimately, it did not receive enough support due to the late sight-only report (seven months after the sighting) and brief description that did not rule out Double-crested Cormorant in the opinion of several Committee members.

The Committee also reviewed documentation of an immature cormorant at Prewitt Res., Washington, 24 May 2010. Again, this report submitted seven months after the sighting did not conclusively eliminate similar species, specifically Double-crested Cormorant, from contention in the opinion of a majority of Committee members (2010-109; 3-4).

**Red-shouldered Hawk** – *Buteo lineatus*. A juvenile hawk observed in flight in Fort Collins, Larimer, 16 February 2010, was described as small with a “dark head...thin black and white streaks on the tail, and buffy comma shape crescents on the outer wing” (2010-103; 1-6). Several dissenting Committee members commented that juvenile Red-tailed Hawks can also show “commas” on the wings. Committee members were also concerned of how lighting conditions (mid-day in mid-February) might have influenced observation conditions of a hawk seen flying to the south for less than half a minute.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** – *Tryngites subruficollis*. An adult was reported from McIntosh Res., Boulder, 2 August 2010, by a single observer (2010-120; 3-4).

Several Committee members commented that the distance of observation (1200 feet) concerned them, and that the description of this buffy colored shorebird did not adequately rule out other “buffy” species, specifically juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Ruff, and Mountain Plover.

**Red Phalarope** – *Phalaropus fulicarius*. An adult phalarope in basic plumage was reported from Luna Res., Weld, 19 September 2010. The documentation required two rounds of voting, but ultimately most Committee members were not convinced by the written description that relied on vocalization (the bird called once in flight) and a description of the back coloration as “light” to rule out Red-necked Phalarope (2010-123; 5-2, 3-4).

**Black-billed Cuckoo** – *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*. The CBRC concluded that the documentation provided for an adult cuckoo at CVCG, Weld, 8 June 2010, observed for ten seconds and a lifer for the reporting individual, did not conclusively support the identification (2010-112; 4-3, 2-5). The CBRC is hesitant to support late-coming documentation that describes precise plumage details of a bird observed months earlier if that documentation does not also have photos or written notes.

Another reported adult Black-billed Cuckoo, this one at Tamarack Ranch SWA, Logan, 4 July 2010, was also observed very briefly (for eight seconds) in flight only (2010-116; 2-5). This report was prepared five months after the observation and without photos or notes written at the time of observation.

**Alder Flycatcher** – *Empidonax alno-*

rum. The CBRC reviewed two documentations of individual Alder Flycatchers reported from May 2010. The first individual, at Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo, 19 May 2010, was described as giving the distinctive “pip” call of Alder Flycatcher. However, the photos appeared to show a brownish flycatcher with an incomplete eyering – characteristics more associated with Willow Flycatcher than with Alder. The two dissenting members in the third round of voting commented that the photos, although certainly of a Traill’s-type flycatcher, did not conclusively support the identification of an Alder despite the call-note description (2010-31; 4-3, 4-3, 5-2).

The second individual was found on a CFO convention trip at Tamarack Ranch SWA, Logan, 21 May 2010. This bird was also described as giving the “pip” call of Alder Flycatcher; however, the two dissenting members in the first round of voting both noted that the photos were not of a Traill’s-type flycatcher, but were more likely of a Dusky Flycatcher. Specifically, the members noted its short, all-black bill, very short primary projection, squat and rounded head profile, and broad eyering. Upon further review of the photos and first-round comments, the remaining Com-

mittee members agreed that the photos did not support the identification of an Alder Flycatcher (2010-83; 5-2, 0-7).

#### **Sprague’s Pipit** – *Anthus spragueii*.

One was reported singing near Arapahoe, Cheyenne, 17 April 2010 (2010-72; 2-5). The observer did not observe the bird, which is not unusual for this species as it often sings in flight at considerable height, but unfortunately, the documentation did not provide a description of the song. The song is distinctive, and since the bird was singing in flight, a behavior typical of only a few North American species, two Committee members considered that suitable evidence to support the identification. The remaining members, however, commented that without a song description, identification to species was not possible for what would be the state’s third spring record.

**Eastern Meadowlark** – *Sturnella magna*. The reporting observer noted that the meadowlark observed near Holyoke along the Yuma and Phillips line, 2 April 2010, sang an Eastern Meadowlark song (2010-14; 2-5). The documentation, however, did not provide a description of that song and the plumage description was too brief for species identification in the CBRC’s opinion.

## **REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS**

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# A Study of Wintering Loggerhead Shrikes in the Texas Gulf Coastal Plain

Susan H. Craig and Amy Chabot

## Introduction

The Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) is the only true shrike found exclusively in North America. Like other shrike species in the family Laniidae, the Loggerhead Shrike is known for its raptor-like habits. While it prefers insect prey, it can dispatch small rodents, other birds, lizards, snakes, and frogs. It hangs its prey on thorns or wedges it in small forks in trees or shrubs. This unique behavior serves as a marker for territorial boundaries, provides a means for females to compare prospective mates, and furnishes a larder of food for the adults and young during bad weather or when food demands increase as nestlings grow larger (Yosef 1996).

Once common in grasslands throughout North America, this unusual passerine now has the added distinction of being among the top ten fastest-declining bird species in North America. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate a 3.8% decline per year since 1966 (Sauer et al. 2008), the 7<sup>th</sup> largest among species monitored in that long-term data set. Partners in Flight suggests that the species has lost 79% of

its population continent-wide (Berlanga et al. 2010). Given these widespread and dramatic losses, numerous studies have been undertaken on the species, including studies of its growth and development, feeding behavior, reproductive success and survival, and various aspects of habitat choice (reviewed in Yosef 1996 and Pruitt



Fig. 1. Wintering Loggerhead Shrike captured in the Gulf Coast of Texas. Photo by Amy Chabot

2000). Most researchers agree that the species' decline is likely due to threats faced during migration and on the wintering grounds (Pruitt 2000); yet, as with most North American bird species, there have been few studies of shrikes on the wintering grounds.

Fascinated by shrikes, we have had the privilege of studying them for more than two decades. Together and singly, we have observed and recorded various aspects of the species' life history across a large portion of its range. In particular, we have focused on Colorado, Ontario, and Illinois, all areas in which the species is migratory. In January 2012, we were able to obtain two small grants that allowed us to undertake a pilot study of winter habitat use of Loggerhead Shrike on its wintering grounds.

After joining up in Colorado, we drove to Port Lavaca, Texas, the first and most southerly of our three study areas, where we set about making the most of our eleven days in the field. We focused our study in three areas on the Gulf Coast of southeast Texas: Calhoun County, centered on Port Lavaca; Matagorda County, centered on the Clive Runnells Family Mad Island Marsh Preserve; and Brazoria County, around Lake Jackson. While we were grateful to avoid recent torrential downpours in the drought-inflicted area where we chose to work, we did face days of zero-visibility fog, winds strong enough to tumble the trap, and enough mosquitoes to feed a few thousand dragonflies. Despite this, we managed to catch over 150 shrikes.

### **Study Methods**

All shrikes were captured from roadsides using a walk-in trap baited with a live mouse sheltered in a protective hardware cloth box. Once we had a bird in hand (Fig. 1), we secured a stainless steel band on the right leg and a plastic orange band on the left. The color band will allow observers to more readily identify banded birds, and also determine the year in which they were caught, since in future years we plan to use plastic bands of different colors. With the help of volunteers at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Lake Jackson and the Clive Runnells Family Mad Island Marsh Preserve, a Nature Conservancy-managed property near Collegeport, we will learn how many of our banded birds remain in the same areas in the breeding season, and which sites will be occupied by banded shrikes in the next winter season. This information will help us start to fill a critical gap in our knowledge of shrikes: winter site fidelity, which is poorly understood in most migratory species.

Before we released birds at their point of capture, we took several measurements, including leg, toe, wing, and beak measurements. These measurements are useful in distinguishing wintering migrants from res-

ident birds, since in many bird species, migrant individuals often differ from resident individuals in morphology: in general, long-distance migrants have more pointed wings, shorter tails, and relatively less mass in the hind limbs than non-migrants (Winkler and Leisler 2005). We also recorded weight and fat levels, which allowed us to rate each bird's general health.

In addition, we assessed each bird's stage of molt, which gave us information about its age. Since shrikes undergo a partial molt following fledging and then a full molt each fall thereafter, any shrike still showing some juvenile

feathers can be aged as Second Year or SY (i.e., a bird that has not yet bred), and any shrike without juvenile feathers can be aged as After Second Year, or ASY (i.e., a bird that has bred at least one year, but possibly more). Molt is one of the most critical parts of a bird's life cycle, equivalent to reproduction and migration in terms of energy demands. In North American birds, there is much to learn about molt patterns, differences in molt among and within species, and differences in molt between ages and sexes. A simple "molt chart" that we developed for field use allowed us to record which wing and tail feathers are newly molted (or not), and serves as a tremendously powerful tool in increasing our knowledge of molt in shrikes.



*Fig. 2. Typical coastal wintering habitat used by Loggerhead Shrikes in the Gulf Coast of Texas. Photo by Amy Chabot*



*Fig. 3. A managed burn in the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge used as a foraging area by wintering Loggerhead Shrikes. Photo by Amy Chabot*

Finally, after releasing the bird, we filled out a data sheet assessing many aspects of the habitat in which we had found the bird. These aspects included land use, grass height, tree and shrub density, and the length of utility wires and fences, which provide effective perches from which the species can hunt.

### Preliminary Results

All the birds we caught appeared healthy, with no leg or beak deformities. However, quite unexpectedly, we captured a one-legged shrike. We were astounded to find that, although on the skinny side, this bird was one of six shrikes that appeared to be pairing and vying for territory near the point of capture.

Of the 150 birds that we were able to age, 58 (38%) were SY, meaning that they hatched the previous year, which represents very good reproductive success for the species in 2011. Preliminary analysis of body measurements, based on previous results discerning morphometrics among shrikes from different breeding areas (Chabot 2011), suggests that a significant proportion of the birds we sampled originate from the northeastern part of the species' range, including eastern Canada. We captured few resident birds, those appearing to be from the subspecies (*L. l. ludovicianus*) found in the area during the breeding season.

In each of the three sample areas, we stratified our work into coastal habitat (within half a mile of the ocean) and inland habitat (between 0.5 and about 10 miles inland). Coastal sites were characterized mainly by vacant seasonal homes with mowed grass lawns and palm trees, where we found many shrikes (Fig. 2). Although this might not be considered typical shrike habitat, we found it was used predominantly by older (ASY) birds. Since older birds are typically dominant over younger birds, this suggests that it is the preferred wintering habitat of these ASY birds.

Inland sites consisted mainly of rural residential areas, pasturage, and fallow agricultural fields of corn, rice, and cotton, and appeared

*Table 1. Comparative fat levels of 145 out of 152 wintering Loggerhead Shrikes assessed in the Gulf Coast area of Texas, January 2012. Fat level was not determined for two ASY birds, three SY birds, and two birds that were not aged.*

Fat Level	0 to trace	1	2	3
SY (n=55)	14 (25%)	28 (51%)	12 (22%)	1 (2%)
ASY (n=90)	9 (10%)	44 (49%)	22 (24%)	15 (17%)
Total (n=145)	23 (16%)	72 (50%)	34 (23%)	16 (11%)





*Fig. 4. An example of poor feather quality and damage on a Second Year (SY) Loggerhead Shrike wintering in the Gulf Coast of Texas. Photo by Amy Chabot*

to be used disproportionately by SY birds. We also worked in the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge in Brazoria County, where a controlled burn had recently been undertaken (Fig. 3). Young shrikes (SY) were found using the still-smoldering burn area along with Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Turkey Vulture, and American Crow. Interestingly, on almost every pass through the San Bernard Refuge, we found new, unbanded SY shrikes in areas where we had previously trapped and banded birds. This suggests low winter site fidelity among younger birds; capture and banding shows that more SY birds use this wintering area than we had realized.

Despite the less-than-typical nature of the coastal habitat, we found higher fat loads and better plumage condition in older, ASY birds in coastal areas than in the SY birds, which appeared to occur more frequently in inland habitat (Table 1). SY birds were thinner and often exhibited dirty or damaged plumage (Fig. 4). This suggests that coastal areas may be the more productive wintering habitat.

Our results confirm that the Gulf Coast region of Texas is a significant wintering area for migrant Loggerhead Shrikes, and this project is a first step in determining the conservation actions required to halt

the precipitous decline of this species. The additional, largely unexpected insights we gained into the species' population dynamics were an added bonus and will help us in planning future research. In the coming months, the feathers we collected will be analyzed for stable isotopes, and our morphometric and habitat data will be studied for a better understanding of the patterns we found. In future years, we hope to return and continue our work in this important wintering area, expand our study areas along the Gulf Coast, and increase our network of collaborators.

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# Earthworms

*Dave Leatherman*

The natural elevator music of dogday cicadas in a prairie town park. The scrolling script of southbound geese written on the clouds. The pain-ushered numbness in our fingers while coercing ice from a winter windshield. And a reassurance the world is at least partly normal when an April robin herniates a worm from the lawn.

I suspect these seasonally iconic sensory experiences exist in all our memories. But only the migrational movements of waterfowl are much more than 100 years old in Colorado. Cities with irrigated, civilized grass are recent phenomena. Cars and plastic scrapers are only “yesterday” inventions. And, hard as it may be to believe, at least in most of North America, “earthworms” are almost all the result of introductions dating back no further than the mid-1800s.

I have often wondered what robins ate before there were earthworms. Had there been a Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas project in, say, 1776, would robins have been one of the most numerous, far-ranging, and habitat-diverse species in our state, as they are today? I would guess the answer to be “no,” at least not by current standards.

“Worm” is a very general and potentially misleading term. But when most of us hear the word, we probably think of wriggling earthworms (or “angleworms” used for fresh-water fishing) that dwell in the soil. These are the subjects of this account.

What is an “earthworm”? While the field of systematics seems in constant flux, the current arrangement has them in the phylum Annelida, class Clitellata, subclass Oligochaeta, order Haplotaxida. These terrestrial, segmented, legless worms have a reproductive structure called a clitellum (the wide “ring” evident on mature individuals), and they come in a variety of colors, mostly shades of reddish, gray, or brown. They have a simple tube-within-a-tube body style, the exterior tube being muscular, and the interior being digestive in function. They have closed circulatory systems and are hermaphroditic, meaning each individual has both male and female body parts (James 1995).

Globally there are estimated to be 6,000 species of earthworms, with 182 having been found so far in North America north of the Rio Grande River. Astonishingly, between 33% and 60% of these species are thought to be introduced (Blakemore 2006), most of them from Europe.

Two factors tend to naturally exclude earthworms from modern landscapes: past glaciation and aridity. One factor tends to introduce



Fig. 1. Casting of an anectic earthworm species, Grandview Cemetery, Larimer County, 14 June 2011. Photo by Dave Leatherman

them to new areas: humans. Moisture allows them to persist. Almost all the native species are restricted to very narrow bands of wet soil around natural lakes or along streams and rivers. Most of the exotics are found in artificially moist habitats such as irrigated lawns, planted landscapes, agricultural areas, and artificial water impoundments. Indeed, just a few human activities account for most of the spread of earthworms in North America. Foremost is probably the movement of plant

material. Pots and the soil that fills them harbor many earthworms. The pet trade, the fish bait industry, school science projects, vermicomposting, road projects, and other land-use changes give earthworms great potential for introduction into new areas.

Colorado has been surveyed for earthworms four times. Seaton (1929) found no earthworms in the state, although the authors of the most recent survey (Reynolds and Damoff 2011) argue that it is unlikely Seaton surveyed gardens or other sites to which earthworms could have been introduced. The first published checklist of earthworms for North America (Gates 1942) summarized over 100 papers from the previous 121 years but listed only four species for Colorado. A paper on the earthworms of “the Great American Desert” (Gates 1967) brought the number of species for Colorado up to 12. A paper on the earthworm family Lumbricidae in the western United States (Fender 1985) added no new species to our list.

The most recent survey, conducted by Reynolds and Damoff (2011), with considerable assistance from Dr. Whitney Cranshaw of Colorado State University and a legion of statewide master gardeners serving various Colorado State Cooperative Extension offices, brought the total to its current roster of 18 species, only four of them native (*Aporrectodea bowcrowensis*, *Bimastos parvus*, *B. welchi*, and *Sparganophilus eiseni*). So far, 52 out of 64 Colorado counties have been surveyed. No doubt much information about earthworm distribution remains to be discovered; 22 species not yet reported from Colorado exist in bordering states (Reynolds et al. 2004).

The various earthworm species are usually divided into three ecological types: epigeic, endogeic, and anectic. Epigeic species live above the soil, tend not to make burrows, and eat leaf litter. Endogeic species make horizontal burrows in the soil and eat it (that is, they are “geophagous”). Anectic species make vertical burrows into which they drag leaf litter for consumption. The anectic species are the ones that make castings (of fecal material, Fig. 1) or piles of castings called “middens” on the soil surface (Edwards 2004). All three lifestyles are represented among the Colorado earthworm fauna.

Charles Darwin was one of the first scientists to champion the value of earthworms to natural systems. He went so far as to say, “It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world, as have these lowly organized creatures” (Darwin 1881). “Nature’s plows,” earthworms mix soil and organic matter, making many mostly-beneficial contributions to soil structure and chemistry, either directly or through the actions of other organisms they enable (Edwards 2004). However, introduced species have been found to be detrimental to native species of flora and fauna, and their alterations of soil chemistry and structure are not always good. For example, some species bring excessive amounts of calcareous materials to the surface as castings, in effect turning the soil surface to “concrete” (Eisenhauer et al. 2007). Disruption of the leaf litter by epigeic species in the genus *Lumbricus* has been found to reduce numbers of certain ground-nesting birds like Ovenbirds in certain types of hardwood forests (Loss et al. 2012). No doubt other costs of introduced earthworms will be uncovered in the future.

Research at the prestigious Rothamsted Experimental Station in Hertfordshire, England, found that even poor soil contains as many as 250,000 earthworms per acre (62 per square meter) and rich, fertile soil as many as 1,750,000 per acre (452 per square meter). It is no surprise that other organisms have evolved to exploit such a resource. Birds are paramount among these.

Earthworms are quite nutritious (French et al. 1957). Roughly, a typical worm is 83% water, 53–64% protein, 16.5–18.6% carbohydrate, 15–23% ash (that is, non-combustible inorganic materials), and 4.4–4.7% fat. Even the ash may contribute useful trace minerals to a bird’s diet (F. Stermitz, pers. comm.) McAtee (1932) found earthworms in the stomachs of 44 species of North American birds, but the full roster of species eating them, at least opportunistically, is probably in the hundreds.

Without a doubt, the American Robin is the best-known worm-eater in North America (Fig. 2). A subject of much debate has been

whether robins see or hear their worm prey. The accepted answer among current behavioral scientists is they find worms with their eyes (Heppner 1967). In other words, the classic head tilt is a stare, not a listen.

Earthworms comprise the majority of food fed to nestling robins (Fig. 3). One study reports between 81 and 113 meals per day being brought to nestlings (Bailey and Niedrach 1965). Several other kinds of birds have been reported stealing worms from robins (an act of kleptoparasitism), including European Starling, Brown Thrasher, House Sparrow, Western Gull, and California Gull (Bowlander 1932).

Perhaps the greatest motivating factor in Rachel Carson's writing *Silent Spring* was the occurrence of massive robin die-offs. These mortality events were due to earthworm bioaccumulation of DDT following widespread urban tree-sprays directed at the beetle vector of Dutch Elm Disease (Mehner and Wallace 1959). Following the banning of DDT in the U.S., robin populations rebounded, presumably due to the rebound of earthworm populations in urban lawns and parks.

An interesting anecdote concerning robins and worms involves a nest containing four half-grown robins, two newly-hatched House Finches, and four finch eggs attended by two robins, two female House Finches, and one male House Finch. The finch babies were suffocated inadvertently by their bigger robin nest-mates. The robin babies were fed by adults of both species, with the adult finches observed taking worms away from adult robins arriving at the nest, cutting the worms into pieces, and feeding the baby robins via regurgitation (Bailey and Niedrach 1965).

Equally famous for its love of earthworms is the American Woodcock. I have considered woodcocks a "favorite" since a spring evening in my youth in Columbus, Ohio, when my birding buddies and I watched woodcocks spiral upward in their courtship flights, and tried running to the takeoff spots in hopes they would land on us (they didn't). Earthworms



Fig. 2. American Robin getting earthworm at Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 23 May 2007. Photo by Dave Leatherman



Fig. 3. American Robin with a load of earthworms for nestlings, Grandview Cemetery, Larimer County, 27 May 2010. Photo by Dave Leatherman

are found in 75–79% of all woodcock diets (Reynolds 1977, McAtee 1932, Sperry 1940). A captive individual ate approximately its summer body weight, 5.5 ounces, in earthworms per day (Sheldon 1971), and foraging woodcocks eat about one worm per minute (Vander Haegen, 1992).

I have only chased one reported American Woodcock in Colorado—the one found by John Prather on 28 November 1990 near the Mount Sanitas Trailhead in Boulder. After this unsuccessful

search, I decided one of the great thrills of my future would be flushing that first one at Tamarack, or Bonny, or below the dam at Two Buttes. Given their fondness for earthworms, and the scarcity of worms in natural Colorado habitats, maybe I should instead be searching urban lawns. Anecdotal observations by local homeowners of last autumn's Burlington woodcock described it as feeding for a period of days strictly on lawns. No doubt it was extracting earthworms. The most recent Colorado earthworm survey lists three species for Kit Carson County (*Aporrectodea tuberculata*, *Dendrodrilus rubidus*, and *Lumbricus rubellus*). The first of these is endogeic (occurring in horizontal burrows in the soil that it eats), the other two epigeic (occurring in the leaf litter above ground). These same three species were listed as being the most important in the woodcock diet (Reynolds 1977), with *A. tuberculata* providing the most energy. It would be most interesting to know which of these, and how many of them, the Burlington woodcock found and ate.

Equally interesting would be *how* it found them. Woodcocks are said to feed mostly by day during the warm months, and at night during winter. Obviously eyesight is helpful, especially during summer for epigeic species. But when the woodcock probes soil with its long bill, some additional techniques and anatomy come into play. The outer one-third of the upper mandible is flexible and is used to both find and capture earthworms in the soil. Both auditory and sensory clues from the prey are also used. Woodcocks apparently have a "heavy-footed" style of walking, enabled by a curious rocking

body motion while the head is held steady. These heavy footfalls are thought to cause sudden earthworm movements, which are either heard and/or detected as vibrations by special nerve endings in the bill, facilitating capture.

The Wilson's Snipe also has special groups of nerve endings on the upper surface of the bill called Herbst's corpuscles (Portmann et al. 1961), which enable it to specialize on earthworms. Kiwis, particularly nocturnal species, locate earthworms by smell, an unusual food-finding strategy in birds (Portmann 1950).

Other bird species or groups that rely heavily on earthworms are other thrushes, grackles, European Starlings, gulls, waders, *Plegadis* ibis, and American Crows (Terres 1980). Charismatic birds with earthworms listed in their diets include Broad-winged Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Upland Sandpiper, Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Varied Thrush, Bluethroat, and Fieldfare (Terres 1980). Among the more interesting species that occasionally eat/ate them are Cattle Egret (Terres 1967), Red-shouldered Hawk (Reagan 1955), and Passenger Pigeon, especially during nesting (Bendire 1892).

Most opportunistic feeding on earthworms by bird species not normally in the habit of eating them is the result of a phenomenon called "stranding," when earthworms leave the soil or leaf litter, usually at times of very high moisture and saturated soil. The exact reasons for stranding are unknown, but plausible theories include: 1) lack of sufficient oxygen when soil pores are filled with water, 2) increased carbonic acid in soil resulting from the increased respiration of soil-dwelling organisms (including earthworms) during wet periods, 3) the opportunity for some burrow-dwelling species to mate on the surface during moist conditions, and 4) the opportunity to move to and colonize new areas during moist conditions above ground. The lack of oxygen in super-saturated soils is the most likely reason for stranding. But because certain earthworm species have been known to survive for several days in oxygenated water, this may not be the total answer.

Whatever the reason, when worms appear on the surface, interesting bird behavior often ensues. One such period occurred along the Poudre River in Fort Collins in late May 1995. Heavy rains at low elevation and accompanying flooding, combined with snow and cool conditions in the mountains, created a migrant bird bottleneck. High numbers of individuals of many mobile passerine species arrived at their breeding latitudes in the north but then were prevented from entering the mountains for nesting. In essence, they made it to the airport but had to circle abnormally long before being cleared to land.

To find prey in rainy weather, tired and hungry birds often forage



lower, since rain typically grounds flying insects and washes many tree-dwelling arthropods downward. It seems logical that once down there, they find the abundance of stranded worms too enticing to pass up. And in May of 1995, earthworms were everywhere on the ground, with birds in pursuit.

In 7.5 hours on 14 May, Dave Ely and I found 97 species of birds, 33 of them migrants, in crazy numbers along the Poudre between where Lemay Avenue crosses it and the Northern Colorado Environmental Learning Center (a distance of about 4.5 miles). My notes include, "Yellow Warbler (30–40), Yellow-rumped Warbler (100s), House Wren (20–30), Northern Waterthrush (8–10), Orange-crowned Warbler (20–30), Green-tailed Towhee (10), and Western Tanager (15)." What I remember most from that day is watching birds such as Yellow Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes, and House Wrens eating earthworms. As with many such days, I'd like to have a "do-over," so that I could observe the whole spectacle again and concentrate on documenting the details of the earthworm feast. It was probably even more extraordinary than my divided attention registered.

Lastly, with tongue firmly in cheek, I would direct readers to the monumental ornithological work entitled *A Field Guide to Little-Known and Seldom-Seen Birds of North America* (Sill et al. 1988), with its pioneering account of the Gilded Worm Weaver (*Loomus caterpillarii*). According to the book, this species, distantly related to vireos and warblers, constructs its nest of live earthworms (identifiable in the illustration by their prominent clitella) and lines it with wooly caterpillars. I reproduce here part of the text, with my own comments in parentheses:

"Since a great deal of time is devoted to nest repair, little time is spent in incubating the eggs and few breeding successes have been reported. Studies show that a typical nest comprises: 7% Bag Worms (none shown in the illustration), 33% Wooly Caterpillars (which appear in the illustration to be two species of tiger moths in the family Arctiidae, including the common "Woolly Bear," *Pyrharctia isabella*), 22% Tent Caterpillars (no doubt intended to mean the Eastern Tent Caterpillar, *Malacosoma americanum*, although the illustrations resemble the Yellow-necked Caterpillar, *Datana ministra*), and 38% Wiggle Worms (earthworms)."

We in Colorado can only hope to encounter such an innovative creature in the field.

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# Trinidad

*Patricia Snider*

Trinidad keeps its old mining town flavor with brick streets in the downtown. There is a statue showing coal miners with a huge canary in a cage, which was used to let the miners know of gas. But Trinidad also has plenty of real live birds for visitors to the CFO convention to enjoy!

I am not much of a person to eat out. I have only been to four places in Trinidad—all the best, says my son-in-law. I will discuss those places first, and mention the others briefly. Most of the usual franchises are present, including Pizza Hut, Domino's, KFC, and McDonald's.

## Best Places to Eat

**Bueno's** was the C and H until a fire destroyed the downtown location. It then moved to the present location at the Quality Inn motel, at exit 11 off of I-25 on the west side on the frontage road (3125 Toupal Dr.; 719-846-3851). They have great huevos rancheros and breakfast burritos. They serve food other than Mexican also, with steaks and halibut for dinner. There is a full-service bar in the motel lobby in the evenings. Hours Monday through Saturday are 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., and 6:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. on Sundays.

The Holiday Inn has a good restaurant, called **The Peak**. It is on the east side of exit 11 off I-25 next to the shopping center at the road heading north (3130 Santa Fe Trail; 719-845-8400). During the CFO convention, they will be serving the field trip sandwiches and breakfast burritos. The restaurant is open from 6:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M.

**Black Jack's Saloon and Steakhouse** is at 225 West Main Street (719-846-9501). It's a western-style place; they give you peanuts and encourage you to throw the shells on the floor. The menu includes steaks and chops. It is open 4:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on weekdays and 4:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. on weekends.

The **Mission at the Bell Restaurant** at 134 West Main Street is well hidden. To find it, one must go in past a planting of tall trees to the elevator at the back of the room. Go down in the elevator to the restaurant, which has great enchiladas. If you get lost, call the restaurant at 719-845-1513. Hours are 11:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. weekdays and 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. on Saturday; they are closed on Sundays. They take all credit cards except American Express.

## Other Options

**Bella Luna Pizzeria** is at 121 West Main Street (719-846-2750).

Closed on Tuesdays, it is open Monday and Wednesday through Saturday 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. for lunch, and 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. for dinner; on Sunday it is open from noon to 6:00 P.M. In addition to pizza, they serve salads and panini.

**Bob and Earl's Café** is on the way to Trinidad Lake on Highway 12 (1118 Robinson Ave., 719-846-0144). Hours are 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., except that they are closed Mondays. They take credit cards other than American Express.

**The Café at D Dry** is at 135 East Main (719-846-7119). They serve a different-type healthy menu with soups, salads, and sandwiches. Hours are 7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Again, they take credit cards other than American Express.

**Chef Liu's Chinese Restaurant and Lounge** can be found at 1423 Santa Fe Trail (719-846-3333). In addition to Chinese they also serve seafood. Hours are 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.; sometimes there is a wait for seating at noon.

**Fabilis Wings** is at 103 West Main (719-846-7298). They are open 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. Sunday through Thursday, and 24 hours on Friday and Saturday.

**The Main Street Tap House** (308 West Main, 719-846-9164) is a pub, serving burgers, fish and chips, onion rings, and the like. It is open at 5:00 P.M. on weekdays, and on Friday at 6:00 P.M. It is closed on Sundays and Mondays.

**Nana and Nano's Pasta House** at 418 East Main (719-846-2696) offers sit-down and take-out Italian, with lunch meats and cheeses, spaghetti, rigatoni, ravioli, and meatballs. It is open 10:30 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Wednesday to Saturday.

**Purgatoire on Elm**, 516 East Elm Street, is a new place opening in February, a catering company with a restaurant and bar that will feature live entertainment on weekends. At first only dinner will be served.

**Rino's Italian Restaurant and Steakhouse** is at 400 East Main (719-845-0949). It is open from 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. and has singing waiters. The proprietor helps the Senior Center. Reservations are needed.

**Tequila's** in the exit 11 shopping center (9900 Santa Fe Trail, 719-846-3514) features a bar and Mexican food. The specials are the carne asada and camarones (shrimp). It is open Sunday to Thursday 10:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M., and Friday and Saturday 10:00 to 11:00.

The **Trinidad Diner** at 734 East Main (719-846-7798) does not take credit cards; just cash or a check. Hours are from 6:30 A.M., for breakfasts, to 9:00 P.M.

**What'a Grind** is a coffee house at 341 North Commercial Street

(719-846-0505). They also serve sandwiches and salads, and there's even a dinner menu. They are open Monday to Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; again they accept all credit cards but American Express.

**Wonderful House Restaurant** on Highway 12 is a block west of the Colorado Welcome Center off exit 13B (415 University, 719-845-1888). It is open Monday to Thursday, 11:00 A.M. to 9:30 P.M.; Friday and Saturday, 11:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M.; and Sunday, 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. They serve wine, beer, and Chinese food.

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## Fall 2011 (August–November)

*Joel Such and Marcel Such*

Though we typically start this report with comments about the season, this time we will first mention changes to the format of the article itself. If you are a regular reader of “News from the Field,” you will notice a significant change in the structure of the species accounts below. We have switched from the previous style to a stripped-down, standardized, telegraphic-style format. This makes it easier to write and edit, and, we hope, simpler to read. As always, we welcome your comments, so if you have any opinions on this new style, please shoot us an email. You can find our addresses at the bottom of this report, or on the inside cover of this journal.

Moving on to the standard content of this introduction, fall migration is always one of the most exciting times in the year of a birder. Full of birds and surprises, this past fall did not disappoint. No doubt, one of the highlights of the season was a potential fifth state record of Common Ground-Dove in Sedgwick County, which was seen by many over its eighteen-day visit. A potential second state record of the Mexican vagrant Streak-backed Oriole came from El Paso County, though the bird was only seen by a single observer during its extremely brief stay. A number of first and second county records were also established this fall, with Long-tailed Duck in Las Animas County and Grasshopper Sparrow in Routt County providing first records for their respective counties, and Long-tailed Jaeger in Pueblo County, Cassin’s Kingbird in Yuma County, and Eastern Bluebird in Montrose County furnishing second records.

One of the more interesting observations of the season involved Townsend’s Warbler. This typical fall migrant is normally a common species found throughout the mountains and out onto the plains. What was unusual, though, was the surprising *lack* of any observations of the species in the mountains west of Boulder, Boulder County, while slightly higher than normal numbers were observed in Pueblo County. Field Sparrows were also on the move, with birds ranging farther west than normal.

Turning to the weather of the period, August started off hot and dry, setting a record as the warmest August in Denver history with an average of 77.0°F. With a total of 0.3 inches of precipitation, August also made the record book as the eleventh driest in Denver. September was near average for both temperature and precipitation. The average temperature of 62.4°F was only 0.8° above normal, while 0.89 inches of rain fell, a mere 0.09 inches below normal. October



*Scarlet Tanager feeding a wasp to a juvenile tanager of unknown parentage, North Cheyenne Canyon, El Paso County, 9 August 2011. Photo by Bill Maynard*



*Grasshopper Sparrow, Chatfield Reservoir, Douglas County, 2 November 2011. Photo by Loch Kilpatrick*



*Le Conte's Sparrow, Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo County, 17 September 2011. Photo by Bill Maynard*



*Arctic Tern, Boulder Reservoir, Boulder County, 22 October 2011. Photo by Rudi Nuissl*



*Rusty Blackbird, Chatfield Reservoir, Douglas County, 28 November 2011. Photo by Mark Chavez*





*Common Redpoll, Jumbo Reservoir, Logan County, 20 November 2011. Photo by Mark Chavez*



*Hooded Warbler, Holyoke Cemetery, Phillips County, 16 November 2011. Photo by Dave Leatherman*



*White-throated Sparrow, Mary Wells' Farm, Boulder County, 30 October 2011. Photo by John Barr*

*Le Conte's Sparrow, Lincoln County, 1 October 2011. Photo by Loch Kilpatrick*



returned to above normal temperatures, but was wetter than usual, with the average temperature of 52.6° (1.7° above normal) and with 1.79 inches of precipitation collected (0.82 inches above the norm). Despite a cold and snowy beginning, November closed out the season with an average temperature of 39.5°F, 1.2° above average, in addition to 0.47 inches of precipitation, which was 0.14 inches below normal.

The warm temperatures at the start of the fall season caused many of our summer residents to stay longer than usual. Additionally, breeders from farther north returned to their southerly wintering locations later than normal, making delayed appearances in the migrant traps that we birders frequent. The drought and heat of the summer dried up much of the shorebird habitat, resulting in lower than expected numbers of those species. Overall, autumn on the Front Range started without any significant weather fronts, while in September three thunderstorms livened up the atmosphere. October lacked any major storms, but during the beginning of November a major cold front accosted the Front Range, dumping up to 13 inches of snow in various locales, resulting in widespread power outages (and a couple panicked teenagers who couldn't check COBirds to see what rare birds had fallen out during the storm).

"News from the Field" contains news and reports of birds sighted in Colorado. These reports are compiled from online discussion groups, rare bird alerts, and eBird (ebird.org), with invaluable contributions provided by a statewide network of informants.

We would like to thank the many contributors for sharing their sightings, as well as the regional compilers and reviewers for adding their insight to county and regional rarities and breeding species. No matter 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>, and/or the West Slope Birding Network, [wsbn@yahoogroups.com](mailto:wsbn@yahoogroups.com). All of these reports are tabulated by your regional compilers, and are sent in taxonomic order, along with comments, to the "News from the Field" editors 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 (CBRC) requests documentation. We strongly recommend that you submit your sightings of these "review" species through the CFO website at <http://cfobirds.org/CBRC/login.php>. This is the preferred method to submit your documentation. However, if you are "technologically impaired" and require a hardcopy form, you may use the one located on the inside of this journal's mailing cover. Mailed

documentation of rarities should be sent to CBRC chairman Doug Faulkner (address on form).

**Note 2** – The names of counties are *italicized*.

**Abbreviations:** **CBR** – Chico Basin Ranch *El Paso/Pueblo*; **imm** – immature; **juv** – juvenile; **LCCW** – Lamar Community College Woods *Prowers*; **m.ob.** – many observers; **Res.** – Reservoir; **SP** – State Park; **SWA** – State Wildlife Area; **WS** – West Slope.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** 41 individuals were reported during the season, up from last year's 18. First report: 9 at Valco Pond in Cañon City *Fremont* on 11 Oct (RM). High count: 12 at Valco Pond *Fremont* on 25 Nov (RM).

**Snow Goose:** Rare on the WS: 7 in *Montezuma* and *Archuleta* (JB). High count: 13,500 at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick/Logan* on 12 Nov (SM, TS).

**Ross's Goose:** Rare on the WS: 1 at Delta *Delta* from 10 Nov through end of season (AR, m.ob.); 1 imm at Navajo Res. *Archuleta* on 26 Nov (JB).

**Brant:** All reports: two of "Black" *nigricans* subspecies at Fort Collins City Park *Larimer* on 15 Nov (DL, RH); two of "Atlantic" *hrota* subspecies at Chatfield Res. *Jefferson* from 30 Nov through end of season (NK, CW, m.ob.).

**"Taverner's" Cackling Goose:** 3 at Lake Loveland *Larimer* on 13 Nov (SM, BiS); 2 at Bittersweet Park in Greeley *Weld* on 26 Nov (SM, BiS).

**Trumpeter Swan:** All reports: 1 at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick/Logan* on 12 Nov (SM); 4 at Lake Estes *Larimer* 19-26 Nov (GM); 1

juv, along with an adult swan sp., at Dixon Res. *Larimer* 19-21 Nov (SB, CB); 7 adults at Barr Lake *Adams* on 21 Nov (JS, KS); 1 at Spring Park Res. *Eagle* 26-30 Nov (TM, LV).

**Tundra Swan:** First report: 3 at Twentymile SWA *Routt* on 26 Oct (SRi). Other rare WS sightings: 3 at WFMC Ponds *Moffat* on 27 Oct (FL); 1 at Lake Catamount *Routt* from 28 Oct to 6 Nov (FD, TL). 11 others reported from eastern slope.

**Wood Duck:** Uncommon in southwest Colorado: 1 male at Durango Fish Hatchery *La Plata* on 5 Oct (RMO); 1 male at Vallecito Res. *La Plata* on 29 Oct (JB).



*Brant (Black), Sheldon Lake, City Park, Larimer County, 15 November 2011. Photo by Dave Leatherman*

**Blue-winged Teal:** Last report: 1 at Loloff Res. *Weld* on 13 Nov (SM, BiS).

**Greater Scaup:** Rare on the WS: 3 in Grand Junction Mesa 10-19 Nov (LA, BBr); 1 at Jerry Creek Res. Mesa on 23 Nov (TD).

**Surf Scoter:** 20 individuals were reported during the season, a bit down from last year. First report: 2 at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 14 Oct (BKP). Rare on WS and in mountains: 1 female at Rifle Gap Res. *Garfield* on 20 Oct (AD, LA); 1 female at Sweitzer, *Delta*, on 7 Nov (AR); 1 juv and 1 female at Elevenmile Res. *Park* on 11 Nov (GW, SS).

**White-winged Scoter:** First report: 3 at Standley Lake *Jefferson* on 28 Oct (DF). Rare on WS and uncommon in mountains: 1 at Vega Res. Mesa on 4 Nov (LA); 1 in Grand Junction Mesa on 6 Nov (LA); 6 at Elevenmile and Spinney Mountain Res. *Park* on 11 Nov (GW, SS). High count: 9 at Terry Lake *Boulder* on 10 Nov (SM).

**Black Scoter:** All reports: 1 at Ish Res. *Boulder* on 22 Oct (LK, SM); 4 at Boulder Res. *Boulder* on 25 Oct (CN); 3 at Prospect Lake in Memorial Park *El Paso* on 27 Oct (KDC); 1 at Spinney Mountain Res. *Park* on 11 Nov (GW, SS).

**Long-tailed Duck:** 7 individuals were reported this season, slightly up from last fall's 6. First report: 1 female at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 3 Nov (BKP, BM). 1 at Lake Trinidad SP *Las Animas* on 20 Nov (MP) was a first county record.

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** Up from the 2010 total of 163 birds at 16 sites, RMBO's annual Barrow's Goldeneye

count found 213 birds at 23 sites, 19-30 Nov. High count: 32 at Stagecoach Res. *Routt* on 27 Nov (TMO).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Uncommon on WS: 6 at Harvey Gap Res. *Garfield* on 5 Nov (TM).

**Hybrid waterfowl:** Snow Goose × Lesser Canada Goose (*parvipes*): 1 at Sanborn Park in Greeley *Weld* on 26 Nov (SM, BiS). Snow Goose × Canada/Cackling Goose: 1 at Bittersweet Park in Greeley *Weld* on 26 Nov (SM, BiS). Gadwall × Northern Pintail: 1 at Baseline Res. *Boulder* on 24 Nov (SM, CN, TF). Ring-necked Duck × Lesser Scaup: 1 at Loloff Res. *Weld* 13-26 Nov (SM, BiS).

**Red-throated Loon:** All reports: 2 juvs and 1 imm at Cherry Creek SP *Arapahoe* 17-29 Oct (GW); 1 in basic plumage at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* 3-4 Nov (BKP, BM); 1 first-cycle bird at Baseline Res. *Boulder* on 8 Nov (CN, BK).

**Pacific Loon:** Down from 27 last year, 13 individuals were seen this year. First report: 1 at Cherry Creek SP *Arapahoe* on 22 Oct (RK et al.). High count: 4 at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 6 Nov (BKP). Rare in northwest Colorado: 1 at Rifle Gap Res. *Garfield* from 27 Oct to 26 Nov (AD, VZ, TD).

**Horned Grebe:** Early report: 1 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* 14-20 Aug (SM, TC). Uncommon in southwestern Colorado: 1 at Williams Creek Res. *Hinsdale* on 3 Nov (JB); 1 at Narraguinnep Res. *Montezuma* on 5 Nov (JB).

**Red-necked Grebe:** 7 were seen during the period, down from the 13 reported last fall. First report: 1 at Boulder Res. *Boulder* on 20 Oct (NP).

**Western Grebe × Clark's Grebe:**

Seven reports of eight birds, from *Larimer*, *Weld*, *Boulder*, and *Sedgwick*, all by the same observer (SM).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** All reports: 2 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 14 Aug (TF, SM, TC); 1 at Cherry Creek Res. *Arapahoe* on 22 Oct (RK et al.).

**American White Pelican:** WS high count record: 125 at Highline Res. *Mesa* on 6 Nov (LA).

**Least Bittern:** One report: a family group (1 ad male, 1 ad female, and 2-3 fledglings) at Holcim Wetlands *Fremont* from 3 Aug to 3 Sep (RM, SeM, DK, MG, m.ob.).

**Tricolored Heron:** One report: 1 adult at Holbrook Res. *Otero* on 14 Sep (SO).

**Reddish Egret:** One report: 1 imm dark-morph at Adobe Creek Res. *Kiowa/Bent* 2-31 Aug (DN).

**Cattle Egret:** No WS records Jul-Sep; 1 at Hotchkiss *Delta* on 14 Aug (KR). Late reports: 1 adult at Boulder Res. *Boulder* 15-16 Sep (CN); 1 injured bird at Eagle *Eagle* on 4 Nov (SB).

**Green Heron:** All reports: 2 adults at Walden Ponds *Boulder* on 11 Aug (SM); 2 at Holcim Wetlands *Fremont* on 22 Aug (BKP); 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 27 Aug (BKP); "some" at Connected Lakes SP *Mesa* from 13 Sep to 10 Oct (LA); 1 at Sweitzer *Delta* on 26 Oct (AC), where they are rare.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Uncommon in southwest Colorado: 1 at Durango Fish Hatchery *La Plata* on 20 Aug (RMO, HM).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** One report: 1 imm at McIntosh Lake *Boulder* on 10 Aug (TD).

**Osprey:** Last report: 1 in southwest Loveland *Larimer* on 16 Nov (CW).

**Northern Goshawk:** Rare outside of the mountains: 1 juv at Boyd Lake *Larimer* on 31 Aug (WRR).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** One report: 1 juv at Bonny Res. *Yuma* on 3 Oct (SM).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** All reports: 1 juv at Greenhorn Meadows Park in Colorado City *Pueblo* on 1 Aug (DS); 1 at Cottonwood Glen Park in Fort Collins *Larimer* on 24 Sep (BBi); 1 at Last Chance *Washington* on 24 Sep (SM); 1 at Crow Valley Campground *Weld* from 25 Sep to 1 Oct (SM, RH, TS); 1 dark-morph juv at Lake Cata-mountain *Routt* on 28 Oct (NM, FD, LW).

**Swainson's Hawk:** Late report: 1 adult at Union Res. *Weld* on 20 Oct (SM).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Interesting was 1 nearly all-white bird suspected to be of this species at Montrose *Montrose* on 14 Sep (BW, CD).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** First report: 1 light-morph at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 30 Oct (BKP).

**Sandhill Crane:** Uncommon in mountains: 1 at Frantz Lake in Salida *Chaffee* on 14 Oct (RM).

**American Golden-Plover:** All reports: Up to 9 at BYO Playa on Pawnee National Grasslands *Weld* from 25 Sep to 1 Oct (SM, RH, TS); 1 at Bonny SP *Yuma* on 3 Oct (SM).

**Snowy Plover:** Late date: 1 at Adobe Creek Res. *Bent* on 31 Oct (RM).

**Semipalmated Plover:** Uncommon at high elevation: 1 at Taylor Park Res. *Gunnison* (9500') on 13

Aug (SP). Other uncommon WS and mountain reports: 1 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* 25-29 Sep (NKe, m.ob.); 1 at Lake DeWeese *Custer* on 25 Aug (RM); 1 at Silver Jack Res. *Gunnison* on 2 Sep (KN).

#### **Mountain Plover:**

Late date: 1 at BYO Playa on Pawnee National Grasslands *Weld* through 2 Oct (NK, CW).

#### **Solitary Sandpiper:**

Uncommon migrant on WS: 1 at Cheney Res. Mesa on 10 Aug (LA); 1 at Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 13 Aug (RMo, HM); 1 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* on 25 Aug (NKe); 1 in Grand Junction Mesa on 18 Sep (LA).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Late dates: 2 at Little Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 18 Nov (BKP, LE, NMo, JD); 1 on the Arkansas River below Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* 20-23 Nov (MY, MJ, DC).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Unusual in Boulder: 1 at Coalton Open Space Boulder on 25 Aug (TF, AF).

**Long-billed Curlew:** Late date: 1 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 17 Sep (DL et al.).

**Marbled Godwit:** Late date: 3 at Totten Res. *Montezuma* through 26 Oct (JB).

**Red Knot:** One report: 1 well-photographed juv at Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 2 Sep (GW, JK, m.ob.).

**Sanderling:** First report: 1 juv at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 28 Aug (SM, TC). Last report: 2 at Timnath



*American Golden-Plover, BYO Playa, Weld County, 25 September 2011. Photo by Rudi Nuissl*

Res. *Larimer* on 23 Oct (CW). High count: 38 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 17 Sep (SM).

**Western Sandpiper:** Hard to find in *Archuleta*: 1 at Navajo Res. *Archuleta* through 8 Oct (RMo, HM).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** One report: 1 juv at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 8 Oct (SM, TS).

**Least Sandpiper:** Late report: 1 at Chatfield Res. *Douglas* on 23 Nov (DSc).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** High number for southwest Colorado: 19 at Naraguinnep Res. *Montezuma* from beginning of season through 30 Aug (JB).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Rare on WS and in mountains: 1 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* 25-26 Aug (AL; very early); 1 at Navajo Res. *Archuleta* on 8 Oct (RMo, HM); 1 at Lake DeWeese *Custer* on 10 Oct (RM); 1 at Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 26 Oct (JB).

**Dunlin:** One report: 1 at BYO

Playa on Pawnee National Grasslands *Weld* on 1 Oct (SM, TS).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Late reports: 1 at Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 26 Oct (JB); 1 at Adobe Creek Res. *Bent* on 31 Oct (RM).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** One report: an incredible 8 at Blue Lake *Bent* on 5 Sep (MP, LE, BS, DN).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** All reports: 1 adult on Weld County Road 59 Pond *Weld* on 6 Aug (SM); 1-2 juv at Prewitt Res. *Washington* 11-17 Sep (SM, TC).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Rare *Archuleta* report: 2 at Navajo Res. *Archuleta* on 8 Oct (RMO, HM). WS high count: 41 at Lake Catamount *Routt* on 20 Oct (TL, NM). Late report: 6 at Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 6 Nov (JB).

**American Woodcock:** One report: 1 in Burlington *Kit Carson* 28-30 Nov (SMu).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** High number for *Montezuma*: 200 at County Road P & County Road 22 *Montezuma* through 28 Aug (SMe).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Last report: 1 at Bonny Res. *Yuma* on 15 Oct (BKP).

**Red Phalarope:** All reports: 1 adult at Empire Res. *Weld* on 7 Aug (RG); 1 juv at Boulder Res. *Boulder* 15-20 Sep (CN); 1 juv at Antero Res. *Park* on 20 Sep (BM); 1 juv at Cherry Creek Res. *Arapahoe* on 21 Sep (GW, LK); 1 at Adobe Creek Res. *Bent* on 28 Oct (DN).

**Sabine's Gull:** A down year for the species, with only 31 reported. First report: 1 adult and 3 juvs at Cherry Creek SP *Arapahoe* on 5 Sep (CT et

al.). Last report: 1 at Lagerman Res. *Boulder* on 1 Oct (PP). Rare on WS: 1 juv at Ridgway Res. *Ouray* on 14 Sep (CD, BW).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** First report: 1 at Berthoud *Larimer* on 22 Oct (SM). High count: 81 at Union Res. *Weld* on 24 Nov (SM).

**Franklin's Gull:** Rare fall migrant on WS: 3 at Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 26 Oct (JB).

**Mew Gull:** All reports: 1 adult at Chatfield SP *Douglas* from 30 Oct to 5 Nov (GW); 1 adult at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 7 Nov (CW); 1 adult at Cherry Creek SP *Arapahoe* on 12 Nov (GW); 1 imm at North Weld County Landfill *Weld* on 17 Nov (SM).

**Herring Gull:** Early report: 1 imm at Jackson Res. *Morgan* on 6 Aug (SM). Rare on WS: 1 juv at Lake Catamount *Routt* 20-28 Oct (TL, NM); 1 at Ridgway Res. *Ouray* on 9 Nov (CD, BW).

**Thayer's Gull:** The total of 61 birds reported this fall was far above average. First report: 1 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 22 Oct (CW). High count: 15 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 13 Nov (SM, BiS).

**Iceland Gull:** All reports: 1 imm at Timnath Res. *Larimer/Weld* 10-13 Nov (BiS, JS, SM); 1 imm (same as Timnath Res. bird) at North Weld County Landfill *Weld* on 13 Nov (SM, BiS).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** The total of 54 reported this fall was considerably higher than last year's 34. First report: 1 adult at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 14 Sep (RH). High count: 6 at North Weld County Landfill *Weld* on 17 Nov (SM, RH, DL). Reported

from 8 other counties: *Alamosa*, *Arapahoe*, *Denver*, *Douglas*, *Logan*, *Pueblo*, *Sedgwick*, and *Washington*.

**Glaucous Gull:** All reports: 1 imm at North Weld County Landfill *Weld* on 13 Nov (SM, BiS); 2 imm at Chatfield Res. *Jefferson/Douglas* from 19 Nov through the end of the season (JK); 1 adult and 1 imm at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 20 Nov (SM, CWo, JBa, BiS); 1 imm at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 26 Nov (IS, LK, PH); 1 adult and 1 imm at Chatfield Res. *Jefferson* on 27 Nov (SM, AH).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** One report: 1 adult at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* from 16 Nov through end of period (BKP).

**Least Tern:** Late report: 1 adult and 1 juv at Blue Lake *Bent* on 5 Sep (MP, LE, BS, DN).

**Caspian Tern:** All reports: 2 adults at Fossil Creek Res. *Larimer* from 30 Aug to 24 Sep (CW); 1 at McIntosh Lake *Boulder* on 5 Sep (TD); 2 at Panama Res. *Boulder* on 29 Sep (SM); 3 at Baseline Res. *Boulder* on 29 Sep (TD).

**Black Tern:** All reports: 35 at Neegronda Res. *Kiowa* on 5 Aug (TF, HF, AF); 1 on 10 Aug and 1 on 25 Aug at Lake DeWeese *Custer* (RM); 8 on 15 Sep and 1 on 17 Sep at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* (BKP).

**Common Tern:** All reports: Up to 8 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* from 3 Sep to 2 Oct (SM, TC, TS); 1 in Grand Junction Mesa on 8 Sep (BBr); 2 at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 15 Sep (BKP); 1 at Union Res. *Weld* on 17 Sep (SM); 5 at Boulder Res. *Boulder* on 18 Sep (CN).

**Arctic Tern:** One report: 1 juv

at Boulder Res. *Boulder* 18-30 Oct (NMo, CN).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** One report: 1 juv at Chatfield Res. *Jefferson/Douglas* 19-30 Nov (JK).

**Long-tailed Jaeger:** All reports: 1 adult at Cherry Creek Res. *Arapahoe* 10-11 Sep (CT); 1 juv at Antero Res. *Park* on 20 Sep (MP); 1 juv at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* 13-24 Oct (BKP, KS, JM; second county record).

**Jaeger sp.:** All reports: 1 at Ish Res. *Boulder/Larimer* on 23 Oct (CW); 1 at Marston Res. *Denver* on 16 Nov (MC).

**Band-tailed Pigeon:** Rare in Moffat: 1 at Wilderness Ranch in the Elk-head Mountains *Moffat* on 14 Aug (CDo).

**White-winged Dove:** Possibly a new county record: 1 at Idaho Springs *Clear Creek* on 2 Aug (BSh). Unusual location: 2 in Eckley *Yuma* on 3 Oct (SM). Late sightings: 1 in Fort Collins *Larimer* on 27 Nov (JSh); 1 near Rye *Pueblo* on 28 Nov (DS).

**Mourning Dove:** Unusual in San Juan: 1 in Silverton *San Juan* on 11 Sep (JB).

**Common Ground-Dove:** Potential fifth state record: 1 at Julesburg *Sedgwick* 12-30 Nov (SM, TS).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Possibly nesting: 2 at Hotchkiss *Delta* 7-13 Aug (JC, JBn).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** All reports: 1 juv near Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 11 Sep (SM); 1 at Last Chance *Washington* on 11 Sep (DF).

**Greater Roadrunner:** North of typical range: 1 at Brush Hollow Res. *Fremont* on 23 Nov (RM).

**Flammulated Owl:** New late date



for Pueblo area: 1 seen along Highway 165 near Lake Isabel Custer on 10 Sep (BKP, AP). Unusual for location: a presumed migrant in a yard in Lafayette Boulder on 28 Sep (TF).

**Burrowing Owl:** Late report: up to 5 near Craig Moffat through 4 Oct (FL).

**Lesser Nighthawk:** One report: 1 male in Nucla Montrose continuing from summer through 11 Aug (CD).

**Common Nighthawk:** Late report: 1 in Eckley Yuma on 3 Oct (SM).

**Chimney Swift:** Unusual location: 1 on the Cañon City Riverwalk Fremont on 13 Aug (RM). Also, an unidentified *Chaetura* swift was at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins Larimer on 26 Sep (DL).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** All reports: 1 female in the Wet Mountains Custer on 1 Sep (BKP); 1 adult male at Montrose Montrose 3-5 Sep (DSR); 1 adult male at Prewitt Res. Logan on 8 Sep (JR, LK, NE, GW); 1 at Sterling Logan 3-10 Oct (KK).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** 1 adult female near Boulder Boulder on 19 Sep (DW).

**Anna's Hummingbird:** All reports: 1 imm male near Green Mountain Jefferson 14-16 Oct (MC); 1 female in Fort Collins Larimer 23-25 Oct (BBi).

**Costa's Hummingbird:** All reports: 1 female in Rye Pueblo on 3 Sep (DS); 1 female in Grand Junction Mesa 8-21 Nov (TV) was a second WS report.

**Calliope Hummingbird:** First report: 1 at Steamboat Springs Routt on 4 Aug (TL).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Eight were seen farther west or south than expected: 3 on Higbee Valley Road



*Anna's Hummingbird, Green Mountain, Jefferson County, 16 October 2011. Photo by Mark Chavez*

Otero on 4 Aug (TF, HF, AF); 1 adult in Wetmore Custer on 5 Aug (RM); 1 juv at Eldorado Mountain Open Space Boulder on 5 Sep (CK); 1 juv at Rock Canyon Pueblo on 14 Sep (BKP); 1 adult in Estes Park Larimer on 21 Sep (SR); and 1 late bird at McIntosh Lake Boulder on 22 Oct (TD).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Reports away from northeast Colorado: 2 at Willow Creek Park Prowers on 5 Aug (TH, HF, AF); 1 adult at Crow Valley Campground Weld on 29 Sep (GW, NE, LK, JC) was the first of many reports from that location; 1 in Loveland Larimer on 13 Oct (CW); 1 in Lamar Prowers on 16 Oct (BKP, MP); 1 at Two Buttes Res. Baca on 16 Oct (BKP, MP).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** First report: 1 adult male at Bonny SP Yuma on 23 Sep (NE, GW).

**American Three-toed Woodpeck-**

**er:** Unusual location: 1 male at the Flagstaff Mountain Summit *Boulder* on 4 Sep (AC).

**Northern Flicker:** Rare on WS: 1 "Yellow-shafted" in Grand Junction Mesa on 14 Nov (DT).

**Western Wood-Pewee:** Late date: 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 9 Oct (BKP, DC).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** One report: 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* 27-28 Aug (BKP, DC).

**Alder Flycatcher:** All reports: 1 at Crow Valley Campground *Weld* on 28 Aug (SM); 1 at Chatfield Res. *Douglas* on 11 Sep (CL).

**Gray Flycatcher:** Unusual locations: 1 calling at Walden Ponds *Boulder* on 11 Aug (SM); 1 at Crow Valley Campground *Weld* on 20 Aug (SM); 1 at Thompson Ranch *Lincoln* on 5 Sep (SM, JK, GW).

**Black Phoebe:** Late date: 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 9 Nov (BKP).

**Eastern Phoebe:** An excellent season for this species; 16 were reported from Adams, *Boulder*, *Custer*, *Jefferson*, *Pueblo*, and *Yuma*.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** Unusual location: 1 northwest of Lyons *Larimer* on 9 Sep (JSu, MS).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** All reports: 1 adult at Bonny SP *Yuma* on 26 Aug (GW, NE); 1 adult at Thompson Ranch *Lincoln* on 5 Sep (GW, m.ob.); 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 8 Sep (BKP).

**Cassin's Kingbird:** Eight reports away from south-central plains. A family group of 4 at Norma's Grove *Weld* on 20 Aug likely represent local breeding (SM); 1 near Panama Res. *Boulder* on 17 Sep (TF); 1 in south

*Boulder Boulder* on 18 Sep (CN); 1 near Niwot Road and County Line Road *Boulder* on 19 Sep (TD; possibly same bird seen near Panama Res. on 17 Sep); 1 at Bonny SP *Yuma* on 3 Oct (SM) was a second county record.

**Eastern Kingbird:** Uncommon in SW Colorado: 1 at Durango Fish Hatchery *La Plata* on 15 Sep (RMO, HM).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** One report: 1 female at Holbrook Res. *Otero* on 24 Sep (SeM).

**Northern Shrike:** First report: 1 from Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 21 Oct (BKP).

**White-eyed Vireo:** All reports: 1 singing at Greenhorn Meadows in Colorado City *Pueblo* from 7 Aug to 12 Sep (DS, m.ob.); 1 at Palmer Lake *El Paso* 23-29 Aug (JD); 1 very late bird at Last Chance *Washington* on 13 Nov (BM).

**Bell's Vireo:** Very rare at location: 1 at CBR *El Paso* on 4 Sep (BM).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Very rare on WS: 1 at Ridgway Res. Banding Station *Ouray* on 15 Sep (BD, CD).

**Cassin's Vireo:** First report: 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 4 Sep (BP, DC). Rare on WS: 1 at Ridgway Res. Banding Station *Ouray* on 11 Sep (CD, m.ob.). 1 at Highline SP Mesa on 13 Sep (LA); 1 in Nucla *Montrose* on 4 Oct (CD, BW). Late report: 1 at Kodak SWA *Weld* on 23 Oct (SM, BiS).

**Cassin's/Blue-headed Vireo:** 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 8 Oct (BKP, DC, JR); 1 at Fox Ranch *Yuma* on 8 Oct (TF, BM, BP).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** All reports: 1 adult at Akron Golf Course *Wash-*



*Sedge Wren, Walden Ponds, Boulder County, 17 November 2011. Photo by William Hohenstein*

ington on 18 Sep (LE, JK, m.ob.); 1 at LCCW Prowers on 2 Oct (SeM); 1-2 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* 2-5 Oct (BKP); 1 at Ridgway Res. Banding Station *Ouray* on 8 Oct (CD, BW); 1 in Boulder *Boulder* on 8 Oct (CN).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** All reports: 1 banded at Barr Lake SP *Adams* on 24 Sep (MMB, m.ob.); 1 at Stalker Pond *Yuma* on 3 Oct (SM).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** 11 reported this season. First report: 1 on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* (RM) and 2 at Crow Valley Campground *Weld* on 5 Sep (SM). Rare on WS and late date: 1 in Nucla *Montrose* 25-26 Oct (CD, BW). Other counties with reports: *Boulder, Douglas, Prowers, Pueblo, and Washington.*

**Steller's Jay:** Rare at location: 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 1 Oct (BKP).

**Blue Jay:** Rare at location: 2 in the Wet Mountains *Custer* on 30 Sep (BKP, RP).

**Western Scrub-Jay:** Rare at loca-

tion: 1 in the Wet Mountains *Custer* on 22 Sep (BKP, RP).

**Chihuahuan Raven:**

Rare at location: 2 at Bonny SP *Yuma* on 15 Oct (BKP, MP, SM).

**Common Raven:** Very rare in region: 1 at Sand Draw SWA *Sedgwick* on 12 Nov (SM, TS).

**Purple Martin:** Rare at location: 1 juv at Big Johnson Res. *El Paso* on 7 Sep (BM).

**Tree Swallow:** Late report: 1 at Littleton *Arapahoe* on 23 Oct (JT).

**Bank Swallow:** Late report: 2 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 24 Sep (SM).

**Black-capped Chickadee × Mountain Chickadee:** 2 on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* on 19 Nov (SM, CN).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Uncommon summer report for eastern Colorado: 1 at LCCW Prowers on 5 Aug (TF, HF, AF).

**Pygmy Nuthatch:** Rare at location: 1 in Pueblo City Park *Pueblo* from 24 Oct to 9 Nov (BKP).

**Carolina Wren:** All reports: 1 male at Prewitt Res. *Washington* from 2 Sep to 2 Oct (CW, JK, m.ob.); 1 in Loveland *Larimer* on 13 Oct (CW).

**Pacific Wren:** One report: 1 male in a Louisville yard *Boulder* on 18 Aug (PH).

**Sedge Wren:** All reports: 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 30 Sep (BM); 1 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 9 Oct (MP, DM, GW); 1 at a Loveland residence

*Larimer* on 13 Oct (CW); 1 at Walden Ponds *Boulder* on 17 Nov (CN).

**Marsh Wren:** Late reports: 2 at Walden Ponds *Boulder* and 2 at McIntosh Res. *Boulder* on 27 Nov (TF et al.).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Last report for mountains: 2 at El Jebel *Eagle* on 17 Nov (MH).

**Eastern Bluebird:** An incredible season for this species: 114 were reported from the counties *Boulder*, *Fremont*, *Huerfano*, *Larimer*, *Montrose*, *Otero*, *Pueblo*, and *Yuma*. First report away from breeding areas: 1 at *Boulder* Res. *Boulder* on 21 Sep (TF, AF). Second county record: 1 male at *Nucla Montrose* 12 Nov through end of season (CD, m.ob.).

**Wood Thrush:** All reports: 1 at CBR *El Paso* on 21 Sep (BM); 1 at Haxtun City Park *Phillips* on 18 Nov (BKP, LE, NMo, JD), an extremely late date.

**Varied Thrush:** All reports: 1 male at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins *Larimer* on 15 Oct (DL); 1 female at Two Buttes *Baca* on 16 Oct (DK, MG, et al.); 1 female in Colorado Springs *El Paso* on 7 Nov (JH); 1 female in Aurora *Arapahoe* 21-25 Nov (BSc); 1 male at Duck Creek SWA *Logan* on 27 Nov (KMD).

**Sprague's Pipit:** All reports: 1 at Union Res. *Weld* on 10 Sep (SM); 1 near Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 18 Sep (CW); 2 in south *Boulder* on 29 Sep (CN); 1 at the Fox Ranch *Yuma* on 7 Oct (BM, TF, BP); 1 in Loveland *Larimer* on 13 Oct (CW); 1 at Republican SWA *Yuma* on 15 Oct (BKP, MP, SM).

**Chestnut-collared Longspur:** Reports away from plains: 1 at Jim Hamm

Pond *Boulder* on 18 Sep (SM); 2-3 at Coalton Trail *Boulder* 18-24 Sep (CN, TF); 5 at Spinney Mountain Res. *Park* on 20 Sep (BM); an unknown number at Castlewood Canyon SP *Douglas* on 8 Oct (GW).

**McCown's Longspur:** Reports away from plains: 1 at Coalton Trail *Boulder* on 18 Sep (CN); an unknown number at Castlewood Canyon SP *Douglas* on 8 Oct (GW).

**Snow Bunting:** One report: 1 or more birds at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 20 Nov (SM, CWo, JBa, BiS).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** Second fall record for Pueblo area: 1 on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* 5-19 Nov (SeM).

**Northern Waterthrush:** All reports: 2 at Lake DeWeese *Custer* on 20 Aug (BKP); 1 on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* 3-5 Sep (RM); 1 at Barr Lake SP *Adams* on 5 Sep (MMD).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** All reports: 3 at Crow Valley Campground *Weld* on 5 Sep (GW, m.ob.); 1 at Sondermann Park in Colorado Springs *El Paso* on 5 Sep (RHi, DC); 1 at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 20 Sep (BKP, MJ).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** All reports: 1 male at Lake Estes *Larimer* 16-29 Sep (GM); 1 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 2 Oct (PG, GW, LK); 1 female at Brush Hollow Res. *Fremont* on 4 Oct (RM); 1 imm female at Dixon Res. *Larimer* 17-18 Nov (BBa).

**Tennessee Warbler:** First report: 1 at Barr Lake SP *Adams* on 5 Sep (MMB). Late report: 1 at Pueblo City Park *Pueblo* on 28 Oct (BKP). Rare on WS: 2 in Ouray *Ouray* on 9 Sep (KN); 1 on the Animas River in Durango *La Plata* 16-17 Sep (SA, m.ob.).



*Varied Thrush, Aurora, Arapahoe County, 23 November 2011. Photo by Mark Chavez*

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Rare *lutescens* subspecies: 1 at Prewitt Res. Washington on 17 Sep (SM); 1 at Bonny SP Yuma on 3 Oct (SM).

**Nashville Warbler:** 16 reported this season, down from 19 last fall. First report: 1 in Lakewood Jefferson on 2 Sep (CG). Last report: 2 at LCCW Prowers on 20 Oct (DL). Rare on WS: 1 on Animas River in Durango La Plata on 18 Sep (m.ob.); 1 in Nucla Montrose on 18 Sep (CD, BW).

**Hooded Warbler:** All reports: 1 male at Valco Ponds Pueblo 20-24 Oct (BKP, MJ); 1 female at Holyoke Cemetery Phillips on 18 Nov (BKP, LE, JD, NMo).

**American Redstart:** Up from last year's 11 birds reported, 34 were reported this fall. First report: 1 male at Lake DeWeese Custer on 10 Aug (RM). High count: 7 at Last Chance Washington on 5 Sep (SM, GW, JK). Rare on WS and in mountains: 1 at Silver Jack Res. Gunnison on 2 Sep

(KN); 1 on Animas River Trail in Durango La Plata on 10 Sep (SA, m.ob.); one imm male in Salida Chaffee on 23 Sep (RM).

#### **Northern Parula:**

Seven were reported this fall, slightly down from 8 last year. First report: 1 male on Cañon City Riverwalk Fremont on 28 Aug (RM). Last report: 1 at Haxtun City Park Phillips 19 Nov (BKP, LE, JD, NMo). Rare mountain report: 1 in Salida Chaffee on 3 Oct (RM).

#### **Magnolia Warbler:**

All reports: 1 imm at Barr Lake SP Adams 10-12 Sep (MMD); 1 imm male in Fort Collins Larimer on 17 Sep (RH); 1 imm female at CBR El Paso on 23 Sep (SB).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** One report: 1 male at Prewitt Res. Washington on 4 Sep (JD).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** All reports: 1 at Rock Canyon Pueblo on 4 Sep (BKP, DC); 1 female at Barr Lake SP Adams on 4 Sep (MMD); 1 adult female at Last Chance Washington on 8 Sep (GW, JR); 1 imm female in Boulder Boulder on 14 Sep (BK); 1 at CBR El Paso on 16 Sep (SBr); 1 at Pueblo City Park Pueblo on 24 Oct (BKP).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** All reports: 1 female at Barr Lake SP Adams on 4 Sep (MMD); 1 at Rock Canyon Pueblo on 10 Sep (BKP); 1 at Cherry Creek SP Arapahoe on 17 Sep (SS); 1 at Prewitt Res. Washington on 17 Sep (SM); 1 at Prewitt Res. Washington on



*Yellow-throated Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo County, 13 September 2011. Photo by Bill Maynard*

24 Sep (SM, JR); 1 in Nucla Montrose on 29 Sep (CD, BW).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** All reports: 1 adult male at Barr Lake SP Adams on 24 Sep (GW, LM, GG); 1 adult female at Estes Park Larimer on 30 Sep (GW, LK); 1 imm male north of Boulder Boulder on 6 Oct (MB, VD, MS, JSu, RH); 1 adult male at Brett Gray Ranch Lincoln on 9 Oct (GW, MP); 1 imm male at CBR El Paso on 9 Oct (SBr); 1 male in Nucla Montrose on 20 Oct (CD), a 12<sup>th</sup> record for the WS; 1 male at Pueblo City Park Pueblo from 30 Oct to 1 Nov (BKP, DC, m.ob.).

**Palm Warbler:** All reports of “western” race birds: 1 in Akron Washington on 17 Sep (SM); 1 at Rock Canyon Pueblo on 1 Oct (BKP); 1 adult at Brett Gray Ranch Lincoln on 20 Oct (MP, GW); 1 in east Boulder Boulder on 13 Nov (CN).

**Pine Warbler:** All reports: 3-4 birds (1 adult male, 1-2 imm females, 1 imm male) at Pueblo City Park Pueblo from 27 Oct to 3 Nov (BKP).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One report: 1 imm at CBR Pueblo 12-13 Sep (JD).

**Prairie Warbler:** All reports: 1 at Clear Springs Ranch El Paso on 20 Aug (DE, SC); 1 in Hotchkiss Delta on 8 Oct (AR), a fourth WS record.

**Townsend’s Warbler:** Late report: 1 in Lyons Boulder on 5 Nov (SM, CN).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** All reports: 1 juv at Jumbo Res. Sedgwick on 16 Sep (GW, KMD, m.ob.); 1 female-type on Cañon City Riverwalk Fremont on 7 Nov (BKP, MP).

**Canada Warbler:** All reports: 1 female at Last Chance Washington on 5 Sep (GW, JK, SM); 1 female at Prewitt Res. Washington on 23 Sep (JV); 1 female at LCCW Prowers on 1 Oct (SeM).

**Wilson’s Warbler:** Interesting observation: 1 female with white in tail (like a Hooded Warbler) at Rock Canyon Pueblo on 15 Sep (BKP).

**Spotted Towhee × Eastern Towhee:** All reports: 1 at Prewitt Res. Washington on 8 Oct (SM); 1 at Crow Valley Campground Weld on 9 Oct (SM).

**Eastern Towhee:** All reports: 1 female northwest of Boulder Boulder on 17 Nov (DW); 1 female at Valco Ponds Pueblo 26-27 Nov (IS, LK, DC).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Early on Front Range: 1 juv at Golden Ponds in Longmont Boulder on 4 Aug (SM). Rare on WS: 1 on County Road 977 Archuleta on 15 Sep (JB); 1 in Craig





*Eastern Towhee, Valco Ponds, Pueblo County, 25 November 2011. Photo by Loch Kilpatrick*

*Moffat* on 17 Sep (CDo); 1 at Sambrito *Archuleta* on 21 Sep (JB); 1 in Grand Junction Mesa on 27 Sep (AC).

**Brewer's Sparrow:** High count for *Boulder*: 40+ at Coalton Open Space *Boulder* on 25 Aug (TF, AF). Late date: 1 at Frenchman Creek SWA *Phillips* on 16 Oct (SM, TS).

**Field Sparrow:** All reports away from eastern border counties: 4 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 2 Oct (GW, MP, LK); 1 at Pine Ridge Natural Area *Larimer* on 3 Oct (NK); 5 at Tamarack Ranch *Logan* on 8 Oct (SM, TS); 1 on Tunnel Drive in Cañon City *Fremont* on 26 Nov (RM).

**Vesper Sparrow:** Late date for *Moffat*: 1 in Craig *Moffat* on 10 Oct (FL).

**Sage Sparrow:** North and east of normal range: 1 north of *Boulder Boulder* on 13 Oct (MB, VD, MS, JSu, RH); 1 at Bear Creek Lake Park *Jefferson* on 13 Oct (MHe, MK, MF).

**Lark Bunting:** Reports away from

plains: 1 at Twentymile SWA *Routt* from 26 Aug to 5 Sep (FL); 25 on Coalton Trail *Boulder* on 25 Aug (TF, AF); 1 at Navajo Res. *Archuleta* on 8 Oct (RMo, HM). Late report: 1 at Little Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 20 Nov (SM, CWo, JBa, BiS).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Potential first county record: 1 at Twentymile SWA *Routt* on 4 Aug (FL).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:**

All reports: 1 at CBR *Pueblo* from 17 Sep to

5 Oct (BM); 2 adults at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 2 Oct (MP, BM, GW); 1 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 4-5 Oct (CW).

**"Red" Fox Sparrow:** All reports: 1 at Frenchman Hills SWA *Phillips* on 16 Oct (SM); 1 at Two Buttes Res. *Baca* on 16 Oct (BKP, MP); 1 in *Bent* on 3 Nov (DN); 1 on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* on 7 Nov (BKP).



*Eastern Towhee, Crestview Estates, Boulder County, 18 November 2011. Photo by David Waltman*

**Swamp Sparrow:** The 10 birds reported this fall made for an average season. First report: 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 25 Oct (BKP).

**White-throated Sparrow:** Up even from last fall's extraordinary 42 birds reported, the total of 55 reported this year was incredible. First report: 1 imm at Dixon Res. *Larimer* on 26 Sep (BBi). High count: 4 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 2 Oct (SM).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Up from last fall, 20 birds were reported. First report: 1 at CBR *El Paso* on 4 Oct (BM).

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** All reports: 1 imm at LCCW *Prowers* on 20 Oct (DL); 1 adult returning to Red Rocks Park *Jefferson* from 3 Nov through end of period (MHe).

**Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed):** Unusual so far east: 2 at Sand Draw SWA *Sedgwick* on 20 Nov (SM, CWo, JBa, BiS).

**Summer Tanager:** All reports: 1 in Loveland *Larimer* on 9 Aug (EC); 1 adult male on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* on 3 Sep (RM); 1 adult male on Animas River Trail *La Plata* 20-22 Sep (RMo); 1 adult male on Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* on 21 Sep (RM); 1 female at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* 18-19 Oct (BKP); 1 west of Walden *Jackson* on 13 Nov (DML).

**Scarlet Tanager:** All reports: 1 male in North Cheyenne Canyon *El Paso* 8-10 Aug (MW); 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 8 Oct (BKP, JR); 1 female at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* 19-23 Oct (BKP, CS, PSS).

**Western Tanager:** Late date and easterly location: 1 at Beecher Island *Yuma* on 15 Oct (SM, MP, BKP, TS).

**Northern Cardinal:** Away from

extreme eastern plains: 1-2 males at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* 18-22 Oct (BKP, CS, PSS).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** All reports: 1 male in Wet Mountains *Custer* 16-19 Aug (BKP, RP, DS, GB); 1 female at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 14 Sep (BKP); 1 adult female north of Boulder *Boulder* on 28 Sep (MB, VD, MS, JSu, RH); 1 female at Two Buttes Res. *Baca* on 16 Oct (BKP, MP); 1 male at Cedaredge *Delta* on 13 Nov (CDa); 1 in Glenwood Springs *Garfield* on 13 Nov (JiC).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Late dates: 1 female west of Pueblo Nature Center *Pueblo* on 10 Oct (BKP); 1 in Colorado City *Pueblo* on 15 Oct (DS).

**Indigo Bunting:** Uncommon in southwest Colorado: 1 imm male at Durango Fish Hatchery *La Plata* on 15 Sep (RMo, HM).

**Dickcissel:** Reports away from plains: 2 (1 male, 1 female) at Meadow Springs Ranch *Larimer* on 4 Aug (EY); 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 5 Oct (BKP); 1 female at Barr Lake SP *Adams* on 9 Oct (BC); 1 at CBR *El Paso* on 10 Oct (BM).

**Bobolink:** Unusual location and late date: 1 male near Weld County Road 59 Pond *Weld* on 3 Sep (SM).

**Rusty Blackbird:** All reports: 1 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 22 Oct (CW); 2 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 6 Nov (SM, CN); 1 in Holyoke *Phillips* on 18 Nov (BKP, LE, JD, NMo); 3 (1 male, 2 females) at Lake Estes *Larimer* 20-21 Nov (GM); 6 on Arkansas River below Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 20 Nov (MJ); 1 at Estes Park *Larimer* on 21 Nov (SM); 2 (1 male, 1 female) at Chatfield SP *Douglas* on 22 Nov (BiS, JS).



**Orchard Oriole:** Late date: 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 17 Sep (BKP).

**Streak-backed Oriole:** Potential second state record: 1 at Fountain Creek Regional Park *El Paso* on 25 Nov (MP).

**Baltimore Oriole:** Unusual location: 1 female at Thompson Ranch *Lincoln* on 5 Sep (SM).

**Red Crossbill:** Rare location: 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 19 Oct (BKP).

**Common Redpoll:** All reports: 2 at Lake Estes *Larimer* 20-27 Nov (GM); 4 at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 20 Nov (SM, CWo, JBa, BiS); 1 at Sand Draw SWA *Sedgwick* on 20 Nov (SM); 4 at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins *Larimer* on 24 Nov (DL).

**Lesser Goldfinch:** Uncommon on eastern plains: 13 were seen in *Bent*, *Otero*, *Prowers*, and *Washington* 4-6 Aug (TF, HF, AF).

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# Goldeneye Bill Coloration

*Tony Leukering*

During most of the year, adult males of the world's two goldeneye species, Common and Barrow's, have plumage differences that make identification simple. However, all other plumages of these two species are quite similar, engendering consternation and misidentifications for birders in Colorado and elsewhere. Particularly in females, bill color is often used as the primary, sometimes only, identification character to identify such birds. Though bill color is often reliable, there are at least two situations in which it can lead one astray, neither of which is treated well by the general field guides.

This essay is intended to be read with reference to the pictures on the back cover of this journal. If one wishes to put the information in this article into practice, an excellent place to do so is the Silverthorne Water Treatment Plant north of Silverthorne on Highway 9 in Summit County<sup>1</sup>. Both species are usually present there in winter in a variety of age/sex classes, and close and prolonged views are possible. Another good winter site is Sands Lake in Salida, Chaffee County<sup>2</sup>, though that site is best early in the morning before the goldeneyes head off to the Arkansas River for much of the day.

## Age and Bill Color

When faced with a problematic goldeneye, it is often best to attempt to determine whether the bird is an immature (<1 year old) or an adult. Age can be determined in many ways, but the easiest are noted below.

Iris color: Goldeneyes hatch with dark irides, which change to clear yellow during their first winter and spring. In winter, the eye color of first-year birds varies from a quite muddy yellow-brown through olive to amber, with even some first-summer birds retaining slightly dark irides. At the height of winter, any goldeneye without clear yellow eyes is certainly an immature.

Bill color: Goldeneyes also hatch with black bills. In males, bill color does not change, but females of both species gradually replace their juvenile bill color with adult bill color during their first winter. In Common Goldeneyes, this means that the bill of immature females will gradually develop a yellow tip, while in Barrow's the entire

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://coloradocountybirding.com/county/bird\\_a\\_county.php?name=Summit#844](http://coloradocountybirding.com/county/bird_a_county.php?name=Summit#844)

<sup>2</sup> See [http://coloradocountybirding.com/county/bird\\_a\\_county.php?name=Chaffee#225](http://coloradocountybirding.com/county/bird_a_county.php?name=Chaffee#225)

bill turns yellow. In my experience in Summit County, the transition in immature female Barrow's is gradual, with the entire bill just slowly becoming paler over the course of the season.

White patch in the loreal area: From late fall into spring, any brown-headed goldeneye that sports white between the eye and the bill is an immature male. The molt by which these young males obtain their characteristic white loreal-area patch is variable in rate and timing, though Common Goldeneyes seem to initiate this molt sooner, such that most have some indication of the white patch by mid-December, while immature male Barrow's seem to lag as much as a month behind Commons. Though many of these immature males also sport at least some of the darker, glossy head coloration of adult males, not all of them do, so caution in sexing immature goldeneyes is warranted.

### **Yellow-billed Common Goldeneyes**

While the vast majority of female Common Goldeneyes exhibit the stereotypical yellow-tipped black bill, a tiny percentage sport bills mostly or entirely yellow or yellow-orange. This supernormal amount of pale coloration may result in bills with larger-than-normal yellow tips, in bills where the black is strongly suffused with yellow, or in bills that are entirely bright yellow or yellow-orange. Obviously, some of these birds could readily be confused with Barrow's Goldeneye, particularly the last two variants.

An excellent example of such a bird is shown in the top picture of the back cover. This individual has bits of brown scattered on the bill, but at a distance, they would disappear into a general all-orange appearance. This bird's eye is clear yellow, a fact that, when considered with the picture's early-January date, should mean that this is an adult female. While some such birds may be hybrid Common  $\times$  Barrow's Goldeneyes, this bird exhibits classic Common Goldeneye features: the bill is considerably longer than the distance from bill base to eye; the head profile has a strongly triangular appearance created by the sharply-peaked head and relatively insignificant mane (extension of feathers below the nape); and the brown head has a pale, warm tone as compared to the subtly cooler, darker brown of female Barrow's Goldeneyes.

### **Female Barrow's Goldeneyes in Summer**

The treatment of female Barrow's Goldeneyes in summer is quite variable in field guides. Some field guides (e.g., Sibley 2000, National Geographic Society 2011) ignore any difference with winter appearance. Other field guides (e.g., Peterson 1980, Madge and Burn 1988,

Kaufman 2000, Crossley 2011) provide at least some indication of a difference, though Peterson (1980) seemingly has the labels mixed up.

Although female Barrow's Goldeneyes in winter typically have bright orange bills (at least in western North America), the same birds in summer sport bills that are entirely black or nearly so (T. McEnaney pers. comm., Palmer 1976), with the darkening apparently taking place around the time that eggs hatch (S. Mlodinow pers. comm.). The bills typically turn yellow-orange again around November (Eadie et al. 2000).

The lower picture on the back cover depicts an adult female photographed in July with an entirely black bill. In this picture, though the bill looks somewhat long, we can see the darker brown of the head, shorter bill, steeper forehead, and more rounded crown that are typical of Barrow's Goldeneye. Though some experts have been confused by this individual, all other goldeneyes photographed by the photographer at this site in summer were Barrow's Goldeneyes. The bird's posture is a bit odd, a factor that may contribute to the apparent intermediacy of some characters. While the possibility that the bird is a hybrid exists, the picture still illustrates well the all-dark bills of summer female goldeneyes. The yellow on the bills of female Common Goldeneyes can be obscured, or partially so, by duskiness in summer (Palmer 1976), giving them an appearance of being entirely dark-billed, so, again, caution is warranted in identifying either species on bill color alone.

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# Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly

## Instructions for Contributors to *Colorado Birds*

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

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

Art and photos will be returned at your request; however, manuscripts and CDs will not, unless specifically requested. While your materials will receive the utmost care, the Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) or any representative thereof cannot be responsible for materials lost in the mail or due to other circumstances beyond our control.

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

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

Send journal contributions to:

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



*Adult female Common Goldeneye, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, 4 January 2010. Photo by Jim Arterburn*



*Adult female Barrow's Goldeneye, Willow, Alaska, 8 July 2007. Photo by Todd M. Katke*

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