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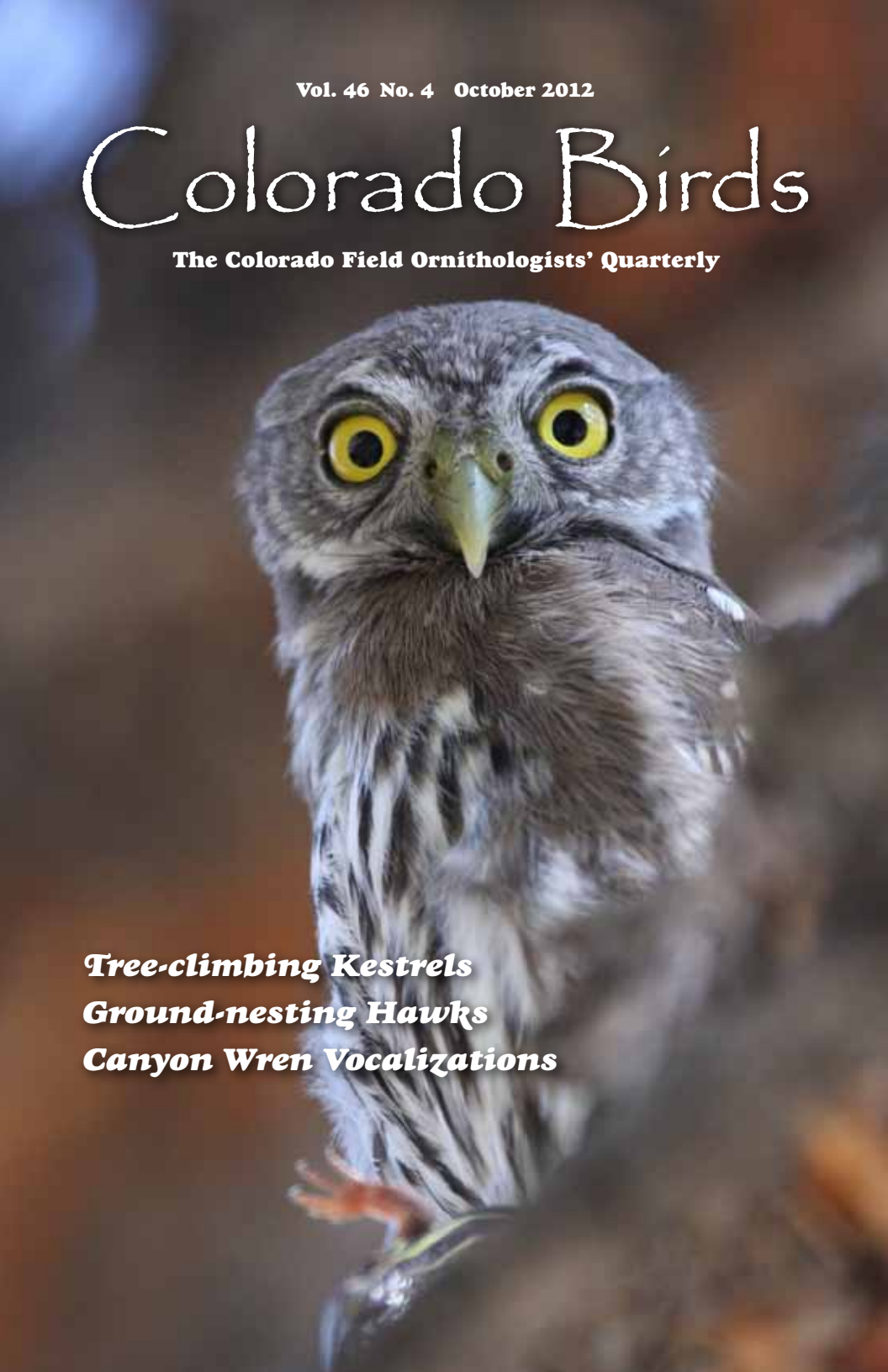
Colorado Birds

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



Tree-climbing Kestrels
Ground-nesting Hawks
Canyon Wren Vocalizations

Colorado Field Ornithologists
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A juvenile Northern Pygmy-Owl with a Six-lined Racerunner, Lyons, Larimer County, 8 August 2012. *Photo by Joel Such*

Trinidad Convention Feedback and the CBRC

Jim Beatty

Survey Feedback from 2012 Convention in Trinidad

As those of you who attended the Trinidad convention already know, we changed our method of gathering feedback on both the convention and broader CFO issues. Instead of a paper survey handed out at the convention, we e-mailed the survey to conventioneers shortly after everyone had returned home and had a chance to reflect on the convention events. We were pleased with the results, as 68 people (about 35% of those attending) shared their thoughts with us. Your perspective on how things went is always valuable information as we try to continue to improve the convention and our overall products and services for our members.

The survey was short and easy to complete – just eleven questions, many with multiple choice answers. Following is brief summary of the results, in no particular order:

- 75% viewed Trinidad as an interesting area of Colorado for birding and 60% thought the field trip locales were very interesting;
- Reasons for attending included "nothing would stop me," "excellent and knowledgeable field trip leaders," "educational," "technical papers," and "chance to network or just visit with other Colorado birders";
- Saturday's banquet meal was not the best, with about 50% rating it as average or lower;
- Some loved the keynote talk, while others found it too long and too technical;
- Field trips generally went very well, although there were a couple of glitches;
- The Thursday evening welcoming banquet, graciously paid for by the Trinidad Tourism Board and Chamber of Commerce, was very popular, and over 80% responded that they would be willing to pay for similar events at future conventions;
- The paper session and ID challenge events were well received, although less than half of the responders attended them;
- Specialty field trips, birding skills workshops, and birding by ear workshops all scored well for future conventions; and
- 80% expressed interest in a fall mini-conference.

We knew at the outset that Trinidad would offer some challenges because of its somewhat remote location and modest convention infra-

structure. The board has many good thoughts and suggestions to consider as we move forward. We thank everyone for contributing to this survey. If you didn't get a chance to make your opinion heard, please feel free to contact any board member; everyone's ideas are always welcome.

Rare bird records

The work to improve, update, and make broadly available the records of the Colorado Bird Records Committee is continuing with Doug Faulkner, Mark Peterson, and Brenda Linfield providing key leadership. This work includes improving the online submitting of new reports, streamlining the handling of past paper reports (of which a very sizeable number still exists), and transforming the database into a system that will allow easy, friendly queries by CFO members and, perhaps, anyone.

The critical, difficult, and time-consuming conceptual phase is moving forward. This involves identifying all problems with the existing system – twenty-five so far – and the all-important comprehensive determination of the project scope. For example, how should subspecies be handled? Today's subspecies could easily be tomorrow's species. Similar questions exist for hybrids. These issues must be identified and carefully thought through, as we simply can't afford to do this project very often.

Once the scope is fully defined, we expect to be able to determine the estimated cost. CFO has earmarked gift funds and other net incomes, such as those from our conventions, to fund this work. We'll keep you updated with periodic progress reports.

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

11 August 2012
Beatty Residence
Durango, CO

Larry Modesitt

The August quarterly meeting was called to order at 11:27 A.M. by President Jim Beatty. Officers present were President Jim Beatty, Vice President Bill Kaempfer, Secretary Larry Modesitt, and Treasurer Maggie Boswell. Directors Lisa Edwards, Doug Faulkner, and Joe Roller were present. Nathan Pieplow was present by telephone. Directors Ted Floyd, Brenda Linfield, and Christian Nunes sent their regrets.

Secretary's Report—Larry Modesitt

Directors approved the minutes of the 14 April 2012 board meeting and the 19 May 2012 annual meeting. Nathan Pieplow described the offer from the Denver Museum of Nature & Science to archive CFO's convention brochures, minutes of meetings, and other historical records. Joe Roller recommended that the museum scan the files, if possible, for more available access. Bill Kaempfer moved and Joe seconded the establishment of a committee to review the situation and make a recommendation. Secretary Larry Modesitt has 3 tub files of information and Treasurer Maggie Boswell has 3 boxes of financial records. Larry, Nathan, and Maggie will review the situation and make recommendations.

Treasurer's Report—Maggie Boswell

Maggie presented the second quarter 2012 financial reports. The $10,000 of net income from the 2012 Trinidad convention was a record high, as was $1,000 from passing the hat. Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) expenses have been minimal so far. Both scholarship and project funds are below budget. Bill Kaempfer asked the board to consider this if future requests were to exceed the normal amount. Maggie noted that we have enough funds for projects as well as expected CBRC expenses.

Evaluation of 2012 Trinidad Convention—Jim Beatty

The board took a chance that the Trinidad location would be successful. Some of the challenges included attracting sufficient attendees to a remote location, having field trips to seldom-visited locations that were generally unfamiliar to trip leaders, locating activities at multiple venues, scouting locations near the convention date, and distant and sometimes rigorous field trips.

We introduced many new actions because of these challenges. Attendees knew who their leaders were in advance, and field trip leaders communicated with attendees before-

hand with suggestions for trips. When late information necessitated making last-minute trip changes, leaders notified people. One bad issue was difficulties in notifying some people about an earlier departure, necessitating changing them to a different trip. Attendees noted, however, how much better the system worked in general compared to the past. In the past, people needed to inspect the bulletin board upon arrival to learn which trips they had been placed on. One problem was averted when a scouting trip just prior to the convention revealed the site was inaccessible. The trip was altered to an accessible site, and people were allowed to change if they requested it.

The board especially appreciated many people's responses to the convention questionnaire. We noted dozens of excellent comments for future reference.

We noted that responders especially enjoyed trips to private property along with birding a seldom-visited part of Colorado.

Attendees generally loved the preconvention barbecue, furnished free of charge to us by the extremely accommodating Trinidad Chamber of Commerce. Eighty-four percent of responders said they would pay for such an activity in the future.

Joe Roller noted that the again-improved ID challenge by Nathan Pieplow was excellent. It was well-attended, with several teams competing and many people watching, despite the overlap with an owling trip.

Bill Kaempfer noted that the major gripe, as it has been frequently in the past, is that food to some tables at the banquet was slow, cold, or both. He suggested improving this by requiring more servers, even if CFO had to pay extra. The lateness of food to some tables also delayed starting the evening's speakers, making the evening end too late. Because of the late start time, the keynote speech felt too long to some people, especially early-rising birders.

Some people thought the keynote speech was too technical, but others were thrilled with it. Since most CFO convention attendees are more interested in the sport of birding than the science of birds, Doug Faulkner recommended we have birder keynoters twice as often as science keynoters. Recently, birder and science speakers have alternated.

The board agreed with a majority of responders that the Trinidad Convention of 2012 was very successful, both from the attendees' and the Treasurer's points of view. We received amazing hospitality from the hotel, museum, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board, and many CFO volunteers.

Discussion of 2013 Convention—Jim Beatty

Jim led a discussion regarding potential locations for the 2013 convention, centering on Durango, Cortez, or Ignacio. Advantages of Durango are its proximity to Archuleta County, to New Mexico, and to the Acorn Woodpecker location. Disadvantages are higher costs of hotel meeting and sleeping rooms, a lack of species in the San Juans until the higher and

more expensive tourist season in mid-June, and fewer opportunities for nearby field trips.

Advantages of Cortez are a wide variety of field trips in many habitats including lakes; opportunities for visiting seldom-birded counties such as Dolores; proximity to the Lucy's Warbler location; and less expensive hotels. Disadvantages are a drive an hour longer each way for most people and a possible schedule conflict with the annual Cortez festival, which is 8-12 May. Since this festival attracts different participants, some of which enjoy birding, Bill Kaempfer suggested partnering with them. Participants could attend trips for either group.

If the convention were in Ignacio, we would be staying at the Southern Ute casino. Advantages are the spectacular museum, the opportunity to bird New Mexico and Archuleta County easily, and possibilities of birding Southern Ute territories. The major disadvantage is the casino location and the lack of other hotel options. Jim will get and relay information on these possibilities, including hotel prices for different dates and partnering with the Cortez festival.

CFO Website—Brenda Linfield

In the future, past articles of The Hungry Birder will be added. Bill Kaempfer encouraged the board to write more in the board content section of our website.

Database—Lisa Edwards

The database is working well with no issues.

Committee Reports

Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC)—Doug Faulkner. There are three issues: catching up recent submission reviews so that they are reviewed promptly, completing the CBRC website, and inputting records up to ten years old that have never been reviewed. The main priority will be getting records caught up by 2013, with a goal that reviews will be completed within a quarter (three months) of their submission. Doug reported that the CBRC is finalizing the 2011 decisions. Committee members are working hard, as the CBRC is receiving 200 submissions annually. If record reviews are not completed during the term of a committee, they must be re-reviewed by the new committee and re-voted upon. It is difficult for the Chair to put a record back into the system for a revote. Second, after a review of issues, it was agreed that Doug Faulkner, Brenda Linfield, and Mark Peterson would refine the plan to make the CBRC records database available to the membership and submit it to the board for any necessary funding. The third priority is non-reviewed documents up to ten years old. They are primarily paper records not part of the online system. CBRC Secretary Rachel Hopper is preparing the paper records for inclusion in the electronic system, which is cumbersome and time-consuming. Some require an outside opinion, which also is time-consuming.

Colorado Birds—Nathan Pieplow reported that the October issue is under development. CBRC members are now subjects for Across the Board, as

all current board members have been profiled. Since we are running out of Hungry Birder columns, Nathan is requesting suggestions for other columns. Doug Faulkner suggested doing birding location profile articles, such as profiling birds to see at a site and when to see them.

Publicity—Ted Floyd, who was not present at the meeting, had previously submitted a written report with updates on the following: (1) recent, ongoing, and future social media activities for CFO; (2) recent and upcoming CFO field trips; (3) a request for funding from the Denver Museum of Nature & Science; and (4) proposals from eastern Colorado communities to host upcoming CFO activities.

Membership—Lisa Edwards reported that membership is increasing. The July issue of *Colorado Birds* totaled 471 issues mailed, with 429 paying subscribers, up in one year from 455 and 415, respectively. Lisa mailed out 85 postcards to people whose memberships have expired recently. If membership does lapse, members can pay for available back issues.

Youth Scholarship & Special Projects—Bill Kaempfer recommended that we provide people aged 18 or under with a one-year youth membership. We want to interest youth in birding and in CFO. Bill will contact various Colorado bird clubs to let them know there are opportunities for one-year CFO memberships as well as scholarships for camp attendance. Joe Roller noted that other bird groups' memberships are aging, so getting youth involved is important. The deadline for project fund applications is 1 December, and we would like more applications. Bill will submit publicity for this to ornithology professors.

CFO Field Trips—Bill Kaempfer noted that the decision to support international field trips continues to be under investigation.

Nominations—Joe Roller. The board discussed possible replacements for Bob Righter, who retired from the board. Bill Kaempfer moved and Joe seconded a motion to have a succession strategy for Maggie Boswell, whose last term expires in May of 2013. The motion passed. Bill asked for clarification regarding when officers' terms expire if they change offices. Larry Modesitt will study the situation and recommend language changes to the CFO bylaws.

New Business

Invitation for CFO to participate in State Land Board monitoring—Larry Modesitt and Joe Roller were asked to attend meetings in which State Land Board personnel asked if CFO members might be interested in performing volunteer monitoring on state leased lands. The board questioned whether this is a good activity for volunteers. In addition, the board wanted to know many more specifics about the request, such as how many of what kind of volunteers would need to do what level of monitoring.

Invitation for CFO to participate in arranging field trips for attendees of the American Ornithologists'

Union (AOU) annual meeting in Estes Park in 2014—Larry Modesitt presented briefly the request by the AOU for Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) to arrange and staff field trips. Little is known about the amount of help required for an unknown amount of days. RMBO would like to partner with CFO for this project, as CFO has more experience in trip planning and leading. Bill Kaempfer and Joe Roller will meet with representatives of RMBO and AOU this fall to learn requirements and plan activities.

Our next meeting will be 10 November 2012. President Beatty adjourned the meeting at 3:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Modesitt, Secretary

Project Fund Application Deadline: 1 December 2012

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

Grant Schedule

- All applications must be postmarked no later than 1 December 2012.
- Successful applicants will be notified after the March 2013 CFO board meeting.
- Following completion of the project, the applicant must submit a final report in writing by February of the next calendar year. This report should include a full description of the project activities and an accounting of the money spent.

Please see the following page on the CFO website for all Project Fund guidelines: **http://cfobirds.org/business/funding.htm**.

Tom Wilberding

Ed. Jim Beatty

The first time I had a chance to spend some time with Tom was when he and Todd Deininger travelled to southwest Colorado working on their state and county lists in late April 2009. Their primary target was, of course, Lucy's Warbler, which was just the start of a very good day. At McPhee Reservoir we were lucky enough to find Heather and Riley Morris already watching a Snowy Plover – rare in southwestern Colorado. As we enjoyed the plover, Todd spotted a large white bird flying directly toward us, and a very obliging Caspian Tern landed on the nearby shoreline. Later, as we drove up to the overlook at Totten Reservoir, a large bird came gliding in low over the water – a Brown Pelican! That was a day to remember.

Tom is a retired home builder from Detroit. His wife, Barb, works in sales at the Flatiron Nordstrom's. They have two daughters, both married, Anna in Rockford, Michigan with their two grandkids, and Clara in Denver.

CFO's newest board member, Tom Wilberding

Tom was born in 1947 and grew up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. He graduated from Georgetown University and then served two years in the Peace Corps as a teacher in Ghana, West Africa. After the Peace Corps, Tom went back to school and received an MBA at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business. After a year in San Francisco with Price Waterhouse, he joined his father's real estate development company, and they designed, built, and sold several condominium communities in the Detroit area. When his dad retired, Tom bought his share and continued in the building business until 2004. He was fortunate to retire just before the housing market slowed.

After their daughters graduated from college and moved out of state, Barb asked, "why don't we move out of state, too?" She wanted to go where there was a lot of sunshine and a Nordstrom's – and

Boulder was perfect. Barb still enjoys her work, Tom's the "butler," and they're both very content in their new surroundings.

Tom's interest in birding started on Mother's Day 1998 at Pointe Pelee, Ontario, which is just a few miles east of Detroit. He had no idea this was a birding Mecca, but noticed that day many birders, some speaking French, others Japanese, others German. Then he spotted several male Scarlet Tanagers in a bush about 40 feet away. "Wow!" he thought. Here was a world-famous birding hotspot close to home, where he could see colorful birds, photograph them, and smoke a Cuban cigar, all at the same time. He was hooked.

Tom's North American list is now up to 547 and his Colorado list is at 345, so he rates his birding accomplishments as "strictly grade B," but he enjoys learning about birds, photographing them, and being outside on the trail. When he fails to chalk up a new bird, he considers the outing a Zen birding experience, so nothing is lost. He enjoys birding with Bill Kaempfer and Todd Deininger, who have been great guides and mentors to him in his Colorado birding adventures.

Tom proudly notes that he has seen at least 20 species in all 64 Colorado counties, making him a member of the prestigious "64/20 club." He even bought a personal trophy to celebrate his accomplishment. John Vanderpoel wryly noted that the only thing the trophy proved is that Tom could afford to buy a lot of gas. Tom countered that John may have purchased a few gallons himself during his 2011 ABA "Big Year."

Another great aspect of birding is meeting and being with other birders, and Tom and Barb have enjoyed recent CFO conventions. He says, "what a bargain to take free field trips with experts, all over this magnificent state, and meet such interesting birders of various skill levels, interests, and backgrounds. I like that there is room for us all in the CFO."

We welcome Tom to the CFO Board.

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

Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient: Lynn Willcockson

Chuck Hundertmark

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a person of character who has helped birders over a period of decades and is held in high esteem by the birding community. Previous recipients have included Joe Himmel, Bob Spencer, Warren Finch, and Suzi Plooster.

In 1960, a young insurance agent was sent by his company from his home in Iowa to a new office in Denver, Colorado. As he prepared to leave for Colorado, his friends at the Iowa Ornithological Union urged that he must meet Al Bailey when he arrived in Denver. He had no idea that "Al Bailey" was Dr. Alfred M. Bailey, one of the leading ornithologists of the day. After settling down in Denver, Lynn Willcockson eventually found his way to the Denver Museum of Natural History (now the Museum of Nature and Science). When he told the attendant that he was there to see "Al Bailey," she told him that *Doctor* Bailey's office was on the second floor.

Arriving on the second floor, Lynn told the receptionist he would like to see "Al Bailey." The receptionist told him that *Doctor* Bailey's office was down the hall. Lynn recalls that it wasn't until a later visit that he finally met the venerable Dr. Bailey.

Lynn quickly became immersed in the Colorado Bird Club, the predecessor of Denver Field Ornitholo-

Lynn Willcockson, recipient of the CFO Lifetime Achievement Award

gists. With the memory of the Iowa Ornithological Union fresh in his mind, Lynn quickly joined Thompson Marsh and others in the conversations that led to the formation of CFO. When the new statewide ornithological organization finally took shape, Lynn served as its fourth president, from 1969 to 1971.

The recipient of the Denver Field Ornithologists' 1997 Ptarmigan Award for service to DFO and advancement of bird study in Colorado, Lynn upgraded the club's monthly trip reports to the *Lark Bunting* newsletter, which he edited for two years. He has served as president, vice president, and director of DFO. He formalized the Colorado Rare Bird Alert, replacing the phone tree then in use, and operated the RBA for four years. Since assuming the presidency of DFO, I have come to appreciate and value Lynn Willcockson's first-hand knowledge of Colorado ornithology.

Lynn could not be with us at the 2012 CFO convention banquet in Trinidad, but Joe Roller accepted the Lifetime Achievement Award on his behalf. CFO thanks Lynn for his many contributions to the Colorado birding community.

Chuck Hundertmark, 2546 Lake Meadow Drive, Lafayette, CO 80026, chundertmark8@gmail.com, 303-604-0531.

The 64th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

Doug Faulkner
Chair, Colorado Bird Records Committee

Introduction

This 64th report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) presents the results of deliberations of the CBRC involving 84 reports submitted by 34 observers and documenting 60 occurrences of 40 species (or recognizable forms) from the period March 1992 to February 2012. 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 a reclassification of an Eastern Whip-poor-will record as Mexican Whip-poor-will, the state's second Streak-backed Oriole, fourth Tufted Duck, fourth Atlantic (*hrota* subspecies) Brant, and fifth Common Ground-Dove. 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, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Bill Maynard, Ric Olson, 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) 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 species' continuance on or removal from the statewide Main Review List (Semo et al. 2002).

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds (AOU 1998) through the 53rd Supplement (Chesser et al. 2012). 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 Chico Basin Ranch (CBR), Crow Valley Campground (CVCG), Highway (Hwy), National Park (NP), National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Reservoir (Res.), State Park (SP), and State Wildlife Area (SWA).

Corrigenda: The 62nd CBRC Report (April 2012) had a couple of errors. Two of the accepted Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*) records should have the accession number year changed to 2011. Therefore, records 2010-70 and 2010-71 should be 2011-70 and 2011-71, respectively. Also, the Chair thanks Tony Leukering for pointing out the correct age of the Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*) as an immature, not an adult as noted in that report.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Atlantic Brant – *Branta bernicla hrota* (19/7). Furnishing only the fourth record of this subspecies in Colorado, two adults were photographed at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, 30 November – 2 December 2011 (NK†, BM†; 2011-173; 7-0). Komar also found Colorado's only other 21st century Atlantic Brant – one at Fossil Creek, *Larimer* (2005-127); the remaining two records are from the early 1990s.

Eurasian Wigeon – *Anas penelope* (39/16). The CBRC received a late report of an adult male discovered during the spring of 1992. The documenting observer, writing from notes taken after the observation, saw the bird at Prince Lake #2 (a.k.a. Hiram Prince Res.), *Boulder*, on the single date of 24 March 1992 (DE; 2011-188; 7-0). According to the Spring 1992 "News from the Field" (Prather 1992), this bird was reported for the period 22-28 March. Astonishingly, eight (!) Eurasian Wigeons were reported during that spring at widely disparate locations along the Front Range. The CBRC has only one other record from that spring, of one at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, 28 March (8-92-24); documentation of the others would be appreciated. The CBRC is conservative in its decisions for documentations written a considerable time after the observation (see Not Accepted section below) when the observer does not provide notes or physical evidence (e.g., photo). However, the CBRC wholeheartedly encourages submission of documentations containing photos, notes, or other evidence of historical occurrences.

Tufted Duck – *Aythya fuligula* (4/2). The state's fourth record, of an apparent adult female discovered at Firestone gravel ponds, *Weld*, 4 December 2011 (SMl†; 2011-177; 7-0), was found 11 months after and 8.5 miles away from the state's third (Golden Ponds, *Boulder*, 17 January 2011; 2011-18) by the same observer. It is entirely possible that both of these records pertain to the same bird and that this bird was the parent of an immature Tufted Duck × Lesser Scaup found at Firestone gravel ponds 18 March 2012 (Leukering and Mlodinow, in press).

Red-throated Loon – *Gavia stellata*. The CBRC added two records of this species prior to removing it from the Main Review List (see Faulkner 2012). A juvenile was observed at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, 3-4 November 2011 (BKP, BM; 2011-154; 7-0). Another one-day wonder and a first for *Boulder*, a juvenile was found at Baseline Res., 8 November 2011 (CN†, BM, PG†; 2011-158; 7-0).

Least Bittern – *Ixobrychus exilis*. One was documented from Holcim Wetlands, *Fremont*, 5 August 2011 (BM†, RM; 2011-105; 7-0). Apparently the species nested here, as two adults and multiple young were reported from 3 August – 3 September. Although the CBRC did not receive documentation, we are thankful to the observer(s) for submitting it to the Breeding Bird Atlas II project.

American Woodcock – *Scolopax minor* (9/3). One visited a Burlington, *Kit Carson*, backyard at least 18-30 November 2011 (JD†, SMu; 2011-172; 7-0). Of the state's nine records this is the third for November, the only month to have more than one record.

Little Gull – *Hydrocoloeus minutus* (28/8). An adult and a juvenile were found at Union Res., *Weld*, 1 December 2011 (SMl† [juvenile], TH, NK [adult]; 2011-174; 7-0). The adult was observed only on 1 December, while the juvenile remained through 3 December. This is the second-latest fall record of the species, as most fall birds are found mid-September to mid-November. The latest record was of an absurdly long-staying adult at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, 27 November – 18 December 1999 (1999-55).

Iceland Gull – *Larus glaucoides* (16/14). The CBRC reviewed documentations for two first-cycle individuals found on the same date of 1 April 2007. One was observed at the Weld County landfill near Severance (NK, LS†, PL; 2007-15; 7-0) before flying toward Black Hollow Res., *Weld*. Upon arriving at Black Hollow Res., the group of birders re-found that individual and discovered a second one (NK, LS; 2007-16; 6-1). In that same general area four years later, a first-cycle individual was seen at Timnath Res., *Larimer*, and the Weld County landfill on 13 November 2011 (SMl; 2011-160; 7-0). Another first-cycle individual was found in 2011, this one at Aurora Res., *Arapahoe*, 31 December 2011 (JD†, GW; 2011-183; 7-0). The state's first and second records are from 1999 and 2000, but the remaining records occurred since 2005. All have been of first-cycle birds, except for a single adult (2008-20) and one second-cycle individual (2005-9).

Lesser Black-backed Gull – *Larus fuscus*. Not only a first for *Alamosa*, but for the entire San Luis Valley, an adult was photographed at San Luis Lake SP, 26 October 2011 (JR†; 2011-149; 7-0).

Glaucous-winged Gull – *Larus glaucescens* (16/6). A nice find to finish off one's year list, a first-cycle individual was documented from Aurora Res., *Arapahoe*, on the lone date of 31 December 2011 (SMl†; 2011-182; 7-0).

Great Black-backed Gull – *Larus marinus*. One adult was observed at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on multiple days from 19 November 2011 through the end of the year, but was joined by a second adult on 1 January 2012 (PH†, BM†, SMl†, BKP; 2011-166; 7-0).

Arctic Tern – *Sterna paradisaea* (16/7). The CBRC considered the occurrences of an adult at CBR's Headquarters Pond, *Pueblo*, 24-25 May 2011, and at Windsor Lake, *Weld*, the following day, 26 May, as constituting a single record (BM†, JD†, SMl;

2011-59; 7-0). These documentations were lumped at the Chair's discretion given the rarity of this species in spring (only five previous records), the north-south trajectory for a northbound migrant between these locations, and the likely arrival at Windsor Lake the day after the *Pueblo* bird was last observed. Only one Committee member felt strongly that these should be considered as separate records. The identity of the tern was not in question at either location. For reasons stated above, the most parsimonious answer is that these observations were of the same bird; however, as with all documentations, the Committee may revisit this decision at a later date. A less controversial juvenile discovered at Boulder Res., *Boulder*, on 18 October 2011 was documented through the 29th (DF†, NP, CN; 2011-146; 7-0). This record is particularly notable for its late date; only one other accepted record (2003-112) beats it, with the incredibly late date of 28 November. Arctic Terns are casual anywhere in North America by early November (e.g., California; Small 1994).

Pomarine Jaeger – *Stercorarius pomarinus* (24/7). An intermediate-morph juvenile harassed the Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, gull population at least 19-28 November 2011 (BM†, PH†, JK; 2011-168; 7-0), although the bird was reported through at least 1 December. Late fall appears to be the time to find this species, as 17 records are from October-November, with 6 December the latest date on record in the state.

Long-tailed Jaeger – *Stercorarius longicaudus* (21/13). An adult was incidentally found when it was flushed by a Pomarine Jaeger (2008-116) the reporting observer was watching at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, 4 October 2008 (BK†; 2009-118; 6-1).

Common Ground-Dove – *Columbina passerina* (5/1). Finally, a ground-dove stayed put long enough for many of the state's birders to see it (SMl†, MB, PG†, BM†, BKP†; 2011-159; 7-0). Found on 12 November 2011 by Steve Mlodinow and Tim Smart at Lions Wayside Park near Julesburg, *Sedgwick*, this individual stayed through bitterly cold weather (it was for us humans, so one wonders what it must have felt like for this southern species) when it was last observed on the 30th of that month. The state's first three records were all by single observers, while the fourth was observed by two birders. Surprisingly, four of the state's five records are from northeastern Colorado (*Logan*, *Morgan*, *Sedgwick*, and *Weld*), with the fifth (and state's first) from *Douglas*.

Mexican Whip-poor-will – *Antrostomus arizonae* (2/0). The species was formally split from Eastern Whip-poor-will (*A. vociferus*) in 2010 (Chesser et al. 2010) partially based on differences in vocalizations (Hardy et al. 1988, Cink 2002) and the CBRC recognized only one record (1999-86; Fosset Gulch, *Archuleta*, 22 June 1999) in its 56th Report announcing the species split (Semo and Faulkner 2010). However, a record from South Cheyenne Canyon, *El Paso*, 15-30 July 1981, was tape recorded and accepted by the CBRC as pertaining to the then-subspecies *arizonae* (Chase 1982; also see Andrews and Righter

1992). This *El Paso* record is now recognized as pertaining to Mexican Whip-poor-will and becomes the state's first record. Thanks to Laurens Halsey and Tony Leukering for bringing this to my attention.

Acorn Woodpecker – *Melanerpes formicivorus* (12/4). The Committee received late documentation (better late than never!) of one southwest of Gulnare, *Las Animas*, 29-30 June 2004 (TLe†; 2011-185; 7-0). This is particularly interesting since the CBRC has another 2004 record approximately 10 miles northeast of that vicinity in Aguilar, 16-18 May (2004-35). Considering records at Lake Dorothey SWA, *Las Animas*, in 1994 (33-94-43), Pueblo Mountain Park, *Pueblo*, 20 May 2000 (2000-85), reports of a pair attending a nest cavity in that park in 2012, and recent single records for *Boulder* and *El Paso*, how many other locations along the I-25 corridor could be harboring this species?

Eastern Phoebe – *Sayornis phoebe*. A first for *Park*, one was found on a horse ranch during Breeding Bird Atlas survey work near Fairplay, 19 July 2010 (JD; 2011-184; 6-1).

Alder Flycatcher – *Empidonax alnorum* (36/24). A juvenile photographed at CVCG, *Weld*, 28 August 2011, was within the date span for fall migrants in eastern Colorado (SMl†; 2011-111; 7-0). Although more frequently reported during spring migration, this species has been recorded on six occasions from fall, 16 August – 13 September. Southbound Alder Flycatcher records from Nebraska span at least 21 July to 4 September (Sharpe et al. 2001), with banding data indicating that this species is a common migrant in Keith County (west-central Nebraska) from 21 July to 17 August (Brown et al. 1996).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – *Tyrannus forficatus*. Although apparently a few have been reported previously, the first documentation submitted to and accepted by the CBRC for *Boulder* was of a male along the South Boulder Trail, 21 August 2009 (PG†, CN; 2011-10; 7-0).

Blue-headed Vireo – *Vireo solitarius* (37/28). This species staged a remarkable invasion during a narrow time band in fall 2011, with four records during the period 5-8 October. The first two individuals found were both at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on the separate dates of 5 and 7 October (BKP†; 2011-133; 7-0 and BKP†; 2011-134: 7-0), respectively. Although found at the same location and only two days apart, the observer noted the vireos differed in plumage, with the second individual decidedly duller. First county records for *Boulder* and *Ouray* were found 8 October with single vireos along the Boulder Creek Path (CN†; 2011-136; 7-0) and at Dennis Weaver Town Park in Ridgway (CD; 2011-137; 7-0). This species is fairly well established as a rare fall migrant, with 32 of the state's 37 records falling between 1 September and 25 October (19 in September, 13 in October). Fall migration in Plumbeous and Cassin's vireos averages much earlier.

Philadelphia Vireo – *Vireo philadelphicus* (39/14). One was observed at Stalker Pond near Wray, *Yuma*, 3 October 2011 (SMl; 2011-131; 7-0). Although the 24 fall records span the

period from 18 August to 19 October, early October has witnessed an unusual number of occurrences: six of the eight October records (and 25% of all fall records) are from the first week.

Winter Wren – *Troglodytes hiemalis*. One was heard singing near Calypso Cascades in the Wild Basin portion of Rocky Mountain NP, *Boulder*, 17-25 July 2011 (MB *s*; 2011-104; 7-0). This is the third such report for Rocky Mountain NP since 2000 that this author can remember.

Gray-cheeked Thrush – *Catharus minimus* (53/19). Documentation, including photos, of three at Hillside Cemetery in Fort Lupton, *Weld*, 14 May 2006, further supports the magnitude of that spring's invasion by this species into eastern Colorado (TLe†; 2011-189; 7-0). The CBRC now has seven records pertaining to 15 individuals from 11-16 May 2006. Typically only a few are reported each spring. Although initial dates of occurrence for 48 of the state's records span the month of May, 23 of these are from the narrow window of 11-16 May, suggesting a strong pattern to the species' timing of migration.

Wood Thrush – *Hylocichla mustelina*. Two more records for this recently removed Main Review List species were accepted by the CBRC: one at Thompson Ranch, *Lincoln*, 11 October 2008 (MP†; 2011-8; 7-0) and one at Haxtun City Park, *Phillips*, 18 November 2011 (JD†, BKP†, NMo; 2011-164; 7-0). The species is most often reported in spring, with 22 records spanning the period 2 April – 24 June, although 16 records are evenly spread across May. Fall records are less frequent, with 15 spanning the period 13 September – 18 November, nine of those from October. December and January each have single records.

Worm-eating Warbler – *Helmitheros vermivorum*. One at the Cañon City Riverwalk, *Fremont*, 5-19 November 2011 (SMl†, BKP†, SMo; 2011-156; 7-0) is notable for representing the county's first and only the second fall record, as well as providing the late-date record. Predominantly a spring migrant in Colorado, this species typically migrates on a more easterly path during fall migration, late July to late September (Dunn and Garrett 1997), than in spring, so its occurrence in November in Colorado is that much more remarkable.

Prothonotary Warbler – *Protonotaria citrea*. Establishing a late-date record for Colorado, a female was observed at the Pine Ridge Natural Area in Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, 17-18 November 2011 (NK, BB; 2011-163; 6-1). It surpasses the previous late record of one at Stratton Res., *El Paso*, 6 November 1982 (52-82-56). Fall records are typically from late August to early October.

Pine Warbler – *Setophaga pinus*. Exemplifying why this species is no longer on the CBRC's Main Review List (see Faulkner 2012), the CBRC accepted six additional records from 2009 and 2011. An adult male was found at a private residence near Lamar, *Prowers*, 19 October 2009 (JS†, DL; 2010-181; 7-0). Late fall 2011 produced an unprecedented assortment in Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, including an adult male, 27 October 2011 (BKP†; 2011-150; 7-0), an immature female, 31 October 2011

Brant, Chatfield Reservoir, Douglas County, 20 December 2011. Photo by Bill Maynard

Grasshopper Sparrow, Squirrel Creek Road, El Paso County, 24 December 2011. Photo by Bill Maynard

Summer Tanager, near Walden, Jackson County, 13 November 2011. Photo by Deborah McLachlan

Purple Finch, South Boulder, Boulder County, 24 December 2011. Photo by Rolando Garcia

(BKP†; 2011-151; 7-0), an immature male, 3 November 2011 (BKP†; 2011-152; 7-0), and a different, as supported by photos, immature female, 3 November 2011 (BKP†; 2011-153; 7-0). Percival did not have a monopoly on this species, though, as one, probably an adult female, came to a feeder at a private residence near Masonville, *Larimer*, 19-20 November 2011 (PW†; 2011-167; 7-0).

Yellow-throated Warbler – *Setophaga dominica*. The CBRC missed reviewing documentation of a photographed adult male at Matthew-Reeser Bird Sanctuary, *Larimer*, 23 October 2009 (RH†, SR; 2009-119; 7-0) submitted in 2009. The bird had been reported for 20-25 October, so the previous Chair may have been waiting for additional documentation to arrive. Given the time that had passed without additional documentation, the CBRC reviewed this documentation in 2012.

Eastern Towhee – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (21/10). A hatch-year bird visited feeders at a private residence near Lyons, *Boulder*, 17-19 November 2011 (NK†, DW; 2011-165; 6-1). *Boulder* accounts for 20% of all Eastern Towhee records, with its first (and the state's second) dating back to 1944. Nearby, an adult male remained at a private residence near Berthoud, *Larimer*, 3 December 2011 – 3 January 2012 (SD†; 2011-176; 7-0).

Grasshopper Sparrow – *Ammodramus savannarum*. A very rare late winter occurrence was documented for an individual along Squirrel Creek Road near Fountain, *El Paso*, 24 December 2011 (BM†; 2011-179; 7-0).

Le Conte's Sparrow – *Ammodramus leconteii* (13/4). One was found on a private ranch near Kutch in *Lincoln*, 2 October 2011 (BM†, DMa; 2011-129; 7-0). Although records span every month from September through May, with recent initial dates of observation of 17 September 2011 (2011-121) and 3 October 2009 (2009-67), it appears that mid-September to early October is a good time to look for this species in eastern Colorado.

Red Fox Sparrow – *Passerella iliaca iliaca/zaboria*. Individuals of this form were photographed on the same date of 16 October 2011 at Frenchman Hills SWA near Haxtun, *Phillips* (SMl†; 2011-142; 7-0) and at Two Buttes SWA, *Baca* (BKP†; 2011-143; 7-0) at the expected time of year. This form appears to be a regular migrant on the eastern plains early October – early December. Of the CBRC's 22 records, 16 are from October – November.

Golden-crowned Sparrow – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (31/16). Presumably the same sparrow that overwintered at Red Rocks, *Jefferson*, in 2010-2011 returned for a second winter, during which it was seen 3 November 2011 to 26 March 2012 (MH†, CA, SMl†; 2011-155; 7-0).

Summer Tanager – *Piranga rubra*. Providing a first for *Jackson*, an adult male was first noticed when it attempted to get at dead flies on the inside window sill at a private residence near Walden, 13 November 2011 (DMc†; 2011-161; 7-0).

Scarlet Tanager – *Piranga olivacea*. One was found at Valco Ponds SWA, *Pueblo*, 8 October 2011 (BKP;

2011-138; 7-0). This species is more frequently reported in spring than in fall, which has only seven records (through 2011) spanning mid-August to early December.

Dickcissel – *Spiza americana*. A first for *Delta* in the CBRC database, an intermittently singing male was observed near Paonia, 22-24 June 2006 (JB†; 2011-187; 7-0). The species is very rare on the West Slope, with Righter et al. (2004) noting seven records including one near Hotchkiss, *Delta*, in 1966. At least three adults, including a female carrying food to a hidden nest, were observed in a pasture on the Meadow Springs Ranch near Carr, *Larimer*, 3-4 August 2011 (EY; 2011-11; 7-0). The species appears to have moved westward as a breeder. Kingery (1998) showed no breeding records for *Larimer*, whereas the Breeding Bird Atlas II project (http://bird.atlasing.org/Atlas/CO/) shows multiple possible/probable breeding status blocks along the northern Front Range.

Orchard Oriole – *Icterus spurius*. A first-summer male visited a feeder at a private residence near Hayden, *Routt*, 30 May – 3 June 2011 (TLi†, NMe; 2011-14; 7-0). This species is a casual visitor to the West Slope in late spring and summer.

Streak-backed Oriole – *Icterus pustulatus* (2/2). Colorado's second was seen by a single observer at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, 25 November 2011 (MP; 2011-170; 6-1). The bird was well described, but its age/sex was not determined, as it may have been either an immature male or an adult female. The reporting observer noted that the immature plumages of eastern Colorado's two regular oriole species have streaking or line-spotting on their backs, so while Streak-backed Oriole is appropriately named for its adult plumage, that characteristic alone is not sufficient to identify an immature bird. This bird, however, was described as having a black throat patch extending to the eye and contrastingly more orange around the face than the yellow-orange of its remaining body plumage, along with several other details that helped eliminate other oriole contenders. Though this species is generally considered a vagrant to the southwestern United States just north of the Mexican border in Arizona and California, there have been two other Streak-backed Orioles far north of the border: Malheur NWR in southeastern Oregon, 28 September – 1 October 1993 (Marshall et al. 2003) and Mercer, Wisconsin, 15 January 1998 (Schultz 1999).

Purple Finch – *Haemorhous purpureus* (40/10). A female-plumaged individual was beautifully photographed at a private residence in Boulder, *Boulder*, 24 December 2011 (RG†; 2011-180; 7-0).

Common Redpoll – *Acanthis flammea*. Unusual so far south in the state in a non-invasion year, an adult female came to feeders at two Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, residences 3-6 December 2011 (DP†, BM†; 2011-175; 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 indicates only 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.

Great Black-backed Gull – *Larus marinus*. The Committee required two rounds to reach a decision for documentation of two large, dark-backed second-cycle gulls reported to be this species at Black Hollow Res., *Weld*, 22 March 2005 (2005-119; 5-2, 5-2). While most members supported the documentation, the plumage description for these birds did not satisfy two members. It is possible that the age of these birds was not reported accurately, thus leading to the non-accept decision, as the description did not exactly match the age reported in the opinions of the dissenting members. However, one affirming CBRC member commented that in March it is likely that these birds were in a transitional plumage and the plumage description may not perfectly match the reported age. Documentation for a first-cycle individual at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, 7 December 2005 (2005-136; 4-3, 5-2) did not receive endorsement as a state record due to the lack of sufficient plumage description in two members' opinions in the final round of voting. Note that there are only two voting rounds recorded for both of these birds. The online system currently shows only the second and third[t] rounds, but the Chair's records indicate that the vote for the first round was also indecisive (i.e., the report received more than three, but fewer than six "accept" votes); however, the actual first-round tally has apparently been lost and is not reported here.

Baird's Sparrow – *Ammodramus bairdii* (11/0). Documentation for one at Vogel Canyon, *Otero*, 5 August 2007, written from memory and submitted in 2011, received no support from the Committee (2011-186; 0-7). Perhaps as a result of the time lag in reporting, most CBRC members commented that the description lacked sufficient plumage details to accept for a species with only 11 state records and none since 2000.

Eastern Meadowlark – *Sturnella*

magna (11/6). Another late documentation received by the CBRC in 2011, this one of a singing meadowlark alongside Hwy 287 near Nee Noshe Res., *Kiowa*, 14 September 2001 (2011-9; 3-4), was written from notes taken at the time of observation. The mixed vote on this documentation partially reflects the Committee's reluctance to accept meadowlark records based on song alone, since songs of meadowlarks are learned while calls are innate. The documentation did not include a description of any call notes or plumage details. For these reasons, several CBRC members commented that they could not support it as a state record.

REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

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Female Song in Canyon Wren, with Notes on Vocal Repertoire

Andrew Spencer

The liquid, ringing notes of the song of Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*) bouncing off high canyon walls is one of the quintessential sounds of the southwestern United States. Few other songs are as immediately recognizable or as memorable. But despite the fact that Canyon Wrens are such a charismatic and conspicuous species, much remains to be learned about their biology and life history, particularly their vocal repertoire and the behaviors associated with the various vocalizations.

The Canyon Wren account in *Birds of North America* (Jones and Dieni 1995) describes two song types (male and female song) and three call types (alarm call, location call, and begging call). Spectrograms are included only for the primary (male) song, which is a descending series of clear whistles, often followed by a few polyphonic whining notes (Fig. 1). A reasonable amount of detail is given concerning the male song as well as courtship vocalizations (made up of a combination of male and female song, male song and female call, or solely calls).

Less is written about female song or calls. The entirety of the published description of female song consists of a single sentence: "Notes of female not usually as clear as those of male; more burring/buzzing, descending scale" (Jones and Dieni 1995, citing Tramontano 1964). These same sources offer some behavioral information: "male gives a complete song, often without terminal buzzes; female responds with a series of descending buzzes, starting in middle of male song" (Jones and Dieni 1995).

Early in the spring of 2012, Nathan Pieplow sent me a recording

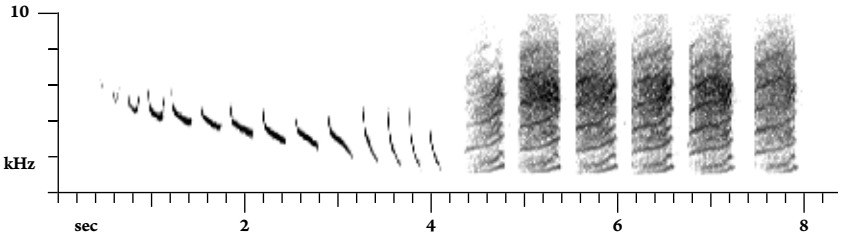

Fig. 1. Song of a presumed male Canyon Wren showing a larger than usual number of whines at the end. Philadelphia Creek, Rio Blanco County, 27 May 2012.

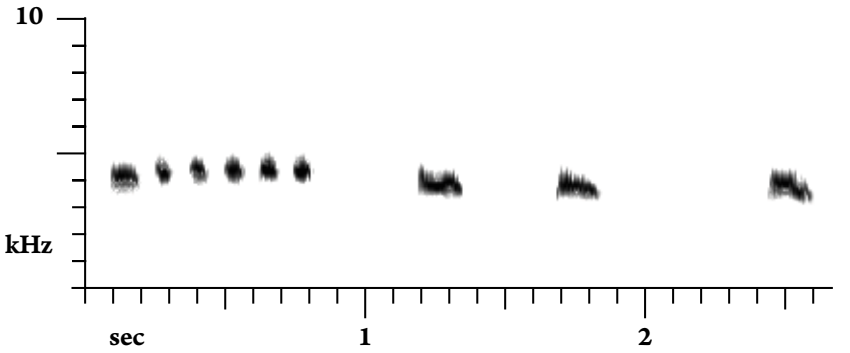

Fig. 2. Excited calls from a presumed male. Irish Canyon, Moffat County, 8 May 2012.

he had made of an unseen Canyon Wren at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Pima County, Arizona, on 10 January 2008. It was a series of buzzes that rose up the scale and then fell, getting slower as it progressed. Given its similarity to the description in the *Birds of North America* account, he theorized that it was the female song of Canyon Wren. He also alerted me to another recording of the same vocalization from Portal, Arizona, on 20 May 1977, in the online catalog of the Macaulay Library (ML audio #21482).

I decided to try to elicit the mystery vocalization from Canyon Wrens via playback and see if I could get a definite recording of it and discover its function or context. Below I detail my observations of singing Canyon Wrens and playback experiments, and give the first published spectrograms of apparent female Canyon Wren song.

Observations

Armed with the recording by Nathan Pieplow, I set out to actually hear and observe a female Canyon Wren sing. On 8 May 2012, I found a singing Canyon Wren at the north end of Irish Canyon in Moffat County, Colorado, and played Nathan's recording to it. I was rather unprepared for the response – the singing bird stopped in the middle of a song and blazed in to where I was standing, vigorously giving an interesting excited call. This call was similar to a series of contact calls, but started out faster and higher-pitched, then descended into the more typical contact call (Fig. 2).

I played Nathan's recording to this bird four different times, always after it had stopped calling and moved off, and each time the bird reacted in the same way, flying in to close range and giving the excited call as described above. Afterwards, once it had calmed down

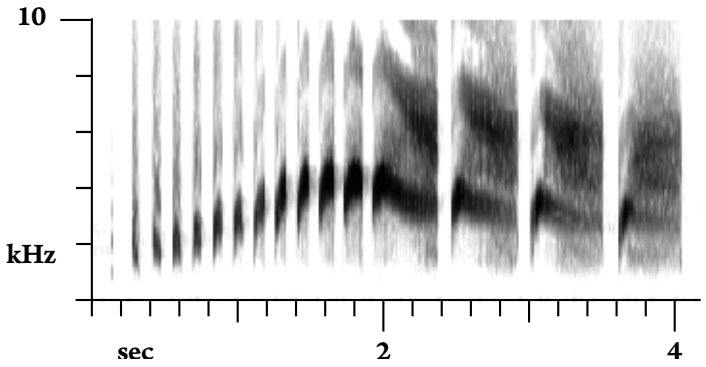

Fig. 3. Buzzy song from a presumed female. Martin Gap, Moffat County, 13 May 2012.

a bit, it resumed singing the normal primary song, but also added more terminal whines than I had heard when it was singing naturally. On this occasion I did not hear anything I believed to be female song; nor did I observe a second bird. That same morning I played Nathan's recording to two other Canyon Wrens, and had similar, if less excited, responses.

The next playback opportunity I got was on 13 May 2012 at Martin Gap in Moffat County. Here I played the same recording at a singing Canyon Wren, and initially had little response. I was about to walk on to the next individual that I could hear in the distance when I finally heard a response that matched the tape.

Over the next half hour, I observed and recorded a single individual Canyon Wren giving a rising and then falling series of burry notes matching Nathan's recording (Fig. 3). I believed this vocalization to be female song. But I was never able to observe two birds at once – I observed a bird singing the primary (whistled) song, and a bird singing the buzzy probable female song, but never at the same time. Interestingly, the bird singing the whistled song reacted to both the whistled and buzzy songs, but much more strongly to whistled song (immediately approaching closely and singing the whistled song multiple times). In response to the buzzy song, this bird approached initially, sang the whistled song a few times, and then lost interest until I played the primary whistled song to it.

The bird I observed singing the buzzy song, on the other hand, reacted very strongly to playback of both Nathan's recording and recordings of its own buzzy song. Each time it reacted by approaching closely and singing the buzzy song. When I played the primary whistled song to that individual, though, it did not react.

At the end of this encounter, I was unable to say for certain that what I had just encountered was the female song I was looking for, but the results were highly suspicious.

Finally, on 27 May 2012, at Tommy Draw, Rio Blanco County, I repeated the same experiment, this time using the recording of the buzzy song that I had made in Martin Draw, which was better than Nathan's original. This time I had an almost immediate response from a pair of birds which flew in together, perched nearly next to each other on a large boulder, and sang at the same time in a duet. One was giving the classic downslurred series of whistles; the other was giving a rising and then falling series of buzzes that matched the other recordings of presumed female song (Fig. 4). The buzzy song tended to begin halfway through the whistled song, and appeared to be initiated in response to it. This occurred every time the members of this pair sang at the same time.

Over the course of my observation the birds reacted in different ways. First, both aggressively answered playback of my recording from Martin Draw by flying in close and both singing their respective song types. Then when I played whistled song, the presumed male bird would react strongly, variably singing the whistled song and giving excited calls, while the presumed female would in general lose interest and drift away. Later playback of the buzzy song elicited a strong response from the presumed female bird, which would approach and give the buzzy song, and a less strong response from the presumed male, which would approach and sing the whistled song. I never observed either bird singing the other's song type, and their behavior led me to conclude that they were a mated pair – there were no aggressive interactions between them, despite repeated and sustained close proximity, and (at least initially) they tended to respond as a pair, flying in and landing together on nearby perches.

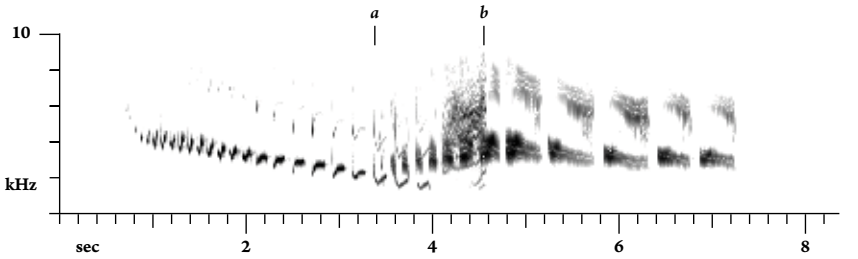

Fig. 4. Song duet including whistled song and buzzy song. Point **a** *marks the spot where the buzzy song begins, and point* **b** *marks where the single terminal whine of the whistled song ends. Tommy Draw, Rio Blanco County, 27 May 2012.*

Later that same day I found another pair of Canyon Wrens at Philadelphia Creek in Rio Blanco County, and had a similar response to playback. After the initial response, both birds sang in duet from near each other on the same rock, again with the presumed male giving the clear whistled song and the presumed female responding with the buzzy song, beginning near the end of the whistled song. Later, although both birds continued singing their respective songs, they apparently stopped duetting, as the timing of their songs began to vary independently, overlapping with one another to varying degrees or not at all.

This pair reacted to playback in similar ways to the previous pair: the presumed male would approach rapidly and sing the whistled song when I played a recording of that song type, while the presumed female would generally not react to playback of this vocalization. Playback of the buzzy, presumed female song elicited a strong response from both members of the pair: they would fly in close to me and to each other and both vocalize. This pair of birds also twice gave a duet in which the presumed male gave the excited series of calls similar to what I recorded in Irish Canyon, while the presumed female would give typical buzzy song. I use the word "duet" because the presumed female gave the buzzy song shortly after the initiation of the presumed male's calls, and seemingly in response to them. Both birds gave occasional contact calls throughout, and the presumed male even gave a few alarm calls, but I never heard male song answered with female calls, as described in Jones and Dieni (1995).

I also observed some interesting vocal variation in the presumed male of this pair. At various points throughout the observation, it would vary the number of terminal whines on its song from none to six (Fig. 1), with the higher numbers being given most often immediately after playback of its own song, the number of whines decreasing after a few songs. Of all the Canyon Wrens I observed and recorded during the spring of 2012, none sang with as many terminal whines as this individual.

Some time after I recorded all of the above individuals, I was made aware of a recording made by Daniel Lane on 4 May 2008 at the Miller Ranch in Jeff Davis County, Texas, of a pair of Canyon Wrens vocalizing in a manner similar to what I observed. In this pair of wrens, one bird sings the whistled song, while the other chimes in with the buzzy song halfway through. Lane posted his recording to the Xeno-Canto website (http://www.xeno-canto.org/101246). His notes say, in part, "Natural song (perhaps between members of a pair?). The presumed male (typical song) was perched on the exhaust vent of an old fort. The presumed female (raspier song) was perched on a rock

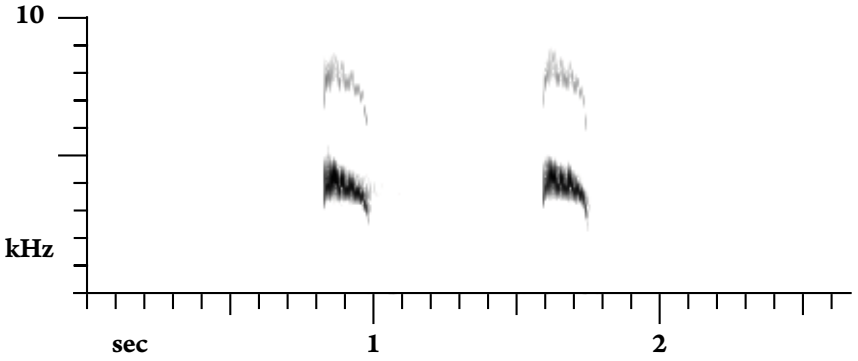

Fig. 5. Contact calls from a presumed female. Philadelphia Creek, Rio Blanco County, 27 May 2012.

nearby, then flew past the first bird. The lack of aggressive behavior suggests that they were probably a pair." Note that this vocalization was given naturally by these two birds, not in response to playback.

Repertoire of Canyon Wren

After all of my observations of singing and calling Canyon Wrens during the spring of 2012 I believe the repertoire of the species consists of two song types (male and female) and four call types (contact call, alarm call, excited call, and begging call). Below, I describe all of these except the begging call.

Male Song: The presumed male song is the classic, descending series of clear, liquid notes that people associate with the species. The individual birds I observed switched between two or three songtypes (that is, versions of the whistled song), and would append a varying number of terminal whines to their song (up to six; Fig. 1). Playback would often cause presumed males to switch to a second or occasionally a third songtype, and playback would also often result in an increased number of terminal whines. One pattern of singing, given most often after playback but also heard a few times under natural circumstances, involves the bird singing one strophe and then immediately following it with another of the same type. I never heard any one bird sing more than three different songtypes, and the majority that I encountered would vary between two (typically giving one for a long period, falling silent for a while, and then picking up again with the other).

Female Song: The presumed female song is typically made up of a varying number of buzzy notes that increase in pitch and length before descending and slowing down into a varying number of longer

buzzes (Fig. 3). The number of introductory (rising) notes varied between seven and eleven, while the number of terminal (descending) notes varied between three and seven. The amount of the change in frequency as the series rises and falls also varies, with some examples having a minimal change (approximately 500 Hz) while others have a more noticeable change (approximately 1300 Hz).

Each of the presumed females I recorded tended to vary its song only a little, but each also had a distinctive song compared to other individuals. Thus, I did not detect any evidence that presumed females have individual repertoires of multiple songtypes, like males do. All of the presumed female songs I heard were given in response to playback, though those recorded by Dan Lane and Nathan Pieplow were not. Individuals singing buzzy songs would often sing in duet with a bird singing primary song, most often joining in partway through the primary song (Fig. 4). However, presumed females would also sing after presumed males without overlapping their songs, and I do not consider those instances a true duet. Occasionally presumed females would sing first, with the other bird joining in with primary song later. Sometimes a bird singing presumed female song approached me alone after playback, presumably looking for an intruding female bird.

Contact call: This is the "classic" call of the species, a single-noted, evenly pitched or slightly downslurred short buzz, often repeated many times (Fig. 5). I heard this call far more often from presumed females, and rarely if ever from presumed males without first hearing the faster excited call pattern. Jones and Dieni (1995), however, indicate that this vocalization is used to maintain contact between members of the pair, and between the parents and fledged young.

Excited call: I heard this vocalization only from presumed male birds, and it was the most common response by presumed males to the buzzy song (both those performed by presumed females in the wild and those on the playback recordings). The call is a series of short buzz notes like the contact call, beginning with shorter faster buzzes that rise slightly, then fall in pitch and slow down to more closely resemble the contact call (Fig. 2). At times the series continues for a long period, and the bird occasionally inserts the faster, higher-pitched segments into the middle of the series as well.

Alarm call: These calls are variable, but typically given by adult birds near a nest or young. In addition, a presumed male bird gave what may have been a version of an alarm call during one of the playback experiments that I performed.

The most common version of the alarm call is two-parted, starting with an abbreviated version of the contact call, followed by (and

sometimes blending into) a rapid, lower-pitched chatter of varying length (Fig. 6). Often just the initial note is given alone. Another version of the alarm call is similar to the two-parted vocalization described above, but with the rattle at the end even lower and shorter, made up of a variable number of "chit" notes. , These "chit" notes have also been heard given by themselves, singly or in slow series, by three different highly agitated male birds after playback (Fig. 7).

Discussion and Conclusion

Identifying vocalizations as pertaining to one sex of a bird or the other, in species that are not sexually dimorphic, can be difficult. The birds I observed were not color-banded, and so my inferences about their sex were often based on circumstantial evidence. An alternative explanation for what I observed in the Canyon Wrens I recorded is that two males were giving the vocalizations, and that the buzzy song does not represent female song (Stephanie Jones, pers. comm.) However, the behavior of the individuals I observed seems to me inconsistent with a two-male hypothesis – particularly the lack of aggression between the pairs of birds responding to playback, and the fact that the buzzy and whistled songs were always given by different individuals as far as I could tell. In addition, the lab group of Lauryn Benedict, which is working on the vocalizations of Canyon Wrens, agrees that the buzzy song pertains to female birds (Lauryn Benedict, pers. comm.)

There remains much to learn about the repertoire and female song of Canyon Wren. Studies involving known sex birds using color banding would help determine the role of the buzzy song with greater certainty. Furthermore, all of my observations of presumed female

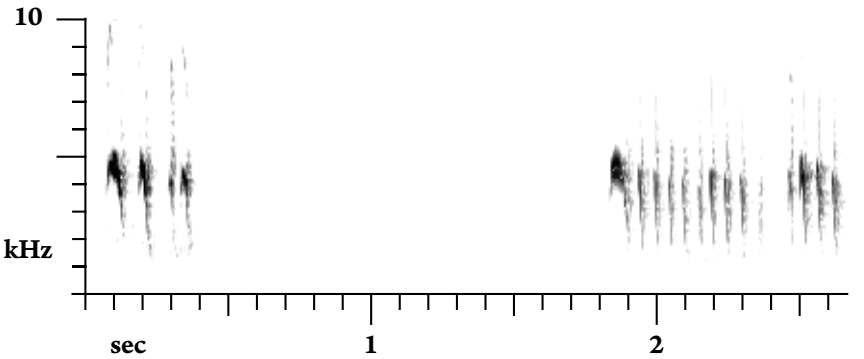

Fig. 6. Alarm calls from an adult near some fledglings. Picture Canyon, Baca County, 29 May 2008.

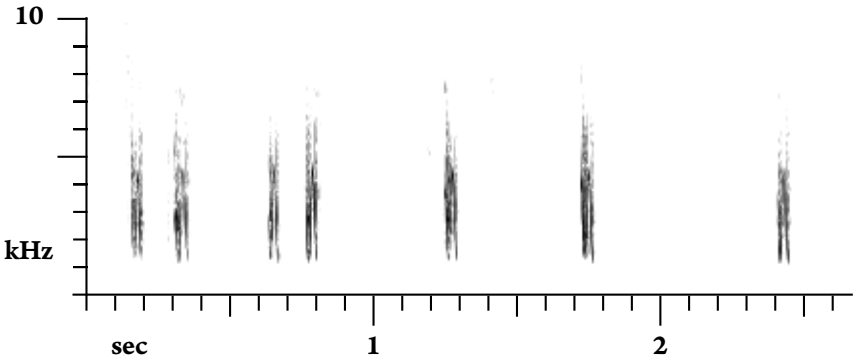

Fig. 7. "Chit" calls from a presumed male. Philadelphia Creek, Rio Blanco County, 27 May 2012.

song were after playback. It would be interesting to get a better idea of its frequency under natural conditions. Further information on the frequency and context of the less frequent calls of Canyon Wren would also be desirable, in particular the "excited calls" and the "chit" calls as described above. Given the accessibility of Canyon Wren habitat, and the relative ease of finding the species in the state, Colorado would be the perfect place to try to answer some of these questions.

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Andrew Spencer, Calle Felix Oralabal Nº 45-55 y Zamora, Quito, Ecuador

Spring 2012 (March–May)

Joel Such and Marcel Such

If you were to ask anybody for the first few words that pop into their heads in response to the word "spring," more often than not you would hear "green," "regeneration," and "pleasant." For many, spring is that special time between the cold of winter and the heat of summer. While that was true to a certain degree for the spring season of 2012, other appropriate words would also be "hot" and "dry." The state made a sudden transition from a mild, dry winter to the hot summer months.

The weather was far from normal this spring. (We have included some climatic statistics below for those interested.) But the weather wasn't the only part of spring that didn't conform to expectations. The bird life was also quite unusual. Some of the rarer species were abundant; in particular, birders found large numbers of many eastern warbler species, and higher than average numbers of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, vireos, and Summer Tanagers. Meanwhile, some common species were conspicuously absent from many parts of the state, with few observations of migrant Franklin's Gulls, Sage Thrashers, Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Yellow and Yellow-rumped Warblers, among others. In addition to the aforementioned irregularities, many of our breeders arrived back on their summer grounds earlier than usual. This was especially true for insect- and nectar-dependent species such as swifts, hummingbirds, and flycatchers.

Snowy Owl sightings continued well into the spring after the winter's iconic irruption of the species. Some individuals were seen in the state well into March (one bird in northeast Wyoming was present until mid-May). There was also a veritable flood of Western Gulls, with our second, third, and fourth state records (pending CBRC acceptance) being found during the period, including one seen on the West Slope in Montezuma County. Our first state record of this Pacific specialty was furnished just last summer at Chatfield Reservoir in Douglas and Jefferson Counties. Whether these anomalies are lost birds or the beginning of range expansion for the species, we have yet to see.

Our shorebird migration, which many people look forward to with great expectation every year, was nearly non-existent in most locations. With the condition of drought that pervaded the state, proper shorebird habitat was extremely rare. The birds that typically flock through the eastern plains went elsewhere, and the *Calidris* fans had

to subsist with what could be found at the occasional damp site. Even the melting snowpack could not rescue us. Only 52% of the average snow level accumulated in the mountains by the end of March, about half of last year's total by that time (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2012). None of the state's drainages were estimated to reach normal stream flow levels, with many predicted to be under 50% of the average.

The lack of snow was not helped by the heat and drought. Based on 140 years of meteorological data from the Denver area, this March broke into the record books as the second-warmest in Denver history. The mean temperature for the month was 49.2°F, 8.8° above a 29-year average, and a mere 1.2° off of the warmest March on record (1910). As to precipitation levels, a scant 0.03 inches fell, a full 0.89 inches less than the average. This was a new record, breaking the old one of 0.11 inches back during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt in 1908.

April's weather was the seventh warmest in Denver history. The mean temperature was 53.3°F, which was 5.9° above normal. 1.39 inches of precipitation were collected (including 1" water equivalent from snowfall) which was 0.32" below normal. May continued the hot and dry trajectory, with an average temperature of 60.5°F and 1.01 inches of rain in Denver (3.4° above average and 1.14" below average, respectively).

"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 compilers.

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, eBird, https://ebird.org, and/or the West Slope Birding Network, 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*; **CBRC** – Colorado Bird Records Committee; **CG** – campground; **CR** – County Road; **CVCG** – Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*; **imm** – immature; **juv** – juvenile; **LCCW** – Lamar Community College Woods, *Prowers*; **m.ob.** – many observers; **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge; **Res.** – Reservoir; **SP** – State Park; **SWA** – State Wildlife Area; **WS** – West Slope, areas west of the continental divide; **YVBC** – Yampa Valley Bird Club.

Greater White-fronted Goose: It was a good season for this species. WS reports: 1 adult at Narraguinnep Res. *Montezuma* on 10 Mar (JB); 1 in Nucla *Montrose* 10-15 Mar (CDe). High counts: 730 at Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 11 Mar (SM, TS); 1,200 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 11 Mar (SM, TS).

Snow Goose: High count: 70,000 at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 11 Mar (SM, TS). Late report: 4 at Jumbo Res. *Logan* on May 26 (SM, NM, AC).

Snow × Ross's Goose: All reports: 1 adult at Windsor Lake *Weld* on 4 Mar (SM, TS); 2 adults at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 4 Mar (SM, TS); 1 imm at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 25 Mar (SM, TS).

Ross's Goose: High count: 2,000 at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 11 Mar (SM, TS). Blue morph: 1 near Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 17 Mar (SM); this morph was virtually unknown a couple decades ago and is still rarely reported anywhere. Late report: 1 at Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 25 May (SM, NM, AC).

Cackling Goose: "Taverner's" subspecies: 16 at Windsor Lake *Weld* on 4 Mar (SM, TS); 1 at Loloff Res. *Weld* on 17 Mar (SM); 1 on *Weld* CR 7 Ponds on 5 Apr (SM); 1 on the Kersey Dairy Ponds *Weld* on 29 Apr (SM, NM); 1 at Beebe Draw *Weld* on 29 Apr (SM, NM). Late: 5 at Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 24 May (SM).

Mute Swan: 1 report: likely a feral bird, 1 adult at St. Vrain SP *Weld* from 1 Apr to 11 May (SM, TS).

Trumpeter Swan: All reports: 1 adult at Duck Lake *Larimer* from 24 Mar to 1 Apr (SM); 4 at Browns Park NWR *Moffat* continuing from the winter until 28 Mar (YVBC).

Tundra Swan: 1 report: 2 adults at Little Jumbo Res. *Logan* on 11 Mar (SM, TS).

Wood Duck: WS and SLV reports: 4 at the Yampa River SWA *Routt* on 30 Mar (CDo); 2 at McPhee Res. *Montezuma* on 24 Apr (JB); 1 on CR 28 *Conejos* on 22 May (JB).

Gadwall × Northern Pintail: 1 report: 1 male at Jumbo Res. *Sedgwick* on 25 Mar (SM, TS).

Gadwall × Mallard: All reports: 1 male at St. Vrain SP *Weld* from 3 Mar to 12 Apr (SM); 1 male at Jackson Res. *Morgan* on 17 Mar (SM).

American Wigeon × Green-

Bobolink, Teller Farms, Boulder County, 18 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

Indigo × Lazuli Bunting, Chatfield State Park, Douglas County, 21 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

"Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow, Red Rocks Park, Jefferson County, 14 April 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

Acorn Woodpecker, Cheyenne Mountain State Park, El Paso County, 21 May 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Golden-winged Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch Banding Station, El Paso County, 2 May 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Long-eared Owl, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 20 April 2012. Photo by Brandon Percival

Wood Thrush, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 14 May 2012. Photo by Brandon Percival

Prothonotary Warbler, Sondermann Park, El Paso County, 26 April 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Eastern Phoebe, Chatfield State Park, Douglas County, 21 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

winged Teal: 1 at Walden Ponds *Boulder* on 6 Mar (TF), presumably the same bird reported here in 2011.

"Mexican Duck": All reports: 1 male at Pueblo City Park *Pueblo* from winter until 25 Apr (DC); 1 male at the Firestone Gravel Pits *Weld* on 4 Mar (SM, TS); another male at the Firestone Gravel Pits *Weld* from 22 Mar to 11 Apr (SM).

Mallard × Northern Pintail: One report: 1 male in Merino *Logan* on 22 Mar (SM).

Blue-winged × Cinnamon Teal: All reports: 1 male in Nucla *Montrose* on 12 Mar (CDe); 1 male at Lower Latham Res. *Weld* on 12 Apr (SM); 1 male at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 26 Apr (SM); 1 female at Lower Latham Res. *Weld* on 26 Apr (SM); 1 male at St. Vrain SP *Weld* on 28 Apr (SM).

Cinnamon Teal: First report (not counting Feb reports submitted during the Winter season): 1 male at the Las Animas Fish Hatchery *Bent* on 1 Mar (VT). Uncommon for county: 4 at Silverton Ponds *San Juan* on 15 Apr (RL).

Ring-necked Duck × Lesser Scaup: One report: 1 male at the Kersey Dairy Pond *Weld* on 5 Apr (SM).

Tufted Duck × Lesser Scaup: One report: 1 imm male at the Firestone Gravel Pits *Weld* on 18 Mar (SM). One must wonder if this bird is the offspring of the female present in the Longmont area during the past two winters.

Greater Scaup: 104 birds were reported during the season. High count: 68 at Fossil Creek Res. *Larimer* on 29 Mar (SM, NM).

Surf Scoter: All reports: 1 male at John Martin Res. *Bent* on 31 Mar (BS, MP); 1 male, possibly the same individual, at Blue Lake *Bent* on 11 May (JR).

Long-tailed Duck: 1 report: 1 at Boulder Res. *Boulder* on 29 Apr (CN).

Bufflehead × Common Goldeneye: 1 report: 1 male at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 31 Mar (BKP, MJ).

Common Goldeneye: Late report: 1 imm male at the Firestone Gravel Pits *Weld* on 31 May (SM).

Barrow's Goldeneye: High counts: 70+ at Spring Park Res. *Eagle* on 27 Mar (DF); 82 on the Coryell Ranch Ponds in Carbondale *Garfield* on 9 Mar (DF). Uncommon in SW: up to 2 in Durango *La Plata* through 17 Mar (JB).

Red-breasted Merganser: WS reports: 5 in Grand Jct. *Mesa* 10-21 Mar (LA); 6 at Navajo Res. *Archuleta* on 14 Mar (JB); 2 in Fruita *Mesa* on 6 Apr (LA); 6 at Harvey Gap Res. *Garfield* on 17 Apr (LA); 1 at Pastorius Res. *La Plata* on 27 Apr (JB).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Uncommon in *Boulder*: up to 3 at Panama Res. *Boulder,* 17 Mar to 1 Apr (TF, SM, TS). Also reported from Prince Lake No. 2 *Boulder* (TF).

Pacific Loon: All reports: 1 at John Martin Res. *Bent* on 18 Apr (DN); 1 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 26 Apr (SM).

Red-necked Grebe: All reports: 1 at Union Res. *Weld* 15-17 Mar (SM); 1 at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 8 Apr (SM, TS).

Eared Grebe: Record high count: 700 at Highline SP *Mesa* on 2 May (JaB).

Neotropic Cormorant: 1 report: 1 imm on Weld CR 7 Ponds *Weld* on 19 Apr (SM).

Double-crested Cormorant: First report of migrants: 9 at Lower Latham Res. *Weld* on 4 Mar (SM, TS). WS nesting colony: 22 active nests at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* on 13 Apr (DG); this species did not nest on the WS 25 years ago.

Least Bittern: 1 report: 1 calling at Holcim Wetland *Fremont* on 8 Apr (SM, TS).

Great Egret: WS report: 1 in Craig *Moffat*, where it is rare, on 30 May (FL).

Glossy Ibis: WS reports: 1 in Nucla *Montrose* on 5 Apr (CDe, BW); 1 at Pastorius Res. *La Plata* on 15 Apr (SA); 1 at Loudy-Simpson Park, Craig *Moffat* 15-16 Apr (CDo, FL); 1 at Highline Res. *Mesa* on 21 Apr (SM, LA); 1 at Nucla Town Res. *Montrose* on 25 Apr (CDe, BW); 1 at Pastorius Res. *La Plata* on 26 Apr (JB).

Glossy × White-faced Ibis: All reports: 1 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* on 21 Apr (SM, LA); 1 near Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 26 Apr (SM); 1 at Beebe Draw *Weld* on 29 Apr (SM, NM).

Harris's Hawk: 1 report: 1 south of Holly on US 89 *Prowers* on 22 Apr (SD, SJ).

Broad-winged Hawk: At least 30 were reported this season from 16 counties. First report: 1 in Colorado Springs *El Paso* on 30 Mar (DC). Last report: 1 in Fort Lupton *Weld* on 31 May (SM).

"Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk: 1 report: 1 imm Red-tailed Hawk at Red Lion SWA *Logan* on 26 May was largely a Krider's but showed some evidence of Eastern Red-tailed Hawk heritage (SM, NM, AC).

Rough-legged Hawk: Late dates: 1 at Steamboat Lake *Routt* on 24 Apr (FL), 1 in *Jackson* on 27 Apr (AS).

Black Rail: Record early date: 1 east of Van's Grove on Road JJ *Bent* on 31 Mar (MP, BS); several at Fort Lyon Marshes *Bent* 21 Apr – 4 May (BK, AS, m.ob.); 2 at Nepesta Marsh *Pueblo* on 28 Apr (BKP, GR).

Sandhill Crane: Uncommon in southwest Colorado: 4 at CR 23 & L *Montezuma* on 3 Mar (DG); 5 at Sambrito Marsh, Navajo SP *Archuleta* on 14 Mar (JB); 6 near Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 28 Mar (JB).

Black-bellied Plover: First report: 1 at Jackson SWA *Morgan* on 6 May (SM).

American Golden-Plover: All reports: 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 26 Apr (AB); 1 at Highline SP *Mesa* on 8 May (LA).

Piping Plover: 6 at John Martin Res. *Bent* on 18 Apr (DN); 2 at Nee-Noshe Res. *Kiowa* on 23 Apr (AS).

Black-necked Stilt: Potential first county record: 3 at the Pagosa wetlands *Archuleta* on 9 May (BB).

Greater Yellowlegs: Early report: 1 at Zink's Pond *La Plata* on 5 Mar (JJR).

Willet: High count: 68 at Spring Park Res. *Eagle* on 27 Apr (DF, LV).

Whimbrel: 9 reports totalling 46 individuals from 7 counties. First report: 1 at Karval SWA *Lincoln* on 25 Apr (VT). Rare on WS: 1 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* on 29 Apr (LA). High count: 19 at Jackson SWA *Morgan* on 6 May (SM).

Upland Sandpiper: Rare in *Boul-*

der: 1 at Teller Ponds 29-30 Apr (TF et al.).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Rare on WS: 5 at San Luis Lake *Alamosa* on 22 May (JB).

Dunlin: 1 report: 1 at Red Lion SWA *Logan* on 26 May (SM, NM, AC).

Ruff: 1 female reported at Bonny Res. SP *Yuma* on 8 Apr by a visiting birder from the UK (VA).

Short-billed Dowitcher: All reports: 1-3 at *Weld* CR 59 Ponds from 26 Apr to 3 May (SM, NM, GW); up to 2 on *Weld* CR 59 near Kersey from 27 Apr to 12 May (GW, JK, LK); 1 at Golden Ponds in Longmont *Boulder* on 6 May (BG); 1 at *Weld* CR 7 Ponds on 11 May (SM, NM); 1 at St. Vrain SP *Weld* on 11 May (NM); 2 at Horseshoe Lake *Larimer* on 20 May (CC).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Early report: 1 in Nucla *Montrose* on 12 Mar (CDe).

Wilson's Phalarope: Extremely high count for spring: 1145 at Kersey Dairy Ponds *Weld* on 3 May (SM, NM).

Red-necked Phalarope: First report: 1 at 20 Mile Res. *Douglas* on 28 Apr (LK).

Bonaparte's Gull: Early WS report: 8 at Narraguinnep Res. *Montezuma* on 4 Apr (JB).

Laughing Gull: All reports: 1 adult at Pueblo Res. *Pueblo* on 14 Apr (BKP); 1 at Cherry Creek Res. *Arapahoe* on 20 Apr (TB); 1 adult at John Martin Res. *Bent* on 27 May (IS, DN).

Franklin's Gull: Few this season, even in far eastern CO (SM). High count: 300 at Timnath Res. *Larimer* on 14 Apr (SW).

Mew Gull: 1 report: 1 imm at Union Res. *Weld* on 4 Mar (SM, TS).

Western Gull: Second, third, and fourth state records (including first WS record) if accepted by CBRC: 1 third-cycle at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 17 Mar (SM); 1 adult near Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 29 Mar (SM, NM); 1 adult at Totten Res. *Montezuma* on 22 Apr (RHM, AD, DSh).

Herring Gull: Uncommon in southwest Colorado: 1 adult at Narraguinnep Res. *Montezuma* on 4 Apr (JB).

Herring × Glaucous-winged Gull: All reports: 2 first-cycles, 1 second-cycle, and 1 adult at Prewitt Res. *Washington* 11-29 Mar (SM, TS, NM, GW).

Thayer's Gull: 42 individuals reported. High count: 13 (9 juv, 2 second-cycle, 2 adults) at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 11 Mar (SM, TS). Counties with reports: *Boulder* (4), *Logan* (5), *Sedgwick* (3), *Washington* (24), and *Weld* (6).

Thayer's × Iceland Gull: 1 report: 1 juv at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 11 Mar appeared to be a cross between these two species (SM, TS).

Iceland Gull: All reports: 1 at Panama Res. *Boulder* on 11 Mar (TF); 4 (1 first-cycle, 1 second-cycle, 1 third-cycle, 1 adult) at Prewitt Res. *Washington* 11-29 Mar (SM, TS, GW, NM); 1 adult at St. Vrain SP *Weld* on 1 Apr (SM, TS).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 18 individuals reported. High count: 8 (1 first-cycle, 2 second-cycle, 5 adults) at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 29 Mar (SM, NM). Counties with reports: *Boulder* (3), *Larimer* (1), *Sedgwick* (2), *Washington* (8), and *Weld* (3).

Glaucous-winged Gull: All reports: 1 first-cycle, 1 second-cycle, and 1 adult at Prewitt Res. *Washington* 11-25 Mar (SM, TS, GW); 1 first-winter at Panama Res. *Boulder* 15-16 Mar (SM).

Glaucous Gull: 14 individuals reported. High count: 7 (1 adult and 6 first-and second-cycle) at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 22 Mar (SM). Counties with reports: *Arapahoe* (1), *Logan* (3), *Sedgwick* (1), and *Washington* (9).

Great Black-backed Gull: 1 report: 1 second-cycle at John Martin Res. *Bent* on 18 Apr (DN).

Least Tern: Rare on WS: 1 at Spring Park Res. *Eagle* on 16 May (DF).

Caspian Tern: All reports: 1 at Highline SP *Mesa* on 27 Apr (LA); 4 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* on 29 Apr (LA); 1 at Cherry Creek SP *Arapahoe* 6-15 May (JH, m.ob.); 1 at Baseline Res. *Boulder* on 7 May (PG, m.ob.); 1 at Pueblo Res. SP *Pueblo* on 8 May (MDM); 1 at Big Johnson *El Paso* on 11 May (SBo); 1 at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* on 12 May (BKP, DC, LL); 1 at Confluence Park *Delta* on 29 May (DG); 1 at Fruitgrowers Res. *Delta* on 31 May (EH).

Common Tern: Early, and unusually high number: 20 at Lake Hasty *Bent* on 14 Apr (SM, MP)

Forster's Tern: Early report: 1 at Valco Pond, Cañon City *Fremont* on 11 Apr (RM). Record high count for WS: 105 at Highline SP *Mesa* on 2 May (JaB).

White-winged Dove: Reported from 15 counties. Unusual locations: 1 in *Mineral* on 17 Mar (TK); 1 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 28 Apr (MP, GW); 1 in Paonia *Delta* on 14 May (JBe).

Snowy Owl: All reports: 1 near Denver International Airport *Denver* on 11 Mar (SBe); 1 imm female at John Martin Res. *Bent* 15-26 Mar (DN); 1 imm at Red Lion SWA *Logan* on 25 Mar (SM, TS); 1 adult east of Prospect Valley *Weld* on 25 Mar (SM, TS); 1 near Bovina *Lincoln* on 25 Mar (RM).

Short-eared Owl: 9 individuals reported from *Bent, Jackson, Larimer, Logan, Prowers,* and *Weld.*

Chimney Swift: Early report: 1 in downtown Pueblo *Pueblo* on 12 Apr (VT).

White-throated Swift: Early report: 3 at Colorado National Monument *Mesa* on 14 Mar (CA).

Acorn Woodpecker: Reports away from *La Plata*: 1 female at Cheyenne Mountain SP *El Paso* on 21 May (BM); 1 male at Smith Reservoir *Costilla* on 21 May (CDe, BW, KPo).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 report: 1 female at Pueblo City Park *Pueblo* on 2 Mar (DC).

Red-naped Sapsucker: Rare on plains in spring: 1 female at CBR *El Paso* on 17 Apr (BKP, BM, JM); 1 male at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 28 Apr (GW); 1 female at CBR *Pueblo* on 3 May (BKP, DC, BM).

Ladder-backed Woodpecker: Unusual locations: 1 male at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 18 Apr (BKP); 1 at Tamarack Ranch *Logan* on 25 May (SM).

Downy Woodpecker: "Rocky Mountain" subspecies rare on plains: 1 at Thompson Ranch *Washington* on 27 May (SM).

Hairy Woodpecker: "Rocky Mountain" subspecies rare on plains: 1 at Jackson SP *Morgan* on 24 May (SM).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: 1 report: 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 31 May (BM).

Least Flycatcher: First reports: 2 at CVCG *Weld* on 29 Apr (SM, NM); 1 at Last Chance *Washington* on 29 Apr (JK). Rare on WS: apparent breeders returned to Mesa *Mesa* from 29 May through the end of the period (NK). High count: 8 near Louviers *Douglas* on 28 May (TH).

Gray Flycatcher: Uncommon away from pinyon-juniper breeding habitat: 1 at CBR *El Paso* on 16 May (BKP, BM, m.ob.); 1 at CVCG *Weld* on 24 May (SM).

Dusky Flycatcher: Record early WS report: 1 singing male 15 miles north of Nucla *Montrose* on 24 Apr (CDe, BW).

Alder Flycatcher: 1 at Fox Ranch *Yuma* on 24 May (TF, DGi).

Black Phoebe: Record early WS report: 1 at Uravan *Montrose* on 14 Mar (CDe, BW). Unusual location: 1 at Tempel Grove *Bent* on 13 May (CG).

Eastern Phoebe: First report: 1 singing at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 19 Mar (BKP). High count: 28 in Cottonwood Canyon *Baca/Las Animas* on 14 Apr (MP, SM).

Black × Eastern Phoebe: 1 report: 1 paired with an Eastern Phoebe at Florence River Park *Fremont* on 8 Apr (SM, TS).

Black × Say's Phoebe: 1 report: 1 bird possibly of this hybrid combination which appeared to be paired with a Say's Phoebe in Cokedale *Las Animas* 19-21 May (BWe, JRo, NP, m.ob.). A melanistic Say's Phoebe could not be ruled out.

Vermilion Flycatcher: All reports: 1 male in Holyoke *Phillips* on 29 Mar (SS); 1 male at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 28 Apr (MP, GW); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 8 May (AB).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: All reports: 1 at Taylor Ranch *Prowers* on 29 Apr (JO); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 9 May (AB); 1 at Cherry Creek SP *Arapahoe* on 17 May (KR); a pair attempting to breed near John Martin Res. *Bent* on 22 May (DN); 1 along US 287 just north of CR D *Cheyenne* on 31 May (CR).

White-eyed Vireo: All reports: 1 male at Tempel Grove *Bent* on 18 Apr (DN); 1 singing bird on the Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* on 29 Apr (BKP); 1 at Holly Cemetery *Prowers* on 5 May (TD, BK); 1 at Two Buttes *Baca* on 11 May (JK, GW et al.); 1 at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (NM); 1 singing bird at Hansen Nature Area, Fountain *El Paso* 12-14 May (RH, m.ob.).

Yellow-throated Vireo, Chatfield State Park, Jefferson County, 31 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

Bell's Vireo: Southeast reports: 1 at Tempel Grove *Bent* on 11 May (DGi, HG); 1 at Lake Hasty CG *Bent* on 16 May (MC).

Gray Vireo: Unusual in *Moffat*: at least 4, including one pair building a nest, in the Dinosaur area *Moffat* on 29 May (CDe, BW). Reports from SE: 1 singing in Cottonwood Canyon *Las Animas* on 12 May (SM, NM); 3 on Beatty Canyon Ranch *Las Animas* 19-20 May (JD, DN, TF, MS, m.ob.).

Yellow-throated Vireo: All reports: 1 singing bird at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 at the CBR Banding Station *El Paso* on 16 May (JD, BM, BKP, m.ob.); 1 at Russell Lakes SWA *Saguache* on 21 May (KP, CDe, BW); 1 singing bird at Last Chance *Washington* 25-27 May (TF, m.ob.); 1 in Chatfield SP *Jefferson* that was building a nest and appeared to be paired with a Plumbeous Vireo (BC, NMc, m.ob.).

Cassin's Vireo: 1 report: 1 at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* on 24 Apr (JS).

Philadelphia Vireo: All reports: 1 male at Two Buttes *Baca* 11-13 May (JK, GW et al.); 1 at LCCW *Prowers* on 11 May (DGi, HG); 1 at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM).

Red-eyed Vireo: Reported from 7 counties. First report: 1 in Boulder *Boulder* on 9 May (DvD).

Purple Martin: Rare for county: 1 at Hwy 13 Bridge over the Yampa River *Moffat* on 5 May (*fide* FL).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Rare summer location: 5 (3 of the Eastern subspecies and 2 of the Interior West) at Barr Lake *Adams* on 31 May (SM).

Carolina Wren: All reports: 1 at Tamarack Ranch *Logan* on 25 May (SM); 1 at Bonny Res. *Yuma* on 26 May (SM, NM, AC).

Bewick's Wren: Rare in *Boulder*: 1 singing bird on Apple Valley Road *Boulder* on 12 Apr (SM); 1 singing at Boulder Open Space Cherryvale Office on 14 Apr (CN, m.ob.).

Winter Wren: 1 report: 1 near Whitewater *Mesa* on 21 Apr (SM, LA).

Marsh Wren: "Eastern" subspecies: 1 singing at St. Vrain SP *Weld* on 3 Mar (SM). There have been only a few reports of this race for Colorado, none documented for the CBRC. The Marsh Wren complex may well be split into two separate species in the future.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: "Eastern" subspecies: 2 at Bonny Res. *Yuma* on 5 May building a nest, which was photographed (MP); 2 there on 26 May (SM, NM, AC).

Eastern Bluebird: Uncommon away from eastern plains: 20 at Runyon Lake *Pueblo* on 3 Mar (MY); a pair at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 12 Apr (BKP); 1 female at CBR *El Paso* on 19 May (BKP, BM, m.ob.).

Veery: At least 16 individuals were reported this spring, from *Cheyenne, El Paso, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Prowers, Pueblo, Washington,* and *Weld*.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: All reports: 1 at Crow Valley *Weld* on 29 Apr (NM, SM); 1 at CBR *El Paso* 6-8 May (KC, BKP, et al.); 1 at Mitchek Ranch *Cheyenne* on 11 May (GW, JK); 1 at Last Chance *Washington* on 15 May (GW, LK); 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 16 May (JD); 1 at Prewitt Res. *Washington* on 19 May (KMD); 1 at Norma's Grove *Weld* on 21 May (DvD); 1 at

Blackburnian Warbler, University of Colorado East Campus, Boulder County, 12 May 2012. Photo by David Waltman

Kentucky Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo County, 23 April 2012. Photo by Brandon Percival

Crow Valley *Weld* on 24 May (NL); an amazing **5** at Thompson Ranch *Lincoln* on 28 May (JK, m.ob.); 1 in Loveland *Larimer* on 30 May (SW).

"Russet-backed" Swainson's Thrush: 1 report: 1 on Stulp's Farm *Prowers* 13-16 May (SM, NM, JS).

Wood Thrush: All reports: 1 at the private Elbert ranch *El Paso* on 28 Apr (DM, GW); 1 at CBR headquarters *Pueblo* on 12 May (TS); 1 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 13 May (GW); 1 singing at CBR banding station *El Paso* on 14 May (NG, BKP m.ob).

Brown Thrasher: Early: 1 at LCCW *Prowers* on 31 Mar (MP, BS).

Curve-billed Thrasher: Rare north of breeding range: 1 singing male at Crow Valley *Weld* on 3 May (SM, NM).

McCown's Longspur: High count: 1,100 at BYO Playa *Weld* on 29 Mar (SM, NM).

Ovenbird: First report: 1 at Karval *Lincoln* on 4 May (LJ).

Worm-eating Warbler: All reports: 1 singing male at Pueblo City Park *Pueblo* on 21 Apr (BKP, m.ob.); 1 at CBR *El Paso* 1-4 May (NG, SBr, m.ob.); 1 at Zapata Ranch *Alamosa* on 13 May (CP); 1 at CBR *El Paso* 10-15 May (BKP, JD et al.).

Northern Waterthrush: First report: 1 at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* 26-28 Apr (JS).

Blue-winged Warbler: 1 report: 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 1 May (AB).

Golden-winged Warbler: 1 report: 1 male at CBR *El Paso* 2-4 May (BKP, MP, BM).

Black-and-white Warbler: All reports: 1 at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* 11-14 Apr (JS); 1 at Greenlee Preserve *Boulder* on 17 Apr (TF); 1 male at CBR *El Paso* 2-4 May (MP, BM, m.ob.); 1 at Karval *Lincoln* on 7 May (LJ); 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 19 May (BM, m.ob.).

Prothonotary Warbler: All reports: 1 at Sondermann Park, Colorado Springs *El Paso* on 26 Apr (JM);

Worm-eating Warbler, Pueblo City Park, Pueblo County, 21 April 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Tennessee Warbler, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 13 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

1 in Holyoke *Phillips* 24-25 May (RL, SM).

Tennessee Warbler: All reports: 1 singing male at CBR *El Paso* on 4 May (GR); 1 female at Two Buttes *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 at CVCG *Weld* on 12 May (GW, LK); 1 at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar *Prowers* 13-19 May (CT, DB); 1 at CBR *El Paso* on 14 May (JD); 1 at Norma's Grove *Weld* on 16 May (AC).

Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 apparently of the *lutescens* subspecies at Mud Springs *Mesa* on 22 Apr (SM, LA).

Lucy's Warbler: 1 report away from Yellowjacket Canyon *Montezuma*: 1 male at CBR *El Paso* on 20 Apr (BKP, MP, BM).

Nashville Warbler: All reports: 1 at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* on 28 Apr (JS); 1 male at CBR *El Paso* 2-3 May (MP, BM, m.ob.); 1 singing male on Apple Valley Road, Lyons *Boulder* on 10 May (SM); 1 singing male at LCCW *Prowers* on 13 May (SM, NM).

Virginia's Warbler: Early report: 1 singing male on the CSU-Pueblo Campus *Pueblo* on 14 Apr (VT).

MacGillivray's Warbler: Early report: 1 at Redlands *Mesa* on 27 Apr (LA).

Kentucky Warbler: All reports: 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 23 Apr (BKP, m.ob.); 1 at Van's Grove *Bent* on 1 May (DN), 1 at Norma's Grove *Weld* on 16 May (CW, AC, m.ob.).

Hooded Warbler: 17 individuals reported. First report: 1 male at CBR *El Paso* on 20 Apr (BKP, m.ob.). Other counties: *Adams, Bent, Boulder, Custer, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Kiowa, Las Animas, Lincoln, Prowers,* and *Weld.*

American Redstart: Reported from 11 counties. First report: 4 at Two Buttes SWA *Baca* on 5 May (JK, LK, m.ob.).

Cape May Warbler: 1 report: 1 male at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* 26-28 Apr (JS).

Yellow-throated Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 20 May 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Magnolia Warbler, Last Chance, Washington County, 28 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

Northern Parula: 33 individuals reported. First report: 1 singing male at LCCW *Prowers* on 13 Apr (DR). Other counties: *Adams* (1), *Baca* (1), *Bent* (4), *Boulder* (3), *Crowley* (1), *Denver* (1), *Douglas* (1), *El Paso* (3), *Kiowa* (2), *Larimer* (4), *Lincoln* (2), *Morgan* (1), *Prowers* (2), and *Pueblo* (7).

Magnolia Warbler: All reports: 1 adult male at Beecher Island *Yuma* on 26 May (SM, NM, AC); 1 imm male at Last Chance *Washington* 27-28 May (NM, SM, m.ob.); 1 at Bonny SP *Yuma* on 31 May (MG, JG).

Bay-breasted Warbler: 1 report: 1 female at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: All reports: 1 in Boulder *Boulder* 6-7 May (PG, m.ob.); 1 male at the NeeNoshe Locust Grove *Kiowa* on 11 May (JR); 1 at Fountain Creek Regional Park *El Paso* on 12 May (MG, JG); 1 at Lilley Gulch *Jefferson* on 14 May (JSh); 1 in Rocky Mountain National Park *Larimer* on 16 May (SBM); 1 at Chatfield SP *Douglas* on 21 May (LK); 1 in Ft. Collins *Larimer* on 30 May (BBi).

Blackpoll Warbler: All reports: 2 males at Jackson SP *Morgan* on 6 May (SM); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 7 May (AB); 1 singing male at CBR *El Paso* on 9 May (BKP); 1 at CVCG *Weld* 11-12 May (CG, m.ob.); 1 male at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (NM, SM); 1 female at CBR *Pueblo* on 13 May (KC, BKP, m.ob.); 1 at Fox Ranch *Yuma* on 24 May (TF); 1 at CVCG *Weld* on 24 May (JK, m.ob.).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: All reports: 1 singing male at LCCW *Prowers* 5 May (LE, m.ob.); 1 singing male at Tempel Grove *Bent* 11-13 May (GW, JK et al.); 1 singing male at Everett Ranch *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 female at LCCW *Prowers* on 13 May (SM, NM); 1 female at CVCG *Weld* on 16 May (ACr), and another or the same bird there on 31 May (SM, LK).

Lucy's Warbler, Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County, 20 April 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Blackpoll Warbler, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 13 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

Palm Warbler: All reports (all of Western subspecies): 1 at the private Elbert ranch *El Paso* on 28 Apr (MP, GW); 1 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 28 Apr (GW); 1 at CVCG *Weld* on 29 Apr (SM, NM); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* 1-3 May (AB); 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 4 May (GR); 1 at Norma's Grove *Weld* on 12 May (GW, LK); 1 at the Stulp's Farm *Prowers* on 19 May (JS).

Yellow-throated Warbler: All reports: 1 at CBR *El Paso* 16-20 May (BKP, BM, m.ob.); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 24 May (AB).

Grace's Warbler: Early: 1 on Trujillo Road *Archuleta* on 2 May (LA); 1 in Jack's Canyon *Mesa* on 3 May (ChA). Rare in southeast: 3 in *Huerfano* on 24 May (GW, LK, m.ob.); 1 singing male at Spring Gulch *Chaffee* on 30 May (TB, AS).

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Unusual outside of WS and southern Colorado: 1 singing male at Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 16 Apr (BKP); 1 male at CBR *El Paso* on 23 Apr (BKP); 1 in Akron *Washington* on 27 Apr (GW, JK); 1 in Boulder *Boulder* 10-12 May (NM, m.ob.).

Townsend's Warbler: Uncommon in spring: 1 male at Barr Lake SP *Adams* on 28 Apr (IB); 1 male at CBR *El Paso* on 2 May (MP, BM, m.ob.).

Green-tailed Towhee: Late migrant: 1 at Thompson Ranch *Lincoln* on 27 May (SM, NM).

Spotted Towhee: High count: 38 at CVCG *Weld*, including 2 of the subspecies *arcticus*, on 29 Apr (SM, NM).

Spotted × Eastern Towhee: All reports: 1 at CVCR *Weld* on 3 May (SM, NM); 3 at Tamarack Ranch *Logan* on 25 May (SM).

Eastern Towhee: All reports: 1 female at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* on 26 Apr (JS); 1 singing male at CBR *Pueblo* on 3 May (BKP, DC, BM); 1 at Cottonwood Canyon *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 at Tempel Grove *Bent*

on 13 May (DB, CT, NM).

Cassin's Sparrow: Early: 1 singing south of Holly *Prowers* on 31 Mar (MP, BS).

Chipping Sparrow: Early reports: 1 in basic plumage at Drake Lake, Severance *Weld* on 4 Mar (SM); 2 in breeding plumage in Nucla *Montrose* on 30 Mar (CDe).

Eastern Towhee, Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo County, 3 May 2012. Photo by Bill Maynard

Clay-colored Sparrow: Early: 1 on *Baca* CR G on 14 Apr (SM, MP) and 1 at CBR *El Paso* on the same day (TB). Potential first spring records for WS counties: 1 at Pastorius SWA *La Plata* 6-8 May (JB, m.ob.); 1 at Deerlodge Park *Moffat* on 13 May (AS).

Field Sparrow: All reports away from breeding areas: 1 at Stulp's Farm *Prowers* on 23 Apr (JS); 2 near Karval *Lincoln* 26-28 Apr (AB); 3 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 28 Apr (GW); 1 singing on the Cañon City Riverwalk *Fremont* on 29 Apr (BKP, m.ob.).

Black-chinned Sparrow: All reports: returning from last summer, 2 at Colorado National Monument *Mesa* from 9 Apr through end of season (LA); 1 near I-25 and 310 Road *Huerfano* on 27 May (SC).

Lark Sparrow: Early WS report: 1 at Cheney Res. *Mesa* on 14 Apr (LA).

Black-throated Sparrow: Uncommon in area: 5 at Vermillion Falls, Browns Park area *Moffat* on 11 May (CDo); 2 in the Dinosaur area *Moffat* on 29 May (CDe, BW).

Sage Sparrow: Uncommon in *Boulder:* 1 at Coalton Open Space on 16 Mar (RB); 1 at Walden/Sawhill Ponds on 20 Mar (DrD, DvD); 1 at Stearns Lake 7-8 Apr (TF, m.ob.).

Lark Bunting: Unusual on WS: 1 in Mack *Mesa* on 11 May (RLa); also reports of up to 36 birds at a dozen locations in *Moffat* in May (CDo, AS).

White-throated Sparrow: Reported from 7 counties. Unusual location: up to 2 at Moose Visitor Center *Jackson* continuing from winter season through at least 5 May (SB, CBo, m.ob.).

Harris's Sparrow: At least 20 individuals reported from 10 counties. WS report: 1 in Palisade *Mesa* 29-30 Apr (SB).

Harris's × White-crowned Sparrow: 1 report: 1 photographed at Valco Ponds *Pueblo* from 24 Mar to 3 Apr (DC, BKP). This hybrid combination has only been documented a few times previously.

Golden-crowned Sparrow: All reports: 1 adult continuing from the winter season at Teller Farms *Boulder* through at least 20 Apr (m.ob.); 1 adult continuing at Red Rocks Park *Jefferson* through at least 15 Apr (m.ob.); 1 imm at LCCW *Prowers* 8-11 Apr (VA, m.ob.).

"Pink-sided" Junco: Odd behavior: 1 at Cow Springs *Mesa* on 22 Apr "performing distraction displays, as if it had started nesting nearby" (SM, LA). If the bird was a breeder, it would likely constitute the first nesting record of this form for Colorado. This subspecies' usual breeding range extends as far south as central Wyoming. The observers note that the displaying female may well have been paired with a "Gray-headed" Junco.

"White-winged" Junco: Uncommon on plains: 2 at Jackson Res. *Morgan* on 17 Mar (SM).

"Gray-headed" Junco: Uncommon on plains: 1 at Random House Ranch (north of CVCG) *Weld* on 3 May (NM, SM).

Hepatic Tanager: Nine were reported: 1 at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 13 May (GW); at least 8 from four locations on CFO Convention field trips 17-24 May (m.ob.), including 2 at Santa Clara Creek / CR 310 *Huerfano*, 2 along CO 12 at mile marker 65 *Las Animas*, 1 on the Beatty Canyon Ranch *Las Animas*, and 2 on the Mesa de Maya Ranch *Las Animas*.

Summer Tanager: A remarkable 35 were reported during the season from at least 18 counties. WS reports: 1 in El Jebel *Eagle* on 7 May (MH, m.ob.); 1 imm male in Steamboat Springs *Routt* 10-13 May (KP, m.ob.). SLV report: 1 imm male at Smith Res. *Costilla* on 21 May (BW, KPo, CDe). High count: 9 at Beatty Canyon Ranch *Las Animas* on 20 May (TF, m.ob.).

Scarlet Tanager: All reports: 1 at CBR *Pueblo* on 17 May (JD); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* 30-31 May (AB).

Northern Cardinal: Away from usual breeding range: 1 male west of Pueblo Nature Center *Pueblo* on 16 Mar (MJ); 1 female at the Portland bridge in *Fremont* on 4 Apr (RMi); 2 singing males at Valco Ponds/Rock Canyon *Pueblo* on 12 May (BKP, DC, LL); 1 male at Brett Gray Ranch *Lincoln* on 13 May (GW); 1 singing at Pueblo City Park *Pueblo* on 30 May (VT).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Reported from 17 counties. WS reports: 1 in El Jebel *Eagle* 7-8 May (JBi, m.ob.); 1 male at Lake Lenore *Ouray* on 14 May (SH); and 1 in Ouray *Ouray* on 19 May (KN).

Lazuli × Indigo Bunting: 1 singing male at Tamarack Ranch *Logan* on 25 May (SM).

Indigo Bunting: Rare in mountains and early: 1 imm male in Georgetown *Clear Creek* on 22 Apr (SM).

Painted Bunting: 1 report: 1 male at Two Buttes *Baca* 11-27 May (MP, JR).

Bobolink: Unusual locations: 7 males at Lake Estes *Larimer* on 11 May (SM); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 12 May (AB).

Eastern Meadowlark: All reports: Up to 4 "Lilian's" just east of Campo *Baca* on 9 Apr (MO, m.ob.); 1 "Lilian's" 35 km west of Campo on 14 Apr (MP, SM); 1 apparently of the eastern race singing and well documented at Greenlee Preserve *Boulder* on 23 May (TF).

Great-tailed Grackle: Up to 8 north of Cortez *Montezuma* from 14 Apr to 4 May (m.ob.).

Bullock's × Baltimore Oriole: All sightings: 1 female at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 male at CVCG *Weld* on 24 May (SM); 1 male at Tamarack Ranch *Logan* on 25 May (SM); 1 female at Holyoke Cemetery *Phillips* on 25 May (SM); 1 male at Sand Draw *Sedgwick* on 25 May (SM); 1 near Karval *Lincoln* on 26 May (AB); 1 along White Rocks Trail *Boulder* from 29 May through end of period (TF, m.ob.).

Baltimore Oriole: 1 sighting away from eastern plains: 1 male at CBR *Pueblo* 16-17 May (JD, m.ob.).

Scott's Oriole: Several were seen through the season in the species' strongholds on the WS and *Las Animas*. Rather far north: 1 male in northern *Moffat* on 17 May (TB). Rare in *Huerfano*: 1 in La Veta on 30 Apr (BJ); 1 at Santa Clara Creek on 24 May (MG).

Pine Siskin: Eastern plains reports: 2 at CVCG *Weld* on 3 May (SM, NM); 1 at Burchfield SWA *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 at Last Chance *Washington* on 27 May (SM, NM).

Summer Tanager, Welchester Tree Grant Park, Jefferson County, 13 May 2012. Photo by Mark Chavez

Lesser Goldfinch: Local on eastern plains: 1 at LCCW *Prowers* on 14 Apr (SM, MP); 3 at Everett Ranch *Baca* on 12 May (SM, NM); 1 at Tempel Grove *Bent* on 13 May (SM, NM).

Evening Grosbeak: High count: 500-1000 in Paonia *Delta* on 16 May (JaB).

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The Mexican Duck in Colorado: Identification and Occurrence

Tony Leukering and Steven G. Mlodinow

Most everything about the taxon known as Mexican Duck (*Anas diazi*) is controversial, confused, and conflated. The taxon has been considered by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) as conspecific with Mallard (*A. platyrhynchos*) since 1983 (AOU 1983), mostly on the basis of the arguments presented by Hubbard (1977). With that reduced taxonomic status, most birders have paid it little attention, so many were likely surprised when a male was found at Walden Reservoir, Jackson County, Colorado, in April 2006. That surprise may have been due both to the bird's distance from the species' known range and to wondering why anyone would care.

We here consider Mexican Duck to be specifically distinct from Mallard (following Banks 2010, Gill and Donsker 2012) and summarize three aspects of the current state of knowledge of the taxon: 1) its relationships within the clade of large, brown dabbling ducks; 2) its occurrence pattern in Colorado as elucidated by previous and recent field workers; and 3) the features allowing birders to separate it from similar taxa and hybrids. This last feature should be read in concert with the photographic material presented on page 299 and on the back cover (see back cover photo captions on p. 308).

Taxonomic History and Relationships

Hubbard (1977) concluded that "extensive hybridization [of Mexican Duck with Mallard] in southeastern Arizona, New Mexico, and west-central Texas compels merger into a single species." Hubbard's treatise was shortly followed by that of Scott and Reynolds (1984), which reached the same conclusion. Both studies used a scale developed by Hubbard (1977) that combined 18 characters to classify birds from pure Mallard (score = 0) to pure Mexican Duck (score = 36). Not even at the southern edge of the Mexican Duck's range in central Mexico did the population consist entirely of "pure" birds, as the average score there was 34.5, and at the northernmost study site near the U.S. border in northwestern Chihuahua, the average score was still high at 28.3 (Scott and Reynolds 1984). For the most part, plumage and structural characters showed a fairly smooth cline (Scott and Reynolds 1984).

If at least some Mexican Ducks throughout the species' range have some Mallard genes, then one would expect that there must have

been substantial long-term hybridization between these two taxa. But there is very little overlap in breeding range between Mallards and Mexican Ducks in Arizona (Webster 2007), New Mexico (Ligon 1961), and Texas (AOU 1998). Additionally, Mexican Ducks likely pair early, before migrant wintering Mallards arrive (Brown 1985, Corman 2005), and they may have a tendency to form stronger bonds than most other ducks, lasting over multiple years (Williams 1980, Brown 1985). Finally, Bevill (1970) found assortative mating in a portion of New Mexico where both taxa occur (though it should be noted that extra-pair copulations could potentially produce hybrid young in a nest tended by pure parents). Data from Kulikova et al. (2004, 2005) suggest that in the past, Mallards may have hybridized more extensively than they do today with Mexican Duck and other New World Mallard-like species (Mottled Duck, *A. fulvigula*; American Black Duck, *A. rubripes*), and such might explain the phenotypic cline found by Hubbard (1977) and Scott and Reynolds (1984).

Certainly, Mallards hybridize with Mexican Ducks currently (see Fig 1). However, Mallards also hybridize extensively with other taxa that are still considered separate species. For example, hybridization with introduced Mallards has had a substantial negative impact on populations of the Hawaiian Duck (*A. wyvilliana*) in most of Hawaii (Drilling et al. 2002, Pyle and Pyle 2009) and the Gray Duck (*A. superciliosa*) in New Zealand (Drilling et al. 2002).

This circumstance bears a striking resemblance to the situation between Mallard and Mottled Duck in both Florida and Texas, and that between Mallard and American Black Duck throughout the latter species' range and beyond. For instance, in 1977 an estimated 13.2% of "American Black Ducks" shot by hunters were actually hybrids (Longcore et al. 2000).

Additionally, Christopher L. Wood (pers. comm.) found that virtually all large, dark dabbling ducks along the Upper Rio Grande in Texas in April 2012 appeared to be Mexican × Mottled Duck hybrids.

Introgression on a similar scale also exists in several better-studied taxon pairs, such as Glaucous-winged and Western gulls, American and Black oystercatchers, and Blue-winged and Golden-winged warblers. The only real difference is that the AOU currently considers Mexican Duck to be "just" a subspecies of Mallard; the gulls, warblers, oystercatchers, and the other large dark ducks are all considered full species. This treatment is inconsistent, particularly considering the body of published evidence not only supporting specific status for Mexican Duck, but also demonstrating that Mallard is not Mexican Duck's closest relative! Livezey (1991) found Mexican Duck to be a species distinct from Mallard based on morphological characters, and

Figure 1: Male Mexican Duck × Mallard (front). The "bimaculated" head showing green crown with pale or buffy cheek is typical of many F1 (first-generation) Mallard hybrids. If extensive hybridization were currently taking place between Mexican Ducks and Mallards, one would expect the majority of males of mixed ancestry to resemble this one, but very few do, suggesting that most "hybrids" are products of many generations of back-crossing with "pure" Mexican Duck (gene introgression). Indeed, since Hubbard (1977) found that many birds at even the southern end of Mexican Duck range were not quite "pure" by his phenotypic evaluation, the definition of what constitutes a "pure" Mexican Duck is unclear. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow at Tucson, Pima County, Arizona, 9 December 2010.

Figure 2: Alternate-plumaged adult male Mallard. Often a conundrum to the inexperienced, male Mallards in alternate plumage, which they wear from mid-summer to late fall, are not what most birders think of as male Mallards. However, the bright yellow bill, strongly white-edged speculum, and nearly all-white tail are excellent characters allowing differentiation from most other large, brown dabbling ducks. Alternate-plumaged male Mexican Ducks are similar, but lack the Mallard's white tail. Photograph by Scott Whittle, Cape May Point State Park, Cape May County, New Jersey, 8 October 2011.

Figures 3 and 4: Female American Black Duck × Mallard hybrid. This bird might easily hide among American Black Ducks in eastern North America, but should stand out as something to study more closely here in Colorado. The bird's darkness and dark tail might cause consideration of Mexican Duck, but the bird is too dark and has too little white in the tips of the secondaries and greater coverts. Finally, the bird's bill color would make it a male if it were a Mexican Duck, but the middle of the bill has the ghost of a female Mallard's dark saddle, which should rule out that possibility. Photographs by Christopher L. Wood, Monroe County, New York, 24 December 2008.

Figure 5: Female American Black Duck. The lack of internal pale markings on the body feathers, the lack of white borders to the speculum, the all-dark tail, the olive-colored bill, and the very dark coloration all point to American Black Duck, and the olive-colored bill lets us know that it is a female. Photograph by Christopher L. Wood, Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York, 19 June 2009.

Figure 6: Female and male Mottled Ducks. In this species, both sexes sport a distinctive black patch at the gape (the angle at which the two halves of the bill meet), while males add a black border at the base of the bill. Both sexes also appear quite buffy-headed, a feature that shows up at surprising distances. At close range, the dearth of streaking on the head makes for a great confirmatory feature for the species. Finally, the internal markings on the body feathers in both sexes are strong and tend to form distinct 'V's, unlike the generally rounded and less-notable markings on these feathers in Mexican Duck and Mallard. Photograph by Christopher L. Wood at Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Palm Beach County, Florida, on 16 January 2009.

Fig. 1. Male Mexican Duck × Mallard (front)

Fig. 2. Alternate-plumaged adult male Mallard

Figs. 3 and 4. Female American Black Duck × Mallard hybrid

Fig. 5. Female American Black Duck

Fig. 6. Female and male Mottled Ducks

several studies using mtDNA have agreed, most finding that Mexican Duck appears more closely related to Mottled Duck than to Mallard (Johnson and Sorenson 1999, McCracken et al. 2001, Kulikova et al. 2004, Gonzales et al. 2009). This evidence has led the International Ornithologists' Union to split Mexican Duck from Mallard (Gill and Donsker 2012), and led Banks (2010) to recommend that the American Ornithologists' Union split Mexican Duck from Mallard, a recommendation the AOU has not yet followed.

The Problem of Mallard × Mexican Duck Hybrids

With various authors (e. g., Hubbard 1977, Scott and Reynolds 1984, Sibley 2000) describing a high degree of Mallard gene introgression into Mexican Duck populations, can anyone be certain of the genetic makeup of any individual purported Mexican Duck? The answer is simple: no.

From a birding point of view, one simply cannot be certain of the parentage and ancestry of any individual bird. The best that birders (or bird records committees) can do is to determine the visible and audible features of a bird. This is as true for Mexican Duck as it is for Glaucous-winged Gull, Blue-winged Warbler, and Eastern Towhee. It is also true of Masked Booby, Dunlin, Western Screech-Owl, Yellow-throated Warbler, Nelson's Sparrow, and Flame-colored Tanager, all of which are among the minimum of 299 ABA-area species (split equally between non-passerines and passerines) for which there are documented cases of hybridization (mostly from Pyle 1997, 2008). And those are the documented cases! In order to put a name on any bird, we have to be willing to ignore the possibility that it may have genes of multiple species, at least until there is a way to remotely assay a bird's genes. Therefore, we believe that any bird exhibiting no sign of gene introgression should be acceptable to us as an individual of the species that it appears to be, else we are forced to use circumlocution in our reporting (e. g., "I saw an apparent phenotypically pure Common Eider at Antero Reservoir, but since there are known hybrids with that species and at least four other species, I cannot be sure that it was genetically pure").

However, this situation does call for close scrutiny of any duck that might be a Mexican Duck, particularly in Colorado, where our understanding of the taxon's occurrence is far from complete. We recommend that the CBRC require complete descriptions and, preferably, photographic evidence of any submitted report of Mexican Duck, as there is a high likelihood of hybrids or back-crosses occurring in the state. Such provides most of the impetus for penning this essay.

Record of Colorado Occurrence

Bailey and Niedrach (1965) report three specimens of Mexican Duck from Colorado in addition to a sight report (see listing, below). Andrews and Righter (1992) did not treat this taxon, as it had been lumped with Mallard (AOU 1983). We note, though, that Andrews and Righter (1992) discounted Bailey and Niedrach's two records of Mottled Duck from Colorado (both in Larimer Co., Nov. 1907 and Sep. 1962) because both Andrews (1978) and Gent (1986) considered both birds to be "probable hybrids." These two specimens and the three of Mexican Duck should be re-assessed given our current state of knowledge of these taxa.

In the listing below, those records preceded by a dagger (†) are represented by a specimen housed at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS); the specimen accession number is listed for each of these. Records preceded by an asterisk (*) have been accepted as valid by the Colorado Bird Records Committee.

† 29 Oct 1939; female; near Henderson, Adams County; A. Bailey, B. Niedrach; DMNS 20557

† 19 Nov 1944; male; Mile High Duck Club, Adams County; A. Bailey; DMNS 24392

†4 Mar 1947; female; Jumbo Reservoir, Sedgwick County; G. I. Crawford; DMNS 25374

16 May 1950; pair; Spring Creek, Rio Grande County; R. Ryder (Ryder 1951)

*20 Apr 2006; male; Walden Reservoir, Jackson County; B. Gibbons, M. Iliff, C. Sheely (photo)

*16 May 2006; female; near Arboles, Archuleta County; J. Beatty

*15 Apr 2009; male; Lower Latham Reservoir, Weld County; D. Lane (photo)

28 Mar 2011; female; Russell Lakes, Saguache County; T. Floyd

*12 May 2011; male; Boulder Reservoir, Boulder County; S. Mlodinow, T. Floyd

*12 May 2011; male; near Firestone, Weld County; S. Mlodinow (photo)

22 Jul 2011; male; near Punkin Center, Lincoln County; T. Floyd

1 Jan – 8 Apr 2012; male; Pueblo, Pueblo County; S. Mlodinow (photo) [in review by CBRC]

4 Mar – 2 Jun 2012; male, near Firestone, Weld County; S. Mlodinow [in review by CBRC]

11 Apr 2012; male; St. Vrain State Park, Weld County; S. Mlodinow [in review by CBRC]

Identification

While considered by some authorities to be conspecific with Mallard, Mexican Duck is not necessarily most readily confused with that species. The darkness of the plumage also encourages confusion with American Black Duck and Mottled Duck, the other large, dark-brown dabbling ducks of the genus *Anas* found in the U.S. However, the greatest challenge is posed by birds showing mixed Mexican Duck-Mallard ancestry. Such birds can closely resemble either parental taxon.

The key features differentiating Mexican Duck from its confusion species are noted in Table 1, and many of the more critical features are discussed in the captions to Figs. 1-10. We here follow Pyle (2005) in considering the so-called "eclipse plumage" of ducks to be an alternate plumage, rather than a basic plumage.

Determining Sex

Of these four species (American Black Duck, Mallard, Mottled Duck, and Mexican Duck), only Mallard is strongly sexually dimorphic; in the other three, differentiation of males from females typically requires close study. Males of all four species tend to have flatter crowns with a decided tendency toward a peak to the crown forward of the eyes. Bill color is also diagnostic for sex determination once individuals achieve adult bill color; all begin life with blackish bills. Other characters providing clues for determining sex of individuals may be gleaned from Table 1.

Determining Age

As in nearly all duck species, age can occasionally be determined (particularly in worn plumages, thus from late winter into early summer) by the paleness and/or raggedness of the tail. First-cycle ducks retain their juvenile tails until they are around one year old; those tails can bleach quite pale and can become quite frayed.

Summary

Mexican Duck is closer in plumage color to Mallard than it is to Mottled Duck or American Black Duck, being just slightly darker than Mallard. Thus, tail coloration is of extreme importance in differentiating Mexican Duck from Mallard, particularly in combination with bill color and pattern.

Mexican Duck is somewhat paler than is Mottled Duck, but lacks the latter species' strong buff tones and nearly unstreaked head and neck. Mottled Duck lacks (or nearly lacks) the white or pale borders to the speculum shown by Mexican Duck, and the internal markings

on the body feathers tend to form sharp and obvious 'V's, unlike the rounded markings on Mexican Duck. Both species share the distinctive trait of a black gape spot (Bellrose 1980), though this feature is much more distinct and pronounced on Mottled Duck than on Mexican Duck, in which it is often, or even usually, absent. At medium and close range, this spot is noticeable and well-defined on Mottled Duck, while, when present on Mexican Duck, it is ill-defined and less noticeable. The black basal border of the bill on male Mottled Ducks is distinctive.

Mexican Duck is obviously paler than American Black Duck. The darker face of American Black Duck contrasts less with the dark crown than in Mexican Duck, but this feature may require experience to use accurately. American Black Duck also differs from Mexican Duck in lacking any (or nearly any) white or pale border to the speculum, cinnamon tones in the body-feather fringes, and internal pale markings on the body feathers.

We encourage great caution in identifying Mexican Duck in Colorado, primarily due to the problems caused by Mallard × Mexican Duck hybrids and Mallard × American Black Duck hybrids. Male Mallard features that seem to persist through successive generations of back-crossing with other species include green on the head (occasionally present in very small amounts), curled-up tips to the central uppertail coverts, and white in the tail. Obviously, female birds with mixed ancestry are much more difficult to detect, but color and pattern of bill and tail can indicate the presence of Mallard genes. Correctly assessing tail features, however, requires excellent views in multiple postures, preferably with a view from behind of the spread tail. Note the difference in apparent tail color due to change in lighting and angle on the two pictures of the same flying Mexican Duck on the back cover (Figs. 9-10).

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Table 1. Identification features of brown ducks in the Mallard group.

Character	Mexican Duck	Mallard (male features are those of alternate plumage[1], also known as "eclipse" plumage)
Crown	Blackish, extensive; strong contrast with superciliary	Dark brown to blackish, extensive; strong contrast with superciliary
Eyeline	Blackish, extending nearly to nape	Blackish, extending nearly to nape
Bill	Female: Olive-yellow with brighter yellow edges Male: Bright yellow	Female: Orange with extensive black saddle Male: Bright yellow, some with olive cast
Cheek	Grayish-tan, vague darker streaking	Female: Pale brown with vague dark streaking Male: Gray with black streaking
Unstreaked subloral area	Female: Medium-sized, grayish-tan Male: Small, tan	Female: Large, grayish Male: Medium-sized, grayish-white
Gape	Usually pale, but ill-defined dark spot sometimes present	Pale
Throat	Tan, vaguely streaked	Whitish, mostly unstreaked
Chest	Warm brown with blackish streaking	Female: Ruddy brown, with dark streaking Male: Maroon, with dark marbling
Upperparts feather fringes	Cinnamon	Female: Orangish-tan, fading to off white Male: Buff, though vague and thin
Tertials	Grayish-brown, vague grayish-tan fringes	Female: Brownish-gray with whitish fringes Male: Gray
Speculum	Medium metallic blue, some (males?) with greenish aspect; white tips to greater coverts and secondaries thin, similar in width to upper and lower black borders to metallic blue section	Medium metallic blue; white tips to greater coverts and secondaries wide, noticeably wider than upper and lower black borders to metallic blue section
Undertail coverts	Female: Medium brown with blackish markings Male: Medium brown with extensive blackish centers	Whitish to cream, with darker markings (males similar to females, but more variable depending on state of molt)
Tail	Grayish-brown with variable gray markings	Female: Outer rectrices mostly white with variable dark markings; central rectrices mostly dark with variable whitish areas Male: White with few or no darker markings

[1]As per Pyle (2005)

Character	Mottled Duck	American Black Duck
Crown	Female: Brown, narrow; medium contrast with superciliary Male: Dark brown; low contrast with superciliary	Black, extensive; low contrast with superciliary
Eyeline	Female: Blackish, short; obvious gap between eyeline and nape Male: Blackish, medium-length; gap between eyeline and nape	Black, extending nearly to nape
Bill	Female: Olive with vague yellowish edges Male: Bright yellow with black basal border	Female: Olive Male: Dull yellow, some with olive cast
Cheek	Female: Warm buff with little or no dark streaking Male: Buff with vague darker streaking at rear	Tan with extensive dark streaking
Unstreaked subloral area	Large, not contrasting with unstreaked cheek	Female: Small, tan Male: Essentially non-existent
Gape	Small, triangular, contrasting black spot	Dark
Throat	Warm buff, unstreaked	Tan with grayish streaking
Chest	Dark brown with blackish streaking	Dark brown with extensive blackish streaking, more so in males
Upperparts feather fringes	Cinnamon	Female: Medium brown, thin Male: Medium brown, but nearly lacking
Tertials	Dark brown with cinnamon fringes	Female: Blackish with medium brown fringes Male: Blackish with little or no pale fringing
Speculum	Dark metallic blue; very thin white tips to secondaries and, occasionally, greater coverts	Dark metallic purplish-blue; some with very thin pale tips to greater coverts
Undertail coverts	Female: Medium brown with blackish markings Male: Blackish with some brown areas	Blackish with some dark brown fringes
Tail	Grayish-brown with variable gray markings averaging less extensive than those of Mexican Duck	Blackish, some (particularly females) with some grayish markings

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Captions for back cover photos:

Figure 7 (Back cover, top left). Male Mexican Duck. This male can be differentiated from Mallard by the richer, chestnut-buff internal feather markings on body, the sharp contrast between dark body and paler neck and head (though only head visible), dark tail lacking white markings, and narrow white speculum borders, particularly posteriorly. Mottled Duck would have more prominent internal feather markings and more limited (or no) pale border to speculum. Note that this bird does have a small black spot at gape, present on many Mexican Ducks (see text). The fairly bright bill places this bird as a male. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow in Tucson, Pima County, Arizona, on 9 December 2010.

Figure 8 (Back cover, second from top). Male Mexican Duck. This bird was easily separated from nearby Mallards by the overall dark coloration, due in part to the rich chestnut-buff internal feather markings and edgings. Also note the all-dark tail and the conspicuous demarcation between dark chest and light neck. The lack of gape spot, presence of streaking on lower face, and relatively limited internal markings on body feathers eliminate Mottled Duck from consideration. The bright yellow bill easily establishes this bird as a male. Overall, this Mexican Duck is rather typical of those seen within the species' core U.S. range. Photograph by Steven G. Mlodinow, Pueblo City Park, Pueblo County, Colorado, 1 January 2012.

Figures 9 and 10. Male Mexican Duck (same bird as in Fig. 8). Note the difference that lighting makes on the appearance of the tail, which goes from entirely dark in the shade (Fig. 9) to dark with extensive whitish-gray internal markings in harsh sunlight (Fig. 10). If this were a female Mallard, the outer tail feathers would be entirely white and the internal markings on the brightly lit photo would be bright white. The speculum color varies from purple-blue on the shaded photo to nearly "teal" on the brightly lit photo. Additionally, note the speculum borders, narrower than on Mallard overall, particularly the anterior border. Photographs by Tony Leukering, Pueblo City Park, Pueblo County, Colorado, 25 January 2012.

Fledgling American Kestrels Climb Tree Trunks

SeEtta Moss

This summer I observed a pair of American Kestrels that I thought were nesting in a cottonwood grove between the Arkansas River and a hay field on my friend's organic farm near Cañon City, Fremont County, Colorado. On 29 June 2012, when I arrived to do some birding, I found a young kestrel clinging to the trunk of one of the large cottonwood trees in this grove. It proceeded to climb the tree, flapping its wings as an assist to the hopping movements that propelled it (Figs. 1-2). Both apparent parents flew around and called often as the young kestrel progressed from near the bottom of the trunk to about 50 feet up the tree, where it disappeared behind a large branch. During this climbing episode I observed the fledgling kestrel digging its

Figs. 1–2. Fledgling American Kestrel climbing tree trunk, Fremont County, Colorado, 29 June 2012. Photos by SeEtta Moss

talons into the crevices of the tree bark while pushing its tail against the bark for balance, as woodpeckers do.

On 7 July 2012, Ruth Carol Cushman observed similar behavior from a just-fledged American Kestrel at her home in Boulder County. She wrote, "American Kestrels have nested in either the willows or cottonwoods on our East Boulder property for six years, and we have watched the just-out-of-the-nest fuzzballs perch on the branches. This year for the first time one of the young ones climbed up the cottonwood trunk, using its wings to help propel it. The clumsy chick flapped and flopped up at least twenty feet to disappear in the leafy branches. When I first spotted it, the chick was just a few feet above the ground, so I wonder if it had tried to fly and ended up grounded. It appeared to be trying to get back to the elevation of the nest cavity or at least above a possibly hungry predator."

Though I have observed owl fledglings engaging in "branching," that is, walking and hopping around tree branches when they leave the nest before ready to fly, I had never seen or heard of an American Kestrel climbing a tree. The *Birds of North America* online article on this species states, "Unlike other raptors that breed in open nests, kestrels are cavity nesters, and prefledged young do not usually climb branches of nest tree" (Smallwood and David 2002).

I did not find other reports of kestrels climbing up trees, but did find one blog post (Fasoli 2012) noting that young American Kestrels were observed hopping around the branches on a large tree snag in which the nest hole was located.

Since it is not uncommon for young raptors to end up on the ground when they are learning to fly, I suspect that this fledgling American Kestrel just wasn't quite ready to fly, or at least to fly very far. After flying or falling, or a combination of flying and falling, to the ground, it then used all of its resources to climb back up the tree with the assistance of wing flapping. I do wonder how often this behavior occurs and is not observed or documented in American Kestrels.

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Apparent Ground Nesting by Swainson's Hawk

Cynthia Madsen

Little documentation exists for ground nesting by Swainson's Hawks. The *Birds of North America* account states, without citing any sources, "In plains of w. Canada and northern states of U.S., in nineteenth century, major fires burned grasslands every few years, keeping trees to a minimum. An occasional pair nested on the ground, though such nests were subject to trampling by American bison herds (*Bos bison*), so surviving small willows (*Salix* spp.) and low aspen (*Populus* spp.), chiefly along and around water bodies, were used whenever available" (England et al. 1997). Woffinden and Mosher (1979) re-

Swainson's Hawk on ground nest, Weld County, 13 June 2012. Photo by Cynthia Madsen

ported an instance of successful ground nesting by Swainson's Hawks in central Utah in 1973. Rather than being placed directly on the ground, the Utah nest was built of sticks on a rock ledge approximately 1.5 meters (4 feet) above the surrounding terrain.

On 13 June 2012, while running the Prospect Valley Breeding Bird Survey route (#17412), Ann Bonnell, Janet Shin, and I saw a Swainson's Hawk next to a nest on the ground in a field of winter wheat. I saw it from stop #17, on 160th Avenue 3.1 miles east of CO 79, just past the culvert on the right (N 39° 59.084' W 104° 21.415'). The nest was approximately 180 meters away on the north side of the road, in Weld County. It appeared to be composed of large sticks. Figure 1 shows a photo, taken through a scope, of a Swainson's Hawk on the nest.

Janet Shin and I spent three hours at the site on 9 July. Because the winter wheat had grown higher, we were unable to see the nest. While we were there, however, we watched three ground visits to the site by Swainson's Hawks. We couldn't be certain if we were seeing one or two different Swainson's Hawks. Each one that we saw would fly so low before dropping down in the area that sometimes we didn't even see it approach. That type of approach might indicate that they were trying to keep the nest secret from predators. Each visit to the site was brief, and then the hawk would fly off with the same type of flight, staying low to the ground and then rising up when it had put some distance between itself and the site. Unfortunately, we could not determine if the hawks were carrying food, but the behavior seemed consistent with feeding young. We also watched one Swainson's Hawk soaring and circling above the site around 11:00 AM.

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Scutigera, the House Centipede

Dave Leatherman

Doctor Whitney Cranshaw of Colorado State University (CSU) is the primary entomologist for our state's Cooperative Extension Service. He is the public's foremost "go-to" person on questions involving arthropods. An uncommonly curious and knowledgeable expert, he has worked as an entomologist for 29 years.

Doctor Boris Kondratieff is chief curator of CSU's C. P. Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity and another exceptionally experienced, gifted, and well-known entomologist and all-round naturalist. He has 25 years of experience in the field.

I have been interested in birds and creatures with lots of legs since childhood, and professionally all my adult life, for 38 years. That makes 92 years of experience between us investigating the jointlegged fauna of Colorado. Prior to July 2012, none of us had ever personally witnessed, or been told about, an outdoor scutigera.

What is a "scutigera"? *Scutigera coleoptrata* is a member of the class Chilopoda (centipedes), order Scutigeromorpha, family Scutigeridae, and goes by the common name of House Centipede (Fig. 1). Generally considered to be a native of the Mediterranean, it is now found throughout much of temperate Europe, Asia, and North America. The first mention of scutigera in this country comes from Pennsylvania in 1849 (Barnes 2003).

As their common name implies, most scutigeras live, or at least are seen by humans, indoors. In the warmer parts of their range, some live outdoors. Until recently, northern Colorado was not generally considered one of those "warmer areas."

*Fig. 1. House Centipede (*Scutigera coleoptrata*), Hyattsville, Maryland.* Photo by Jennifer Snyder (Creative Commons 2.0)

On the afternoon of 13 July 2012, I watched one pair of adult Canyon Wrens (*Catherpes mexicanus*) nesting along Spring Canyon Dam at Horsetooth Reservoir west of Fort Collins (Larimer County) bring one scutigera after another – at least 20 in all – to their soon-to-fledge young (Fig. 2). I can conjure no scenario in which the wrens had access to an indoor source of these beasts. I can only conclude that they found the scutigera outdoors, among the rocks at Horsetooth Reservoir.

This event was startling to me and to Nathaniel Warning, a graduate student at the University of Northern Colorado currently trying to work out the particulars of territoriality among Canyon Wrens and Rock Wrens (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). Nat has already arrived at many new insights into the nesting biology of these charismatic wren species and contacted me regarding their diets. He extended an opportunity, for which I am grateful, to view a particularly accessible nest among the rocks near Horsetooth Reservoir.

Scutigeras, like other centipedes, have no means of closing their spiracles, or breathing pores (Lewis 1981). To avoid desiccation, they are, therefore, partial to microhabitats that are humid and not excessively cold. Indoors, this means they are likely to be found in basements, bathrooms, and garages. Outdoors, they occur under rocks, in caves, below wood piles, and under compost (Cloudsley-Thompson 1968).

Fig. 2. Canyon Wren bringing House Centipede to nestlings, Spring Canyon Dam, Larimer County, Colorado, 13 July 2012. Photo by Dave Leatherman

A fully-grown scutigera has 15 pairs of legs, 14 of which are used for locomotion. The remaining pair at the front is modified into fangs for capturing and injecting prey with venom. Scutigeras rarely bite humans, and when they do, rarely break the skin. However, if our skin is broken by one of their bites, it can be painful on the order of a bee sting.

Scutigera legs increase in length from the front of the body to the rear. The rearmost pair of legs is exceed-

ingly long, resembling the antennae attached to the head. A young scutigera newly hatched from its egg has four pairs of crawling legs in addition to the modified "fang" pair (Bushsbaum et al. 1987, Drees and Jackman 1998, Barnes 2003). During its development, a scutigera molts five times, the number of legs increasing with each shed. The body contains three longitudinal stripes, and the legs are banded as well. The length of the legs and the way they arch and elevate the body above the surface when in motion contribute to the ominous appearance of a scutigera. I doubt that any human thinks warm thoughts upon viewing their first one.

Canyon Wrens may respond differently. Any serious student of birds knows that a bird's anatomy can give clues as to what the species might eat. This applies in particular to bills, but the whole body is involved, to be sure. I have long suspected Canyon Wrens must do special things, both in terms of the items they eat and how they procure them. Their greyhound proportions, long, slender, curved beaks, coloration befitting southwestern Native American pottery, and long claws contribute to a form that of necessity must fit unique function. During one of our wren nest viewing sessions, Nat told me of the Canyon Wren's dorso-ventrally compressed skull, thought to have evolved out of a need to negotiate narrow cracks and fissures in the rock making up much of its habitat.

And now we know at least one of the things northern Colorado Canyon Wrens find during spelunking and rock-climbing sessions, as they squeeze among the cracks and probe the humid darkness – scutigeras.

The hard-working adult wrens brought a myriad of other things to their babies in that cave nest at Horsetooth Reservoir in late July. Among them were fairly large spiders, moths, moth pupae, moth caterpillars, scarab beetles, crickets, and a few unidentified no-longer-flying objects. But far and away the most common prey, at least for this particular nest late in the nestling phase of this brood, was scutigeras.

More field work is necessary to allow assessment of how commonly scutigeras are utilized by Canyon Wrens in Colorado, and, indeed, throughout their range. Exactly where the centipedes are being captured also demands elucidation. It seems likely that the boulders covering the southwest-facing slopes of the dam are likely spots (parent wrens leaving the nest cave mouth, after dropping fecal sacs, often headed in the direction of the dam rocks) but they may occur also, or instead, in the native fissured rock that forms the "walls" surrounding the reservoir between the dams.

It has been a long time since my favorite soft drink, Mountain

Dew, marketed the catch-phrase "It'll Tickle Your Innards". If ever such a phrase applied to a food item of people or birds, in this case delivered live by dutiful parent wrens to the gaping throats of clamoring offspring, it would seem to be a scutigera.

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Fig. 7. Male Mexican Duck

Fig. 8. Male Mexican Duck

Fig. 9. Same male Mexican Duck as in Fig. 8

Fig. 10. Same male Mexican Duck as in Fig. 8