

C.F.O. Journal

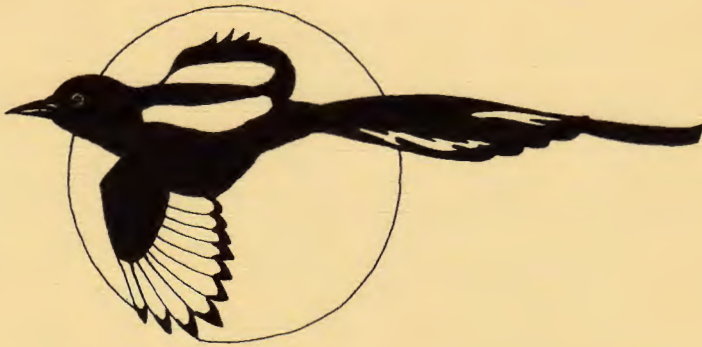
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Cover Photograph: Spotted Owl at Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde
N. P., August 1987 by Cliff Hence.

Pencil Drawings: by Ellen Klaver of Boulder, Colorado.

...Notes From the Editor

This issue, which concludes my first year as editor of the C.F.O. Journal is, I believe, the longest single volume ever published for our journal. I have tried to maintain the quality established during the recent years while Ann Hodgson was editor. At the same time, I have made the publishing of four issues on time a priority.

This issue also brings us up to date on seasonal reports, with the last "traditional" Seasonal Report for Fall 1987 from David Leatherman along with the latest Report From the Field for Fall 1988 from David Martin. The intervening seasonal reports have appeared over the last several issues--so we have not missed any. For those who, like myself, go to the seasonal report first, this issue will be a feast.

I am pleased by the fine quality of the articles submitted to be considered for publication in this journal. It is through your continued support and contributions that the C.F.O. Journal exists.

Please take a moment to renew your membership by filling out and mailing in the renewal form on the back of this issue. This is the only notice that you will be receiving so it is important to do this now.

And finally, with this issue we sadly mark the passing of a good friend and well-known naturalist, Frank Justice. Frank was as special to the C.F.O. as our organization was to him.

-M.A.J.

FALL 1987 SEASONAL REPORT
AUGUST 1 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30Dave Leatherman
2048 Whiterock Court
Fort Collins, CO 80526

The following summarizes birds reported during the fall of 1987. As is usual for such accounts, rarities, unusual dates and particularly interesting observations are stressed. By necessity of space and time, such a summary cannot do justice to the detail, massive volume and personality of individual reports.

The fall of 1987 was notably warm and dry. For example, our first frost in Fort Collins was 9/18, our first measurable snowfall was 11/15 (record late date for Ft. Collins is 11/21). Due to the nature of the various reports, particularly as they speak to common species, it is difficult to tally the total number of species seen in Colorado during the period. A figure of 335-340 species is certainly safe and represents, according to Hugh Kingery, the best total in 11 years.

LOONS - Two Red-throated Loons, one first seen at Pueblo Reservoir on 10/12 (DS), and one first seen at Denver's Cherry Creek Reservoir on 11/20 (JR) were good finds. About 10 Pacific Loons were found beginning on 10/24 and then through November from Brush Hollow Reservoir near Penrose, north to Denver and northeast to Jumbo Reservoir near Julesburg. Common Loons appeared in good numbers throughout the state. One 8/2-9 at Hamilton Reservoir north of Fort Collins was early (RR). A Denver Field Ornithologists' (D.F.O.) field trip to several northeastern Colorado (=NECO) reservoirs on 10/30 produced 20 individuals. No Yellow-billed Loons were reported.

GREBES - All five expected grebe species were reported. Conscientious efforts at distinguishing Clark's from Western Grebes are beginning to resolve the seasonal ratios of these two newly-split species. In gross terms, it would appear that while both decrease in number through the fall, the proportion of Clark's Grebes to the total of Aechmophorus grebes present steadily decreases from late summer into early winter. No Red-necked Grebes were reported.

PELICANS - American White Pelicans lingered late in small numbers, with two at Sweitzer Lake near Delta on 10/24 (MJ) and one at Prewitt Reservoir near Fort Morgan 11/28 (JR).

CORMORANTS - As with pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants stayed in small numbers through the period. No Olivaceous Cormorants were reported.

DARTERS & FRIGATEBIRDS - No hurricanes, no reports.

BITTERNS & HERONS - American Bittern reports were scarce, in what appears to be a habitat-related trend. One Least Bittern was reported from Lower Latham Reservoir near Greeley on 8/9 (JR). Great Egret reports tended to reflect known breeding colonies near Greeley and Boulder. Four Little Blue Herons were reported, with two at Union Reservoir near Longmont 8/8-15 (BF), one immature at Muir Springs near Fort Morgan 9/29 (BR), and one at Boulder's Baseline Reservoir 9/27-10/7 (MF). A dead Tricolored Heron was salvaged on 11/20 south of Yuma (C&VF), while an adult in breeding plumage was found on 9/5 at Lake Meredith near Ordway (MJ). The Cattle Egret colony at Riverside Reservoir seems in good shape with a post-breeding group of 75 birds reported at nearby Lower Latham 8/13-15. Small groups of these African opportunists were seen at the Clifton Ponds near Grand Junction (CD). A very late bird showed up at Delta on 11/5 (MJ). Green-backed Herons were at Pueblo (2), Denver (1), Boulder (1), and Grand Junction (1).

IBISES & SPOONBILLS - Normal reports (that is, groups of White-faced Ibises here and there, no spoonbills).

STORKS - No reports.

SWANS, GEESE & DUCKS - Only 4 Tundra Swans were reported during the period. One at Sweitzer Lake on 10/20 was unusual (MJ). The other 3 were found in Boulder Co. between mid-October and mid-November. The total of 40 or so Greater White-fronted Geese was better than the last few years. They first appeared in eastern Colorado 10/21 and could be found by diligent searchers through the period, thereafter. Jumbo Reservoir played host to 500+ white phase Snow Geese on 11/4 but only a few could be found there a few weeks later (JC). (Birds have wings?). A rare blue phase bird was found at Pruitt Reservoir 11/25 (JC). Ross' Geese continued to be found in small but regular numbers statewide after mid-October. Of interest were no less than six separate locations

or field trips noting 10+ Wood Ducks, indicating this species continued its resurgence. Two female Oldsquaws, one at Lower Latham on 11/22-23 (JH) and one at Denver's Chatfield Reservoir on 11/24 (AB) were rarities. Three female Black Scoters found Hamilton Reservoir to their liking 11/8-27 (RR, m.ob.). Three female Surf Scoters were first found at Hamilton 10/24 (WH). These birds were joined by a male in mid-November (JC) and 2-4 birds of this species were seen through the period. Six Surf Scoters were found in NECO in November (WH, JR). Two more visited Denver with one female at Johnson Lake in Denver on 11/7 (TJ) and one female at Chatfield 11/22 (TJ). An immature 11/15 at Vega Reservoir near Grand Junction was a Latilong 9 record (CD). As many as 7 White-winged Scoters appeared at Hamilton Reservoir with the first reported 11/14 (WH). This completed the Hamilton "grand slam," where many observers had all three scoter species in the same spotting scope field simultaneously. Three white-wings were reported in Denver and points northeast during November (JR, DM). Hooded Merganser reports began with 4 in Boulder on the early date of 9/5 and they remained scarce until November, at which time they became locally common.

AMERICAN VULTURES - Last reported dates for Turkey Vultures center around the period from 9/20 to 10/3, with a late group of 12 leaving Douglas Co. on 10/26 (D.F.O.).

KITES, EAGLES & HAWKS - Osprey reports were widespread and ran from 8/29 through 10/24. A large number, 12, were seen at Pueblo Reservoir on 10/10 (DS). Bald Eagles did not show up at several locations until mid-November, a date a few observers described as "late." Seven separate Broad-winged Hawks were seen in eastern Colorado between 9/5 and 9/23. Wheeler described an impressive movement of 2500 Swainson's Hawks at Anton 9/21-24, with a peak of 850 birds on 9/24. The last Swainson's report was 10/6 near Boulder. Rough-legged Hawks completed the changing of the guard by moving into Colorado in good numbers by mid-November. Gunnison's much studied and discussed Red-backed Hawk (or "buzzard" if you think its not legitimate) was first seen in mid-August (MD) and last seen (until summer 1988) on 10/30 (RM). Wheeler obtained wonderful photographs, as did others. Will the person who knows how this South American bird first got to Colorado please come forward?

FALCONS - Normal reports of the four expected species.

GROUSE, TURKEYS & QUAIL - Reports for this group were virtually non-existent for the period, particularly for grouse. Are Sharp-tailed Grouse still thought to be moving into extreme NECO from the northern plains states during winter? Northern Bobwhite reports came from Crow Valley (DL) and from as far west as Boulder (B.A.S.) (both groups released birds?).

RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS - The mild fall produced three November reports of lingering Virginia Rails. (See 1987 Christmas Counts, also).

CRANES - Some Sandhill Cranes were seen moving in large numbers early, with SH reporting 1500-2000 on 9/5 at Colbran on Grand Mesa. A D.F.O. field trip to Monte Vista on 10/25 found (and no doubt heard) 6500. A few groups could be found at NECO reservoirs into early November. The San Luis Valley is thought to have hosted 21 Whooping Cranes from 9/16 to the end of the period. One whooper with avian tuberculosis hit a power line on 11/2 (EM).

PLOVERS - Rare Lesser Golden-Plovers were seen in small numbers at Cherry Creek Reservoir 10/10-11/2 (JR, BR), Prewitt Reservoir on 10/3 (JW), and 9/11 at Jackson Reservoir north of Fort Morgan (JR). Howe provided the following dates and numbers for the Pawnee National Grassland Mountain Plovers: 8/8 (24), 8/11 (5), 8/16 (36) and 8/17 (83). Although nesting in the vicinity of Hamilton Reservoir, Ryder reported no Mountain Plovers during the period. Perhaps they were over at the Pawnee pre-migration party?

STILTS & AVOCETS - A total of 4 or 5 early September Black-necked Stilts were found in southeastern Colorado (=SECO) (DB, DS), with two at Antero Reservoir in Park, Co. on 8/9 (DB). A very late American Avocet was at Sweitzer Lake on 11/9 (MJ).

SANDPIPERS & PHALAROPES - It was a very strong showing by this group east of the Continental Divide (or so those with scopes tell me) and poor on the West Slope. Two Upland Sandpipers heard overhead at Arapahoe NWR near Walden on 8/27 seemed far west of their normal Colorado haunts (WH). Long-billed Curlew reports were scarce, with the Pueblo area reporting none ("unusual," DS). On 8/23, a juvenile Hudsonian Godwit appeared at Jackson Reservoir, as did an even rarer juvenile Ruddy Turnstone (both JR). Four separate Red Knot notations, probably three individuals, were unusual. These came from Barr Lake on 8/23 & 9/13 (WWB), Weld Co. on 8/30 (DN) and Jackson Reservoir 9/2 (CL).

Most of the peeps were seen widely in good numbers, mostly from mid-September through mid-October. Pectoral Sandpiper sightings extended well into November. Dunlins, a probable total of 5 individuals, were oddly seen only in late August and then in November. Two rare Buff-breasted Sandpipers described as "early" were seen in a field east of Proctor (Logan Co.) on 8/5 (JR) and another 8/29 through 9/13 at Jackson Reservoir (JR). Short-billed Dowitchers, a total of 17-18 individuals, were good identification challenges but perhaps about normal in number. These were found statewide from 8/14 to 10/31, the peak being late September to early October. Red Phalaropes, 3 or 4 individuals, were very good finds. All were at NECO reservoirs between 9/14 and 10/11 (JR, JC) -- all in winter plumage?

JAEGERS, GULLS & TERNS - The only jaeger species found was the Parasitic. Five individuals were found: one at Barr Lake 8/22 (DN), one well-documented dark phase immature at Antero Reservoir 8/30 (CDu, IB), one sub-adult 9/8 at Lake Meredith (JR), one at Chatfield Reservoir 10/1 (BR) and one sub-adult at Cherry Creek Reservoir 11/22 (JR). A second-winter Laughing Gull showed up at Lake Meredith 9/6 (MJ) and a second was found at Union Reservoir 9/20 (BF). Cherry Creek Reservoir continued to produce out-of-normal range gulls with a Little Gull in plumage transitional between juvenile and first-winter 9/13-26 (JR), and an Immature Mew Gull on 11/20 (JR). No less than 7 Thayer's Gulls (only one adult) were found at NECO reservoirs (WH, BP, NE, JR). A first-winter Greater Black-backed Gull dwarfed all relatives at Prewitt Reservoir on 11/25 (JC). First Glaucous Gull reports of the winter came in very late November. Two or three first-winter Black-legged Kittiwakes visited NECO between 11/24 and 11/28, brightening the Thanksgiving holiday. Perhaps the most-watched Kittiwake was one at Hamilton Reservoir 11/24-27 (JM). All 5 Sabine's Gulls reported were immatures and came in the period 9/18-29. The only Caspian Tern report came from the very unlikely location of Twin Lakes near Leadville on 8/2 (VZ). Common Terns appeared in the Pueblo area for the third straight fall indicating they are perhaps regular post-breeding migrants along the Arkansas River (A.V.A.S.). The lone Least Tern was at Blue Lake north of Las Animas 8/8 (JM).

MURRELETS - No reports.

PIGEONS & DOVES - All normal species seen.

CUCKOOS, ROADRUNNERS & ANIS - The only Yellow-billed Cuckoo report came from Sterling 8/5, perhaps indicating low NECO populations of tent caterpillars (JR).

BARN-OWLS - Declining, or just hard to find outside the cliffs of SECO? Two pairs nested successfully near Grand Junction (A.S.W.C.).

OWLS - In general, reports were scarce. The Burrowing Owl, an easy species to observe, appears down. Let us hope this is temporary.

GOATSUCKERS - Rare effort led to a rare Whip-poor-will, flushed from its island resting place in the Platte River near Julesburg on 9/27 (DB).

SWIFTS - An unusual record was a Black Swift on 8/24 over Denver (DN). Three Chimney Swifts over the Gunnison River near Delta on 8/29 constitute a first West Slope record (MJ). This species appeared to leave NECO in late September and SECO in early October. Two White-throated Swifts at the Bookcliffs 11/15 were very late (RL, CD).

HUMMINGBIRDS - One confused Broad-tailed Hummingbird was observed in Boulder on 11/18 (RVZ), no doubt tempted to stay behind by some prankster with cherry snowcones.

KINGFISHERS - Normal reports.

WOODPECKERS - The report of a Lewis' Woodpecker in November from Sweitzer Lake was not only unusual for location but described a bird storing corn in telephone pole cracks (MJ). Red-headed Woodpeckers are apparently down in SECO. One at Evergreen on 9/21 (WWB) and one at Upper Bear Creek on 10/5 (DIB, DH) were odd for mountain locations. Separate Red-bellied Woodpecker reports in late October-early November came from Prewitt Reservoir (BC, JK), Jumbo/Tamarack Ranch (JR, DB) and Bonny Reservoir south of Wray (JR). An unusually high number of eight Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, mostly immatures, appeared this fall. Most were well-studied. A few stayed and transformed into adult plumage over the winter, apparently confirming the validity of a published field identification character (i.e., no red on nape of immatures by late fall).

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS - The outstanding member of this group was a beautiful male Vermilion Flycatcher at Pueblo's Lake Minnequa 11/3-14 (AW). An Ash-throated Flycatcher in Waterton Canyon southwest of Denver on 9/12 was unusual (HK). Four Great Crested Flycatchers were found, one from west of Loveland (AM, JCh). The only Scissor-tailed Flycatcher north of I-70 in eastern Colorado was one at Owl Canyon north of Fort Collins on 9/20 (BD, PS).

SWALLOWS - Barn Swallows on 11/3 at Barr Lake (PE) and Grant Reservoir (TJ) were quite late.

JAYS, MAGPIES & CROWS - Blue Jays continue to expand in number and range. One specific account described how this species is now moving into the foothills around Rye during fall and winter (DS). A Pinyon Jay banded in Aurora on 9/13 certainly was not normal (MOS).

TITMICE - Normal reports.

BUSHTITS - Roving bands at various locations statewide.

NUTHATCHES - Normal reports.

CREEPERS - Normal reports.

WRENS - A sixfold increase (compared to 1986) in Bewick's Wrens was reported on the Grand Junction Fall Count (A.S.W.C.). Ten separate Winter Wrens were found after 9/14, particularly in extreme NECO (DB, JC, DFO, JK, RW).

DIPPERS - Normal reports.

KINGLETS & GNATCATCHERS - Golden-crowned Kinglets were unusually common during migration in the Fort Collins area, and probably elsewhere (m.ob.).

SOLITAIRES & THRUSHES - Small groups of Eastern Bluebirds were plentiful and seem to indicate a good nesting season in NECO. One Wood Thrush was at Bonny Reservoir on 9/15 (DJ). One Varied Thrush paid a visit to a Perry Street address feeder in Denver 11/9-10 (H&BO).

MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS - Curve-billed Thrashers started visiting Pueblo area feeders in late September (MK, JW1).

PIPITS - The Sprague's Pipits which very likely pass through and over eastern Colorado in small numbers continue to escape detection. We need to spend more time in corn stubble and/or learn the flight call of this species.

WAXWINGS - Earliest Bohemian Waxwings of the winter moved in from the north in late November.

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS - No reports.

SHRIKES - Normal reports, except for one Loggerhead in SECO on 11/22 which may have been an overwintering individual (DB).

VIREOS - One Bell's Vireo was seen in Boulder on 10/23 (DW). Three "blue-headed" (or "eastern") race birds (DL, JW, DN) and 5 "Cassin's" race birds (DFO, JR, JW) of the Solitary Vireo indicate this species warrants close scrutiny in Colorado. One of the best birds of the fall was a Yellow-throated Vireo in yellow cottonwoods 9/27-28 west of Fort Collins (WH). A well-studied Philadelphia Vireo was a triumph of identification skill 10/11-13 at Barr Lake (DA, m.ob.).

WOOD-WARBLERS - No less than 31 species were found, an impressive variety but probably not a banner year in terms of impressive numbers or distinct "waves." It would appear the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (WRG) continues to be one of the best warbler spots in Colorado, and certainly one of the best-covered. A Blue-winged Warbler was at Bonny Reservoir on 9/5 (DJ), with 2 at Barr Lake 10/11 (MC). One adult male Golden-winged Warbler sighting, a species predicted by some to be extinct in 50 years, at WRG 9/15 should be cherished (JW). Four (or five) Tennessee Warblers showed their white undertails this fall. Northern Parulas were at WRG 9/12 (JW) and Waterton 8/12-23 (DB). A well-documented Cape May Warbler was tardy and off-course at Crestone north of Alamosa 11/17-19 (HR). It is hard to tell how many Black-throated Blue Warblers were seen. The 8 reports probably represent 6 individuals, including a male and female at Salida 10/3-8 (RE). The 5 Black-throated Green Warbler reports were evenly distributed between 8/29 and 11/4. Chatfield Reservoir produced a nice male Blackburnian Warbler on 10/7 (HK) and an immature female was seen at Riverside Reservoir on 9/6 (JC, JH). The Front Range had 6 Palm Warblers, one Bay-breasted 10/20-24 at Barr Lake (DA), and only 3 Blackpolls. One Black-and-white Warbler at Fort Collins foraged in the snow 11/20 (through 12/4) (DL). A Worm-eating

Warbler spent two days in a yard in North Boulder 8/22-23 (RVZ). Ives Hannay had a Hooded Warbler at Waterton 8/15. A very late Wilson's appeared in a riparian area east of Boulder 11/27 (DN). A rare Canada Warbler was at WRG on 9/17 (NC, JW & TJ). Perhaps the most unusual warbler was a Southwest visitor, a probable male Painted Redstart, at Lake Hasty near Lamar 9/7-9 (JR).

TANAGERS - Three Summer Tanagers were found and upon discovery appeared to be in no rush. The WRG bird was seen from 8/23 to 9/10 (JW), while the Chatfield bird stayed 9/9 through 9/25 (VW).

CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS & BUNTINGS - One female Northern Cardinal was found at Jumbo Reservoir on 10/30 (JR), while a second wintering male was first reported from tangles in the WRG on 11/3 (MKr). Although mentioned in many widespread Colorado site guides, only one (female) Indigo Bunting was reported 9/5-6 from SECO (DFO). Are cowbirds adversely affecting this species?

TOWHEES, SPARROWS & LONGSPURS - This was an impressive season for eastern sparrows, particularly for Field, Swamp, White-throated and Harris' Sparrows. The first wave of Tree Sparrows moved into Colorado in mid-October, with one early bird at Crow Valley Campground near Briggsdale on 10/4 (WH). Both "eastern" and "western" Field Sparrow races were reported from Jackson Reservoir (JW). Reports before October are probably breeding birds in eastern Colorado. A grand total of 17 Field Sparrows were seen after 10/3, all in NECO except a new Latilong record at Sweitzer Lake (MJ). Sage Sparrow reports were mostly lacking but 5 at Sweitzer Lake on 9/13 were "early" and one 10/4 from along the Rio Grande River 4 miles north of New Mexico comes from a little-visited area (DB). Four Fox Sparrows were found outside their normal breeding areas. A Lincoln's Sparrow at Bonny Reservoir on 11/1 was late (JR). Swamp Sparrows were everywhere, it seemed. As would be expected, most were found in NECO, but two near Delta from mid-October to mid-November (MJ) and one at Capulin in Conejos Co. (DB) probably indicate their invasion was widespread. At least a few of these birds wintered near seeps and other areas combining open water and dense weedy growth. The White-throated Sparrow influx began as early as 9/6 and was quite evident throughout NECO in early October. Single birds were at Salida 11/3 (RE) and Glenwood Springs 11/1 (VZ). Harris' Sparrows were present in higher than normal numbers in extreme NECO (Bonny Reservoir, for example, but a few birds even appeared on the West Slope: Sweitzer Lake 11/18 (MJ) and 11/20 in Glenwood Springs

(JMe). An early immature female Snow Bunting at Tamarack Ranch 10/30 was also the only of her species reported (JR).

BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES - Rusty Blackbirds made a good showing this fall with ten separate reports representing 64 individuals. All reporters going into any detail indicated the birds were near water. A Great-tailed Grackle at Del Norte 11/26 was uncommonly late (JRa).

FINCHES - Ryder had a female Purple Finch in his yard in Fort Collins 11/25-26, the only report of this species. Two to ten White-winged Crossbills were observed in the higher portions of Boulder Co. in each month of the period (DiB, DH). This was not a big year for northern "invaders" but four Common Redpolls were found in late November at feeders (Denver and Fort Collins). A very unusual grosbeak, evidently an Evening Grosbeak, appeared at Zerbi's feeder in Glenwood Springs during November. The bird was solid canary yellow with a light beak, white wings and white tail. Its eye was dark.

INTRODUCED SPECIES - A small group of elusive Chukars was found at Island Acres SWA west of Grand Junction on 9/25 (JR).

The author of this summary accepts responsibility for any errors of fact (dates, locations, discovering individual credits, etc.) and/or judgement (what to include, what not to include) found herein. I publicly apologize to Mark Janos and Peter Gent for the delay in getting this report worked up, despite their more-than-patient requests to do so.

CITED OBSERVERS:

D. Arbor (DA), Arkansas Valley Audubon Society (A.V.A.S.), Audubon Society of Western Colorado (A.S.W.C.), Ilze Balodis (IB), Ann Bonnell (AB), Boulder Audubon Society (B.A.S.), Dan Bridges (DB), Winston William Brockner (WWB), Diane Brown (DiB), Jerry Cairo (JC), Mike Carter (MC), John Chrisafis (JCh), Brenda Cockrell (BC), Nevin Corl (NC), Mark Dailey (MD), Bobbie DeMuth (BD), Denver Field Ornithologists (D.F.O.), Coen Dexter (CD), Charles Duncan (CDu), Ruby Ebright (RE), Patty Echelmeyer (PE), Norm Erthal (NE), B. Fiehweg (BF), Carroll & Vickie Flemister (C&VF), Marge Foland (MF), Dave Hallock (DH), Ives Hannay (IH), Joe Himmel (JH), William Howe (WH), Sid Hyde (SH), Mark Janos (MJ), Dave Johnson (DJ), Tina Jones (TJ), Bill Kaempfer (BK), Joey Kellner

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Northern Pintail



NEWS FROM THE FIELD:
SPRING 1988 (March, April, and May)
FALL 1988 (October and November)

David E. Martin
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This issue's article will consist of two parts. The first covers reports for spring 1988 that were received after the last publication deadline. An article about last spring's sightings appeared two issues ago, so I will not include here birds discussed in that issue. The second part is a report for this fall, October and November, (September was discussed in the last issue). Our goal is to continue to publish on a schedule where this season's report will feature birds reported for the last three months, but also discuss birds seen earlier from reports received after our publication deadline, such as those reports from American Birds.

If you observed a bird marked with an asterisk (*) in the text, whether you found the bird or not, please submit a report to the C.F.O. Records Committee, so these reports of rare birds can be closely examined. Send details to the C.F.O. Records Committee, c/o Curator--Zoological Collections, Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park, Denver, CO 80205. Please remember that you can report any bird you see simply by calling the Colorado Bird Report at (303) 423-5582.

Spring 1988

Coen Dexter found Eared Grebes on the western slope at Highline Reservoir in Mack on April 25, while Jerry Cairo commented on their scarcity around Greeley this spring where they usually are much more common. An American Bittern was heard calling on April 29 by Bill Howe and Tasha Kotliar at Fort Collins' Flatiron site, and others were seen by Cairo at Greeley's Lower Latham Reservoir, a good spot to find this marsh dweller. Berthoud's Least Bitterns (*) were seen only once, on May 25 by Bobbie Christensen, who saw them in the same area where they nested the last two years and overwintered last year. A flock of

85 White-faced Ibis seen by Jack Merchant at Dotsero on April 23 was the largest flock he had ever seen at this western slope location.

A Tundra Swan was seen in Sedalia by Ruby Ebright on April 4 as it flew north with a flock of Canada Geese. More than 10,000 Snow Geese were seen by Bill Brockner at Jumbo Reservoir in northeastern Colorado on March 19, at the height of their northward migration. Two Ross' Geese were found by Jerry Cairo at one of his favorite haunts, Carbody Lake, in Weld County on April 5-6.

Ron Ryder conducted a count of migrant ducks in the Fort Collins area and came up with the following high numbers for this spring's migration. Twenty-six Green-winged Teal were seen on March 9, as were 450 Northern Pintails, with the recovery of a Pintail banded in California. The high Blue-winged Teal count was 43 on April 8, and included birds banded in Louisiana and Mississippi. Four hundred Northern Shovelers were seen on April 3 and 500 Gadwalls were counted on April 8. High Redhead counts were on March 9 when 550 were found and on March 19 when 1500 were seen on Wellington Reservoir #3. During this period, 663 Redheads were banded. The highest count day for Lesser Scaup was April 3 when 470 were seen. A single Oldsquaw was seen on March 30 by Van Truan on Pueblo Reservoir. Fifty-nine Common Goldeneyes were found by Ryder on March 9. A female Hooded Merganser was found May 28-29 by Howe at Ovid in an area along the South Platte River where possible nest sites are abundant. Could this species nest here? This area has lots of snags and many nesting Wood Ducks. For the third year in a row, Merchant found female Common Mergansers with young at Dotsero.

The first two Turkey Vultures of the season were seen by Lu Bainbridge as they arrived in Cortez on March 26, about average for Cortez. A single Turkey Vulture surprised Merchant by arriving early on March 29 at Gypsum. An impressive kettle of 55 vultures were seen by Blair French and Keith Shultz on April 9 at Poudre Park. The season's first Osprey was found at Pueblo Reservoir by Van Truan on March 30. Van found up to 6 Ospreys here through May 23. Statewide, 8 nesting Bald Eagle pairs produced 8 young. Broad-winged Hawk reports were down this spring with only two reported: 1 by the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society field trip to Bonny Reservoir on May 7 and one seen by Mark Janos flying northwest over La Junta City Park on May 11. Jim and Rosie

Watts report a pair of Red-tailed Hawks that successfully raised a family from their nest in a church belfry in Canyon City. A Ferruginous Hawk was seen on May 22 in Cortez by Bainbridge. A pair of American Kestrels nested for the third year in a row in a box at the Watts' property in Penrose. Joe Himmel found two different Peregrine Falcons following their meals north over Lower Latham Reservoir on May 2 and 4.

A visit to the Sage Grouse lek north of Wolcott in the last half of April rewarded Merchant with sightings of 14 males and 7 females. Four Northern Bobwhites found in Longmont by Joanne Amoroso and Ann Delzell on two different days in early April were a long way from their traditional haunts. Could these be escapes? Twenty-eight Northern Bobwhites were found by Howe at Julesburg on April 19, a high count for that area. Ryder reported an American Coot band recovery from western Mexico on March 9 in northern Colorado. Eight Sandhill Cranes seen by Ryder on March 27 and 4 more on March 28 were all at Hamilton Reservoir, north of Wellington. Two Whooping Cranes surprised Bob and Eleanor Hamre as the cranes flew overhead 20 miles south-southwest of Walden on April 10. This pair was most certainly from the Gray's Lake foster flock.

Two Black-necked Stilts on April 30 were the first ever seen by Ebright in Sedalia. Fifty American Avocets found during the spring by Cairo at a pond on Weld County Road 59 were more than usual. This was a good spring for Willets, and Cairo found them "everywhere" throughout the period from April 25 to May 12. A single Whimbrel sighting is noteworthy in Colorado so a flock of 22 seen on April 27 at Union Reservoir, east of Longmont by Cairo was fantastic. Three more were seen on May 21 at Nelson Reservoir in Fort Collins by Bill Prather. Cairo also found 18 Marbled Godwits on April 27 at Union, in a flock separate from, but close to, the Whimbrel flock. Dave Silverman found two breeding-plumaged Red Knots at Pueblo on May 20 and 2 more on the 21st at Vineland. A Dunlin was seen on May 5 at Lower Latham Reservoir by Himmel and 2 more were seen by Bill Prather at Nelson Reservoir in Fort Collins on May 22. Ten Red-necked Phalaropes were found by Leatherman at Walden Pond in Boulder on May 20.

The high count of Franklin's Gulls was 138 on April 10, seen east of Fort Collins by Howe. A pleasant surprise was 26 Bonaparte's Gulls found by Howe and Kotliar at Nelson Reservoir on April 12, and 10 more which Howe found at Jumbo Reservoir on April

19.

A single Band-tailed Pigeon was seen by Ted Swem in Evergreen on April 14, and an amazing 150 were seen on April 30 at Florence by Mark Peterson. Merchant reported Band-tailed Pigeons did very well this spring in the Eagle area, with 11 seen south of Gypsum on May 21. Four Yellow-billed Cuckoos were found by Howe on May 27, in Brush State Wildlife area. Cuckoos seem to do much better in the hundred mile strip of Colorado that borders with Kansas than elsewhere in the state.

The pair of Common Barn-Owls at Fruita fledged 5 young this spring. This is the only known nesting pair in the entire Grand Junction area. Does anyone know of more? Two Northern Pygmy-Owls were heard in Rocky Mountain National Park in April by Chase Swift who is famous for his accurate ears. The big owl news this spring comes from Hugh Kingery, who along with Marilyn Colyer observed a pair of Spotted Owls (*) in the same area of Mesa Verde National Park where last summer park naturalists found and photographed fledglings, providing us with the first hard evidence that this species nests in Colorado. Up to 8 Boreal Owls were heard in the Cameron Pass area in early April by Ryder who heard another on April 29 in Rocky Mountain National Park. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls were seen by Glenwood Audubon in Glenwood Springs on March 3. Another was heard calling on April 1 near McCoy by Clark and Margaret Ewing, who only heard it for one night, not for several weeks as they did last year. Two more Saw-whet Owls were heard and then photographed in Rocky Mountain National Park by Chase Swift. A possible Chuck-will's-widow (*) was observed for a total of eight seconds by Cairo at Crow Valley Campground on the Pawnee Grasslands on May 25. After two hours of searching, Cairo could not relocate this potential addition to Colorado's avifauna.

Merchant commented that White-throated Swift numbers were higher than any of the last six years. This species always arrives early and 9 were seen at Red Rocks west of Denver on March 27 by Brockner. Others were seen the same day west of Fort Collins by Dave Leatherman. Every year in Cortez, Bainbridge says that the Black-chinned Hummingbirds arrive when the Buffalo Currant bloom, which was on April 28 this year.

A Lewis' Woodpecker seen at Gypsum on May 18 by Merchant was unusual. Red-headed Woodpeckers seem to be doing well in the proper habitat and were reported this spring along the South

Platte River from Greeley and eastward. A Red-bellied Woodpecker nest was found by Howe on May 29 east of Ovid. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker which overwintered in the Fort Collins' Grandview Cemetery was last seen by Leatherman on March 13.

An Olive-sided Flycatcher seen by Merchant on May 22 was early for Eagle, and a Least Flycatcher found at Last Chance by Kingery was a new Latilong record. Unusual was a Gray Flycatcher seen on May 4 at Evergreen Lake by Brockner and Dieter Kamm. Two Say's Phoebes seen by Merchant on March 31 constituted an early arrival date for Eagle. A Great-crested Flycatcher was found by Leatherman as it sang on the Lamar Junior College campus in Lamar. Just to prove they are true wanderers, 85 Pinyon Jays flew by Dana Cuil in Lyons on March 21. Also wandering were 13 Bushtits in Joe Himmel's Greeley yard on March 16.

Ten Golden-crowned Kinglets were found in Rist Canyon west of Fort Collins by Howe on March 6. The habitat there is 90% Ponderosa Pine, and 10% Douglas Fir. Bohemian Waxwings were around statewide until about the first of April, when they all vanished. A Northern Shrike seen by Merchant on March 20 was as late as he had ever seen them in Eagle. Ron Lambeth reported 5 Gray Vireos, the first arrivals of the season, in Grand Junction on May 1.

A well-described male Blue-winged Warbler found by Merchant in Gypsum Ponds State Wildlife Area on May 9 was extraordinary. Single singing male Northern Parulas were found by Howe at Brush State Wildlife Area and nearby Dune State Wildlife area on May 18. A female Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen by Leatherman at Dixon Reservoir in Fort Collins, and two male Black-throated Gray Warblers were well described by Kotliar in Lyons on April 25. A Northern Waterthrush was seen on May 15 in McCoy by the Ewings. A female Hooded Warbler was seen on the east side of Riverside Reservoir by Joe Himmel on April 29 and a male was seen by Joe Rigli in Fort Morgan on May 12. Twelve singing male Yellow-breasted Chats were found by Merchant at Dotsero where this species may not be so uncommon after all.

A single Indigo Bunting was a refreshing contrast to the snow cover as it fed at Merchant's feeder in Eagle on May 2. Another seen on May 18 in Last Chance by Urling Kingery was a first Latilong record. Van Truan heard a strange song in Walsenburg on May 14 and upon investigation found a singing Baird's Sparrow (*).

Good numbers of Fox Sparrows were seen in and around Eagle by Merchant in April and May. Five White-throated Sparrows were seen in Colorado City on March 13 by Silverman. A high of 114 McCown's Longspurs were seen on May 3 by Ryder at Pawnee Grasslands.

Four Scott's Orioles were seen at the State Line pinyon grove west of Fruita by Dexter on May 15, and 6 more were spotted in McCoy by the Ewings on May 25.

A single female Purple Finch was netted and checked in hand at Ryder's feeder in Fort Collins. One Common Redpoll was seen by Steve Thide in Longmont on March 6. The Watts' found Evening Grosbeaks "everywhere" this spring, in the area bounded by Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and Canyon City.

Fall 1988

October and November are exciting times to go birding in Colorado, and these months in 1988 lived up to that expectation. October was dry and warm with very little rain or snow anywhere statewide. November was wetter, although most of the snow fell in the mountains, leaving the eastern and western portions dry.

This is the time of year to look for loons, and a good complement of Pacific Loons was found. Easiest to study was one seen by Duane Nelson in Wheat Ridge which stayed on a gravel pit pond from October 27 to November 23. Another Pacific Loon was seen on Prewitt Reservoir by Dan Bridges with 8 Common Loons on October 29, and Howe found 4 Pacific Loons with a dozen Common Loons there November 5. A single Pacific Loon with 5 Common Loons was seen at Cherry Creek on November 11 by Dick Schottler. Three more Pacific Loons were seen on November 13 by Silverman at Pueblo Reservoir, in with many Common Loons. Other Pacific Loons were found by Glenn and Jeane Hageman at McClellan Reservoir on November 18 and Cherry Creek Reservoir on November 30. A single Common Loon was found by Leatherman at Joe Wright Reservoir, near the top of Cameron Pass, on October 19. Dave Farmer, a beginning birdwatcher from Longmont, was at Hamilton Reservoir with David Leatherman on November 5 and was thrilled to be getting good close looks at the first loon he had ever seen. After some study, he commented to Leatherman that it sure looked a lot more like the fieldguide's picture of a Yellow-billed Loon (*) than a Common Loon. After a fast re-focus, Leatherman agreed. This started the

rush to Hamilton Reservoir to see the third Yellow-billed Loon found in Colorado in the last three years. This bird's outstanding attribute was its propensity to hang around the dam where it could be observed from as close as 20 feet, often with Common Loons! With this, the state's sixth Yellow-billed Loon in the last 7 years, Colorado must rank only behind Alaska in the number of reliable recent North American sightings of this species. This Yellow-billed Loon was still entertaining crowds of observers on November 30, amid speculation that it may spend the winter here. A winter-plumaged Red-necked Grebe was found by Howe on November 28 at Hamilton Reservoir and was still there on the 30th. A White Pelican, found by Schottler on November 11 on McClellan Reservoir, was late. White Pelicans are not often seen on Colorado's western slope, so it was a surprise for Dexter when he found a very late individual on November 19 at Grand Junction's Corn Lake. Two more late White Pelicans were seen soaring over Wadsworth and Hampden in Lakewood on November 30 by Marilyn Rowe.

Scott and Diane Seltman were at a loss for words when a female Magnificent Frigatebird (*) drifted over them on the western Kansas prairies at Hill City, Kansas on October 8. This bird, only 100 miles east of Colorado, was blown in by Hurricane Gilbert. The frigatebird sighting by the Seltman's is positive proof that clean living really does pay off. An American Bittern was found by Kingery at Cherry Creek Reservoir on October 22. Great Egret is another of those species much more likely to be encountered on the eastern plains, so the single seen on the late date of November 22 at Fruita Sewer Ponds by Dexter was noteworthy. An adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*) rewarded Bob Lehman with good close looks at Cherry Creek Reservoir on October 6.

We usually see Tundra Swans each November, and this year they came through between November 18 and 20. Three immature Tundra Swans were found on November 18 at Cherry Creek Reservoir by the Hagemans. This report was followed by 3 reported by the DFO in the Platte River and Chatfield areas on November 19. Five adults were seen flying along the Platte River by Schottler on the 19th, and a single was found by Dexter also on the 19th at Highline Reservoir near Mack. On November 20, Ryder found 16 swans at Hamilton Reservoir, at least one of which was still there on the 23rd. Tina Jones saw 2 at Chatfield, and Bill Brockner found one at Marston Reservoir in southern Jefferson County on November 30. A single Trumpeter Swan (*) was seen on November 26 by the

Arkansas Valley Audubon Society at Pueblo's CF&I Ponds. This swan was well studied as it traveled with 4 Tundra Swans. The Denver Field Ornithologist's trip to Pueblo found 4 early Greater White-fronted Geese and 2 Snow Geese at CF&I Ponds on October 23. One Greater White-fronted Goose was found by Dexter in with Canada Geese on November 19-20 at Highline Reservoir north of Mack. Three more Greater White-fronted Geese were found by Mammoser in Fort Collins from November 20 to 25. Seven Greater White-fronted Geese alighted on McClellan Reservoir on November 25 as the Hagemans watched. Bridges reported 150 white phase Snow Geese at Prewitt Reservoir on October 29. A single Snow Goose was seen at Barr Lake by the Rows on October 30, and another single Snow Goose was seen by Dexter with a Ross' Goose from November 19-20 at Highline Reservoir. Six-hundred Snow Geese were reported by Himmel at Jumbo Reservoir on November 26, mostly white phase, but with a few blues mixed in. Mammoser reported a Ross' Goose which spent the last half of November in Fort Collins, and Jones found another which briefly visited McClellan Reservoir on November 20. Single Oldsquaws were seen at Hamilton Reservoir on October 28 by Kevin Cook, and at Chatfield State Park on November 17 by Dorothy Horton. Another, a male found by Bridges, was at Jumbo Reservoir from November 21 to 26, and a female was found on November 23 by Jean Maguire and TenBrink at Quincy Reservoir in Aurora. A female Oldsquaw was found on November 27 at Queens State Wildlife Area by Janos.

The fall's only Black Scoter was a female seen on November 2 at Cherry Creek Reservoir by Jack Reddall. Surf Scoters arrived early this fall with the first seen by Bill Prather on October 11 at Union Reservoir. Ten more were found by Ann Hodgson the next day at Black Hollow Reservoir, a rarely visited lake on the plains east of Fort Collins. A single Surf Scoter seen by Nelson on October 29 was with a flock of White-winged Scoters in Wheat Ridge. A single White-winged Scoter was found by Norm Erthal on October 15 at Hamilton Reservoir. This scoter and another were seen off and on through November 30.

When the goldeneyes arrive in the fall, everyone searches through the flocks looking for the prized Barrow's Goldeneye. This year's winners were TenBrink, who found a pair at Hamilton Reservoir on November 13, Bob Evans who reported a dozen on Grand Lake where they are annual winter residents, Todd Myers who found a pair on Valmont Reservoir in Boulder on November 19, and the Hagemans for the pair seen on Denver's Sloan Lake from November 25

through 30. Hooded Mergansers made a good showing this fall, with many reports from the Denver area lakes. Further north, Ryder counted 23 Hooded Mergansers at Hamilton on November 6, and 25 on November 20. Thousands of Common Mergansers were reported by Himmel from Jumbo Reservoir on November 26. Also on the 26th, Mammoser reported thousands of Common Mergansers at Prewitt Reservoir, which were accompanied by a swarm of over 2000 gulls, who are fond of robbing mergansers of their catch. Schottler found two female Red-breasted Mergansers at Hamilton Reservoir on November 6, and Maguire and TenBrink found another at Cherry Creek Reservoir on November 23.

An Osprey visited Sawhill Ponds on October 1, where Scott Fitzmorris was also visiting. Janos observed up to 6 Ospreys at John Martin Reservoir from October 10-23. Eight Bald Eagles were sighted on November 5 by Kingery as they were apparently migrating south through the foothills west of Denver. A single Goshawk surprised TenBrink on November 22 by appearing in a Denver neighborhood near Broadway and Belleview. TenBrink also reported lots of hawks in the northeast Denver area in late November, especially Ferruginous Hawks at prairie dog towns, but also including Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks, and Prairie Falcons. A female Merlin obliged Janos by perching on a telephone pole above the Hale store near Bonny Reservoir on October 8. On October 22, a Merlin put on a show for Kingery and his class of birdwatchers at Cherry Creek. Another Merlin was seen on November 12 at Barr Lake by Norm Erthal. A Peregrine Falcon reported on November 19 by Dexter in Grand Junction is believed to be the same individual that wintered last year.

A Ruffed Grouse (*) shot by a hunter in extreme western Colorado in October was taken 1/2 mile east of the Utah state line, in west central Moffat County and constitutes a new state record. Ruffed Grouse are a resident of the adjacent Uinta Mountains in Utah, and many a Colorado birder has fantasized that they would sometime come over to our side. Colorado Field Ornithologists will sponsor a field trip into this area on April 29 and 30, 1988, and attempt to determine if this species nests in Colorado; details will be announced later.

The Colorado Bird Observatory at Barr Lake reported a thousand Sandhill Cranes passing through between October 2 and 6, and 4000 descending to roost on the evening of October 28. A number of early risers who came out before 6:00 a.m. on the 29th

were amply rewarded when the cranes took to the skies. Flocks totaling 1500 passed over Janos at La Junta on October 20, heading south. A late pair of Sandhill Cranes were seen by Denver's Tuesday Birders on November 8 from a plains overlook at Mount Falcon Park in the foothills west of Denver.

A Greater Yellowlegs seen by Silverman on November 13 along the Arkansas River was late. Three Pectoral Sandpipers were seen on October 5 by Leatherman at Union Reservoir, 5 more were reported east of Boulder by Hodgson on October 12, another 5 were seen at Cheraw Reservoir by Janos on October 22, and 3 were seen at CF&I ponds on October 23 by Denver Field Ornithologists. A Dunlin was well observed by Denver Field Ornithologists at Pueblo Reservoir on October 22. Another Dunlin, seen by Wade Leitner on Boyd Lake in Loveland on November 20, was late, as was the Long-billed Dowitcher seen November 13 below Pueblo Reservoir by Silverman. A single Red-necked Phalarope was found at Boulder's Sawhill Ponds on October 1 by Scott Fitzmorris, and three more were seen at Union Reservoir on October 11 by Bill Prather. Last year was thought to be sensational because four Red Phalaropes were seen in the fall in eastern Colorado. Two found in October this year brought this year's tally up to four. Perhaps we have been overlooking this species. A Red Phalarope found at Cherry Creek Reservoir on October 13 by Kingery was polite enough to stick around for five days, allowing many close looks. Silverman reported that the Red Phalarope found on October 23 by Denver Field Ornithologists at CF&I Ponds in Pueblo remained through November 13. An immature Parasitic Jaeger was found by Dorothy Horton at Chatfield Reservoir on October 28. Another Parasitic Jaeger on November 13 at Pueblo Reservoir allowed Silverman close approach and careful study.

If birders instead of the Chinese were allowed to name each year, 1988 would be known in Colorado as the year of the Gull. A new state record, 3 Little Gulls, and 4 Mew Gulls, were a bonanza for Colorado birders in October and November, and there were lots more. After this spring's second state record of Lesser Black-backed Gull (*), the big fall news was a sighting of a Common Black-headed Gull (*) at Cherry Creek Reservoir on October 8, by Wade Leitner, Jack Reddall, and Steve Stachowiak. This addition to the Colorado state bird list was seen again on October 9 by several more individuals, including Thompson Marsh, who ticked off the 412th bird he has seen in Colorado. For the second year in a row, a Little Gull (*) visited Colorado, but this time it brought

friends. First to be seen was an adult Little Gull found by Leatherman at Union Reservoir on October 6. This gull stayed long enough to be seen by all who came by on the 7th. A first winter Little Gull was then found on November 12 at Cherry Creek Reservoir by Leitner. It stayed around the next day, to the delight of many observers. Not to be outdone, Claude Vallieres and Joe Roller reported this year's third Little Gull, a juvenile-plumaged individual which spent November 19-28 on Denver's Sloan Lake, giving many birdwatchers nice close looks. This Little Gull was in a different plumage than the Cherry Creek Gull and so was a different individual. Bonaparte's Gulls were well reported this fall with 9 seen at Prewitt by Bridges on October 29, and 35 found by Reddall on November 2 at Cherry Creek, some of which were still there on November 23. Over 100 Bonaparte's Gulls were reported on November 13 by Silverman from Pueblo Reservoir. A dozen more Bonaparte's Gulls were found by Howe on November 27 at Horseshoe Lake, north of Loveland.

Not content with helping to find Colorado's first Common Black-headed Gull a day earlier, Leitner discovered an immature Mew Gull (*) on October 9 at Cherry Creek Reservoir. It stayed through November 30, and will probably winter. Another Mew Gull, in second-year plumage, was seen by Ira Sanders on November 11 at Union Reservoir. A Mew Gull in immature plumage was seen by Silverman when it visited Lake Beckworth in Colorado City on November 8 only. The season's fourth Mew Gull, found from November 20-22 at the Fruita Sewer Ponds by Dexter, is a first western slope record. Two Thayer's Gulls were seen on November 13 by Silverman in Pueblo Reservoir, and five were found by TenBrink at a lake at 88th and Dahlia in Northglenn from November 19-28. Another was seen by Howe on Loveland's Horseshoe Lake on November 27.

A first year Great Black-backed Gull (*) was seen on November 2 by Reddall at Cherry Creek Reservoir. This is one of only a handful of records in the state, but was the third Great Black-backed Gull seen in the state this year! The fall's reported Black-legged Kittiwakes included an immature seen by Scott Fitzmorris at Hamilton Reservoir on November 20, and an immature found by Randy Lentz at Cherry Creek Reservoir and seen from November 25-30. An immature Black-legged Kittiwake found by Himmel at Horseshoe Lake north of Loveland was seen from November 25 to 27. Still another Black-legged Kittiwake was seen by John Prather on November 27 and 28 at Hamilton Reservoir. Howe,

Leatherman, and Mammoser point out that two of the kittiwakes in northern Colorado on November 27 lacked black legs. The Horseshoe Reservoir kittiwake had yellowish legs, while the legs on the Hamilton Reservoir kittiwake were flesh colored. While only a small percentage of immature Black-legged Kittiwakes do not have black legs, Colorado had two which did not at the same time! Remember, when attempting to identify any bird, look for more than one field mark. Continuing their strong showing from September, two adult and six immature Sabine's Gulls were found in the first 9 days of October at three reservoirs: at Union, Cherry Creek, and Jackson.

An Eastern Screech-Owl was heard calling by David Martin at 10:30 a.m. on November 6 just east of Hamilton Reservoir, a new species for the site. A Northern Pygmy-Owl was found by Leatherman in the Poudre Canyon on October 19, and a Long-eared Owl was found at Chatfield on October 16 by Virgil Williams. While visiting friends in the mountains 9 miles east of Durango on November 27, Dexter watched a Saw-whet Owl as it defied conventional wisdom and hunted during the day. Whether the 10 inches of new snow had caused the little owl to fail to catch prey at night and come out during the day is not known, but Dexter reported that the owl had no fear of humans, "I could have picked him up if I wanted to." Instead, Coen shot several rolls of film.

A Red-bellied Woodpecker seen by Bridges on October 4, 2 miles west of Fort Morgan, was quite a bit west of Crook where this species has been found. An immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen by Bridges on October 2 along the Platte River near Fort Morgan. Winter Wrens arrived in the Denver area on October 25, when one was seen at Bear Creek Lake Park in Lakewood by Mary Jane Schock. A second Winter Wren was found at Chatfield State Park on October 30 by Joe and Adam Mammoser. A Marsh Wren chattered at Kingery and his bird class at Cherry Creek Reservoir on October 22. Very late was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher seen on November 5 at Chatfield by Virgil Williams. After several reports from Seltman of Varied Thrush in neighboring Kansas this fall, Dexter reported one seen on November 30 in Grand Junction, where it has been seen in a yard for three days. A Water Pipit was seen by Leatherman while it perched on a telephone wire at Union Reservoir on October 5th--a strange perch indeed for a pipit.

A Solitary Vireo of the eastern race was found by Kingery on October 18 in Waterton Canyon. John Prather continues to prove

that there are still warblers in Boulder by finding a Nashville and a Chestnut-sided Warbler on October 24 along Boulder Creek. The Chestnut-sided stayed until Halloween, but wasn't found the next day. A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen by Cook on September 30 at Lory State Park, west of Fort Collins. A Pine Warbler was found on November 26 in Pueblo City Park by Silverman and the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society field trip, which had seen a Trumpeter Swan only an hour earlier. It hardly seems fair, does it? A Black-and-white Warbler was found at Bonny Reservoir by Janos on October 9. Earlier in the month, on October 5, John Prather and Bob Andrews found a Kentucky Warbler on the C.U. campus, calmly feeding beneath a bush only 5 feet from a busy footpath!

Two male Northern Cardinals were found along the Arkansas River south of Holly on November 27 by Janos, who reported finding Cardinals here about one out of every three visits. A Lazuli Bunting was banded on October 2 by the Colorado Bird Observatory at Barr Lake. Three Field Sparrows were seen on October 8 on the south side of Bonny Reservoir by Janos. A Fox Sparrow of the eastern race was reported from October 2-6 by the Colorado Bird Observatory on the east side of Barr Lake. Single Swamp Sparrows were seen on October 22 at Cherry Creek State Park by Hugh Kingery and his bird class, and on October 23 at Barr Lake, where one was banded by the Colorado Bird Observatory. The first Golden-crowned Sparrow of the season was found by Spencer in Wheat Ridge Greenbelt on October 31. On October 1-2, Leatherman reported a movement of White-throated Sparrows as he saw several in Fort Collins. Janos reported 2 at Bonny Reservoir on October 8. On October 23, several White-throated Sparrows were also seen at Barr Lake. A White-throated Sparrow at Nelson's feeder at 8000 feet elevation in the foothills west of Denver from November 12-17 was an unusual find at this location. Another White-throated Sparrow was seen on November 18-19 by Schottler at Chatfield State Park. The bird was seen in a flock of sparrows including Harris' Sparrows that was seen from November 18-26 by Jones. Several Lapland Longspurs were heard by Schottler around Hamilton Reservoir in with the flocks of Horned Larks on November 6.

Unusual were two Yellow-headed Blackbirds seen at Henry's Lake in Lakewood by Lisa Hardy on November 5. An early Rusty Blackbird was found by Bridges on October 4, 2 miles upstream from Muir Springs and Fort Morgan. A rarity in the state only several years ago, Great-tailed Grackles wintered in Fruita last year, and

the 17 found by Dexter at the Clifton Water Plant on November 19 may do the same this year. Three American Goldfinches seen on November 17 at Nelson's feeder were unusual for this mountain location.

LEAST FLYCATCHER NESTING IN COLORADO

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Least Flycatchers (Empidonax minimus) have been suspected of nesting in Colorado for a long time, probably more than 70 years. Bailey and Niedrach (1965) noted the following summer records: 2 in Jefferson County 8 August 1911 and one there 30 August 1914; 1 in Denver 19 June 1927. More recently, summer sightings in American Birds have included birds at Loveland (28 June-19 July 1983), Chatfield State Park (13 June 1986), Evergreen and Sterling (25 July 1987) (Kingery 1983, 1986, 1987).

On 4 July 1988, I discovered a nest of the Least Flycatcher in Lyons, Colorado (40°13'N, 105°15'W). My son, John, and I had been seeing and hearing Least Flycatchers in the Lyons area since the middle of May. We had also found Least Flycatchers in Lyons in May of 1986 and 1987 and we were suspicious that nesting had occurred. In 1988, we were unable to pin down the birds to a specific place until the end of June. John reported that he was consistently hearing Least Flycatchers singing in an area across the St. Vrain River from Highway 34 where it enters Lyons. On 1 July, I found that I could reach the area by walking downstream from the Second St. bridge. I discovered Least Flycatchers singing from two groves of trees separated from each other by about 100 feet of marshy area. The birds were heard and seen in both areas on the second and third of July and I assumed that each was defending a territory. After the nest was discovered on the fourth, however, Least Flycatchers were seen or heard only in the grove with the nest.

The grove is an area about 100 by 140 feet dominated by Narrowleaf Cottonwoods (Populus augustifolia) that grow 60-80 feet tall. Boxelder (Acer negundo) and Common Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis) are the most common mid-story species. The understory consists of thistles (Carduus nutans and Centaurea picris) and a variety of shrubs including Wild Plum (Prunus americana) and Western Chokecherry (Prunus virginiana). The canopy was about 30% open. One long side of the grove merges with the generally lower trees of the riparian woodland along the St.

Vrain River. The opposite side is a cleared area around a sewage treatment facility. The nest was 30 feet from one end of the grove and 30 feet from the cleared side. It was placed on the horizontal limb of a Boxelder about 5 feet out from the trunk and fourteen feet from the ground. It was hidden by leaves from above and partially hidden on the sides.

When the nest was being observed for short periods on July 5, 6 and 7, the female was sitting on it and the male was seen bringing food on one occasion. On the 7th, both adults were seen bringing food and feeding the three young. On the 17th, I watched as first one and then a second young bird made a hesitant, fluttering flight, apparently for the first time. Davis (1959) reported that the young leave the nest 15-16 days after hatching so these young were probably hatched when the nest was discovered.

On 19 July, I found three young Least Flycatchers which stayed in a tight group--often on the same limb--and were fed by two adult birds. I was surprised to find another group of two or three more active and less inseparable young Least Flycatchers being fed by other adults in an area only 50 feet away in the same grove. Both groups were seen again on the 20th and 24th of July. The adults seemed to have the grove divided about equally and brief territorial disputes were observed near the center of the grove on two occasions.

It seems likely that this grove of only about 1/3 acre in extent had two successful Least Flycatcher nests. This species has probably nested around Lyons and in other areas of Colorado before. It will be interesting to see what happens with this species in Colorado in years to come. I hope that they are a permanent addition to our list of breeding Colorado birds.

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***** MARK YOUR CALENDARS *****

The Colorado Field Ornithologist's 27th Annual Convention will take place in Fort Collins, Colorado on the weekend of May 20-21.

Saturday morning field trips will be followed by an afternoon paper session. There will be a banquet and program on Saturday evening. On Sunday, there will be an all-day field trip to Pawnee Grasslands.

Plan to attend our annual convention, see friends and do some birding.

DELAYED EGG LAYING BY KILLDEER IN NORTHEASTERN COLORADO

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Precipitation is highly variable and unevenly distributed on the shortgrass prairies of northeastern Colorado (Badaracco 1971). Consequently, breeding birds may experience food fluctuations that could affect foraging efficiency and a female's ability to produce eggs. Graul (1973) noted that long intervals between the laying of eggs sometimes occurred in the Mountain Plover (Charadrius montanus), but egg-laying behavior by Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) on the high plains has not been reported.

Killdeer typically lay four eggs whose incubation requires approximately 25 days (Johnsgard 1981). Bunni (1959) reported an average egg-laying period of 3.7 days for clutches of three or four eggs, but Brunton (1987) found a mean egg-laying period of six days for four egg clutches in Michigan. While selection should favor a rapid succession of egg-laying, particularly in ground nesting birds, the Killdeer's timing of laying consecutive eggs is apparently flexible.

Following a week of cold wet weather, I observed a Killdeer initiate a clutch on 4 May 1983 at 0700 h MDT approximately 8.0 km east of Grover, CO. The second egg appeared on the following morning, nearly 26 h after the first egg was laid, but the third and fourth eggs did not appear until 9 May and 10 May respectively. Approximately 37 h elapsed between the laying of the third and fourth eggs, and incubation commenced immediately after the last egg was laid. Twenty-five days later, all eggs hatched.

Severe snowstorms persisted into mid-May on the shortgrass prairie during 1983, and data collected by the Central Plains Experimental Range indicated that January - June were the wettest months on record for northeastern Colorado since 1970. McCaffrey et al. (1984) noted that Mountain Plovers did not begin laying until 1 May 1983, nearly two weeks later than reported by Graul (1975). Late nesting may have been due to inclement weather, food

availability, foraging efficiency, or a combination of these factors. Similar conditions may have affected clutch initiation and the tempo of egg-laying in Killdeer because egg formation in shorebirds requires a considerable expenditure of metabolic energy (Ricklefs 1974). Whether Killdeer accumulate reserves is unknown, but in some birds prelaying females accumulate reserves that are necessary for laying, and egg-laying may cease if reserves fall below a threshold (Murphy and Haukioja 1986). Therefore, climate and its potential impact on prairie nesting birds warrants further investigation.

Acknowledgements -- I thank Walter D. Graul and the Denver Audubon Society for logistical support during my stay in Colorado.

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-----ANNOUNCEMENT-----

DENVER AUDUBON TO HOLD WINTER BIRD SEED SALE

The Denver Audubon Society will hold its annual winter bird seed sale in January. Order forms for bird seed and feeders must be received by the Denver Audubon Society office in advance.

Order forms may be obtained by calling the Denver Audubon office at 860-1471. Seed must be picked up on Sunday, January 29, unless other arrangements are made with the office. Orders will be delivered for a \$10 delivery charge.

The pickup point for the sale is at the Denver Design Center, 595 South Broadway. The Design Center is conveniently located near the I-25 and Broadway interchange.

Orders for bird feeders must be received by January 2, and orders for the seed must be received by January 16. Order forms will be available by December 1.

COLORADO BREEDING BIRD ATLAS REPORT

Hugh Kingery
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At this writing (November 15, 1988), only half the returns are in, i.e. the Atlas office has only half the cards for field work during 1988. So far in the project, using this partial data, we have worked in 383 of the 1800 Atlas blocks in Colorado (21%). We have completed 70 of them: only 18% of those we have started and a poor 4% of the total.

In order to complete the task, we need lots of effort over the next three or four years. (I have a feeling that we will regard the first year as a pilot year, and administratively decide that 1987 and 1988 were only one year). We need observers to spend more time in their assigned blocks, we need more observers, and we need observers willing to trek away from home.

Most of the blocks along the Front Range and around Grand Junction have been claimed, with about a quarter of them completed. But in almost any direction over an hour from these people centers there are blocks available; some diverse and some routine.

Reports from the field emphasize the pleasure and delight our observers gain from Atlas work. In fact sometimes we become so attached to our block we want to keep going back. Either they are such great places or we have to check up on one or two more species. However, in order to complete the Atlas within the scheduled five-year period (or a reasonable facsimile thereof), observers have to move on to new blocks.

Mark Yaeger returned to Pueblo Reservoir, but last year's Black Phoebes did not return. In Urling's and my Willow Lakes block in the Gore Range, we wonder about the ducks which we flushed from a beaver pond and which we could not identify. In our Flattops wilderness block, we wonder if and where the Barrow's Goldeneyes nest. The Dry Creek block (near Lindon) is a migrant trap where we can find new species for Latilong 13. The Sentinel Peak SW block, the most southwesterly block in the state, offers

intriguing possibilities for rarities in the cottonwoods along the Mancos River.

On the other hand, new blocks offer new possibilities. Atlas work has produced three Purple Martin sites, one new one for the state each year. Loggerhead Shrikes nest in most plains blocks. And there are patterns which we haven't mapped yet. Dr. Allan Phillips (visiting ornithologist at the Denver Museum of Natural History), expressed great interest in the Brewer's Sparrows breeding above timberline in the Flattops Wilderness: a race of Brewer's, called the Timberline Sparrow, breeds above timberline in British Columbia. Are the Flattops birds that race, or are they the same race that breeds in sagebrush 20 miles away from the Flattops?

Please note a correction to my article on the Atlas in the Fall 1988 issue of C.F.O. Journal (Vol. 22(3)104). Colorado has, not two and a half, but three and a half new breeding species after 1988 field work. In addition to the Least and Great Crested Flycatchers, and the Red-backed Buzzard/Swainson's Hawk, Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge hosted nesting Little Blue Herons. Ron Ryder and Rick Schnaderbeck found them during field work in June, 1988. On July 5 one nest had four dead young and one egg. The outcome of a second nest is unknown.

BOOK REVIEWS

An Audubon Handbook. 3 volumes: How to Identify Birds (320 pp); Eastern Birds (477 pp); and Western Birds (477 pp). John Farrand, Jr. McGraw-Hill Book Company (Chanticleer Press). \$40.50.

Reviewed by Hugh Kingery
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Denver, CO 80206

Put that name, "Audubon" on a bird book and people will buy it. This one, with one introductory page devoted to describing the National Audubon Society, is the third set of bird identification guides with the Audubon name and people probably will buy it too. Don't.

Photographic field guides for beginners don't seem to work. It's hard to find photographs which illustrate field marks well. Rigid formats don't work (here, one page per species; always 5 inches for name, size and picture and always 3 inches for text).

Rigid size charts mislead: though it's a good field practice to decide whether an unknown bird is the size of a sparrow, robin, or crow, some birds don't fit neatly into six obligatory sizes. It measures Pine Grosbeak and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher as robin-sized birds, and Tanager and Goldfinches as sparrow-sized birds.

Nowadays, every new bird book has a new theory on how to group birds for identification. This one has the water bird/land bird split started by National Geographic, but then re-orders the birds according to the author's theory of similar species. The order of land birds has a certain logic related sometimes to habitat and sometimes to plumage, but I don't know how a beginner could discover that without headings, and I find it mystifying.

Under shorebirds, he put Common Snipe and Upland Sandpiper between Baird's and Semipalmated, Least, and Western Sandpipers. Pine Grosbeak appears on p. 434, House Finch on p. 467, and Cassin's Finch on p. 471. (I had to use the index to find the finches). Falcons, accipiters, and other relatives are mixed in with Buteo hawks. Eurasian Wigeon is six pages away from American Wigeon.

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet appears on page 358 (between Bushtit and Blackpoll Warbler), with two pictures: one Ruby-crowned and one Golden-crowned. A beginner has to read the text carefully to figure out that the two photos show different species. (The eastern guide shows them separately, 45 pages apart).

I recommend that beginners, intermediates, and advanced birdwatchers stick with the standard field guides: Peterson, Robbins, and National Geographic. The only photographic guide which succeeds is the Master Guide--which the same author edited. It costs about the same as this series, but has knowledgeable discussions of the quirky problems of identification, a flexible format, and variable numbers of photographs well-designed to illustrate the species.

The Birder's Handbook, A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds. Paul Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye. 1988. Simon and Schuster (A Fireside book). \$24.95 hardback, \$14.95 softback.

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The cover describes this as "the essential companion to your identification guide." It may not be essential, but certainly is an informative book chock full of information. "This field guide takes up where the others leave off--that is once you have identified the bird. You can refer to a condensed description of the biology of the species, and you can read brief essays on avian ecology, behavior, and evolution." It includes all bird species (about 650) known to nest regularly north of Mexico.

It mimics field guide format: a condensed treatment of two species on each left hand page, and essays on facing pages. In telegraphic style, the species treatments stuff a lot of information into a small space. They present details about breeding (nest location, eggs, timing), feeding habits, conservation (if it winters south of the border with attendant problems, cowbird susceptibility), other notes, and references to relevant essays. You can dig out a lot of information here, and preparing it must have taken a huge amount of research. The authors refer you to original sources.

The essays cover a huge variety of topics. Some expand on the subjects in the species treatments. Others range afield to topics like diet, behavior, flight, speciation, and many more.

Here's an example of how to use the book. This year no one has seen Burrowing Owls at either Cherry Creek Reservoir or Chatfield State Park. Under Burrowing Owl, I learn that the owls winter in Central America. They nest in ground squirrel and prairie dog colonies. They eat mainly insects but also rodents, lizards, and birds (not their prairie dog companions). (Watch out for the format--it shows the main food--insects--with a picture and then lists the secondary foods). Populations in Florida and the Pacific Coast are declining. "Poisoning and nest sites loss result from human efforts to control squirrels and prairie dogs." When disturbed, they mimic a rattlesnake's rattle.

It refers me to three essays: Blue List, Vocal Copying, and Nest Sanitation. The Blue List appears sporadically in a National Audubon publication, American Birds, and aims at providing "early warning of those North American species undergoing population or range reductions." However, the essay doesn't go into specifics about species. Similarly, "Vocal Copying" has three paragraphs which raise as many questions as they ask. The nest sanitation had some fascinating tidbits: "...many birds repeatedly add green leaves or cedar bark with pesticidal properties to their nests. . .nuthatches ritually smear pine pitch and rub insects around the entrance of their holes instead of adding fresh greenery. Both the pitch and the defensive chemicals of the insects may discourage parasites."

I didn't find out much about Burrowing Owls per se, but certainly found some intriguing subjects to distract me and to stimulate my field observations. But I also learned that the owls eat insects and that they winter in Central America. I know that Mexico and many Central American countries still use DDT, and those countries are aggressively cutting down their tropical forests.

Burrowing Owls probably don't winter in tropical forests, but if they eat insects which have ingested DDT, or if they eat birds or rodents which have done so, the DDT food chain may have a disastrous effect on them. So I skip the essays on habitat destruction (in tropical wintering grounds) and turn to pesticides in the essay index. This sends me to pieces on DDT, raptors and

pesticides, and pesticides and wintering birds. And so on. Pretty soon, I suspect the book will refer me to every other essay in it. And to an infinite supply of source references.

This book probably will become a standard tool for bird students. I recommend it as an excellent supplement to your field guide.

IN MEMORIAM: FRANK JUSTICE

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With regret we report the passing of Frank Justice who served as treasurer of the C.F.O. for four years, from 1981 through 1984. Frank made substantial contributions to field ornithology in Colorado. With wife Jan (among naturalists in Denver, "Frank-and-Jan" is said almost as a single name), he amassed the basic information about birds at Chatfield State Park. The data led to publication of the Chatfield bird checklist; he permitted his name to appear on the second edition of the checklist.

After publication of the Colorado Latilong study, he and Jan added to the knowledge of Colorado bird distribution by concentrating on several of the little-known latilongs, especially Limon and Rangely.

He served as an active leader in the Denver Field Ornithologists, both for field trips and for the Christmas, Spring and Fall counts. He belonged as well to the Colorado Wildlife Federation (which he also served as treasurer), the Botanic Gardens, the Mycological Society, the Zoological Foundation and the Foundation for Colorado State Parks. Frank's interest in public lands culminated when Governor Lamm appointed him to the Colorado State Parks and Recreation Board in 1984. His tenure was brief--just two years--until illness forced him to resign.

Frank and Jan met while climbing mountains around Boulder with the University of Colorado Hiking Club. They married while still in college and, before he was six weeks old, Art, the first of their four sons, was having his bottle warmed over a campfire. They introduced their other sons, Dean, Stan and Doug to the out-of-doors with mountains to climb, birds to learn, and flowers, trees and mushrooms to study. Frank read, collected, and wore out binoculars and scopes as well as the mufflers on his cars.

On a snowy, below zero Saturday in February, you could find Frank at Chatfield hoping to find just one more Great Horned Owl nest, one more rare bird, or the first bluebirds of spring. In

July, you might find Frank and Jan traveling, perhaps looking for Mexican rarities along the southeastern Arizona border. Whenever Frank-and-Jan reported a bird that they saw--usually at Chatfield--we bird watchers knew that we could find it (unless it had flown off somewhere). The initials "FJJ" after a bird observation will signify good field ornithology and reliable observations for years to come.

A lot of us have shared Frank and Jan's love of Chatfield. They had a special ability to find owl nests there--they found eight to ten every year in that small piece of wilderness near the city. We will remember him through the place names that they thought up: Kingfisher Bridge, Cuckoo Slough, and Flicker Spit.



Boneaparte's Gull

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ANNOUNCING:
THE CFO TOUR OF COLORADO

A series of field trips to special places and special birds led by CFO Board and Record Committee members. More trips will be announced in coming issues of the CFO Journal

Saturday, February 18, 1989 White-tailed Ptarmigan

This is a moderate cross-country ski trip led by Steve Bouricius to see ptarmigan in their winter plumage. In 1988, the group got excellent, close looks at the birds and had a grand time. A Northern Three-toed Woodpecker was also seen near Steve's house. Anyone with skiing experience should have no problems on this trip, and cross-country equipment can be rented at some area stores. Participants should be prepared for possible severe winter wind and blowing snow conditions. Climbing skins may be useful. Bring sack lunch, water, hot drinks, snacks for energy, etc. Meet at Steve's house (50152 Colo. Hwy. 72 Peaceful Valley—just west of the Peaceful Valley Lodge complex) at 9:00 AM or at the Brainard Lake Road closure at 9:30. For more information, call Steve Bouricius at (303) 747-2367.

Sunday, June 18, 1989 Evergreen Area Mountain Specialties

This will be a car and walking (2-3 miles) trip led by Bill Brockner. Possible species include Hammond's Flycatcher, White-tailed Ptarmigan, (Brown-capped) Rosy Finch, Blue Grouse, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, and Pine Grosbeak. Mountain weather is always changeable so be prepared for precipitation and cool conditions and bring food and drinks. Camping is available at Echo Lake, motels at Idaho Springs and Golden. Meet at the parking lot on the southwest corner of the junction of Colo. Hwys. 74 and 103 in Bergen Park, north of Evergreen at 7:30 AM MDT. Call Bill Brockner at (303) 674-4851 for more information.

Sunday, July 8, 1989 Empidonax Flycatchers

We will attempt to find birds and nests of 5 different Empidonax Flycatcher species. We will carpool and hike, wade, and scramble to the nesting areas. Bring food and drinks and be prepared for warm and cool, wet and dry conditions. Overall, the activity will not be very strenuous. Meet at Bill Prather's

house, 13810 Weld Co. Rd. 1, Longmont (the 3rd house south of Colo. Hwy. 66 on the Boulder/Weld County line east of Longmont) at 7:00 AM or at the visitor center in the middle of the town of Lyons at 7:30 AM. You may camp at Barbour ponds (at I-25 and Colo. 119) or get a motel room in the same area. You are also welcome to "crash" at Bill Prather's home - be prepared for the unusual. For more information, call Bill Prather at (303) 776-2191.

Sunday, November 12, 1989 Pueblo Reservoir

Dave Silverman is always turning up interesting birds at Pueblo Reservoir. We've been hearing about them on the rare bird alert and seeing them in the seasonal reports. Target birds include loons, gulls, Bald Eagles, Rusty Blackbirds and surprises. We will carpool and take light, easy, short walks. Bring clothes appropriate for November, food and drinks, and a telescope if you have one. Camping (cold) can be done at Pueblo Reservoir and many motels are available at I-25 and U.S. 50 west. Meet at park headquarters of Pueblo Reservoir (near the South Marina) at 7:30 AM. For more information, call Dave Silverman at (719) 489-3565 or (719) 543-1842 (12:30 to 2 PM only).

