

# C.F.O. Journal

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C.F.O. JOURNAL is devoted to the field study of birds in Colorado. Articles and notes of scientific or general interest, and reports of unusual observations are solicited. Send manuscripts with photos and drawings to: Mark Janos, 902 Colorado Ave., La Junta, CO 81050. Send rare bird reports to: CFO Official Records Committee, c/o Zoological Collections, Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park, Denver, CO 80205. Send membership inquiries, renewals, and change of address to Steve Bouricius, 50152 Hwy. 72, Peaceful Valley, Lyons, CO 80540.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FOR RECORDS SUBMITTED IN 1987 (PART II) . . . . .	114
Richard L. Bunn	
RECENT STATE RECORD SPECIMENS OF BIRDS AT THE DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. . . . .	121
Betsy Webb and Jack Reddall	
A SUMMARY OF THE RECENT CHANGES TO THE 6TH EDITION OF THE A.O.U. <u>CHECK-LIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS</u> (Thirty-seventh Supplement). . . . .	128
Duane Nelson	
A NORTHERN CARDINAL ( <u>Cardinalis cardinalis</u> ) AT 10,710 FEET ELEVATION IN COLORADO . . . . .	132
Winston William Brockner	
A SECOND SPECIMEN RECORD OF LESSER NIGHTHAWK ( <u>Chordeiles</u> <u>acutipennis</u> ) FROM COLORADO, WITH SOME NOTES ON ITS OCCURRENCE AND IDENTIFICATION. . . . .	134
Mark Janos and Inez Prather	
COLORADO BIRD REPORT UPDATE 1989. . . . .	139
David E. Martin	
<u>C.F.O. JOURNAL</u> INDICES TO VOLUME 23: 1989 . . . . .	142

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Two Black-billed Magpies disturb the winter nap of a Great Horned Owl, by Karen Mancini.

Many thanks to Karen for our covers this year.

THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT  
FOR RECORDS SUBMITTED IN 1987 (PART II)

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Colorado Springs, CO 80907

This report contains the second half of the records acted upon by the CFO Records Committee in 1987. The first half of the report appeared in Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 13-17 of the C.F.O. Journal. The members of the Committee were: William Winston Brockner (Evergreen), Mark Janos (La Junta), William Maynard (Colorado Springs), Duane Nelson (Golden), David Silverman (Rye) and Richard Stransky (Durango).

Records reviewed by the Committee receive an A, B or C designation, according to a majority vote by the Committee. An A designation supports the identification; a B record is considered a misidentification; a C record is regarded as incomplete. All records are given a permanent file number, e.g. 1-87-1. The numbers represent the family code number, the year the report was received, and the chronological record number. The family code numbers do not reflect recent changes in the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds. The Committee desires documentation of those species that have occurred rarely in the state, those species previously unrecorded in the state, and unusual or new breeding records in the state.

PART 1

Class A Records

Red-throated Loon (Gavia stellata) 1-87-106. A winter-plumaged bird was seen at Lower Latham Reservoir (Weld County) on 4 November 1984 by Jerry Cairo. This is the tenth state record and the first record for Latilong 5 (Greeley).

Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 5-87-3. An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Lake Meredith (Crowley County) on 5 September 1987 by Dan Bridges and Mark Janos.

Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 5-87-77. Jerry Cairo saw an immature bird on 8 September 1985 at Lower Latham Reservoir (Weld County).

Parasitic Jaeger (Stercorarius parasiticus) 22-87-26. Mark Janos saw a dark-plumaged juvenile at Jumbo Reservoir (Logan County) on 6 September 1985.

Northern Saw-whet Owl (Aegolius acadicus) 28-87-103. On the Colorado Springs Christmas Bird Count on 20 December 1986, Virginia and John Maynard found two adults in Manitou Springs (El Paso County).

Black Swift (Cypseloides niger) 30-87-44. Five birds were seen by Michael Carter at Barr Lake State Park (Adams County) on 12 July 1987.

Black Swift (Cypseloides niger) 30-87-45. A flock of birds was seen by Chuck LaRue west of Nucla (Montrose County) on 10 July 1987.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus varius) 33-87-50. Dan Bridges saw a female on 26 September 1987 at Hale Ponds near Hale (Yuma County).

Say's Phoebe (Sayornis saya) 34-87-101. An adult was seen by Dorothy Lippincott on 20 December 1986 in Colorado Springs (El Paso County). This was on the Colorado Springs Christmas Bird Count and is very late for this species.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (Tyrannus forficatus) 34-87-52. An adult male was seen near Laporte (Larimer County) on 19 September 1987 by Bobbie DeMuth. Identifiable photographs were obtained and submitted.

Gray-cheeked Thrush (Catharus minimus) 44-87-56. Jerry Cairo saw an adult near Hale (Yuma County) on 12 May 1986.

Wood Thrush (Hylocichla mustelina) 44-87-58. Dan Bridges saw an adult in breeding plumage on 17 May 1987 at Bonny Reservoir (Yuma County).

Varied Thrush (Ixoreus naevius) 44-87-59. A male in winter plumage was seen intermittently between 13 December 1986 and 21 February 1987 at a feeder in Beulah (Pueblo County) by Neva Jo Haver. An excellent photograph was obtained and submitted.

Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 43-87-60. Vic Zerbi saw an adult in Glenwood Springs (Garfield County) on 27 December 1986. This unusual winter west slope observation was on the Roaring Fork Christmas Bird Count.

Brown Thrasher (Toxostoma rufum) 43-87-63. An adult was seen in the middle of September 1984 in Buena Vista (Chaffee County) by Dorothy and Donald Roeske.

Brown Thrasher (Toxostoma rufum) 43-87-102. Cindy Lippincott saw an adult on the Colorado Springs Christmas Bird Count on 20 December 1986 in Colorado Springs (El Paso County).

Curve-billed Thrasher (Toxostoma curvirostre) 43-87-61. An adult was seen at the Pawnee Buttes (Weld County) on 21 July 1985 by Jerry Cairo.

Phainopepla (Phainopepla nitens) 48-87-64. An adult female was seen on 20, 28 and 29 June 1986 in Ignacio (La Plata County) by Caroline Shryock and Lorita Mansfield. This is the sixth state record.

Yellow-throated Vireo (Vireo flavifrons) 51-87-65. An adult was seen on 28 September 1987 by Dan Bridges at Horsetooth Reservoir (Larimer County).

Philadelphia Vireo (Vireo philadelphicus) 51-87-93. Jerry Cairo saw an immature at Muir Springs near Fort Morgan (Morgan County) on 19 October 1985. This is the first record for Latilong 6 (Sterling).

Blue-winged Warbler (Vermivora pinus) 52-87-67. A singing male in breeding plumage was observed by Hope Leighton on 4 June 1987 and by Peter Gent on 6 June 1987 five miles south of Boulder (Boulder County).

Brewster's Warbler (Vermivora pinus x chrysoptera) 52-87-69. Toni Brevillier and Hugh Kingery found a male of this hybrid at Hanna Ranch south of Fountain (El Paso County) on 21 May 1987.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (Dendroica pensylvanica) 52-87-70. David Jasper saw a male on 16 and 18 June 1987 in Radium (Grand County).

Black-throated Blue Warbler (Dendroica caerulescens) 52-87-73. A male and two females were seen by Ruby Ebright on 3, 4 and 8 October 1987 in Salida (Chaffee County).

Black-throated Blue Warbler (Dendroica caerulescens) 52-87-76. A male in breeding plumage was seen at Crow Valley Park near Briggsdale (Weld County) on 23 May 1987 by Deborah Parete and Ivan Getting.

Yellow-throated Warbler (Dendroica dominica) 52-87-78. One in breeding plumage was seen in Boulder (Boulder County) on 3 and 5 May 1987 by Peter Gent.

Kentucky Warbler (Oporornis formosus) 52-87-68. A male in breeding plumage was seen by Peter Gent in Boulder (Boulder County) on 30 May 1987.

Hooded Warbler (Wilsonia citrina) 52-87-71. David Leatherman saw a male on 4 and 5 June 1986 in LaPorte (Larimer County). An excellent photograph was obtained and submitted.

Canada Warbler (Wilsonia canadensis) 52-87-105. David Hallock saw a male in Nederland (Boulder County) on 24 June and 1 and 11 July 1987.

Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra) 55-87-83. A first year male was seen by Dan Bridges on 13 May 1987 in Pueblo (Pueblo County).

Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra) 55-87-85. An adult female was seen at Hanna Ranch south of Fountain (El Paso County) on 17 May 1986 by Jerry Cairo.

Scarlet Tanager (Piranga olivacea) 55-87-84. An adult female was seen by Jerry Cairo at Tamarack Ranch near Crook (Logan County) on 14 May 1986.

Field Sparrow (Spizella pusilla) 56-87-86. On the Roaring Fork Christmas Bird Count, an adult was seen at a feeder in Glenwood Springs (Garfield County) on 27 December 1986 by Vic Zerbi. Mark Janos also saw this bird on 18 January 1987. Excellent photographs were obtained and submitted.

Sage Sparrow (Amphispiza belli) 56-87-107. An early observation on 31 March 1985 was made by John Rawinski at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge (Rio Grande County).

Swamp Sparrow (Melospiza georgiana) 56-87-62. Mark Janos saw an immature at Hart's Basin near Eckert (Delta County) on 16 November 1987. This species is unusual on the west slope.

Swamp Sparrow (Melospiza georgiana) 56-87-89. One in basic plumage was seen by Chuck LaRue on 8 October 1987 just west of Nucla (Montrose County).

Swamp Sparrow (Melospiza georgiana) 56-87-90. An immature was seen at Escalante Wildlife Area near Delta (Delta County) on 16 and 17 October 1987 by Mark Janos.

White-throated Sparrow (Zonotrichia albicollis) 56-87-92. An adult was seen at Crow Valley Campground near Briggsdale (Weld County) on 23 May 1987 by Deborah Parete and Ivan Getting.

Great-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus) 54-87-79. Beth Dillon saw an adult male on 31 May 1986 at Two Buttes (Baca County).

Great-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus) 54-87-80. Breeding was documented in Walsh City Park (Baca County) during August 1986. Beth Dillon saw at least one male and seven females and obtained several excellent photographs. This is the first documented breeding in Latilong 28 (Springfield).

Great-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus) 54-87-81. Breeding was documented in Salida (Chaffee County) during May and June 1987 by Ruby Ebright.

Great-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus) 54-87-82. Coen Dexter saw a pair at Highline Reservoir near Loma (Mesa County) between 9 May and 14 June 1987.

Great-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus) 54-87-98. One was seen near Lamar (Prowers County) on 16 March 1987 by Toni Brevillier. This species continues the rapid expansion of its range into Colorado.

Lesser Goldfinch (Carduelis psaltria) 56-87-95. On the Roaring Fork Christmas Bird Count on 27 December 1986, Vic Zerbi saw an



adult female in Glenwood Springs (Garfield County). Mark Janos saw this bird on 18 January 1987.

PART 2

Class B and C Records

American Black Duck (Anas rubripes) 8-87-97. The Committee felt that the description of this bird seen near Boyd Lake (Larimer County) on 18 March 1986 was too brief.

Gyr Falcon (Falco rusticolus) 12-87-10. The Committee split on this observation of a dark phase bird seen at Jumbo Reservoir (Sedgwick County) on 4 December 1986.

Gyr Falcon (Falco rusticolus) 12-87-12. The description of this white bird north of Longmont (Boulder County) on 20 January 1987 did not rule out other light-colored falcons and hawks.

Black Rail (Laterallus jamaicensis) 17-87-14. The Committee thought that the description of two birds at Shackle Reservoir near Fort Collins (Larimer County) on 19 September 1987 did not adequately rule out immatures of other rail species.

Common Poorwill (Phalaenoptilus nuttallii) 29-87-40. The Committee felt that the description of a very brief sighting of three birds near Boulder (Boulder County) on 28 February 1987 was not detailed enough.

Black Phoebe (Sayornis nigricans) 34-87-96. The Committee thought the description of this bird near Adobe Creek Reservoir (Bent County) on 15 March 1987 was too brief.

Red-eyed Vireo (Vireo olivaceus) 51-97-66. The description of a bird near Nucla (Montrose County) on 9 and 10 October 1987 did not eliminate Tennessee Warbler.

Blue-winged Warbler (Vermivora pinus) 52-87-75. The Committee was unconvinced by the description of a female at Chatfield Reservoir (Jefferson County) on 15 May 1987.

Black-throated Blue Warbler (Dendroica caerulescens) 52-87-72. The report did not give the sex of this bird seen near Nucla (Montrose County) on 9 October 1987.

Black-headed Grosbeak (Pheucticus melanocephalus) 56-87-100. The Committee decided against this very brief report of two males on 20 December 1986.

Dickcissel (Spiza americana) 56-87-88. The Committee thought that the description of a female near Nucla (Montrose County) on 8 October 1987 was too brief.

Brambling (Fringilla montifringilla) 56-87-87. The Committee felt that the description was too brief and the photographs unclear of this bird seen in Salida (Chaffee County) on 26 February and 12 March 1987.

Purple Finch (Carpodacus purpureus) 56-87-94. The Committee was unconvinced by the description of a brief observation of two females near Holly (Prowers County) on 13 March 1987.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chairman wishes to thank those C.F.O. members and non-members who support the efforts of the C.F.O. Records Committee through submission of records. All records have been brought up to date at the Denver Museum of Natural History. This includes producing a duplicate set of records which reside at the Museum and are available for public use. These efforts were organized by Betsy Webb, Curator of Zoology, but the work has been done mostly by Jack Reddall and Phil Hayes. The Committee wishes to thank these people for their considerable efforts.

RECENT STATE RECORD SPECIMENS OF BIRDS  
AT THE DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Betsy Webb, Curator  
and  
Jack Reddall, Department Associate  
Department of Zoology  
Denver Museum of Natural History  
City Park, Denver, CO 80205

State record bird specimens housed in museums are an invaluable resource for documenting the dynamic nature of bird distributions through time. They are concrete, three-dimensional evidence of the presence of new bird species in Colorado. Like library books, they are available to future researchers and chroniclers of Colorado's avian biogeography. It has been said that if you stand in one place long enough, sooner or later every known species of North American bird will parade by your optical equipment. Following is a summary of ten first or second state record specimens, their data, and the often humorous stories behind their "capture" in the past ten years from 1979 to 1989.

Painted Bunting      Passerina ciris pallidior      (Adult) male  
DMNH#36768

Second State Record Specimen      22 May 1979      COLORADO: Bent  
Co., 5 km. S. of Hasty, John Martin Reservoir (Lake Hasty  
Campground)      Coll. Allan R. Phillips

On his annual trek to the Denver Museum of Natural History, Dr. Allan R. Phillips, Research Associate and Consultant to the DMNH Bird Collection, set off on a collecting trip to the southeastern part of the state with Charlie Chase, Lisa Bardwell and me. Upon arrival at John Martin Reservoir after the long drive, we unloaded the museum field truck, set up one token mist net, and sat down under the orchard trees at Lake Hasty Campground to eat lunch. We had not even unpacked the food before Lisa noticed an unusually colorful bird entangled in the net. To our utter surprise, it was a beautiful male Painted Bunting. Once we scraped Dr. Phillips off of the picnic table, we photographed the

bird in hand, and the rest is history.

The specimen was verified to subspecies by Phillips at the National Museum of Natural History where it was compared with a large series of P. c. pallidor. Bailey and Neidrach (1965) noted an immature male collected by Donald Watson on 29 August 1938 on the North Rim of Mesa Verde National Park (#166 in Mr. Watson's collection), identified by H. C. Oberholser. We verified the existence of this specimen in the Mesa Verde National Park Research Collection (MEVE#7527).

Groove-billed Ani     Crotophaga s. sulcirostris     (Adult) female?  
DMNH#37376

First State Record Specimen     22 October 1981     COLORADO:  
Larimer Co., Loveland (801 S. Cty. Rd. 29)     Salv. Marjorie  
Dusan

(Adult) male     DMNH#37773     Second State Record Specimen     17  
September 1982     COLORADO: Yuma Co., S. side of Bonny  
Reservoir     Coll. Mark Holmgren, Allan R. Phillips and  
Charles A. Chase III

The second state record specimen was taken at Bonny Reservoir on another museum field trip with Dr. Phillips, who is an electromagnet for unusual bird records wherever he goes. As the expeditionary force of Dr. Phillips and Charlie Chase were beating the bushes in early morning, Dr. Phillips, on foot, first heard an ani call from a thick row of trees along a road. Then it got up and flew across the road. He flagged down Charlie, on wheels, and they chased a completely invisible bird for the rest of the day. Undaunted, they were joined by Mark Holmgren the following day. The ani repeated the performance, but remained hunkered down in low weeds and thick trees. The group followed it around intensively, and Mark got a momentary glimpse later in the day - enough to collect it.

Marbled Murrelet     Brachyramphus marmoratus perdis     (Immature)  
male     DMNH#37691

First State Record Specimen     22 August 1982     COLORADO:

Pitkin Co., Aspen (McLain Flats Rd.) Salv. Tom Cardamone

A former CFO President, Garfield County Court Judge Vic Zerbi, was on the bench when the call came in to his law clerk that a Marbled Murrelet was paddling around in a puddle in the middle of an Aspen street. The Honorable Zerbi continued hearing the case, difficult though this was, with the intention of adding the bird to his life list the following day. The bird was taken to Hallam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary where it was released. Unfortunately, the bird expired in the ensuing hours, leaving the judge to wonder whether he should have suspended the case and gone birdwatching instead.

The specimen was originally designated as B. m. marmoratus by C. A. Chase III, but was reidentified as B. m. perdix by A. R. Phillips. This is the only form to have been recorded in the interior of North America (Jehl and Jehl, Jr. 1981; Sealy, Carter and Alison 1982).

Lesser Nighthawk Chordeiles acutipennis texensis (1 year old)  
female DMNH#39386

Second State Record Specimen 20 June 1987 COLORADO:  
Montrose Co., Dave Wood Rd. (5 mi. SSW of Montrose) Salv.  
Mark Janos

This specimen was an incredibly serendipitous road kill. Mark Janos was driving innocently, yes, one early morning in the effort to reach the starting point of his breeding bird survey. While speeding along, he sighted a nighthawk sitting in the road, dead ahead. It flew up too late, hit his car grille, and was killed instantly. He scooped the bird up, realized that it might be a Lesser Nighthawk, and placed it hurriedly in a nighthawk-sized burrito wrapper from Circle K with the truly dedicated intention of looking at it after the survey.

He later examined the bird and sent it to the Museum for verification. The specimen was then sent to Roxie C. Laybourne of the National Fish and Wildlife Laboratories at the Smithsonian Institution for verification of

subspecies and comparison with a larger series of specimens.

There had been two prior state record specimens, of which one (DMNH#26007) was reidentified by Laybourne as an immature Common Nighthawk (C. minor howelli). The first state record specimen of Lesser Nighthawk (DMNH#26006) was confirmed by Laybourne as C. a. texensis, a first year female (11 June 1908; COLORADO: Las Animas Co., Hoehne; Coll. C.E. Aiken).

Magnificent Frigatebird      Fregata magnificens rothschildi  
(Adult) female      DMNH#39020

First State Record Specimen      16 September 1985      COLORADO:  
Summit Co., Green Mountain Reservoir      Salv. Jerry Mullikin

The story behind this specimen is, without a doubt, the most bizarre of all. The frigatebird - disoriented, injured, and in a starvation state - appears to have been swept inland 1000 miles out of its range on the front of deadly Hurricane Elena from the Gulf of Mexico. It eventually made its way to Green Mountain Reservoir where it repeatedly attacked a stranded windsurfer offshore during a lull in the winds. As the bird came ashore in pursuit of the windsurfer, it was stoned by a group of onlookers. The windsurfer took the bird home and identified it from a bird guide. Worried about a gash received from the attack, he called the Colorado Division of Wildlife to inquire about wildlife diseases. The Division retrieved and deposited the carcass with the Museum (see Webb 1985).

Tricolored Heron      Egretta tricolor ruficollis      (Adult) male  
DMNH#39487

First State Record Specimen      20 November 1987      COLORADO:  
Yuma Co., 15 mi. S. of Yuma on St. Hwy. 59      Salv. Frances  
Pusateri

This bird was found injured along the roadway, felled by an ice storm and high winds. Ranchers brought the bird to Frances Pusateri, Wildlife Biologist with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The bird was badly

injured, and died within five minutes after it was received. Frances was unable to identify it at first, but after much ado discovered that it was a "Louisiana" Heron from a field guide.

Little Blue Heron      Egretta caerulea subsp.?      (Juvenal) male  
DMNH#39519

First State Record Specimen      5 July 1988      COLORADO: Rio Grande Co., Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge      Salv. Ron Ryder

This bird was one of three chicks found dead in a nest along with one egg at the Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge. Ron Ryder was doing routine nest surveys and bird banding in the area when he stumbled onto the nest in the middle of a colony of White-faced Ibis, Snowy Egrets, and Black-crowned Night-Herons. He marked the nest and returned later to band and photograph the nestlings, only to find three dead nestlings and one unhatched egg. The cause of death is unknown, but Ron surmises that a predator such as raccoon or skunk may have been the culprit.

Ron and others had seen Little Blue Herons in the vicinity for several years, but this was the first proof of breeding by this species in Colorado. He also observed at least one adult in an adjacent colony after the nest failure - perhaps a relocated parent. Although the salvaged specimen is in juvenal plumage, it is recognizable by the emergent black primary wing tips characteristic of immature plumage in Little Blue Herons.

Varied Thrush      Ixoreus naevius subsp.?      (Adult) male  
DMNH#39555

Second State Record Specimen      10 December 1988      COLORADO: Mesa Co., 20 mi. SE of Grand Junction (Kannah Creek)      Salv. Coen Dexter

This bird was killed by a cat in a neighboring yard of Coen Dexter, CFO Records Committee Director.

The subspecific identification is unknown, since these characters are for the most part visible only in female plumages. The first state record specimen (DMNH#36057; male) was identified as a probable I. n. meruloides by A. R. Phillips because of its extremely pale and gray coloring (25 April 1968; COLORADO: Larimer Co., Loveland (404 W. 13th St.); Salv. Mrs. Clarence W. Hilburn).

Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus incana (Adult) male DMNH#39566

First State Record Specimen 24 October 1988 COLORADO: Rio Blanco Co., Hoy Mountain Coll. Bob Hernbrode

Bob Hernbrode, "Mr. Watchable Wildlife" at the Colorado Division of Wildlife, was working the big game season undercover with a local officer in northwestern Colorado. They stopped for lunch and noticed some Blue Grouse in the vicinity. Thinking only of their stomachs, they scrounged for hunting gear in their truck and set off in search of a gourmet bird. Bob noticed something strange about one of the grouse. Then as he was about to pull the trigger, it "ruffed" at him. When it was in hand, he showed it to the local officer who first realized what it was - it looked (and acted) like a Ruffed Grouse.

The Colorado Chapter of the Wildlife Society awarded Bob the Blunder Buss Award, noting that "...the man in charge of coordinating Colorado's efforts to promote nonconsumptive wildlife recreation, did terminate a little gray ruffed grouse. This was the last ruffed grouse known in Colorado (also the first)...In one brief instant, the number of watchable wildlife species in the state was reduced by one."

We have not examined the specimen yet since it is being held at the Colorado Division of Wildlife for study. It has been described as a typical gray phase Ruffed Grouse.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

Coming in the next issue of the C.F.O. Journal will be a full listing of the monthly C.F.O. fieldtrips planned for 1990, courtesy of David Martin. Until then, we want to announce the first fieldtrip of the year:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1990

WINTER PAWNEE GRASSLANDS

Join David Leatherman for an all-day trip to the Pawnee Grasslands east of Fort Collins. We will search for raptors, owls and winter finches. If time permits, we plan a search of Hamilton Reservoir north of Fort Collins for waterfowl and gulls.

For details of this trip, including trip length, starting time and place and any other information call David Leatherman at (303)484-5445, or David Martin at (303)422-9143.

A SUMMARY OF THE RECENT CHANGES TO THE 6TH EDITION OF THE  
A.O.U. CHECK-LIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS  
(Thirty-seventh Supplement)

Duane Nelson  
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Golden, CO 80403

The American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature has recently made several important changes that will be summarized here. These fall into three major categories: additions to the North American avifauna; name changes; splits.

#### ADDITIONS

Additions to the list because of new distributional information will not be discussed at length here. However, new to the A.O.U. check-list are Stejneger's Petrel (Monterey, California), Black-tailed Gull (Alaska; San Diego, California), Yellow-breasted Bunting (Attu, Alaska), Mottled Owl (Texas), Greenish Elaenia (Texas), and two birds of more general interest: Eurasian Collared-Dove and Shiny Cowbird. The latter two species are natural colonizers which are spreading explosively in South Florida. There is speculation that the Eurasian Collared-Dove, which only recently became established in the cool climates of western Europe, will soon spread throughout much of temperate North America and may well reach Colorado in the not-too-distant future.

#### NAME CHANGES

Name changes mostly involve minor changes, like deletion of a hyphen, subtraction of the word "Common," or changes in the scientific name of a species. In this category, the following changes have been made:

- The name American Pipit (Anthus rubescens) replaces Water Pipit (Anthus spinoletta).
- Northern Gannet is now placed in the genus Morus (formerly in genus Sula).
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, formerly Nycticorax violaceus,

becomes Nyctanassa violacea.

--Barn Owl replaces Common Barn-Owl.

--Northern Hawk Owl replaces Northern Hawk-Owl.

--Pauraque replaces Common Pauraque.

--(Three other minor changes have been made concerning Aleutian vagrants).

#### SPLITS

Newly recognized splits are probably of the most interest to the Colorado field ornithologist. The A.O.U. recognizes five new species in the A.O.U. area. The "A.O.U. area" includes the islands of the Caribbean, and two splits involve island forms formerly considered races from nearby islands. Unfortunately, both newly recognized species, the Brace's Emerald (Bahamas) and the Cuban Macaw (Cuba), are now extinct. The remaining splits are of more immediate interest to the Colorado birder.

Forget about seeing a "Western" Flycatcher on your trips to rocky canyons in the Rockies as this species has been split into two new species. The inland form, found in Colorado, is now correctly referred to as Cordilleran Flycatcher (Empidonax occidentalis). For a correct pronunciation of Cordilleran, I asked my geologist friends who insist that the American pronunciation is cor-duh-LAIR-un). The Pacific slope population, generally found west of the Cascades and Sierra Nevada, differs both in calls and morphology from the Cordilleran Flycatcher and is now called the Pacific-slope Flycatcher (E. difficilis). The two forms are sympatric only in the Siskiyou region of northern California where interbreeding is either absent or extremely rare.

"Brown" Towhees have also disappeared. The inland form, preferring rocky areas in the dry interior of the Southwest, is now called the Canyon Towhee (Pipilo fuscus). The west coast form, found in chaparral and suburban areas west of the mountain ranges from Southern Oregon through Baja California, is now called California Towhee (P. crissalis). These species are visibly different. Canyon Towhees are more strikingly patterned, with a brighter rusty crown and a dark spot on the breast. Both calls and songs are very different. These species seem to differ as much from each other as they do from the similar Abert's Towhee (Zimmer 1988).

The last change in taxonomy is the splitting of the

California Gnatcatcher (Polioptila californica) from Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (P. melanura). These species differ from each other visually, morphologically and vocally. Where their ranges overlap, there is little or no interbreeding (Atwood 1988). The California Gnatcatcher is generally found only near the coast from Los Angeles County south to Southern Baja California.

A brief comment on the processes used by taxonomists to determine what constitutes a species is in order. Different methods have been necessary for different species. Techniques used by geneticists are very helpful in establishing the relationships of some groups of birds such as the Empidonax complex, but yield confusing data for others, such as the towhee group. Thus, old criteria, such as vocalizations, ranges, and appearance seem to keep towhees from interbreeding, while genetic differences seem to prohibit interbreeding in the Empidonax flycatchers. The genetic tool that is most in vogue today, and seems to yield the most diagnostic data is a process called DNA-DNA hybridization.

In this process, DNA from two different species, or suspected species, is heated to separate complimentary strands, and single strands from different birds are combined. The two different strands tend to combine to the degree to which they are complimentary. The test for closeness of species is the amount of heating required to dissociate the new product. If very little heat is required to separate strands, it is assumed that the birds are not closely related, and a great deal of time has passed since the two birds have diverged. Conversely, a high melting point implies that full speciation has not yet occurred.

But what does this have to do with birding? It seems to have two implications. First, the age old lumper vs. splitter schism is now based on scientific criteria rather than emotional positions. Secondly, it opens up a new can of worms, so to speak. One can only guess how many new, and presumably more accurate relationships, are about to come to light.

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## NOTICE

In cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, considerable effort has been devoted to banding Rosy Finches (*Leucosticte*) during the last two years. We would like to enlist the aid of Colorado birders to help us determine the winter movements of these birds. Over 2000 Rosy Finches were banded at Gothic during the last two winters. Last summer, a number of individuals of the Brown-capped form were banded in Colorado breeding habitat at Indian Peaks (yellow bands), Mt. Evans (red bands) and Mt. Democrat (orange bands).

Please help us determine the whereabouts of banded Rosy Finches during the coming winter months. Report sightings of banded or color-banded Rosy Finches (Brown-capped, Black, Gray-crowned or Hepburn's) to:

Norman French  
P.O. Box 511  
Ft. Collins, CO 80522  
Tel. (303) 747-2410

or  
Susan Allen, Director  
Rocky Mt. Biological Laboratory  
Crested Butte, CO 81224  
Tel. (303) 349-7231

A NORTHERN CARDINAL (Cardinalis cardinalis) AT 10,710 FEET  
ELEVATION IN COLORADO

Winston William Brockner  
5965 South Herzman Drive  
Evergreen, CO 80439

On 17 July 1989, I received a telephone call from Lorraine Reiner of Echo Lake, below Mount Evans in Clear Creek County. She told me that she had just seen a male Northern Cardinal (Cardinalis cardinalis) at Echo Lake. This amazing sighting was at 10,710 feet elevation.

It was RaIph Reiner, the resident Manager of the University of Denver's High Altitude Laboratory at Echo Lake, who is Lorraine's husband, who first spotted the N. Cardinal at a feeding station on the Laboratory grounds. Because of the location and elevation I suggested that Lorraine, who is a licensed bander, should try to capture the bird. In about five minutes she called me back and announced that she had caught the bird in a trap and banded it. I immediately drove up to the Echo Lake Laboratory and met Lorraine who showed me the handsome male N. Cardinal.

This occurrence at 10,710 feet in elevation is surprising, although Ralph and Lorraine told me that they had heard reports in June, 1989 of a "red bird" on a ranch between Echo Lake and Idaho Springs. Bailey and Neidrach in Birds of Colorado (1965) state that the N. Cardinal was "First recorded, a male (no. 2581), taken near Denver by A.W. Anthony, Dec. 5, 1883." Subsequent to that time, most Colorado records of N. Cardinal have occurred east of the Front Range. Bailey and Neidrach also list a Grand Junction record on 27-28 May 1962 and a male at Bergen Park west of Denver on 10 July 1963. William Davis, in Birds in Western Colorado (1969), notes without further comment that the Grand Junction record was possibly an escaped bird. Further west there is one Utah specimen, a bird obtained 10 March 1983 near Ogden (Behle, et.al., 1985).

Originally, the N. Cardinal was counted as a Carolinian bird in the east. The A.O.U. Checklist (1983) lists the N. Cardinal as casual west and north to central Colorado. My review of the literature, however, does not mention elevation records. Eastern

U.S. mountain ranges fall below the elevation of Denver so the Echo Lake occurrence may represent an elevation record for the N. Cardinal in North America.

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A SECOND SPECIMEN RECORD OF LESSER NIGHTHAWK (Chordeiles acutipennis) FROM COLORADO, WITH SOME NOTES ON ITS OCCURRENCE AND IDENTIFICATION

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and

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Lesser Nighthawk (Chordeiles acutipennis) may be the truest of "accidentals" in Colorado, as it has only been reported in the state as an accident victim. At approximately 4:55 a.m. on 20 June 1987 while driving to the starting point of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Breeding Bird Survey route, Janos encountered a small nighthawk resting, "perched" on the ground in the middle of the road. The nighthawk flew up and was struck and killed by the front of his vehicle. This site is on Dave Wood Road, about 5 miles southwest of Montrose, Colorado (Montrose County). The fresh specimen was briefly examined by Janos who felt that the bird was a female Lesser Nighthawk. More detailed examination later that day, along with a review of fieldguides and current literature at hand, reinforced this first impression. The specimen was saved, frozen, and submitted within a week to the Denver Museum of Natural History. The specimen has been satisfactorily identified by Roxie Laybourne at the Smithsonian Institution as an adult female Lesser Nighthawk, DMNH# 39386.

On the afternoon of 27 May 1988, Prather and her family were at Two Buttes Reservoir S.W.A. approximately 30 miles south of Lamar, Colorado (Baca County) where they were scouting fieldtrips for the upcoming C.F.O. convention. Prather and her daughter, Kea, climbed the steep side of Two Buttes Canyon, just below the reservoir and dam and discovered a dead nighthawk on the canyon rim above. They noted not only that the carcass was fairly fresh and was just beginning to suffer some insect damage, but that the bird did not appear to be a Common Nighthawk. They collected the bird and submitted an intact wing as a specimen to the Denver



Museum of Natural History. The Museum has yet to look at the specimen, however Janos examined the wing on 28 May 1988 and felt that it matched his specimen of the previous summer. In all likelihood, this bird is also an adult female Lesser Nighthawk.

Originally, there were two specimens of Lesser Nighthawk for Colorado (Bailey and Neidrach 1965). These were DMNH# 26006 (a one-year female taken on 11 June 1908 at Hoehne near Trinidad, Las Animas Co., by C.E. Aiken) and DMNH# 26007 (a juvenal male taken on 25 August 1922 at Colorado Springs, El Paso Co., by Aiken). This second specimen, the juvenal male, upon re-examination by Roxie Laybourne, was determined to be a misidentified Common Nighthawk (Chordeiles minor howelli). C. m. howelli is one of five (of a total of eight) races of Common Nighthawk to occur in Colorado (Bailey and Neidrach 1965). Thus there was only one previous verifiable skin obtained in Colorado that resides in the DMNH collection, and it is noted as the first state record specimen. There are many examples, other than this one, of misidentified Lesser/Common Nighthawks, even with the skin in hand.

Occasional sight records of Lesser Nighthawks have been made in Colorado between 1908 and 1987. This species was reported to be "rare migrants in Las Animas Co." (Sclater 1912). On 12 June 1962, a Lesser Nighthawk was observed flying very low over the road near the top of Genesee Mountain, Jefferson Co. No written details were submitted for review by the Official C.F.O. Records Committee, so this is not an accepted record. On 15 July 1980, fifteen Lesser Nighthawks were reported at Ridgway, Ouray Co., a record which was not accepted by the Official Records Committee. Thus there are no acceptable sight records of this species for the state.

There are a number of problems that one encounters in trying to identify Lesser/Common Nighthawks. First, as previously mentioned, there are at least five subspecies of the Common Nighthawk that occur in Colorado. Some of these may be nearly as different in appearance from each other as any one is from the Lesser Nighthawk. Second, the view that one gets of a flying nighthawk is seldom 100% satisfactory, with the bird often seen in poor light, with only brief glimpses of plumage made during its fluttering flight that is composed of sharp turns, banks and quick wing flicks. Third, most fieldguides are not very helpful in distinguishing the two species.

Information presented in the last five years in the popular literature is very helpful in distinguishing these two species. (Although interestingly, these species may be clearly distinguished with the excellent descriptions provided by Elliott Coues in Key to North American Birds (1927)). First, the relative lengths of the outer two primaries, an oft-mentioned field mark, is not diagnostic. Although most Common Nighthawks show a longer outermost primary than second (giving the wingtip a pointed look), and most Lesser Nighthawks show either equal length or a longer second primary than outer (giving the wing a blunt look), a small percentage of either species may actually possess the reverse pattern (Wilds 1985). In addition, this fieldmark is very difficult to observe directly in flying birds.

An excellent and diagnostic fieldmark, not mentioned in most fieldguides, is the bold buff spotting on the inner primaries on both male and female Lesser Nighthawks. The primaries of Common Nighthawks, except for the white wing-bar of both sexes, are plain blackish and unmarked. (Note that the primary wing-bar of the female Lesser Nighthawk is buff, not white as in Common Nighthawk, also an excellent fieldmark). These buff spots on the primaries are quite distinct and may coalesce into weak bars as they did on the Montrose specimen. This spotting is visible in both the spread and folded wing and, although not mentioned in the text, it can be seen illustrated in some fieldguides (Farrand 1983, National Geographic Society 1983) and bird books (Zimmer 1985).

In the Common Nighthawk, the wing-bar is closer to the bend of the wing than on the Lesser Nighthawk. On the Lesser Nighthawk, the inner edge of this bar begins about two-thirds of the way out from the bend of the wing or one-half the way out from the edge of the underwing primary coverts. This is shown very well in Zimmer (1985). In addition, the wing-bars of the Lesser Nighthawk are smaller, covering only 3-4 primaries. On the Common Nighthawk, the wing-bar is larger, extending across at least five primaries. On the Montrose bird, there were 1) bold buff spotting on the inner primaries, forming rows, 2) buff wing-bars extending across only four primaries and 3) the wing-bar about two-thirds of the way from the bend of the wing to the tip (the inner edge of the wing-bar was 11 cm from the bend of the wing; the wing chord measured 17 1/2 cm). Thus, the presence of the buffy spots on the inner primaries (seen even in the folded wing) and the location of a small wing-bar about two-thirds of the way out from the bend of the wing should identify the Lesser Nighthawk.

The Montrose specimen occurred near the edge of a slope rising to a sparse pinyon-juniper woodland on the edge of scattered farm and rangeland. Like the location of the Two Buttes specimen, this is in open country. The Lesser Nighthawk, although "accidental" in Colorado, may be more common than is thought. Bailey and Neidrach (1965) state that "few ornithologists have worked the southern part of the state, and the species may occur more or less regularly--the lack of reports being due to the scarcity of observers." This statement is probably still true today. Baca County has attracted considerable interest by Colorado ornithologists through the years and more recently by Colorado birders. However, the rest of southern Colorado has not attracted as much attention. The southern half of Las Animas County, much of which is quite difficult to access, would be an ideal place to search for this species in late May and early June. Their occurrence in the mountains of southwestern Colorado may be more of a surprise. In addition, very early or late migrant nighthawks should be carefully scrutinized by Colorado observers; one should not assume them to be Common Nighthawks.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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## COLORADO BIRD REPORT UPDATE 1989

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Operating the Colorado Bird Report (303-423-5582) is a lot like working at a McDonald's. There are busy times and there are quiet times. Busy is December and January (Christmas Bird Counts and New Year's birding), April and May (spring migration) and August through October (fall migration). Quiet is February and March, and June, but even during these times pleasant surprises pop up. Just like the actual migrations, the calls to the tape in the spring come fast and furiously for about six weeks, while those in the fall come in at a more leisurely pace over about a twelve week period. Sometimes a flurry of calls will come over a weekend or holiday, which does not necessarily indicate that more birds are about, only that more birders are in the field.

The best part of operating the Colorado Bird Report is not being the first to hear about a rare bird find, but rather is hearing from the rare bird finders first. I always get a thrill when a friend finds a good bird and I get to hear about it firsthand. My greatest pleasure is talking to all concerned and discussing their birding fortunes as they wax and wane. Few of us would ever get anywhere without the help of others and birders owe a greater debt to their fellow birder than the average man. If it weren't for the many ornithologists, artists, and authors with their research summarized into field guides, most of us would probably be collecting stamps. But the birding tradition has always been one of sharing with those who know, helping those who don't know. The Colorado Bird Report is just an extension of this tradition, with everyone contributing, and everyone benefitting.

Sometimes you will call in a bird that doesn't get on the tape; there are three reasons why this might happen:

1. The bird is of little general interest. This is almost never the case with experienced birders but novices often call in as rare such birds as Killdeers, Belted Kingfishers, Bullock's Orioles, and almost anything else you could imagine.

2. The bird is more common than the reporter assumes. In the last couple of winters, I could have renamed the taped message "The Colorado Bald Eagle and Hooded Merganser Report" if I had put all of the eagles and mergansers on the tape that were reported. I still want to hear about these birds, and will use your called-in birds in the seasonal report published in the CFO Journal, but they won't always make the tape. On the other hand, spectacular concentrations of any species are interesting, and will usually be aired: "Over 10,000 Hooded Mergansers were sighted today at City Park Lake in Punkin Center, southeast of Hugo."

3. I made a mistake and forgot to put your bird on, or I misunderstood your message. Believe it or not, I am human and have made mistakes in the past and most certainly will continue to make mistakes in the future. If your bird isn't on the tape, and you haven't heard from me, give me a call, and we will try together to find your lost bird. While I am on the subject, give me a call anyway just to chat or with a suggestion to improve the tape. Many of the features in the current tape format were first suggested by callers, and I will gladly add any good ideas that you have.

If you are a regular caller, you probably noticed some different voices on the tape this spring and summer. Dick Schottler updated the tape in early June when I went on vacation with my family in Florida, and Norm Erthal updated the tape in August when I went on vacation with Dick Schottler in Arizona. Both did excellent jobs, and will continue filling in when I leave on business trips and vacations.

Some interesting statistics for the first nine months of 1989 are on the table below. The tape was updated (a new announcement read onto the machine) 230 times, giving us only a few days without an update. In May, when lots of birds were showing up, the tape was updated twice a day a number of times, and three times a day on several different occasions. Numbers in the table below include the numbers of different species that were discussed on the tape each month, and the number of messages called in to the machine each month. Our new machine (installed in November of 1988) counts incoming calls and we have been averaging about 75 calls a day, but had over 100 calls a day in May. That's a lot of calls and it is why you sometimes get a busy signal when calling.

Month	Species	Messages	Updates	Calls
January	34	100	29	2217
February	12	49	19	1595
March	17	72	22	2145
April	30	143	24	2672
May	53	195	44	3123
June	20	76	24	2239
July	21	69	21	2151
August	23	68	19	2205
September	35	116	28	2467
Totals	245	888	230	20814

Remember, when you see a bird that is reported on the tape, call it in and update the tape so I can keep it current. Often a dozen people will use the tape to find a bird, and none of them will call it in as refund! Conversely, if you believe a bird on the tape has left the area, call and I'll take it off. With your continued help and support, we can make the Colorado Bird Report even better. Remember, you can leave a message anytime during the announcement by pressing "5" on your touch-tone phone, listening for the beep, and talking just as you would at the end of the tape. Good birding. I am waiting to hear from you.

C.F.O. JOURNAL  
INDICES TO VOLUME 23: 1989

-----Index by Title-----

- 1989 C.F.O. Membership News, S. Bourcius. (1989) Vol. 23(2)78-80.
- A House Wren Singing at 11,800 Feet, B. Righter, H. Kingery and R. Wilson. (1989) Vol. 23(3)106.
- A Message From Our President, Bill Prather, B. Prather. (1989) Vol. 23(2)46-47.
- A Northern Cardinal (Cardinalis cardinalis) at 10,710 Feet Elevation in Colorado, B. Brockner. (1989) Vol. 23(4)132-133.
- A Second Specimen Record of Lesser Nighthawk (Chordeiles acutipennis) From Colorado, With Some Notes on its Occurrence and Identification, M. Janos and I. Prather. (1989) Vol. 23(4)134-138.
- A Specimen of Surf Scoter (Melanitta perspicillata) from Western Colorado, C.W. Jeske. (1989) Vol. 23(2)75.
- A Summary of the Recent Changes to the 6th Edition of the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (Thirty-seventh Supplement), D. Nelson. (1989) Vol. 23(4)128-131.
- A Tape of Bird Calls and a Cassette Recorder: Tools for Surveying Inconspicuous Marsh Birds, K. Mancini. (1989) Vol. 23(2)48-55.
- Ages of Loggerhead Shrike Young, H. Kingery. (1989) Vol. 23(2)73-74.
- Barrow's Goldeneyes Summer in Flat Tops Wilderness, H. and U. Kingery. (1989) Vol. 23(3)86-90.
- Birds of the Fraser Experimental Forest, Colorado, and their Role in Dispersing Lodgepole Pine Dwarf Mistletoe, T.H. Nicholls, L.M. Egeland and F.G. Hawksworth. (1989) Vol. 23(1)3-12.
- Book Reviews:
- Atlas of Wintering North American Birds: An Analysis of Christmas Bird Count Data by Terry Root, (P. Gent--1989) Vol. 23(1)40.
- Birds of Yellowstone by Terry KcEneaney, (H. Kingery--1989) Vol. 23(2)83.
- Hawks in Flight by Pete Dunne, David Sibley and Clay Sutton, (H. Kingery--1989) Vol. 23(1)37-38.
- The Complete Birder by Jack Connor, (H. Kingery--1989) Vol. 23(1)38-39.
- C.F.O. Ruffed Grouse Trip, I.M. Cold. (1989) Vol. 23(2)81-82.
- Colorado Atlas Update, H. Kingery. (1989) Vol. 23(2)76-77.
- Colorado Bird Report Update 1989, D. Martin. (1989) Vol. 23(4)142-144.
- Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Begins Third Season, H. Kingery.



- (1989) Vol. 23(1)31-34.
- Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Update, H. Kingery. (1989) Vol. 23(3)110-111.
- Field Trip Report: No White-tailed Ptarmigan, B. Brockner. (1989) Vol. 23(3)112.
- Field Trip Report: White-tailed Ptarmigan, Feb. 18, 1989, B. Prather. (1989) Vol. 23(1)36.
- Latilong Revision Pending, H. Kingery. (1989) Vol. 23(1)35.
- Proceedings of the 1989 27th Annual Convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists, M. Janos and D. Leatherman. (1989) Vol. 23(3)100-105.
- Recent State Record Specimens of Birds at the Denver Museum of Natural History, B. Webb and J. Reddall. (1989) Vol. 23(4)121-127.
- Seasonal Reports:
- (Winter 1988-1989) News From the Field: Winter 1988-1989 (December, January and February), D. Martin. (1989) Vol. 23(1)19-30.
- (Spring 1989) News From the Field: Spring 1989 (March, April and May), D. Martin. (1989) Vol. 23(2)56-72.
- (Spring 1989) News From the Field: Summer 1989 (June, July and August), D. Martin. (1989) Vol. 23(3)91-99.
- The Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee Report for Records Submitted in 1987 (Part I), R. Bunn. (1989) Vol. 23(1)13-18.
- The Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee Report for Records Submitted in 1987 (Part II), R. Bunn. (1989) Vol. 23(4)114-120.
- Western Screech-Owls in the Grand Valley, R. Levad. (1989) Vol. 23(3)107-109.

-----Index by Author-----

- Bouricius, S. (1989) 1989 C.F.O. Membership Update. Vol. 23(2)78-80.
- Brockner, B. (1989) Field Trip Report: No White-tailed Ptarmigan. Vol. 23(3)112. A Northern Cardinal (Cardinalis cardinalis) at 10,710 Feet Elevation in Colorado. Vol. 23(4)132-133.
- Bunn, R. (1989) The Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee Report for Records Submitted in 1987 (Part I), Vol. 23(1)13-18. The Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee Report for Records Submitted in 1987 (Part II). Vol. 23(4)114-120.
- Cold, I.M. (1989) C.F.O. Ruffed Grouse Trip. Vol. 23(2)81-82.
- Gent, P. (1989) Book Review: Atlas of Wintering North American Birds: An Analysis of Christmas Bird Count Data by Terry Root. Vol. 23(1)40.

- Janos, M. and D. Leatherman. (1989) Proceedings of the 1989 27th Annual Convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. Vol. 23(3)100-105.
- Janos, M. and I. Prather. (1989) A Second Specimen Record of Lesser Nighthawk (Chordeiles acutipennis) From Colorado, With Some Notes on its Occurrence and Identification. Vol. 23(4)134-138.
- Jeske, C.W. (1989) A Specimen of Surf Scoter (Melanitta perspicillata) from Western Colorado. Vol. 23(2)75.
- Kingery, H. (1989) Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Begins Third Season. Vol. 23(1)31-34. Latilong Revision Pending. Vol. 23(1)35. Ages of Loggerhead Shrike Young. Vol. 23(2)73-74. Colorado Atlas Update. Vol. 23(2)76-77. Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Update. Vol. 23(3)110-111. Book Reviews: Hawks in Flight by Pete Dunne, David Sibley and Clay Sutton. Vol. 23(1)37-38. The Complete Birder by Jack Connor. Vol. 23(1)38-39. Birds of Yellowstone by Terry KcEneaney. Vol. 23(2)83.
- Kingery, H. and U. Kingery. (1989) Barrow's Goldeneyes Summer in Flat Tops Wilderness. Vol. 23(3)86-90.
- Levad, R. (1989) Western Screech-Owls in the Grand Valley. Vol. 23(3)107-109.
- Manci, K. (1989) A Tape of Bird Calls and a Cassette Recorder: Tools for Surveying Inconspicuous Marsh Birds. Vol. 23(2)48-55.
- Martin, D. (1989) Seasonal Reports: (Winter 1988-1989) News From the Field: Winter 1988-1989 (December, January and February). Vol. 23(1)19-30. (Spring 1989) News From the Field: Spring 1989 (March, April and May). Vol. 23(2)56-72. (Summer 1989) News From the Field: Summer 1989 (June, July and August). Vol. 23(3)91-99. Colorado Bird Report Update 1989. Vol. 23(4)142-144.
- Nelson, D. (1989) A Summary of the Recent Changes to the 6th Edition of the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (Thirty-seventh Supplement). Vol. 23(4)128-131.
- Nicholls, T.H., L.M. Egeland and F.G. Hawksworth. (1989) Birds of the Fraser Experimental Forest, Colorado, and their Role in Dispersing Lodgepole Pine Dwarf Mistletoe. Vol. 23(1)3-12.
- Prather, B. (1989) Field Trip Report: White-tailed Ptarmigan, Feb. 18, 1989. Vol. 23(1)36. A Message From Our President, Bill Prather. Vol. 23(2)46-47.
- Righter, B., H. Kingery and R. Wilson. (1989) A House Wren Singing at 11,800 Feet. Vol. 23(3)106.
- Webb, B. and J. Reddall. (1989) Recent State Record Specimens of Birds at the Denver Museum of Natural History. Vol. 23(4)121-127.

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