

C.F.O. Journal

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



VOL. 24, NO. 2

C.F.O. JOURNAL

WINTER 1990



C.F.O. JOURNAL (ISSN-0362-9902) is published quarterly by the Colorado Field Ornithologists, 1225 W. Myrtle St., Fort Collins, CO 80521. Second Class Postage paid at Fort Collins, CO 80521. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: C.F.O. Journal, 50152 Hwy. 72, Peaceful Valley, Lyons, CO 80540.

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Cover Photograph: Immature Sharp-shinned Hawk at Crow Valley Park near Briggsdale, October 7, 1989, by Dave Leatherman. A similar photograph of this bird won Dave an Honorable Mention Award in the 1990 Nongame Photo Contest sponsored by Colorado Outdoors magazine and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. His winning photo appeared in the January/February 1990 issue of that magazine.

BUFFLEHEADS BREEDING IN COLORADO

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Buffleheads (Bucephala albeola) typically nest in the parkland and boreal forest regions of Canada, with isolated breeding populations reported in and around Yellowstone National Park (Bellrose 1976). Successful nesting in Colorado has not been documented, although this species is a common migrant and unusual winter resident of the state (Kingery 1988). A secondary cavity-nesting species, this small duck uses holes excavated by other species, primarily woodpeckers.

A Bufflehead brood was first observed (KJK) on 15 June 1989, and photographed on 29 June (JKR) on their small moraine pond in the Routt National Forest located 2.5 km north of Teal Lake (32 km southwest of Walden, CO). The seven ducklings were age class Ic when photographed (about 16 days old, Gollop and Marshall 1954). The hen had selected as the rearing wetland a small (1 ha) pond dominated by cowlily (Nuphar polysepalum). No potential nest cavities were observed nearby.

On 13 and 14 July 1989, one of us (JKR) observed two other Bufflehead broods on moraine ponds near the headwaters of Forester Creek and the North Fork of the North Platte River 4 km south of Big Creek Lake. Distance between these two brood sightings and the first observation is >30 km, indicating that these were not only different broods from our initial observation, but also that breeding Buffleheads probably occur throughout much of the forested habitat bordering the western edge of North Park. One of these latter broods had 7 age class Ib ducklings, the other had 2, age class IIb young.

The discovery of a breeding population of Buffleheads in Jackson County is not surprising considering earlier observations of breeding pairs in the area. As part of a cooperative study with the U.S. Forest Service, the senior author has been evaluating wetlands and waterfowl production in this corner of North Park during the summer of 1989. During waterfowl surveys,

personnel on this study have observed at least four and perhaps five pairs of Buffleheads occupying breeding territories in the 9.6 km² study area. This apparent breeding density of 0.4 birds/km² is similar to breeding densities for this species across the closed boreal forest and parklands of Canada (Bellrose 1976).

Old flicker (Colaptes auratus) holes are favored by Buffleheads. Erskine (1972) reported that aspen (Populus tremuloides) contained 52% of the Bufflehead nests he observed, with ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa) and Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii) comprising 6% and 2% of the nest trees, respectively. Most nests are within 200 m of water. Competition with other cavity-nesting species, durability of existing cavities, and flicker abundance all affect the availability of cavities and Bufflehead densities. Successful nesters often return to the same cavities, so populations may build through this homing tradition (Erskine 1961). Bufflehead ducklings consume animal matter almost exclusively, and the rich aquatic invertebrate resources found in moraine wetlands provide ideal food (J. K. Ringelman, unpubl. data).

Natural cavities are not particularly abundant in this forested region of the state, thus the potential exists to enhance the breeding habitat of Buffleheads through the introduction of artificial nesting structures similar to those used for Wood Ducks (Aix sponsa). Interestingly, a study comparing nest-box preference by Buffleheads suggests that specially designed nesting boxes, smaller than those built for Wood Ducks, are preferred by this species (Gauthier 1988). Buffleheads prefer boxes with internal dimensions 15 x 15 x 40 cm deep (cavity depth ≥ 30 cm), with an entrance hole of 6.5 cm. To discourage use by European Starlings (Sturnus vulgaris), boxes are placed close to water in coniferous forests, not open aspen groves.

The confirmed sightings of three Bufflehead broods and records of several additional breeding pairs suggest that this species is a rare but established nester in western Jackson County. Under the umbrella of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the U.S. Forest Service has initiated a program called "Taking Wing" to develop and enhance waterfowl habitat on National Forest land. Waterfowl management in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, such as installing artificial nesting structures, will be initiated in this region of the Routt National Forest. With such action, it is hoped that nesting

populations of Buffleheads will increase and expand their range among the forested regions of Colorado.

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[Editor's Note: Jenny Rechel observed breeding Buffleheads with young in the Walden area in June 1987 while working on the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas project. This is an example of valuable information gained by professionals and amateurs alike as part of this cooperative statewide endeavor.]

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: WINTER 1990
(December 1989, January and February 1990)

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As usual this is a schizophrenic article. The first part reports on sightings from the 1989 fall season that arrived after our last deadline, and the second part reports on birds seen during the 1989-1990 winter season. Almost all the reports from the first section were submitted to Hugh Kingery, the Mountain West Regional Editor to American Birds, and easily the hardest working person in Colorado for wildlife causes, especially birds. I would like to thank Hugh for his continued support by having made so much of this data available to me.

The winter was warmer and dryer than usual, a comment that I found myself making last year at this time. The mild winter gave the Grand Valley west of Grand Junction almost no snow, a large number of unusual wintering sparrows and two wintering Hermit Thrushes. A cold snap in February and the seasonal two week closure of the Rawhide Power Plant caused Hamilton Reservoir to be almost 100% frozen on February 17. However, at least some of the wintering ducks (including two species of scoters) returned after the power was turned on later in February and the ice melted.

The bird of the year (decade?) was a female Pyrrhuloxia found by Mark Janos on December 17 during the Holly Christmas Bird Count. This southwestern bird stayed in the same location with a flock of White-crowned and Harris' Sparrows for at least 4 days and was seen by at least eight lucky Colorado birders.

To report any sightings, please drop me a note or just leave a message after calling the Colorado Bird Report at (303) 423-5582.

Update, Fall 1989

A Great Egret was seen from August 2 to September 21 at Walter Walker Wildlife Management Area in Grand Junction by Tom Tustison, and three were seen at Pueblo August 1-6 by Dave

Griffiths. A Green-backed Heron was seen on August 19 in Boulder County by Bill Kaempfer, and another was seen by the Boulder Aubun Society on October 1.

Fifteen Tundra Swans were seen by Rosalie Culver over Boulder Valley Farms on November 21, and another stayed November 24-29 in the ponds there. A late male Blue-winged Teal in fresh plumage was seen by Dave Silverman on November 11 in Pueblo. On November 9, a flock of 20 Buffleheads was found by Lucille Bainbridge at Cortez.

Bainbridge noted a dozen Turkey Vultures soaring at 9,500 feet elevation on September 7 and saw several more on the 9th and 11th, with the last pair of the season seen on the 21st. A large (for Colorado) kettle of 26 Turkey Vultures were seen by Margaret Ewing at Burns on August 4. One fall migrant Osprey was seen by Bainbridge on August 27, three more on September 24 at McPhee and another on October 19 at Totten Reservoir. An Osprey seen by Jack Merchant at Eagle on August 18 was unusual there. A pair of Bald Eagles seen on November 10 at Narraguenep Reservoir worried Bainbridge. This is the reservoir where the state has prohibited fishing because of the high mercury content in the fish. The word got out to the fisherman but no one bothered to tell the eagles. A Cooper's Hawk was seen at Cortez once each month of the fall by Bainbridge, who also reported the last Swainson's Hawk in Cortez on October 11. Brian Wheeler found a total of 3,030 migrating Swainson's Hawks September 16-29 in southwest Washington County. On September 29 alone, he found several large kettles totaling 1367 Swainson's Hawks, 500 of which were on the ground at one location. Bainbridge observed the first Rough-legged Hawk of the season in Cortez on September 16. Wheeler found 138 Rough-legged Hawks between November 2-29 on the northeastern Colorado plains. The good news here is that these observations included good numbers of juvenile Rough-legged Hawks, indicating a recovery from last year's paucity of young. A pair of Golden Eagles with one immature was seen by Bainbridge around Cortez until November 19. A Merlin was seen by Tustison on November 25 near Grand Junction, and Wheeler found 29 different Merlins November 16-29 in northeastern Colorado. Eight of these were seen near Briggsdale on November 23. One Peregrine Falcon was seen all fall by Rick Schnaderbeck at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, and a Prairie Falcon was seen on October 14 in Veltes Park at Glenwood Springs by Victor Zerbi.

A female Blue Grouse and a dozen Wild Turkeys were seen on November 14 in the Dolores Canyon by Bainbridge, and an amazing 73 Wild Turkeys were reported on November 18 at Bergen Park by Colorado's legendary Winston William Brockner.

Schnaderbeck reported the arrival of the first Sandhill Crane at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge on August 30. The Crane population here quickly climbed until it reached 17,000 during the last week of October and then dropped rapidly from November 6-10, with only 300 remaining at the end of November. Over 325 Sandhill Cranes were seen in Boulder County by Alex and Gillian Brown October 12-17, and Peg Haden reported hundreds of Sandhill Cranes at her ranch in Evans on October 12. Merchant saw 45 Sandhill Cranes circling Eagle on September 10. Schnaderbeck reported that the first Whooping Crane arrived on September 20 at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge.

Chris Rustay saw a Semipalmated Plover September 11 at Totten Reservoir near Cortez, and a Common Snipe was seen by Zerbi in Veltes Park at Glenwood Springs between September 20 and October 17.

A Black-legged Kittiwake was found dead beneath power lines on October 17 at Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge by Wendy Brown. Wendy is conducting a study of birds that are killed by flying into power lines during migration. She found the kittiwake while searching under the power lines looking for kills. A Forster's Tern was seen in Silt on October 12 by Zerbi.

Only one Band-tailed Pigeon was seen all season at Eagle by Merchant, who found it August 6. He also reported a Mourning Dove lingering into December at Eagle.

A Barn Owl was seen by Joe Rigli at Fort Morgan on September 16. A pair of Flammulated Owls was found west of Boulder on September 8 and 14 by the Boulder County Nature Association. This is a difficult owl to find in the fall. An Eastern Screech-Owl that was heard calling at Pueblo by Dave Johnson on August 16 was in the middle of Western Screech-Owl country. Eagle's only Northern Pygmy-Owl was one found on October 30 by Merchant. A Burrowing Owl seen by Merchant on September 13 was an immature bird. It was seen in a ground squirrel colony at Eagle where there was a Burrowing Owl last year. The fledgling this year was one month earlier than last year's bird. A Northern Saw-whet Owl

was heard west of Boulder on August 15 by Steve Jones. Common Nighthawks were common in Eagle through August 16, and Merchant saw the last of the season on September 16. Bainbridge saw her last on September 17 in Cortez but didn't mention if it was the same nighthawk reported by Merchant.

Twelve Black Swifts were seen by Silverman at Colorado City on August 7. A Magnificent Hummingbird appeared again in August at Barbara Whipple's Salida feeder. Norma Peterson reported four species of hummingbirds at her Florence feeder this fall: Calliope Hummingbirds were seen on 19 days in August with 4 seen on August 2; Rufous Hummingbirds were seen on 26 days in August with 8 seen on August 1; Broad-tailed and Black-chinned Hummingbirds also peaked very early in August and then lingered into early September. The last Black-chinned Hummingbird of the season was seen September 17 in Glenwood Springs by Zerbi. A Calliope Hummingbird in Alamosa at Virginia Simmons' feeder in August was a surprise. She often sees them in the mountains but not in town. A Calliope Hummingbird seen in Rye by Silverman on August 5 was in an expected location.

The Lewis' Woodpecker report from Bainbridge in Cortez was of 8 seen on September 7 and 14 at 8,500 feet elevation on power poles. All were gone on October 2. A Lewis' Woodpecker was a surprise this fall in McCoy for Ewing but not the 4 seen through the period in Veltes Park in Glenwood Springs by Zerbi, who attributes their resurgence to the new "crop" of dead cottonwoods which make ideal nest sites. Silverman reported good numbers of this species in the Pueblo area until November 1 when the numbers dropped off in foothills, probably due to a seasonal movement. A Lewis' Woodpecker in Fort Morgan seen on September 16 was the first Rigli had seen there in 4 years. A Red-bellied Woodpecker seen in Pueblo where they are very unusual was found on August 4 and September 23 by Van Truan. A pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers seen by John and Elizabeth Rawinski in Monte Vista was a new Latilong record. Two Red-naped Sapsuckers have been regular visitors to the Eagle cemetery in August for the last 5 years, but Merchant was surprised to find one still there on November 3. Four Williamson's Sapsuckers were also found here in August by Merchant. Four Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen at San Isabel by Silverman on November 22-23.

Breeding flycatcher numbers were reported down in the Evergreen area this summer by Brockner, probably as a result of

the dry weather and the resultant paucity of flying insects. An Eastern Phoebe was seen at Lochbuie on October 15 by Brockner, and another was seen 10 days later in Pueblo by John Yeager. A Western Kingbird seen on September 10 ties Merchant's latest date in Eagle. A Purple Martin was seen in Grand Junction on August 20 at the Walter Walker Wildlife Management Area by Tustison. On September 21, Bainbridge watched the last of the Cortez Barn Swallows as they departed for the season.

The flock of 10 Gray Jays seen by Merchant at 8,000 feet elevation near Eagle in September and October was at a very low altitude. Three Blue Jays seen in Alamosa by Virginia Simmons all fall constituted a first Latilong record. About 50 Pinyon Jays were seen on August 20, and 24 in Cortez by Bainbridge. Even with what seemed to be a total pinyon nut crop failure, these Pinyon Jays were still around, obviously taking advantage of some other food source. Unusual were 5 Pinyon Jays in Boulder on September 28 seen by Steve Jones. June Simon reported a very unusual Clark's Nutcracker invasion on November 16 in Evergreen where 25-30 came into town. Merchant commented on the shortage of Clark's Nutcrackers in Eagle in the fall, a time when they are usually common. Merchant felt that the nutcrackers seemed to have been more severely affected by the pinyon nut crop failure than had been the Pinyon Jay's.

The three Black-capped Chickadees at Merchant's feeder this fall preferred sunflower seeds, while the 20 or so Mountain Chickadees liked peanut butter. Is this true everywhere where both species come to a feeder, or only in Eagle?

A gang of about 20 Bushtits visited Bainbridge's Cortez yard once in October and once again in November. Brockner reported that the Evergreen Red-breasted Nuthatch population was down this year and thought it might be due to more widespread pesticide spraying.

The last Rock Wren was seen by Dave Hallock to leave Eldora on August 15. A Bewick's Wren was seen during the first half of November by Bainbridge at Cortez. Winter Wrens were seen at Eldora by Hallock on November 2, and by Steve Jones in Boulder's Gregory Canyon on November 16 and 22. Unusual were two Marsh Wrens seen by Merchant October 21-27 at Eagle--the first he has seen in the area.

Eastern Bluebirds are now to be expected in the upper Arkansas Valley in winter. Two were reported by Sylvia Wheelock in Canon City on October 20, two more were seen by Silverman on November 14 in Colorado City, and another was seen by Pat Monoco on November 17 at Wetmore. A Hermit Thrush was seen in Veltes Park in Glenwood Springs by Zerbi October 14-18, where he also saw Gray Catbirds 7 times in September. The latter is an unusual sighting in Glenwood Springs. An immature Northern Mockingbird was seen on August 15 at Cortez by Bainbridge, evidence that they are nesting nearby. A Brown Thrasher at Roberta Winn's feeder all fall in Westcreek at 7,500 feet elevation stayed through the subfreezing period at the end of November. Silverman estimates that the Pueblo area now plays host to 25 to 50 permanent resident Curve-billed Thrashers.

The first Northern Shrike of the winter in Cortez was seen on November 28 by Bainbridge. He had previously found a singing Loggerhead Shrike the first two weeks of November below the Dolores River Dam.

Unusual on the western slope was an eastern subspecies of Solitary Vireo found by Zerbi on September 6 in Glenwood Springs. A Nashville Warbler seen in McCoy by Ewing on September 6 was a treat. Bainbridge reported flocks of up to 20 Virginia's Warblers mixed with Yellow Warblers from mid-August to mid-September in Cortez. A single Chestnut-sided Warbler at McCoy on September 6 was well described by Ewing, and considered very unusual. Townsend's Warblers made a good appearance and were seen by Rawinski in every warbler flock in the foothills south of Monte Vista during the first week of September. A Pine Warbler was reported in Boulder on October 29 by Wes Sears, and a Palm Warbler was seen on October 24 in Zerbi's yard in Glenwood Springs--a first Latilong record. An American Redstart seen on September 13 at the Orchard Mesa cemetery by Tustison was unexpected. A male Prothonotary Warbler found by Dave Silverman on August 27 in Colorado City was a spectacular find. The city of Boulder retains its crown as Colorado's Worm-eating Warbler capital with one seen on September 12 and 13 by Ridi Van Zandt. A Northern Waterthrush was seen on September 5 and 6 in McCoy by Ewing. Two Canada Warblers were reported in September: one at Bonny Reservoir on the 1st and 2nd by Dave Silverman, and another seen in Fort Collins on the 3rd by Mary Alice Root.

A male Western Tanager was seen by Ewing on August 4 feeding two young at McCoy. On the same day she saw a male Lazuli Bunting feeding its young. A Sage Sparrow on September 29 was the first found by Bainbridge at Cortez. A Lark Bunting seen by Rigli on November 13 was very late. A White-throated Sparrow seen by Bob Righter at Minturn on September 24 was an unusual west slope record. This fall's Golden-crowned Sparrow was an immature seen on September 24 at Colorado City by Silverman. Harris' Sparrows were seen on the west slope on November 24 at Battlement Mesa where Tustison found an immature, and in Zerbi's yard on November 30 in Glenwood Springs. The only Snow Buntings of the season were two reported at Twin Sisters south of Estes Park on November 26 by Dave Bolton and Jerry Spangler.

Four Great-tailed Grackles were found by Ron Meyer on November 7 in Gunnison. Common Grackles are becoming more common on the west slope. One was seen on September 9 in Grand Junction by Tustison, and 35 were seen at Eagle on August 6 by Merchant who reported that smaller numbers of the grackles stayed through November 5. Ewing found 18 Common Grackles in McCoy on August 3 and a very unusual Orchard Oriole on August 20. A flock of 160 gray-crowned Rosy Finches were seen by Rawinski near Capulin on November 24. Their appearance in the dry canyons, with virtually no snow in the higher country, was unusual. Presaging the Purple Finch "invasion" in the northern Front Range area in early winter were three Purple Finch at Norma Peterson's feeder in Florence on November 8 and again on the 20th. These included two females and a male. Brockner complained that huge numbers of House Finches were bullying the Cassin's Finches at his Evergreen feeder. At the rate the House Finches are currently eating his birdseed, Bill might soon have to choose between buying more seed and going to Attu next spring. A single Red Crossbill was seen on November 10 in Zerbi's yard in Glenwood Springs. Common Redpolls put in a good appearance in November with a flock of 100 seen in Fort Collins on November 12 by Brian Wheeler, one seen in Boulder on November 13 by Sue Greenberg and a flock of 25 seen on November 25 by Hallock in Eldora. A Lesser Goldfinch seen on October 17 by Pat Monoco at Wetmore was a straggler. Brockner reported that Evening Grosbeak numbers were way down last year in the Evergreen area, most probably due to the drought-induced poor pine cone crop.

Winter 1990: December 1989, January and February 1990

A Common Loon was seen at Hamilton Reservoir from the New Year through February 11 by numerous observers. A Yellow-billed Loon arrived on December 9 at Chatfield State Park, where it was found by Joey Kellner. Although it was seen through the 14th, Chatfield froze over the night before the Denver Christmas Bird Count and the loon was gone on the morning of December 16, thus missing the CBC.

Several Pied-billed, Horned, and Western Grebes wintered at Hamilton Reservoir, at least until it was allowed to freeze over on February 17. The many Horned Grebes reported here by Dan Bridges on February 25 were early spring migrants.

Two immature Tundra Swans, found by Zerbi, were present December 7-17 in Carbondale, and made it on their Christmas Bird Count. More late Tundra Swans included one east of Longmont seen on December 11-12 by Mark Nikas, and another single seen on January 13 by Norm Erthal at Holly. The Tundra Swan seen east of Longmont was accompanied by a Trumpeter Swan on December 11-12, thus making for a nice comparison of the two species. Greater White-fronted Geese reports were of one seen on December 5 at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt by Nelson, three on January 4 at Runyan Lake in Pueblo by Silverman, one on January 6 at Valmont Reservoir in Boulder by Todd Myers, one on February 5 in Fort Collins by Joe Mammoser, and two on February 11 at Timnath Reservoir by Joe and Adam Mammoser. An immature Ross' Goose was seen on December 3 at McLellan Reservoir by Virgil Williams. Three Ross' Geese, including one very rare blue phase individual, were seen on February 12 at Lower Latham Reservoir by Joe Himmel. Very exciting was a Mallard X Black Duck hybrid found by Nelson in Denver December 30-January 21. This male duck looked like a Black Duck with the exception of a green crown. Cinnamon Teal returned to the Grand Valley area on February 19 when Dexter reported them right on schedule. A pair of Greater Scaup seen on December 4 on Lake Minnequa in Pueblo by Silverman were not the only ones of the season. Two females were found by Nelson all of January in the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Wheat Ridge, a male was found by Kellner during the last half of January on McLellan Reservoir and another male was seen on January 13 in Pueblo by Silverman. Two immature or female Surf Scoters, found in November by Ron Ryder, stayed through the period, as did 5 of the 8 White-winged Scoters found here earlier in the season. Other White-winged Scoters were seen

on December 11 east of Longmont by Nikas, and on December 16-18 by Virgil Williams at McLellan Reservoir. Two female Oldsquaws spent the first two weeks of December in Clifton where Dexter found them at the Clifton sewage ponds. The season's only other Oldsquaw was a female found by Nelson in Wheat Ridge. This duck stayed December 15-17 and left when the lake froze. One Barrow's Goldeneye was seen on December 3 at the Adams County Fairground by Joe TenBrink, one on December 4 at Lake Minnequa in Pueblo by Silverman, three on December 7 in Carbondale found by Zerbi, a male on January 2 at Denver's Sloan Lake discovered by Roller, and one on January 17 in Wheat Ridge Greenbelt found by Mort Staatz. About a dozen Barrow's Goldeneyes were found by Bob Evans from January 21 to February 24 in the canal between Grand Lake and Shadow Mountain Reservoir, and another 12 were found by Rich Levad on January 22 on Plateau Creek on the road to the Powderhorn Ski Area. Hooded Mergansers were seen widely this winter. There were 57 seen on the Denver Christmas Bird Count and other reports from all over the state, including one from Marilyn Collier who saw a male on January 12, 1/4 mile east of Mancos. Red-breasted Mergansers wintered throughout the period at Prospect Pond at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt where they were reported by Spencer. This species was also seen throughout the period at other regular wintering spots: Coors Pond on McIntyre Street south of Clear Creek in Wheat Ridge, Sloan Lake in Denver, McLellan Reservoir in Littleton, and at Hamilton Reservoir.

Leatherman reported 3-5 Northern Harriers seen on each trip to the Pawnee Grasslands in January and February. Adult Sharp-shinned Hawks were also seen by Leatherman in Fort Collins on December 9 and in Estes Park on December 17. A Northern Goshawk was seen on December 9 at Waterton Canyon by Nelson and another was found on December 22 north of Laporte by Dave Hoxler. Over 400 Rough-legged Hawks were tallied this winter on the northeast plains by Brian Wheeler, again with a good proportion of immatures. A Merlin spent the winter for the second year in a row at the Kingery's house in Denver, and Merlins were found from the end of January through early February by Leatherman on the Pawnee Grasslands. Another Merlin was found by Leatherman on February 15 in Fort Collins lunching on either a Robin or a Bohemian Waxwing. A Peregrine Falcon was seen on December 13 in Fruita by Ira Sanders and another (or perhaps the same bird) was seen by Sanders on January 13 in Grand Junction.

Up to two dozen White-tailed Ptarmigan were seen in their traditional wintering grounds on Guanella Pass February 3-18. Six White-tailed Ptarmigan were found on February 10 by Bouricius and gang on the C.F.O. field trip to Left Hand Reservoir in western Boulder County. This small flock of ptarmigan sat on the ice of the reservoir and calmly faced into a 30 knot wind and sub-zero wind chill. Steve pointed out that these grouse not only survive in this exposed and most severe of all environments, but they actually put on weight for the spring breeding season! A pair of Blue Grouse was found by Warren Finch in Turkey Creek on December 9 and later in the same spot for the Denver Christmas Bird Count. Blue Grouse were found by Nelson on January 6 in Golden Gate State Park, west of Denver. At least two Blue Grouse were found by Steve Bouricius at Left Hand Reservoir and were seen February 3-10. A flock of 10 Northern Bobwhite were seen by Schottler and Roller at Muir Springs in Fort Morgan on February 25.

Four Virginia Rails were seen by Dexter from December 2 to February 10 in the Clifton marsh, and another was found by Leatherman at the north end of Horsetooth Reservoir in Fort Collins on January 6. Dexter also reported that up to 4 Soras spent the period in the Clifton marsh.

Silverman found the first Pueblo-area record of a Mew Gull in January. This first winter bird was seen all month at Runyan Lake and City Park Lake in Pueblo. Also present at Runyan Lake on January 4 were a Thayer's and a Glaucous Gull, both reported by Silverman. Earlier, Silverman reported a Glaucous Gull seen on December 1 and 2 at C.F. & I. Ponds in Pueblo.

Sixty Mourning Doves were found by Joe Mammoser at the Fort Collins Nature Center on January 7, an unusually large flock for the winter.

A Barn Owl was found dead on January 4 by Leatherman along Interstate 70, 4 miles east of Bovina in Lincoln County. Is this a year-round resident, able to withstand our harsh high plains winters? Another Barn Owl was found on February 4 in the Fruita Cemetery by Dexter, who thought this owl had used the same roost all winter because beneath its roost tree were "a couple of buckets of pellets." Eastern Screech-Owls were reported during the period in Wheat Ridge Greenbelt by Chris Wood and in Fort Collins at the Flatiron marsh where Leatherman reported that they nest in the Wood Duck boxes. Kevin Cook also found them on the

east side of Fort Collins, roosting and calling along the Poudre River. Leatherman reported that the Great Horned Owl pair in Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins began incubating eggs on February 16. This pair successfully fledged three young from this same nest last year and all three were banded by Ron Ryder. A Northern Pygmy-Owl was seen once each month in December, January, and February in Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins by Leatherman. Whether this was one bird putting in three appearances or three owls putting in one appearance each is left as an exercise to the reader. Other Northern Pygmy-Owls were singles seen from December 11-17 in Glenwood Springs by Zerbi, on January 1 on Monarch Pass by Janos, on January 7 west of Lyons by Bill Fink and on February 10 in Steve Bouricius' Pleasant Valley yard. A Short-eared Owl was seen at dusk on February 5 by Leatherman on the Pawnee Grasslands.

A pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers was found at Holly on December 18 by Bridges. A single male Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen on January 8 by Alan Hay at Muir Springs in Fort Morgan. This male was still present on February 25 and is probably the same individual that has been at this spot for the last couple of years. In a more expected location, 6 Red-Bellied Woodpeckers were seen on January 31 at Bonny Reservoir by Rick Austin. An immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen in Grandview Cemetery by Leatherman from December 2 through January 7. Other Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers seen during the period were on December 14 in Greeley at Glenmere Park where Nikas found one, and one December 16-18 at Phyllis Fisher's Denver feeder, just in time to make the Denver Christmas Bird Count. A very late Williamson's Sapsucker was seen on December 11 by Leatherman, also in Grandview Cemetery. The only report of a Northern Three-toed Woodpecker was of a female seen on December 31 at Spruce Lodge on Grand Mesa, reported by Janos. The yellow-shafted race of the Northern Flicker is resident in eastern Colorado and seems to wander in the winter, as demonstrated by one that was found by Marvin Woolf February 26 at Brighton.

A Say's Phoebe was found by Al Hay on December 9 in Lakewood. This bird was not seen again after 10 inches of snow fell that evening. The female Vermilion Flycatcher that was found in November at Waterton by Miller also vanished after the December 9 snowfall.

A small flock of Bushtits found by Kingery was seen February 6-11 on the hogback south of Morrison. Bushtits winter in small numbers along the base of the foothills west of Denver. The question is, where do they nest? They were found nesting several years ago west of Lyons but have never been found nesting west of Denver.

A Winter Wren was seen in Fort Collins at the Northern Colorado Nature Center by Mammoser January 4-15, and another was found on January 15 at Chatfield by Warren Finch. Up to 12 Marsh Wrens were seen by Dexter in early December in the Clifton marsh. Leatherman found Golden-crowned Kinglets present throughout the period at Fort Collins, in Grandview Cemetery and on the C.S.U. campus. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher were seen on December 2 by Dexter in the Clifton marsh.

Very unusual was a pair of Eastern Bluebirds found by Dexter on December 16 during the Hotchkiss Christmas Bird Count. Much more expected were 16 Eastern Bluebirds seen on January 31 at Bonny Reservoir by Austin. Two different Hermit Thrushes were reported by Dexter wintering in the Grand Junction area. A beautiful male Varied Thrush in the Fort Collins yard of Al and Carol Ramm only lasted 4 days, January 13-17, before it collided with a window and died. Leatherman reported that this bird's behavior was very similar to that of the Varied Thrush in Fort Collins in 1987, when the bird would feed on fallen crab apples and then rest beneath a dense spruce. The behavior of the 1987 bird, however, did not include flying into windows. Leatherman deposited this year's bird at the Denver Museum of Natural History. A Northern Mockingbird spent the winter near Paul Opler's house in Fort Collins, eating the Russian olive berries. A Brown Thrasher was spotted at Bonny Reservoir on January 31 by Austin.

Bohemian Waxwings were seen in December and February but there were few reported in January. About 35 were seen in Greeley by Himmel December 13-14. Another 20 were found by Fiewig on Christmas Day in Golden Gate State Park. On December 29, Mammoser found two flocks of about 50 Bohemian Waxwings on opposite sides of Fort Collins. Leatherman reported that in Fort Collins, small- to medium-sized flocks of Bohemian Waxwings were seen at the end of January, and by February 15 he reported a flock of 175. Additional Bohemian Waxwings were reported from the high country with flocks seen in early February south of Idaho Springs at

Chicago Creek Campground, high on Guanella Pass and at Brainard Lake, in western Boulder County. Later, Bohemian Waxwings were seen at Chatfield on February 24, and over one hundred were seen in one flock on February 25 at White Ranch at the north edge of Golden by Tim Kesel. About 100 Cedar Waxwings were seen in a flock in Greeley December 13-14 by Himmel, and small numbers of Cedar Waxwings were reported throughout the period in the older parts of Denver and Fort Collins.

This was a good winter for Northern Shrikes on the northeastern plains, with Leatherman reporting 7 seen in January, including 4 on January 21 in Weld County. One of these shrikes was seen on the C.F.O. field trip on January 27 at Crow Valley, where Terry Flageolle found a silky pocket-mouse neatly shish-kabobbed on a honey locust thorn--the snowy-day larder of the shrike.

A myrtle race of the Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen on December 5 by Leatherman in Fort Collins and on December 30 in Boulder by Bob Fiewig. Wintering Yellow-rumped Warblers included one in the Clifton marsh found by Dexter, and one in La Junta found by Janos. A single Common Yellow-throat was also seen at the Clifton marsh on December 2 by Dexter but wasn't reported again.

Five Field Sparrows seen by Scott Seltman on February 10 along the Cimarron River in Baca County were in an area where they are sparse in the winter. The warm, dry winter in the Grand Valley along the Colorado River west of Grand Junction attracted some very uncommon wintering sparrows. These included up to 6 Vesper Sparrows seen north of Fruita on January 28 by Dexter, a Lark Sparrow found on January 28 by Ron Lambeth and a Lark Bunting found on January 28, also by Dexter. A Fox Sparrow came to Zerbi's feeder in Glenwood Springs December 23-29. Swamp Sparrows were reported in higher numbers this winter than in the last few. These included three seen December 1-2 at C.F. & I. Ponds in Pueblo by Silverman, one that wintered in the Clifton marsh found by Dexter, another found in Boulder on December 12 by Nelson, three seen on December 16 at Chatfield by Chris Wood, at least two, first seen on January 1, at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt by Nelson, one found on January 14 at Barr Lake State Park by TenBrink, 4 seen on January 31 at Bonny Reservoir by Austin, and one found by Roller and Schottler at Muir Springs on February 25. Average numbers of Harris' Sparrows were reported this winter, with one

seen on January 4 at the Northern Colorado Nature Center by Mammoser, an unusual west slope sighting by Dexter on January 28 west of Grand Junction, another seen on January 31 at Bonny Reservoir by Austin, and one February 23-25 at Muir Springs found by TenBrink.

The three Northern Cardinals found in November by Silverman below Pueblo Reservoir remained through December 2. A male Northern Cardinal was at a Lakewood feeder in the 2600 block of South Field Street on December 24, and a female first found by Alan Hay at Muir Springs on January 8 remained there through February 25.

Without a doubt the bird of the season was Colorado's first state record of Pyrrhuloxia, a female found on December 17 by Mark Janos as he conducted the Holly Christmas Bird Count. This remarkable bird was kind enough to pose for pictures by Duane Nelson on December 20 but was not seen again. The female Pyrrhuloxia that was north of Elkhart, Kansas a month earlier (constituting a first state record for Kansas) was found dead on December 28. It was in such poor condition that it was felt to have died several weeks earlier, thus making the bird found at Holly a different individual. Mark is the Holly CBC compiler and its main bird counter. If you will remember, last year he found a Carolina Wren in this circle. It staggers the imagination to wonder what would show up there if another birder were to ever join him on the count.

Lapland Longspurs were seen all winter on the northeastern plains with about 20 seen January 27 on the C.F.O. field trip to Pawnee Grasslands lead by Leatherman.

Two immature Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen by Leatherman on January 21 at Timnath Reservoir, and a single Rusty Blackbird was seen on February 10 at Bonny Reservoir by Bridges. A male Great-tailed Grackle visited Cook's feeder in Fort Collins and was seen all of December. Sixteen Great-tailed Grackles were seen on December 6 in the Clifton marsh by Dexter, 17 were seen in Weld County south of Greeley on December 14 by Nikas, 14 were seen February 17-18 in Las Animas by Janos, and one was seen in Boulder February 20-25 by Gerome Ruben.

Leatherman reported 35 Rosy Finches in pursuit of a Sharp-shinned Hawk on December 17 in Estes Park. Denver's no-miss

Rosy Finch spot at Red Rocks has yielded poorer and poorer results each year. During this entire winter, including the Denver Christmas Bird Count, only one Rosy Finch was seen there. Other areas are doing better with about 300 Rosy Finches, including at least 5 black race birds, seen at Watson Lake west of Fort Collins by Leatherman on January 13, and 500 Rosy Finches seen on February 10 southeast of Idaho Springs by Warren Finch. A Purple Finch invasion of the front range was signaled when a female Purple Finch was found on December 16-17 on the Denver Christmas Bird Count along Plum Creek by Doug Ward and Norm Erthal. Another female showed up at Mammoser's Fort Collins' feeder on December 31, and yet another female was found by Colorado's Mr. Finch, Warren Finch, at Chatfield State Park. This last Purple Finch stayed from January 15 to February 1 and was seen by many observers. Up to 35 Red Crossbills were seen during the entire period in Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins and were watched closely by Leatherman. The last time White-winged Crossbills were seen in the Fort Collins Grandview Cemetery was in 1984. They returned this season. Up to 8 White-winged Crossbills were seen there by Leatherman on December 11 and 12. No more were seen until 4 showed up on January 9 and stayed through January 15. The White-winged Crossbills were always associated with the heavy cone crop at the top of the huge blue spruces in the cemetery. They were often found in trees adjacent to the Red Crossbill flock but never shared a tree with them. On the eastern plains, 6 Common Redpolls were seen on December 3 at Prewitt Reservoir by Bridges. In the foothills, one was at Ray Davis' feeder in Lyons on December 11, and 4 were seen on December 17 on the Glenwood Springs Christmas Bird Count. The most reliable birds, however, was a flock of 15-40 Common Redpolls found by Bill Kaempfer in Ward from January 14 to February 25. A single female Lesser Goldfinch was seen on February 10 in Baca County by Seltman.

A COMMUNIQUE' FROM THE RECORDS COMMITTEE

Duane Nelson
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As the new Chairman of the Records Committee, I'd like to use this forum to get acquainted with you, to let you know what we're up to and how we function, and to thank all of you who send in records for your support. Without you, we would not be in the strong condition that we are in today.

The Records Committee currently is composed of eight committed and qualified C.F.O. members from all regions of the state. Each member serves for a three year term. When report forms are received by the Chairman, they are given an identifying number, duplicated, and sent in batches for each member's evaluation. After each member completes their review, the report forms are sent to the next member on the list, and each member's votes are sent back to the Chairman for tallying. The Chairman then writes up the decisions for publication in the C.F.O. Journal. When this is completed, the original records and all photographic documentation are permanently archived at the Denver Museum of Natural History.

What kind of standards must we set in order to accept a record? This seemingly difficult question is easily answered. First, if the species is convincingly described and has no inconsistencies, we tend to affirm it. Second, and somewhat more subtly, it is important that our decisions could be reviewed by others at a later time, and that they would come to the same conclusions based on the same data. The Records Committee has historically accepted about 80% of all reports since its inception, so it should be fairly obvious that we prefer saying "yes." Of the approximately 20% that we can't conclusively affirm, most fall into category "C", due to insufficient or incomplete data. My own opinion of birds voted into this category is that most are probably correctly identified but were not written up so as to absolutely eliminate all doubt. It is this category that causes the most frustration, both for the Committee, and for the reporter. I know that I spend much more time with the tough decisions than with the easier ones, and that I am never as happy with my vote when I am uncertain if I made the right

decision. Perhaps if you have ever submitted documentation that has not been accepted, which is a blow to the ego for sure, you will understand that it is not you we are voting on, but rather the way the case is made.

Although there are many ways to prepare a convincing report, a preferred way is to go from the macro to the micro level, that is from general categories to the very specific. For example, a Philadelphia Vireo must first be proven to not be a similar appearing bird within the Vermivora genus of warblers. Size is also important. A redpoll had better not be "appreciably larger than a Pine Siskin." The most common problems that we see are the omission of a critical field mark. If I had to decide on the fate of a Purple Finch record, I would be very troubled if its best field mark, immaculately unstreaked undertail coverts, were not described, even if the bolder face pattern and shorter bill with a curved culmen were beautifully described. Similarly, a drab fall warbler identified as a Blackpoll needs a description of leg color to be seriously considered. For birds with more subtle field marks, even more care must be exercised.

We are forced to have a slightly higher standard for inclusion of a new state record, which is normally a unanimous vote. For new state records, we often solicit aid and advice from the most qualified persons nationwide. Making sure that our decisions are consistent with regional and national trends makes us an important part of what is known about bird distribution in North America.

Finally, a new, updated and comprehensive Field Check List of Colorado Birds prepared by the Records Committee of the C.F.O. is almost ready to print. The Check List will be available in time for the C.F.O. Convention in Pueblo in May, 1990 and at the A.B.A. Convention in Ft. Collins in June, 1990. In addition to adding birds new to the Colorado state list since the last edition, you will note the deletion of two species, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Common Black-Hawk. The Records Committee felt that while both species were accurately described and identified, the normal patterns of vagrancy for both species makes their wild origin suspect here in Colorado. If dramatic news of range expansion surfaces, these records can be re-evaluated as necessary (which is true for any other species as well).

I plan to submit more information to the C.F.O. Journal in subsequent issues in order to keep you current.

FOOD ITEMS OF COLORADO BIRDS
INTRODUCING A NEW CFO JOURNAL COLUMN

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Birding is wonderful for many reasons, but two particularly underpin the subject I introduce here. First, the avenues of pursuit are potentially endless. I think many of us have developed new skills and a new appreciation for birds through participation in the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, for example. Second, amateurs and professionals alike can make valuable contributions to the science of ornithology. What I propose here is a column devoted to the eating habits of Colorado birds.

Being an entomologist, I have long been fascinated by which bird ate which insect for which meal during which season. With a little investigation, I soon expanded and found myself recording all bird food items: animal, plant and even mineral. As these observations, however coarse, began to accumulate, it seemed they might be useful to someone and should perhaps be part of the "literature." To make them accessible, I contacted Mark Janos about putting these in the "C.F.O. Journal" as an article. We decided to make this a regular column on a trial basis for one year. Here would be my suggestions for "ground rules":

- (1) Of course, anyone can contribute observations.
- (2) The column is intended to serve as documentation of wild Colorado bird feeding habits. For the time being, I would propose excluding feeder observations. Perhaps this could be a separate column.
- (3) Minimum data for an entry or observation would be bird species, food item, date, place (specific and county), and comments (if any).
- (4) Be as precise as possible. Identification of the bird is probably not a problem in most cases. Food identification is perhaps the real challenge, but also a great opportunity for learning. Descriptions like "tree berries", "weed seeds", or "bugs" probably are not

specific enough. For example, if you see a sparrow nipping at the seed head of some grass, take careful note of which plant was being eaten. Collect some, if necessary (and legal). Local botanists, garden clubs, native plant societies and the like usually enjoy having their expertise tapped. I have found small plants can often be photocopied. The black and white image produced is life-size and may convey enough detail to allow identification. For insects, "cabbage white butterfly (Pieris rapiae)" is better than "white butterfly" is better than "moth or butterfly" is better than "flying insect" is better than "bug". Take things as far as you can.

- (5) Send your observations to me and I will do my best to decide which should be included and to compile the column. I am also willing to help identify food items, should you want to forward them to me (no elk carcasses, please!). It is usually better to dry and press plants (or send a good photocopy). Insects may require preserving in a vial with something common like rubbing alcohol.

Following this introduction are my tabulated observations for 1989 (plus Dec. '88). From these I think you can get the idea. If you have any format suggestions or other ideas for this whole business, please let me know. I do not have a computer, unfortunately. Here is your chance to share what you have seen. Perhaps here is an excuse to learn your trees, plants, insects, etc.

Bent and other early naturalists did a great job of detailing food habits in their life history studies. The Stokes' have revived popular interest in bird behavior and I would like to see the members of C.F.O. have a forum for sharing their observations in the area of what birds eat.

Remember, this proposal is only a trial at this point. If there is interest, I think it could be valuable and fun. There is certainly no intent to "make work" or divert attention from existing important projects like the Atlas. My feeling is many of us are, or could, collect feeding information right now. I would view this as an enhancement of current activities, much like filling out Cornell Nest Cards enhances the value of Atlas work.

Abbreviations used in the following account:

GC = Grandview Cemetery

FC = Fort Collins

SWA = State Wildlife Area

RMNP = Rocky Mountain National Park, CO

BIRD FEEDING OBSERVATIONS, DECEMBER '88 THROUGH NOVEMBER '89*WINTER

Robin	Eur. buckthorn fruit	GC, Ft. Collins, CO	12/6/88
Canada Goose	Golf course fairway grass	Ft. Collins	12/9
Flicker	Ants in bare soil	GC, Ft. Collins	12/9
Robin	Russian olive fruits	FS, Ft. Collins	12/10
Flicker	Hackberry psyllids in bark	GC, Ft. Collins	12/15
Herring Gull	Canada goose (dead)	Ft. Collins	12/15
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern gray squirrel	Columbus, Ohio	12/23
Carolina Chickadee	Redbud seeds in pods	Columbus	1/1/89
House Finch	Elm (Chinese?) buds	Columbus	1/1
Tufted Titmouse	Redbud seeds in pods	Columbus	1/1
Robin	Red hawthorn berries	Columbus	1/2
Yellow-b. Sapsucker	Austrian pine sap wells	GC, Ft. Collins	1/8-2/23
Cedar Waxwing	Snow and hackberries	CSU, Ft. Collins	1/13
Robin	Juniper berries & hackberries	CSU	1/13
Herring Gull	Canada goose (dead)	Ft. Collins	1/19
Robin	Juniper berries	Poudre Park, CO	1/20
Three-t. Woodpecker	Douglas-fir beetle larvae	Poudre Canyon, CO	1/20
Common Bushtit	Pinyon insects (aphids?)	Brush Hollow SWA, CO	1/21
Robin	Juniper berries	GC, Ft. Collins	1/30
Robin	Russian olive fruits	Fort Collins	2/10
Robin	Earthworms in thawed soil	CSU, Ft. Collins	2/14

Comments: In this case at least 70 robins were in a feeding frenzy in a long strip of soil thawed by underground steam pipes in front of the Forestry and Wagar Buildings on campus. They were also actively probing mulch under shrubs in this same soil.

Lapland Longspur	Milo, wild sunflower seed	Pawnee Nat.Grslnd., CO	2/26
Horned Lark	Milo, wild sunflower seed	Pawnee Nat.Grslnd.	2/26

*SPRING

Lapland Longspur	Spilled field corn on road	w. North Platte, NE	3/1
Pine Siskin	Blue spruce seeds	GC, Fort Collins	3/6
Cedar Waxwing	Flycatching	Fort Collins	3/12

Comments: Several waxwings were flying out from cottonwood branches and snapping up Aphrodisian dung beetles and/or giant willow aphids (winged forms). This was an unseasonably warm day and these early spring insects were both active.

*SPRING, cont.

Raven	White-t jackrabbit carrion	n.of Tie Siding, Wyo.	3/13
Evening Grosbeak	Boxelder seeds	LaPorte, CO	
Three-t. Woodpecker	Douglas-fir beetle larvae	Poudre Canyon	3/16
Red Crossbill	Salt and/or salty road grit	Cameron Pass, CO	3/16
Black-b. Magpie	Engorged ticks	Upper Poudre Canyon	3/16
<p>Comments: Magpies, as many as three at a time, were observed probing the fur of bighorn sheep with their beaks. These scavengers were removing engorged ticks from their hosts. The younger sheep seemed somewhat aggitated by these large birds pecking at their necks and other "private" parts, but the older sheep seemed indifferent to this mutualistic behavior.</p>			
Robin	Juniper berries	Stove Prairie, CO	3/16
Mountain Bluebird	Adult grasshopper	Stove Prairie	3/16
Red Crossbill	Salt and/or salty road grit	Cameron Pass	3/25
White-w Crossbill	Salt and/or salty road grit	Cameron Pass	3/25
Pine Siskin	Salt and/or salty road grit	Cameron Pass	3/25
Robin	Russian olive fruits	Fort Collins	3/30
House Sparrow	Aspen catkins (flowers)	CSU, Ft. Collins	4/2
Evening Grosbeak	American elm flowers	GC, Ft. Collins	4/5
Robin	Earthworms	Wheeling, W. Va.	4/9
Loggerhead Shrike	Redshank grasshopper (impale)	Briggsdale, CO	4/17
White-cr. Sparrow	Wild plum flower petals	Dixon Res. (FC)	4/22
Say's Phoebe	Cabbage white butterfly	Dixon Res. (FC)	4/22
American Goldfinch	Am. elm buds and flowers	CSU	4/26
Starling	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Ft. Collins	4/29
Common Grackle	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Ft. Collins	4/29
Red-w. Blackbird	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Ft. Collins	4/29
Barn Swallow	Two spp. of midge (over water)	Thompson Lk. (Weld Co.)	4/30
Bank Swallow	Two spp. of midge (over water)	Thompson Lk. (Weld Co.)	4/30
Tree Swallow	Two spp. of midge (over water)	Thompson Lk. (Weld Co.)	4/30
Cliff Swallow	Two spp. of midge (over water)	Thompson Lk. (Weld Co.)	4/30
California Gull	Dead carp	e. of Eaton, CO	4/30
Lazuli Bunting	Wild plum flower petals	Dixon Res. (FC)	5/1
White-cr. Sparrow	Wild plum flower petals	Dixon Res. (FC)	5/1
Black-c. Chickadee	Wild plum flower petals	Dixon Res. (FC)	5/1
Yellow-r. Warbler	Gleaning insects from willow	Dixon Res. (FC)	5/1
<p>Comments: The insects present were midges, small caddisflies (adults) and giant willow aphids. Presumably, the warblers were eating them all.</p>			
Chipping Sparrow	Wild plum flower petals	Dixon Res. (FC)	5/1
Orange-cr. Warbler	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	5/2&3
Virginia's Warbler	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	5/2&3
Yellow-r. Warbler	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	5/3
Evening Grosbeak	Male blue spruce flowers	GC, Fort Collins	5/4
Great Horned Owl	Crow & rock dove	GC, Fort Collins	5/4

*SPRING cont.

Comments: Feathers of these birds found below a great horned owl nest in the crotch of an American elm within the interior of the cemetery.

Evening Grosbeak	Female cottonwood catkins	LaPorte, CO	5/6
Lazuli Bunting	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Fort Collins	5/9
House Finch	Dandelion seeds	Fort Collins	5/10
House Sparrow	Dandelion seeds	Fort Collins	5/10
Chipping Sparrow	Dandelion seeds	Fort Collins	5/10
Common Grackle	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Fort Collins	5/10
Sharp-sh. Hawk	Common grackle	GC, Fort Collins	5/10
Pine Siskin	Dandelion seeds	Fort Collins	5/10
Starling	Cutworm larvae in soil	Fort Collins	5/10
Lesser Goldfinch	Dandelion seeds	Bellvue, CO	5/11
Common Grackle	Earthworms	Fort Collins	5/14
Starling	Earthworms	Fort Collins	5/14

Comments: Both starlings and grackles were observed feasting on earthworms flushed from the soil by heavy overnight rains.

Ring-billed Gull	Spilled corn	Cheraw, CO	5/17
Franklin's Gull	Spilled corn	Cheraw, CO	5/17
Mourning Dove	Spilled corn	Cheraw, CO	5/17
Common Grackle	Spilled corn	Cheraw, CO	5/17
Western Meadowlark	Spilled corn	Cheraw, CO	5/17
Swainson's Hawk	Snake sp.	Severance, CO	5/17
Kestrel	Snake sp.	Fossil Creek Res.	5/21
Crow	"Milky Way" candy bar	Fort Collins	5/25
House Finch	Dandelion seeds	GC, Fort Collins	5/25
Cedar Waxwing	European elm scales/honeydew	GC, Fort Collins	5/25

Comments: The waxwings were observed gleaning the scales from American elm branches and twigs, but more interestingly, also gleaning "honeydew" from the leaves of these same trees. "Honeydew" is a surgary excretion of the scale insects. The insects feed on tree sap via sucking mouthparts. They extract what they need for life processes from the sap (mainly nitrogenous compounds) and secrete the rest, which is rich in carbohydrates (= "sugars"). This material is attractive to a number of animals, from mammals to insects.

*SUMMER

Chukar	Indian ricegrass seedheads	Como, CO	6/6
Common Grackle	Unripe red mulberries	GC, Fort Collins	6/25
Starling	Unripe red mulberries	GC, Fort Collins	6/25
House Finch	Unripe red mulberries	GC, Fort Collins	6/25
Robin	Honeysuckle berries	GC, Fort Collins	7/11
Starling	Honeysuckle berries	GC, Fort Collins	7/11
House Finch	Mint sp. flower petals	Dixon Res. (FC)	7/23
Robin	Chokecherries	Dixon Res. (FC)	7/23
Broad-t. Hummingbd.	Feeding at lg. white thistle	Sprague Lake (RMNP)	7/29

*SUMMER cont.

Comments: In addition was young fledgling Great Horned Owl foraging along the leaves and small branches of an American elm in Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins for European elm scale insects and very possibly their sugary "honeydew" excretion. This looked to be an unlikely, dainty food source for so large and powerful a bird.

<u>*FALL</u>			
Robin	Honeysuckle berries	GC, Fort Collins	8/11
Red-br. Nuthatch	Catching blue spruce seeds	GC, Fort Collins	8/17
Robin	Chokecherries	Dixon Res., (FC)	8/17
Least Tern (adult)	Unid. 3" fish to fledgling	See Noshe Res., CO	8/19
Wilson's Warbler	Wild sunflower aphids	Pawnee Nat'l. Grsland	8/20-22
Western Tanager	<u>Ribes cereum</u> (=gooseberries)	Briggsdale, CO	8/21
Black-h. Grosbeak	<u>Rhus trilobata</u> (sumac) berries	Briggsdale	8/22
Yellow-br. Chat	Fall webworm caterpillars	Spring Crk. Dam (FC)	8/24
Pine Siskin	Blue spruce seeds	GC, Fort Collins	8/30
Prairie Falcon	Lark bunting	n. of Timpas, CO	9/1
Western Kingbird	Russian olive fruits	Fort Collins	9/4
Evening Grosbeak	Boxelder seeds	Durango	9/6
Cedar Waxwing	Red honeysuckle berries	Durango	9/6
Pine Siskin	Blue spruce seeds	Durango	9/6
Pine Siskin	Rabbitbrush seeds	Durango	9/6
Yellow Warbler	Boxelder psyllids	Durango	9/6
Cassin's Finch	Russian Knapwood seed	Briggsdale	9/9
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	Cottonwood aphids	Briggsdale	9/9
Blackpoll Warbler	Cottonwood aphids	Briggsdale	9/9
Western Kingbird	Russian olive fruits	Briggsdale	9/9
Eastern Kingbird	Russian olive fruits	Briggsdale	9/9
Robin	Russian olive fruits	Dixon Reservoir	9/10
Western Tanager	Russian olive fruits	Dixon Reservoir	9/10
Western Kingbird	Russian olive fruits	Fort Collins	9/10
Pine Siskin	Blue spruce seeds	GC, Fort Collins	9/15
Pine Siskin	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	9/15
House Finch	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	9/15
Evening Grosbeak	Boxelder seeds	CSU	9/19
Evening Grosbeak	Hackberry nipplegall psyllids	CSU	9/19

Comments: The hackberry nipplegall psyllid is one of the more common insect pests of hackberry. The galls or "bumps" they make on the leaves are a common feature, so much so they can help identify this species of tree in most cases. This observation involved seeing large numbers of the galls lying beneath infested trees. The galls were bitten off by the grosbeaks and the causal insect deftly removed prior to the galls being discarded. These insects were at a stage of development just prior to emergence from the gall. It seems odd the birds would go to the trouble of extracting the insects, when the insects

*FALL cont.

	would emerge on their own and be present in very large numbers in just a few days hence.		
Red-br. Nuthatch	Blue spruce seeds on ground	GC, Fort Collins	10/2
Rufous-s. Towhee	Blue spruce seeds on ground	GC, Fort Collins	10/2
Chipping Sparrow	Blue spruce seeds on ground	GC, Fort Collins	10/2
Red-br. Nuthatch	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/5
Pine Siskin	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/5
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/5
Black-c. Chickadee	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/6
Red-br. Nuthatch	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/6
Sharp-sh. Hawk	Dark-eyed junco (slate-col)	Briggsdale	10/7
Mountain Chickadee	Wild sunflower seeds	Briggsdale	10/7
Towns. Solitaire	Wild rose hips	Briggsdale	10/7
Common Grackle	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Fort Collins	10/12
Red-w. Blackbird	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Fort Collins	10/12
Blue Jay	Ornamental sunflower seeds	Fort Collins	10/12
Robin	Russian olive fruits	Fort Collins	10/12
Flicker	Japanese barberry berries	GC, Fort Collins	10/18
Brown Creeper	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/23
Robin	Russian olive fruits	Briggsdale	10/27
Northern Shrike	Pursuing r-b nuthatch and tree sparrows	Briggsdale	10/27
Flicker	Russian olive fruits	Briggsdale	10/27
Towns. Solitaire	Juniper berries	Briggsdale	10/27
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	Russian olive aphids	Briggsdale	10/27
Golden-cr. Kinglet	Russian olive aphids	Briggsdale	10/27
Water Pipit	Various spp. of midges	Jackson Res., CO	10/27
Mountain Chickadee	American elm buds	GC, Fort Collins	10/30
Brown Creeper	Hackberry psyllids	GC, Fort Collins	10/30
Yellow-r. Warbler	Russian olive aphids	Chatfield, Denver, CO	11/2
Black-c. Chickadee	Russian olive aphids	Chatfield	11/2
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	Russian olive aphids	Chatfield	11/2
Wilson's Warbler	Russian olive aphids	Chatfield	11/2
Red-tailed Hawk	Bl.t prairie dog	Pt. Collins dump	11/4

A DISCUSSION OF THE JUVENILE PLUMAGES
OF Melospiza SPARROWS AS SEEN IN
THE FIELD IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN AREA

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The purpose of this article is to point out the difficulty in identifying juvenile plumages of the Melospiza sparrow group which includes Song Sparrow (Melospiza melodia), Lincoln's Sparrow (M. lincolni), and Swamp Sparrow (M. georgiana) in Colorado and to point out some field marks that could help in identification to species.

For the plumage descriptions and measurements, I relied heavily on the written description by Oberholser in The Bird Life of Texas (1974). I felt his descriptions were extrapolated from a wider range of variation within each species, whereas, the limited plates and photos I could find would be a single depiction of a bird that may or may not accurately represent its species. The descriptions by Oberholser I cross-referenced with Bent's Life Histories (1968), Godfrey's Birds of Canada (1986), Pyle, et al's, Identification Guide to North American Passerines (1987), the National Geographic Field Guide (1987), and the Audubon Society's Master Guide to Birding (1983).

At first glance, all three of these Melospiza sparrows in juvenile plumage resemble the adult Lincoln's Sparrow that is depicted in the field guides. All have buffy underparts, particularly on the finely-streaked upper breast. All show a rufous wash in their wings, buffy-brownish streaked sides and flanks, a rather streaky brownish cap, and buffy-grayish sides of face. All three may show a crest effect. Some of the reliable structural features such as the Song Sparrow's long, rounded tail cannot be used with any certainty, because in late summer and early fall new tails are being grown.

Juvenile plumage is prevalent from June through September for Song Sparrows (Bailey and Niedrach 1965; Pyle, et al 1987), June through August for Swamp Sparrows, and July through August for Lincoln's Sparrows (Pyle, et al 1987). In September, all three

will show diminishing signs of juvenile plumage and advancing stages of immature or first-winter plumages, which generally resembles the adult winter plumage.

Although there are many races of Song Sparrow, the juvenile plumage of the eastern races (found west to at least the Rocky Mountains) is about the same for this discussion. The West Coast races are darker and noticeably larger as one goes northward along the coast (Bent 1968).

First let us separate the juvenile and adult Song Sparrow from the rest. In fall plumage, the adult Song Sparrow can appear buffy on its breast and flanks and darker on its upper parts than it usually appears in spring and summer. It can usually be separated from all others in this discussion by its breast being broadly streaked. All the other juveniles, plus the adult Lincoln's, show a buffy breast with finely-defined brownish streaks on the upper breast. On both juvenile and adult Song Sparrows, the malar stripes can be noticeably wide at the base and even enclose the pale buffy stripe next to them. The malar stripes of the other two species usually are not as strongly marked nor as wide at their base.

Second, let's separate the juvenile and the adult Lincoln's Sparrow from the rest. The throat of the juvenile Lincoln's is usually significantly streaked, more so than the adult whose throat ranges from showing barely noticeable to noticeable streaking. The juvenile Song Sparrow can show some fine streaking on its lower throat but usually not on its entire throat. The throat of the juvenile Swamp Sparrow is unstreaked. The juvenile Lincoln's can show two buffy wing bars, where the other two species and the adult Lincoln's do not. The juvenile Lincoln's further differs from the adult by not showing the broad gray medium crown stripe, although this feature can be obscured in fresh winter plumage.

Third, let's separate the juvenile Swamp from the other two sparrows. The upper parts and the cap of the juvenile Swamp ranges from appearing a tawny olive with black streaks to appearing almost solidly dark. This would contrast to both juvenile and adult Song Sparrows which would appear buffy with dark brown streaks. The upper parts and cap of the juvenile Lincoln's is variable and in its darker shade would approach the lighter shade of the juvenile Swamp. The winter adult Swamp

Sparrow is recognizably separable from all others in this discussion.

In summary, a juvenile Melospiza sparrow with a wide-based malar stripe and a light buffy effect on its upper parts probably is a juvenile Song. A juvenile Melospiza sparrow with striped throat and buffy wing bars probably is a Lincoln's. A juvenile Melospiza sparrow that appears quite dark on the upper parts and cap probably is a juvenile Swamp.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Bob Andrews and Jack Reddall who both added structural suggestions, and Sandy Righter for her patience that never wavered through countless retypings.

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BREEDING BIRD ATLAS REPORT

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The 1990 field season has started, and we urge C.F.O. members to participate as Atlas field workers. The Steering Committee set a 1990 goal of starting 500 new blocks and completing 250. In contrast, in our massive efforts so far we have started 567 blocks and completed 177. We've set a big target and we need your help.

We do have a few field workers who have accepted block assignments but have yet to do field work (as far as we know). We urge those laggards to get out in the field this year. If for some reason you have accepted a block and simply cannot do the field work, please contact your Regional Coordinator. The RC will try to find another field worker for that block. We'd rather have you do it, but if you can't, let's get someone else. (We will ask you to return the topographic map so we can provide it to the new field worker).

If you have doubts about how to do it, contact your field worker or join us in one of our training sessions.

April 5 Denver Dryland Training Session: Discussion
of Breeding Codes and Habitat Codes

7:30 p.m., Zoology Dept., Denver Museum of Natural History
(Use Employee/Volunteer entrance, easternmost door, north side).

April 8 Denver Training Field Trip

8 a.m. - Meet at Denver Museum of Natural History, North
Parking Lot.

June 2-4 Baca County Atlas Rendezvous

We will stay at the cabin of the Colorado Division of
Wildlife at Two Buttes Reservoir, and work on two-four Atlas
blocks nearby. The Atlas will furnish meals, you bring your own
sleeping bag.

Register with Beth Dillon, 1228 W. Myrtle, Fort Collins 80521
(home 490-2610, office 484-2836), or Hugh Kingery (333-0161).

C.F.O. FIELD TRIP: PAWNEE GRASSLANDS
27 JANUARY 1990

David Leatherman
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The C.F.O. Field Trip to the Pawnee Grasslands on January 27, 1990 was a general success. Like most field trips, the highlights were partly predictable, partly unexpected. The total of seven participants (John Barber, Bob Evans, Terry Flageolle, Joe Himmel, David Martin, Joe TenBrink and Dave Leatherman) was low, perhaps because of strong winds the night before. It is also possible prospective birders would not chance being stranded more than a day's walk from the nearest television of Super Bowl Eve.

The Pawnee portion of our trip totaled 21 species and featured good looks at Lapland Longspurs feeding on road-spilled corn; an adult Northern Shrike, a probable male Merlin and two Great Horned Owls at Crow Valley Campground; an enormous concentration of Horned Larks (we need to come up with a term for one of these) on Weld CR 100 east of CR 77. We found Red Crossbills and a good assortment of various gleaners in Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins.

An unexpected treat was Terry finding a classic example of shrike "butcherism": a very small, intact rodent precisely impaled on a long tree thorn at Crow Valley. We also examined the dead Fort Collins Varied Thrush, seen alive by some of you in the backyard of Al and Carol Ramm before presumably hitting a patio window on January 18, 1990. This bird will be deposited with the Denver Museum of Natural History. In all we had a great time, saw some good birds and made new friends. And we saved the Snow Buntings until "next time."

SPECIES TOTALS

Pawnee Grasslands and nearby areas - 8 a.m. thru 1 p.m.

Northern Harrier (about 5) - low total

Rough-legged Hawk (about 5) - very low total

Golden Eagle (1) - low total

American Kestrel (about 3)

Merlin (2) - both appeared to be the "prairie" form
 Great Horned Owl (2) - neither bird was on a nest
 Northern Flicker (3) - all "red-shafted"
 Horned Lark (10,000+ (?)) - most birds associated with bare ground
 or roadway
 Blue Jay (2)
 Black-billed Magpie (2-3)
 Townsend's Solitaire (1)
 American Robin (1)
 Northern Shrike (1)
 American Tree Sparrow (about 15)
 Dark-eyed Junco (4) - including Slate-colored, Oregon and pink-
 sided Oregon Lapland Longspur (about 20) - all associated with
 horned larks
 Red-winged Blackbirds (about 75) - mostly associated with
 livestock operations
 Western Meadowlark (about 15)

Rock Dove (about 10)
 European Starling (about 20)
 House Sparrow (about 10)

Grandview Cemetery, Fort Collins - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Canada Goose (about 20)
 Great Horned Owl - fresh pellet and prey items (including muskrat)
 found
 Northern Flicker (2) - "red-shafted"
 Black-billed Magpie (1)
 American Crow (3)
 Black-capped Chickadee (5-7)
 Mountain Chickadee (4-5)
 Red-breasted Nuthatch (3-4)
 Brown Creeper (5)
 Golden-crowned Kinglet (1f)
 American Robin (2) - both associated with European buckthorn
 shrubs
 Dark-eyed Junco (few heard)
 House Finch (few heard)
 Red Crossbill (about 15) - associated with cones at top of mature
 blue spruce
 Pine Siskin (about 5)

European Starling (about 5)

BOOK REVIEW

Hugh Kingery
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A Guide to Bird Behavior, Vol. III (397 pp); \$18.95 hardback, \$10.95 soft cover.

The Hummingbird Book (90 pp); \$9.95.

By Donald and Lillian Stokes. (1989) Little Brown and Co.

The Stokes have produced a series of instructive books and stimulating articles on bird behavior. The books include two other volumes in the Guide series and a Bird Feeder book. The articles appear in Bird Watcher's Digest and the Living Bird, published by Cornell Laboratory on Ornithology (and probably in other periodicals which I don't see).

Volume III of the Bird Behavior Guide (the last in the series according to the authors), covers a different assortment of birds than the first two: five water birds, seven diurnal raptors and three owls, and half a dozen backyard birds. More than the first two guides, the treated species occur in the East rather than Colorado (of the 25, ten do not breed here, or do so very rarely). Nonetheless, the information meets the high standards set in the first two books. The species accounts discuss behavior throughout the year, courtship to breeding, plumage, and seasonal movement. Even for the non-Colorado species, the accounts are informative and well-written.

They have printed The Hummingbird Book in large format like the Bird Feeder (8½" x 11"). This one at least covers western species -- it has to -- and provides a lot of interesting data about hummingbirds and how to attract them to our yards. They list "Amazing Facts" about hummingbirds, a two page spread on baby hummingbirds, and species accounts for 16 species. They also tell where to order hummingbird feeders. It's an attractive, colorful book.

-----NOTICES-----

The new, 29-page Check-list of the Birds of the United States Air Force Academy (1988) by Russell P. De Fusco and J. Frank Cassel may be obtained upon request. Write to the Biology Department (DFB), U.S.A.F. Academy, Colorado 80840.

Two new Rare Bird Alerts were started during January 1990 in Kansas and New Mexico. The Kansas tape will be edited and updated by C.F.O. member Scott Seltman from his home in Necoma, KS. As you know, Scott has been a frequent and valuable contributor to the Colorado Bird Report. Scott says he will update the Kansas tape often, like the Colorado Bird Report is updated, whenever birds are reported. The Kansas Bird Alert number is (913) 329-4499.

The new tape in New Mexico will be updated and edited by C.F.O. member Pat Snider, from Los Alamos, NM. That tape can be called at (505) 662-2102. Pat is also following the Colorado format and will update whenever a good bird is reported. Colorado birders are urged to report to these two tapes any birds found along their Colorado borders which would be of interest to Kansas or New Mexico birders.

SOUTHEAST COLORADO
BREEDING BIRD ATLAS FIELD TRIP

Come join us the weekend of June 1-3 for an atlas trip into the far reaches of region T in southeastern Colorado. This region includes all of Baca County and parts of Prowers, Bent and Las Animas counties. Lodging will be provided at the Division of Wildlife's bunkhouse at Two Buttes State Wildlife Area. The bunkhouse has bunks, of course, and cooking facilities and cookware. The atlas project will provide 3 meals on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. We will try to work in at least 2 different atlas blocks: one "plains" block and one "canyon" block. For more information and to sign up, call Beth Dillon, Regional Coordinator at (w) 484-2836 or (h) 490-2610.

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