

C.F.O. Journal

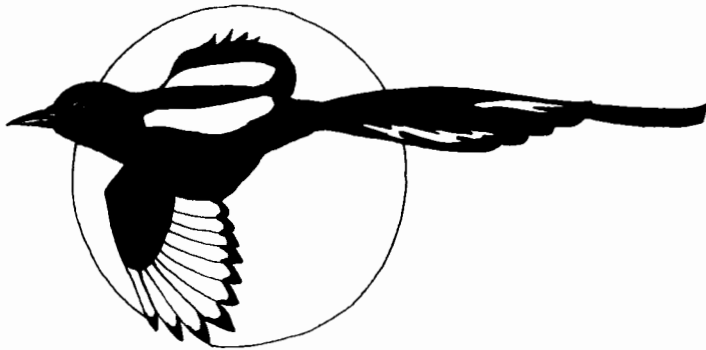
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Cover Photographed by David Leatherman.
Least Bittern, June 1983, at
Flatirons Site, Fort Collins

A NOTE FROM THE C.F.O. PRESIDENT, BILL PRATHER..

I am happy to announce the appointment of three fine Colorado birders to the CFO Records Committee: Peter Gent of Boulder, Dick Schottler of Golden and Joe Himmel of Greeley will all start three year terms. They replace Bill Brockner, Bill Howe and Nick Watmough. Bill Howe and Nick have left Colorado and we wish them well. In addition to serving on the records committee we thank Bill for finding some great birds (Eastern Meadowlark and Sedge Wren come to mind) and Nick for the great convention slide program last year. We thank Bill Brockner for many years of service to CFO and the Colorado birding community in many capacities. He is one of the great pillars of CFO and we suspect he will continue to find ways to advance birding. CFO Records Committee bylaws call for members to serve 3 year terms with 2 terms beginning each year. In recent years the normal rotation has been altered by resignations due to members leaving the state.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD - FALL 1990
(September, October and November)

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This fall in Colorado was marked by warm and generally dry weather. Wild food crops of berries, seeds and cones were in good supply over most of the state. In the early fall, birding seemed slow as far as rarities were concerned, and even "expected" passerine and shorebird numbers were lower than usual. However, excellent sightings were reported. Included among these were a possible first state record and two species seen for only the third time ever in Colorado. For another species (American Woodcock) there were only two previous Latilong records and a number of "old" records of questionable validity. Details on these and other interesting finds plus some notes on early and late dates and unusual numbers of some species follow.

Loons to Ibises

Red-throated Loons have never been common in Colorado but they have been especially scarce in the last two or three years. However on 11/17 Mark Janos and Brandon Percival found an immature Red-throated Loon on Pueblo Reservoir. The bird was seen by a number of observers on 11/17 and 11/18 including Dan Bridges. It was Dan's 350th bird in Colorado for 1990 breaking the previous record of 349. (Dan went on to finish the year with 360 species--a record that will be tough to beat!) Pacific Loons were almost common up and down the Front Range this fall. An especially cooperative bird first found by Dick Schottler on 10/21 at a Chatfield gravel pit stayed for about two weeks. It was often accompanied by Common Loons affording interesting comparative views. Dave Silverman also reported higher than usual numbers of Pacific Loons in the Pueblo area. Common Loons were also reported in good numbers from a variety of locations with a high number of twenty birds seen by Van Truan at Pueblo Reservoir on 11/6.

Another excellent find was a Red-necked Grebe first seen by Bill Howe on 11/10 at Hamilton Reservoir. It was still in partial breeding plumage and stayed at least until 11/14.

Twenty-five American White Pelicans were still at Jackson Reservoir as late as 10/27 according to Howe. He and Joe Himmel also found 800 Double-crested Cormorants at Jackson Reservoir on 9/29.

Green-backed Herons were seen by Janos on 9/1 at Olive Marsh in Pueblo, on 9/3 by Bridges at Lamar Community College and by Joe Mammoser and David Leatherman at Muir Springs (again on 9/3).

Waterfowl to Cranes

Tundra Swans came through in November with sightings at Chatfield (Joey Kellner - two birds) and Prewitt Reservoir (Bridges - 5 birds) on 11/7. One immature was at Highline State Recreation Area on the West Slope on 11/19 (Coen Dexter). Five birds were also seen at Barr Lake on 11/28 (Duane Nelson). Two Trumpeter Swans first seen by Bob Dickson on 11/30 at C.F. and I. Lakes near Pueblo were the only birds of this species reported for the fall period.

Seven Greater White-fronted Geese were seen on 11/9 by Janos at C.F. and I. Lakes. Dexter found one immature at Highline S.R.A. on 11/19 and Bridges reported six at Nee Noshe Reservoir on 11/22. Snow Geese were well-represented at diverse locations around the state. Janos counted about 10,000 Snow Geese at Lake Meredith on 11/9 for the highest number. The Rawinskis reported 150 birds flying near Monte Vista--the largest flock they've ever seen in that area. Twelve birds were also seen by Dexter on 11/11 at Highline S.R.A. on the West Slope and two were reported by the Rowe's at Barr Lake on 10/27. Ross' Geese were reported by the C.F.O. trip at Red Lion on 9/15 and by Janos on 11/11 at Lake Meredith. Dexter also saw six birds at Highline S.R.A. on 11/19. One of the best finds of the season was the four Brant (eastern race) first found by Marilyn and Lee Rowe on 11/10 at Barr Lake. These birds were also seen by the D.F.O. field trip the next day (but not by certain other frustrated birders such as the author of this report). According to Hugh Kingery this was only the third documented record for Colorado.

The first state record mentioned in the Introduction was a Fulvous Whistling-Duck found by Joe Himmel on 10/15 on a prairie pond east of Kersey. The bird was seen later that day by Jerry Cairo but it frustrated numerous birders on subsequent days. The sighting currently awaits review by the C.F.O. Records Committee. Dave Silverman reports Wood Ducks are increasing in numbers and spreading into the foothills near Pueblo. Twenty to forty were reported in Colorado City near Rye on 11/1. Also in Pueblo the American Black Duck continued to be seen through 9/5. At Cheraw Lake on 11/17 Dave Johnson found a well-documented (and unusual in fall) Eurasian Wigeon. A cooperative male and female Greater Scaup were found by Janos on 11/4 at Valco ponds in Pueblo and stayed until 11/18. Oldsquaws were reported from Clifton Ponds (Dexter, 11/11), Jackson Reservoir (Himmel, 11/18), Cherry Creek S.R.A. (Virgil Williams, 11/19), and Jumbo Reservoir (Bill Prather, 11/21). A first Latilong record female Black Scoter was found by Truan at Pueblo Reservoir on 11/6. Surf Scoters were recorded by Bill Fink on 10/21 at Chatfield, by Dexter on 10/28 in the Grand Junction area (two birds), and by Truan at Pueblo Reservoir on 11/16 (two females). White-winged Scoters were well represented with reports coming from Hamilton Reservoir, Pueblo, Carbondale and Chatfield between 10/29 and 11/19. A male Barrow's Goldeneye found by Nelson was present on Coors Ponds from 11/25 to 11/30. A high number (25) of Red-breasted Mergansers were seen on 10/28 at Highline S.R.A. on the West Slope by Dexter.

Fifty-five Turkey Vultures were seen flying over Fort Collins on 9/30 by Leatherman. Three banded Osprey left their nest in Fort Collins on 9/11. Other Osprey records came from Prewitt Reservoir (9/14), near Ridgway (9/17), and Chatfield (9/19) and

9/29). Four late Mississippi Kites were seen by Janos near Pueblo on 10/10. This fall's only record for Broad-winged Hawk came from Norm Erthal on 9/20 at Barr Lake. Merlins were seen in good numbers on the eastern plains with Joe Rigli reporting sightings on 9/16, 10/22, 11/8, and 11/14. Peregrine Falcons were sighted at five locations between 9/15 and 11/20: Weld County (Mark Nikas, 9/15), Lake Meredith (Truan, 9/15), Chatfield (Joe Roller, 9/29), Grand Junction (Dexter, 11/7), and downtown Denver (Ira Sanders, 11/20).

Silverman reported increasing populations of Scaled Quail and Ring-necked Pheasants in the Pueblo area. Blue Grouse were reported regularly from around the state in their usual habitat.

Todd reported 60 Sandhill Cranes overhead near LaPorte on 9/29. Both Sandhill Cranes and Whooping Cranes were seen on their usual stopping-over grounds at Monte Vista N.W.R. on both 10/21 (D.F.O. field trip) and 10/28 (Fink).

Shorebirds to Doves

Black-bellied Plovers were well-represented this fall with reports from Byers, and multiple reports from Jackson Reservoir and Chatfield. Lesser Golden-Plovers were seen at Jackson (Bridges, 9/15 and Howe, 9/22), Union Reservoir (Nikas, 9/14), and Windsor Reservoir (Mammoser, 10/7).

The only fall Red Knot was observed on 9/15 at Union Reservoir by Nikas. Sanderlings were reported regularly from both Jackson Reservoir and Barr Lake during October and November. Four White-rumped Sandpipers were found by Percival and Truan on 9/8 at Lake Meredith (along with 14 Pectoral Sandpipers). Dunlins were reported on 9/15 at Jackson Reservoir by Bridges and on 10/7 at Highline S.R.A. by Dexter. Another Dunlin, first seen by Himmel, was present at Jackson Reservoir off and on between 10/23 and 11/5. The only Buff-breasted Sandpiper was found by John Prather and the C.F.O. on 9/15 at Jumbo Reservoir. Short-billed Dowitchers were seen as follows: 9/2, Janos - Lower Queens Reservoir; 9/22, Howe - Jackson Reservoir (heard), and 9/29, Percival - ten birds at C.F. and I. Lakes. An American Woodcock was located by John Prather on 11/28 along the mount Sonitas Trail in Sunshine Canyon on the west side of Boulder. John and Peter Gent refound the bird on 11/30 but many other birders searched in vain. There are a number of old records of questionable validity but only two other Latilong records for this secretive species in Colorado. Red Phalaropes were reported by Bridges at Prewitt Reservoir on 9/19, by Leatherman and Mammoser on 10/13 at Union Reservoir, and by Roller and the D.F.O. on 11/4 at Chatfield. Kingery found a late Least Sandpiper on 10/13 at Chatfield and Janos reported a late Baird's Sandpiper on 11/9 at Lake Meredith along with a late juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher and two Greater Yellowlegs at Cheraw (also on 11/9).

The single fall jaeger report was a probable Pomarine at Union Reservoir on 10/6 and 10/7 first seen by Cook. A first year Mew Gull was found by Janos at Olive Marsh in Pueblo and stayed until 9/30. This was only the second Pueblo-area record. Thayer's Gulls were reported by Janos on 11/4 in Pueblo, by Nelson on 11/22 at Cherry Creek,

and by Percival and Truan on 11/23 at Pueblo Reservoir. The third state record for Lesser Black-backed Gull was found at Cherry Creek on 11/17 by the D.F.O. field trip. The only Black-legged Kittiwake (an immature) was seen by Bill Prather at Jumbo Reservoir on 11/21. Sabine's Gulls were again quite frequently reported along the Front Range with reports from Walden Ponds on 9/22, Jumbo Reservoir 9/26, Cherry Creek 9/26, Riverside Reservoir 10/1, and Union Reservoir 10/7. Caspian Terns were seen on 9/10 in Pueblo and on 10/28 at Highline S.R.A. Common Terns were at Jackson Reservoir from 9/15 to 9/29 and another was at Holbrook Reservoir on 10/6.

A flock of twenty Band-tailed Pigeons was reported by Dexter on 9/16 in the Montrose area.

Cuckoos to Woodpeckers

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported by Dexter in Olathe on 9/17 and by Silverman and the D.F.O. near Ordway on 10/6. Two equally late birds were seen near Walsh in Baca County on 10/7.

Bridges reported the only Barn Owl on 9/3 behind the Lamar Community College. A Northern Pygmy-Owl was seen at Chatfield on 11/11 by Virgil Williams and the D.F.O. upstream from Kingfisher Bridge on the east side of the Platte River. A late Burrowing Owl was found by Silverman near Pueblo on 11/7. Long-eared Owls were at Chatfield on 9/26 and Great Plains Lakes on 11/22. Short-eared Owls were reported by Bridges on 11/29 at Lykins Gulch west of Longmont and by Joe Rigli on 11/28 at the Rigli Ranch.

Two late Chimney Swifts were seen on 10/28 at Hannah Ranch. A late Black-chinned Hummingbird was reported by Dexter on 10/1 from the Grand Junction area. Five Red-headed Woodpeckers were at Rocky Ford on 9/8 and an immature was seen on 10/5 in Walsh (Baca County). On 9/3 Janos found a Red-bellied Woodpecker behind the college in Lamar. A Three-toed Woodpecker was reported by Percival on 9/8 in the San Isabel area. Jack Merchant reported an unusual Yellow-shafted Flicker one mile north of Eagle on 11/10.

Flycatchers to Warblers

A late Hammond's Flycatcher was seen by Dexter in Grand Junction on 11/4. Dick Schottler found an Eastern Phoebe at Chatfield on 10/21. Great-crested Flycatchers were unusually common with reports on 9/3 from Lamar, 9/5 in Wheatridge Greenbelt, 9/8 at Lake Henry and 9/29 at Barr Lake. A late Western Kingbird (10/1) and a late Eastern Kingbird (9/30) were reported by Dexter near Grand Junction. Brian Wheeler found a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in southwest Denver on 10/7. Two late Barn Swallows were seen by Silverman in Pueblo on 11/8.

Pinyon Jays were seen up and down the Front Range with sighting at Barr lake on 9/21 by Nelson and at Fort Collins on 10/21 where Leatherman saw 400. Jim and Rosie Watts reported up to 85 birds coming to their feeders in Penrose--undoubtedly the most reliable spot for these wanderers in the entire state. Bushtits were fairly common.

in southeast Colorado and Daniels reported a flock on 10/28 on the hogback south of I-70 and west of Denver.

A Carolina Wren was present in Lykins Gulch west of Longmont from 11/14 to 11/17 (Bill Kaempfer). At least three Winter Wrens were present for two to three weeks in Sunshine Canyon west of Boulder (J. Prather). Alan Versaw found twenty Golden-crowned Kinglets on 9/15 along Sharkstooth Trail in the La Plata Mountains. Silverman also reported a good population in the foothills near Rye. He also found increased numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the Pueblo area into late November.

Eastern Bluebirds moved west in late October and November with sightings of four birds by Percival at the Colorado Springs Wildlife Area on 10/27. Forty were seen by Janos on 11/9 below the dam at Pueblo Reservoir and Dorothy Horton found ten birds on 11/26 at Chatfield near the Plum Oak Nature Area. Wood Thrushes were seen by Bridges on 9/17 at Prewitt Reservoir below the dam and on the Audubon Trail in Grand Junction.

Vic Zerbi found a female Varied Thrush near Carbondale which stayed for two weeks (this was also a first Latilong record). One hundred fifty American Pipits were reported by Dexter on 10/7 at Highline S.R.A. Bill Howe who has extensive experience with Sprague's Pipits from previous fieldwork in eastern New Mexico, heard a Sprague's Pipit flying over Crow Valley on 9/22.

Fifteen Bohemian Waxwings were reported from Evergreen on 11/3 by Dieter Kamm. Northern Shrikes were quite common throughout the season and were reported from multiple sites.

A Red-eyed Vireo was reported by Bridges on 9/5 below the dam at Prewitt. Nelson found a Blue-winged Warbler on 9/19 at Barr Lake and J. Prather saw another on 10/23 along Boulder Creek on the C.U. campus. Nashville Warblers were well-represented with sightings on 9/4 at Canon City by Sylvia Wheelock and again on 9/27 when six were found. On 9/16 the same species was seen by Bridges at Lamar and by Erthal at Wheatridge Greenbelt. Magnolia Warblers were seen on 9/16 at Lamar by Bridges (an immature), on 9/24 by Truan at Canon City, on 10/9 by Dexter at Clifton Ponds, and on 10/10 and 10/24 by J. Prather along Boulder Creek. There were three reports of Black-throated Blue Warbler: Shottler, 9/29 - Wheatridge Greenbelt; Dickson, 10/7 - Pueblo; and J. Prather, 10/22 again along Boulder Creek. Erthal found a Black-throated Gray Warbler on 9/16 in Wheatridge Greenbelt. Three Townsend's Warblers were in Wheatridge Greenbelt from 9/15 - 9/17. Janos found a Pine Warbler on 9/22 at the Olive Marsh parking lot in Pueblo. Palm Warblers were reported on 9/29 by Randy Lentz at Chatfield, by Leatherman on 10/6 at Crow Valley, and on 10/15 at Fort Collins, and by Bill Brockner on 11/3 from Evergreen. An immature Bay-breasted Warbler was a good find by Janos on 9/23 at Olive Marsh. Jack Merchant found a first Latilong record Blackpoll Warbler seven miles southeast of Eagle on 9/17. Prothonotary Warblers were seen by Silverman on 9/22 at the Canon City riverwalk, and by Bridges along Sand Creek near Sedgwick on 10/10. Ovenbird reports came from Muir Springs on 9/3 (Mammoser), from Waterton on 9/8 (D.F.O. field trip), and from Crow Valley on 9/28 (Leatherman). Northern Waterthrushes were seen on 9/3 at Muir Springs (two birds) and on 9/4 along the South Platte in Denver. The rarest warbler find of the season was an immature female Mourning Warbler

found by the indefatigable Dan Bridges on 9/21 in some small trees in the far northwest corner of Jackson Reservoir.

Tanagers to Finches

Mark Janos took his fall "Tanager Run" on 9/23 coming up with a male Summer Tanager at Olive Marsh and a winter-plumaged Scarlet Tanager at Canon City, both on the same day. Some birders feel this was not fair. Hugh Kingery also found a Scarlet Tanager on 9/8 at Waterton during the D.F.O. fall count. A late Western Tanager was in Vic Zerbi's yard in Glenwood Springs on 10/8.

A late female Black-headed Grosbeak was found by Rosetta Smoot on 11/27 at Indian Hills. The single Northern Cardinal report came on 9/15 at Tamarack Pond (C.F.O. field trip). A Field Sparrow was also seen on 9/15 by the C.F.O. at Tamarack. Dexter found three Field Sparrows on 9/17 three miles east of Ridgway for a first Latilong record. Three Fox Sparrows were scratching away in dense vegetation along a hillside above Boulder Creek on 10/23 (J. Prather).

Swamp Sparrow reports came from J. Prather on 10/2 along Boulder Creek, from Janos on 11/4 at Lake Minnequa in Pueblo and from Bridges on 11/29 at Lykins Gulch. Harris' Sparrows were located at multiple sites including Fort Collins (9/30 - 10/27 at Jim Sedgwick's home east of Fort Collins), Sedgwick area (10/10), Chatfield (11/4), Walden Ponds (11/16), and northeast Denver (11/28).

White-throated Sparrows were quite common with reports from Prewitt Reservoir on 9/14, Rocky Ford on 9/15, Crow Valley on 9/22 (5 birds), Chatfield on 10/15, Boulder Creek on 10/23, Barr Lake on 11/5, and Pueblo Reservoir on 11/17. The best sparrow was an immature Golden-crowned Sparrow located coming to a feeder behind the trading post at Red Rocks by "visiting" Van Remsen on 11/23. This bird continued to be seen off and on past 11/30 and into the winter season reporting period.

A large concentration of Common Ravens numbering approximately 400 birds was found by Dexter near Redlands on 11/17. Red Crossbills were reported regularly from expected habitat. Howe found 8 Pine Grosbeaks on Cameron Pass (11/3).

All in all it was a very interesting fall season which managed eventually to live up to the exciting spring birding earlier in the year. Taken together, spring and fall 1990 provided some of the best birding in a number of years in Colorado.

FIRST RECORD OF PYRRHULOXIA
(*Cardinalis sinuatus*) FROM COLORADO

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At approximately 1 p.m. on December 17, 1989 I was participating with Dr. Kendall A. Knaus in the Holly, Colorado Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The afternoon weather was cold and heavily overcast, but it was an improvement from the morning conditions of bitter cold, light snow and fog. We were driving back from the Kansas border and the eastern edge of our count circle on Road DD which closely parallels the south edge of the Arkansas River. At a point approximately 3 miles southeast of Holly and 1.2 miles west of the Kansas border (Prowers County; Latilong 21) a female Pyrrhuloxia (*Cardinalis sinuatus*) hopped up from the surrounding weedy growth to perch on a roadside fence post.

The bird remained in clear view at about 25 feet distance for a few seconds before flying off over the car and out of sight towards a silage pit and cattle feeding area. We searched for the bird unsuccessfully for about 45 minutes before relocating it in the same general area. The two of us then observed the bird for an additional 20 minutes at distances as close as 50 feet with binocular and spotting scope.

The bird was loosely associating with a flock of 100-200 White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*). It frequently disappeared into the heavy ground cover of rough waist-high weeds but would sometimes fly up to perch in clear view on fence posts, weed stalks and once about 30 feet high in a cottonwood tree. While thus posed it often raised its spiky crest and twitched its long tail. Once we watched it fly into the silage pit and feed with White-crowned Sparrows at the face of the spilled silage.

After identifying the bird and observing it to our satisfaction (at the same time we were anxious to resume our Christmas Count) I drove at once to Holly to report our find. I called David Martin at the Colorado Bird Report and thus the bird was on the tape within the hour. By December 20, 1989 at least five other Colorado bird watchers (Dan Bridges, Thompson Marsh, David Martin, Duane Nelson and Jack Reddall) were able to find and photograph the bird in a woodlot near the original site. Despite additional searches well into mid-January, this is the last date that the bird was seen.

The bird was about 8 1/2" long, rather long-tailed and distinctly crested. The slender, spiky crest was sometimes held erect and sometimes folded back to the nape. The eyes were black and the legs dark grayish. Overall the bird was a dull grayish-brown with yellowish-buff tones underneath. The folded wings were darker gray than the brownish-gray back and lacked wingbars. There was a thin slash of red along the folded edge of the primaries. The tail was blackish with a red wash. The tips and back edge

of the crest were also reddish and the bird showed a thin distinct red eye ring. On December 17, in dense overcast, we described the bill as grayish, while those who observed the bird on December 20 in bright sun described it as yellowish. Photographs taken in good light of this individual confirmed the yellowish color. The shape of the bill was distinctive: it had a parrot-like look with a dramatically downcurved upper mandible, a nearly straight lower edge to the bill and an upturned inverted "V" angle to the cutting edge of the upper mandible.

The bird was similar to, but relatively easily told from, a female or immature Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). The Pyrrhuloxia could be distinguished from the N. Cardinal by 1) lack of a pink bill, 2) less red on the face, tail and wings, 3) presence of the red eye ring, and 4) smaller bill with a curved culmen and angled cutting edge.

The appearance of a Pyrrhuloxia in Colorado, while exciting, was not unexpected. A Pyrrhuloxia was found in Cimarron County, Oklahoma just south of Baca County in extreme southeastern Colorado in December 1976. This individual was subsequently reported on the Kenton (Black Mesa), Oklahoma Audubon Christmas Bird Count on January 1, 1977. It was when I noticed this 1977 record in the early 1980's that my curiosity was aroused and I, and others (Cairo and Righter 1987), anticipated the Pyrrhuloxia as being a possible addition to the Colorado state list. A Pyrrhuloxia was again reported on the Kenton (Black Mesa) C.B.C. on January 1, 1983. In addition, the first confirmed record for Kansas was of a bird found near Elkhart (Morton County) in extreme southwestern Kansas by Sebastian Patti and Max Thompson on Saturday, October 28, 1990 (about two months prior to the Colorado bird). In fact, it was with the knowledge of the discovery of this first Kansas record so close to Colorado's borders that I had birded southeastern Colorado's Baca County on November 4, 1989.

Thus there are at least three previous extralimital records of Pyrrhuloxia near the southeastern borders of Colorado prior to this first Colorado record. Otherwise the species is normally confined to southern Arizona, southern New Mexico and western, south-central and southern Texas, and from there south into Mexico. Severe drought conditions in southwest Texas may cause it to wander north and east into the northern parts of the Texas panhandle, where there are numerous records, particularly in the last 10 years. In addition, it rarely wanders into southern California. The Colorado record, at 38 degrees, 2 minutes North latitude becomes the most northerly record of the species in North America.

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I would like to thank Duane Nelson and Scott Seltman for reading drafts of this paper and for providing critical comments and insights to improve it.

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AN INSTANCE OF FOOD CACHING IN A LEWIS' WOODPECKER
(*Melanerpes lewis*)

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It has been well known for years that some species of birds, including woodpeckers, have the apparent foresight to plan for the future. That is, they cache, or store food for future use.

On September 24, 1987 I first noticed an adult Lewis' Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) perched on a telephone pole at the entrance station to Sweitzer Lake State Wildlife Area, near Delta in western Colorado (Delta County; Latilong 15). Despite being a fairly common species in the valleys of western Colorado, I had rarely seen this species at Sweitzer Lake. So that day I watched the bird for some time with interest. In subsequent visits that year to Sweitzer Lake S.W.A. through October I continued to notice a single Lewis' Woodpecker present.

Then on November 2, 1987 I again observed this individual on it's usual perch, on the telephone pole near the entrance station. It was perched, clinging to the side of the pole near the top. I noticed a kernel of corn held in its bill, near the tip. While I observed it, it flew to a neighboring corn field that had been harvested earlier that fall. It landed on the dirt and gleaned surplus corn from the cultivated surface of the ground. It again returned to the pole and tried to wedge a kernel of corn in a crevice near the top of the pole.

I was fascinated by this behavior and examined the pole closely. I found that the pole was an old one, quite dried and worn with numerous long cracks and crevices running vertically nearly the length of the pole. For the first time I noticed that nearly all of the cracks were jammed with corn kernels. I checked neighboring poles and found three more that contained corn and tried to estimate how many. Two of the four poles had been used the most and contained several thousand, perhaps 5000 each, of the dried kernels of corn. A third and fourth pole had lesser amounts, with one containing perhaps a thousand and the other a few hundred kernels.

The bird had used pre-existing cracks in the pole and it did not appear that to have made any holes nor to have altered the cracks in any way. At the base of one of the more frequently used poles were several small pieces of dried corncob with the kernels removed. This indicated that the woodpecker had sometimes saved energy by transporting many kernels at one time to the pole, attached to the cob, before removing them and adding them to its larder. Even so, this individual had managed to accumulate several thousand, perhaps over 10,000 kernels or corn in a single year.

This quantity of food hoarding in a single individual is astonishing and represents a prodigious effort.

Other woodpeckers which commonly store food are the closely related Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), and the eastern counterpart of the Lewis' Woodpecker, the Red-headed Woodpecker (*M. erythrocephalus*) (Terres 1980). Indeed Robert Niedrach (1965) mentioned corn caching in Lewis' Woodpeckers in Colorado 25 years ago.

Colorado bird watchers should find it interesting to watch for this curious behavior and fascinating adaptation to food shortage that makes a very beautiful and interesting species even more fun to watch.

LITERATURE CITED:

Bailey, A.M. and R. Niedrach. 1965. Birds of Colorado. Denver Museum of Natural History.

Terres, J. 1980. The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds. Alfred Knopf.

DAYTIME TORPOR IN A BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD
(*Selasphorus platycercus*)

Duane Nelson
1619 Ford Street
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It is well documented that hummingbirds must go into a state of metabolic slowdown, or torpor, in order to survive overnight without feeding. Torpor can also be an adaptation to severe environmental conditions such as extreme cold and/or snow. This paper presents an example of a Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) slowing down its metabolism in order to survive extreme daytime conditions.

Hummingbirds are an extremely successful group of birds, with approximately 330 species occurring in almost all habitats in the western hemisphere. Although their center of abundance is northern South America, many species thrive in cold-temperate habitats. In order to exploit nectar as a food source, various body and behavioral adaptations have been evolved, such as small size and an ability to hover and even fly backwards. Because of their high level of activity, the cardiovascular system is disproportionately large, and their cardiovascular system must slow down at night to conserve the expenditure of calories. The heartbeat of an average hummingbird at rest is approximately 615 beats per minute (bpm), and is thought to go over 1000 bpm in times of stress. The heart of a hummingbird is larger in proportion to its size than in any other bird.

While torpor is known as a necessary adaptation in order to keep hummingbirds alive overnight, there is little evidence that it can also be a survival mechanism for surviving extreme weather and temperature conditions in the middle of the day. This paper is presented in order to illustrate an example of an immature Broad-tailed Hummingbird going into torpor in order to survive cold and snow during the daytime in the fall of 1985.

During the six years that I lived in Coal Creek Canyon, located at 8,000 feet altitude in extreme northwest Jefferson County, Colorado, I fed hummingbirds. In every fall but 1985, hummingbirds stopped coming to the feeders by mid-September, and their absence was the cue to take down the feeders. However, in 1985, a few immatures continued to use the feeders, and I did not take them down.

That September was unseasonably mild, without any frosts. However, on September 28, a gentle rain began, which soon turned to freezing rain, and then snow. At dawn on September 29, there was 8" of snow on the ground, and the air temperature was 6

F (the coldest September day on record). The nectar solution in both feeders was frozen solid, and two different immature Broad-tailed Hummingbirds hovered anxiously around the feeders. I thawed out one of the feeders inside, and put it outside, and both birds immediately came and sat on the perches. Almost immediately, the solution began to freeze. By alternately warming up one feeder while the other one was being used, I was able to maintain a food source. By mid-afternoon, one of the birds left and did not return.

One of the hummingbirds remained and I attempted to keep its feeders thawed. In the late afternoon, after a long time resting on its feeder perch, I noticed that it was standing motionless, and its partially opened eyes appeared to be glazed over. When I walked outside, it did not move when I approached and it appeared to be dead, but it teetered back and forth slightly on its perch. I attempted to gently move the bird off the perch, but it continued to cling tightly to it with its feet. I brought the feeder, and the hummingbird into the house. I attempted to warm the bird by cupping my hands around it once in the house, but there was no response. After about 15 minutes, there were increasing signs that it was alive, as it began to open its eyes slightly. Soon, I picked it up, and within a few seconds, it look around, and began to move its body. When I opened my hands, it immediately flew around the inside of my house (which opened to a peak 20 feet above the floor). When I hung up the feeder from a hook in the ceiling, it immediately went to it to feed. It found a favorite perch on a hanging Swedish Ivy 15 feet above the floor, near the stairway leading to the second floor.

By the next morning, the hummingbird flew around the house, and fed and rested, apparently none the worse for the experience. It was clear and warmer outside, but the snow blanket was still deep. I did not know how to catch it to release it. By late afternoon on September 30, much of the snow had melted, and large patches of ground were exposed. The forecast for the next day was very good, and the temperature was not below freezing overnight. Since the bird spent the night of the 30th in the same Swedish Ivy, I planned to catch it by hand minutes before dawn and release it the next morning. At about 6:00 a.m. the next day, I easily picked it up, and went outside and released it to head south. With warm weather, and available food supplies, I like to think it successfully made it to warmer climes.

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATE

Hugh E. Kingery
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Denver, CO 80206

Last June Beth Dillon scheduled an Atlas Rendezvous at Two Buttes, in Baca County in southeastern Colorado. Nine Atlasers participated. We did field work in twelve blocks and completed five of them.

This year we have scheduled an ambitious series of Rendezvous at sites all over the state. We encourage C.F.O. members to attend one, or all but one, of them (two are on the same weekend). They will take us to a number of little-known parts of the state, as far as breeding birds are concerned. Come and help us find something new!

RENDEZVOUS SCHEDULE

May 31 - June 2: Two Buttes

Contact Beth Dillon: 1225 Myrtle, Fort Collins 80521
490-2610 (home); 484-2836 (work)

May 31 - June 2: Montezuma County

Contact Alan Versaw, 619 Colfax, Cortez 81321
545-7989 (home)

June 7 - 9: Akron

Contact Alex Cringan, 1200 Stover, Fort Collins 80524
493-9138 (home)

June 21 - 23 Little Hills and Cathedral Bluffs (near Meeker)

To explore the Piceance Basin birds.

Contact John Toolen, 711 Independent Ave., Grand Junction, CO 81505
245-4082 (home), 243-7175 (work)

or Ron Lambeth, 624 Yucca Drive, Grand Junction, CO 81503
245-4082 (home), 243-6561 (work)

June 28 - 30 Steamboat Springs

Contact Hugh Kingery, 869 Milwaukee, Denver 80206
333-0161 (home)

July 12 - 14 White River Plateau, Pagoda Creed quad, at Vaugh Lake CG (moderately difficult terrain);

Contact Mary Cunningham, USDA/FS, 317 E. Market, Meeker, CO 81641
303-878-4039 (work)

July 19 - 21 White River Plateau, Oyster Lake quad; horse packing trip,
 horses to be provided (difficult terrain)
 Contact Mary Cunningham, USDA/FS, 317 E. Market, Meeker, CO 81641
 303-878-4039 (work)

Two more personnel changes--both in southern Colorado. Alan Versaw has taken over as Regional Coordinator for southwestern Colorado, covering the Durango and Cortez areas. His address and phone number are listed above under the Rendezvous schedule.

The San Luis Valley now has its own Regional Coordinator--actually she is functioning as a Co-coordinator with Pat Monaco. For information about blocks in that Valley or the eastern slope of the San Juans contact Anne Morkill. Her address is c/o Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge, 9383 El Rancho Lane, Alamosa 81101. Telephone: 719-589-4021 or 719-852-454 (both work).

The March issue of the Atlas newsletter contains a list of 130 field workers who have completed Atlas blocks--a good number of whom belong to C.F.O. We'd like to list more people, with more blocks--we invite all C.F.O. members to join us in the massive endeavor.

A reminder that the Colorado Atlas will host the triennial meeting of the North American Ornithological Atlas Conference at the Keystone Science School. The meeting will be held September 13 - 15, 1991 and will feature workshops on Atlas techniques, field work, administration, computerization, and use of results. Registrations have already come in from Atlas coordinators from Nova Scotia, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia and Kansas.

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) RECOVERY PLAN

Lyn Stevens
Wildlife Research Technician
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The crane has long been a symbol of good fortune in the Orient; a bearer of peace and glad tidings. Here, in Colorado, we have the good fortune to host a small remnant population of breeding Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) in the Steamboat Springs/Hayden area. These birds have been the subject of intensive field work during the past year in conjunction with the development of a Sandhill Crane recovery plan for the state of Colorado. Sandhill Cranes are believed to be the oldest living bird species, having existed since the Pliocene (4 to 9 million years ago). Six subspecies of Sandhill Crane inhabit North America, 3 of which are migratory. The Colorado birds are of the greater Sandhill Crane subspecies, and are considered part of the Rocky Mountain population which nests from northwestern Colorado north to Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. They are migratory, leaving the state in mid to late fall, and wintering in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico.

In 1973, greater Sandhills were classified as endangered under the state Nongame and Endangered Species Act. Protection of the crane was reduced in 1988 to include only those birds breeding in Moffat, Routt, Jackson, and Grand counties. Since 1971, Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and Routt National Forest personnel have monitored crane numbers and nesting success, and investigated potential breeding/nesting habitat, home range, and crane/livestock interactions. These efforts have been limited in scope by available funding. In 1985, however, the organizational commitment was made to develop a greater Sandhill Crane recovery plan as a provision for active species management. The plan, a cooperative effort of CDOW and Routt National Forest, was approved early in 1990 and will provide adequate funds for intensive, long-term field studies.

In preparation for the completion of the recovery plan, funds were set aside to intensively monitor those biological factors earmarked as crucial to species recovery in the draft plan. The 1989 studies were designed to: 1) inventory greater Sandhill Crane nests in NW Colorado, 2) monitor nesting success, 3) monitor recruitment in critical habitat, 4) monitor movements of banded juveniles from hatch to fall migration, and 5) conduct counts and age classifications on fall staging grounds in cooperation with the Colorado Bird Observatory (CBO).

All potential nesting areas were surveyed from the air. Intensive monitoring of nests and chick movement was conducted on 2 selected high density study areas, California Park (CP) and Steamboat Lake (SL). These areas were chosen because they represent areas of low (CP) and high (SL) chick survival, and low (CP) and high (SL) incidence of human/crane interaction.

Aerial surveys were conducted in late May. Flights were made along each stream with special attention paid to beaver dams, lodges, and other favored nesting sites. Biologists determined the nesting status of observed crane pairs and searched historic nest sites for birds which may have been overlooked during aerial surveys. Selected pairs were monitored at regular intervals to determine hatching dates, number of chicks, feeding and roosting habits, home range size, degree of interspecific interactions, and chick survival.

In 1989, aerial surveys reported 113 adults in the vicinity of active nests, 23 adults near potential nests, and 124 non-nesting adults. A minimum of 73 active nests were confirmed during the field season. Hatching success of 73% was reported for 33 nests in the overall study area; chick survival was 25%. Cranes in the CP area had a nest production rate of 0.15 compared to those at SL with a production rate of 0.46. Three or four chicks fledged in CP in 1989. Although this is considerably better than zero fledged in 1982, it still compares poorly to the greater than 7 chicks surviving at SL.

In late July, two crane chicks were captured, weighed, measured, checked for signs of disease, fitted with radioed leg bands and released. Chick movement was monitored on a regular basis until birds left the fall staging grounds to go south for the winter. Territory size was estimated from telemetered check movements and an additional pair of cranes which nested in an area of high visibility. Territories ranged from 27 to 64 ha. Observers felt that the extreme variability of territory size was related to individual tolerance to inter/intraspecific intrusions and/or habitat quality.

Counts and classifications of cranes were done on the fall staging grounds beginning in early August and continuing through late September. Counts were conducted during both morning and evening feeding periods on each 3 staging rounds (Elk River, Morgan Bottom, and Hayden airport) by CDOW Northwest Region personnel and volunteers from CBO. High counts were 298/27 (adults/chicks) at the Elk River, 262/31 at the Hayden airport, and 1357/103 at the Morgan Bottom staging grounds. Based on counts representative of our local Colorado population, recruitment for the 1989 breeding season was calculated at 6.8% and production at 0.27 chicks per successful nest.

The recovery plan will continue to evolve as additional information becomes available. With this in mind, CDOW biologists John Ellenberger and Van Graham plan to continue this work for at least 2 years. Their short term goal is reclassification of Sandhill Cranes to threatened status. However, the ultimate goal is declassification. Before any recommendation to change classification will be made a specified number of breeding pairs must exist in the Colorado population (a minimum of 50 for threatened and 70 for removal from the list). Recruitment is targeted at 0.5 to 1.0 chick per active nesting pair. In the meantime, data collection on the special biology of cranes in the Colorado population will continue. In particular, what makes good crane nesting habitat? How much habitat is available? How much damage can/will farmers in the area sustain from crane foraging? What level of recruitment is necessary to sustain a stable breeding population? What factors contribute to chick

mortality? And at what level should/can these factors be managed to increase survival? Many questions have yet to be answered. But with the recovery plan to guide and the cranes to bring luck, we should enjoy a flourishing population in no time.

-----1991 C.F.O. FIELD TRIPS -----

April 20, 1991, Saturday Weld County Lakes Field Trip and Board Meeting
Waterfowl, gulls and early shorebirds will be the focus of this trip, we should get a big list of the usual species plus a surprise or two. The Board of Directors of CFO will meet at Bill Prather's house after the trip. All CFO members are invited to dinner and the board meeting. You may bring a side dish if you wish. Call Bill Prather (303-776-2191) for details.

May 18, 1991, Saturday Boulder-Denver Area Field Trip
We will visit the hottest migrant spots in the metropolitan area during the height of migration. This is the one to go on to see a lot of migrants. Call Peter Gent (303-494-1750) for details.

May 25 - 27, 1991 Memorial Day Weekend Grand Junction Area Field Trip
This is another encore for Coen Dexter's popular field trip to see some West Slope specialties-Scott's Oriole, Sage and Black-throated Sparrows, Gray Vireo, Townsend's Warbler, and others. This will be held in conjunction with Denver Audubon Society's campout. Call Coen Dexter (303-241-9531) for details.

July 6, 1991 Saturday Three-Toed Woodpecker and Flammulated Owl
This trip to the Pueblo area mountains will be an afternoon and evening trip to find two of the hardest-to-get mountain species. We should see a number of other mountain birds as well. Come prepared for some night birding. Call Brandon Percival (719-547-3722) for details.

August 17 & 18, 1991 Saturday & Sunday Shorebird Identification Clinic
Bob Righter will hold a two-day (first day inside to study slides, specimens, and printed materials; second day in the field) clinic to improve everyone's shorebirding skills. Bob says the more you know before-hand, the more everyone will learn. Participants will be limited to a manageable group size. Please call Bill Prather (303-776-2191) for details and to sign up.

August 31, Sept. 1 & 2, 1991 Labor Day Weekend 29th Annual CFO Convention
Join us in Durango for 3 days of great birding activities. Our activities will be centered at the prestigious Red Lion Inn where we will have the papers session, a birding clinic, and the Saturday banquet. Field trips will explore all of southwest Colorado's best birding spots to look for the specialties of the region, migrants, and surprises. Plan now to be there and look for full details and the registration form in the next CFO Journal.



C.F.O. T-shirts are available in M, L, XL, and XXL. The shirts are 100% white cotton with the logo printed in black. They may be ordered for \$10.00 each plus \$2.25 for postage. Please send your order to Beth Dillon, 1225 W. Myrtle St., Fort Collins, CO 80521.

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