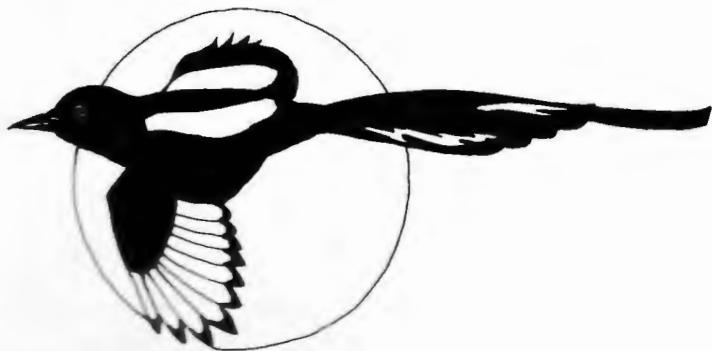


# ***C.F.O. Journal***

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Cover Photographed by David Leatherman.  
Cattle Egret near Meredith  
May 1985

## ...A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue I must tell you that I am stepping down as Editor of the C.F.O. Journal. I do this with some sadness and a great deal of regret. When I took over the editorship of the journal in 1987 I said that I wanted to produce four issues a year of a high quality state birding journal. I did not realize to what an extent this was to be a team effort. With the advice and gentle prodding of Presidents Peter Gent and Bill Prather, and the active work of Secretary Beth Dillon and Treasurer Steve Bouricius this goal has been achieved.

While I still have the chance, I want to thank all of you who contributed articles and papers for publication. You are the most important contributor of all to the effort of producing the journal. I will expand on a statement that I made about four years ago: To a great extent the C.F.O. Journal is the C.F.O. And you, the authors and contributors of status and behavioral observations of Colorado birds, seasonal reports, birding site guides, identification articles, book reviews and announcements are the C.F.O. So on my behalf, on the behalf of the next Editor and on the behalf of all members of the C.F.O. I respectfully ask all of you to contribute articles for publication in your state journal. It is with your support that the C.F.O. Journal exists.

While one purpose of the journal is as a vehicle for publication of papers that contribute significantly in some way to the scientific literature, it is also the way for all of us to keep track of both Colorado birdlife and Colorado birders. I still feel that our journal is essentially for nonprofessionals and I want to encourage you all to contribute to it in any way that you can. I have been very pleased by the high quality of papers submitted over the past few years by our general membership.

I really think that the \$12.00 annual cost of membership in the Colorado Field Ornithologists is the best bargain around in birding organizations. The high quality of our journal is attested to by the fact that articles are abstracted internationally in the Recent Ornithological Literature Supplement to the *Auk*, the *Emu* and the *Ibis*. In addition the C.F.O. coordinates statewide fieldtrips, sponsors workshops at the Denver Museum of Natural History, directs the C.F.O. Records Committee, contributes to the production of the Colorado Latilong Report, holds a popular annual convention, and provides monetary support for other Colorado ornithological activities, such as the D.F.O. Colorado Bird Report, the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas project and the Colorado Bird Observatory.

As in any personal endeavor there comes a time when it feels right to step down and let the next person have a chance at it. The time feels right to me now. I have found my tenure as Editor to be exciting and personally rewarding. I have expanded my knowledge and abilities. I learned to converse with authors, solicit for articles, fight with printers, and (I hope not too frequently) be a pain in the rear to some contributors. I have made many new friends and have lost no old ones.

Again, I thank you for your support and words of kind encouragement over the last few years. And I ask you to lend your similar support to the next Editor in both word and deed by contributing actively and in a positive way to your C.F.O. Journal.

DISTRIBUTION OF SMALL FOREST OWLS  
IN BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

Stephen R. Jones  
Boulder County Nature Association  
P.O. Box 493  
Boulder, CO 80306

## INTRODUCTION

The distribution and abundance of small forest owls along the Colorado Front Range is not well understood. Observations of Northern Pygmy-Owls (*Glaucidium gnoma*), Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*), and Flammulated Owls (*Otus flammolus*) in the Colorado Rockies were first reported during the 1880's (Bailey and Neidrach 1965). Since then sightings of these species have been infrequent and nesting reports scarce (Webb 1982). Boreal Owls were first reported in Colorado in 1896, but no active nests were confirmed until 1981, when this species was still classified as a migrant or vagrant in much of the literature (Webb 1982; Ryder, Palmer, and Rawinski 1987).

Research conducted during the 1970's and 1980's suggested that small forest owls may be more common within Colorado than previously thought. Reynolds and Linkhart (1987) discovered Flammulated Owl nesting densities of approximately 1-2 pairs/km<sup>2</sup> in mature ponderosa pine forest west of Manitou Springs, Colorado. Ryder, Palmer and Rawinski (1987) located 36 singing Boreal Owls and 4 active nests in the Cameron Pass area during 1983-4. During 1978-9 Webb (1982) found 4 Saw-whet Owl nests in Front Range ponderosa pine/Douglas fir forests, and 5 Flammulated Owl nests in "aspen dominated" mixed forest stands west of Colorado Springs and on the Uncompahgre Plateau in western Colorado.

Results of these studies suggested that the scarcity of Colorado breeding records for small forest owls stemmed largely from the difficulty of observing these owls and from a lack of prior research effort. In 1985 we initiated a search for singing Pygmy-, Saw-whet, Boreal, and Flammulated Owls throughout Boulder County, enlisting the help of more than 50 volunteers, who used tape playbacks to locate singing owls.

## STUDY AREA

The study was conducted within the western half of Boulder County and the extreme northern portion of Gilpin County, Colorado. The elevation range in this area is approximately 1600-4100 m, and four life zones are represented (Marr 1961). Forests at lower elevations (Transition and lower Montane life zones) consist mostly of open stands of ponderosa pine (ponderosa pine woodland) and mixed stands of ponderosa pine/Douglas fir. In the mid- to upper-Montane these forest types give way to lodgepole pine and aspen. The lower limit of the Sub-alpine life zone marks the transition to spruce/fir forest. The lower limit of the Alpine life zone marks the

transition from spruce/fir forest to tundra. Riparian vegetation consists of cottonwoods, willows, smaller deciduous trees and shrubs at lower elevations, and aspens and willow carrs at higher elevations.

Mean annual precipitation varies from approximately 45 cm at 1700 m to approximately 100 cm at 3500 m (Marr 1961). The mean annual temperature at 1700 m is approximately 10C, with July being the warmest month (23C) and January the coldest month (0C). Mean temperatures at 3500 m are 10-15C colder (Marr 1961). Snowfall occurs throughout the study area October-May with greatest snowfall amounts in March and April. Thunderstorms are common throughout the summer months, and maximum precipitation throughout most of the study area occurs in May and June (Marr 1961).

## METHODS

During winter 1985, we established 20 survey routes on roads and hiking trails in Boulder County and northern Gilpin County. Survey routes varied in length from 1.6-15 km. Each route was censused 3-5 times, February-May, using tape playbacks of Pygmy-, Saw-whet, and Boreal Owl calls to locate singing owls. On road surveys we stopped every 1 km and alternated listening for 30 seconds and playing the tape for 30 seconds for a total of 5 minutes at each stop. At lower elevations (below 2400 m) we played the Pygmy- and Saw-whet calls; at higher elevations we played the Pygmy-, Saw-whet, and Boreal Owl calls. On trail surveys we stopped every 0.5 km and followed the same procedure. Location of singing owls was marked on a 7-1/2' topographic map, and habitat types and elevation for each location were noted. We continued February-May small owl surveys in 1986-89, driving and walking 15 survey routes in 1986, 10 routes in 1987, 10 routes in 1988, and 6 routes in 1989.

During 1986 we initiated a separate search for Flammulated Owls. We focused most of our efforts on the Boulder Mountain Park, a 24 km<sup>2</sup> area of forested public land to the west of the city of Boulder. From 1986-89, we visited all major drainages within the Park at least 2 times during the months of May and June, using tape playbacks to locate singing Flammulated Owls. A 1.6 km long survey route within the Park in Long Canyon was walked at least 2 times each year 1986-89. A second 1.6 km long survey route was established in Coulson Gulch, west of Lyons, and surveyed each year. Additional Flammulated Owls were located during Saw-whet Owl and Pygmy-Owl surveys.

During daylight hours volunteers visited locations where singing owls had been heard, examining dead trees for signs of nesting activity. Using this procedure we were able to find four active nests. Four additional small owl nests were discovered through random observation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From 1985-89, we found 31 singing Pygmy-Owls, 34 singing Saw-whet Owls, 7 singing Boreal Owls, and 31 singing Flammulated Owls in Boulder County and northern Gilpin County (Tables 1 and 2). Pygmy-Owls were found in the Transition and Montane life

zones from 1700-2900 m; Saw-whet Owls were found in the Transition and Montane life zones from 1700-3000 m; Boreal Owls were found in the Sub-alpine life zone from 2800-3300 m; Flammulated Owls were found in foothills and Montane canyons from 2000-2600 m.

We observed three active Pygmy-Owl nests in foothills ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest at 1810 m, and 2190 m; two active Saw-Whet Owl nests in foothills ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest at 1810 m, and 2300 m; and three active Flammulated Owl nests in ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir/aspen forest at 2030 m, 2240 m, and 2600 m (Table 3). Species accounts follow.

#### Northern Pygmy-Owl

We observed Northern Pygmy-Owls throughout the Transition and Montane life zones, with highest densities in the foothills from 1700-2000 m. (Figure 1, Table 2). Of the 31 singing Pygmy-Owls, 23 were located in ponderosa pine/Douglas fir forest, 5 in ponderosa pine woodland, two in foothills riparian, and one in Lodgepole Pine/Aspen forest (Table 1).

Pygmy-Owl densities on lower foothills survey routes were considerably higher during 1985 than in subsequent years. In 1985 we observed three singing Pygmy-Owls along a 2 km survey route near Buttonrock Reservoir and 5 singing Pygmy-Owls in a 22 km<sup>2</sup> area of the Boulder Mountain Park. Density of singing Pygmy-Owls in the Boulder Mountain Park declined to 1-2 singing owls/22 km<sup>2</sup> during 1986-89. Relatively high densities of singing Pygmy-Owls in the lower foothills in 1985 corresponded with an influx into this region of irruptive seed-eating birds (Boulder County Audubon Society 1975-91). Pygmy-Owls may have been drawn to the lower foothills by the presence of these prey species, including Red Crossbills, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Pine Grosbeaks.

Bailey and Niedrach (1965) concluded that Northern Pygmy-Owls are uncommon residents throughout the mountains of Colorado, breeding in the same vicinity as Saw-whet Owls and Flammulated Owls but ranging to higher elevations. Webb (1982) concluded that Pygmy-Owls probably nest in the lower and upper Montane life zone and are less common in Colorado than other small owls. Our observations suggest that Pygmy-Owls may be more common along the Front Range than was previously thought, and that highest densities of breeding populations may occur in the lower foothills.

Territorial singing of Pygmy-Owls began in February and peaked in late March (Figure 3). An occupied Pygmy-Owl nest was observed in Pinebrook Hills 3 km northwest of Boulder, on 30 March 1985. A second nest was discovered on Eldorado Mountain on 15 April of the same year. A third 1985 nest, on Enchanted Mesa in the Boulder Mountain Park, fledged 3 young on 15 June.

### Northern Saw-whet Owl

From 1985-89 we observed 30 singing Saw-whet Owls in Boulder County and 4 more in northern Gilpin County. Singing Saw-whet Owls were found at elevations from 1700-3100 m, with the majority in ponderosa pine woodland and ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest (Table 1). In May 1985, we found an active Saw-whet nest on Enchanted Mesa in ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest. This nest was discovered when one of our volunteers knocked on a dead tree and a Saw-whet Owl stuck its head out of the hole approximately 3 m above the ground. In April of the same year we found a second nest in Bear Gulch west of Lyons also in ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest (Table 3).

There was considerable annual variation in Saw-whet Owl densities along survey routes (Table 4). For survey routes above 2400 m, the annual range was 0.0-0.42 singing owls/km; for survey routes below 2400 m, the range was 0.01-0.05 singing owls/km. Annual variations in densities of singing Saw-whet Owls may be related to the availability of prey, particularly mice and voles (Palmer 1986).

We heard singing Saw-whet Owls from February-June, with peak singing activity occurring in April and May (Figure 3). Saw-whet Owls were highly responsive to tape playbacks. In fact, we found that Saw-whet Owls responded just as readily to the Pygmy-Owl call as to the Saw-whet call.

Our data support Bailey and Niedrach's (1965) and Webb's (1982) belief that Northern Saw-whet Owls are uncommon but widely distributed inhabitants of the mountains of Colorado. Densities of singing Saw-whet Owls along our survey routes were similar to those reported by Palmer (1987) in the Cameron Pass region west of Fort Collins. These densities are considerably lower than those observed in some other regions of North America. Swengel and Swengel (1987) reported densities of 5 singing Saw-whet Owls/km<sup>2</sup> in a mixed hardwood-coniferous forest study plot in southern Wisconsin. Cannings (1987) reported densities of 0.5 singing Saw-whet Owls/km along survey routes in deciduous woodland habitat in southern British Columbia. Although we observed singing Saw-whet Owls primarily in ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest, they have been found in riparian habitat and pinon/juniper woodlands in other parts of Colorado (Webb 1982; Hugh Kingery pers. comm.).

### Boreal Owl

From 1985-89 we observed 7 singing Boreal Owls along two survey routes in the Sub-alpine life zone in Boulder County (Figure 4). Boreal Owls were heard near Red Rock Lake at 3050-3200 m and near Hessie at 2800-3250 m. Singing activity occurred February-June.

Recent Colorado studies of Boreal Owl distribution indicate that this species nests in the Sub-alpine life zone throughout the state (Ryder, Palmer, and Rawinski 1987; Hugh Kingery pers. comm.). Ryder, Palmer, and Rawinski (1987) estimated that densities of singing Boreal Owls in the Cameron Pass region were comparable to those observed in historic Boreal Owl range in Alberta and Ontario, Canada. Our efforts to survey

Boreal Owl populations were limited by difficulty in accessing the Sub-alpine life zone during winter and early spring and by frequent high winds. Nevertheless, we heard singing Boreal Owls during 10 of 19 surveys conducted within the Sub-alpine life zone from 1985-89. Further research is needed to determine whether the owls we found represent more widespread breeding populations in the spruce/fir forests of Boulder County.

#### Flammulated Owls

Of the 31 singing owls we observed from 1985-89, 25 were located in ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forests in foot hills canyons from 2000-2300 m (Tables 1 and 2). Our initial success finding Flammulated Owls in these areas prompted us to search every drainage within the Boulder Mountain Park during 1989 and 1988. We found singing Flammulated Owls in 4 canyons within the Park (Figure 5). These canyons contained mature ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest and dense shrub growth along small streams. A 1990 inventory of Boulder Mountain Park forest structure revealed that mean tree diameters and snag densities were higher in these canyons than in most other regions of the Park (Jones 1990).

One survey route within the Boulder Mountain Park and a second survey route in Coulson Gulch west of Lyons were censused each year from 1989-89. Singing Flammulated Owls were heard on both survey routes during all 4 years, with densities as high as 2 singing owls/km. However, numbers of singing owls in both canyons declined from 1986-89 (Table 5).

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century observations of Flammulated Owls in Colorado suggested that these owls nest primarily in aspen (Bailey and Niedrach 1965; Webb 1982). Recent studies indicate that Flammulated Owls have an affinity for mature and old growth ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forests (Reynolds and Linkhart 1987; Howe and Ritcey 1987; McCallum and Gehlbach 1988). Although the majority of Flammulated Owls we observed were located in mature ponderosa pine/Douglas fir forests, two of the three Flammulated Owl nests we found were in aspen trees. One nest, in the Boulder Mountain Park, was 4 m up in a lone aspen snag that was completely surrounded by much larger ponderosa pines and Douglas-firs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following volunteers who walked and drove survey routes for this study: Dave Alles, Carol Ambruster, Deb Amerman, Jane Anderson, Inger Bell, Betty Botts, Pete Botts, Alex Brown, Adele Bryan, Marcia Cardetti, Elaine Clarke, Elaine Cook, Ann Cooper, Ruth Carol Cushman, Raymond Davis, Jerry Dunphy, John Emerick, Gary Emerson, Vera Evenson, Mike Figgs, Merril Gilfillan, Dave Hallock, Paula Hansley, Elaine Hill, Lyn Hoffman, Tina Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Jim Knopf, Nan Lederer, Joe Lutz, Elizabeth Mekkelson, Todd Meyers, Mike Mooring, Joe Piombino, Pam Piombino, Karen Prescott, Scott Sievers, Leslie Spencer, Joe Strauch, Dennis Thiers, Rick Thompson, Carol Trent, John Vanderpoel, Jim Vernon, Margaret Vernon, Susan Ward, Howard Weinberg, and Andreas Zetterberg.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ronald Ryder, David Palmer, and Brian Linkhart who offered their support and expertise; and Alex Brown and Ruth Carol Cushman who helped prepare this paper.

Funding for this study was provided by Colorado Audubon Council, Boulder County Audubon Society, and Boulder County Nature Association.

Table 1. Singing Owls by Habitat, 1985-89.

Habitat	Pygmy	Saw-whet	Boreal	Flammulated
Riparian	2	---	---	---
Ponderosa Pine Woodland	6	4	---	1
Mixed Coniferous Forest <sup>1</sup>	22	26	---	25
Lodgepole Pine Forest	1	2	---	1
Aspen Woodland	---	1	---	4
Spruce/Fir Forest	---	1	7	---
Total	31	34	7	31

<sup>1</sup>Predominantly ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forest, but also includes mixed Douglas-fir/lodgepole pine/aspen forest at higher elevations.

Table 2. Singing Owls by Elevation, 1985-89.

Elevation (m)	Pygmy	Saw-whet	Boreal	Flammulated
1701-2000	9	10	---	1
2001-2300	16	5	---	25
2301-2600	4	11	---	3
2601-2900	---	6	1	2
2901-3200	2	2	5	---
3201-3600	---	---	1	---
Total	31	34	7	31

Table 3. Nest Location, 1985-89.

Species	Elev.	Location	Habitat	Nest Tree	Height	Outcome
Pygmy	1970m	Pinebrook Hills	P Pine/D-fir	Ponderosa	11m	Unknown <sup>1</sup>
Pygmy	1810m	Enchanted Mesa	P Pine/D-fir	Ponderosa	11m	3 Young
Pygmy	2190m	Eldorado Mt.	P Pine/D-fir	Ponderosa	5m	Unknown <sup>2</sup>
Saw-whet	2300m	Bear Gulch	P Pine/D-fir	Ponderosa	10m	Unknown <sup>2</sup>
Saw-whet	1810m	Enchanted Mesa	P Pine/D-fir	Ponderosa	3m	Abandoned
Flammulated	2600m	Golden Gate Park	Coniferous	Aspen	5m	Unknown <sup>2</sup>
Flammulated	2030	Ranger Canyon	P Pine/D-fir	Aspen	5m	4+ Young
Flammulated	2240m	Coulson Gulch	P Pine/D-fir	Ponderosa	4m	Unknown <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Adults observed feeding young. No young observed outside nest.<sup>2</sup>Occupied nest. No young observed outside nest.

Table 4. Densities of Northern Saw-whet and Northern Pygmy Owls along Survey Routes, 1985-89

Year	Singing Pygmy Owls/Km <sup>1</sup>		Singing Saw-whet Owls/km	
	Below 2400 m	Above 2400 m	Below 2400 m	Above 2400 m
1985	0.07	0.00	0.04	0.04
1986	0.02	0.08	0.01	0.08
1987	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.42
1988	0.08	0.02	0.05	0.07
1989	0.05	0.00	0.02	0.00

<sup>1</sup>Total number of singing owls heard divided by total kilometers driven or walked on all survey routes.

Table 5. Numbers of Singing Flammulated Owls Heard on Two, 1.6km Boulder County Survey Routes, 1986-89.

Survey Route	1986	1987	1988	1989
Long Canyon	3	3	2	1
Coulson Gulch	3	2	2	1

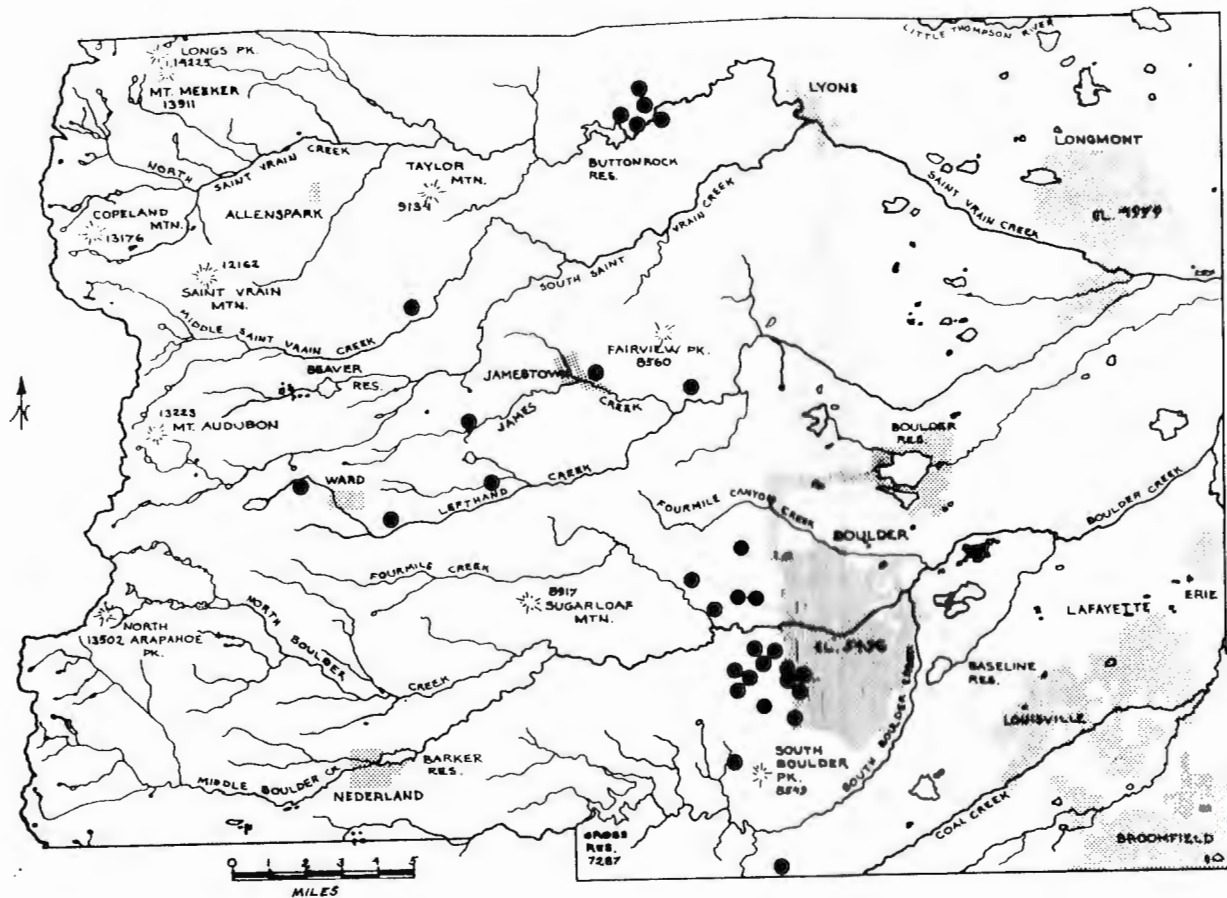


Figure 1. Location of Singing Northern Pygmy Owls in Boulder County, 1985-89.

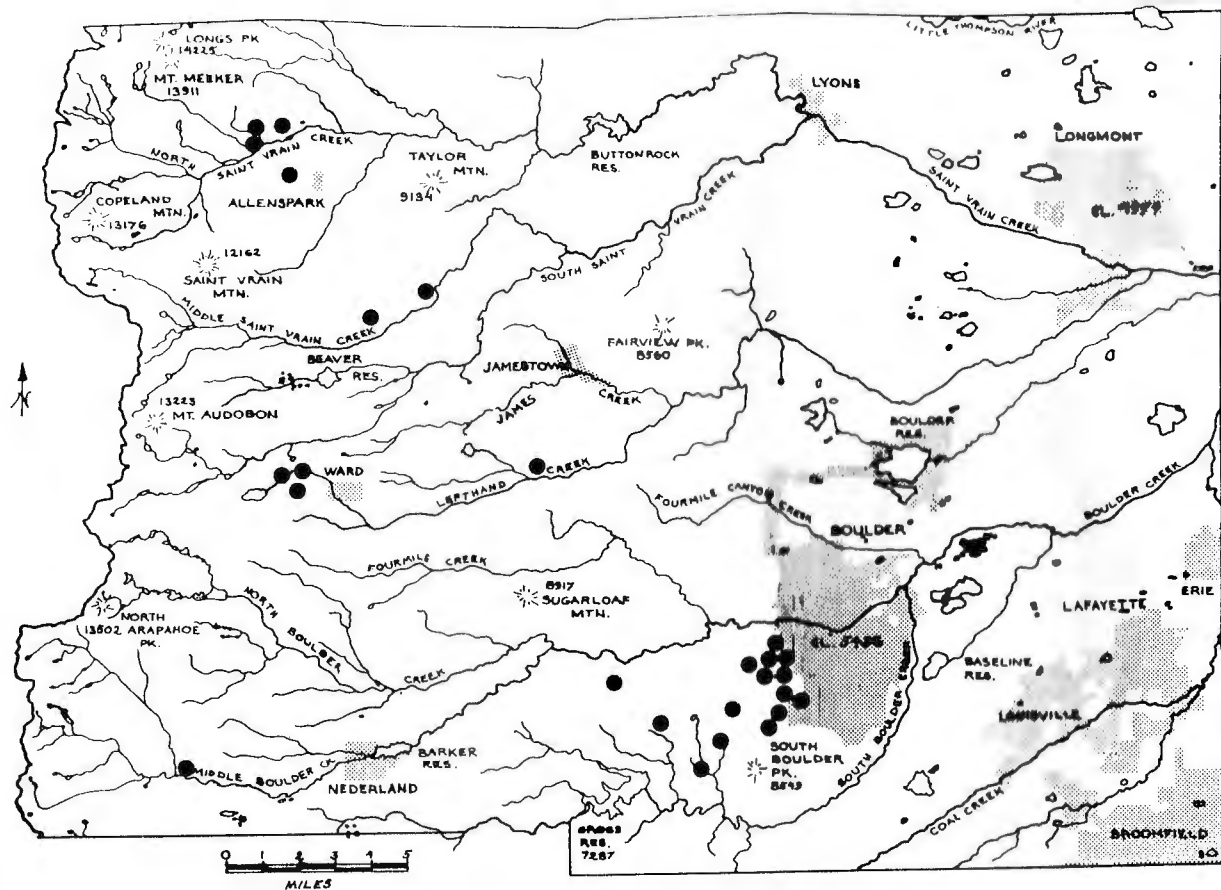


Figure 2. Location of Singing Northern Saw-whet Owls in Boulder County, 1985-89.

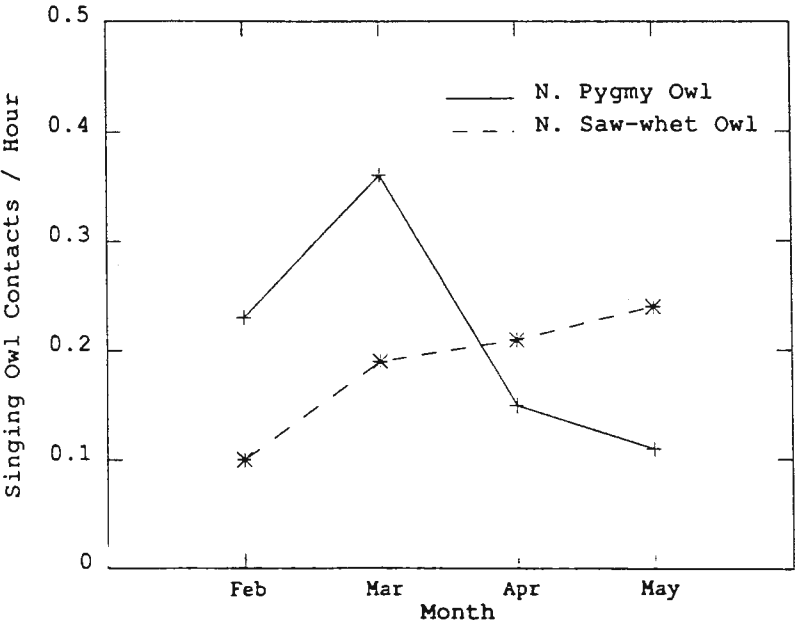


Figure 3. Call Frequency by Month for N. Pygmy and N. Saw-whet Owls. A "singing owl contact" is defined as one singing owl at one stop on one survey.

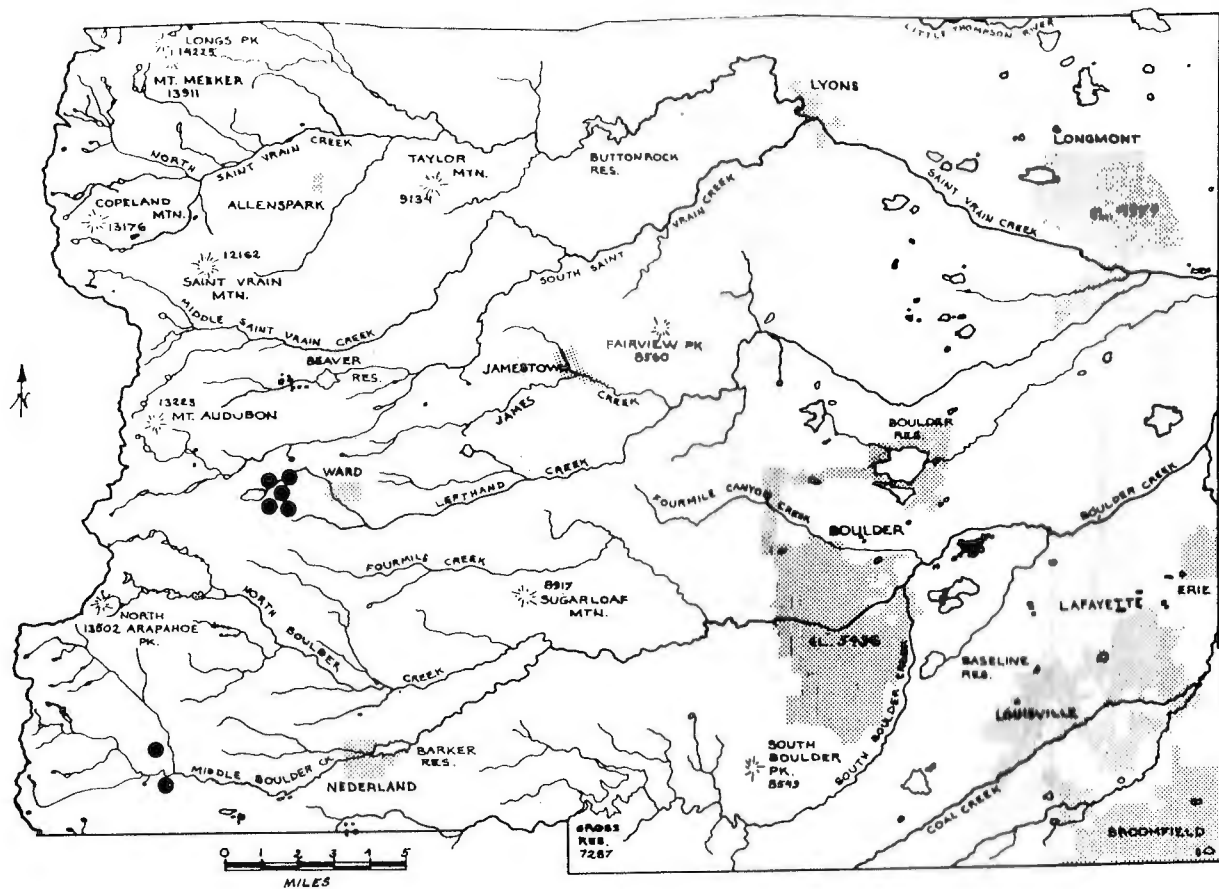


Figure 4. Location of Singing Boreal Owls in Boulder County, 1985-89.

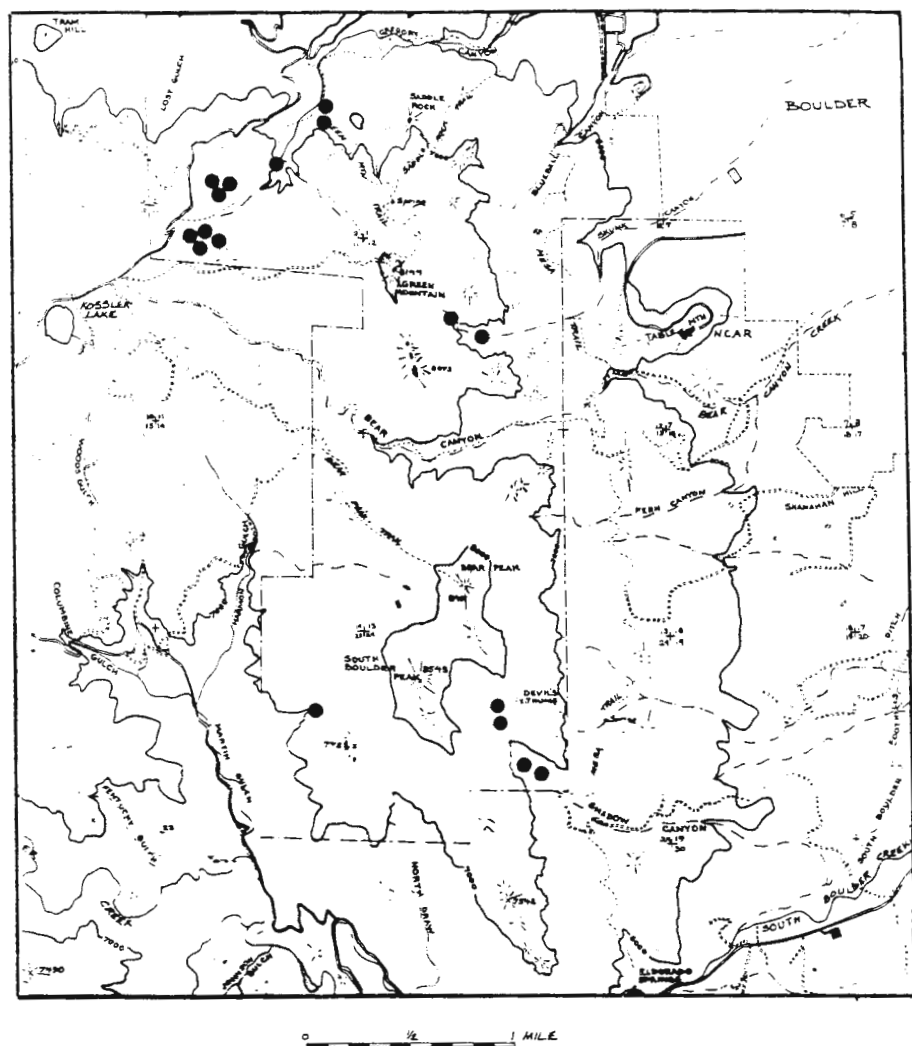


Figure 5. Location of Singing Flammulated Owls in the Boulder Mountain Park 1986-89.

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## NEWS FROM THE FIELD:

WINTER 1990-91 (DECEMBER, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY)

Brandon K. Percival  
835 Harmony Drive  
Pueblo West, CO 81007

This seasonal report includes records submitted to Hugh Kingery for American Birds, records submitted to the Colorado Bird Report, and records sent to the author of this report.

I would like to thank Bill Prather, Hugh Kingery, and Mark Janos for their help with this report. Also a big thanks to Scott Menough for doing a great job with the Colorado Bird Report (303-973-7207).

This winter Colorado was graced with many rare and unusual birds, including Red-throated and Yellow-billed Loons, Red-necked Grebe, Trumpeter Swan, Barnacle Goose, Gyrfalcon, Carolina Wren, Varied Thrush, Cape May and Pine Warblers, LeConte's, Sharp-tailed and Golden-crowned Sparrows, and Purple Finch. Details on these and other interesting finds follow.

LOONS TO HERONS

All four species of loons were seen this winter in Colorado. A Red-throated Loon was reported from CF&I Lakes in Pueblo by Dave Griffiths on 12/11. Another Red-throated was seen at Chatfield Reservoir on 12/15. Five Pacific Loons were reported: one at Union Reservoir by Dave Leatherman and Joe Mammoser on 12/2, one bird at CF&I on 12/8 by Bob Dickson, Dan Bridges, and Brandon Percival, one in Boulder on 12/10 by Bill Kaemper, and two at Hamilton Reservoir on 12/30 by Mikos. Five Common Loons were seen: two at Pueblo Reservoir on 12/1 by Van Truan, Mark Janos, Dickson and Percival, one at Hamilton Reservoir through the reporting period and seen by many, one seen at Highline Reservoir through the period by Coen Dexter and Rich Levad, and one at Union Reservoir by John Prather. The loon of the season was an immature Yellow-billed Loon found by Mammoser and Morer on 12/5. It stayed through 2/10 and was seen by many at Hamilton Reservoir.

A Red-necked Grebe was seen at Hamilton Reservoir by Mikos on 12/4.

An injured American White Pelican was seen sitting and hobbling on the ice at Lake Holbrook near Rocky Ford by Percival and Truan on 12/7. Late Double-crested Cormorants were seen this winter, with one at Totten Lake in Cortez on 12/1 by Alan Versaw, and two birds on 12/12 in Boulder by the DFO.

Twelve Black-crowned Night-Herons were seen this winter, including one on the Boulder Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on 12/16, 5 birds on 1/1 on the Denver Urban CBC, and 6 on the South Platte River reported by the DFO on 1/5.

## WATERFOWL

Many unusual species of waterfowl were seen this winter. Six Trumpeter Swans were seen on 12/1 at Baseline Reservoir in Boulder by Harrington (one was still there on 12/16), three at McClellan Reservoir in Denver on 12/16 by the Olivers, one at Coors Pond near Golden on 12/22 by Dick Schottler, and two birds along the St. Vrain River on 1/13 by Mikos. Tundra Swans were also reported, with a high count of 19 birds at Joe Wright Reservoir, west of Fort Collins, on 12/1 by John Barber. Singles were seen on 12/8 at Barr Lake (Rowe), on 12/9 at Baseline Reservoir (Kaempfer), and on 12/22 at Coors Pond (Schottler). Greater White-fronted Geese were seen all over the state this winter with the following: two 12/8 at Union Reservoir (John Prather), one 12/14 at Fort Collins (Barber), one 12/15 at Longmont (Sally Seitz), two 12/16 at the Colorado River (Dexter), one 12/16 at Bowles Grove Park (Olivers), one 12/16 on the Boulder CBC, one 12/31 at Pueblo Reservoir (Janos and Percival), two 1/1 on the Denver Urban CBC, three 1/1 at Runyon Lake in Pueblo (Dave Johnson), five 1/5 at Runyon Lake (Truan), one 1/6 in Denver (Dorothy Horton), one 1/6 at Sloan's Lake (Marsh), one 1/13 on the South Platte River (George), one 2/8 at Windsor Reservoir (Mammoser) and one 2/17 east of Timnath Reservoir (Leatherman). Snow Geese seen in northern Colorado included singles 12/11 at Baseline Reservoir (Collins) and 12/13 at Chatfield (Horton). The Arkansas Valley had many Snow Geese through the period at Lake Meredith, John Martin Marsh, and Nee Noshee Reservoir. Ross' Geese were seen as follows: 6 on 12/1 at Highline Reservoir (Dexter), one to three 1/11 at Runyon Lake (Truan and Dickson), one 2/1 east of Pueblo by the DFO, three 12/8 at Lake Meredith (Janos, Peter Gent, Duane Nelson, and Bob Andrews), one 2/17 at Ordway (Janos and Percival), and one on 2/27 north of Windsor (Leatherman). Colorado's only "new bird" for the state this winter, probably an escape, was a Barnacle Goose. It was found in Weld County on 12/11 by Milos.

An early migrant Cinnamon Teal was found on 2/2 along the Colorado River by Vic Zerbi, and a few more were seen by Dexter on 2/28 in Grand Junction. Six Greater Scaups were reported this spring: one at Lake Holbrook near Rocky Ford on 12/7 (Truan and Percival), one 12/27 at Prospect Park Lake (George and Alan Hay), one 12/28 at Mount Olivet Cemetery (Kamby), a female 1/27 at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (DFO), and two males 2/20 at Valco Ponds in Pueblo (Janos). Many Oldsquaws were found, including one by Warner Reeser at Lake Estes on 12/8, another by Collins at Baseline Reservoir on 12/11, two by Kaempfer and Bill Prather in Boulder County on 12/12, a single by Davis at a pond in Parker on 12/13, one by Ann Means at Terry Lake north of Longmont on 12/15, one by Medley on the South Platte River on 12/31, two by Rubohm at Carter Lake on 1/12, one by Nelson at Coors Pond in Golden on 2/15, and two males at Pueblo Reservoir on 2/16, through the end of the period, first found by Truan, Dickson, and Mark Yaeger. The only scoter reported this winter was a White-winged at Clifton Ponds on 12/5 by Coen Dexter. Dexter also saw a female Barrow's Goldeneye at Clifton Ponds on 12/4. Other Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported from Union Reservoir on 12/17 by John Prather, a male along the South Platte on 1/2 by Joe Roller, and a very cooperative pair found by Truan and Dickson at Pueblo Reservoir and seen from 1/11 - 2/17. The highest number of Barrow's Goldeneyes reported were 6 found by Vic Zerbi at Crystal Springs Lake in Carbondale on 2/10, and two on 2/20 at Coors Pond by Peterson.

### HAWKS TO CRANES

Raptors that aren't normally too easy to find in Colorado in winter were found this year. These included Osprey, "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk, Gyrfalcon, and Peregrine Falcon. An immature Osprey was seen in a field in Cortez on 1/5 by Lu Bainbridge. Bald Eagles were reported in their usual wintering grounds around Colorado, with large numbers of 35 seen at Pueblo Reservoir by the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society on 2/23 and 50 found here by Pat Monaco on 2/27. In late February, 72 Bald Eagles were reported from the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge. Northern Goshawks were found as singles except when two reported in Boulder County on 12/16. Jack Merchant found one at Eagle on 12/16, Janos found one in Pueblo on 1/26, an adult was found by Dexter and Lavad near Redlands on 1/29, where they also found an immature bird on 2/16, Zerbi found one in Grand Junction on 2/17, and Bill Brockner found one in Evergreen on 2/22. Joe TenBrink found a "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk on 12/7 in Thornton. This was a great find for Colorado. Very rare in Colorado was a Gyrfalcon 12/2 - 2/2 north of Nunn, first found by Brian Wheeler. This bird was seen by some Colorado birders, however it was missed by most who searched. Coen Dexter saw a Peregrine Falcon in Grand Junction on 2/12.

The only Blue Grouse report was of three birds seen on 12/16 on the Boulder CBC. Northern Bobwhites were reported from three sights: 7 birds at Ordway on 1/6 by Glen and Jeanne Hageman, Joey Kellner, and Jack Reddall, 4 on 1/20 at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal by the DFO, and 10 on 2/17 in Crowley County by Dan Bridges.

Virginia Rails were reported from many locations this winter from 12/1 - 2/16. The locations include the Grand Valley, John Martin Marsh, Berthoud, Pueblo Reservoir, Denver, Vineland, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Cherry Creek Reservoir, CF&I Lakes, and La Junta. Soras were reported on 12/1 southeast of Berthoud by Christensen, on 12/3 at Clifton Marsh by Dexter, and two on 1/26 at CF&I Lakes by Mike Ketchen.

A late immature Sandhill Crane was found on 12/11 in Loveland by Ron Harden. Others were reported, with Dexter finding 5 on the Colorado River on 12/16, and 10 in Grand Junction on 12/17. Bob Dellapina reported a Sandhill Crane in Boulder County on 1/1. Cranes found their usual migrating grounds at the Monte vista National Wildlife Refuge by late February with 7,500 Sandhill Cranes and two Whooping Cranes present.

### SHOREBIRDS TO GULLS

Two late migrant shorebirds were seen this winter. A Lesser Yellowlegs was found on 12/16 along the Colorado River by Dexter, and a Least Sandpiper on 12/7 was seen at Lake Cheraw by Janos, Nelson, Andrews and Gent.

Bonaparte's Gulls were reported in early December. Twenty on the 1st at Horseshoe Reservoir in Loveland by Means, 25 on the 1st at Pueblo Reservoir by Dickson, Truan, Percival, and Janos, one on the 2nd at Prince Lake #2 in Lafayette by Kaempfer, one on the 2nd at Clifton Ponds (a good western slope find) by Dexter, and three on the 5th at Lake Holbrook by Truan and Dickson. California Gulls were seen at Pueblo Reservoir on 12/1 when 8 were found by Dickson and Truan, Boulder County on 12/2 with 18 seen, Runyon Lake in Pueblo on 12/2 9 with 13 found by Janos and Percival,

and at Pueblo Reservoir by Truan and Dickson with one on 1/11. Herring Gulls were reported throughout Colorado this winter, with the highest count being 62 found at Pueblo Reservoir by Janos and Percival on 12/31. Seven Thayer's Gulls were reported this winter. Two were found on 12/11 in Pueblo by Griffiths and singles were seen on 12/12 at Cherry Creek Reservoir by Bill Fink, 1/1 on the Denver Urban CBC, 1/12 at Pueblo Reservoir by Janos (seen again on 12/16 by Truan and Percival), 1/16 on the South Platte River by Fink, and the last one of the season found on 2/14 at Walden Ponds in Boulder by Bill Prather. There were seven Glaucous Gulls seen. One was at Cherry Creek Reservoir on 12/9 (Cooper), three more on 1/5 at Valmont Reservoir (first found by Todd Myers), one on 1/11 at Pueblo Reservoir (Truan and Dickson), and yet another in Pueblo at Runyon Lake on 1/12 (Percival). The last one of the season was found on 2/24 by, who else, Bill Prather at Walden Ponds.

### OWLS TO WOODPECKERS

The only Barn Owl of the season was seen throughout the period by Dexter in the Fruita Cemetery. A few Eastern Screech-Owls were seen this winter. One was found at a usual location at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt on 1/8 by the Tuesday Birders, two in Loveland in February by Geanne Richards, and two more in Boulder County on 2/16. Rich Levad reported that 35 Western Screech-Owls spent the winter in the Grand Valley. In mid-February other Western Screech-Owls were reported, one on the 17th in Fruita by Zerbi, two on the 10th by Truan at the Canyon City Riverwalk, and one reported by Bridges on the 23rd at the Rocky Ford SWA. Bob Spencer reported finding a Northern Pygmy-Owl on 12/15 in Denver, and one on 12/16 at Camp Wilshaw near Colorado Springs. Zerbi found one on 12/15 at Four Mile Road on the western slope. Another was reported on the Oak Creek Grade near Canyon City on 12/11 by Richard Bunn. Finally, one was seen at Mt. Falcon Park by Brockner and George, and two in Durango on 1/2 by Elva Fox. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were widespread this winter in Colorado. Long-eareds were seen in the Grand Valley, at Muir Springs near Fort Morgan, east of Union Reservoir, west of Longmont, in Boulder County, at Briggsdale Cemetery, at Cherry Creek Reservoir, near Wellington, on the Denver Urban CBC, and at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. A total of 36 Long-eared Owls were reported. Short-eared Owls were reported from west of Longmont, in Boulder County, at the Wellington SWA, southeast of Berthoud, in northeastern Colorado, at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, and at Foothills Reservoir west of Longmont. A total of 19 Short-eared Owls were reported, Jim Sedgwick reported a Boreal Owl on 12/22 at Lory State Park west of Fort Collins. Five to eight Boreals were heard on Cameron Pass near Fort Collins on 2/28 by Ron Ryder.

The only Red-bellied Woodpecker reported this winter flew in and landed obligingly in a tree next to Janos and Percival on 12/23 in Holly. Probably Colorado's first winter record of a Red-naped Sapsucker was found this year on 12/16 in Penrose by Rosie Watts. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found coming to Sylvia Wheelock's yard in Canyon City on 12/29 and was seen again on 1/9. An adult Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was found by Leatherman on 2/1 and stayed through the end of the month at Grandview Cemetery. A Ladder-backed Woodpecker was seen at Vineland on 1/3 by Truan and Bill Fink and another was near Fowler on 2/17 on the Denver and Arkansas Valley Audubon Society's fieldtrip. Duane Nelson found three Three-toed Woodpeckers at Mt. Falcon Park on 12/15. Another was reported on the Boulder CBC on 12/16, and a male was seen on 2/9 on the Grand Mesa by Coen Dexter.

### FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

Say's Phoebe's returned to Pueblo West by 2/28 (Chris Molitor).

A great western slope find was a Blue Jay seen in Grand Junction throughout the period by Dexter.

A surprising guest showed up in Duane Nelson's Golden yard on 12/1. It was a Carolina Wren. Winter Wrens were seen in good numbers. Three at the Mt. Sonnedas Trail found on 12/3 and seen through 1/12 by John Prather, two found at Chatfield on 12/8 by Joey Kellner and gang on the CFO fieldtrip, two at Lyons on 12/15 by Ron Harden, one on the Urban CBC on 1/1, and one on 1/10 at the Fort Collins Nature Center by Mammoser.

The Pueblo area was a stronghold for Eastern Bluebirds this year. Mark Janos found 40 at Valco Ponds in Pueblo on 12/1-2/23. He also saw 5 in Rye on 12/15, 6 south of Pueblo on 1-25 on 1/6, and three 3 more on Burnt Mill Road on 2/2. The Watts reported two on 2/6 in Penrose, Bridges found 6 in Otero County on 2/18, and Wheelock saw one in Canyon City on 2/21. There were a few Eastern Bluebirds seen elsewhere besides Pueblo, with one at Muir Springs on 1/26, and 4 on the Weldona-Ft. Morgan CBC on 12/29 by Joe Rigli. Seven Western Bluebirds were seen in Penrose on 1/18 by Jim and Rosie Watts, a few were seen by the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society on 1/26 near Canyon City, and two were found in Pueblo by John Yeager. Wintering Northern Mockingbirds included two in Penrose on 12/6 by the Watts, one at Berthoud on 12/16 by Marilyn Meador, and one sitting in a tree in a front yard in Pueblo West on 1/16 by Percival and Truan.

Two Hermit Thrushes were reported, with one on 12/7 in Durango by Elva Fox and one the next day at Connected Lakes by Dexter and Levad. Janos, Andrews, Gent, and Nelson discovered a male Varied Thrush at a woodlot in Las Animas on 12/8. I visited this woodlot hours before they found the bird but only saw a Blue Jay, not a Varied Thrush (which I need). Another Varied Thrush was found at Redlands on 12/16 by Dexter and Levad. Truan and Percival found a Sage Thrasher at Pueblo Reservoir on 12/15-1/5, another was seen at Valco Ponds on 12/16 by Janos and Percival, and two more were seen in Penrose by Rosie Watts on 12/16. Brown Thrashers lingered into December, with one on the 5th at Rocky Ford SWA (Truan and Dickson) and two seen in Longmont on the 15th (Mona Hill).

Bohemian Waxwings were reported from 12/8-1/31 in large numbers. They were seen in Rye, Boulder County, Berthoud, Loveland, Longmont, Rocky Mountain National Park, Fort Collins, west Platte River, northeastern Colorado, Grand Junction, and Muir Springs.

Dave Leatherman found an Orange-crowned Warbler on 12/10 in Grandview Cemetery. An immature male Cape May Warbler found by Silverman near the Taco Rock Restaurant in Colorado City was seen by him and others 12/1-12/11. Four Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen in the Grand Valley this winter by Dexter, one in Colorado City on 12/1 by Silverman, one at the Valco Ponds on 12/1 by Truan, and a

ahigh count of 16 found on 12/7 in Pueblo by Griffiths. Another was seen in Cortez on 12/16 by Alan Versaw. A Pine Warbler and a Common Yellowthroat were seen on 12/16 on the Boulder CBC.

### SPARROWS TO FINCHES

Two Northern Cardinals were found at the Pueblo Nature Trail on 12/12 by Diana Miller. Two Chipping Sparrows were seen in Boulder County by D.W. King, and two in Pueblo on 2/16 by Mark and John Yeager. Two Field Sparrows were seen on the Boulder CBC on 12/16. Rich Levad saw a Sage Sparrow on 1/13 near Whitewater. Up to six LeConte's Sparrows were seen at the John Martin Marsh from 12/2 through 2/27. These birds were discovered by Bridges. Truan and others were able to take pictures of these birds and they were seen by many. Janos revisited this area in April and found that the marsh had been burned and the birds were gone. Another rare sparrow seen at John Martin Marsh was a Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Glimpsed on 12/3 by Truan and Dickson, this bird should be left as a "possible" Sharp-tailed Sparrow as it was not confirmed. Kellner saw a Fox Sparrow in Waterton Canyon on 1/4. A Lincoln's Sparrow was found on 12/21 in Fort Collins by the Ryders and another was seen in Mesa County by Dexter on 2/23. Swamp Sparrows were found at the Marshall Landfill by Kaempfer on 12/2 (one), up to 15 birds from 12/3 to 2/27 at John Martin Marsh, one west of Longmont on 12/15 by John Prather, up to three at Valco Ponds on 12/15 found by Truan and Percival, one near Holly on 12/23 by Janos and Percival, one on 2/5 at Rocky Ford SWA by Crookman, and two on 2/16 at CF&I Lakes in Pueblo by Dickson. Eighteen White-throated Sparrows were reported from 12/1-2/21 in the Grand Valley, Colorado City, Boulder County, Pueblo Reservoir, Valco Ponds in Pueblo, Fort Collins, Loveland, Lyons, Canyon City, Rocky Ford SWA, and Pueblo. An immature Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Valco Ponds in Pueblo. Found by Mark Yeager on 12/16, it was seen by Janos and Percival the next day. Twenty Harris' Sparrows were reported throughout the period at Fort Collins, Pueblo Reservoir, Highline Reservoir on the western slope, at Chatfield, Thornton, Boulder County, Hamilton Reservoir, Longmont, Walden Ponds, and Waterton Canyon.

Lapland Longspurs were found as follows: two on 12/7 at Lake Cheraw by Truan and Percival, 33 in Westcliffe on 12/22 by Dickson. Percival and Nancy Crafton, one at Nunn on 12/22 by Tina Jones, 20 in Holly on 12/23 by Janos and Percival, 18 on 12/30 at Hamilton Reservoir by Cynthia Melcher, one in Pueblo West by Percival on 1/1, and 4 on 2/2 at the Pawnee National Grasslands by the Foothill Audubon Society. Marilyn Meador saw 40 Snow Buntings on 12/6 in Berthoud, and 30 were found at Greeley on 1/21 by Barbara Hale.

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen this winter, with one on 12/5 at Clifton Marsh by Dexter, one 12/6 in Berthoud by Meador, 6 on 12/16 in Boulder County, 5 in Longmont in January and February by Mary Griest, and 4 east of Longmont in February by Ann Delzell. The only report of a Rusty Blackbird this winter was of one on 12/29 at Vineland by Janos and Percival. Great-tailed Grackles are showing up in Colorado in large numbers with 6 on 12/16 along the Colorado River by Coen Dexter, 13 on 12/31 in Cortez by Bainbridge, 50 on 1/3 in Las Animas by Truan and Fink, 117 found in Las Animas, by the Hagemans, Kellner, and Reddall, and one at Windsor Reservoir on 2/7 by Dave Leatherman.

Very strange was a Northern Oriole found on 12/16 in Loveland by Ann Means. This is a first winter record of this species in Colorado.

Rosy Finches were found as follows: 5 on 12/15 at Oak Meadows by Zerbi, 2 on 12/18 Northwest Lyons by Christensen, 8 on 12/19 in Boulder County by King, 7 west of Loveland by Julia Boothroyd on 12/20, one 12/21 in Boulder County by Cherie Long, a nice, accurate count of 272 on 12/22 in Westcliffe by Janos, 50 on 1/14 at Poudre Canyon by John Barber, 250 seen on 2/16 by Warren Finch and the DFO, and 400 near Colbran by Dexter, where he also reported 150 Black Rosy Finches on 2/2. Pine Grosbeaks were seen on 12/15 in the Grand Valley by Dexter with 5 birds seen, 4 in Westcliffe on 12/22 by Silverman, 5 in Rye on 1/4 (also by Silverman), and two seen on 1/17 in Evergreen by Brockner.

A female Purple Finch was found in Bluebell Canyon in Boulder on 12/16 by Peter Gent. Forty Red Crossbills and 60 White-winged Crossbills were found on 12/16 on Guanella Pass by Kellner and Steve Stachowiak. A Common Redpoll was seen on 12/15 in Longmont by Hale. Four Lesser Goldfinches were seen in Pueblo on 12/7 by Griffiths.

The birding in 1990 was great. I had my best year in Colorado ever with 299 species of birds seen. That total would have been 300 if I hadn't missed the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Canyon City.

[The author of this report, Brandon Percival, is a 16 year old high school student and avid birder, who, when he isn't chasing that 300th "year bird", resides in Pueblo West.]

## FIELDTRIP REPORT-LONGMONT, LYONS AND BERTHOUD AREA

Saturday, April 20, 1991

Bill Prather  
13810 WCR 1  
Longmont, CO 80501

Nine CFO members and guests gathered at Jim Hamm park at 7 a.m. The day was cool and overcast which seemed to make for good birding, as we began to see a lot of birds. A number of sandpipers were feeding in the shallow water, including 45 American Avocets, both yellowleg species, Willet, Least and Spotted Sandpipers, Common Snipe, Semipalmated Plover, and Long-Billed Dowitchers. Ducks, including Wood Duck, and gulls, including Bonaparte's, were added to the list. A Long-Billed Curlew gave its mournful call as it flew by. A walk around the pond to the trees and hedgerow turned up a lot of passerines, including Vesper, Baird's, Chipping, Song, and (Gambel's) White-Crowned Sparrows, and Townsend's Solitaire.

We had listed 41 species in a little more than an hour when we moved over to Union Reservoir. Here we added more ducks to the list including Canvasback and Red-breasted Merganser. An estimated 700 Western Grebes were joined by a few Clark's and Eared Grebes. A large shorebird was spotted a good distance away and was identified as a curlew by the leader. Other members studied the bird in their scopes and, after some discussion, that ID was corrected to Marbled Godwit. While traveling around the lake we spotted a large group of swallows resting on phone wires. A look through binoculars revealed all 6 expected species: Barn, Bank, Violet-green, Tree, Cliff, and Rough-winged. Migrating Say's Phoebes and a Loggerhead Shrike were also seen. Before leaving the Union area we checked Jim Hamm's pond one more time and were rewarded with a group of "peeps" including Semipalmated, Western, and Baird's Sandpipers. We then had 74 species on the list.

Next we headed towards Lyons to see if any migrants were stopping there on this cool day. A quick stop at McCall's lake added 4 common species. Lyons proved a little disappointing, perhaps because the day was now warming up. We did add a number of expected species including Golden Eagle (on the nest), Lewis' Woodpecker, and Canyon Wren.

The rest of the trip was spent in the Berthoud area going from one lake to another hoping to find a rare waterbird or shorebird to top off the list. We added a species or two here and there but nothing special until at Duck Lake a Peregrine Falcon flew over but did not give us a very good look. We headed back to Longmont with 101 species on the list. We don't always see a lot of rare birds but we always have good companionship and discussions on CFO fieldtrips. Perhaps you would like to join us or lead a trip to your favorite area of the state. Contact Bill Prather or Dave Silverman with your suggestions.

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
BOARD MEETING

Saturday, April 10, 1991

Beth Dillon, Secretary

The meeting was held at Bill Prather's house in Longmont. Board members in attendance: Bill Prather, Mike Carter, Paul Opler, Dave Silverman, Steve Bouricius and Beth Dillon. Guests present: John Prather, Bob Dickson.

**OFFICERS/BOARD MEMBERS:** The board discussed candidates for president and vice-president. Mike Carter was suggested for president and Dave Silverman for vice-president. (After the meeting adjourned, and everyone was heading out the door, Carter and Silverman agreed to serve as president and vice-president). Prather reported that Bouricius and Dillon agreed to continue as treasurer and secretary, respectively. Opler and Coen Dexter's board terms expire this year. The board discussed candidates for future board members. Both Opler and Dexter are eligible and willing to serve another term and were recommended. It was felt that since there are many good people available, that we probably should not have the same people serving in multiple roles on the CFO Board, the Records Committee and the DFO Board of Directors. Mark Janos was suggested, if he would like to continue as a board member once he completes his editorial duties. Silverman suggested Van Truan if Mark Janos declines. Silverman noted that it may not be desirable to have more than one or two board members from the Pueblo area. Other suggestions were John Barber, Dave Leatherman, Jack Merchant, Joe Himmel, and Alan Versaw. Bouricius suggested we bring in a member from the west slope. Opler will ask Leatherman if he wants to serve on the board. Prather will contact other prospective board members.

**JOURNAL EDITOR:** Mark Janos will retire as editor of CFO Journal after publication of the July 1991 issue. Prather suggested 4 people as possible editors: Mona Hill, Bill Fink, Helen Wainwright and Wally Collins. Carter suggested that people who declined being editor should be asked if they want to serve on the board. Dillon suggested the next editor work with Janos on the July issue to become familiar with the process. Prather will contact the 4 people above and ask if they're interested in becoming editor. Another person suggested for editor was Dave Leatherman.

**AFFILIATE CLUBS:** Opler mentioned the possibility of having affiliate CFO chapters around the state as a way to become more active and get members involved. The issue of liability was raised. Silverman explained how insurance is handled for Arkansas Valley Audubon Society field trips through Washington Insurance. The board asked if CFO had a liability waiver. Bouricius said he had a copy of one and would send it to Dillon. These should be distributed to all field trip leaders.

**TREASURER'S REPORT/FINANCES:** Bouricius reported that as of 4-20-91, CFO has \$8166.58 and that we are in good shape financially. Most of the membership

renewals are in for this year. We have 3 more journals to mail at a cost of approximately \$1800-\$2000. Bouricius said he would soon be able to compile statistics on where CFO money comes from and where it is spent.

Bouricius asked the board if he could purchase a software program for maintaining the mailing list and membership records. The current system is outdated and cumbersome. Opler asked if we had enough money. Bouricius said we did. Bouricius is also interested in converting the ledger and accounting to an easier system. Carter suggested that both programs be changed at the same time. The value of having specific programs that could be transferred to the next treasurer was discussed. Silverman moved that Bouricius be allowed to spend up to \$200 to investigate the purchase of a software program for the mailing list. Seconded by Opler. Motion passed.

Bouricius reported that Neal Williams has renewed at \$100 per year (sustaining) for several years. Prather will contact Williams thanking him for his contributions.

**1991 CONVENTION: WORKSHOPS.** Plans for the Durango convention in September were discussed. Prather asked Carter if he would be willing to put together a couple of workshops for the convention. Carter agreed. Ideas for workshop topics and instructors: beginning birding - designed to attract newcomers and local residents (Kevin Cook or H. Kingery), bird photography (D. Leatherman), *Empidonax* flycatchers (Jim Sedgwick), owls and their calls (John Rawinski), bird calls in general (instructor ?).

**PAPER SESSION.** Carter said we should have a structured paper session that lasts no more than 2 hours. He said that papers should be limited to 10-15 minutes presentation and 5 minutes for questions. Carter felt that a longer paper session would detract from the convention. Prather had some ideas for papers already. Bouricius suggested Bob Kickins for a paper, but he will be in California during our convention. Other sources for papers might be graduate students at Fort Lewis College, Preston Summers, researchers from Gothic or perhaps from one of the Universities in Arizona. Prather and Carter will handle the paper session.

**BANQUET SPEAKER.** Possibilities for a banquet presentation are: D. Leatherman, Brian Wheeler, Harold Holt, Paul Ehrlich, Betsy Webb. Concern was expressed about inviting speakers that were used as few as 3-4 years ago (Leatherman, Wheeler). Bouricius thought Holt would be a good choice since he has a lot of experience and time birding in Colorado. Opler suggested Ehrlich, and that he may still be at Gothic in early September. Although his usual fee is high and beyond our means, the board felt that he should be approached anyway. The board agreed that Ehrlich would be a draw for the convention. The board discussed fees associated with workshops and banquet speakers. An honorarium to cover expenses of speakers was suggested. No decision was made at this time.

**SCHEDULE.** The convention is August 31 - September 2, 1991. There will be field trips each morning. The paper session is Saturday afternoon followed by the banquet that evening. Workshops are scheduled for Sunday afternoon. Prather suggested an informal barbecue for Sunday evening followed by an owling trip. Elva Fox, a Durango

resident, lives along the river and offered her place for the meal. Depending on the number of participants, it could get crowded at Fox's residence. Dillon suggested that perhaps the Division of Wildlife's hatchery had room for a picnic/barbecue. She will check on this.

**MISCELLANEOUS CONVENTION ITEMS.** Bouricius stated that we haven't promoted our conventions very well and therefore have had low attendance. Dillon said that we should advertise in the local newspapers and at Fort Lewis College. Opler suggested that perhaps we should send out an advance registration packet. The decision was to offer an "early bird" registration for \$15 and a regular or "straggler" registration at the door for \$20. The next journal is due out in July and will contain registration materials. Depending on when the July issue is mailed, a separate mailing about the convention will precede the July journal. Silverman stated that CFO needs to maintain high standards and that perhaps the organization needs to branch out and try new things in regards to our annual conventions.

**PRICE FOR CFO BACK ISSUES:** Dillon asked the board for a guideline on how much to sell back issues of the CFO Journal for. Dillon used the prices that Toni Brevillier (former secretary) set up until the ABA convention in Fort Collins in June 1990. At the ABA convention we gave away copies of the old CFO issues in excess of our inventory needs. Since then we have received a few requests for free back issues. After much discussion, Silverman moved that we sell all back issues of the CFO Journal at a price equal to one quarter of the current membership price for an individual, plus incidental costs for duplication and postage. Carter seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**MEMBERSHIP:** CFO received a letter from Walter Thiede in Germany requesting a large number of back issues and the availability of a life membership. Bouricius suggested a life membership of \$500. Dillon moved that CFO establish a life membership category in the amount of \$500. Prather seconded the motion. Motion passed. The subject of multiple year renewals was raised. Should CFO offer additional year renewals for less money? The decision was to offer renewals for up to 3 years at current prices (1 yr. \$12, 2 yrs. \$24, 3 yrs. \$36).

Bouricius said he processed 3 memberships for CBO when the members renewed for CFO. He said that if there are many more than 3 requests, then the system will require more handling and administration. Bouricius and Carter discussed the merits of offering renewals through CFO and CBO. Their decision was to discontinue this service. Opler suggested that each organization could exchange its renewal notices and publish them in each other's newsletter/journal.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

## BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATE

Hugh Kingery  
869 Milwaukee St.  
Denver, CO 80206

This report from the Breeding Bird Atlas meets a June deadline for a summer publication--and of course we have no returns from the 1991 summer field season yet.

Training sessions at Alamosa and Cortez in May involved about 30 new Atlasers and, we hope, improved coverage in those two areas. In addition, a Denver training session oriented 25 volunteers for The Nature Conservancy. They will survey Conservancy properties using the Atlas techniques.

We do have a few tantalizing preliminary reports--like nesting Bald Eagles in two southwestern Colorado blocks. One pair nested in a big cottonwood in the middle of a horse pasture, about 200 yards from a county road. At this writing, two large young appear ready to fledge.

The Baca County Rendezvous also found an eagle nesting in a cottonwood tree in a grassland. Golden Eagles in Baca County, however, typically nest in situations like that. Other birds found by the parties included typical southeastern Colorado birds like Cassin's Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, one roadrunner, and one Ladder-backed Woodpecker.

The Cortez Rendezvous explored three blocks and found such things as a Broad-tailed Hummingbird building a nest, an unexpected wetland with a diversity of water birds (some of which may have been on migration), Grace's Warblers in all three blocks, and a Lewis' Woodpecker which inspected a hole in use by Starlings who promptly escorted the woodpecker away from the vicinity.

At a McPhee Reservoir campground, some Mountain Bluebirds had utilized a unique nesting site. Most of the campground buildings have nest boxes mounted on them--they look like typical bluebird boxes. Tree Swallows are using them all. The bluebirds have found a different nest box on each of three campground sign-in boards. The Forest Service has, for some reason, installed two boxes (having a bluebird house-shape) which have slots at the bottom for taking out the envelopes in which campers place the fee. At each of the three boards bluebirds have selected one fee box for a nest site. They enter through the slot at the bottom. We watched busy bluebird parents poking food into tiny mouths poking out the bottoms of two of the boxes. (Another was empty except for an old nest.)

## FOOD ITEMS OF COLORADO BIRDS (V)

David A. Leatherman  
2048 Whiterock Court  
Fort Collins, CO 80526

A general description of the format, purpose and reporting procedures for this column can be found in the introduction section of previous columns.

This edition of the column contains mostly records for December 1990 through February 1991. I thank those individuals who have provided me with their observations. In some cases I have been unable to add material sent to me because it lacks one or more items of basic data. In some cases I have contacted you about filling in the gaps. In other cases I have not. If you know of material that you have provided but not seen in print, then it is probably for this reason. I would be glad to include everything for which the basic information is complete.

Also, do not hesitate sending me information on feeding episodes of interest that took place prior to the current reporting period. For example, in this column Rosie Watts provided observations on "her" *Phainopepla* in Penrose during 1989. This information is extremely interesting and is in no way diluted by being two years old.

I would say the dominant feature of this winter in regards to what and where birds fed is the cone crop(s) which held many mountain birds in the foothills. These species have been conspicuous by their absence this winter down in the lower elevation cities and towns. As an example, the Hawksworth's in Ft. Collins report no Evening Grosbeaks at their feeders "for the first time in 14 years", "no Pine Siskins for the first time in 9 years", "no Cassin's Finches for the first time in 5 years", and no Mountain Chickadees.

Keep those cards and letters coming. As always I welcome comments on how to improve this column.

BIRD	FOOD ITEM	LOCATION	DATE
Mallard	Crayfish	GC	11 Sept. '90 (JM)
Northern Harrier	Roadkilled rabbit (prob. cottontail)	Sterling	4 Jan. '91
Northern Harrier	Dead carp	Hamilton Res., Larimer Co.	28 Dec. '90 (DH)
Cooper's Hawk	European starling	Fort Collins	27 Dec. '90 (DII)
Red-tailed Hawk	Rock dove	Penrose	9 Feb. '91 (RW)
Prairie Falcon	Mallard (male)	Timnath Res., Larimer Co.	27 Feb. '91 (JM)
Prairie Falcon	Horned lark	Nunn (4 miles ne), Weld Co.	13 Dec. '90 (DII)
Virginia Rail	Small fish ("beak-length")	Chatfield S.P.	15 Dec. '90 (HEK)

(Bird was reported carrying fish while moving through cattails. Seen during Denver Christmas Count. Terres' Encyclopedia of North American Birds lists "small fish" as part of this bird's known diet, but it would seem that, given the bird, the date, and the location this sighting is rather unusual. One has to wonder if observed one week later if the food item would have been described as "small frozen fish".)

Herring Gull	Scavenging dead N. Shoveler on ice	Fort Collins	5 Jan. '91
Eastern Screech-Owl	(Remains of European Starling under roost)	GC	15 Feb. '91
Great Horned Owl	(Remains of multiple Rock Doves under roost)	GC	Jan. '90-Feb. '91
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Initiating sap wells in Douglas-fir	GC	5 Jan. '91
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Extensive sap wells in Austrian pine	GC	1 thru 28 Feb. '91
Sapsucker			

(This adult male may be the same individual seen January 5 and, indeed, in previous winters. Despite my searching often for this bird, it did not appear until the first day of February. It has worked the same group of 8 pines as in the past three winters. This year it has noticeably shifted from favoring the westernmost trees in this clump to the easternmost trees through the month. It seems like more new wells have been initiated this winter than in past winters. And for the first time, the bird spent time during one visit working the upper limbs of an American elm near the pine clump. Finally, on 21 Feb. the bird was even seen "flycatching" from the elm mentioned previously.)

Downy Woodpecker	Female working on great mullein seeds	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	20 Feb. '91
	Male working on fire-killed ponderosa	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	20 Feb. '91

BIRD	FOOD ITEM	LOCATION	DATE
<p>(The male Downy was first seen on the trunk of large-diameter trees near the base, removing small, round patches of charred bark. Under the bark were mostly cerambycid wood borer larvae. This family of so-called "long-horned beetles" is a common colonizer of stressed and/or recently-killed conifers. Also under the bark were a few larvae of engraver (genus <i>Ips</i>) beetles and various other secondary insects. These same insects, particularly the large wood borer grubs, were the targets of both Hairy Woodpeckers of both sexes and female Three-toed Woodpeckers (both mentioned later). The male Downy Woodpecker was also seen pecking on the small branches (about 1/2" in diameter) of ponderosa pine. The prey in this case appeared to be small bark beetles referred to as "twig beetles". The feeding habits of woodpeckers are widely reported in the literature to differ between sexes. It might be useful in defining this behavior further if observers specify <u>which sex</u> of which woodpecker species they saw eating what.)</p>			
Hairy Woodpecker	Cerambycid wood borer larvae (see above)	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	20 Feb. '91
Hairy Woodpecker	Douglas-fir pole beetle	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	20 Feb. '91
<p>(This small bark beetle of small Douglas-fir trunks and branches has a distinctive gallery pattern. The woodpecker was seen removing a small 2" x 3" patch of bark from a mid-crown limb, revealing the "beetle tracks" of its prey well enough to identify them. This tree was also killed by the above-mentioned fire, which occurred on April 27, 1989.)</p>			
Northern Flicker	Staghorn sumac seeds from seed heads	GC	18 Dec. '90
Black-billed Magpie	Philadelphia cream cheese ("Janet Lee" brand)	GC	25 Jan. '91
Black-billed Magpie	Beef burrito ("Taco Bell")	Redrocks Park, Morrison	10 Feb. '91
American Crow	Philadelphia cream cheese ("Janet Lee" brand)	GC	25 Jan. '91
Common Raven	Scavenging road-killed mule deer	Estes Park	30 Jan. '91
Black-capped Chickadee	Purple willow aphids cadavers	Fort Collins	4 Dec. '90

(This species of aphid is common on Colorado willows, particularly weeping willow. In this case the chickadees were foraging along outer branches eating aphids killed by fall frosts that still remained attached to the twigs. A Downy Woodpecker was apparently doing the same thing but its prey was not positively determined.)

	BIRD	FOOD ITEM	LOCATION	DATE
SUMMER 1991	Black-capped Chickadee	Green ash seeds	GC	10 Dec. '90
	Pygmy Nuthatch	Douglas-fir seeds (in cones & on ground)	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	3 Feb. '91
	(1990 was a very good year in general for Douglas-fir cone/seed production and for certain stands of Engelmann spruce in the mountains of north-central Colorado (and elsewhere?). This is apparently at least part of the reason populations of bird species reliant on such seed crops are reported "up" in the mountains (see for example, results of the 1990 Evergreen Christmas Count) and perhaps why very few of these mountain birds have been seen at lower elevations this winter. Included in this group of birds are Mountain Chickadees; Pygmy, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches; Pine Siskins; Evening Grosbeaks; and White-winged and Red Crossbills. Terres does not mention Douglas-fir seeds in his account of feeding habits for pygmy Nuthatch, but does mention "pine seeds". This may be an example of a bird taking advantage of an abnormal food source present in abundant quantities.)			
C.F.O. JOURNAL	Canyon Wren	(Apparently spiders and/or their egg sacs)	Owl Can., Fort Collins	21 Jan. '91
	(Bird was intently foraging in cracks and crevices on a vertical rock face. The only apparent prey items found in several of these sites which I inspected were spiders and their web-encased egg sacs.)			
	Townsend's Solitaire	Rocky Mountain juniper berries	GC	5 Jan. '91
	Townsend's Solitaire	European buckthorn berries	GC	17 Jan. '91
	Townsend's Solitaire	Currant berries (old) prob. <u>Ribes cereum</u>	Mt. Falcon Park	20 Feb. '91
	American Robin	Juniper sp. berries	Ft. Collins	7 Jan. '91
	American Robin	Hackberry berries	Ft. Collins	11 Jan. '91
	American Robin	Russian olives	Ft. Collins	12 Jan. '91
	American Robin	Mountain-ash berries	Ft. Collins	30 Jan. '91 (DH)
	Bohemian Waxwing	Snow (sweetened?) on Am. elm branch	Ft. Collins	24 Jan. '91
VOL. 25 NO. 3	Bohemian Waxwing	Snow (sweetened?) on silver maple branch	Ft. Collins	25 Jan. '91
	(The above two incidents involved small flocks of waxwings feed in "parrotlike" fashion on nearly vertical large branches with snow packed along the north sides. The attraction seemed more than just snow as a source of water. I speculate that scale insect honeydew (American elm) and maple sap had soaked into the snow in these two cases making it more attractive.)			
	Bohemian Waxwing	Juniper sp. berries	Ft. Collins	7 Jan. '91
	Bohemian Waxwing	American linden "nutlets"	GC	25 Jan. '91

	BIRD	FOOD ITEM	LOCATION	DATE
SUMMER 1991	(This group of waxwings flew from a silver maple toward a berry-laden juniper. They were not permitted to land in the juniper by an American Robin defending "his" winter food resource. The waxwings chose to land in the linden nearby and were then seen eating the nutlets of this tree. These structures are not fleshy and would appear to be very difficult to digest.)			
	Bohemian Waxwing	Russian olives	Ft. Collins	27 Jan. '91 (DH)
	Bohemian Waxwing	Crabapples	Ft. Collins	27 Jan. '91 (DH)
	Bohemian Waxwing	Ornamental plums	Ft. Collins	27 Jan. '91 (DH)
	Bohemian Waxwing	Mountain-ash berries	Ft. Collins	30 Jan. '91 (DH)
	Bohemian Waxwing	Hackberry berries	Ft. Collins	29 Jan. '91
	Bohemian Waxwing	Russian olives	near Muir Springs	1 Feb. '91 (JR)
	Cedar Waxwing	Russian olives	Ft. Collins	12 Jan. '91
	Cedar Waxwing	Russian olives	near Muir Springs	1 Feb. '91 (JR)
	Phainopepla	Russian olives	Penrose	8-11 Sept. '89 (RW)
C.F.O. JOURNAL	Phainopepla	Asparagus seeds ("red berries")	Penrose	8-11 Sept. '89 (RW) ♂
	Northern Shrike	(Hunting down in pile of limbs and brush)	Crow Valley Campg.	19 Jan. '91
	(The shrike would perch atop the brush pile and then actually disappear amid the limbs and twigs. Small rodents using the pile as a winter home/shelter were the apparent potential prey. No captures were witnessed.)			
	European Starling	European buckthorn berries	GC	3 Feb. '91
	European Starling	Russian olives	Ft. Collins	26 Dec. '90 (DH)
	European Starling	Fallen red apples	Ft. Collins	26 Dec. '90 (DH)
	European Starling	Staghorn sumac seeds in seed heads	Ft. Collins	11 Dec. '90
	European Starling	Russian olives	Ft. Collins	17 Dec. '90
	European Starling	Staghorn sumac seeds in seed heads	Ft. Collins	5 Jan. '91
	European Starling	Hackberry berries	Ft. Collins	11 Jan. '91
VOL. 25 NO. 3	European Starling	Russian olives	Ft. Collins	12 Jan. '91
	European Starling	Crabapples	Ft. Collins	13 Jan. '91
	European Starling	Fallen hackberries	Ft. Collins	13 Jan. '91
	European Starling	Crabapples	Ft. Collins	13 Feb. '91 (DH)
	House Finch	Green ash seeds	GC	10 Dec. '90

BIRD	FOOD ITEM	LOCATION	DATE
House Finch	Green ash seeds and American elm buds	GC	5 Jan. '91
House Finch	Crabapples ("Radiant" variety)	Ft. Collins	7 Jan. '91
House Finch	Green ash seeds	GC	28 Feb. '91
House Finch	Green ash seeds	Ft. Collins	10 Dec. '90 (DH)
House Finch	Paper birch catkins	Ft. Collins	11 Dec. '90 (DH)
Red Crossbill	Ponderosa pine seeds in cones	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	10 Feb. '91
Red Crossbill	Douglas-fir seeds in cones	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	10 Feb. '91
Red Crossbill	(Female adult feeding juvenile)	Mt. Falcon Park, JeffCo.	20 Feb. '91
(The juvenile was perched on the outer limb of a Douglas-fir. A female adult flew in and landed next to the young bird and fed "mouth-to-mouth", presumably regurgitated seed material. The young bird could fly but its bill was uncrossed. This apparently is evidence of a January nesting.)			
American Goldfinch	American elm buds	GC	5 Jan. '91
American Goldfinch	Silver maple flower buds/flowers	Ft. Collins	26 Feb. '91

Key to Abbreviations:

DH Dave Hawksworth  
 HEK Hugh Kingery  
 JM Joe Mammoser

JR Joe Roller  
 RW Rosie Watts

GC Grandview Cemetery (Ft. Collins)

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL AT SAND DUNES IS  
FIRST RECORD FOR SAN LUIS VALLEY

John J. Rawinski  
3677 W. Highway 160  
Monte Vista, CO 81144

and

Ronald A. Ryder  
Colorado State University  
Ft. Collins, CO 80523

It was late May 1990, and Park Ranger Tom Morin was driving to work at the Great Sand Dunes National Monument in the San Luis Valley. Tom, who works at the Park seasonally, is a school teacher for the Monte Vista School system, and was eager to begin his summer duties. Shortly after entering the park boundary, a road-killed animal caught his attention. He stopped and collected a small owl and brought it to Park Headquarters where it was placed into the freezer. Park naturalists identified the bird as a Western Screech-Owl (*Otus kennicotti*).

Three weeks later, the Rawinski family presented their annual owl program at the Sand Dunes outdoor amphitheater. After the program, a Park employee asked me if it was true that no records of Western Screech-Owl existed for the San Luis Valley. I said that I believed that to be true. She then told me of the owl they had collected just a few weeks ago. I was excited to see the bird, but cautious since I have been called to identify a number of owls that were not what they claimed to be! I was pleasantly surprised to see the Screech-Owl in excellent shape. The bird was predominantly gray in color, with dark slender streaks with lighter horizontal bars extending from the black streaks on the breast. Eyes had a yellow iris. White spotting on the scapulars was also notable, as were the tufts of feathers on each side of the head. The dark bill with the pale tip was also an important characteristic. The bird was definitely a Screech-Owl, but which one? As you know, the song of the Screech-Owl is one of the most important diagnostic features used to distinguish the Eastern from the Western Screech-Owl, and dead birds sing no songs!

Kenn Kaufmann wrote about Screech-Owl identification in *American Birds*, Summer 1989. Kaufmann suggests that differentiation of the two species can be done without hearing vocalizations. He describes the breast of the Western Screech-Owl as having crossbars being closer together and being much narrower than the heavier black vertical stripes. On Eastern Screech-Owls, the dark crossbars are relatively bold and widely spaced. This bird appeared to have breast characteristics suggesting Western Screech-Owl. The back of the bird was grayish with a number of widely spaced vertical stripes. The black base of the bill with pale tip suggests strongly that this bird is a Western Screech-Owl.

Karel H. Voous, writing in his book Owls of the Northern Hemisphere, states that "it may eventually prove more realistic to consider it [Western Screech-Owl] conspecific with the Eastern Screech-Owl as formerly". This may indeed prove to be the case, as we learn more about the Screech-Owls of America.

We feel this bird is a Western Screech-Owl, even though we shall never hear its call. The bird is a fantastic find, and not entirely unexpected since Western Screech-Owls occur in areas to the east, south, and west of the San Luis Valley. The habitat where the bird was found fit that of Western Screech-Owl, being in the pinyon-juniper zone.

While it is possible that the bird was hit elsewhere and carried on the vehicle, it seemed unlikely based on Tom's observations on the freshness of the kill. Is this bird a recent colonist to the San Luis Valley? As you well know, a national trend has been in evidence over the past two decades of birds of more temperate climates moving into new northerly areas. Or is this bird colonizing new territory as a result of climatic change? Finally, has this bird been here undiscovered for many years? Though climatic changes are apparent, we would suggest the latter theory may best explain the occurrence of the Western Screech-Owl in the San Luis Valley. We believe this since owls are nocturnal by nature, and can go undetected by man. In addition, the species often roosts during the daytime inside tree cavities. It is likely that the careful observation and curiosity of one man had discovered a bird that more than one hundred years worth of observers had not seen or noted. The specimen is being mounted and will be displayed at the Sand Dunes Visitor Center in the near future.

The San Luis Valley can now lay claim to some 11 of the 13 species of owls that occur in Colorado, including such species as the Boreal Owl and recent reports of Mexican Spotted Owls. Tom's find helped bridge the gap of our knowledge and the gap in geography of this species occurrence in Colorado!

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