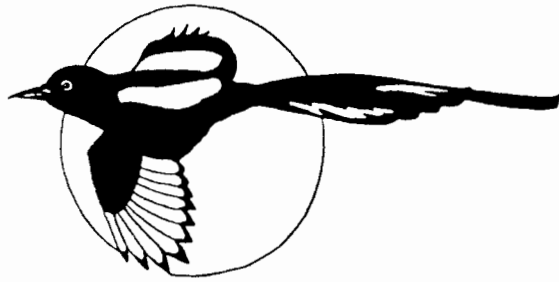

C.F.O. Journal

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly





C.F.O. JOURNAL (ISSN-1066-7342) is published quarterly by the Colorado Field Ornithologists, 1782 Locust St., Denver, CO 80220. Subscriptions are through annual membership dues. Second Class Postage paid at Denver, CO 80202. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

C.F.O. Journal, P.O. Box 481, Lyons, CO 80540

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**C.F.O. BOARD MEETING
AND POTLUCK SUPPER**

**November 13, 1993
Immediately Following Field Trip
at the Off-Broadway Art Gallery,
221 South Union, Pueblo, Colorado**

Take 1st Street exit from I-25. Go west on First Street to Union. Turn right on Union. The Off-Broadway Art Gallery is about two blocks on the right.

C.F.O. BYLAWS

The C.F.O. Board of Directors is considering updating the C.F.O. bylaws. Copies of the current Bylaws may be obtained from Mona Hill, 3410 Heidelberg Drive, Boulder, Colorado 80303, (303) 494-8135. Comments and recommendations for changes may be sent to Mona Hill, to David Pantle, 1782 Locust Street, Denver, Colorado 80220, (303) 333-8352, or to Linda Vidal, 1305 Snowbunny Lane, Aspen, Colorado 81611, (303) 925-7134.

CORRECTION

Correction to C.F.O. Membership List, Vol.27(3)144: Esposito, Tony. 13175 Grant, Longmont, Colorado 80501.

**ADDITIONS TO C.F.O. CONVENTION FIELD TRIP REPORT
VOL. 27(3)104**

Pygmy Nuthatch
Western Bluebird
Red Crossbill

C.F.O. FALL FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

MORGAN COUNTY BIRDS

Meet at 8:30 a.m., **Saturday October 23, 1993**, at Joe Rigli's ranch, 6877 County Rd. 14, Fort Morgan. From Fort Morgan, go 9 miles south on Sherman Street to Road I, 5 1/2 miles west to Road 14, and 1 mile south to the ranch. Bring a lunch.

On this trip, we'll visit several habitats to see the raptors, waterbirds and passerines of northeast Colorado.

Leader: Joe Rigli (303) 432-5200

PUEBLO AREA BIRDS

Meet at 8:00 a.m., **Saturday November 13, 1993**, at the K-Mart Caboose at the southwest intersection of I-25 and Highway 50 west in Pueblo.

This C.F.O. field trip to see Pueblo area birds is co-sponsored by the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society. There will be a C.F.O. Board meeting following this trip.

Leader: Brandon Percival (719) 489-3565

ONE MILLION LONGSPURS

This will be a three day trip on **December 3, 4, 5, 1993**. Meet at 8:00 a.m., Friday, December 3, at the North Parking Lot at the Denver Museum of Natural History. We'll drive to Topeka, Kansas to spend Friday night. Saturday morning we will visit areas where we will see great numbers of Smith's Longspurs. From there, we will drive west for McCown's, Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs.

Join us for this great trip, cosponsored by C.F.O., the Denver Field Ornithologists and the Kansas Ornithological Society.

Register with Linda Vidal (303) 925-7134 by November 27, 1993. Contact Linda, too, for possible carpooling and lodging information.

Leader: Scott Seltman (913) 372-5411

RAPTOR IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP AND FIELD TRIP

Colorado Field Ornithologists will sponsor a special two-part workshop presented by Dr. Charles Preston, to study the common diurnal raptors of Colorado. Dr. Preston is Chairman of the Department of Zoology and Curator of Ornithology for the Denver Museum of Natural History.

The **Thursday evening** laboratory session will be held from **6:30-8:30 p.m., January 20, 1994**, at the Denver Museum of Natural History. Dr. Preston will use slides and specimens to illustrate polymorphism, age, and sex differences in identification of raptors.

The **Saturday morning** field trip will include hotspots in the Denver-Boulder region where we normally expect to see 15 species of raptors. Meet at **7:00 a.m., January 22, 1994**, at the Denver Museum of Natural History. We will carpool and expect to return by 2:00 p.m. Bring a lunch.

Workshop Leader: Dr. Charles Preston (303) 370-6353

C.F.O. FIELD TRIP LEADERS

If you would like to lead a field trip in your area of special interest, please write or call Steve Bouricius at (303) 747-2367. The C.F.O. welcomes the opportunity to co-sponsor field trips with other organizations. Deadline for inclusion in the next *C.F.O. Journal* is December 1.

SONGBIRD ART SHOW FOR CBO

The Colorado Bird Observatory is hosting a Songbird Art Show November 20 and 21 from 10-4 at the Thornton Civic Center, 9500 Civic Center Drive. The show is designed to increase public awareness, through art, on songbirds, shorebirds and waders. Artists interested in submitting work (sculpture, photography or flatwork) should contact CBO for a prospectus. All works will be for sale to the public. For more information, call (303) 659-4348 or write Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, Colorado 80601.

C.F.O. JOURNAL-LIBRARY EXCHANGE

**David Pantle
1782 Locust Street
Denver, Colorado 80220**

C.F.O. donates 100 copies of each issue of the *C.F.O. Journal* to the Colorado State University (CSU) Library in Fort Collins. CSU exchanges the *C.F.O. Journal* for other bird periodicals which are kept at the CSU Library.

Attached in the current list of the publications received by CSU in exchange for the *C.F.O. Journal*.

The *C.F.O. Journal* and exchange publications received by CSU are especially used by its students in Wildlife Management Studies, an "area of excellence" for CSU.

C.F.O. members may use any of these publications at the Periodical Room in the main CSU Library. Periodicals which are more than two years old may be checked out for 2 days.

CSU has a complete set of the *C.F.O. Journal*. The Denver Museum of Natural History has two complete sets. The University of Colorado at Boulder also has a complete set, thanks to the efforts of Walter Collins a few years ago.

C.F.O. handled its own publications exchanges until 1969 when, at the suggestion of Dr. Ron Ryder, C.F.O. agreed for CSU to do that. C.F.O. does not have facilities to store and make available for use exchange publications.

The *C.F.O. Journal* began publication in Winter 1967. So far, 90 issues have been published through July 1993.

TITLE	CALLNO	COUNTRY
ANALES DE BIOLOGIA. SEC. BIOLOGIA	QH540.A527	SPAIN
ANALES DE BIOLOGIA. SEC. BIOLOGIA	QH301.A46	SPAIN
ANALES DE BIOLOGIA. SEC. BIOLOGIA	QL1.A465	SPAIN
ANALES DE BIOLOGIA. SEC. BIOLOGIA	QK1.A45	SPAIN
AUDUBON NATURALIST NEWS	FOLIO QH104.5.M45A8 Period	USA
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND.	HC68.R48 PERIOD	USA
AUSTRALIAN BIRDS	QL671.A926 Period	AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIAN BIRDWATCHER	QL671.A92 PERIOD	AUSTRALIA
BEE-EATER	FOLIO QL696.C754B43 Period	STH AFRICA
BELIZE AUDUBON SOCIETY. BULLETIN	FOLIO QL671.B3 PERIOD	BELIZE
BIRD OBSERVER OF EASTERN MASSACHU-	QL671.B375 PERIOD	USA
BIRD REPORT (GAMBIA ORNITHOLOGICAL	FOLIO QL671.G26a	WESY AFRICA
BIRD WORLD	QL671.B382 PERIOD	USA
BIRD'S EYE VIEW (VALLETTA, MALTA)	QL671.M42 PERIOD	MALTA
BIRDING	QL671.B34 PERIOD	USA
BULLETIN (AVICULTURAL ASSOCIATION	QL671.A9285 PERIOD	USA

TITLE	CALLNO	COUNTRY
BULLETIN OF THE FLORIDA ST. MUSEUM	CAT SEPS	USA
BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF ORNITH	QL691.B945	KOREA
CAROLINA BIRD CLUB. CBC NEWSLETTER	QL671.C357A PERIOD	USA
CASSINIA	QL671.C3	USA
CHARADRIUS	QL671.C39 PERIOD	GERMANY
CHAT (TRYORI, NORTH CAROLINA)	QL671.C4 PERIOD	USA
CONNECTICUT WARBLER	QL671.C66 PERIOD	USA
CONTRIBUTIONS IN BIOLOGY & GEOLOGY	QH301.C685	USA
CORMORAN	FOLIO QL671.C728 PERIOD	FRANCE
COTTONWOOD (PUEBLO, COLO)	QH76.5.C6C67 PERIOD	USA
FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY.	QL671.F25A	U.K.
FALKNER	FOLIO SK321.F35 SPECIAL	AUSTRIA
FIELDIANA : BOTANY	QK1.F4	USA
FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGIST	E78.F58 PERIOD	USA
GARCILLA	QL671.G32	SPAIN
GOSHAWK (ROCHESTER, N.Y.)	QL671.G65 PERIOD	USA
GOSSE BIRD CLUB. BROADSHEET	FOLIO QL671.G6 PERIOD	JAMAICA W.I.
HAWK MOUNTAIN NEWS	QL671.H33 PERIOD	USA
HORNED LARK	QL671.K35 PERIOD	USA
ILLINOIS BIRDS AND BIRDING	QL671.J37 PERIOD	USA
INDIANA AUDUBON QUARTERLY	QL671.J4 PERIOD	USA
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ON SPARROWS	QL696.P246157 PERIOD	POLAND
JACK PINE WARBLER	QL671.J3 PERIOD	USA
KANSAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.	QL671.K3 PERIOD	USA
KAS MAGAZINE	QL671.K27 PERIOD	USA
KENTUCKY WARBLER	QL671.K4 PERIOD	USA
KIRTLANDIA	QH71.C6A3	USA
LARUS (ENGLISH, ED.)	QL671.L3	CROATIA
LIVING BIRD QUARTERLY	QL671.L58 PERIOD	USA
LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY.	QL685.L63 PERIOD	CANADA
LOON	QL671.F5 PERIOD	USA
LUSCINIA	QL671.L97 PERIOD	GERMANY
MARYLAND BIRDLIFE	QL671.M3 PERIOD	USA
MERILL	QL671.M4 PERIOD	MALTA
MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.	QL671.M52a PERIOD	USA
NATURA	QH7.N37 PERIOD	VENEZUELA
NATURALISTA SICILIANO	QH152.N37	ITALY
NEBRASKA BIRD REVIEW	QL671.N25 PERIOD	USA
NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.	FOLIO QL671.N26 PERIOD	USA
NEW HAMPSHIRE AUDUBON	QL671.N42 PERIOD	USA
NEW MEXICO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.	QL677.5.N4 PERIOD	USA

TITLE	CALLNO	COUNTRY
NEWSLETTER (PAPUA, NEW GUINEA BIRD NYALA	FOLIO QL671.N38 PERIOD	NEW GUINEA
OBSERVER (STINSON BEACH, CALIF.)	QH195.M47N9 PERIOD	MALAWI
OKLAHOMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.	QL671.P6 PERIOD	USA
OREGON BIRDS	QL671.O36 PERIOD	USA
ORNIS FENNICA	QL671.O44 PERIOD	USA
ORNIS SVECICA	QL671.O55 PERIOD	FINLAND
ORNITHOLOGISCHE BEOBACHTER	ID SECTION	SWEDEN
ORNITOLOGIA	QL671.O62 PERIOD	SWITZERLAND
ORNITOLOGILINE KOGUMIK	QL671.O86	USSR
OSPREY (MONTPELIER, VERMONT)	QL690.E707	ESTONIA
OSPREY (ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND,	QL671.O872 PERIOD	USA
PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP	QH1.07 PERIOD	CANADA A1C
PASSENGER PIGEON	FOLIO QL671.P16a PERIOD	USA
PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS	QL671.P2 PERIOD	USA
PEREGRINE FUND (U.S.) ANNUAL REPORT	QL671.P42 PERIOD	USA
PEREGRINE FUND (U.S.) NEWSLETTER	QL696.F3P47a	USA
PHALAROPE	QL696.A2C65 PERIOD	USA
PIONUS BREEDERS ASSOCIATION.	QL671.P5 PERIOD	USA
PLAINS AND PEAKS	SF473.P3P46a PERIOD	USA
PRAIRIE HORNED LARK	FOLIO QL671.P55 PERIOD	USA
PROMEROPS	FOLIO QL671.P65 PERIOD	USA
PROTHONOTARY	FOLIO QL671.C34 PERIOD	STH AFRICA
PUSZTA	QL671.P7 PERIOD	USA
REDSTART	FOLIO QL671.P977	HUNGARY
RING	QL671.R4 PERIOD	USA
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CAGE BIRD NEWS	QL671.R5 PERIOD	POLAND
SAFRING NEWS/NUUS	SF461.R63 PERIOD	USA
SCISSORTAIL	QL677.5.S2 PERIOD	STH AFRICA
SENCKENBERGIANA BIOLOGICA	QL671.S3 PERIOD	USA
SOUTH DAKOTA BIRD NOTES	QH5.S33 PERIOD	GERMANY
SPOONBILL	QL671.S6 PERIOD	USA
SUNBIRD	FOLIO QL671.S65 PERIOD	USA
TALE FEATHERS	QL671.S9 PERIOD	AUSTRALIA
UTAH BIRDS	SF461.T36 PERIOD	USA
VERMILLION FLYCATCHER	QL671.U83 PERIOD	USA
WBC NEWS	QL671.V4 PERIOD	USA
WESTERN BIRDS	QL671.W75 PERIOD	STH AFRICA
WINGING IT	QL671.C25 PERIOD	USA
YAMASHINA CHORUI KENKYUJO. Hyoshiki	QL671.W65 PERIOD	USA
	QL677.5.Y35a	JAPAN

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATE

**Hugh Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206**

Preliminary returns from the 1993 breeding season--the next to last year for the Atlas--look good. About 230 field cards came in by September 15, and we expect that many more. I estimate that now we have worked in 1400 of the 1760 blocks and have completed 925 of them. That leaves one year to do a LOT of work!

Most interesting results this year came from the southeastern plains. David and Sherrill Pantle and Ruth and Walt Kuenning, in the area between Colorado Springs and Hugo, found Mountain Plovers in seven blocks, Long-billed Curlews in four, Burrowing Owls in seven, Chestnut-collared Longspurs in three, and McCown's Longspurs in two. They confirmed over half of these.

Black Phoebes nested at Uravan, Grace's Warblers sang near Wetmore--perhaps scattered pairs nest along the foothills from the Arkansas River to Trinidad, somewhat like the scattered pairs of Chestnut-sided Warblers which nest along the Front Range.

Other results of interest include new Latilong confirmed breeding records like these: Hepatic Tanager (Pueblo), Ring-necked Duck (Craig and Pagosa Springs), Sandhill Crane (Unaweep Canyon), N. Pygmy-Owl (Craig), Eastern Phoebe (near Lamar), Pied-billed Grebe (Ignacio). In a class by themselves are the single female Scissor-tailed Flycatcher which built and attended a nest at Glenwood Springs and a Ring-billed Gull which may have tried to nest at San Luis Lake.

Four government agencies helped this year by providing funding for field workers. The U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife combined to hire five field workers who worked on 119 blocks and completed 98 of them. This made a huge impact on our field work for 1993.

Plan now to work on Atlas blocks in 1994: it's your last chance!

MORE THOMPSON MARSH STORIES

David Pantle
1782 Locust
Denver, CO 80220

Patricia K. Echelmeyer
2695 Newland
Denver, CO 80214

Lynn Willcockson
2698 South Niagara
Denver, CO 80224

Several *C.F.O. Journal* readers have sent to the Editor more "Thompson Marsh stories" in response to the invitation in Vol. 27:1

From Helen Stiles-Wainwright in Boulder came the following:

"I was in a carload with Thompson on a birding trip in the early 1970's to the Colorado Springs area. We took the old road near Sedalia and he remarked that before the days of the Interstate, this was the only good road to the Springs, albeit a hazardous one. This reminded him of a particularly hair-raising ride to the Springs with his father when he was a teenager. He remembered remarking to his dad, who was a fast and reckless driver, that instead of pursuing a career, he was just going to stay home and inherit the family fortune--which seemed fairly imminent that day. . . . this may qualify as a Thompson Marsh story, tho it has less to do with birds than with Thompson's brand of humor."

Joe Rigli, of the Rigli Ranch near Fort Morgan, wrote:

"I received the January issue of the *C.F.O. Journal* today and especially enjoyed the article about my friend Thompson Marsh. I miss him greatly. Thompson and Susan attended my very first spring bird count here on the ranch in May of 1977. We became friends, and I received a Christmas card from him every Christmas. On that particular bird count, we both got to observe a male Bullock's and Baltimore Oriole hybrid cross, a Long-Billed Curlew, and three young Great Horned Owls in a nest. Afterwards I ate lunch with him and his wife Susan, visited and then said goodbye as they departed for their home. I was glad to have had both of them as friends."

Brandon Percival, of Pueblo West wrote:

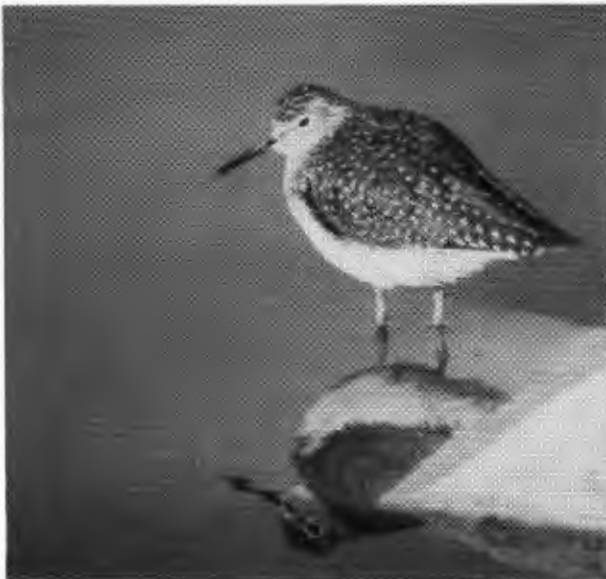
"Well I've a story. During the winter of 1990, I do not remember the date, however that's not important, Van Truan and I went to John Martin Marsh to look for the LeConte's Sparrow to let Van take pictures. We were driving down the dirt road that goes to the parking area; a car was coming towards us. Both Van and I knew it had to be a birdwatcher; as we got closer we identified the birder as Thompson Marsh. Thompson asked 'is this the place where the LeConte's Sparrows are,' and we said 'yes.' So Thompson

turned his car around and followed us to the parking lot. Van, Thompson, and I walked to the area where the sparrows had been. Thompson and I stood near each other, and Van was standing about ten feet to our right. We watched and a LeConte's Sparrow popped up in front of us. I quickly put the bird in my scope and Thompson looked through it at the bird. He told me 'thanks' and then he went home and drove back to Denver. This was a Colorado bird for him."

From Bill Prather in Longmont came the following stories:

"I once asked Thompson how he was able to be sure that his Colorado list was pure. He replied that he was very careful about that. For a bird to qualify for his list, he either had to see it very well, or hear it very well, or "feel its presence" very well."

"On another occasion, I was on a field trip with Thompson. It was at Two Buttes, when the C.F.O. convention was down there about four years ago. It was a hot day, and we were all taking it easy and sitting on the rocks around the parking area. Vultures began to circle over us. Thompson got up and said 'they're getting too close, I'd better be getting along.'"



**Solitary Sandpiper at Walsh Sewer Ponds
April 22, 1993.**

Photo by Janeal Thompson.

THE OCCURRENCE OF THE SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER IN
COLORADO AND SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING ITS
PRESENCE

Robert Righter
2358 South Fillmore
Denver, Colorado 80210

Robert Andrews
Box 40, Ruacana, Namibia
Africa

Occurrence in Colorado: Present documented evidence as stated in Colorado Birds (Andrews and Righter, 1992) suggests that the Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) is a very rare fall migrant with 14 records and is an accidental spring migrant with 2 records on the eastern plains. There is 1 fall record in the western slope and 1 in the mountains. We feel this dowitcher undoubtedly occurs in Colorado more than present knowledge suggests. What is not known is how much more does it occur and, if so, what then would be its geographic relative abundance in spring and fall migration. It is hoped that by suggesting criteria for its identification that this information can then become better known.

All those who are interested in identifying a dowitcher to species should carefully read Claudia Wild's "The Dowitchers," Chapter 10, in Kenn Kaufman's Advanced Birding, 1990. The following are comments on key identification points mentioned in that excellent article and how they might affect dowitcher identification in Colorado. There are essentially four ways a dowitcher can be identified to species in Colorado.

1) **Juvenile Plumage:** Juvenile Short-billed Dowitchers potentially could start to arrive in Colorado by approximately the end of July or perhaps sooner. Juvenile Long-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus scolopaces*) usually start arriving in Colorado during the mid part of September (Kaufman 1990) with some perhaps arriving sooner. Caution should apply when trying to identify a juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher early in the fall migration season when adult Long-billed Dowitchers can still be in a form of breeding plumage that could have the potential of the appearance of a juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher. Adult Long-billed Dowitchers still in breeding plumage could arrive in Colorado as early as mid-July or earlier. Documentation should categorically rule out that potential. A juvenile Short-billed Dowitcher molting to first winter (basic) plumage can show many characteristics of a molting adult Long-billed Dowitcher molting to winter plumage. For example, a dowitcher in molt with tertials showing internal markings from approximately the beginning of August could be either species.

2) **Sound:** The Short-billed Dowitcher has a well described, species-specific rapid "tutututu" sound as heard on the Peterson Field Guides Western and Eastern Bird Song tapes. It also utters a single and/or a more well spaced "tu" sound (not found on the Peterson or other commercial tapes)

which is quite similar to the "tu" call note of the Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), which is on the Peterson tapes. The Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) can also give a very similar single to well-spaced "tu" sound (not on the Peterson or other commercial tapes), and when run rapidly together can sound quite similar to the characteristic Short-billed Dowitcher sound (Cramp, 1983). Without realizing the spectrum of vocalization possibilities for all of the above described species, it could cause confusion when two or more are present. The Long-billed Dowitcher has a different vocalization, as heard on the Peterson field guide bird song tapes as well as being described in Kaufman, 1990. What has not been well established as far as we know is if the Long-billed Dowitcher can also give the single or "spaced" "tu" sound. The Birds of the Western Palearctic Camp, Vol. III, 1983 implies that the Long-billed does possess the potential, thus leading one to the conclusion that a dowitcher giving the single or spaced "tu" sound could not be reliably confirmed as being a Short-billed Dowitcher.

3) **Tail Pattern:** Well described and illustrated in Advanced Birding and no other comments are necessary.

4) **Breeding Plumage:** On plumage alone it would be very difficult to prove any other race of Short-billed Dowitcher in Colorado other than *L.g. hendersoni*. Since full breeding plumage is usually only realized on the breeding grounds in June a not-yet-fully-developed breeding plumage Short-billed dowitcher of either *L.g. griseus* or *L.g. caurinus* found in Colorado in May, for example, would be most difficult to distinguish from a yet not-fully-developed breeding plumage Long-billed Dowitcher. What is not totally understood is if dowitchers, like other similar-sized shorebirds, sport a second calender year plumage (Chandler, 1989) and, if this is true, what this might look like for each species and subspecies.

In summary, while a dowitcher can be identified in the field to species, the task of doing so can be a rather complicated procedure. There will be many dowitchers that should simply be left just anonymous; just bid them happy trails with the hope they will return to Colorado at a later time in a more identifiable mode. We strongly urge that all Short-billed Dowitchers be thoroughly documented in the hopes that its true status and distribution can be better understood.

We want to thank Mark Janos who reviewed this paper and made many helpful suggestions as well as contributed useful information.

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THE OCCURRENCE OF AN ALBINO LARK BUNTING NEAR THE RIGLI RANCH

Joe Rigli
6877 County Road 14
Fort Morgan, Colorado 80701

On Wednesday, August 11, 1993, my dad and I decided to go about 3 miles south of our place and check the water level of San Arroyo Reservoir. After arriving at the reservoir, and noticing an abnormal amount of water we observed several Killdeers and 3 Black Terns. On our return, about 1 mile south of our home, we noticed a small white bird flying with a flock of 75-80 Lark Buntings.

Upon closer observation, I identified the bird as an albino Lark Bunting. The bird was not pure white but was off-white, with a hint of rufous. The legs were pink but it was difficult to see the eye color. As we drove on, the white bird landed on the road ahead while other buntings perched on a barbed wire fence. Upon our approach, all the birds flew and we could plainly see the white bunting amid the normal ones. The flock continued to fly ahead, then circled right and landed on the ground near sagebrush. The next morning I went back to re-find the bunting but it was gone. This was the first sighting of an albino Lark Bunting in our area.

AN EXTENDED SEASON FOR OLDSQUAW IN COLORADO

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When I discovered a female Oldsquaw, *Clangula hyemalis*, on the South Platte River above the 88th Avenue bridge near Thornton in December 1992, I called the Colorado Bird Report sponsored by the Denver Field Ornithologists. I found that others had seen and reported Oldsquaws earlier, possibly as early as mid November. Until the Thornton Columbine Water Treatment pond froze, as many as four Oldsquaws were observed on the lake and on the river by Colorado birders. Both a male and female were observed regularly on the river until 20 February. For a period of a month I did not see the birds but on 20 March a pair of Oldsquaws were observed together on the water treatment lake. The ducks were watched regularly for the next month and a half using binoculars and spotting scope and videoed on 20 April. These birds were last seen on the lake on 6 May.

Oldsquaws commonly winter in saltwater and deep freshwater habitats along the west coast south to Washington and less frequently along the Atlantic Coast and the Great Lakes in North America. They summer and nest in appropriate habitats throughout the arctic (Johnsgard, 1979). Andrews and Righter (1992) list them as rare in fall in eastern Colorado, occasional elsewhere in the state in the winter and spring. Bailey and Niedrach (1967) list their earliest fall date as 16 October (1898) and latest spring record as 7 March (1962), both in Larimer County. A female Oldsquaw spent well over a month on the South Platte in the same locality from late December 1990 to early February 1991.

The female Oldsquaw was in typical winter plumage until mid-February when it started to show both a darker crown and lower auricular region. By late March the plumage was nearly identical to that shown for the early summer female in the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds (1983). The male, with plumage similar to that of the female but with gray replaced by a distinct pink in the bill, was obviously a first year male as illustrated in the Geographic Field Guide. In mid February the scapulars were showing the typical adult male winter gray. When I saw the bird in late March it had assumed the plumage of an adult except for the lack of the distinctive long tail. According to Bent (1925 [Dover edition, 1962]) the adult tail of the male is acquired in August or September when the bird is just over a year old.

Throughout the observation period the birds spent considerable amounts of time underwater, both on the river and the lake. Often (though not always) they would dive in unison or nearly so. They would reappear as much as fifty yards from where they dived. I never observed that they swallowed

food after being underwater but it was difficult to spot the birds immediately when they surfaced.

Bent (1925 [Dover, 1962]) describes the birds as "lively, restless, happy-go-lucky little ducks," and the males in spring thus: ". . . fantastic postures, rushing, flying, quarreling and filling the air with their musical love notes." Probably because there was usually only the pair, and because the male was subadult, this behavior was subdued. Only once did I hear the yodel call which happened when a second male was on the lake on the Friday before Easter. During the winter the birds flew fast, in a more or less straight line, usually following the river at least a quarter of a mile before landing. In early May I observed the female perform the often mentioned zig-zag flight briefly; the male was never observed showing that flight pattern, this in spite of frequent observations of an hour or longer at least three days a week. The pair usually stayed within 5 yards of each other, often in close association with Common Goldeneyes, Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaup. If other divers took flight on the river the Oldsquaws were almost certain to join though they often allowed observers to approach quite close and they would reward the patient watcher by swimming surprisingly close. When on the lake the birds usually were toward the middle or opposite shore, two to four blocks away.

The South Platte River in this locality is rich in nutrients, being downstream from numerous water treatment plants. Especially when the lakes are frozen in mid winter, this segment of the river hosts thousands of waterfowl of over a dozen species as well as American Coots, Pied-billed Grebes and other water birds. As the lakes open the population drops but hundreds of ducks including several divers spend time resting and eating on the river. Large numbers of walkers, bikers and others use the open space trail which parallels the river bank.

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**MOUNTAIN PLOVERS (*CHARADRIUS MONTANUS*)
NESTING NORTH OF BYERS, COLORADO**

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While running a Breeding Bird Survey Route (#042 - Adams Co.), on June 6, 1993, Karleen Schofield and I were amazed to see a Mountain Plover at our first stop at 80th Avenue and Byers-Calhoun Road (46N). The bird flew directly over us at no more than 20 feet uttering rather raucous squawks. It had white underparts, tan upperparts, prominent white wing stripes and dark band at end of tail. It landed in the plowed field to the south where another plover rested. We studied the birds with a telescope and noted their white faces, broken by dark eye stripes which ran to short, plover-length, pointed bills, and black spots on their forecrowns. Karleen had seen a Mountain Plover with young two weeks previously, and I had seen one a month previous in the eastern part of the Pawnee National Grasslands.

At Stop #14, 2 1/2 miles east of Strasburg Mile Rd. on 64th Avenue, we saw another adult Mountain Plover. This one had two recently hatched young in tow. Proof of nesting! (This is the first nesting in Adams County since the early 1900's.) On the left was a large field of growing wheat about 2 feet high. On the right (north) was a large field (which, I learned later from the farmer, had been left fallow this year). Actually, we might have missed these birds were they not exactly at this scheduled stop. The adult emerged from the shallow ditch on the right followed by the two fuzzy, buffy, dark speckled, scurrying babies. They stayed nearby, the adult alert while the babies fed. When we began to move, they ran ahead - next to the growing 2 feet high wheat. I wondered why they didn't go into this handy cover. The next day I called Lois Webster, who has studied this species for many years. She informed me that Mountain Plovers will never run into any growth - into short grass and plowed fields only. Since the young plovers were but days old, their nest was probably in the fallow field.

I sped up to get past them and relieve the stress we were causing. The adult (it could have been either sex as the female will most times leave the male to incubate the first nest of eggs and then re-nest) flew ahead for a short distance, then circled back to the young.

I returned on June 9th to search this area and to the east because I learned that Joey Kelner had seen a Mountain Plover on his Breeding Bird Survey route northeast of Anton, Colorado. I followed County roads, scoping all likely habitat until darkness stopped me near Woodlin School northeast of Last Chance, Colorado. I saw NO plovers - not even those seen on Sunday. It shouldn't be concluded that no Mountain Plovers were in this area, however.

On group trips to the Pawnee National Grasslands I have seen it take 15 minutes or more for people scanning a traditional location with 6 telescopes to find them.

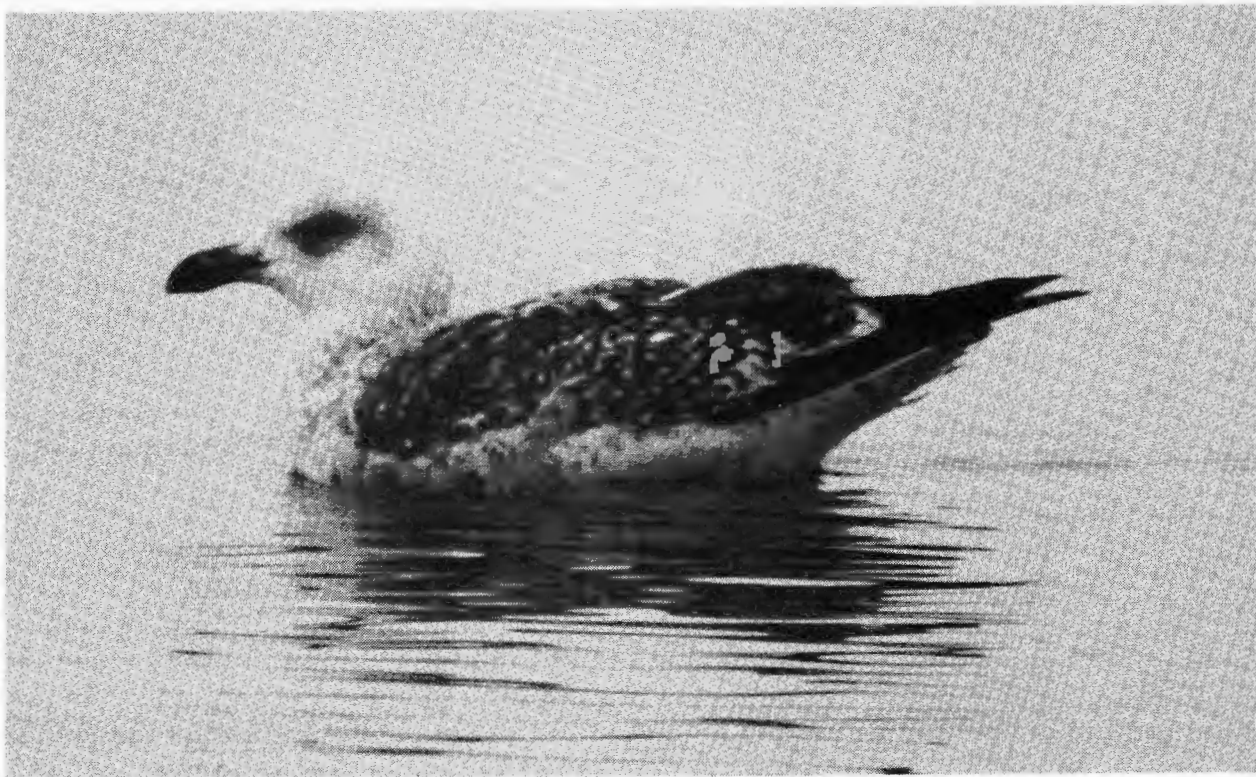
Mountain Plover populations are declining at an alarming rate and are being considered for Endangered status. In Weld County, which had an estimated 21,000 birds in 1969, only 1,971 were counted in 1991. My meager experience with this species at a traditional area near the pond 1/4 mile south of Weld County Road 122 on Co. Road 45 would seem to verify further decline. In May, 1991 I saw at least 10, 1992 - 2, 1993 - 1. And I saw none here or on a traverse from here to Crow Valley Campground on June 1. This, in the area considered the last stronghold of Mountain Plovers.

I leave to experts what action is warranted. Certainly this area should be surveyed for Mountain Plovers and their numbers documented. If they are found in significant numbers, it may indicate a different nesting strategy is evolving. The custom of the wheat farmers to let vast fields lay fallow in alternate years may very well provide adequate nesting habitat. If this is proven, perhaps nothing more than surveys should be done, following the adage that "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Advertising that an endangered species is nesting in farmland could unduly alarm the owners of the land and have an adverse affect. If their present farming methods are indeed serving to perpetuate a species threatened with extinction, I would believe that their full cooperation can be expected.

This is, of course, speculation. But, anything and everything must be done to save this beautiful, remarkable bird. We owe it to future generations, and indeed to the birds themselves.

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**Greater Black-backed Gull at Pueblo Reservoir
March, 1993.
Photo by Joe Roller.**

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: SEASONAL REPORT SPRING 1993
(March, April, May)

Coen Dexter
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Bill Prather has asked me to write the next series of seasonal reports. This can become a big job so I will need to be rescued in a year by someone who would like to give it a hand.

The format Bill has developed seems to be working well so I will continue with it. Bill has explained his approach to seasonal reporting in the latest several issues of the *C.F.O. Journal*.

This spring report was generated from these sources: American Birds reports sent to Hugh Kingery; *the rare bird report* telephone log; and DFO Lark Bunting. If I missed getting your good bird in the report, I would like to apologize. If you have suggestions as to how to make the seasonal report better, let me know.

The spring season was cool and wet. Most observers felt the weather had little impact on spring migrants however. One notable exception did occur in the mountains where the snow pack was deep. Mountain resident species were hard to find and migrant species did not move into the higher elevations until later than is normally expected.

Red-throated Loon has no previous spring records. 1 at Chatfield Res. 4/8-5/10 (T.B. Hayes and others); 1 at Cherry Creek Res. 5/12-20 (The Browns and others).

Common Loon rare spring migrant in western valleys. Numerous reports in western valleys.

Clark's Grebe fairly common spring migrant in San Luis Valley and on southeastern plains. Numerous reports statewide.

Great Egret rare spring migrant on eastern plains, casual in western valleys. Several reports on the plains.

Snowy Egret rare to uncommon spring migrant in western valleys, mountain parks and eastern plains. Several reports statewide.

Little Blue Heron very rare spring migrant on eastern plains, casual in western valleys. 1 at Walden Ponds in Boulder County 4/25 (Susan Ward).

Tricolored Heron very spring migrant on the eastern plains. 2 adults were at Huerfano Res. 5/9 (Allen Wood and others).

Reddish Egret accidental spring. 1 reported at Neeskah Res. 4/22 (Thomas Kihn).

Cattle Egret rare spring migrant on eastern plains, in western valleys and in the San Luis Valley. Numerous records statewide.

Green-backed Heron rare spring migrant on eastern plains, very rare in western valleys. Reported from Denver, San Luis, Grand Jct. and Pueblo.

White-faced Ibis rare to uncommon (locally fairly common) spring migrant in western valleys, very rare in mountains outside parks. Numerous reports statewide.

Trumpeter Swan no spring migration records. 1 imm. at Lake Holbrook 3/13 (Brandon Percival); 3 adults and 2 imm. at Sweetwater Res. northeast of Glenwood Springs 3/19-25 (Jack Merchant and others). These swans are the same five that wintered in Mesa County.

Greater White-fronted Goose rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Several reports on the plains.

Snow Goose rare migrant in western valleys. Many reports statewide.

Ross' Goose rare to uncommon spring migrant in western valleys, the San Luis Valley, and on the eastern plains. Several reports statewide.

Eurasian Wigeon very rare spring migrant on eastern plains, casual in mountain parks and accidental in western valleys. 1 male Weld County on 4/4-24. (Joe Himmel and others); 1 male at Monte Vista 4/4-11 (Alan Carothers and others); 1 male at Hart's Basin 3/29 (Rich Levad).

Greater Scaup rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Several reports.

Oldsquaw very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 2 birds wintered from Nov. until early May on the South Platte River in Denver. A female was at Pueblo Res. 3/28-4/24; 1 male near old Marshall landfill 4/24 (Bill Kaempfer).

Surf Scoter casual spring on northeast plains. 2 sub-adult males were in Golden 4/18-5/8 (Diana Mullineaux and others).

White-winged Scoter casual spring migrant on eastern plains and no previous records in the west. 1 bird at McPhee Res. near Cortez 3/27 (Wright and Dexter); 1 bird at Baseline Res. in Boulder 5/1-5 (Bill Kaempfer).

Barrow's Goldeneye Rare spring migrant in western valleys, mountain parks and on eastern plains near foothills. Reported from Golden 3/6, Sweetwater 4/5 and Granby 3/14.

Hooded Merganser rare spring migrant in western valleys, mountain parks and on the eastern plains, may be uncommon or even common very locally. Numerous reports statewide.

Red-breasted Merganser rare to uncommon spring migrant in western valleys and on eastern plains. Numerous reports statewide.

Osprey rare to uncommon spring migrant. Numerous reports statewide; Dakota Hogback reported a record number 66.

Mississippi Kite very rare in spring, summer and fall on eastern plains away from Baca County and the Arkansas Valley. 10 to 15 pair in the Pueblo area (Dave Silverman).

Northern Goshawk rare to uncommon resident in foothills and mountains, rare spring migrant elsewhere. 6 birds were reported at Dakota Hogback. Several other scattered reports received.

Common Black Hawk no previous records in the state. 1 reported at Ft. Collins 4/29 (Alex and June Cringan).

Red-shouldered Hawk casual spring migrant on northeastern plains. An imm. reported near Ft. Collins 5/7-8 (David Leatherman and others).

Red-backed Hawk this amazing hawk has shown itself in Gunnison for a 7th year. Its origin and wintering area are mysteries.

Broad-winged Hawk rare spring migrant on eastern plains. There were several reports with Dakota Hogback counting 27.

Merlin rare to uncommon spring migrant in western valleys, mountain parks and eastern plains. Dakota Hogback reported 16 along with many other reports.

Peregrine Falcon rare spring migrant-population rebounding in Colorado. Dakota Hogback reported 26 to go along with a few other reports.

Gyr Falcon no spring migration records. 1 reported near Raymer 3/16 (Dave Bolton).

Common Moorhen casual on plains. 1 bird was at Sombrero Lake 5/30 (Steve Feldstein).

Sandhill Crane a pair nested and reared 2 young in Unaweep Canyon 150 miles southwest from the nearest known breeding site 5/8 into summer (Dexter and Wright)

Black-bellied Plover rare to uncommon spring migrant on eastern plains, very rare in western valleys. A few reports from the plains.

Lesser Golden Plover accidental in western valleys in spring migration. 1 at Highline Res. 5/24 (Dexter and Levad).

Semi-palmated Plover rare to uncommon migrant on eastern plains, very rare in western valleys. Several reports including the western valleys.

Piping Plover very rare spring migrant and local breeder. 1 bird at Lake Cheraw 4/30 (Mark Janos).

Mountain Plover rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 5 records and 2 breeding reports, one from Cheyenne Wells 5/13 (Hugh Kingery)

Black-necked Stilt rare spring migrant on eastern plains and in western valleys. Several reports.

Whimbrel rare spring migrant on eastern plains and casual in western valleys. Reported from Grand Jct. and Craig and many eastern plains locations.

Long-billed Curlew rare spring migrant in western valleys, mountain parks and on the eastern plains away from southeast. Several reports statewide with as many as 12 birds at Saguache.

Hudsonian Godwit very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 in breeding plumage at Cheraw 5/23 (Mark Janos).

Ruddy Turnstone very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 breeding plumage at Nee Noshe 5/23 (Mark Janos).

White-rumped Sandpiper fairly common to common spring migrant on extreme eastern plains, rare to near foothills. Numerous records.

Pectoral Sandpiper rare spring migrant on eastern plains. A few records.

- Dunlin** very rare migrant in spring on eastern plains. 1 at Cheraw 4/24-25 (Mark Janos).
- Stilt Sandpiper** rare to uncommon spring migrant on eastern plains. A few records.
- Short-billed Dowitcher** accidental spring migrant on eastern plains. 40 at Huerfano Res. 5/9-12 (Mark Janos).
- Laughing Gull** casual migrant in spring on eastern plains. 1 at Union Res. 4/29 (Bill Prather).
- Mew Gull** casual spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 at Cherry Creek Res. 3/13 (Larry Malone).
- Thayer Gull** rare winter into early spring on eastern plains. Several records.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull** accidental on eastern plains. 1 sub-adult at Cherry Creek Res. 3/16-19 (Joe Roller); 1 adult and a second year gull at Baseline Res. 3/1-4/11 (many observers).
- Glaucous Gull** rare winter visitor into early spring. Several records.
- Greater Black-backed Gull** casual spring on eastern plains. A first winter gull at Pueblo Res. 3/14-5/10 (Janos and Percival); 1 adult at Chatfield Res. 5/10 (Joey Kellner).
- Caspian Tern** very rare spring migrant on eastern plains and western valleys. Several reports around the state and a Lat. first in Lat. 1 at Brown's Park 5/30 (C.F.O. field trip).
- Inca Dove** no spring records. 1 was still at Vineland 3/20.
- Common Barn Owl** rare, and locally uncommon, spring resident in western valleys and migrant on eastern plains. Several records.
- Flammulated Owl** was heard singing on Slumgullion Pass at 11,500 feet 4/30 (John Rawinski).
- Western Screech Owl** a road kill was found at Great Sands National monument 3/31. This is the second San Luis Valley record. The first was at the same location, also a road kill (John Rawinski).
- Snowy Owl** rare winter on northeastern plains into early spring. 1 at Jumbo Res. 3/20 and 1 at Raymer 3/16 (Dave Bolton).
- Spotted Owl** very rare resident in foothills and mountains. 1 calling in Wet Mountains 5/8 (Brandon Percival).
- Long-eared Owl** rare resident in western valleys, foothills, lower mountains, and on eastern plains. Several reports.
- Boreal Owl** rare to locally uncommon resident in higher mountains. Grand Mesa 5/16 and Slumgullion 4/30.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker** casual in spring on eastern plains away from extreme northeastern areas where they breed. Several reports.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** very rare winter resident on northeastern plains near foothills, accidental on extreme eastern plains and in western valleys. A few very early spring reports.
- Gray Flycatcher** casual migrant on eastern plains. 1 at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt 4/29 (Dick Schottler); and 1 at Ft. Collins 5/4 (Dave Ely).

Black Phoebe accidental spring western valleys. A pair nested at Uravan from 5/8 into summer and reared 3-5 young. (Dick Guadagno and others)

Eastern Phoebe rare spring migrant on eastern plains and accidental in western valleys. Numerous reports including 1 from Gateway, Mesa County 5/16 (Dick Guadagno).

Great Crested Flycatcher rare on southeastern plains. Several reports from the plains.

Purple Martin accidental on eastern plains. 2 were at Rocky Ford S.W.A. 5/12-13 (Karleen Schofield).

Gray-cheeked Thrush very rare spring migrant, mostly on northeastern plains. Reports came from Parker, Lamar, Bonny Res., Lake Waneka, Barr Lake and Crow Valley from 5/1-30.

White-eyed Vireo casual spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 at Prewitt Res. 5/8 (Kellner and Wood).

Yellow-throated Vireo very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 at Lake Henry 4/25 (Percival and Janos); 1 at Fountain Creek Colo. Springs 5/12 (Karleen Schofield); and 1 at Rocky Ford S.W.A. 5/13 (Karleen Schofield).

Blue-winged Warbler very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 at Barr Lake 5/8 (Terry Flageolle); 1 at CU Campus 5/10 (Bill Kaempfer).

Golden-Winged Warbler very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reports were from Crow Valley 5/12-19; Littleton 5/10; Colorado Springs 5/13; Waterton Res. 5/18; and Lyons 5/8.

Tennessee Warbler rare to uncommon spring migrant on eastern plains, and casual in western valleys. Reports from Pueblo 5/15; Crow Valley 5/4-18 and Palisade 5/9 (Wright and Dexter).

Nashville Warbler rare spring migrant in western valleys, foothills, and eastern plains. Reports from Bonny Res. 5/2; Ft. Morgan 5/15; and Boulder area 5 birds.

Northern Parula Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 at Lamar 5/5; 1 at Fowler 4/19; and Ft. Collins 5/18.

Chestnut-sided Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains, casual in western valleys. Boulder area 5 reports; Lamar 5/1; Colorado City 5/8; and Pueblo 5/15.

Magnolia Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Crow Valley 5/19; Nee Noshe Res. 5/23; Canyon City 5/2; Loveland 5/15.

Black-throated Blue Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Rocky Ford S.W.A. 5/9.

Black-throated Gray Warbler rare spring migrant in valleys and plains adjacent to breeding range. Numerous reports from the plains.

Townsend's Warbler rare spring migrant in western valleys and on eastern plains near foothills. 1 bird at Rocky Ford S.W.A. 5/1 and Pueblo 5/9.

Black-throated Green Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Ft. Collins.

Pine Warbler accidental winter and spring migrant. Reported 3/2-4/12 at the

CU Campus which could be the same birds that wintered there.

Palm Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Many reports.

Bay-Breasted Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Loveland 4/9.

Blackpoll Warbler rare to uncommon spring migrant on eastern plains. Numerous reports with as many as 12 individuals seen by 1 observer in a day.

Black and White Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains and casual in western valleys. Reported from Ft. Collins 5/8 and 5/20; Crow Valley 5/7; Montbello; Rocky Ford S.W.A. 5/9 and Highline SWA 5/16 (Dexter).

Prothonotary Warbler very rare spring migrant. 1 Morgan County 5/11 (Jim Dennis).

Worm-eating Warbler rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Bonny Res. and Lamar 5/1.

Ovenbird rare spring migrant on eastern plains and accidental in the San Luis Valley. Several reported including a bird in Monte Vista 5/8 (Rawinski and De Moss).

Kentucky Warbler very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. A male was at Fountain Creek 5/14 (Van Truan).

Connecticut Warbler accidental spring migrant eastern plains. 1 banded at Barr Lake 5/24.

Red-faced Warbler no previous record for the state. 1 male at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt 5/3 (Dick Schottler and others).

Hepatic Tanager uncommon and very local summer resident in central and eastern Las Animas county, several records in May from Canyon City and Pueblo areas. Reported again this year in the Pueblo area 5/15.

Summer Tanager rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Lamar 5/5.

Scarlet Tanager rare spring migrant on eastern plains. Reported from Penrose 5/19 and Ordway 5/20.

Northern Cardinal rare on eastern plains, accidental in mountains, mountain parks and western valleys. Reported from Bonny Res. 5/8-13 and Wray.

Rose-Breasted Grosbeak rare to uncommon spring migrant on eastern plains. Casual in foothills, lower mountains, and western valleys. Numerous reports.

Indigo Bunting rare to uncommon spring migrant on eastern plains, rare in western valleys. Several reports statewide.

Sage Sparrow very rare spring migrant on eastern plains along foothills. Reported near Boulder 5/19.

White-throated Sparrow rare spring migrant in western valleys and on eastern plains. A report from Rocky Ford S.W.A. 5/1.

Golden-crowned Sparrow very rare spring migrant on eastern plains. 1 adult at a Morrison feeder 5/1-6 (Ronda Woodward); 1 in Longmont 4/22-5/4. (Halseys, Kulh and Griest).

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3. Frequency of Issue QUARTERLY		3A. No. of Issues Published Annually 4			3B. Annual Subscription Price \$12.00	
4. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State and ZIP+4 Code) (Not printers) 1782 Locust Street, Denver, Denver County, CO 80220-1632						
5. Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters of General Business Offices of the Publisher (Not printer) same as item 4						
6. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (This item MUST NOT be blank) Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address) Colorado Field Ornithologists 1782 Locust Street, Denver, CO 80220 Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address) Mona Hill, 3410 Heidelberg Dr., Boulder, CO 80303 Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address)						
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8. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities (If there are none, so state)						
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