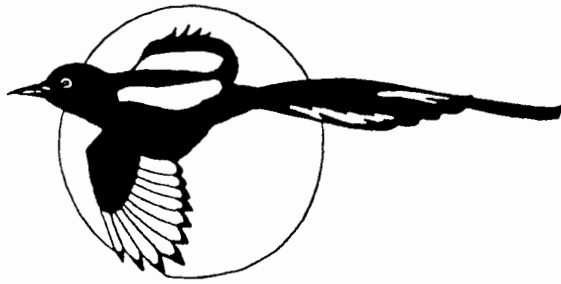

C.F.O. Journal

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN OPEN LETTER TO C.F.O. MEMBERS
 CBO Board Members.....3

C.F.O. BOARD MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT.....4

C.F.O. 1995 CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT.....4

BOULDER BIRD CLUB/C.F.O. RAPTOR TRIP.....4

DENVER AUDUBON ANNUAL DINNER/AUCTION
 Lisa Hutchins.....5

C.F.O. FIELD TRIP: GRAND VALLEY & GRAND MESA
 Coen Dexter.....6

FIELD TRIP LEADER RECRUITMENT.....6

NEW C.F.O. BROCHURE ANNOUNCEMENT.....6

THE BLUEBIRD PROJECT.....7

C.F.O. T-SHIRTS.....7

NEW MEMBERS LIST FOR 19948

RAPTOR ELECTROCUTIONS ON THE PAWNEE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS
 Jay Tishendorf et al.....11

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATE
 Hugh Kingery.....12

AN ALPINE TUNDRA BURROWING OWL
 David Gulbenkian.....14

MOUNTAIN PLOVER NESTING IN OTERO COUNTY, CO
 Tom and Sara Shane.....15

BROWN CREEPERS' WINTER ROOST
 Hugh Kingery and Catherine Anderson.....16

GRAY JAY AS PREDATOR ON CASSIN'S FINCH NESTLINGS
 Hugh and Urling Kingery.....17

GOPHER SNAKE AS PREDATOR AT LONG-BILLED CURLEW AND
ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW NESTS
Hugh and Urling Kingery.....18

POSSIBLE HYBRIDIZATION OF SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER
AND WESTERN KINGBIRD
Coen Dexter.....20

DESCRIPTION OF A NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL VOCALIZATION
FROM THE SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS
Bob Righter.....21

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: SUMMER 1994 (JUNE & JULY)
Kim Potter.....24

DR. HOHMAN WAS RIGHT
David Allen Leatherman.....33

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS/HOW TO SUBMIT RECORDS TO
THE C.F.O. RECORDS COMMITTEE.....36

ILLUSTRATIONS

EURASIAN WIGEON
Adult male photographed at Edora Park, Fort Collins, December 1994,
Joe Mammoser.....COVER

AMERICAN KESTREL WITH PREY, Joe Roller.....10

WINTER RING-BILLED GULL, Joe Roller.....13

MOUNTAIN PLOVER CHICK, Tom Shane.....15

GOPHER SNAKE ATTEMPTING TO EAT LONG-BILLED CURLEW EGG,
Hugh and Urling Kingery.....19

PROBABLE YOUNG SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER X W. KINGBIRD
Coen Dexter.....20

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL SONOGRAMS, Bob Righter.....23

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, David Allen Leatherman.....35

AN OPEN LETTER TO C.F.O. MEMBERS

Recently, the Colorado Bird Observatory (CBO) Board met at the offices of CBO at Barr Lake. We are convinced that CBO must have a new "nest". Many of you have been to the offices, so you know the researchers are crammed into a 1967 "mobile home". It is freezing cold in the winter and unbearably hot in the summer. There are now 8 full-time employees, working on over 30 scientific projects. Computers, printers, library, files, and a kitchenette are housed in 700 square feet of space! We need your help.

CBO is the research arm of Colorado birding. It is highly respected, both nationally and internationally. Currently, researchers and educational staff have to constantly reschedule their days to have access to work stations. This must change.

We are not considering an elaborate edifice, but an efficient, modular building that can be expanded in the future, as needed. There are models that would "fit in" with the Barr Lake Visitors Center and the personnel of State Parks are eager to share some facilities. This brings us to the capital campaign.

We hope to raise \$100,000 for the building, additional computers, furniture and landscaping. To do this we will need to depend principally on the Colorado birding community. While the cause is paramount, we can not rely on the uncertain nature of grant money from foundations and corporations. We know you receive many requests for donations, but this is a one-time plea closely connected to your pursuit. There are no "if's", "and's" or "but's", if we are interested in the future of birds in Colorado. We need CBO and CBO needs new quarters. Soon you will receive a brochure with more details. When you do, we ask that you make a considerable donation for this request.

Thanks!

Sincerely,

CBO Board Members
Jack Redall,
Bob Righter,
Jan Justice-Waddington,
Jay Reed,
Mary Water,
Mark Sather,
Linda Vidal, and
Judy Scheu



C.F.O. BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 11, 1995
1 PM

People's Clinic
3303 Broadway
Boulder

(This location is 1/4 block south of Iris,
on the west side of Broadway)

**Don't forget the morning field trip in Boulder
(see announcement to follow)**



MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!!

**THE 1995 C.F.O. CONVENTION
IS COMING TO THE GRAND VALLEY
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND**

DETAILS FORTHCOMING



BOULDER BIRD CLUB/C.F.O. RAPTOR TRIP

Meet at 9:00AM Saturday, February 11, 1995, at Scott Carpenter Park, southwest of the junction of 30th and Arapahoe, in Boulder. This will be a half-day trip, as planned, with lunch optional. If the group wishes to continue into the afternoon, that may be possible. The trip focus will be raptors.

Leader: John Tumasonis of Boulder (phone: (303) 440-8154)



**ANNOUNCEMENT OF DENVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
ANNUAL DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION**

Lisa Hutchins
Denver Audubon Society
8751 E Hampden Avenue, Suite A-1
Denver, CO 80231

The Denver Audubon Society (DAS) is hosting its Annual Dinner and Silent Auction on Friday, April 28, 1995, at the Marriott Southeast at I-25 and Hampden in Denver. The Silent Auction and Cash Bar begins at 6:00PM; the Dinner, Awards Ceremony and Program Presentation start at 7:00PM.

Keynote speaker this year will be PETER DUNNE, noted author and the director of the Cape May Bird Observatory. Dunne has written several well-known books, including *Tales of a Low Rent Birder* and *Hawks in Flight*. The topic of his talk will be "Small-headed flycatchers: a shaggy bird story".

The silent auction features wonderful items from Denver-area merchants. Auction items run the gamut from baked goods to weekends at posh resorts. Dinner guests write in bids on these items during the cocktail hour.

Cost of the dinner is \$25 for DAS members and \$30 for non-members. Dinner guests who would like to sit with Peter Dunne at the head table may do so for \$100 per person. Peter Dunne will be leading a birding field trip up to the Genessee area on Saturday, April 29. Cost of the field trip is \$50 per person, which includes a gourmet lunch. The cost to sit at the head table and attend the field trip will be \$125.

Proceeds from the silent auction, dinner and field trip go toward DAS' conservation and education programs. For more information or to make reservations, contact the DAS office at (303) 696-0877.



**C.F.O. FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT:
GRAND VALLEY AND GRAND MESA OWLS**

Meet at 2:00PM Saturday, 1 April 1995, at Fruita Visitor's Center. The Center is just off I-70 on the south side, opposite the town of Fruita. Exit I-70 at Exit 19.

Again, we will try for eight species of owls. In the valley we should see Barn Owls, Western Screech-owls, Great Horned Owls, Burrowing Owls and Long-eared Owls. By 6:00PM, we will drive to Mesa and eat at the Wagonwheel Cafe. Mesa is a small town located on the north slope of Grand Mesa about 30 minutes from Grand Junction. After eating, we will try calling Northern Pygmy-owls (a long shot), Boreal Owls and Northern Saw-whet Owls.

Last year the large group was able to view five owl species. Wind, however, prevented us from having any luck finding montane owls.

Co-leaders: Coen Dexter (303) 464-7971 and Rich Levad (303) 242-3979.



**RUMOR HAS IT YOU ARE...
FIELD TRIP LEADER MATERIAL**

If you would like to lead a field trip, C.F.O. is interested. You do not need a life list of 700. A previous visit to Attu or Costa Rica is not required. All you need is a little knowledge of your favorite birding place and a willingness to share. Prospective leaders please contact Coen Dexter, 175 Sunset Circle, Palisade 81526, (303) 464-7971.



NEW C.F.O. BROCHURE NOW AVAILABLE

A copy of our newly printed promotional brochure should accompany this issue of the *Journal*. Look it over and think how you might use it to introduce C.F.O. to someone. If you need more copies, contact any C.F.O. Board Member. Let's use this as a tool to build C.F.O. and benefit our Colorado birds



THE BLUEBIRD PROJECT

Are the bluebirds among your favorite species? If so, you might consider getting involved in "The Bluebird Project". Its goal is an 826 mile-long trail running from Grand Junction east to the Nebraska line, with bluebird boxes approximately 10 to the mile! Conceived in 1993 by The Denver Audubon Society and the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the envisioned 8000+ boxes will obviously require much volunteer work. If interested in helping with one of the many field and office jobs available, please call Sherry Chapman at the Volunteer Office, CO Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216. Phone: (303) 291-7302.



IS YOUR OLD C.F.O. T-SHIRT TOO SMALL?

IS YOUR OLD C.F.O. T-SHIRT WORN OUT?

**HAVE YOU NEVER OWNED A C.F.O. T-SHIRT,
BUT ALWAYS WANTED ONE?**

These classy shirts carry the Black-billed Magpie in flight logo of C.F.O. This design was created by member Ellen Klaver of Niwot and first appeared in the Winter 1980 [Vol.14 (1)] issue of the *C.F.O. Journal*. Presently shirts are available in L and XL sizes and in either emerald green or maroon, with the magpie logo printed in white. The price is still \$10.00, plus \$1.50 for postage. Contact David Pantle, 1826 Flora Court, Canon City, CO 81212-4577 [phone: (719) 275-8208].



**THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
WELCOME 69 NEW MEMBERS IN 1994**

An updated, complete membership list is planned for this fall's issue of the *Journal* [Volume 29 (3)]. But as promised, here is a listing of our recent new members. We welcome them to C.F.O. and look forward to meeting them all. If that can not be accomplished earlier, the 1995 C.F.O. Convention in Grand Junction over Memorial Day weekend should afford a great opportunity to do so. A complete roster of addresses was not available by press time, but it is hoped a listing of names, hometown, state and phone will be helpful.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
Agger, Dale	Fort Collins	CO	(303) 226-6531
Ball, Garland	Colorado Springs	CO	(719) 471-7723
Benjamin, Lee	Boulder	CO	(303) 442-9005
Blackburn, Shirley	Manitou Springs	CO	(719) 685-1586
Blackwood, Jean	Walsenburg	CO	(719) 738-2696
Bright, Leon	Pueblo	CO	(719) 561-1108
Bronson, Karen	Denver	CO	(303) 388-3055
Bucknam, Dale	Westminster	CO	(303) 426-6669
Buettner, Steve	Colorado Springs	CO	(719) 578-0607
Busch, Susan	Evergreen	CO	(303) 670-9043
Byrne, Gene	Rifle	CO	(303) 625-2312
Chapman, Sherry	Aurora	CO	(303) 699-1351
CO Bird Observatory	Brighton	CO	(303) 659-4348
Crowley, Janice	Carbondale	CO	(303) 963-9031
Danielson, Laura	Canon City	CO	(719) 275-1092
Dickel, Terhune	Homestead	FLA	(305) 248-8289
Dodd, Mary Lea	Bellvue	CO	(303) 482-4494
Fredlund, Jim & Jean	Denver	CO	(303) 428-5420
Gillihan, Scott	Fort Collins	CO	NA
Gorden, Grant	Apple Valley	MN	NA
Goycoolea, Bob	Colorado Springs	CO	(719) 390-6266
Griesemer, Vince	Fort Collins	CO	(303) 663-5852
Haines, Laurie	Boulder	CO	(303) 494-3352
Hamer, Tammy	Boulder	CO	(303) 494-6051
Hamrick, Katie	Florissant	CO	(719) 748-3744
Harden, Laura	Sedalia	CO	(303) 688-2680
Hill, Katie	Grand Junction	CO	(303) 241-0410
Holmes, Richard	Boulder	CO	(303) 499-5169
Huntley, Bill	Denver	CO	(303) 298-8350
Keating, Dawn	Aspen	CO	(303) 963-3023
King, D. W.	Lyons	CO	(303) 823-5554
King, Edwin	Fort Collins	CO	(303) 226-5645

King, Jackie Ann	Commerce City	CO	(303) 287-1644
Kretzinger, Andy	Montrose	CO	(303) 249-0821
L'Herrison, Ruby	Colorado Springs	CO	(719) 632-1878
Leatherman, Charlotte*	Columbus	OH	(614) 294-2162
Lewis, Brian	Boulder	CO	(303) 499-7315
Lovato, Lori	Saguache	CO	(719) 655-2563
Mallory, Andrew	Littleton	CO	(303) 795-6896
Maugans, Jeff	Estes Park	CO	(303) 586-4633
McBride, John	Baton Rouge	LA	(504) 769-8107
Morris, R. & L.	Lakewood	CO	(303) 234-9259
Mulholland, Peter	Arvada	CO	(303) 423-0435
Myers, John	Boulder	CO	(303) 665-0195
Patton, Joyce	Grand Junction	CO	(303) 523-1089
Pellouchoud, Barbara	Boulder	CO	(303) 494-4286
Plage, Peter	Boulder	CO	(303) 494-7182
Prentice, Joe	Longmont	CO	(303) 772-2051
Rader, Mike	Wilson	KS	(913) 658-2595
Schlageter, Ginny	Denver	CO	(303) 756-2297
Schmitz, Marjorie	Boulder	CO	(303) 494-5496
Schnitzer, Sandra	Denver	CO	(303) 733-3525
Schnurr, Pamela	Grand Junction	CO	(303) 248-7178
Schomaker, Mike	Fort Collins	CO	(303) 223-1929
Shane, Thomas & Sara	Garden City	KS	(316) 275-4616
Shepard, Diana	Boulder	CO	(303) 494-1410
Smith, David	Colorado Springs	CO	(719) 473-1780
Smyth, Ellen	Golden	CO	(303) 279-8256
Snyder, Steven	Longmont	CO	NA
Sproul, Helga	Boulder	CO	(303) 444-5550
Strand, Martin & Joan	Evergreen	CO	NA
Ten Barge, Cathy	Denver	CO	(303) 988-7296
Theimer, Bill	Gunnison	CO	(303) 641-6845
Tucey, Timothy	Pueblo	CO	(719) 544-6420
Turner, Pam	Fort Collins	CO	(303) 221-3676
Waibel, Earl & Carole	Littleton	CO	(303) 797-6647
White, Larry	Evergreen	CO	(303) 674-0535
Wickes, Nancy	Snowmass Village	CO	(303) 923-5158
York, Sherrie	Golden	CO	(303) 278-3921

* Hi, Mom.





American Kestrel With Prey
Union Reservoir east of Longmont, CO
November 1994
By Joe Roller

**RAPTOR ELECTROCUTIONS
ON THE PAWNEE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS**

Jay Tishendorf (1), John-Edd Brown (2),
Kelly Hepworth (3), and Edwin Wiland (4)
American Ecological Research Institute, --AERIE
PO Box 380
Fort Collins, CO 80522

and

(1, 2, 3)
Colorado State University
College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Fort Collins, CO 80523

Between July and mid-September 1994 the authors documented 4 raptor electrocutions on the Pawnee National Grassland (PNG): 1 Golden Eagle (immature), 2 Swainson's Hawks (immature), and 1 Barn Owl.

Three of the raptors (the eagle and the two Swainson's Hawks) were found lying beneath wooden power poles equipped with transformers. The Swainson's Hawks were found together, and a comparison of foot sizes indicated one was a male and the other a female. The fourth bird, a Barn Owl, was lying atop a wooden pole, straddling the crosspiece. Judging condition, all birds were found within 3 weeks of their deaths.

While raptor electrocutions may not be unusual (Marshall 1940, Dickinson 1957, Olendorff 1972, Smith and Murphy 1972, Laycock 1973, Boeker and Nickerson 1975), the authors are unsettled by the number of cases we have confirmed over the limited geographic area and brief period encompassed by this note.

Furthermore, all four raptors were found incidentally, while the authors were engaged in other activities, namely sport hunting and searches for endangered black-footed ferrets. Visits to the PNG were sporadic during this late summer-early autumn period and at no time were we looking specifically for electrocuted raptors. Speculation that the true magnitude of this problem is much greater, both in terms of numbers and effect on sensitive raptorial species, is thus warranted.

Other than the work of Olendorff (1972), who reported that 17 Golden Eagles were found dead under 3 1/2 miles of northeastern Colorado powerline, the authors are unaware of other work related to this subject on the PNG. Anyone with information on raptor electrocutions in this region is encouraged to contact us at the senior author's address--AERIE. An investigation aimed at resolving this matter would make an ideal Eagle Scout project or graduate study.

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- Laycock, G. 1973. Saving western eagles from traps and zaps: bobcat baits and poles take heavy tolls. *Audubon Magazine* 75(5): 133.
- Marshall, W. 1940. "Eagle guard" developed in Idaho. *Condor* 42: 166.
- Olendorff, R. R. 1972. Eagles, sheep and power lines. *Colorado Outdoors* 21(1): 3-11.
- Smith, D. G. and J. R. Murphy. 1972. Unusual causes of raptor mortality. *J of Raptor Research* 6:4-5.



BREEDING BIRD ATLAS UPDATE

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, CO 80206

Colorado's largest volunteer bird survey ended with the end of the 1994 breeding survey. Over 1000 volunteers worked on the Breeding Bird Atlas, including over half of the C.F.O. members. The Atlas and its people thank all of you.

As of November 20, for 1994 we have received field cards on 721 priority blocks, plus 129 non-priority blocks. That input exceeded our prior top count by one-third! We must admit, though, that funding from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, US Forest Service, US Bureau of Land Management and US Fish and Wildlife Service allowed us to hire 10 field workers this summer. They also did yeoman work--contributing 392 cards.

Using cards received to date, atlasers did field work in 1714 of 1760 priority blocks (97%). They completed field work in 1513 of those blocks (86%).

Special results this summer included Colorado's first Acorn Woodpeckers (reported in the last *Journal*) and the state's first nesting Northern Waterthrushes (found by Beth Dillon in North Park).

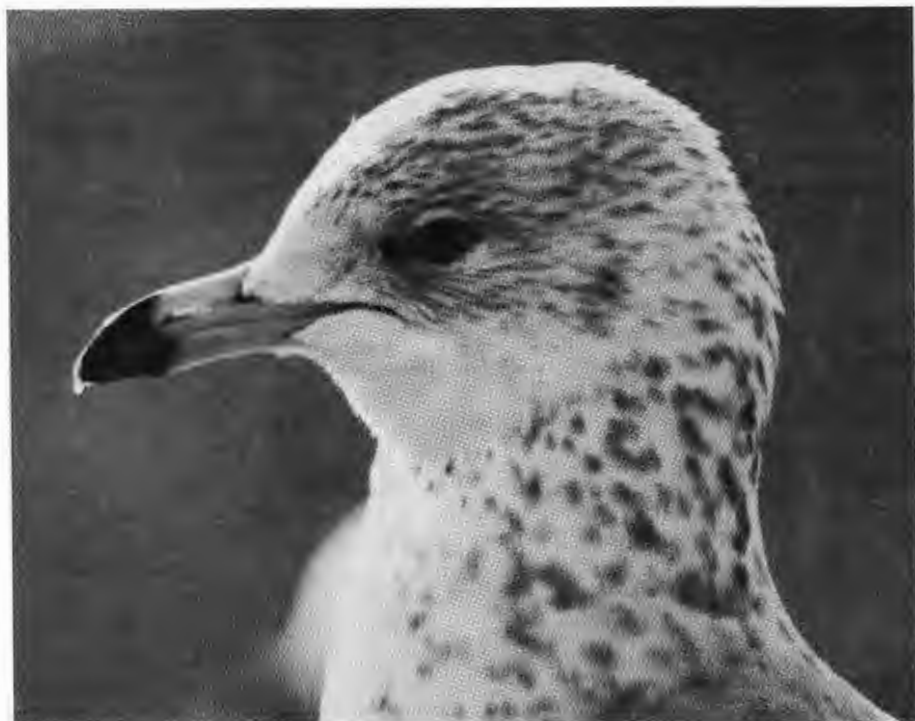
Some trends we picked up: House Finches have, in the last three years, expanded on the eastern plains. Bill Kaempfer found them in several blocks in 1993 and

1994, where he had not found them in prior years. Eastern Phoebes may have started a slow expansion; atlasers confirmed nesting in three new latilongs.

Observers found over 100 species in only three blocks: Boulder, Eldorado Springs, and Hooker Mountain (on the Yampa River near Hayden, a new Nature Conservancy Property).

IF ANY OF YOU HAVE ANY ATLAS FIELD CARDS OR INFORMATION FOR THE ATLAS, WE NEED IT IMMEDIATELY. OTHERWISE, THE DATA WILL NOT GET INTO THE ATLAS DATABASE.

Thanks to all C.F.O. members for their enthusiasm, field work and support.



Ring-billed Gull (winter)
Prospect Park, Wheat Ridge, CO
November 1994
By Joe Roller

AN ALPINE TUNDRA BURROWING OWL

David Gulbenkian
2475 Garland Street
Denver, CO 80215

On July 27, 1994 I saw a Burrowing Owl in open tundra at 12,600 feet above sea level (ASL). The spot was just east of Silverton, San Juan County, CO on the Continental Divide Trail, about 5 miles south of Stony Pass. The bird was literally on the Divide, on a rocky knoll with numerous natural burrows! I startled the bird from the ground. This caused it to fly 50 yards, where it stayed for about 15 minutes warily watching me.

Frankly, I assumed I was watching a Boreal Owl, but the long legs and bobbing motion reminded me of a Burrowing Owl. I had not seen the latter for many years. The bird was light brown, with white spots on the back, and the white eyebrows were particularly strong. Both times when it flew, it stayed low to the ground. The nearest trees were a few miles away.

Only when I got a chance to study field guides a few days later, was I forced to give up what would have been a "lifer". I consulted every book I had and found this note in *Birds of Yosemite and the East Slope* (David Gaines, 1988):

"...extremely rare transient at higher elevations east of the crest. Not only is the Burrowing our rarest owl, but it also holds high altitude laurels. On 9/25/74, one on the Dana Plateau was far above treeline at 12,000 feet. Yet an alpine fell-field is not that far removed from the ground-dweller's usual haunts: arid meadows and grasslands."

The record for high altitude occurrence in the burrowing owl appears to be 14,900-15,000 feet ASL in the Andes of western Bolivia, northeastern Chile and Peru (*Birds of the High Andes* by Fjeldsa and Krabbe, 1990).

In Colorado, Burrowing Owls have bred in the Uncompahgre Valley and have been sighted on Red Mountain Pass between Silverton and Ouray (both locations mostly Ouray County). Thus, my bird was only 20-30 air miles from the Uncompahgre population. I thank Hugh Kingery for looking up the Colorado information and Dr. Ron Ryder for the Andes material.



MOUNTAIN PLOVER NESTING IN OTERO COUNTY, COLORADO

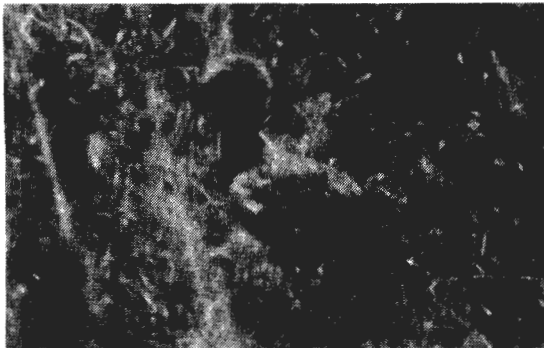
Thomas G. Shane and Sara J. Shane
PO Box 876
Garden City, Kansas 67846

While returning from Trinidad and the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Convention 14 June 94, on Colorado State Highway 10, we encountered an adult Mountain Plover. It was standing in the middle of the highway and would not move until we had slowed and approached within a few dozen yards. After passing the bird, we could still see it was going to stay on the highway. Thinking it was a good chance to get a photograph and hopefully encourage the bird off the road, we turned our car around.

The exact location was five miles west of Hawley, CO on SR10, which is in west-central Otero County. The habitat was entirely shortgrass prairie, with mostly level terrain and a slight rise north of the highway.

We returned to the spot to find two birds, the second being a downy chick about two-thirds grown and unable to fly. We stayed only a minute to take a couple pictures, since the adult was agitated and the mid-afternoon temperature was 105 degrees Fahrenheit. The grass in the road ditch was moderately tall. If other chicks were present, we did not see them.

The recently published summer range of the Mountain Plover does not include Otero County (*Colorado Birds* by Andrews and Righter, 1992). However, the counties of Crowley, Kiowa and Bent to the northeast are shown to be uncommon to fairly common nesting areas of this bird.



Mountain Plover Chick
West of Hawley, Otero County, CO
14 June 1994
By Thomas G. Shane



BROWN CREEPERS' WINTER ROOST

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, CO 80206

and

Catherine Anderson
4400 East Quincy Avenue
Engelwood, CO 80110

Birdwatchers do not often find where birds spend the night. Brown Creepers, with their quiet demeanor and secretive habits, are particularly hard to track.

During the winters of 1990-1993 Brown Creepers have used a nighttime roost in the same grove of Russian olives (*Eleagnus angustifolia*). An orchard-like group of these trees grows on the west side of the canal road along the Highline Canal south of Quincy Avenue in Englewood, Arapahoe County.

Each winter, from about November through March, Anderson has observed two or three creepers flying in just before dusk to roost in a Russian olive in this grove. In the winters of 1990-1991 and 1991-1992 they used the same tree. They chose a different tree about 20 meters from the 1990-1992 tree for use in the winter of 1992-1993. They did not return in the falls of 1993 or 1994.

When roosting in the first tree, they picked a natural crack or scar in the bark on the southwest side of the trunk. In 1992-1993 they roosted in a scar left when a branch broke off. They squeezed up into the pointed top of the scar and pushed into the overhang of bark as far as they could.



GRAY JAY AS PREDATOR ON CASSIN'S FINCH NESTLINGS

Hugh E. Kingery and Urling C. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, CO 80206

We often see small birds like kinglets and vireos frantically follow Gray Jays through the trees. Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas field work last summer provided us with a vivid observation as to why those birds dread the jays.

During field work in the Mountain View Crest Atlas Block (37107E6), La Plata County, we walked through a logged over area with widely scattered Engelmann spruces 20-30 feet tall. A Gray Jay flew by with a mouse-sized object in its beak. A pair of Cassin's Finches followed; they frantically fluttered in great agitation, but at a distance from the jay. The jay flew 300 meters into thicker spruces and disappeared.

Ten minutes later the jay returned and flew directly into a 25-foot Engelmann spruce. It emerged with another object in its beak, which this time we could identify definitely as a nestling bird. The finches again fluttered helplessly about the jay, which again disappeared in the same spruce forest. It did not return a third time: we may have seen only part of the raid or perhaps the finches had only two nestlings at that point.

Because of the behavior of the finches, we concluded that the jay had raided the finch nest and taken their fledglings.



GOPHER SNAKE AS PREDATOR AT LONG-BILLED CURLEW AND ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW NESTS

Hugh E. Kingery and Urling C. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, CO 80206

In year two of the CO Breeding Bird Atlas field workers reported a snake raiding a Northern Oriole nest (Stiles-Wainwright 1988). This reports two other instances.

Long-billed Curlew

During field work June 21, 1994 in the Painted Canyon Atlas Block (37103C8), Las Animas County, we drove through a short grass prairie with scattered "cholla" or Candelabra Cactus (*Opuntia imbricata*). We observed a Long-billed Curlew running along about 20 meters from our vehicle. The curlew had its head hunched over and uttered loud distress calls.

The behavior gave us hope of finding a nest that would confirm breeding in the block. We searched on both sides of the dirt track. Urling suddenly jumped, when she almost stepped on a large snake curled in a depression.

In its mouth the snake had an egg, about one-third ingested. The snake's coils surrounded another egg. The large eggs (chicken-size or larger) had dark beige ground color, with darker spots. We identified the predator as a gopher snake, commonly referred to as "bullsnake", (*Pituiphis melanoleucus*).

The snake became aware of us when we moved close enough to identify and photograph it. Although we did not interfere with its prospective meal, it apparently became nervous at our closeness. It disgorged the egg, uncoiled and glided away from the nest. It left the two eggs intact.

We saw only one adult curlew at this site (as was the case during a visit 3 weeks earlier, when a lone curlew performed a more classic agitation display for Hugh).

The next day when we returned, a curlew sat on the nest (about 8 meters from our vehicle). She remained on the nest as we drove past slowly. Unfortunately, we could not return to this site to ascertain whether or not the eggs had hatched.

We thank Mark Reeves, Manager of the River Canyon Ranch, for permission to do field work in the Painted Canyon Atlas Block.

Rough-winged Swallow

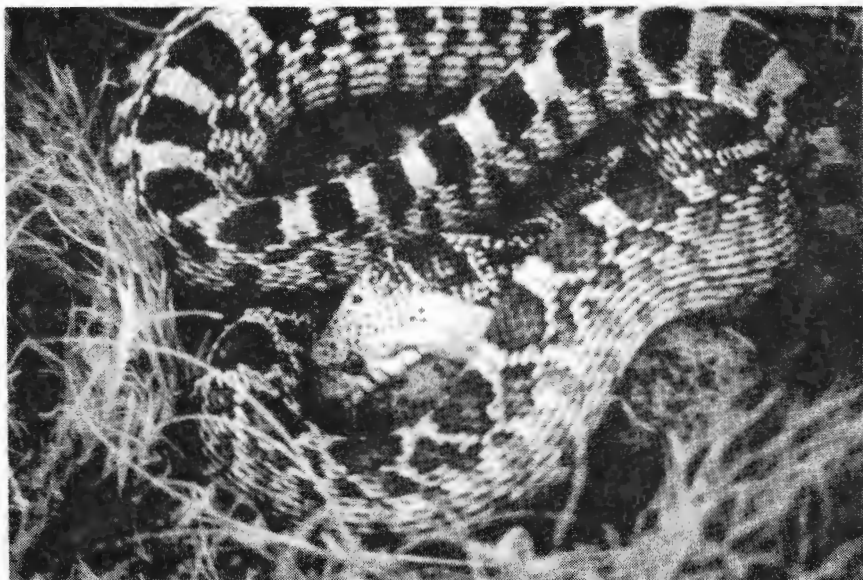
Several pairs of Rough-winged Swallows had nests on a sandstone cliff in the Vernon Atlas Block (39102H3), Yuma County, CO.

We observed, from several hundred yards away, the swallows flying around the cliff in some agitation. When we approached, we saw a gopher snake sliding in and out of holes in the cliff, where presumably the swallows had nests. The snake moved deliberately into every hole in the cliff as the swallows hovered around. We did not see that it ate any eggs or captured any young swallows.

At the point where the snake inspected the last hole, the cliff became steeper and lacked ledges. This caused the snake to fall, apparently unhurt, about 25 feet to the ground below.

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Gopher Snake (attempting to eat Long-billed Curlew egg)
Painted Canyon Atlas Block, Las Animas Co., CO
21 June 1994
By Hugh & Urling Kingery

**POSSIBLE HYBRIDIZATION OF SCISSOR-TAILED
FLYCATCHER AND WESTERN KINGBIRD**

Coen Dexter
175 Sunset Circle
Palisade, CO 81526

In July 1993, a female Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was reported near the Sopris Inn between Glenwood Springs and Carbondale along Colorado State Highway 82 in Garfield County. The flycatcher would often perch near a very tattered nest, which was built from cotton, tissue paper and twigs. The nest was built on the cross member of a power pole.

The following summer, 1994, the flycatcher returned. A nest was constructed on another power pole just across the road from the 1993 nest. This time the bird incubated and hatched three young. They had fledged by the end of July.

A male bird was never seen. It is suspected the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher may have mated with a Western Kingbird and the young are hybrid. One of the young had a yellow cast on the chest and belly. Also, their tails were dark with outer white tail feathers. John K. Terres reports in the *Encyclopedia of North American Birds* that these two species have produced hybrids. Nest building is done by female Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, who then attract a mate. If no mate is available, then maybe any kingbird will do.



Probable Young Scissor-tailed Flycatcher x Western Kingbird

Glenwood Springs, CO

July 1994

By Coen Dexter



DESCRIPTION OF A NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL VOCALIZATION
FROM THE SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Bob Righter
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Denver, Colorado 80210

As far as is known to the author, no recording of Northern Pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*) vocalizations from the southern Rocky Mountains exists. Written descriptions have been brief. The only source I could find was from *Birds of Colorado* by Alfred Bailey and Robert Niedrach, which states from notes provided by Don Malick, "The call began as a staccato roll of high notes, very brief, ending in single notes repeated at approximately one per half-second for up to twenty seconds".

On May 24, 25, 26, and 28, 1994 I was able to record a pair of Northern Pygmy-owls. The exact location coordinates for the nest tree are N 39 38 957, W 106 24 961 and the elevation is 8,900 feet above sea level. (These figures are accurate to within 300 feet). The east-facing nest hole was located approximately 30 feet up in an aspen (*Populus tremulae*). The tree was about one foot in diameter at its base and was about 75 yards up hill on a 35-40 degree, east-facing slope above Buffehr Creek, Eagle County, Colorado. The nest tree was also about 1000 feet south-southwest of a small beaver pond. The tree is further identified by having the large initials "RM" carved into it. The dominant vegetation surrounding the tree was aspen, both alive and dead. The dead stems were both standing and fallen. Immediately west and north was lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*). The dominant shrub was snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* sp.), with a few scattered chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) and currant (*Ribes* sp.).

On my visitation dates, the pair apparently began vocalizing about 5AM. On May 28 I arrived at the site at 4:45AM and heard no vocalizations until 5AM. I do not know if they were vocal prior to 5AM on the previous dates, as I did not arrive until 5:15, at which time the birds were already calling. On May 25 they were still hooting at 6:15AM, when I left the site. On the other days I left at approximately 5:45AM.

The longest continuous period of vocalization recorded was 3 minutes and 39 seconds. I can only speculate from my limited time on site and the few recordings I obtained for analyses, that occasional lengthier continuous hooting sessions may occur. During periods of long continuous hooting, the hoots were either given singly, in doubles, or a combination of both. Sometimes the distinction was not clear between single and double hoots. When the hoots were given singly, the interval between hoots, as shown on the spectrogram, was about 1.4 seconds. When the hoots were given in doubles, the interval between hoots within the pair was about 0.8-0.9 seconds. On occasion, following these long continuous hoots, copulation would follow. To my ear, the hoots just prior to, during, and

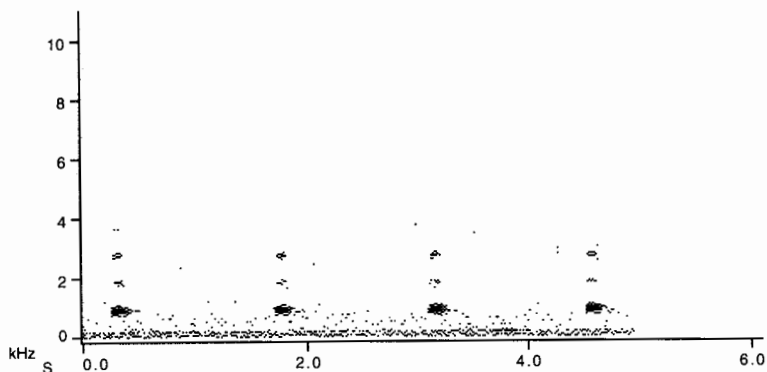
immediately after copulation sounded as though both owls were uttering a fast "hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo" together. It was tremulous, almost laughing in nature. I can not say with certainty both sexes were making this sound, as it could well have been just one. Another vocalization sounded to me like a cross between the chatter made by swifts and wrens. This sound was made during copulation, as well as in or near the nest. I do not know if this is the only time this particular type of vocalization is given.

On May 24 and 25, while within 30 yards of the pair, I played recordings of Northern Pygmy-owls recorded from Pomo Canyon, Sonoma Coast State Park, California and from El Moro Sierra Madre Oriental, Nuevo Leon, Mexico (Hardy et al, 1990). In both instances the owls made no visible or vocal responses. On May 26 I played a recording from southeastern Arizona (*Peterson Western Bird Songs*, 1992), and again, no response. I did not playback to the birds a recording of their own vocalizations. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the lack of response to non-local recordings. One could speculate the "hoots" from these other locations were different enough to represent an unrecognized threat, or that the threat was recognized but considered unimportant at that point in their breeding cycle. It is also possible the recordings from afar were "squeaky" and, therefore, not understandable. Obviously, there is still a lot to be learned.

The tapes of the sounds described for this article were submitted to the Library of Natural Sound, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA.

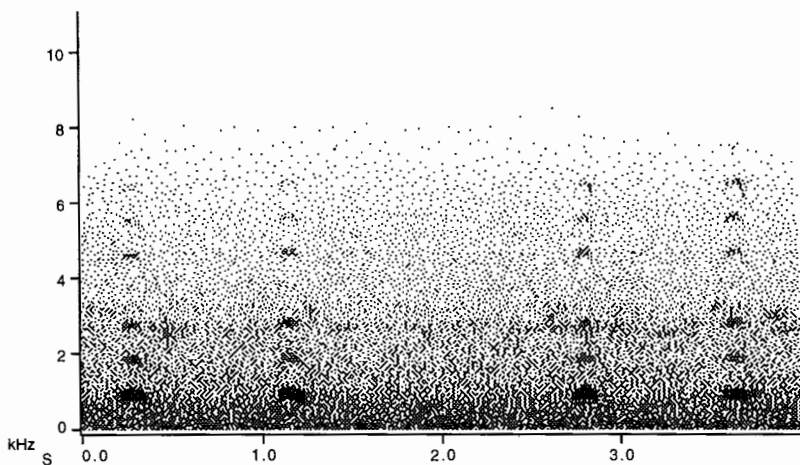
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Single-hoot Sonogram of Northern Pygmy-owl (top)
Double-hoot Sonogram of Northern Pygmy-owl (bottom)

Above Buffehr Creek, Eagle County, CO
Late May 1994
By Bob Righter



**NEWS FROM THE FIELD: SEASONAL REPORT
SUMMER 1994 (JUNE & JULY)**

Kim Potter
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I think the contributors best described the summer season. Here is what they had to say: **"HOT AND DRY.** They are not original, but I do not know of two better words to describe our summer period. Temperatures soared near daily records often and rainfall lagged behind average by more than 3 inches during the two months of the season. Fire activity was high, with frequent lightning ignitions following dry frontal passages. Breeding species struggled in many locations, as bugs and flowers were often hard to find in areas heavily impacted by the drought. Starvation of many first broods indicated how severe it became, even early in the season. The grasslands (northeast of Fort Collins) looked scorched by late June, after what seemed to be less than a month of "green-up". Two obvious windfalls of these drought conditions were considerably low reservoirs that revealed miles of shoreline and, hence, shorebirds that returned in great numbers in early July, and the hummingbird bonanza that seemed to exceed anyone's memory" - Bill Lisowsky, Northeastern CO. Joe Rigli of Fort Morgan found many usual nesters at his ranch were not present this summer and numbers were low. Ann Means, reporting for the Foothills Audubon Club, said, "We had an 'invasion' of hummingbirds from mid-July through the first week in August". Phil Hayes, compiler for the Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO), noted this trend: "The increase in Common Grackles at the expense of Brewer's Blackbirds follows a trend that has been occurring for more than a decade". Janeal Thompson of Walsh noted, "Most notable was the dearth of Common Nighthawks that usually fly around in the evenings in large numbers". Ina Mery of Powderhorn: "After reviewing 6 years of banding records, all bird numbers are down as well as numbers of species. First year we have had no cottontail rabbits- ergo seeing no eagles or hawks, except two Red-tailed Hawks occasionally". Lucille Bainbridge of Cortez: "Spring and this summer have been so hot and dry there seems to be a lot fewer birds in the areas we walked. Food supplies for the insect eaters seem scarce". Dave Hallock of Boulder and the Indian Peaks Breeding Bird Count reported, "Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were seen at all-time high numbers". Bill Brockner of Evergreen: "Around my valley and home, flycatchers have all but disappeared. This is the biggest year in 30 for Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds". Roberta Winn of the Turkey Rock and Westcreek areas in Douglas and Teller Counties: "Seed-eaters seem to have done well", while many insect eaters were missing from her area this summer. Jack Merchant of Eagle: "I feel that the birds in general have had a pretty productive breeding season".

John Rawinski from Monte Vista points out the Breeding Bird Atlas surveys have provided a first breeding record for Dickcissels in the San Luis Valley and a Canyon Towhee south of Antonito was also a first for the valley. Brandon

Percival, Pueblo, notes the Northern Parula, Red-shouldered Hawk and Hooded Warbler reports were first summer records for the Pueblo area.

Thank you to all who took time to pass your information to compilers. The sources of this report were from a collection of reports sent to Hugh Kingery for *Audubon Field Notes*.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

EARED GREBE - rare in western valleys. 5 seen near Rangely 7/15 (Coen Dexter). Four pairs nested on UnawEEP in Mesa County (Rich Levad) and 7 pairs nested near Elk Springs in Moffat County 6/1 (Kim Potter).

WESTERN GREBE - locally uncommon to abundant summer resident in western valleys, mountain parks and on eastern plains. Reported in record low numbers by the DFO (Phil Hayes). Numbers continued low at Hamilton Res in Larimer County, with only 1-2 pairs (Ronald Ryder).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - now breeds at three sites in state. A terrific breeding season in many spots, as R. Ryder estimated 1800 young at Riverside Res east of Greeley, 150 young at MacFarland Res in North Park. Seven or 8 seen at Stagecoach Res near Steamboat Springs 7/23 (Jack Merchant).

BROWN PELICAN - casual in summer. One imm. at Nee Noshe Res in Kiowa County (Jennifer Slater et al) 6/29-7/10.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT - rare in western valleys. Two seen in Debeque Canyon ne of Grand Junction 7/30 (C. Dexter). Four at Hart's Basin near Cedaredge 7/28 (R. Levad).

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT - occasional in summer at lower elevations. One adult at Ireland Res e of Hudson 6/7 (Brandon Percival).

[**EGRETS AND HERONS**] - Despite encouraging numbers of sightings, R. Ryder reports no young of Black-crowned Night-heron, Snowy Egret and Cattle Egret were believed fledged at Riverside, Milton and Ireland Reservoirs (all Weld County) due to low water. It was speculated the higher numbers of birds early in the summer at Ireland were displacements from Milton.

GREAT EGRET - very local breeder on eastern plains. Reports from Lower Latham and Union Reservoirs (east of Longmont), Longmont and Barr Lake in Adams County. One observed at Adobe Res n of Las Animas 6/16 (Joe Mammoser et al).

SNOWY EGRET - rare to uncommon summer resident in western valleys, mountain parks and on the eastern plains. One at Deadman Lake near Timnath 6/11 (David Ely). Fifty+ at Ireland Res and 20+ at Lower Latham Res 7/10 (R. Ryder). Three at Union Res 7/31 (Bill Prather). Eight at Barr Lake 6/18 (P. Hayes), 2 at Meredith Res near Ordway 6/16 (Alan Versaw).

LITTLE BLUE HERON - very rare summer resident locally. One adult at Ireland Res 6/7 (B. Percival).

CATTLE EGRET - rare non-breeding summer resident in western valleys, mountain parks and on the eastern plains away from breeding areas in San Luis Valley and northeastern plains, where it is uncommon. An ever-increasing species, 10 reported nesting at Ireland Res 6/12 (D. Ely). Fifty+ at Lower Latham Res 7/10 & 7/24.

WHITE-FACED IBIS - very rare non-breeding summer visitor in western valleys, mountain parks and on eastern plains, common breeder in San Luis Valley. First migrants in the Grand Valley near Grand Junction 7/5 (R. Levad). Seven ne of Loveland 6/19 (Gordon and Mary Magruder). One at Lower Latham Res 6/17 (Bill Lisowsky and John Barber). Two near Elk Springs 6/1 (K. Potter).

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - very few records in Colorado. One at Nee Noshe Res 7/12 (B. Percival).

RING-NECKED DUCK - uncommon to fairly common summer resident locally in mountains and mountain parks. One female with 8 young at Quien Sabe Lake in Archuleta County 7/23, a second breeding record for Latilong 23 (Hugh and Urling Kingery).

REDHEAD - rare summer resident outside Brown's Park (Moffat County), North Park and the San Luis Valley. Sixteen reported by Foothills Audubon in June and July near Longmont (Ann Means).

COMMON GOLDENEYE - accidental in mid-summer in mountain parks and on eastern plains. One at Hamilton Res 7/3 (R. Ryder).

BUFFLEHEAD - no breeding records outside of the Park Range in Jackson County. One female at Hamilton Res 7/3 (R. Ryder).

HOODED MERGANSER - very rare nonbreeding summer visitor. One female on Hamilton Res 7/3 (R. Ryder).

COMMON MERGANSER - rare to uncommon summer resident in central and western CO. Two females on 6/23 and fledged young on 6/24 on Rio Grande River, Conejos County. A first breeding record for Latilong 25 (H. & U. Kingery).

OSPREY - rare to uncommon local summer resident in mountains and mountain parks. One on Indian Peaks Breeding Bird Count 6/11 (Dave Hallock). One in se Las Animas County 6/1 and 1 at Haviland Lake, La Plata County, 7/19 (B. Percival). One near Rifle 6/21 (R. Levad), 1 west of Meeker 6/23 (C. Dexter), 1 in Poudre Canyon near Eggers 6/12 (B. and Paula Lisowsky), 1 at Joe Wright Res near Cameron Pass perched on an artificial nest structure 6/22 (John Barber). A pair produced 3 young at Pueblo Res on 6/5 (John Yaeger & B. Percival).

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - rare to uncommon resident in foothills and mountains. Reports from Eagle area; 3 reports from Grand Junction area and 1 on Indian Peaks Breeding Bird Count. A pair nesting s of Rifle fledged young in Monument Hill Breeding Bird Atlas Block, La Plata County 6/29.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK - occasional on eastern plains, mostly in migration. Seen in June & July in Vineland east of Pueblo. First summer record for Pueblo area (Dick Roth).

RED-TAILED HAWK ("KRIDER'S") - This subspecies' status is poorly known and generally considered rare, especially in summer. One report from Laramie River Valley 6/13 (T. Carol Agee).

FERRUGINOUS HAWK - rare to uncommon summer resident locally on eastern plains. Seen on nest near San Acacio, Costilla County, 5/28 and a nest with young on Medano Ranch, San Luis Valley, 6/8 (R. Levad).

PRAIRIE FALCON - rare local summer resident. One in Lyons area (D. W. King). A nest with young along Rio Grande River, Conejos County, 6/23 (H. & U. Kingery), 2 adults with begging young Castlewood Canyon, Douglas County, 6/29 (D. Leatherman), 1 in Laramie River Valley 7/12 (T. Carol Agee).

PEREGRINE FALCON - rare summer resident in foothills and lower mountains. One pair observed in Ragged Mountains e of Paonia 7/28, 1 at Upper Queens Res, Kiowa County, 7/10 (Lindsay Lilly et al). One report from Great Sand Dunes area 7/16. Two seen copulating in Hell's Canyon Breeding Bird Atlas Block, Moffat County, 6/27. The Peregrine Falcon Survey reports a very successful reproduction year. Also, at least 10 new pairs statewide (Jane Hines).

BLACK RAIL - casual in spring, early summer and fall. Two birds heard at Bent's Old Fort, Otero County, 6/17 (D. Ely & John Bowser).

SNOWY PLOVER - uncommon summer resident on southeastern plains, numbers fluctuate widely. Colorado Bird Observatory (CBO) monitoring date from southeastern CO: 31 nesting pairs, 18 successful, 10 failed, 3 unknown (Ronnie Estelle and Todd Mabee).

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER - Early fall date at Hamilton Res 7/3 (R. Ryder).

PIPING PLOVER - Confirmed breeding only 4 times on eastern plains prior to 1992, very rare spring and fall migrant. CBO monitoring data from southeastern CO: 16 nests, 8 successful, 8 failed (R. Estelle & T. Mabee).

MOUNTAIN PLOVER - rare to fairly common resident on eastern plains, rare in South Park. Good number of reports from Kiowa, Lincoln and Cheyenne Counties. Counts were up in Larimer County. (See article reporting first confirmed breeding in Otero County, this issue, by Tom & Sara Shane).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER - Early fall date of 7/31.

WILLET - rare in early summer on eastern plains. Two at Adobe Res 7/6 (A. Versaw).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - uncommon to fairly common summer resident on northeastern plains west to Logan County and south to Yuma County, rare to uncommon west to Morgan County, very local in Weld County, accidental elsewhere. Two near Milton Res 7/10 and 7/24. Three at Rigli Ranch 7/14 & 7/24 (Joe Rigli).

MARbled GODWIT - very rare nonbreeding summer resident on eastern plains. One at Windsor, Weld County, 7/12 (Joe Himmel), 12 at Jackson Res, Morgan County, 7/29 (J. Barber & B. Lisowsky), 1 at Ramah Res S.W.A. 7/26 (A. Versaw) and 1 at Lake Cheraw north of LaJunta 7/3 (Mark Janos and B. Percival).

WESTERN SANDPIPER - Early fall date of 7/30.

LEAST SANDPIPER - Early fall date of 7/3.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - fairly common to common spring migrant on eastern plains, accidental elsewhere, summer and fall status uncertain and needs to be documented. Traditionally, a late spring migrant, several seen by D. Ely and J. Bowser on 6/17 at Queens Res, even later than expected.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - Early fall date 7/3. A large flock of 300 was seen at Timnath Res 7/24 (D. Leatherman).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - Early fall date 7/17.

DUNLIN - very rare migrant in spring and fall on eastern plains. One at Hamilton Res 7/17 (R. Ryder).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - Early fall date 7/12.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - uncommon to fairly common fall migrant on eastern plains. As many as 20 at Jackson Res in early July (J. Himmel).

FRANKLIN'S GULL - rare to uncommon nonbreeder in early summer in western valleys, mountain parks and eastern plains. One w of Rangely 7/14 (C. Dexter). A large flock of 217 reported by Foothills Audubon in Longmont area 7/5-7/31 (A. Means).

CASPIAN TERN - very rare nonbreeding summer resident on eastern plains. One in early July at Windsor Res (J. Himmel).

BAND-TAILED PIGEON - locally fairly common to common summer resident in foothills and lower mountains. Numbers down in Evergreen area, but slightly up on the Indian Peaks Breeding Bird County and almost doubled in Turkey Rock and Westcreek areas, southwest of Castle Rock. Reports from Gypsum, Eagle County, and a single bird found in the grasslands at Pinon Canyon Military Reservation, Las Animas County, 6/22 (A. Versaw). A good number of 135 at Rifle Rest Area 6/21.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO - rare to uncommon summer resident on eastern plains. Two near Kit Carson, Cheyenne County, 6/15 (H. Kingery and Dick Pratt). One at Lake Hasty, Bent County, 6/17 (D. Ely & J. Bowser), 5 at Cottonwood Canyon, Baca County, 6/18 (J. Mammoser et al), 1 from se Lincoln County and 1 near Agate, Elbert County, 6/20 (A. Versaw).

FLAMMULATED OWL - uncommon to common resident in the foothills and lower mountains. Three heard in Whale Hill BBA Block, Saguache County, 7/13 (H. & U. Kingery). Many heard near San Isabel: 8 on 7/9 and 6 on 7/22 (B. Percival). One heard near Meeker 6/23 and 1 near Buford 5/25 and 1 s of Rifle 6/29 (K. Potter). Of the 100 nesting boxes placed on the Uncompahgre National Forest by the US Forest Service, 3 housed Flammulated Owls this summer.

WESTERN SCREECH-OWL - uncommon to fairly common resident in western valleys, and on the southeastern plains. One in McClave BBA Block, Bent County, 6/13, a first for Latilong 21.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL - rare resident in foothills and mountains. Three fledged young at Meadow Park, Lyons (D. W. King). One adult, 2 fledged young n of Ruedi Res &/24 (K. Potter).

LONG-EARED OWL - Two or 3 fledged ne of Del Norte 7/12 and 1 at 11,000 feet at Poage Lake, Rio Grande County (R. Levad). Adult on nest near Blue Mountain, Moffat County 5/29 (K. Potter).

BOREAL OWL - rare to locally uncommon resident in higher mountains. One fledged young found in Mesa Lakes BBA Block. Of the 100 Grand Mesa nest boxes places by the US Forest Service, 6 were used by this owl.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - casual in summer and early fall. One female at Turquoise Lake, Leadville, at an elevation of 9,800 feet (Virginia Diogini).

MAGNIFICANT HUMMINGBIRD - very rare in summer and early fall in foothills and lower mountains north to Mesa, Jackson and Larimer Counties. One male at Wetmore 7/22 (Reed Morris).

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD - rare to uncommon late summer migrant in western valleys, foothills and lower mountains. Many reports beginning 6/12 at Chatfield Res near Denver. As many as 20 individuals between mid-June and mid-August, with a peak of perhaps 6 individuals at one time on 7/23, at Peaceful Valley (Steve Bouricius).

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER - now a very rare breeder on the eastern plains near foothills, casual visitor in mountain parks and western valleys. A juvenile bird observed ne of Longmont (Ann Delzell).

ACORN WOODPECKER - Colorado's first record. Four discovered in July by Mark Jaeger in Barela BBA Atlas Block near Lake Dorothy, Las Animas County.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER - The valley population of this flycatcher in western CO may be the endangered subspecies of the Southwest US. One male singing e of Hayden 6/17 and 1 male singing on Disappointment Crk 7/19 (C. Dexter). Seven on Brush Crk, Eagle, 7/31 and 1 at Lava Crk (elevation 9,000) 7/4 (J. Merchant).

BLACK PHOEBE - One at confluence of Dolores & San Miguel Rivers 7/17 (C. Dexter), 1 at Uravan 6/15 (R. Levad), 1 in Loma Linda BBA Block, La Plata County, 7/22 (H. & U. Kingery. A nest with young in Lambing Spring BBA Block, Las Animas County, is a 1st record for Latilong 26 (M. Yaeger).

EASTERN PHOEBE - rare to uncommon, local in summer in eastern CO. Confirmed breeding in Painted Canyon BBA Block, Las Animas County, 6/22 (H. & U. Kingery) and in Latilong 28 by Janeal Thompson.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - very rare summer visitor on eastern plains away from breeding area in Baca County, casual in mountains and mountain parks. Female presumably bred with Western Kingbird and produced 3 young, Glenwood Springs (Vic Zerbi and Joan Potter). (See article this issue).

PURPLE MARTIN - Confirmed breeding near Cortez 8/3 (Lu Bainbridge), also several places s of Rifle and on the Grand Mesa. Two seen in Palisade 7/2 (Nancy and Bob Gustafson).

BLACK-CAPPED & MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE - After wintering together near Wellington, a male Black-capped and female Mountain Chickadee produced

(from 7 eggs) 6 hybrid fledglings. The young dispersed in late June. The pair of adults has stayed in the vicinity of the nest (Steve Martin).

CAROLINA WREN - very rare visitor to eastern plains. One singing at Beulah 7/20 (Pat Flynn).

VEERY - rare to fairly common local summer resident in foothills, lower mountains and mountain parks. One male singing near Steamboat Springs 6/30 (C. Dexter). One on the Indian Peaks Breeding Bird Count 6/11 (D. Hallock).

GRAY CATBIRD - rare to uncommon very local summer resident. One male singing sw of Del Norte 6/8 (R. Levad). Three birds on Colorado River near Gypsum 6/20 (J. Merchant). Four birds in Antonito BBA Block, Conejos County, 6/24, (H. & U. Kingery).

BENDIRE'S THRASHER - local summer resident in foothills of San Luis Valley. One singing n of Del Norte 7/19 (B. Percival).

CEDAR WAXWING - rare to uncommon very local summer resident. Two in Poudre Canyon 6/22 (J. Barber). Total of 7 birds, including 2 young, reported by Foothills Audubon in Longmont (A. Means) and 3 in Eagle area 6/3 (J. Merchant).

NASHVILLE WARBLER - rare spring and fall migrant in western valleys, foothills and on eastern plains. One singing near Trinidad 6/12 (Bob Dickson).

NORTHERN PARULA - casual in summer. One male at Canon City 7/15 (David Pantle).

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER - accidental summer resident in western valleys, casual in lower mountains. One male discovered on 6/15 (near Eagle?) by J. Merchant, who reports, "On 7/2 it was staying close to a yellow warbler and her nest but not helping with the feeding of young". One male singing in Poudre Canyon 6/22 (J. Barber).

GRACE'S WARBLER - uncommon summer resident locally. One carrying food in Bayfield BBA Block, La Plata County, 6/27 and 2 in Monument Hill BBA Block, La Plata County, 6/30 (H. & U. Kingery). Two adults and 1 imm. at Haviland Lakes Campground 7/19 (B. Percival).

AMERICAN REDSTART - rare summer resident in summer in canyons at base of eastern foothills and immediately adjacent plains. One male in Pueblo 6/2 (M. Janos). Two fledged young in Colorado City in June (B. Dickson). One imm. at Starkville, Las Animas Co., 6/12 (H. Kingery), 3 at Chatfield Res 6/12 (P. Hayes).

OVENBIRD - rare to uncommon local summer resident in eastern foothills and lower mountains from southern Larimer County to northern Huerfano County.

One singing in Rye 6/9 (Drew Smith & B. Percival). Birds from Rist Canyon near Fort Collins not present this year. Five in Startkville BBA Block, Las Animas County 6/12 (Randy Lentz & H. Kingery). One in se Lincoln Co. 6/6 (A. Versaw).

HOODED WARBLER - casual in summer, previous records were in northern foothills. One female near Trinidad 6/11 (Drew Smith).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH - accidental in summer. One seen carrying food in Gould Northwest BBA Block, Jackson County. First CO nesting record. Two more seen 7/22 (Beth Dillon).

KENTUCKY WARBLER - accidental in summer. One male window-kill near Montrose 6/18 (Allan Belt).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - rare east to Eagle. Eight chat territories located between Gypsum and Dotsero (J. Merchant).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - casual in summer in foothills, lower mountains and western valleys. One in Evergreen 6/21 (Diane Hansen). One male singing at Aiken Canyon Preserve, sw of Colo. Springs 6/4 (A. Versaw). One pair in June in Big Thompson Canyon (Maxine Hennessee).

INDIGO BUNTING - rare or locally uncommon summer resident on eastern plains and in western valleys. One male and 1 imm. at Cottonwood Canyon 6/10 and 1 male seen again 6/18 (D. Leatherman).

PAINTED BUNTING - casual spring migrant on eastern plains. Still present in Cottonwood Canyon 6/5 and 6/10.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK - rare this far west, but now seems to be resident locally. One was found near Dixon Reservoir w of Fort Collins for the second consecutive year (D. Leatherman and D. Ely).

BOBOLINK - Reported again this season from e of Boulder 6/17 and near Wellington (first in May and a non-nesting pair later in June) (Steve Martin). One in winter plumage near Milton Res 7/24 (D. Leatherman).

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE - One near Tiffany 6/13 (R. Levad), 2 at junction Weld CR76/SR257, 6/11, and 1 at junction Weld CR53/CR18, 6/12 (D. Ely).

RED CROSSBILL - irregular in mountains all year. One reported at Indian Peaks 6/16 (Dieter Kamm). Large numbers in mountains west and northwest of Ft. Collins thruout period (D. Leatherman et al).



DR. HOHMAN WAS RIGHT

David Allen Leatherman
2048 Whiterock Court
Fort Collins, CO 80526

It happens every time I hear Don McLean's song "American Pie" and there is nothing I can do about it. I think of driving our old turquoise Impala from the rental house we shared with "Mama Green" on Morreene Road to graduate forestry classes at Duke. The oak-lined streets, raisony scent of tobacco, and crepe myrtle blossoms come rushing back. I do not know from which direction they come. But if there is truth to division of labor among our head hemispheres, I would say it is from the right.

Sousa marches invariably conjure images of impetuous Grandpa Leatherman. On those last-day-of-vacation mornings we kids hoped would somehow never begin, it was his ritual to wake us- no, shock us- from sleep with "Semper Fidelis" and other organized chaos. Bacon cooking, either sound or smell, pulls another trigger. An aroma enjoyed hundreds of times in dozens of settings, it always evokes a mental rerun of April breakfasts with my Ohio family at Blendon Woods Park.

Why is it our brain selects certain sensory combinations for eternal epoxy and indifferently sorts a billion others to a dead file comprising the 90% of our craniums we never use? If somehow we could peek, I am sure all those high school classmates we can not remember are there, floundering in a pulp of calculus and locker combinations.

Chemistry? It must be chemistry. Dr. Hohman, who could not convince me to switch majors, was probably right. He would say everything has its roots in chemistry, and certainly this quirk of memory probably does. Whatever the answer, the process of recall is indeed mysterious and wonderful.

Most people recall their first day at school (the bell was loud), their first electric kiss of romance (am I tasting lips or is that popcorn salt?), their first driving lesson (the instructor had garlic bread for lunch). Birders are no different, except that many of our flashbacks have avian roots. Where were you when that first male Blackburnian Warbler hopped across your 7x50's? Does the thought of your life-list Ruffed Grouse add wet beech and sugar maple leaves to your soles? Do you shiver at the image of that inaugural Bald Eagle perched above the ice?

For me, one of those memories involves a Yellow-crowned Night-heron. Forever bound to this bird is my father, Allen.

In the spring of 1993 Dad was dying of cancer. My final visits from Colorado to see him were understandably difficult. When the emotion became too much, I would seek out my old friends in old familiar places. There in Greenlawn

Cemetery surrounded by Columbus, just like I had longed for, was the Winter Wren, Cape May Warbler and Cardinal.

But one bird made an indelible impression. Like a store-window mime begging you to guess if it is real, it worked the pool. Moving without moving. Its total beauty, from crown plumes to wire toes, drew my telephoto close. It taught me to stalk by example and my shutter finger filled with adrenalin. (Dr. Hohman, no doubt, would know the chemical formula for this hormone and perhaps how it functions in the composition of mental glue).

As I write, Dad has been gone for almost two years. When I think of him, which is often, I do not think of a Yellow-crowned Night-heron. But when I ponder this wader's portrait in the album, my consciousness always fills with memories of the man. Considering the whole process, it is only right and purely logical. Dad wanted me as a small boy to enjoy electronics. But when the Philco radio kit got dusty, while I chased monarch butterflies or looked for birds, he joined me outdoors. He drove me everywhere. He introduced me to Dr. Edward Thomas, Irving Kassoy, Dr. Harold Burt and Milton Trautman. He gently forced me to have a man named Peterson sign my first field guide, despite my embarrassment. And he took me to a place along the Scioto River where I spied my first Yellow-crowned Night-heron. Most of all, he recognized and reinforced my personal interests.

Now you know why I think chemistry, dads, and Yellow-crowned Night-herons are mysteriously wonderful.





Yellow-crowned Night-heron (adult)
Greenlawn Cemetary, Columbus, Ohio
10 April 1992
By David Allen Leatherman

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The *C.F.O. Journal* is devoted to the field study of birds in Colorado. Articles and notes of scientific or general interest and reports of unusual observations are solicited. Articles are informal and are not restricted to any particular style, but authors are asked to consult recent issues for the general format. Photos and drawings reproduce best if black and white, showing good contrast. Other material will be used if it can be printed in black and white. Please send negatives or slides, as well as prints, to save on costs of printing; both will be returned.

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