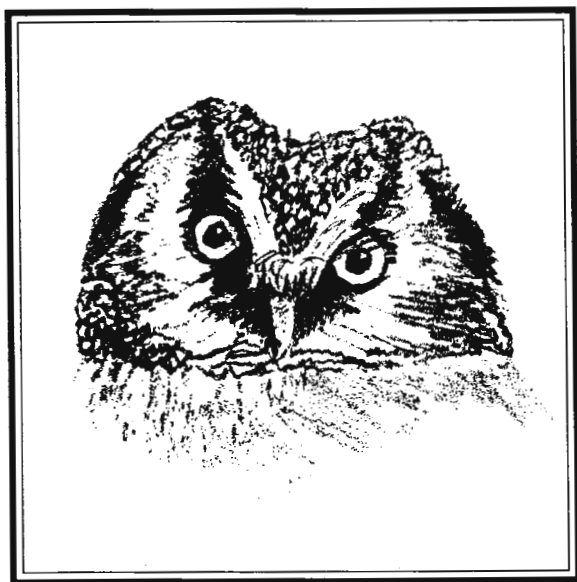
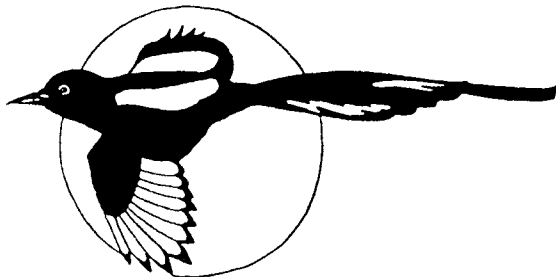

C.F.O. Journal

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly





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COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: Mark Janos, Pueblo 2002
(Chair); Bill Prather, Longmont (Former Chair); Peter Gent, Boulder 1997;
Bill Lisowsky, Fort Collins, 1999*; Bob Righter, Denver 1997*; Dick Schottler,
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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (renewable at the beginning of the year):
Student \$12; Regular \$16; Family \$20; Institutional \$25; Contributing \$25;
Supporting \$40; Sustaining \$100. \$16 of the annual membership dues pays
for a one-year suscription to the *C.F.O. Journal*. All members receive the
C.F.O. Journal. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
Send membership inquiries, renewals, and change of address to
Colorado Field Ornithologists, Robert Spencer, 3410 Gladiola Street,
Golden, CO 80403.

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UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS **NORTHEASTERN COLORADO**

Meet Bill Prather (303/776-2191) at the Tamarack Ranch check station-1 at 7:30 AM on MARCH 16. To reach the meeting point go on I-76 to the Crook/Fleming Exit (#149) and go north on SR 55 about 1 mile to the check station. A \$3 DOW permit per car is required for Jumbo Res. Lots of geese are expected. Other waterfowl, gulls, early shorebirds and "lbj's" are also possible.

GRAND VALLEY OWLS

Meet Rich Levad (970/242-3979) on APRIL 5 at 1 PM at the Colorado Visitors' Center in Fruita west of Grand Junction on I-70. This trip usually produces several species of owls typical of the Valley floor and the Grand Mesa (weather permitting).

GUNNISON AREA **SAGE GROUSE & SHOREBIRDS**

Meet the leaders at 1 p.m. on Saturday April 26 at the Neversink Picnic Area about 10 miles west of Gunnison on US50. The dates are APRIL 26 AND 27. Contact Alan Versaw (719/598-7130) or Kim Potter (970/625-3713). This promises to be an exciting opportunity to see the "Gunnison" Sage Grouse, which may be elevated to species status, as well as West Slope shorebirds.

LAMAR AREA MIGRANTS

MEETING TIME AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED. MAY 3 & 4. Contact Jenny Slater (719/598-7130). Sites visited could include Two Buttes and Queens Reservoirs, the Lamar Community College woods, and other area hotspots. At this time of year exciting migrants, both big and small, are probable.

C.F.O. CONVENTION MONTE VISTA

A full slate of field trips in and around the San Luis Valley is planned for MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND, MAY 24-26. See future updates in the *C.F.O. Journal*.

DURANGO ACORN WOODPECKERS **and GRACE'S WARBLERS**

MEETING TIME AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED. JUNE 28. Contact Kip Stransky at 970/247-8138.



GENERAL ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **next Board Meeting of C.F.O.** will be at 10 a.m. on March 8, 1997 at the People's Clinic in Boulder. Submit items for the agenda to Linda Vidal by February 8, 1997.

The newly formed **C.F.O. Journal Committee** will have its inaugural meeting on February 22, 1997 at the Adams County Library, Northglen Branch, 10530 Huron, Thornton (see minutes of the November 9 Board Meeting (this issue) for the purpose of this committee and for directions to the meeting place. If you have an interest in helping with the *Journal* or just want to provide input, plan to attend.

The **1997 C.F.O. Convention** will be in the San Luis Valley, and headquartered at the Movie Manor in Monte Vista. This will be over Memorial Day weekend. A full schedule of field trips, papers, a banquet and other enjoyable activities are in the planning stages. It promises to be a great event in a part of the state few of us know well. The bird attractions are many. Watch future *Journal* issues for updates and registration details. If you have questions, call Alan Versaw or Pearle Sandstrom-Smith.

Just as a reminder (to the Editor and anyone else), the **C.F.O. membership list** is published as an insert in the *Journal* in odd-numbered years. During even-numbered years an addendum of "New Members" (since the last complete roster) is published. This new member list should be in this issue and is not. Look for it in the January 1997 issue: Volume 31(1). The Editor regrets this oversight and will do 30 push-ups between now and July 2007.

DO YOU NEED TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP? Check the mailing label on this issue. The date of the year your membership expires is on this label. If it says '96 you need to send new C.F.O. Treasurer Bob Spencer your dues.

Please take the time to **express your appreciation** for the tremendous work done for C.F.O. by outgoing Secretary David Pantle and Treasurer Raymond Davis. We will miss their efforts, but welcome the considerable talents of Mona Hill and Bob Spencer, respectively, to fill the shoes of David and Davis.

The **new Editor of the C.F.O. Journal** will be Cynthia Melcher of Fort Collins. She will be formally introduced in the January 1997 issue. The outgoing Editor is grateful for her willingness to contribute her many skills to this task. She will do a great job.



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
AUGUST 17, 1996**

The Board of Directors of CO Field Ornithologists held a productive meeting on August 17, 1996, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at People's Clinic, 3305 N. Broadway, Boulder, CO. Linda Vidal, Alan Versaw, David Pantle, Raymond Davis, John Barber, Bill Fink, Suzi Plooster, and David Leatherman attended.

1. Colorado Partners in Flight. Linda Vidal announced that COPIF will hold its next quarterly meeting in Grand Junction on September 20. She hopes to attend on behalf of C.F.O.

2. Approval of Minutes. The Board approved the Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of June 17, 1996 as written.

3. Treasurer's Report. C.F.O.'s cash has increased, with a balance now of \$16,143, before payment to Western Field Ornithologists of its one-half of the small profit from the C.F.O.-W.F.O. annual meeting.

4. Mission Statement. Linda had prepared a draft Mission Statement for C.F.O. After much discussion, the Board approved the following:

Mission Statement. C.F.O. exists to:

- . promote the field study, conservation and enjoyment of Colorado birds
- . review rare bird sightings through the Colorado Bird Records Committee and maintain the authoritative list of Colorado birds
- . publish the *Colorado Field Ornithologists Journal*
- . conduct field trips and workshops and hold yearly conventions

5. Field Trips and Workshops. Alan Versaw as Vice-President, assisted by Bill Fink, will plan field trips for this year. They will try to schedule and publish these in advance for the entire year, listing tentative leaders who may sometimes need substitutes. The Board brainstormed desirable field trips, preferring that we go to locations where individual birders find it difficult to go on their own. Linda will ask another Board member to assume responsibility for planning workshops for this year. Suzi suggested that each Board member take on a job for the year.

6. Nominating Committee. Suzi Plooster, assisted by Margie Elliot and Joe Himmel, devoted much time seeking nominees to fill vacancies on the Board and anticipated vacancies of Officers. The Committee nominated the following to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors: Class of 1998, Leon Bright and Bob Spencer; Class of 1999, Raymond Davis and Brandon Percival. These nominees were enthusiastically appointed by the Board, and Suzi was thanked for her hard work. Suzi will contact the new Board

members and advise them of their appointment. Suzi noted that John Barber and Bill Fink serve in the Class of 1997, and not 1998 as the Secretary had recently indicated, as persons appointed to fill a vacancy serve for the unexpired term of the position being filled. Suzi said she would like to be relieved from continuing to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee, and Linda appointed John Barber as her successor, effective as of the next Board meeting. Suzi stated that the Bylaws are poor, should be amended so Officers would be elected for two years rather than one year, and also revised to specify how many persons serve on the Nominating Committee, and in other ways. David Pantle declined to undertake a review and revision of the Bylaws, as he believes they are adequate, and as his term as Secretary is about to expire. This may be considered later.

7. 1997 Annual Convention. Alan Versaw reported on advance planning for the San Luis Valley convention over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-26, 1997. We will meet at the Movie Manor in Monte Vista. Alan will continue to plan for the motel and field trips. Linda Vidal, Ray Davis, Brandon Percival, and Pearle Sandstrom-Smith have agreed to help with other details as members of a convention committee. The Board authorized Alan to offer membership in C.F.O. for one year to locals, John Koshak and Ron Garcia, if they agree to lead field trips. We will hold our 1998 annual convention in Lamar, and Brandon Percival has offered to help plan it.

8. Editor of *C.F.O. Journal*. Dave Leatherman reported a person may be willing to become his successor as Editor for the next three years. He originally agreed to serve for three years, and his final issue would be October 1996, but he has offered to her [Cynthia Melcher will become the next Editor, effective with the April 1997 issue - ED] that he would also prepare the January 1997 issue. Dave indicated that he would also be willing to continue to help her as a "safety net". The Board authorized expenditure of up to approximately \$100 to obtain desktop publishing software and "virus protection" for the new Editor if she takes on the position. On motion by Alan Versaw, seconded by David Pantle, the Board voted that the Editor will be reimbursed \$150 per issue for usual expenses of the position, beginning with the July 1996 issue. Dave anticipates that C.F.O. Journal will continue to be printed in Boulder by the Village Printer.

The Board briefly discussed possible future articles. John Barber and Suzi Plooster offered to help solicit more articles from the universities and other scientific sources. Suzi will write an article concerning Roger Tory Peterson, who was a member of C.F.O., and John will write a review of the new *Stokes Field Guide to Western Birds*.

9. Distribution of "Field Checklist of Colorado Birds". Linda Vidal for the past year has been seeking more outlets for our checklist. Several bird stores and

Pueblo State Park now carry it, in addition to A.B.A., but other possible distributors, such as Rocky Mountain Nature Association, have declined. John Barber and Suzi Plooster offered to contact possible outlets. This matter will be on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

10. Ronald A. Ryder Award. John Barber presented a draft of criteria for possible future awards, which the Board modified and approved. John will head a standing committee until the 1997 annual meeting, and recruit others to serve on the committee. John will prepare an article for the October 1996 *C.F.O. Journal* setting out the criteria and asking for nominations by March 1.

11. Directors' Manual. Beth Dillon proposed several years ago that a standard manual be prepared to give to each director. Linda would like to follow up on that, and distributed a draft of possible contents of such a manual. She asked that each director contact her before the next meeting with any suggestions for changes in the draft. This will be on the agenda for a future meeting. It was agreed each new director will prepare a one-paragraph biographical sketch to be placed in the manual and the *Journal*.

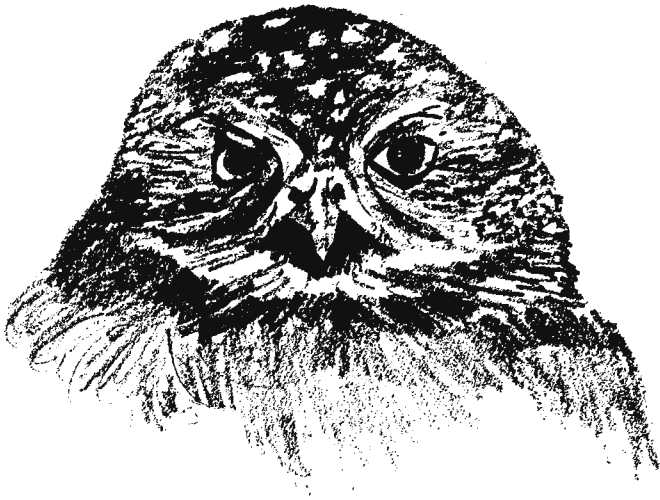
12. Membership Committee. The Board began discussion of whether to create a new office of Membership Chair to be assisted by a membership committee. This could relieve both the Treasurer and Secretary from some of their time-consuming duties. Also, perhaps memberships should be for twelve months, and not solely for calendar years as at the present time. This will be discussed again at future meetings. In the meantime, Suzi Plooster offered to begin mailing the *C.F.O. Journal*, with the help of the Boulder Bird Club, beginning with the October 1996 issue. The Secretary now spends approximately one full day preparing each issue for mailing. David Pantle will work with Suzi on that and will assist the Nominating Committee in seeking a replacement for him as Secretary, preferably someone in the Boulder-Denver area. The Bylaws provide that the Secretary and Treasurer may each serve for a maximum of four years, which will be up for David as Secretary in October 1996, and for Davis as Treasurer in September 1996.

13. Next Board Meetings. A Director suggested that the Board normally hold three meetings each year, one at the annual convention and two others between conventions. The Board will hold its next meeting in Boulder on November 9 at 10 a.m., at People's Clinic.

respectfully submitted,

David Pantle, Secretary
September 3, 1996





Northern Pygmy-Owl
(pencil drawing)

by Paula Lisowsky

MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
NOVEMBER 9, 1996

The Board of Directors of the Colorado Field Ornithologists met on November 9, 1996, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the People's Clinic, 3305 N. Broadway, Boulder, CO. Present were John Barber, Raymond Davis, Bill Fink, Peter Gent, Mona Hill, David Leatherman, Cynthia Melcher, Suzi Plooster, Pearle Sandstrom-Smith, Bob Spencer, Linda Vidal, and Alan Versaw.

1. It was moved, seconded and approved to appoint Mona Hill as Secretary. Her term of office shall be until the next general meeting at the 1997 convention.

2. Minutes of the meeting August 7, 1996, were approved after changing the time of the meeting on November 9, 1996, from 10:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. to correct for an inadvertant rescheduling.

3. Treasurer's report was given by Raymond Davis. A copy is attached. Linda Vidal requested an analysis of the cost of printing the *Journal* compared to the dues collected.

4. Responses to the Membership Questionnaire that was printed in the July 1996 *Journal* (Vol. 30, No. 3) were discussed. Since many of the questions and responses dealt with the *Journal*, a committee was formed to discuss these and to develop a strategic plan for the *Journal*. Linda Vidal, Cynthia Melcher, Dave Leatherman and Mona Hill volunteered for this committee. Warren Finch will also be asked to join, based on his response to the questionnaire. Any other members of C.F.O. who are interested are welcome to join or to offer suggestions. The first meeting of this committee will be held Saturday, February 22, 1997 at the Adams County Library, Northglen Branch, 10530 Huron, Thornton, CO (I-25 to 104th Exit, west on 104th to Huron, north on Huron to library).

Other responses to the questionnaire will be considered in the future.

5. Committee Reports

A. Bird Records Committee

The Bird Records Committee report was given by Peter Gent for Mark Janos. Both the 1994 and 1995 record summaries are near completion.

Bob Dickson has completed his term on the Bird Records Committee. Joey Kellner has been approached and has agreed to

replace him. Linda Vidal will formally invite Joey Kellner to be on the records committee. Joe Mammoser was mentioned as being interested in being on the committee as well.

Charles Preston of the Denver Museum of Natural History has contacted Mark Janos with a proposal that C.F.O. provide reports, photographs and volunteers needed to update the records at the Museum. These records are currently completed through 1992. In addition, the Museum has offered to provide computers and software, as well as working and storage space, if C.F.O. would help to computerize the Bird Records at the Musuem. After agreeing that such a project met the requirements of the Mission Statement, the Board directed Mark Janos to contact Charles Preston and ask for a clear letter of intent, with estimates of the time (both in man-hours required and time until completion) and cost to complete the project of putting all Bird Records into a database.

B. Convention Committee

Alan Versaw and Pearle Sandstrom-Smith reported that the cost of the Convention was set at:

Registration	\$15
Banquet	\$15.

Peter Gent is arranging the Papers Session for Saturday afternoon.

C. Checklist Committee

Suzi Plooster reported on her attempts to obtain the typeset of the checklist, which belongs to C.F.O. but currently held by the Printery. Because attempts to place the checklist in state parks, highway tourist booths, etc., have not been successful, discussions are underway with ABA to permit them to print and distribute the list for C.F.O. Suzi will report further at the next Board meeting.

D. Membership Committee

Raymond Davis agreed to chair this committee. It was moved, seconded and approved to change the Bylaws to allow memberships to begin the beginning of the month in which the payment is received and to expire the last day of the month the following year. This is a change from the current specification that all memberships begin and end on the calendar year. Arguments in favor of the change included the elimination of the need to send out back copies of the *Journal* to new members and suggestions that potential members may be more likely to join if emmberships start immediately. All current memberships will continue to renew on January 1st.

The editors of the *Journal* were requested to include a renewal form on the mailer sheet of all copies of the *Journal*; this form should allow for members to pay for 1, 2, or 3 years of membership.

Suzi Plooster will update the membership brochures accordingly.

Therefore, the "Bylaws of the Colorado Field Ornithologists" are changed as follows:

I. Membership

3. Classes and Dues. The classes of memberships in Colorado Field Ornithologists and annual dues required for each class shall be determined from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors. All memberships begin the first day of the month in which payment of dues is received. All memberships, except Life Membership, expire at midnight the last day of the month the year(s) following the receipt of payment of dues; dues may be paid for one, two or three years.

E. Director's Manual

Linda Vidal reported that this has been nearly completed except for job descriptions and biographies. All board and committee members are encouraged to include e-mail addresses if they have them. Copies of the checklist and membership brochure will be added to the manual.

F. Field Trip Committee

Alan Versaw and Bill Fink reported on the field trips being arranged. Because of the problems of scheduling so far in advance, it was suggested that trip leaders' names and phone numbers could be listed in the *Journal* instead of full information on times and places. Also, trips will be posted on COBIRDS.

6. Old Business items on the agenda were covered during committee reports.

7. New Business

A. Susan Blackshaw-Craig has resigned from the Board of Directors. Filling her position was discussed. It is not necessary to fill this position to maintain full memberships on the Board of Directors. Suzi Plooster will approach Warren Finch about serving as treasurer or as a board member.

- B. It was voted to ask Linda Vidal to write to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to support the "Teaming with Wildlife" initiative.
 - C. Discussion of creating a business manager position on the Board of Directors was tabled until the next meeting. More information will be obtained from KOS about how they define this position.
 - D. A publicity committee was formed, with Pearle Sandstrom-Smith chairing. This committee is charged with sending out notices to other groups both within and outside of Colorado.
 - E. The editor of the *Journal* is allowed up to twenty copies per issue of the *Journal* for use at the editor's discretion.
 - F. Boulder Audubon asked to borrow our mailing list. It was agreed to give them printed address labels for one time use only. Discussion of a formal policy on sharing of membership lists was tabled.
 - G. It was moved, seconded and approved that Linda Vidal express to David Pantle and Susan Blackshaw-Craig the Board of Directors' appreciation for the work they have done for C.F.O.
8. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be at 10:00 a.m. on March 8, 1997 at the People's Clinic in Boulder, CO. Submission of topics to be included on the agenda should be made to the Secretary by February 8, 1997.

respectfully submitted,

Mona Hill, Secretary



C.F.O. MISSION STATEMENT

C.F.O. exists to:

- . promote the field study, conservation and enjoyment of CO birds
- . review rare bird sightings through the Colorado Bird Records Committee and maintain the authoritative list of Colorado birds
- . publish the *Colorado Field Ornithologists Journal*
- . conduct field trips and workshops and hold yearly conventions



ANNOUNCEMENT: "BIRD SONG OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS"

Several years in the *C.F.O. Journal* there was an article by me about the forthcoming audio production from Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology of "Bird Song of the Rocky Mountains". We are pleased to notify everyone that not only has production started, but I have already received the first 21 minutes to review (Grebes through Gallinaceous birds). While it contains many new vocalizations not previously published, the most dramatic section to date is the gallinaceous birds (notably our lek-oriented grouse and prairie-chickens). You cannot help but feel as though you are right there in the lek. We anticipate the release sometime in the spring of 1997 and will keep you updated on progress.

Robert Righter



REQUEST FOR COURTESY

This is shaping up as a very good winter to view rosy finches. If you visit the feeders at Ward in Boulder County (or if you send visitors wishing to see these species), please mind your manners and do not jeopardize our opportunities to view birds in the area. Please park only to the right of the Old Depot, head in. Do not park on the roads or block driveways. Also please do not use your scopes, as people feel they are being scrutinized in their homes. Please leave your video cameras at home. Spend a reasonable amount of time, but do not spend hours and hours. Please introduce yourselves and thank people for the opportunity to see these birds. Think about strangers viewing and photographing your home, and be extremely considerate and cooperative. The actions of one inconsiderate birder can spoil the opportunities for everyone. Your birding ethics are important here! Remember, you are the guest. Whatever someone in the town asks of you, take heed. It is their home.

Suzi Plooster, Boulder Bird Club president (and spokesperson for Ward)



**SELECTION CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES
FOR
THE RONALD A. RYDER AWARD
FOR
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE
TO
COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGY**

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. For distinguished service to the Colorado Field Ornithologists organization and goals.
2. For scholarly contribution to the Colorado Field Ornithologists and to Colorado field ornithology.
3. For sharing knowledge of Colorado field ornithology with the people of the state of Colorado.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. The Award will be given at most every other year. Nominations may be made by the membership at large. Nominations should be received on or before March 1 of even-numbered years to be considered by the C.F.O. Board Of Directors. The Board selects and approves an awardee for announcement at the Annual Convention during the year a recipient is chosen.
2. The Award will be a plaque designed to match the original plaque given to Dr. Ryder.
3. The Award will be accompanied by a life-time membership in the Colorado Field Ornithologists.
4. When the Award is given, details will be published in the *C.F.O. Journal* and accompanied by a cover photograph of the Awardee. Other press releases will be made as approved by the C.F.O. President.



BOOK REVIEW

STOKES FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS: WESTERN REGION

John Barber
1700 Clearview Court
Fort Collins, CO 80521
970/4849791

The Stokes Field Guides are the latest to join the growing list of field guides to birds. The Western Region guide is reviewed here.

The Western Region guide (in comparison to the Eastern Region guide) best covers Colorado. The area covered by this guide also includes western Nebraska and Kansas.

The guide is well-organized, with a quick index inside both covers. I also like the color tab index to the bird groups, which are presented in taxonomic order.

Each species is covered on one page, a feature which eliminates flipping back and forth. Each species account includes a color photograph and range map, plus sections on identification, description, feeding, nesting, habitat, voice, and conservation status.

The photographs are great for the most part, but I find the identification points do not always show up well in even the best photographs.

The book includes handy learning pages on hawks, shorebirds, gulls, flycatchers, warblers and sparrows. They should be quite helpful to the novice and provide good reviews for the experienced birder.

I recommend checking it out the next time you browse the book store.

[*Stokes Field Guide To The Birds, Western Region* by Don and Lillian Stokes. Little Brown and Company - 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, 10020, 474 pages, 5 x 8-1/2m \$16.75 per volume, paperback]



BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) NOTES FOR 1996

Kim M. Potter
440 East 7th Street
Rifle, CO 81650

The following are taken from the field notes of the White River National Forest Old-Growth Forest Inventory Crew (Rachel B. Reichardt and Kim M. Potter).

July 7, 1996 At least a dozen Brown-headed Cowbirds were observed in the horse stables at Budes' White River Resort. The elevation of this sighting is 10,200 feet (3109 m). Budes' Resort, near Buck Creek, is located within the Deep Lake 7.5 minute topographic map in Garfield County.

July 9, 1996 An Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*) was observed feeding a fledged Brown-headed Cowbird at Aldrich Lakes. At about 7,500 feet (2286 m), the lakes are surrounded by sage, mountain shrublands and oak scrub, with aspen and mixed aspen forests just above. Aldrich Lakes are located with the Thornburgh 7.5 minute topographic map in Rio Blanco County.

According to cowbird host records compiled by Chace and Cruz and more recent Breeding Bird Atlas record (pers. comm. H. Kingery), this is the first documented case of Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism on Orange-crowned Warbler for Colorado.

Literature Cited

Chace, J. F. and A. Cruz. 1995. Knowledge of the Colorado host relations of the parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). *C.F.O. Journal* 30(2): 67-81.



BLUE GROSBEAKS: A RESPONSE TO HABITAT CHANGES AND A LATE NESTING RECORD

Cynthia Melcher and Ken Giesen
4200 North Shields Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524
970/484-8373
cynthia@NREL.ColoState.EDU

To our delight, the habitat in our 12-acre backyard recently became suitable for nesting Blue Grosbeaks (*Guiraca caerulea*). Prior to 1994, it is highly unlikely Blue Grosbeaks nested on our land because the vegetation had been severely damaged through overgrazing and trampling by horses. When Ken purchased the land in 1988, some sections of the property were completely denuded. Once our house was built, however, the vegetation was allowed to recover.

Native grasses that grew back during the first 4-5 years included buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*), western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), blue gramma (*Bouteloua gracilis*), side-oats gramma (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), and three-awn (*Aristida* sp.). Fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*) also became abundant, and yucca (*Yucca glauca*) and rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*) occurred in small numbers. Unfortunately, a number of exotic species, including crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), smooth brome (*Bromopsis inermis*), sweet-clover (*Melilotus officinalis*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), also returned.

Soon after the house was built, Ken planted a small "shelterbelt" of drought-tolerant trees and shrubs, including wild plum (*Prunus americana*), Nanking cherry (*Prunus tomentosa*), and chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), three-leaved sumac (*Rhus trilobata*), eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*). They were planted in 4-7 rows with 20-120 feet of the northern and western flanks of the house. The plantings were bare-root seedlings with a long way to go before most of them would poke their tops above the grasses. In the spring of 1993 Ken also burned about 9 acres of the residual cover that had accumulated over the previous four years, which resulted in vigorous growth of grasses that year. As in all years, the area was also inundated with hordes of grasshoppers.

Our land, which is situated approximately 3.5 miles north of the Fort Collins city limits, is flanked on two sides by a county road. One section of the road also borders a reservoir, the other borders a regularly-mowed pasture. The remaining two sides were originally flanked by grassland subjected to some grazing by horses, although the property is now being developed with a relatively high density of large homes.

The first evidence that we had Blue Grosbeaks in the area appeared in the form of a small disaster. It happened in 1992 during mid-late summer (no date recorded), when a juvenile grosbeak crashed into one of our windows and died (we subsequently have put hawk silhouettes on the largest windows). At the time, however, there was no evidence that grosbeaks were nesting on our land, and we concluded the bird had probably fledged from a nest in one of the many shrubs or trees that surround the nearby reservoirs.

It was 1994 before we discovered a pair of grosbeaks nesting on our land in the plum patch--a special section of the shelterbelt. Compared to their cohorts, the plums were enormous (3-10 feet high), clearly benefitting from the ample supplies of water and nutrients lingering in our leach field directly beneath them! The perimeter of the patch was approximately 150 feet. The 1994 pair of grosbeaks raised two broods in that new patch of habitat, each time building a new nest about 1.75-2.0 feet from the ground in a small (3 feet tall) three-leaved sumac. The second nest was built just above the first one.

Although we did not record nesting dates of the 1994 birds, we did note the dates in 1995, largely because we were struck by the very late second nesting attempt. Spring 1995 had been quite wet and cold, which may have contributed to either delayed nesting or a failed first attempt. In either case, it was mid-August before the young fledged. Thus, we assumed that would be the pair's only 1995 nesting attempt. Based on the fledging date of 15 August, and using nesting ecology information provided by Stabler (1959) and Ingold (1993), we determined the female must have initiated that clutch on or about 21 July. Not wanting to disturb the birds, we did not check the nest to count eggs, but we observed 3-4 fledglings (clutch sizes range from 3-5, with 4 being typical). The nest was 2 feet high in the same sumac used in 1994, and contained no unhatched eggs.

Once the young had fledged, the male appeared to be attending to them while the female was busy with...building a second nest? Given the late date, we could not believe she would be attempting to raise a second brood. But upon looking for the original nest, we accidentally flushed the female from what turned out to be a second nest containing three eggs. We estimated the grosbeak had initiated her second clutch on 17 August, just 2 days after the first brood fledged, and that incubation began on 19 August! The second nest was located 3.5 feet from the ground in a tall (8 feet) wild plum, about 40 feet from all three previous nests. The three young fledged on 9 September, and all left the area within 24 hours. According to previous records (Ingold 1993; Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, in prep), this second nesting date was extraordinary. The latest known egg date (Oklahoma) had been 6 August, with the young fledging on 28 August (Sutton 1967). For Colorado, the latest fledging date for a known second clutch was 2 August (Stabler 1959).

Of the grosbeak behaviors we observed, one made us especially glad to have them use our land. They ate grasshoppers! In fact, the local abundance of grasshoppers may have been an important factor in the birds' selection of our plum patch for nesting. We observed many mouthfuls of grasshoppers being delivered to the nestlings, and during future breeding seasons we plan to quantify the percent of food deliveries that include grasshoppers. What we did not observe or determine was what the adults were eating.

After each nesting season, we collected the nests for donation to the Denver Museum of Natural History. Upon inspection of nest materials, we were enchanted further by this species. Each of four nests contained a variety of recycled, anthropogenic items, such as shreds of old newspaper and plastic bags, and bunches of sleeping bag insulation. Various authors refer to this species' penchant for using discarded items, including string, paper, and cardboard, but we could find no reports of plastic bag material being used by this species (Stabler 1959, Bent 1968, Ingold 1993). Snake skins, however, have been reported in many nests (Stabler 1959, Bent 1968, Ingold 1993), and we concluded our backyard birds may have substituted plastic bag material for snake skin. They used a variety of other natural products as well, including dead cottonwood leaves, grasses, and rootlets.

In addition to the Blue Grosbeaks, the habitat recovery (and embellishments) in our backyard have attracted and provided suitable nesting habitat for other species, including Vesper Sparrows (*Pooecetes gramineus*) and Grasshopper Sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*). In addition, the density of Western Meadowlarks (*Sturnella neglecta*) has increased in response to the habitat changes and apparent increase in food resources. During migration, our habitat has attracted a tremendous variety of birds, including (but not limited to) Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), Eastern and Western Kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus* and *T. verticalis*), Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*), Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*), Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*), Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilio chlorurus*), Clay-colored and Brewer's Sparrows (*Spizella pallida* and *S. breweri*), Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*), and Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). What remains to be seen is how much all the intense development around us will affect the fledgling population of birds that has been using our new habitat.

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Winter-plumaged Harris' Sparrow
at 1200 Stover Street, Fort Collins
winter of 1988-89

by Alex Cringan

THE LARK BUNTING: IN PERIL OR MAKING PROGRESS?

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Introduction

At the end of the morning after completing my first Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) route in 1967, I knew a great project had been undertaken. I have tried to participate most years, knowing the ultimate value of the resultant data. I now have relegated myself to be assistant and driver, leaving the counting to my wife, ten years my junior. This will allow me to participate in the project long after the onset of dreaded hearing loss due to the accumulation of too many birthdays.

The BBS office in the early years would issue annual reports, showing maps for various species and confirming my original hopes for the project. In 1986 the United State Fish and Wildlife Service published the results of the first 15 years of the BBS (Robbins et al, 1986). I combed every page, studying every map and graph. At that time I questioned some of the regression lines applied to the time series graphs.

As time progressed, more authors discussed the various declining bird populations. The phrase "neotropical migrant" became popular among avian biologists and there was much concern over the woodland species of this group. The loss of habitat, primarily in the tropics but also in temperate regions, was the main explanation. Of late, concern about grassland birds has moved to the front, also because of prairie habitat losses in North America.

I would contend most major damage done to grassland bird populations happened during the first 50 years of prairie settlement, with gradual habitat loss occurring in following decades. Menke (1894) listed the Mountain Plover as an abundant summer resident of Finney County, (southwest) Kansas; it was extirpated in the county prior to 1950. Likewise, the Short-eared Owl was a common resident; it is now uncommon to rare. However, certain species managed to survive, adapt and maintain fairly high populations throughout the following 100 years. The Horned Lark, Western Meadowlark, Dickcissel and Lark Bunting were all abundant prior to 1894 and remain so today.

In this paper I look at one species of grassland bird, the Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*). Beginning with the report by Robbins et al. (1986), we see a severe decline in the Lark Bunting numbers for the central region of the continent (p. 113). It is fairly apparent the bunting population did decline between 1968 and 1979; however, the severity of the decline they

depict is questionable. Significant long term declines in the Lark Bunting population are reported at 3.1% per year from 1966 to 1991 (Peterjohn and Sauer, 1993) and 1.3% per year from 1966 to 1993 (Peterjohn et al., 1994). Consequently, groups like "Partners In Flight" and others include the Lark Bunting in their lists of species of concern.

Methods and Results

I have looked at the Lark Bunting populations from five different approaches. At a local level I chose the Briggsdale, Colorado BBS route (Figure 1) because of its continuous coverage, and its perfect data acquisition record (i.e., always started on time, never too windy, etc.), along with its having one of the highest Lark Bunting counts in the nation. The survey shows the buntings starting out very high, dropping to an all-time low in 1974, regaining some in the late 1970's, and then showing drastic fluctuations during the subsequent 15 years. No recent low point has been as low as that of 1974.

A mean relative abundance of seven states in an area of high abundance was calculated for all complete years of the BBS (Figure 2). Again, the first three years were at an all-time high, with a major crash in a short time span by 1974. A drop of 58% occurred in just five years. However, after numerous fluctuations, the population did make a comeback to within 14% of the all-time high by 1991. The severe droughts in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico are a possible explanation for the most recent declines.

The extreme fluctuations at a particular locale can be explained partially by the bird's poor breeding site tenacity. A comparison of areas with above average Lark Bunting numbers was made for nine regions between 1968 and 1995 (Figure 3). This figure shows a central area of high use from 1968 to 1972, then a shift to the northern plains from 1973 to 1976. Then, as if one switch was turned off and another turned on, a large portion of the population shifted to the southern plains from 1977 to 1984. Again in 1985, the population made a shift back to the central part of the bird's range and stayed at a fairly high level through 1994. Interestingly, Reynolds et al. (1994) showed a 7.7% decrease in the Lark Bunting population from 1966 to 1986 for North Dakota and a 21.3% increase in bunting numbers from 1987 to 1992. The latter they correlated with the onset of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Ironically, the trend in Figure 3 shows the buntings being down in the north because they were up in the southern plains. The bulk of the population had started moving back north in 1985 just prior to the CRP and stayed strong until a population crash in 1993, with the CRP fields still in tact. I would hypothesize the increased Lark Bunting populations in North Dakota were due to reasons other than the CRP. That is not to diminish the value of CRP for many other grassland species.

The Midland, Texas Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is often one of the high counts in the nation for the Lark Bunting (Figure 4). This example of a local wintering population is again highly erratic from year to year. A compilation of the top ten CBC's for the Lark Bunting in the United States also depicts highly erratic numbers between years (Figure 5). This is not as representative of the entire population as the results of Figure 2, since many buntings winter in Mexico.

Discussion

I believe the temptation to consider 28 years of BBS data as "long term" for certain species is premature. I consider the data compiled by MacLulich from the Hudson Bay Company records on Snowshoe Hare and Lynx from 1845 to 1935 as long term (Odum 1971). Another factor which seriously affects interpretation of BBS data is the starting point. Peterjohn (1994) shows populations numbers for a species (Carolina Wren) that start low in 1966, increase rapidly, crash in 1977 (due to a severe winter) and then steadily rise through 1994. Twenty-nine years of data on that species is long enough to get a fair idea of its stability. What about a species (the Lark Bunting may be one) that starts out in the early monitoring years at high levels, crashes, and then takes more than 30 years to cycle back to peak numbers? In such case, statistical analysis may indicate a decline that could be interpreted as permanent and is really only temporary.

Is the Lark Bunting in peril or is it making it in the world of man in fairly good shape? The bunting is very adaptive to the the point of nesting in a plowed field, with only a clump of wheat stubble to protect the nest and still succeeds in fledging young. It quite often has the highest nesting success of any other prairie community member. It has a very low cowbird parasitism rate (so detrimental to other species), which may be due to the fact both the male and female incubate and brood. The bunting is also adaptive, with a variety of mating systems from monogamy to polygyny (Pleszczynska and Hansell, 1980) and systems with excess unmated males becoming helpers at the nest (Johnson, 1981). Adaptation and shifts to new wintering areas have occurred (Shane and Seltman, 1995).

The bird, in my opinion, will do just fine well into the 21st century. However, a couple of troublesome areas confront the bunting, as well as many other species. Large local grasshopper outbreaks are controlled with a deluge of pesticides. The spray plane is almost a daily sight during the growing season on the plains of North America, combatting one problem or another. I have seen signs posted at regular intervals along fields warning people not to enter because of recent spray applications. Grasshoppers are one of the primary food sources for both adult and young buntings, hence the concern. If a

grasshopper outbreak the magnitude of those in 1873-1874 and 1934-1936 occurred today, all our grassland birds would be in peril.

The bunting can be a pest to man at times. Large amounts of grain were distributed to various feeding locales for the benefit of quail in southeastern New Mexico (Campbell, 1959). It was reported that "greedy" Lark Buntings and Mourning Doves ate 75% of the 44 tons of seed put out for the quail over a three-year period.

The sorghum fields of northern Mexico are probably susceptible to large numbers of Lark Buntings. We do not know what happens to birds invading crops in Mexico. Other species, like the Dickcissel, are being poisoned by the thousands, maybe millions, because of their damage to rice crops in Venezuela.

Organizations such as the Colorado Bird Observatory are to be commended in starting some initial studies and censuses in northern Mexico for our grassland birds. Only until an adequate cross-section of the wintering Lark Buntings in Mexico are studied over a long period of time will we know for sure whether Colorado's State Bird is in peril.

Acknowledgments

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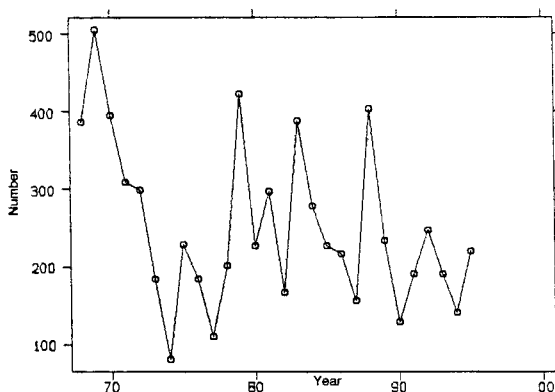


FIGURE 1. Total number of Lark Buntings on the Briggsdale, Colorado Breeding Bird Survey 1968 -1995.

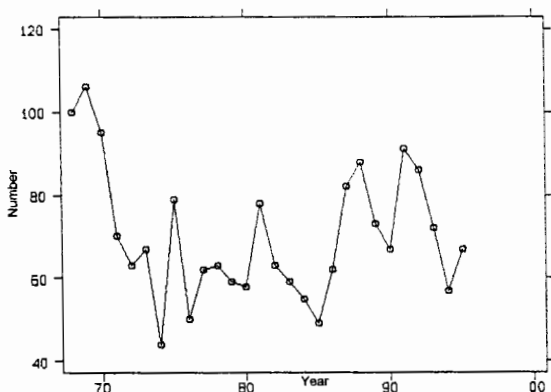


FIGURE 2. Mean relative abundance of the Lark Bunting from seven states (MT, ND, SD, WY, NB, CO, & KS) with high abundance, from Breeding Bird Survey routes that ever recorded buntings from 1968 - 1995.

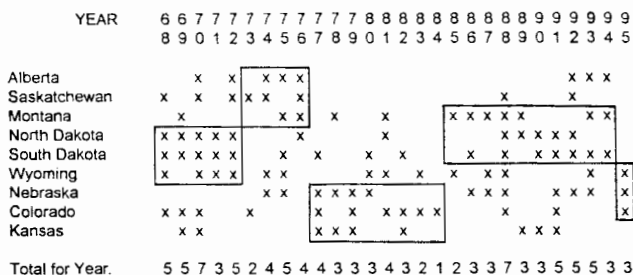


FIGURE 3. Regions with above average (x) relative abundance for Lark Buntings. Data are from Breeding Bird Survey routes that ever recorded buntings, using the states and provinces with the highest abundances. Boxed regional - temporal clusters are areas of highest relative abundance within that time span.

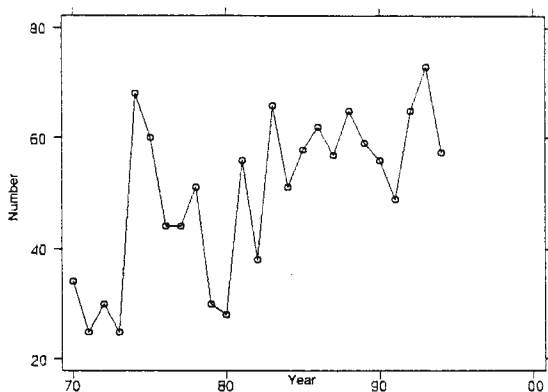


FIGURE 4. Number of Lark Buntings per party hour recorded on the Midland, TX Christmas Bird Counts from 1970 -1994. (Data from Audubon Field Notes and American Birds.)

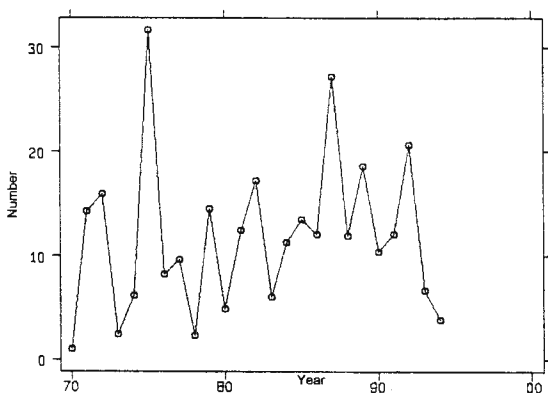


FIGURE 5. Mean number of Lark Buntings per party hour for the ten highest count Christmas Bird Counts. (Nogales, AZ; Portal, AZ; Ramsey Canyon, AZ; Santa Catalina Mountains, AZ; Tucson Valley, AZ; Balmorhea, TX; Big Spring, TX; Lubbock Co., TX; Midland, TX; San Angelo, TX) from 1970 - 1994. (Data from Audubon Field Notes and American Birds.)



FORAGING BEHAVIOR OF THE WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE IN THE COLORADO FRONT RANGE

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INTRODUCTION

Several studies on insectivorous birds have attempted to relate foraging ecology to such factors as prey availability (Busby and Sealy 1979, Bibby 1981, Moeed and Fitzgerald 1982, Quinney and Ankney 1985, Raley and Anderson 1990), habitat structure (Rotenberry 1980, Robinson and Holmes 1982, 1984), or optimality theory (Davies 1976).

Of particular interest in such studies has been the relatively behaviorally diverse family of New World flycatchers, the Tyrannidae (Traylor 1977). Many species within this family rely solely on sally-hovering as a means of prey capture. Several workers have examined the foraging ecology of various tyrannids (Verbeek 1975, Beaver and Baldwin 1975, Davies 1976, Frakes 1978, Eckhardt 1979, Fitzpatrick 1980, 1981, Sherry 1984) and some have addressed the Western Wood-Pewee, *Contopus sordidulus*, (Beavers and Baldwin 1975, Verbeek 1975, Frakes 1978, Eckhardt 1979). Our primary study objectives were to examine foraging by the Western Wood-Pewee and to further understand its biology in Colorado.

The Western Wood-Pewee is primarily an insectivorous species (Beal 1912), with a summer range extending throughout much of western North America (Bent 1942). In Colorado the pewee is a fairly common to common summer resident in foothills and lower mountains, where it breeds mainly in aspen, ponderosa pine, and foothill riparian forests (Bailey and Neidrach 1965, Andrews and Righter 1992 and Chace and Cruz Ms).

STUDY AREAS AND METHODS

This study was conducted from 29 May to 15 August 1995. Care was taken to make observations during all daylight hours in order to gain insight into pewee foraging behavior throughout the day.

Study site. Field work was conducted on Mount Sanitas in the western outskirts of Boulder, Colorado. Rising to approximately 2200 m in the Rocky Mountain foothills, Mount Sanitas is predominantly forested in the upper hillsides with ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*). The cover ranges from dense, closed tree canopies to open fields of approximately 50 square meters. The understory is dominated by chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), wax currant (*Ribes cereum*), skunkbrush (*Rhus trilobata*), small ninebark (*Physocarpus mongynus*), Oregon grape (*Mahonia repens*), mountain

mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), and various grasses (*Agropyron*, *Anisantha*, *Bouteloua*, *Bromus* and *Koeleria*).

Methods. After locating as many pewees as possible, we confined observations to distances greater than 10 meters to minimize disturbance. Individual pewees were often followed for as long as possible, in many instances up to 10 minutes. This allowed sequential observations of individual foraging birds. A Chi-squared test was used to assess significant differences in the use of different foraging categories. For each foraging individual, the following was recorded.

Height of perch.--The perch height in a tree of each pewee was visually estimated to the nearest meter. We often validated approximated heights by measuring the actual perch height and found our observations to be accurate.

Foraging attempts and successes.--A foraging attempt was recorded when an individual pewee left its perch and attempted to catch an insect. When an individual left its perch and did not seem to pursue any insect, or no insects were visible, an attempt was not recorded. Foraging attempts were scored as successful when an individual captured an insect.

Foraging methods.--Only two foraging methods were witnessed during our study: aerial sally-hovering and sally-gleaning. We define aerial sally-hovering as a maneuver in which both bird and prey are on the wing at the same time. Sally-gleaning is prey removal from a substrate while the pewee is on the wing. In both, the birds may hover at the capture point.

Return to perch.--When attempting to capture an insect, the pewee has a choice of either returning to its perch or going to a new one. We scored a foraging attempt as a "return to perch" when an individual returned within 15 cm of the perch from where it just left.

Distance to and identification of prey.--Distance to prey was categorized as either less than or greater than 10 m and was estimated in much the same way as perch height. We were able to identify some prey items to order. Insects that were either too small or too far away were recorded as "unknown".

Flight pattern.--Flight pattern was determined as either ascending, descending, or horizontal with regard to the perch position of the pewee.

RESULTS

Foraging attempts and successes.--We made 97 total foraging observations, of which 56 were determined as successful, giving a success rate of 57.7%. The mean perch height for foraging Western Wood-Pewees was 7.7 +/-3.1 m.

Foraging methods.--Of 97 foraging attempts witnessed, 95 were classified as aerial sally-hovering and 2 were classified as sally-gleaning (P less than .001).

Return to perch.--Without considering the success or failure of the foraging attempt, pewees showed no significant tendency to either select a new perch site or return to the original perch. However, of the 56 successful foraging attempts, the bird returned to the original perch 41 times (P less than .05).

Distance to and identification of prey item.--There was no correlation between distance to the prey and success rate, nor was there between distance to prey and prey selected. Of the 56 attempts, prey items were identified to order in 49 instances. These include Diptera (n = 17), Lepidoptera (n = 14), Coleoptera (n = 6), Orthoptera (n = 6), and Hymenoptera (n = 6).

Flight pattern.--There was no significant difference among the flight patterns the pewees used in attempting to capture a passing insect. However, pewees did show a marginally significant (P less than .10) tendency to favor either a descending (n = 39) or horizontal mode (n = 30) of attack rather than an ascending mode of attack (n = 23).

DISCUSSION

Mean height of perch.--The mean perch height of pewees in the Mount Sanitas study area was 7.7 +/- 3.3 m. Pewees foraged primarily from twigs (98%, n = 95) on the outer periphery of trees. This location, often in dead branches, allows the foraging bird a wide variety and number of directional opportunities to aerially hawk at passing insects.

Foraging attempts and successes.--Pewees exhibited an overall success rate of 57.7%, which at first glance might seem rather high for an insectivorous forager. But Davies (1976) found a success rate of 63.8% for the Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*, Family Muscipapidae) hawking for dipterans.

Foraging methods.--In other studies of Western Wood-Pewee attack modes (Verbeek 1975, Frakes 1978, and Eckhardt 1979), aerial sally-hovering was found to be the case in well over 90% of the observations, and in one case, 100% (Verbeek 1975). We observed 2 sally-gleaning and 95 sally-hovering, giving a total percentage of 97.9% sally-hovering attempts. Along those lines, since pewees rely so heavily on aerial sally-hovering, they prefer to perch on the outer branches of the trees.

Return to perch.--Leck (1971) showed length of flight and tendency to return to the same perch are related in the Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*). However, Verbeek (1975) found no correlation between flight distance, perch height, flight direction and tendency to return to perch in California pewees. Similarly, we observed no correlation between those factors.

Moreover, we were interested in the possible relationship between successful foraging attempts and the tendency to return to the same perch. By feeding on common insects that appear randomly, pewees in no way create a "resource depression" (Charnov et al 1976). Charnov et al. (1976) ask that if an individual is reasonably successful foraging from a specific location, why should it change locations, assuming the resource is not rapidly depleted. In fact, we found this tendency in pewees. Pewees showed a significant correlation between successful aerial sally-hovering and a tendency to return to the same location (P less than .05). Of the 56 successful attempts we observed, the successful bird returned to the same perch site on 41 occasions.

Prey identification.--Beal (1912) found in a sample of 174 pewee stomachs collected in the western United States, dipterans, hymenopterans, coleopterans, and lepidopterans comprised 44.3%, 39.8%, 5.44%, and 5.2%, respectively, of the average diet of this species. In the Wet Mountains of southern Colorado, Beaver and Baldwin (1975) found in a sample of 69 pewee stomachs collected, diptera, hymenopterans, coleopterans, and lepidopterans comprised 32%, 32%, 16%, and 13%, respectively, of this species' diet. Our results, based on foraging observations, are congruent with these studies. Beaver and Baldwin (1975) also observed that pewees were taking smaller insects more frequently than larger ones, with a mean length of 7.5 mm.

Flight pattern.--In aerial sally-hovering for a prospective prey item, the Western Wood-Pewee generally leaves its perch in a horizontal or descending pattern rather than an ascending pattern. Two possible reasons for this might be that it is too energetically costly to fly upward and chase an often times very maneuverable insect, and/or the majority of available insect prey is found either horizontal to, or below, the mean perch height of 7.7 m.

A pewee's tendency to not fly upward from the perch is related to the fact such flights are less successful (3 observed successes/23 flights), as compared to horizontal (30/35) or descending flights (23/39). The extremely low success of ascending flights might be attributed to the energetic costs involved in pursuing an insect from below. Since a bird flying upward is often slower in pursuit, a prospective prey insect will have more time to respond and more chance to escape. On the other hand, horizontal and descending flights allow the pewee to attack in a quicker, more successful manner. In the Kawuneeche Valley of Colorado, Eckhardt (1979) found the predominant flight pattern was horizontal (52%), followed by downward flights (35%). In California, Verbeek (1975) reported descending flights are most common (51%), followed by ascending flights (32%). The difference between Verbeek's data (1975) and the Colorado data may be due to the differences in vegetation types and resource availability between the regions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD: THE SPRING REPORT
(MARCH, APRIL, MAY 1996)

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I thank all who submitted observations this period. They were a source of great pleasure and extreme envy as I perused them. This spring report is lengthy and it was certainly an exciting period. According to my tally, a total of 37 warbler species were observed this spring! Included are such awesome birds as Louisiana Waterthrush, Connecticut Warbler, Hermit Warbler, and Mourning Warbler. Bonny Res., Two Buttes Res., Lamar Community College, and Crow Valley Campground continued to be dependable locales to find migrant passerines, while the Fort Lyons Wildlife Easement and Estes Park seem to be emerging as new hotspots. Shorebird hotspots this spring were Upper Queens Res., Nee Noshe Res., the Fort Collins/Greeley area, and Highline State Park on the west slope. Highlights included Hudsonian Godwit, American Golden-Plover, and Dunlin.

I would like to make a minor change in the report format. In the past people submitting documentation for rare sightings have received an asterisk by their initials. I would like to discontinue this procedure. I have two reasons. First, it does not seem to fit the scope of this article to track such documentation, particularly when I may not be privy to all reports. Second, I do not want to embarrass anyone or make them feel guilty by showing a great bird as undocumented. If you have comments on this, please let me know.

As another item of business, I would like to ask if you use abbreviations in your reports, please provide a key. This will help eliminate any confusion.

This report is compiled from information first provided to Colorado's regional compilers and/or passed on to Van Truan and Brandon Percival, Mountain West co-editors for *Audubon Field Notes*. Bird observations reported only to other sources (e.g. the "Colorado Rare Bird Alert" phone tape or the "COBIRDS" e-mail network) will not be included here. If you are not doing so already, please submit sightings to the regional compilers (or to Truan and Percival if you have no regional compiler). This will enhance the scope of this report and contribute to our growing knowledge of Colorado's avifauna.

Note: Species for which the Colorado Bird Records Committee would like documentation are underlined.

Common Loon: Eight to 10 individuals were reported this spring in the western valleys (CD, RL), where this species is rare. The first appeared on 3/24. An individual in breeding plumage appeared at Blue Mesa Res. on 4/22 (KP). One at Dotsero 4/21 and another at El Jebel 4/22 were the first noted in that area in five years (JMe). Up to 10 were discovered on the eastern plains this spring in of the window of 4/5 to 5/21.

Red-necked Grebe: A breeding-plumage bird swam on Lake Cheraw from 5/18-27 (CW, JK, BKP, MJ).

American Bittern: Up to 3 were reported at the FLWE from 5/3-19 (MJ, BKP, mob). One was at Lake Holbrook on 5/11 (PSS, CS), upwards of 6 at Sawhill/Walden Ponds in Boulder from 5/15-18 (JHi, DWK), and one did a fly-by at Barr Lake SP on 5/31 (TL, SBo). Another was reported from the San Luis Valley (JRw, LRw).

Least Bittern: One of this elusive species was seen on 5/18 at Sawhill/Walden Ponds (PP).

Great Egret: This is a rare spring migrant in the east and is casual in the western valleys. The species does occur regularly near Boulder, where it breeds and eight were at the Boulder Creek heronry on 4/13 (HK, UK). One was near Hasty from 5/5-12 (MJ, mob). Up to 2 stopped-over at Valco Ponds in Pueblo from 5/7-10 (BKP, mob). Two were found at Big Johnson Res. on 5/18 (AV). The Clifton Marsh Wildlife Area had a stray on 5/23-24 (RL, CD) and Highline SP was visited 5/25 (CD, RL). Another was near Molina on 5/27 (CD, RL). Monte Vista NWR had a single on 5/25 (TL, LRw).

Little Blue Heron: Lake Holbrook was visited by a "calico-plumaged" bird on 5/3 (BKP), while an adult stopped at Rocky Ford SWA on 5/22 (CW, JK).

Cattle Egret: A rare spring bird, one was at Rocky Ford SWA on 4/14 (BKP, MJ), one near Las Animas on 5/5 (MJ), and 2 at Lower Latham Res. on 5/21 (JV, DWK). Three were reported from the San Luis Valley (JRw, LRw).

Green Heron: This spring was rife with reports of this reclusive wader. The first reports were on 4/28 from Olive Marsh in Pueblo (MY) and Rocky Ford SWA (MJ). Two were in west Fort Collins on 5/5 (JFB) and one at the Connected Lakes in Grand Junction on 5/5 (CD). Another was at the LCCW from 5/5-19 (MJ, BKP, mob). One was at Martinez Park in Fort Collins on 5/6 (DCE, JBo), where the species has bred for about 3 years in a row. One was at Pueblo's Valco Ponds from 5/8-24 (BKP), one near Fort Morgan on 5/11 (JRi), one at Sawhill/Walden Ponds from 5/15-19 (JHi), one at Bonny Res. on 5/18 (BKP, mob), and one at Lake Henry on 5/20 (BKP, MJ).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: An immature of this very rare species was discovered at Bonny Res. on 5/19 (BKP).

Glossy Ibis: There was a relative plethora of sightings this spring of this accidental species. Mark Janos found an adult near Boone on 5/4. Another was identified on 5/20 at Nee Noshe Res. (BKP, MJ). A subadult was located on 5/27 near Iliff (DAL, JM).

Greater White-fronted Goose: An immature was at Angel Lake near Severance on 3/16 (DAL), three at Lower Latham Res. on 3/18 (JH), 30 at Lake Holbrook on 3/26 (MJ, BD), one on 4/7 at the Walsh sewer ponds (JT), 4 in east Larimer County on 4/14 (WPL), and a very late singleton at Hamilton Res. on 5/15 & 27 (RAR).

Snow Goose: Most unusual was one at Silt from 3/18-22. Late stragglers were noted on 5/18 at Big Johnson Res. (RB, SH, TL) and 5/26-27 at Lake Cheraw (BKP, MJ).

Ross' Goose: One hung-out in Vineland from 3/2-25 (MJ), while one returned to Home Lake in the San Luis Valley on 3/4 and remained until 4/12 (JRw, LRw, JPo). West of Fowler 15 were found on 3/10 (BKP, MJ). A single-species flock of about 120 birds was south of Woods Lake near Severance on 3/16 (DAL). Up to 75 roamed the Lower Latham Res. area from 3/18-4/11 (JH). At Lake Holbrook 150 on 3/26 abated to 50 on 3/30 (MJ, BD). Three more were at Lake Cheraw on 3/30 (MJ).

American Black Duck: One male and one female were discovered at Hamilton Res. on 4/16 (RAR). Escaped birds or mavericks?

Garganey: At least one male was confirmed at Sombrero Ponds in Boulder with an associated female of disputed identification from 4/21-5/12 (mob).

Eurasian Wigeon: A male was found be Beebe Draw south of Lower Latham Res. on 3/21 (JH).

Oldsquaw: Three birds remained from winter near the 88th Avenue Bridge area in Denver on 3/17 (JBo, TL, CM). Two summer-plumaged females appeared near Alamosa, the first San Luis Valley record (JRw, LRw).

Black Scoter: A male and female at the Colorado River Wildlife Area on 4/26 was an exceptional find (CD, RL).

Surf Scoter: Metro Lake in Colorado City had a male from 5/26-28 (DS, DJ).

Barrow's Goldeneye: Eight were on Blue Mesa Res. from 3/1-16 and Plateau Creek in Mesa County had a pair on 3/4 (KP). Rifle Gap had 2-6 from 3/4-28. Two males and one female were at Sweetwater Lake in Garfield County on 4/3 (JMe). Lastly, a pair showed at Lake Estes in March (EPBC).

Red-breasted Merganser: 20-25 birds were reported in the Grand Valley beginning 3/17 (CD, RL). This is a high number in this area where they are rare. Up to 30 were at Arapaho Bend Natural Area in Fort Collins from 4/2-5/2 (JC, AC). Three were at the San Luis Lakes on 4/13 (AV). Two males and 3 females at Dotsero from 4/14-29 were very rare birds for this locale (JMe).

Northern Goshawk: The only reports were from Larimer County. One that wintered at the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery in Fort Collins was last seen on 3/2 (DAL). Another was reported from Hamilton Res. on 4/28 (RAR). One on 5/14 at Lake Estes held a ground squirrel as prey (SRA).

Broad-winged Hawk: The first spring sightings of this rare migrant occurred on 4/21, when one was sorted out of a kettle of 150+/- Swainson's Hawks near Walsh (JT) and another turned up at Rocky Ford SWA (MJ). In Boulder County on 4/26 a pair was located (DWK) and up to 3 prowled the LCCW from 4/27-5/2 (VZ, mob). On 5/8 one was at Sawhill/Walden Ponds (PP). In Fort Collins one was at Grandview Cemetery on 5/10 (JFB) and 1 or 2 were along the Poudre River Trail from 5/13-18 (JBo, DAL). An immature was at CVCG on 5/13 (DAL).

Rough-legged Hawk: Two cunctative birds were still in Weld County until 4/17 (DAL), but the latest was a loner near Fort Morgan on 4/27 (JRi).

Peregrine Falcon: By 4/1 a nesting pair had returned to Estes Park (JZ, BZ). One was at Lower Latham Res. on 4/14 and two were there on 4/29 (JH). Another was south of Latham at Beebe Draw on 4/27 (JH). Up to 16 birds were observed in the Grand Valley and the Colorado and Dolores River Canyons beginning on 4/18 (CD, RL). On 5/3 one was at the FLWE (MJ) and one was in Fort Collins on 5/10 (JBo). Upper Queens Res. hosted one on 5/12 (BKP, MJ). Two were near Steamboat Mountain on 5/27 (DWK). Three were also reported from the San Luis Valley during the period (JRw, LRw).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Spilling over from burgeoning Wyoming groups, 8-12 were found on the northern Pawnee National Grasslands on 4/12 (WPL, JFB).

Black-bellied Plover: The only two reports were of one at Hamilton Res. on 5/11 (JBo, CM, mob) and 20 on 5/15 near Lake Meredith (PSS, CS).

American Golden-Plover: Accidental in the west during the spring, one at Highline SP on 5/13 was a great find (SH).

Snowy Plover: On 5/15 one was seen at the Colorado River Wildlife Area on the west slope, where this species is considered very rare (DWr). Two were at the La Junta sewage ponds from 4/14-20 (BKP, MJ).

Semipalmated Plover: Up to 4 birds were at Blue Mesa Res. from 4/16-28 (KP). Two were at Upper Queens Res. on 4/21 (MJ). At Jim Hamm Pond east of Longmont two were seen on 4/25 (WPL, JFB). Two more were seen at both Highline SP on 4/27 (mob) and the Colorado River Wildlife Area a day later (CD). Fossil Creek Marsh near Fort Collins had four on 4/30 (JBo) and two stopped at Hamilton Res on 5/5 (RAR).

Mountain Plover: On 4/12 eighty +/- individuals were found in two flocks of about 40 each on the Pawnee National Grasslands (JH). A loner south of Vineland from 5/5-24 was at an unusual locale (PSS, CS).

Black-necked Stilt: There were several reports away from breeding areas in southeastern Colorado. One was found at Blue Mesa Res. on 4/16 (KP). Five were at Fossil Creek Marsh on 5/2 (JBo, WPL, PDL). One or two were at Hamilton Res. from 5/11-15 (RAR, JBo). A breeding attempt was made on the west slope until high water destroyed the nest on 5/23).

Upland Sandpiper: Further west than normal were one at Hamilton Res. on 5/13 (DAL) and 2 east of Galetton on 5/18 (JBo).

Whimbrel: One was at Highline SP on 4/21 (CD, RL) and one on 5/11 at Thompson Res #2 (CD). This species is casual in the west. From the east, the first report was of 14 at Hamilton Res. on 5/3 (DCE, JBo). On 5/4, one was found at Upper Queens Res. (BKP, MHu). One appeared at Bonny Res. on 5/11 (TL, BSt) and two each showed at Union Res. (DWK) and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal (HK, UK, mob) on 5/12. Eleven remained at Hamilton Res. on 5/15 (RAR) and an astonishing 70 were at Bonny Res. on 5/17 (BKP, BD, BRi). One was near long-billed curlews at Blue Lake on 5/18 (SH, TL, BSt).

Long-billed Curlew: The earliest report this year was of 2 near Highline SP on 3/24 (RL), where they would be rare any time. Three more were seen on 4/12 at Wood Gulch and Chance Gulch near Gunnison (KP). The earliest eastern plains report was of 14 on 4/13 along the Larimer/Weld County line (DCE, JM). Singletons were near Lake Cheraw on 4/20 (BKP, MJ, BD) and Hamilton Res. on 4/22 (JC, AC). Three were at Hamilton Res. on 5/5 (RAR).

Hudsonian Godwit: A spectacular breeding-plumaged bird graced Duck Lake south of Fort Collins on 5/2 (DCE, JBo, WPL, PDL).

Marbled Godwit: A head count at Highline SP on 4/27 eclipsed the century mark (CD, RL, SH). The species is normally rare there. Another was seen

with 30+ willets at Blue Mesa Res. also on 4/27 (KP). The high eastern plains count was of 31 birds near Windsor on 5/2 (DCE, JBo).

Sanderling: A treat in spring, ten were at Upper Queens Res. on 5/4 (BKP, MHu). Two were at Hamilton Res. on 5/15 and one stayed until 5/27 (RAR). Very rare on the west slope, two were at Highline SP on 4/27 (CD, RL, mob).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: At best an uncommon spring migrant on the plains, one was early on 4/6 at Lake Holbrook (PSS, CS). A loner was at Beebe Draw on 4/20 (JH). Fifteen appeared at Hamilton Res. on 5/27 (RAR).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Two at Upper Queens Res. on 5/17 were the first reported (BKP, BD). Two were also near Tamarack on 5/27 (DAL, JM).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Uncommon in spring, 3 were spotted at Beebe Draw on 4/20 (JH).

Dunlin: Rare in spring, one was found on 5/19 at Upper Queens Res. (BG).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Walden Ponds in Boulder hosted this very rare spring migrant on 5/12 (JV).

Red-necked Phalarope: Rare on the western slope, 10-15 were seen on 4/27 (CD, RL). This was by far the earliest report. The first reported from the east were 6 at Hamilton Res. on 5/11 (JBo, CM). The highest tally was 150 flying incessantly around Prewitt Res. on 5/17 (DAL).

Laughing Gull: Union Res. was visited on 5/7 by this casual visitor from the Gulf States (JPr).

Bonaparte's Gull: Rare to uncommon in spring, there were many reports this year. Three at Lake Holbrook on 3/24 were the first. A first-winter bird on 4/22 at Blue Lake (JMe) and another first-winter bird from 4/24-28 at Blue Mesa Res. (KP) vie for the honor of "most misplaced". The high count was 24 at Hamilton Res. on 5/5 (RAR). All other reports were of 1-3 birds.

Herring Gull: Probably too gorged with the flesh of dead Asiatic carp to move northward, three immatures persisted at Hamilton Res. on 4/28. Two remained until 5/5 and one was tardy until 5/15 (RAR).

Thayer's Gull: One immature lasted at Hamilton Res. from the winter period until 3/30 (RAR). An adult was found along I-76 in western Adams County on 3/31 (TL).

Glaucous Gull: An exceptional record of an immature at Antero Res. on 5/24 was mutually wayward and abeyant in its northward travels (DP).

Common Tern: Accidental in spring in western CO, one on 5/23 at the Colorado River Wildlife Area must have thrilled the observers (CD, DWr, RL, PA). One adult at Lake Holbrook on 5/3 (BKP) was the only report received of this rare spring migrant on the eastern plains.

Least Tern: What a great year for rare terns on the west slope. One individual was at the Colorado River Wildlife Area on 5/30 (DWr, CD, RL).

Band-tailed Pigeon: An incredible 300+ thronged a feedlot near the Rifle Rest Area on 5/12 (CD, RL).

White-winged Dove: This casual species staged an irruption this year in southeastern CO on the heels of several days of strong, southwesterly winds. The first appeared at Pueblo West on 5/16-17 (FD, BKP, MJ). Another visited Pueblo from 5/22-27 (MHL, MY). A pair showed in Canon City between 5/25-31 (BAb, DP, JwT, RWt). On 5/26 one was discovered in the San Luis Valley, to constitute the first record for the species there (LC, JRw, LRw).

Carolina Parakeet: As expected, no reports were received.

Black-billed Cuckoo: For the second time in recent years, a dead individual was found on the CSU campus (reported to RAR). Resuscitation efforts failed. One with a pulse was spotted at Adobe Creek Res. on 5/20 (DN).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: There were two spring reports of this rare to uncommon migrant and resident on the eastern plains. Most likely there will be more reports for the summer period as this species arrives here late. One was seen 5/22 in Pueblo (MJ) and one was near Fort Morgan on 5/30 (JRi).

Greater Roadrunner: One on 4/26 in Cottonwood Canyon (BKP, BD) and two on 5/3 at Two Buttes Res. (VZ, BKP) were expected locales.

Barn Owl: Myriad reports this spring include a very early bird on 3/16 at the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery (CH). One was near Walsh on 4/17 (JT) and at the FLWE on 4/21 (MJ). Two were at Fort Lyon from 4/26-5/27 (MJ, mob). Singles were seen at Two Buttes Res. on 5/3-4 (BKP, VZ), Bonny Res. on 5/12 (TL), Nee Noshe Res. on 5/17-19 (BKP, BD), Upper Queens Res. on 5/19 (DSm), and in Pueblo West on 5/21 (BKP).

Flammulated Owl: A very early record for the state and the earliest ever for the San Luis Valley was of two birds on 4/12 (LRw, JRw, JPo). Another turned in Rye on 5/18 (DJ).



Brown Pelican
(center foreground, with white pelicans)
Chatfield Reservoir
28 September 1996

by Dean Hill



Marsh Wren
Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge
May 1993

by Leon Bright

Western Screech-Owl: One the west slope four broods were found by the end of the period (CD, RL). One on 4/12 at the Uracca Cemetery provided only the 6th San Luis Valley record (LRw, JRw, JPo). Two were in Cottonwood Canyon on 4/26 (BKP, BD).

Northern Pygmy-Owl: Conejos Canyon hosted this rare resident on 4/19 for the only report within the period (JRw).

Long-horned Owl: The only report of this rare resident from the west slope was of a failed nest near Highline SP (CD, RL). In the east, ten nests were found at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, which is the highest total in the last 5 years of record-keeping (DMt).

Short-eared Owl: An encouraging number of reports were received for this rare to uncommon resident. Two were found 5 m east of Ault on 3/30 (DAL) and another slightly east of here on 5/3 (JFB, WPL). On 4/19, one was found on the Pawnee National Grasslands and other just north of Nunn (TL, BSt, SH, JB). Two were south of Lindon in Washington County on 5/7 (BSt) and one was first seen south of Hamilton Res. on 5/21 (RAR, AH).

Boreal Owl: Hearing 10-12 at Cameron Pass on the night of 3/9 belied the usual elusiveness of this much sought and rarely found resident (RAR, SRa, DAL, JFB, WPL). One was seen on 3/31 in Rocky Mountain National Park to the envy of us all (SRa). Three were heard calling north of Silverthorne throughout March and April (SBo, TL SH).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One was heard in late March near Eagle (JFz). One was seen in Rocky Mountain National Park on 5/2 (SRa) and another was found in Rist Canyon west of Fort Collins on 5/9 (JFB). On 5/11, three fledglings were found on the Uncompahgre Plateau (CD, RL).

Chimney Swift: Six birds in Palisade, possibly nesting, is amazing (CD, RL). This would be only the 2nd confirmed record from the west slope.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: The first appeared in southeast Colorado near Walsh on 4/17 (JT). The first on the west slope was reported on 4/27. A pair in Penrose from 4/27-28 (JWt, RWt) and a male at the LCCW on 5/4 were unexpected (BKP, MHu).

Hummingbird species: A fly-by on 3/8 in a Pueblo backyard remains a mystery. This is a very early date.

Lewis' Woodpecker: One visited Jack Merchant's feeder in Eagle on 5/16, where it was not an anticipated guest. Another explorer was found east of normal range at CVCg on 5/21 (JH, WPL).

Red-headed Woodpecker: The two most unusual reports were of individuals at Hamilton Res. on 5/13 (DAL) and in Estes Park on 5/23 (MTv).

Acorn Woodpecker: A residence in the Thompson Canyon west of Loveland was home to a female from 5/23 through the end of the period (DA, SA). Some speculate this may be the same bird that was seen downstream at the Sylvan Dale Ranch in September 1995 by Christian Hagan.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: One was at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins on 3/23 (DAL), where they have become annual visitors.

Red-naped Sapsucker: One at Pueblo's Valco Ponds on 4/27 was odd (MY).

Williamson's Sapsucker: Two were located on the Uncompahgre on 5/11, where they are rare (RL).

Ladder-backed Woodpecker: Sightings of this uncommon resident are always of interest. Six at Cottonwood and Carrizo Canyons on 3/31 was a good count (MJ). One at Avondale Ponds in Pueblo County on 4/6 (PSS, CS) and two at Olney Springs on 4/6 (PSS, CS) were at their range edge.

Three-toed Woodpecker: The burn area at Pingree Park west of Fort Collins hosted two on 3/8 (DAL).

Alder Flycatcher: Well-versed in the punctilios of *Empidonax* identification, Tony Leukering banded one each day on 5/11 and 5/12 at Bonny Res. His identification comments are of interest. "Both had more noticeable eyerings than most Willows show and both fell outside the Willow range on two important wing formula characters and inside the range of Alder for both".

Least Flycatcher: Now that we have all calibrated to the "che-bek" call, leasts seem to be everywhere. The high count was 6 at Bonny Res. on 5/17-19 (BKP, BD). The earliest reports fell on 4/27, when one was in Carrizo Canyon (BKP, BD) and another at Lake Henry (MJ). Westernmost were birds at Dixon Res. in Fort Collins from 5/9-20 (WPL, JBo, mob). DAL estimated as many as 20% of this spring's identifiable empids along the northern Front Range may have been this species.

Gray Flycatcher: In the east, one was at Temple Canyon Park on 5/18 (DJ).

Black Phoebe: A pair returned to nest at Uravan by 4/25 (RWO, RL). In recent years this has become a regular nesting location for this rare CO sp.

Eastern Phoebe: Six had returned to normal haunts in Cottonwood and Carrizo Canyons by 3/31 (MJ). Other sightings were less expected. One was a Flagler Res. in Kit Carson County on 5/8 (BSt), another at Colorado City from 5/19-26 (DS), one sang at the LCCW on 5/19-20, and two pairs at Apishapa SWA on 5/22 (TL, BSt).

Ash-throated Flycatcher: On 5/11 the Poudre River Trail in Fort Collins was visited by this rare northern Colorado migrant for the 2nd straight year.

Great Crested Flycatcher: All reports were from southeastern Colorado, including one on 5/3 at the LCCW (MJ, BKP, PG, VZ), and up to 4 at the FLWE from 5/10-27 (BKP, mob).

Cassin's Kingbird: One was seen on Pinyon Mesa on the west slope on 5/11 (AS), constituting the most unusual record for this species this season.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: The only report, very rare outside of extreme southeastern Baca County, was of one at Colorado City on 5/13 (DS).

Purple Martin: Away from areas of expected occurrence on the west slope was one near Mack on 5/19 (RL) and another in the Grand Valley on 5/25 (CD). A very rare find on the eastern plains, a female was found at Jumbo Res. on 5/27 (DAL, JM).

Stellar's Jay: One on 5/5 at Connected Lakes in Grand Junction was a rare Grand Valley record (RL).

Blue Jay: This species continues westward. One was in Eagle from 5/17-29 (JMe). Three were found on the San Luis Valley Spring County (JRw, LRw).

Carolina Wren: Though very rare, two Colorado locales seem to garner the lion's share of the records- Beulah and Denver. One was seen again from 3/9-4/21 in Beulah (BKP, BG, PF). From 4/14-16 another visited a Denver feeder (BWu, SWu, HK, UK).

Veery: The first was found on 5/2 at Two Buttes Res. (VZ). One was near Fort Morgan on 5/9 (JRI). The remaining reports were from the second half on the month. One was at the Last Chance Rest Area on 5/17 (WPL, JFB), one at CVCG on 5/17-18 (mob), three at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins from 5/20-end of period (DAL), one at Nee Noshe Res. on 5/20 (BMP, MJ), up to 2 at Dixon Res. in Fort Collins from 5/20-22 (JM, WPL, mob) and lastly one north of Limon on 5/27 (CW).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: This spring proved to be a prodigal source of records for this very rare migrant. One was at Willow Creek Park in Lamar

on 4/28 (MJ, BKP, BD), one at the LCCW from 5/10-12 (BKP, VT, MJ), and one was east of Fort Lyon on 5/10 (NE, JK). One at Bonny Res. was seen on 5/10 (JTB) and probably the same bird was banded in the area on 5/11 (SH, TL, RB, BSt). Hasty CG had one on 5/18 (MJ) and the last record was of a bird north of Limon on 5/27 (CW).

Wood Thrush: A rare migrant, one was found this spring amongst Swainson's Thrushes near Grover in Weld County on 5/11 (RAR).

Varied Thrush: One lingered at the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery through 3/16, after first being discovered on the Christmas County in December 1995 (DCE, DAL, mob). Another was found in Walsh on 5/12 (JT), providing only the 2nd Baca County record.

Northern Mockingbird: This species' numbers were up tremendously according to observers on both sides of the Divide. Speculation is that dry conditions to the south of Colorado was the reason.

Bohemian Waxwing: Always unpredictable, the only reports were of 150 along Crown Point Road in Larimer County on 3/8 (DAL) and of about 30 at Cameron Pass on 3/9 (DAL, JFB, WPL).

White-eyed Vireo: A casual spring migrant, one was at the LCCW on 5/1 (DN) and another appeared at Fountain Creek Regional Park from 5/10-11 (BM, DS_m). The most extraordinary was one banded on 5/29 in Rocky Mountain National Park by the Colorado Bird Observatory (RCo). This is apparently the first mountain record for the species.

Bell's Vireo: Outside of normal "stomping grounds" near Bonny Res. and Tamarack Ranch, one was at Lake Henry on 5/22 (CW, JK), two in Boulder County on 5/24 (DWK), and one singing at Lake Cheraw on 5/27 (BKP).

Yellow-throated Vireo: A very rare spring migrant, one was at the FLWE on 5/3 (BKP), another at Bonny Res. on 5/17 (JFB, WPL), and a third at Fountain Creek Regional Park on 5/24 (BM).

Philadelphia Vireo: A singing bird at Upper Queens Res. on 5/18 was an ultra-rare discovery (DS_m).

Red-eyed Vireo: There were eleven reports of fifteen birds from 4/28-end of period. The most unusual was one at Lake Estes on 5/23 (SR, JR).

Blue-winged Warbler: One was at Cottonwood Canyon on 5/4 (JR_w, LR_w, JP_o) and a female was seen in Estes Park on 5/19 & 5/21 (DB, mob). The species is accidental in the mountains.

Golden-winged Warbler: For at least the third consecutive year one was found at CVCG. This immature stayed from 5/11-17 (DBe, JC, AC, mob).

Tennessee Warbler: There were numerous reports this spring. One was at Two Buttes Res. on 5/2 (VZ), one at the LCCW on 5/4 (VZ) and 5/19 (BG), one at Hamilton Res. on 5/13 (DAL), up to 2 at CVCG from 5/10-23 (JFB, WPL), up to 2 at Bonny Res. from 5/17-19 (JFB, WPL, BKP), and one in Estes Park on 5/24, where its considered very rare (SW).

Nashville Warbler: Southeastern Colorado was the place for Nashvilles this spring. Up to 4 were at the LCCW from 5/2-5 (VZ, mob). Two were seen at Two Buttes Res. from 5/2-4 (VZ, mob). One was at Lake Henry on 5/5 (BKP, MJ) and 5/22 (CW, JK). One was at the FLWE on 5/10 (BKP) and one at the LCCW on 5/18 (MJ).

Northern Parula: Southeastern Colorado - it's like a whole other state. The first showed on 5/4 in Cottonwood Canyon (RO, GA, DQ). A male was at the LCCW on 5/5 (LRw, BKP, mob), one 5/9 at Olive Marsh in Pueblo (BKP, PSS), a singing male at Rock Canyon in Pueblo on 5/11 (BKP), and lastly another singing male was found at Mineral Palace Park in Pueblo on 5/24 (DS).

Yellow Warbler: Apparently wanting to get a jump on the competition, one showed in Walsh on the very early date of 4/10 (JT).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: A male was at the LCCW on 5/5 (MJ, PG, BKP, mob), another at Valco Ponds in Pueblo from 5/6-8 (MY, PSS, CS, BKP). On 5/18 one was a Bonny Res. (VZ) and in Fort Collins (DAL). One was at Lake Henry on 5/22 (CW, JK), at the FLWE on 5/26 (MJ, BKP), and the latest on 5/29 in Fort Collins (DAL).

Magnolia Warbler: One was at Nee Noshe Res. on 5/12 (BKP, MJ), at the FLWE from 5/13-19 (MJ, BKP), another at Nee Noshe Res. on 5/19 (BKP, BD), one at the LCCW on 5/20 (BKP), two singing males in Pueblo on 5/20 (BD, JD), and one at Two Buttes Res. on 5/22 (JK, CS). One at Lake Estes on 5/21 (SR, JR, SRa) was a rare mountain record.

Cape May Warbler: Outstanding was a male at the LCCW on 5/7 (DN).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A singing male was at the FLWE on 5/10 (BKP, MHu, mob) and another male was at CVCG from 5/15-17 (DBe, mob).

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Rare in the east during migration, a female was seen at Mineral Palace Park in Pueblo on 4/29 (MJ). Others, all in

different plumages, were seen at the FLWE on 5/3, 5/10 and 5/12 (MJ, BKP). CVCG hosted one on 5/13 (DAL) and 3 were found at the LCCW on 5/28 (JT).

Townsend's Warbler: All reports were of females. One was east of Fort Lyons from 5/10-13 (BKP, MHu, mob), one at the FLWE on 5/12-13 (BKP, MJ) and one at the LCCW from 5/18-20 (MJ, mob).

Hermit Warbler: Undoubtedly one of the spring's best finds was a young singing male at the FLWE on 5/17 (BKP). This represents Colorado's 9th record, pending acceptance.

Black-throated Green Warbler: A rare spring migrant, one was at Two Buttes Res. on 5/6 (DSm, KS). Another was seen on 5/18 at Bonny Res. (VZ).

Blackburnian Warbler: A singing male at Lake Henry from 5/4-6 (MJ, BKP, mob) is the kind of thing winter daydreams are made of. Another was found at Two Buttes Res. on 5/22 (JK, CW).

Palm Warbler: Singletons appeared at Two Buttes Res. on 4/27 (VZ), Mineral Palace Park on 4/29 (MJ), the LCCW from 5/3-4 (MJ, PG), Lower Latham Res. on 5/3 (WPL, JFB), Pueblo on 5/10 (JD), and the Poudre River Trail from 5/10-11 (JM, DAL). The first spring record for the San Luis Valley was of a bird from 5/10-11 at the Rawinski residence. I find the habits of this species interesting. The Latham Res. bird was working cattails along a ditch and fenceline. I was in Nebraska this May and saw two Palms there. One was sitting on a barbed wire fence in a pasture with hundreds of clay-colored and savannah sparrows and no other warblers. The other was foraging on a sandbar with a few yellow-rumped warblers.

Bay-breasted Warbler: A pleasant surprise was a singing 1st-year male at Dixon Res. from 5/19-20 (WPL, JBo, mob).

Blackpoll Warbler: A slow spring for this species with only 11 reports, compared with 29 last spring. They were reported from 4/27-5/27.

Black-and-White Warbler: Fifteen reports this spring compares with 28 in 1995. They spanned 5/2-27. Of rarest occurrence were one on 5/11 in the San Luis Valley for the 4th record there (JRw, LRw) and another at Lake Estes from 5/16-23 (JSm). There are fewer than 10 mountain records.

American Redstart: Twelve reports spanned through the end of the period after beginning on 5/3. Casual in the mountains, two were seen in Estes Park. A female was first seen on 5/11 and stayed for about two weeks (SR, JR). A male was seen there on 5/31 (SRa).

Prothonotary Warbler: There were two reports this spring of this very rare visitor. A singing male was at Valco Ponds in Pueblo from 5/6-7 (PSS, CS, BKP, mob). One seen at the Monte Vista NWR on 5/25 (BSt, TL) provided only the second San Luis Valley record.

Worm-eating Warbler: It was a strong spring for this rare species. One was found from 5/4-5 at the LCCW (PG, BKP, mob) and again on 5/10 (BKP). Another showed in Cottonwood Canyon on 5/4 (LRw, JRw, JPo, mob). One was at Nee Noshe Res. on 5/6 (DSm, KS). Bill Lisowsky and John Barber had two on 5/17, one at Bonny Res. and another at the Last Chance Rest Area.

Ovenbird: Ten were reported from 5/3-25, most from southeastern Colorado.

Northern Waterthrush: 21 were reported from 5/3-25. High count honors go to Lake Estes where observers noted up to 6 (SR, JR, JZ, BZ). Most unusual were birds on 5/11 near Eagle (JFz) and another at the Monte Vista NWR on 5/25 (TL).

Louisiana Waterthrush: I thought long and hard to come up with a good superlative to use here. Wow! One was discovered at Prewitt Res. on 5/17 (DAL). It was compared to a nearby Northern Waterthrush, helping nail-down the 6th state record, pending acceptance.

Kentucky Warbler: There seems to be a Kentucky every year now in Colorado. It is just a matter of where in the state one will show up. This year's "Where's Waldo" Kentucky Warbler showed at Flagler Res. on 5/8 (BSt).

Connecticut Warbler: The find of the spring was a well-studied adult male at Tamarack Ranch on 5/27 (DAL, JM).

Mourning Warbler: A strong showing this spring for this very rare species. A male was at Nee Noshe Res. on 5/10 (JK, NE) and another on 5/15 at Fort Lyon (DN). At the Last Chance Rest Area a male was present from 5/16-19 (JRo, BKP, BD, mob) and a female on 5/26 (CW).

Hooded Warbler: A male was at the LCCW on 5/2 (VZ) and a female at Two Buttes Res. on 5/3 (BKP, MJ, PG, VZ). Singing males were reported from Two Buttes Res. from 5/4-6 (BKP, mob) and at the FLWE on 5/13 (MJ). A male was in Baca County on 5/12 (JT) and a female on 5/21 at CVCG (WPL, DAL).

Hepatic Tanager: A male was found at Apishapa SWA on 5/21 (RCo).

Summer Tanager: At Two Buttes Res. a female was present on 5/2 (VZ) and a male on 5/4 (BKP, MHu, mob). On 5/5 at the LCCW a young male was seen

(MJ, PG, mob) and also an adult male (RO). A singing male was seen in Penrose from 5/25-30 (JWt, RWt).

Scarlet Tanager: There were two reports this spring of this very rare migrant. A female was discovered at Bonny Res. on 5/17 (WPL, JFB) and one was in Boulder County on 5/20 (BMi).

Northern Cardinal: One was seen on 3/31 in Carrizo Canyon (MJ), where it was unexpected.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: There were fifteen reports this spring. They are considered very rare in the mountains, but recent trends do not suggest this. One female was seen near Lake Estes from 5/15-23 (JZ, BZ). Up to two males were at Jack Merchant's feeder in Eagle from 5/9-12 and he reports knowledge of two more near Minturn on 5/21. One was near Crestone on 5/11 (reported to JRw).

Indigo Bunting: There were two reports from unexpected locales. One was at a feeder near Lake Estes on 5/10 (REs, LEs) and one near Crestone on 5/11 (reported to JRw).

Painted Bunting: Chalk-up another great bird for the FLWE. On 5/12, a young male or female was found (MJ, BKP).

Dickcissel: Irregular and always of interest in Colorado, up to 6 were found east of Fort Lyons from 5/18-27 (MJ, BKP, mob).

Eastern Towhee: A rare resident and of interest since the split, a male was a Lake Henry on 5/11 (MJ) and another sang from 5/18-20 at Upper Queens Res. (MJ, DSm, VZ, BKP). A male was found at Bonny Res. on 5/18 (VZ) and Rocky Ford SWA had one on 5/27 (BKP).

Rufous-crowned Sparrow: Two were reported on 4/27 from Cottonwood Canyon (BKP, BD). Unexpected, was a bird in Walsh on 5/7 (JT), as well as throughout the period in Lefthand Canyon near Boulder (DWK). At Apishapa SWA, 21 were located from 5/20-22 (MC, TL, BSt).

Field Sparrow: One was at Two Buttes Res. from 4/27-30 (BKP, BD, mob) and another sang at Upper Queens Res. on 5/20 (BKP, MJ).

Black-throated Sparrow: Two wandered away from usual haunts this spring. One on 3/30 at the Rawinski residence represents only the 3rd San Luis Valley record. Possibly a first for the northern mountains was one on 5/20 near Lake Estes (SRa, SR, JR, WPL, JFB).

Sage Sparrow: A very rare spring migrant in the east, one was at Huerfano Res. on 3/25 (MJ), one at Crown Hill Lake in Jefferson County on 4/4 (BS), and one near Wellington on 4/11 (SMa, KMa).

Fox Sparrow: One was near Fort Morgan on 4/1 (JRi) and an eastern race bird was in Pueblo from 5/10-12 (JD).

White-throated Sparrow: One was at Veltus Park in Glenwood Springs on 3/18 (VZ), one on 4/27 at Lake Henry (MJ), one on 5/3 at Rocky Ford SWA (BKP), one from 5/3-5 at the LCCW (MJ, PG, mob), one on 5/5 near Fort Morgan (JRi), and one on 5/20 at Upper Queens Res. (BKP, MJ).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: One at Lake Estes from 5/5-6 is exceptional (MTv). This species is casual, at best, in the mountains.

Harris Sparrow: One lingered in the Eagle area until 3/11 (JMe). One was at Veltus Park in Glenwood Springs on 3/18 (VZ), one at a feeder in Fort Collins from 4/17-5/4 (RAR), and one in Walsh on 4/21 (JT). Another was last seen on 4/24 at a Barr Lake SP feeder (TL). One was near Campo on 5/4 (RO, GA, DQ) and another at Pueblo's Valco Ponds on 5/6 (PSS, CS).

Bobolink: This species had a good showing this spring. One showed at East Dale Res. for only the 3rd San Luis Valley record (LRw). Beginning on 5/6, Estes Park had two males for the 2nd year in a row (SW, SRa). For the 2nd consecutive year, the species showed up near Bellvue. This year 3 males and a female were found first on 5/16 (DAL, JM, JBo). Near Wellington, Steve and Kathy Martin had the species for the 4th straight year. This year a pair was found starting on 5/23. A male showed in Gunnison on 5/27 (KP).

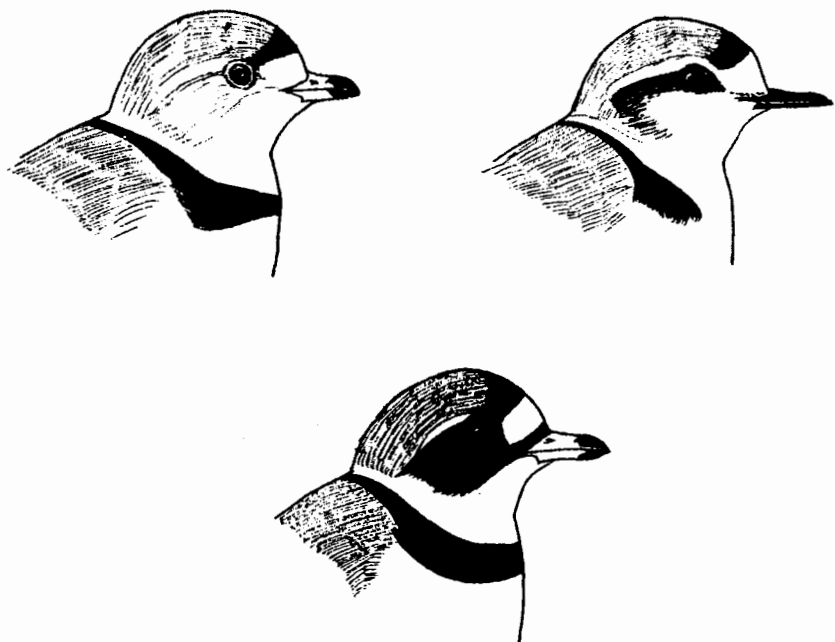
Baltimore Oriole: One on 5/6 at Veteran's Park in Brighton was quite far west (CAi, TL, NG).

Purple Finch: One 3/24 in Cottonwood Canyon was well-documented and photographed (BMc, SS).

Abbreviation Key: CG=Campground; CVCG=Crow Valley Campground; FLWE=Fort Lyons Wildlife Easement; LCCW=Lamar Community College Woods; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; Res.=reservoir; RMNP=Rocky Mountain National Park; SWA=State Wildlife Area

Cited Observers: Bob Abbott (BAb), Don Adams (DA), Sylvia Adams (SA), Chuck Aid (CAi), Pat Arbeiter (PA), George Armbrust (GA), John Barber (JFB), Don Belts (DBe), Joe Bens (JB), Louis Bevier (LBv), Sue Bonfield (SBo), John Bowser (JBo), David Bray (DB), Richard Bunn (RB), Les Cahill (LC), Mike Carter (MC), Robin Corcorin (RCo), Alex Cringan (AC), June Cringan (JC), Coen Dexter (CD), Bob Dickson (BD), Johnnie Dickson (JD), Frosty Donley (FD), David Ely (DCE), Estes Park Bird Club (EPBC), Norm Erthal (NE), Larae Essman (LEs), Roger Essman (REs), Jerry Fedrizzi (JFz), Pat Flynn (PF), Nelda Gamble (NG), Peter Gent (PG), Bob Goycoolea (BG), Jim Hill (JHi), Christian Hagen (CH), Mel Hall (MHl), Andy Hicks (AH), Joe Himmel (JH), Mark Hullinger (MHu), Scott Hutchings (SH), Mark Janos (MJ), Dave Johnson (DJ), Joey Kellner (JK), D.W. King (DWK), Hugh Kingery (HK), Urling Kingery (UK), David Leatherman (DAL), Tony Leukering (TL), Rich Levad (RL), Bill Lisowsky (WPL), Paula Lisowsky (PDL), Bob Machover (BMc), Joe Mammoser (JM), Kathy Martin (KMa), Steve Martin (SMa), Dan Matatos (DMt), Bill Maynard (BM), Cynthia Melcher (CM), Jack Merchant (JMe), Bill Miller (BMi), Duane Nelson (DN), many observers (mob), Ric Olson (RO), David Pantle (DP), Brandon Percival (BKP), Pam Piombro (PP), Jerry Poe (JPo), Kim Potter (KP), John Prather (JPr), David Quesenberry (DQ), Scott Rashid (SRa), John Rawinski (JRw), Lisa Rawinski (LRw), Bob Righter (BRi), Joe Rigli (JRi), Julie Roederer (JR), Scott Roederer (SR), Joe Roller (JRo), Ron Ryder (RAR), Pearle Sandstrom-Smith (PSS), Starr Saphir (SS), Karleen Schofield (KS), Dave Silverman (DS), Art Smith (AS), Clif Smith (CS), Jim Smith (JSm), David Smith (DSm), Bob Spencer (BS), Bonnie Stout (BS), Joe TenBrink (JTB), Janeal Thompson (JT), Melinda Travis (MTv), Van Truan (VT), John Vanderpoele (JV), Alan Versaw (AV), Susan Ward (SW), Jim Watts (JWt), Rosie Watts (RWt), Chris Wood (CW), Ronda Woodward (RWo), Dave Wright (DWr), Bill Wuerthele (BWu), Suzanne Wuerthele (SWu), Mark Yaeger (MY), Barbara Zaninelli (BZ), Jerry Zaninelli (JZ), Vic Zerbi (VZ)





Colorado's *Charadrius* Plovers
Piping Plover (upper left)
Snowy Plover (upper right)
Semipalmated Plover (lower)

(pen and ink drawings)

by Kim Potter

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Burrowing Owl
(pencil drawing)

by Paula Lisowsky

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS OF THE *C.F.O. JOURNAL*

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.

Contributors who use a computer are encouraged to send a hard copy of articles, as well as a disk. The editor would prefer computer-generated articles that use Microsoft Word 5.1 for Macintosh or Word Perfect 5.1 for IBM or ASCII text. Please attach a note to each disk, indicating the software used. After the article is published, the disk will be returned. Please double-space all typed or computer-printed material. Authors may receive one extra copy of the *Journal*. Additional copies are \$3.00 each. Authors who anticipate needing additional copies of their articles should contact the editor prior to printing.

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Deadlines are December 1, March 1, June 1 and September 1, for issues dated January, April, July and October, respectively.

HOW TO SUBMIT RECORDS TO THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Standard reporting forms are available in the "Colorado Bird Distribution Latilong Study", from the *C.F.O. Journal* Editor, or an *Audubon Field Notes* Mountain West form is available from Van A. Truan (1901 Court St., Pueblo, CO 81003 - phone: 719/543-4744). Forms are preferred, as completion of all sections ensures most pertinent information is included.

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Send records of rare birds to the Colorado Bird Records Committee, c/o Zoological Collections, Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park, Denver, CO 80205.



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