
Journal of the

Colorado Field Ornithologists

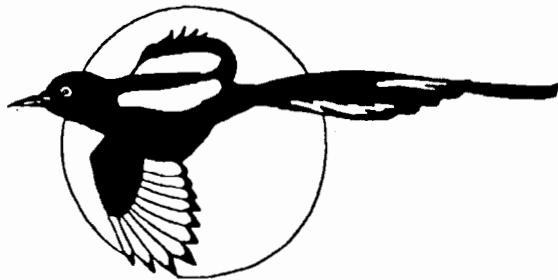
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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (renewable quarterly): Student \$12; Regular \$16;
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the Colorado Field Ornithologists*. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed
by law. Send membership inquiries, renewals, and change of address to Colorado Field
Ornithologists, Robert Spencer, 4430 Gladiola Street, Golden, CO 80403.

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ERRATA -- FROM THE EDITOR: I apologize for transcribing the mailing address of CFO's Treasurer, Robert Spencer, incorrectly in last issue of the *Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists* (Volume 31, No. 2). Although the address appeared correctly with Robert's name under the list of CFO's Board of Directors, it was incorrect in the section on Annual Membership Dues. The correct mailing address for sending in Annual Membership dues is: Robert Spencer, 4430 Gladiola Street, Golden, CO 80403. I am very sorry for any inconvenience or confusion this caused anyone.

In the last issue of the *Journal* there were some errors in the names and term dates for the Records Committee. I apologize for this, as well. The listing of Records Committee members on the inside front cover of this issue should be correct.

-- Cynthia Melcher



DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTWORK

TUFTED DUCK: On March 27, 1997, Myron Plooster discovered what may turn out to be the first wild Tufted Duck ever recorded in Colorado. The bird showed up at Cottonwood Marsh in the Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat northeast of Boulder. This photo shows the first-winter, male Tufted Duck found in early 1992 on Waneka Lake in Lafayette, just a few miles southeast from Cottonwood Marsh. The Waneka Lake bird wore a red plastic leg band, which told all the world it had escaped from a captive breeding flock. The bird found this March, however, had no leg bands. The final decision regarding its status will be made in 1998 by the CFO Records Committee.

Suzi Plooster.....Front Cover

CERULEAN WARBLER: This female Cerulean Warbler gave attendees of the 1997 CFO Convention the surprise of their lives. Drew Smith discovered her on the way back from a CFO Convention field trip in the San Luis Valley on May 25, 1997. She was foraging in some trees just west of the parking lot at the northeast corner of the Home Lake State Wildlife Area, which has a reputation for attracting unusual birds.

Dean Hill.....113

CFO CERULEAN WARBLER-WATCHERS: Interestingly, this rare species cannot be found until there is a Cerulean Warbler in Colorado. They tend to congregate, often where there is no cover, in large flocks around areas where Cerulean Warblers have been observed. This group of CFO Cerulean Warbler-watchers was found at Home Lake State Wildlife Area the same day the Cerulean Warbler appeared there on May 25, 1997.

Clif Smith.....115

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: Dave Leatherman captured on film this infamous adult, winter-plumaged Great Black-backed Gull that lingered at Cherry Creek Reservoir in Denver from mid September to late October 1995. First "confirmed" as a Western Gull, this controversial bird's true species identity was finally resolved by the CFO Records Committee.

Dave Leatherman.....153

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: This adult Sharp-shinned Hawk appeared in Alex Cringan's backyard in Fort Collins on April 11, 1997. Alex suspects it was the same bird he saw on April 12 and 15, as well. The bird in this photograph is feeding on a House Finch.

Alex Cringan.....165

IN MEMORIUM: DR. VERYL KEEN

Dr. Hobey Dixon
84 San Juan
Alamosa, Colorado 81101
(719) 589-3813

Dr. Veryl Keen died Memorial Day weekend as a result of an automobile accident. He was on his way home from leading a birding field trip for the CFO Convention in the San Juan Mountains.

Veryl was a quiet man with a wry sense of humor and a willingness to help others. He grew up on a farm in eastern Oklahoma and knew much about farming and animals. He never boasted, though, unless it was about his grandkids, his garden, or the birds he had seen in the San Luis Valley.

Veryl was a natural biologist, which led him to study biology at the University of Colorado and become a respected and world-renowned ornithologist. He retired as head of the Biology Department of Adams State College after teaching there for twenty-five years. He was an enthusiastic, field-oriented teacher, whose primary concern was the success of his students. Nothing delighted him more than getting people started in birding. He loved to take a box of bird skins and visit local schools to talk about birds. He published about local birds, reported many new species from the San Luis Valley, and conducted training sessions for professional and amateur naturalists. At the drop of a hat, he would go to see a new bird or lead an impromptu field trip.

A few days before Veryl's death, we talked about birds and the upcoming Field Ornithologists trip, he bragged about his grandkids and his garden, and he said that he would like to teach some summer bird courses. Veryl Keen was a gentleman, a teacher, a friend, and a field companion. We miss him.

Dr. Hobey Dixon was a long-time friend of Dr. Keen's. They attended the University of Colorado together, and then both acquired teaching positions at Adams State College, where Dr. Dixon continues to teach Botany. Dr. Dixon is an avid birder, and he credits Dr. Keen with getting him to look up more often than he looks down. To honor Dr. Keen, memorial contributions may be given in his name to Adams State College for funding the college's new science building -- Dr. Keen's favorite charity.

TRIBUTE TO WALLY COLLINS

Edward Wolff
Boulder, Colorado

The concept of "going to the ends of the earth" was no pipe dream for Walter S. (Wally) Collins II, of Boulder, who died suddenly in June, at the age of 71, while on a birding vacation on the East Coast. During a single year, he visited Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America, and later the Aleutian Islands, 8,000 miles farther north, in search of elusive birds.

At the drop of a hint from the Rare Bird Alert network, he often hopped on a plane to go see a bird that was new to him. His life-bird count for North America was 707. He added the 707th -- Bicknell's Thrush -- to his list in early June, when he hiked to timberline on New Hampshire's Mount Washington to find it.

Wally's professional life, and his other love, was music. A teacher, choral conductor, and music historian, he was Associate Dean of the College of Music at the University of Colorado. He served a term as president of the American Choral Directors Association and was a founder and first secretary-general of the International Federation for Choral Music, to which choral directors from more than 40 countries belong.

Wally loved small-group singing. When he moved to Boulder in 1971, he founded a men's acappella singing group, the New Wizard Oil Combination. Named for Wizard Oil, a famous patent medicine of the late 19th century, the group is best known for its comic songs. Wally's solos included "Mad Dogs and Englishmen Go Out in the Noonday Sun" and "The Sadder But Wiser Girl for Me," in which the soloist prays "for Hester to win just one more 'A'."

Wally leaves his wife of 39 years, Jenny Kate; two daughters, Martha and Mayly; and a son, Neil. He lives on in the memories of colleagues, students, and friends everywhere.

Ed Wolff and Wally Collins met in the early 1950s, when they sang together with the Wiffenpoofs at Yale University. In 1970, when the University of Colorado's Associate Dean of Music position had been offered to Wally, Ed helped "influence" Wally's decision to accept the position. In 1971, this singing duo reunited to co-found the New Wizard Oil Combination. On those rare occasions when Wally and Jenny Kate were home from their birding trips, they would visit with Ed and his wife, Mary, to share good times and travel tales.

**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 its goals.
2. For scholarly contributions 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 every other year at most. 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 C.F.O. 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.

Cerulean Warbler at Home Lake State Wildlife Area,
San Luis Valley, May 25, 1997
by D. Hill



**CERULEAN WARBLER (*Dendroica cerulea*)
IN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY**

Drew Smith
3606 Widgeon Way
Eagan, Minnesota 55123

On Sunday, May 25, 1997, during the Convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) in the San Luis Valley, our group field trip had ended and our vehicle was headed back to the main hotel. It was about 3:30 p.m., and we decided on taking one last stop at the Home Lake State Wildlife Area (SWA). The remaining members of our group were Cliff Smith, who was driving, Pearle Sandstrom-Smith, Nickie Pliler, and myself.

The Home Lake SWA has a reputation for attracting unusual birds. Actually, a good portion of the area is a popular fishing lake ringed with trees, and it is located in a fairly suburban setting on the east side of Monte Vista. We drove to the northeast corner and parked. We were hoping to add a Belted Kingfisher to our trip list. After a few minutes of casual birding at the canal that runs along the north side of the lake, Pearle noticed some bird activity in a small

grove of trees just west of where we parked. Very quickly we saw a Warbling Vireo and a Yellow-rumped Warbler. Still, there were more birds. Then Pearle called out a male Chestnut-sided Warbler. The rest of us started searching for the bird. I didn't see it, but I did find a different warbler that I couldn't identify immediately. I knew it was going to be something very good, and alerted the group to this new bird. Clif had also found this bird instead of the Chestnut-sided Warbler, and he had no idea what it was either.

The bird was feeding actively, which made it difficult for us to get a good look at it. Initially, it was in the upper canopy, but it started working its way to lower branches. Our views of it were mere glimpses as it moved through the leaves, branches, and shadows. Frequently, it flew out on short forays to hawk insects. Finally the obliging moment came: the bird tipped forward into the sunlight to snatch an insect. Its back was a beautiful blue-gray just tinged with green. There were no streaks or patches of other color. The wings were dark with two prominent, white wing-bars. There was a pale but distinct supercilium, and the auricular area was a grayish patch. The throat and upper breast were a pale, buffy yellow, and the underparts were whitish with a fine speckling of spots that extended down the sides to the flanks as pale streaks. The legs and bill were dark. I then recognized the bird, having seen the same species numerous times in Minnesota. I called out, "Oh my God! That's a female Cerulean Warbler!"

For the next several minutes, the bird was very cooperative. She remained low in the trees, coming down to within ten feet or less of the ground. Based on my experience, this was uncharacteristic for Cerulean Warblers. In Minnesota on their breeding grounds, they seem to favor the canopy of undisturbed woods with tall, old trees. Typically, only views of the birds' underparts are seen, acquired with a classic case of "warbler neck." On the two days that I saw her, she frequently foraged in low branches. Perhaps the winds and cool weather forced insect prey to concentrate in the lower branches.

Being well-aware that our find was rare, we quickly wrote our notes and then headed to the main hotel to contact any remaining convention attendees. Thanks to Pearle, who made phone calls and had the hotel manager leave a message for each attendee still registered, the word spread quickly and many people got to see the bird that afternoon. When we returned to the area, finding the bird again caused some anxious moments. A nasty weather front was moving through with some rain and strong, gusty winds. Fortunately, it was very brief and seemed to pass once we found the bird on the other side of the canal... a nice coincidence! Clif Smith and Dean Hill took several photographs. Peter Gent

phoned the discovery in to the Denver hotline, which was updated quickly with the news.

That evening, more storms came in, producing rain in the valley and snow in the mountains. When I arrived at Home Lake the next morning at 6:25 a.m., several people were there already, and so was the Cerulean Warbler. How lucky we were that she stayed another day! John Rawinski had taken a couple rolls of photos before I arrived. When I left the area at about 7:00 a.m., more people were still arriving. I don't know how many people actually saw the bird, but I would guess it was probably more than 40. There are numerous photographic records, as well. Without question, she was the most widely observed and documented Cerulean Warbler yet discovered in Colorado! I'm not sure how many records there are for this species in Colorado, but I had heard it was anywhere from the third to the fifth. The CFO Records Committee can sort that out!

What a surprise it was to find a Cerulean Warbler in the San Luis Valley, and, what a pleasure it was to be able to share the discovery with so many birders.



CFO Cerulean Warbler-watchers at Home Lake State Wildlife Area,
San Luis Valley, May 25, 1997
by C. Smith

**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS'
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

May 24, 1997

CFO Annual Convention

Monte Vista, Colorado

Present were: Warren Finch, Mona Hill, Mark Janos, Suzi Plooster, Pearle Sandstrom-Smith, Bob Spencer, Linda Vidal, and Alan Versaw. Brandon Percival, Leon Bright, and Cynthia Melcher had communicated that they would not be there. As there are currently 14 members of the Board, the eight members attending did not constitute a quorum and no business could be transacted. A quorum is defined in the bylaws as being two-thirds (67%) of the members of the Board present; 8 of 14 is 57%.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mona Hill, Secretary

**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS'
ANNUAL MEETING**

May 24, 1997

Monte Vista, Colorado

At a brief meeting at the annual convention, members of the Colorado Field Ornithologists moved, seconded and approved the election of officers as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Term Expiring</u>
Linda Vidal	President	1998
	Vice President	
Mona Hill	Secretary	1998
Robert Spencer	Treasurer	1998

Board members were elected as follows: Alan Versaw, Warren Finch, and William Fink. The three board members are eligible for reelection when their terms expire in 2000.

As there was no nomination presented for Vice President and there were no nominations from the floor, it was approved to suspend the Bylaws requiring officers to be elected by the general membership at the annual convention and to allow the Board to appoint a vice president until the next annual convention.

Respectfully submitted,
Mona Hill, Secretary

CFO CONVENTION 1997

Alan Versaw
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The Mississippi Kite that showed up in Alamosa during the week prior to the 1997 CFO Convention portended an excellent list of species for the conventioners. While the kite did not stick around for the weekend, other rare birds for the San Luis Valley helped to make up the difference. Highlight birds for the convention included Common Tern, Nashville Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and the cooperative Cerulean Warbler. Altogether, just over 160 species were recorded for the weekend.

Field trips took convention participants to all parts of the San Luis Valley. Many people paid visits to tried-and-true sites, such as Russell Lakes and San Luis Lakes. Others visited less-celebrated, but equally productive sites, such as the Blanca Wetlands and Cat Creek.

Tony Leukering of the Colorado Bird Observatory provided the banquet program. His bird quiz slide show provided a number of identification challenges for even the most accomplished birders in our crowd. None of those present will ever again misidentify a young Williamson's Sapsucker peeking out of a dimly-lit aspen hole. Yeah, right.

One note of sadness requires mention. Dr. Veryl Keen, a long-time and respected member of Colorado's academic ornithological community, passed away during the convention weekend. He died from injuries sustained in a single-car accident while returning to Alamosa after leading the field trip on which the Bay-breasted Warbler was found. Dr. Keen taught biology at Adams State College from 1966 until he retired in 1994. At the time of his retirement, he was the head of the Biology department. During the 1980s and into the 1990s, he taught a one-week summer course entitled "Birds of the San Luis Valley." Numerous people gained their first real exposure to birding in those classes. I took the class myself as a way to add some spice to my summer education classes at Adams State College in 1989. One of the field trips we took that week went to the Cat Creek area. It was clearly one of his favorite birding locales in the San Luis Valley. Dr. Keen, who was 74 at the time of his death, was born and lived his early years in Oklahoma. He is survived by two children, both of whom live in Alamosa.

In all, 64 people attended the convention. Several other folks from the San

Luis Valley helped us with field trips. Additionally, we were honored by the presence of Mr. Arnold Salazar, Chairman of the Colorado Wildlife Commission, and his wife, Marguerite, at the convention banquet.

We look forward to reconvening in Lamar next year. No official dates for next year's convention have been set, but it will fall early in the month to match the peak of warbler migration in southeastern Colorado.

Bird species seen on CFO Convention field trips in the San Luis Valley over the weekend of May 23rd through 26th are listed below. The list was provided by John Rawinski. New records for the San Luis Valley are denoted with an asterisk.

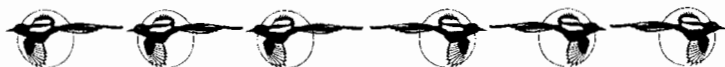
Pied-billed Grebe	Common Merganser
Eared Grebe	Ruddy Duck
Western Grebe	Mississippi Kite*
Clark's Grebe	Northern Harrier
American White Pelican	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Double Crested Cormorant	Cooper's Hawk
American Bittern	Swainson's Hawk
Great Blue Heron	Red-tailed Hawk
Great Egret	Ferruginous Hawk
Snowy Egret	Golden Eagle
Cattle Egret	American Kestrel
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Prairie Falcon
White-faced Ibis	Peregrine Falcon
Turkey Vulture	Ring-necked Pheasant
Snow Goose	Virginia Rail
Canada Goose	Sora
Green-winged Teal	American Coot
Mallard	Sandhill Crane
Northern Pintail	Snowy Plover
Blue-winged Teal	Killdeer
Cinnamon Teal	Mountain Plover
Northern Shoveler	American Avocet
Gadwall	Lesser Yellowlegs
American Wigeon	Spotted Sandpiper
Redhead	Sanderling
Ring-necked Duck	Common Snipe
Lesser Scaup	Wilson's Phalarope
Bufflehead	Red-necked Phalarope

Franklin's Gull	Black-billed Magpie
Bonaparte's Gull	American Crow
Ring-billed Gull	Common Raven
California Gull	Black-capped Chickadee
Common Tern*	Mountain Chickadee
Forster's Tern	Plain Titmouse
Black Tern	Bushtit
Rock Dove	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Band-tailed Pigeon	White-breasted Nuthatch
Mourning Dove	Pgymy Nuthatch
Flammulated Owl	Rock Wren
Great Horned Owl	House Wren
Burrowing Owl	Marsh Wren
Long-eared Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Short-eared Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Common Nighthawk	Western Bluebird
Common Poorwill	Mountain Bluebird
White-throated Swift	Townsend's Solitaire
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	American Robin
Red-naped Sapsucker	Sage Thrasher
Downy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Northern Flicker	European Starling
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Solitary Vireo
Western Wood-Pewee	Warbling Vireo
Willow Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler
Hammond's Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler*
Dusky Flycatcher	Virginia's Warbler
Gray Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler
Cordilleran Flycatcher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Say's Phoebe	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Western Kingbird	Bay-breasted Warbler*
Eastern Kingbird	Cerulean Warbler*
Horned Lark	MacGillivray's Warbler
Tree Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Violet-green Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Yellow-breasted Chat
Bank Swallow	Summer Tanager
Cliff Swallow	Western Tanager
Barn Swallow	Black-headed Grosbeak
Steller's Jay	Blue Grosbeak
Pinyon Jay	Lazuli Bunting
Clark's Nutcracker	Green-tailed Towhee

Spotted Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Brewer's Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Sage Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Savannah Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Red-winged Blackbird
Western Meadowlark

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Great-tailed Grackle
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Bullock's Oriole
Cassin's Finch
House Finch
Pine Siskin
Lesser Goldfinch
American Goldfinch
Evening Grosbeak
House Sparrow

168 species



COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' MISSION STATEMENT

C.F.O. exists to:

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

PAPERS SESSION ABSTRACTS & TITLES: 1997 CONVENTION OF THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

DESTINATIONS OF BIRDS MIGRATING FROM THE SAN LUIS VALLEY, COLORADO

Ronald A. Ryder

Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1474

Banding has provided considerable information on where birds from the San Luis Valley (SLV) spend the winter. Several thousand Snowy Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons banded in the SLV since 1949 have resulted in over one hundred recoveries, most of which occurred in central Mexico, especially in the states of Jalisco, Michoacan, Sinaloa, Tabasco, and Veracruz. Only four birds are known to have been recovered from among more than 800 White-faced Ibises banded in the SLV: two from Mexico, and two from Texas. American Coots banded in the SLV have been recovered primarily in Mexico, most in Sinaloa. Most recoveries from the thousands of ducks banded in the SLV since 1937 were shot in the SLV. However, Mallard recoveries were reported from as far away as Alaska and Mexico. Most reports of banded Northern Pintails were from Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, and California, but some came from (then) USSR and Alaska. In some years, 20% of the Northern Pintail recoveries were in Mexico, primarily Sinaloa. Most recoveries of Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Gadwall, and American Wigeon were in Colorado, but some Blue-winged Teal went as far as Central America, Cuba, and Columbia. Although most of the 207 recoveries of Redheads banded between 1963-1980 were in Colorado, 12.5% were in Texas and 25% were in Mexico. At least one Swainson's Hawk banded in SLV was recovered in Argentina, and three adult Bald Eagles that wintered in SLV were radio-tracked to their nesting grounds in Saskatchewan. Overall, Texas and western Mexico seem to be the main wintering grounds for waterbirds that nest in the San Luis Valley.

OWLS OF THE SAN LUIS VALLEY AREA

John Rawinski
837 West County Road 1 South
Monte Vista, Colorado 81144

The San Luis Valley, including the adjacent Sangre de Cristo and San Juan Mountains, represent some of the southern-most habitat for a northern owl like the Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*), and some of the northern-most habitat for southern species like the Mexican Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*). The area has had 11 species of owls documented and represents one of the lesser-explored areas for owls in Colorado.

COLORADO BIRDS - MONITORED 2000

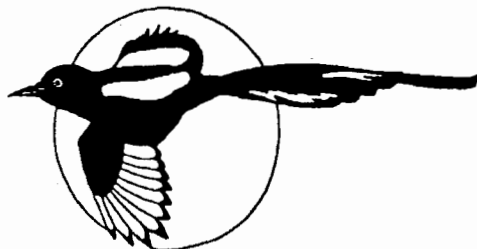
Tony Leukering
Colorado Bird Observatory
13401 Piccadilly Road
Brighton, Colorado 80601

IDENTIFICATION OF THAYER'S, ICELAND, AND SLATY-BACKED GULLS

John Vanderpoel
Boulder, Colorado

UPDATE ON THE CFO RECORDS COMMITTEE

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Court
Pueblo, Colorado 81001



CFO FIELD TRIP REPORT: DURANGO JUNE 28, 1997

Alan Versaw
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Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907
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While Acorn Woodpeckers have visited Las Animas County recently, the birds showing up near Durango (La Plata County) have proven to be much more reliable. Therefore, this particular trip was scheduled for Durango rather than the Trinidad area.

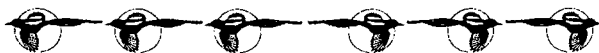
Unfortunately, the distance proved too great for most CFO members. For those who were able to make the trip, however, it was an exciting chance to see one of the newest additions to the Colorado list of species. A small colony of Acorn Woodpeckers appears to be thriving just a few miles southwest of Durango on private property. The area boasts a healthy stand of both ponderosa pine and Gambel oak (as well as other mid-elevation shrubs). Property owners have left standing a few tall ponderosa snags which the birds use extensively. Curiously, no granary trees have yet been found. This leads Chris Schultz (field trip leader and ornithologist for the U.S. Forest Service) to speculate that the birds' winter food supply comes primarily from generous offerings of sunflower seed at local feeders.

After locating and spending a half-hour or so watching at least three Acorn Woodpeckers, we went back through Durango to Junction Creek Campground to find Grace's Warblers. Several birds sang from high in the ponderosa canopy. Actually seeing one of the birds proved a bit more difficult than hearing them. With a measure of patience and persistence, however, we were rewarded with fine views of a singing male Grace's Warbler.

Since Black Phoebe's nested along the Animas River south of Durango last year, we decided to spend the rest of the morning checking last year's site. No success attended these efforts. Either the birds moved to another, and less accessible site, or they simply did not come near Durango to breed this year.

A hearty thank-you to Chris Schultz, who filled in as trip leader when Kip Stransky had to be out of town on the date of the field trip. His expertise was appreciated by all. The complete list of species is provided below.

Mallard	Common Raven
Common Merganser	Mountain Chickadee
Turkey Vulture	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
American Kestrel	Western Bluebird
Spotted Sandpiper	American Robin
Rock Dove	European Starling
Mourning Dove	Warbling Vireo
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Grace's Warbler
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Western Tanager
Lewis' Woodpecker	Black-headed Grosbeak
Acorn Woodpecker	Spotted Towhee
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Western Wood-Pewee	Lark Sparrow
Dusky Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Say's Phoebe	Dark-eyed Junco
Western Kingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Violet-green Swallow	Western Meadowlark
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Brewer's Blackbird
Cliff Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Barn Swallow	House Finch
Western Scrub Jay	Lesser Goldfinch
American Crow	House Sparrow



CFO Field Trip Report:
GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE / SHOREBIRDS
APRIL 26-27, 1997

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A handful of participants from the Roaring Fork Audubon Chapter joined four to six CFO members on this field trip to the Gunnison area. After meeting at the Neversink Picnic Ground of Curecanti National Recreation Area, we ventured over to Blue Mesa Reservoir. Low water levels left vast areas of open shoreline. By mid afternoon we had closed in on a fair-sized group of gulls and shorebirds along the inlet of the reservoir. Among the interesting birds we found there were Bonaparte's Gull, Semipalmated Plover, Willet, American Godwit, and Semipalmated Sandpiper. The enjoyment of the two

hours we spent scoping shorebirds was diminished only by persistent, cold winds coming off the reservoir. The next stop on the itinerary took us around the east end of the runway at the Gunnison airport. A late-to-depart Snow Goose highlighted the species added at this stop.

The "main event" of the trip came prior to dawn the next day. Before we left for the Sage Grouse lek, however, two friendly Gunnison police paid us a visit. Apparently, the good people of Gunnison have little experience with groups of people gathering in a parking lot at 5 a.m. Fortunately, we were able to convince the police of our intentions more expeditiously than some other people who have been detained by law enforcement officials in the course of a big day count.

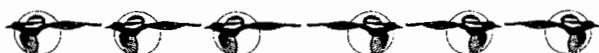
Trip leader Kim Potter then took the group to a lek where 10-15 male Sage Grouse were strutting and making sounds that defy ready description. We viewed the birds for nearly half an hour and anticipated better views as the light increased. The anticipated views never came, though, as the birds spooked and flew away to parts unknown about 20 minutes prior to sunrise. Kim had warned us of the "spooky" character of Gunnison Sage Grouse. The birds certainly lived up to their reputation.

With the advertised highlight of the trip now past, most participants headed home. Those who remained were treated to close up views of territorial Sage Sparrows. A return trip to Blue Mesa Reservoir netted a handful of additional species. The complete trip list is shown below.

Eared Grebe	Sage Grouse
Western Grebe	American Coot
Snow Goose	Semipalmated Plover
Canada Goose	Killdeer
Green-winged Teal	American Avocet
Mallard	Lesser Yellowlegs
Northern Pintail	Willet
Cinnamon Teal	Marbled Godwit
Northern Shoveler	Semipalmated Sandpiper
Gadwall	Common Snipe
American Wigeon	Franklin's Gull
Ring-necked Duck	Bonaparte's Gull
Lesser Scaup	Ring-billed Gull
Common Goldeneye	California Gull
Common Merganser	Say's Phoebe
Ruddy Duck	Tree Swallow
American Kestrel	Black-billed Magpie

Common Raven
House Wren
Mountain Bluebird
Townsend's Solitaire
American Robin
Sage Thrasher
Loggerhead Shrike
European Starling

Vesper Sparrow
Sage Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird
Western Meadowlark
House Sparrow



TUFTED DUCK IN BOULDER COUNTY, MARCH 21-23, 1997

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On Friday, March 21, 1997, I had the rare privilege to identify an adult male Tufted Duck, a bird that has never been seen before in the wild in Colorado. It was found at Cottonwood Marsh in the Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat northeast of Boulder, at 9 a.m. I had gone out mainly to take a morning walk at Walden and Sawhill Ponds. I always carry my binoculars, but this time I decided at the last minute to take the scope as well. Finding an assortment of waterfowl on Cottonwood Marsh, I began scanning with the scope, starting with a small group of scaup that was actively diving and feeding about 75 yards off the south shore. Suddenly I saw a duck pop up at the surface wearing a ponytail! I checked the other field marks... Purplish-black head? Yes. Black breast, back, and tail? Yes. Bright white sides? Yes. Tufted Duck!

But was it really a wild, "countable" Tufted Duck? In early 1992, a first-winter, male Tufted Duck was reported on Waneka Lake in Lafayette, just a few miles southeast from Cottonwood Marsh. My wife, Suzi, had received a call asking us to check it out. It turns out that there was a Denver Field Ornithologists' field trip to the Boulder area the very next day, so we made our first stop at Waneka Lake. Suzi took some cracked corn along to tempt the bird out of the water, and it worked beautifully--the duck came running up on the shore to take the handout. The trouble was, it was wearing a red plastic leg band, and had obviously escaped from some captive breeding flock. (Several

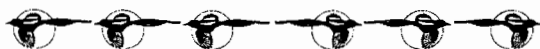
birders on the trip grumped that Suzi's corn had cost them a life bird.) But this bird stayed on Waneka Lake for months. We had many opportunities for close-up views and took a number of photographs. We had become so well acquainted with the Tufted Duck that there was no doubt about the bird at Cottonwood Marsh.

I ran home to get Suzi, who was feeling just a little under the weather. I told her, "No matter how you feel, you've got to come out to Cottonwood Marsh. There's a Tufted Duck there!" I called the Rare Bird Alert, made a couple of calls to get a Boulder birder to come out and verify the bird, and then we went to Cottonwood Marsh so Suzi could see it. We took turns with the scope, looking for any leg bands or other sign that it was another escapee. The duck obliged by scratching its head and neck, first with one foot and then the other. No leg bands. It was looking better.

It was time to get the word out. Back home, Suzi got on the phone and started calling every birder she could think of. I put a note on COBIRDS, the Colorado birding discussion group on the Internet, and then went out to look at other ponds in the area to see what else was around--after all, if you can find a Tufted Duck, just think of the other possibilities! I found a Greater Scaup on Stearns Lake southeast of Boulder, a good bird but sort of an anticlimax after the morning's excitement. So I circled back to Cottonwood Marsh. The parking lot looked like a birder's convention. Scopes were everywhere. Birders peering intently out over the pond were all wearing big, wide smiles. Suzi had done a great job of getting the word out, and the Tufted Duck was putting on a good show.

The Tufted Duck was observed by birders from more distant locales, including a number from Pueblo, on Saturday and Sunday, March 22 and 23. Pam Piombino of Boulder went looking for the bird on Monday, a cold day with snow showers, with no success. Tuesday was clear and warm and more birders were out, but it was clear that the duck was gone, and it has not been seen since.

The Tufted Duck may have been migrating with a small flock of Greater Scaup, which appeared on (and disappeared from) Cottonwood Marsh at about the same time. It is also interesting that there were quite a few Tufted Duck sightings from other states this winter, as reported in Winging It, the monthly newsletter of the American Birding Association. All observers I spoke with felt that ours was probably a wild bird. The final decision will be made in 1998 by the CFO Records Committee.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD: THE WINTER 1996-1997 REPORT (DECEMBER-FEBRUARY)

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The thing that sticks out in my mind about this winter period was the excitement of having a good cup of java, a window, and a bird feeder on the other side of the window. Many of you who have been birdwatching in Colorado longer than I may have different thoughts, but this winter certainly was the best I've experienced in seven years here. It seemed that all the charismatic and colorful winter feeder birds were prevalent. Two species of rosy-finch, Gray-crowned and Black, were particularly easy to find, as were Evening Grosbeaks, Cassin's Finches, and Red Crossbills. Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches also staged irruptions at lower elevations. Bohemian Waxwings were nearly impossible to miss along the northern Front Range by the end of the period. Pine Siskins, however, seemed mostly absent after a good autumn.

The usual open water holes held on to a few Double-crested Cormorants, Common Loons, and an assortment of grebes. The Pueblo area was again the place to be if it was gulls you were seeking. In addition to the usual wintering stuff there, (oddly, this includes Great Black-backed Gull), Glaucous-winged, Glaucous, Mew, and Lesser Black-backed gulls all made a showing. A Black-legged Kittiwake also was seen there. The Denver area had a few good gulls, as well, including Lesser Black-backed Gull and an Iceland x Thayer's hybrid.

Other good birds during the period included Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Trumpeter Swan, possibly the state's first Mute Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, Gyrfalcon, Pomarine Jaeger, Eurasian Collared and Inca doves, Sedge Wren, LeConte's and Golden-crowned sparrows, and a few Purple Finches.

The information in this report was either forwarded to me by the regional editors for the Audubon Society Field Notes (Brandon Percival and Van Truan) or sent directly to me by the observer. I also allow e-mail submissions. **Due to popular demand I will now also try to incorporate information I glean from the Colorado Rare Bird Alert, but** I feel that a written report sent directly to me is giving me permission to use the information for my report. There is no such consent associated with the Rare Bird Alert. I'm instituting this change on a trial basis only, so please keep the written reports coming. I thank everyone for their submissions.

Note: The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Records Committee would like to see documentation provided for those species that I have underlined in this report. I will note documentation by putting an asterisk (*) next to the documenting-observer's initials. If I am not aware of such documentation, then I will denote this by putting an <ND> (meaning no documentation) symbol following the observation. I do not have perfect information so **DO NOT** feel badly if I assign an <ND> to your sighting. I also will use an asterisk to acknowledge observers who provided notes on identification or documents of any kind regarding sightings, even if it was not required for the species observed.

Abbreviations used: CBC=Christmas Bird Count, Co.=county, Cos.=counties, CVCG=Crow Valley Campground, f.w.p=first winter plumage, Ft.=Fort, imm.=immature, LCCW=Lamar Community College Woods, Mt.=mount or mountain, Res.=reservoir, RFSWA=Rocky Ford State Wildlife Area, SP=State Park, SWA=State Wildlife Area, VPSWA=Valco Ponds State Wildlife Area (in Pueblo).

Red-throated Loon: One adult winter bird was seen at Pueblo Res. from 12/27-30 (BKP, CW) <ND>.

Pacific Loon: One imm. was at Lake Holbrook on 12/1 (BKP, DSm) and another was at Baseline Res. on the same date (WHK, PG). One was at Pueblo Res. from 12/7-27 (BKP, MJ, mob) and an adult and a juvenile were at Cherry Creek Res. on 12/14 (JLD). A juvenile also was seen at Baseline Res. on 12/15 (JLD).

Common Loon: The last report from the Denver area was of a winter adult at Chatfield SP on 12/1 (JBH). Farther north, one was turned up on 1/8 at Lake Loveland by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Up to 6 wintered at Pueblo Res. (mob), which now seems to be a normal occurrence.

Horned Grebe: Eleven on the Rawhide CBC (which includes Hamilton Res.) was this CBC's 3rd highest count ever (RAR). Additionally, up to 6 wintered at Pueblo Res. (mob). Two seen at Lake Holbrook on 2/17 were either very hardy or very early (DS).

Red-necked Grebe: One was seen on 12/15 at Union Res. (JLD*, JV).

Eared Grebe: One lingered at Lake Cheraw until 12/1 (BKP, DSm) and Pueblo Res. had five on 1/19 (BKP); a loner was still there on 2/22.

Western Grebe: More than 100 were still at Pueblo Res. on 12/7 (mob), where up to three remained through the winter. Hamilton Res. had 70 on 12/14, a high number for the late date. Twenty-two remained on 2/16 (RAR).

Clark's Grebe: One played "hide-and-seek" at Pueblo Res. on scattered dates spanning 12/6-2/28 (BKP, mob).

Double-crested Cormorant: Again this year, the Pueblo Res. area had a small wintering contingent (eight individuals). Five also wintered at Valmont Res. (DWK).

Black-crowned Night-heron: An imm. remained at Runyon Lake in Pueblo from 12/6-29 (DS, BKP). Two more were seen in Longmont along Saint Vrain Creek (VDi) through 2/9, and two were at the Denver City Park nest colony site on 2/15 (TL).

Tundra Swan: One was at the Greeley gravel ponds on 12/21 (JH), and an imm. was seen at Lake Cheraw on 12/22 (MJ, LL, mob). Also, one was reported from the west-central region during the period (RL).

Trumpeter Swan: Seven adults stayed until 12/14 at Roxborough Village after first being seen in November (JBH) <ND>. Two different trumpeters were seen in the Boulder area, one banded bird on 12/21 (WHK) <ND> and an unbanded individual on 1/28 (WHK*, mob) at Boulder Valley Farms. Three trumpeters that were neck-banded in Iowa stayed at John Martin Marsh from 12/28-2/8 (Dbr, mob) <ND>.

Mute Swan: A free-flying, wary, unbanded bird with intact hallux was seen at Pueblo Res. and VPSWA from 12/21-1/22 (MJ, BD, mob). Will this species soon be added to the state's list?

Greater White-fronted Goose: Twelve were at Valco Ponds in Canon City from 12/1-2/15 (mob). Up to 11 spent the entire winter at Dodd Res. near Niwot (WHK, mob). Two were at Ketring Park in Littleton on 12/5 (JBH). Three were seen on the South Platte River on 1/2 (JBH) and one was at Walden Ponds in Boulder on 1/31 (JBH). Northward from there, single birds were seen on 1/2 in north Ft. Collins (RK), on 1/28 in Glenmere Park in Greeley (JH), and on 2/5 near Severance (DAL).

Ross' Goose: The usual smattering of winter reports for this species was received. Four were seen on 12/1 at the RFSWA (BKP, DSm), one in Niwot from 12/15-1/29 (JLD, JV), one at the Greeley gravel ponds on 12/21 (JH), two at Hamilton Res. from 12/29-1/8 (RAR, mob), one at Prospect Park in the Wheatridge Greenbelt on 1/11 (DCE, DAL, WPL), three at Lake Meredith on 1/12 (BKP, MJ), one at Walden Pond on 1/19, and one on 1/21 at Runyon Lake (DS). Others were reported from the west-central region (RL) and from Big Johnson Res. (BG).

Blue-winged Teal: One was reported near Carbondale on 12/22 on the Roaring Fork CBC (BJo).

Cinnamon Teal: Four late birds were seen in ponds along the Roaring Fork River near Glenwood Springs on 12/22 (BK).

Eurasian Wigeon: The male, now an annual returnee, was present in Ft. Collins throughout the period at Edora Park (mob) <ND>.

Greater Scaup: Two males were at Lake Cheraw on 12/15 (BKP, MJ) and one male was at Prospect Park in the Wheatridge Greenbelt from 1/6-2/15 (mob). A male was near VPSWA from 1/13-26 (BKP, mob) and a female was at the Vineland Fire Department Ponds on 2/17 (DS).

Oldsquaw: One showed up at Big Johnson Res. from 12/1-7 (AV*, RB, BG) while a female was at Lake Cheraw on 12/7 and from 12/22-26 (BKP, mob). A female made a brief stop at VPSWA on 12/27 (BKP, CW). A pair was seen again this year on the South Platte River near the 88th Avenue Bridge in Denver (mob).

White-winged Scoter: An adult was seen from 12/1-6 at the Greeley gravel ponds (JH), and one was located on Boulder Creek during the Boulder CBC (PP).

Barrow's Goldeneye: Up to 5 stayed at VPSWA from 12/11-1/29 (BKP, mob). Lone males were at Union Res. on 12/15 (JLD, JV) and near the 78th Avenue Bridge on the South Platte River in Denver on 1/17 (JBH). A total of 94 (!) were seen at various Rio Blanco and Garfield Co. sites on 1/19 (KP, RL). Two were seen at Silverthorne on 2/21 (TL, SBo) and two more at Lake Estes from 2/24-28 (SRa, mob).

Hooded Merganser: The two most unusual reports were from the southeast, where one was seen on 12/16 at Two Buttes Res. (DAL) and a male was at John Martin Res. on 1/10 (JT).

Turkey Vulture: One seen north of Ft. Collins on 2/7 (EK) and another east of Ft. Collins on 2/17 (ATR) raise two questions. Were these opportunistic birds riding north on unseasonably warm winds or, dare I say, overwintering birds?

Northern Goshawk: Despite a generally surreptitious demeanor, four couldn't escape detection during the period. Those discovered were: one on 12/7 at RFSWA (BKP, mob), one from 12/8-22 near Glenwood Springs (KP), one near Two Buttes Res. on 12/19 (DAL), and one at Vail on 12/24 (BRi).

Merlin: It was a down year for the species with only 12 reported from the northeastern plains, compared with 30+ in winter 1994-95 and 25+ in winter 1995-96. Only four other reports outside of northeastern Colorado were received this winter.

Peregrine Falcon: Two apparently wintered near eyrie locations in El Paso Co. this winter (RB). Elsewhere, solo birds were seen on the South Platte River near 77th Avenue on 1/18 (DQ) and in the Grand Valley on 2/16 (RL).

Gyr Falcon: Mucho laudation is deserved for the discovery of a white-morph bird east of Union Res. on 2/28 (DWK*).

Sandhill Crane: Rich Levad reports that 2-3 wintered in the Grand Valley.

Killdeer: Two stalwart birds wintered near Eagle (JMc), an apparently regular occurrence.

Baird's Sandpiper: One seen south of Florence during the Penrose CBC on 12/22 (TL*) was extremely tardy.

Pomarine Jaeger: A juvenile bird observed on 12/14 (JLD*, JV) at Cherry Creek Res. may have been the same bird observed there in late November.

Bonaparte's Gull: Up to 15 lingered at Pueblo Res. from 12/6-14 (BKP).

Mew Gull: An amazing two birds appeared in the Pueblo area this winter. One, a winter adult, was seen at VPSWA on 12/21 (BKP) <ND> and Pueblo City Park on 1/12 (MJ) <ND>. A second winter bird was found at the latter location from 1/19 - 2/4 (SBu, mob) <ND>.

Thayer's Gull: There were up to five in f.w.p. at Cherry Creek Res. on 12/14-15 (JLD, JV). Three in f.w.p. were at Chatfield SP on 12/21 (JBH). One was also seen at Sloan Lake in Denver on 1/6 (JBH) and four were seen at McClellan Res. on 1/20 (JBH). Away from the Laridae Shangri-la's in Denver and Pueblo were one in f.w.p. at Horsetooth Res. near Ft. Collins on 1/7 (DCE) and one throughout the period at Big Johnson Res. (RB, mob). The Big Johnson Res. bird represents the first El Paso Co. record.

Iceland x Thayers Gull: One of these rare hybrids was observed and photographed at the lake in Denver City Park on 2/17 (TL*).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: It was an excellent winter for this species. A winter adult was seen from 12/6-17 at Baseline Res. in Boulder (mob, JLD*, JV). Possibly the same bird was seen at McClellan Res. from 12/21-1/20 (mob) <ND>. At Pueblo Res. a second winter bird was seen from 1/6-18

(BKP, CW, JK, mob) <ND>. Two in f.w.p. were observed there from 1/9-10 (BKP) <ND>.

Glaucous-winged Gull: An accidental wanderer from points westward was an individual in f.w.p. at Pueblo Res. from 1/22-2/10 (BKP, mob) <ND>.

Glaucous Gull: Two apparently different f.w.p. birds were seen at Pueblo Res. One was seen from 12/28-1/3 (JRw, LRw, JPo, mob) and another from 1/17-28 (BKP, mob).

Great Black-backed Gull: As surely as the "snowbirds" flock to Arizona for the winter, the Great Black-backed Gull returned to Pueblo Res. and points eastward along the Arkansas River from 12/6-2/17 (BKP, mob) <ND>.

Black-legged Kittiwake: An imm. was found on Pueblo Res. from 12/7-14 (BKP, MJ, mob) <ND>.

Band-tailed Pigeon: Up to 14 birds were observed from 12/14 through the period in El Paso Co. (RB). This is the first time the species has ever been recorded on a Colorado CBC.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Four to 10 birds were present in Rocky Ford throughout the period (mob).

Inca Dove: A super find was one at Cascade in El Paso Co. from 1/18-2/13 (SS, SBu*, CL).

Western Screech-Owl: Seventeen were located on the Grand Junction CBC (RL, mob).

Northern Pygmy-Owl: Two were found in RMNP on 12/21-22 during the local CBC (SR, JR, SW) and were refound in the same locale in early February (Sra). Three were found during the Denver CBC (mob). In the west-central region, one was near Hotchkiss on 12/21 (RL) and another was seen north of the Mesa Co. line on the Newcastle/Colbran Road from 12/26-1/6 (KP, RL). Four were found in El Paso and Fremont Cos. during the period (RB).

Long-eared Owl: One was seen at Chatfield SP on 12/21 (JBH). A staggering 22! were found on the Longmont CBC. Up to 15, including 10-12 near Fruita, were seen in the west-central region from 1/4-2/22 (RL). One was seen near Briggsdale on 1/6 (DCE). Three were at Bonney Res. on 2/8 (DBr) and one near Lyons on 2/24 (SP1, MPI). Four were seen throughout the period near Wellington (SMa, KMa). That's a lot of long-eared owls.

Short-eared Owl: Four were seen at Wellington SWA on 1/16 (JM, DCE), a regular haunt for the species. This was the only report received.

Northern Saw-Whet Owl: A road-killed bird was picked up near Gould on 12/26 while six (!) more were collected off Highway 115 in southern El Paso Co. (RB). At least one beat the odds and was seen alive in Eagle on 2/17 (PHa).

Red-headed Woodpecker: An accidental winter visitor, one took up residence in Lyons from 1/8 through the period (DWK*, mob).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: One was found at Pueblo City Park on 1/16 (DBr) and 2/22 (BKP, MJ). Another appeared from 2/1-24 at Lyons (DWK, mob). One was finally located on 2/13 at Grandview Cemetery in Ft. Collins (DAL) after evidence of a sapsucker first appeared circa 12/7/96.

Three-toed Woodpecker: A female was seen on 2/21 near Brainard Lake in Boulder Co. (DBr), and 5 were found on the Indian Peaks winter count on 1/11 (mob).

Pinyon Jay: For only the 2nd time, the species was not tallied on the Penrose CBC. Following an irruption into the foothills west of Ft. Collins during the fall, none were reported in the winter period. Just to be enigmatic, the species was recorded on both the Longmont and Boulder CBCs. Near Eagle, 20-40 visited Jack Merchant's feeder all winter; this was the first winter since 1993-94 he's had the species. They also wintered in the Chalk Creek Canyon area of Chaffee Co. (RB). On 2/9, 1000+ filled the tributary canyons of Turkey Creek in El Paso Co. (RB).

Clark's Nutcracker: Reports from Eagle (JMe) and Garfield Co. (KP) indicated much lower-than-normal numbers.

Chihuahuan Raven: At the apparent northwestern limits of the species' Colorado range, there was a pair near the Ft. Carson/Hannah Ranch boundary in El Paso Co. on 12/26 (RB). Two also were found on the Penrose CBC on 12/22 (TL, BM).

Mountain Chickadee: Numbers were only 25% of normal in Eagle (JMe) and well above normal on the eastern plains, with two as far east as Ovid on 1/25 (DCE).

Bushtit: Fifty on 12/14 (DQ) and 20 on 12/21 (DQ) in lower Mt. Falcon Park were away from core areas. Two at the LCCW on 1/30 (JT) also were well north and east of normal range.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Higher-than-normal numbers were reported at lower elevations this winter.

Winter Wren: The only report was of one at Jim Hamm Pond (DWK).

Sedge Wren: Casual and reclusive, one was found from 12/11-12 at VPSWA (BKP, DSm, KS) <ND>.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: The higher elevations had a few (Eagle and Indian Peaks areas) but meager numbers were reported in the northeast. No trend reports were received from other areas.

Eastern Bluebird: Oddly, one was seen near Peaceful Valley at 9,000 feet in late February (SFy). More expected were five at RFSWA on 12/22 (MJ, BKP, LL).

Hermit Thrush: A singleton was seen on the late date of 12/2 in Pueblo (MY).

Gray Catbird: One seen on 1/25 at Tamarack Ranch (DCE) was an accidental winter visitor.

Sage Thrasher: One on 12/21 in Pueblo West was late (PSS, CS).

Brown Thrasher: A number of winter reports were received. One was at RFSWA from 12/15-1/12 (BKP), while another at Two Buttes Res. on 12/19 successfully eluded a bobcat (DAL). Another was found on the Rawhide CBC on 12/29 (SCh, mob). Others were seen in Beulah on 1/4 (PF, MY) and at Tamarack Ranch on 1/25 (DCE).

Curve-billed Thrasher: Well away from normal haunts was one in Aurora on 2/7 and 2/23 (ASe).

American Pipit: Rare in winter, one was discovered on the Nunn CBC on 12/24 (RAR).

Bohemian Waxwing: It certainly was an invasion year for the species. They probably were never out of earshot in Ft. Collins throughout the period. They were seen as far south as Pueblo and as far east as RFSWA, where two were seen on 12/22 (BKP, BG, JDi). The species was also present in the mountains. The highest count was 1000+ in Estes Park on 1/6 (SW).

Orange-crowned Warbler: A late bird was seen on 12/7 at VPSWA (BKP, mob).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: An individual of the "Myrtle race" was seen on 12/29 at Runyon Lake in Pueblo (BKP).

Summer Tanager: A dead bird was found in the Longmont CBC circle on 12/19. Dead or alive, this is an extraordinary record for the date.

Northern Cardinal: One was found along the Highline Canal in Englewood from mid December through 2/25 (CAn).

Green-tailed Towhee: Two rare winter reports were received. One was seen at a feeder near Carbondale through 12/22 (DCI) and another wintered near Wellington (Sma, KMa).

Field Sparrow: Atypical for the date, was one at a Lamar feeder on 1/7 (JT).

Vesper Sparrow: Two documented winter reports were received for this accidental winter visitor. One was at Hannah Ranch (Colorado Springs SWA) on 12/26 (GBu*, SLo) and another was in Lyons on 2/10 (DWK*).

Savannah Sparrow: Two seen at Lake Cheraw on 12/1 were late (BKP, DSm).

LeConte's Sparrow: One was discovered on 12/6 between Coot Lake and Boulder Res. by Bill Kaempfer.* Kudos, on a great find.

Swamp Sparrow: The species was reported per usual from the normal winter "stomping grounds" in the Arkansas Valley, with up to six at Ft. Lyon Marsh (BKP, MJ, mob). Most northerly was one seen on 12/1 at the Northern Colorado Environmental Learning Center in Ft. Collins (DCE).

White-throated Sparrow: As always, a few winter reports were received. One was at Indian Hills on the Denver CBC. One was near Carbondale in the third week of December (DCI). One was at the RFSWA from 12/1-2/8 (MJ, BKP, DSm) and one was in Pueblo on 2/22 (MJ).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: For at least the past five winters, one has been present at the feeders at the Red Rocks Trading Post. This winter, two were found there -- an imm. and an adult (BB*, LB, mob). Another was in a Boulder area yard during the period (Wse) <ND>.

Harris' Sparrow: About 20 individuals were reported in the state during the period. The high count was of three color-banded birds, which returned to a Wellington area feeder from previous winters (Sma, KMa).

Dark-eyed Junco: The "white-winged" subspecies was particularly common during the winter with testimony offered by the observance of 25 at Two Buttes Res. on 12/16 (DAL) and 26 in El Paso Co. in mid December (RB).

Lapland Longspur: Many observers on the northeastern plains reported that this species was present there in higher-than-average numbers.

Snow Bunting: It was a decent winter for the species. The first report was of a winter female seen at Cherry Creek Res. on 12/6 (JBH). Five were west of Grover on 12/19 (JH). One was found on the Nunn CBC on 12/24 and 80 were seen on the North Park CBC on 12/26.

Rusty Blackbird: A male was found along the Arkansas River in Pueblo on 12/21 (MY, DS) and another male was seen in Colorado City on 1/5 (DS). One was found on each the Boulder and Longmont CBCs. Most unexpected were the two seen on the Indian Peaks Winter Bird Count on 1/11 (mob).

Great-tailed Grackle: As usual, several groups of wintering birds were present in the Arkansas Valley during the period, but the largest groups were near Brighton. Seventy-seven were seen on the Barr Lake SP CBC on 12/28 (TL, RB, GAk) and 126 were near Brighton on 2/9 (TL). The furthest north was a female at the Jackson Res. outflow canal on 1/6 (DCE).

Common Grackle: Eight reports were received for the period 12/15-2/10. The oddest was one found on the Estes Park CBC on 12/21 (SR, JR). The high count was of 11 seen on the Longmont CBC.

Brown-headed Cowbird: On 1/24, ten were seen at Ft. Lyon (DAL). Four were observed on the Barr Lake SP CBC on 12/28 (TL, RB, GAk).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: This winter, the species was common at feeders in the mountains and foothills. Twenty seen in northeast Weld Co. on 1/11 (DQ) represented the eastern-most individuals seen during the period.

Black Rosy-Finch: There were usually a few to be found in the larger rosy-finch groups this winter. Up to six frequented the Red Rocks Trading Post feeders. They also were seen near Eagle (JMe), Rifle Gap on 1/7 (KP, RL), Georgetown, Green Mountain Falls, Lyons, and the west-central region.

Brown-capped Rosy-Finch: This was the scarcest of the three rosy-finches this winter with the only reports being of one at the Red Rocks feeders (mob) and up to 125 at a Green Mountain Falls feeder during the period (RB).

Pine Grosbeak: Though still not easy to find at lower elevations this winter, a few reports were received, which indicated the species wasn't absent as they are in most years.

Purple Finch: Three reports makes an outstanding season. A female was seen at Rocky Ford on 12/15 (MJ, BKP) <ND>. A male and a female were

observed in Colorado City on 1/14 (DJ, DS) <ND> and an adult male was at a Boulder feeder in late February (DH, MH, MPI*).

Cassin's Finch: A female seen at Two Buttes Res. on 12/16 (DAL) was locally ultra-rare. Ft. Collins had big numbers during the period and Dr. Ron Ryder said the species often outnumbered house finches at his feeders.

Red Crossbill: An irruption onto the Front Range and eastern plains began in late summer and early fall 1996 and continued through the winter period. The most wide-ranging birds were seen at Two Buttes Res., where up to nine were seen through 1/25 (JT). Four in Morgan Co. on 12/21 (JRI) were also east of normal.

Common Redpoll: After a banner 1995-96 winter, the number of reports and individuals seen in 1996-97 were much closer to the norm. There were two reports, both of single birds. One was near Hannah Ranch on 12/26 (RB) and another was at the U.S. Forest Service work station feeders north of CVCG during January and February (DWb, mob).

Pine Siskin: There were much lower-than-average numbers for the species this winter. In Garfield and Eagle Cos. they vanished during the period. (KP, JMe).

Lesser Goldfinch: There were numerous reports of this casual winter species. Two were seen at Monument Creek in north-central Colorado Springs on 12/21 (AV*). One was reported through 12/22 in Carbondale (DCI) and one on 1/7 in Rifle (KP). On 1/4, 2 males were seen at Pueblo Res. (DCE, BKP) and one female was at Colorado City (DS). Andrews and Righter (1992) recommend thorough documentation of winter sightings.

Evening Grosbeak: Another colorful addition to the feeders on the northern Front Range this winter were hordes of this species.

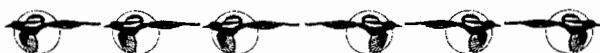
Observers Cited

Gary Ackert (GAK), Catherine Anderson (CAN), Sue Bonfield (SBo), Dan Bridges (DBr), Bob Brown (BB), Lea Ann Brown (LB), Steve Buettner (SBu), Richard Bunn (RB), Greg Butcher (GBu), Sherry Chapman (SCH), Dave Clark (DCI), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), Bob Dickson (BD), Jordan Dimick (JDi), Virginia Dionigi (VDi), John L. Dunn (JLD), David Ely (DCE), Pat Flynn (PF), Steve Frey (SFy), Peter Gent (PG), Bob Goycoolea (BG), Pat Hammon (PHa), J.B. Hayes (JBH), Dean Hill (DH), Mona Hill (MH), Joe Himmel (JH), Mark Janos (MJ), Bill Johnson (BJo), Dave Johnson (DJ), Bill Kaempfer (WHK), Joey Kellner (JK), Bob Kelly (BK), D.W. King (DWK), Edwin King (EK), Rachel Kolokoff (RK), David Leatherman (DAL), Tony Leukering (TL), Rich Levad (RL), R. Lindsay Lilly, Jr. (LL), Cindy

Lippincott (CL), Bill Lisowsky (WPL), Stephen Long (SLo), Joe Mammoser (JM), many observers (mob), Kathy Martin (KMa), Steve Martin (Sma), Bill Maynard (BM), Jack Merchant (JMe), Brandon Percival (BKP), Pam Piombro (PP), Myron Plooster (MPI), Suzi Plooster (SPI), Jerry Poe (JPo), Kim Potter (KP), David Quesenberry (DQ), Scott Rashid (SRa), John Rawinski (JRw), Lisa Rawinski (LRw), Robert Righter (BRi), Joe Rigli (JRI), Julie Roederer (JR), Scott Roederer (SR), Audrey Ryder (ATR), Ron Ryder (RAR), Pearle Sandstrom-Smith (PSS), Karleen Schofield (KS), Wes Sears (WSe), Aaron Sell (ASe), David Silverman (DS), Clif Smith (CS), David Smith (DSm), Susan Soloyanis (SS), Jancal Thompson (JT), John Vanderpoele (JV), Alan Versaw (AV), Susan Ward (SW), Duane Weber (DWb), Chris Wood (CW), Mark Yaeger (MY). Seventy-nine observers cited (including "mob").

LITERATURE CITED

Andrews, R., and R. Righter. 1992. Colorado Birds. Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado.



REPORT OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 1995 RECORDS

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This report covers 106 records of 68 species and one hybrid submitted by 56 observers and evaluated by the Colorado Field Ornithologists Bird Records Committee (hereafter the RC or the committee). Fifteen of the reports were accompanied by photographs and 11 by sketches or field drawings. All 106 records received definitive votes by the RC through circulation, re-circulation, or RC meeting discussions. Eighty-eight were accepted, for an acceptance rate of 83%. The majority of records are for birds observed in 1995. Per RC bylaws, all accepted records received 7-0 or 6-1 votes either on the initial circulation or the re-circulation. Each record discussed at an RC meeting was accepted if there was no more than one vote to reject. All records not accepted received less than four votes to accept (3-4, 2-5, 1-6, or 0-7) on either initial circulation or re-circulation.

No species were added or deleted from the Colorado state list as a result of this report. The Colorado state list stands at 456 species after the addition of Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) and Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus*

galbula) due to splits described in the 40th Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (Janos 1996). Highlights from 1995 include one Brown Pelican, three Glossy Ibises, one Harris' Hawk, one Ancient Murrelet, one Alder Flycatcher and one Swainson's Warbler. Potential first state records of Mandarin Duck and California Quail were not accepted. A possible Western Gull (and also a potential first state record) was instead accepted as a Great Black-backed Gull.

Committee News: New bylaws for the committee were accepted by the Colorado Field Ornithologists (hereafter CFO) Board in 1995 (Dickson et al. 1995). This report reflects work performed by the RC operating within these bylaws. The CFO and the RC are in discussion with the Denver Museum of Natural History in an effort to computerize the catalogue of bird records that is housed there.

Records of interest currently under review by the RC for 1996 include Brown Pelican, Glossy Ibis, Marbled Murrelet, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Alder Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher (1986), Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (1991), Buff-breasted Flycatcher (1991), Black-capped Vireo, Hermit Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, and Pyrrhuloxia.

The committee's membership at the close of the 1996 was: Bob Dickson, Peter Gent, Mark Janos (Chair), Bill Lisowsky, Bob Richter, Dick Schottler, and Vic Zerbi. With the endorsement of the RC, Joey Kellner was appointed by the CFO Board at the end of 1996 to fill Bob Dickson's expired term. Joey will serve from 1997-1999.

Committee Functions: All records reviewed by the RC are archived at the Denver Museum of Natural History, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, Colorado 80205-5798. All written documentation, photographs, videotapes, and sound recordings are housed at the Museum and are available for public review. The committee solicits documentation on all species on its review list, on unusual occurrences by date or location, and on species unrecorded in Colorado. Those species annotated as "R" (rare) or "U" (unusual) in the March 1995 "Field Checklist of Colorado Birds" constitute the Colorado state review list (Colorado Field Ornithologists 1995). Please send documentation to either: Mark Janos, CFORC Chair, 10 Sedum Ct., Pueblo, CO 81001; or to the Colorado Field Ornithologists Records Committee, c/o Zoological Collection, Denver Museum of Natural History, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO 80205-5798.

Report Format: Species are listed in A.O.U. taxonomic order. Records are listed chronologically by first date of occurrence. Included with each accepted record is location, county, date(s) of occurrence and the initials of observers who submitted reports. If known, the initials of reporting observers who discovered the bird(s) are underlined. The date span follows the submitted record date(s). Records are sight records unless otherwise noted. An asterisk (*) prior to a species' name indicates that currently it is not on the RC's review list. For species with fifteen or fewer Colorado records, the number in parentheses that follows the species' name is the number of records accepted by the RC through this reporting period.

Abbreviations Used in the Report: AHY (at least first year); Ave. (Avenue); Co. and Cos. (County and Counties); CBC (Audubon Christmas Bird Count); CP (City Park); L. (Lake); DFO (Denver Field Ornithologists); NWR (National Wildlife Refuge); R. (River); Rd. (Road); Res. (Reservoir); SP (State Park); sp. (species); SWA (State Wildlife Area).

PART 1: RECORDS ACCEPTED

YELLOW-BILLED LOON (*Gavia adamsii*) (10). A juvenile bird was at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) 17 Dec 1994 - 11 May 1995 (MJ, BP; sketch; 1-95-3). This bird was joined by a second juvenile at the same location, 8 Jan - 11 May 1995 (MJ, BP; sketch; 1-95-2).

RED-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps grisegena*). A basic-plumaged bird was at Chatfield Res. (Douglas and Jefferson Cos.) 16 Dec 1995 (HK; field drawing; 2-95-4). A second, different, basic-plumaged adult was at McClellan Res. (Arapahoe Co.) 20 Dec 1995 (TL; 2-95-5).

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) (8). An immature bird was observed by many at Sweitzer L. (Delta Co.) 9 Jul - 2 Oct 1995 (CD, NG, RGu, SJ; photos; 3-95-6).

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*). An immature bird was found at L. Holbrook (Otero Co.) 29 Apr - May 8, 1995 (MJ, BP; 5-95-8).

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) (7). There were an amazing three separate accepted records for this species in 1995, first documented in the state on 26 Mar 1986. A single adult in alternate plumage, found by JRo, was at L. Cheraw (Otero Co.) on 28 Apr 1995 (MJ; 7-95-9). Two adults in alternate plumage were picked out from a small flock of *Plegadis* sp. in a flooded field on 7 May 1995 about 5 miles east of Las Animas along Highway 50 in Bent Co. (MJ; 7-95-10). Finally, a single, alternate-plumaged adult was located

along Buckley Rd., one mile north of E. 120th Ave. in Adams Co., 12-14 May 1995 (KS; 7-95-11).

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*) (14). Five records of this species were evaluated. Three were accepted. The identification of this species is a problem for field observers and evaluation of written and photographic records remains problematic for RC members. For a recent treatment of Trumpeter and Tundra Swan identification, see Patten and Heindel (1994). Three adults were well described from Valmont Res. (Boulder Co.) on 7 Jan 1995 (DS; 8-95-12). A flock of five adults and three immatures was documented from Platte Canyon Res. (Douglas Co.) 16 Dec 1995 (HK; field sketches; 8-95-15). An adult, was discovered by JK and CW on the Rocky Ford CBC at L. Cheraw (Otero Co.) on 30 Dec 1995 (MJ; 8-96-16).

BRANT (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) (11). One adult was at Angel L. near Severance (Weld Co.) on 8 Feb 1995 (JB; 8-95-17).

BLACK SCOTER (*Melanitta nigra*). There were two accepted records. The first bird was a female on L. Meredith (Crowley Co.) on 3 Dec 1995 (MJ; 8-95-19). The second record was an immature male at the fish ponds below the Colorado State Fish Hatchery near Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) on 11 Dec 1995 (MJ; 8-95-20).

HARRIS' HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) (3). The recent intrusion of this southern and southwestern species into Colorado continues. This beautiful adult bird was well seen about ½ mile west of Manzanola (Otero Co.) by two observers on 14 Oct 1995 (MJ; field sketches; 10-95-21). Although it was subsequently seen by other observers, no additional documentation was received by the RC.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*) (11). An adult gray phase bird was seen by many in January 1995. Unfortunately only one observer submitted a record. It was seen on 7 Jan 1995 ranging widely in an area about one-two miles west of Union Res. and Jim Hamm Park (Boulder Co.) (MJ; 12-95-106). An immature gray phase bird ("brown morph") was seen south of Lower Latham Res. (Weld Co.) on 8 Dec 1995 (JH, BL; 12-95-22).

BLACK RAIL (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) (4). A series of four occurrences of this species at the west end of John Martin Res. marsh in 1995 is here treated as a single "record" by the committee. From 1-16 birds were seen or heard per report. There was a single visual description. The report dates ranged 12 May - 16 Jul 1995 and all were from the area of Bent's Old Fort on the west to marshes just west of the intersection of Bent Co. Rds. JJ and 19 on the east (Bent and Otero Cos.) (JM, BP; 17-95-25).

WHOOPIING CRANE (*Grus americana*). There was one record. It consisted of four written reports received for this widely observed and well-seen individual. It is the first RC-accepted record from eastern Colorado since 1973. The birds seen widely in western and central Colorado valleys through the 1980s and 1990s are part of the Idaho/New Mexico foster flock that never became established in the wild. This record is of an unbanded immature bird. Since there are no recent introductions back into the transplanted flock and all remaining foster birds are adults, this individual is a wild bird. This bird lingered 10-26 Mar 1995 wandering more or less widely in southeastern Colorado (and apparently neighboring Kansas). Most observations were from and around Thurston Res., north of Lamar, in Prowers Co. (PG, MJ, BP, JS; 16-95-26).

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*). The RC voted unanimously to accept these two records: an alternate-plumaged adult at L. Cheraw (Otero Co.) on 25 May 1995 (AS; 19-95-28); and a multiple-observer, but single-reporter, record of a basic-plumaged adult bird at Hannah Ranch SWA (El Paso Co.) on 9 Sep 1995 (MJ; 19-95-29).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER (*Tryngites subruficollis*). A juvenile was observed at the southwest corner of Jumbo Res. (Logan Co.) on 1 Sep 1995 (JM; 19-95-31). Two juveniles were observed on 5 Sep 1995 at Jackson Res. (Morgan Co.) (TL; photo; 19-95-32).

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). This bird was first seen on a CFO field trip. It was a light phase sub-adult at L. Henry (Crowley Co.) 9-10 Sep 1995 (MJ; 22-95-34).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) (6). The vote stood at 5-2 after re-circulation; it was unanimously accepted after additional documentation (including photographs) was submitted. This was an adult at Barr L. (Adams Co.) on 10-14 Sep 1995 (TL; BR; photos; 22-95-35).

LAUGHING GULL (*Larus atricilla*). The first record is of a striking, alternate-plumaged bird at L. Henry (Crowley Co.) on 1 May 1995 (MJ, BP; 23-95-36). The second accepted record for 1995 is of a first-summer bird at Nee Noshe Res. (Kiowa Co.) on 24 May 1995 (AS; 23-95-105). The third accepted record for 1995 is of a juvenile at Cherry Creek Res. (Arapahoe Co.) 31 Aug - 2 Sep 1995 (JRe; 23-95-37).

LITTLE GULL (*Larus minutus*) (11). Photographic slides accompanied the first report. This accepted record was of a juvenile at Clifton (Mesa Co.) 12-14 Sep 1995 (RL; photos; 23-95-38). A second bird, also a juvenile, was near Longmont at Union Res. (Weld Co.) on 24 Sep 1995 (JM; 23-95-39).

MEW GULL (*Larus canus*) (11). A winter-plumaged adult wintered at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) 19 Nov 1994 - 1 Jan 1995 (MJ; 23-95-40). This is not a new record, but it extends the date of this individual's occurrence into 1995. It was submitted in 1994, accessioned as number 23-94-32, and accepted. It was the eleventh accepted record at that time.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*) (13). A breeding-plumaged adult was in the California Gull (*Larus californicus*) colony at Adobe Creek Res., Bent and Kiowa Cos., on 24 May 1994 (DN; 23-95-41).

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL (*Larus glaucescens*) (6). The vote stood at 4-3 after re-circulation; it was accepted with only one vote to reject at the RC meeting. This was an adult at Mosca (Alamosa Co.) 3 March 1995 (JR; sketches; 23-95-43).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*) (12). The first record in 1995 is an adult at Union Res. (Weld Co.) on 8-9 Mar 1995 (BPr; 23-95-46). The second record in 1995 is the infamous adult, winter-plumaged bird at Cherry Creek Res. (Arapahoe Co.) 17 Sep - 25 Oct 1995. Originally identified and "confirmed" as the first Western Gull (*L. occidentalis*) in Colorado, the identity began to be questioned in the weeks subsequent to discovery. Opinion swung over to re-identification as a Great Black-backed Gull after out-of-state birders viewed this bird. A full discussion of pertinent field marks will not be made here, but all observed characters were consistent with a female Great Black-backed Gull. While most RC members initially felt that the bird was too small, light-mantled, and dark-eyed to be a Great Black-backed Gull, the bird was accepted as such upon much discussion, input (thanks to Shawneen Finnegan and Paul Lehman), and research. The dark-appearing iris (amber-pale to dusky-pale, depending on light and angle) caused many initially to rule out Great Black-backed Gull, however this color is acceptable for this species. The bird was accepted as a Great Black-backed Gull (SF, MJ, PL, BPr, BR; field sketches; 23-95-44). This bird may be the famous Pueblo Res. Great Black-backed Gull, which only appeared after the Cherry Creek bird disappeared and which also had a dusky iris. This record shows the difficulty inland birders have with separating rare species from look-alikes that are far from their normal ranges and haunts. Such occurrences take place without the benefit of comparison species and in front of observers without regular and recent experience with the species under question. Such situations also occur for Colorado birders when jaegers are observed. The third 1995 record is the Pueblo Res. bird, which was back for the fourth consecutive year 18 Nov - 31 Dec 1995 (MJ; 23-95-45), this time as an adult (Pueblo Co.). Observers followed the plumage sequence of this bird over four winters as it progressed from first winter through adult winter plumages.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*) (2). Two first-year birds at Nee Noshe Res. (Kiowa Co.) on 25 Nov 1995. Sightings of more than one of these striking birds on a single lake in Colorado is very unusual (MJ; 23-95-47).

ANCIENT MURRELET (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) (3). This occurrence caused quite a stir in the Colorado birding community. Unfortunately a "one-day wonder," the bird could not be located on subsequent days. However, quite a few birders did observe this individual on the single day that it was present. The bird was in near-winter plumage and was found by JK at Chatfield Res. (Douglas and Jefferson Cos.) on 5 Dec 1995 (JK; sketch; 24-95-48).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) (17). There were four records of this species in 1994-1995. An adult was discovered in residential Boulder (Boulder Co.) on 19 Jun 1994 (AB; photos; 25-95-51). Originally, this record was accessioned as number 25-94-38 and circulated in the 1994 records. It was not accepted in 1994, but it was resubmitted with photographs in 1995 and accepted. A singing bird was seen briefly in a residential backyard in Pueblo (Pueblo Co.) on 11 May 1995 (BD; 25-95-49). A singing bird was found at the Central Plains Experimental Range near Nunn (Weld Co.) on 17 Jun 1995 (GK; 25-95-50). The fourth bird was in residential Pueblo (Pueblo Co.) 4-5 Nov 1995 (MJ, DSi; 25-95-52). The eruption of this species into Colorado in 1994-1996 may be associated with drought conditions in Texas and the southwest.

LESSER NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) (8). There were three submitted and accepted records in Colorado in 1995. An adult female was observed in the riparian area below Two Buttes Res. dam (Baca Co.) on 19 May 1995 (JM; 29-95-53). Another adult female was observed in the north, along the Front Range, near the Poudre R. on the east side of Ft. Collins (Larimer Co.) on 1 Jun 1995 (JM; 29-95-54). Finally, an adult male was seen near Two Buttes SWA along Co. Rd. VV in Baca Co. on 25 Jul 1995 (JRe; 29-95-55). Several of the recent Colorado records are from the Two Buttes Res. area.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) (10). The vote stood at 4-3 after re-circulation and was accepted unanimously at the RC meeting. The record was of an adult male at Dinosaur National Monument (Moffat Co.) on 20 Jul 1995 (HD; 31-95-56).

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) (2). An adult was present at the Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch near Loveland (Larimer Co.) 27 Sep-1 Oct 1995 (CH; photos; 33-95-57).

***RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*). This record documents an occurrence of this species well out on the southeastern plains of Colorado — a male on 10 Apr 1995 in Walsh (Baca Co.) (JT; 33-95-58).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*). A singing bird was at Rocky Ford SWA (Otero Co.) on 21 May 1995 (MJ; 34-95-59).

ALDER FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax alnorum*) (9). The first report was submitted with four "in hand" photographs. It was a mist-netted individual that also was observed calling in the field. The photographs, in-hand measurements, and call notes eliminated other *Empidonax* sp. The bird was observed at Barr Lake SP (Adams Co.) on 28 May 1995 (TL; photos; 34-95-60). The second record was a sight record of a calling bird. The vote stood at 4-3 after re-circulation and was accepted with only one reject vote at the RC meeting. This bird was at Rocky Ford SWA (Otero Co.) on 4 Jun 1995 (BP; 34-95-61).

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) (13). This individual was discovered along the Canon City Riverwalk, MacKenzie Parking Area (Fremont Co.) 14 Oct - 17 Dec 1995. It was well documented (MJ, SM, BP, DP; 34-95-62).

***EASTERN PHOEBE** (*Sayornis phoebe*). This bird was unusually far north at the wrong season at Box Elder Creek, about five miles west of Rawhide Power Plant on the Rawhide CBC (Larimer Co.). It was seen 31 Dec 1995 (BDi; sketch; 34-95-63).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*). A female was well documented from the campground at the northeast corner of Jumbo Res. SWA (Logan Co.) on 20 Jun 1995 (JRe; 34-95-64).

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). Another Denver urban record — an adult in a Denver backyard (Denver Co.) on 18 Jan 1996 (RG; 42-95-65).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH (*Catharus minimus*). One was at Willow Creek, Lamar (Prowers Co.) on 9 May 1995 (MJ; 44-95-66). Another was about three miles northeast of Ft. Lyon wildlife easement (Bent Co.) at a small wood lot on 18 May 1995 (MJ; 44-95-67). This species seems to be more regular on the eastern fringes of southern Colorado than previously thought. Reporting is complicated by the need for good views and careful documentation. Gray-cheeked Thrush is considered a rare but regular migrant in southwestern Kansas (Cable et al. 1996). Future documentation of this species in Colorado will be complicated by the need to distinguish it from the very similar and recently separated Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*),

which is not expected to occur in Colorado. See McLaren (1995) for a very informative discussion on the field identification of this new species.

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*). This rarely reported species was apparently present for a week, 8-14 May 1995, at a small wood lot at the intersection of Rds. JJ and 16 near Ft. Lyon (Bent Co.). It was seen on May 8 and 14 but not on intervening days (MJ, BP; 44-95-68).

PHAINOPEPLA (*Phainopepla nitens*) (8). This report documents the record of an immature male or female seen 29-30 Sep 1995 at Redlands (Mesa Co.) (CD; photo; 48-95-104).

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*). An adult was in Pueblo CP (Pueblo Co.) 6 May 1995 (MJ; 51-95-72). Another adult was found at the "Frog Pond" in Colorado City (Pueblo Co.) on 30 Oct 1995 (DSi; 51-95-73).

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*). A single adult bird was found in migration at Pueblo CP (Pueblo Co.) on 20 May 1995 (MJ; 51-95-74).

PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireo philadelphicus*). An adult from Valco Ponds below Pueblo Res. along the Arkansas R. (Pueblo Co.) on 7 Sep 1995 was a single-observer record (MJ; 51-95-75).

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora pinus*). An alternate-plumaged male was seen along Willow Creek in Lamar (Prowers Co.) on 12 May 1995 (BP; 52-95-76).

GOLDEN-WINGED X BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera* x *Vermivora pinus*). This hybrid AHY (a bird in at least its second calendar year) female was captured, photographed, and banded on 25 Jul 1995 at the Turkey Creek MAPS Station on the Fort Carson Military Reservation in El Paso Co. (BM; photos; 52-95-77). Opinions submitted by John Confer and Paul Lehman were that the bird could not be called either a "Lawrence's" or a "Brewster's" warbler, but was something in between, with more Golden-winged than Blue-winged characteristics.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*). A female was observed at Willow Creek in Lamar (Prowers Co.) on 6 May 1995 (BP; 52-95-91). An alternate-plumaged male was observed in the riparian grove at Lake Henry (Crowley Co.) on 28 May 1995 (MJ; 52-95-78).

***NORTHERN PARULA** (*Parula americana*). A female at Mosca (Alamosa Co.) on 19 May 1995 was a rare San Luis Valley (possibly second) record (JR; 52-95-79).

CAPE MAY WARBLER (*Dendroica tigrina*). This individual was discovered in the Valco Ponds area below Pueblo Res. dam (Pueblo Co.) and was present for two weeks (15-28 Dec 1995). It was recorded on the Pueblo Res. CBC. This bird was a fall female, at the duller extreme of the range of plumage variability (MJ, TL, BP; 52-95-80). This bird fed and rested along the banks of the Arkansas R. near protected eddies, where it may have subsisted on insects hatching from the water.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Dendroica discolor*) (11). This bird was a dull-plumaged fall female. It was in the Valco Ponds area below Pueblo Res. dam (Pueblo Co.) 3 Nov - 16 Dec 1995 (MJ, BP, DSm; 52-95-82). Originally discovered on 3 Nov by BP, this individual was rediscovered on 13 Dec in time to be recorded on the Pueblo Res. CBC. This is a remarkably late record. This species has not lingered this late into winter before in Colorado.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER (*Dendroica castanea*). This species seems to have become more scarce in Colorado in the 1990s. An alternate-plumaged male was a treat for observers in the riparian grove at L. Henry (Crowley Co.) on 28 May 1995 (MJ; 52-95-83).

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*). This is a record of a male on 10 May 1995 at Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso Co.) (BP; 52-95-84).

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helmitheros vermivorus*). This record was of a bird seen 3 May 1995 at Fort Lyon wildlife easement (Bent Co.) (BP; 52-95-85).

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) (7). This was a well-described individual on 22 May 1995 in the Valco Ponds area below the dam at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) (PSS; field sketch; 52-95-87).

KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Oporornis formosus*). This beautiful adult was found by MJ and BP on 5 May 1995 and shown to participants of a DFO field trip on 6 May. It was at Willow Creek, Lamar (Prowers Co.) (MJ, BP; 52-95-88).

MOURNING WARBLER (*Oporornis philadelphia*) (10). An adult male was observed briefly in the riparian grove at L. Henry (Crowley Co.) on 28 May 1995 (MJ; 52-95-89).

***HOODED WARBLER** (*Wilsonia citrina*). An adult male at Monte Vista NWR (Rio Grande Co.) was a treat for observers on 3 Jun 1995 (JR; 52-95-90). This is the second San Luis Valley record and the first spring record there (at about 7200 feet).

CANADA WARBLER (*Wilsonia canadensis*). The vote stood at 5-2 after re-circulation and was accepted with only one reject vote at the RC meeting. This was a male in alternate plumage at Fort Carson (El Paso Co.) on 28 Aug 1995 (BM; 52-95-92).

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*). An unmistakable adult was seen in the riparian area below Two Buttes Res. dam (Baca Co.) on 30 Apr 1995 (BP; 55-95-93).

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) (15). An alternate-plumaged male and female were discovered west of Drake ("Cedar Bend") on 8-10 Jun 1995 in Larimer Co. (MM; 56-95-94). Breeding was not documented. An alternate-plumaged male was observed in Cottonwood Canyon in Baca Co. on 24 Jun 1995 (GK; 56-95-95).

***EASTERN TOWHEE** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). This recently split species will probably prove to be an uncommon resident in eastern Colorado. This record is of a male photographed in a yard in Boulder (Boulder Co.) 31 Oct - 5 Nov 1995 (BMi; photos; 56-95-96).

***RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Aimophila ruficeps*). Two records of this species were circulated because the locations were unusual. A single bird was in a Boulder back yard (Boulder Co.) 28 Dec 1995 - 27 Jan 1996 (BMi; photos; 56-95-97). A second bird was below the Spring Creek dam near Horsetooth Res. (Larimer Co.) on 2 Jan 1995 (BL, PLi; photos; 56-95-98).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*) (7). This individual was found during the Rocky Ford CBC. It was well observed by numerous observers during subsequent days. It was found in the dense lake-side grasses of L. Meredith (Crowley Co.) 30 Dec 1995 - 1 Jan 1996 (MJ; 56-95-99).

PURPLE FINCH (*Carpodacus purpureus*). Two records of this species were accepted: a male in Boulder (Boulder Co.) on 6 Nov 1995 (RH; photo; 56-95-101); and a female in a tree lot at the intersection of Rds. JJ and 16 near Ft. Lyon (Bent Co.) on 19 Nov 1995 (MJ; field sketches; 56-95-102).

PART 2: RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED -- IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONABLE

RED-THROATED LOON (*Gavia stellata*). This was a difficult record for the RC to evaluate. It was not accepted after re-circulation and discussion by a vote of 2-3. The committee invites additional documentation of this sighting in the Denver area; only one report was received. The record was of two juveniles at Chatfield Res. (Douglas and Jefferson Cos.) on 1 Dec 1995 (1-95-1).

***LEAST BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus exilis*). A calling (singing) bird was reported from the marshes below Two Buttes Res. (Baca Co.) on 23 Jun 1995 (5-95-7). This record was based entirely on call and the brief description was felt to be incomplete. The vote was 3-4.

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*). This first record is an example of the difficulty of separating this species from the very similar Tundra Swan, even with good views and a photograph. An apparent adult was described and photographed from Ridgway State Park (Ouray Co.), 20 May 1995 (photo; 8-95-13). Most RC members felt that the report was inadequate to eliminate Tundra Swan and that the submitted photograph was of a Tundra Swan. The vote was 2-5 upon re-circulation. A single adult, with no nearby large waterfowl for size comparison, was described from Huerfano Res. (Pueblo Co.) on 11 Nov 1995 (8-95-14). The long distance involved in this observation did not allow critical field marks to be described adequately. The vote was 3-4.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). This record was of two white-phase adults with a juvenile on 4 Nov 1995 near Muddy Creek arroyo in Pueblo Co. (12-95-23). The habitat was pinon-juniper woodland. There was no written description accompanying the letter. The RC members were not able to evaluate this record adequately due to the lack of a written description. The vote was 0-7. Observers are reminded that white-phase Gyrfalcons are not expected at the southern extreme of their winter range. Some *Buteo* sp., such as Ferruginous Hawk, may appear nearly white from underneath.

WHOOPIING CRANE (*Grus americana*). This single-observer record was of a flock of six birds at Barbour Ponds (Weld Co.) 23 Apr 1995 (16-95-27). This report was very brief and RC members did not feel that the observer sufficiently eliminated similarly appearing species. The vote was 0-7.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER (*Calidris acuminata*). This record (19-95-30) consisted of four written reports, none with photographs. The record was of a single juvenile on 5 Aug 1995 at a pond near Weld Co. Rds. 42 and 45, Weld Co. This was a difficult record for the RC to evaluate and the RC appreciates and acknowledges written opinion from Paul Lehman. While the written descriptions of the bird seemed reasonable, there were inconsistencies between reports. These included description of posture, feeding style, leg color, upper breast and throat color, and undertail coverts. The date of occurrence also was a stumbling block for acceptance. The earliest arrival of juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers in western Alaska is about 15 August and juveniles do not appear along the coast of California until around 20 August. Not only would this have been the second documented record of this species for Colorado, the date would make it of significance for North America. Thus

most RC members wished for a more detailed, consistent report or photographs. The vote was 2-5.

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). A single-observer record (22-95-33) from near Ouray, (Ouray Co.) on 15 Jun 1995 did not eliminate other jaegers. The vote was 0-7.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*). An adult was reported from an unknown location on 29 Dec 1995 (23-95-42). The vote was 3-4.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*). This report would have documented breeding of this species near Durango (La Plata Co.). The report was e-mail text and was perhaps not intended to document the occurrence. It included no description but was simply dates of occurrence (11 Apr - July 1995). The RC members felt that they could not render an opinion to accept this record (33-95-103). The vote was 1-6.

VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*). This report of an adult female from Aspen (Pitkin Co.) on the unusual date of 15 July 1995 was felt to be too brief and did not fully eliminate sub-adult American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) (44-95-69). The vote was 2-5.

BENDIRE'S THRASHER (*Toxostoma bendirei*). The controversy over the occurrence of this species in Colorado continues. Two records were not accepted by the RC: a single bird near Cortez (Montezuma Co.) on 25 Apr 1995, and a pair of birds five miles northwest of Del Norte (Rio Grande Co.) on 26-27 Jun 1995 (43-95-70 and 43-95-71 respectively). The possibility of worn-plumaged Sage Thrashers (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) could not be eliminated. In fact, with commendable caution, the second of these records was submitted as possible Bendire's or Sage thrashers. The votes were 0-7 and 0-7. There is controversy over the identification and occurrence of this species in Colorado. For recent discussion of the issue, see Rawinski et al. (1995).

PINE WARBLER (*Dendroica pinus*). A fall bird, listed as being of unknown sex, was observed at Golden Ponds Park (Boulder Co.) on 31 Aug 1995. The vote was 0-7.

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helmitheros vermivorus*). This report did not adequately eliminate similar species. It was a single bird seen 13 Oct 1995 in Lyons (Boulder Co.) (52-95-86). The vote was 3-4.

PURPLE FINCH (*Carpodacus purpureus*). This report described two birds out of a group of four birds on 20 Sep 1995 at Collbran (Mesa Co.) at

approximately 7000 feet (56-95-100). The observation only lasted one minute and the description did not adequately eliminate Cassin's Finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*). The RC vote was 1-6.

PART 3: RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED -- NATURAL OCCURRENCE QUESTIONABLE

MANDARIN DUCK (*Aix galericulata*). This Asian species is commonly kept by wildfowl enthusiasts. Individuals of this species show up occasionally in Colorado. They can be found year-round in Pueblo, where they have been released and are now breeding freely. This record consisted of a photograph and letter describing an adult male seen at Big Thompson Creek (Larimer Co.) on 5 Apr 1995 (photo; 8-95-18). The identification was not in doubt, but the question of origin resulted in a 0-7 vote by the RC.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL (*Callipepla californica*). This three-observer record was well documented. The identification was not in doubt by RC members. The record was of a single male, 3-18 April 1995, in Greeley (Weld Co.) (13-95-24). The location of the bird in a residential area of Greeley, the extreme tameness of the bird, and the availability of this species to keepers of wildfowl brought the origin of this individual into question. The committee vote was 0-7.

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Great Black-backed Gull, Cherry Creek Reservoir
September 25, 1995
by D. Leatherman

MANAGING FOR GRASSLAND BIRDS IN AN URBAN / WILDLAND INTERFACE IN COLORADO

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Abstract

Populations of grassland birds in North America have undergone dramatic declines during the past 25 years. Alterations to both their breeding and wintering habitats likely have contributed to the declines. Recently, small fragments of grassland, typically surrounded by inhospitable habitat, such as developments or forest, have become preserves for many grassland birds. While predation and parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) continue to impact populations of grassland birds, a new and intensifying suite of perturbations confronts them in these urban / wildland interfaces: changes in predator assemblages, which now include domestic cats (*Felis silvestris*); recreational uses associated with trails; agricultural practices, such as grazing and haying; and management for other plant and animal species. Through a combination of land-use modifications, visitor restrictions, public education, and effective monitoring, however, disturbance can be reduced and the probability of long-term survival of grassland bird populations in wildland / urban interfaces can be enhanced. This paper presents the management scenario and actions taken to address multiple impacts on grassland birds and to preserve a unique population of Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) and other grassland birds in an urban / wildland interface of Boulder, Colorado.

Introduction

Since the arrival of European settlers, grasslands along the eastern Front Range of the Colorado Rocky Mountains have undergone dramatic changes. The shortgrass and mixed-grass prairies have seen the disappearance of Bison (*Bison bison*) and a severe reduction in the range of Black-tailed Prairie Dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) (Miller et al. 1994). While almost all grasslands have been changed through agricultural conversion, some contain remnants of the species assemblages noted prior to European settlement. Some plant and animal species that inhabited tallgrass and mixed-grass prairies along the South Boulder Creek floodplain near Boulder, Colorado, still occur in the remaining grasslands. In

these grasslands, native grasses (*Andropogon gerardii*, *Panicum virgatum*, and *Spartina pectinata*) mix with non-native grasses (*Phleum pratense*, *Festuca pratensis*, and *Agrostis alba*) to form a unique habitat in modern, irrigated pastures and hay meadows. These meadows still contain avian assemblages similar to those first recorded in the early 1900s: Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*), and Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) (Alexander 1937, Betts 1913, Henderson 1908).

Concern about rapid, uncontrolled urban expansion during the 1960s led the citizens of Boulder to embark on a very successful land protection program. A municipal department, now known as the Boulder Open Space Department (CBOSD), was created to purchase agricultural and undeveloped wildland in the Boulder Valley. Since then, more than 9,500 hectares (23,474.5 acres) of land, including some of the grasslands along the South Boulder Creek floodplain, have been purchased and protected in and around the city limits. Some important purposes of the Open Space Program are to preserve and restore natural areas, preserve scenic vistas and wildlife habitat, preserve land for passive recreational use, preserve historic agricultural use and land suitable for agricultural production, and use land for shaping the development of the city.

As global concern about population declines among grassland birds grew, (Askins 1993, Knopf 1994), local agency personnel and ornithologists began tracking grassland birds in the Boulder Valley (Hallock 1989). Monitoring (accomplished through annual modified spot mapping) was conducted to track Bobolink populations in particular. Preliminary studies revealed that Bobolinks and other grassland birds in the irrigated grasslands suffered direct mortality due to haying and natural predation (Thompson and Strauch 1987). Increasing urbanization and concern about how to manage the grasslands to benefit grassland birds led to additional work in 1994, the focus of which was the nest success of grassland birds. Nest success (defined as at least one fledgling) varied from 75% in areas of low urbanization to 15% in areas of high urbanization (C.K. Miller, unpublished data). The variety of potential perturbations and their complex interactions demanded that management of the unique grassland avifauna of the South Boulder Creek area be addressed. This paper outlines a plan used to manage for grassland birds in the irrigated pasture / hay meadows of the South Boulder Creek area.

South Boulder Creek Management Area

The South Boulder Creek Management Area (SBCMA) encompasses approximately 663 hectares (1,638 acres) of irrigated pasture and hay meadows at an elevation of 1630 meters (5,348 feet) along the base of the eastern foothills

of the Rocky Mountains south of Boulder, Colorado. Pastures range in size from 23 to 149 hectares (56.8 - 368.2 acres). The perimeter of the SBCMA is 22 km (13.67 miles), 27% of which borders high-density urban areas (>1 home / ha or 2.471 acres), 18% of which borders low-density urban areas (<1 home / ha or 2.471 acres), and 55 % of which borders unirrigated, upland, mixed-grass prairie pastures or other wildlands. The SBCMA has 7.2 km (4.47 miles) of recreational trails located primarily within the wooded riparian zone of South Boulder Creek or on the perimeter of the grasslands. More than 290,000 visits are made to the SBCMA annually, with most of the activity (hiking, running, dog exercise) being confined to the trails (Zeller et al. 1993).

The irrigated grasslands at SBCMA are important components of year-round ranching operations in the Boulder Valley. Typically, cows and calves are turned out to graze on the grasslands during the non-growing season (December - May). Maximum Animal Unit Months (AUM) range from 100-600, depending on pasture size, forage condition, and season. Cows generally calve during March. From May through June, flood-style irrigation is applied, then a single cutting of hay is made during July, usually beginning about 4 July and continuing for several weeks. If available, irrigation water is applied again from late summer through September.

Common avifauna breeding in the SBCMA grasslands include Wilson's Phalarope, Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink, Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), and Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) (Bock et al. 1995). Breeding typically begins in early May and continues throughout August, depending on the species. During migration, the grasslands are used by a number of species, including Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*), Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), and White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*), and in winter they are used by Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*), Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*).

Perturbations and Management Strategies

This section discusses the potential threats to which grassland avifauna are exposed and mitigation measures the CBOSD is using to reduce those impacts.

Nest Parasitism. -- Recent increases in populations of the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) and its capacity for producing many eggs may threaten the survival of grassland birds through nest parasitism (Robinson et al. 1993). The availability of more perch sites for Brown-headed Cowbirds in or adjacent to grasslands also has the potential for contributing to nest parasitism on grassland birds (Johnson and Temple 1990). As part of the CBOSD's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, non-native Russian olive trees

(*Eleagnus angustifolia*) are removed from grassland interiors and margins (particularly along irrigation ditches) to create a more homogeneous grassland environment and to decrease the number of perches available to cowbirds.

Predator Assemblages. -- Predators can have a significant influence on the nest success of birds (Miller and Knight 1993). Grassland avifauna of the SBCMA contend with a variety of native mammalian, reptilian, and avian predators, including Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), Stripped Skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), various snakes, Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*), and Black-billed Magpies (*Pica pica*). Many native predators have adapted to developed areas and become more numerous as urbanization increases (Rosatte et al. 1991). Grassland avifauna in proximity to developments also must contend with populations of domestic cats, which can inflict significant predation on adult and nestling birds (Coleman and Temple 1993). Through public education, SBCMA users are encouraged to be responsible pet-owners (e.g., cats and dogs should be kept on leashes or confined to urban yards). In addition, home stewardship (feeding pets indoors and keeping garbage sealed) is encouraged to avoid supplemental feeding of native predators.

Non-avian Species Of Concern. -- *Spiranthes diluvialis* is a federally listed, threatened orchid that grows in the SBCMA. The plant flowers from 15 July to early August, which necessitates early haying to avoid destruction of flowering heads. Early haying, however, is diametrically opposed to beneficial management for grassland nesting birds, which require late haying to avoid destruction of nests (Bollinger et al. 1990, Herkert et al. 1993). Fortunately, *Spiranthes diluvialis* does not occur in high densities in all of the grassland parcels in the SBCMA. Therefore, the timing of haying and the order in which each grassland parcel is hayed has been modified so that parcels with the largest concentrations of *Spiranthes diluvialis* are hayed first. In this way, larger populations of the orchid benefit from early haying in some parcels while other parcels remain available for grassland nesting birds without the potential mechanical destruction of their nests.

Non-native Weed Control. -- Past disturbances (channelization of South Boulder Creek, construction of recreational trails) have led to the introduction of non-native weeds, particularly Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*). Unfortunately, infestations of non-native weeds can have ecologically devastating effects on natural communities (Hengeveld 1988). Monocultures of non-native weeds can have detrimental impacts on the quality of nesting and foraging sites for grassland avifauna. The CBOSD IPM program utilizes a variety of chemical, biological, and mechanical control techniques to manage infestations of non-native weeds. In the SBCMA, mechanical weed control (hand-held weed

mowers or tractor-mounted mowers) is used after the main avian breeding season. In addition, livestock grazing is used to control Canada thistle. Grazing continued past 1 May can retard growth of Canada thistle effectively because cattle graze plants preparing to flower (L. Dieter, personal communication).

Mosquito Control. -- Chemical and biological control of mosquito populations is common in the floodplain / irrigated grasslands of the SBCMA due to the proximity and number of urban / rural subdivisions. Although invertebrate food resources in grasslands have been shown to be superabundant (Wiens 1974, 1977), a reduction in food resources combined with other factors, such as high densities of urban-associated predators and nest parasitism, could effectively reduce the nest success of grassland birds. Mosquito control in the SBCMA is administered by the Boulder County Health Department (BCHD). The CBOSD works closely with the BCHD to encourage citizen tolerance of mosquitos and to encourage natural mosquito predators. Cliff Swallows (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*) are encouraged to nest on various structures (buildings, culverts, and bridges) in the area, and bat boxes have been placed in trees along irrigation ditches in the SBCMA. In addition, chemical control is not allowed on grassland parcels and limited biological control is allowed only during exceptional outbreaks of mosquitos.

Landscape Fragmentation. -- Fragmentation of grasslands can have significant biological consequences for grassland avifauna (Samson 1980). For example, a number of grassland species (e.g., Bobolink, Savannah Sparrow) have been shown to be area sensitive (Herkert 1994, Vickery et al. 1994), and forest-grassland or urban-grassland edges have can have a significant, negative influence on the nest success of birds (Angelstam 1986, Johnson and Temple 1990, Suhonen et al. 1994). In addition, recreational trails have a negative influence on the nest success of grassland birds (Miller et al., *in press*). Therefore, CBOSD continues to purchase land to maintain buffers around the SBCMA. Large, contiguous blocks of irrigated grassland habitat or non-irrigated, mixed-grass uplands are managed together as units for grazing and haying. Also, artificial edges (roads, recreational trails) are developed adjacent to each other to minimize fragmentation of the grasslands.

Agriculture. -- Although natural disturbances, such as flooding and fire, are almost non-existent in the SBCMA, the disturbance regimes of livestock grazing and haying have helped maintain the suitability of grassland habitats for grassland birds. Haying, however, can have destructive impacts on ground-nesting birds (Bollinger 1990, Frawley and Best 1991, Luttschwager et al. 1994), and livestock grazing where the number of AUMs is too high or there is a lack of control over the timing of grazing may impede the vegetative recovery

necessary before habitats become suitable for nesting (Bock et al. 1993; C.K. Miller, personal observation). In addition, flood irrigation can limit suitable nest sites for grassland birds. Therefore, livestock are removed from the SBCMA prior to the initiation of nesting unless weed control is warranted. Haying is delayed until most of the birds have completed at least their first nesting cycle. On a number of parcels, there are some areas that remain undisturbed from mechanical mowing because they are inaccessible to the mowers, and the micro-topography of the fields results in some areas being left high and dry during flood irrigation. The presence of water also may deter domestic cats from entering fields.

Recreational Trails. -- Passive recreation associated with trails can have devastating consequences for grassland nesting birds. Nest success can be influenced negatively, birds can be disturbed from foraging areas, and local predator assemblages can be affected (Knight and Gutzwiller 1995, Miller 1994). Research in mixed-grass prairie areas south of the SBCMA revealed that recreational trails may have a negative influence on the success of nests up to 100 meters from the trails (Miller et al., *in press*). The trails within the SBCMA, however, have been designed to avoid fragmenting the grasslands. Interpretive displays in the SBCMA encourage proper trail etiquette, such as staying on trails and leashing dogs. Aesthetically pleasing fencing and native plantings are used to keep visitors on the trails and prevent development of braided trail systems. Since 1993, there have been voluntary seasonal closures to visitors from 15 May to 15 July on parcels of land that contain significant numbers of nesting bobolinks.

Prescribed Fire. -- Fire plays an important role in maintaining quality grasslands and available nesting habitat for grassland avifauna (Zimmerman 1993). The use of prescribed fire is precluded in parts of the SBCMA due to irrigation practices and the proximity of homes. However, prescribed fire has been used on a number of parcels that are situated away from developed areas and which have marginal potential for irrigation or hay-cropping. Prescribed fire will continue to be an important management tool in the future.

The long-term maintenance of populations of nesting grassland birds in the SBCMA depends upon the continued stewardship of the CBOSD. Bobolink populations have increased during the past four years (32 males and 14 females in 1993; 27 males and 18 females in 1994; 53 males and 16 females in 1995; 40 males and 31 females in 1996) in some areas and they have been noted on several new parcels (Bock et al. 1995; C.K. Miller, personal observation). This could be a result of effective management and more effective monitoring, or it could be an artifact of natural population fluctuations. Reproductive success and post-fledging survival are still paramount issues that require

attention. The CBOSD will continue effective management and monitoring in the future and continue to introduce new techniques, including volunteer citizen-stewardship of grassland parcels, modification of the timing and locations of haying, encouragement of applicable research, and education of the public regarding the value of the grasslands and grassland avifauna.

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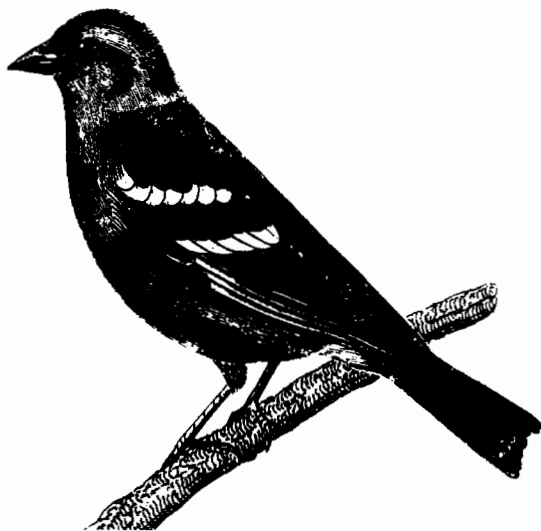
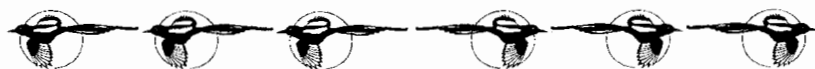
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WATCHING AN ASPEN AT DUSK

An aspen, maybe 4-5 meters,
rises from a bed of juniper
at twilight,
with new May leaves,
and a Green-tailed Towhee sits
as a Gray Catbird relaxes,
sharing the branched structure.
Then, a House Wren jumps into the tree
and is agitated.
but then too relaxes,
and sits with the catbird for five minutes
after the towhee dropped into the juniper mass.
A White-crowned Sparrow jumps up
and, excitedly, hops between the wren and catbird
and the towhee returns.
For moments, it's a little aspen full of birds--
until the wren leaves,
then the towhee,
followed by the sparrow.
It's near dusk.
The aspen in new leaf swings
in the east breeze
and in the canopy of the juniper bed
against the white base bark
hunches the catbird
puffed, calm,
reposed, but alert,
waiting for morning.
And the eye closes.
In the bright horizon
and dark foreground,
five minutes later,
the eyes open
as a Canada Goose flies over
honking, and passes.
Black tail, silhouetted
against white aspen trunk,
again relaxed, the catbird sleeps.

by Fritz Knopf

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Sharp-shinned Hawk in Fort Collins, April 11, 1997
by A. Cringan

INTERNET WEB SITES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST TO CFO MEMBERS

<http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/birdlinks.html> (an incredible site that has a huge variety of links to Web sites all over the world for bird-related information resources -- home pages for professional ornithological organizations, non-governmental organizations, public agencies, birding groups, natural history museums; shopping sites for bird-related items; information on the *Birds of North America* series; bird songs from Cornell Ornithology Laboratory; information on endangered and extinct bird species, and much much more)

<http://www.im.nbs.gov/birds.html> (U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division's -- formerly National Biological Service -- home page for bird monitoring information, including Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Count data)

<http://www.birdware.com/Lists/rba.html> (National Birding Hotline Cooperative)

<http://www.npsc.nbs.gov/resource/othrdata/chekbird/chekbird.html> (Northern Prairie Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division -- Bird checklists of the U.S.)

<http://www.peaknet.org/enviro/birds.html> (Birds of the Peak to Peak Highway, Colorado)

<http://www.mindspring.com/~rlbunn/peakbird.html> (Birding the Pikes Peak Region, Colorado)

<http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/birdframe.html> (Bird Families of the World -- Sibley and Monroe's classification)

<http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/birdmail.html> (daily mail from birding chat sites of the U.S., including COBIRDS and BIRD CHAT, as well as chat sites from other countries)

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS OF THE *JOURNAL OF THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS*

The *Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists* 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. Please do not use "tabs" in electronic versions of your manuscript, except to indicate new paragraphs (i.e., do not use them to create hanging indents). The Editor will send a more detailed set of instructions upon request.

Contributors are encouraged to send electronic versions of their manuscripts, tables, and graphs via e-mail attachment or on a 3.5" floppy diskette. Preferred software is WordPerfect (DOS or Windows, versions 5.0-6.1), MS Word (DOS or Windows versions 6.0 or earlier), Quattro Pro, or ASCII text format. **Please include a diskette label that indicates which software packages and versions/operating systems you have used.** After the article is published, the diskette and artwork/photographs will be returned to you. If you send only a hard-copy manuscript, then please double-space the text (disk copy manuscripts do not need to be double-spaced); hard-copy manuscripts will not be returned unless requested. Black & white and color artwork or photographs (slides, prints, or negatives) can be submitted as originals or duplicates, or they can be scanned TIF images on a 3.5" diskette or compact disk; please send information about photos and art (e.g., what does it depict; type of camera/lens/film used; where it was taken; what art medium was used). Generally, all photographs and artwork are published in black & white. Authors, (and photographers, artists) may receive one complimentary copy of the *Journal*. Additional copies are \$3.00 each. Authors needing additional copies of their articles should contact the editor prior to printing.

Send manuscripts, photographs, drawings, and questions to Cynthia Melcher, 4200 North Shields, Fort Collins, CO 80524. **Home phone:** (970) 484-8373; **work phone:** 970/491-2153; **e-mail:** cynthia@NREL.ColoState.EDU; **FAX:** 970/491-1965.

NOTE: Deadlines for submissions are: December 1 for January issue, March 1 for April issue, June 1 for July issue, and September 1 for October issue.

How To SUBMIT RECORDS TO THE Colorado Bird Records Committee

Use the standard reporting form inserted at the centerfold of each current issue of the *Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists*, or request an *Audubon Field Notes* Mountain West form is from Van A. Truan (1901 Court St., Pueblo, CO 81003; phone: 719/543-4744). Forms are preferred because completion of all sections ensures that most pertinent information is included. If photographs are submitted, please send two copies, as the records are duplicated before being sent to committee members.

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; or send them to Mark Janos, Records Committee Chair, 10 Sedum Ct., Pueblo, CO 81001.

