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COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' MISSION STATEMENT

The Colorado Field Ornithologists 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.

UPCOMING CFO FIELD TRIPS

17 Feb 2001 (Saturday)

Field trip around Pueblo with leader Brandon Percival. Meet at 8 A.M. at Valco Ponds parking lot on Hwy 96, 2.4 miles west of the intersection with Pueblo Blvd. We will spend the day looking for birds around Pueblo and Pueblo Reservoir. Bring food and drink for lunch. State parks pass required for Pueblo Reservoir. For details call Brandon at 719-547-3722.

FOURTH ANNUAL GULL-IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Tony Leukering will lead a two-day gull-identification workshop in the Loveland/Longmont area, 9-10 March 2001. There will be an evening classroom session in Longmont on Friday, the 9th, and an all-day field trip in the Loveland area on Saturday, the 10th. The evening session will run from 6:30 to about 9:30 and the Saturday field trip will start at 7:00 A.M. and go for as long as participants wish. Participation is free to all with an interest in learning gull identification. To register, please e-mail Tony (greatgrayo@aol.com). If you do not have access to e-mail, please call him at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory at 303-659-4348.

A NEW NAME AND OFFICE FOR THE COLORADO BIRD OBSERVATORY

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The mission of the Colorado Bird Observatory (CBO) has always emphasized “conservation of birds of the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains.” However, with recent growth of its conservation programs, reaching from Canada into Mexico and from the Great Plains to the Colorado Plateau, it was felt that a new name was needed to reflect the Observatory’s wide-ranging efforts in bird

conservation. Therefore, in a recent, unanimous vote by CBO's Board of Directors, the organization changed its name to better reflect its mission. Colorado Bird Observatory is now *Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory*.

Although the organization has a new name, its mission remains the same: conserving birds and their habitats throughout the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains, through monitoring, research, education, and international partnerships. Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) will continue to conduct on-the-ground conservation and research in cooperation with other private, state, and federal agencies responsible for managing areas and programs important for birds. RMBO will also continue to work with private landowners and managers to encourage sound land management practices. Much of the work is designed to increase understanding of birds and their habitats, by educating children, teachers, natural resource managers, and the general public.

Along with the new name, the Observatory has a new office. For most of its 12-year existence, CBO operated out of a drafty, crowded mobile home located at Barr Lake State Park. As programs and staff continued to expand, acquiring new office space became a high priority. By lucky coincidence, Barr Lake owned an abandoned house on the opposite side of the lake from the CBO trailer; the building was slated for demolition, unless CBO wanted it for a new office. A little research revealed that the Old Stone House (as it was known locally) was a 110 year-old Swiss-style house, the only one of its kind in Colorado. The Colorado State Historical Society soon designated it a State Historical Property. The long history of ornithology at Barr Lake, historic building conservation, and bird conservation all seemed to fit together, so CBO signed a lease on the property. After a successful fund-raising campaign, restoration work began in 1997. Thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of dedicated people, RMBO staff moved in during March of 2000—the first occupants in over 40 years (not counting Rock Doves and coyotes).

For now, the mailing address remains the same as at the old office. However, staff members have new e-mail addresses, with the format of "firstname.lastname@rmbo.org" (see our addresses above).

For more information about the new office or about RMBO in general, check out the exciting new web site at www.rmbo.org, or phone the Observatory at 303-659-4348.



THE EFFECTS OF ELK ON NEST SITE SELECTION IN CAVITY-NESTING BIRDS IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT: Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) is the most widely-distributed tree in North America. In many areas in Colorado and the West, elk (*Cervus elaphus*) browse in aspen stands on twigs and new suckers and feed on the bark, damaging the tree and discouraging regeneration. The management of the elk population in Rocky Mountain National Park has long been the subject of study and controversy. I studied cavity-nesting birds in aspen groves on the elk winter range in the park to determine if primary cavity-nesting birds preferentially select for trees of a specific health class, and whether elk are affecting the availability of potential nest sites. I found that cavity-nesters choose live trees more often than dead trees. The consistent deterioration of the overall health of aspen groves in this area of the park could ultimately lead to the extirpation of some species of cavity-nesting birds from this area. Understanding the short- and long-term effects of elk on aspen habitat and cavity-nesters is vital to the creation and implementation of a successful elk management plan.

Introduction

Quaking aspen is the most widely-distributed tree in North America (Whitney 1985). In Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), quaking aspen provides vital habitat for many species of birds. Nearly 50% of species that consistently breed in the park use aspen groves as a regular component of their habitat, and 10 species breed in these areas almost exclusively (Lloyd 1997, cited in Andrews and Righter 1992). On average, aspen sites in the park contain a higher species richness than surrounding conifer sites (Turchi 1994). The quaking aspen groves of RMNP have come under close scrutiny since before the park's inception in 1915.

Elk are residents of the park and a natural part of the ecosystem. Historically, their populations were controlled by a number of factors, including their

available food base, predation by gray wolf (*Canus lupus*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), and hunting by humans. These controls kept the population from reaching levels that damaged the environment. By approximately 1880, excessive hunting had eliminated elk from the park (Monello, pers. comm.). A reintroduction of elk from Yellowstone eventually restored the population. Although no information exists on historic numbers of elk in the park, the population is probably higher now than at any time in the last 120 years (Monello, pers. comm.). The decline of available winter habitat and the extirpation of large predators have resulted in dense elk concentrations during winter that many believe exceed the carrying capacity of the park, and are therefore potentially damaging to the ecosystem (Hess 1993; Lloyd 1997; Olmsted 1977, 1997).

The management of the elk population in the park has long been the subject of study and controversy. The deterioration and lack of aspen regeneration in areas administered by the Park Service have been discussed in the literature for many years (Olmsted 1977). Studies that were undertaken to determine the effects of elk and other large herbivores on aspen in Rocky Mountain and other national parks have shown a direct correlation between the decline of aspen and an increase in the elk population (Baker et al. 1997; Krebill 1972; Olmsted 1977, 1997; Lloyd 1997; Suzuki et al. 1999).

Elk are herbivores and can affect aspen in two important ways: by eating bark (“barking”) and by eating new sprouts and seedlings, both common practices in Colorado and the western United States (Fitzgerald et al. 1981). Sprouts and seedlings provide easy winter forage for elk and other herbivores. Overuse of this food source, however, limits the growth of new trees and therefore affects the replacement of dead and fallen trees. Elk eat the bark in the fall and winter, which can seriously affect the vigor and regeneration of aspen (Fitzgerald et al. 1981). While eating the bark from an aspen will rarely kill the tree outright, it provides a point of entry for a variety of pathogens (DeByle and Winokur 1985) that can thus cause a decline in health and perhaps the eventual demise of the tree. Krebill (1972) found that barking has increased aspen mortality in stands in Teton National Forest, Wyoming, because pathogens and injurious insects have been able to invade the wounded trees.

Today, about half of the 29 orders of birds nest in tree cavities or other holes (Arsenault 1999). In the park, cavity-nesting birds include woodpeckers (*Picidae*), chickadees (*Paridae*), nuthatches (*Sittidae*), swallows (*Hirundinidae*), wrens (*Troglodytidae*), and bluebirds (*Turdidae*). Primary cavity nesters are those that excavate their own cavities and include woodpeckers and occasionally nuthatches and chickadees. Secondary cavity-

nesters are those that cannot excavate their own cavities, and instead use existing cavities. Swallows, wrens, bluebirds, and sometimes nuthatches and chickadees fall into this category. They are limited in their choice of nest location by the preference of primary nesters and by the chance location of natural cavities. Aspen is a frequently-chosen nest site by cavity-nesting birds in the park, perhaps because it has a soft wood. It is also often infected with fungi and other pathogens that further soften the wood, making excavation easier.

Zaninelli and Leukering (1997) identified 19 aspen groves in the elk winter range on the east side of RMNP and then surveyed each tree in each grove for the presence and use of cavities, overall tree health, and other tree and surrounding habitat characteristics. Their study, along with others, suggests that live quaking aspen are the most important habitat for cavity-nesting birds in RMNP (Duberstein 1999). This study looks at aspen in the elk winter range in the park in an attempt to determine whether or not cavity-nesting birds preferentially select trees of a specific health class and, if so, whether elk are affecting the availability of potential nest sites.

Methods

I conducted research in aspen groves on the east side of RMNP between 22 May and 20 July 2000. Surveys were conducted throughout the day, generally beginning at 0600 and ending at 1830.

The RMNP GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Department assisted in the determination of research grids by generating 20,000 random points within the elk winter range of RMNP. Of these, 197 points fell within the 19 pre-established plots on which cavity-nesting bird research had been conducted since 1997. I chose 23 of these points at random, further selecting 12 of them to be the starting point for year 2000 transects. These random points were located using a Garmin GPS eTrex™ unit. Once at the first point, a random compass bearing was taken, and a square 1-ha plot was paced out. Within this plot, a sample of 60 aspen trees was taken by walking through the entire plot and randomly selecting 60 trees. For plots containing fewer than 60 trees, all trees were sampled. For each tree, I recorded the following data: tree height, diameter at breast height, tree condition (Table 1), number of cavities, cavity orientation, cavity age, and bird activity. If the tree did not contain cavities, I recorded only information about tree height, diameter at breast height, and tree condition. Because so few trees were found with cavities, and even fewer with active cavities, I also surveyed a second group of previously-located cavity trees. This cohort was made up of trees in aspen groves located outside of the random 1-ha plots.

Table 1. Tree condition classification in aspen study, Rocky Mountain National Park, CO, summer 2000.

Class	Description
I	normal, vigorous, healthy, no dead branches
II	some dead branches
III	dead standing tree
IV	standing stump

Using the computer program SYSTAT (SPSS 1997), I tested for significance using a Pearson Chi-square test and a two-sample *t*-test. For statistical purposes, both tree cohorts were combined in analyses.

Results

In 12 plots, I surveyed a total of 685 non-cavity trees and 24 trees with cavities. Most trees were categorized as Health Class II (Table 2). Ten active cavities containing five different bird species were located. These included Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus nuchalis*), Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*), White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), and House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*). In the second cohort, a total of 72 trees comprising 215 cavities was evaluated. Twenty-seven of these cavities were active. With the exception of White-breasted Nuthatch, all bird species found in tree Cohort 1 were also found in Cohort 2. Additionally, Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*), Mountain Chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*), Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currocoides*), and European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were found in Cohort 2. Most nest cavities were in trees of Health Class II (Tables 3, 4).

Pearson Chi-square tests comparing tree class (I-IV) with cavity presence/absence yielded suspect significance tests due to a lack of data. However, when classes were collapsed into two categories (Class I and II=*live*, Class III and IV=*dead*), and the tests were run again, a significant preference by primary cavity-nesting birds for live trees was shown. Eighty percent of primary nesters were found in live trees. Additionally, nearly 69% of secondary nesters chose cavities located in live trees (value=5.941, df=2.000, prob=0.05) (Table 5). Fifty-six percent of all cavities (active and inactive) were located in live trees, a percentage which proved to be significant (value=74.265, df=1.000, prob=0.00) (Table 6).

A two-sample *t*-test showed tree height to be significant when compared with the presence or absence of cavities. On average, cavity trees were approximately 2 m shorter than those without cavities (pooled variance $t=3.164, df=705, p=0.002$).

Table 2. Percent of different health classes of non-cavity trees surveyed in aspen study, Rocky Mountain National Park, CO, summer 2000.

	# of trees	% of total trees
Class I	99	14
Class II	475	69
Class III	74	11
Class IV	37	6
TOTAL	685	100

Table 3. Percentage of cavities in Class I-IV trees in aspen study, Rocky Mountain National Park, CO, summer 2000.

	# cavities	% of total cavities	# active cavities	% active cavities
Class I	4	2	3	8
Class II	128	53	24	65
Class III	49	20	3	8
Class IV	60	25	7	19
TOTALS	241	100	37	100

Table 4. Use of tree class by various cavity-nesting species in aspen study, Rocky Mountain National Park, CO, summer 2000.

Species	total # nests	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Red-naped Sapsucker	5	1	4	0	0
Northern "Red-shafted" Flicker	3	0	1	0	2
Tree Swallow	7	1	4	0	2
Violet-green Swallow	1	1	0	0	0
Mountain Chickadee	5	0	4	1	0
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	0	1	0	0
House Wren	13	1	8	2	2
Mountain Bluebird	1	0	0	0	1
European Starling	1	0	1	0	0
TOTALS	37	4	23	3	7

Table 5. Pearson Chi-square comparison of tree class to cavity activity, Rocky Mountain National Park, CO, summer 2000.

Tree Health	inactive (%)	primary nester (%)	secondary nester (%)	Total (%)
dead	48.485	20.000	31.250	45.000
live	51.515	80.000	68.750	55.000
TOTALS	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000

value = 5.941, df = 2.0, prob = 0.05

Table 6. Pearson Chi-square comparison of the percent of cavity trees with tree health, Rocky Mountain National Park, CO, summer 2000.

Tree Health	cavity absent	cavity present	total
dead	15.721	43.103	22.633
live	84.279	56.897	77.367
TOTALS	100.00	100.00	100.00

value = 74.265, df = 1.00, prob = 0.00

Discussion

I found that tree health appears to be an important parameter in the selection of nest sites by primary cavity-nesting birds. The results of this study agree with those of Zaninelli and Leukering (1997), who found that, as a group, cavity-nesters selected live trees for cavities more often than expected by chance (80% of primary nesters were found in live trees, as were 74% of secondary nesters). In this study it was difficult to determine whether cavities were excavated before or after the trees died. It is possible that the cavities were created when the trees were still living. This possibility, combined with the already-high proportion of primary nesters in live trees in this year's study, reinforces the assertion that live aspen are more important to cavity-nesting birds than are dead trees.

Elk appear to be the main cause of the decline of aspen health in RMNP. There are other arguments for this degradation, including fire suppression, climate, and changing hydrologic conditions. However, some scientists believe these causes are at most only contributing factors and not the driving forces behind the decline (Lloyd 1997). Class IV trees made up the second-highest percentage of cavity trees. While cavity-nesting birds provide benefits to trees in the form of insect control, the creation of a cavity also provides entry for fungi and other diseases. DeByle and Winokur (1985) state that the benefits gained by the tree seem to outweigh the damage caused by the excavation of a cavity. While the excavation of a cavity may not adversely affect a tree under normal circumstances, elk barking may accelerate the degradation of the tree. The excavation of several cavities, combined with high elk grazing pressure, may surpass the tolerance level of the tree, leading to its demise; hence, we find Class IV trees the second-most-likely to contain cavities. Future studies might follow a cohort of live trees containing newly-excavated cavities over a number of years, comparing their mortality with that

of a control group of non-cavity trees. This study should be carried out in areas with high and low elk grazing pressure in order to determine whether or not cavity excavation, complicated by elk grazing, adversely affects tree mortality.

The determination that cavity trees are shorter than non-cavity trees has interesting implications. Connor (pers. comm.) theorizes that trees containing cavities are perhaps weaker than those without cavities and therefore tend to break off more easily, especially during high winds. He further notes that he has observed trees breaking off right at a cavity or where there are multiple cavities in close proximity to each other more often than in undisturbed places on the tree. A multiple-year study is required to further examine these observations and assess their significance.

While Suzuki et al. (1999) found no evidence pointing toward an overall trend of decline in aspen in RMNP, they did find that grazing pressure on aspen appeared to be greater in groves on the east side of the park that are utilized by elk in the winter. Baker et al. (1997) and Lloyd (1997) attribute this decline within the park to elk grazing pressure. The consistent deterioration of the overall health of aspen groves on the east side of the park has considerable effects on the future of cavity-nesting birds, and could ultimately lead to the extirpation of these species from this area. Understanding both the short- and long-term impacts of elk grazing on aspen habitat and cavity nesters is vital to the creation and implementation of a successful elk management plan.

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COLORADO BREEDING BIRD ATLAS: USE AND USES OF THE ATLAS DATABASE

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Atlas database available

The last major component of the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, distribution of the database for use by the public, occurred in May, 2000. The Colorado Bird Atlas Partnership (CBAP) delivered copies of the Atlas database to the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Bird Observatory, and Colorado Natural Heritage Program. At a later date, Audubon Society of Greater Denver may receive the database.

Anyone who wishes to use the database may contact one of those agencies. You may either use the database or request that someone extract the information that you want. Each agency has a policy about reimbursement for the time spent either by you on their computer or by them getting information for you.

Agency contacts:

Colorado Division of Wildlife	303-291-7277	Don Schrupp
Colorado Bird Observatory	303-659-4348	Mike Carter
Colorado Wildlife Heritage Program	970-491-2844	Lee Grunau

Designed by Don Schrupp, the original Atlas database served us very well. He made it compatible with other Division of Wildlife data banks. Throughout the project Don provided extensive expert computer support to the Atlas; he enabled the creation and maintenance of the database. He also contributed to the Atlas publication, particularly by creating the distribution maps.

After publication of the Atlas, Bob Berman fine-tuned the database so that mere mortals can fathom its depths. He made global changes to update bird names (e.g., changing "DIPPER, AMERICAN" to "American Dipper"), to add scientific names and keys to codes to the database, and to organize the database into accessible files. Bob also wrote the manual that accompanies the database. The labors of both Don and Bob constitute a major contribution to the Atlas project and we gratefully acknowledge their effort and expertise.

Uses of the Atlas database

The Atlas log of uses of the database started in 1989. One hundred and one users have made 99 requests for information. Requests range from a list of birds in the block where a user has a summer cabin to providing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species section) all Atlas records of Mountain Plover.

The log categorizes types of users and types of uses. Most frequent user: the federal government (five agencies). Federal agencies used the database most often in connection with the Endangered Species Act and for Research (seven each). They made six requests for data for habitat evaluation and inventory, and five requests related to agency management.

Examples of uses: Using nesting dates for certain sensitive species to determine when to conduct a prescribed burn; ecosystem management planning; issuance of collectors' permits; proposed listing under the Endangered Species Act for Mountain Plover, Willow Flycatcher, and Loggerhead Shrike; as input to a model to develop habitat suitability models for wetland/riparian species. One agency researcher requested phenology dates for four grassland species in connection with her studies of birds on the Pawnee Grassland; another asked for blocks in which both Wilson's and Yellow warblers occur so as to locate sites for a study of nest and habitat selection by these two warblers.

A Division of Wildlife manager asked for the phenology of small birds that use CRP lands (Conservation Reserve Program) in order to advise the agency about a start date for harvesting dates on CRP lands during a drought year. Another requested block lists from the Uncompahgre Valley in order to gauge the ecological integrity of the Uncompahgre River Corridor, a project for GOCO (Great Outdoors Colorado).

A county Open Space agency asked for a species list from his county, and the U.S. Forest Service obtained lists for all Atlas blocks in national forest lands. The Owl Mountain Project obtained block lists and species lists for all of North Park and also provided financial support for Atlas field work there.

Several individuals, environmental groups, environmental consultants, and government agencies asked for block listings of sites involved in environmental issues such as proposals for pipelines, a ski area, a cement plant, and a subdivision.

Private consultants most frequently requested data to aid in preparation of Environmental Impact statements (nine requests). Commercial users included a tour leader, book authors, and a respected Colorado author/sound specialist who sought locations in which to record the calls and songs of the (newly distinguished) Juniper Titmouse.

The database is now available for research, information, habitat analysis, personal or any other interest. Feel free to contact any of these agencies, or me, for access to it. The wide support that the Atlas received from governmental agencies, environmental groups, and, especially, the community of Colorado bird watchers, dictates that CBAP make the results widely available.

Summary of types of users

28	Federal agencies
24	Individuals
18	Private consultants
14	State and county agencies
14	Non-profit groups
3	Environmental groups

Summary of types of uses

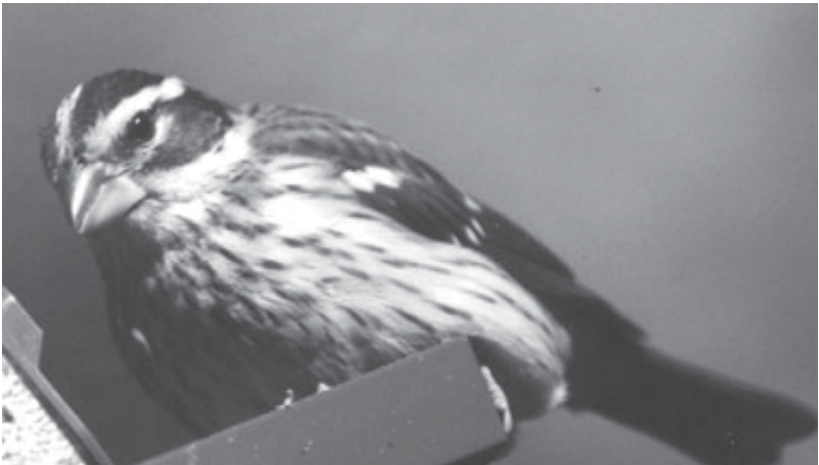
23	Research
20	Environmental issues
19	Habitat evaluation
12	Habitat inventory
8	Endangered species Act
8	Information
6	Agency management
5	Birds of North America (AOU monograph series)
3	Commercial

Post-Atlas

Sales of the book exceeded expectations. After initially projecting a print run of 1500 (based on the experience of atlas projects in other states), CBAP received pre-publication orders for 1900 books. We printed 3250 copies, and have left in inventory only 500. You can still buy copies at some book stores, wild bird stores, and American Birding Association, or order from the Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation, 303-291-7212, PO Box 211512, Denver 80221-0394. The latter agency also handles bulk purchases, e.g., for book stores or by non-profit groups.

The enthusiasm for the books has meant that CBAP has finished its atlas project with a substantial cash balance. The Steering Committee decided to keep the money in an Atlas 2007 Fund. New York inaugurated its second atlas this year, 20 years after it began its first one; Colorado can seriously consider repeating its Atlas effort with a similar time table.

The Steering Committee has new officers: Gary Skiba, President; David Pantle, Vice-President; Hugh Kingery, Secretary; and Jo Dirckx, Treasurer. Alex Cringan, Beth Dillon, Rich Levad, David Pantle, Gary Skiba, and Alan Versaw comprise the Steering Committee.



This female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed at a feeder near Como (in South Park), at 9800', on 5 December 2000. The bird was present regularly during 1-12 December, and occasionally after. Photo by Ed Zeigler.

FOUND: THE WEST SLOPE'S FIRST GREAT MIGRANT TRAP!

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The mouth of the Uncompahgre River at Confluence Park in Delta lies in a wide valley. The rims of the drainage lie twenty miles or so to the east and west. Birds traveling south along the broad open valley are dispersed over a broad riparian zone and agricultural plain. As they head south along this river, the bordering ridges—Uncompahgre Plateau to the west and Cimarron Ridge to the east—slowly converge and congregate the birds into a narrower and narrower chute. As they approach Ouray, the valley becomes a canyon, and when they get to the town of Ouray the canyon becomes a box. Migrants can either quickly gain altitude and climb over Red Mountain Pass or stop for a while in town to refuel before attempting the climb. Ouray has a tremendous supply of fruit sources (apples, crab apples, bittersweet, rose hips, etc.) which probably tempts various frugivores to brave the snow and sub-freezing temperatures that characterize its climate in November, rather than make a risky climb over colder and snowier mountains.

Topography and habitat such as this, which stops and holds migrants, constitutes a *migrant trap*. Events in Ouray in early November 2000 suggest that Ouray may be an outstanding example of this phenomenon. The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) conducted a company retreat there 6–7 November, and the authors and several other staff birded around town whenever they weren't "trapped" indoors—usually before eight in the morning and after three in the afternoon. We found so many birds that were late, very late, and/or out-of-range that we (Levad, Leukering, Doug Faulkner, and Nelda Gamble) stayed to bird more on the morning of the 8th.

During our stay, there were not all that many individual birds, aside from the hundreds of rosy-finches (of all three species plus Hepburn's) and the numerous Dark-eyed Juncos. However, we found so many individual birds that were out of place and/or out of time, that we had the distinct impression that we really needed to look at every bird that we could find. This is the feeling that Leukering has every time he visits Cape May, NJ, one of the granddaddies of migrant traps. However, the birding that we encountered in Ouray was even more thrilling than that in Cape May, as a very high percentage of the birds that we saw were not "supposed" to be there.

The wrong-place, wrong-time birds included nine Hermit Thrushes (late), one Gray Catbird (late), one Tennessee Warbler (very late and out of range), one “Myrtle” Warbler (late and out of range), one “Audubon’s” Warbler (late), three Spotted Towhees (late), one “Red” Fox Sparrow (the subspecies from the taiga region of Canada, a first record of this subspecies/species for western Colorado), one Lincoln’s Sparrow (late), one Swamp and four White-throated sparrows (both rare on the West Slope and probably an all-time high count in western Colorado for the latter), two “White-winged” Juncos (the Black Hills subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco, very rare on the West Slope), and one Black-headed Grosbeak (late). A partridge in a pear tree would hardly have been a surprise.

On the morning of the 7th, 50 Sandhill Cranes, 45 Snow Geese, and a lone Double-crested Cormorant flew south over the town, heading toward Red Mountain Pass in the midst of a snowstorm, providing further evidence that the Uncompahgre Valley acts as a migration corridor. These observations lead us to speculate about this site being a funnel for migrating raptors earlier in the fall.

Some other interesting, though not unexpected, birds also entertained us. The best feeder setup in town was at the Plain Jane Bed & Breakfast (west of 2nd St. and south of 7th Ave). These feeders hosted about a dozen Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches, 40 Black Rosy-Finches, and approximately 300 Brown-capped Rosy-Finches. Even more interesting, the feeding station had attracted all five subspecies groups of Dark-eyed Junco (a very rare event for the West Slope), and we could compare Slate-colored (nominate *hyemalis* and the northern Rockies *cismontanus*), White-winged, Oregon (a couple different subspecies), Pink-sided, and Gray-headed side by side. Throw in the various age- and sex-related plumage differences, and the range of plumages that the juncos presented was hard to beat. Steller’s Jays, Cedar Waxwings, Cassin’s Finches, and Evening Grosbeaks also visited feeders and fruit trees regularly.

For those interested in visiting Ouray in the near future, our experience and the history of Ouray birding (though limited) suggests that it can be an exciting destination throughout fall—not just a place to get out and stretch your legs and crane your necks skyward in summer and early fall to look for Black Swifts. Tennessee Warbler seems particularly prone to showing up in town (D. Guadagno, pers. comm.), but the topography ought to produce a pretty good raptor flight and the food sources in town probably support a large array of regular migrants and lost birds.

Our experience suggests that the whole town is worth walking. Pay particular attention to the many fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, and vines. The fruit trees near the Wiesbaden Inn (5th St. and 6th Ave.) were quite productive and held Cedar Waxwings, the “Red” Fox Sparrow, the Black-headed Grosbeak, some Evening Grosbeaks, and a number of Pine Grosbeaks. It will be interesting to see what the future holds in store for birders visiting Ouray and we’re particularly keen to know how long some of these lost birds can hold out at 8100’ in late fall. By the way, we can heartily recommend both establishments mentioned above for visiting birders. The hot springs pool at the Wiesbaden Inn is particularly nice!



This Parasitic Jaeger was videotaped by Larry Semo on 13 October 2000 at Chafield Reservoir.

CFO WEBSITE

We invite you to browse the Colorado Field Ornithologists’ website. If you don’t own a computer, check your local library. Check the site regularly, because new items and changes appear regularly. The Internet address is:

<http://www.cfo-link.org>

BOBOLINK (*DOLICHONYX ORYZIVORUS*) SURVEYS IN THE YAMPA VALLEY: MOFFAT AND ROUTT COUNTIES

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Warren (1908) first documented Bobolinks in the Yampa Valley on three meadows near Steamboat Springs in 1907. Martin et al. (1974) described them as follows: "During the 1972 and 1973 breeding seasons, the Bobolink was a common species inhabiting natural hay meadows along the Yampa Valley from Hayden Station downstream to Craig." In May of 2000, I investigated the distribution of this isolated population and found Bobolinks at seven locations in Routt County, between Craig and Steamboat Springs. I did not locate any Bobolinks in Moffat County. This systematic survey shows a decrease in the overall distribution of the population since 1972. Bobolinks persisted at two of six historic sites located in 1972–73 by Martin (pers. comm.). The reasons for abandonment of historic sites may be attributed to conversion of rangeland to other uses and changes in grazing regimes.

The survey area consists of the Yampa Valley downstream from Milner, in Routt County, to the confluence of the Williams Fork River at Hamilton, in Moffat County. Fortification Creek north of Craig to Ralph White Lake was also surveyed. The elevation range is from 6487 to 6240 feet (1977 to 1900 meters). The vegetation along the Yampa River floodplain includes woodland communities composed of open stands of narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), and river hawthorn (*Crataegus rivularis*) having an understory of scattered dense patches of red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*); riparian hay pastures; croplands of alfalfa and wheat; northern desert shrub stands of big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*); mountain shrub rangeland of serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), choke cherry (*Prunus virginiana*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), snowberry, and Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambellii*); and cattail marsh, pond, and stream habitats (Martin et al. 1974).

On 20 May 2000, the study area was driven and potential breeding and foraging habitat was identified and plotted on county series 1:50,000 scale USGS topographic maps. Potential habitat included irrigated hayfields with greater than 50% grass plus a broadleaf forb component and other wet

meadows with similar vegetation structure. Steve Martin was the primary information source for historic Bobolink breeding sites; local ranchers supplemented this information. These locations were also plotted on the county series maps.

Bobolinks begin arriving in the Yampa Valley the third week of May; the adult males arrive before the females. Locations with stable, larger populations are occupied first while smaller, more marginal populations are occupied last. Males begin territorial behavior upon arrival and during this period territorial boundaries are easiest to identify by observing male interactions. Territories are non-overlapping. For these reasons we chose to survey for Bobolinks 24–30 May.

On clear warm days, surveys were conducted between first light and 10 A.M. On cool, overcast days males remained actively defending territories throughout the morning and surveys continued until 12 P.M. Potential habitat was scanned with binoculars while the observer listened for male flight songs. When Bobolinks were found at potential and historic sites, a territory was assigned to each male and plotted on the county series map. At the end of the observation period the territories were counted and a total tallied for that location. Counts were obtained from roadside observations, except at the Carpenter Ranch where counts were made on the ground with a grid system.

Bobolinks were found at seven locations in Routt County. A total of 69 male territories were identified at these locations. Bobolinks were not found in Moffat County. Martin identified six historic sites in Routt and Moffat counties as active in 1972 and 1973 (pers. comm.); only two were still occupied by Bobolinks in 2000, the Carpenter Ranch and the Yampa River State Wildlife Area.

As recently as the 1970s Bobolinks from the Yampa Valley may have been connected to or had exchange with the White River population near Meeker. The Highway 13 corridor may have provided intermittent habitat at Hamilton, Axial, and a few other locations between Craig and Meeker. Loss of habitat and a decrease in the range of the Yampa Valley Bobolinks suggest this is an isolated population.

Areas occupied by Bobolinks had these characteristics in common: 1) the vegetation composition was greater than 50% grass with a taller broadleaf forb component, usually alfalfa, dandelions, or clover, and in one case western dock; 2) Red-winged Blackbirds and Savanna Sparrows were present; 3) occupied fields had not been grazed in 2000; 4) hay fields were not cut before

July 4 in the recent past; 5) all occupied areas were in the Yampa River floodplain.

In New York, Bobolinks use habitats characterized as alfalfa fields greater than 8 years since last plowing and reseeded, with low amounts of total vegetation cover, low alfalfa cover, and low total legume cover but with high litter cover and high grass-to-legume ratios relative to nearby fields (Bollinger and Gavin 1992). In Wisconsin they use grass-sedge fields along river bottoms (Martin 1971) and in arid Oregon they use irrigated meadows (Wittenberger 1976). Bobolinks in the Yampa Valley used habitats similar to these descriptions.

We experimented with taped recordings of male Bobolink vocalizations. We expected to elicit a territorial response from males when the tape was played within an occupied territory. However, the males did not respond. Steve Martin discovered that a very brief female vocalization, or “veep” call, did elicit a response from the males, but only at close range. This may prove helpful in future census work.

The Bobolink survey was a cooperative effort involving the following agencies and individuals: Steve Martin, who is researching Bobolink population dynamics on the Carpenter Ranch, and Cynthia D. Fleming, an intern from the Field Naturalist Program at the University of Vermont. The Nature Conservancy of Colorado, Carpenter Ranch, provided access to their fields and Bobolinks, and housing for Bobolink researchers. Their staff assisted in fieldwork and support: Goeff and Betsy Blakeslee, Ann Davidson, and Patrick Slattery.

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REPORT OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE: 1999 RECORDS

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This report covers the rare bird records reviewed by the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Bird Records Committee (hereafter the CBRC or the Committee) for 1999. The Committee evaluated 183 records of 98 species submitted by 67 observers. Fifty of the reports were accompanied by photographs, sketches, or field drawings, three included videotapes, and one provided a tape recording. All but one of the 183 records has received definitive votes by the CBRC through initial circulation, re-circulation, and consultation, and is presented here. One record's review was suspended and will be evaluated, with additional information, as part of the 2000 report. Of the 1999 records, 158 were accepted, for an acceptance rate of 86%. The majority of records are of birds observed in 1999. Per CBRC bylaws, all "accepted" records received 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept, either on the initial circulation or on the re-circulation. All records that were "not accepted" received fewer than four votes to accept (3-4, 2-5, 1-6, or 0-7) either on initial circulation or on re-circulation, or more than one "not-accept" during the meeting of the Committee.

Three species, Zone-tailed Hawk, Iceland Gull, and Common Ground-Dove, are added to the Colorado State list as a result of the 1999 circulation and are published in this report. The recent A.O.U. split of Sage Grouse into two separate species, both of which occur in Colorado, resulted in an official increase of one species for the list. The two species are now listed as Greater Sage-Grouse and Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Other potential first state records (White-tailed Kite, Vaux's Swift, Elegant Trogon, Black-backed Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Olive Warbler, and Smith's Longspur) were not accepted and are also published in this report. The Colorado State List stands at 469 species following these additions and changes.

Other highlights of this report include the third accepted records each of Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Pyrrhuloxia, the fifth records of Acorn Woodpecker and Sprague's Pipit, plus documentation on three additional Eurasian Collared-Dove records. This species was only added to the state list two years ago, but is expanding its distribution at a phenomenal rate.

The Committee's membership at the close of the 1999 was: Bill Lisowsky (chairman), Karleen Schofield, Tony Leukering, Joe Mammoser, John Rawinski, Chris Wood, and Vic Zerbi.

Committee Functions: All records reviewed by the CBRC are archived at the Denver Museum of Science and Nature. 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 (Janos 1998), on unusual occurrences by date or location, and on species unrecorded in Colorado.

Please send rare bird documentation and any other Committee correspondence either to: Tony Leukering, CBRC Chairman, P.O. Box 157, Arvada, CO 80001; or to the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Records Committee, c/o Zoological Collection, Denver Museum of Science and Nature, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, Colorado 80205-5798.

Report Format: This report is divided into three parts. Part 1 consists of records that were accepted and Parts 2 and 3 consist of records that were not accepted—either for reasons of identification, or for questions of natural occurrence or origin. Species are listed in current American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) taxonomic order (AOU 1997, 2000). Within species, records are listed chronologically by first date of occurrence. Included with each accepted record is its location, including county, and date(s) of occurrence. The initials of observers who submitted the reports and the record accession number (note the recently modified format of "four digit year - number", e.g. "1999-55") immediately follow the sighting information. If known, the initials and name(s) 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 it is not currently on the CBRC's review list. For species with ten or fewer Colorado records, the number in parentheses following the species' name is the number of records accepted by the CBRC through this reporting period.

Abbreviations used in the report: Co. (County); CBC (Christmas Bird Count); CC (Community College); NP (National Park); Res. (Reservoir); SP (State Park); SWA (State Wildlife Area); WE (Wildlife Easement).

Part 1: RECORDS ACCEPTED:

RED-THROATED LOON—*Gavia stellata*. An adult bird in breeding plumage was at Wolford Res. (Grand Co.) from at least 7/10/99 through 8/10/99.

This is the first July or August record for Colorado. (JL; 1999-1) Another record came from Jumbo Res. (Logan Co.) on the more expected date of 11/27/99. (PSw; 1999-2)

***PACIFIC LOON** – *Gavia pacifica*. An adult basic-plumaged loon was at Baseline Res. (Boulder Co.) on strange date of 6/29/99. (LS; 1999-3)

YELLOW-BILLED LOON – *Gavia adamsii*. A basic-plumaged bird spent a good part of the winter at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.), from 12/5/99 through at least 1/17/00. (MJ; 1999-4)

RED-NECKED GREBE – *Podiceps grisegena*. An immature bird originally found by Coen Dexter was seen at the Colorado River Wildlife Area near Clifton (Mesa Co.) on 12/13/99. (RL, photos; 1999-5) A basic-plumaged bird was seen at Hamilton Res. (Larimer Co.) on 1/30/99 (NK; 1999-6) Another record came from Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) between 11/13/99 and 12/5/99. (MJ; 1999-7)

BROWN PELICAN – *Pelecanus occidentalis*. A subadult was seen at Blue Lake SWA (Bent Co.) on 7/2/99. (NK; 1999-8) An adult and subadult were together at Quincy Res. (Arapahoe Co.) on 9/5/99. (PLa; 1999-9)

LITTLE BLUE HERON – *Egretta caerulea*. An adult was seen flying up the Cache la Poudre River near Fort Collins (Larimer Co.). (BL; 1999-11) Another sighting, of a juvenile bird, was near this same spot, on 8/5/99. (CW; 1999-183) A third report, a subadult, was in a pond east of Lochbuie (Weld Co.) on 8/15/99. (KS; 1999-12)

TRICOLORED HERON – *Egretta tricolor*. Two adults in breeding plumage were found by Mark Janos and Brandon Percival at a pond near Lake Holbrook (Otero Co.) on 5/16/99. (MJ; 1999-13)

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – *Nyctanassa violacea*. An adult in breeding plumage, previously found by others, was seen at Sawhill Ponds (Boulder Co.) on 5/22/99 (TL, photo; 1999-14)

GLOSSY IBIS – *Plegadis falcinellus*. Last year five records were accepted and 1999 was another big year with three more records submitted and accepted, confirming at least in part that observers are carefully scanning the spring *Plegadis* flocks. A breeding-plumaged adult was observed at Cherry Creek SP (Arapahoe Co.) on 4/26/99. (BB; 1999-15) Two other birds, both adults in breeding plumage, were seen in flooded fields, one west of Interstate 25 on 5/12/99 in Larimer County just east of Fossil Creek Res. (NK; 1999-16) and one near Fort Lupton (Weld Co.) on 5/15/99. (NK; 1999-17)

***CANADA “CACKLING” GOOSE** – *Branta canadensis minima*. An excellent documentation package was received and accepted for an individual of this subspecies, which is very rare in Colorado. The bird was viewed and photographed over the period of 3/19/99 through at least 5/26/99 at Chatfield Arboretum (Jefferson Co.) by numerous

observers. (AB, photos; LN; 1999-18)

BRANT– *Branta bernicla*. (9, 10) Two reports included a seven-year old record that had not been previously reviewed even though it was seen and reported at the time by many other observers. It was resubmitted along with photos of the specimen, and will be recorded officially as the Black Brant (*nigricans* race), seen 10/31/93 in Weld Co. at Union Res. (VD, photos; 1999-19) On 11/17/99, Dan Bridges found another adult of the *nigricans* race at Utah Park (Arapahoe Co.) which was also seen by many observers through at least 11/20/99. (LS, photos; PG; 1999-20)

EURASIAN WIGEON – *Anas penelope*. An adult male seen at Fruitgrowers Res. (Delta Co.) on 2/11/99 was only the second West Slope record. (EH; 1999-23)

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK – *Anas rubripes*. The increasing trend of sightings for this species continues. The Committee also continues to struggle during their record reviews, as the potential for hybridization is high. An adult bird at Nee So Pah (Kiowa Co.) on 2/7/99 was a very difficult call but the completeness of the description was felt to be sufficient. (MJ; 1999-25)

***SURF SCOTER** – *Melanitta perspicillata*. This species is very rare on the West Slope. A female was seen at Rifle Gap Res. (Garfield Co.) on 11/28/99. (KP; 1999-27)

BLACK SCOTER – *Melanitta nigra*. A female was seen at Big Johnson Res. (El Paso Co.) 11/11/99 through 12/9/99. (MJ; 1999-28)

***LONG-TAILED DUCK** – *Clangula hyemalis*. This is not normally a review species; however, this report came from the West Slope, where they are rare. A female was seen at Pastorius Res. near Durango (La Plata Co.), on 12/31/98 through 1/1/99. (SA; 1999-29)

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK – *Buteo lineatus*. One was seen along the Poudre River near the Northern Colorado Environmental Learning Center (Larimer Co.) on 10/2/99. (DAL; 1999-30)

***BROAD-WINGED HAWK** – *Buteo platypterus*. A juvenile seen near Grand Junction (Mesa Co.) on 9/30/99 presented the Committee with some real challenge, however, it was accepted, after two rounds of review and a vote at a Committee meeting. (RL; 1999-31)

ZONE-TAILED HAWK – *Buteo albonotatus*. (1) Extensive documentation was received on this **first state record** from Colorado National Monument (Mesa Co.) on 7/17/99. Photographs, sketches, and original field notes were submitted. The observation was made by a group of Colorado Bird Observatory summer field ornithology campers as the bird soared over Independence Monument Overlook. Persistence certainly paid off for the group, as like most Zone-tails, at

first look it appeared to be “just” another Turkey Vulture. With careful study, it proved to be the first accepted record in Colorado. (JD, photo; NB; AW photo; SY photo; MN; 1999-176)

BLACK RAIL – *Laterallus jamaicensis*. (9) Getting any kind of picture of this reclusive species takes effort, but an unbelievably detailed photo was submitted for a bird seen at Bent’s Old Fort marsh (Otero Co.) on 5/10/97. (DAL, photo; 1999-33)

HUDSONIAN GODWIT – *Limosa haemastica*. Two reports were submitted. Two adults were seen near Nee So Pah Res. (Kiowa Co.) on 5/7/99. (MJ; 1999-35) A male in alternate plumage was seen on 4/22/99 near Beebe Draw (Weld Co.) (SD; 1999-36)

RUDDY TURNSTONE – *Arenaria interpres*. On 8/10/99, one was seen and photographed at Lower Latham Res. (Weld Co.). (DM, photo; 1999-37) Another bird, an adult male in alternate plumage, was seen at John Martin Res. (Bent Co.) on 8/14/99. (RO; 1999-38)

***WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** – *Calidris fuscicollis*. A rare west slope record from 1999 was of three seen at Rio Blanco SWA (Rio Blanco Co.) on 6/7/99. (DE; RL; 1999-39)

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER – *Limnodromus griseus*. Six records were accepted in 1999. One was a juvenile seen at Lower Latham Res. (Weld Co.) on 8/25/98. (TL; 1999-40) Another juvenile from 1998 was at Rocky Ford sewage ponds (Otero Co.) on 9/13/98. (TL; 1999-41) A spring adult, later seen by many as part of the CFO convention field trips, was found near Galeton (Weld Co.) on 5/20/99. Dave Leatherman’s photo captured this bird in flight and really demonstrated the unique tail pattern. (BL; DAL photo; 1999-42) One juvenile was seen near Stoneham (Weld Co.) on 9/3/99. (BL; 1999-43) Lower Latham Res. hosted another on 9/5/99. (JV; 1999-44) The final report was of a juvenile molting to basic plumage at Fossil Creek marsh (Larimer Co.) on 10/9/99. (PSw; 1999-45)

POMARINE JAEGER – *Stercorarius pomarinus*. An adult bird in alternate plumage on 6/17/99 was documented and photographed from Stagecoach Res., in Routt County. (DE, photos; 1999-46) This was only the second June record of this species in Colorado.

PARASITIC JAEGER – *Stercorarius parasiticus*. A light-morph adult was seen and well documented from Windsor Res. (Weld Co.) on 10/18/99. (SD; 1999-50)

JAEGER, species – A record documenting what was seen was submitted and accepted for an obvious jaeger seen only briefly at Hamilton Res. (Larimer Co.) on 10/31/99. (PSw; 1999-47) Some observers are reluctant to submit reports of individuals not identified to species. However, it is helpful for the overall record to have such reports.

LAUGHING GULL – *Larus atricilla*. One was seen and photographed in definitive alternate plumage at the Walsh sewage ponds (Baca Co.) on 5/9/99. (TL, photos; 1999-51) A second-year bird was seen on a sand bar at Adobe Creek Res. (Bent Co.) on 7/6/99. (BKP; 1999-52)

LITTLE GULL – *Larus minutus*. There were three submitted reports. A prior year report, a young bird in first basic plumage, was seen at Barr Lake (Adams Co.) on 11/8/98. (TL; 1999-54) A juvenile bird was seen at Union Res. (Weld Co.) on 10/5/99. (SD; 1999-53) An adult that was first found on 11/27/99 and stayed through a good part of the winter and was seen by many observers at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) among the numerous Bonaparte's Gulls. (TL; 1999-55)

MEW GULL – *Larus canus*. Perhaps unprecedented, four different birds were seen in 1999. A second-basic bird was seen standing on the island at Jim Hamm Pond (Weld/Boulder Co.) on 2/27/99. (TL; 1999-56) On 11/18/99, an individual (most likely an adult) was seen nearby, along the northwest end of Union Res. (Weld Co.) (JV, video; TL; 1999-57) An adult in basic plumage was seen at Cherry Creek Res. (Arapahoe Co.) on 11/20/99. (JV, video; PG; SDo; TL; 1999-58) A first basic bird was seen on the Barr Lake CBC and was SW of Ft. Lupton (Adams Co.) on 12/31/99. (JV; 1999-59)

ICELAND GULL – *Larus glaucooides*. (1) Some long-time Colorado birders had been predicting this one for some time, and it finally happened on 1/9/99 when Ric Olson spotted a first-basic bird on the ice at Valco Ponds SWA (Pueblo Co.) and later watched it preening. Many other observers also were able to re-find this **first state record** as it remained until the next day, 1/10/99. It was photographed as well. (RO; BKP; DQ; MJ; PG; TL, photos; TD, video; 1999-172)

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – *Larus fuscus*. In last year's report, four records were enough to elicit the comment that "this is a species that is definitely becoming more common in Colorado." There were **fourteen** records in 1999. A fourth-basic or definitive-basic bird was at Lake Loveland (Larimer Co.) on 12/12/98. (NK; 1999-60) A second-basic bird was at Douglas Res. (Larimer Co.) on 1/6-7/99. (SD; NK; 1999-61) A basic adult was found at Windsor Res. (Weld Co.) on 2/10/99. (SD; 1999-62) A first-alternate bird was seen at Horseshoe Res. (Larimer Co.) on 4/3/99 and 4/18/99. (NK; 1999-64) Yet another bird, in second-basic plumage, was also at Horseshoe Res. (Larimer Co.) on 4/18/99. (SD; 1999-65) A first-winter bird was found at Timnath Res. (Larimer/Weld Co.) on 8/28/99. (PSw; LS, photos; SD; 1999-66) Up to three, including two second-basic and one fourth-basic or definitive-basic bird were at Warren Lake in Fort Collins (Larimer Co.) between the period of 11/14/99 and 11/22/99. (SD; JF; 1999-67) A bird in

definitive-basic was seen at Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe Co.) on 12/4/99. (DF; TL; 1999-68) A second-basic bird was found on the ice at Horseshoe Res. (Larimer Co.) on 12/11/99 and over at Lake Loveland on 12/12/99. There is little distance between these two locations and the observer was sure it was the same bird. (TL, photos; 1999-69) A subadult, probably a second-basic bird was seen at Lake Loveland 12/12-13/99. (NK; 1999-70) A fourth-basic was nearby at Horseshoe Res. (Larimer Co.) on 12/12/99. (TL; 1999-71) A third-basic was at Loveland Res., (Larimer Co.) on 12/12/99. (TL, photo; 1999-72) A first-basic was found at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) during the CBC on 12/18/99. (TL; 1999-73) A near adult in basic plumage was also seen during the Pueblo Res. CBC on 12/18/99 and re-spotted on 1/9/00. (TL; 1999-74)

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – *Larus marinus*. An adult in definitive basic was on the North Marina of Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) between 1/3/99 and 1/31/99. (TL; 1999-75) Another in adult basic plumage was seen on the south side of Nee Noshe Res. (Kiowa Co.) on 2/18/99. (BKP; 1999-76) The third report also came from Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) as one spent the winter there during at least the period of 11/8/99 through 1/8/00. (GL, photos; TL; 1999-77)

ARCTIC TERN – *Sterna paradisaea*. (7) Two observers made careful notes following a thirty-minute observation of an adult bird in alternate plumage at Union Res. (Weld Co.) on 10/5/99. (TL; DF; 1999-78)

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE – *Streptopelia decaocto*. (2, 3, 4 & 5) The CBRC received an expected flurry of records on this species that is rapidly expanding its range in the state. One was at Fowler (Otero Co.) on 5/17/98. (TL; 1999-80) Twelve were at Springfield (Baca Co.) on 11/28-29/98 and two were re-sighted by Harry Kahler there attending a nest, the state's first, between 5/7/99 and 5/16/99. (TL; 1999-79) One was at Holly (Prowers Co.) on 5/17/99. (TL; 1999-81) Three were at the usual Rocky Ford spot (Otero Co.) on 7/25/99. (LS; 1999-82)

WHITE-WINGED DOVE – *Zenaida asiatica*. One adult was near Rye (Pueblo Co.) 7/17-18/99. (DS; 1999-83)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE – *Columbina passerina*. (1, 2, 3, & 4) The first dual-observer record in Colorado opened the door to the addition of this species to the state checklist. In Colorado, single observer records are acceptable; however, until conclusive verification by a second person, specimen or photograph, the records are put in suspense and the species is not added to the state list. In the case of this particular species, three previous single observer records were "on hold." The bird that actually confirmed the species was seen by a group of Denver birders including Dave Quesenberry and Gail

Owens, who documented it with excellent reports. This bird was at Jackson Res. near Fort Morgan (Morgan Co.) on 11/20/99. This bird, by virtue of the three previously accepted single observer sightings actually becomes the fourth Colorado record. (DQ; GE; 1999-181)

The previously accepted Common Ground-Dove records are now annotated in the archives as follows:

Dennis Morales at Deckers (Douglas Co.) on 11/8/81. (25-81-64)

Galen Burrell at Tamarack (Logan Co.) on 12/17/81. (25-81-63)

Joe Himmel at Cozzens Lake (Weld Co.) on 12/22/94. (25-94-41)

***WESTERN SCREECH-OWL** – *Otus kennicottii*. For the second year in a row, good documentation of a very easterly and northerly record was submitted from Franktown (Douglas Co.), 4/12/99. (HK; UK; 1999-84)

LESSER NIGHTHAWK – *Chordeiles acutipennis*. Three birds were found at the Lamar CC grove along Willow Creek (Prowers Co.) on 5/9/99. (MJ; 1999-85)

WHIP-POOR-WILL – *Caprimulgus vociferus*. (9) A bird identified as the southwestern race of this species by call was found by Walt Wilson and then independently re-found by many others near Fosset Gulch Road, 26 miles west of Pagosa Springs (Archuleta Co.) on 6/22/99 and other dates. (BKP, tape recording; 1999-86)

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD – *Lampornis clemenciae*. An adult female was seen at rest and feeding at nearby flowers at a private home on 7/29/99 at an elevation of 7600 feet, in Black Forest (El Paso Co.). (BBH; 1999-87)

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD – *Eugenes fulgens*. (6) A female was seen at Flagstaff Mountain (Boulder Co.) on 8/10/99 that had been present for some time previously. (CW; 1999-88)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD – *Archilochus colubris*. (3) Peter Gaede and Brandon Percival found a very active adult male that was frequently observed foraging in the Russian Olive and Cedar trees behind Lamar CC (Prowers Co.) on 4/30/99. It was very accommodating and a number of observers were able to re-find it on 5/1/99. (PGa; RO; MJ; 1999-89)

***CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** – *Stellula calliope*. This was an extremely “late date” report, from Grand Junction (Mesa Co.) where one was seen from 9/28/99 through 10/11/99. (LA; 1999-90)

ACORN WOODPECKER – *Melanerpes formicivorus*. (5) Six birds were seen near Durango, (La Plata Co.) the only dependable spot in Colorado to find this species. At least two males and one female were firmly identified from the group seen on 4/11/99. (PGa; 1999-91)

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – *Contopus virens*. A singing bird of this species was found at Ft. Lyon WE (Bent Co.) on 5/1/99. (MJ; 1999-93)

- *GRAY FLYCATCHER** – *Empidonax wrightii*. Two reports of this species, very rarely reported from the eastern plains, were submitted and accepted. One was seen at Crow Valley Campground on the Pawnee National Grassland (Weld Co.) on 9/19/98. (PSw; JF; 1999-94) A second report was received from Fort Collins (Larimer Co.) of a bird along the Poudre River Bike Trail on 4/18/99. (DAL; 1999-95)
- BLACK PHOEBE** – *Sayornis nigricans*. One was found at the “Frog Pond” near Colorado City (Pueblo Co.) on 8/23/99. (DS; 1999-96)
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER** – *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. A male first discovered by Jim Norton graced the edge of the Platte River at Chatfield State Park (Jefferson Co.) on 5/15/99. (JK; 1999-97)
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** – *Tyrannus forficatus*. For the third year in a row, this species was seen at a location between Colorado Springs and Black Forest (El Paso Co.) This year, a pair was seen beginning 6/10/99, building and then sitting on a nest. However, the female was found dead on 6/28/99. The male remained in the area through at least 7/18/99. (BBH; TD photos; 1999-98) A female was seen near Briggsdale (Weld Co.) on 6/18/99. (EC; 1999-99) A male was seen and photographed in this same vicinity on 8/29/99. (SD; JF; DM photo; 1999-100)
- WHITE-EYED VIREO** – *Vireo griseus*. A bird first found by Brandon Percival was seen on 5/8/99 at Ft. Lyon WE in Bent County. (MJ; 1999-101) A singing male was seen on both 8/25/99 and 8/31/99 at Chatfield State Park (Jefferson Co.) (KS; 1999-102)
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** – *Vireo flavifrons*. Lisa Rawinski spotted this adult bird in breeding plumage at Lamar CC (Prowers Co.) on 5/9/99. (JR, LR; 1999-103) Another adult was seen at Chatfield SP (Jefferson Co.) on 5/12/99. (KS; 1999-104) A singing adult was on the Air Force Academy base, near Ice Lake (El Paso Co.) on 5/15/99. (AV; 1999-105) A frantically feeding bird was in Fort Collins (Larimer Co.) on 10/7/99. (DAL; 1999-106)
- BLUE-HEADED VIREO** – *Vireo solitarius*. One, found by Van Remsen, was at Bass Lake, in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (Jefferson Co.) on 9/14/99 and 9/15/99. (KS; EC; 1999-109) Another was seen actively foraging at Fort Collins, along the Poudre River Trail (Larimer Co.) on 9/19/99. (DAL; 1999-110)
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO** – *Vireo philadelphicus*. One was carefully described from a sighting at Lamar CC (Prowers Co.) on 9/26/99. (DAL; 1999-111)
- *RED-EYED VIREO** – *Vireo olivaceus*. A rare West Slope report, a singing bird was found on Fosset Gulch Road (Archuleta Co.) on 6/27/99. (BBH; 1999-112)

- CAROLINA WREN** – *Thryothorus ludovicianus*. A bird visited a feeder in Pueblo (Pueblo Co.) at the Tucey residence, on 2/15/99 and stayed through at least 2/19/99. (BKP; 1999-114) Another feeder visitor was in Boulder (Boulder Co.) during the period of 10/11/99 to 11/26/99. (BG, photos; 1999-113)
- GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** – *Catharus minimus*. Two records were received and accepted in 1999. One bird was seen on 5/8/99 at Lamar CC (Prowers Co.) (TL; 1999-115) A second bird was seen well and photographed along the Poudre River Trail east of Fort Collins (Larimer Co.) on 5/19/99. (DAL, photos; 1999-116)
- WOOD THRUSH** – *Hylocichla mustelina*. Among a number of migrants in a wood lot at Two Buttes SWA (Baca Co.) on 5/10/99, this rarity popped up and was seen well. (TL; 1999-117) Another Wood Thrush was found along the Poudre River Trail on 5/16/99 by Dave Leatherman and his mother, Charlotte (an occasional birding companion). Almost all participants at the 1999 CFO Convention heard at least part of the daily songfest for this, the probable highlight bird of the convention at Fort Collins. It stayed until at least 5/21/99. (DAL; MJ; 1999-118)
- VARIED THRUSH** – *Ixoreus naevius*. A wary male seen along the Republican River east of Bonny Res. (Yuma Co.) on 1/1/99 was a great start to the new year. (PGa; 1999-119)
- *CURVE-BILLED THRASHER** – *Toxostoma curvirostre*. Photographs documented a bird of this species at Red Cliff, (Eagle Co.) where they are rare. The bird was seen from 6/17/99 through 6/18/99. (JA, photos; 1999-120) Another out-of-place bird that was captured on film, was one west of Livermore (Larimer Co.) from 8/25/99 to 8/28/99. (CB, photos; 1999-121)
- SPRAGUE'S PIPIT** – *Anthus spragueii*. (5) Following up on a previously reported sighting, Tony Leukering kicked one up from a field south of Julesburg (Sedgwick Co.) on 10/18/98. (TL; 1999-122)
- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** – *Vermivora chrysoptera*. A first-basic bird was found at the south end of Chatfield SP (Jefferson/Douglas Co.) as it actively fed in 30-40' trees on 8/24/99. (KS; 1999-123) An adult female was seen at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (Jefferson Co.) 9/14-15/99. (TD; 1999-124)
- *MAGNOLIA WARBLER** – *Dendroica magnolia*. This species is not a review species but is very rare in Colorado away from the Front Range. A breeding-plumaged male was seen actively feeding at Home Lake SWA (Rio Grande Co.) on 5/22/99. (JR; LR; 1999-125)
- CAPE MAY WARBLER** – *Dendroica tigrina*. A fall adult in basic plumage was seen at the northwest end of Pueblo City Park (Pueblo Co.) on 10/

24/99. (DS; 1999-126)

***BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** – *Dendroica caerulescens*. An adult male was seen south of Eagle (Eagle Co.), where rare, on 9/24/99. (JM; 1999-127)

***BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** – *Dendroica virens*. An adult female was at the parking area at Lake Henry (Crowley Co.) on 5/16/99. (MJ; 1999-128)

HERMIT WARBLER – *Dendroica occidentalis*. (10-11) Two reports make it a big year for a species that is this rare in Colorado. An adult male was at Hasty Campground (Bent Co.) 4/24-25/99. It was located by its chip note but gave observers great looks. (MJ; 1999-129) A second report was submitted for a breeding plumage male seen at Jim Hamm Park, near Union Reservoir (Boulder Co.) on 5/17/99. (PG; 1999-130)

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER – *Dendroica fusca*. Brandon Percival found a breeding-plumaged male at Lake Henry grove near Ordway (Crowley Co.) on the morning of 5/15/99. Fortunately others were able to re-find it later that day. (MJ; 1999-131) A first-fall female was found at Greenhorn Creek near the edge of Colorado City (Pueblo Co.) on 11/18/99. (DS; 1999-132)

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER – *Dendroica dominica*. A male was found by Brandon Percival on 5/1/99 at Lamar Cemetery (Prowers Co.) and re-found later by others, including participants of a CFO field trip on 5/7/99. (RO, MJ; 1999-133) A male in breeding plumage was also seen at Chatfield State Park (Jefferson Co.) on 5/16/99. (JK; 1999-134) A bit later in the season, one was seen and photographed at Pueblo City Park (Pueblo Co.) on 6/12/99. (PH, photos; 1999-135)

PINE WARBLER – *Dendroica pinus*. An individual was a sporadic feeder visitor in Fort Collins (Larimer Co.) and was later photographed. It first appeared on 12/19/98 and remained through at least 1/14/99. (BC, photos; 1999-136) At the west end of Lake Henry, (Crowley Co.) on 5/21/99, a male gave itself away by its song and was seen forty feet up in a cottonwood as it alternately preened and sang. (JK; 1999-137)

PRAIRIE WARBLER – *Dendroica discolor*. A prior year document and photo was submitted of a basic male that was banded at Barr Lake State Park (Adams Co.) on 8/21/98. (TL, photo; 1999-138) During a CFO field trip behind Lamar CC (Prowers Co.), an adult male was well seen and sang often. (MJ; 1999-139) Another male, an immature, was seen east of Ft. Lyon WE (Bent Co.) on 9/19/99. (MJ; 1999-140)

***PALM WARBLER** – *Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea*. An eastern race adult male was seen on 12/26/99 at the Cattail Marsh south of Comanche Power Plant (Pueblo Co.). Obviously, the date is significant, however this was excellent documentation of the rarer

subspecies in Colorado. Interestingly, this subspecies accounts for most of the winter-season records and has rarely if ever been recorded at other seasons. (DS; 1999-141)

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER – *Protonotaria citrea*. An adult male was found hopping in willows and on the ground at Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso Co.) on 5/15/99. (LSi; 1999-142) A fall bird was seen below the dam at Prewitt Reservoir (Washington Co.) on 9/8/99. (TD; 1999-143) The third report from 1999 was also of a fall bird at Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (Jefferson Co.) that foraged at eye level on 9/14/99. (GW; 1999-144)

WORM-EATING WARBLER – *Helmitheros vermivorus*. The CBRC received three reports consisting of documentation for four birds in 1999. Two were seen at Ft. Lyon WE (Bent Co.) on 4/24/99. (MJ; 1999-145) Mark Janos found another bird on the same day at Lamar CC (Prowers Co.) as it fed among the low branches near the edge of heavy thickets. (MJ; 1999-146) The final report came from Two Buttes Res. (Prowers Co.) where on 5/8/99 the Rawinskis turned up one feeding in the riparian habitat below the dam. (JR; LR; 1999-147)

KENTUCKY WARBLER – *Oporornis formosus*. A breeding-plumaged adult found originally by Brandon Percival was stalked amid the tamarisk at Lake Henry (Crowley Co.) on 5/7/99 before it finally hopped out into the open and was seen well. (MJ; 1999-148) An early-morning sighting was made near Craver Middle School in Colorado City (Pueblo Co.) on 6/29/99 after it gave itself away with steady singing. (DS; 1999-149)

MOURNING WARBLER – *Oporornis philadelphia*. An adult male in breeding plumage was found in the Lamar CC grove (Prowers Co.) on 5/8/99 through 5/15/99. It foraged low, rarely more than ten feet above the ground. (RO; MJ; 1999-150) On 5/17/99, Tony Leukering turned up another adult male at Lake Henry (Crowley Co.), and Janos saw it the next day as it briefly came to the edge of a heavy tamarisk grove. (MJ; 1999-151)

CANADA WARBLER – *Wilsonia canadensis*. Rare anywhere in Colorado, but especially so in the high country, an adult male was well seen near Meeker (Rio Blanco Co.) on 5/27/99. This bird landed on top of some willows along the creek bank and then began flycatching until chased off by a Yellow Warbler. (DH; 1999-152)

***SUMMER TANAGER** – *Piranga rubra*. An adult male graced a Fort Collins (Larimer Co.) backyard on 11/22/99. (SD; 1999-153)

EASTERN TOWHEE – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. (5, 6, 7, & 8) The record is beginning to grow for this species since the A.O.U. split. The tough identification challenge cannot be overemphasized, due mostly to the

occurrence of hybrid Eastern x Spotted Towhee individuals in eastern Colorado. The distinctive vocalizations of this species remain an important separation criterion. A male was seen and heard at Franktown (Douglas Co.) on 10/16/99 through 10/18/99. (HK; UK; 1999-154) An adult female near Colorado City (Pueblo Co.) was well studied and convincingly described. (DS; 1999-155) An adult male was seen along the Riverwalk in Canon City (Fremont Co.) on 12/19/99. (PGa; 1999-156) Another adult male was seen for many days at the Watts' feeder in Penrose (Fremont Co.) during the period of at least 12/19/99 through 1/9/00, including the CBC. (TL; 1999-157)

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW – *Zonotrichia atricapilla*. (9, 10, 11, & 12) Through the end of 1998, eight records had been accepted in Colorado by the CBRC. Incredibly, in 1999, four records were accepted. The first report was of an immature that was banded and photographed at Barr Lake SP by Glenn Giroir on 10/19/98 and present until at least 11/5/98. (TL, photo; 1999-158) Steve and Kathy Martin had a bird at their feeder near Wellington (Larimer Co.) from 12/17/98 through 2/9/99. They also banded and photographed this immature bird. (SM; 1999-159) An early spring bird was near Dolores (Montezuma Co.) on 4/22/99. (MA; 1999-160) Dave Leatherman was able to capture a beautiful immature on film at Crow Valley Campground (Weld Co.) on 10/1/99. (DAL, photos; 1999-161)

***NORTHERN CARDINAL** – *Cardinalis cardinalis*. An adult sang and then perched to allow observers good looks before flying into the understory at Cottonwood Canyon (Baca Co.) on 5/8/99. (JR; LR; 1999-163)

PYRRHULOXIA – *Cardinalis sinuatus*. (3) This male bird was at a feeding station near Durango (La Plata Co.) 4/29-30/99. Several helpful photos were provided to aid in the documentation of this timid and extremely rare Colorado bird. (DR, photo; 1999-164)

***INDIGO BUNTING** – *Passerina cyanea*. Perhaps a first Grand County record, an adult male was seen 5/18/99 through 5/21/99 at a feeder at the Colorado Division of Wildlife Office in Hot Sulphur Springs. (KP; 1999-165)

PAINTED BUNTING – *Passerina ciris*. A male was seen by many at Barr Lake SP (Adams Co.) on 4/21/99 through at least 4/25/99 but only one observer submitted information to the Committee. The bird was visiting the feeders at the Visitor Center. (MC; 1999-166)

***BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** – *Icterus bullockii*. An immature was seen over two days, feeding on shriveled grapes from a fence in a residential backyard in Lamar (Prowers Co.) on the unusually late dates of 11/30/99 and 12/1/99. (DAL; 1999-167)

PURPLE FINCH – *Carpodacus purpureus*. A male was seen and photographed during a cold spell at a Franktown (Douglas Co.) feeder 10/28/99 through 10/30/99. (HK, photo; UK; 1999-170)

Part 2 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, identification questionable:

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT – *Phalacrocorax brasilianum*. An adult bird reported from Strauss Cabin Pond (Larimer Co.) on 10/9/99 was reviewed three times by the Committee but ultimately, in a Committee meeting vote, was felt to be lacking several key field marks and the record was not accepted. (1999-10).

TRUMPETER SWAN – *Cygnus buccinator*. The identification of this species is always a hard call, especially at a distance, and the Committee struggled with two separate reports in 1999. Both were likely correct identifications, but the bill descriptions were lacking. The bird at Lake Estes (Larimer Co.) on 2/13/99 was not accepted by a vote of 3-4. (1999-21) The bird seen between 7/8/99 and 7/15/99 at Culver Lake near Lafayette (Boulder Co.) was also not accepted, by the same vote of 3-4. (1999-22)

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK – *Anas rubripes*. There is always the concern about possible hybridization between this species and Mallard. It is doubtful that any non-specimen report can completely eliminate this possibility, but observers are encouraged to continue to submit careful descriptions. A bird seen at Long Pond (Larimer Co.) on 1/6/99 was especially difficult. Despite careful observation by the observers to clearly determine and eliminate this possibility of a hybrid, reporters identified differing characteristics that left open this potential. The Committee debated this record and decided during the third review not to accept it. (1999-24) The Committee also felt that the report of the bird seen at Lower Latham Res. (Weld Co.) on 5/27/99 was not definitive and did not accept it by a vote of 0-7. (1999-26)

GYRFALCON – *Falco rusticolus*. A report was received of one between Oak Creek and Steamboat Springs (Routt Co.) on 11/13/99. This bird was well described and could have been correct, but a few characteristics were wrong for a Gyr and the Committee decided not to accept by a vote of 0-7. (1999-32)

WHITE-TAILED KITE – *Elanus leucurus*. A very good report was provided for a bird believed to be this species near Cortez (Montezuma Co.) on 11/5/99. The Committee felt that elements were missing that should be documented to separate all similar species, particularly in the case of a potential first state record such as this, and voted not to accept by a vote of 0-7. (1999-180)

- POMARINE JAEGER** – *Stercorarius pomarinus*. A dark-morph juvenile at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) on 11/6/99 was almost certainly correctly identified and the documentation provided was good. However, it was felt that additional information should be provided and this report be re-circulated some time in the future. The listed information did not rule out all other congeners and the Committee, by a voice vote, elected not to accept. (1999-48) By a vote of 3-4, one at Cherry Creek SP (Arapahoe Co.) on 11/15/99 was not accepted, again pointing out the difficulty of this identification and the resulting documentation challenge to clearly separate all other possible species. (1999-49)
- ICELAND GULL** – *Larus glaucooides*. A very compelling document and photos were provided but the Committee just did not feel that all potential possibilities had been eliminated, including the always-difficult “pale” Thayer’s Gull. It certainly seems possible that the bird seen at Pueblo Res. (Pueblo Co.) on 4/17/99 was correctly identified, however on re-circulation, the determination was not to accept it, by 1-6 vote. (1999-172)
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** – *Larus fuscus*. A sub-adult, most likely a Basic II, was seen at Horseshoe Lake (Larimer Co.) on 2/11/99 but the Committee was split on its identification and voted 1-6 on re-circulation. (1999-63)
- VAUX’S SWIFT** – *Chaetura vauxi*. The acceptance of a first state record for any species always requires extensive details and documentation that can completely eliminate all potentially similar species. The two reports received this year by two different observers each provided careful descriptions of this species. However the Committee still was concerned that there was reasonable doubt for each record. The information was strongly supportive. The first report, from Walden Ponds SWA (Boulder Co.) on 5/23/99 received a vote of 1-6. (1999-174) The second report, which included excellent sketches of a bird over Pueblo (Pueblo Co.) on 7/6/99, received a vote of 2-5. (1999-175)
- ELEGANT TROGON** – *Trogon elegans*. There was too little information provided to accept this report of what would have been an addition to the state checklist. The vote was 0-7 on a report from Mancos (Montezuma Co.) in mid-June 1999. (1999-173)
- *WILLIAMSON’S SAPSUCKER** – *Sphyrapicus thyroides* - Two birds were reported from Mesa Verde NP (Montezuma Co.) during the period of 1/27/99 through 2/13/99. This record was very difficult not to accept as it was likely identified correctly, however the report was very short and did leave out some characteristic marks of the species. The vote, on re-circulation, was 2-5. (1999-92)

BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER—*Picoides arcticus*. This report was of a bird seen at an elevation of 8000', near Pine (Jefferson Co.) between 5/30/99 and 7/16/99. There are no accepted records in Colorado. The Committee carefully reviewed the documentation and sketch that was provided but voted not to accept by a vote of 1-6. (1999-182)

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER—*Empidonax virescens*. This potential first state record of a bird seen at Lamar CC (Prowers Co.) on 4/16/99 was well described and all characteristics listed were supportive. However, the Committee did not feel that all other flycatchers were eliminated and did not accept the record by a vote of 0-7. (1999-177)

BLUE-HEADED VIREO—*Vireo solitarius*. Two records were not accepted, primarily because the descriptions did not separate them from Cassin's Vireo. Cheek/throat contrast, head color, crown/back contrast and the extent of white in the tail are some of the main separators but there are intermediate birds that can make this identification very difficult. One was at Monte Vista Cemetery (Rio Grande Co.), on 5/13/99 and received a 3-4 on the second round of voting. (1999-107) The second report was from Rocky Mountain Arsenal (Adams Co.) on 9/12/99 and also received a "not accept" decision on re-circulation, by a vote of 2-5. (1999-108)

OLIVE WARBLER—*Peucedramus taeniatus*. There was too little information to accept this report. There were many other similar species that were not eliminated, and the Committee voted 0-7 on the report of a bird near Mancos (Montezuma Co.) on 9/7/99. (1999-178)

SMITH'S LONGSPUR—*Calcarius pictus*. The Committee struggled with this excellent report and attached sketch. Two observers carefully described what they had seen at Lake Estes (Larimer Co.) on 10/17/99 and all listed information was consistent with this species. However, there were still a few important field marks that were not observed and therefore did not eliminate several similar species. By a vote of 3-4, the Committee voted not to accept this report as the first record in Colorado. (1999-179)

***SNOW BUNTING**—*Plectrophenax nivalis*. By a vote of 1-6, the Committee determined that while supportive documentation had been provided, not all similar species had been eliminated for the two breeding-plumaged males reported at Mancos (Montezuma Co.) on 2/15/99. (1999-162)

PURPLE FINCH—*Carpodacus purpureus*. This is always a difficult identification challenge. A good report with photos from a feeder near Blackhawk (Jefferson Co.) on 1/24/99 to 1/30/99 did not clearly separate this female bird from a Cassin's and the Committee voted 3-4 not to accept. (1999-168) For a similar reason, and by a vote of 1-6,

the five birds reported from Nunn (Larimer Co.) on 4/11/99 were also not accepted. (1999-169)

Part 3 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED, establishment of introduced population questionable: NONE

Initialed contributors

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IT'S AN OWL-EAT-OWL WORLD

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After a few remarkable coincidences, this story, quite appropriately, finds itself here in the *JCFO* where it began nearly seven months ago. On 18 December Fred Comendant, who lives near the Colorado National Monument in Grand Junction, found a bird leg, complete with a metal band, in what appeared to be a pile of bird excrement in his driveway. Not sure what to do with the band, Mr. Comendant called the Colorado National Monument to ask for help. Lisa Claussen received the call at the monument. Since Lisa works on projects with the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and knows of our banding in Grand Junction, she called me to report the band. I went out to Mr. Comendant's house to retrieve it. He handed to me a plastic cup, inside of which was a small bone with a band attached. We went outside to view the area where the band was found, and found the remnants of a large owl pellet. I checked RMBO's banding records and found that the band was indeed ours. The band belonged to an ill-fated Western Screech-Owl that fledged from a Grand Valley Audubon Society owl box only two miles away. After a bit of biological detective work, the scenario seemed clear: The unfortunate screech-owl appeared to be the victim of its much larger nocturnal cousin, the Great Horned Owl. And what, you may ask, is so remarkable about this story. Well, when Mr. Comendant called the Colorado National Monument, he expected only to receive instructions on what to do with the band. He had no idea that Lisa, who answered his call, had held the very bird in question just seven months earlier (pictured below), when she and I banded Western Screech-Owls during a field trip for the 2000 CFO convention here in Grand Junction—a field trip many of you may have been on. Although we all feel for the little screech-owl that met with an early demise, we're also aware of the laws of nature. I guess you can say it's an "owl-eat-owl" world out there.



OVENBIRD (*SEIURUS AUROCAPILLUS*) AT THE YAMPA RIVER PRESERVE, ROUTT COUNTY, COLORADO

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At 6 A.M. on 2 June 2000, Cynthia D. Flemming, an intern studying Bobolink population dynamics at the Carpenter Ranch, and I began birding in the Yampa River Preserve. We were listening and looking for all birds and recording each species so the information could be incorporated into the area master list. The morning was calm with a dewy dampness and a frosty chill.

The Yampa River Preserve is owned and administered by The Nature Conservancy of Colorado and is located just east of the Carpenter Ranch (~2 miles east of Hayden) between Hayden and Steamboat Springs in Routt County, Colorado. We parked across from a gaging station where U.S. Highway 40 crosses the Yampa River. We accessed the Preserve area along a ditch road and often went off the road and into the woodland to look for birds.

In the woodland we first heard the emphatic “teacher-teacher-teacher-teacher-teacher” verse and immediately recognized it as an Ovenbird song. We heard the bird vocalizing at or near ground level and at other times it vocalized from a higher perch, but never from over our heads. True to the secretive nature of this warbler, which has always seemed to me to exhibit the behavior more befitting a thrush than a warbler, we were not able to get long clear looks at it. My previous experience with Ovenbirds in northern Wisconsin led me to believe the bird would still be singing at high noon when all other birds had quieted for the day. I returned at noon with a hand-held tape recorder and was able to record two clear bursts of the “teacher-teacher-teacher-teacher-teacher” song.

The Ovenbird was located in a woodland community along the Yampa River floodplain at 6,400 feet in elevation. The woodland was comprised of open stands of narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), and river hawthorn (*Crataegus rivularis*) having an understory of scattered dense patches of red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*). This unique habitat is host to interesting avian species. Stephen G. Martin and others (1974) first documented a breeding population of Red-eyed Vireos (*Vireo olivaceus*) and

American Redstarts (*Setophaga ruticilla*) at this location in 1972 with a small number persisting through 1999 (S. Martin, pers. comm.). Veerys (*Catharus fuscescens*) are regularly heard throughout this habitat.

This may be the first record of an Ovenbird on the Western Slope of Colorado. In eastern Colorado, a small population, separated from the rest of the species' range, occupies disjunct patches along a narrow strip of the Front Range from Larimer County to the New Mexico line (Kingery 1998). Ovenbirds are widely distributed east of Colorado throughout deciduous forests. They breed from Newfoundland and the northeastern U.S. west to northeastern British Columbia and south from eastern Colorado to northern Georgia and the Carolinas. Andrews and Righter (1992) show no records from the West Slope of Colorado for this warbler, although it is noted as accidental in three latilongs in the Salt Lake vicinity in Utah (Walters 1983). There are no latilong records of this bird west of the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming (Luce 1997).

This report was made from notes written in the car after each visit into the Yampa River Preserve on 2 June 2000. The identification of the taped Ovenbird song was later verified by comparison with bird song recordings (Righter and Keller 1999).

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CFO'S PROJECT FUND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Project Fund Committee—Linda Vidal (Chair), Pearle Sandstrom-Smith, and Jim Chace—grants funds to individuals/organizations seeking to conduct projects/research that will result in a lasting benefit to Colorado's birds and the habitats upon which they rely. Guidelines for applicants follow:

- A. Applications should contain name, address, and telephone number of the person or organization applying for a grant.
- B. Applications should include a description of the project: what will be done, who will direct the project, who will actually conduct the work, a timetable, and rationale (how does the project support CFO's Mission). CFO grants may be considered "matching funds."
- C. Applications must be submitted by 1 December each year directly to the Project Fund Chair, Linda Vidal, at: 855 Wooden Deer Rd., Carbondale, CO 81623.
- D. Projects must have anticipated start/completion dates.
- E. Applicants must submit a complete budget. Projects should be realistic in terms of cost, volunteer resources, and time required to complete the project.
- F. Travel expenses and purchase of equipment readily available from other sources (e.g., camera, spotting scope, office equipment) generally will not be funded.
- G. After receipt of a grant and completion of the project, the applicant must submit a final written report to the Project Fund Chair. The report should include an accounting of money spent, time donated, etc.
- H. All funds not used will be returned to the CFO Treasurer.

Any additional supporting materials (e.g., brochures, financial reports) that the applicant wishes to send with the grant application should be sent in quadruplicate, one for each of the four Project Fund Committee members.

Each year, applicants will be notified in February, after the winter CFO Board of Directors' meeting, as to whether or not they will receive funds.

BEQUESTS FOR CFO'S PROJECT FUND
THE CFO PROJECT FUND COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS TO REMEMBER THE CFO PROJECT FUND IN THEIR WILLS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT LINDA VIDAL AT: 970-704-9950; OR E-MAIL LINDA AT: VIDAL@ROF.NET.

CFO BOARD MEETING MINUTES: 18 NOVEMBER 2000

The regular quarterly meeting of the board of directors of the Colorado Field Ornithologists was held on Saturday, November 18, 2000 at 10 A.M. at the John Deaux Art Gallery in Pueblo, the President being in the chair and the Secretary present. Board members attending: Jim Chace, BB Hahn, Rich Leivad, Warren Finch, Tony Leukering, Mark Yaeger, Leon Bright, and Bob Spencer. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as corrected.

President's Report

Mark Janos stated that he had no formal report but would have information to present as committee reports and unfinished business were discussed.

Treasurer's Report

BB Hahn reported that our current assets are \$23,555.13. The bill for convention T-shirts has been received and puts the net 2000 Convention income at \$4,747.63. BB emphasized again that the convention was very successful and the net proceeds were extraordinary.

Colorado Bird Records Committee

Tony Leukering presented Bill Lisowsky's report. The Colorado Checklist stands officially at 469 with the 1999 records summary completed. Leon Bright moved that the board approve the committee's recommendation of Peter Gent to fill the remaining year of Vic Zerbi's term. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

BB Hahn read portions of an e-mail from Alan Versaw concerning the seemingly duplicate rare bird reports which can be sent to the CFO records committee, *Field Notes*, and *JCFO*. While there is no way for CFO to "solve" this situation, Tony will reply to Alan and COBIRDS on behalf of CFO.

Journal Editor

Mark Janos presented Scott Gillihan's report. Scott has offered to waive the honorarium for the four 2001 *JCFO* issues in light of the fact that he does not believe he will be able to secure corporate sponsorships. BB Hahn moved that we accept Scott's offer. The motion was seconded and passed. Mark Janos requested that BB thank Scott and request a letter stating these intentions.

Membership

BB Hahn reported for Raymond Davis that current paid memberships stand at 375 as of 11-13-00.

Website

Mark Janos read highlights of Rachel Kolokoff's report. The on-line store has been moved to a new server, additional items have been added for purchase, mark-ups have been standardized, and handling charges have been changed. Net income from sales this quarter were \$56.73. Also, the State List has been updated and reflects the new figure of 469 species.

Awards Committee

Rich Levad volunteered to write a *JCFO* article with a history of the recipients.

Nominating Committee

Warren Finch would like to resign as committee chairman but continue to serve on the committee. He will make recommendations for a new chairman to Mark Janos. Warren expressed his strong conviction that CFO's nominating committee continue to seek high-caliber CFO officers and board members.

Annual Convention

Mark Yaeger reported that May 18–20, 2001 has been selected for the annual convention in Pueblo due to the availability of Tom Schultz as the banquet speaker. Convention headquarters will be at the Holiday Inn and Lee Kellogg with ABA has volunteered to coordinate the Trade Show.

Unfinished Business

JCFO Subject Index: The board discussed several possible ways to publish the Index prepared by Warren Finch. He will confer with Scott Gillihan to determine the costs of various formats and a mailing to all members. The board feels that a published version of the Index would be especially valuable to libraries and that many CFO members would find it to be of great use.

Homeowners Plaque: Mark Janos reported for Rachel Kolokoff that the plaque has been completed. Dave Leatherman and Dave Ely will present it to the Homeowners Association that allowed many CFO members onto private property to view the Slaty-backed Gull earlier this year. They have offered to pay for the plaque and will not be requesting reimbursement from the special CFO fund. Sherry Chapman moved that Mark Janos write thank you letters to Dave Leatherman and Dave Ely expressing the gratitude of the board. Motion seconded and passed unanimously.

The next board meeting will be held at 10 A.M. on February 10, 2001 at the John Deaux Art Gallery, Pueblo. The meeting adjourned at 1:35 P.M.

Sherry P. Chapman, Secretary



NEWS FROM THE FIELD: SUMMER 2000 REPORT (JUNE–JULY)

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The big story in Summer 2000 was the hot and dry conditions statewide. At Denver, the departure from normal temperature during June was +1.4°F and in July it was +4.7°F, with a total of 37 days reaching at least 90°F. The latter month's average of 76.8°F equaled the average of the previous fifth hottest July on record. Denver International Airport recorded only one day with more than 0.5" of rain in a season total of 2.21" (all weather references are National Weather Service 2000). These conditions produced one of the biggest fire seasons in recent memory with one or two potential Three-toed Woodpecker-supporting fires on the Front Range. Most other Colorado fires of which we're aware were in lower-elevation habitats, particularly piñon-juniper.

Summer is, obviously, a season dominated in the birds' points of view, by breeding. As such, local and statewide breeding-bird monitoring efforts are of paramount importance in the minds of these editors. So much so that, even if one of us weren't the Monitoring Coordinator at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, we would still make liberal use of that data in this report. Therefore, we extend a hearty "thanks" to Rich Levad for summarizing the Observatory data for this report.

Bill Maynard reported that a number of grassland species were absent, in much reduced numbers, and/or fared poorly at reproduction at Ft. Carson this year. He suggested that the lack of rainfall created habitat conditions that were either unsuitable (Dickcissel, which was absent), less suitable (Grasshopper Sparrow, which was in low numbers), or not conducive to successful breeding (Vesper Sparrow, Western Meadowlark). Grasshopper Sparrow and Dickcissel are apparently most abundant there "in years when there is abundant moisture and the Yellow Sweet Clover and Musk Thistle go crazy. So, these two

introduced plants didn't do so well ... which we have to say is good, but in return, two species of cool birds suffered, at least in the Ft. Carson part of El Paso County.”

Joey Kellner monitors the breeding birds of the Chatfield Reservoir area and he kindly supplied his data for this report. This area (the reservoir, Waterton Canyon, and the Plum Creek Delta) is one of the few known breeding localities in the state for, and with the largest populations of, such “eastern” species as Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, and American Redstart. So much so, that one can almost fool oneself into thinking that one is somewhere at least a state or two to the east. That is, if you ignore all the Broad-tailed Hummingbirds and Virginia's Warblers. Interestingly, though in Colorado it's a specialty of Gregory Canyon, Waterton Canyon looks great for Hooded Warbler, so Joey, keep your ears open.

Forrest Luke runs a Breeding Bird Census (BBC) plot near Lay, Moffat County, and he provided some of those data. The BBC program generates information on breeding-bird abundance in selected areas on an annual basis. This is a great program that doesn't get enough cooperators. We also want to thank Forrest for living in such an “out-of-the-way” county and generating bird-occurrence data for an extremely under-birded area.

Leukering walked about 2 km of the St. Charles River below the Burnt Mill Bridge on 4 June. He was specifically hoping to find the apparent mixed pair of Black and Eastern phoebes that he first found in mid-May, as there are no records of hybridization in the genus of which we are aware. Unfortunately, he could not find either bird in June, though he did find three pairs of Easterns and one pair of Blacks in that stretch. Apparently, the mixed pair was seen at the bridge into July with a nest reported as found at the location, though we received no direct word of this. This stretch of the St. Charles is the location of one of the very few Front Range breeding sites for Black Phoebe and is about the only site in the world that supports both these species of phoebes.

Leukering, in his search for breeding grebes and other colonial waterbirds in Huerfano and Las Animas counties ran across some odd summering waterbirds. Of particular interest was a small unnamed (at least on the atlases) reservoir east of Hoehne, Las Animas County, that he visited on 5 and 6 June. He had to view the water from almost a mile away, but found a Clark's Grebe, an interesting array of ducks, and a small loon. The loon was probably a Pacific as it did not hold its head above horizontal and it was obviously small (about the size of the nearby Clark's Grebe), but he could not absolutely rule out Red-throated.

Note 1: The reports contained herein are largely unchecked, and the authors do not vouch for their authenticity. Underlined species are those for which the Colorado Bird Records Committee requests documentation, though that review list will be changing soon. The Colorado Field Ornithologists' web site (<http://www.cfo-link.org>) has a link to the rare bird Sight Record reporting form that can be submitted electronically; the same form is also printed on the inside cover of this journal's mailer.

Note 2: All locations are annotated as to county (and counties are italicized) the first time each appears; county names are not included with subsequent records.

Abbreviations: A&R=Andrews and Righter (Andrews and Righter 1992); BBA=Breeding Bird Atlas (Kingery 1998); BBS=Breeding Bird Survey; CBRC=Colorado Bird Records Committee; CVCG=Crow Valley Campground (PNG, *Weld*); et al.=and others (used for the finding group of a bird that was not seen subsequently, either on specific date or subsequently); JMR=John Martin Res., *Bent*; MCB=*Monitoring Colorado's Birds* (a Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory—formerly known as Colorado Bird Observatory—program to monitor bird populations in the state); m.ob.=many observers (used for birds that were refound, either the same day or on subsequent days, by others); MVNWR=Monte Vista NWR, *Rio Grande* (mostly); NP=National Park; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; ph=photographed; PNG=Pawnee National Grassland; Res.=Reservoir; SP=State Park; SWA=State Wildlife Area.

Red-throated Loon: For the second year in a row and for only the second time, this species was found in the state in summer. One in Alternate was at Ramah Res., *El Paso*, 6-9 June (AV, BKP). The original observer also got to hear it vocalize. Has anyone ever heard this species in the state before? Another, in Basic, was at JMR on 13 July (BKP). Was this the same bird that was present at this site in Alternate in May?

Common Loon: One summered at Dotsero, *Eagle*, in basic-like plumage (JM) for an interesting West Slope record. Speaking of Jack, Leukering apologizes for misspelling his name in previous reports.

Eared Grebe: MCB monitors documented 675 nests plus 134 juveniles at 19 active sites. Ten were at Orlando Res. #2, *Huerfano*, on 4 June (TL). This site is, presumably, the source of the BBA record from the area. Two were on Hinman Res. on 15 June (TL). The BBA did not record the species in *Grand*.

Western Grebe: MCB monitors counted 1050 birds at 28 sites and documented nesting at ten. Five were at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL). The BBA did not record the species at this location. There were

five at Wolford Mountain Res. and two at Hinman Res., both *Grand*, on 15 June (TL).

Clark's Grebe: MCB monitors counted 1950 birds at 28 sites and documented nesting at five. Two were at Wolford Mountain Res. on 15 June (TL) for a rare *Grand* record. Five Clark's were with the five Westerns at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL) and one Clark's was at an unnamed reservoir east of Hoehne, *Las Animas*, 5–6 June (TL). Neither A&R nor the BBA reported the species from *Huerfano* or *Las Animas*.

American White Pelican: The colony at McFarlane Res., *Jackson*, produced 167 young, but the colony at Antero Res., *Park*, failed, probably due to excessive disturbance. We received no word on the colony at Riverside Res., *Weld*.

Double-crested Cormorant: MCB monitors counted 1400 at 20 sites and documented nesting at 12. Leukering counted 21 at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June. Neither A&R nor the BBA record the species from *Huerfano*.

American Bittern: One was "singing" at a pond north of Lay, *Moffat*, on 24 June (FL). There are very few records of breeding in the northwestern part of the state away from Browns Park NWR.

Great Blue Heron: MCB monitors visited 134 historical sites and counted 1250 nests at the 62 colony sites that were active.

Great Egret: One flying over I-76 near Barr Lake on 11 June (TL, SB, PH) provided a rare *Adams* record. Apparently, this bird was seen again in the area later in the season. One at Cottonwood Hollow, *Larimer*, on 26 June (RK) was also somewhat out-of-the-ordinary. Jennie Slater (Colorado Division of Wildlife) counted 19 active nests at the Boulder Creek heronry—the highest ever count—and another nest at a Longmont heronry confirmed a new breeding site for this species. Up to four were present in *Kiowa* throughout the summer (CW).

Snowy Egret: At least 12 were in the Barr Lake heronry 22 June, with at least three of those on nests (CW, TL). It has been quite some time since nesting was confirmed at this site. MCB counted 509 adults at 18 sites and documented nesting at seven. Bowen Pond at MVNWR accounted for half of the total count.

Tricolored Heron: An adult was at Russell Lakes SWA for much of the summer. The bird was first found by Dean Lee (Colorado Division of Wildlife) in mid June and was still present when Levad visited the area on 20 July. It remained until at least 24 July when Levad and Faulkner returned to conduct inventories of breeding waterbirds.

Little Blue Heron: Two adults and a 'calico' bird in the Barr Lake heronry were quite a surprise 22 June (CW, TL). The observers had speculated that this heronry may have been the source of juvenile Little Blues near

Lochbuie each of the two previous years in early August. Unfortunately, they could not find any confirmation of nesting in the colony and there were no Little Blues to be found there at the end of the season (DF, AP).

Cattle Egret: There were at least 21 in the Barr Lake heronry with at least three at nests 22 June (CW, TL), providing the first confirmed nesting at Barr Lake by this species in many years. Kelli Stone and Lisa Rawinski counted 20 adults at Parker Pond and banded seven juveniles at Bowen Pond on MVNWR.

Green Heron: An active nest at Wray, *Yuma*, first found by Wood in May was still being attended on 21 June (CW, TL). Birds were present during the nesting season at Grand Junction (L. Stigen), Denver (H. Kingery), and Fountain (K. Pals), sites that have all had nesting activity in the past.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: *MCB* monitors counted 526 birds at 26 sites and confirmed nesting at 19.

White-faced Ibis: Kelli Stone and Lisa Rawinski documented a population explosion at Bowen Pond on MVNWR and nearby Adams Lake, counting an astounding 1300 and 2000 adults, respectively, at these historical nesting sites. These numbers far exceed any previous counts in Colorado and the total accounts for a significant portion (5–10%) of the world's population. A bit odd were the eight birds at Green Mountain Res., *Summit*, on 11 June (TL, SB, PH). Odder, at least according to A&R and the BBA, as neither reports specific records for *Huerfano*, three were at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL).

Turkey Vulture: Two birds were acting suspiciously as if they were at a nest site near Julesburg, *Sedgwick*, 21 June (CW, TL). Unfortunately, the observers could locate no nest in the good-looking sites that they could find. There remain no confirmed nestings of this species in *Sedgwick* or neighboring *Logan*.

Trumpeter Swan: The 'resident' in *Boulder* was present through the season, providing more grist for the mill in the discussion as to that bird's "countability." Also, two swans were on a lake in the Sumetha Flats west of Pagosa Springs, *Archuleta*, on 24 July. The observers (MO, LZ) felt that at least one was a Trumpeter and weren't sure of the second due to not having time to study the distant birds.

Blue-winged Teal: A pair was at Wolford Mountain Res. on 15 June (TL). This site is the source for the only *Grand* record reported in the BBA.

Greater Scaup: A male molting into eclipse was at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL) for a rare Colorado summer record.

Lesser Scaup: A male was on Maria Res., *Huerfano*, 4 June (TL) and 2+ males were on a small unnamed reservoir east of Hoehne, *Las Animas*, 5

June (TL).

Ring-necked Duck: At least 40 were on Hinman Res. on 15 June (TL).

Bufflehead: An individual in female-type plumage was at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL) for a rare plains summer record.

Common Goldeneye: Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, kept its reputation alive as the Colorado epicenter for summering by this species with a female present all summer (m.ob.). However, another female summered at Strauss Cabin Lake, *Larimer*, this year (m.ob.).

Barrow's Goldeneye: A male spent the summer near Cañon City, *Fremont* (SMo), for a first local summer record. The jury is still out on the identity of a female goldeneye that summered at the same site (ph. SMo), with various experts disagreeing with each other as to the bird's identity, though it had an all-dark bill.

Hooded Merganser: This species is fairly rare in summer in the state so three widely-spaced reports were interesting. All were of female-plumaged birds including one in mid-June at Bonny Reservoir (CW); one at Two Buttes Reservoir, *Baca*, 24 June (CW, PL); and one at Strauss Cabin Lake on 26–29 June (CLW, BKP).

Osprey: One chick produced at Dotsero that fledged on 8 August was “probably the first Osprey to hatch in Eagle County since the age of DDT” (JM). *Grand* remains the center of abundance for Ospreys in Colorado as 16 successful nests (of 27 nest starts) produced 30 youngsters there (D. Summerlin).

Mississippi Kite: This species continues to occupy its toehold in northeastern Colorado at Holyoke, *Phillips*, as two were detected there 21 June (CW, TL).

Cooper's Hawk: Despite the lack of Atlas records and our previous belief that the species does not breed on the eastern plains, Wood and Leukering detected three birds along the major river systems this summer. An adult male was at Tamarack SWA, *Logan*, 21 June (CW, TL), one was near Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 22 June (CW, TL), and the third, an immature male, was along the Arkansas River at Rocky Ford, *Otero*, on 23 June (CW).

Peregrine Falcon: Early on the plains away from breeding locations, a juvenile was at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on 30 July (SD, JF).

Common Moorhen: The bird present near Ft. Lyon, *Bent*, this spring was heard on a couple of occasions this summer until at least 13 July (CW, BKP).

Black-bellied Plover: Two were still at Lake Meredith, *Crowley*, to 8 June (BKP). Summer records are somewhat odd, though the first southbound migrants can arrive in July. However, the species only rarely lingers into June in Colorado.

- Mountain Plover:** Mike Wunder found a total of 64 nests in South Park this summer, further solidifying the belief that this area may be the most important stronghold for the species range-wide.
- Black-necked Stilt:** A pair produced two youngsters at a private pond east of Grand Junction, *Mesa*, this summer (RL) for a rare confirmed breeding west of the large mountain parks. At least six were in North Park, *Jackson*, 19 & 27 June (JV).
- Greater Yellowlegs:** One at Bonny Reservoir, *Yuma*, 22 June (CW, TL) was the first southbound migrant of the year.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** Two were at the Oxbow SWA (west of Sunbeam), *Moffat*, on 21 July (FL). There are very few specific records from northwestern Colorado.
- Willet:** A fall migrant was seen in *Archuleta* 25 June (PL, CW).
- Upland Sandpiper:** One called once in Murphy's Pasture, PNG, *Weld*, on 26 June (BD, D. Weber). Since Beth had not recorded the species in that area all summer previously, she felt that the bird was an early southbound migrant; the species does not breed at PNG or nearby. Interestingly, another was found south of Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on 28 June (JV)—another very early migrant? A more regularly-timed early migrant was at Nee Grande Res., *Kiowa*, on 16 July (BKP).
- Whimbrel:** Exceptional was a very early southbound migrant at PNG on 2 July (BKP, m.ob.).
- Ruddy Turnstone:** A laggard northbound bird in full Alternate was at the Lake Meredith feedlot ponds on 8 June (BKP).
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** As is typical, this species was noted at a number of locations in early June (it is, arguably, our latest spring migrant) and the latest reported were 2 in *Yuma* on 15 June (CW).
- Stilt Sandpiper:** A presumed very early southbound migrant, an adult in Alternate was at a pond north of Lay, *Moffat*, on 24 June (FL).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** One [presumably, an adult in Alternate - Eds.] was at Oxbow SWA on July 21 (FL). Unless there have been records after the publication of A&R, this is only the second county record. Even "rarer," that is, NO specific county records mentioned in A&R, was an adult just starting its molt out of Alternate at Walden Res. on 27 June (JV).
- Western Sandpiper:** There were 15 at Oxbow SWA on 21 July (FL). Due to the scarcity of past effort in northwestern Colorado, A&R reported records for this species from *Moffat* from only one location. That is as many as was reported for Semipalmated!
- Baird's Sandpiper:** To round out the *Calidris* records from *Moffat* for the season, there were 20 Baird's at Oxbow SWA on 21 July (FL). A&R reported this species from a whopping two locations in the county!

One may presume that now that we have a birder living in the county, we will see many more records of “rare” species from *Moffat*.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: An adult was at Prewitt Reservoir on 31 July (CW).

This is the first “summer” report, and may be the only one of an adult aside from the two spring records. The dot in June in A&R presumably refers to the 27 April 1971 record.

Red-necked Phalarope: Only seven days before the first of the fall migrant shorebirds, two Red-neckeds were among the last of the spring migrants on 15 June (CW). The first fall report came from Oxbow SWA where one in Alternate [male or female? - Eds.] was present 21 July (FL).

Red Phalarope: Fontaine and Wood found an adult female in Alternate on 19 July at Jumbo Res. (*Logan*) for a very rare summer record.

Pomarine Jaeger: A light-morph adult was present at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, 3–5 July (BKP, m.ob.). Recent history suggests that any jaeger found during summer in Colorado is probably a Pom. That said, an adult Long-tailed Jaeger was found less than an hour’s drive from Colorado in late June in New Mexico (PL, CW). So, as with all jaeger reports, detailed descriptions are requested by the CBRC, preferably accompanied by photos and/or video.

Franklin’s Gull: After last year’s first Colorado confirmation (Levad 2000), Levad and Faulkner found six flightless juveniles at Walden Res., *Jackson*, on 12 July. They counted 88 adults exhibiting agitated, aggressive behavior at the colony site, a huge increase over last year’s eight adults.

California Gull: The North Park colonies at McFarlane and Walden Reservoirs produced 73 and 212 youngsters, respectively (RL, DF). The Antero Reservoir colony apparently failed, probably due to excessive disturbance by boaters. Unfortunately, the Riverside Reservoir colony was not monitored this year. California Gulls began a new colony this year, with an estimated 20 nests producing at least seven juveniles at Strauss Cabin Lake (RK, JV, A. Cringan).

Caspian Tern: Individuals put in appearances at a couple locations this summer. One was at Lower Latham Res. on 19 June (JV) and another 1–2 were at Strauss Cabin Lake 26–28 June (BKP, JV, m.ob.). We wonder if this is a species that will nest in the state some year. It would certainly behoove us to check gull colonies for such an event.

Common Tern: An adult in Alternate was seen at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on 19 July (CW, JF). This is very early for this species to show up in the state, though the official record for this species here is undoubtedly clouded by the difficulty of identification of terns in Alternate.

Forster's Tern: Levad and Faulkner counted 24 adults at Lake John and 30 at Walden Res. The Lake John birds were carrying food to the colony, and four flightless young were at Walden Res. *MCB* monitors found no other nesting sites in the state this year.

Least Tern: A subadult was at Strauss Cabin Lake 26-28 June (BKP, m.ob.), nicely timed for the American Birding Association convention in Ft. Collins. This species is very rare away from its Arkansas River valley breeding haunts, particularly so in mid-summer. Additionally, first-summer individuals (as was this bird) normally stay on or closer to the winter grounds. We would ask the various observers to submit documentation on this bird to the CBRC as it is quite an interesting record. A total of 34 young fledged from 22 nests in the Arkansas River valley (Nelson 2000).

Black Tern: At least 18 were at Walden Res. on 27 June (JV). This species is notorious for migrating very late, even into June, as illustrated by the 20 east of Lake Meredith on 4 June (BKP). However, individuals present at breeding sites late in June are probably breeders. The *MCB* count of Black Terns at the site was considerably smaller in mid-July (RL, DF). So, what happened? Did that many pairs fail? Observers for the *MCB* Black Tern census reported only 18 at six sites throughout the state; some may have been nesting, but no nests were found and no juvenile birds were seen during the period. We repeat Leukering's call to action from last summer's report (Leukering 2000): Is this species slipping away as a Colorado breeding bird?

Eurasian Collared-Dove: The beat goes on... yeah, the beat goes on. This recent arrival continues to consolidate its grip on eastern Colorado as individuals continued at such regular spots as Rocky Ford (numerous all summer (m.ob.)) and Springfield (three on 28 June (DH)). In addition, the apparent breeding birds in Campo, *Baca*, from the spring report continued into the summer with two being spotted there on 13 June (DH) and the same observer found four in Pritchett, *Baca*, on 2 June.

White-winged Dove: The bird present in Campo, *Baca*, in the spring was present until at least 24 June (PL, CW video). Hanni continued his dove luck by finding a White-wing in Springfield 28 June.

Inca Dove: The birds first found in spring were present throughout the period in Rocky Ford, *Otero* (m.ob.). There was much talk about exactly how many birds were present with most observers finding two, but some reporting three or more. Four birds seen on 23 June by Wood and Lehman were the most reported to these editors. Please stay tuned to this story in the fall report.

Black-billed Cuckoo: The only Black-bill reported this summer was a bird

along the Blue River just south of Kremmling, *Grand*, on 11 June (TL et al.). If accepted by the CBRC, this would provide only the second county record and third West Slope record. Interestingly, the previous *Grand* record was from a location only a couple miles away.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Yellow-billed Cuckoos were present in traditional locations in the eastern half of the state, but in lower than average numbers, at least in the Arkansas River valley and northeastern Colorado (CW).

Black Swift: Cool weather apparently knocked one down out of the stratosphere to be found at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson*, on 18 June (JK) for a rare summer plains observation.

White-throated Swift: A pair was seen in copulation over Hwy 9 in Kremmling,, *Grand*, on 15 June (TL).

Acorn Woodpecker: The colony in Durango, *La Plata*, persists, with at least three there on 25 June (CW, PL).

Alder Flycatcher: Alder Flycatcher is a typically late spring migrant, so the calling bird detected at Lake Henry, *Crowley*, on 4 June (BKP) wasn't all that outlandish (other than the rarity of the species in the state). Another just beat the end of the season and is included here: Maynard, who has much experience with both Alder and Willow, heard one singing on the lower slopes of an unnamed mountain to the northwest of Palmer Lake, *El Paso*, on 30 July.

Willow Flycatcher: One was singing in suitable habitat at Green Mountain Res. on 11 June (TL, PH, SB). Though A&R depict this species as occurring in summer in the county, the BBA recorded no birds in *Summit*.

Least Flycatcher: At least eight singing males and a female (silent, accompanying a singer) were present in the Chatfield Res. area this summer, but Kellner did not visit an area in the Plum Creek Delta that usually holds another couple pairs.

Gray Flycatcher: Two territorial birds were in sage and *Tamarisk* habitat at Oxbow SWA on 21 July (FL). This species is usually restricted in Colorado to piñon-juniper with sage and records of this species utilizing the exotic *Tamarisk* are interesting.

Black Phoebe: See introductory text.

Eastern Phoebe: A pair was found nesting under a bridge along the South Fork of the Republican River in *Kit Carson* on 13 June (CW). The BBA recorded only one nesting farther north.

Vermilion Flycatcher: The pair at Higbee, *Otero*, from the spring succeeded in raising at least one youngster to fledging (D. Leatherman), thus providing the first successful nesting of the species in the state. The two previous attempts (1981 and 1994) both failed due to severe

storms (A&R, BBA).

Cassin's Kingbird: One was at PNG on 2 June (JV) for a rare *Weld* summer record.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One graced a spot just west of the intersection of Hwy 131 and CR 17 just north of Yampa, *Routt*, on 26 July (V. Dionigi et al.). A&R report a previous county summer record.

White-eyed Vireo: One was singing along the Purgatoire River, just east of Lorencito (west of Trinidad Lake), *Las Animas*, on 6 June (TL). This would provide the first county record if accepted by the CBRC.

Bell's Vireo: Wood, while surveying for various eastern species in northeast Colorado for *MCB*, counted 33 at Black Wolf Creek, *Yuma*, including 29 singing males, on 15 June. Even more interesting was a singing bird heard and seen 13 June on a *MCB* Low-elevation Riparian transect along the White River in *Rio Blanco* (DF, RL). The bird, apparently of the nominate race (the yellow, eastern one), was ½-mile west of Kenney Res. and sang about 2 songs/minute for the 15 minutes that the bird was within earshot. The observers have submitted details to the CBRC and the occurrence should provide the first West Slope record.

Gray Vireo: Glenn Giroir repeated his census of this species' population in Colorado National Monument, *Mesa*, this summer. His total of 172 territories was up from 160 in 1999.

Red-eyed Vireo: A late migrant was at CVCG on 1 June (JF). Panjabi detected a singing bird on a *MCB* aspen transect just a few hundred meters east of the *Montrose/Gunnison* line and a couple miles north of Morrow Point Res. on Black Mesa. The incredible luckiness of finding this bird on a transect randomly drawn from the landscape may indicate that there are many other Red-eyeds out there. Another West Slope report of a singing bird came from the Yampa River Preserve (east of Hayden), *Routt*, on 3 June (FL). The BBA did not record a West Slope breeding record for the species and A&R reported only three specific West Slope summer records. However, one of these records was from near Hayden. Perhaps, this area should be searched for breeding Red-eyed Vireos.

Purple Martin: *MCB* personnel counted 180 at 40 sites scattered throughout western Colorado (GL, RL).

Bank Swallow: Inadvertently omitted from the Spring 2000 report, at least two were along the Blue River just north of Silverthorne, *Summit*, on 14 May (TL, D. O'Brien). A&R reported no specific records for the county.

Bushtit: Merchant found 5–10 on 10 July about six miles south of Eagle at 9100', which is amongst the highest elevations at which this species

has been seen in the state.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: A precursor to the great flight onto the plains in the fall, one was at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory office at Barr Lake on 23 July (TL).

White-breasted Nuthatch: Wood found individuals of the eastern “subspecies” along the S. Platte River in *Sedgwick* and along the Republican River in *Yuma*. The birds were feeding young at both sites. We encourage all observers to pay attention to this common species on the plains, as minor plumage and major vocal differences among subspecies (east vs. Rockies vs. Pacific Slope) suggest the possibility of a future split. Regardless of their taxonomic designations, the distribution of the two forms in Colorado is still an interesting biogeographical problem that is readily solvable by Colorado observers. Eastern birds “yank,” Rockies birds do not.

Winter Wren: Unprecedented in summer, a singing bird was heard and seen by very experienced observers along Ouzel Falls Trail in Rocky Mountain NP on 4 July (S. Webb, W. Russell, et al.). The observers felt that the bird was referable to the western group of subspecies. We have not heard whether anyone followed up on this report to determine whether there was a mate nearby. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have this dynamo breeding in our state?! We would like to request that the observers submit documentation to the CBRC, as it is the first report of the species in Colorado between late May and early September (A&R).

Northern Mockingbird: A surprising six were near Lay on 24 June (FL). This is a species that is “seen only sporadically in *Moffat*.”

Brown Thrasher: One at Lory SP, *Larimer*, on 2 July (JL) was a bit out of place.

Yellow-rumped “Audubon’s” Warbler: A female was at CVCG on the late date of 1 June (JF) for this early- spring migrant.

Prairie Warbler: A male, apparently staking out territory, was singing below the dam at Two Buttes SWA, *Baca*, 6-8 June (D. Leatherman, TL). We received no other reports on this individual, so cannot say whether it stayed longer.

Black-and-white Warbler: A singing male was present at Castlewood Canyon SP, *Douglas*, in mid-June (L. Semo) for another record suggestive of Colorado breeding by the species. However, as for all previous such records, confirmation eludes us.

American Redstart: Kellner counted seven singing males in the Waterton Canyon/Chatfield Res. area on 18 June. At least two were present at Ft. Carson, another historic breeding locality.

Ovenbird: Singing birds were present in most of the “usual” spots (e.g., near Roxborough (with at least five singing males present; AB) and

Castlewood Canyon state parks and in Rye Mountain Park). A couple of new locations were added this summer to the list of probable Colorado breeding sites. One was singing in suitable habitat (in Front Range CO, mixed conifer with Gambel oak and with a herbaceous layer comprised of ferns (AB pers. comm.)) east of Greenland, *Douglas*, on 4 June (TL). More interesting was a singing bird along the Yampa River at the Yampa River Preserve, *Routt*, 2 June (KP). The particulars are reported elsewhere in this issue (Potter 2001).

Hooded Warbler: For the third summer in a row, this species, both a male and a female, was present in Gregory Canyon, *Boulder*, throughout the period (JV, m.ob.).

Hepatic Tanager: To continue his run of luck with the species from spring, Wood found a singing bird on the Ninaview Breeding Bird Survey route in northeastern *Las Animas* on 3 June. This provided the second BBS record in Colorado for the species. The species was apparently absent this summer from Ft. Carson, which is one of the historical and reliable sites (if difficult to access) for Hepatics in Colorado (BM).

Cassin's Sparrow: Dillon reported that this species "made a strong showing on the Pawnee this summer. It's been several years since there's been such an influx." A number of Cassin's were singing near Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL). The BBA did not quite record the species this far west in *Huerfano*.

Brewer's Sparrow: The scientific literature on "Timberline Sparrow", a high-elevation and far north subspecies (*taverneri*) of Brewer's Sparrow is beginning to gather evidence toward a split of the species. The breeding range was understood to be from southern Alberta and British Columbia north and west in the northern Rockies at or above treeline to extreme eastern Alaska (A.O.U. 1957, Doyle 1997). However, recent field work has turned the birds up in Montana (B. Walker, pers. comm.). A&R report Brewer's Sparrow in Colorado as "local in higher mountains to timberline" and provide a dot of occurrence at 12,000' on the elevation chart. Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory staff have made a few observations of singing Brewer's Sparrows above treeline in the past few years in various parts of Colorado and all were of birds that didn't sound "quite right." Though there are suspicions that these might be Timberlines, all the information available on vocal differences between the two forms is vague written descriptions; observers have been unable to be sure about these tundra birds. *MCB* personnel found Brewer's Sparrows on three Alpine Tundra transects in *Gunnison* in 2000. Three were singing on a transect spread from West Maroon Pass to Frigid Air

Pass 4 July (AP), three were seen on a transect at Cumberland Pass 15 July (DR), and another silent bird was on the flanks of Italian Mountain 18 July (DR).

Sage Sparrow: “A number” of this species was in a stand of pure greasewood at the Oxbow SWA on 21 July and again in August (FL). The observer suspected that they were breeding in this very un-sage habitat. Rising (1996) does not mention this species breeding in greasewood, a habitat more typical of the congeneric Black-throated Sparrow.

Lark Bunting: Luke found 11 on his Breeding Bird Census plot near Lay on 24 June, highlighting an “invasion” year in *Moffat*.

White-throated Sparrow: A bird [morph? - Eds.] present at CVCG on 1 June (JF) was pushing the state late date record.

McCown’s Longspur: Versaw found at least 10 individuals in a pasture near Black Forest and within five miles of the Colorado Springs city limits, *El Paso*, on 29 July. A number of them were juveniles that, along with the date, strongly suggest local breeding. There are no previous breeding records in the county with only the BBA records from *Elbert* and *Lincoln* being even remotely close. In addition to being at an odd latitude, the elevation of right around 7000' is probably a world record for breeding by the species. Alan also reports that he saw “several” McCown’s in late June 1996 concentrated near Trucon. All were adults with some displaying.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Speaking of out-of-range longspurs, a male was found on a *MCB* Grassland transect in southwestern-most *Bent* on 10 June (CW).

Indigo Bunting: One singing adult male at Waterton Canyon, *Jefferson*, on 11 June (TL, SB, PH) continued this species’ record of local summer occurrence, though surveys later in the summer, surprisingly, did not record the species (JK).

Dickcissel: The species was absent from Ft. Carson this year (BM) where it has been fairly regular in recent years. Interestingly, in late June, there were a few in the PNG area (m.ob.), where the species is quite scarce. However, the *creme de la creme* of Dickcissel records in 2000 came from Ouray, where a New Jersey Audubon tour found a bird on 26 July (MO, LZ).

Bobolink: The statewide tally of adult males cobbled together by *MCB* from numerous observers’ reports was 230 in 35 hayfields (SMa and KP on the Yampa and White Rivers, SMa in *Larimer*, and Laura Golton in Boulder Open Space). Unfortunately, *MCB* did not receive any numbers from the colony south of Castlewood Canyon SP. The two males from the spring period near Cañon City were present only until

11 June (SMo). One male was in a field near Bellevue, *Larimer*, 28 June (CW, BKP, JF), an area that has hosted nesting birds before, but that was not covered by *MCB*.

Western Meadowlark: A singing bird heard 10 July on a *MCB* Alpine Tundra transect between James Peak and St. Mary's Glacier, *Park*, above 12,000' (AV) might provide the high-elevation record for the species in the state.

Great-tailed Grackle: Versaw found this species at Ramah Res. this summer and juveniles there were highly suggestive of local breeding. There are no previous breeding records within 40 miles of the location. Of course, there's not much grackle habitat within 40 miles of the location. Another first local breeding record (a first for *Larimer*) was provided by at least two females seen carrying food 24-28 June at Cobb Lake (R. Ryder, BD, JF, CW, BKP). The species was present near Holyoke on 21 June (TL, CW), providing a possible first for *Phillips*. Lastly, eight birds at Orlando Res. #2 on 4 June (TL) provided at least a suggestion of local breeding. Neither A&R nor the BBA recorded this species in summer in *Huerfano*.

Scott's Oriole: *MCB* field workers found territorial adult males in *Rio Blanco* (KP; 2), *Mesa* (GL, RL; 9), and *Montezuma* (DF; 1). Wood found the first for a Colorado BBS route on his Ninaview route on 3 June, in *Las Animas*.

Red Crossbill: Maynard reported a very poor cone crop in *El Paso*, so he saw NO crossbills, of any type, this summer. We want to take this opportunity to remind everyone that, if you can, try to determine the type of Red Crossbill any time you have the chance. It is as important now as it will be when, if we guess correctly, the species gets split into eight or so species. The important features for separation of the "types" are bill size and shape and vocalizations, particularly the call notes. For a good source for learning crossbill call notes, check out Jeff Groth's web site about these birds (Groth 2000). The type that is normally found in ponderosa pine forest is Type 2 and the type that is normally in lodgepole pine (and spruce-fir) forest is Type 5. Note, however, that Type 2 and Type 5 overlap extensively in morphology and ecology (Groth 2000) and the two forms regularly occur in close proximity in Colorado (C. Wood pers. obs.).

White-winged Crossbill: Two were seen in Rocky Mountain NP, *Larimer*, on 4 July (SW, WR) for an interesting and rare Front Range summer record. About 20 were in the White River National Forest in northern *Garfield* well north of Rifle Gap on 17 July (CW).

Lesser Goldfinch: In the "What-the-heck-is-up-with-this-bird?" category, a male black-backed individual was at Lake Henry on 8 June (BKP). Not

only is this species not “supposed” to be on the plains, one would think that it certainly shouldn’t be on the plains in JUNE! Three were reported from Michigan Creek, *Jackson*, on 27 June (JV). There are very few records from the county, though the BBA reported a Possible record.

Evening Grosbeak: A flock [number? - Eds.] flew over Ft. Collins on 14 July (JL); it is unknown if these were local breeders, or simply presaging a minor flight by this species onto the plains in late summer/fall.

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