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**Front Cover:** Tony Leukering took this photo of a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, on 17 May 2004.

## A NEW LOOK FOR THE CFO WEBSITE

Rachel Hopper  
[webmaster@cfo-link.org](mailto:webmaster@cfo-link.org)

I hope by now that all of you have had a chance to browse through the vastly improved and newly re-designed CFO website ([www.cfo-link.org](http://www.cfo-link.org)). Thanks to Erika and Scott Hutchings at CryBaby Design ([scott.hutchings@indra.net](mailto:scott.hutchings@indra.net)) for their excellent work on this project. It is the Board's hope that the new site is easier to navigate as well as more esthetically pleasing. The new Colorado Bird Records Committee website (under beta testing at the moment) will be seamlessly integrated into the CFO home site in very short order. The CFO website is full of useful information about our organization as well as birding in Colorado.

Is your membership about to expire? Our most recent accomplishment with the site is a new on-line store where you can join CFO or renew your membership directly through the web (<http://cfo-link.org/members/join.php>). On the same page you can also make contributions to CFO's newly created Youth Scholarship Fund, our long established Project Fund, or to COBirds (<http://cfo-link.org/birding/COBirds.php>), the premiere listserv for the discussion of Colorado birds. Our on-line store makes membership, shopping, and donations easy. We accept all forms of payment, including credit cards.

CFO merchandise for sale (<http://cfo-link.org/merchandise/index.php>) includes hatpins, decals, a great variety of shirts, and Colorado state field checklists. A very recent publication, an annotated checklist, by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, *Birds of Barr Lake and Surrounding Areas 1888-1999*, by Robert Andrews, Robert Righter, Michael Carter, Tony Leukering, and Alison Banks is also available for purchase and very worthy of a place on your bookshelf.

With the holidays approaching, we have added a new line of bird and butterfly note cards. These make great gifts for everyone on your list. Available right now are beautiful cards by Scott Rashid of Estes Park. There are five different designs (hawks, owls, songbirds, hummingbirds, and butterflies) each in a pack of eight cards. And, we will soon be adding cards created by Radeaux and Sherrie York. Remember, 100% of proceeds go to support our organization.

Please stop by and visit the new and improved CFO website. And, as always, your comments are welcome. You can contact me at [webmaster@cfo-link.org](mailto:webmaster@cfo-link.org).

## FIELD TRIPS

### Understanding and Identifying Juncos

Ted Floyd

December 11, 2004

Join Ted Floyd, editor of *Birding* and junco enthusiast, for an outing and workshop. The Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) is one of the most common birds in North America. It is also one of our most variable and extraordinary of bird species. Here in the Colorado Front Range region, we are at the epicenter of junco diversity. Six highly distinctive races of the Dark-eyed Junco can be observed in a single morning and, in fact, it is possible to view all six in a single flock. Hybrids are frequent (and fascinating), and there are marked differences between the sexes. Yet it is possible to make sense of all of this remarkable diversity. This workshop has been scheduled for the week before the commencement of the 2004-05 Christmas Bird Count season, and thus is perfectly timed for those wishing to make a concerted effort at sorting out the junco races on their Colorado CBCs this year. There is one "assignment" for this workshop prior to attending, please study the photos and discussion at the following website: <http://www.oceanwanderers.com/JuncoID.html>. Many of the issues that we will confront in the field are nicely addressed at this website.

The field trip will be limited to eighteen participants, and is suitable for birders of all levels of expertise. For reservations, please contact Ted at [tedfloyd@aba.org](mailto:tedfloyd@aba.org) or 303-444-6365. E-mail is preferred.

The field trip will be from 8:00 A.M. - noon. We will meet at the Mesa Trail parking lot, in southern Boulder County. The parking area is on the north side of SR 170 (the road into Eldorado Canyon State Park), 1.65 miles west of the intersection of SR 170 and SR 93. Note that the parking lot is directly across the street from the familiar Doudy Draw parking lot. Please dress for the weather, and make sure to have your binoculars!

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR RONALD A. RYDER AWARD

On February 25, 1995, the CFO Board of Directors passed a resolution establishing the Ronald A. Ryder Award and presenting the first of these awards to Dr. Ryder. The award was presented to Dr. Ryder for distinguished service to the Colorado Field Ornithologists organization and goals, for scholarly contribution to Colorado field ornithology, and for sharing knowledge of Colorado field ornithology with the people of the state. These criteria were established as those which would govern presentation of the award to others in the future. Recipients of the Ronald A. Ryder award are presented a plaque at the annual CFO convention and are granted a life-time membership in the organization.

Members of CFO are encouraged to submit nominations for the award. Nominations may be submitted to Tom McConnell, Awards Committee Chair, by U.S. mail or e-mail [awards@cfo-link.org](mailto:awards@cfo-link.org), no later than February 1. Nominations should include a full description of the nominee's contributions to the Colorado Field Ornithologists and to Colorado field ornithology.

Tom McConnell  
Awards Committee Chair  
66 Casa Del Monte Ct.  
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

### CFO WEBSITE

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

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

## CFO PROJECT FUND

The CFO Project Fund has money for grants for projects that will have a benefit to Colorado birds. The Project Fund Committee—Cheryl Day, Pearl Sandstrom-Smith, and Jim Chace—requests that the recipients of funding publish a short year-end summary of their funded work in *Colorado Birds* and/or present some of their findings at the CFO convention the next calendar year.

1. Applications should contain name, address, and telephone number of person or organization applying for grant.
2. Applications should include a description of the project - what will be done, who will direct the project, who will do the work, timetable, and rationale (explaining how the project will support the Mission of CFO).
3. Applications must be postmarked by December 1, and must be submitted directly to chairperson of Project Fund committee.
4. Projects must have an anticipated starting and completion date and should be realistic in terms of time required to complete project.
5. Applicants must submit a complete budget. Projects should be realistic in terms of financial and volunteer resources. Applications should contain all items that the project requires, the items for which the applicant is seeking funding from CFO, and should contain amount requested from CFO.
6. Travel expenses and equipment readily available from private sources (such as camera, spotting scopes, and office equipment) are usually not funded.
7. Applications should contain amount funded from other sources.
8. Following the receipt of a grant and completion of the project, the applicant must submit a final report, in writing, to the chairperson of Project Fund by February of the next calendar year. This report should include a full description of the project activities and an accounting of money spent.

Applicants will be notified after the March CFO Board Meeting.

Please send three copies of grant proposal and supporting materials to:  
Cheryl Day  
Project Fund Director  
28478 Hwy. 92  
Hotchkiss, CO 81419  
e-mail: [projectfund@cfo-link.org](mailto:projectfund@cfo-link.org)

## **CFO BOARD MINUTES**

Lisa Edwards, Secretary

The regular quarterly meeting was held August 29, 2004 at 11:14 A.M. Board members present were President Peter Gent, Vice President Norm Lewis, Secretary Lisa Edwards, Treasurer David Waltman, and Directors Cheryl Day, Rachel Hopper, Tony Leukering, Tom McConnell, Bill Schmoker, and Mark Peterson. Directors Sharon Dooley and Doug Faulkner reported by email. Also attending the meeting were CFO members Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright. The minutes of the 2004 Annual Convention meeting were approved as corrected.

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Peter Gent read two thank notes that CFO had received over the summer from Steve & Debbie Bouricius and Tina Jones. He also stated that he had received very positive feedback on the 2004 CFO convention that was held in Montrose in May.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

CFO's current assets are \$33,732.75. There was discussion on the Project Fund. The Project Fund would be handled in the following manner:

1. Private donations are used first to fund grants. If the amount of grants is less than the amount of the private donations, the balance of private money remains in the Project Fund for future grants.

2. General funds will be allocated after the Project Fund committee makes a recommendation to the CFO Board. The Board will decide how much money, if any, will be used in addition to private donations to fund approved projects. No funds from the general fund will be carried over from year to year.

### COBIRDS

The listserv is running fine with approximately 670 members.

### WEBSITE

The new website is up and running. The photo uploads still need to be completed. A motion was made and passed to pay Scott Hutchings an additional \$750.00 dollars to add Pay Pal to the website, for transferring the content from the old website, setting up a forwarder from the old website, and for submitting the website to the top search engines.

### CBRC

The on-line submission and review system will be ready by the end of the year. The site is now ready for beta testing. The committee expects to be current by the end of the year with the circulation of 2003 records to be started in October.

### FIELD TRIPS

The pelagic trip in June off of the coast of NC had 19 CFO participants and was a great success. The Black Swift trip in early August was well attended and in addition to getting to view the swifts up close and personal, there was also some time to get in county birding for Ouray County. Some of the upcoming field trips include a junco workshop with Ted Floyd in December and Feather Tracts with Tony Leukering this fall.

### COLORADO BIRDS

The October issue is coming along well. There were several problems with getting the July issue out on time, the printer was backlogged and the four-color print specialist was on vacation.

### MEMBERSHIP

The CFO membership stands at 383 active members. This includes 331 members that reside in Colorado and 23 institutions, mostly university libraries outside of Colorado.

### PROJECT FUND

The committee will be meeting in late winter to review proposals for 2005.

### NEW BUSINESS

- 1) 2005 Convention - There was general discussion about the convention that will be held in La Junta. Stan Oswald has agreed to be the local contact for this convention. The convention will be held at the Otero Junior College and the Holiday Inn Express.
- 2) 2006 Convention - The Western Field Ornithologists has expressed an interest in holding a joint meeting with CFO in 2006. Bill Schmoker will let the WFO contact know that CFO is also interested in a joint meeting.
- 3) Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas will be starting again in 2007. Tony Leukering noted that CFO contributed to this project the first time.

The next CFO Board meeting will be held on Saturday, December 4, at the RMBO headquarters in Brighton at 11:00 A.M.

The board meeting was adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

## 2004 CFO CONVENTION SUMMARY

If you missed the 2004 CFO Annual Convention held this past Memorial Day weekend in Montrose, Colorado, you missed a good time. One hundred twenty birders from Colorado and surrounding states attended, with field trips starting Friday and lasting through Monday. Many participants were starting to look a bit haggard by Sunday morning.

The convention was held at the newly-remodeled Montrose Holiday Inn Express. The manager at the time we made arrangements was a birdwatcher and a long-time member of the local Audubon Society. It was felt that she would know all the quirks and needs of birdwatchers, and would give the CFO a good price. Since she was retiring in June of 2004, the board agreed to hold the convention in Montrose this year. Despite the manager retiring earlier than expected in April, the convention still went smoothly, and the general consensus was that it was a very enjoyable weekend.

Below are short notes from participants and field trip leaders of their birding highlights of the Convention:

Participants on the Grand Mesa owl trip did not get a look at a Boreal Owl but they did get a listen as one responded to a tape near Spruce Campground. After a few hoots it retreated, and its call was promptly replaced by the winnowing of several Wilson's Snipe, a night sound eerily similar to the primary call of the Boreal Owl. - Rich Levad

Scott's Oriole in Norwood Canyon about 1/2 way between Norwood Hill and Placerville. Also, the Indigo Bunting at the base of Norwood Hill, seen by a mob led by Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright. - Andrea Robinsong

On field trips at the Montrose convention we found several exciting birds. On Friday's Uncompahgre Plateau trip we found a Tennessee Warbler at Hwy 90 and Dry Creek. On Saturday, a Great Egret just east of Nucla, and on Monday we shared the Black Swifts in Delta, the wonderful assortment of terns at Fruitgrowers Reservoir, and found White-winged Crossbills at County Line parking area on Grand Mesa. A great convention! - Tom McConnell

My favorite bird was the Grace's Warbler aggressively singing from the top of a pinon in pure pinon/juniper habitat, east of Dry Creek, on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The runner-up was the Indigo Bunting along the San Miguel River. - Bill Day



Rich's Delta County trip: A pair of White-winged Crossbills dropped onto the Grand Mesa road 30 feet from the group. They, along with a couple of Pine Grosbeaks, pecked in the gravel on the roadside, lined up sideways so as to display their wing bars, and stayed for close observation by everybody spread up and down the road. - Hugh Kingery

Chris's Ridgway Reservoir Trip: While looking at a Bullock's Oriole adult and fledgling, leader Chris Wood explained the Bullock's migration strategy in which it moves to Arizona to molt, then on south to its winter quarters. - Hugh Kingery

I certainly think Black Swifts were highlights on many trips, including the slacker trip I took. Glenn Walbeck's group found about 55 Black Swifts foraging at Sweitzer Lake on the 31st. Our group saw these birds, too. Then Doug Faulkner and I took our group to Confluence Park, where about 340 Black Swifts were foraging! Our group, along with Glenn's group, also had three Common Terns and three Caspian Terns at Fruitgrowers Reservoir, along with an American Bittern. Also, on the owling trip I led, our group had stunning looks at a Flammulated Owl from about 7 meters away. - Bill Schmoker

The slacker group enjoyed a variety of birds, but sitting on the front porch of John Welfelt's house in Delta, eating fresh-made gazpacho, and drinking iced tea while watching a family of Gambel's Quail hopping around less than 15 feet away made our day. - Cheryl Day

### **CFO SUPPORTS ETHICS CODES**

The Colorado Field Ornithologists is dedicated to the conservation of avian species and to increasing the public awareness of human impact on birds. As one step toward achieving these goals, the CFO Board has endorsed the American Birding Association's (ABA) *Birding Code of Ethics* and the Ornithological Council (OC) of North American Ornithological Societies' *Code of Ethics*.

## HUMAN AWARENESS CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC CATS ON WILDLIFE ALONG THE FRONT RANGE, COLORADO: A SURVEY

Bryn W. Johnson<sup>1</sup>, Robyn Bortner<sup>1</sup>, Janet Kemp<sup>1</sup>, Tim Sichmiller<sup>1</sup>, Sarah Swanty<sup>1</sup>, Therese Tepe<sup>1</sup>, and David E. Gammon<sup>2</sup>

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**Abstract**—Domestic cats (*Felis catus*) kill millions of birds and other wildlife in the United States each year. Furthermore, many of these cats receive food supplementation from their human owners. We surveyed 68 cat owners in Fort Collins, Colorado, and the surrounding Front Range area with two goals: 1) determine cat owner awareness of the predatory activities of their cats, and 2) determine attitudes of cat owners towards their cats' predatory behavior. We found that most cat owners underestimate the impact their cats have on wildlife. Although previous studies of the predatory activity of cats estimated between 10 and 161 small animals killed per cat per year, 70% of owners estimated that their cats killed 5 or fewer small animals per year. Even if cat owners had knowledge of much higher predatory activity (365 kills per year), approximately two thirds of cat owners stated they would not change their behavior towards letting their cat outside. We conclude: 1) that cat owners along the Front Range usually underestimate the negative effects their outdoor cats have on wildlife, and 2) that most owners are unlikely to reduce their cats' outdoor activities.

### Introduction

Domestic cats (*Felis catus*) have been introduced in many habitats throughout the world, and cats have severely reduced populations of birds and small animals in many areas (Churcher and Lawton 1987, Barratt 1998, Hawkins 1998). In two extreme examples, a single cat killed 1690 small vertebrates during an 18 month period (Bradt 1949), and another cat caused the extinction of a bird species endemic to one island (Olson 1977). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 66 million pet cats exist in the United States alone (<http://www.census.gov>, 2000). Domestic cat populations are kept at high densities well above carrying capacities because of feeding by humans (Crooks and Soule 1999). Furthermore cats continue to kill prey species even when prey populations are low (Churcher and Lawton 1987). The problem is

aggravated by the presence of an additional 60 to 100 million feral cats that roam the nation's cities, suburbs, and rural areas (American Bird Conservancy <http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/>).

Numerous studies have assessed the negative impact of cats on wildlife populations (e.g., Pearson 1964, George 1974, Barratt 1998, Hawkins 1998, Woods et al. 2003). Estimates of the number of small vertebrates killed by cats vary according to the study with a low estimate of 10.2 and a high estimate of 161.0 kills per cat per year. Additionally, one study in Alameda County, California, showed that sites excluding cats contained twice as many birds as sites with cats (Hawkins 1998).

Despite what is known about the negative impact of outdoor cats on wildlife populations, not much is known about the attitudes of cat owners towards the predatory activity of their cats. The goals of this study were to use surveys to determine cat owner attitudes and awareness towards the predatory behavior of their cats.

### Study Area and Methods

Undergraduate students distributed surveys as part of the Spring 2004 ornithology course at Colorado State University. Each student conducted one or two surveys of adult cat owners in Fort Collins and the surrounding Front Range area. Students did not discuss survey questions with cat owners until after the survey was completed. The survey included questions about location (urban vs. rural), the number of cats per owner, how often cats were let outside, and the owner's knowledge of their cat's predatory behavior.

### Results

Sixty-eight surveys were administered for this study. Seventy-one percent of cat owners lived in an urban setting, and 29% of cat owners lived in rural areas. Respondents owned 1.9 cats on average with a maximum of nine cats. The amount of time each cat spent outside varied greatly. Eight cat owners (12%) never let their cats outside, and eight owners (12%) let their cats outside 24 hours per day. The average amount of time spent outside per cat per day was 8.5 hours. Cats were outside more often during daylight hours: 67% of cats were outside between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M., and only 31% of cats were outside during the night. Twenty-seven percent of cat owners indicated their cats remained on their property while outside, 62% said their cats ranged beyond their property, and 11% replied that they did not know.

Cat owners that let their cats outside varied greatly in how closely they monitored their cats' outdoor activity. Twenty percent of respondents

indicated that they never monitored their cat, 32% monitor once in a while, 33% monitor occasionally, 7% monitor often, and 8% indicated they always monitored their cat while it was outdoors. Eighty-seven percent of cat owners that let their cats outside remembered observing predatory behavior from their cats, such as waiting by bird feeders, watching small animals, chasing small animals, bringing home dead animals (e.g., rodents, songbirds, lizards), or actually eating or killing a small animal. Although 87% of cat owners observed their cats in predatory behavior, 70% of cat owners believed their cats killed five or fewer animals per year.

Cat owners were asked if they would change their behavior of letting their cats outside if they knew that their cat ate one bird per day. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated they would definitely not change their behavior, 32% indicated they would probably not change their behavior, 25% were unsure, 8% said they would probably change, and 11% said they would definitely change their behavior.

The U.S. Census estimated that 27.3% of the national population owned cats. Based on a 2000 A.D. human population of 4,301,261 in Colorado (<http://www.census.gov>, 2000) with 1.9 cats per owner and 88% of cats going outdoors (see above), we estimate 1.96 million outdoor cats in Colorado. This estimate does not include feral cats.

### Discussion

Our data show that 70% of cat owners believe their cats have a small effect on wildlife (=5 kills per cat per year). According to published studies, cats bring home at least 10.2 small animals per year and possibly many more. These numbers do not include animals killed by cats that are not brought home (Mitchell and Beck 1992). Thus, most cat owners are probably underestimating the negative effect of their cats on wildlife.

It is difficult to estimate the precise impact of cats on wildlife. Cats generally prey upon small mammals the most, followed by birds, and then reptiles (Mitchell and Beck 1992, Crooks and Soule 1999). Using our estimate of 1.96 million outdoor house cats in Colorado and a low estimate of 10 small animals per cat per year, we estimate that cats kill at least 19.6 million small animals per year across Colorado. This number includes only animals killed by house cats, which are presumably fed by their owners. According to the American Bird Conservancy, the number of feral cats is approximately equal to the number of house cats (<http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/>), and these cats eat nothing but wildlife (Stallcup 1991). Domestic cats are not a "natural" part of the ecosystem: they exist at much higher densities than native predators because

they are fed and protected from disease and injury by humans (Coleman et al. 1997). Therefore, they can kill wildlife independent of prey densities, and may be directly competing with natural predators for prey (Crooks and Soule 1999).

According to our study, even if cat owners knew the negative impact of their cats on wildlife, most would be unlikely to keep their cats indoors. Fifty-six percent of cat owners reported they would definitely or probably not change their behavior, and 25% were unsure. Our results contrast with those from a study conducted in rural Wisconsin in which 38% of farmers and 59% of non-farmers indicated they would be willing to decrease the number of cats on their property to benefit wildlife (Coleman and Temple 1993).

There are limits to what surveys can reveal about human behavior and the effects of cats on wildlife. For example, surveys do not inform us of the activity of feral cats. It is also possible that responses from cat owners were inaccurate. Direct observations of cat activity through radio-collars and/or following their movements would likely improve our knowledge of the negative effects of cats on wildlife.

#### Acknowledgments

We thank the students in the Spring 2004 Ornithology class for their participation. We also thank Kevin Crooks and Jerry Deffenbacher for their help in designing the survey.

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## WEST NILE VIRUS AND COLORADO'S BIRDS

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West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne flavivirus that requires birds as amplifying hosts in its primary transmission cycle. Known in Africa and other Old World continents since 1937, it spread to North America in 1999, where it caused a significant outbreak of human encephalitis cases in New York City. The WNV outbreak in New York differed from other described WNV outbreaks in that it also caused high levels of mortality in birds, especially members of the corvid family, such as American Crow and Blue Jay (Komar 2003).

In the United States, WNV spread rapidly, reaching Colorado in August 2002. During 2003, Colorado reported more human cases of WNV than any other state, and 63 deaths (Centers for Disease Control, unpubl. data). Significant horse and bird mortality and mosquito infection was also reported through surveillance efforts. Surveillance detected WNV transmission activity in almost all of Colorado's counties, with the exception of some of the least populated counties. Risk of WNV transmission in Colorado coincides with periods when mosquitoes are active, particularly *Culex tarsalis* and *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes. Both of these species feed on both birds and mammals, and breed in association with human settlements. *Culex pipiens* occurs in both urban and rural areas, whereas *Culex tarsalis* is mostly a rural mosquito, breeding in association with irrigation run-off water. In 2004, WNV activity in Colorado was first detected in a horse in May and continues to cause problems for birds and people, but to a lesser extent than in 2003 (State of Colorado 2004).

Many species of birds are susceptible to fatal infections from WNV. In North America, 198 species of free-ranging and captive birds had succumbed with WNV infection through 2002 (Komar 2003), and this number continues to rise. In birds, death is often rapid, with few signs of illness prior to death. However, some birds do show weakness, loss of appetite, or difficulty walking or maintaining upright posture. Ruffled feathers and tremors are classic signs of infections in birds. Some larger birds, in particular hawks and owls, survive WNV infection with complex neurological effects that are still being catalogued.

A study to evaluate which Colorado bird species are dying from WNV infection, and therefore may be useful in future surveillance programs, is underway. This study documented 34 affected species in 2002 and 2003, and is continuing through 2004. Preliminary findings indicate that in addition to most corvid species, hawks and owls are being affected (including Great Horned, Northern Saw-Whet, Long-eared, and Flammulated owls, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, and Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, Ferruginous, Red-tailed, and Swainson's hawks). Numerous passerine species have been affected in addition to the corvids. House Finches seem like they may be useful for WNV surveillance. Of 13 dead House Finches tested in 2003, 11 were positive for the virus, a rate consistent with that found in corvids. Of the corvids, 6 species were found affected (American Crow, Black-billed Magpie, Blue Jay, Western Scrub-Jay, Steller's Jay, and Pinyon Jay). These findings confirm which species are at risk of fatal infections, but they do not determine the impact of WNV on populations (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** A dead Clark's Grebe found in Larimer County, Colorado, tested positive for WNV infection by virus isolation. This is the only Clark's Grebe to test positive in the United States. However, most dead Clark's Grebes would not be found in order to be tested, so the true impact of WNV on this species is unknown. Photo by Nicholas Komar.





Few data have been collected on population-level effects of WNV on birds in Colorado, or even elsewhere in the U.S. Two studies have documented significant local population reductions of American Crows in Oklahoma and Illinois. In Stillwater, Oklahoma, WNV-attributed mortality was 32% among 26 marked hatch-year crows during the summer of 2002 (Caffrey et al. 2003). In Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, WNV-attributed mortality in crows was measured to be 68%, using data from a radio telemetry study of 28 crows (Yaremych et al. 2004). Two other studies have looked at effects of larger areas using Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data and Project FeederWatch, although declines in bird species could not be directly attributed to WNV. In the first study, CBCs in the northeast United States (all terrestrial counts in CT, MA, NJ, NY, PA, RI) failed to detect statistically significant population declines in 10 species evaluated, including American Crow (Caffrey and Peterson 2003). In the second study, significant declines were registered for American Crow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, and Carolina Chickadee among data collected by Project FeederWatch (Bonter and Hochachka 2003).

To evaluate declines in Colorado bird populations potentially due to WNV, post-outbreak data from surveys of birds in specific locations must be compared to data collected prior to the arrival of WNV. The birds surveyed must reside in Colorado during the period when WNV is most active. I evaluated CBC data from five circles where WNV was most active in 2003 in the eastern half of the state and along the Front Range (Boulder, Fort Collins, Fort Morgan, Longmont, and Pueblo). I further restricted the analysis to bird species that are mostly resident and non-migratory and were likely to have been affected, based on anecdotes and findings from avian mortality surveillance for WNV in Colorado. The 12 selected species were: American Crow, Common Raven, Black-billed Magpie, Blue Jay, Western Scrub-Jay, Steller's Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, House Finch, and House Sparrow. Numbers of birds observed were normalized by party-hours.

From this simple evaluation, it is apparent that some species may be undergoing large population fluctuations in the short period of this two-year study (Table 1). These large fluctuations may reveal the inaccuracies inherent to CBC data, or they may indeed reveal true changes. Potential problems inherent with CBC data include observer biases (e.g., quality of observers change from year to year), weather effects, influence from migration and dispersal on resident bird populations (many of the 12 species selected for analysis are subject to these influences, such as the European Starling), and natural fluctuation of bird densities over time and space, even when the population is stable. Because of these problems, it seems best to use this

preliminary analysis to generate hypotheses, rather than to document real changes in bird populations.

**Table 1.** Cumulative birds/party-hour for five Christmas Bird Counts (see text for list of circles) for 2002-03 (103rd CBC, "103"), 2003-04 (104th CBC, "104") count periods, and the percent change (National Audubon Society 2004).

Species	103	104	% change
Western Scrub-Jay	0.14	0.05	-61.4
White-breasted Nuthatch	0.35	0.18	-48.6
Black-capped Chickadee	1.91	1.09	-42.9
Black-billed Magpie	3.68	2.41	-34.5
Steller's Jay	0.87	0.63	-27.6
Mountain Chickadee	0.70	0.52	-25.7
American Crow	5.38	4.07	-24.3
Blue Jay	0.86	1.01	17.4
House Finch	4.72	6.27	32.8
Common Raven	0.28	0.41	46.4
House Sparrow	8.32	13.77	65.5
European Starling	31.29	96.00	206.8

Some of the observed changes in the CBC data seem consistent with an effect by mortality due to WNV, such as the apparent decreases in American Crows by 24% and Black-capped Chickadees by 43%. Apparent increases in Blue Jays by 17% and Common Ravens by 46% cannot be explained by WNV. Increases in House Sparrow and House Finch numbers were also unexpected, as both species suffer from WNV-induced mortality. Perhaps reductions in corvid populations actually led to increased nest success of some passerine birds such as House Sparrow and House Finch, considering that corvids are notorious for marauding nests of passerines.

Another important limitation to the CBC database is that many migratory species are completely missed. Thus, if population declines in House Wrens and Bullock's Orioles occurred, these would not be detected by the CBC. Another dataset, the Breeding Bird Survey, may eventually be used to assess the impact of WNV on these populations of breeding birds. Nonetheless, the link to WNV itself will always be speculative. What is truly needed are mark-recapture studies in which recaptured bird can be evaluated for evidence of WNV infection (and therefore survival) and dead marked birds can be found in time to be adequately tested for WNV infection. This was the approach taken

in the aforementioned crow studies.

Most bird populations in Colorado will experience some reduction as a result of the WNV invasion, and for the most part, these reductions will be inconsequential. American Crows and Black-billed Magpies will find virus-free zones to carry on their gene flow, and some genetically resistant birds will survive in WNV hot zones as well, ultimately spreading the resistance genes and strengthening their species' future survivability. However, some populations teeter on the brink of disaster, and these are the ones most vulnerable to extirpation due to WNV. These would include several species that are threatened or endangered in Colorado (State of Colorado 2003), including Piping Plover, Least Tern, Bald Eagle, Spotted Owl, and several other rare breeders. Small numbers of each of these four species have already been found dead due to WNV infection in other states (Komar 2003). Concern for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse, a newly recognized species that may be listed as threatened or endangered in the near future, is especially warranted given that a mark-recapture study in Wyoming recently documented a 38% population decline in Greater Sage-Grouse as a result of WNV invasion into the study zones (Naugle et al. 2004).

### Acknowledgments

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## NEW EVIDENCE FOR A BREEDING POPULATION OF LUCY'S WARBLER IN SOUTHWESTERN COLORADO

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### Introduction

On 16 May 2003, the authors, along with Inez and Bill Prather of Longmont, Colorado, observed at least two territorial male Lucy's Warblers (*Vermivora luciae*) along Yellow Jacket Creek in Montezuma County, Colorado. Subsequently, many additional observers were able to locate these birds, and ultimately a nest was discovered. These sightings marked the first evidence of breeding by Lucy's Warblers in Colorado in nearly a century. The first, and only prior breeding record of this species, was of two individuals and a nest collected in 1913 (Lincoln 1918). Lincoln (1918) noted, "the fact that the first record for this bird in Colorado was also found breeding, makes it seem possible that the species has been overlooked by other collectors." Indeed, even in recent years this area has been little explored by birders and there is considerable evidence to suggest that Lucy's Warbler may be more common in Colorado than previously documented. In this manuscript, we examine the status of Lucy's Warbler in Colorado and nearby northeastern Arizona and southeastern Utah, and present evidence that Lucy's Warbler may be a regular, albeit local, breeding species in southwestern Colorado.

### History of Lucy's Warbler in Colorado

The first records of Lucy's Warbler from Colorado are two specimens and a nest collected on 3 May 1913 in the "Four Corners area" of Montezuma County, and another specimen collected from the same location on 19 May 1913 (Lincoln 1918, Bailey and Niedrach 1965). The date of collection of the first two specimens is apparently erroneously reported as 13 May in Andrews and Righter (1992) and Righter et al. (2004). We were also unable to find the third specimen or the nest in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science collection, and have no further details about them. The exact location where these specimens were collected is unknown, although suggestive of a location on the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, perhaps somewhere along the San Juan

River or one of its tributaries. Since these initial records, Lucy's Warblers have been reported in Colorado on only three occasions, all of which are of single birds during spring migration. On 11 May 1991, a singing male found in Grand Junction marked the first reported occurrence of Lucy's Warbler in Colorado in nearly 80 years (Andrews and Righter 1992, Righter et al. 2004). Recently, two different females were seen in eastern Colorado, one in Lamar on 21 April 2002 (Percival and Truan 2002, Leukering and Semo 2004) and one in Pueblo on 13-15 April 2003 (Percival et al. 2003). There are reports of sightings in Mesa Verde National Park, but currently these records are not available for review.

### **Breeding distribution of Lucy's Warbler**

The primary breeding range of Lucy's Warbler is in the Sonoran Desert regions of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, where it breeds primarily in mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) and willow (*Salix* spp.) thickets in desert washes, as well as associations of shrubs and cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*) in riparian areas (Johnson et al. 1997). However, the range of Lucy's Warbler extends outside this region along major river drainages (Johnson et al. 1997), such as that of the Colorado River and its tributaries, where it seems to have increased in abundance with the expansion of thickets of introduced tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.; Brown et al. 1987, Johnson et al. 1997).

Lucy's Warbler is known to have occurred along the Colorado River and its tributaries in southeastern Utah for more than a century. The first specimen of Lucy's Warbler from southwestern Utah was taken in 1892, and since that time there have been many documented sightings along the Colorado and San Juan rivers in Kane, Garfield, and San Juan counties (Beahle 1960, 1985), although documented breeding records are rare (e.g., Fagan 1995). However, recent surveys in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area found Lucy's Warbler to be a common breeding species along the Colorado, San Juan, and Escalante river drainages (C. LaRue, J. Grahame, and J. Spence, unpub. data). In northeastern Arizona, Lucy's Warbler is considered a common breeding species (Monson and Phillips 1981). The species nests in mesquite and tamarisk thickets all along the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park (Brown et al. 1987), and it is considered the most common breeding bird in the riparian belt (Carothers and Johnson 1975). Lucy Warbler is also common in many side canyons off the Colorado River and breeds regularly as far up the Little Colorado River as Cameron, Arizona (C. LaRue pers. comm.). However, away from these breeding areas, there are relatively few reports of Lucy's Warbler on the Navajo reservation (C. LaRue pers. comm., LaRue 1994).

### **The Yellow Jacket Canyon Site**

In 2002, the authors observed several Lucy's Warblers singing along the San

Juan River at Bluff, Utah, only 20 miles from the Colorado border. This renewed our interest in locating Lucy's Warblers in Montezuma County, Colorado, where similar habitat was sure to exist. During the winter of 2002-03, the Hills discovered an apparently publicly accessible area within the riparian corridor on Yellow Jacket Creek. They noted the large cottonwoods in the canyon bottom while hiking on top of Cannonball Mesa, just to the south. Perusal of maps indicated that while much of the canyon was privately-owned, a stretch of public land existed along the canyon floor near Moccasin and Risley canyons. In mid-April 2003, we hiked down Moccasin Canyon to explore the BLM land along Yellow Jacket Creek. The habitat included many old cottonwood trees with obvious cavities and a shrub understory consisting primarily of tamarisk, greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), and willows. This habitat looked very similar to Lucy's Warbler breeding habitat in northern Arizona (J. Prather pers. obs.), which typically contain a combination of large trees with nesting cavities, especially cottonwood and sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), along with tall desert scrub or tamarisk. We did not locate any Lucy's Warblers that day, but while this species often arrives on most of its breeding grounds by mid-March (Johnson et al. 1997), early dates of arrival in southeastern Utah and, thus, southwestern Colorado, may be later.

We were unable to revisit Yellow Jacket Canyon in spring or early summer 2003, but did so on 16 May 2004. Almost immediately upon arrival in the riparian area along Yellow Jacket Creek near the bottom of Moccasin Canyon, we detected a singing Lucy's Warbler. We found a second bird singing a bit farther upstream, and Prather observed a third bird near the junction with Risley Canyon. On a subsequent trip on 23 May with other birders, we again encountered the same singing male warblers. On 27 May, a nest was located upstream from the location of the original sighting by a small group of birders (T. Leukering pers. comm.).

Unfortunately, the boundaries of private property in the canyon are not clearly marked, and after coordinates were determined with a GPS unit, we found that the original sightings, as well as the nest, were on private property. Maps of the area indicated that this was not the case, but these maps apparently lacked sufficient detail and may also have been out-of-date. Subsequently, the landowner was contacted, and he has requested that no further trespassing occur. Thus, visits to the area have been discontinued until the property boundaries in the area can be determined with certainty. However, the bottom of Yellow Jacket Canyon may contain four to six miles of riparian corridor that has potential to be nesting habitat for Lucy's Warblers. It would be a surprise if the short stretch of canyon we visited was the only one supporting Lucy's Warblers. We are in the process of trying to determine areas of public property

in the canyon and negotiating with landowners for access to areas of private property.

### **What is the Status of Lucy's Warbler in Colorado?**

So why are there so few records of Lucy's Warbler in Colorado? Much of this is speculation on our part, but we believe there are several reasons for the paucity of sightings. First, Lucy's Warbler is a relatively nondescript species. Over much of its range, Lucy's Warbler was overlooked by early ornithologists (Johnson et al. 1997), and other researchers have noted the paucity of sightings away from breeding grounds (Monson and Phillips 1981, C. LaRue unpub. data). The relatively dull plumage of Lucy's Warbler makes it easy to overlook, or to pass off as a Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*), a dull female Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), a Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*), or even a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliopitila caerulea*). Its song is loud, but not particularly distinctive, and could easily be missed by someone that is not familiar with it. Indeed, we likely would not have seen the warblers in Yellow Jacket Canyon had we not been listening for, and recognized, the song.

Second, the part of Colorado in which Lucy's Warblers are most likely to occur is remote and much of the land is difficult to access. Good breeding habitat for Lucy's Warbler only occurs in southwestern Colorado along the San Juan River and a few of its tributaries. The entire length of the San Juan River in Colorado, and several of its primary tributaries (such as East McElmo Creek), lie entirely on the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation. Attempts to obtain permission to bird the San Juan River area of the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation were not successful in 2004 because insufficient time was allowed. Further attempts will be made in 2005. Other likely areas, such as along McElmo Creek, are largely privately-owned. In addition, the habitat in McElmo Canyon is not optimal, as the riparian corridor is surrounded by agricultural areas, rather than the dry scrub habitat preferred by this species. Thus, the areas of prime habitat for Lucy's Warbler that are on public land are largely, or entirely, restricted to remote canyons, such as Yellow Jacket Canyon, within Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Finally, few surveys for birds have taken place in the area where these Lucy's Warblers were found. According to Hugh Kingery and Alan Versaw (pers. comm.), the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas project did not include Yellow Jacket Creek, and Versaw, a long-time Montezuma County birder, had not looked for Lucy's Warbler along Yellow Jacket Creek. Birders rarely visit even areas of public land in Montezuma County. Thus, a small population of Lucy's Warbler could have remained undetected for the last century.



### Future Research Needs

Many questions remain regarding the occurrence of Lucy's Warbler in southwestern Colorado. Does Lucy's Warbler occur annually in Montezuma County, or only on an irregular basis? Is Yellow Jacket Canyon a new breeding location for the species, or have they been there, unreported, for years? Are there other breeding locations on private land or the Ute Mountain Ute Indian reservation? These questions may never be adequately answered. However, based on the abundance of Lucy's Warblers in southeastern Utah and northeastern Arizona, and the likely presence of similar habitat in several locations in Montezuma County, we believe we will ultimately find that Lucy's Warbler breeds regularly in Colorado. However, until intensive surveys can be done, the status of the species in Colorado will be in doubt. Negotiations with the Ute Mountain Tribe and private landowners to gain access to likely breeding sites is a difficult, but necessary, step, as is the undertaking of more intensive surveys in publicly accessible remote canyons within Canyon of the Ancients National Monument.

We believe there is much to be learned about the avifauna of southwestern Colorado. In addition to the possibility of a breeding population of Lucy's Warbler, there is a high likelihood of documentation of additional species that are rare or unrecorded for the state. The well-documented increase in abundance of Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) in western Colorado in recent years (Righter et al. 2004) is just one example of southwestern species expanding along the Colorado River and its tributaries. In recent years, both Crissal Thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*) and Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) have increased their ranges along the Colorado River in northern Arizona as well (Brown et al. 1987), with Crissal Thrasher now occurring regularly as far up the river as Moenkopi Wash (C. LaRue pers. comm.) and Hooded Oriole now regularly in the vicinity of Page, Arizona (J. Spence pers. comm.). As birders become more familiar with southwestern Colorado, and these areas are visited more frequently, additional interesting sightings are likely to occur.

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This Lucy's Warbler, one of a pair attending a nest in Yellow Jacket Canyon, was photographed bringing insects to the nest cavity on 27 May 2004. Photo by Tony Leukering.

### A BIT OF JOURNAL HISTORY

*10 Years Ago in the Journal...*

Bob Righter addressed the reasons why shorebirds in real life do not appear like the same species depicted in field guides.

*15 Years Ago in the Journal...*

A possible elevational record for Northern Cardinal was reported on by Winston Brockner. The male cardinal visited a feeder near Echo Lake (elev. 10,710 feet) during the summer of 1989.

*20 Years Ago in the Journal...*

Dave Hallock provided a historical review of breeding bird censuses conducted in Colorado for the National Audubon Society.

*30 Years Ago in the Journal...*

Allegra Collister wrote about a January 1974 birding trip to Oaxaca, Mexico.

## THE 38TH REPORT OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

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### Introduction

The Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter, CBRC or Committee) here provides the 38th report of its deliberations on submissions to the CBRC for documentation and archival purposes. In this article, we provide the results of the circulation of 89 reports submitted by 41 observers documenting 80 occurrences of 65 species and one hybrid. This article deals primarily with 2002 occurrences, but reports included here date back to 1996. Of the reports here considered, the CBRC accepted 63 records of 48 species and one hybrid and did not accept 17 reports. Per CBRC Bylaws, all accepted records received final 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept. Each report that was not accepted received fewer than four votes to accept in the final vote for that report. The CBRC wishes to reiterate that the main reason reports are not accepted is that those reports either do not support the identification or do not fully describe the bird in question, thus failing to eliminate all other identification contenders.

The documents reviewed here include reports on Colorado's second Zonetailed Hawk and third Lucy's Warbler. Reports on other very rare species, Common Black-Hawk, Gyrfalcon, Curlew Sandpiper, and Common Ground-Dove are also commented upon here. Though this article reports on no species for which the Committee accepted a first state record, the state list total still climbs one to 477 with the split of Canada Goose into two species (A.O.U. 2004). We here add Cackling Goose to the state list on the strength of specimens of *hutchinsii* (#s 14708, 14709, 26814, 26974, and 33782) at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, as reported by Bailey and Niedrach (1965). Additionally, two reports of Black Vulture are currently circulating and, if accepted, would add a species to the state list. The top four observers submitting the most documents for inclusion here are: Jim Beatty (11), Ric

Olson (7), Tony Leukering (6), and Susan Allerton (5). Seven observers submitted three documents each and another seven submitted two documents each. Committee members voting on some or all of these reports were Coen Dexter, Tony Leukering, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, Karleen Schofield, Larry Semo, John Vanderpoel, and Christopher L. Wood.

### Corrigenda

In Part I of the 2001 report (Leukering and Semo 2003), please correct the accession number of the Western Scrub-Jay report in Summit County. The number should be 2001-91, not 2001-71 as reported. The latter accession number correctly refers to a record of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Also, the Golden-crowned Sparrow record reported in Part I as 2001-024 and corrected to 2001-131 in Part II (Leukering and Semo 2004) should really be 2001-113. Boy, did we make a hash of that one! Finally, the vote tally of 7-0 was omitted from a Black Scoter record (2001-93) published in Part II (Leukering and Semo 2004).

### The Finders of Birds

The CBRC tries to keep up with who finds various rare birds and endeavors to report that information in its reports, whether or not the finder submits documentation. However, in many instances, we are unable to determine from the documentations submitted or from the seasonal report in *Colorado Birds*, who actually first put name to any given rare bird. So, we ask those submitting documentation to the Committee to indicate who found the bird, but only if that information is known with certainty. In the case that one does not know who the finder is, please indicate that. The CBRC thanks you.

### Committee Functions

All reports received (written documentation, photographs, videotapes, and/or sound recordings) by the CBRC are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO 80205, where they remain available for public review. The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its review list, both the main and supplementary lists (Semo et al. 2002, Semo and Leukering 2004), and for reports of species with no prior accepted records in Colorado. While documentary materials can be submitted in hard copy to Tony Leukering (PO Box 660, Brighton, CO 80601), the CBRC would greatly appreciate submission via the new CBRC website, which is scheduled to be available before the end of 2004. The members' term-expiration dates are printed on this journal's masthead. Please note that though Leukering's term of service to the CBRC will be completed at the end of 2004, the physical address for snail mail submissions will remain the same—at least in the short term.

### Report Format

The organization and style of this report follow that of Leukering and Semo (2003), with some alterations. This report consists of three parts: Part I consists of accepted records, Part II lists those reports that were not accepted because the documentation did not support the identification and/or eliminate all similar species, and Part III lists those reports of birds whose identification was not questioned but whose wild origin was.

The nomenclature and sequence of these lists follow the American Ornithologists' Union (1998, 2003). As of 1 January 2002, the CBRC removed from the main review list, but **only** from the main review list, those species preceded by the pound, or number, sign (#; Semo et al. 2002), thus the reports here are from a period when the species were on the main review list. Those species' names preceded by the plus symbol (+) are species that are rare in certain parts of the state or at certain times of the year and for which the CBRC requests documentation from those areas (Semo et al. 2002, Semo and Leukering 2004). Finally, an asterisk preceding a species' name indicates that the species is not currently on any CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002), but that the report is of some interest, due to location, date, plumage, etc., but for which documentation would not be required. Note that the CBRC added two species to the review list in 2002 despite a long history of occurrence in the state: Tundra Swan and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Thus, the numbers of accepted records of these species only refer to those submitted after 2001.

The numbers in parentheses after each species' name represent the total number of accepted records for Colorado followed by the number of accepted records in the past ten years (1993 - 2002). The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria for a species' placement on the main CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002). However, note that the number of accepted records will decline for some species as the CBRC tackles the backlog of determinations as to how many of the accepted records are simply recurrences in subsequent years of a known individual.

Within each species account, records are listed chronologically by first date of occurrence, with all reports originating from a year prior to 2002 having the year **bold-faced**. Each record presents as much of the following information as we have available: number of birds, age, sex, locality, county, and date or date span. In parentheses, we present the initials of the contributing observer(s), official record number, and vote tally in the first round and, if relevant, second round (with the number of "accept" votes on the left side of the dash).

The initials of the finder(s) of the bird(s) are underlined and are presented first

if that person (those people) contributed documentation; additional contributors' initials follow in alphabetical order by name. If the finder(s) is (are) known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture have a dagger (†) following their initials and initials of those that submitted videotape are indicated by a lower-case, italicized "v" (*v*). Thus, the parenthetical expression of a report in Part I ("JD *v*, RA†, PEL, BR, DAS; 2002-36; 4-3, 5-2") means: JD found the bird(s) and submitted documentation (including video) and as the finder, is first in the list of those that submitted details with initials underlined; RA, though alphabetically first of the five submitting observers, was not the finder, so comes second; RA submitted, at least, photographic documentation; the record number assigned to the occurrence was 2002-36; and in the three rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four "accepted" votes and three "not accepted" votes, the second-round vote was 5-2 in favor of accepting the report, and since this report was listed in Part I, the report was accepted at a CBRC meeting. The decision on most reports is completed on the first round.

In this report, county names are italicized, in keeping with the style established for the *News from the Field* section in this journal (e.g., Semo and Wood 2003). We have attempted to provide the full date span for individual records, with the seasonal reports in *North American Birds* and this journal being the primary sources of those dates. The Committee has not dealt with the question of full date spans as compared to submitted date spans.

Abbreviations used in this report are: **ACR**=Adobe Creek Reservoir (aka Blue Lake), *Kiowa/Bent* (county indicated in account); **BLSP**=Barr Lake SP, *Adams*; **BR**=Bonny Res., *Yuma*; **CVCG**=Crow Valley Campground, Pawnee National Grassland, *Weld*; **LCC**=Lamar Community College, *Prowers*; **LSP**=Lathrop SP, *Huerfano*; **MR**=Milton Res., *Weld*; **PaR**=Pastorius Res., *La Plata*; **PCP**=Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*; **PuR**=Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*; **Res.**=reservoir; **SP**=State Park; **SWA**=State Wildlife Area; **TBSWA**=Two Buttes SWA, *Baca/Prowers* (county indicated at each citation); **ZP**=Zink's Pond, near CR 215 south of Durango, *La Plata*

### **Part I: Records Accepted**

**TRUMPETER SWAN** - *Cygnus buccinator* (22/13). An immature was found at TBSWA, *Baca*, on 22 March 2002 (DL; 2002-33; 7-0). The documentation submitted included lovely sketches of the bird's head in profile and head-on, nicely illustrating the important features in identifying our native swans.

**TUNDRA SWAN** - *Cygnus columbianus* (2/2). The CBRC only recently added

Tundra Swan to the main review list and we here report on the first two reviewed and accepted records. Two adults graced Horseshoe Lake in LSP 10-12 March 2002 (DS, DJ; 2002-31; 7-0), though the birds were only documented on the last date of that period. Two adults with a juvenile in tow visited Martin Lake in LSP in November 2002 but were only documented on the 7th (JBy, JKy; 2002-189; 7-0). One Committee member expressly did not accept the accompanying juvenile, as he felt that the description of that individual did not eliminate Trumpeter Swan.

EURASIAN WIGEON - *Anas penelope* (24/10). A male put in an appearance at Wiley, *Prowers*, on 21 March 2002 (DL; 2002-32; 7-0). The bird was apparently not present the next day.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK - *Anas rubripes* (18/6). A female foraged with Mallards at Lower Latham Reservoir, *Weld*, on 30 November 2002 (TL †, RO; 2002-102; 7-0) and was tallied on Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's (RMBO) Early-winter Waterbird Count. A couple of members expressed some concern about the long distance at which the bird was seen (~700 meters), but the pictures and descriptions left no doubt as to the identity of the bird. The last accepted state record occurred in 1999.

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK x MALLARD - *Anas rubripes* x *platyrhynchos*. A very American Black-Duck-looking male dabbler was found at the Haxtun sewage ponds, *Phillips*, 30 November 2002 (DF †; 2002-128; 7-0) on RMBO's Early-winter Waterbird Count. Though the bird could easily have passed for a "pure" American Black Duck, the presence of white outer webs to the outer rectrices and the upturned uppertail coverts (called "tail feathers" in the report) indicated that Mallard genes could be found if one were to look closely enough. The darkness of the bird also ruled out Mottled (*A. fulvigula*) and Mexican (*A. platyrhynchos diazi*) ducks.

+ PACIFIC LOON - *Gavia pacifica*. An adult visited LSP 25 November 2002 (BS; 2002-109; 7-0) for a first documented *Huerfano* record. Semo et al. (2002) asked for documentation of occurrences of this species west of the 6000' Front Range contour; LSP rests at about 6200'.

\* RED-NECKED GREBE - *Podiceps grisegena*. An alternate-plumaged adult foraged on a pond at the Pueblo Nature Center, *Pueblo*, 2 May 2002 (DS; 2002-44; 7-0).

BROWN PELICAN - *Pelecanus occidentalis* (14/8). A juvenile or immature was at PuR 4-13 May 2002 (NP, LA; 2002-207; 7-0), but was documented as occurring only on the 8th.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK - *Buteo albonotatus* (2/2). Three lucky observers followed an adult from PCP to PuR, *Pueblo*, 27 April 2002 (DL, JMA;



2002-43; 6-1). This occurrence provides only the second state record, with the first occurring in the Colorado National Monument, *Mesa*, in July 1999.

+ PIPING PLOVER - *Charadrius melodus*. One at BR 17 April **2001** (DF; 2002-15; 7-0) provided a rare record in Colorado away from the breeding areas in the lower Arkansas River valley.

\* MOUNTAIN PLOVER - *Charadrius montanus*. One, presumably a migrant, was near Mack, *Mesa*, on 9 April **2001** (KP; 2002-35; 7-0). The date reported here is that provided on the documentation. However, Righter et al. (2004) mention this record but state it as occurring on 10 April 2002. The documentation's author (in litt.) provided Leukering confirmation of the published date of 10 April 2002.

RUDDY TURNSTONE - *Arenaria interpres* (29/12). An alternate-plumaged adult graced BR on 20 May 2001 (NP; 2002-121; 7-0).

\* PECTORAL SANDPIPER - *Calidris melanotos*. Two were probing the mud at PaR 15 April 2002 (JBy; 2002-37; 7-0). Righter et al. (2004) report no spring records in western Colorado. Another, in basic plumage, was at the west end (east of the causeway) of Lake Cheraw, *Otero*, on the very late date of 19 December 2002 (TL; 2002-178; 7-0). The bird was at the same location as a Dunlin and both were recorded on the Rocky Ford Christmas Bird Count conducted that day.

RED PHALAROPE - *Phalaropus fulicaria* (27/11). An adult in basic plumage foraged on MR 25 August 2002 (RO; 2002-74; 7-0). Another adult visited Vega Res., *Mesa*, 12 October 2002 (RL; 2002-86; 7-0). The latter bird provided only the second accepted West Slope record, the first being a bird at Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, on 27 April 1979. Righter et al. (2004), however, note two other reports, including one at Vega Res.

MEW GULL - *Larus canus brachyrhynchus* (25/15). A basic-plumaged adult visited PuR 11 March 2002 (BKP; 2002-30; 7-0) and an individual in first basic plumage was at Runyon Lake, *Pueblo*, 11 December 2002 - 11 January 2003 but was documented as occurring only on 29 December 2002 (RM, BKP; 2002-208; 7-0).

\* SABINE'S GULL - *Xema sabini*. An adult provided some excitement at San Luis Lake, *Alamosa*, 26 September 2002 (DRI; 2002-84; 7-0). As Andrews and Righter (1992) report no previous records in the San Luis Valley, the record is certainly of interest. The icing on Rintoul's cake was provided by the fact that the bird was in definitive alternate plumage; adults are not seen with great frequency in Colorado.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - *Rissa tridactyla* (26/11). An adult in basic plumage graced Union Res., *Weld*, 6 December 2002 (BS, CLW; 2002-112; 7-0) and, apparently, provided only the second Colorado record of an adult.

- + EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE - *Streptopelia decaocto*. One was about one mile east of Ft. Morgan, *Morgan*, on 23 December **2001** (RP; 2001-147; 5-2, 7-0), providing a first accepted county record. Birds had been reported from Ft. Morgan for over a year prior to this record, but without submission to the CBRC.
- \* WHITE-WINGED DOVE - *Zenaida asiatica*. One near ZP on 17 April 2002 (JBy; 2002-38; 7-0) provided a rare county record. Another was at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, *Adams*, 13 May 2002 (DRh; 2002-88; 6-1).
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (16/3). Yaeger found one at PCP in spring 2002 on the somewhat-early date of 13 May (MY; 2002-63; 7-0)
- YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER - *Sphyrapicus varius* (2/2). The CBRC only recently added this species to the state review list (Semo et al. 2002) and the records reported here are the first reviewed. An adult male visited the vicinity of ZP on 1 October 2001 (JBy; 2002-211; 7-0) and an immature female matriculated at PCP during the winter of 2001-2002 and was documented on 2 March 2002 (RO; 2002-24; 7-0).
- ALDER FLYCATCHER - *Empidonax alnorum* (12/5). An individual heard to call once was in the shelterbelt of a private ranch west of Norfolk, *Larimer*, on 11 June 2002 (TL; 2002-148; 6-1). Though the plumage was seen quite well and described, one Committee member was concerned about identifying an Alder Flycatcher on the strength of only one call note, as Willow Flycatcher can give some Alder-like call notes.
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER - *Pyrocephala rubinus* (22/10). An immature male spent the **2001** Christmas holiday (23-31 December) in Pueblo, *Pueblo* (MY; 2002-190; 6-1), but was only documented as occurring on the first date. Colorado has only a few previous winter records of the species. Another immature male brightened the LCC grove on 30 April 2002 (BG; 2002-160; 7-0).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - *Tyrannus forficatus* (19/14). An adult at Dotsero, *Eagle*, on 17 May 2002 (JMe; 2002-89; 7-0) provided a first accepted West Slope record. Righter et al. (2004) state that there are more than 10 reports from the area of the book's purview, including that of an apparent nester (Dexter 1995, Potter 1998), but nary a one of those has been submitted to the CBRC.
- \* YELLOW-THROATED VIREO - *Vireo flavifrons*. One was at Welchester Tree Park, *Jefferson*, on 26 May 2002 (MC; 2002-65; 7-0). Though reported as a male, the sexes in this species are virtually identical in plumage and the bird was not singing. The late date might suggest that the bird was actually a female.

- BLUE-HEADED VIREO - *Vireo solitarius* (9/8). One was studied thoroughly at the RMBO office in BLSP on 25 October 2000 (DE; 2002-130; 7-0).
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO - *Vireo philadelphicus* (26/13). One was at CVCG on 19 May 2002 (RO; 2002-125; 7-0).
- + WINTER WREN - *Troglodytes troglodytes*. One was seen in a yard in Hotchkiss, *Delta*, on 15 November and 28 December 2002 (AR; 2002-206; 6-1).
- + EASTERN BLUEBIRD - *Sialia sialis*. Two males visited McElmo Creek 10-13 January 2002 (SA, GS, JBy; 2002-14; 7-0) for a first accepted *Montezuma* and West Slope record. However, a report from *Eagle* that predates this one is still in circulation. Additionally, there are other West Slope reports of the species that predate these (Righter et al. 2004), but none has been submitted to the CBRC.
- GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH - *Catharus minimus* (36/23). One haunted the banding station, but eluded the nets, at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 12 May 2002 (BS, TL; 2002-48; 7-0). On the same date and at nearly the same time, another was at CVCG (RO; 2002-126; 7-0).
- WOOD THRUSH - *Hylocichla mustelina* (19/7). One was at Lair O' the Bear SP, *Jefferson*, on 9 May 2002 (KS; 2002-184; 7-0), another skulked at BR (the report did not specify where at the reservoir) on 19 May 2002 (HK, UK; 2002-60; 7-0), and a third haunted Niwot, *Boulder*, on 7 October 2002 (CLW; 2002-202; 7-0).
- VARIED THRUSH - *Ixoreus naevius* (20/13). A female was a nice find on the Crosier Mountain Trail near Drake, *Larimer*, on 21 February 2002 (RD; 2002-28; 7-0) and another was at the Ft. Lyon Wildlife Easement, *Bent*, 23-26 October 2002 (BKP, DN; 2002-205; 7-0), but was documented as occurring only on the last date.
- LUCY'S WARBLER - *Vermivora luciae* (3/1). An amazing find was a female Lucy's Warbler at LCC on 21 April 2002 (BG; 2002-182; 7-0). The observer included a nice sketch of the bird. This report provides the first accepted record since the collection of three adults and a nest in the Four Corners area in 1913 (Andrews and Righter 1992). A report of a singing male at Grand Junction in May 1991 was never submitted to the CBRC.
- + BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - *Dendroica caerulescens*. A female was a great find in Hooper, *Alamosa*, 4 May 2002 (KM; 2002-49; 7-0). The documentation included an excellent sketch of the bird. Not only is the species relatively rare in Colorado in spring (versus typically much more common in the fall), it is almost unknown in the state west of the eastern plains. There are two other interesting facets of this record: the reporter's age at the time of the sighting was 14 and the reporter's entire family saw the bird!

- HERMIT WARBLER - *Dendroica occidentalis* (12/4). A female visited BLSP briefly on 4 May 2002 (TL; 2002-119; 7-0) and provided the first accepted *Adams* record and the first accepted Colorado record since 1999.
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER - *Dendroica fusca* (37/20). An alternate-plumaged male provided some color along the south side of BR 19 May 2002 (HK, UK; 2002-61; 7-0).
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER - *Dendroica dominica* (26/10). A male foraged in the trees at Lake Beckwith, *Pueblo*, 2 May 2002 (DS; 2002-46; 7-0).
- PINE WARBLER - *Dendroica pinus* (19/7). A male that sang several times at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 19 April 2002 (BG; 2002-163; 7-0), made for a nice find and provided the first accepted state record since 1999.
- PRAIRIE WARBLER - *Dendroica discolor* (22/15). An immature male flitted about the willows at CVCG on 1 September 2002 (JMa, JH; 2002-53; 7-0).
- + BLACKPOLL WARBLER - *Dendroica striata*. Durango birders found two alternate-plumaged males in *La Plata* in spring 2002, one at PaR 7-8 May (SA, JBy; 2002-47; 7-0) and another at Vallecito Res. on 20 May (JBy, SA; 2002-66; 7-0). Apparently the former bird was photographed by a New Mexico birder, but the CBRC did not receive any photographic submission. We would still greatly appreciate the submission of photos of the bird. Neither of these records is cited in Righter et al. (2004). The only previous county report was of a bird that occurred on 8 May 1971.
- # PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - *Protonotaria citrea*. A male enlivened Prospect Ponds Natural Area, *Larimer*, on 21 September 2002 (JBn; 2002-194; 6-1).
- KENTUCKY WARBLER - *Oporornis formosus* (30/13). One visited TBSWA, *Baca*, 5 May 2002 (BKP; 2002-134; 7-0). The observer thought that the bird was a female, though allowed that it might have been an immature male.
- MOURNING WARBLER - *Oporornis philadelphia* (20/12). An immature skulked in Durango, *La Plata*, 12 September 2002 (JBy; 2002-79; 6-1) and provided a first West Slope record. Righter et al. (2004) did not include this occurrence.
- CANADA WARBLER - *Wilsonia canadensis* (23/8). For the second fall in a row, Olson found a Canada Warbler in *Weld*, with the 2002 bird gracing the gallery woodland around MR on 6 September (RO; 2002-76; 7-0).
- + FIELD SPARROW - *Spizella pusilla*. One at Runyon Lake, *Pueblo*, 21-23

February 2002 (RM; 2002-29; 7-0) was quite a nice find. Not only was the bird out of place, it was also out of season, as there are few acceptable winter records in Colorado - though Leukering and Semo (2004) reported on another winter record from 2002.

**GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW** - *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (17/11). An immature foraged with a large flock of White-crowned Sparrows across the road from the Wray Fish Hatchery, *Yuma*, on 6 January 2002 (TL; 2002-124; 7-0) and provided the easternmost Colorado record of the species. The previous easternmost and *Yuma* record is of a specimen collected at *Yuma* 4 November 1923. Another immature was along the Piedra River just upstream of Navajo Res., *Archuleta*, 29 January - 2 February 2002 (SA, JBy; 2002-18; 6-1). This occurrence provides a first county and only second accepted record from the southwestern corner of the state - the previous being a bit over 27 years earlier from the Animas River valley, *La Plata*, on 10 October 1974 (record# 56-74-128).

- \* **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBILL** - *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. A basic-plumaged male visited the Miller yard in Boulder, *Boulder*, on 4 November 2002 (BM; 2002-97; 6-1).
- + **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL** - *Loxia leucoptera*. As many as 15 graced Grandview Cemetery in Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, during January 2002 (RH v; 2002-185; 6-1), though documented only for 4-5 January. The dissenting vote was due to the lack of a written description. See Leatherman and Nelson (2003) for more details on this occurrence.
- + **COMMON REDPOLL** - *Carduelis flammea*. As many as five individuals graced Merchant's feeder southeast of Eagle, *Eagle*, 4 January - 22 March 2002 (JMe; 2002-85; 7-0). From the plumage descriptions, at least a few of the birds were adult males ("one had a strong rosy color on its breast, others a fainter rose"). Redpolls exhibit delayed plumage maturation - that is, they do not attain definitive plumage in their first plumage cycle. This means that in the field one cannot typically discern the sex of birds that lack pink or red on the chest; such birds could be females or immature males. A flock of five was along the South Platte River in Waterton Canyon 17 February 2002 (RO; 2002-19; 7-0). The birds were seen on both sides of the river, that is in both *Douglas* and *Jefferson*.

### **Part II: Records Not Accepted, Identification Not Established**

**SNOW GOOSE** - *Chen caerulescens*. A "white goose with black primaries and small bill" was described from Dollar Lake on the Medano Ranch, *Alamosa*, on 18 June 2001 (2002-106; 1-6). Though the observer wrote that the bird was "too big for Ross's [Goose]," no direct size

comparison with any other species was provided to enable the Committee to determine the size of the bird and the description (detailed above) did not eliminate Ross's Goose from consideration.

**TUNDRA SWAN** - *Cygnus columbianus* (2/2). One was reported at TBSWA, *Baca*, on 13 April 2002 (2002-39; 1-6). Though the description of the bird's head and bill provided some cause to vote to accept, the report was not accepted for two main reasons. The first was that the description of the head and bill were not quite detailed enough for most Committee members. The second, and perhaps the most damning, was the exquisitely documented Trumpeter Swan from the same location only 22 days earlier (see above). All else being the same, had the location been one of the better-birded water bodies near the Front Range, the CBRC might have voted to accept this report, as a hiatus of 22 days at a well-birded site would have indicated that the documents received described two different birds.

**BROWN PELICAN** - *Pelecanus occidentalis* (14/8). A pelican was reported at Big Meadows Res., *Mineral*, 2-3 July 2002 (2002-70; 2-5). Unfortunately, though both observers were experienced with the species, the description was brief, sketchy, and unconvincing. One CBRC member suggested that the bird might have been an ash-stained American White Pelican, as the bird's described foraging behavior ("... sitting on the water attempting to catch fish - flapping its wings to move forward in the water") seemed to match that of the more expected species.

**TRICOLORED HERON** - *Egretta tricolor* (20/8). A bird identified as an adult Tricolored in basic plumage was present in Boulder, *Boulder*, on 3 September 2002 (2002-191; 1-6). Though the observer eliminated Great Blue Heron from consideration by the bird being smaller with a "distinct gray neck with a white stripe down the front," there was no direct size comparison to any other bird provided and the described neck pattern fits Great Blue Heron. As the observer did not mention the belly color, which easily separates Great Blue from Tricolored, the CBRC was left with no choice but to not accept the identification as correct.

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** - *Elanoides forficatus* (4/1). Two adults were reported perched on yardarms of utility poles along I-25 between mile markers 52 and 59 (near Walsenburg), *Huerfano*, on 19 July 2002 (2002187; 0-7). As the observer was traveling on the interstate and did not stop to study either of the birds, the descriptions were necessarily brief, only including white head and underparts and dark "sides/wings" on one bird and the white head and black back, wings, and tail on the second bird. Though these features are certainly

consistent with the plumage of Swallow-tailed Kite, they are also consistent with some plumages of Swainson's Hawk, particularly birds in first basic plumage (a hideously variable plumage in Swainson's Hawk). Of course, Swainson's Hawk would be much more likely in that area and the CBRC was unanimous in thinking that the descriptions did not eliminate that species. For such an exceedingly rare bird, a more detailed plumage description would be required for acceptance.

**COMMON BLACK-HAWK** - *Buteogallus anthracinus* (4/2). A black raptor seen 16 miles north of Yuma, *Yuma*, on 5 December 2002 (2002-114; 0-7) was reported as referring to this species. The description, though somewhat suggestive, contained inconsistencies with the Committee's current understanding of Common Black-Hawk identification characters and behavior. The bird was perched on a fence post over prairie and was described as bigger than a Golden Eagle and almost as large as a Bald Eagle; Common Black-Hawk, in reality, is only about the size of a Rough-legged Hawk. The described tail pattern (a single white band on a dark tail) can be matched by some plumages of Rough-legged Hawk, which would be a much more expected species on the eastern plains of Colorado in December than would Common Black-Hawk, particularly as the latter species is an invertebrate specialist, preying particularly on crabs and crayfish, so would find a very hard living in *Yuma* in winter.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** - *Calidris ferruginea* (1/1). An adult in basic plumage was reported from Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 19 October 2001 (2002-127; 3-4). Though the details provided were consistent with an identification of Curlew Sandpiper, they did not completely rule out the more likely Stilt Sandpiper. The Committee will always be conservative on reports of extreme rarities.

**LAUGHING GULL** - *Larus atricilla* (29/17). Either an adult or an older immature was reported flying around over Prewitt Res., *Washington*, 9 September 2001 (2002-140; 2-5). Though the description provided suggested Laughing Gull (particularly the extensive dark on the underwing), various Committee members were concerned by the lack of description of a different wing shape, as compared to that of the Franklin's Gull in the vicinity and the difficulty in separating immature Franklin's Gulls from adult Laughing Gulls.

\* **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** - *Zenaida asiatica*. The CBRC received a submission on an occurrence in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 8 May 2002 (2002-51; 1-6). Unfortunately, the submission completely lacked a description of the bird.

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** - *Columbina passerina* (4/2). The CBRC made a

final decision on a report that had been circulating through the Committee since 1997. Two doves were reported from southwestern Adams on 14 December 1996 (25-96-39; 4-3, 1-6). Many on the Committee were concerned that the birds were seen without aid of a binocular and that two birds were together, something at least a bit odd for such an extreme rarity. Additionally, for such a rare species in Colorado, the description left a bit to be desired.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - *Lampornis clemenciae* (12/4). A female was reported at a private residence in Golden, Jefferson, 28 September 2001 (2002-209; 0-7). Though the description was quite suggestive of a female Blue-throat, the details provided were not sufficient to convince the Committee members. At least one member of the Committee has re-identified a reported female Blue-throated in Colorado as a female Magnificent, so the entire Committee is cautious of reports that are not exhaustive in their detail on such birds.

+ HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER - *Empidonax hammondii*. An *Empidonax* flycatcher relatively meticulously described was found at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Jefferson, on 7 November 2002 (2002-212; 2-5). However, the genus is conservative in plumage, with most species being similar to each other. Banding data from Barr Lake suggest that Dusky Flycatcher is the most likely late-season "Empie" in Colorado, though others' field experience suggest that it is Hammond's. Regardless, any *Empidonax* flycatcher found in Colorado after early October is of interest, as late fall is a typical time for out-of-range birds. The details provided eliminate most species, but do not eliminate Least Flycatcher, which, in the eastern part of the continent, is the most likely species to occur in November. The eye ring shape described seems more consistent with Least than with Hammond's. The "lower mandible [sic] was not noticeably different in color than upper mandible [sic]," but the observer did not indicate that he saw the bird high enough in the vegetation to be sure of seeing the true color of the mandible - a feature very difficult to see well unless the bird is overhead. Unfortunately, the features that would have nailed the description and which can be crucial in any *Empidonax* identification - primary projection and relative tail length - were not mentioned.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER - *Pyrocephala rubinus* (22/10). Despite the fact that males in spring are quite distinctive, the CBRC voted to not accept the report of one at Carrizo Canyon, Baca, on 8 April 2002 (2002-36; 1-6). Unfortunately, the documentation submitted contained absolutely no description of the bird, just a description of the time and place of occurrence. Another male was reported from the



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher site south of Lamar, *Prowers*, on 5 May 2002 (2002-72; 2-5). The description provided was brief and sketchy. Additionally, one CBRC member was present at the site on that date and saw a male Summer Tanager. These concerns caused the CBRC to vote to not accept the report.

WOOD THRUSH - *Hylocichla mustelina* (19/7). One reported at a dried water hole with willows and elms surrounded by grassland near Ault, *Weld*, on 5 November 2001 (2002-23; 2-5) received little support. Of concern to the Committee members were the late date, the habitat, and the "olive-brown down the back." While any one of these concerns would probably not have caused the report to not be accepted, the combination put this report here. Another Wood Thrush was not accepted in this circulation, one at PCP on 28 May 2002 (2002-193; 1-6). On this one, the Committee's concerns included the brief view and the lack of underparts description (due to not seeing the underparts). However, the observer did describe the distinctive face pattern of Wood Thrush.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW - *Ammodramus savannarum*. The CBRC was initially split on the report of a bird on Florida Mesa, near Durango, *La Plata*, 16 December 2001 (2001-39; 4-3, 0-7). Though quite a few details were suggestive of Grasshopper Sparrow, the Committee was concerned about the bird consorting with juncos, the described gray flanks and notched tail, and the call note.

PURPLE FINCH - *Carpodacus purpureus* (30/9). An adult male reported from the Broad-billed Hummingbird yard in Clifton, *Mesa*, on 24 November 2002 (2002-188; 1-6) was not accepted. The Committee was concerned that the report was written six months after the sighting and that the features described did not eliminate an adult male Cassin's Finch which would have been more likely at the location. The CBRC cannot stress too much how difficult separation of Cassin's and Purple finches is, making a thorough and convincing description paramount for acceptance.

### **Part III: Records Not Accepted, Questionable Origin**

GYRFALCON - *Falco rusticolus* (9/8). Observers photographed a striking adult white-morph individual at Longmont, *Boulder*, 1 December 2001 (2001-125; 0-7) that was described as "making more noise than a hawk or accipiter ever would." The Committee was confident that the bird was identified correctly. However, a message to COBirds (the internet listserv currently operated by the Colorado Field Ornithologists) contemporaneous with the date of the sighting provided details on the escape of a falconer's white Gyrfalcon and a

plea for information on its whereabouts if it were seen by birders. White-morph Gyrfalcons are very rare in the western U.S. to begin with, but adults of that color are virtually unheard of here. Thus, the Committee did not accept this report as pertaining to a wild individual.

### Reporters and Cited Observers

Susan Allerton, Lyle Anise, Jason Beason (JBn), Jim Beatty (JBy), Tamie Bulow, Mark Chavez, Caroline Coleman, Cynthia Daly, Ruth Dick, Donna Emmons, Norma Erickson, Doug Faulkner, Brian Gibbons, Paula Hansley, Joe Himmel, Harold Holt, Rachel Hopper, Dave Johnson, Jonathan Kelly, Hugh Kingery, Urling Kingery, Dave Leatherman, Tony Leukering, Kalen Malueg, Joe Mammoser (JMa), Sharyl Massey, Jack Merchant (JMe), Bill Miller, Rich Miller, Todd Myers, Duane Nelson, Ric Olson, Brandon K. Percival, Nathan Pieplow, Dave Rhoades (DRh), Dave Rintoul (DRi), Andrea Robinsong, George San Miguel, Bill Schmoker, Karleen Schofield, Dave Silverman, Robert Steller, Joyce Takamine, Catherine West, Christopher L. Wood, Mark Yaeger.

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## NEWS FROM THE FIELD: THE SPRING 2004 REPORT (MARCH-MAY)

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### Introduction

The spring of 2004 will probably not be remembered for any really noticeable waves of migrants. Many observers commented on the relative lack of birds seen during migration, especially among the passerines, with weather perhaps being the culprit. Birders judge spring based on the “quality” of migration. But we forget that what is “quality” for us, isn’t necessarily “quality” for the birds. We define a good migration as waves of birds and lots of rarities. Since many birds migrate at night, we cannot witness their movements and only see them when they are forced to stop, and concentrations of those birds occur usually because of poor weather.

The high temperature in Denver for March was 79 degrees on the 26th. Strong southerly winds dominated for a good portion of March and precipitation was below normal. In contrast, April temperatures were quite cyclic between slightly below normal temperatures to above normal. The high temperature for the month in Denver was 81 degrees on the 17th, but the high temp on the 30th was only 33 degrees. Precipitation was near normal for the Denver area at least. The first half of May saw well above normal temperatures and strong southerly winds, perfect migration weather for birds (but not for stopping in Colorado). A cold snap set in for the middle and latter parts of the month, though the temperature hit 88 degrees in Denver on the 28th. Precipitation was below normal for the month. In Pueblo, March was quite similar with above normal temperatures for the month and below normal precipitation. The highest temperature was on 23 and 26 March when it soared to 84 degrees. The average wind direction for the month for that area was from the northeast. April in Pueblo brought slightly below normal temperatures, but 3.6 inches of precipitation above normal. The average wind direction for the month was from the north. May was hotter than normal with, unfortunately, below normal

precipitation. The average wind direction was southerly. All weather data was obtained through NOAA (2004).

### **Are Birds Migrating Earlier?**

Many of us may remember the intense electronic dialogue that transpired in early spring on COBirds (the CFO listserv) regarding whether or not migrants are arriving earlier than previously. As we analyzed this past spring's observations, we paid attention to first arrival dates for many species to see how the spring of 2004 compared to 2003. As typical, little inference could be gathered based on the limited sample sizes of observations. What we did learn is that there simply is not enough information yet to test the hypothesis of whether birds are arriving earlier, on average, in Colorado.

We humans often error in judgement when we convert theories too expeditiously into dogma. If a hypothesis is proposed, many of us suddenly believe the supposition is true. That is most certainly the case today as scientists argue over whether global warming is occurring and if so, that it is having major influences on bird migration (and perhaps breeding and wintering activities as well). Some may convincingly postulate that birds are arriving earlier, some may cogently argue the complete opposite argument, while others may be on the fence awaiting more data before taking a stand. Studies by the National Wildlife Federation and the American Bird Conservancy suggest that the "warming trends" across the globe may be influencing when birds migrate and how far they migrate in warmer months.

Antithetically, though, those limited number of studies are also being broadly interpreted to apply to locations where data don't support it. Inquisitors of this topic must also take into account the fact that during the past couple of decades, the number of birders and relative ease of travel to many different locations quickly (as compared to our predecessors earlier in the 1900s) dramatically increases the sample size of observations and that earlier arrival dates should be acquired. We do know that many breeding birds in Colorado return to breeding locations on nearly the same dates each year in Colorado.

Migration is not a unitary feature, rather there is extreme variation in migratory life-history attributes and migratory performances. Migration varies among species, amid populations, among age groups, and even among sexes, and may even vary between individuals. Differences occur with respect to distances migrants journey, the routes they follow, and the timing of departure and arrival. The causes, adaptive significance, and consequences of these differences are still largely unexplored. To complicate the earlier migration theory, we must remind ourselves that there are two general groups of

migrants: long-distance (typically referred to as “neotropic”), the warblers, vireos, flycatchers, grosbeaks, etc., and short-distance, the sparrows, blackbirds, waterfowl, and such.

Long distance migrants are genetically programmed to respond to changing photoperiods. It is explicit that the absolute length of the photoperiod that is considered to be optimal for migration to begin varies with species. Day length is the environmental stimulus that results in pre-migratory weight gain in spring that stores fuel for the aerobic contraction of flight muscles, permitting flights of long duration with minimal fatigue. Yet the progression of the migratory instinct is not thoroughly driven by day length. Birds also respond to other environmental stimuli, such as temperature, especially the short-distance migrants. During spring migrations, radar studies have shown that weather plays a large role in deciding when a bird will actually start its’ migratory flight. The main stimulus for spring departure is a south wind. Clear skies, presumably providing for celestial orientation cues, are of secondary importance, since major flights will still occur even under overcast conditions if an adequate tail wind is occurring. When spring is late, birds usually do not arrive early. Likewise, when spring is advanced, birds may arrive early to take advantage of the advanced environmental resources.

To illustrate the contradiction of data of whether birds are arriving earlier, we conducted a quick analysis of early arrival dates for neotropical warblers (long-distance migrants) of a Gulf Coast state, Mississippi. Of the 33 regular spring migrant species in that state, only one new arrival date occurred during the 2000 decade. Five new early arrival dates were documented during the 1990s. The vast majority of early arrival date records (16 species) took place in the 1980s. The early arrival dates for the remaining 11 species all occurred prior to the 1980s, with the 1930s still retaining five of those species records (Peterson 2004). Thus over the span of eight decades (though we’re still early in this decade), 82 percent of all early arrival records for the *Parulidae* and *Peucedramidae* occurred more than 14 years ago. If one assumes that migration seasonality is normally distributed as a bell-shaped curve (with the few early migrants being on the left side of the tail, the peak of migration as the apex of the curve, and the late migrants representing the right side of the tail), and if neotropical migrants are indeed arriving earlier, the entire bell-shape curve should shift earlier in the season as well, which would mean the peak of migration for those species is would also be earlier.

With this bell-shaped migration distribution, birders will usually observe a few early individuals come into the state followed by a much larger volume of migrants. This peak will then gradually taper off to a few lingering stragglers.

Determining when the peak of migration actually is can be very difficult, however, as, for many migrant species, the periods one could observe the largest number of individuals would only be when poor weather conditions dropped them from the skies. If birds are indeed arriving earlier, one could suggest that the bell-shaped migration distribution is also changing and that the apex of the curve is shifting further to the left. That is the conundrum we are currently faced with in attempting to understand how or if migration patterns are changing globally and in Colorado.

For those short-distance migrants, most of us can attest that it seems that in the past few years, birds have been arriving earlier. But we also have experienced very mild winters, as southern states and Mexico have as well, which suggests that for many short-distance migrants, there is no need to continue migrating further south when resources can be procured closer to their breeding areas. Is this possible trend long-term? Only time will tell.

As the debate continues over whether birds are migrating earlier, it is important that we observers pay special attention to early arrival dates and document those that are on the extraordinary spectrum of the season so that we can compare arrival dates for all years validly. It is also important that we pay attention to the temporal differences in the migration of different age and sex classes to see how migration is occurring within a given species.

### Rarities

Vagrant highlights of the past spring included two Red-throated Loons, a Reddish Egret, a White Ibis, no fewer than 10 Glossy Ibis, more Trumpeter and Tundra swans, two Eurasian Wigeon, eight Hudsonian Godwits!, two Laughing Gulls, one Mew Gull, Colorado's second Black Skimmer!, more Inca Doves, a Whip-poor-will, Acorn Woodpeckers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, an Eastern Wood-Pewee, seven Alder Flycatchers!, Vermilion and Scissor-tailed flycatchers, two Philadelphia Vireos, Gray-cheeked Thrushes, two Wood Thrushes, the first nesting of Lucy's Warbler in the state since 1913!, two Cape May Warblers, three Blackburnian Warblers, two Yellow-throated and Prairie warblers, three Bay-breasted Warblers, five Kentucky and Mourning warblers!, six Scarlet Tanagers, a lingering Eastern Towhee, two Painted Buntings, and returning Eastern Meadowlarks. These and other notable records await your interest on the following pages!

**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. The Colorado Field Ornithologists' website (<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 the **first** time each appears; county names are NOT included with subsequent records, except for locations that are situated within multiple counties where a described sighting for that location may require information in which county the observation occurred.

**Abbreviations:** CBRC=Colorado Bird Records Committee; CG=Campground; CVCG=Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*; et al.=and others (restricted to use for the finding group of a bird that was not seen subsequently); LCC=Lamar Community College, *Prowers*; m.ob.=many observers (used for birds that were refound, either the same day or on subsequent days, by others); NG=National Grassland; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; Res.=Reservoir; SP=State Park; SWA=State Wildlife Area.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Reported from the eastern plains from the beginning of the period through at least 3 May (RL). Armknecht reported a tally of approximately 500 birds at Jumbo Res., *Logan/Sedgwick*, on 12 March, which is an extremely high count for Colorado. Rare Front Range observations included one in Arvada, *Adams*, on 7 March (LS) and one at the Denver City Park, *Denver*, on 23 April (TH).

**Snow Goose:** Considered rare in *La Plata*, one was present at Pastorius Res., *La Plata*, between 4 and 9 May (JBy). The latest report was of an injured bird seen at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 23 May (BKP, MY) that eventually summered at that locale.

**Ross's Goose:** For those of us who are fascinated with rare morphs, Nelson found a "blue morph" Ross's Goose at Neenoshe Res., *Kiowa*, on 11 April. Blue morph Ross's Geese are extremely rare and the estimated percentage of that morph of all Ross's Geese in the Central Flyway is only 1 in 10,000 (Tim Moser pers. comm.). Congratulations Duane, that is certainly a bird the authors would have loved to seen.

**Trumpeter Swan:** The enigmatic Trumpeter Swans in *Boulder* were present through the majority of the spring season. One adult was present during the winter period (BSc, CLW). On 20 March, three birds (two adults, one juvenile) were seen at Lake Valley (AH, DW), of which the juvenile was still present at that location until at least 3 May (AH, DW). On 19 May, a juvenile was seen at North Boulder Ranch (SP), which most likely was the same bird reported earlier. Two other birds (age not reported) were observed at Cattail Pond in *Larimer*



between 8 and 11 April (BT, GLr). Though unknown, if these birds were adult, it is possible they were the same adults seen in *Boulder* earlier in the season.

**Tundra Swan:** Two first-cycle birds were observed at Strauss Cabin Lake, *Larimer*, between 11 and 28 March (NK, RH). Three first-cycle birds were also reported from Clark Lake, *Larimer*, on 26 March (JDe). Four Tundra's (age not specified) were reported from Cobb Lake, *Larimer*, on 31 March (JDe, RH). It is anybody's guess as to how many different birds may have been present in *Larimer* during that month.

**Wood Duck:** Odd locations this species was observed included a male at Lathrop SP, *Huerfano*, on 27 March (BKP, CLW), one at Craig, *Moffat*, on 13 April (FL), and a pair at Upper Queens Res., *Kiowa*, on 8 May (LS).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** A male was seen between 21 and 26 March at Wellington SWA, *Larimer* (GLo, BGu, RH). Another male was observed between 17 April and possibly 9 May at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso* (BM, MPE, m.ob.). If both birds are documented and accepted, they would potentially represent the 25th and 26th records for the state, respectively.

**Blue-winged Teal:** The first report for the season came from the Colorado City Bank Pond, *Pueblo*, on 11 March (DSi), a bit on the early side. Early for the West Slope was the bird seen on 2 April at Nucla, *Montrose* (CDr).

**Northern Pintail:** Approximately 250, a high count, were observed at Bijou Res., *Morgan*, on 21 March (TL, CLW).

**Canvasback:** The maximum count for the period was the 600 observed by Hugh Kingery at Jumbo Res., on 20 March.

**Redhead:** Good numbers of Redhead were reported across the state during the period. High counts included the roughly 2000 seen at North Poudre Res. #3, *Larimer*, on 14 March (BSc, RH) and the 1000 seen at Jumbo Res. on 12 March (HA).

**Greater Scaup:** A total of 71 Greater Scaup was reported from the state during the period, a good number. The most unusual locale reported from was Pastorius Res., where a male was spotted on 30 April (JBy).

**Surf Scoter:** Rare in spring, a female was present at Lake Hasty, *Bent*, between 1 and 10 May (GW, DAL).

**Long-tailed Duck:** The only reports from the spring included a female present at Barr Lake, *Adams*, between 12 and 13 March (DFa, TL, GW) and a bird (sex not reported) at Jumbo Res. on 4 April (HA).

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** Easternmost observations during the period were that of a male present at Barr Lake on 13 March (LK, IS, GW, m.ob.) and another at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, last reported on 20 March (DSi). The last report for the season was one at Lake Avery, *Rio Blanco*, on 28 April (DH).

**Hooded Merganser:** The last report was of a bird seen at Fort Lyon, *Bent*, on 13 May (BKP, TL, CLW).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** The only West Slope report of the species came from Craig on 26 April (FL). The high count for the state came on 7 March when Semo tallied 66 at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*. Late reports included two at Lake Hasty on 10 May (DAL) and one at Lake Henry, *Crowley*, on 3 May (SO).

**Ruddy Duck:** The first report for the season was of a bird seen at Jumbo Res. on 12 March (HA).

**Chukar:** Chukar are rare in *La Plata*, so the report of a bird near Pastorius Res. between 4 and 5 April (J&J Rees et al.) is unusual. The habitat in that area is certainly not the best for Chukar and there is a good probability the bird was an escape.

**Wild Turkey:** Turkeys continue to expand their range northward in the state. One was seen and photographed by Irwin near the Fall River Visitor Center in Rocky Mountain NP, *Larimer*, on 11 April. Personal communications with Jeff Conner at Rocky Mountain NP indicated that the first turkey observed in the park was in 1977 with occurrences documented only about once a year thereafter until 1993. At that point they were considered accidental for the area. No other occurrences were obtained until 1999. Since then, however, more turkeys have been found and successful nesting was documented in 2004 as well, despite the fact that the status of the species on the Park's checklist remains as accidental.

**Red-throated Loon:** Very rare in spring, a surprising two Red-throated Loons were found in the state during the spring. The first, a basic-plumaged bird, was discovered by Semo at Standley Lake, *Jefferson*, on 4 April and remained through the majority of the month, being last seen on the 27th (LS, DFa). Oswald also found one, on 3 May, at Lake Henry.

**Common Loon:** Good numbers (30) of Common Loons were reported in the state during the season from fifteen counties (*Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Douglas, Eagle, Fremont, Garfield, Huerfano, Jackson, Logan, Mesa, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Routt, and Sedgwick*). The first report came from Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 31 March (DEy), a tad on the late side. The last report was of a bird still present at Jumbo Res. on 9 May. This bird may also have spent the summer of 2004 at that location (HA).

**Horned Grebe:** The first report for the season was of six birds observed by Semo at Standley Lake on 7 March. The maximum count reported for the period was 209 at Luna Res., *Weld*, a perennial hotspot for the species, on 9 April (TL).

**Eared Grebe:** The first report was of a molting bird seen at Pueblo Res. on 20 March (GW). Linfield reported six from Holyoke, *Phillips*, which is high for such a waterless county.

**Western Grebe:** The maximum count for the period was 266 at Barr Lake on 24 April (TL).

**Clark's Grebe:** The first report was of a bird seen at Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on 8 March (BGu). Considered rare to uncommon for the West Slope, individual Clark's Grebes were found on 15 April at Rifle Gap Res., *Garfield* (VZ), and at Fruitgrowers Res., *Delta*, during the last few days of May (CFO Convention).

**American White Pelican:** The earliest reported arrivals were the five seen near Lower Latham Res. on 7 March (BMi). For a potential first county record, pelicans were observed in *Montrose* in late May (CFO Convention), which lacks any sizable waterbodies.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The first report for the season came from Cherry Creek Res. on 9 March (GW).

**American Bittern:** Ten birds were reported from 6 April through the end of the period in *Adams, Alamosa, Bent, Delta, Pueblo, and Weld*.

**Great Egret:** The first report came from Valco Ponds in Canon City, *Fremont*, on 4 April (DP). Subsequent birds were observed through the end of the period in *Crowley, Delta, El Paso, Jefferson, La Plata, Montrose, Otero, and Weld*.

**Little Blue Heron:** Two Little Blue Herons were observed during the spring. The first (age not reported) was seen at Barr Lake on 22 April (LK, GW). The

second, an adult-plumaged bird (which may have been the same bird earlier seen at Barr Lake, if indeed the bird at Barr was in adult plumage), was along ponds near the Platte River at 88th Avenue near Commerce City, *Adams*, between 11 and 12 May (GW, LS, m.ob.).

**Reddish Egret:** Colorado certainly has had its share of Reddish Egrets the past few years considering that three of the seven records for the state have occurred in this century, with records dating back as far as 1875. On 29 April, Silverman found a second-cycle white morph bird at Lake Beckwith, *Pueblo*, and if accepted by the CBRC, would represent the eighth record for the state! This also represents the second white morph bird for the state.

**Cattle Egret:** Early was the bird reported from Lower Latham on 5 April (BGU).

**Green Heron:** Fifteen Green Herons were reported from this past spring, a good number for this uncommon to even slightly rare species in the state. The earliest birds were both reported on 22 April from Canon City Riverwalk (DP, SMs) and from Lathrop SP (DSi). Interesting for the locations were the bird returning to the Alamosa Golf Course, *Alamosa*, where present three years in a row (JRa, LMi, JRe) and a bird seen at the Mt. Ouray SWA, in Salida, *Chaffee*, on 26 May (RM). Other reports of this species came from more typical haunts including *Bent*, *Boulder*, *Crowley*, *Logan*, *Prowers*, and *Pueblo*.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Holdovers from winter included two birds seen on 7 March in Arvada, *Adams* (LS), and a bird at Grand Junction, *Mesa*, on 19 March (LA). A bird seen at Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, on 10 March (MPE, m.ob.), may also have wintered at that location. A first-cycle bird was at Pastorius Res. on 2 May, which is an odd location, but a location that has hosted the species the past two years (JBy).

**White Ibis:** As with Reddish Egret, the number of White Ibis records for Colorado has certainly spiked over the past five years (as with other neighboring states as well). Percival and Hulsey were the lucky ones this year, when they discovered an adult at Rock Canyon/Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on 25 May, a possible first county record. If accepted by the CBRC, this would represent the fifth record for the state, all of which have come since 1985 and four of which since 1998.

**Glossy Ibis:** Are Glossy Ibis becoming “ho-hum” in Colorado? Based on the number of records and interest received when hearing of a bird being seen, one would suspect so. But that certainly shouldn’t be the case. It is inexplicable at this point why this “Gulf Coast” species turns up annually in Colorado in

numbers neighboring states haven't seen. There are a lot of hypotheses of possibly why we're the fortunate ones (that is unless you're the poor soul that is documenting them). And for that reason, it is meaningful that Coloradoans continue to document observations of Glossy Ibis in the state so that we can get a clearer picture of the range expansion of the species. The number of Glossy and White-faced Ibis hybrid records are also increasing, which may suggest aggrandized mating attempts or our increased knowledge of what their offspring actually look like. The first record for Colorado was actually from the West Slope in 1986 from Delta, a seemingly odd location for a first state record that was supposed to coming from the southeastern U.S. As of 2002, there now have been 28 accepted records for the species, all but three being from the eastern plains. Spring 2004 was again no exception to the current Glossy Ibis trajectory as nine birds were reported from across the state. What is most interesting is that in 2004, two birds were observed from the West Slope. One was seen at Zink's Pond, *La Plata*, on 18 April (PD), and, if accepted, would provide the second record for that county. The other was seen at Maybell, *Moffat*, on 30 April (FL), which would represent the first county record. Other reports included one at Lake Holbrook, *Otero*, on 17 April (RS), two in Rocky Ford, *Otero*, on 30 April (GW, m.ob.), up to three birds being seen at Lake Holbrook between 1 and 17 May (MPe, LS, PL, SMw, m.ob.), a bird at Lake DeWeese near Westcliffe, *Custer*, on 2 May (MPe), and one at Beebe Draw, *Weld*, on 20 May (BGu). Of special note is that Lehman and Mlodinow carefully observed a hybrid Glossy x White-faced at Lake Holbrook on 17 May.

**White-faced Ibis:** The first report came from Lake Holbrook and Lake Cheraw, *Otero*, on 2 April (BKP, GR). High count estimates of 200 birds were reported from Lake Holbrook on 16 April (GW, LK) and from Perch Pond, *Moffat*, on 29 April (FL).

**Turkey Vulture:** Record early for that region was the report of one bird at Paonia, *Delta*, on 11 March (BDa, CDy). The first East Slope observation was on 12 March at the Goodnight River Trail, *Pueblo* (MA).

**Osprey:** The first Osprey reported for the season were two birds seen at Pueblo Res. on 16 March, which is a rather normal arrival date. Record early for the West Slope was the bird seen on 24 March at Grand Junction (LA).

**Bald Eagle:** Late was the presence of an adult at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on 21 May (DEy, DAL). The species is not known to breed in that vicinity.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** The first report for spring was of two birds observed at Lake Hasty on 23 April (BKP, RO). Percival and Olson also reported a dark

morph bird at Lamar, *Prowers*, the following day. All other reports for the season came from typical plains and foothill locations on the East Slope.

**Swainson's Hawk:** The first report was of a bird seen at Barr Lake on 1 April (CLW).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Fourteen individuals were recorded away from breeding locales from 8 March through 15 May in *Adams, Boulder, Chaffee, Douglas, Jefferson, Eagle, Fremont, Huerfano, La Plata, and Pueblo*.

**Black Rail:** Van Truan reported the first birds of the season when he had 16 in *Bent* and two in *Otero* on 29 April.

**Sora:** The first report came from John Martin Res., *Bent*, on 18 March (GW, LK, EZ), where they also had wintered.

**Sandhill Crane:** Cranes are considered rare west of the Uncompahgre Plateau, so the observation of the species (numbers not reported) near Nucla from 23 March through the remainder of the period is interesting (CDr, BW). The high count was the estimated 500 birds seen at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 29 April (DFi).

**Black-bellied Plover:** A total of 18 Black-bellied Plovers were reported from across the state during the spring between 9 and 23 May in the following counties: *Bent, Logan, Park, Washington, Weld, and Yuma*. The high count was six seen at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on 14 May (JKr, GW, m.ob.).

**Snowy Plover:** The first report for the spring came from Lake Cheraw on 16 April (GW, LK). Unusual were the birds seen at 6 & 50 Res., *Mesa*, on 18 April (LA) and the one at Lower Church Lake, *Jefferson*, on 22 May (JRr, LS). Other birds were reported from more normal haunts including Adobe Creek Res., *Bent*, and John Martin Res.

**Semipalmated Plover:** The first report was from Chatfield Res., *Douglas*, on 20 April (GW). The high count for the period was eight seen at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, on 29 April (DFi).

**Piping Plover:** Breeding birds were reported from *Bent* and *Kiowa* during the period. It was a good year for finding migrants as birds were noted at Thurston Res., *Prowers*, on 16 April (GW, LK), at Lake Henry, *Crowley*, on 30 April (GW, JKr, NEL), at Bonny Res. on 29 April (DFi), and at Black Hollow Res., *Weld*, on 14 May (CS).

**Mountain Plover:** The first report for the season was of a single bird in *El Paso* on 28 March (MPE, LE).

**Black-necked Stilt:** The first observation was on 31 March at Lake Holbrook, when Nelson saw two.

**American Avocet:** The first observation came from Lake Holbrook on 17 March (SO). On 6 April, a count of 345, possibly the highest single-location count ever for the state, was made at that same location by Wood and Hallenbeck.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Linfield keeps on upping the species tally for *Phillips*. This past spring he spotted a Solitary Sandpiper in Holyoke on 3 May, which is a pretty good find for that nearly waterless county.

**Upland Sandpiper:** Birds returned to their traditional area south of Briggsdale, *Weld*, which is the farthest west known breeding location in the state.

**Whimbrel:** A total of 19 Whimbrel were reported for the spring season, all but one on the eastern plains. The most interesting report was of a bird at Fruitgrowers Res. on 17 April (EW), which is also the earliest sighting for the state this past spring.

**Long-billed Curlew:** First reported from the East Slope in *Baca* on 16 April (LK, GW). The West Slope was only a day behind with two birds being seen in *La Plata* on the 17th (PD).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Spring 2004 was perhaps the best year known to see Hudsonian's in Colorado, with a minimum of eight birds being seen on the eastern plains. The first was seen on 17 April at Bonny Res. by Wood and Backstrom. On 27 and 28 April, two birds were being seen at Adobe Creek Res., *Kiowa* (DN, BKP).

**Sanderling:** Sanderlings put on a pretty good showing for spring with 17 birds being observed. The most unusual location was of a bird seen at 6 & 50 Res., *Mesa*, on 28 April (LA, VZ). The high count, which is really good, was of 12 birds seen at John Martin Res. on 17 May (PL, SMw). Other birds were noted from Lake Henry and Bonny Res. during the period.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Rare for *La Plata*, one was present between 24 April and 9 May (JBy, SA). Linfield again struck gold in *Phillips* when he observed a semi-sand there on 3 May. A good high count of 150 was estimated at Bonny Res. on 29 April (DFi).

**Western Sandpiper:** Early was the report of one at Parker, *Douglas*, on 31 March (GW).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** White-rumped Sandpipers arrived at typical times this year, with the first report coming on 15 May from Lower Latham (DSm). A single bird was present at Lower Church Lake between 20 and 23 May (LS, JRr), which is an unusual find for that county.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Exceptionally early was the bird found by Oswald at Lake Holbrook on 5 March.

**Dunlin:** Dunlin are very rare migrants on the eastern plains and are considered casual at best on the West Slope of Colorado. No fewer than eight Dunlin were reported this past spring, including one on 28 April at the O Road Pond in *Mesa* (LA). Other birds were reported from Neenoshe Res. on 24 April (DN), one at Lake Holbrook on 30 April (GW, JKr, NEI), one at Union Res., *Weld*, on 2 May (RS), one at Thurston Res. on 13 May (DSi, DJ), two at John Martin Res. on 18 May (DN, JBy), and one at Lake Henry on 25 May (PL, SMw).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** What may be the highest count ever for the state, Lehman and Mlodinow estimated 750 Stilt Sandpipers at John Martin Res. on 17 May.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** Four Short-billed Dowitchers were reported from the state this past spring. Two birds were observed at close range at Pastorius Res. on 28 April (SA, JBy). There are only four previous records of this species for western Colorado. In eastern Colorado, one was at McKay Lake, *Adams*, on 1 May (DEy, EZ) and one was at Lake Henry on 25 May (PL, SMw).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** The first report this past spring came on 26 March when one bird was seen at Lake Holbrook (SO).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** Birds were reported during May from *Boulder*, *Mesa*, *Moffat*, and *Weld*.

**Laughing Gull:** Two were reported during the season: one, age not reported, was observed at Bonny Res. on 16 May (JBy) and an adult was seen at Cherry Creek Res. on 25 May (BBr).

**Franklin's Gull:** The first spring reports were on 14 March, when birds were spotted in *Delta* (RLe) and *Mesa* (LA). Those observations are ten days earlier than the previous earliest records for the species on the West Slope.



**Mew Gull:** One Mew Gull was reported during the spring season, a second-cycle bird seen at Valmont Res., *Boulder*, on 8 March (TF, BSc).

**Herring Gull:** Very late was the adult seen at Sand Lake SWA, *Chaffee*, on 28 May (BSc, GW, m.ob.).

**Thayer's Gull:** Five reports were received this past spring. First- and third-cycle birds were present at Valmont Res. between at least 5 and 8 March (BSc, TF). First- and second-cycle birds were also seen at Cherry Creek Res. on 9 March (GW, JO). Lastly, an adult was at Seeley Lake, *Weld*, on 12 April (BGU).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Nine birds were reported during the period, though one wonders how many reports were of the same birds in the *Boulder*/northern *Jefferson* area. A first-cycle bird was at Waneka Lake, *Boulder*, 1-2 March (RS). An adult was at Cherry Creek Res. on 4 March (KSt). An adult and third-cycle were at Valmont Res. on 8 March (BSc, TF), while presumably the same adult and a first-cycle bird (which may have been the first-cycle bird seen earlier in the month at Waneka Lake) were at the same location on 18 March (BSc, TF). An adult was present at Prince Lake #2, *Boulder*, on 8 and 20 March (CLW, BSc); this bird may have been the bird also seen at Valmont Res., a night-time roost location for many gulls in the area. A first-cycle bird was at Boulder Res., *Boulder*, on 12 March (CLW). A "basic"-plumaged bird was at Pueblo Res. on 15 March (BKP). An adult in definitive alternate plumage was at Chatfield Res., *Douglas*, between 3 and 4 April (MPe, TL, BM). Finally, a first-cycle bird was at Lower Church Lake between 3 and 29 April (TF, LS).

**Glaucous Gull:** Five were reported during the early portion of the season, which included an adult at Seeley Lake on 3 March (BGU), a first-cycle bird at John Martin Res. on 5 March (DN), a second-cycle bird at Baseline Res., *Boulder*, on 13 March (Dsp), a first-cycle at Cherry Creek Res. on 20 March, and another first-cycle bird at Seeley Lake on 3 April (BGU).

**Caspian Tern:** Spring 2004 was a pretty good year for finding Caspian Terns in Colorado, with no fewer than eight birds being seen across the state. Exceptionally early was the report of two birds at Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, on 3 April (DBr). A bird seen at Craig on 9 April (FL), establishes the earliest record for the West Slope by 14 days! Other birds reported during the season included one at Adobe Creek Res., *Kiowa*, on 25 April (DN), one at Pueblo Res. between 26 and 28 March (BKP), and three at Fruitgrowers Res. on 31 May (CLW, TL, GW, m.ob.).

**Common Tern:** Common Terns are considered rare spring migrants. Eight birds were reported during May in the following counties: *Jefferson, Yuma, Pueblo, Delta,* and *Crowley*.

**Forster's Tern:** Very early was the report of one at Lamar on 18 March (EZ, LK, GW).

**Least Tern:** Away from the breeding range in southeastern Colorado, one was at Florence, *Fremont*, between 14 and 27 May (AB, m.ob.), which established a first county record. One was present on the West Slope, at Sweitzer Lake, *Delta*, between 28 and 29 May (CFO Convention).

**Black Skimmer:** Certainly one of the best rarities found in the state during the period was the second state record bird observed and photographed at Pastorius Res. on 29 April by Winegardner, Allerton, Beatty, and others. Despite poor weather during the evening following the sighting, the bird could not be relocated the second day. Though photographs of the bird are not suggestive of subspecific identity, it would be interesting to know whether the bird was of the Pacific or Atlantic race.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** This species is virtually (but not quite) present across the state in suitable habitat now, with birds recorded from the following western counties: *Eagle, Montrose, Montezuma,* and *Rio Blanco*.

**White-winged Dove:** Many were reported during the period, which has become quite typical. A wintering bird at Lake Beckwith remained until at least 2 March (DSi, DJ). At least three were in Rocky Ford between 17 March through the end of the period (SO). One was near Bristol, *Prowers*, on 5 April (JTa). A bird was seen in Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, on 6 April by Klingler. One was at Belmont, *Pueblo*, on 13 April (MA) and another was found in *El Paso* on the same date and was present through the remainder of the period (MPe). Single birds were noted in Lamar on 20 April (DFi), 25 April (BKP, RO), and 27 May (DR). Two were in Springfield, *Baca*, on 11 May (DAL). Two were in *Boulder* on 14 May (SSe). One was in *Pueblo, Pueblo*, on 17 May (MY). Finally, one was seen in Cortez, *Montezuma*, on 27 May (LS, m.ob.). The species is still considered to be quite rare in the southwestern portion of the state.

**Inca Dove:** This species continues its hold in southeastern Colorado. One was in *Pueblo, Pueblo*, between 1 March and 4 April (MA). As many as three birds were present in various Lamar locations between the first of the period through at least 9 May (JTh, NEI, DAL). Four birds were present in Rocky Ford between 17 March and 7 May (SO).

**Black-billed Cuckoo**: One was at Lake Hasty CG on 7 May (GW, JKr, RO).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo**: Slightly unusual was the bird found dead by Coffee in Boulder, *Boulder*, on 9 May.

**Spotted Owl**: One was heard calling from the traditional location of the Wet Mountains, *Pueblo*, on 13 May (BKP, CLW, TL)

**Short-eared Owl**: Short-eared Owls were noted from Strauss Cabin Lake on 14 March (BSc, RH), near the Campo Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek, *Baca*, on 9 and 19 April (BKP, MPe, RS), and in the Lower Latham area between 4 April and 22 May (BGu, BSc, IS, TS).

**Common Nighthawk**: The earliest report was on 16 May from Bonny Res. (JBy).

**Common Poorwill**: Plains reports included one at LCC on 24 April (DN) and one in *Elbert* on 7 May (RO, GW, JKr).

**Whip-poor-will**: A great find was the bird observed at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 12 May (BM). If accepted by the CBRC, this bird would represent the tenth record for the state and the third for *El Paso*.

**White-throated Swift**: As in 2003, the first report for the season came on 13 March, this time at Graneros Gorge near Colorado City, *Pueblo* (DSi).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird**: The first reports came on 14 April from *Mesa* (LA) and *Montrose* (CD, BW). This is a few days later than the first sightings last year. Black-chinned's continued to push their northern limit on the East Slope where one was again seen (as in 2003) at Cherry Creek SP, *Arapahoe*, in late May (BBr). In southeastern Colorado, a female was found incubating at Rocky Ford for the third year in a row (SO), and even further east, a nesting pair was discovered in Lamar during the month of May (JTh).

**Calliope Hummingbird**: Though Calliope's are fairly common migrants in late summer and fall in Colorado, they are considered casual at best during spring. Thus, the presence of a male at Grand Junction between 30 April and 3 May is noteworthy (LA).

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird**: Early was the bird seen in *Teller* on 31 March (JJ).

**Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird:** An unidentified male *Selasphorus* hummingbird was seen in *Huerfano* on 12 May (CLW). This constitutes the first spring record for that area of the state.

**Lewis's Woodpecker:** The farthest east report was of a bird present during the past winter in Lamar through the entire spring season (DAL).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** On the western edge of their range, Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen at CVCG, *Weld*, on 23 May (TF), and another, also in *Weld*, on 24 May (JE).

**Acorn Woodpecker:** Besides the usual suspects at Wildcat Canyon, *La Plata*, one was seen at Aguilar, *Las Animas*, from between 15 and 17 May by Gifford.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** A tad west was the bird that wintered and remained until 2 April at Lake Hasty CG (DN, GW, LK).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** The winter of 2003/2004 was perhaps the best year ever for finding Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in Colorado. Thus it was not surprising that many birds lingered into the early spring season as well. One was present at Walsh, *Baca*, on 3 March (P&TB). A juvenile was at Willow Creek Park in Lamar between at least 8 and 9 March (DAL). A female was discovered at Blende, *Pueblo*, on 9 March (RM). The juvenile present during the winter at Pueblo City Park was last reported on 20 March (GW, LMo, LK, EZ). Finally, an adult was seen at Maurico Canyon, *Las Animas*, on 27 March (CLW, BKP). We hope documentation for all these birds will be submitted to the CBRC.

**Red-naped Sapsucker:** Eastern plains reports came from 25 March, when a female was found at Willow Creek Park in Lamar (JTh, DAL) and also at that location on 16 April (CLW) when a male was found. Closer to the mountains, a female was found at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 13 May (BKP, CLW, TL).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** One was reported singing at Rock Canyon on 27 May (PSS).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Spring 2004 was most likely the best year ever to try and find Alder Flycatchers in the state, as no fewer than seven were found! To date, there have been only 12 accepted records of this species for the state since the first one was found in 1885, though there are at least three additional reports pending acceptance by the CBRC. Chico Basin Ranch was obviously the hotbed for Alder Flycatchers as at least four (and perhaps more) were present

between 17 and 25 May (NGo, TL, m.ob.) in both *El Paso* and *Pueblo*. Documentation for two were provided as one was banded and another was photographed. Other birds were seen at the 3V Road, *Washington*, on 20 May (CLW, TL), at Lathrop SP on 22 May (MPe), and at Chatfield Res. SP, *Jefferson*, on 24 May (GW, BSc). We hope documentation for all these birds will be submitted to the CBRC.

**Gray Flycatcher:** Wayward Gray Flycatchers were present at Belmar Park, *Jefferson*, on 29 April (DEy) and east of Fort Lyon on 30 April (BKP, JTr, GR).

**Black Phoebe:** I know this is going to sound strange for many folks, considering this species was on the state review list up until 2002, but no less than 82 Black Phoebes were reported from Colorado during the past spring! Though the species has been expanding its range into Colorado during the past decade, it was also not searched for in some areas as well. Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory has been conducting concerted surveys for this species across the state and the organization found at least 70 in the Uravan area, *Montrose*, during the period (CDr, BW). On the East Slope, the small population of Black Phoebes in Fremont and Pueblo were present again this spring as one was present in Penrose, *Fremont*, for the majority of the period (RM), a pair nested on private property in Canon City (SMs), one was along the Canon City Riverwalk in mid-April (RM), one was near Portland, *Fremont*, in mid-May (RM), one was in western *Fremont* on 31 May (SMs), and at least one was present at the traditional Burnt Mill Road site, *Pueblo*, in mid-May (BKP, CLW, TL). Other reports included one in *Montrose* on 29 May (CFO Convention), two at Boedecker Lake, *Larimer*, on 30 April (CWl), which is the most unusual report, one in late March at Carrizo Canyon, *Baca* (SMs), and one along the South Platte, near Waterton Canyon, *Jefferson*, on 28 April (MJ).

**Eastern Phoebe:** Out-of-range Eastern Phoebe observations included singles at Lake Estes, *Larimer*, on 7 April (SRa), at McKay Lake on 17 April (EZ), and at Manitou Lake, *Teller*, on 13 May (AB).

**Vermilion Flycatcher:** Five Vermilion Flycatcher were reported. The most unusual report was that of a pair breeding at Lake Catamount, *Routt*, discovered on 16 April (fide FL). Others included a male at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, on 27 March (SMs), a female at Pueblo Res. on 1 April (Lewis et al.), and a female west of Higby Cemetery, *Otero*, on 2 April (SO).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** Birds outside the breeding range were found at Fort Lyon on 10 May (DAL), at Barr Lake on 15 May (D&SK), and at CVCG on 28 May (GLr).

**Eastern Kingbird:** Inordinately early was the report of an Eastern Kingbird at Two Buttes Res. on 27 March (SMs).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** For the third year in a row, the pair present at a radio tower just south of Lamar returned in 2004 where they were present from at least 1 May through the remainder of the period (GW, m.ob.). The only other Scissor-tailed reports were that of one at Spurgeon Res., *Boulder*, on 3 May (BK) and a male at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 14 May (TV).

**Northern Shrike:** The latest report of this winter resident was of a bird seen at Spring Park Res., *Eagle*, on 27 March (DFi).

**White-eyed Vireo:** In the Spring 2003 News from the Field, I airily questioned why the CBRC removed this species from the state review list, when, ironically, not a single one was observed during the spring following its removal from that list. Spring 2004 affirmed the Committee's decision, however, with at least five birds being reported. These included one at Campo on 22 April (MJI, BPG), one along Boulder Creek, *Boulder*, on 8 May (AC), one at Two Buttes Res. on 10 May (JRa), one at Sonderman Park, *El Paso*, between 18 and 27 May (Lafreniere, m.ob.), and one at the Pueblo Nature Center on 20 May (RM).

**Bell's Vireo:** The first birds were, as usual, reported from the northeast, when Semo observed one at Bonny Res. on 9 May. It is interesting to note that the bird was not found within traditional plum thickets in the uplands, but rather in sapling cottonwood stands on the drawn-down lake bed.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Six reports were received, which included one seen by Iliff and Gibbons at Campo on 22 April, one at Eads, *Kiowa*, on 27 April (BKP, JTr), one in Colorado City between 13 and 16 May (BKP, TL, CLW, DSi), one at Dixon Res., *Larimer*, on 21 May (CS), one on the University of Colorado campus, *Boulder*, on 23 May (the Linfield's, PG), and, most surprisingly, one along Yellow Jacket Creek, *Montezuma*, on 26 May (SA, PD). If documented and accepted by the CBRC, this would represent the first record for western Colorado, according to Righter et al. (2004).

**Cassin's Vireo:** This species is much rarer in spring than fall in Colorado. Three reports were received this spring. One was at Chatfield SP, *Jefferson/Douglas*, on 25 April (SSt, JKr). Another was a bird seen on 7 May at the Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar (JKr, RO, GW). The third bird was seen at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 12 May (BM).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** Two birds were observed in the state during this past spring, one at LCC on 3 May (DR) and one at the Broomfield Natural Area, *Broomfield*, on 15 May (DEy, LS).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Thirteen birds were reported from across the state between 3 May through the remainder of the month in the following eastern plains counties: *Boulder, El Paso, Huerfano, Jefferson, Larimer, Prowers, Pueblo,* and *Weld*. The most unusual observation was that of a bird in Craig on 25 May when seen by Bucher. Red-eyed Vireo is considered a rare spring migrant in western Colorado.

**Tree Swallow:** The first report for the season came on 17 March when Oswald spotted one at Lake Holbrook. This is generally a typical arrival date for this species in Colorado.

**Violet-green Swallow:** Right on time based on previous years, the first report was on 27 March from Valco Ponds, *Pueblo* (MY).

**Barn Swallow:** A bit on the early side, Gent found one at Walden Ponds, *Boulder*, on 21 March.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Late for the plains, one was still present at Lake Hasty CG on 10 May (DAL).

**Carolina Wren:** A respectable five reports were submitted, including one along the Arkansas River in *Pueblo* between 17 and 19 April (BKP, RM), one in Old Colorado City, *El Paso*, on 19 April (BM), one at Bear Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, on 27 April (GW), one at a residence in Westminster, *Jefferson*, on 3 May (LS), and one at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, *Jefferson*, on 10 May (DSc).

**Bewick's Wren:** Very unusual so far north was the bird observed along Fern Creek Road in Rocky Mountain NP, *Larimer*, on 12 April by Irwin.

**Winter Wren:** Three Winter Wrens were reported this past spring. One barely made it into the season when spotted at Colorado City on 1 March (DSi). Another was tallied at Greenhorn Meadows Park, *Pueblo*, on 22 March (DSi). The third bird, also in *Pueblo* (*Pueblo* sure gets its share of Winter Wrens) was a bird seen at Rock Canyon 15 April (BKP).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The first report was of a bird seen near the Higby Cemetery on 28 March (DAL, JTh), which is 20 days later than the first report last year for the state.

**Eastern Bluebird:** Away from more normal far eastern locales, observations from less typical locales included the sightings of three along the Canon City Riverwalk on 13 March (RM), up to two present at Lake Beckwith between 14 March and 11 April (DSi), one near Monson, *Huerfano*, on 27 March (CLW, BKP), one on Abbey Road, *Pueblo*, on 28 March (DSi), and two in Florence on 2 April (MPe, AB). The furthest west report was of a bird seen in Navajo SP, *Archuleta*, from at least 28 April through the rest of the period (PD, JBy, SA).

**Veery:** The first report was of a bird seen at CVCG on 10 May (m.ob.). Additional migrants reported away from breeding grounds included birds seen in *Bent*, *Boulder*, *El Paso*, *Larimer*, and *Pueblo* (m.ob.).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** Three Gray-cheeked Thrushes were reported this past spring. One was at CVCG on 8 May (GR), another was at the same location on 16 May (DEy, JMr, SM), and the third find was at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 28 May (BBr). The CBRC reminds observers that this species remains on the main statewide review list and that all observations of this species should be documented for potential acceptance to the formal state list.

**Swainson's Thrush:** The high count for the season was 40 seen at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 12 May (BM).

**Wood Thrush:** A Wood Thrush was at Last Chance, *Washington*, on 20 May (TL, CLW). Another was at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 19 May (MPe).

**Northern Mockingbird:** Mockingbirds are slightly unusual in the Denver metro area. Two were reported from that area during the period, one was west of Golden, *Jefferson*, on 11 May (MF) and another was in Broomfield, *Broomfield*, on 21 May (DEy). On the West Slope, mockingbirds are pretty much restricted to the lower elevation areas, so the bird seen at Lay, *Moffat*, on 15 May (FL) is interesting.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Four Golden-wings were reported this spring. These include a male at Box Springs Pond, *Crowley*, on 7 May (LS), a female at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 8 May (BSc, MPe, DFa, CLW), a male at the Neenoshe Res. Locust Grove on 18 May (DN, JBy), and a male at Pueblo City Park on 23 May (BKP).

**Tennessee Warbler:** Only nine reports of Tennessee Warbler were submitted, which is quite a bit lower than other years. Reporting counties included *El Paso*, *Kiowa*, *Larimer*, *Logan*, *Pueblo*, *Sedgwick*, *Washington*, and *Weld*.



**Nashville Warbler:** This species was first noted on 19 April from LCC (SO). Another was seen on 22 April at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso* (NGo). One was singing below Two Buttes Res. (JKr) on 7 May. The Plooster's observed a female in their yard in Boulder on 14 May. Another Nashville Warbler was seen at Dixon Res. on 22 May (RH). The sixth bird was at LCC on 24 May (DR).

**Lucy's Warbler:** Perhaps the most fascinating story of the spring season was the discovery of a nesting pair of Lucy's Warblers from Yellow Jacket Canyon in far western *Montezuma*. It was through the diligent and concerted search efforts of Mona & Dean Hill and Bill, John, and Inez Prather that led to the finding of the pair of birds on 16 May. Subsequent visits by many other birders through the month eventually led to the discovery of the nest cavity in a small cottonwood tree. This find represents the second known nesting of the species in Colorado, with the previous documented nesting occurring in 1913, also in *Montezuma*.

**Northern Parula:** Nineteen parulas were reported this past spring with the first observation coming from Niwot, *Boulder*, on 20 April (CLW). The other 18 observations came from *Boulder*, *Chaffee*, *Conejos* (a very good find by Grimes and Poe), *Kiowa*, *Larimer*, *Otero*, *Pueblo*, *Washington*, and *Weld*.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** A total of nine were seen. These included one at Colorado City on 7 May (DSi), one at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 15 May (GW), another was at Gregory Canyon, *Boulder*, on 17 May (PG), one was at Rock Canyon on 20 May (BKP), another on the same date at Jumbo Res. and two birds, also on the 20th, at Dixon Res. (JBn, RHa). On 21 May, a male was at CVCG (DAL, DEy, m.ob.). Lastly, Leukering spotted one at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 22 May.

**Magnolia Warbler:** Nine Magnolias, a fair showing, were observed during the spring. The first sightings came on 14 May when one was present at LCC (DSi, DJ, DAL) and another (present until the 16th was at the University of Colorado campus in *Boulder* (Crockett). Two birds were also seen on the 15th, one being at CVCG (LK, BGu) and another at CBR, *Pueblo* (BKP). On 17 May, another Magnolia was spotted at CBR, *Pueblo* (BKP, DEy), while a second bird was seen at Cow Creek, *Larimer* (JWr). On 24 May, two birds were observed in the state, one being at LCC (SMw) and another at Dixon Res. where it remained until the 26th (JDe, GLr).

**Cape May Warbler:** Always a nice find, Colorado was blessed with two this past spring. A male was present along Boulder Creek in Boulder between 10

and 15 May (LK, EZ, m.ob.) amid throngs of bicyclers, joggers, and outdoor “residents”. Another (sex not submitted) was at Dixon Res. on 14 May (DSm). If documentation for both birds are submitted and accepted by the CBRC, they would represent the 23rd and 24th records for the state.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Four Black-throated Blue Warblers were seen in spring, a relatively typical number for the state. The first was a male at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar on 13 May (DAL). A second male was present at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 15 May, while a third male was seen at CVCG on the same date (LK, LS). The fourth bird was a female observed on 22 May at CVCG as well on 22 May (IS, TS).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Only three Black-throated Green Warblers were reported from the spring. A male was seen at CVCG on 15 May (BGU), another male was at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 17 May (BKP, DEy, MPE, PGa), and another bird (sex not submitted) was at Dixon Res. on 29 May (Rha).

**Townsend’s Warbler:** Four reports, all males, were submitted for this uncommon to rare spring migrant. One was at Eads, *Kiowa*, on 28 April (BKP, JTr). Another was at Barr Lake SP on 3 May (GW). One was seen at Lake Hasty CG on 9 May (JRa). The last bird was observed at CVCG on 15 May (LK, BGU).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** Three beautiful males were seen in the state this past spring. The first was near Florence on 16 May (BKP, MPE, AB). Another was seen on 20 May at Gregory Canyon (PGe). The third bird was present at Sondermann Park, *El Paso*, on 23 May (AB, MPE, BM, m.ob.).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Two were observed during the spring. One male was at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, between 13 and 14 May (NGO, BKP, m.ob.). The other, also a male, was Lake Estes on 22 May (GM).

**Prairie Warbler:** This species was reported from two locations this past spring. The first was at Lower Queen’s Res., *Kiowa*, on 2 May (GW, GG, JKr, m.ob.), while the other was found on the opposite end of the month, on 31 May, at Doudy Draw, *Boulder* (MSm).

**Palm Warbler (Western):** In contrast to spring 2003 when 14 Palm Warblers were observed, only five were reported this past spring. One was present at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, between 14 and 17 May (TL, BKP). Two were seen at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 17 May (BKP, DEy, MPE, PGa). The other two birds were both seen on 22 May, one at Lake Estes (GM) and the other at CVCG (JP).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** Seven were reported from the spring season, all in eastern Colorado. The first was seen on 3 May at Lake Henry (SO).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** One of the most interesting reports was of a bird seen at the Monte Vista Cemetery, *Rio Grande*, on 6 May (LR); this species only gets reported every few years from the San Luis Valley. Another interesting sighting was that of a female at Castlewood Canyon SP, *Douglas*. There has been a territorial male present at Castlewood for a few years, though evidence of breeding has yet to be found. There are no breeding records for Colorado.

**American Redstart:** A total of 33 were noted from this past spring, which is a pretty good showing. The most interesting locations included a female seen at Uravan on 22 May (CDr) and a singing male at Sands Lake in Salida on 25 May (RM).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Only one Prothonotary was seen, that being a bird at Dixon Res. on 21 May (DSm).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** Five reports of this species came in for this past spring. The first was way up north at Tamarack Ranch, *Logan*, on 22 April seen by Martin and Lefor. The date of this sighting is the same as the first bird seen in spring 2003 as well. Others included one below Two Buttes Res. on 2 May (JKr), one at Lake Estes on 11 May (GM, SRo), another bird below Two Buttes Res. on 15 May (JBY), and one at Last Chance on 22 May seen by Vince K.

**Ovenbird:** A total of 25 were seen during the spring, all from the eastern plains. The first report was from Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 21 April (NGo), which is on the early side.

**Northern Waterthrush:** Observers reported 29 waterthrushes beginning 2 May from the following counties: *Baca, Boulder, El Paso, Fremont, Huerfano, Kiowa, Larimer, Prowers, Pueblo, and Weld*.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Spring 2004 had a good showing of Kentucky Warblers in the state, with at least five being reported. A male was at Van's Grove, *Bent*, between 24 and 25 April (DN, BKP). Another male (possibly the same bird as above?) was at the nearby Fort Lyon Wildlife Easement between 30 April and 1 May (JKr, m.ob.). Another male was at the Locust Grove along Neenoshe Res. on 17 May (DN). One was unfortunately a window fatality, found by Wollert, in Wiley, *Bent*, on 23 May. Lastly, a singing male was at Rock Canyon

between 25 May and 12 June (BKP, m.ob.). We hope all observers will provide documentation to the CBRC.

**Connecticut Warbler:** Always a rare find in Colorado, a probable Connecticut was seen on 28 May at Dixon Res. (RO).

**Mourning Warbler:** The spring of 2004 was also a great year for finding Mourning Warblers in the state, with a minimum of five being reported. The first, a male, was at the Neenoshe Res. Locust Grove on 13 May (DAL). On the next day, two male Mournings were seen, one being at Van's Grove (DN) and the other at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso* (BKP, m.ob.). On 20 May, two more male Mournings were seen, both by Luke. One was along the Platte River near Sterling, *Logan*, and the other was at Jumbo Res. If all these birds are documented and accepted by the CBRC, they would constitute the 22nd through 26th records for the state.

**Hooded Warbler:** As has been typical, this species was widespread this spring with reports from seven counties of eight birds. The first, a male, was at Lamar High School between 28 April and 1 May (BKP JTr, m.ob.). A female was present at LCC on 29 April (BKP, VAT, JTr), while a male was seen below Two Buttes Res. on the same date, lingering until 1 May (BKP, VAT, JTr, m.ob.). On 8 May, a male was observed at Meadow Creek in Colorado City (DSi, m.ob.). A male was also present between 14 and 15 May at Gregory Canyon seen by Boswell and Hansley. On 26 May (sex not submitted), another Hooded Warbler was at Manitou Lake (DEr, JJ). A male was seen on the 29th at Rock Canyon in Pueblo (RM). Two females were seen on the 28th, one at Dixon Res. present until 30 May (RO, RHa) and one at CVCG (GLr).

**Hepatic Tanager:** Four were seen near Interstate 25 Exit 42 in *Huerfano* on 21 May (LK, GW), where present last year. To the south, in *Las Animas*, a pair was seen and photographed near Tobe on 14 May (SOI).

**Summer Tanager:** Fewer Summer Tanagers were reported during the season (nine). The first was on 29 April in Lamar (BKP, VAT, JTr). Other counties in which this species was observed include: *Baca*, *Bent*, *Boulder*, *El Paso*, *Fremont*, *Larimer*, and *Pueblo*.

**Scarlet Tanager:** Six were seen during the spring, a high number for the state. A male was at Sands Lake in Salida between 4 and 5 May (RM). Another male was at CVCG on 10 May (GW, NP). On the following day, Guarente reported a female from the same location. Another female graced the presence at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo* (CLW, BKP, TL). A male was seen by Black in

Washington Park, *Denver*, on 17 May. Lastly, another male was Neenoshe Res. on 18 May (DN, JBy).

**Eastern Towhee:** The wintering bird from southwest Estes Park, *Larimer*, remained into the spring season, last seen on 17 March (JWr, SRo).

**Cassin's Sparrow:** Early were the four birds seen and photographed at the Campo Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek on 16 April (LK, GW).

**Rufous-crowned Sparrow:** Slightly out-of-range was the bird seen below Two Buttes Res. on 6 April (CLW).

**Black-throated Sparrow:** The most interesting report was the bird seen at Walden Ponds on 23 May (CC, AC, PGe). A report of one at Paradox, *Montrose*, on 29 March (CDr), is rather on the early side for the West Slope.

**Sage Sparrow:** Wayward Sage Sparrows included one at Lake Estes on 21 March (JWr, SRa) and one photographed at Murphy's Pasture in the Pawnee National Grasslands, *Weld*, on 5 May (TL, JBn).

**LeConte's Sparrow:** At least three of the wintering birds at the Fort Lyon SWA marshes lingered until at least 2 April (m.ob.).

**Fox Sparrow:** A "Red" Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca iliaca*) was present at Belmar Park, *Jefferson*, between 22 and 24 April (MC, DFa, m.ob.). Interesting "Slate-colored" (*P.i.schistacea*), the race that breeds in Colorado, reports included the wintering bird at Nucla that lingered until 18 March (CDr, BW) and one seen by Hansley at a relatively low elevation along the South Mesa Trail in *Boulder* on 25 April.

**Swamp Sparrow:** The last report for the season was a bird seen at Lake Beckwith on 2 May (DSi).

**White-throated Sparrow:** Reports of scattered birds came from the following counties, with the last being on 21 May at Jackson Res. SP (DEy, DAL): *Adams, Baca, Bent, Boulder, El Paso, Fremont, Mesa, Montrose, Otero, Prowers, and Pueblo*.

**Harris's Sparrow:** There was one West Slope report, that being of a bird that may have wintered at Nucla seen between at least 16 March through 6 May (CDr, BW). This is also the latest report in the state for the spring season.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Good numbers were reported again this past season (54), beginning from 1 May (five days later than last year) through the end of the period. One West Slope report came in, that of a male at Adams Lodge on the White River, *Rio Blanco*, on 28 May (DH).

**Painted Bunting:** Two were reported from during the season. A male was present at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, between 11 and 14 May (NGo), while a female was seen east of Fort Lyon, on 24 May (CLW).

**Bobolink:** Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory counts of Bobolink in the Steamboat Springs/Hayden area, *Routt*, yielded a minimum of 73 birds nesting in that area.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Birds returned to the Campo Lesser Prairie Chicken Lek area again this spring, where seen 3 April and 7 May (m.ob.).

**Orchard Oriole:** Rare finds indeed were the singles observed at Pastorius Res. on 9 May (JBy, SA), which may be a first county record, and a bird found by Simmons at Del Norte, *Rio Grande*, on 23 May, which would represent the second record for the San Luis Valley.

**Baltimore Oriole:** Unusual western observations of this species included one at Hatchet Ranch, south of Pueblo, on 6 May (BBH), a male present at Barr Lake (for the second year in a row) between at least 10 and 16 May (DEy, m.ob.), another bird at Hooper, *Saguache*, on 6 May (KM), which should represent the first San Luis Valley record, and a male at Endovalley in Rocky Mountain NP, *Larimer*, on 17 May (SRo).

**Scott's Oriole:** Semo found one along Road Canyon in southwestern *Bent* on 7 May. This general area supports a very small, and seemingly irregular, population of this species.

**White-winged Crossbill:** Quite a few White-winged Crossbills remained in Colorado through the spring season, following the excellent showing of the past winter. On 13 March, four were seen at Bakerville, *Clear Creek* (BSc, JS). Crossbills were also seen in late May during the CFO Convention trips in *Montezuma*, *Delta*, and *Mesa*.

**Lesser Goldfinch:** The most unusual locations this species was noted at this spring was the bird present at a residence in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 10 March (NK), and the male seen in Lamar between 9 and 10 March (DAL).

### Cited Observers

Mymm Ackley, Susan Allerton, Henry Armknecht, Larry Arnold, Parker Backstrom, Jason Beason (JBn), James Beatty (JBy), Mary Black, Maggie Boswell, David Bray (DBr), Bob Brown (BBr), ? Bucher, Pat and Tex Buckhaults (P&TB), Alan Burns, Mark Chavez, George Coffee, Cindy Cornelius, Allan Crockett, Alex Cruz, Bill Day (BDa), Cheryl Day (CDy), Justin Dee (JDe), Peter Derven, Coen Dexter (CDr), Lisa Edwards, Joe Elliot, David Elwonger (DEr), Dave Ely (DEy), Norm Erthal (NEI), Doug Faulkner (DFa), Dick Filby (DFi), Ted Floyd, Mike Foster, Peter Gaede (PGa), Peter Gent (PGe), Brian Gibbons (BPG), Susan Gifford, Maggie Glenn, Nancy Gobris (NGo), Gregg Goodrich, CJ Grimes, Bryan Guarente (BGe), BB Hahn, David Hallenbeck, Roy Halpin (RHa), Paula Hansley, Thomas Heinrich, Ann Hicks, Dona Hilkey, Mona and Dean Hill, Rachel Hopper, Marshall J. Iliff (MJI), Don Irwin, Dave Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Jeff Jones, Vince K. (?), Bill Kaempfer, Joey Kellner (JKr), Debbie and Steve Kennedy (D&SK), Loch Kilpatrick, Glenn Klingler, Nick Komar, Kay Lafreniere, David Leatherman (DAL), Gary Lefko (GLo), Jack Lefor, Paul Lehman, Tony Leukering, Rich Levad (RLe), Donald Lewis, Roger and Brenda Linfield, Greg Luger (GLr), Forrest Luke, Kalen Malueg, Joe Mammoser (JMr), Steve Mammoser, Ron Martin, Gary Mathews, Bill Maynard, Bill Miller (BMi), Lynne Miller (LMi), Rich Miller, Steve Mlodinow (SMw), Larry Modesitt (LMO), SeEtta Moss (SMs), Duane Nelson, Ric Olson, Steve Olson (SOI), Stan Oswald, David Pantle, Mark Peterson (MPe), Brandon K. Percival (BKP), Nathan Pieplow, Suzi Plooster, Jerry Poe, Bill Prather, Inez Prather, John Prather, Scott Rashid (SRa), John Rawinski (JRa), Lisa Rawinski, J & J Rees, Scott Roederer (SRo), Jacki Robbie (JRe), Joe Roller (JRr), Dotti Russell, Gene Rutherford, Ira Sanders, Tammy Sanders, Pearle Sandstrom-Smith (PSS), Larry Semo, Randy Siebert, Bill Schmoker (BSc), Jim Schmoker, Dick Schottler (DSc), Larry Semo, Scott Severs (SSe), Dave Silverman (DSi), Virginia Simmons, Dixie Smith (DSm), Margaret Smith (MSm), Debra Sparn (DSp), Steve Stachowiak (SSt), Karl Stecher (KSt), Carol Sullivan, Joyce Takamine (JTa), Janeal Thompson (JTh), Brent Thordarson, Jolan Truan (JTr), Van A. Truan (VAT), Tammy Vercauteren, Glenn Walbek, David Waltman, Eric Watson, Cole Wild (CWi), Chris Wood (CLW), Brenda Wright, Judie Wright (JWr), Mark Yaeger, Vic Zerbi, Eric Zorawowicz.

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Adult male Baltimore Oriole at Hatchett Ranch near Pueblo on 6 May 2004. Photo by BB Hahn.





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