



C.F.O.
Journal

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Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Nest

Photo/D. A. Bartol, Jr.

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The C.F.O. Journal, formerly the Colorado Field Ornithologist, is a journal devoted to the field study of birds in Colorado. Articles and notes of scientific or general interest, and reports of unusual observations are solicited. Send manuscripts, with photos and drawings, to Hugh Kingery, Editor, 869 Milwaukee Street, Denver, Colorado 80206.

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EDITORIAL PAGE

We exchange the C.F.O. Journal with almost every conceivable bird-related periodical publication in the United States and Canada and many foreign countries. Our copies of exchange publications are lodged in the library of Colorado State University. C.F.O. members wishing to utilize these materials may go to the library to use them, or may order them through the Inter-Library exchange, which operates in Colorado.

To use the Inter-Library Exchange, you may order them through your local library (at colleges, government agencies like the Bureau of Standards, and city libraries). C.S.U. will cause their delivery to your own library within 10 days.

Publications available are those issued by almost every Audubon Society in the country, birding associations, bird clubs, field ornithology clubs and the like. The list was published in the issue of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. We have used them to review outstanding publications like the Western Tanager (Los Angeles Audubon Soc.), the Loon (Minnesota Ornithological Society) and the Roadrunner (Maricopa Audubon Soc.).

* * *

Dave Griffiths, who retired this year as C.F.O. President, has been elected president of the Colorado Audubon Council, the coordinating group for the nine Audubon chapters in Colorado.

* * *

C.R. "Pete" Bryant, Manager of the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge for many years, has retired this fall. Many of us who have visited the refuge have met him and learned from him of the management techniques necessary to create and maintain a refuge in that high, somewhat dry valley. The recent publicity attending the Whooping Cranes which rest at Monte Vista on their way to and from their new Idaho nesting grounds attest to Pete's skill in providing a superb refuge for the cranes as well as for waterfowl.

* * *

The Manomet Bird Observatory solicits the records of any Coloradans who have periodic counts of shorebirds made during the 1976 autumn migration at one specific site. To contribute your information, contact Brian A. Harrington, Staff Biologist, Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts, 02345, for the forms. He also requests information on any color-marked shorebirds seen during the 1976 migration: species, date, location, description of the color marks, and particularly whether or not there were bands seen on the legs.

OBSERVATIONS OF NESTING - LONG-EARED OWLS

by Pete Moulton, Mike Moulton,
and Judd Sundine

Although a recent dearth of Long-eared Owl reports has led Colorado observers to term the species as "scarce" in this state, we have found it to be rather common in suitable habitats throughout the eastern plains region. Included in this paper are some notes taken during our observation of four nests of this species along a one-quarter mile transect in the immediate Denver area during the last Spring. We considered the apparent disparity between this kind of density and the small number of reports of Long-eared Owls and found three factors. These factors are also included in this paper so that more observers will find more Long-eared Owls and thereby help to improve the accuracy of our study of this species' population status.

Failure to recognize the species constitutes the first problem. On a few occasions we encountered observers who were just leaving our study area as we entered it; a majority of these birders mentioned that they had seen young Great Horned Owls at the sites. Diligent search in this area has yielded only one of that species and that bird was not seen after mid-December. This problem is most often related to inexperience and usually disappears after a few of both species have been observed. It does cause undue weighting of Great Horned Owl population reports to the detriment of Long-eared Owl records.

Knowledge of the Long-eared's habitat preference does not seem thorough or widespread enough to permit consistent observations which are essential to accurate population study. No more will be mentioned about this lack here, but a completed habitat description will be given for the nesting sites; this may be taken as typical.

Further, this bird is more nocturnal, prefers denser habitats, and is less inclined to flush than its larger relative. These habits can make the bird very difficult to find, even in the favored locations. Probing of likely thickets with more than casual attention often results in more observations.

(The habitat description is a very important aspect in this report; to aid the reader in conceiving an overall picture of the habitat, most botanical names of plants are appended as footnotes).

At an elevation of about 5100 ft., the area could be described as a mixed prairie. Dominant plants include Blue grama¹ and Buffalo-grass.² Both are persistent beneath an overstory of taller grasses such as Western wheatgrass,³ Little bluestem,⁴ Sand dropseed,⁵ Needle-and-thread,⁶ and Red three awn.⁷ These taller grasses are dominant because of little or no grazing.

The area in question could be called a swale or drainage. Associated with drainage is another one of the most common plants: the Sedge (*Carex filifolia*). It is rather peculiar that while the area is a drainage, only a few meters from the water it is so dry that only a few plants will survive. Prickly pear (*Opuntia*) and *Yucca* spp. along with a few scattered drought-resistant grasses. The point is that the conditions are such that there is a tremendously varied habitat within a very short distance.

It should be said here that all the nests were located in *Salix amygdaloides*, a short (10-15m), but dominant Willow tree. These Willows are not scattered but instead, they are bunched or grouped. The understory of these trees is tall grass. Cottonwoods⁸ are abundant but they were not used as Long-eared nest sites. The above mentioned trees are the only ones in the area.

Certain meadow type plants occur in this area. The plant that is dominant on both sides of the drainage is a medium-sized (6-10m) *Salix* spp. (probably *Salix caudata*). The plant is so thick that it would be impassable if not for existing trails.



Juvenile Long-eared Owl
Photo/Pete Moulton

Scattered throughout the area are two kinds of Sweetclover (*Melilotus alba* and *M. officinalis*). Alfalfa is also scattered throughout the area.

Thistles are very prevalent. The three main ones are *Carduus plattensis*, *C. ochrocentrus*, and *C. lanceolatum*. Other plants include *Euphorbias*, Sagebrush, Cheatgrass, and other Fescues.⁹ Scattered throughout the area is Mijt, Whitish-yellow columbine,¹² Milkweed,¹³ primrose,¹⁴ and various mustards. Stinging nettles,¹⁵ two kinds of Barley,¹⁶ and *Equisetum* are quite easy to find.

In this particular study it has been attempted to give the reader an insight into the flora with which the Long-eared Owl is associated. It is important for the reader to get a feeling for an area in which to look for Long-eared Owl nests.

Our observations began with the discovery of two nests 27 April, 1976; subsequently, two additional nests were located on May 1. The period of observation extended until June 26, when all juveniles had reached their first winter plumage. Throughout this period we were able to observe the sites approximately once a week, except for a two week hiatus in late May and early June. The nests were all located in old Magpie nests two to four meters above ground. The birds evidently used these nests as-is; no repair work was apparent. All nests were occupied on May 1 and three additional birds were found at roost. One nest was vacated at our approach and by climbing a nearby tree, we found

that the old bird was brooding five eggs. These were nearly spherical, and averaged slightly under one inch in diameter. They were whitish in color and the surface was dull. Photographs were taken of the site, the nest, and the eggs.

During observation, certain behavioral patterns were noted. The old birds were extremely reluctant to leave their nests and roosts; admittedly, we did attempt to disturb them as little as possible, and this may account for their sedentary behavior. Any bird that did flush stayed very close to the area and attentively watched the proceedings. The Owls were quite aggressive toward human interlopers, and one went so far as to attack us. No contact was made, much to our relief; this bird's talons are not to be despised. More often the activity seemed to be intended as a decoy, and the broken-wing act was foremost in this category.

These activities were accompanied by a variety of vocalizations. When young were in the nest, an adult would deliver a peculiar harsh squeal at a rate of six to ten per minute. When no young bird was evident, the call was a sharp double bark, "bek-bek," about eight times per minute. The first kind of call was uttered in flight and from an exposed perch, while the second was given from a perch. Bill-snapping was the most common used threat, and this kind of activity continued until the young were completed fledged. The only vocalization the young ever gave was a loud, plaintive

whistle with a rising inflection. This call was made when the young were fledged; it lasted about a full second, was infrequently uttered, and sounded like a Broad-winged Hawk call.

While the owls were aggressive toward humans they were tolerant of other members of their own species. Two nests were situated within 50 feet of each other, and one evening we observed two adults apparently hunting together in close proximity to these nests. Both nests were occupied at that time and we concluded that adults of two different nesting pairs were indeed hunting together. This may be yet another manifestation of the Long-eared Owl's famous gregariousness.

The young were first seen in white natal down. In this plumage they resemble large cotton balls. When they reach about three weeks of age, they assume a dark gray coloration with a whitish area between their eyes. At this time the "ear tufts" are visible but are not well-developed. They have well-developed flight feathers and may be able to fly in this period. We found them to be alert and two in this dress were found at least 100 feet from the nearest nest. An adult was present at this time but it does not seem likely that it carried them to that location as they were almost full-sized. The first adult plumage was reached by June 25, and it resembled the adult dress in all but the minutest details. The "ear tufts" were not fully grown and some of the bars and spots were sharper. This may be a function of fresh versus worn plumage.

Insofar as numbers are concerned, a total of eight adult Long-eared Owls raised at least eight young to fledging; this is a conservative total for the result, as we were absent for the emergence of the young from one of the nests. Even an average of two fledged young per nest compares favorably with the ratio which we have observed for Great Horned Owl nests on the plains, and that species is generally considered to be the most numerous owl reported in Colorado. **Therefore, we feel that a little constructive thought and some persistence in the proper habitat will lead to much more accurate evaluation of these two species' relative numbers.**

A final note concerning population declines in birds; these declines are often related to gunning and habitat destruction. In light of this it is rather surprising that the Long-eared has suffered very much in Colorado. Their secretive habits help to protect them from the first cause, and, in Colorado, habitat has been constructed in the form of shelter belts. The owls seem to find this habitat quite suitable and many of our observations have been in such belts. It can truly be said that this species is one of the very few which have actually benefited from its association with mankind.



Adult Long-eared Owl
Photo/Judd Sundine

Botanical footnotes, from Harrington, Manual of the Plants of Colorado, 1964.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> | 9. <i>Artemisia</i> (sp.) |
| 2. <i>Buchloe dactyloides</i> | 10. <i>Bromus tectorum</i> |
| 3. <i>Agrophron smithii</i> | 11. <i>Festuca</i> sp. |
| 4. <i>Andropogon scoparius</i> | 12. <i>Aquilegia thalictrifolia</i> |
| 5. <i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i> | 13. <i>Asclepias speciosa</i> |
| 6. <i>Stipa comata</i> | 14. <i>Oenothera canescens</i> |
| 7. <i>Aristida longiseta</i> | 15. <i>Urtica dioica</i> |
| 8. <i>Populus sargentii</i> | 16. <i>Hordeum jubatum</i> |

CFO FIELD TRIP

Monte Vista Refuge - March 20-21

We met Dave Griffiths, the leader, at the refuge about ten o'clock and talked about the whoopers with our ranger guide. He told us they were still sure that five birds were alive, although only two were on or near the refuge itself. Because people had been chasing the birds last fall, many of the areas we had visited on the last trip were closed to us and in fact, only the one circle is open to public travel. With the wind blowing quite strong, we toured the refuge and the roads on its boundaries but failed to find any whoopers although we saw many spring ducks. The official trip broke up about two o'clock but my group had planned to stay overnight and returned again that evening. We were fortunate to meet the refuge manager while we were checking the areas the ranger had pointed out as feeding and loafing areas for the whoopers and he directed us to a field two miles south of the refuge near a Community Church where we saw one whooper. Even among a thousand sandhills, the whooper stands out as an obviously larger pink bird among the sandhill gray. After a quiet Sunday morning, the wind picked up again as we entered Sand Dunes and forced us to curtail our birding, although we did see one Brown Thrasher there.

-Sophia Bogart-

CFO FIELD TRIP

Summit County, August 22, 1976

Mike and Pete Moulton led a field trip in the Kremmling area to check for possible Flammulated Owl territory, for birds in the most northerly and easterly pinyon pine habitat in the state (between Kremmling and Radium), and to look for shorebirds at the Williams Fork Reservoir.

Pinyon birds turned out to be typical, although some nesting birds had departed. Most conspicuous were Plain Titmice and Pinyon Jays. Shorebirds were scarce at the Williams Fork reservoir, as was good shoreline. The upper end of the lake did have about 75 Western Grebes.

Most interesting was the Moultons' approach to searching for owls. They look for a habitat which supports a substantial undergrowth of forbs, and therefore, of small rodents upon which owls will prey. Even though the Flammulated is an insect-eating owl, it will feed upon small mammals. In addition, this type of habitat attracts a large and varied insect life as well.

-H.E.K.-

NESTING OF BLUEBIRDS AND OTHER SPECIES IN BOXES

by

Helen B. Thurlow

with the help of Vincent and Roberta Winn

Thirty-eight bluebird houses were placed in the Manitou Experimental Forest, north of Woodland Park, Colorado, in the spring of 1975. They were placed in three different areas: 20 in the North Forest, 13 in the South Meadow, and 5 around the buildings comprising the station. They were monitored in 1975 by Mr. and Mrs. Dean McDermott and Ray Priestley of Woodland Park. By the end of the summer, only one house had been used by a House Wren. It was felt that the bluebirds might need two or three years to become aware of the houses, and also that the entrance holes might be too small to accommodate them. Since it was not possible for the McDermotts to monitor the boxes in 1976, I agreed to visit the forest and try to decide whether I might be able to carry on the project.

On April 13, 1976, I was taken through the forest by William Knott, the forester, who had drawn maps of the routes with the number and location of each house. The houses seemed to be well spaced to prevent crowding in a rather open forest of Ponderosa Pines interspersed with meadowland, and at varying distances from the dirt service road. They were placed directly on the trees at from 6 to 12 feet above the ground. Two were mounted on fence posts.

Materials and Methods

The North Forest is an east-facing slope which rises gradually to the west from Highway 67 at an altitude of about 7800 to 8000 feet. A few cattle are grazed within the area. Dead trees are removed rather quickly leaving fewer opportunities for hole-nesting birds. The South Meadow is about a mile and a half south of the station buildings on a west-facing slope which rises more steeply eastward to the Rampart Range Ridge at 9300 feet. The buildings are about one-tenth of a mile rise from Road #67 at the edge of the forest to the east. The bird houses around the buildings were also well placed but perhaps a little closer together.

The houses were identically made of plywood, well nailed together but with no way to open them for inspection and cleaning. The rear slab of the house was a board which extended about 5 inches above and below the box itself which was square. Two nail holes in each of the extended portions served to attach the houses directly to the trees with large construction nails. The entrance holes were definitely too small and had to be enlarged.

Other specifications for the houses are as follows:

Size of floor 5" x 5"

Depth of house 8"

Height of hole above the floor 6"

Diameter of hole 1½" (After enlargement for bluebirds)

Height above ground 5 to 10 feet.

(A hinge for easy opening and a hook for closing would be helpful; also makes cleaning the box easier).

Vincent and Roberta Winn agreed to help me and we started by taking some of the houses to the shop where they had to be taken apart to enlarge the holes. This required an electric drill bit and a wood rasp. The remainder were enlarged some time later by the forester who used a heavy metal reamer with the boxes in place on the trees. Inspections required a 6 foot ladder, a nail claw to pry the roofs up and a hammer to nail them down again, a crude and disturbing procedure. Since there was

not time before the nesting period to equip each box top with a hinge, they were attached with screws at the end of the nesting period. Then a single nail fastened the roof to the front edge of the box. All houses were in place by May 6, 1976. A complete circuit of all areas was a distance of eleven miles which was covered at each inspection.

Observations

For a Detailed Summary of the observations, see the Chart. In all columns except "Eggs Laid" the numbers refer to the number of houses or boxes.

Discussion

The forest is a known bluebird area, although I am surprised to find the majority of them to be Westerns.

The North Forest and the Station area had 100 per cent success in boxes used. The South Meadow was poor with only 2 boxes out of 13 used. The reasons for this are not clear. Strong winds always encountered in the South Meadow may have been a deterrent to nesting. By contrast, the North Forest seemed warmer and a quiet place with very little wind.

May was cold with rain and a two-inch hail fell in the forest in June. Nuthatches nested concurrently with Western and Mountain Bluebirds in May. The House Wrens nested in early June and the Violet-green Swallows not until late June and early July. Second nestings of bluebirds occurred June 30 until July 15. The two boxes on fence posts were used by a pair of Violet-green Swallows and of Mountain Bluebirds. The House Wren used the same box as in 1975. The swallows were disturbed most by our presence at the nesting site and one attacked the forester at the weather station and always swooped around us in the vicinity of the nest. The one box which was broken open and eggs removed was due, we felt, to human interference. It was visible from an active camping ground across the road from the North Forest entrance. Although we had keys to open the gates for the car, it was easy to trespass. After repair and replacement of the box, it was used again by Western Bluebirds which hatched 4 young. They were later found feathered but dead in the box, reasons unknown. Wildlife known to be in the forest are deer, coyotes, raccoons, porcupines, and Abert Squirrels.

Summary

Total nestings 33

Western Bluebirds	21	(includes 6 second nestings)
Mountain Bluebirds	7	(includes 2 second nestings)
Violet-green Swallows	3	
White-breasted Nuthatches	1	
House Wrens	1	

Total eggs laid 181 Birds fledged 129

Western Bluebirds	118	80
Mountain Bluebirds	39	30
Violet-green Swallows	14	13
White-breasted Nuthatches	3	2
House Wrens	7	4

1976 Observations of 38 Bluebird Houses

Date	Species	Total Boxes	Nest No Eggs	Eggs Laid	Incubating	Young	Fledged	Failures Nest	Empty Boxes
28 May 1976									
	W. Bluebird	13		63	13				
	Mtn. Bluebird	5		30	5				
	Wh-breasted Nuthatch	1		3	1				
	Empty	19	4						15
	Totals	38	4	96	19				15
8 June 76									
	WB	18	6 eggs missing ⁺¹	17	6	5		1 - Eggs Scattered	
	MB	5	5		5	4			
	Nuthatch	1			1				
	House Wren	1		6	1				
	Empty	13						3 - full of grass	10
	Totals	38	2	23	13	9		4	10
22 June 76								1-Box broken No eggs/birds	
	WB	18	4	9		10	1	1-4 dead birds messy nest	1-eggs scattered
	MB	5			1-6 eggs n.g.		4		
	Nh	1				1			
	H Wren	1		1	1				
	V. Gr. Swallow	3	2	2	1				
	Empty	10							10
	Totals	38	6	12	2+1-?	15	1	3	10
29 June 76									
	WB	29	3	5-3-2-WB 2d Nesting	3	6	6	1-4 dead birds 1-2 dead "	9
	MB	5				3	2		
	Nh	1				1			
	H Wren	1				1			
	Vgr Sw	2		5 + 5	2				
	Totals	38	3	20	5	11	8	2	9
					10.				

1976 Observations continued

Date	Total Boxes	Nest No Eggs	Eggs Laid	Incu-bating	Young	Fledged	Failures Nest	Empty Boxes	
16 July 76							1-Nest covered with ants		
WB	28	3	2-5-4 4-4 2d N.	5	3	3	1-Nest abandoned	12	
MB	5		5 2d N.	1	1	2		1	
Nh	1					1			
H Wren	1					1			
Vgr. Sw	3		4 eggs	1	2				
Totals	38	3	30	7	6	7	2	13	
5 August 76									
WB	28				5	2	1-House moved to another tree	21	
MB	5				2	2			
Nh	1							1	
H Wren	1							1	
Vgr. Sw	3				2	1			
Totals	38		0		9	5	1	23	
20 August 76							1-2 dead/2 fledged		
WB	28					4	1-5 eggs n.g. 1-2 eggs n.g.	21	
MB	5					1		4	
Nh	1							1	
H Wren	1							1	
Vgr. Sw.	3					2		1	
Totals	38		0			7	3	28	
26 August 76									
n.g. - No good	All boxes cleaned, hinged, and replaced on trees at about 5-6 feet from the ground.						1 Blue egg left in box full of grass in the very bottom.		
				11.					

SPRING MIGRATION 1976

by Bob Andrews

The spring migration of 1976 was generally slow and late, with many common species one-two weeks late and/or in unusually low numbers (passerines especially). As far as rarities go, the season did produce a number of excellent birds, but no new species were added to the state list (several were in 1975). A total of 312 species were recorded from Colorado in April and May 1976, compared with 344 for the same period in 1975 (HK).

* CFO Records Committee will review

Common Loon-Observers at both Denver and Durango feel there is a trend for this species to stay later in the spring. Late May reports this year were: 1 Bonny May 15, 1 Durango May 17, 1 Carbondale May 19-30, 2 Union Res. May 22, 1 CCRA May 29, 1 Pueblo late May.

Horned Grebe-A very late bird was at Barr June 4.

Green Heron-The bird that wintered at Durango remained until Apr. 26. At least 16 were reported from eastern Colorado Apr 29 to May 31.

Little Blue Heron-1 CF&I Lakes May 14(JL), 2 Hudson May 31(HH), for the 12th and 13th state records. (*)

Cattle Egret-1 Estes Park May 15(FO,WR) was a first for the locality; also reported from the usual spot of Latham Res. May 31(HH).

Great Egret-Only reports were single birds at Boulder Apr 3 and May 15.

Trumpeter Swan-A swan displaying several characteristics of the Trumpeter was seen by many observers on Valmont Res. at Boulder Apr 10-28, but the bird could not be definitely identified. There are 2 Colorado records.

White-fronted Goose-4 Barr Apr 3-5, 1 Grand Junction May 7.

Eurasian Wigeon-A male was seen on Barr Lake Apr 3 for the 7th Colorado record (BA,JC) (*).

Greater Scaup-4 were seen on Barr Apr 3.

Bufflehead-There were several late records: 7 Barr-MHDC May 23-27, 2 Union May 24, 2 CCRA May 29.

Surf Scoter-An adult male on Marston May 14(BBa, VT) was very unusual as most scoter records are late fall and early winter, and there are almost no records of adult males.

Ruddy Duck-Numbers down significantly, with peak at Barr 200 (vs. 690 in 1975)-this species appears to have regular, substantial fluctuations in the Denver area.

Hooded Merganser-Late records: 2 Twin Mounds Lake May 15, 1 Florida River, La Plata Co. May 15.

Sharp-shinned Hawk-About 22 were reported, from Apr 3 to May 29, with most in late April and early May.

Cooper's Hawk-18 reported, Apr 10-May 30.

Red-shouldered Hawk-1 adult was seen at Bonny Res. May 5(JR), 1-2 immatures were at Boulder May 7-25(BK,SL), 1-2 at Tamarack Ranch May 30(HH,BL), (All *).

Broad-winged Hawk-1 Chatfield Apr 24, 1 Barr Apr 29, 2 CCRA Apr 29, 1 Boulder May 9-23.

Osprey-Ten from E. Colorado and 2 from the southwest corner, mostly in April.

Peregrine Falcon-1 Adams Co. Mar 18, 1 La Plata Co. Apr 5, 2 Weld Co. Apr 24, 1 Larimer Co. Apr 28, 1 Adams Co. Apr 29.

Merlin-1 Jackson Res. Apr 10, 2 Pawnee NG Apr 24, 1 Ft. Collins Apr 30, 1 Boulder May 22, 1 Ridgway May 24.

American Kestrel-A heavy flight of 200+ was noted in Larimer, Boulder and Adams Counties Apr 28-29.

- Whooping Crane-4 came through the San Luis Valley, the last sighting on May 3.
 Common Gallinule-Quite unusual was 1 at Union Res. May 30-June 6(LR)(*).
- Black-bellied Plover-Highest counts came from the Arkansas Valley: 50-60 at L. Henry May 2 and 150+ at L. Meredith May 11. Three at Pastorius May 8 was a 2nd record for the West Slope.
- American Golden Plover-One in the flock of Black-bellieds at L. Henry May 2 in partial breeding plumage was unusual as there are few spring records.
- Whimbrel-2 at Highline Lakes, Mesa Co. Apr 27(HTy) was an unusual West Slope record. Probably the best flight on record for this species from Colorado was reported from Union Res. with 5 May 10, 44 May 11 and 90+ May 13(M & PM), in the same period 12 were at Barr May 12(BA).
- Upland Sandpiper-4 near Hudson May 8, 3 Pawnee NG May 16, 2 Red Lion May 28-31.
 Solitary Sandpiper-Late birds were at Chatfield May 23 and Barr May 27.
- White-rumped Sandpiper-4 Two Buttes Res. May 16, 9 Red Lion May 28-31.
 Dunlin-1 Boulder May 5 (BW), 1 Union May 7(PM).
- Short-billed Dowitcher-4 Union Res. May 24(M & PM, BW) (*):
 Stilt Sandpiper-1 at Pastorius May 8 was the 2nd West Slope record.
- Marbled Godwit-The only report of large numbers was 200+ at Highline Lake Apr 27.
 Hudsonian Godwit-1 Red Lion May 8(JR) and 1 also at Red Lion May 30(HH, BL) are the 7th and 8th records for the state, but they come from the most likely locality.(*).
- Black-necked Stilt-1 Barr May 10, several Highline Lake May 16, 1 CCRA May 19, 1 Lafayette May 21, 2 Union May 25.
- Laughing Gull-1 at Two Buttes Res. May 16(HK) is the 12th state record(*), this species is now reported from every migration season.
- Little Gull-Outstanding were the several reports of this bird; an adult in breeding plumage at Julesburg Res. May 8(JR) was the 2nd state record. One immature was at Union May 22-27 and joined by a second until June 11, with another observation June 27; plumage details indicate 3 different birds at Union (first found by PM, with many more observers seeing the birds(*)).
- Forster's Tern-1 at Ft. Collins Apr 11 was quite early.
- Common Tern-1 CF&I Lakes May 16(VT), 1 Union May 22(M&PM, BW), 1 Julesburg Res. May 28-31(BL).
- Barn Owl-2 were seen at CCRA Apr 8-29, 1-2 on RMA Apr 12-19, several at Two Buttes Res. Apr 30-May 1, and 1 at Bonny May 15.
- Long-eared Owl-A number of nests were located in Adams and Arapahoe Cos., mostly in low, dense deciduous thickets.
- Poor-will-One was well out on the plains at Bonny May 16.
- Hummingbird sp.-A female was seen at Bonny Res. May 5-6(JR); it could have been either Black-chinned or Ruby-throated(the latter would have been the first for the state).
- Hairy Woodpecker-A mountain race individual(*monticola*) was at Barr May 6, it may have been late but data is scanty because few observers make note of races of Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers.
- Cassin's Kingbird-1 was at CCRA May 17; most NE Colorado records are from the fall.
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher-1 at Bonny May 16 was well north of its normal Colo. range.
- Eastern Phoebe-1 Chatfield Apr 18-May 26, 1 Boulder May 8-9, 1 Aspen May 30.
- Purple Martin-Very unusual eastern Colorado records were a male at Barr Apr 29(BA) and a female at Ft. Morgan May 25(JRi)(*).
- House Wren-A very early individual was at Barr Apr 7.
- Winter Wren-The only report is 1 at Estes Park May 15.
- Bewick's Wren-A first county record was 1 at Barr Apr 29; Platte drainage records are few.
- Short-billed Marsh Wren-Notable was 1 at Bonny May 6-7(JR) and 1 at Julesburg May 16 (BK, SL, NS)(*).

- Curve-billed Thrasher-One at a feeder in Dillon in March was quite unusual as the species is seldom reported in northern Colorado and probably never before from the mountains(LB).
- Wood Thrush-1 Barr May 15-16(BA,LW), 1 Bonny May 15 (M&PM,JS).
- Gray-cheeked Thrush-A massive flight of Swainson's Thrushes on May 15-16 contained an unprecedented number of Gray-cheeks. With only 10 previous state records, at least 9 and perhaps 12 were reported, mostly from the weekend of May 15-16. 1 Boulder May 13(BL), 1 Boulder May 16(FrH), 2 Bonny May 15-16(M&PM,JS), several Julesburg Res. area May 15-16(SL), 1 Barr May 16(BA), 1 Boulder May 17(SL), 1 CCRA May 17(MS), 1 Crow Valley Park May 16(BL), 1 Julesburg Res. May 28-31(BL). All (*).
- Eastern Bluebird-1 was seen at Barr Apr 4.
- White-eyed Vireo-1 at Two Buttes Res. May 1(BA,BB,BK,SL,N&JS)was the 4th state record(*).
- Yellow-throated Vireo-1 was reported from Loveland May 2(JRy)(*).
- Philadelphia Vireo-1 at Boulder May 25(FrH) was the 18th state record.
- Black-and-white Warbler-Ten were reported from E Colorado Apr 28-May 30.
- Prothonotary Warbler-A male at Boulder May 8-12(m.ob)was the 16th state record(*).
- Worm-eating Warbler-2-3 were observed at Boulder May 8-20(m.ob.)
- Blue-winged Warbler-Quite unusual were the 3 reports of this species: 1 Two Buttes Res. May5(JR), 1 Cottonwood Canyon Baca Co. May 8-9(VDi,TE) and 1 at Barr June 6(BA); these are the 6th, 7th and 8th state records(*).
- Northern Parula-1 Waterton Apr 18, 1 Boulder Apr 21, 1 Boulder May 8, 1 Hack Ranch in South Park(first for that locality), 2 Waterton May 22.
- Yellow Warbler-1 at Waterton Apr 18 was rather early.
- Magnolia Warbler-1 Bonny May 15, 1 Boulder and 1 Longmont May 25.
- Cape May Warbler-1 male at Red Rocks May 9(DT) and 1 male at Boulder May 10-12(SL, BK,m.ob.)may have been the same bird; there are only 8 state records prior to this one(*).
- Black-throated Blue Warbler-1 female at Barr May 21 was the only one reported.
- Black-throated Gray Warbler-1 at Green Mountain, Jefferson Co. Apr 15 was the only one reported from NE Colorado.
- Townsend's Warbler-1 Barr May 15-16 was the only report of this scarce spring bird.
- Hermit Warbler-A male at Boulder May 20(RVZ) was only the 2nd state record(*).
- Chestnut-sided Warbler-3 Boulder May 8-27, 2 Pueblo May 17, 1 Pueblo May 21.
- Bay-breasted Warbler-1 Bonny May 14(M&PM,JS), 1 Kremmling May 20(PM,SS)(probably the first West Slope record), 1 Boulder May 22(SL), 1 Waterton May 22(HK), 1 Barr June 5-6(BA).
- Blackpoll Warbler-27 were reported this spring, all but 1(May 9 at Red Rocks) from the weekend of May 15-16.
- Prairie Warbler-A male at Bonny May 15(M&PM,JS,m.ob.)was the 3rd state record(*).
- Palm Warbler-The only one reported was 1 at Ft. Morgan Apr 25(JRi).
- Ovenbird-2 Bonny May 15-16, 1 Boulder May 20, 1 Lykins Gulch May 28, 1 Barr June 4.
- Northern Waterthrush-18 reported from May 9-26.
- Hooded Warbler-2 were seen at Boulder May 23-25(m.ob.).
- Wilson's Warbler-Normally scarce in spring, 13 were seen at Barr(only 1 in 1975).
- Canada Warbler-1 Colorado Springs May 25(ChC)
- Bobolink-10 Boulder-Longmont area May 11-29, 1 Estes Park May 20, 10 Tamarack Ranch May 28-31.
- Eastern Meadowlark-Again reported from Red Lion: Apr 11(JR), May 28-31(BL)(*).
- Baltimore Oriole-1 at Barr May 21 was the only one reported near the foothills.
- Rusty Blackbird-3 at CCRA Apr 8 were unusual as most records are from the fall,winter.
- Great-tailed Grackle-Up to 20 nesting in a cemetery at Monte Vista in May(m.ob.)(*).
- The species has occurred at that locality for several years.

- Common Grackle-An additional West Slope record was 1 at Grand Junction May 2.
 Western Tanager-A very strong flight was noted along the foothills May 22-23(65 at Waterton-Chatfield and 200 in Boulder area) but was absent farther out on the plains at Barr, where an early arrival was seen Apr 29.
 Scarlet Tanager-Quite notable were males at Boulder May 23-24(JR,m.ob.)
 Summer Tanager-1 near Durango May 7(GS), females at Barr May 23(BA)and Boulder May 24 (BA.SL).
 Cardinal-The wintering bird in Lakewood remained until Apr 17. Other reports were 1 at Denver May 26 and a male at CCRA May 29.
 Rose-breasted Black-headed Grosbeak-1 at Boulder May 22.
 Purple Finch-1 at Evergreen May 2(WB) was an unusual spring record(*).
 Gray-crowned Rosy Finch-1 on Squaw Mtn. May 19(WC)was very late.
 Lark Bunting-1 at MHDC Apr 9 was very early(an even earlier bird was at Union Mar 13-see winter season).
 Baird's Sparrow-A singing male at Red Lion May 8(JR) was notable as there are rather few records from Colorado.
 Rufous-crowned Sparrow-1 on Florida Mesa near Durango May 15(KS) was very unusual as this rather sedentary species is seldom reported away from SE Colorado.
 Field Sparrow-2 Two Buttes Res. May 1.
 White-throated Sparrow-10 reported from E Colorado Apr 29-May 18, and 1 at Aspen up to mid-May.
 Swamp Sparrow-1 Two Buttes Res. Apr 30-May 1.

Observers: 177

Aspen-David Michael; Bonny Reservoir-Mike and Pete Moulton, Judd Sundine; Boulder-Louise Hering-27 and Narca Schor-33; Denver-Bob Andrews-24; Durango-Kip Stransky-11; Evergreen-William Brockner-11; Estes Park-Warner Reeser-12; Ft. Collins-Ted Bodner-16; Ft. Morgan-Joseph Rigli; Grand Junction-David Galinat-3; Hack Ranch-Carol Hack and Kathy Hawkins; Longmont-Allegra Collister-34; McCoy-Mrs. Kenneth and Clark Ewing; Monte Vista NWR-Charles Bryant; Pueblo-Dave Griffiths-12 and Van Truan-6.

Channa and David Alles, Idabelle Arndt, Clotilda Barrett, Benton Basham, Verlie Beeler, Clair Billings, Chris Blakeslee, Linda Boden, Sophia Bogart, Christine Bonney, Bruce Bosley, Steve Bouffard, Roger Boyd, Donna Breganzer, Dan Butler, Casey Butler, Nancy Butler, Charles Campbell, Pilk Carter, Tonnie Casey, Ward Chadwick, Gloria Childress, Al Clark, Gary Clark, Kevin Clark, Olive Cobb, Ann Cooper, John Cooper, Irene Cruikshank, Camille Cummings, Rudy and Virginia Dionigi, Cathy and Vance Dittman, Joe and Alice Doyle, Patty EcheImeyer, Beth Edwards, Clarence Elbert, Thelma Elbert, Margaret Elliott, Robbie Elliott, Gary Emerson, Mrs. Ertl, Tony and Dick Esposito, Geraldine Everly, Randy Fairbanks, Margaret Gallup, Ken Griesen, Bill Gilbert, Vivian Gilbert, Jennie Goldberg, Herman Griese, Mary Griest, Jack Grugan, Fern Hack, Freeman Hall, Worth Hall, Paula Hansely, Ron Harden, Ramona Harris, Carol Haverkamp, Dorothy Hansen, Fred Hermann, Harold Holt, Fern Huffsmith, Barbara Hyde, Sidney Hyde, Bruce Johnson, Hugh Kingery, Barry Knapp, Joe Krieg, David Laliberte, Steve Larson, Charles Legros, Dean Leffingwell, Jerry Ligon, Gary and Becky Lucich, Bill Lybarger, Eleanor MacDonald, Thompson Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. William Marshall, Ann Means, Elizabeth Mekkelsen, Carl Merkel, Ken and Christine Mesch, Arch McCallum, Christine McColl, Eva McGregor, Lou Murphy, Melanie Murphy, Dan Nelson, Willie Nelson, Karen Nicky, Frances O'Neal, Ruth Osgood, Marian Patterson, Brian Peck, Floyd Pendell, Roanna Raich, Jane Fitz Randolph, Paul Rechel, Jennifer Rechel, Jack Reddall(JR.), Leona Rowe, Ron and Audrey Ryder, Wilhelmina Schnucker, Susan Seeds, Scott Sefesta, Gail Shickley, Narca and Joshua Schor, David

Silverman, Judy Sisler, Mildred Snyder, Bob Spencer, Dale Stevens, Allen Stokes, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stull, Berene Sullivan, Rosamund Sullivan, Judd Sundine, Liz Taylor, Don Thatcher, Steve Thide, Frances Thide, Merle Thielen, Edna Clare Thomas, David Thorne, Jo Trainor, Howard Travis, H. Traylor, Van Truan, Ellen Valentine, Dean Valentine, Tom and Ridi Van Zandt, Art Wainwright, Bruce Webb, Martha Ann Webber, Lois Webster, John Wescott, Pat Wheat, Grace Wiegman, Craig Williams, Jeff Williams, Howard Winkler, Elinor Worley, Lynn Yancy.



Little Gull, Union Reservoir, May 27, 1976

Photo/Pete Moulton

SOUNDS OF THE BARRED OWL

Walking through dense hemlocks will often flush one from the lower to middle branches of a large hemlock. We look for ear tufts if we can possibly see them, to establish if we have a Barred or Great Horned. The Great Horned have a tendency to hoot about sundown on mild days in early winter on some evenings we do not hear them at all.

As you are undoubtedly aware the Barred will characteristically hoot 8 times, the Horned, 5. Also the Barred has an unearthly shriek it likes to utter occasionally which is a real hair-raiser and probably has something to do with the panther and lynx screams so prevalent in frontier stories. Also, the Great Horned immature has a strange long-drawn-out-un-owl-like call usually uttered between dusk and dawn between about May 15 and September 15. This call is of a whistle quality with the suggestion of a mammalian origin and apparently is used to guide the adults to wherever the young, long since out of the nest but still dependent, are situated.

The Barred gives a ludicrous double noted "ooh-ah" on a higher key at the end of its hooting performance.

We found that crows circling and cawing frequently designate the perch of either a Barred or Great Horned.

GENERAL NOTES

KING RAIL - FIRST COLORADO RECORD

On June 12, 1976, at about 7 a.m., when Carolyn and I went to CF & I Lakes, we stopped near a marshy area on the southwest side of the south lake. There, off to the side of a group of Cinnamon Teal, I saw a bird nearly the size of the teal, but on longer, greenish legs and with a long, sharp-pointed orange-marked beak. I recognized the bird as a King Rail (Rallus elegans) which I had seen before in its usual geographic location much farther east and south. It was quite out in the open, so that we were able to watch it for some time.

It had a rich chestnut-brown breast and neck, black and white stripes on its lower belly with a white patch under a short-pointed tail, and a brown-striped back with chestnut patches on the wings. Things that stood out to me about it was the size--the only comparable rail would be the Clapper Rail (Rallus longirostris), which is much grayer and more of a salt marsh bird; rich chestnut brown on neck and upper breast; the shoulder or forewing; reasonable long greenish legs; long dark beak; its size, probably two to three times the size of the Virginia Rail; and the orange markings on the side for almost its full length. It walked in the typical pumping fashion of the rails and never seemed to get tired of clucking once it responded to a recording.

The bird answered readily to a recording of its voice, which is a loud "kick kick" sound; upon such occasions it came out of the marsh vegetation and strutted around, though not far from cover at any time. Although it was called out as often as three times in a day, it still stayed. It got to where it wouldn't come or answer a recorder in the afternoon, after the first week. It did answer the recorder and followed a Colorado Springs group downstream somewhat like a tame chicken, although staying close to cattail cover all the time. When it came out in the afternoon it was mostly to challenge the recorder. It behaved like an adult male, and answered King, Clapper, and Virginia Rail calls.

CF&I Lakes, 7 miles south of Pueblo, are two large shallow storage lakes owned by CF&I Steel Corporation. Three large isolated cattail marshes are located in the area. The King Rail chose the southernmost one, where an old channel had silted in until there was just a depression left that has water in it only part-time. The marsh is an ideal habitat--cattails with some grassy marsh.

A "Rare Bird Alert" was effected, and by June 19, nearly 25 people had seen it. The first weekend it was sighted, it would come quite close to observers and then if it became spooky would fly short distances--50 to 100 feet--sometimes directly overhead, so that all the field marks could easily be observed. At least four people have photographed it, and Betty Field from Colorado Springs recorded its voice.

How long it stayed, nobody knows for sure. It reached the point where it would not respond to a recorder and was very wary. July 3, 1976 was the last time it was seen.

-Dave A. Griffiths-

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER - OBSERVATIONS OF INTERACTION WITH AMERICAN KESTRELS

Area: Lower Rock Creek valley, one mile above confluence with Colorado River, near McCoy, Eagle County, Colorado. Pinyon pine juniper country with cottonwoods, alders, willows in creek valley. Most observations localized on one side of valley, and in two partially dead cottonwood trees.

CLARK'S NUTCRACKER

- May 2 - 5 Clark's Nutcrackers (Nucifraga columbiana) chasing an American Kestrel (Falco sparverius).
- May 9 - One Kestrel and 5 Clark's Nutcrackers seen in same area.
- May 11 - 10 or more Clark's Nutcrackers flocking in north meadow, flying back and forth across valley.
- May 12 - 2 Kestrels in upper meadow. Later 2 Clark's Nutcrackers were chasing one Kestrel.
- May 13 - 6 Clark's Nutcrackers vocally harassing a Kestrel which was sitting on a dead top limb of a cottonwood tree. The nutcrackers were scoffing or mocking as they flew about and perched in the same tree. Later in the day, 3 or 4 Clark's Nutcrackers were observed harassing 2 Robins, apparently trying to get them away from their nest. This was perhaps 300 feet away.
- May 14 - 4 Clark's Nutcrackers pestering the Kestrel near the nest located in an old flicker hole in a partly dead cottonwood tree. The hole was about 35 feet above the ground.
- May 16 - 4 Clark's Nutcrackers pestering the Kestrel in the same tree.
- May 20 - 5 Clark's Nutcrackers again pestering Kestrel at nest site. The birds would perch in the tree and make their irritating calls. A Kestrel flew out of the nest and sat in the top of a nearby partially dead cottonwood tree. It seemed to ignore the annoying birds.
- May 30 - 6 Clark's Nutcrackers harassing Kestrel at nest area. One young bird was out of the nest and perched in the nearby tree with a parent bird above. The nutcrackers stayed close by, perched in the tree above the nest and also in the tree where the hawks sat. Every so often one or two would dart by the Kestrels, all the time making their raucous calls. When the young Kestrel flew from one branch to another, a Clark's Nutcracker flew at him.
- June 1 - One Kestrel near nest. 3 Clark's Nutcrackers fussing about in tree where nest was located.

No further notations were made of both species in the same area at the same time, but I was absent for a while. During July, 1 or 2 Clark's Nutcrackers were seen occasionally, but not until July 21 was a Kestrel observed flying above the meadow. Again one was seen July 31.

Why this behavior on the part of the Clark's Nutcracker? How like the "cat-calling," contemptuous ridiculing, and bullying exhibited by groups, especially the young, in human society. Perhaps these were young nutcrackers.

A.M. Bailey in Birds of Colorado reports that the Clark's Nutcracker breeds early, in March and April. "After the nesting season...the nutcrackers roam widely." About 7:30 in the evening of May 14 a flock of 15 Clark's Nutcrackers were observed flying above Rock Creek canyon about six miles north of the Kestrel's nest area, presumably heading for higher country and the night's roost.

-Margaret Ewing-

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD - UNUSUAL NESTINGS?

During early June 1972 Mrs. Bartol (Ellen) and I discovered a female Broad-Tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) building a nest astride a protected limb located about 8 feet over running spring water in Castlewood Dam State Park. Photography was taken through the successful fledging to two young.

During late June 1973 Ellen and I observed an incubating Hummer on the same, but repaired nest. Photography was again obtained through the successful fledging of two young.

During late June 1974 we repeated observations and photography of the same nest and activity through July 5. However, we returned to the site on July 6 to find no activity. After a reasonable time, I approached the site and examined the nest. Both immatures were dead - ostensibly starved. I removed them for use by the Biology Department of Colorado College (see photo).

During late June 1975 we returned to the same nest and site to witness a repetition of the 1972, 1973, and 1974 nesting observations. The feeding pattern progressed very well into mid July 1975. In late July we returned to find the nest and immatures missing. However, a female Broad-Tailed Hummer did buzz us several times when we neared the site.

During June - July 1976 we found no activity, of the nature reported upon, at the site.

1. Was the female Hummer of 1972 the same parent in 1973, 1974 and 1975?
2. Was the same nest site in use before 1972?
3. Did offspring of the 1972 fledging use the site after 1972?
4. Why did the 1974 immatures apparently starve?
5. Were young successfully fledged in 1975?
6. Who or what predation of the nest occurred in 1975?
7. Why was there no nesting at the site in 1976?

We do not know...

-Dominic A. Bartol, Jr.-

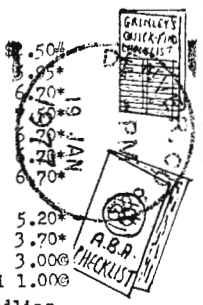


Immature from 1974 nest
Photo/Dominic A. Bartol, Jr.

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