



C.F.O.
Journal

No. 34, Summer, 1978

Horned Lark

Sketch by Joseph C. Rigli

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The C.F.O. Journal is a quarterly 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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THE FALL MIGRATION--1977

By Peter Moulton *

The fall bird migration got underway quite early this year, as many breeding species, especially those which frequent such wetland habitats as marshes, swamps, and mountain meadows, deserted their nesting grounds almost as their young fledged. Simply stated, these habitats could not survive the strain placed on them by severe drought conditions, and they were too dry and too shrunken to support their usual populations. Additionally, the cone crop was extremely poor throughout the mountains with a concomitant decline among cone-dependent species.

On the other hand, the situation was not entirely negative; the uniformly mild weather did nothing to improve the most seriously affected habitats, but it did allow some of the more drought-resistant species to linger in the state much longer than usual. A few species actually benefited from the dry conditions: shorebirds, for example, found vast expanses of available mudflats, and they were impressively numerous through most of the season. Insects and waste grain were fairly plentiful and the species that depend on these food sources fared reasonably well. Falconiform raptors appeared in good numbers and excellent diversity, and a wide variety of owls turned up, though some, such as the Screech Owl, were disappointingly few. Interestingly, the deepwater species were fairly common and amazingly diverse, even though nearly all lakes and reservoirs were at minimum water levels.

In all, observers reported some 317 species this fall, a rather high number in view of the severe climatic conditions and consequent habitat deterioration. It was not a season for spectacular rarities, although some highly unusual birds did occur; rather, it was a season for good numbers of some of the more uncommon species. Reporters added nothing new to the state list, but did locate a Red-throated Loon at Denver, two Black Phoebes at Durango, and a Bendire's Thrasher at Ft. Morgan. Of the uncommon species that appeared in unusually great numbers, perhaps the Red Knot, Parasitic Jaeger, and Common Tern made the strongest flights.

LOONS AND GREBES: Common Loon--at least 30 observed; earliest 2 at Union Res. 8/14-15 (BK, TVZ), and last at Chatfield Res. 11/24. It was widespread in Durango area from 10/18 on (KS). . . Arctic Loon--a total of 8: 2 at CCRA 10/22 (DKI,DL), 1 at CCRA 11/3 (JJC), 1 at Chatfield 11/19-27 (JR), 3 at Pueblo Res. 11/25 (JL); 1 at Shadow Mt. Res. 10/28 (DAJ) a very unusual Western Slope record. . . Red-throated Loon--for the second consecutive fall, this rare species was reported in Colorado, this year 1 at CCRA 11/25 (JR). . . Red-necked Grebe--well-reported, with 5 individuals listed: 2 at Chatfield 10/29 (FJ), 1 there the next day (DW,JW); 2 at Chatfield 11/19 (DKI,DL), and 1 at Union Res. 11/24-25 (m.ob).

PELICANS, HERONS, AND IBIS: White Pelican--observers found some large concentrations at Riverside Res.: 1000 on 9/25 (EHPS), and 1400 on 10/5 (GM); latest, 40 at New Windsor Res. 11/13 (MJ). Unusual, 1 at Lake Granby 10/7-11 (DAJ). . . Double-crested Cormorant--a field trip to n-c Colorado lakes produced 410 birds on 9/4 (DFD) for the seasonal high;

* 8050 Niwot Road #35, Longmont, Colorado 80501.

latest, 2 at Chatfield 11/19. Again this fall, as last, it occurred in the Durango area: 1 at Totton 10/11 (KS). . . Green Heron--1 at Sawhill Ponds 8/25-9/2 (BAS), 1 at Beebe Draw 9/15 (PGo), 1 at Sawhill 10/8 (BAS), and quite a late bird at Pueblo 11/27 (JL). . . Little Blue Heron--1 at Hygiene 8/22 (TVZ), and a possible at Barr Lake 8/13. . . Great Egret--observers found 17 this fall, all on the Eastern Slope. Snowy Egret--maximum count, 75 in n-c Colorado 9/4 (DF0). Black-crowned Night Heron--only small numbers noted, nearly all in n-c Colorado; latest, at Sawhill Ponds 11/25 (BAS). . . Yellow-crowned Night Heron--only one report, 1 at Barr L. 8/21-22 (DF0). . . Least Bittern--one at Pueblo Res. 10/9 (E9); this may represent a new extreme for late departure, but it is so secretive that such dates are likely not true indicators of the extent of its occurrence in Colorado. . . White-faced Ibis--7 at Parr L. 8/21-22 (DF0), 1 at Sawhill Ponds 8/23, and 15 at Totton 8/17 to about 9/1 (KS).

SWANS AND GEESE: Whistling Swan--earliest, 4 at L. John 12/29 (PGo); seasonal maxima, 25 at Browns Park NWR 11/18 (GLD) and 28 at Chatfield 11/19 (DF0). . . White-fronted Goose--eleven reported 10/1 to 11/18. . . Snow Goose--earliest was 1 at Julesburg Res. 10/1 (HH), but the vast majority of reports came from mid-November on; seasonal maxima were 78 at Barr 11/13 (JR) and 100 at Browns Park 11/19 (GLD). A Blue/Snow intergrade was at McCalls L. 11/24-25 (m.ob.). . . Ross' Goose--1 imm. at Barr 11/13 (JR), and 3 at Chatfield 11/24-27 (HK, RA, PG, JR).

DUCKS: Gadwall--remained throughout the fall, but population smaller than usual; maxima were 700 at Browns Park 8/24 and 10/27 (GLD). . . Cinnamon Teal--maximum 800 at Browns Park 8/24, and latest reported 175 there on 10/27 (GLD). . . Wood Duck--22 observed, including 5 Western Slope reports: 1 female at Echo Canyon Res. 8/9-16 (KS), 2 males at Aspen 11/11-30 (ECT), 1 male at Ridgway 10/13-11/12, and a female there from 11/29 on (JRG). . . Redhead--maximum, 4000 at Boulder 11/12 (DF0). . . Ring-necked Duck--seemed somewhat scarce this fall; present all fall on the Western Slope, with a maximum of 200 at Browns Park 11/30 (GLD); on the Eastern Slope the first birds arrived at Pueblo 9/17-18. . . Canvasback--widespread in small numbers from late August until the end of the season, most reports coming before November; high count, 100 at Browns Park 10/27 (GLD). . . Lesser Scaup--numbers reduced again this fall as the main flight seemed not to have arrived by the end of Nov. . . Common Goldeneye--the arrival of 5 at Browns Park on 8/24 may represent a new early extreme. . . Barrow's Goldeneye--at least 5 Barrow's were seen this fall, all in Longmont and Estes Park, from 11/6 on. . . Bufflehead--the most common diving duck in the Durango area from 9/16 on (KS); on the Eastern Slope, the main flight arrived about 10/15. Most departed by mid-November. . . Oldsquaw--one at Union 11/13 (SL, BW, m.ob.), 4 there 11/24-25 (m.ob.), and the last 11/27 there (PH). . . White-winged Scoter--2 at CCRA 11/3 (JJC), an adult male at Gaynor L. near Longmont on 11/6 (MHPM), 1 at Barr 11/6 (JR), 1 female or imm. at Totton 11/28 (KS), and an imm. male collected at Pastorius 11/30, specimen to Ft. Lewis College (fide KS). . . Surf Scoter--4 birds: 1 at Fossil Creek Res. 11/5 (MJ), 1 at Chatfield 11/19 (DKI, DL), 1 female or imm. at Clover Basin 11/24-27 (mob.), and a most unusual Western Slope report of an adult male at Williams Creek Res. 11/25 (KS). . . Black Scoter--one, an adult male at Windsor L., Denver 10/28-11/2 (JM, m.ob.). . . Red-breasted Merganser--the 22 birds were all at Chatfield or Boulder Co., except one at Jackson Res. 10/22 (MJ), which was also the earliest.

VULTURES, HAWKS, AND EAGLES: Turkey Vulture--latest were 6 at Castlewood St. Park 9/25 (JR) and 1 in Boulder Co. the next day (BAS) . . . Sharp-shinned Hawk--48 reported throughout the state. . . Cooper's Hawk--35 noted, all but 4 before 11/1, and nearly all in or near the mountains on both sides of the Continental Divide. . . Red-shouldered Hawk--quite rare was an adult seen 2 mi. east of Ft. Collins 9/2 (BM) . . . Broad-winged Hawk--a dead bird picked up 1.5 miles east of Grant 9/3, delivered to Den. Mus. of Natural History (HH); a live bird at Evergreen 9/22-23 (ECT, m.ob.) . . . Swainson's Hawk--Denver Fall Count listed 25 on 9/10 for a maximum. . . Rough-legged Hawk--again this year the earliest fall arrival was in sw Colorado: 2 at Hatcher Res. near Pagosa Spgs. on 8/23 (KS); elsewhere, they began to arrive in early October, but in low numbers--only 37 listed statewide. . . Ferruginous Hawk--about 38 listed, 37 on the Eastern Slope and 1 at Red Mesa on 10/28 (KS). . . Osprey--13 reported 9/11-10/23. . . Peregrine Falcon--3 reported, one near Ft. Collins, 2 at Durango. . . Merlin--in contrast to low numbers reported last year, 24 were listed this fall; earliest was 1 at Ridgway on 8/3 (JRG).

QUAIL, PHEASANT, TURKEY: Ring-necked Pheasants--It appears likely that the reduced population can be accounted for by a combination of drought and burned fencerows and the consequent decline of suitable nesting habitat. . . Turkey--87 reported, all in the Front Range from Ft. Collins to San Isabel.

CRANES AND RAILS: Whooping Crane--Two 2 year old birds migrated into MNWR this fall, along with 4 young of the year; unfortunately, one of the chicks flew into a fence and perished (MTN). The only report away from the refuge was 1 (possibly 2) at Ridgway 11/8 (Jwh) . . . Sandhill Crane--began to arrive at Monte Vista in mid-August, peaked at 11,000, and proceeded southward quite rapidly (MTN); elsewhere on the W. Slope, they were scarce at Hotchkiss (TC), and 15 noted at Ridgway 11/8 (Jwh). On the E. Slope, they were seen from 9/10-11/13, peaking during the last 10 days of October: 600-1000 at Barr 10/22, and 3000 along the S. Platte in Weld Co. 10/29 (RA, PG, MM, PM, JS, LS) . . . Sora--latest on the E. Slope was 1 at Sawhill Ponds 10/10; latest on the W. Slope, 1 at Durango 10/25 (KS); the continuing drought really seemed to reduce Colorado's populations of rails, as suitable habitats were few and far between all through the migratory and nesting seasons.

PLOVERS: Semipalmated Plover--at least 33 reported, all from the E. Slope 8/13-9/17, the latter the date Pueblo's fall count listed 16 . . . Piping Plover--2 at Barr L. 8/11 (RA), and 4 there 8/13 (DFD). A late one at Jackson on 9/3 (JR) . . . Snowy Plover--22 at Queens L. 8/7 (DKI), and 25 on the Pueblo Fall Count 9/17-18. . . Mountain Plover--250 east of Ft. Collins 9/4 (CMS, SBT) . . . Am. Golden Plover--1 at CCRA 10/1 (DL) and 10/2 (DFD); 1 at Union 10/16-24 (BB, PG, PM, TR) . . . Black-bellied Plover--a few on the E. Slope 8/11-10/29; the only W. Slope report was 1 at Pastorius Res. 10/21 (EF), for what seems to be the first Durango area fall record.

SANDPIPERS: Ruddy Turnstone--1 at Barr L. 8/11 (RA), 1 in n-c Colorado 9/4 (DFD), 1 at Union 9/14-19 (CE, SL, m.ob.) . . . Long-billed Curlew--3 reports 8/7 to 9/10. . . Numenius sp.--a rather short-billed Curlew observed in flight 9/7 near Ft. Morgan, but distance prevented exact identification (JCR) . . . Upland Sandpiper--

1 at Barr 8/11 (RA), 1 at a small pond just south of Barr along Tower Road 8/14-16 (BK, RA); a strong possibility exists that all refer to the same bird. . . Willet--only 4 noted, all in n-c Colorado. . . Lesser Yellowlegs--high count, 85 at Barr 8/21-22 (DFO), and the latest 2 at Sawhill Ponds on 11/5 (BAS). . . Red Knot--a strong showing of 8 individuals: 1 at Riverside 8/7 (PGo, GM), 1 at Union 8/13-14, (CE, SL m.ob.), 5 at Union 9/3-5 (DFO, FH, BK, SL, PM, m.ob.), 2 of which remained until 9/11, and 1 at Jackson 10/2 (HH). . . Pectoral Sandpiper--about 41 listed, all on the E. Slope; earliest were 5 along Tower Road 8/13 (DKI), and the latest, 6 at Pueblo Res. 11/25 (JL). . . Baird's Sandpiper--high counts were 1300 in n-c Colorado 9/4 (DFO) and 605 on the Denver Fall Count 9/10. 1 at Totton on 9/9 was a rare Durango fall record (KS). . . Dunlin--exceptionally early was 1 at Hygiene on 8/22 (TVZ), but all other reports came in November, 5 birds 11/13-24. . . Stilt Sandpiper--again this fall, large numbers of this species occurred on the plains, and 2000 counted on a DFO field trip to the n-c Colorado lakes on 9/4. Western Sandpiper--some very large concentrations occurred, with 5035 listed on the Pueblo Fall Count. . . Buff-breasted Sandpiper--1 in n-c Colorado 9/4 (DFO), and 1 at CCRA on 9/7 (TMar). . . Black-necked Stilt--possible breeding was noted at Boulder, as the 2 adults that summered there were seen with a young of the year on 8/27 (BK, SL). . . Red Phalarope--a rare Red was at Union 9/13-14 (JRo, BW, m.ob.). . . Northern Phalarope--good numbers reported with a maximum of 51 on the Denver Fall Count 9/10; latest, 1 at Union on 10/16 (VD, TE).

JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS: Parasitic Jaeger--Colorado observers found 6 jaegers this fall, all of this species, and all on the E. Slope: 1 dark-phase adult at CCRA 8/13 (TMar); at Union 1 light-phase adult 8/13-14 (CE, SL, MM, PM, m.ob.), 1 imm. 9/3-4 (FH, m.ob.), 1 light-phase adult 9/9-14 (SL, m.ob.); 1 light-phase adult at Chatfield 9/17 (DFO), and 1 imm. at Red Lion on 9/30 (HH). The ratio of adults to immatures seems remarkable. . . Herring Gull--earliest were 1 adult and 1 (possibly 2) immatures, in unspecified plumage at Riverside on 8/13 (DKI). Most arrived on the E. Slope about mid-October, but numbers were generally low. . . Franklin's Gull--common to abundant on the E. Slope, with a representative high of 5780 on the Pueblo Fall Count 9/17-18. . . Bonaparte's Gull--migrants began to appear on the plains by mid-August but no major buildup was reported. . . Sabine's Gull--a strong showing of 9 birds, all on the E. Slope: 1 adult and 1 imm. at Union 9/11 (PG, MM, PM); about 4 occurred at Union altogether, the latest 1 imm. on 11/5-6 (MJ, PM). Others included 1 ad. at Sloan's L. 9/25 (JRo), 2 imm. at CF&I Lakes 10/2 (EB), 1 at Pueblo Res. 10/9 (EB), and 1 imm. at L. John 10/16 (PGo). . . Forster's Tern--about 34 reported, to 10/9. . . Common Tern--about 52 reported; earliest was 1 ad. at Union 8/21 (PM), and the latest 1 imm. at CCRA on 9/25 (JR). Two notable concentrations at Union involved 16 (12 ad., 4 imm.) on 8/28 (BK, MM, PM), and 32 birds on 9/9 (SL, m.ob.). . . Least Tern--2 of this rare species were at Chatfield 10/1 (FJ).

PIGEONS, CUCKOOS, OWLS: Band-tailed Pigeon--a poor wild food crop in the Durango area resulted in reduced numbers there, and the population was the smallest in 12 years in the Evergreen area (KS, WWB) latest were 10 at Haystack Mt. on 10/8 (BAS). . . Yellow-billed Cuckoo--

[Continued on Page 20]

LIBRARY EXCHANGES AVAILABLE TO C.F.O. MEMBERS

The following is a list of the periodicals received in exchange for the C.F.O. Journal at Colorado State University Libraries. Members desiring the articles from one of these publications may submit a request for an Interlibrary Loan at the local public or academic library. Be sure to include the publisher when placing your requests.

<u>National and Regional Publications</u>	<u>Birding</u> . American Birding Assn., Austin, Texas. <u>News</u> . Inland Bird Banding Assn., Laurel, Maryland. <u>North American Bird Bander</u> . Cave Creek, Arizona. <u>Western Birds</u> . California Field Ornithologists, Del Mar, California.
Alabama	<u>Alabama Birdlife</u> . Alabama Ornithological Soc., Auburn.
Arizona	<u>Roadrunner</u> . Maricopa Aud. Soc., Phoenix. <u>Vermillion Flycatcher</u> . Tucson Aud. Soc., Tucson.
Arkansas	<u>Newsletter</u> . Arkansas Audubon Soc., Little Rock.
California	<u>Gull</u> . Golden Gate Aud. Soc., Berkeley. <u>Newsletter</u> . Internat'l Bird Rescue Research Center, Berkeley. <u>Annual Report</u> . <u>Newsletter</u> . Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Bolinas. <u>Western Tanager</u> . Los Angeles Aud. Soc., Los Angeles.
Colorado	<u>Aikorns</u> . Aiken Aud. Soc., Colorado Springs.
Connecticut	<u>Newsletter</u> . Connecticut Aud. Council, Harwinton.
Delaware	<u>Delmarva Ornithologist</u> . Delmarva Orn. Soc., Wilmington.
Florida	<u>Florida Naturalist</u> . Florida Aud. Soc., Maitland. <u>Florida Scientist</u> . Florida Academy of Science, Gainesville.
Georgia	<u>Oriole</u> . Georgia Orn. Soc., Athens.
Idaho	<u>Prairie Owl</u> . Palouse Aud. Soc., Moscow.
Indiana	<u>Cardinal</u> . Indiana Aud. Soc., Indianapolis. <u>Quarterly</u> . Indiana Aud. Soc., Indianapolis.
Iowa	<u>Iowa Bird Life</u> . Iowa Orn. Union, Davenport. <u>Newsletter</u> . North American Game Breeders and Shooting Preserve Assn., Goose Lake. <u>Wildlife Harvest for Game Breeders and Hunting Reserves</u> . Same.
Kansas	<u>Bulletin</u> . Kansas Orn. Soc., Winfield. <u>Newsletter</u> . Kansas Orn. Soc., Winfield.

- Wichita Audubon. Wichita Aud. Soc., Wichita.
 Kentucky Kentucky Warbler. Kentucky Orn. Soc., Louisville.
 Louisiana News. Louisiana Orn. Soc., Lafayette.
 Maryland Maryland Bird Life. Maryland Orn. Soc., Baltimore.
 Massachusetts Annual Report. Research Report. Manomet Observer.
Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet.
Man and Nature. Massachusetts Aud. Soc., Lincoln.
Newsletter. Massachusetts Aud. Soc., Lincoln.
 Michigan Jack-Pine Warbler. Michigan Aud. Soc., Mt. Pleasant.
 Minnesota Loon. Minnesota Orn. Union, Minneapolis.
 Mississippi Mississippi Kite. Mississippi Orn. Soc., Mississippi State.
 Missouri Bluebird. Aud. Soc. of Missouri, Kansas City.
 Nebraska Nebraska Bird Review. Nebraska Orn. Union, Lincoln.
Newsletter. Nebraska Orn. Union, Lincoln.
 Nevada Pelican. Lahontan Aud. Soc., Reno.
 New Hampshire Quarterly. Aud. Soc. of New Hampshire, Concord.
 New Jersey Cassinia. Delaware Valley Orn. Club, Blackwood
Magazine. New Jersey Aud. Soc., Westwood.
 New Mexico Field Notes. NMOS Bulletin. Seasonal Report. Publi-
cation Series. New Mexico Orn. Soc., Cedar Crest.
Ravens. Southwestern New Mexico Aud. Soc., Silver City.
 New York Newsletter to Members. Peregrine Fund Newsletter. Cor-
 nell University Laboratory of Orn., Ithaca.
Goshawk. Genesee Orn. Soc., Richester.
Prothonotary. Buffalo Orn. Soc., Lewiston.
 North Carolina Chat. Carolina Bird Club, Zebulon.
 Ohio Cleveland Bird Calendar. Cleveland Museum of Natural
 History, Cleveland.
 Oklahoma Newsletter. Cleveland County Bird Club, Norman.
Kite. Stephens County Orn. Soc., Duncan.
Scissortail. Bulletin. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., Bartlesville.
Tulsa Scissortail. Tulsa Aud. Soc., Tulsa.
 Oregon Audubon Warbler. Portland Aud. Soc., Portland.
Oregon Birds. Southern Willamette Orn. Club, Eugene.

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Identification Notes

TACKLING THE THRUSHES

Two common Colorado thrushes, an uncommon one, and two rare ones offer a field identification puzzle more challenging than many observers realize. A number of recent Gray-cheeked Thrushes in Colorado, all in the spring, makes timely this information on separating the Catharus (nee Hylocichla) thrushes. Their identification requires a good look, front and back. By itself, back color is not a reliable indicator--colorations overlap and sometimes poor light deceives.

The information in this article is drawn from a series of three articles by Jon Dunn in "The Western Tanager", a part of his continuing series on bird identification.

[The Editor thanks Barry Clark, Editor of "The Western Tanager", published by the Los Angeles Audubon Society, for assistance in adapting this article from the original which appeared in 1977 in the Tanager. He furnished us with the original art work used to illustrate that series.]

The following chart summarizes the plumage characteristics. Remember, though, that the calls of the birds in migration, and of course their songs on the breeding grounds, can give diagnostic identification.

BACK	SPECIES	BREAST SPOTS				EYE RING		
		Very Heavy	Bold	Light	Very Faint	Conspicuous	Faint	None
	Wood	x				x		
Red	Veery				x			x
	Swainson's			x		x		
	Swainson's			x		x		
Olive	Gray-chk'd		x				x	x
Red tail Ol. back	Hermit		x				x	

Illustrations by Mary Ellen Pareyra.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH

Catharus ustulata

In Colorado, breeds sparingly in the mountains, along willow-lined streams. Migrates commonly on the eastern plains; sometimes 100 can be seen in a day.

Behavior:

All thrushes posture and move like a robin, but they also are much shyer and more secretive than our city thrush.

Call Notes:

Typical call note is a soft wink, often compared to the sound of a droplet of water falling into a pool.

Song:

A rolling series of flute-quality phrases, rising up the scale.

Plumage:

Two color phases occur. The typical Colorado bird has a uniformly olive back. The Pacific Coast race, however, has rich rufous-brown coloration to the upperparts; this race strongly resembles the Veery, so that birds with reddish backs particularly should be examined for other field marks. These include:

- Distinct buffy eye-ring; (compare with Hermit, which has thinner, whitish eye-ring).
- Fainter spotting on underparts than Hermit, which has bold, distinct spots. Rows of spots on breast do tend to form streaks.
- Cheek, breast, and flanks shaded with rich golden-buff.

* * * * *

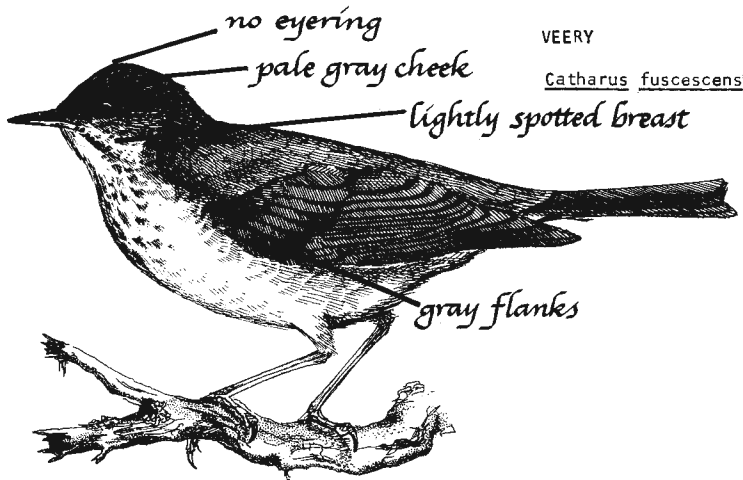
VEERY

Catharus fuscescens

Breeds sparingly on the Western Slope. Migrates uncommonly on the Eastern Slope.

Song:

A rolling series of flute-quality phrases, dropping down the scale.



A down-slurred veer, quite different from call notes of Hermit or Swainson's.

Plumage:

Even though this species breeds throughout the Great Basin states and to the East and North, any reddish-backed birds should be examined closely because of the russet-backed race of Swainson's Thrush.

- Tawny-red upper parts, in the eastern race, are more intense than the russet-backed Swainson's, but the difference between back colors on the Great Basin Veery and the russet-backed Swainson's is virtually imperceptible. Therefore the next two features constitute the best marks.
- Underparts largely whitish-gray, and breast only lightly spotted.
- Gray flanks, particularly distinctive, contrast markedly with the rest of the underparts and the rusty-red back. Swainson's is much more heavily spotted across the breast, and the spots are larger and darker, forming a more extensive pattern which extends down along the sides. In addition, the cheeks, breast, and flanks of the Swainson's are richly washed with a bright buff that is totally lacking in the Veery (except for a tinge of buff restricted to the breast).
- No distinct eye-ring.
- Very pale gray cheeks.

HERMIT THRUSH

Catharus guttata

Breeds commonly in Colorado conifer forests. Migrates uncommonly on plains and in valleys.

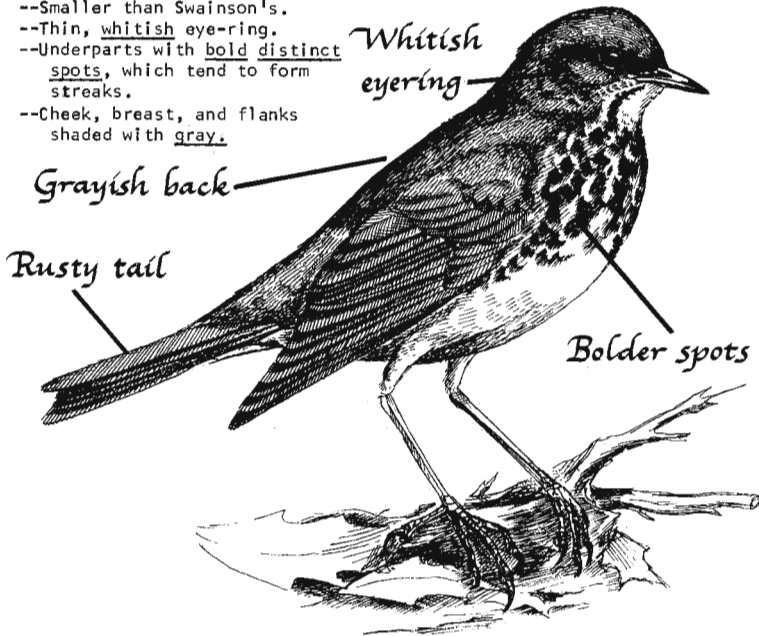
Behavior: The only thrush that has the frequent habit of flicking its wings when perched. Also when perched, it often cocks its tail and drops it slowly.

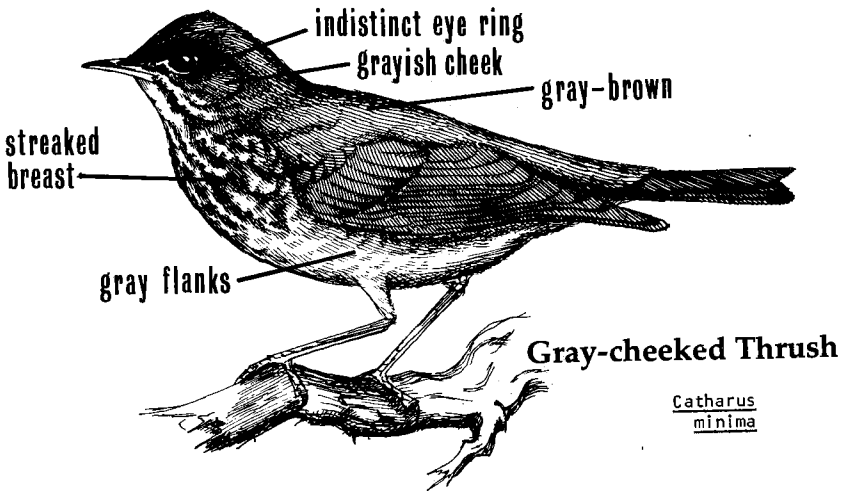
Song: An ethereal serenade of flutelike quality which echoes across our mountain valleys in June and July. Each phrase is introduced by a long introductory note, followed by a jumble of rising and falling notes, and delivered as a duet (question and answer).

Call Notes: Has a number of call notes, the most common of which is a low chup or chup-chup; none of the call notes are remotely similar to the call of the Swainson's.

Plumage: Best mark is the rusty-red tail which contrasts with the rump and back. This mark, however, can be difficult to discern, particularly when the bird is in bad light. Too often the inexperienced or quick-draw observer makes the rapid and often inaccurate assumption that the thrush under observation is not a Hermit, because it appears to lack the reddish tail.

- Smaller than Swainson's.
- Thin, whitish eye-ring.
- Underparts with bold distinct spots, which tend to form streaks.
- Cheek, breast, and flanks shaded with gray.





Gray-cheeked Thrush

Catharus
minima

Migrates rarely, in spring, on plains.

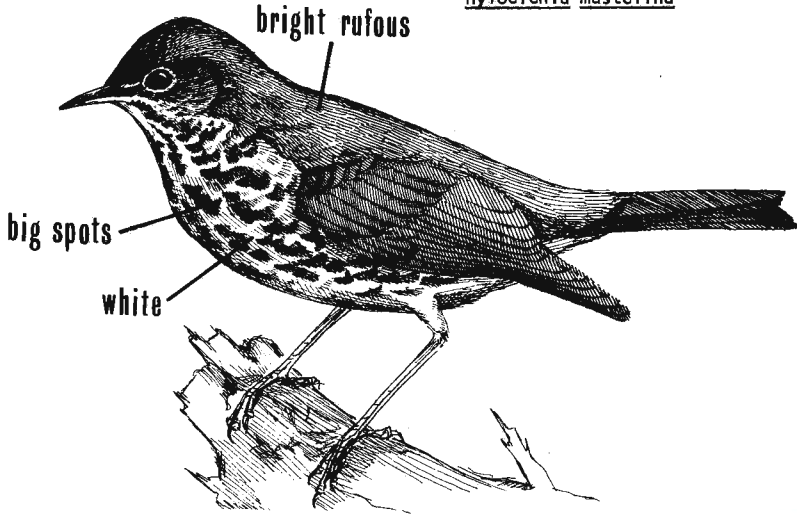
Call Notes: Similar to Veery, but slightly higher-pitched.

Song: Like Veery, but softer, more nasal, and with abrupt, rising inflection at end.

Plumage: The Gray-cheeked Thrush most closely resembles the common Swainson's Thrush, for the coloration of the upperparts is similar.

- Cheek always grayish; lacks the rich buff tones of Swainson's.
- Indistinct eye ring, or none at all. The immatures can have a thin whitish eye ring.
- Underparts of adults quite distinctive: Dull slaty-gray flanks, contrasting with otherwise grayish-white underparts. Immatures have a similar pattern, but most show a very pale yellowish-olive wash across the breast.
- Rather heavy pattern of spots, forming streaks across the breast, similar to Swainson's.

The Gray-cheeked can be readily confused with the similar Hermit Thrush, for the overall coloration is quite similar. Apart from its larger size, Gray-cheeked features which distinguish it from the Hermit include a less distinct eye ring, the lack of a rusty tail (if the bird is in good light), its call note, and the underparts.

Wood ThrushHylocichla mustelina

Rare Migrant in Colorado.

Call Notes: a low tuck tuck; an alarm note, a liquid pit pit pit.

Song: A series of loud phrases of flute quality, each followed by a soft guttural trill.

Plumage: Easiest of the spot-breasted thrushes to recognize, for it is quite large, approaching the size of a robin.

- Crown, nape, and upper back bright rufous buff.
- Rest of upperparts only slightly duller.
- Underparts very white, distinctly patterned with large, round black spots, set well apart from each other--as distinct from the pattern of streaks in the other four, Catharus, thrushes.

Note on Gray-cheeked migration: The Gray-cheeked is one of the few North American landbirds to breed west to northwestern Siberia--a range close to that of the Blackpoll Warbler. Yet the Blackpoll is a fairly common migrant in Colorado, at least on the plains, while the Gray-cheeked Thrush has been recorded only a few times. The paucity of records in Colorado and the West suggests that Siberian birds, on their way to South American wintering grounds, must migrate due east, across Canada, for thousands of miles before turning south.

GENERAL NOTESMourning Dove Ground Nesting in Sagebrush Habitat

Little has apparently been published concerning ground nesting in Mourning Doves (Zenaidura macroura) even though it is a common occurrence throughout much of the treeless western United States. Downing (J. Wildl. Mgt. 23: 117-118, 1959) studied ground nesting by Mourning Doves in Oklahoma, where he calculated that 70% of the dove population in his study area nested on the ground. In Colorado, Bailey and Nie-drach (The Birds of Colorado, Den. Mus. of Natural History, 1965: 1175) state that, "A large per cent of the doves on the eastern prairies, and probably in western counties as well, nest on the ground. . ."

From May 18 to 21, 1977, I recorded dove nest data at a study area near Lay, Colorado, about 20 miles west of Craig in the northwestern part of the state. The area is gently rolling sagebrush-covered hills dissected by gullies and rock outcrops. Sagebrush is the predominant vegetation type, but cultivated dryland wheat begins 2 miles to the east and pinyon/juniper woodland occurs within 0.5 miles to the west. Lay Creek runs east-west through the area. Along Lay Creek are stands of Black Greasewood (Sarcobatus vermiculatus), grass and sedge meadows, stands of cattails (Typha latifolia), and willows (Salix sp.). Mourning Doves ranged over all of these habitats, and long flights between habitats were commonly observed, particularly early and late in the day.

During the five-day period I spent several hours in all habitats searching for dove nests. Searches were made simply by walking through a habitat and searching thoroughly in any spot where doves flushed. Even though doves were abundant, I managed to locate only seven nests, all in a localized area of sagebrush habitat. The data I recorded for each nest is summarized in Table 1. Considering the variety of habitats and nest sites available in the area, these doves chose very specific situations, apparently indicating a very precise habitat selection. Five of the seven nests were associated with a long ravine extending north/south through the area. All of the nests were directly under the canopy of a Big Sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata). Of the ravine nests, all were on the east-facing slope of the ravine and near the top. The steepness of the slope varied, but most nests were on moderate to very steep slopes.

Nest material was principally dead grass stems mixed with some grass leaves and other herbaceous material, but no sticks were used. Each of the nests examined had a two-egg clutch. The five ravine nests were all located between a large bunch of Indian Ricegrass (Oryzopsis hymenoides) and the base of a sagebrush shrub. The bunchgrass, situated on the downhill side of the nest, served as a prop for the nest and created a small level bench on an otherwise steep hillside. The sagebrush on the uphill side of the nest provided shade and cover. These situations were relatively uncommon on the hillside.

This uniformity of nest site selection brings up the question of what these particular nest sites offer. Since there apparently was a variety of shrub and tree sites available, as well as many different ground situations, the sites chosen must have special desirable qualities. Factors apparent to me were:

1. The nests were sheltered from the prevailing southwest wind by their position on the hillside.
2. They were shaded from the sun and well hidden by vegetation.
3. Most offered a distant view of approaching predators.

Although protection from the elements seemed to influence nest site selection by these doves, Downing (op. cit.) did not find this to be true in his study. He found that high winds destroyed tree nests and not ground nests, but leeward slopes were not preferred over other slopes, and overhead cover or shade was not essential.

If the Lay Creek doves are typical of other populations in western Colorado, and other populations nest in close proximity in similar habitat situations, it may be possible to identify key dove nesting areas in (rapidly diminishing) sagebrush habitat. Potential areas are the upper leeward sides of sagebrush-bunchgrass covered ridges within one mile of water.

Nest No.	Estimated Slope in Degrees	Aspect of Slope (Major direction)	Distance to Closest Dove Nest (Meters)
1	15	N	100
2	45	SE	300
3	45	E	60
4	65	NE	300
5	60	NE	160
6	50	E	100
7	20	N	150

-- James R. Rees
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Goshawk Attack on Sage Grouse^{1/}

On the morning of July 25, 1978, we observed a Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis) successfully attack a juvenile Sage Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus) near Goodman Springs in northwestern Moffat Co., Colorado. As we approached Goodman Springs, we observed a flock of 40-50 Sage Grouse on the road 120 meters before us. As preparations were being made to attempt to capture the grouse, all but one suddenly flushed. We observed the remaining grouse through binoculars as it struggled to escape from a raptor, which we later identified as a juvenile Goshawk. The Goshawk unsuccessfully attempted to carry off the Sage Grouse when we approached by vehicle. When we were within 30 meters it abandoned its prey and flew to a grove of aspen trees 150 meters north. Inspection of the Sage Grouse indicated it was a juvenile female, with numerous lacerations on its head and back.

1. Contribution from
Colorado Federal Aid
Project W-37-R.

James D. Bingman & Kenneth M.
Giesen
P. O. Box 2287, Fort Collins 80522.

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[Continued from Page 8]

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* * * * *

FALL MIGRATION

Abbreviations used for Organizations: Boulder Audubon Society (BAS), Boulder Bird Club (BBC), Boulder County Parks Dept. (BCP); Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO), Ft. Collins Audubon Society (FCAS).

FALL MIGRATION

9 birds reported, the last 9/16 at Ft. Collins (MJ). . . Barn Owl--2 seen near Rocky Mt. Arsenal 8/16 (PE, RO), 1 on Wellington W.M.A. 10/6 (EBu), and 2 at Ft. Collins throughout November (BN). . . Screech Owl--only 5 birds noted; this seems an extremely small number for such a common bird. . . Pygmy Owl--only 4 birds reported. . . Burrowing Owl--latest was 1 at Ken Caryl Ranch 10/1 (DFD). . . Spotted Owl--this rare owl was reported once, 1 at Ridgway 10/24 (JRG). . . Long-eared Owl--only 2 reported, 1 found dead at Hesperus on 8/22 (KS), and a live one on the Denver Fall Count on 9/10. . . Short-eared Owl--the only report was 2 at Browns Park NWR throughout October (GLD). . . Saw-whet Owl--a road-kill was found at Hesperus 8/22 (KS), an injured bird was at Aspen Park near Evergreen 10/9 (SB, MDG), and 1 was at Evergreen 11/8 (ECT), where it spent the day roosting in a ponderosa pine in ECT's yard.

GOATSUCKERS, SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS: Poor-will--1 at Barr (RA) and 1 in Boulder Mt. Parks (FH) on 9/24, and 1 at Durango 9/27 (KS). . . Com. Nighthawk--maximum count, about 150 at Durango 9/9, and the latest, also there, on 10/1 (KS). . . Black Swift--at Eagle, JM received an imm. on 9/18, which had evidently been attacked and killed by magpies in a neighbor's yard. . . Hummingbirds--last dates were 1 Black-chinned 9/20, 1 Broad-tailed 9/23, and 1 Rufous 9/28, all at Durango (KS). . . Calliope Hummingbird--2 at Silverthorne 8/14 (HK), and 1 at Durango 9/1 (KS); at Ridgway Guadagno listed 22 observations (maximum 3 on 8/6, 8/9, and 9/2, with the last date 9/6; 1 at L. Estes in early September (LM), and the last reported at Eldora on 9/9 (GS).

WOODPECKERS: Red-bellied Woodpecker--the only report this fall comes from an unusual location: 1 at Pueblo Res. on 11/20 (JL). . . Yellow-bellied Sapsucker--observers found a fair number in the western half of the state, the latest at Dinosaur Nat'l Mon. on 10/16 (JFA); the only bird reported on the plains was 1 of undetermined form at Ft. Morgan on 10/5 (JCR). . . N. Three-toed Woodpecker--1 at Evergreen on 9/18 (ECT), single birds in the Boulder Mt. Parks 10/29 and 11/5 (BAS) and 1 on Wolf Creek Pass 10/23 (HK).

FLYCATCHERS: Cassin's Kingbird--1 at Lafayette on 9/24 (JR) for the state's latest report. . . Great Crested Flycatcher--the only report was 1 at Ft. Morgan on 8/23-24 (JCR). . . Ash-throated Flycatcher--1 at Barr L. 8/21-22 (DFD), 1 at Ft. Morgan on 9/2 (JCR), and 1-2 seen on 14 occasions at Ridgway 8/9-9/4 (JRG). . . Black Phoebe--in point of rarity, the find of the season was 1 of this species along the Animas R. in Durango on 8/9 (EF); 2 there the next day were seen regularly until 9/23 (KS). . . Say's Phoebe--latest reported were 2 on Florida Mesa on 10/17 (KS), a month later than anywhere else in the state. . . Empidonax sp.--latest of this genus were 1 at Ken Caryl Ranch 10/1 (DFD) and 1 at Chatfield the next day (HK). . . Eastern Wood Pewee--this rare species was identified once during the season: 1 at Ft. Lupton on 8/14 (WMB, DK).

SWALLOWS, CORVIDS: Violet-green Swallow--again this year, as last, the major fall concentrations were in Durango: 2700 on 8/20, 1500 on 9/17, and 7 on 9/26. At Ridgway they declined from a seasonal maximum of 400 on 8/17 to a last date (number not specified) of 9/26 (JRG). . . Bank Swallow--very late, and possibly extremely so, were 2 at Fossil Creek Res. and 2 at Union on 10/8 (MJ, PM). . . Purple Martin--again this fall, as last, the only martins were reported from the Durango area: 6 including 2 adult males and at least

1 imm., were at Summit Res. 8/12 (KS). . . Clark's Nutcracker--early on the plains were 1 at Boulder on 9/6 (PW), and 5 at Chatfield on 9/17 (DFO). The population was unusually large at Estes Park (WKR), but more nearly normal elsewhere.

PARIDS TO WRENS: Plain Titmouse--Ligon considered this species as scarce at Pueblo, as did Stransky at Durango, and no others reported any at all. . . Bushtit--25 were in Spring Creek Can. on 9/18 (MJ), a flock was at Pueblo Res. on 10/9, and 2 were in east Denver 10/19 (JR). Red-breasted Nuthatch--although this was projected as a possible flight year, only about 58 birds were noted: 37 in the Denver-Boulder area, 1 at Ft. Collins 10/13 (JGF), and 18 on Wolf Creek Pass on 10/23 (HK). . . . Winter Wren--1 near Eagle on 10/9 (JM), 1 at Waterton on 11/9 (JR). . . Bewick's Wren--only two reports: 1 on Pueblo Fall Count 9/17-18, and 1 at Totton on 11/12 (KS). In mild winters it can be found all year at Durango but apparently this was not one of them (KS). . . .

THRASHERS, THRUSHES: Bendire's Thrasher--far indeed from its normal range is 1 at Ft. Morgan on 9/25 (JCR); no further details were received with the report, but hopefully more information is available. . . Curve-billed Thrasher--the only report, 1 on the Pueblo Fall Count on 9/17. . . Wood Thrush--the only report was 1 at Ft. Collins on 9/21 (JGR). . . Hermit Thrush--only 8 birds found this fall. . . Swainson's Thrush--only 2 reported. . . Western Bluebird--an interesting occurrence was a flock of 150 at Berthoud on 11/16 (MMD).

KINGLETS, WAXWINGS, SHRIKES: Golden-crowned Kinglet--earliest on the plains were 2 at Barr L. on 9/4 (RA). . . Northern Shrike--a strong flight brought at least 36 into the state this fall; earliest was 1 on Florida Mesa on 8/28 (EF), and up to 6 could be found on any subsequent day in that area (KS). On the E. Slope the flight began much later, the first at Ft. Morgan on 10/19 (JCR). . .

VIREOS: Solitary Vireo--latest on the W. Slope was 1 at Ridgway on 9/27 (JRG), and the last on the E. Slope was 1 at Boulder on 11/10 and 11/12 (PG, MHO). The only blue-headed birds reported were 2 on the Denver Fall Count on 9/10. . . Philadelphia Vireo--a rare one was at Chatfield on 9/3 (FJ).

WARBLERS: Black-and-white Warbler--2 at Barr L. 8/21-22 (DFO), and 1 in Wheatridge on 8/31 (PE). . . Prothonotary--the best warbler of the fall was 1 of this species observed on the Pueblo Fall Count 9/17-18. . . Worm-eating--1 on the C.U. Campus in Boulder 10/22-30 (PG, SL, m.ob.). . . Tennessee--well-reported, with a total of about 12 birds involved, 9/4 to 11/13. On the W. Slope, 3 at Durango on 9/11 and 2 there on 9/19 (EF). . . Nashville--9 individuals reported, 8/8 at Ridgway (JRG) to 11/6 at Boulder (SL, PM). . . Yellow--an exceptionally late bird was at Ft. Collins on 10/22 (JGF). . . Magnolia--1 in Ft. Collins on 12/3 (RR, Jaw). . . Townsend's--fairly common and widespread this fall; on the E. Slope the first arrivals were 2 at Ft. Morgan 8/23 (JCR), and the last at Boulder 10/16 (BAS); Approximate maximum was 16 on the Denver Fall Count 9/10. . . Black-throated Green--6 individuals reported. An exceptionally early one at Barr L. 8/21-22 (DFO); others 1 at Barr L. 10/22 (RA), 2 in Boulder 10/22-24 (BAS), 1 in the Sterling cemetery 10/29 (PG, MM, PM, JS, LS), and 1 on the C.U. campus in Boulder 11/5-6 (FH, SL, PM).

. Blackburnian--a rare fall observation at Eldora 9/9 (GS). . . .
Chestnut-sided--an ad. female seen several times at Durango 8/9-18 (KS)
. . . . Blackpoll--1 at Boulder on 10/9 (SL), and 1 at Chatfield 10/16
(HK). . . . Palm--birds reported in widely separated locations: 1 at
Ridgway 9/1 (JRG), 1 at Barr L. 9/24 (RA), 1 at Evergreen 9/30 (ECT),
and 1 at Silverthorne on 10/8 (DFD). The W. Slope had only one prior
record. . . . Ovenbird--2 at Waterton/Chatfield 8/27 (DFD), 1 at Boulder
9/6 (PW), and 1 at Ft. Morgan 9/7 (JCR). . . . Yellow-breasted Chat--
only 3 reported: 1 at Red Rocks Park 8/14 (DFD), 1 at Ft. Morgan 8/23
(JCR), and 1 at Barr L. 9/3 (RA). . . . Hooded Warbler--1 at Boulder on
8/22 (SL), 1 female at Barr L. 9/3 (RA), and 1 at Boulder 9/21 (SL). . . .
Am. Redstart--about 9 noted, all but one from the E. Slope--the excep-
tion 1 at Ridgway on 8/29 (JRG).

BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS: Bobolink--3 at Durango on 9/3 (EF, m.ob.)
is certainly a noteworthy record. . . . Yellow-headed Blackbird--the
approximate maximum was 944 listed on the Denver Fall Count 9/10, and
the latest was 1 at Ft. Collins on 11/2 (MJ). Oddly no reports came
from the W. Slope. . . . Rusty Blackbird--1 was at Erie on 10/27 (PG),
and 6 total were at Ft. Collins on 11/5 and 11/23 (MJ). . . . Brown-
headed Cowbird--an unusual report in 18 seen feeding on the tundra
above Silver Plume on 9/27 (EC, CG). . . . Summer Tanager--this rare
bird was noted twice: 1 at Boulder on 8/21 (SL), and 1 at Waterton/
Chatfield on 8/27 (DFD).

FINCHES: Cardinal--1 was in Wheatridge from 10/18 on (PE). . . .
Rose-breasted Grosbeak--in contrast to the strong spring flight, only
2 were seen this fall: 1 on the Pueblo Fall Count on 9/17, and 1 in
Boulder 9/23 (SL). . . . Blue Grosbeak--latest on the W. Slope were 2
in Ridgway on 9/4 (JRG); 8 were listed on the Pueblo Fall Count on
9/17, for the highest count and last date. . . . Indigo Bunting--5 noted
on the E. Slope 8/21-9/17; on the W. Slope, 1 at Durango on 8/15 (EF).
Indigo Buntings are appearing fairly regularly around Durango and, so
far, they display no outward evidence of intergradation with the Lazuli
Bunting (KS). . . . Pine Grosbeak--12 at Hermosa Park on 8/13 (EF), 2 imm
at L. Isabelle, Boulder Co., on 8/28 (BK), and 4 females at Evergreen
on 11/3 (DK). . . . Gray-crowned Rosy Finch--30 on Guanella Pass on 10/1
(LKM), and 80 on Squaw Mt. on 11/13 (SB, WWB). . . . Black Rosy Finch--
the first reported, 4 on Squaw Mt. on 11/13 (SB, WWB, AU). . . . Leucos-
ticta sp.--large mixed flocks containing all 3 species were above Sil-
ver Plume at 9500' from 11/19 on 9EC, CG). . . . Red Crossbill--very
sparsely reported this fall, as the cone crop seemed poor in nearly all
areas; most reports came from the Denver-Boulder part of the Front
Range, but a flock of undetermined number was at Eagle on 9/3 (JM). . . .
White-winged Crossbill--the only observation of the fall involved an
unspecified number on Wolf Creek Pass on 9/24 (SW). . . . Brown Towhee--
6 noted on Pueblo Fall Count 9/17-18. . . . Lark Bunting--last reported
on E. Slope on Denver Fall Count 9/10; a rather unusual W. Slope report
was 1-2 at Ridgway 8/24-9/8 (JRG).

SPARROWS: Grasshopper Sparrow--fairly common and conspicuous in
Baca Co. 8/6-7 (DKI), but not reported elsewhere. . . . Baird's Sparrow--
1 at Union 9/29 (PM). . . . Lark Sparrow--latest, one at Durango 11/13
(KS), which is very late indeed. . . . Black-throated Sparrow--1 at Pine
Brook Hills, Boulder Co., on 11/8 (fide BB, LC); although this location

is fairly far from the species' usual range, the Black-throated is not entirely unknown in Boulder Co. . . Sage Sparrow--1 closely studied at Pueblo Res. 10/16 (EB) for the only report. . . Dark-eyed Junco--earliest arrival was a Slate-colored at Boulder 8/11 (RVZ); about 20 White-wingeds reported, the earliest at Barr L. on 10/8 (RA). . . Tree Sparrow--arrived about 2 weeks late, and the numbers seemed rather low; earliest report was 10/15 in Boulder Co. (BAS), and on the W. Slope they didn't arrive until 11/21 at Ridgway (JRG). . . Chipping Sparrow--latest on W. Slope, 1 at Ridgway on 11/1 (JRG), and on the E. Slope 2 were very late at Sawhill Ponds 11/24 (BAS). Maximum was 165 on Denver Fall Count 9/10. . . Clay-colored Sparrow--on the E. Slope, last reported were 3 at CCRA on 9/25 (JR), and an unspecified number at Boulder the same day (BAS); on the W. Slope, they remained at Ridgway until 10/19 (JRG). . . The maximum was 203 in Boulder Co. 9/14-25. . . Brewer's Sparrow--last on the E. Slope were 3 along lower Bear Creek 10/15 (DFO) and on the W. Slope, 1 at Ridgway 10/19 (JRG). . . Field Sparrow--about 13 reported, all on the E. Slope, from 9/4 until 10/16. . . Harris' Sparrow--first arrivals noted at Boulder, 2 on 10/11 (RVZ); on the W. Slope, 1 imm. was closely studied at Dinosaur Nat'l Mon. on 10/15 (JFA). . . Numbers seemed quite low this fall, as compared with the last 3-4 years. . . White-throated Sparrow--a rare W. Slope observation was 1 at Ridgway on 11/22 (JRG). . . Fox Sparrow--1 at Skunk Hollow Gorge on 9/10 (ME), and 1, possibly injured, at Ft. Morgan 10/12 (JCR); at Ridgway the maximum was 3 on 9/11, and the last seen the next day (JRG). . . Swamp Sparrow--1 at Sawhill Ponds on 11/19 (PG), and 1 at CCRA on 11/24 (JR). . . McCown's Longspur--latest were 10 on PNG on 11/27 (DFO). . . Lapland Longspur--4 at Chatfield on 11/24 (HK), 3 at Union on 11/25 (BAS), and 35, harbingers of a strong winter flight, on the PNG on 11/27 (DFO). . . Chestnut-collared Longspur--the only report was 1 on 10/21 (AH).

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