

# *C.F.O. Journal*

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



Volume 17, Number 3

Fall, 1983



## C.F.O. JOURNAL

A quarterly publication of the Colorado Field Ornithologists, c/o Kate Kittlesman, 217 Lois Drive, Louisville, Colorado 80027.

### OFFICERS OF THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

President: Charles A. Chase, III, c/o Zoological Collections, Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park, Denver, Colorado 80205.

View President: Vic Zerbi, 812 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs,

Colorado 81601. Executive Secretary: Kate Kittlesman, 217 Lois

Drive, Louisville, Colorado 80027. Treasurer: Frank Justice, 1917

S. Gaitman, Denver, Colorado 80219. Directors: Steve Bissell,

Denver; Bill Ervin, Boulder; Elva Fox, Durango; Fran Enright, Boulder;

Richard Swan, Colorado Springs; Ron Lamborn, Grand Junction.

### CFO OFFICIAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

Delta: Kent (Chairman), Boulder; Richard Bunney, Colorado Springs;

Samuel Casey, Denver; Kevin Cook, Ft. Collins; Mark Holmgren,

Lawrence; Mark James, Delta; Steve Larson, Boulder; Ron Ryder, Ft.

Collins; Rip Strzansky, Durango.

### CFO JOURNAL STAFF

Editors: Steve Bissell and Ann Hodgson, 6060 Broadway, Denver,

Colorado 80216.

CFO JOURNAL is devoted to the field study of birds in Colorado.

Articles and notes of scientific or general interest, and reports of

unusual observations, are solicited. Send manuscripts, with photos

and drawings to: Ann Hodgson & Steve Bissell, 6060 Broadway, Denver.

Send rare bird reports to: CFO Official Records Committee, c/o

Zoological Collections, Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park,

Denver, Colorado 80205.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES (renewable at the beginning of each year),

including a subscription to CFO JOURNAL: Sustaining, \$100; Supporting,

\$25; Contributing, \$10; Regular, \$5. Dues and contributions are tax-

deductible to the extent allowed by law. Membership inquiries and

renewals should be addressed to Frank Justice, Treasurer, 1917 S.

Gaitman, Denver, Colorado 80219. Send change of address to Kate

Kittlesman, 217 Lois Drive, Louisville, Colorado 80027.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
EDITOR'S MESSAGE. . . . .	2
ON CORRECT IDENTIFICATION . . . . .	3
George M. Sutton	
PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS . . . . .	5
ABSTRACTS OF TECHNICAL PAPERS . . . . .	6
CURRENT STATUS AND OUTLOOK FOR THE GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN IN NORTHEAST COLORADO. . . . .	8
Ted Washington	
FIELD TRIP REPORT LATILONG BLOCKS 27 & 28 . . . . .	13
Charles Chase and Steven Bissell	
AN IMMATURE ROSS' GULL IN EASTERN COLORADO . . . . .	16
NECK COLLARED TRUMPETER SWANS. . . . .	18
BOOK REVIEW: A Guide to Bird Behavior, . . . . .	19
Donald W. Stokes.	
Hugh E. Kingery	

Cover Drawing: American Woodcock (Scolopax minor) by Russ Bromby. Russ is Information Specialist for the Colorado Division of Wildlife and a member of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers.

Art Work: All of the drawings in this issue are by Dick Draney, Colorado Division of Wildlife.

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

First, we apologize for this issue being so late. We more fully appreciate the fine work Peter Gent has done the last few years, because this is alot harder than we thought. We hope that future issues will be more timely.

With this edition we will be making some minor changes with CFO Journal. In the future we will attempt to engage a larger group in editing possible articles for the Journal. We fully intend to keep this primarily a nonprofessional publication, but since it is now being carried by abstracting services such as Wildlife Review, we feel that all articles should be reviewed by experts. If any CFO members would like to help, please let us know the topics you would be willing to review.

A continuing problem is in getting enough material for a complete issue without resorting to highly technical articles or endless species lists. Many people express the concern that they "don't know how to write." Our job is to help potential authors express their observations and ideas clearly, please give us the chance.

Hugh Kingery submitted a very good book review for this issue. This is one idea we would like to see continued. If you have any books you would like to see reviewed, please let us know. Also if you are willing to review publications let us know so we can call on you from time to time.

Art work and photographs are badly needed. We can use these to illustrate articles and to fill those gaps that occasionally occur when putting an issue together.

The final message is that CFO Journal relies more upon individuals who are willing to contribute than it does upon the editors. We will try to do the best job possible in putting out a quality publication, but we need alot of material to work with. If you have any comments, suggestions, or criticisms please send them along.

Steven J. Bissell & Ann B. Hodgson



## ON CORRECT IDENTIFICATION

George M. Sutton

It sometimes seems to me that the only person fully qualified to comment on that which gives sight records full validity is the confirmed collector of specimens who has had the experience of identifying a living bird in the field to his complete satisfaction, then of collecting that very bird only to find it not to be of the species he had been sure it was.

Three times I have had that experience—first at Churchill, Manitoba, along the west coast of Hudson Bay in the summer of 1931, when I crawled across a mudflat on a very foggy day stalking what I felt sure was a Hudsonian Godwit (Limosa haemastica) only to find, after I'd collected the bird, that it was a Stilt Sandpiper (Micropaiama himantopus) in full breeding feather. In heavy fog, the bird had appeared to be three times its actual size. That's how fog can affect visibility.

Again, in the northern panhandle of West Virginia, I collected what I felt sure was an adult male Blue Grosbeak (Guiraca caerulea), a species that had never been reported from that area, and picked up a Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis), a common species there. The sky was clear and very blue that day. The feathers of the catbird's back had reflected that blue and the bird died because I, convinced that the blueness was that of a Blue Grosbeak, and mindful that I had many times failed to obtain an important specimen as a result of too much deliberation, did not check one very important point—the looks of the bird's bill. Many a reader will say: What nonsense! Nobody'd ever mistake a catbird for a grosbeak! To which I reply: That's exactly what I did. I wanted very much to obtain a Blue Grosbeak. And the reflected blueness tipped the scales in favor of my calling the catbird a grosbeak. It was as simple as that; and the point of this particular discussion is that what happened happened to me, a veteran.

Again, in central Oklahoma, this time on September 13, 1954, along the east edge of Norman, I collected what I'd identified as a Philadelphia Vireo (Vireo philadelphicus), at that time a species that had never been taken in Oklahoma. I had noted the strongly yellowish tone of the flanks and the rather warm tone on the chest and was confident that the bird was a Philadelphia, this despite the fact that I'd heard a Warbling Vireo (V. gilvus) singing more than once that morning in that very area. When I picked the specimen up, I saw at once that it was a Warbling Vireo. Its chest was pale buffy, not yellow. For a moment I toyed with the idea that I'd seen one bird and shot another; then I knew that I'd simply misidentified the bird while it was alive.

So nowadays when someone tells me that what he saw was surely a raven (Corvus corax) because it was "so much larger" than a crow (C. brachyrhynchos), or a Great-tailed-Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus) because it was "a whole lot bigger" than a Common Grackle (Q. quiscula), the first question I ask is this: Was the day foggy? or, if the moot bird

was supposedly a Philadelphia Vireo, I insist on ascertaining that the color of the underparts was the right sort of light, clear yellow and that this color extended throughout the whole of the throat and breast, before I feel sure that the bird was not a Warbling Vireo.

Most bird students are honest; but I have reason to suspect that many of those who dedicate their efforts primarily to building up a "life list" tend to be content with identifications that are not entirely satisfactory. Especially is this true when the "life lister" knows that the locality and season are right for the species he is determined to see. After all, he may have travelled across a continent just to see that particular species.

Here in Cleveland County, Oklahoma, those of us who have worked, really worked, with the birds of the area know that Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) is a fairly regular winter resident. We know about when it arrives and about when it departs. We know from specimens carefully collected and examined that the molt into handsome breeding feather does not start while the species is here. We know about where to look for the birds, for they seem to be attracted winter after winter to certain largely treeless fields.

How many of us know just what to look for in identifying Smith's Longspur—the boldly black-and-white lesser and middle wing coverts in adult males (a feature that can be seen clearly on a bright day as the birds fly past), the strongly buffy tone of the underparts in both sexes, the diagnostic tail pattern? Showing visitors from afar some flying longspurs and announcing that "they could be Smith's Longspurs" is not enough. Falling back on the well documented statement that all four longspurs are known to occur here in winter is not enough. The truly scientific "life lister" will have in mind just what characters to look for and also exactly what the analogous characters are in similar species before he calls his sight record completely valid.

STOVALL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, NORMAN  
73019, 18 OCTOBER 1977.

-Reprinted by permission from the Bulletin of Oklahoma Ornithological Society 10(4) 28-29, Dec. 1977, as appearing in American Birds, 37(2): 230, March-April, 1983.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
FIRST COLORADO CONGRESS OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

Ann Hodgson\*

Approximately 100 people attended the twenty-first annual convention of the Colorado Field Ornithologists held during the weekend of 27-29 May 1983 at Regis College campus in northwest Denver. This year, however, there was a new twist as months of careful planning by a joint committee of the Colorado Field Ornithologists, Denver Field Ornithologists and the Denver Audubon Society successfully produced the first combined annual meeting of the three groups, eloquently billed as "The First Colorado Congress of Field Ornithologists (F.C.C.O.F.O.)". What a mouthful!!! All three organizations deserve endless praise for their support of the conference's activities.

The meeting kicked off with registration, a social hour and the screening of several apropos nongame films loaned by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Saturday morning early risers joined field trips to the Wheatridge Greenbelt, Chatfield State Park, Roxborough State Park. More leisurely risers enjoyed a tour of the Regis Area Lakes.

The paper session began after lunch and continued concurrently with a wildlife art show and sale of varied media held in the hallway outside the amphitheater. Drew Grainger, DAS, introduced the speakers. Abstracts of their papers and Ted Washington's complete manuscript follow this introduction; regretfully, Geoff Hammerson departed for a year in Puerto Rico with the Nature Conservancy before he could submit an abstract of his paper "Birds as Predators and Prey of Reptiles and Amphibians in Colorado."

Conference attendees moved from the paper session to a social hour and Banquet in the Student Center, then returned to the Science Amphitheater for Perry Conway's slide tape show of Colorado scenery entitled "Prairies to Peak Tops."

Sunday morning conventioners reassembled at Barr Lake State Park for birding and a smorgasbord lunch sponsored by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, then some parties visited the Denver Museum of Natural History for a courtesy tour of the zoological collections.

President Timms Fowler conducted the CFO Business Meeting Sunday afternoon and introduced the new officers and Board members. Frank Justice reported briefly on the status of the treasury. It was suggested from the floor that a list of names and addresses of members be published, and the Journal editors plan to do that in a forthcoming issue.

\* Colorado Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216.

LOONS IN COLORADO: THEIR IDENTIFICATION,  
DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Ronald A. Ryder, Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology,  
Colorado State University, Fort Collins 80526

All four species of the world's loons (family Gaviidae) have been recorded in Colorado in the past 15 years. The Common Loon (Gavia immer) is the most widespread, having been reported as a regular but uncommon migrant in 25 of the state's 28 latilong blocks. The Arctic Loon (G. arctica) is the next most frequently reported species, being noted in 11 blocks, mainly from September through December. The Red-throated Loon (G. stellata) is a rare, accidental migrant, seen in at least 4 blocks. The last 2 years, the Yellow-billed Loon (G. adamsii) has been observed at Chatfield Reservoir near Denver. An earlier reported specimen of the Yellow-billed Loon was determined to be a Common Loon. Differences in plumage, silhouettes, and behavior of the four species were discussed using study skins and photographs.

## RESPONSE OF BREEDING GREAT BLUE HERONS TO HUMAN DISTURBANCE

Diana Vos, Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology,  
Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526

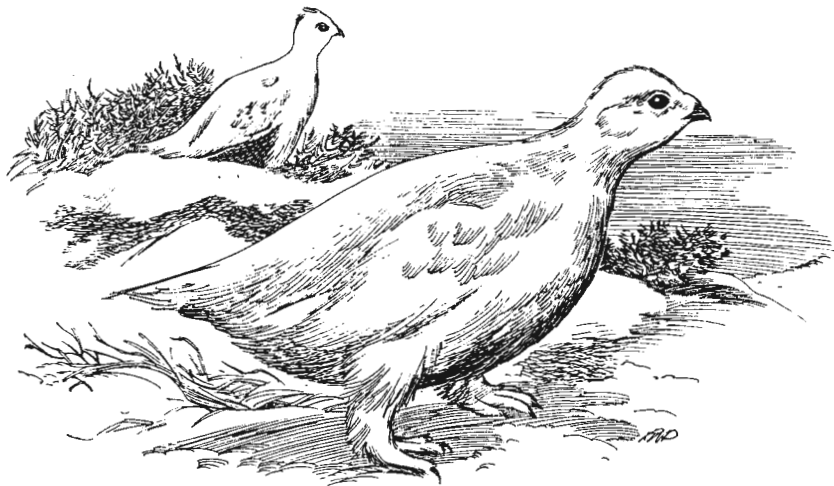
Reactions of nesting great blue herons (Ardea herodias) to human disturbance were studied during the 1980, 1981, and 1982 breeding seasons at the Fossil Creek Reservoir, Lonetree Reservoir, Chatfield Reservoir, and Boulder Creek heronries. All human activity within 100m of the heronries was monitored. Reactions of herons to human activity were grouped into 3 categories: minimal, local, and general responses. Observations were divided into monthly segments which corresponded with major stages of the breeding cycle. Sixty-seven percent of all human activity observed caused a minimal response, while local responses were elicited towards 26.9% of the human disturbances. Only 6.2% resulted in a general response. Herons appeared to be most disturbed by land related human activity and least by boating activity. Land related disturbances resulted most often in local responses (61.4%) and 16.7% caused a general response. Boating activity caused mainly minimal responses (92.1%) and only resulted in local responses when it occurred directly below the heronry. Changes in heron response to human activity occurred as the breeding season progressed, with an increasing percentage of minimal responses (28.6%-95.9%) being elicited each month.



## REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN IN COLORADO

Kenneth M. Giesen and Clait E. Braun  
Colorado Division of Wildlife, Fort Collins, CO 80526

Intensive long-term population studies of White-tailed Ptarmigan in Colorado have been directed at understanding periodic fluctuations in breeding densities. White-tailed Ptarmigan have a monogamous mating system in which all females but not all males breed annually. Timing of clutch initiation within years or between years has no effect upon clutch size although adults have a larger average clutch size than yearlings (6.2 vs. 5.5,  $P < 0.01$ ). Nest success varies annually with adults being more successful than yearlings (72.5% vs. 56.5%,  $P = 0.002$ ). Nesting success of individuals is independent between years and has no measurable effect on long-term female survival. During a female's life span, she will participate in an average of 2.2 breeding seasons and raise an average of 3.6 young.



CURRENT STATUS AND OUTLOOK FOR THE  
GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN IN NORTHEAST COLORADO

Ted Washington

ABSTRACT

In 1981 an intensive population survey of the Greater Prairie Chicken (Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus) was initiated in a 555-square mile area north of Yuma and Wray, extending north just past the Phillips County line. A total of 43 active leks were identified and counted in the survey area. The mean number of birds per lek was 7.5 over the survey period. A total of 107 active leks were located during the 1982 spring survey. Of these, 76 percent occurred in the sandhills north of Highway 34 between Yuma and Wray, Colorado. The remainder were located in the sandhills north of the Arikaree River to Highway 34. The mean number of birds per lek was 9.6. The 1983 spring survey produced 22 new leks, making for a total of 129 active leks in northeastern Colorado. Habitat restoration work aimed in part at providing nesting and brood rearing cover for Greater Prairie Chickens was begun with the initial interseeding of 330 acres of the southern portion of the South Platte Wildlife area. Since the removal of grazing on this area, there have been numerous confirmed and unconfirmed sightings of both Greater Prairie Chickens, and Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse (Tympanuchus phasianellus jamesi) in the project area, including a Greater Prairie Chicken x Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse hybrid that was a road kill.

## Introduction

Historically, the Greater Prairie Chicken (Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus) nested in substantial numbers on Colorado's eastern prairie. As the prairie was settled, much of it was converted to cropland or subjected to intensive grazing by livestock. This changing land use pattern initially enhanced the Greater Prairie Chicken population, but as it became more intensive, it decimated the same population resulting in the hunting season on the Greater Prairie Chicken being closed in 1937. At its lowest level, the population of Greater Prairie Chickens was estimated to number no more than 600 birds in Yuma County, at which point it was classified as endangered in Colorado.

In the spring of 1981, an intensive three year population survey of Greater Prairie Chickens was initiated in a 555 square mile area north of Wray and Eckley to determine the number of active leks, their location, and the average number of birds per lek. In 1982, the survey area was expanded to include approximately 320 square miles south of Highway 34. In conjunction with this survey, habitat restoration work was begun in 1982. Restoration was aimed in part at providing sufficient nesting and brood rearing cover to support a viable population of up to 200 Greater Prairie Chickens on the southern portion of the South Platte Wildlife area (South Tamarack). It is in this area that numerous confirmed and unconfirmed sightings of Greater Prairie Chickens and Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse (Tympanuchus phasianellus jamesi) have been reported, including a road killed Greater Prairie Chicken x Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse hybrid found on Highway 76 just northeast of South Tamarack.

### Project Areas and Methods

The survey area consisted of approximately 875 square miles of range and crop land (center pivots) over a rolling sandhill topography with sand, sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*), and assorted grasses. The northern extent of the survey area extended five miles north of the Yuma County line into the dwindling sandhills of Phillips County. The eastern boundary went within two miles of the Kansas-Nebraska borders, extending south along the sandhills to the Yuma County line near Joes. The southern boundary extended east along the county line into Washington County to Cope, then north along its western border following the sandhills to Highway 34.

Road surveys were used to locate booming grounds as defined by Homerstrom and Homerstrom (1973). A predetermined stretch of road, running about six miles, was surveyed from a half-hour before sunrise until booming activity tapered off, usually around three hours later. Stops were made at approximately half-mile intervals while listening for booming at each one. If booming was heard, its bearing would be recorded and the ground flushed, counted, and located on the map.

South Tamarack is located in the sparsely populated northeast corner of Logan County approximately two miles south of Crook, Colorado. It is bordered on the north by Interstate 76, on the east by Logan County Road 93, and on the western tip by Highway 55. The southern boundary borders state school land.

Restoration of South Tamarack is being accomplished through the control of grazing and the interseeding of native grasses. The principle of range interseeding is that of planting in a scalped furrow from which all native vegetation has been removed. The furrows are prepared by undercutting about two (2) inches below ground level and placing the turned over sod strips to the side. The width of the strip is important to seeding success through reduction of competition for moisture (Schumacher 1964). Wider furrows are required in areas of low precipitation such as South Tamarack. This range interseeding method is particularly suited for reintroducing climax-dominant grasses to hasten natural succession on areas where the erosion hazard is high and/or where complete seedbed preparation is impractical.

### Results

The last intensive survey of Greater Prairie Chickens was conducted in 1962 and 1963 (Evans 1964). During the 1962 and 1963 surveys, a total of 49 leks were located in which 25 and 27 grounds were counted, with a mean of 5.76 and 7.00 birds, respectively, per lek. In the spring of 1981, a total of 43 leks were identified in the survey area located primarily north of Wray and Eckley, Colorado. The mean number of birds per lek was 7.5 with a standard deviation of  $\pm 6.4$  (Van Sant 1981). All total, 300 individual Greater Prairie Chickens were observed in this 555 square mile survey area which presently is the strong hold for the Greater Prairie Chicken population.

During the 1982 survey, a total of 107 leks were located in Yuma in the survey area which included approximately 320 square miles of

sandhills located south of Highway 34 and north of the Arikaree River (Van Sant 1982). Of these leks, 76 percent occurred in the sandhills north of Highway 34 between Yuma and Wray, Colorado. The mean number of birds per lek was  $9.6 \pm 7.5$ . A total of 980 Greater Prairie Chickens were observed in the survey area; 83 percent of the birds north of Highway 34. A density of .12 leks/mile<sup>2</sup> (.0471/100ha.) was determined for the whole 875 square mile area. The area north of Highway 34 between Yuma and Wray had a density of .15 leks/mile<sup>2</sup> (.057/100 ha.).

In the 1983 survey, an additional 22 new leks were located in extreme southwestern Yuma County and southeastern Washington County. Bad weather prevented a complete survey of the whole survey area as had been planned. As it stands, we have now located and mapped 129 active Greater Prairie Chicken leks.

Habitat restoration work began in the spring of 1982 with the inter-seeding of approximately 330 acres of South Tamarack to a mixture of locally adapted strains of native grasses higher in succession than the existing vegetation. These include big bluestem (Andropogon gerardi), little bluestem (Andropogon scoparius), sand bluestem (Andropogon hallii), switchgrass (Panicum virgatum), indiagrass (Sorghastrum nutans), and sand lovegrass (Eragrostis trichodes). To date, approximately 620 acres of South Tamarack has been interseeded and the results thus far are encouraging. Timely and abundant precipitation during the spring of 1982 resulted in a high rate of germination and deep root establishment.

The resultant increase in vegetative height and density that occurred on South Tamarack via the control of grazing, which is presently not allowed on the area, is believed to have enhanced the overall value of the area for most, if not all, of the wildlife species known to be present. Similarly, the continued sightings of Greater Prairie Chickens and Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse in the area may be evidence of the areas heightened value to the same. In May of 1983, a lone male Greater Prairie Chicken was observed by District Wildlife Manager Larry Crooks booming on an apparent lek located several miles south of the southeast corner of South Tamarack.

No less an important discovery was a road-killed Greater Prairie Chicken x Plains Sharp-tailed Grouse hybrid that was found in March of 1983 about a mile east of South Tamarack near the Crook rest stop on I-76. Hybridization between these two species usually occurs at a rate of 1-3 percent but has been as high as 25 percent (Lumsden 1970).

#### Discussion

It is believed that hybridization usually occurs via the female mating with a heterospecific when conspecifics are difficult to find. Thus, interspecific matings would be most frequent with females of the less abundant species. Support for this hypothesis is that the rate of hybridization has been shown to increase as the prairie chicken/sharp-tailed ratio increased and that the only interspecific matings observed were with females of the less abundant species (Sparling 1980).

The male hybrid found near the Crook rest stop had very short pinnae and banded coloration on its breast but not nearly so on its abdomen. The air sacs were more flesh colored as opposed to the purple of sharp-tailed grouse and the orange of Greater Prairie Chickens. With some minor exceptions, the phenotypic characteristics of this hybrid were similar to those of another hybrid male that was observed in 1964, booming on the largest prairie chicken lek in Yuma County. The air sacs were purple, resembling the air sacs of a sharp-tailed grouse, however, during the display, the air sacs of the hybrid protruded much more than the air sacs of the sharp-tailed grouse (Evans 1964). The central rectrices of the Crook hybrid were approximately 2 cm longer than the lateral rectrices. The hybrid observed by Evans possessed a tail in between that of a normal prairie chicken and a sharp-tailed grouse. This bird was also noticeably smaller than the male Greater Prairie Chicken on the booming ground, and its overall coloration was a lighter shade than the prairie chicken's. Evans (1964) also noted that when displaying, this hybrid spread its wings more than the prairie chickens, but less than the displaying sharp-tailed grouse. Similarly, it seemed to stomp its feet more than the prairie chicken, but it did not run as much as sharp-tailed grouse.

Given our initial seeding success on South Tamarack and the continued sightings of Greater Prairie Chickens in the area, we are cautiously optimistic that by controlling grazing and interseeding with native grasses, we will be able to enhance and add to existing nesting and brood rearing cover. Current plans are to interseed approximately 2,000 acres of the 3,700 acres that make up South Tamarack as a part of our effort to increase the project area's potential to support a reintroduced population of Greater Prairie Chickens. The successful completion of this project would give us at least one population of Greater Prairie Chickens on an area under Division of Wildlife control, on which much needed research could be carried out.

The primary purpose of the lek surveys was to gather data on the number and density of active leks. These two factors have been proven to be a more accurate method for determining trends in prairie chickens (Cannon and Knopf 1981). At the end of the 1982 lek survey, the majority of the area north of Highway 34 between Yuma and Eckley had been surveyed yielding a total of 82 leks and a density of .15 leks per square mile. In the sandhill habitat south of Highway 34 to the Arikaree River, a total of 25 leks were located, giving a density of .08 leks per square mile. The latter area had not been completely surveyed in 1982. Plans were to conduct an intensive survey in the spring of 1983. However, to reiterate, bad weather that spring prevented us from covering the entire survey area. A total of 22 new leks were located, giving a new total of 47 active leks for this area and a density of .15 leks per square mile.

The contrasting increase in active leks from 1981 through 1983 is attributed to the more thorough surveying of areas believed to be unoccupied and should not be interpreted as a sign of a population increase. While no conclusions regarding the current population trend of Greater Prairie Chickens can be drawn from the data collected thus far, it clearly shows that the present population of birds occupies

most of the available native range and is for the most part continuous throughout that range.

The threat of the loss of additional large areas of native prairie due to its conversion to crop land via center pivot irrigation has been reduced. However, overall poor range conditions due to heavy grazing continue to adversely affect the population. Effective management of the existing population of prairie chickens will necessitate obtaining management control over key areas of occupied native range.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Cannon, R.W. and F.L. Knopf. 1981. Lek numbers as a trend index to prairie grouse. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 45:776-778.
- Evans, K.E. 1964. Habitat evaluation of the Greater Prairie Chicken in Colorado. M.S. Thesis, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins. 98 pp.
- Hamerstrom, F. and F. Hamerstrom. 1973. The prairie chicken in Wisconsin: highlights of a 22-year study of counts, behavior, movements, turnover, and habitat. *Wis. Dep. Nat. Resour. Tech. Bull.* 64. 52 pp.
- Lumsden, H.G. 1970. A hybrid population of prairie grouse on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. Paper presented to 32nd Midwest Fish Wildl. Conf., Winnipeg.
- Schumacher, C.M. 1964. Range interseeding in Nebraska. *J. Range Manage.* 17:132-137.
- Sparling, D.W. 1980. Hybridization and taxonomic status of Greater Prairie Chickens and Sharp-tailed Grouse (hybridization in grouse). *The Prairie Naturalist*, Vol. 12, No 344:92-102.
- Van Sant, B.F. 1981. 1981 population and distribution census of the Greater Prairie Chicken of Colorado. Colo. Div. Wildlife, unpublished rep. 10 pp.
- Van Sant, B.F. 1982. Spring 1982, analysis of distribution, density, food habitats, mortality of and 2, 4-D effects on the Greater Prairie Chicken of Colorado. Colo. Div. of Wildlife, unpublished rep. 19 pp.
- Colorado Division of Wildlife. 517 West Prospect, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526.

FIELD TRIP REPORT  
LATILONG BLOCKS 27 and 28

Charles Chase and Steve Bissell

Regardless of your point of view, the trip to Las Animas and Baca Counties on June 17, 18, 19, and 20 was a success. The weather was tremendous and the bird watching was challenging. It was a new and different experience for those who have never visited that part of the state and a refreshing experience for those who have. The high precipitation of this summer and the past spring was evident; grass cover was lush and there were thousands of flowers out.

Some of the folks on the trip learned that planning on eating at restaurants isn't always possible; there is only one between Trinidad and Springfield and it isn't always open. Steve Bissell still hasn't seen a Scarlet Tanager; a fine male was seen by the Wainwrights, 20 minutes after Bissell left to go swimming at Two Buttes. Longbilled Curlews were seen everywhere and Charlie Chase managed to run down and catch a chick for photos. The folks from Colorado Springs learned that a machete is a better tool for bird watching on the Arkansas River than binoculars.

A total of 103 species was seen in the four days. There were 27 new latilong records or status changes. These blocks could still use some work in the fall and anyone needing information on places to go should contact us.

Participants: Steve Bissell, Toni Brevellier, Richard Bunn, Charles Chase, Beth Dillon, Larry Halsey, Ann Hodgson, Bob Jickling, Jan and Frank Justice, Bill Maynard, Bill Morrefield, Dianne Osborne, Don Schrupp, Mary Jane Shock, Tom Strong, Helen and Bill Wainwright, Doug, Judy, and John Ward, and Jim and Rosie Watts.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Latilong/Change*</u>
Mallard	27,28
Turkey Vulture	27,28
Miss. Kite	28
Northern Harrier	27,28
Cooper's Hawk	27
Swainson's Hawk	27,28
Red-tailed Hawk	27
Ferruginous Hawk	27,28
Golden Eagle	27
American Kestrel	27,28
Prairie Falcon	27,28
Ring-necked Pheasant	27,28
Wild Turkey	27,28
Northern Bobwhite	28
Scaled Quail	27
Killdeer	27,28
Mountain Plover	27,28
Long-billed Curlew	27,28
Band-tailed Pigeon	27-B*

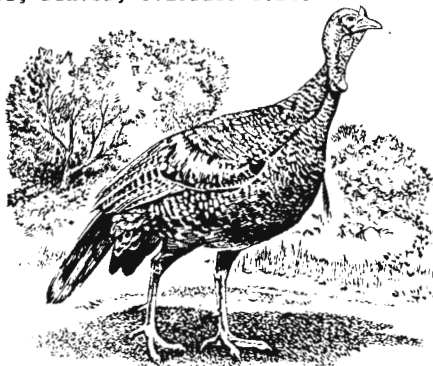
<u>Species</u>	<u>Latilong/Change*</u>
Mourning Dove	27,28
Black-billed Cuckoo	27-B*
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	27,28
Greater Roadrunner	27
Common Barn-Owl	28
Eastern Screech-Owl	27-B*,28-b*
Western Screech-Owl	27-B*,28-b*
Great Horned Owl	27,28
Burrowing Owl	27,28
Common Nighthawk	27,28
Common Poorwill	27,28-b*
Chimney Swift	28-b*
Black-chinned Hummingbird	27
Belted Kingfisher	27,28
Lewis' Woodpecker	27,28
Red-headed Woodpecker	28
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	27-b*,28-b*
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	27,28
Downy Woodpecker	27,28
Hairy Woodpecker	27
Northern Flicker	27,28
Olive-sided Flycatcher	27-b*
Western Wood-Pewee	27,28
Willow Flycatcher	27-b*
Western Flycatcher	27-B*
Eastern Phoebe	27,28
Say's Phoebe	27,28
Vermilion Flycatcher	0.5 Km S. of 28 in Oklahoma
Ash-throated Flycatcher	27,28
Great Crested Flycatcher	28
Cassin's Kingbird	27,28
Western Kingbird	27,28
Eastern Kingbird	27,28
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	27
Horned Lark	27,28
Violet-green Swallow	27-B*
Cliff Swallow	27,28
Barn Swallow	27,28
Blue Jay	28
Black-billed Magpie	27,28
American Crow	27,28
Chihuahuan Raven	27,28
Common Raven	27
Black-capped Chickadee	27
Rock Wren	27,28
Canyon Wren	27
Bewick's Wren	27,28
House Wren	27,28-B*
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	27-B*
American Robin	27,28
Northern Mockingbird	27,28
Brown Thrasher	27,28
Curve-billed Thrasher	27



<u>Species</u>	<u>Latilong/Change*</u>
Loggerhead Shrike	27, 28
European Starling	27, 28
Warbling Vireo	28-b*
Red-eyed Vireo	27-b*
Yellow-breasted Chat	27-B*
Hepatic Tanager	27-B*
Summer Tanager	28
Scarlet Tanager	27M*
Western Tanager	27-b*
Black-headed Grosbeak	27
Blue Grosbeak	27, 28
Lazuli Bunting	27
Indigo Bunting	27
Dickcissel	27, 28
Brown Towhee	27, 28
Cassin's Sparrow	27, 28
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	27
Chipping Sparrow	27
Lark Sparrow	27, 28
Black-throated Sparrow	27-b*
Lark Bunting	27, 28
Grasshopper Sparrow	27-B*, 28-B*
Red-winged Blackbird	27, 28
Western Meadowlark	27, 28
Common Grackle	27, 28-B*
Brown-headed Cowbird	27, 28
Orchard Oriole	27, 28
Northern Oriole	27, 28
House Finch	28-B*
House Sparrow	27, 28

\*New Record or Status Change

Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado 80205, and Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado 80216.



AN IMMATURE ROSS' GULL IN EASTERN COLORADO

Note the black "v" across the the wings and back, white secondaries and elongated black-tipped central tail feathers.



Immature Ross' Gull in Colorado

An immature Ross' Gull (Rhodostethia rosea) was observed and photographed at Jumbo Reservoir, Sedgwick/Logan Counties, Colorado, from April 28, to May 7, 1983. The bird was identified by Bill and Inez Praether of Fleming, Colorado on Thursday April 28, in the company of Bonaparte's Gulls. Mr. Praether reports that these were the first Bonaparte's Gulls of 1983 at Jumbo Reservoir. No gulls were seen there on Tuesday April 26, and no one was in the field on Wednesday April 27. Thus, it seems likely that the Ross' Gull and the Bonaparte's Gulls arrived sometime between Tuesday afternoon April 26, and Thursday morning April 28. The weather during this period (at least through May 1) was inclement. On Saturday April 30, the temperature was in the low 40's (F.), the sky was heavily overcast, and there was intermittent fog, drizzle, and rain, with a NE wind of up to 20 mph.

Many Colorado birders made the long drive out onto the prairie to see this rare arctic gull. Observers included Bob Andrews, Bill Brockner, Richard Bunn, Charles Chase, Kevin Cook, Jeanne & Larry Halsey, Hugh Kingery, Barry Knapp, Diane & Steve Larson, Thompson Marsh, Mike Middleton, Jack Reddall, John Vanderpoel, Doug & Judy Ward, and Betsy Webb. Several people obtained good photographs on Sunday morning, May 1, when the bird stayed very close to the concrete dam on the south side of the reservoir for extended periods of time. The photographs reproduced here were taken by Mike Middleton on Kodachrome 64 with a 200 mm lens.

There are only three previously documented occurrences of the Ross' Gull in sub-arctic North America: an immature in November 1966 at Victoria, B.C. (Roberson, Rare Birds of the West Coast, p. 206), an adult from March to May 1975 at Newburyport, Mass., (AB 29, 643-646), and an adult at Chicago, Ill., in November 1978 (AB 33, 140-142). There are sight records from May, 1957 at Pt. Pelee, Ont., (James et al, Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ontario, p. 27) and April 1981 at Newburyport, Mass., (Bird Observer of Eastern Mass. 9, 134-135; AB 35, 802).

Since 1978, the Ross' Gull has occurred regularly in small numbers during the nesting season at Churchill, Manitoba and has bred there successfully (at least in 1980; AB 32, 1177; 34, 839; 35, 951; 36, 989).

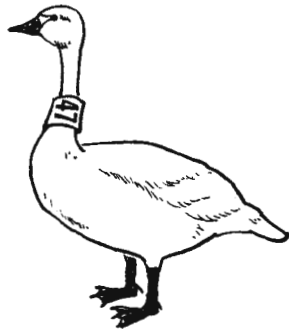
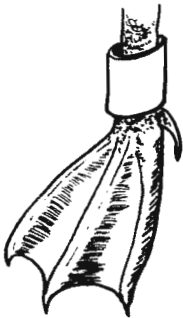
NECK COLLARED TRUMPETER SWANS

Dear Cooperator:

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department needs your help in locating Trumpeter Swans wearing green plastic neck collars or leg markers. During the summers of 1983 - 1985, collars will be placed on trumpeter swans that reside in the Snake and Green River drainages of Wyoming. The plastic collars are a bright green with one or two white numerals (2 inches high and in one position on the collar), and a symbol (in another position on the collar). Cygnets will only have a colored leg marker on either the left or right leg. All swans will have a #9 metal leg band. Each collar marked "swan" can be identified by either the numerals or symbols.

Identify Leg Marker Color and Leg  
On (Right or Left)

Read Neck Collar From Head  
toward body



The collaring effort will, with sufficient observation data, provide biologists with information on migration, local movements, dispersal to areas outside these drainages, recruitment of breeding adults into the flock, and mortality rates. Please inform all interested organizations, bird watchers, and biologists within your organization of this program. Record the following information on marked swans observed: color of collar, the number and/or symbol on collar, date of siting, location of siting, and observer and address. Send to or call: Dave Lockman, Migratory Bird Biologist, Box 96, Smoot, WY 83126, phone: (307) 886-9470, and Chief, Bird Banding Laboratory, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland 20708.

## BOOK REVIEW

A Guide to Bird Behavior, Vol. 1. By Donald W. Stokes. Little, Brown & Co. 1983. \$8.95

Anyone who can make Starling-watching sound interesting demands attention. This book covers a facet of field ornithology which most of us ignore all too much: watching what the birds do. The material represents, to me, the epitome of field ornithology: the application of dedicated field study.

Stokes describes, in 10-12 pages, the behavior of 25 common species of birds. The common birds Stokes picked all occur in the eastern U.S. Although all nest in Colorado, five have limited occurrence here. The data he discusses provide a fascinating overview of the behavior of his selected species. I also learned how much we miss, particularly by centering on our quest for the elusive rara avis.

Each species account contains: an introductory summary, a Behavior Calendar, a Display Guide which describes auditory displays and illustrates visual displays, Behavior Descriptions covering territory, courtship, nest building, breeding, plumage, seasonal movement, social behavior, and, where appropriate, feeder behavior. Lifelike portraits of each species by J. Fenwick Lansdowne decorate the book.

I finished the chapter on Starlings, realizing how little I know about this abundant pest. The Stokes introduction to the Starling, more lively than most of his introductions, offers these thoughts: "The Starling is undoubtedly one of the least loved birds in North America, for its aggressive claiming of nest holes often crowds out other species, and its bothersome population growth seems to have no clear end in sight. In these respects, Sturnus vulgaris is very similar to Homo sapiens. In any case, the behavior watcher can find something of interest in every animal species, and since Starlings are always available, they make great subjects".

Highlights or excerpts: Tree swallows frequently desert their nest sites temporarily during nest building or incubation, for as long as four days. This usually occurs during stormy weather and does not affect nesting success. (I suppose that we see this on those stormy days when lakes attract hosts of swallows). No one has ever documented overt signs of courtship--pair formation--in the robin! Flickers mate for life, range over 150 acres or more. A Mallard's territory does not include the nest site; in fact the male locates it 150 yards or so away. It has open water for feeding, dense cover for protection, and open land for loafing (preening and resting). Around the edge of a lake, the scarcity of loafing areas constitutes the main factor limiting Mallard territories.

We who claim the name "field ornithologists" may learn from this book how to study behavior and what to look for in the common birds, and by implication, the less common birds. I am trying to talk myself into more appreciation of behavior watching; maybe it will convince you too.

Hugh E. Kingery, 869 Milwaukee, Denver, CO 80206



OFFICIAL C.F.O. T-SHIRTS

Limited supply left!!

The C.F.O. logo in Black on an attractive Beige  
T-shirt.

Only \$7.50 each

Order from:

Frank Justice  
Colorado Field Ornithologists  
1917 Quitman Street  
Denver, CO 80219

Please specify Small, Medium, Large or Extra Large!

COLORADO  
BIRD DISTRIBUTION  
LATILONG STUDY



2nd EDITION  
COMPLETELY REVISED

Order from:

Frank Justice, Treasurer  
Colorado Field Ornithologists  
1917 South Quitman Street  
Denver, CO 80219

Make checks payable to C.F.O.  
Price: \$4.00 for C.F.O. members  
\$5.00 for non-members