

C.F.O. Journal

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Quarterly



VOL. 21, NO. 2

C.F.O. JOURNAL

SUMMER, 1987



C.F.O. JOURNAL (ISSN - 0362-9902) is published quarterly for \$10.00 per year by the Colorado Field Ornithologists, 1440 Wood Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80907. Second Class Postage Paid at Colorado Springs, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to 1440 Wood Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80907.

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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, 317 W. Prospect, Fort Collins, CO 80525; send rare bird reports to: CFO Records Committee, c/o Zoological Collections, Denver Museum of Natural Resources History, City Park, Denver, Colorado 80205.

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Cover Photograph: Female Blue Grouse calling chicks by Bud Smith, Regional Information Officer, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Northeast Regional Office, Fort Collins, CO.

THE CFO ANNUAL CONVENTION

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The CFO Annual Convention in 1987 was the 25th anniversary convention and was held in Boulder on the weekend of May 8-10th. The three Saturday morning field trips were to East Boulder County Lakes, Boulder Creek and CU Campus and Old South Road Foothills. Relatively few species and no unusual migrants were seen as the spring migration was very slow along the front range in early May.

The Saturday afternoon paper session was held at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. Over fifty people attended and were rewarded with an interesting and varied program. The papers presented were:

- 1:00 - 1:15 The First CFO Annual Convention, Lynn Wilcockson, Denver.
- 1:15 - 1:45 Distribution Ecology of Brown Thrasher and Gray Catbird, Robert Andrews, Department of EPO Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder.
- 1:45 - 2:15 Birds and the Colorado State Forest Service, David Leatherman, Colorado State Forest Service, Fort Collins.
- 2:15 - 2:45 Hamilton Reservoir, Waterbird Sauna of Larimer County, Dr. Ronald Ryder, Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins.
- 2:45 - 3:00 Break
- 3:00 - 3:30 Breeding Status of Small Owls in Boulder County, Stephen Jones, Boulder.
- 3:30 - 4:00 Weather and Tree Swallow Movements, Dr. Robert Cohen, Department of Biology, Metro State College, Denver.

The CFO business meeting was held immediately afterwards and the following new officers were duly elected: President Peter Gent, Boulder, Executive Secretary Toni Brevillier, Colorado Springs, Treasurer, Judy Ward, Lafayette, and Directors David Martin, Westminster and David Silverman, Rye. The following

officers retain their old positions: Vice-President Bill Prather, Longmont, Journal Editor Ann Hodgson, Denver and Directors Tina Jones, Denver, Ron Lambeth, Clifton, John Rawinski, Monte Vista and Ronald Ryder, Fort Collins. The outgoing officers, President Victor Zerbi, Executive Secretary David Blue and Treasurer Fran Enright were thanked for their dedicated efforts over the last two to three years. There was also some discussion of the CFO Records Committee. The new chairman for 1987 is Richard Bunn, Colorado Springs. The originals of all records submitted to the committee since it was set up are in four large folders that are held by the chairman and are open for inspection and use by all CFO members and anyone else interested. A duplicate set of records is also held at the Denver Museum of Natural History and is also open for general use.

The Saturday evening dinner was held at the Clarion Hotel in Boulder and again over fifty people were present to see and hear an excellent presentation by Brian Wheeler, a wildlife artist and photographer living in Longmont. He has just completed the color plates for the "Field Guide to Hawks of North America", the soon to be published Peterson Field Guide Series #35. The guide also has many of Brian's excellent photographs, but not as many as he showed us. We saw slides of all possible plumages of all the hawks that occur in Colorado and several other species as well.

There were two field trips on Sunday May 10th: one to Rocky Mountain National Park and one to Weld County lakes and wetlands. The RMNP trip had excellent looks at nesting Lewis' Woodpecker, Red-naped and Williamson's Sapsuckers and Mountain Bluebirds. In Weld County some migrants were finally found with three Whimbrel and a Northern Waterthrush being seen as well as a rather far north pair of Black-necked Stilts.

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
25TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
May 9, 1987 - BOULDER, COLORADO

THE FIRST C.F.O. ANNUAL CONVENTION

ABSTRACT

In April 1963 the Colorado Bird Club (later known as the Denver Field Ornithologists) announced in their newsletter to all members that there would be an organizational meeting for purposes of establishing a statewide bird group. The meeting was to be held at the Denver Museum of Natural History on May 25 and 26, 1963. Records of those who were in attendance could not be located but a slide was shown of people registering in front of Phipps Auditorium on May 25, 1963.

During the afternoon of May 25, 1963, several papers were presented including one on White Pelicans by Dr. Ronald Ryder, who has been a regular contributor at most state meetings since 1963. The evening banquet was held at the Wellshire Inn and Dr. Alfred M. Bailey provided the program - a film of Colorado Wildlife.

The meeting in 1964 was in Ft. Collins and in 1965 the meeting was at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. During the 1965 meeting the name COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS was adopted and the first officers for the "new" organization were elected. They were: President - Thompson Marsh - Denver
Vice President - Allegra Collister - Longmont
Sec. Treas. - Lois Webster - Denver
Membership Sec. - Helen Thurlow - Colorado

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DISTRIBUTION ECOLOGY OF BROWN THRASHER AND GRAY CATBIRD

ABSTRACT

The abundance and habitat use by two riparian shrubland birds, the Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) and the Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) were examined at 5 study areas along the South Platte and Platte Rivers from northeastern Colorado to eastern Nebraska. The Gray Catbird was most common in eastern Nebraska, declined westward to central Nebraska, and was absent beyond that. The Brown Thrasher occurred along the entire transect, but was most common from northeastern Colorado to central Nebraska, and declined both westward and eastward. Gray Catbirds were relatively specialized in their habitat use, generally occurring at sites that differ significantly in shrub height and foliage density from most sites at the same study area. Brown Thrashers were generalists, using sites that generally did not differ significantly with respect to number of trees, number of shrubs, shrub height and foliage density than randomly sampled sites within the same study area.

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THE COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE AND BIRDS

ABSTRACT

The Colorado State Forest Service, headquartered in Ft. Collins, is an arm of the State Board of Agriculture and Colorado State University. Major programs, directed particularly at private forest landowners, include Forest Management and Utilization, Fire Control and Prevention, Insects and Diseases, Urban and Community Forestry, Nursery, Living Snow Fence, and Project Learning Tree. These programs have the potential to affect bird habitats, in particular feed and cover requirements. Current activities such as specific consideration of birds in forest management plans, increased reliance on non-pesticide options in the management of tree pests, plains plantings for wildlife, use of prescribed fire, and emphasis on youth education are some ways in which the CSFS is attempting to make the net effects of forestry on birds positive.

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HAMILTON RESERVOIR, WATERBIRD SAUNA OF LARIMER COUNTY

ABSTRACT

Bird numbers by species have been monitored at Hamilton Reservoir, Rawhide Energy Station, about 35 km north of Ft. Collins. Over 90 species have been observed on or adjacent to the reservoir since 15 August 1986. Seventeen species of ducks, 2 of geese, and 4 of grebes have utilized the reservoir, which is ice-free all winter with surface temperatures ranging from 9°C in January to 25°C in August. In August and early September, American Coots were the most abundant species. Most ducks peaked in October, but Mallards were later. Canada Geese were most numerous in December. Pelicans, cormorants, grebes, gulls, shorebirds, and most passerines migrated in early autumn. Low numbers of raptors are believed due to low numbers of rodents and rabbits. Peregrines have been seen on three occasions. Four Common Loons were seen on 31 October. 61 White-faced Ibises on 19 April. A total of 1,260 waterfowl of 10 species have been banded and many sampled for Vibrio cholerae. About 17% (71 of 397 samples) tested positive.

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BREEDING STATUS OF SMALL OWLS IN BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

ABSTRACT

Eight road transects were driven and twelve trail transects walked during the 1985-1987 breeding seasons (February to July). Tape-recorded playbacks were used to locate breeding owls. Twenty-four singing Pygmy Owls were located at elevations ranging from 5,600 feet to 8,800 feet. All of the Pygmies were found in ponderosa pine/douglas fir ecosystems or montane and foothills riparian ecosystems. Calling activity was greater for Pygmy Owls during March and early April. Three Pygmy nests were found in the foothills between 6,000 feet and 7,200 feet. Twenty-one singing Saw-whet Owls were located at elevations ranging from 6,000 feet to 10,000 feet. Saw-whets were found in ponderosa pine/douglas fir ecosystems and lodgepole pine ecosystems. One Saw-whet nest was found in the foothills at 7,300 feet. Nine singing Flammulated Owls were located at elevations ranging from 6,000 feet to 8,500 feet. Eight of the nine Flammulated Owls were found in foothills canyons in mature ponderosa pine/douglas fir ecosystems. Two Flammulated Owl nests were found in the foothills at 6,000 feet and 7,400 feet. Three singing Boreal Owls were located at about 10,000 feet in spruce-fir ecosystems. Populations of Saw-whet and Pygmy Owls fluctuated dramatically from year to year. In 1986 and 1987, Pygmy and Saw-whet numbers in the Boulder Mountain Parks were 80 percent lower than numbers observed in 1985. Saw-whet numbers in the upper montane were about 50 percent higher in 1987 than in 1985 and 1986. Food supply may be a significant factor in nesting habitat selection for these species. Fifty volunteers participated in the study, which was sponsored by Boulder Audubon and the Boulder County Nature Association. The study was funded by grants from the Colorado Audubon Council and Boulder Audubon.

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WEATHER AND TREE SWALLOW MOVEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The high mobility of swallows and swifts allows them to arrive and acquire nest sites and mates relatively early in the spring compared to other small aerial insectivores such as tyrant flycatchers. In April and May, before egg-laying, Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) routinely leave their breeding areas in the Colorado mountains to forage, and presumably to night-roost, at lower elevations. Each day their arrival time, arrival behavior, activity pattern in the breeding area, departure time, and departure behavior are strongly dependent on the local weather conditions and the weather conditions at lower elevations. With widespread storms they may temporarily leave the region entirely.

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SEASONAL REPORT: FALL 1986

August 1 through November 30

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This report summarizes the Colorado birds reported for the fall season, August 1 through November 30, 1986. Emphasis is placed on extreme dates, rare and unusual species, high numbers and reports of birds seen in less than usual numbers. Conclusions on bird observational trends are based on comments by individual contributors.

There was a fairly poor seed and berry crop in the fall, both on the western slope and along the front range. WWB observed that bird numbers were "the lowest in about 20 years" which he attributed to the low food supply and also possibly the "flat" fall weather. However, MJ noted that 5 storms in October/November on the western slope brought a few good sightings, many late migrants and lingerers.

Loons through Ibis:

Common Loon numbers reportedly increased on both the western slope and LLBL areas, with good representation from most "birded" areas. One early Common Loon October 4 in south central Colorado (DFO); 16 on November 4 in Delta (MJ). Nine sightings of Pacific Loons reported from October 12 through November 22; a new record for latilong 15 in Delta November 9 (MJ). Three reports of Red-Throated Loons: October 27 at Jackson Reservoir (LH, HH), and November 3 and 9 at CCR (DFO).

Total of 1500 Horned Grebes at Union and Horsehoe Reservoir November 4 (JC), and 5 late Eared Grebes at Sweitzer Lake in Delta (CD). Many observers now differentiating between Western and Clark's Grebes in reports; approximately equal numbers of each with young at CF&I ponds in Pueblo September 20 (BM). Union Reservoir had peak of 2,000-3,000 Western Grebes; 50 Clark's Grebes had all left by October 1 (BP). Boulder area reported 110 identified Clark's Grebes out of 12,285 total Western/Clark's Grebes during the fall period. Two reports of Red-Necked Grebes: One at Jackson Reservoir October 27 (LH,HH) and one CCR November 26 (JR). American White Pelican reports were increased and widely scattered in August/September in Boulder area (AB); DFO sighted 750 in northeast Colorado October 6, with late reports from Prewitt Reservoir November 16 (MJ) and Pueblo Reservoir November 23 (DS).

American Bittern at Sweitzer Lake October 14, and early November in Boulder (AB). Three locations reported Least Bitterns: a family of 3-4 at Kennel Lakes, Weld County August 8 (JC), one at Barr Lake August 17 (CA) and two in Berthoud August 20 (DS). Twenty-one reports of Green-backed Heron in August and September, mostly front range. Five sightings of Great Egrets from Boulder to the eastern plains with one late October 12 in Windsor (JC). DFO reported 150 Cattle Egrets August 24 in northern Colorado. Black-crowned Night Heron reported as late as November 22 in Ft. Collins (DL).

Delta area reports most species of waterfowl decreased for the second year in a row. Several scattered observations of Tundra Swans included nine from November 18-23 in the Boulder area, representing a large increase over recent years. Nine greater White-fronted Geese in northeast Colorado November 17 (DFO), one late October-early November in Grand Junction (CD) and one at Woods Lake November 23 (JC). Early dates for Snow Geese include 3 at Hamilton Reservoir near Ft. Collins August 15-29, which RR surmises might be injured holdovers from spring, and one at Cheraw August 30 (DS); Boulder reported a flight of 150, where normally only singles are seen (AB). A total of 14 Ross' Geese were sighted from October 20 to November 23, mostly Denver to eastern plains, and western slope. An excellent photo was submitted by DS from the Denver area. DFO observers counted an estimated 20,000 Canada Geese in northeast Colorado November 17; increases were noted in Grand Junction, "strong migration" in Ft. Collins area (RR), but decreased numbers in the Eagle Valley (JM).

The western slope reports decreased numbers of several varieties of ducks, but an increase in the number of Wood Ducks (CD,MJ). Sawhill ponds near Boulder had a family of 8 in September (AB). Five individual Greater Scaup were sighted from October 13 to November 19 (JC, JR, MJ). Oldsquaw reported at Mesa County November 22 (CD) and Bijou Reservoir November 23 (JR). Six White-winged Scoters from Boulder eastward November 9-25 (M.ob.), and one Surf Scoter October 15 at CCR (BR). One Barrow's Goldeneye at Horseshoe Reservoir November 4. Boulder had an increased number of Hooded Merganser - 32 on November 23 (DFO).

Raptors:

Turkey Vultures mostly gone by early October, with latest report November 9 western slope (CD). Ft. Collins had six Osprey sightings; they were "numerous and widespread" according to BM, who also reported at late one November 28 in Colorado Springs. DSI reports Mississippi Kites had left Pueblo September 4; they remained in Lamar until September 16 (PL). First return of Bald

Eagles noted at Barr Lake September 13 (DFO), with fair numbers in the San Luis Valley, western slope and eastern plains; 15 at Prewitt Reservoir November 13 (MJ). Boulder reported decreasing numbers of Northern Harriers each month (AB). 33 observations of Sharp-shinned Hawks in Denver area (fide HK). Two Broadwinged Hawks in Boulder in September (AB). Swainson's Hawks moving in good numbers end of August - early September, latest date October 1. Rough-legged Hawks first date September 24 with fair numbers thereafter. Prairie Falcon at Delta sewage ponds November 9-10 unusual for the area (MJ). DP reports 21 aeries of Peregrine Falcons in Colorado in 1986; at least nine other observations including two fighting over a shorebird which one had killed, near Cedaridge (CD).

Galliformes through Cranes:

Blue Grouse in Boulder area in September (DB,DH); 16 Sage Grouse at Grand Junction August 29 (PY), and four Greater Prairie Chickens in Holyoke (CH). DFO reported 30 Wild Turkey November 28 in Evergreen. Ring-necked Pheasant numbers still very diminished in Boulder area (AB) and relatively few numbers reported elsewhere. PM sighted 8 Chukars in Boulder October 3, most likely captive escapees.

Late Sora in Boulder November 9 (AB). Sandhill Cranes begin moving through the state in late September with high numbers noted by several observers: 5000 October 4-5 over Wetmore (fide RW); farmers east of Pueblo reported hundreds nightly late September to mid-October (fide DSi). Peak activity centered around the weekend of October 11,-12: 6,500 in Boulder area (AB), "strong migration" from Ft. Collins foothills to Pawnee National Grasslands (FG), and 10,000-20,000 in Denver area (HK). An estimated 15,000 began arriving in the San Luis Valley mid-October and stayed through the first week of December (EM). The only area reporting lower numbers of Sandhill Cranes was Grand Junction with 60 compared to 350 in 1985. One Whooping Crane October 14 at Barr Lake (BR) and 22 total in San Luis Valley (EM).

Shorebirds through Gulls and Terns:

Shorebirds were good in Greeley and Jackson area according to BP, who also felt gulls and terns were comparable to last year in the LLBL area. Western slopes had some late date shorebirds with generally lower numbers despite good mudflats (EM,JM,MJ,CD). Nine scattered reports of Black-bellied Plovers with a peak number of 20 from Delta October 12-18 (MJ), and a few lesser Golden Plovers last seen November 8.

A late Semi-palmated Plover visited Crawford Reservoir October 18 (CD). Two Piping Plovers, one at Julesburg August 27 (JC) and another in northeast Colorado September 24 (CFO). 400 Lesser Yellowlegs in southeast Colorado September 8 (JR). CD reports a late Solitary Sandpiper November 24 and Spotted Sandpiper November 13 both on the western slope. Nine Willets along the Arkansas River in Florence August 30 (MP). Five Upland Sandpipers appeared in Walsh August 9 (BD). Two Whimbrels seen October 12 at Thompson Lake (DHi). BP sighted one Ruddy Turnstone September 28, Union Reservoir. Four observations of Red Knots September 5-28; one in southeast Colorado, and the remainder in the northeast. Delta had 12 Sanderlings, a high count for them. Hart's Basin supplied one Semi-palmated Sandpiper October 14 and 31 Pectoral Sandpipers October 7 (MJ). JR reported one Buff-breasted Sandpiper September 8 in southeast Colorado. A total of 33 Short-billed Dowitcher reported August 10-31 in three sightings. Thirty at CF&I ponds August 10 (DaB) represents a significant increase over the number of previously documented observations. Long-billed Dowitcher seen November 3 at Hart's Reservoir is late for western slope according to CD. A fairly large flock of 100+ Common Snipe September 13 in Ft. Collins (RR). Wilson's Phalarope November 10 ends the list of late shorebirds for western slope (CD).

LH and HH report two Parasitic Jaeger at Jackson Reservoir October 27. High numbers of Franklin's Gulls August 15 in northern Colorado (3300) (JR), and up to 100 Bonaparte's Gulls November 17 in northeast Colorado (DFO). First fall date Herring Gull October 10; one first winter Thayer's Gull November 17 and 23 reported by JR at CCR. One immature Glaucous Gull showed up in northeast Colorado November 17 (DFO). A total of ten Sabine's Gulls scattered over eastern plains September 13 through October 26. Caspian Terns sighted at Lake DeWeese in Westcliffe August 3 (DSi,DJ). Nine observations of Common Terns from Pueblo north September 13 to October 10 (m.ob.).

Pigeons through Woodpeckers:

Fourteen reports of Barn Owls across the state with six at White Rocks area where they are "known nesting." Grand Junction reports decreased numbers of Great Horned Owls (CD). Northern Pygmy/Owls were fairly evident this fall; six in the Grand Junction area (RL) and four east of the Rockies (m.ob.).

PY reported 76 Common Nighthawks August 19 in Boulder; 60 on western slope October 22 (CD). Calliope Hummingbird reports came in from four locations, including a very late one in Olathe September 28 (MJ). WWB last saw Broad-tailed Hummingbird

September 10 "earliest departure since 1976"; however a late bird was seen in Boulder October 12 (AB). Lewis' and Downy Woodpecker numbers were down on the western slope (CD,RL).

Flycatchers through Swallows:

DSi reports one Least Flycatcher August 31 in Colorado City. CD mentions high of 50 Western Flycatchers on western slope and a late Ash-throated Flycatcher September 27. Cassin's Kingbirds visited Boulder in September-October, where they are not usually seen (AB). CME observed and photographed an albinistic Kingbird spp. in August with both white outer tail feathers and white-tipped tail. One Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at CCR August 2 according to HS.

Western slope had late Tree Swallow October 9 (MJ) and late Barn Swallows November 2 (CD). DFO counted 2000 Barn Swallows at Barr Lake September 13.

Corvids through Gnatcatchers:

Grand Junction reportedly enjoyed an increase in the corvid population, notably Steller's Jays and 2000+ Common Crows in Mesa (CD). However, Mountain Chickadee numbers were down in Grand Junction, as were White-breasted Nuthatches (CD). IPFC similarly reports lower numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches. A new latilong report of Golden-Crowned Kinglet in Otis October 9 (DL).

Bluebirds through Shrikes:

Four eastern Bluebirds in Boulder in November were the first seen there in three years (AB), 100+ Western Bluebirds on western slope October 29 (RI). The latest Mountain Bluebird report was November 23 (CD). WNB said Robins had disappeared from Evergreen by October 15 with none wintering. Six reports of Gray Catbirds, with a late one in Denver November 23 (fide HK). Boulder reported greater than usual numbers of Sage Thrashers (13 total); two fairly late observations from Hamilton Reservoir October 17 (RR) and Grand Junction October 18 (CD). The westernmost Curve-billed Thrasher report came from Penrose October 1 (JW). Scattered reports of Bohemian Waxwings began with an early sighting in Grand Junction November 22 (CD); large numbers up to 250 in Ft. Collins November 15-30 (DL) and 300+ at JC residence.

Vireos and Warblers:

Seven Bell's Vireos reported August 11 in northeast Colorado (DFO) and a fairly late one in Colorado Springs September 11 (BM). One October Philadelphia Vireo in Boulder (AB). A

Red-eyed Vireo on August 26 represents a new latilong record in Eagle (JM).

Although no major wave of warblers was noted this fall a good variety were reported, total 23 species. A Tennessee Warbler was a new latilong record in Mesa County September 1986 (RLe,CD). A Northern Parula in Ft. Collins reported by DHa October 3. A Yellow Warbler September 28 on the western slope was late (CD). A fairly late Black-throated Green Warbler from Lyons (BP) was accompanied by a very clear photo. Blackburnian Warbler in Boulder October 23 (GB). DaB spotted a Pine Warbler at Riverside Reservoir September 7. Chatfield Reservoir hosted two Palm Warblers: one October 13 (HK) and November 8 (RLz). A Blackpoll Warbler in Greeley was late November 1 (JC). RS sighted a Hooded Warbler in Wheatridge September 19.

Tanagers through Sparrows:

One Scarlet Tanager at Jackson Reservoir October 2 (JC). Three Summer Tanager sightings: One at Chatfield August 20 (DaB) and September 8-13 in southeast Colorado (CFO). A Green-tailed Towhee October 11 on western slope stayed late as did November 1 Chipping Sparrow and November 22 Brewer's Sparrow (CD). Another new latilong record for Eagle was the Black-throated Sparrow September 29 (JM). Sage Sparrow also late for western slope October 18 (CD). BM reports a Savannah Sparrow late at Pueblo Reservoir November 29, as well as two Fox Sparrows in Colorado Springs October 18. MJ found two Swamp Sparrows in Fort Morgan November 13. Golden-crowned Sparrows were sighted in Boulder area September 28 (PP,ES) and November 6 and December 2 (PV). JC reported thousands of White-crowned Sparrows in Weld and Morgan Counties. Mesa County also had a new latilong record Harris' Sparrow October 25 (CD).

Blackbirds through Finches

AB reported 6 late Bobolinks in Boulder in September. Up to 800 Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen in northeast Colorado September 86 (DF0); one at feeder in Florence was somewhat late (NP). 7,000 Brewer's Blackbirds at Latham Reservoir on September 10 (JC). One Great-tailed Grackle seen August 24-30 in Florence (JW,RW). An unusual Pine Grosbeak in Lamar October 31 is a latilong record (details given, PL). JM states it was a good year for Red Crossbills in Eagle where BR reported the first record of White-winged Crossbills for latilong 10 August 12. Hundreds of Pine Siskins were seen in Silverton (CD). Boulder reported an increased number of Lesser Goldfinches August through October (AB).

Abbreviations: CCR: Cherry Creek Reservoir; DFO: Denver Field Ornithologists; fide: reported by; IPFC: Indian Peaks Fall Count; LLBL: Longmont, Lyons, Berthoud, Loveland; m.ob.: many observers.

Special thanks to Jim Watts for help in reviewing reports and researching data.

"Noted Observers":

Charles Aid (CA), Dan Bridges (DaB), Winston W. Brockner (WwB), Alex Brown (AB), Diane Brown (DB), Gillian Brown (GB), Jerry Cairo (JC), Alex Cringham (AC), Coen Dexter (CD), Beth Dillon (BD), Clark & Margaret Ewing (CME), Fred Glover (FG), Dave Hallock (DH), Carol Hargreaves (CH), David Hawksworth (DHa), Dorothy Hill (DHi), Harold Holt (HH), LaVona Holt (LH), Mark Janos (MJ), Dave Johnson (DJ), Hugh Kingery (HK), Ron Lambeth (RL), Dave Leatherman (DL), Randy Lentz (RLz), Rich Levad (RLe), Peggy Locke (PL), Bill Maynard (BM), Jack Merchant (JM), Ed Merritt (EM), Patricia Mizrah (OM), Mark Peterson (MP), Norma Peterson (NP), Pam Piombino (PP), Bill Prather (BP), Dick Pratt (DP), Jack Reddal (JR), Bob Righter (BR), Ron Ryder (RR), Dick Schottler (DS), Helen Singer (HS), Dave Silverman (DSi), Robert Spencer (RS), Jim Watts (JW), Rosie Watts (RW), Peter Yankey (PY).

LEUCISTIC RED-TAILED HAWK (Buteo jamaicensis)
IN LA PLATA COUNTY

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Leucism and albinism are two terms often confused. Leucism is the complete loss of an individual pigment, or all pigments, in feathers but not in soft parts (Buckley 1982, Jehl 1985). Pure albinism, on the otherhand, occurs when pigment is completely absent from plumage, irides, and skin (Sage 1962). Hundreds of leucistic specimens have been classified as either partial or incomplete albinos in the past (Sage 1962, Ross 1963, Gross 1965). A literature search I recently conducted revealed at least 26 known records of "albinistic" Red-tailed Hawks (Buteo jamaicensis) in the United States.

Ross (1963) states, "albinism occurs more frequently in this species (sic B. jamaicensis) than any other hawk". His research of museum collections realized 20 albinistic specimens of the species (4 total (=pure) and 16 partial). The demographics of these species, however, are not given in the paper. Published accounts of "albinistic" Red-tailed Hawks exist for Minnesota (Leucistic; Eckert 1974), Idaho (Leucistic; Melquist and Schroeder 1974), South Dakota (pure albino; Harris 1977), Wisconsin (Leucistic; Follen 1979), and Oregon (Leucistic; Oakley and Eltzroth 1980). The purpose of this note is to document the occurrence of a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk in southwest Colorado in 1985.

At approximately 1400 hours on December 12, 1985 I spotted what appeared to be a totally white hawk perched in a cottonwood tree (Populus spp.) as I drove along Highway 160 nine km east of Durango (La Plata County). After stopping, I viewed the bird for 10 minutes with 7 x 35 binoculars at a distance of approximately 300 m. Upon my departure from the area, I was sure the bird was of the genus Buteo, but unsure whether it was a Red-tailed Hawk or a Rough-legged Hawk (Buteo lagopus). On December 28, 1985, I returned to the area and relocated the bird 1 km west of its previous location. At this time, with the aid of 20X spotting scope (at a distance of 100m) I was able to identify the bird as a Red-tailed Hawk. The bird's plumage, while perched, appeared completely white with the exception of two black areas (3cm each) on its nape. Its feet appeared yellow in color; cere and eye color was undeterminable. After approximately ten minutes the bird flushed from its pole-top perch. While it flew, I observed that its rectrices appeared to be the normal "red" color and that the ventral primary remiges were tipped with black.

To my knowledge this is the first published sighting of a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk in Colorado. A live mount of a leucistic Red-tailed Hawk does, however, exist in the collection of the Denver Museum of National History. According to the specimen label, the bird died while a resident of the City Park Zoo in 1947. The bird is mostly unpigmented except for some melanistic feathers on its neck, flank, and alula. Also, one remex and retrix were dark in color. Its soft parts appeared to be pigmented.

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COLORADO BIRD REPORT

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PURPOSE

The Colorado Bird Report's purpose is to supply timely information about the occurrence and location of uncommon birds in Colorado and adjoining areas via a recorded telephone message. The phone number is 303-423-5582.

REPORT FORMAT AND CONVENTIONS

The report will start with the date the report was last updated. If the time is given also, it means that the report was updated a second or more times on that day, because important sightings were received after the first update.

Newly reported birds are described first; the only exception is when a very rare bird is found, in which case it will get top billing. Updates of previously reported birds will be given next, from the most current date back. This will allow the frequent caller to know that he has heard all the new birds reported when he hears reports which were not updated from his last call.

Credit to the observer will be given unless there is a specific request to omit credit. This is done so callers can contact the observers directly for bird details, directions, or comments about what else was in the area. This is in line with the general philosophy of giving out as much information as possible.

Each bird reported will be dated as to the last update received; this will allow listeners to determine when each bird was last seen. Reports will be dropped if they are not updated regularly. In order for the Colorado Bird Report to be successful, it is imperative that the information reported be current.

Updates will be made whenever significant new sightings are received, unless the updater is out of town. If the updater will be gone for more than three days, he will make arrangements for someone to come in and do the report. Generally if there is no update, it means that there have been no new birds reported and no significant updates about birds already on the report. Even

with no new updated birds reported, the recording will be updated Saturday night, and the next week's field trip information given.

Knowledgeable local birders have been contacted and asked to act as Colorado Bird Report resource people. The names and phone numbers of two of these resource people are given each week after all the birds are reported. The function of these individuals is to help give directions to locations mentioned on the report, and to provide a contact for out of town birders.

Announcements are given after the resource phone numbers. These announcements will include meetings and field trips, and other items of local ornithological interest.

The final statement asks callers to leave a message after the tone.

REPORT PROCEDURES

Two logs are kept, an incoming message log and an outgoing message log. The incoming log contains handwritten notes taken daily from the incoming tape, which is where messages are left after the "tone" at the end of the outgoing message. The outgoing log, kept in a three ring binder, contains a printed copy of the text that is read into the outgoing tape each time it is updated.

In order to assure that accurate information is given out on the report there is a system of validation. Validation of rare birds reported will be attempted by calling back the reporter and discussing the sighting. Other birders in the vicinity may also be contacted and asked to field check the sighting and local experts will be consulted about identification details. If no validation is possible, and if the reporter is convincing in his description of the bird, the bird will be reported. Anonymous reports will be ignored. Only wild birds will be reported, not feral exotics or escapes. The bird report will not give locations of raptor nests when that information could cause nest harassment. No bird will be placed on the report against the wishes of a landowner if the bird can only be seen from his property.

The "rarity" of reported birds will vary, depending on how slow the birding is, and what other birds are on the report. Rarity is a function of season, so a common bird in the summer could be a rare winter sighting. If a reported bird is not placed on the report, a courtesy call will be attempted so the reporter will know he is not being ignored.

A region-wide bird reporting network has been set up by writing letters to 42 active birders in Colorado, western Kansas, and Wyoming. These people have been asked to call in reports from their areas, and because each individual is near the top of a local grapevine, the coverage should be much wider than would be expected from 42 isolated individuals. As an added incentive, these individuals have been offered a personal telephone call when a bird from a list they have sent to us is reported to the Colorado Bird Report. This will help them to be sure they are not missing any important birds just because they can't call as often as the local birders can. This offer is extended to all Colorado birders; just send your list to the author.

In order to assure all valid reports to the system are reported to a publication, a list will be maintained of all birds reported, when and where they were reported and by whom. This will be sent monthly to the editor of The Lark Bunting and four times a year to the regional editor of American Birds.

WHAT TO REPORT

What can you, as a field ornithologist, do to make the Colorado Bird report better? The answer is simple; report, report. You are the eyes of the Colorado Bird report, and without your calls, it would cease to function. If you are unsure if the bird you saw warrants reporting, report it anyway, and let the updater worry about its inclusion. If you see a bird which is currently on the tape, call it in so its status can be updated. Very few birders do this on a regular basis, making it difficult for the updater to know which birds are still around. It is just as important to report when a bird on the tape is not found, so it can be taken off the report, eliminating "wild goose chases". When reporting, call in as soon as possible. The earlier the call, the quicker the update, and the more people will have a chance to see the bird.

Report "hot spots"; these are places where there are not necessarily any unusual finds, but where there are lots of birds. With the word out as to where all the warblers, shorebirds, or gulls are, birders will follow and someone might find a real rarity.

Look for birds in out of the way places which have good potential but are not regularly birded. With all the birders looking in the same old places we are not going to find as many birds as if we spread out and really beat the bushes.

Remember, this is your bird report, and the only way it will get any better is if you make suggestions. So when you call in and listen to the tape, give your ideas for improvements so your bird report can become even better.

IN MEMORIAM

Allegra Collister

Allegra Collister, an early mainstay of Foothills Audubon Club and the Colorado Field Ornithologists, died early this year in Placerville, California. Allegra inspired a legion of bird watchers in the Longmont/Lyons area during her long residence in Longmont.

She initiated a banding operation in Lykins Gulch, near Lyons, and provided an important base of knowledge for Colorado birds through her studies there. In 1965 she authored "Birds of Rocky Mountain National Park", still the most up-to-date report on the birdlife of our fine national park.

Bea Clawson McGee reports that five years ago Allegra donated her banding equipment and mist nets to the Point Reyes Research Station. She also says, "She was a remarkable woman, a great friend and teacher. I spent long hours in the field with her and never ceased to be amazed at her knowledge as well as her ability to locate birds in spite of her profound deafness. I hesitate to say that she was a rare bird but certainly she was unique in my experience."

--H.E.K.

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