

# The 55<sup>th</sup> Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

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## Introduction

This 55<sup>th</sup> report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on partial results of circulations held between 2008 and 2010. This article provides results of the circulation of 16 reports submitted by 10 observers documenting 15 occurrences of 10 species from the period 2008 through 2009. Three occurrences involving three different species were not accepted because of insufficient documentation or because descriptions were inconsistent with known identification criteria. Per CBRC bylaws, all accepted records received final 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept. Each report that was not accepted received fewer than four votes to accept in the final vote. Those records with four or five “accept” votes have transcended to a second round of deliberations, and results of those records will be published at a later date.

Highlights of this report include first county records of Neotropic Cormorant for *Larimer*, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron for *Bent*, Upland Sandpiper for *Montezuma*, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher for *Kiowa*, and Painted Bunting for *El Paso*.

Committee members voting on these reports were Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Bill Maynard, Larry Semo, David Silverman, and Glenn Walbek.

## Committee Functions

All reports received by the CBRC (written documentation, photographs, videotapes, and/or sound recordings) are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS), 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, CO 80205, where they remain available for public review. The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its review list, including both the main and supplementary lists (Semo et al. 2002), and for reports of species with no prior accepted records in Colorado. Those lists can be found at <http://www.cfo-link.org/birding/lists.php>. Documentary materials should be submitted online at the CBRC website (<http://www.cfo-link.org/CBRC/login.php>).

## Report Format

The organization and style of this report follow those of Leukering and Semo (2003), with some alterations. If present, the numbers in parentheses following a species' name represent the total number of accepted records for Colorado, followed by the number of accepted records in the ten-year period preceding the submission. The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria for a species' continuance on or removal from the statewide Main Review List (Semo et al. 2002).

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds (AOU 1998) through the 50<sup>th</sup> Supplement (Chesser et al. 2009). Each record presents as much of the following information as we have available: number of birds, age, sex, locality, county, and date or date span. In parentheses, we present the initials of the contributing observer(s), the official record number, and the vote tally in the first round and, if relevant, second round (with the number of "accept" votes on the left side of the dash).

The initials of the finder(s) of the bird(s) are underlined, if known, and are presented first if that person (those people) contributed documentation; additional contributors' initials follow in alphabetical order by name. If the finder(s) is (are) known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture have a dagger (†) following their initials; initials of those who submitted videotape are indicated by a lower-case, italicized "v" (v); and those who submitted audio spectrograms or recordings are indicated by a lower-case, italicized "s" (s). Thus, the parenthetical expression "(JD v, RA†, TL, JV, CW; 2001-36; 4-3, 6-1)" means: JD found the bird(s) and submitted documentation (including video) and, as the finder, is first in the list of those who submitted details, with initials underlined; RA, though alphabetically first of the five submitting observers, was not the finder, so comes second; RA submitted, at least, photographic documentation; the record number assigned to the occurrence was 2001-36; and in the two rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four "accept" votes and three "do not accept" votes, while the second-round vote was 6-1 in favor of accepting the report. The decision on most reports is completed in the first round.

In this report, county names are italicized in keeping with the style established for the "News from the Field" column in this journal. We have attempted to provide the full date span for individual records, with the seasonal reports in *North American Birds* and this journal being the primary sources of those dates. The Committee has

not dealt with the question of full date spans as compared to submitted date spans when documentations do not provide such. The CBRC encourages observers to document the final date on which a rare species was seen, as that provides historical evidence of the true extent of its stay.

For this report, the CBRC abbreviations are used for Chico Basin Ranch (CBR) and Reservoir (Res.).

## RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Neotropic Cormorant** – *Phalacrocorax brasiliensis* (17/6). One was at Timnath Res., Larimer, between 15 and 30 Aug 2009 (RH †, BKP †, NK; 2009-79; 7-0). The bird was noted as being found on 14 Aug but no details were presented to the Committee for that earlier date. This is the first confirmed record of Neotropic Cormorant for Larimer.

**Least Bittern** – *Ixobrychus exilis* (22/8). A male was photographed at Cottonwood Hollow in Fort Collins, Larimer, on 21 Jul 2009 (RH †, NK; 2009-77; 7-0). There may have been up to three birds at this location but no details of the other birds were provided to the CBRC. It is interesting that a Least Bittern was present at this same location during Aug 2008.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – *Nyctanassa violacea* (22/8). An adult was found at the western end of John Martin Res. on 31 Jul 2009 (BSt †; 2009-78; 7-0). This is, surprisingly, the first established record of the species for Bent. Later that year, three juveniles were found near Jumbo Res., Logan, on 2 Sep 2009 (ED †; 2009-84; 7-0). An adult was found at Jumbo Res. on 30 Aug of that same year and its occurrence was previously accepted by the CBRC (Semo and Faulkner 2010). One wonders whether the spe-

cies bred at that location during the summer of 2009.

**Upland Sandpiper** – *Bartramia longicauda*. Establishing a first record for Montezuma and an extremely rare record for the West Slope of Colorado, an Upland Sandpiper was photographed near Cortez on 17 Jun 2009 (SM †, 2009-52; 7-0).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** – *Tryngites subruficollis* (32/11). A juvenile, the third for Arapahoe, was documented on 30 Aug 2009 (BKP †, 2009-80, 7-0). The bird was apparently present at this location between 29 Aug and 2 Sep but no details for the remainder of that period were provided to the Committee. A second juvenile was seen at Jumbo Res., Logan, on 20 Sep 2009 (BSc; 2009-86; 7-0). This is the second accepted record for that reservoir and that county.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** – *Tyrannus forficatus* (35/22). Establishing the first confirmed record for Kiowa, a pair was discovered near Chivington on 10 Jun 2009 (BSt †; 2009-74; 7-0). Subsequent attempts to refind the birds failed.

**Pine Warbler** – *Dendroica pinus* (35/17). An adult male was at Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, Prowers, on 30 Apr 2009 (BKP †; 2009-72; 7-0). This is the fourth accepted Pine

Warbler record for Prowers. The bird apparently remained at this location for days afterwards, but no further documentation was submitted.

**Kentucky Warbler** – *Oporornis formosus* (37/11). An adult female was well-described from below the dam at Lake De-Weese, Custer, on 28 Apr 2009 (BKP, RM; 2009-71; 7-0). The bird, the second for Custer, was apparently first discovered

the previous day, although no details on that occurrence were submitted to the CBRC.

**Mourning Warbler** – *Oporornis philadelphica* (28/11). An alternate-plumaged male, the first confirmed for Larimer, was photographed by De-Fonso in Loveland on 14 May 2009 (ED †, CWi; 2009-73; 7-0). The bird was noted to have been discovered the previous day, but no further details were provided to the Committee.

**Painted Bunting** – *Passerina ciris* (33/15). A hatch-year bird was banded at CBR, El Paso, on 27 Sep 2009 (SB †; 2009-89; 7-0). This represents the first accepted record for El Paso and CBR and also the latest fall date for the species in Colorado.

## **RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED**

The Committee recognizes that its “not accepted” decisions may upset



Pine Warbler, Fairmount Cemetery in Lamar, Prowers County, 30 Apr 2009. Photo by Brandon Percival

those individuals whose documentation did not receive endorsement as state records. We heartily acknowledge that those who make the effort to submit documentation certainly care whether or not their reports are accepted. However, non-accepted reports do not necessarily suggest that the observer misidentified or did not see the species. A non-accepted report only indicates that the documentation did not provide enough evidence to support the identification of the species reported in the opinion of at least three of the seven Committee members. Many non-accepted reports do not adequately describe the bird(s) observed or adequately rule out similarly looking species. The Committee recommends that observers refer to the article written by Tony Leukering on documenting rare birds (Leukering 2004), which is available online through the CBRC website

([http://www.cfo-link.org/records\\_committee/CBRC\\_articles.php](http://www.cfo-link.org/records_committee/CBRC_articles.php)). All non-accepted reports are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and may be reconsidered by the Committee if new information is provided (e.g., photos, documentation from other observers). We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** – *Tyrannus forficatus*. An adult documented from Barr Lake, Adams, on 3 May 2008 (2008-46; 4-3, 4-3, 5-2) may very well have been accurately identified, but the observer provided scant details to the Committee upon which to deliberate. The only description provided was that the bird had a long tail and light back and head. No information was presented on what size the bird was, how long its tail was, or whether it had pink wing linings.

**Veery** – *Catharus fuscescens*. The report of a heard-only bird along the Neversink Trail in Gunnison on 15 Jun 2009 (2009-75; 3-4) may have been correctly identified, but little information was provided to the

Committee. The only description provided was that the bird sang a “spiraling whistled song.” Most voters indicated that the description was just too brief to fully indicate the song of a Veery.

**Baird's Sparrow** – *Ammodramus bairdii*. The report of three Baird's Sparrows singing from near Two Buttes, Baca, on 7 May 2008 created quite a debate within the CBRC, causing the record to transcend through three rounds of circulation (2008-35; 5-2, 5-2, 4-3). Dissenting voters maintained that it would be extremely unlikely for three Baird's Sparrows, which do not breed in the state, to sing from one location in southeastern Colorado. We have no knowledge that Baird's Sparrows sing during migration and most observations of the species involve quick flushes with the bird diving rapidly back into the grass. The observer noted that the birds had blocky heads and had seen them fly, but failed to mention whether they also had white braces to the mantle feathers as Baird's Sparrows would have.

## REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

The CBRC graciously thanks the following individuals for submitting records of or discovering rare species in Colorado that prompted this circulation: Robert Bradley; SB: Steven Brown; Jay Carlisle; ED: Eric Defonso; RH: Rachel Hopper; NK: Nick Komar; Nic Korte; SM: Suzy Meyer; RM: Rich Miller; BKP: Brandon K. Percival; BSc: Bill Schmoker; BSt: Brad Steger; CWi: Cole Wild.

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