

The 56th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

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Introduction

This 56th report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on partial results of circulations held in 2010. This article provides results of the circulation of 43 reports submitted by 19 observers documenting 35 occurrences of 19 species from the period 2001 through 2010. Seven occurrences involving seven 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 the first accepted Colorado record of Pacific Wren,

the formal separation between the two species of Whip-poor-will, and the second state record of Anhinga. With the recent taxonomic splits by the American Ornithologists’ Union (Chesser et al. 2010), “Whip-poor-will” was removed from the official state list and replaced with Eastern Whip-poor-will and Mexican Whip-poor-will. Pacific Wren was also split from Winter Wren; both of the resulting species have been documented in Colorado. This expands the total state list to 491 species.

Committee members voting on these reports were Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, 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 51st Supplement (Chesser et al. 2010). 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 documenta-

tion; 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 campground (CG), Chico Basin Ranch (CBR), Reservoir (Res.), State Park (SP), and State Wildlife Area (SWA).

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Dusky Grouse – *Dendragapus obscurus*. Quite low in elevation was a male at Chatfield SP, Jefferson, on 11 Apr 2001 (NP; 2003-156; 6-1).

Anhinga – *Anhinga anhinga* (1/2). Establishing only the second accepted record for Colorado, an adult female was at Barr Lake, Adams, on 3 May 2003 (GB, RS: 2003-54; 6-1). The previous record, a specimen now at DMNH, was collected in Aurora, Adams, in Sep 1931. Bailey and Niedrach (1965) listed an additional record from Aurora collected in Sep 1927. Phillips (1984) analyzed the specimen and determined it to actually be an Australian Darter (*Anhinga novaehollandiae*) and deemed it an escape. The CBRC apologizes to the observers for the extreme delay in deliberating on this fantastic Barr Lake record.

Glossy Ibis – *Plegadis falcinellus*

(37/60). The CBRC has recently accepted seven new records of Glossy Ibis for the state. One was at Red Lion SWA, Logan, on 21 May 2005 (SL; 2010-46; 7-0). One was at Beebe Draw, Weld, on 12 May 2009 (ML †, LS †; 2009-33; 7-0). Union Res., Weld, hosted a bird on 4 Apr 2010 (CN †, BPr; 2010-75; 7-0). In La Plata, one was at Pastorius Res. on 25 Apr 2010 (JBy †; 2010-17; 7-0). Another in Silt on 4 May 2010 (CD; 2010-77; 7-0) furnished the first accepted record for Garfield. One foraged in Colorado City, Pueblo, on 17 May 2010 (DS; 2010-82; 7-0). Lastly, one was at Red Lion SWA on 21 May 2010 (JD †; 2010-36; 7-0). As interbreeding is known to occur and believed to be increasing between Glossy and White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*), the Committee urges observers of hybrids to provide details, as it may become more and more difficult to separate individu-

als of multi-generation cross-breeding.

American Golden-Plover – *Pluvialis dominica*. A juvenal-plumaged bird was at Lake John SWA, Jackson, on 2 Nov 2003 (AS, NP; 2003-1004; 7-0), representing a first for the county and North Park.

Black-billed Cuckoo – *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (8/24). Two additional records of Black-billed Cuckoo have been accepted.

One at Julesburg SWA near Ovid on 6 Jun 2005 (SL; 2005-162; 7-0) provides the second record of the species for Sedgwick. Another pleased birders at Crow Valley CG, Weld, where it was documented on 15 Jun 2010 (NK †, CWI; 2010-85; 7-0); this represents the second record for Weld as well. The bird was first reported on 8 Jun and was seen by many; it is unfortunate that the historical database will reflect the bird's stay as being only one day. It is interesting that there have been ten accepted records of the species in Colorado from 2000 to 2010, yet only one record was obtained during the period 1990-2000.

Eastern Whip-poor-will – *Caprimulgus vociferus* (2/10). With the recent split of "Whip-poor-will" (Chesser et al. 2010), records of members of the *vociferus* group have been officially reclassified as Eastern Whip-poor-will. The species split was based on differences in vocalizations (Hardy et al. 1988, Cink 2002), mi-



Acorn Woodpecker, Niwot, Boulder County, 26 May 2010. Photo by Bill Schmoker

tochondrial and nuclear DNA, and morphology. Accepted records of Eastern Whip-poor-will have mostly been from the eastern portion of the state from 1903 to 2008, from Larimer, El Paso, Las Animas, Sedgwick, Crowley, Moffat, and Pueblo. Acceptance of these records as Eastern Whip-poor-will was based on specimen examination and/or voice descriptions provided by observers.

Mexican Whip-poor-will – *Caprimulgus arizonae* (0/1). The one accepted record of Mexican Whip-poor-will for Colorado was of a calling bird tape-recorded at Fosset Gulch, Archuleta, on 22 Jun 1999.

Acorn Woodpecker – *Melanerpes formicivorus*. An adult male dined on peanut butter at a residential yard in Niwot, Boulder, where it was present on 25 and 26 May 2010 (DFL, BSc †; 2010-41; 7-0). This is the first record for Boulder and the second northernmost record in the state, the northernmost being of a bird present in

Loveland, Larimer, during the fall of 1995. The species still regularly resides in a small colony near Durango, La Plata, where documentation to the CBRC is not necessary.

Alder Flycatcher – *Empidonax alnorum* (22/32). The CBRC recently deliberated on and accepted three Alder Flycatcher records. In 2007, one was banded at CBR, El Paso, on 23 May (BM †, SB; 2010-59; 6-1) and another was banded at the same location on 23 May 2009 (BG †; 2009-108; 7-0). This past spring, one was excellently detailed from the town of Hereford, Weld, on 19 May 2010 (DAL †; 2010-30; 7-0). One may hypothesize that Alder Flycatch-

ers are becoming more prevalent in Colorado, considering that 70% of the records have occurred in the past 10 years; however, it may simply be an artifact of increased education about how to separate it from Willow Flycatcher (*E. traillii*). Although somewhat subjective and inconsistent, the characteristics of a very thin, complete white eyering and overall greener coloration on Alder Flycatchers may sometimes allow for species separation. Many observers now know the difference between the “pip” call of Alder Flycatcher and to the “whit” call of Willow Flycatchers. The publication of Pyle (1997) has also been a great asset to banders, as some measurements also differ between the two species, with Alders generally having slightly longer and more pointed wings and smaller bills, although there is overlap.

Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans*. Adding to the historical archive of records for the southwest, an adult was photographed at Lone Dome SWA near Cahone, Dolores, on 27 Apr 2002 (AS †; 2002-201; 7-0) and a pair was discovered in Escalante Canyon, Delta, on 7 Apr 2007 (NP; 2007-19; 7-0). More recently, Percival provided documentation of continued winter presence of the species in Rock Canyon below Pueblo Res, Pueblo, where he photographed one on 1 Dec 2009 (BKP †; 2009-64; 7-0). Establishing the second record for Boulder (and only by a year), one was at Twin Lakes in Gunbarrel on 9 May 2010 (WS, MB †, EK; 2010-24; 7-0).

Blue-headed Vireo – *Vireo solitar-*



Alder Flycatcher, Hereford, Weld County, 19 May 2010. Photo by David Leatherman

ius (18/26). One was at Valco Ponds in Pueblo, Pueblo, on 25 Sep 2009 (BKP †; 2009-88; 7-0) and another was at CBR, Pueblo, on 6 May 2010 (BKP †, BM; 2010-21; 7-0).

Pacific Wren – *Troglodytes pacificus* (1/1). The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) recently split (Chesser et al. 2010) North American populations of Winter Wren (formerly *T. troglodytes*) into two species: Winter Wren (*T. hiemalis*) and Pacific Wren (*T. pacificus*) based on differences in vocalizations (Kroodsma 1980, Hejl et al. 2002), mitochondrial DNA (Drovetski et al. 2004), and the absence of free interbreeding and maintenance of genetic integrity within their contact zone (Toews and Irwin 2008). The "Winter Wren" in the original sense is known to occur in Colorado rarely but regularly, mainly during the winter (Bailey and Niedrach 1965; Andrews and Righter 1992; Righter et al. 2004). The first written mention of a "Winter Wren" in Colorado was in Ridgway (1873), which compiled birds known from Colorado through the specimen collections of Henry Henshaw, Charles Aiken, Martha Maxwell, and others. Marsh (1931) noted that the first record of "Winter Wren" was of a bird recorded by Edwin James in 1802 at Fountain Creek, *El Paso*, on the strange date of 15 Jul, although Phillips (1986) asserted that this first discovery was erroneous.

Based on only three Colorado specimens, Bailey and Niedrach (1965) placed Colorado populations within the *pacificus* group. They also indicated that populations in the

states of Nebraska and Kansas were of *hiemalis*, while birds from Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico were *pacificus*. Phillips (1986) reanalyzed the Colorado specimens and maintained that they actually pertained to *hiemalis* rather than *pacificus*. Andrews and Righter (1992) did not provide information as to the subspecific status of "Winter Wrens" in Colorado, but did suggest that "Winter Wren" was an annual rare fall migrant and winter resident, especially on the Eastern Plains, with fewer than ten reports each year. Farther west, Righter et al. (2004) indicated that there were approximately a dozen records for the far western portion of Colorado and also commented that "Winter Wren" was a rare breeder in the Uinta Mountains of eastern Utah, not far from the Colorado state line.

Chesser et al. (2010) suggested that *hiemalis* winters in eastern Colorado, and indeed, most reports of "Winter Wren" from this portion of the state have been believed by the observers to be of that species. Chesser et al. also noted that summer records of "Winter Wren" in the mountains of Colorado are presumed to be *pacificus*, and based on their analysis, the Utah population would presumably be Pacific Wrens. They did not include Colorado to be within the known wintering range of the species, however.

During the past CBRC circulation, Semo analyzed the three Colorado specimens of "Winter Wren" at the DMNS (all Eastern Plains records, from *Baca*, *Sedgwick*, and *Denver*) and concluded that they are

hiemalis, based on plumage patterns. There have been previous reports of Pacific Wren from Colorado, especially during the past decade, when observers started understanding the differences in plumage patterns and calls between the two species. There is one accepted record in the CBRC database of "Winter Wren" from late autumn and early winter in Hotchkiss, *Delta*, in 2002. The CBRC will reanalyze that record soon to attempt to determine which species it may have been. However, no documentation for Pacific Wren was submitted to the CBRC until recently.

The Committee received three records of Pacific Wren in 2010 and has concluded deliberation on one. This bird, barring the discovery of additional specimens from the state, becomes the first established record of Pacific Wren for Colorado. On 2 Jan 2005, a Pacific Wren was found downstream of Two Buttes Res., *Baca* (TL †, CWo; 2010-88; 7-0). The bird clearly displayed the ruddier upperparts coloration and the buffier underparts than an eastern Winter Wren and also voiced its distinctive call, a short, high-pitched doubled "czit" different from the more fluid call of an eastern Winter Wren.

As the occurrence of Winter Wren (*T. hiemalis*) in Colorado is well-supported by specimen evidence as well as annual reports, the CBRC will not require documentation for that species in the state, although we strongly support the documentation of any eastern Winter Wren from western Colorado. However, as we have little information as to the status and dis-

tribution of Pacific Wren, we have now placed the species on the state review list and request full details of all observations until its status and distribution are more fully known.

Varied Thrush – *Ixoreus naevius* (25/40). A first for CBR was one on the *Pueblo* side of the ranch on 15 Oct 2009 (BKP †, BM; 2009-117; 7-0). An immature female came to a feeder in south *Boulder*, *Boulder*, from 1 Nov through 5 Dec 2009 (AJ †; 2009-107; 7-0). Another female, this one an adult, came to a feeder in *Boulder* on 6 Jan 2010 (BM †; 2010-02; 7-0).

Worm-eating Warbler – *Hemitheros vermivorus*. Although the species is not on the state review list, documentation was received of one from CBR, *Pueblo*, where it was discovered on 9 May 2010 (BKP †, KS; 2010-25; 7-0). This is the first record for CBR and the third for *Pueblo*. The previous two records for the county were from 1973.

Golden-crowned Sparrow – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (14/28). An immature bird was near the intersection of CRs 20 and 61 in *Sedgwick* on 8 Oct 2005 (SL; 2010-62; 7-0). The Committee apologizes to the finder for its tardiness in circulating this record. Returning for its third year, the Golden-crowned Sparrow at Tunnel Drive, *Fremont*, was documented from the period 20 Dec 2009 through 19 Apr 2010 (BKP †, RM; 2009-112; 7-0). Another was discovered at Red Rocks near *Morrison*, *Jefferson*, and was documented on 3 Jan 2010 (BSc †, BB; 2010-01; 7-0). It is disconcerting that the bird was first found ear-

lier during the Denver CBC and remained into spring, yet posterity will only know that it was present for one day, as no other documentation of its stay was submitted.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

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

Red-throated Loon – *Gavia stellata*. This is yet another highly probable report of a rare species to not be accepted by the Committee due to a deficient written description. In this case, the documentation for a Red-throated Loon in basic plumage at Pueblo Reservoir on 30 Nov 2007 contained a 12-word written description and an even briefer rationale for eliminating similar species (2007-1886; 3-4). Support for the report centered on three photos submitted by the observer. However, in the opinion of most Committee members, the photos were of poor quality and, although suggestive, not diagnostic by themselves. Several dissenting Committee members expressed their regret that the written description was not more thorough.

Glossy Ibis – *Plegadis falcinellus*. The observer of a pair of *Plegadis ibis* at Bighorn Lake, *Eagle*, near Vail, on 2 May 2010, admitted to the uncertainty of the birds’ identity (2010-19; 0-7). Any ibis is rare in Colorado’s high mountains, and the observer apparently submitted this report due to that rarity. Unfortunately, there was too little detail in the report for the Committee to determine specific identity and the documentation received no support as the reported species.

Swallow-tailed Kite – *Elanoides forficatus*. The report of one over Boulder on 17 Oct 2009 mentioned only that the bird had a long, swallow-like tail (2009-105; 0-7). The reporting individual noted that the bird’s coloration was not obvious

(the observation occurred while the observer was driving at dusk), but the bird appeared to be dark overall. Since Swallow-tailed Kites are strongly patterned black and white, and the only characteristic noted was the tail shape, most Committee members felt that there was too little information to accept this as the state's fifth record and the first since 1993.

Little Gull – *Larus minutus*. The documentation of a Little Gull at Chatfield State Park, Douglas/Jefferson, on 20 Sept 2002, provided more enlivened comments than most contentious reports in recent memory (2002-180; 4-3, 4-3, 4-3). Spurring some of this debate was the bird's description as antithetical to the reported age. The observer, reporting the gull's plumage as juvenal, provided a description that more closely allied itself to that of 1st winter plumage. This brings to light an interesting dilemma that the Committee occasionally must tackle – that is, a bird described as a different age or sex than reported. The reasonable presumption is that the majority of identifications are based on plumage, so the dichotomy between reported age/sex and the written description rightly calls into question the overall species identification. This report contained no photos and the majority of Committee members felt that there were significant, irresolvable issues regarding the bird's identity.

Unknown Species. Documentation of a bird of unknown identity coming to a residential feeder in Brighton, Adams, on 20 Jul 2009, did not pass the Committee despite

submission of photos (2009-76; 1-6). The majority of Committee members stated their belief that the bird was possibly a lovebird (*Agapornis* sp.). The Committee is charged with reviewing submitted documentation, even if the observer is uncertain of the bird's identity, to 1) try to establish an identity, and 2) ascertain provenance and suitability as a naturally occurring vagrant. It is conceivable that an observer may submit documentation of a bird unknown to them that the Committee may identify and accept to the state list (e.g., a photographed storm-petrel). In this case, identity could not be fully established.

Snow Bunting – *Plectrophenax nivalis*. The report of 12 Snow Buntings along Highway 50 in Delta on 13 Jan 2010 received minimal support from the Committee (2010-06; 1-6). Dissenting members felt that the description of these birds as "mostly white with light-brown markings" and "underside of bird and wings were white" was inconsistent with winter-plumaged Snow Buntings. Snow Buntings have dark gray/black primaries that are sharply demarcated by white on both upper- and underwing. The description provided in the report is more reminiscent of Horned Lark. Further suggesting a probable misidentification is the observer's note that she sees Snow Buntings on "almost every trip....to Grand Junction during the winter." Righter et al. (2004) states that Snow Buntings are very rare in western Colorado and it is hard to imagine that all but one of the West Slope's birders is miss-

ing this species on their drives along Highway 50 in winter.

Blackburnian Warbler – *Dendroica fusca*. This is the second report of an adult male Blackburnian Warbler to not be accepted by the Committee in the past year (see Semo and Faulkner 2010 for the other report) due to a too brief description (2010-23; 3-4). Observers of both birds focused their descriptions on the bright orange underparts coloration with minimal additional information. For this report of one at Boulder on 8

May 2010, in addition to the bird's warbler-like size the observer noted, "deep, bright orange throat, black and orange head, black and white wings" for the entire extent of the written description. This certainly describes a Blackburnian Warbler, but it can also describe an adult male Olive Warbler. We reiterate the Committee's necessary lack of imagination and urge observers to provide thorough descriptions in light of the fact that Committee members were not there to see the bird.

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: JBy: Jim Beatty; MB: Michael Blatchley; Maureen Briggs; BB: Bob Brown; GB: Glenda Brown; SB: Steven Brown; CD: Coen Dexter; JD: John Drummond; DFl: Dave Fletcher; BG: Brian Gibbons; AJ: Arlette Julian; EK: Elena Klaver; NK: Nick Komar; Catherine Labio; SL: Steve Larson; DAL: David A. Leatherman; ML: Mark Lockwood; BM: Bill Maynard; RM: Rich Miller; CN: Christian Nunes; BKP: Brandon K. Percival; NP: Nathan Pieplow; BPr: Bill Prather; Anna Richards; BSc: Bill Schmoker; Heather Schultz; LS: Larry Semo; KS: Kelly Shipe; RS: Randy Siebert; DS: David Silverman; AS: Andrew Spencer; WS: Walter Szeliga; CWi: Cole Wild, CLW: Christopher L. Wood.

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