

The 86th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

Introduction

This 86th Report of the CBRC documents decisions on records submitted in the last six months of 2023 and several older records. No new species are added to the Colorado State List, which remains at 520 species. This report details the first, fifth and sixth records of Black Vulture, the second record of Limpkin, the fifth records of Brambling and Hooded Oriole, the fifth and sixth records of Cassia Crossbill, the sixth records of Harlequin Duck and Pyrrhuloxia, and the eighth record of Common Ground Dove. The 47 records in this report were submitted by 32 observers, and I thank them for their support of the CBRC. A special note of thanks goes to Luke Pheneger who submitted 19 of the records in this report. Accepted records received either six or seven positive votes from various combinations of seven committee members. AWR indicates Accepted Without Review and applies to species that are not on the CBRC Review List.

Accepted Records

NORTHEAST (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, Yuma)

Snow Goose – *Anser caerulescens*

(PJ*; 2023-037; AWR): An individual of the Blue Goose form was nicely photographed near Westlands Park in Aurora, Arapahoe, on 18 Nov 2023.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – *Calidris subruficollis* (LPh*; 2023-033; AWR): Two birds were foraging together at Barr Lake State Park, Adams, on 9 Sep 2023.

Pomarine Jaeger – *Stercorarius pomarinus* (DL*; 2023-049; 7-0): A

juvenile bird gave many observers excellent looks at Windsor Lake, Weld, on 26 and 27 Oct 2023. At one time on the 27th, it was gleaning midges off the northernmost fishing pier pilings two meters directly below observers.

Least Tern – *Sternula antillarum*

(LPh*; 2022-064; AWR): An adult was photographed at Prewitt Reservoir SWA, Washington, on 18 May 2022.

Black Vulture – *Coragyps atratus* (TO; 9-78-54; 7-0): A bird was seen in the western section of the Pawnee National Grasslands, Weld, on 6 Jun 1978. The committee originally accepted the identity of this species, but it was not



Pomarine Jaeger. 10/26/23, Weld County. Photo by Dave Leatherman.

added to the state list because it was a single observer sight record only (Chase 1981). As far as I could determine, this record has not been reconsidered until now when more reports of this species have been received. Therefore, the record was recirculated, and was unanimously accepted as the first record of this species in Colorado.

Hooded Oriole – *Icterus cucullatus* (LPh*; 2019-062; 6-1): An adult was photographed at Westerly Creek Park in northeast Denver, Denver, on 24 Apr 2019. This is the 5th record of this species in Colorado.

Black-throated Blue Warbler – *Setophaga caerulescens* (LPh*; 2022-066; AWR): A male was photographed at Prewitt Reservoir SWA, Washington, on 17 Sep 2022.

EAST CENTRAL (Cheyenne, El Paso, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln)

Black Rail – *Laterallus jamaicensis*

(LPh; 2023-047; 6-1): A singing bird was recorded at Hugo SWA, Lincoln, after 9pm on 19 May 2023.

Piping Plover – *Charadrius melanotos*

(LPh*; 2022-061; 7-0): A juvenile was photographed at the playa on CR 34 north of CR T, Cheyenne, on 8 Aug 2022.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

– *Nyctanassa violacea* (KR*; 2023-040; 6-1): An immature bird was photographed in a yard in Ramah, El Paso, on 10 Aug 2023.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – *Tyrannus forficatus* (LPh*; 2023-031; AWR): An adult graced the intersection of CRs 16 and T, Lincoln, on 20 May 2023.

Blue-headed Vireo – *Vireo solitarius* (LPh*; 2022-062; 6-1): An adult photographed below the dam at Flagler Reservoir, Kit Carson, on 4 Sep 2022 provided about the seventh county record, all but one being found at this location.

Philadelphia Vireo – *Vireo philadelphicus* (LPh*; 2023-054; 7-0): An adult was photographed at the Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, on 20 May 2023.

Eastern Bluebird – *Sialia sialis* (LD; 2023-034; AWR): A singing bird was seen and recorded just south of Elizabeth, Elbert, on 23 Sep 2023.

Brambling – *Fringilla montifringilla* (DR*; RR*; AD*; 2023-061; 7-0): An immature male was seen in several backyards in NW Colorado Springs, El Paso, between 27 Dec 2023 and 2 Apr 2024. This is the 5th state record, with Colorado records in the last two winters.



Brambling. 12/27/23, El Paso County. Photo by David Resch.

Louisiana Waterthrush – *Parkesia motacilla* (LPh*; 2022-063; 7-0): One was photographed at the Brett Gray Ranch, *Lincoln*, on 20 May 2022.

Chestnut-sided Warbler – *Setophaga pensylvanica* (LPh*; 2021-042; AWR): One was seen on CR 9 south of CR V, *Cheyenne*, on 18 Sep 2021.

SOUTHEAST (Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo)

Lesser Nighthawk – *Chordeiles acutipennis* (AD*; 2022-039; 5-2, 5-2, 6-1): One was at Rose Pond in Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 24 Apr 2022. The very good photograph generated a spirited discussion about the position of the white wing bar, and whether this bird was referable to the 'henryi' race of Common Nighthawk. This subspecies breeds in SW Colorado and is unique among Common Nighthawk races with ochraceous to deep cinnamon feather edges on the upperparts.

Laughing Gull – *Leucophaeus atricilla* (LPh*; 2023-048; 7-0): One was photographed at Upper Queens Reservoir, *Kiowa*, on 2 Sep 2023.

Black Vulture – *Coragyps atratus* (BP*; 2023-043; 7-0): An injured bird was found in northern Pueblo West, *Pueblo*, on 6 Nov 2023. It was taken to the Pueblo Raptor Center, but died on 19 Nov 2023. This is the 5th state record of this species in Colorado.

Red-shouldered Hawk – *Buteo lineatus* (JS*; 2023-045; 7-0): An immature bird was nicely photographed at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 26 Sep 2023.



Red-shouldered Hawk. 9/26/23, Prowers County. Photo by Jill Smith.

Yellow-throated Vireo – *Vireo flavifrons* (LPh*; 2021-044; AWR): One sang along the Purgatoire River Trail in Trinidad, *Las Animas*, on 30 May 2021.

Worm-eating Warbler – *Helmitheros vermivorus* (LPh*; 2019-060; AWR): An adult was photographed at Melody Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 28 Apr 2019. (LPh*; 2023-030; AWR): Another adult was seen at the Lake Hasty campground, *Bent*, on 3 May 2023.

Prothonotary Warbler – *Protonotaria citrea* (LPh*; 2023-062; AWR): One was photographed in the Stulp's yard south of Lamar, *Prowers*, on 2 May 2023.

Scarlet Tanager – *Piranga olivacea* (LPh*; 2022-065; AWR): One was photographed at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 24 Sep 2022.

Pyrrhuloxia – *Cardinalis sinuatus* (JL; 2023-056; 7-0): A female was very well described when seen at Melody Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 6 May 2023. This is the 6th record of this species in Colorado.

NORTH CENTRAL (Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer)

Red-necked Grebe – *Podiceps grisegena* (KK*; 2023-032; AWR): Two adults were seen at Pole Mountain Reservoir, which is near Coalmont, *Jackson*, on 13 Jul 2023. When the observer returned on 28 Jul 2023, the adults had three juvenile birds in tow. A pair bred in 2014 at Lake John, which is a bit farther north in North Park, and these locations are hundreds of miles south of the nearest breeding area in northwest Wyoming.

Limpkin – *Aramus guarauna* (LPr*, PG*, KL; 2023-039; 7-0): One at the Teller Farms North Trailhead east of Boulder, *Boulder*, on 19 and 20 Jul 2023 provided the 2nd state record, and occurred about a month after the first was found at Ramah Reservoir northeast of Colorado Springs.

Long-tailed Jaeger – *Stercorarius longicaudus* (NK*; 2023-050; 7-0): A juvenile was nicely photographed

at Boyd Lake State Park northeast of Loveland, *Larimer*, on 29 Aug 2023. Note that the photograph below clearly shows that only the outer two primary feathers have white shafts.



Limpkin. 7/20/23, Boulder County. Photo by Terri Kurtz.



Long-tailed Jaeger. 8/29/2023, Larimer County. Photo by Nick Komar.

Hammond's Flycatcher – *Empidonax hammondi* (CB*; 2023-038; AWR): An adult was photographed in Lyons, *Boulder*, on 15 Nov 2023, which is extremely late for *Empidonax* flycatchers in Colorado.

Cassia Crossbill – *Loxia sinesciuris* (KMD; 2023-058; 7-0): A single bird was voice-recorded in North Park very close to the Wyoming state line, *Jackson*, on 22 Aug 2023. (KMD; 2023-059; 7-0):

Another single bird was voice-recorded in the Routt National Forest, *Larimer*, on 22 Aug 2023. These occurrences provide the fifth and sixth records of this species in Colorado, and first records for both counties.

CENTRAL (Chaffee, Clear Creek, Douglas, Fremont, Gilpin, Jefferson, Lake, Park, Summit, Teller)

Common Ground Dove – *Columbina passerina* (JM*; 2023-052; 7-0): One was photographed in a yard just east of Little Dry Creek Park in Arvada, *Jefferson*, on 14 Oct 2023. That was quite a good yard bird as this is only the 8th record of this species in Colorado.



Common Ground Dove. 10/14/2023, Jefferson County. Photo by James McCall.

Long-tailed Jaeger – *Stercorarius longicaudus* (LPh*; 2021-040; 6-1): A juvenile was photographed at Antero Res., *Park*, on 6 Sep 2021.

Sprague's Pipit – *Anthus spragueii* (TM*; 2023-055; 7-0): Two birds were photographed and voice-recorded at Coal Creek Open Space, *Jefferson*, on 5 and 6 Oct 2023.

White-throated Sparrow – *Zonotrichia albicollis* (LPh*; 2020-085; AWR): One was photographed in the town of Jefferson, *Park*, on 5 Dec 2020.

Prairie Warbler – *Setophaga discolor* (ML; 2022-050; 5-2, 4-3, 7-0): One was recorded at the Audubon Nature Center southwest of Chatfield Res., *Jefferson*, on 16 May 2022. The recording was extremely faint, but a much enhanced version was submitted before the third round of voting, which was unanimous for acceptance.

SOUTH CENTRAL (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Huerfano, Rio Grande, Saguache)

Brant (Black) – *Branta bernicla nigricans* (KMD*; 2023-041; 7-0): One was photographed at the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, *Rio Grande*, on 19 Mar 2023.

Black Vulture – *Coragyps atratus* (JR*; AL*; 2023-044; 7-0): One was seen along Pinos Creek Road about 6 miles southwest of Del Norte, *Rio Grande*, between 20 and 23 Dec 2023. This is the 6th record of this species in Colorado and the second in 2023.

NORTHWEST (Eagle, Garfield, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt)

Harlequin Duck – *Histrionicus histrionicus* (NM*; 2023-042; 7-0): A female or juvenile was nicely photographed at Dotsero Ponds, *Eagle*, on 12 Nov 2023. This is the 6th record of this species in Colorado, and the first since one spent about a month in the Animas River in Durango in early 2001.



© John Rawinski
Black Vulture. 12/21/2023, Rio Grande County.
Photo by John Rawinski.



Harlequin Duck. 11/12/2023, Eagle County. Photo by Nick Moore.

WEST CENTRAL (Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Pitkin)

Mexican Duck – *Anas diazi* (LC*; 2023-057; 7-0): A male was photographed at the Clifton Water Treatment ponds, *Mesa*, on 19 Aug 2023, providing a new species for Mesa County.

SOUTHWEST (Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan, San Miguel)

Ruddy Turnstone – *Arenaria interpres* (CD*; 2023-035; AWR): One was

photographed at Narraguinnek Reservoir just east of Lewis, *Montezuma*, on 2 and 3 Sep 2023.

Boreal Owl – *Aegolius funereus* (KS*; 2023-036; AWR): One was found about two miles west of Hwy 550 and Electra Lake, *La Plata*, on 23 Sep 2023.

Not Accepted Records

NORTHEAST (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, Yuma)

Chukar – *Alectoris chukar*. (2023-029; NAWR): One was photographed in a front yard near Sloan's Lake, *Denver*, on 4 Sep 2023. However, all birds of this species found along the Front Range are thought to have escaped from captivity.



Mexican Duck. 8/19/2023, Mesa County. Photo by Linda Chittum.

CENTRAL (Chaffee, Clear Creek, Douglas, Fremont, Gilpin, Jefferson, Lake, Park, Summit, Teller)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck – *Dendrocygna autumnalis*. (8-80-84; 4-3) An adult was well described when seen at Chatfield State Park, *Jefferson*, on 21 Sep 1980. This record



Boreal Owl. 9/23/2023, La Plata County. Photo by Kristi Streiffert.

was initially accepted as a new species for the state (Chase 1982). However, it was later removed from the state list because of the possibility that it was an escaped bird (Nelson 1991). The record was reconsidered when other reports of this species had been received, but again it was not accepted because of the escapee possibility (Leukering 2003). The Chairman recirculated this record

again because there had been a few more recently accepted records of the species in the state. However, three members of the committee still thought the bird could have been an escapee because the species had a much more restricted range in the USA in 1980 compared to the northward expansion of the species over the last decade.

NORTHWEST (Eagle, Garfield, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt)

Common Black Hawk – *Buteogallus anthracinus*. (2022-031; 4-3, 5-2, 3-4): The description of a bird seen along Hwy 70 just south of the Wyoming state line, *Moffat*, on 4 Apr 2022 was considered by some committee members to be inadequate (“broad, buteo shaped wings”) and did not fully eliminate other buteo species, especially a dark-morph Broad-winged Hawk. Unfortunately, no photographs were submitted with this record; even a cell-phone photograph would probably have shown the unique profile of this species with very broad wings and a short tail.

Reporters and Cited Observers

CB: Carl Bendorf, LC: Linda Chittum, CD: Coen Dexter, AD: Aaron Driscoll, LD: Laurie Duke, PG: Peter Gent, PJ: Patricia Jackson, KK: Kathryn Kay, NK: Nicholas Komar, AL: Adrian Lakin, KL: Katrena Laney, DL: David Leatherman, JL: Josh Lefever, ML: Michael Lester, JM: James McCall, KMD: Kathy Mihm Dunning, TM: Timo Mitzen, NM: Nicolas Moore, TO: Thomas Olson, BP: Brandon Percival, LPh: Luke Pheneger, LPr: Leanne Presley, RR: Robert Raker, KR: Karen Rau, DR: David Resch, JR: John Rawinski, JS: Jill Smith, KS: Kristi Streiffert.

Committee Functions

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its Review List (<https://cobrc.org/ReviewList.aspx>), species with no

prior accepted record in Colorado and sightings of regularly occurring species that are considered out-of-range or out-of-season. Documentary materials should be submitted online at the CBRC website (<https://cobrc.org>).

Committee News

Committee members voting on these records were Eric DeFonso, Michael Lester, Tony Leukering, Ric Olson, Mark Peterson, Cathy Sheeter, Jason St. Pierre and David Tønnessen. Tony Leukering rotated off the Committee at the end of 2023 having served two consecutive three year terms. He was replaced in 2024 by Linda Chittum of Grand Junction, who will serve a three year term; she voted on a few of these records. Cathy Sheeter agreed to serve a second three-year term ending in 2026.

Report Format

The records in each section of this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithological Society's (AOS) Checklist of North American Birds (AOS 1998) through the 64th Supplement (Chesser et al. 2023). We present the accession number, the initials of the contributing observer(s), and the vote tally in the first round and, if relevant, the second and third rounds (with the number of “accept” votes on the left side of the dash). The initial observer of the bird, if known, is presented first. Additional contributors follow in chronological order of the sighting. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture are indicated with an asterisk. In this report, SP indicates a State Park and SWA a State Wildlife Area.

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