

The 44th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

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Introduction

This 44th report presents the results of first-half 2007 deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on submissions to the CBRC for documentation and archival purposes. This article provides results of the circulation of 106 reports submitted by 37 observers documenting 69 occurrences of 45 species. Per the 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 4 or 5 accept votes have transcended to a second round of deliberations, and results of those records will be published at a later date.

The documents reviewed include the report of one species previously unconfirmed from the state, Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*), bringing the state total to 483. Four potentially new species to the state list are still pending within the CBRC: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*), though this species is already included provisionally on the state list on the strength of one accepted single-observer report; Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*); Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*); and, recently, Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*).

Committee members voting on these reports were Coen Dexter, Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Ric Olson, and Larry Semo.

Documenting and reviewing rarities

The primary purpose of the CBRC is to archive reports of occurrences of species that are considered rare in the state. Secondarily, the Committee's purpose is to provide a scientific context for accepting records of birds, primarily sight records, to the official state list of species that have occurred in the state. To complete the second task, the CBRC requests that the birding public submit documentation on such occurrences to be reviewed by the Committee. The review is primarily to ascertain whether the submitted documentation supports, in the consideration of seven state experts, the identification. Thus, the primary pieces of information that the Committee requires are a written description of the bird(s) and a discussion of how similar species were ruled out.

Current photographic technology has greatly increased the number of photographs (particularly digital photographs) that the CBRC has received, and these photos greatly assist the Committee in determining whether the documentation provided supports the identifications. However, this technological benefit has a disadvantage also. Some observers are now simply submitting photographs with date and location, without a written description. While the photographs certainly prove the identification, the lack of a written description leaves at least some of the CBRC members feeling uneasy. Without written descriptions, many pieces of information are lost forever. While pictures are great, and you will not hear a single CBRC member complain about too many photographs, photos are merely single images of a bird or flock of birds; they may not convey everything that a thorough, well-written description could provide. Remember, the CBRC is primarily an archive; and with only a single picture as documentation for an individual rarity occurrence, future researchers may not be able to determine the age, sex, origin, or behavior of a given rarity, something that may be considered important in the future.

Committee News

The second consecutive term of Brandon Percival expired at the end of 2006. John Vanderpoel's second consecutive term also expired at the end of 2006. John resigned from the CBRC at the end of 2005 due to other commitments and Peter Gent graciously stepped in to complete the final year of John's term. At the beginning of 2007, Peter agreed to begin a new term and Rachel Hopper was selected as a new Committee member.

Committee Functions

All reports received (written documentation, photographs, videotapes, and/or sound recordings) by the CBRC are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 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, both the main and supplementary lists (Semo et al. 2002, Semo and Leukering 2004), 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>. While documentary materials can still be submitted in hard copy to Larry Semo (9054 Dover Street, Westminster, CO 80021), the CBRC greatly appreciates submission via the on-line 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. An asterisk preceding a species' name indicates that the species is not currently on any CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002), but that reviewed reports refer to unseasonable or locally rare occurrences, or a noteworthy hybrid. Those species preceded by the pound, or number, sign (#) were removed from the statewide Main Review List, but only from the Main Review List, as of 2002 (Semo et al. 2002); thus the reports here are from an earlier period when those species were still on the Main Review List (Semo and Leukering 2004).

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). Note that the number of accepted records may decline for some species as the CBRC continues to tackle the backlog of determinations as to how many of the accepted records are simply recurrences in subsequent years of a known individual (e.g., Great Black-backed Gull, *Larus marinus*).

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds (AOU 1998) through the 48th Supplement (Banks et al. 2007). Within each species account, records are listed chronologically by first date of occurrence. 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 that submitted video footage are indicated by a lower-case, italicized "v" (v); and those who submitted sonograms or audio recordings are indicated by a lower-case, italicized "s" (s). Thus, the parenthetical expression "(JD v, RA†, TL, JV, CW; 2001-36; 4-3, 5-2)" means: JD found the bird(s) and submitted documentation (including video), and, as the finder, is first in the list

of those that 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 three rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four “accept” votes and three “do not accept” votes, the second-round vote was 5-2 in favor of accepting the report, and, since this report was listed in Part I, the report was accepted at a CBRC meeting. 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 (e.g., Semo and Wood 2003). 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.

The CBRC wishes to thank Tony Leukering for reviewing a previous draft of this report.

Abbreviations used in this report: CG=Campground; CR=County Road; Res=Reservoir; SP=State Park; SWA=State Wildlife Area

RECORDS ACCEPTED

BRANT – *Branta bernicla* (14/6). A “Black” Brant (*B. b. nigricans*), the Pacific coast form of the species, grazed at the Inverness Business Park and a nearby golf course in Englewood, in both *Douglas* and *Arapahoe*, between 25 February and 3

April 2005 (TL †, BKP †, DF, JG †; 2005-14; 7-0). This represents the



Brant, Englewood, Arapahoe County, 4 March 2005.
Photo by Doug Faulkner



Eurasian Wigeon, Pueblo City Park, Pueblo County, 26 February 2005. Photo by Tony Leukering

first record of this species for Douglas. Another "Black" Brant spent time in Fort Collins and nearby Long Pond, Larimer, where present between 16 November and 18 December 2005 (NK, AS †, CW †, DF; 2005-121; 7-0). These two individuals represent the 10th and 11th records of that subspecies for Colorado. More unusual was the presence of an "Atlantic" Brant (*B. b. hrota*) at Fossil Creek Res., Larimer, on 20 November 2005 (NK †, CW †; 2005-127; 7-0). There are only two previous records of that taxon from Colorado.

EURASIAN WIGEON – *Anas penelope* (29/11). Three additional male Eurasian Wigeon records were accepted during this circulation. One was at Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso, on 17 April 2004 (BM †, ME †; 2004-107; 7-0). Two additional birds were found in 2005, one at Pueblo City Park, Pueblo, which, although present for some time, was only documented between 19 and

26 February (BKP †, TL †). Another male was at Wellington SWA, Weld, where documented on 30 April, although it was apparently present at that location for some weeks prior (DF †, GL; 2005-34; 7-0)

BROWN PELICAN – *Pelecanus occidentalis* (15/7). A third-cycle bird was seen at, ironically, Pelican Lake (or Rock Bridge Lake) in Windsor, Weld, on 10 June 2005 and was observed at that location, as well as nearby Fossil Creek Res., Larimer, until at least 19 June (NK †, RH †, CW, BS †, TL †; 2005-65; 7-0). Komar was notified by a local resident of the presence of the bird prior to his seeing it, although the CBRC does not know what prior date that was.

GLOSSY IBIS – *Plegadis falcinellus* (39/32). Continuing the documentation of its western expansion, the Committee accepted four additional Glossy Ibis records from 2005 during this circulation. One was at Beebe Draw, Weld, on 23 April (TL †, BS †,

SMe; 2005-29; 7-0), although the bird was reported to have been at that location since at least 16 April. On 30 April, Boyce observed two birds near Las Animas, Bent (AB; 2005-33; 7-0).

Another was at Box Springs, Crowley, on 13 May (LS †, DF; 2005-45; 7-0). Lastly, one up in the mountains at Franz Lake, Chaffee, on 18 May (NP; 2005-55; 7-0) provided the first record for that county.

Observers should be aware that pairings of Glossy Ibis × White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) are increasing in frequency, and reports of Glossy Ibis without photographic evidence that do not provide a rationale for why the bird best fit Glossy rather than a hybrid may not be accepted for the historical record.

*GLOSSY IBIS × WHITE-FACED IBIS – *Plegadis* spp. With the expansion of Glossy Ibis into the western Great Plains, evidence of hybridization between it and White-faced Ibis is increasing and should be documented so as to develop a clear picture of the species' range expansion and its impacts upon White-faced Ibis. The CBRC encourages observers to provide details on possible hybrid ibis. One such hybrid was found near Beebe Draw, Weld, on 23 April 2005 (TL †, BS †; 2005-28; 7-0). Although the full variability



Brown Pelican, Windsor, Weld County, 14 June 2005.
Photo by Tony Leukering

of hybrid *Plegadis* characteristics is not yet known (especially with post F1 generation birds), consistent field marks of the cross include red eyes not as bright as in White-faced, a pinkish-violet narrow facial border that doesn't wrap around the posterior of the eye (or is very thin if it does), and legs with perceptible color contrast between the tibia-tarsus joint and the tibia and tarsus.

COMMON BLACK-HAWK – *Buteogallus anthracinus* (5/3). An adult was a one-day wonder downstream of the dam at Two Buttes Res., Baca, on 19 April 2005 (MI †; 2005-23; 7-0). This represents the second record of this species for Baca, and the first photographed in the state.

*BLACK RAIL – *Laterallus jamaicensis*. As birders nocturnally explore the Lower Arkansas valley of Colorado, detections of Black Rail have increased both east and west of the

species' stronghold near John Martin Res. in Bent. Pieplow heard one in a marsh on the southeast corner of the intersection of CRs 19 and LL near Bristol in Prowers on 11 June 2005 (NP; 2005-96; 7-0).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT – *Limosa haemastica* (26/7). Two alternate-plumaged birds waded in Lake Henry, Crowley, on 30 April and 1 May 2004 (MP †, LK, NP; JK, NE, PD; 2004-20; 7-0).

*BAIRD'S SANDPIPER – *Calidris bairdii*. The Committee has accepted a very rare record of a Baird's Sandpiper from the early winter of 2005. This bird, apparently present in late November at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, was photographed just downstream along the Arkansas River near Valco Ponds on 2 December (BKP †; 2005-131; 7-0).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER – *Tryngites subruficollis* (28/8). Six

were present at Prewitt Res., Washington, on 5 September 2005 (TL †, RLi, BS †; 2005-88; 7-0). Although the birds were reported present prior to and after the documented date, the CBRC only received documentation for the 5th.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK – *Scolopax minor* (7/3). First found during the Denver Urban Christmas Bird Count on 31 December 2004, an American Woodcock lingered for a while at the Star K Ranch in Aurora, Adams, where it was documented on 2 January 2005 (JK, RLE; 2005-1; 7-0). This represents the second record of this species for Adams, the first being from 1945.

RED PHALAROPE – *Phalaropus fulicarius* (30/12). An adult in basic plumage was at Eleven Mile Res., Park, on 18 October 2003 (NP, AS †; 2004-87; 7-0). The bird was reported to remain at that location following

18 October, but the CBRC did not receive any details on such occurrence. It is not, however, too late to add documentation for additional dates.

MEW GULL – *Larus canus* (27/16). Although no written details were provided to the Committee, diagnostic photographs supported the occurrence of a definitive basic-plumaged bird at Jim Hamm Park near Longmont, Boulder, on 24 November



Hudsonian Godwit, Lake Henry, Crowley County, 1 May 2004. Photo by Mark Peterson



Glaucous-winged Gull, Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe County, 14 March 2005. Photo by Glenn Walbek

2004 (GW †; 2004-109; 6-1). This distinctive individual, which has a limp, has been found in this area for numerous winters, but it has only rarely been documented for the CBRC.

ICELAND GULL – *Larus glaucopterus* (2/2). Providing only the second accepted record for the state, a second-cycle bird was discovered by Walbek at Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe, on 11 February 2005 and remained until at least 12 February, based on supporting details (GW †, BKP †, TL †; 2005-9; 7-0). There are seven additional reports of Iceland Gulls that the Committee has yet to review, most from prior to the date of this accepted record.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL – *Larus glaucescens* (12/6). A second-cycle bird was well photographed at Cherry Creek Res. on 14 March 2005 (GW †; 2005-15; 7-0). Phenotypically,

the bird showed no evidence of hybridization with either Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*) or Western Gull (*L. occidentalis*). It is noteworthy that seven (58%) of the 12 records of Glaucous-winged Gull from Colorado have come from Cherry Creek Res., and all of those in spring.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – *Larus marinus* (28/15). The CBRC accepted an amazing six addi-

tional records of Great Black-backed Gull during this past circulation. A definitive basic bird nick-named “Murray,” who has wintered annually at Pueblo Res. since 1993, returned again to that location to be photographed on 17 January 2004 (DF †; 2004-112; 7-0). On 20 January 2006, Kaempfer documented a first-cycle bird at Thomas Res., Boulder (BK; 2005-3; 7-0). A second-cycle bird was at Pueblo Res. on 28 January 2005 (BKP †; 2005-5; 7-0) and another second-cycle bird was photographed at Cherry Creek Res. on 12 February 2005 (DF †, TL †; 2005-10; 7-0). “Murray” returned to Pueblo Res. again in 2005 in its twelfth year of life, where documented on 18 February 2005 (BKP †; 2005-11; 7-0). Finally, a third-cycle bird was at Pueblo Res. on 16 December 2005 (BKP †; 2005-139; 7-0). As it is apparent that Colorado receives annually returning



Black-billed Cuckoo, Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, 22 May 2005. Photo by Nancy Bell

wintering Great Black-backed Gulls, the CBRC has been in a dilemma regarding how many actual individual birds have occurred in the state, especially considering that neighboring states have nowhere near the number of accepted records of this maritime species as does Colorado. In the near future, the Committee will deliberate on the number of actual records versus the number of birds and attempt to determine the number of different individual Great Black-backed Gulls that have occurred in the state.

*EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE – *Streptopelia decaocto*. The widespread expansion of Eurasian Collared-Dove has been well documented, and the CBRC is appreciative of submitted records that illustrate the species' spread across the state. Although it is no longer on the main statewide review list, the CBRC still requests first-time occurrence

documentation from those counties for which the species has yet to be discovered. Per that request, the Committee reviewed two reports of occurrences of the species from two counties for which no previous records were known. One was in Gunnison, Gunnison, on 30 July 2005 (CW; 2005-78; 7-0) and another was at Walden, Jackson, on 16 December 2005 (CW †; 2005-140; 7-0). There are

only four remaining Colorado counties without accepted records: Clear Creek, Gilpin, Hinsdale, and San Juan.

INCA DOVE – *Columbina inca* (17/12). The Committee has accepted the occurrence of seven Inca Doves present at a feeder in Lamar, Prowers, between 29 September and 31 December 2002 (IT †; 2002-162; 7-0).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO – *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (29/7). Prior to 1990, there were 12 accepted records of Black-billed Cuckoo from the state. However, there was a near dearth of records in the 1990s (only one), and many birders believed that Black-billed Cuckoo was soon to become only an extremely rare vagrant. Records during the current decade have been much more encouraging, though, with seven records total. Two of those were recently accepted by the CBRC. One was present at Crow



Broad-billed Hummingbird, Lamar, Prowers County, 18 April 2005. Photo by Jane Stulp

Valley CG, Weld, on 22 May 2005 (CB, NB †, RH †; 2005-59; 7-0). Another was on territory east of Foster Grove CG, Bonny Res., Yuma, where present and audio recorded between the period 6 June and 9 July 2005 (NP s, LS; 2005-64; 7-0). Hopefully this cuckoo expansion trend continues.

SNOWY OWL – *Bubo scandiacus* (15/6). During specimen investigations at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in 2003, Semo unearthed two specimens of Snowy Owl which were not accounted for in Bailey & Niedrach (1965), Andrews & Righter (1992), or in CBRC files or databases. Both specimens have now been accepted by the CBRC. The first is of a very old specimen procured by an unknown collector 16 miles

northeast of Akron, Washington, in 1920 (2003-113; 6-1). Unfortunately, no exact collection date is available with the specimen. The second is of more recent occurrence, having been salvaged north of Gilcrest, Weld, on 3 March 1998 (WGA; 2003-150; 6-1). Although the CBRC could not obtain information to indicate whether there was an incursion of Snowy Owls to the western Great Plains in 1920, the 1998 record does correspond to another accepted observation that spring of a Snowy Owl from Wiley, Prowers.

***CHIMNEY SWIFT** – *Chaetura peligra*. Establishing a first county record for *Huerfano*, a single Chimney Swift twittered over Lathrop SP on 8 May 2005 (BS; 2005-40; 7-0).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD – *Cynanthus latirostris* (2/2). One of the most surprising finds was of an adult male Broad-billed Hummingbird wonderfully photographed at a private feeder south of Lamar on 18 April (JS †; 2005-21; 7-0), establishing only the second record for the state. A third record of Broad-billed Hummingbird from *El Paso* in 2006 has not yet been circulated within the Committee.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD – *Archilochus colubris* (6/5). An immature male Ruby-throated Hummingbird with diagnostic small red gorget patches graced the feeder of Dexter and Wright in the odd (for the species) location of

Nucla, Montrose, on 28 September 2003 (CD/BW †; 2003-76; 6-1). This represents the second record of this species for the West Slope, the previous bird having been banded in Gunnison in 1998.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – *Contopus virens* (19/6). Two additional Eastern Wood-Pewee records were accepted in this circulation, both from 2005. One was in the Flatirons in Boulder on 31 July (RLi, 2005-79; 6-1), while the other was at Barr Lake, Adams, 2-4 September 2005 (RS, GW †; 2005-83; 7-0). This is the first accepted record for heavily-birded Adams.

ALDER FLYCATCHER – *Empidonax alnorum* (15/7). A juvenile, a first for the county, was present at Box Springs, Crowley, on 25 August 2002 (TL, LS †; 2002-62; 6-1).

***BLACK PHOEBE** – *Sayornis nigricans*. Although Black Phoebe has been removed from the main statewide review list (Semo et al. 2002), the CBRC continues to request details on birds observed away from traditional breeding locales or birds discovered out-of-season. Providing the first winter record for Colorado, an adult attempted to winter along the Arkansas River near Valco Ponds in Pueblo, where documented on 11 December 2005 (BKP †; 2005-137; 7-0). The bird was reported to remain at that location into at least January, although the Committee received no details on such.

***GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** – *Myiarchus crinitus*. Great Crested Flycatchers are regular inhabitants of the far northeast cor-

ner of the state and along the lower Arkansas River in southern Colorado. Records farther west than that are few, and as such, the CBRC requests documentation on those occurrences (Semo et al. 2002). During the past circulation, the Committee accepted a westerly record of a Great Crested Flycatcher discovered in Fort Collins on 26 June 2005 (CB, NB; 2005-73; 7-0).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – *Vireo solitarius* (14/13). An adult (seemingly female) was photographed by Walbek in his yard in Castle Rock, Douglas, on 24 September 2005 (GW †; 2005-98; 7-0). Besides the supporting narrative description, the photographs clearly showed those key characteristics that indicate Blue-headed Vireo: crisp demarcation between bluish-gray head and greenish mantle; trenchant separation between bluish-gray head and white throat; and bright yellow flanks. Since the “Solitary Vireo” was split in 1997 (AOU 1997), there has been an average of 1.3 accepted records of this species in the state per year as of 2005.

***CLARK'S NUTCRACKER** – *Nucifraga columbiana*. Clark's Nutcracker very rarely emigrates out of the mountains and onto the plains of eastern Colorado. To track those infrequent occurrences, the CBRC requests details on such observations (Semo et al. 2002). Establishing a first record for Broomfield, one was present in the Interlocken business area on 20 January 2005 (LS; 2005-4; 7-0).

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH – *Catharus minimus* (38/16). One was

well photographed at Crow Valley CG on 27 May 2005 (RH †; 2005-50; 7-0). This constitutes the 8th record of this species for Weld up through 2005.

VARIED THRUSH – *Ixoreus naevius* (23/13). Establishing the first record for *Douglas*, a basic-plumaged male graced a residential feeder in Roxborough between 28 January and at least 7 February 2004 (TO †; DF †; BS †; LS †; 2004-5; 7-0).

BENDIRE'S THRASHER – *Toxostoma bendirei* (8/1). The occurrence of Bendire's Thrasher in Colorado is firmly supported by a specimen collected in Colorado Springs on 8 May 1882. On 9 June 1970, a presumed nest of the species was discovered near Timpas, Otero. Analysis of the photographed eggs by Semo suggests Bendire's. In 1984, a Bendire's was found in the San Luis Valley in *Saguache* and additional highly debated records of the species have come from the Valley irregularly ever since, debated mainly because the occurrences were brief and lacked photographic evidence and because descriptions were somewhat contradictory for an identification of Bendire's Thrasher. In 2003, however, Rawinski captured photographs of a bird present at the junction of roads 3E and 7S within the Monte Vista NWR,

Rio Grande, on 11 May (JR †; 2003-87; 6-1).

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER – *Dendroica fusca* (39/18). An immature male was photographed at Cherry Creek Res. on 3 September 2005 (GW †; 2005-84; 7-0).

CERULEAN WARBLER – *Dendroica cerulea* (4/2). A great find was an alternate-plumaged male Cerulean Warbler at Long Pond, Larimer, on 16 May 2005 (RH; 2005-51; 7-0), establishing only the fourth confirmed record for the state. The three previous records were from *Douglas* in 1936, *Baca* in 1989, and *Rio Grande* in 1997. Another *Baca* report (in 1999) was apparently never submitted to the CBRC.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER – *Oporornis agilis* (9/4). Constituting only the 9th record for Colorado, and the first for *Larimer*, Olsen observed an alternate-plumaged male at Dixon



Varied Thrush, Roxborough SP, Douglas County, 7 February 2004. Photo by Bill Schmoker



Hepatic Tanager, Pryor Flats, Huerfano County June 2003. Photo by BB Hahn

Res., Larimer, on 28 May 2004 (RO; 2004-105; 7-0).

HEPATIC TANAGER – *Piranga flava* (19/4). Recent greater scrutiny of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) woodlands in southeastern Colorado has encouraged the belief that Hepatic Tanagers are regular breeders in that portion of the state. In support of that premise, the Committee has accepted two additional records of Hepatic Tanager, both from *Huerfano*. A pair was present for a good part of the summer in 2003 near Pryor, where present, at least, from 7 to 22 June (RO, RH, GW †, RLi, BBH †, TL; 2003-49; 7-0). In 2005, an adult male was present at the same location, where present 22 May to 25 June (BKP †, NP, MP; 2005-60; 7-0).

EASTERN TOWHEE – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (12/9). Review of Eastern Towhee records from Colo-

rado has been problematic for the CBRC, as hybridization is frequent between Eastern Towhee and Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus arcticus*), and observers should be aware of how the Committee processes such records. It is known that classic Spotted Towhees display white spots on scapulars, interscapulars, and wing coverts, while Eastern Towhees are unspotted and have a white patch at the base of the primaries. Female Spotted Towhees of most subspecies

are dark gray overall, while female Easterns are rich reddish brown on the head and back. The two species' voices are distinctive, but bridged by intermediate songs and calls in the Great Plains populations. Hybrid phenotypes can vary significantly, showing patterns including the following: 1) only a trace of upperparts spotting, with a white primary base patch; 2) extensive upperparts spotting and a white primary base roughly half that of a "pure" Eastern; and 3) only slightly less upperparts spotting than typical Spotted, yet with a trace of a white primary base patch. Some female hybrids can display slightly muddied-brown upperparts (not the rich reddish brown of "pure" birds) and others can be brownish gray. Female plumage color is also confounded by the fact that the prairie-breeding race of Spotted (*arcticus*)



Eastern Towhee, Bonny SP, Yuma County, 23 December 2005. Photo by Bill Schmoker

has females with a marginal to strong brown cast to at least some of the upperparts.

In 1959, the late Charles Sibley published results of a study presenting secondary intergradation between the two races of "Rufous-sided" Towhee [as the Spotted and Eastern Towhees were considered until 1995 (AOU 1995)] across the Great Plains (Sibley and West 1959). He used an index of shared plumage characteristics to map the breeding distribution of the two forms along the Platte River and rivers north of it. Results of Sibley and West's work indicated that, in fact, most of Nebraska's population along the Platte River showed genetic dilution between the two "species," with birds in easternmost Nebraska being phenotypically purer than western birds (although still not "pure") and birds on the eastern edge of Spotted Towhee's range (eastern

Colorado/western Nebraska) being characteristically more "tainted." Subsequent observations of summering towhees in Colorado have generally indicated that birds subtly display characteristics of such genetic dilution. The majority of accepted records of Eastern Towhee in Colorado have come from fall, winter, or early spring occurrences, when it is easier to argue that birds in Colorado are true vagrants from more northern and eastern populations. Given the problems of genetic dilution and hybrids that look mostly pure, the Committee will continue to be conservative in its deliberations and will closely analyze all documentation, looking for discussion of exactly why reported Eastern Towhees showed absolutely no phenotypic traits of Spotted Towhee. Voice descriptions should also provide clear information on purity.

Despite the committee's high standards for documentation, two wintering birds were accepted by the CBRC during this past circulation. Photographic evidence provided no suggestion of gene introgression and both records conform to the theory that true Eastern Towhees usually are present in Colorado only during the non-breeding season. A female scratched at a feeder along Big Thompson Road near Loveland, Larimer, where pres-

ent between at least 22 and 31 January 2004 (BA †, RH†, BS †; 2004-7; 7-0). In 2005, a female hid among the tangles along the south shore of Bonny Res., where seen on 22 and 23 December (AS †, CW †, BS †, MP; 2005-145; 7-0).

*FIELD SPARROW – *Spizella pusilla*. Field Sparrows are regular summer inhabitants of the eastern edge of Colorado. Records from farther west than that are few, and therefore the CBRC requests documentation on those occurrences (Semo et al. 2002). During the past circulation, the Committee accepted a westerly record of a Field Sparrow discovered at Doudy Draw, Boulder, on 13 September 2005 (MB; 2005-90; 7-0).

“RED” FOX SPARROW – *Passerella iliaca iliaca*. Although “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow (*P. i. schistacea*) is a regular breeder in the mountains of Colorado, there are few records of the nominate taiga breeding race for the state and the Committee requests documentation on those occurrences (Semo et al. 2002). One was present along the south side of Bonny Res. during the Bonny Christmas Bird Count on 23 December 2005 (AS, MP; 2005-146; 7-0). Another bird of that same race was reported from east of the Bonny dam at that time as well and that report is pending in the Committee.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (18/11). A surprising find was an adult in alternate plumage at Lathrop SP on 7 May 2005 (BS †; 2005-39; 7-0). This occurrence provides the first accepted record for Huerfano and the latest spring date for the species in the state.

SMITH’S LONGSPUR – *Calcarius pictus* (1/1). Establishing a first for Colorado, a Smith’s Longspur was photographed at NeeNoshe Res., Kiowa, where present between 11 and 12 October 2003 (BS; SMa, JM, GW †; 2003-82; 6-1). A previous report (from Adams) is still in circulation.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK – *Sturnella magna* (8/3). Two Eastern Meadowlark records were accepted during this past circulation. The first, a presumed southwestern race “Lilian’s” (*S. m. lilianae*), was found again near the Campo Lesser Prairie-Chick-



Golden-crowned Sparrow, Lathrop SP, Huerfano County, 7 May 2005. Photo by Bill Schmoker

en (*Tympانuchus pallidicinctus*) lek near Campo, Baca, where documented in the period 18 to 22 April 2005 (BKP †; MI †; 2005-22; 7-0). A nominate race (*S. m. magna*) bird set up territory in a field near Bellvue, Larimer, where present between 22 June and 1 July 2005 (RH †, NP, BS †; 2005-72; 7-0).

*GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE – *Quiscalus mexicanus*. First recorded in the state in 1970, Great-tailed Grackles have slowly expanded to eastern and western portions of the state, but unsurprisingly they have not been recorded in most montane counties. Establishing a first confirmed record for Park, an adult male was photographed at Lake George on 23 November 2005 (NK †; 2005-128; 7-0).

*BALTIMORE ORIOLE – *Icterus galbula*. Baltimore Orioles are regular summer inhabitants of the northeast corner of the state as well as being regular migrants through the eastern edge of Colorado. Records from farther west than that are few, and therefore the CBRC requests documentation on those occurrences (Semo et al. 2002). During the past circulation, the Committee accepted a belated, extremely westerly report of an alternate-plumaged adult male Baltimore Oriole photographed in Gunnison, where present 26 to 27 May 1998 (LB †; 2004-102; 7-0).

PURPLE FINCH – *Carpodacus purpureus* (33/9). Three birds, two brown-plumaged birds and an adult male, were photographed at a residential feeder in Lamar, Prowers, on 30 November 2004 (JT †; 2004-73; 7-0).

*COMMON REDPOLL – *Carduelis flammea*. In 2002, the CBRC classified Common Redpoll as a Code F species, meaning that documentation is now requested for all counties in the state outside Sedgwick, Phillips, Yuma, Logan, Washington, Morgan, Weld, Larimer, and Boulder (Semo et al. 2002). Gould banded a single redpoll in Teller on 1 February 2004 (PGo †; 2004-10; 7-0).

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

The Committee recognizes that its decisions may upset some observers. We heartily acknowledge that those who made the effort to submit documentation certainly care whether or not their reports are accepted. However, non-accepted records do not necessarily suggest that the birder misidentified or did not see the species. A non-accepted record only indicates that the documentation was not complete or convincing enough to catalogue on the list of confirmed bird records for the state. Non-accepted reports may provide evidence that may not mention certain requisite field marks or may indicate that the conditions of the observation did not permit the proper study of all necessary traits. We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

GLOSSY IBIS – Although suggestive, the report of a Glossy Ibis from Pastorius Res., La Plata, on 12 April 2005 presented no information on why a hybrid Glossy Ibis × White-faced Ibis should be eliminated from contention (2005-18; 1-6). Since hybrid ibis are increasing in frequency

in Colorado, the Committee remains conservative with regard to acceptance of records that do not discuss how hybrids were eliminated from consideration.

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE – The report of a singing Eastern Wood-Pewee near Crook, *Logan*, on 11 June 2005 (2005-66; 1-6) was not accepted by the Committee because virtually no description of what the bird actually looked like was submitted to the CBRC other than that the bird was shaped like a flycatcher, had wing-bars, had no eye-ring, and had a gray-buffy breast. The minimal description could refer to many species.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO – A photographed bird at Ramah SWA, *El Paso*, on 9 October 2005 was not accepted, as the Committee believed that the photographs best fit a bright Cassin's Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*) (2004-52; 1-6). Although the late date of observation is more indicative of Blue-headed Vireo, the Committee felt that the contrast between the blue-gray head and white throat was too weak for Blue-headed and that the green on the mantle intruded too much into the hind crown and was not sharply demarcated enough. As well, the color contrast between the throat and auriculars seemed too blurry, not sharp enough for Blue-headed.

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HEPATICTANAGER – Although it probably referred to a Hepatic Tanager, a report of a female-plumaged bird at Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso*, on 11 May 2005 was extremely brief and lacked a definitive description of the bird (2005-43; 2-5).

Reporters and Cited Observers

The CBRC graciously thanks the following individuals for submitting the records of rare species in Colorado reviewed during this circulation: WGA: W.G. Alther; BA: Barb Anderson; CB: Charles Bell; NB: Nancy Bell; MB: Maggie Boswell; AB: Andy Boyce; LB: Lori Brummer; CD: Coen Dexter; PD: Paul Differding; ME: Mel Emeigh; NE: Norm Erthal; DF: Doug Faulkner; JG: Jay Gilliam; PGo: Pat Gould; BBH: B.B. Hahn; RH: Rachel Hopper; MI: Marshall Iliff; BK: Bill Kaempfer; JK: Joey Kellner; LK: Loch Kilpatrick; NK: Nick Komar; GL: Gary Lefko; RLe: Randy Lentz; TL: Tony Leukering; RLi: Roger Linfield; JM: Joe Mammoser; SMA: Steve Mammoser; BM: Bill Maynard; SME: Steve Messick; TO: Tom Olkowski; RO: Ric Olson; MP: Mark Peterson; NP: Nathan Pieplow; BKP: Brandon K. Percival; JR: John Rawinski; BS: Bill Schmoker; LS: Larry Semo; RS: Randy Siebert; AS: Andrew Spencer; JS: Jane Stulp; JT: Janeal Thompson; GW: Glenn Walbek; CW: Cole Wild; BW: Brenda Wright.

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FIELD NOTE

An Observation of Apparent “Fishing” by Turkey Vultures

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Ed. Hugh Kingery

There is a spring-summer-fall communal roost of the most migratory North American race of the Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura meridionalis*) at the intersection of West Mountain and Washington Avenues in northwestern Fort Collins. Following roost departure in the morning, the birds using this roost sometimes resort by means of powered flight to a post-roost in a hayfield situated about 1.5 km northwest of the overnight roost. There is a small irrigation pond in the hayfield. This note describes an observation of attempted “fishing” by vultures at the post-roost, in which some birds behaved as if hoping to capture live prey.

At 5:57 a.m. MDT on 5 June 2007, I watched two vultures assume positions at an inlet to the irrigation pond at the post-roost. At 6:02 they were joined by a third bird (Fig. 1) when all three lined up within a meter along the edge of the inlet and stared down at the incoming