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## CBRC REPORT

# The 45<sup>th</sup> Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee: New Additions to the State List

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### Introduction

This 45<sup>th</sup> report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on records of three species previously unknown from the state: Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*), Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*), and Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*). 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 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 bring the state total to 485. One potentially new species to the state list is still pending within the CBRC: Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*).

Committee members voting on these reports were Coen Dexter,

Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Ric Olson, and Larry Semo.

## Committee News

The second consecutive term of Ric Olson expired at the end of 2007. Bill Maynard has been selected as a new Committee member and can serve two consecutive three-year terms. Bill's first term will expire at the end of 2010. Doug Faulkner and Joey Kellner finished their first terms at the end of 2007 and will remain on the Committee; their new terms will expire in 2010.

## 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, 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 48<sup>th</sup> Supplement (Banks et al. 2007). 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 videotape are indicated by a lower-case, italicized "v" (v), and those who submitted sonograms 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 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.

### **Errata**

The accession number for the accepted record of Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) from Prowers published in Semo (2007) was erroneously noted as 2005-96. The actual accession number for that record should be 2005-153.

The Black Brant photo on p. 245 of issue 40:4 was incorrectly credited to Doug Faulkner; it was taken by Jay Gilliam.

## RECORDS ACCEPTED

HOODED ORIOLE – *Icterus cucullatus* (1/1). An alternate-plumaged male foraged among Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), and trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*), often elusively, at and near the residence of Sheldon Zwicker near Cortez, Montezuma, between 18 June and at least 14 July 2006. Although the bird was originally found on 18 June, the CBRC received documentation only for the period starting 19 June (RH †, JK †, BM †, BKP †, NP, AS †, CW †, NE, JR; 2006-102; 7-0). The typical icterid structure was well noted and documented, as were the black face and throat, yellow-to-orange body, and black wings with a large white shoulder bar along the median coverts. The subject bird differed from Altamira Oriole (*I. gularis*), the most similar species, by being considerably

smaller and longer-billed, by the pattern of the black mask, and by the lack of white at the base of the primaries.

Hooded Orioles normally range from southern Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and western California south to southern Mexico and Belize and are racially segregated into five subspecies: *I. c. cucullatus*, *I. c. sennetti*, *I. c. igneus*, *I. c. nelsoni*, and *I. c. trichilooides* (Jaramillo and Burke 1999). The nominate race (*cucullatus*) ranges from the central Rio Grande in Texas south through Mexico to Oaxaca and Veracruz. It is very orange overall and has a relatively short bill and longish tail. The *sennetti* group occurs from the lower Rio Grande south along the Gulf Coastal plain into central Tamaulipas in Mexico. *Sennetti* birds are similar to *cucullatus*, except that males are distinctly paler and more yellow. The northwestern form of Hooded

Oriole, *nelsoni*, ranges from central California south to northern Baja California and east through southern Nevada, extreme southwestern Utah, central and southern Arizona, and southwestern New Mexico south to southern Sonora, Mexico. *Nelsoni* populations are noticeably more yellow than *cucullatus* (even yellower than *sennetti*), have longer and more slender bills than the other two



Hooded Oriole, McElmo Creek, Montezuma County, 19 June 2006. Photo by Brandon Percival

aforementioned races, and have longer wings and shorter tails than *cucullatus* and *sennetti*. The other two subspecies (*igneus* and *trochiloides*) are restricted to areas south of the U.S. Male *igneus* are even brighter orange than *cucullatus* and occur from southern Mexico to Belize. *Trochiloides* are found in southern Baja California and, although similar in color to *nelsoni*, are even longer- and thinner-billed (Jaramillo and Burke 1999).

Although its subspecific identity was not established, the Colorado bird was likely most closely allied with populations of *nelsoni* based on its plumage and structural components, including its long bill, relatively short tail, and yellow pattern. The location of the bird also suggests *nelsoni*, as that is the race that breeds immediately south of and nearest to the discovery site. Hooded Orioles have demonstrated patterns of vagrancy relatively often, with presumed *nelsoni* wandering northward to Washington and British Columbia (Jaramillo and Burke 1999).

LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH – *Carduelis lawrencei* (1/1). An alternate-plumaged male graced Larry Arnold's feeder in Grand Junction, Mesa, where present and documented between the period 23 May and 24



Hooded Oriole, McElmo Creek, Montezuma County, 19 June 2006. Photo by Brandon Percival

July 2007 (LA, PG, GG †, RH †, BM †, NP; 2007-38; 7-0). As the bird was in alternate plumage, the Committee had no concerns over its specific identity. Lawrence's Goldfinches occasionally irrupt eastward during the winter, and this species had been predicted to occur in Colorado, but not during the summer period. Examination of photographs of the bird did not provide any indication of captive origin, as feather shape was excellent and consistent with the time of year. Review of nearby states indicated that other late Lawrence's Goldfinches were present out-of-range as well in 2007. A male was present at Dammeron Valley, Washington, in southwestern Utah during late March (Davis 2007), with the same or a different bird photographed at the same location in early September. In New Mexico, meanwhile, an alternate-plumaged male turned up at a feed-

er in the Datil Mountains, Catron, which is in the west-central portion of the state, on 19 July and remained at that location until 5 August (UA 2007). Considering that other Lawrence's Goldfinches were present easterly out-of-range and out-of-date, the presence of an individual in western Colorado is at least somewhat supported by a seasonal vagrancy pattern of the species.

**BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW** – *Spizella atrogularis* (1/1). One was photographed on private property south of Lamar, Prowers, on 16 September 2006 (JS †; 2006-128; 5-2, 6-1). Although little narrative description was provided to the Committee, the photograph, though of poor quality, convinced the majority of members through a second round of voting to accept the record as the first confirmed for the state. Based on the photograph, the sparrow had a solid charcoal-gray head, the color of which extended to the chest, then faded slightly whiter on the lower belly. The mantle and wings were medium brown, and the greater coverts showed pale tips that provided a very weak single wingbar. The tail appeared gray and very long. Those features are entirely consistent with Black-chinned Sparrow and not any age/sex combination of any other North

American emberizid. An enlargement of the photo showed a pale bill, although the extent and precise color were not obvious due to shadowing and low resolution.

Black-chinned Sparrows inhabit brushy, arid slopes across fragmented areas of the southwestern and western U.S. and western Mexico. Three races are currently recognized: the nominate, which occurs in Mexico only; *S. a. cana*, the widespread southwestern U.S. type; and *S. a. caurina*, a subspecies occurring along the central California coast. Plumage and morphometric differences between the races are weak and clinal, and separation is considered difficult (Pyle 1997). The species is regular in suitable habitat from central California east to southern Nevada, southeastern Utah, southeastern Arizona, and southwestern New Mexico; northeastward to north-central New



Lawrence's Goldfinch, Grand Junction, Mesa County, 25 May 2007. Photo by Andrew Spencer

Mexico; and southward through westernmost Texas to central Mexico. Although vagrancy is infrequent, the species has occurred extralimally in southern Oregon and central Texas and episodic invasions have occurred into northern California (Tenney 1997). A possible sighting of one came from near Boise City, Oklahoma, on 21 June 2001 (Shackford 2003). In New Mexico, breeding records extend north to Taos County, San Miguel County, and probably San Juan County (New Mexico Partners in Flight 2007); Taos and San Juan counties border southern Colorado. Historically, the species has bred along the Canadian River Gorge north to Colfax County and in the Rio Grande Gorge at least as far north as the Orilla Verde area; it may also breed along the Canadian escarpment in San Miguel and Harding Counties (J. Oldenettel, pers. comm.). Extralimital records in New Mexico include one in December 1994 near Clayton, Union County, and one in May 2004 at Amistad, Union County (J. Oldenettel, pers. comm.). The species may also be increasing in population in New Mexico (Tenney 1997). Based on adjacency, it is presumed, although not proven, that the Colorado bird was a member of *cana*, the southwestern race.

As the species occurs near southern Colorado, it was not unexpected that the species would eventually be confirmed for the state. The CBRC has reviewed, but not accepted, three prior reports of the species: from near Louisville, *Boulder*, on 15 December 1973; from near Berthoud, *Larimer*,

on 26 November 1980; and from Hotchkiss, *Delta*, in mid-May 1998. During this current circulation, the CBRC also reviewed a 2005 heard-only report of a Black-chinned Sparrow from Colorado National Monument in Mesa. That report was not accepted and a discussion of that record is presented below.

### **RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED**

The Committee recognizes that its decisions may upset some observers. We heartily acknowledge that those who make 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 do not mention certain requisite field marks or indicate that the conditions of the observation did not permit the proper study of all necessary traits. All non-accepted records are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

#### **BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW**

– On 24 May 2005, a highly experienced Colorado birder detected a trill song emanating from within Colorado National Monument near Grand Junction. Based on the observer's experience with the species and its song, the song was believed to be that

of a Black-chinned Sparrow. Unfortunately, the observer was able to see the bird in flight only briefly and was not able to make any field determinations based on visual traits. Although

the species certainly may have been at that location, the description of the song provided little evidence to determine the veracity of the record (2005-151; 2-5).

### Reporters and Cited Observers

The CBRC graciously thanks the following individuals for submitting records of rare species in Colorado that prompted this circulation: LA: Larry Arnold; JB: Jason Beason; NE: Norm Erthal; PG: Peter Gent; GG: Gregg Goodrich; RH: Rachel Hopper; JK: Joey Kellner; BM: Bill Maynard; BKP: Brandon Percival; NP: Nathan Pieplow; JR: Joe Roller; AS: Andrew Spencer; JS: Jane Stulp; and CW: Cole Wild.

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