

# The 70<sup>th</sup> Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

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## Introduction

This 70<sup>th</sup> report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) presents the results of deliberations of the CBRC involving 57 reports submitted by 47 observers and documenting 49 occurrences of five species (or recognizable forms) from the period November 2009 to April 2013. Per CBRC bylaws, all accepted records received a final 7-0 or 6-1 vote to accept. Each report that was not accepted received five or fewer votes to accept.

This report highlights species with fewer than 10 state records, first state record of the Aleutian Cackling Goose, the phenomenal Common Redpoll invasion of winter 2012-2013, and non-acceptance of a potential new species to the state list (Arizona Woodpecker). The focus on uber-rare species and events allows for more content per individual record than can be achieved using the previous all-records format. The CBRC will continue to publish all new records for the state and is considering other publishing venues, including online-only reports accessible through the CFO and CBRC websites. No new species have been accepted since publication of the 69<sup>th</sup> CBRC Report (Faulkner 2014) and the Colorado state list remains 498.

Committee members voting on these reports were John Drummond (Colorado Springs), Doug Faulkner (Arvada), Bill Maynard (Colorado Springs), Brandon Percival (Pueblo), Mark Peterson (Colorado Springs), Bill Schmoker (Longmont), David Silverman (Rye), and Glenn Walbek (Castle Rock).

## Committee Functions

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its Main Review List ([coloradobirdrecords.org/reviewlist.aspx](http://coloradobirdrecords.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 ([coloradobirdrecords.org](http://coloradobirdrecords.org)). Alternatively, one can fill out the form printed on the inside dust jacket of this journal and mail it to the CBRC Chair, or request an electronic Word document from the Chair or Secretary (see this journal's inside front cover for contact information).

## Report Format

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) *Checklist of North American Birds* (AOU 1998) through the 54<sup>th</sup> Supplement (Chesser et al. 2013). We present the initials of the contributing observer(s), the official accession number 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 total number of state records is given in parentheses after the species scientific name.

The initial observer of the bird is underlined, if known, and is presented first only if that person contributed documentation; additional contributors' follow in alphabetical order by last name. If the initial observer is known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are underlined and presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture are indicated with a dagger (†); those who submitted video by a lower-case, italicized "v" (v) and those who submitted audio spectrograms or recordings by a lower-case, italicized "s" (s).

In this report, county names are italicized. We have attempted to provide the full date span for individual records with this journal being the primary source of those dates. The Committee has not dealt with the question of full date spans as compared to submitted date spans when documentations cover only a portion of the reported dates (see the Costa's Hummingbird record for additional discussion).

## ACCEPTED RECORDS

**Aleutian Cackling Goose** – *Branta hutchinsii leucopareia* (1). The CBRC does not have a mandate to review reports of subspecies, particularly for those species common to the state. However, it may consider doing so when a subspecies is of particular interest (e.g., may potentially be elevated to full species status or whose occurrence in Colorado is thought to be rare). The Aleutian Cackling Goose's relevance for review by the CBRC resides with the possibility of additional splitting of Cackling Goose in combination with its coastal distribution pattern (breeding in the Aleutian and Semidi Islands and wintering in

California and southwest Oregon). If Cackling Goose is to be split further, current subspecies with isolated breeding ranges and no to little genetic interchange with other subspecies (like Aleutian Cackling Goose) stand the best chance of becoming full species. Furthermore, Aleutian Cackling Goose was thought to be extinct until a remnant population was discovered on Buldir Island in 1962. Population estimates now exceed 100,000 (Min et al. 2011). Its small population size and coastal affinity suggests that vagrancy to Colorado should be considered exceptional.

The CBRC reviewed documentation of an Aleutian Cackling Goose



Aleutian Cackling Goose, Union Reservoir, Weld County, 25 November 2012.  
Photo by Steve Mlodinow

at Union Res., Weld, 25 November 2012 (2013-12; SML†; 6-1). This individual was scrutinized for approximately 20 minutes allowing the observer to extensively study body structure and plumage details that could vary depending on posture and light conditions. The tiny goose reliably showed diagnostic characteristics (at least when considered collectively) of the Aleutian subspecies. These characteristics included a dark, bronzy breast, no indentation on the narrow white cheek patch which extended into a broad white gular stripe, rounded head, and thin white collar at the base of the neck. The reporting observer included comments from two outside experts, both well-respected birders from the West Coast, who agreed with the identification. The lone dissenting CBRC member was concerned that the bird's bill was too large and that the digiscoped photos did not show plumage characteristics well enough to identify the goose to

subspecies with any confidence. The reporting observer acknowledged that the dark plumage and white neck collar did not appear in the photos as seen in true life.

The Chair has been unable to find any mention of this subspecies for Colorado in the literature or online museum catalogs. This is not surprising given its limited distribution and near-extinction. Therefore, this individual represents the first record of Aleutian Cackling Goose in Colorado.

**Costa's Hummingbird** – *Calypte costae* (7). A long-staying female at a private residence in Grand Junction, Mesa, in November 2011 was documented for just a single day (the 19<sup>th</sup>) by a single observer (2013-39; JT†; 7-0). The photos left no doubt about the identification of this individual. This bird represents the second record for Mesa and for the West Slope.

The CBRC (and most state bird records committees) consider the "official" date(s) of occurrence as those which are supported by submitted documentation. Thus, the only date of occurrence for this individual will be 19 November 2011 unless the CBRC receives additional documentation for the bird's reported stay of 8-21 November 2011 (Such and Such 2012). However, perhaps state bird records committees should consider that the first reported date is "official" and that documentation from subsequent dates support that individual's extended stay. Conceivably, if a bird is reported on day X, then seen and documented on days X+2, X+3, and X+6, and all documentation supports the identification, there is little reason to doubt that

the bird was correctly identified on day X. After all, what is the chance that a bird is incorrectly identified and then, by happenstance, that rare species is observed later at the same location? Then again, maybe it is too much of a reach and adds another possible source of error in establishing the scientific credibility that bird records portend to have. The Chair's recommendation is that all observers should provide documentation so the entire duration of a rare bird's stay can be vetted within a single inclusive record. Documentation of this bird from other observers on other dates would be appreciated.

**Pacific Wren** – *Troglodytes pacificus* (6). The CBRC recently accepted three new records of this species doubling the total number of state records to six. A calling Pacific Wren, found along the Saddle Rock Trail in Gregory Canyon, *Boulder*, 10 November 2009, was originally documented by a single observer (2009-92; NPs, WS, NK; 5-2, 4-3, 6-1). This documentation did not include supporting physical evidence and the CBRC conservatively (although not unanimously) felt that physical evidence was necessary to accept it as a state record. Subsequent to that decision, the CBRC received additional documentation containing a sound recording that swayed enough Committee members to vote in favor of acceptance. This bird represents the first record for *Boulder*.

Not to be outdone, *Pueblo* added two more Pacific Wren records to bring its total to four for the county. One found on the *Pueblo Res.* CBC downstream of *Pueblo City Park* on 18 December 2010 was documented



*Costa's Hummingbird, Grand Junction, Mesa County, 19 November 2011.*  
Photo by Jackson Trappett

only for the date of 27 December 2010 (2012-194; PH†, DM; 7-0). This individual was reported through at least the 29<sup>th</sup>. Another Pacific Wren was observed along Greenhorn Creek near *Rye, Pueblo*, 2 November 2012 (2012-168; DS; 6-1). This wren was intensively studied which allowed the observer to note and describe key plumage details that satisfactorily differentiated it from Winter Wren for the majority of Committee members.

**Common Redpoll** – *Acanthis flammea*. The winter of 2012-2013 may always be known as the redpoll invasion winter. Unprecedented numbers of Common Redpolls descended onto the state with initial reports streaming in during the first weeks of November. Except for 35 at *Granby, Grand*, birders reported very few redpolls during the previous winter of 2011-2012. In 2012-2013, 35 redpolls at a given location were not unusual and the flock coming to the *Discovery Museum* in



Common Redpoll, Silverton, San Juan County, 5 February 2013. Photo by Jim Beatty

Ft. Collins, Larimer, which included a handful of Hoary Redpolls (see Faulkner 2014), consisted of several hundred Commons. In order to capture a snapshot of the magnitude of this massive irruption, the CBRC requested documentation of Common Redpolls away from their expected northeastern Colorado winter range. This effort also resulted in 20 first county records. The list of accepted records is in Table 1. Not included in that table is the recently accepted record of an individual at Flagler, Kit Carson, 29 December 2011, which represents the first for that county (2013-173; BK†; 7-0).

#### SPECIES NOT ACCEPTED— IDENTIFICATION NOT ESTABLISHED

**Arizona Woodpecker** (*Picoides arizonae*). The reports submitted by two observers of a woodpecker in Cottonwood Canyon, Las Animas, 26 April 2013, was tantalizing enough

to garner one accept vote from the Committee (2013-136; 1-6). The bird was observed briefly by both observers, less than a minute by the primary observer who saw it perched on a tree truck and for only one second by the other observer who caught a glimpse of it as the bird flew away. The Hairy Woodpecker-sized bird had an all brown back, red on the hind crown, possible white barring on the lower right side (the side facing the observer and presumably meaning the flight feathers), and rump and tail that were “more rufous” than the back. Except for the tail and rump, the description is supportive of Arizona Woodpecker. Dissenting CBRC members, however, were concerned about the rufous coloration (Arizona Woodpecker is not rufous anywhere) and the lack of mention of a broad, white neck-patch that should have been readily visible. In addition to the description concerns, other Committee members expressed doubts that Arizona Woodpecker is likely to occur in southeast Colorado. The species barely enters the United States in southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico. And, even within its normal montane range, the species is rarely known to wander to lower elevations (Corman and Wise-Gervais 2005). The Chair would like to point out that both observers did not believe that their descriptions were adequate to accept as a first state record. While it is rare for any (let alone both in this case) observer to state that his/her sighting of a possible rare bird should probably NOT be accepted as a record, it is refreshing that 1) they documented the bird anyway, and 2) described

Table 1. Common Redpoll records from winter 2012–2013

Accession #	# Birds	Location	County	Dates	Observers	Vote
2013-237	1	La Veta	Huerfano	10–12 Nov 2012	PN†	7-0
2012-184	1	Hayden	Routt	15 Nov 2012	NM†	7-0
2013-87	1-2	Lamar	Prowers	15–19 Nov 2012	JS†	7-0
2013-88	2	Fawn Brook Inn	Boulder	17 Nov 2012	CH†	7-0
2013-107	60	Baseline Res.	Boulder	24 Nov 2012	BSct	7-0
2012-213	2-3	Manitou Springs	El Paso	28 Nov – 28 Dec 2012	BM†, BKPt, NM	7-0
2013-24	1-2?	Coaldale	Fremont	8 Dec 2012 – 13 Jan 2013	TMt†	7-0
2013-27	65	Steamboat Springs	Routt	9 Dec 2012 – 22 January 2013	TMq†	7-0
2013-52	2	Glenwood Springs	Garfield	10 Dec 2012	TMc†	7-0
2013-82	1	Franktown	Douglas	11 Dec 2012	HK†	7-0
2013-56	4	Pueblo Res.	Pueblo	12 Dec 2012 – 3 Jan 2013	BKPt†	7-0
2013-85	30	Near CVCG	Weld	13 Dec 2012	NL	7-0
2013-135	1	Denver	Arapahoe	13 Dec 2012	MD	6-1
2013-57	2	Broomfield	Broomfield	15 Dec 2012	EZ	7-0
2013-25	24	Granby	Grand	15 Dec 2012 – 19 Jan 2013	BC	6-1
2013-7	1	Conifer	Jefferson	18 Dec 2012	SM†	7-0
2013-62	35	Sterling	Logan	20 Dec 2012	KMD†	7-0
2013-58	6	Cascade	El Paso	22 Dec 2012 – 17 Jan 2013	JD†, SS	7-0
2013-59	11	Black Forest	El Paso	22 Dec 2012	JD†, HJR	7-0
2013-20	20	Fraser	Grand	25 Dec 2012 – 6 Jan 2013	DE†	7-0
2013-63	6	Sedalia	Douglas	25 Dec 2012 – 18 Feb 2013	BB†	7-0
2013-23	65	Steamboat Springs	Routt	28 Dec 2012	TL†	7-0
2013-86	2	Aurora	Arapahoe	28 Dec 2012	LB†	7-0
2013-76	20	East Vail	Eagle	29 Dec 2012 – 15 Feb 2013	AE†	7-0
2013-28	10-22	Aspen	Pitkin	30 Dec 2012 – 22 Feb 2013	EB, JS†	7-0
2013-100	25	Longmont	Boulder	29 Dec 2012 – 15 Mar 2013	BSct	7-0
2013-4	1	Tennessee Pass	Eagle	30 Dec 2012	MD†	7-0
2013-21	30	Collbran	Mesa	1 Jan 2013	NK†	7-0
2013-38	3-4	Mesa	Mesa	1-5 Jan 2013	J†	7-0
2013-60	6	Ouray	Ouray	2 Jan 2013	KN	6-1
2013-22	27	Avon	Eagle	3-6 Jan 2013	MV†	7-0
2013-111	3	Brush Hollow Res.	Fremont	6 Jan 2013	IS†	7-0
2013-49	25	Walden	Jackson	26 Jan 2013	TLet	7-0

2013-44	8-35	Silverthorne	Summit	27 Jan 2013	CT, SMH, TLe†	7-0
2013-45	180-200	Kremmling	Grand	27 Jan 2013	SMH†, TLe†	7-0
2013-137	20	Idaho Springs	Clear Creek	3 Feb 2013	JH†, RDB	7-0
2013-46	3	Silverton	San Juan	5 Feb 2013	JB†	7-0
2013-89	50	Aurora	Arapahoe	6 Feb 2013	CP	6-1
2013-84	8	Monument	El Paso	8 Feb 2013 – 18 Mar 2013	KS	7-0
2013-90	3	Cortez	Montezuma	21-24 Feb 2013	SMe	6-1
2013-123	16	Prewitt Res.	Washington	3 Mar 2013	SMI	7-0
2013-91	8	Winter Park	Grand	3-6 Mar 2013	BM†	7-0
2013-92	1	Aurora	Arapahoe	11 Mar 2013	CT†	7-0

the bird just as they observed it without apparent influence or bias from field guides or personal knowledge of key field marks for that particular species.

## REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

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