

# The 58<sup>th</sup> Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

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## Introduction

This 58<sup>th</sup> report presents the results of deliberations of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) on partial results of circulations held in 2010 and prior. This article provides results of the circulation of 49 reports submitted by 26 observers documenting 37 occurrences of 20 species (or recognizable forms) from the period 2003 through 2010. Of those, 11 occurrences involving nine different species were not accepted as state records because of insufficient documentation, because supporting evidence was inconsistent with known identification criteria, or because wild provenance was not established. 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 in the final vote.

Highlights of this report include the third state record for Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), seven records of Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*) from 2006-2010 taking the total for the state to 11, first county records for Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) in *Fremont* and Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) in *Bent*, and the third record of American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) for *Adams*.

Committee members voting on these reports were Coen Dexter, John Drummond, Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Bill Maynard, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, Bill Schmoker, Larry Semo, David Silverman, and Glenn Walbek.

## Committee Functions

All reports received by the CBRC (written documentation, photographs, videos, and/or sound recordings) are archived at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS), 2001 Colorado Boulevard, Denver, Colorado, 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 record 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>).

### **Committee News**

Doug Faulkner has agreed to continue serving in the role of Secretary as a non-voting member. This position supports the Chair with various organizational tasks, including compilation of reports for publication in *Colorado Birds* and maintenance of physical, electronic, and online databases.

### **Erratum**

In the previous issue of *Colorado Birds*, the CBRC incorrectly acknowledged Larry Griffin as the photographer of an accepted Tricolored Heron from Weld County on 5 May 2010 (2010-78). Tom France provided photographic evidence of the bird, and we apologize for not correctly acknowledging his contribution to the CBRC.

### **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 during the most recent 10-year time period (2001-2010) including the most recent circulation year (2010). 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 51<sup>st</sup> 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, the second and third rounds (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 (or people) contributed documentation; additional contributors' initials follow in alphabetical order by last name. If the finder(s) is (are) known with certainty, but did not submit documentation, those initials are underlined and presented last. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture have a dagger (†) following their initials; initials of those who sub-

mitted video 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 is listed second; RA submitted, at least, photographic documentation; the record number assigned to the occurrence was 2001-36; and in the two rounds of voting, the first-round vote was four “accept” 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.

In this report, abbreviations are used for Chico Basin Ranch (CBR), Crow Valley Campground (CVCG), Reservoir (Res.), State Park (SP), and State Wildlife Area (SWA).

## **RECORDS ACCEPTED**

**Red-throated Loon** – *Gavia stellata* (40/12). The Committee considered the occurrence of this species at two separate locations in fall 2009 as pertaining to the same individual (NP, BKP †, BM; 2009-102; 7-0). A juvenile loon originally found at Union Res., *Weld*, on 30 October 2009 by Pieplow is considered the same as one observed a few days later at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 4 November by Percival. The loon continued at that location until at least 14 November 2009. Two Committee members recommended that these reports

be considered independent sightings of two different individuals. One of the dilemmas faced by the Committee is how to deal with multiple sightings of a rare species that are close either spatially or temporally. If additional information becomes available, especially documentation for dates between 30 October and 4 November at either site that contradicts the opinion that these sightings are of the same individual, then these records may be revised.

An adult Red-throated Loon still in basic plumage was observed at Brush Hollow Res., *Fremont*, on 19



*Blue-headed Vireo,*  
*Pueblo City Park,*  
*Pueblo County, 21*  
*Oct 2010. Photo by*  
*Brandon Percival*



*Summer Tanager,*  
*Livermore, Larimer*  
*County, 11 Nov*  
*2009. Photo by*  
*Donald Beaver*



*Iceland Gull,*  
*Larimer County,*  
*1 Mar 2008.*  
*Photo by An-*  
*drew Spencer*



*Black Vulture*, Cheyenne County, 31 Jul 2010. Photo by Gregg Goodrich

May 2009 (BKP †, RM; 2009-41; 7-0) for that county's first record. This record also represents the sixth occurrence of this species during spring. Perhaps more noteworthy than the actual occurrence is the fact that photographers were able to get close-up photos of a juvenile at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, on 11 November 2010 (BKP †, BM †; 2010-149; 7-0).

**Black Vulture** – *Coragyps atratus* (3/3). Yet another reason to participate in Colorado's second Breeding Bird Atlas is the possibility of finding a rarity. Gregg Goodrich did so when he found a Black Vulture in his atlas block near Wildhorse, Cheyenne, on 31 July 2010 (GG †, 2010-118; 7-0).

**American Woodcock** – *Scolopax minor* (8/3). The third record for Adams was discovered actively foraging in the Espelands' backyard near Brighton during the afternoon of 15 November 2010 (RE †, 2010-146; 7-0). No other county has more than one record.

**Black-legged Kittiwake** – *Rissa tridactyla* (37/13). The Committee unanimously accepted documentation in support of a juvenile-plumaged kit-

tiwake at Lagerman Res., Boulder, on 28 November 2004 (BS, SR; 2004-141; 7-0). The Committee had previously reviewed and accepted a record from nearby Lon Haggler Res., Boulder, on 16 November 2004 (2004-65); however, due to the lack of reports during the nearly two-week pe-

riod between sightings, the Lagerman Res. kittiwake was considered a different individual. This record continues to support the notion that if you want to find a kittiwake in Colorado, you should visit your local waterbody in November. Of the state's 37 records, 25 have occurred in November, and an outstanding 32 (86%) between 27 October and 15 December.

**Iceland Gull** – *Larus glaucooides* (11/9). The number of reports and documentations for this species has increased considerably over the past several years. This publication brings Colorado's total to 11 records, nine of which are from the period 2001-2010. The Committee has received documentation of several other Iceland Gulls from recent years that it will be reviewing in the near future, so this tally will likely increase. First county records established below include those for Boulder, Larimer, Logan, and Weld. One clear pattern has arisen from these records: virtually all of the Iceland Gulls documented thus far are immature birds in either first- or second-cycle plumage. The lone

exception is an adult at Lake Loveland, *Larimer*, on 1 March 2008 (NK †, AS †; 2008-20; 7-0). Iceland Gulls accepted recently include a first-cycle bird at Lake Loveland, *Larimer*, on 14 December 2006 (NK †; 2006-168; 6-1); a first-cycle bird at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, from 14 January 2007 through 18 February 2007 (BKP †, BM †; 2007-3; 7-0); a first-cycle bird at Valmont Res., *Boulder*, on 2 February 2008 (BKP †, BS †; 2008-11; 6-1); a first-cycle bird at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on 29 March 2009 (CLW †; 2009-13; 7-0); a second-cycle gull at Valmont Res., *Boulder*, 8-9 January 2010 (BS †; 2010-3; 7-0); and a first-cycle bird at Windsor Lake, *Weld*, on 27 March 2010 (NK †; 2010-13; 6-1). A first-cycle bird at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, was documented for the period 18 December 2008 to 11 January 2009 (TL †, PH †, BS †, CW †; 2008-144; 7-0). This bird was reported through at least 29 January 2009, but the Committee did not receive documentation for those dates.

**Arctic Tern** – *Sterna paradisaea* (14/5). The Committee accepted the report of an adult at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 28 November 2003 (RL; 2003-112; 5-2, 6-1) as the latest documented occurrence of this species in Colorado and the only

one for November. Six of the previous 13 records are from September, while the latest dates prior to this record were from 5-8 October. It also marks 2003 as the best year for the species, with three accepted records.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** – *Streptopelia decaocto*. Documentation establishing this species in *La Plata* and *Jackson* was provided to the Committee. Six were observed in Durango, *La Plata*, on 28 December 2004 (JB; 2004-140; 6-1) and four in Walden, *Jackson*, on 10 April 2004 (AS †; 2006-189; 7-0).

**Blue-headed Vireo** – *Vireo solitarius* (31/22). Brandon Percival had a banner year with Blue-headed Vireos in 2010, with three records of single birds: one at Rock Canyon, *Pueblo*, on 12 September 2010 (BKP †; 2010-122; 7-0); a first county record in Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 8 October 2010 (BKP †; 2010-126; 7-0); and the third at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on 21 Octo-



*American Woodcock, Henderson, Adams County, 15 Nov 2010. Photo by Lois Espeland*

ber 2010 (BKP †; 2010-132; 7-0). One in first-basic plumage banded at CBR, *El Paso*, on 16 September 2009 (BG †; 2009-116; 5-2, 7-0) provided the sixth record of the species for 2009 and the third for CBR that year.

**Northern Parula** – *Parula americana*. A surprising find was a Northern Parula in the Neldner backyard near La Veta, *Huerfano*, on 8 November 2010 (PN †; 2010-42; 7-0). What may be even more surprising is that there are two other November records for this species in recent history—one in Paonia, *Delta*, on 26 November 2005 (2005-129) and one in Lakewood, *Jefferson*, on 23 November 2008 (2008-153)—and there is even one from 15 January 2006 in Boulder, *Boulder* (2006-7).

**Prothonotary Warbler** – *Protonotaria citrea*. A first-year female was beautifully photographed at Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 14 May 2005 (BS †; 2005-48; 7-0).

**“Red” Fox Sparrow** – *Passerella iliaca iliaca/zaboria* (13/12). One came to a bird feeder at the US Forest Service office in Paonia, *Delta*, on 9 December 2009 (DG †; 2009-96; 7-0), establishing that county’s first record and the second for the West Slope (the first occurred in *Owray* in 2000 [2000-156]). Another was found along Fountain Creek, *El Paso*, on 14 December 2009 (TF; 2009-97; 7-0).

**Summer Tanager** – *Piranga rubra*. Establishing a very rare late fall occurrence of this species in the state was an adult male observed at Livermore, *Larimer*, on 11 November 2009 (DB †; 2009-103; 7-0). Not quite as late was a female-plumaged tanager banded at

Barr Lake SP, *Adams*, on 16 October 2006 (SN †; 2010-70; 7-0).

## RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Tundra Swan** – *Cygnus columbianus*. An immature bird was reported at Navajo Res., *Archuleta*, on 13 February 2006. The report of a Trumpeter Swan (*C. buccinator*) at the same location a few days prior to this report prompted some Committee members to question whether an identity could be established from a written description alone (2006-16; 4-3, 1-6). Although the write-up was suggestive, ultimately, most Committee members commented that a photo or other physical evidence would be needed given the differing opinion on identification of this swan by other observers.

**Trumpeter Swan** – *Cygnus buccinator*. Two Committee members consistently dissented through three rounds of voting on the documentation provided for two adult swans and one immature bird observed at Lake Hasty, *Bent*, on 7 January 2006 (2006-3; 5-2, 5-2, 5-2). In these members’ opinions, the single photo submitted of one adult did not conclusively establish the swan’s identity. Furthermore, very little written description was given for the sighting and how similar species, especially Tundra Swan, were ruled out. One dissenting member commented that mixed-species swan groups have been observed in Colorado and, without a description of the immature swan, the documentation could not be accepted as a record. At least five other members disagreed.

The Committee did not accept as a state record the documentation

provided for two adult swans at Bud Mielke Res., *Larimer*, on 28 November 2006 (2006-166; 4-3, 0-7). The quality of the single photo of one adult was insufficient to establish that bird's identity in the opinion of most Committee members. Furthermore, most members commented that the written description did not provide enough details to conclusively rule out Tundra Swan.

**Smew** – *Mergellus albellus*. Documentation for a pair at the Denver Zoo did not pass the Committee based on the captive nature of these birds (2010-145; 0-7). One photo shows the male possessing a band on its right leg, suggesting that it was not a wild bird, but rather one of many exotic waterfowl species found in the zoo. The documentation did not provide rationale for these Smew being wild, free-flying birds.

**Arctic Loon** – *Gavia adamsii*. The Committee reviewed documentation of two separate sightings that were considered to pertain to the same individual (2009-93; 2-5). The first report came from Union Reservoir, *Weld*, on 25 October 2009, while the second was from Marston Reservoir, *Denver*, on 19 November 2009. Both observers noted a white flank patch that they considered a key feature in identifying the loon. Some Committee members were concerned about the description of the loon sitting high on the water, as any loon in that position will show extensive white sides and flanks. Although other features were consistent with Arctic Loon—such as the lack of a chin strap, and a head and bill structure similar to that of Common Loon

(*G. immer*) but with a slightly smaller body size—most Committee members felt there was not enough definitive evidence to accept this as the state's third record.

**Arctic Tern** – *Sterna paradisaea*. Documentation for one reported as being in worn juvenile plumage at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 14 October 2009, took the Committee two rounds to reach a decision (2009-90; 4-3, 1-6). The documentation included four photos of the tern standing on a sandy beach. The Committee addressed these photos extensively during its review and most members considered the individual to more closely resemble Common Tern (*S. hirundo*) than Arctic Tern. In particular, the tern's leg length (long) and bill size/coloration (long and orange-based) were consistent with Common Tern and outside the usual range of variation in Arctic Tern.

**Long-billed Thrasher** – *Toxostoma longirostre*. The observer of a thrasher originally identified as a Brown Thrasher (*T. rufum*) at CVCG, *Weld*, on 16 May 2006, submitted documentation for the thrasher as a Long-billed upon review of photographs. This was at nearly the same time when Colorado's third and fourth state records of Long-billed Thrasher were present in January/February 2006. The Committee needed two rounds of voting to reach a decision (2010-64; 4-3, 1-6). Most Committee members considered this experienced observer's original identification correct. In particular, some Committee members commented that the thrasher showed a higher degree of rusty coloration and



a longer primary projection than typical for Long-billed. The photo quality did not provide for sufficient detail for some Committee members to discern other features, such as the extent of gray on the face and streaking on the undertail coverts.

**Eastern Towhee** – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. The same observer provided documentation for two separate male towhees: one at Bonny Res., Yuma, on 16 May 2005 (2005-52; 4-3, 4-3), and the other at Tamarack Ranch SWA, Logan, on 17 May 2005 (2005-57; 4-3, 4-3). The Committee noted that descriptions for both birds were identical and the documentations were submitted six months after the observations. Identical descriptions used for different individuals observed under different circumstances are always a concern for the Committee, as they imply that the observer may not have accurately reported the details of one or both observations. Moreover, neither documentation discussed how a hybrid Spotted (*P. maculatus*) × Eastern Towhee was ruled out. Eastern Colorado is on the western edge of a well-established hybrid zone between

these species, and documentation for any suspected Eastern Towhee should include the rationale for elimination of a hybrid.

**European Goldfinch** – *Carduelis carduelis*. Photos of a male coming to a feeder in Bailey, Park, on 31 May 2010 clearly established the bird's identity (2010-104; 0-7). As with other reports of non-native species discussed in this article, the Committee had no evidence of wild provenance, and it seemed unlikely given that this species is commonly sold in the pet trade, there is no pattern of vagrancy to North America, and there is no established population of released birds.

**Zebra Finch** – *Taeniopygia guttata*. The identification of a male in Fort Collins, Larimer, on 7 September 2006, was well established with several photos (2006-185; 0-7). However, because this Indian and Australasian species is common to the pet trade and there is no naturalized population established in North America, the Committee did not accept this documentation as a state record based on provenance concerns.

## 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: JB: Jim Beatty; DB: Donald Beaver; Cindi Bosworth; Rick Bosworth; RE: Robert Espeland; TF: Ted Floyd; BG: Brian Gibbons; DG: Dennis Garrison; GG: Gregg Goodrich; PH: Paul Hurtado; Tina Jones; NK: Nick Komar; Marie Lee; TL: Tony Leukering; RL: Roger Linfield; BM: Bill Maynard; RM: Rich Miller; PN: Polly Neldner; SN: Starr Nicely; BKP: Brandon Percival; NP: Nathan Pieplow; SR: Scott Roederer; Robert Righter; Julie Rouse; BS: Bill Schmoker; AS: Andrew Spencer; Walter Szeliga; CW: Cole Wild.

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