

The 68th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

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Introduction

This 68th report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter CBRC or Committee) presents the results of deliberations of the CBRC involving 90 reports submitted by 35 observers and documenting 53 occurrences of 41 species (or recognizable forms) from the period July 2005 to June 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.

Highlights of this report include first state records of Sandwich Tern, Great Kiskadee, and Hoary Redpoll; Colorado's sixth Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, fourth Smith's Longspur, fifth Nelson's Sparrow, third Brambling, the first San Luis Valley record of Laughing Gull and first county records for Neotropic Cormorant, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Phoebe, Carolina Wren, McCown's Longspur, Cape May Warbler, Canyon Towhee, Scarlet Tanager and Northern Cardinal. With publication of this report, the state list is now 496 species.

Committee members voting on these reports were John Drummond, Doug Faulkner, Bill Maynard, Brandon Percival, Bill Schmoker, David Silverman, and Glenn Walbek.

Committee Functions

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its Main Review List (<http://www.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 (<http://www.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 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 full 10-year time period (2003-2012). The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria the Committee uses to determine a species' continuance on, or removal from, the statewide Main Review List.

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) *Checklist of North American Birds* (AOU 1998) through the 54th Supplement (Chesser et al. 2013). 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 submitted 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 first and final dates on

which a rare species was seen, as that provides historical evidence of the true extent of its stay.

For this report, abbreviations are used for Chico Basin Ranch (CBR), Highway (Hwy), National Grassland (NG), Reservoir (Res.), River (R.), State Park (SP), and State Wildlife Area (SWA).

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Neotropic Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (25/12). An immature bird lingered at Lake Holbrook, *Otero*, 1-15 July 2012 (BKP†; 2012-160; 7-0) representing the first for that county.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – *Nyctanassa violacea* (28/14). The CBRC herein reports on additional documentation for a juvenile at Banner Lakes SWA, *Weld*, in July 2005. The Committee received a single documentation for this individual for 19 July, the day after it was originally found. That documentation (2005-75) was not endorsed by the Committee. A subsequent report submitted in 2008 by the finding observer for 18 July was given the accession number 2008-155. Typically, documentations for a single bird are grouped and reviewed together. However, the CBRC Chair at the time did not recognize this as a submission relating to the same bird as the 2005-75 report. Regardless of this oversight, since the first report for 19 July was not the original sighting and was not endorsed as a record, the CBRC retains the second report's accession number for this record for the lone date of 18 July 2005 (SL; 2008-155; 7-0). Two more recent records were also endorsed by the CBRC: a juvenile along the South Platte R., *Littleton*, *Arapahoe*, 25-26 July 2012 (PR†;

2012-139; 7-0) and another juvenile at the Bret Gray Ranch, *Lincoln*, 29 July 2012 (BM†, MP; 2012-90; 7-0), the latter representing a county first.

Laughing Gull – *Leucophaeus atricilla* (45/17). Two alternate-plumaged adults were present at Lake Holbrook, *Otero*, 15 July 2012 (BKP†, MP; 2012-155; 7-0). One adult in non-breeding plumage found on 18 August 2012 was observed again by the same observer on 14 September 2012 at Russell Lake SWA, *Saguache* (DD†; 2012-116; 7-0). This record is the first for any county in the San Luis Valley.

Great Black-backed Gull – *Larus marinus*. Although this species was removed from the Main Review List in 2012 (Faulkner 2012), the CBRC traditionally conducts a review for any documented occurrence during the period the species was on the review list. Such was the case for a first-winter plumaged individual at *Erie Res.*, *Boulder*, 3 January 2010 (RN†; 2012-101; 6-1). This brings the number of accepted records for this species to 44.

Sandwich Tern – *Thalasseus sandvicensis* (1/1). Quite unexpected, an adult was found by Roger and Brenda Linfield at Manitou Lake, *Teller*, 27 June 2013. The bird was observed actively foraging at Manitou Lake and along Trout Creek above the lake through 30 June 2013 (BL†, RL, JD†,

DF†, BK, PG†, BKP†; 2013-177; 7-0). Identification of this bird was straightforward as Sandwich Tern is the only tern in the world with a yellow-tipped black bill (Harrison 1983). Two North American subspecies *T. s. acufavidus* and *T. s. eurynathus* are readily separated as the latter subspecies has an entirely yellow or orange bill. The Eurasian subspecies *T. s. sandvicensis* (recently recognized as a separate species [Eurasian Sandwich Tern] by the British Ornithologists' Union [Sangster et al. 2011]) can be distinguished with caution, in part, by its longer, thinner, drooping bill. Several photos submitted for the Colorado tern showed that its bill as thick and fairly straight indicative of the *T. s. acufavidus* subspecies. An excellent synopsis article of a possible Eurasian Sandwich Tern, with taxonomic summary, in North America is available on the eBird website (http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/sate_ma/). The origin of this bird is of some concern since there are very few inland records of this species and most (all?) pertain to storm or hurricane-driven birds. Colorado experienced no major weather systems before or during the time that this tern was found. Its behavior of actively plunge diving for prey, the lack of leg bands, and lack of featherwear all suggest that this was a wild bird and not one recently escaped from captivity.

Band-tailed Pigeon – *Columba fasciata*. Representing a first for *Arapahoe*, one was observed along Hwy 36 approximately 12 miles west of Last Chance well enough to see the white hindneck collar and black-tipped yellow bill (SS; 2012-162; 7-0). The

CBRC has no other records for this species on the eastern plains. Andrews and Righter (1992) illustrates one report for western *Adams* as the lone eastern plains report. A small handful of records have occurred in Kansas (Kansas Ornithological Society 2012), Nebraska (Sharpe et al. 2001), and eastern Wyoming (Faulkner 2010).

Anna's Hummingbird – *Calypte anna* (12/5). An immature female visited a feeder at a private residence in Longmont, *Boulder*, 7-8 October 2012 (BS†; 2012-157; 7-0) representing that county's second record.

Acorn Woodpecker – *Melanerpes formicivorus* (15/7). A female documented from Cheyenne Mountain SP in Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, 21 May 2012, (BM†, TK; 2012-55; 7-0) follows one documented for the Colorado Springs area in 2010 (2010-90). It is unclear whether the recent spate of records for lone female Acorn Woodpeckers along the Front Range, as well as documentations currently pending review by the CBRC, pertains to the same or different individuals as none of the dates overlap.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher – *Empidonax flaviventris* (6/5). A well-studied adult at Flagler SWA, *Kit Carson*, 27 September 2012 (SM; 2012-133; 7-0) gives the state its sixth record since the first was recorded in 2000. Expectedly, all six records have come from eastern counties; however, they are split evenly between spring (20 – 28 May) and fall (13 August – 27 September) seasons.

Black Phoebe – *Sayornis nigricans*. Representing the first for *Custer*, an adult was found below the Lake De-

Weese dam, 25 August 2012 (BKP†; 2012-156; 7-0).

Great Kiskadee – *Pitangus sulphuratus* (1/1). Colorado's first record was observed for only 13 minutes in the Stulp's backyard near Lamar, *Prowers*, 21 June 2013 (JS†; 2013-174; 7-0). Report of the bird drew birders from afar to search for it later that day and the next, but without success. Great Kiskadee is a member of the flycatcher family that ranges from southern Texas through the New World tropics. However, the species appears to have slowly expanded its range northward in Texas over the past decade or so and is now regular along an arc from Houston to Austin to Del Rio (E. Carpenter, pers. comm.). Texas has multiple sightings for the Panhandle and other parts of western Texas, although the Texas Bird Records Committee does not officially review each extralimital report since the species is common elsewhere in the state (E. Carpenter, pers. comm.). New Mexico has multiple records, all from the southern tier of counties (S. Williams III, pers. comm.). Kansas has a single record from Middle Spring, *Cimarron NG*, *Morton*, 18-21 May 1995, approximately 10 miles east of Colorado's southeastern corner. Colorado's first record now represents the furthest north the species has been documented in North America.

Blue-headed Vireo – *Vireo solitarius* (43/33). Continuing the onslaught of records for this species during the past 10 years, the Committee reports on three accepted records from fall 2012. One observed near the bird banding station at CBR, *El Paso*, 14

September, was considered the same as one captured and banded on 18 September (BKP†, NG†; 2012-145; 7-0). One was observed in Rock Canyon, *Pueblo*, 21-23 September (BKP†; 2012-118; 7-0) and another in the same area, 28 September (BKP†; 2012-121; 7-0). Photos of these two individuals indicated that they were different birds based on plumage differences.

Philadelphia Vireo—*Vireo philadelphicus* (47/20). As testimony to the "invasion" of this species that Colorado witnessed in 2012, Percival photographed five individuals in the Pueblo area in mid-September 2012: single birds were at Valco Ponds, 15 September (BKP†; 2012-117; 7-0), Rock Canyon, 21 September (BKP†; 2012-119; 7-0), Rock Canyon, 22 September (BKP†, DC; 2012-120; 7-0), and two vireos at the Pueblo Nature Center, 28 September (BKP†; 2012-122; 7-0). Photos submitted for each of these records were sufficient for the Committee to conclude that different individuals were most likely involved despite the close proximity, geographically and temporally, of these sightings. This brings the number of Philadelphia Vireo records for *Pueblo* to ten.

Carolina Wren – *Thryothorus ludovicianus*. Representing the first for *Douglas*, one was along a bike trail in Castle Rock, 12 June 2010 (SS, KH; 2012-167; 7-0).

Sedge Wren – *Cistothorus platensis* (23/8). The seventh for *Pueblo*, one was observed briefly at Upper Twin Pond, CBR, 16 October 2012 (BKP†, BM†; 2012-141; 7-0) while in search

of the LeConte's Sparrow (see that species below).

Gray-cheeked Thrush – *Catharus guttatus* (57/20). The third documented and accepted for spring 2012, one was found on 6 May and banded on 8 May at CBR, *El Paso* (BKP†, NG†, KC; 2012-161; 7-0).

Smith's Longspur – *Calcarius pictus* (4/4). While photographing Chestnut-collared Longspurs at Spinney Mountain Res., *Park*, Maynard fortuitously took a photo of two longspurs in flight that were later identified as this species (BM†; 2012-154; 7-0).

McCown's Longspur – *Rhynchophanes mccownii*. Representing the first for *Park*, an adult male in winter plumage was photographed at Eleven Mile Res., 27 October 2012 (NK†, JD†; 2012-159; 7-0).

Golden-winged Warbler – *Vermivora chrysoptera* (35/2). This species was recently reinstated on the Main Review List in 2012 (Faulkner 2012) due to the perceived decline in the number of reports since the species was removed from the list in 2001. The CBRC accepted the only documentation submitted for this species for spring 2012 – a male observed and subsequently banded at CBR, *El Paso*, 2-3 May (BKP†, BM†; 2012-144; 7-0).

Cape May Warbler – *Setophaga tigrina* (32/9). One at the Overland Museum in Sterling, *Logan*, 22 September 2012, (SM; 2012-130; 7-0) represents the first for that county.

Eastern Towhee – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (27/15). Adding to a banner year for this species, the two records presented here bring the total of accepted records for 2012 to six. Neither

the female photographed at Flagler SWA, *Kit Carson*, 12 October (GW†; 2012-142; 7-0) nor the female at CBR, *Pueblo*, 12-24 October (BM†, RH†; 2012-146; 7-0) exhibited hybrid characteristics.

Canyon Towhee – *Pipilo fuscus*. One at a private residence in Parker, *Douglas*, 15 January 2011, potentially represents the only valid record for that county (SS†, GW; 2012-163; 7-0). A specimen (DMNS 19120) was apparently procured near Parker in May 1930 (Bailey and Niedrach 1965); however, whether that specimen is still extant in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science has not been verified (B. Righter, pers. comm., Denver Museum of Nature and Science 2013).

Black-chinned Sparrow – *Spizella atrogularis* (6/6). The Committee accepted two additional records for this species from the lower end of No Thoroughfare Canyon along the Devil's Kitchen Trail, Colorado NM, *Mesa*. Preceding the birds observed by many in 2011, a singing male was documented by a single observer 11 June 2010 (MF; 2012-151; 7-0). The CBRC received thorough documentation of multiple birds, 9 April-7 June 2012 (LA†, MH, CT†; 2012-152; 7-0), establishing that a singing male was on territory by 9 April and successful breeding confirmed by two adults feeding one fledgling on 4 June. Two adults attending to four fledglings were documented for 5 June.

LeConte's Sparrow – *Ammodramus leconteii* (16/4). Found at the same location as a juvenile in fall 2011 (2011-121), another juvenile was at

Upper Twin Pond, CBR, *Pueblo*, 12-20 October 2012 (BM†, JD†, BKP†; 2012-147; 7-0).

Nelson's Sparrow – *Ammodramus nelsoni* (5/2). While looking for the LeConte's Sparrow above, Hinds photographed one of these beauties at Upper Twin Pond, CBR, *Pueblo*, where it was documented for 19-20 October 2012 (RH†, PG†, BM†, BKP†; 2012-148; 7-0). The rich coloration of this bird easily identified it as being of the interior race *A. n. nelsoni*. This record is the first since 2007 and only the second since 1973.

Fox Sparrow (Red) – *Passerella iliaca/zamboria*. Two individuals of this subspecies were documented for fall 2012: one at CBR, *Pueblo*, 20 October (BKP†; 2012-149; 7-0) and another at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, 26 October (BKP†; 2012-158; 7-0).

Golden-crowned Sparrow – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (35/18). One visited feeders at a private residence in Cañon City, *Fremont*, 16-18 October 2012 (LR; 2012-143; 7-0).

Scarlet Tanager – *Piranga olivacea*. Although a former Main Review List species (Faulkner 2012), the CBRC may still desire documentation for those sightings that pertain to first county records. Such was the case with an adult male found at the Colorado Welcome Center south of Julesburg, *Sedgwick*, 17 May 2012 (SS†; 2012-164; 7-0).

Northern Cardinal – *Cardinalis cardinalis*. The first record for *Douglas*, a singing male was approximately 0.5 mile north of the Louviers town center, 17 May 2009 (KH†, TH; 2012-166; 7-0).

Brambling – *Fringilla montifringilla*

(3/1). The presence of an immature male at Bear Creek Lake Park, *Jefferson*, 19-23 November 2012 (MH†, SB†, BK, BM†, BKP†, IS†, BS†, and SW†; 2012-192; 7-0), drew scores of birders from at least Colorado if not other states as well. Unlike the state's previous two records from fall/winter 1983, this bird did not appear to be part of a broader invasion as Colorado was the only interior state to record the species in winter 2012-2013.

Common Redpoll – *Acanthis flammica*. A flock of an estimated 35 Common Redpolls were found during the Granby Christmas Bird Count along CR 55 four miles west of Hwy 40, *Grand*, 17 December 2011 (MB, DK; 2012-150; 6-1). Although it may not seem noteworthy now after Colorado's redpoll invasion of winter 2012-2013, at the time this flock was both unusual for the high number of individuals as well as its location away from the northeastern plains.

Hoary Redpoll – *Acanthis hornemanni* (1/1). The CBRC reports on one of 12 documented occurrences of this species in Colorado during winter 2012-2013. A more complete discussion of this invasion year and a full accounting of Hoary Redpoll reports will be published in a later CBRC report. However, the Committee has made a decision on documentation submitted for an adult male coming to a private residence in Longmont, *Boulder*, 29-30 January 2013 (BS†, PG†, SM†; 2013-1; 7-0). The two outside experts consulted for this individual were unequivocal about its identification as a Hoary Redpoll and specifically of the subspecies *A. h. exilipes*.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

The Committee recognizes that its “not accepted” decisions may upset those individuals whose documentations did not receive endorsement as state records. We heartily acknowledge that those who make the effort to submit documentation certainly care whether or not their reports are accepted. However, non-accepted reports do not necessarily suggest that the observer misidentified or did not see the species. A non-accepted report only indicates that the documentation did not provide enough evidence to support the identification of the specie reported in the opinion of at least three of the seven Committee members. Many non-accepted reports do not adequately describe the bird(s) observed or adequately rule out similarly looking species. The Committee emphasizes that the standard for acceptance is not whether a report will stand up among one’s contemporary peers, but whether it will withstand scrutiny 40 years from now by birders and researchers who may not know you.

The Committee recommends that observers refer to the article written by Tony Leukering on documenting rare birds (Leukering 2004), which is available online through the CBRC website (<http://www.coloradobirdrecords.org/ReviewList.aspx>). All non-accepted reports may be reconsidered by the Committee if new information is provided (e.g., photos, documentation from other observers). We summarize below why the following reports were not accepted.

Mute Swan – *Cygnus olor*. Since

2008, the CBRC has reviewed four documentations for this species, including the adult reported here from St. Vrain SP, Weld, 15 April 2012 (2012-42; 1-6), without accepting any as a new species to the state. The swan had apparently been present in the area since 3 January 2012, but the Committee received no other documentation. Interestingly, an adult had been found and documented for this same location on 3 January 2009. A hint of a pattern of occurrence is developing with these four documentations. Each of these birds was observed on the northern Front Range from Larimer to Arapahoe between the dates of 3 January and 15 April, forming the framework for a developing geographical and temporal pattern. The CBRC requests documentations for other Mute Swans thought to be of wild origin so we can more fully develop a picture of where and when these birds are occurring. It is possible that these are wild birds and the CBRC may re-review all previous documented occurrences in light of any forthcoming evidence and additional documentation.

Short-tailed Albatross – *Phoebastria albatrus*. The documentation of two adults reported flying over Niwot, Boulder, 20 April 2013, received no support from the Committee (2012-125; 0-7). The birds were described as having an excess of 7-foot wingspan, flat wing profile, black wingtips, black edging on tail, and golden/orange head with purplish/pink beaks. The birds flew in level flight with an effortless and fast flight. The description suggests the reported species, howev-

er, several Committee members commented on the extreme rarity of this endangered pelagic species (only a few thousand in the world) and that there are no inland records for this species in the U.S. In May, Short-tailed Albatrosses should be at their breeding grounds on the Senkaku Islands, Japan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2005), so the presence of not one, but two, in Colorado would be extraordinary and additional evidence would need to be presented for acceptance as a first state record.

White-tailed Kite – *Elanus leucurus*. An adult was reported near Lay, Moffat, 20 June 2012 (2012-83; 3-4). The description was acceptable to several Committee members, but others felt that more was necessary to accept it as a first state record. In particular, the flight pattern and the bird's underparts were not described. The observer also did not rule out Northern Harrier, a species at least superficially similar to White-tailed Kite, which concerned some dissenting Committee members.

Red-shouldered Hawk – *Buteo lineatus*. Three rounds of voting were required for the documentation of a juvenile reported from Bonny Res., Yuma, 3 October 2011 (2011-132; 4-3, 5-2, 4-3). The brief view of approximately 15 seconds was a concern for most dissenting members who commented that other species, such as Broad-winged Hawk, may not have been adequately ruled out. Members in support of this report, however, were satisfied with the observer's description of both the bird and its flight style which is distinctive from other buteo species. Apparently, another

birder may have also observed this bird, but after two years the Committee has yet to receive documentation of that sighting.

Gray Hawk – *Asturina nitida*. A bird originally identified as a Broad-winged Hawk was photographed near Lamar, Prowers, 22 May 2011 (2013-41; 6-1, 0-7). Upon subsequent review of the photos, however, the observer thought that the bird may have been a Gray Hawk, a potential first Colorado record. Photos were sent to biologists in New Mexico who thought the bird resembled a Gray Hawk as well. The record initially passed the CBRC as an accepted record on a 6-1 vote. The dissenting member noted that Broad-winged Hawk had not been completely ruled out as some individuals can show a pale facial pattern similar to Gray Hawk. Three outside raptor experts were consulted and each considered the bird most likely to be a Broad-winged Hawk based on the photos alone; although, the tail pattern was not discernible in the photos and there was a slim chance the bird could have been a Gray Hawk. With opinions from all three outside experts against a definitive identification as the reported species, the Committee was compelled to retract its initial decision and decided to not accept this report as the state's first record of Gray Hawk.

Purple Martin – *Progne subis*. Unfortunately, the brief description of two adult males reported from Stearns Lake, Boulder, 2 June 2012, caused a majority of Committee members to be concerned that other species were not ruled out. Members in favor of

this report, however, commented that a swallow with a “dark belly and back” in Colorado is most assuredly a Purple Martin. The Committee reiterates that what seems obvious and definitive to a person seeing a bird in the moment is not also the case when the CBRC has only a brief, written description with which to make a decision.

Marsh Wren – *Cistothorus palustris*. A singing individual considered by the observer to be of the eastern form (comprised of multiple subspecies –see Leukering and Pieplow 2010) at St. Vrain SP, *Weld*, 3 March 2012 (2012-25; 5-2, 0-7) was documented for the CBRC to consider. The observer noted that the song was different from those typically heard in Colorado, with the introductory note or two blending into the song rather than being distinctive. The observer also noted subtle plumage differences such as the brighter rust coloration and darker lateral crown stripes. Bailey and Niedrach (1965) noted that “eastern” Marsh Wren “should occur in eastern counties in winter and during migration.” Since there are no previous specimens or confirmed observations of this form in Colorado, and due to the potential for a species split of Marsh Wren, the Committee held this documentation to the standard of that for a first state record. The Committee’s decision to not accept was primarily based on the weight of evidence placed on the written description of the song. Interpretation of written song descriptions is subjective and members considered the inability to see (i.e., sonogram) or hear (e.g.,

recording) the song as a detriment to endorsement as a first state record.

Gray-cheeked Thrush – *Catharus minimus*. One reported at a private residence in Loveland, *Larimer*, 30 May 2012, (2012-67; 3-4) did not receive enough support from Committee members to be accepted. Only the bird’s head and upper chest were observed which caused most of the concern for dissenting members. The description sufficiently ruled out Swainson’s Thrush; however, dissenting members were not convinced that the interior form of Hermit Thrush, which has grayish overtones similar to Gray-cheeked Thrush, could be adequately ruled out based on the features observed and described.

Sprague’s Pipit – *Anthus spragueii*. A bird reported as this species heard calling in flight near Union Res., *Weld*, 10 September 2011 (2011-116; 4-3, 2-5) received a mix decision from the Committee after two rounds. The call notes of Sprague’s Pipit are distinctive, but the Committee has generally taken a conservative approach to documentations relying on the description of call notes as their main evidence. The physical description of the flying bird suggested a pipit, although its brevity caused some members to discount the written description. Ultimately, only two Committee members were comfortable with endorsing this record. The remaining members thought that the brief look and the observer’s testimony that it was the first time to have had heard this species, other than from recordings, warranted a conservative approach.

Purple Finch – *Carpodacus purpureus*. A male and a female-plumaged finch were documented as this species from Lafayette, Boulder, 23 March 2012 (2012-31; 1-6). The finches were in the company of House Finches making for an easy comparison of size and plumage. Both birds were noted as being larger than a House Finch with

distinctively different streaking and coloration, particularly for the male. In the opinion of a majority of Committee members, the written description did not adequately rule out the more likely Cassin's Finch. Purple and House Finches are very similar in size, so the description of these birds as larger, which Cassin's is, was of concern.

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REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

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