

THE 37TH REPORT OF THE COLORADO BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

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The Colorado Bird Records Committee (hereafter, CBRC or Committee) here provides the 37th report of its deliberations on submissions to the CBRC for documentation and archival purposes. In this article, we provide the results of the circulation of 96 reports submitted by 47 observers documenting 52 occurrences of 44 species. This article, which deals primarily with 2002 occurrences but with reports dating back to 1999, is comprised almost entirely of reports for which the Committee received strong photographic support. Thus, we report here only accepted records. Per CBRC bylaws, all accepted records received final 7-0 or 6-1 votes to accept. The documents reviewed here include reports on three species previously unrecorded from the state, Arctic Loon, Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, bringing the total of accepted species to 476. Committee members voting on these reports were: Coen Dexter, Tony Leukering, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, Larry Semo, John Vanderpoel, and Christopher L. Wood.

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. Secondly, 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 that committee. The review is primarily to ascertain whether the documentation submitted supports, in the consideration of seven state experts, the identification presented. Thus, the primary pieces of information that the Committee requires is a written description of the bird(s) and how similar species were ruled out. Most reports that the CBRC does not accept as

correctly identified were simply not described well enough for the Committee members to be certain of the correct identification; it is probable that very few were incorrectly identified. See the article that will appear in the July issue.

Current photographic technology has greatly increased the number of photographs (particularly, digital) that the CBRC has received and these photos greatly assist the Committee in ascertaining whether the documentation provided supports the identification. However, this technological benefit has a disadvantage. Some observers are now simply submitting photographs with date and location with no 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. In fact, one member refuses to vote to accept any report without at least some written description. 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, those photos are 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 or sex of a given rarity; something that may be considered important in the future.

When submitting photographs to the CBRC, please use information in the picture title that will help us remember the important pieces of information: who, what, where, when. We suggest titling pictures in this manner: megu-seelelake-11-02-02-tl. In this example, the picture is of a Mew Gull (you can use the full name of the species, rather than the four-letter code) taken at Seeley Lake on 2 November 2002 by Tony Leukering.

Corrigenda

When dealing with large amounts of information, most of us find that we, unfortunately, make mistakes; the authors are no different. We here wish to correct a few such mistakes that crept into a previous report – part I of the 2001 reports (Leukering and Semo 2003) – for which we heartily apologize to those affected.

- The finder of the Black Scoter on Blue Mesa Res., *Gunnison* (2001-119), was not indicated; that person was Brian Gibbons.
- The Carolina Wren in *El Paso* (2001-56) was seen on 24 December 2000, not in 2001.
- The “Western” Palm Warbler at Pastorius Reservoir, *La Plata* (2001-110), was found on 13 October 2001 by Jim Beatty, not 4 October by Susan Allerton, who did document the bird,

but on the 14th. Jim Beatty did provide documentation, so his initials should have been first and underlined.

- Jim Beatty also found (and documented) the Prothonotary Warbler at Pastorius Reservoir, *La Plata* (2001-111), so, again, his initials should have been included first and underlined.

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 for which Colorado has no prior accepted records. The mailer of this journal has a documentation form on it and the CFO website (www.cfo-link.org) has two electronic versions. Documentary materials should be e-mailed (cbrc@cfo-link.org) or snail mailed (current address: PO Box 660, Brighton, CO 80601) to the Chair of the CBRC. However, when it becomes available later this year, the CBRC would greatly appreciate submission via the soon-to-be-available, check-out-the-bells-and-whistles, wonderful new CBRC website. The members' term-expiration dates are printed in this journal's masthead.

Report Format

The organization and style of this report follow that of Leukering and Semo (2003), with some alterations, particularly as we report here no non-accepted records. The nomenclature and sequence of these lists follow the A.O.U. (1998, 2003). An asterisk (*) preceding a species' name indicates that the species is not currently on any CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002), but are unseasonable or locally very rare. Those species' names preceded by the pound, or number, sign (#) are species that are rare in certain parts of the state and for which the CBRC requests documentation from those areas (Semo et al. 2002, Semo and Leukering 2004). The plus sign (+) indicates those species not on any review list and not particularly out-of-season but for which the CBRC circulated for review a record of some interest, due to location, date, plumage, etc., but for which documentation would not be required.

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 past ten years (1992-2001). The latter number is of importance, as it is one of the criteria for a species' placement on the main CBRC review list (Semo et al. 2002). However, note that the number of accepted

records will decline for some species as the CBRC tackles the backlog of determinations as to how many of the accepted records are simply recurrences in subsequent years of a known individual.

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 with certainty, 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 and initials of those that submitted videotape are indicated by a lower-case, italicized “v” (v). 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 “accepted” votes and three “not accepted” 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 on 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.

Abbreviations used in this report are: **ACR**=Adobe Creek Reservoir (a.k.a. Blue Lake), *Kiowa/Bent* (county indicated in account); **BPNWR**=Brown’s Park National Wildlife Refuge, *Moffat*; **LCC**=Lamar Community College, *Prowers*; **LSP**=Lathrop SP, *Huerfano*; **Res.**=reservoir

RECORDS ACCEPTED

BRANT - *Branta bernicla* (11/5). An adult visited Woods Lake, *Weld*, 30 November - 6 December 2001 (DF †; 2002-16; 7-0), though with submitted documentation covering only the first date of that span. Though the pictures provided were sufficient to prove the identity to species, the CBRC, in a split vote, was unable to convince itself that the bird was definitely a "Black Brant" as it was reported. See Semo and Leukering (2004) for a discussion concerning the undescribed "Gray-bellied Brant" that could cause identification problems.

TRUMPETER SWAN - *Cygnus buccinator* (22/13). An adult was sight-seeing in *Boulder* in the winter of 2002-03, being first found on 19 November 2002 (BS †, CLW †, AH; 2002-120; 7-0). The two documentations received by the CBRC were from Fentress Lake, near Niwot, on 19 December and from Valmont Res. on 31 December. Apparently, the bird graced quite a few other locations in that county.



Adult Arctic Loon on 18 November 2002 at Walker Pit, Franktown, *Douglas*. Photo by Ric Olsen.

ARCTIC LOON - *Gavia arctica* (1/1). Though some members of the Colorado birding community had been discussing the possibility of Arctic Loon occurring in the state, the actual occurrence of an adult in transition from alternate to basic at Franktown, *Douglas*, 17-20 November 2002 (HK, UK, DF †, RH †, TL †, RO †, DWa †, GW; 2002-105; 7-0) was still quite surprising. This acceptance provides the first record of Arctic Loon in North America away from Pacific coastal states. The bird was seen to fly north away from Walker Pit on the 20th and was, apparently, found at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, the next day. However, the CBRC did not receive any documentation of the bird's presence at that location, despite the extensive documentation received of its presence in *Douglas*. Given the

extreme rarity in North America of the species away from the Pacific coast, and given the lack of documentation from *Arapahoe*, the Committee does not endorse this individual's occurrence in that county. As with all first state records, we hope that the particulars involved in this event will see fit to publish in this (or another) journal an account of this incredible occurrence.

YELLOW-BILLED LOON - *Gavia adamsii* (16/7). A juvenile graced Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, 3-13 November 2002 (BS †, NKr; 2002-93; 7-0) and Chatfield Res., *Douglas and Jefferson*, 17-23 November 2002 (BS †; 2002-110; 7-0). Despite being seen by numerous observers at both places, Schmoker was the only one to document it, in either location! Bill also provided a pictorial side-by-side comparison of the bird at the two locations, with the pictures (and the submitted documentation detailing the occurrences) on the 5th at Boyd Lake and on the 23rd at Chatfield. Interestingly, what may have been the same individual was seen at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, on 24 November (Gent 2003), when the bird was definitely not present at Chatfield. Unfortunately, the CBRC did not receive documentation on this occurrence. Due to the species' rarity and the timing of the occurrences at various water bodies along the Front Range, the CBRC voted by a simple majority to consider the two accessioned reports as pertaining to the same individual bird. Thus, these reports will be placed in the CBRC archive under the former accession number (2002-93).



Juvenile Yellow-billed Loon. Photo taken by Bill Schmoker on 23 November 2002 at Chatfield Reservoir, *Douglas/Jefferson*.

+ **RED-NECKED GREBE** - *Podiceps grisegena*. Wright provided details and a photograph of one of the few well-documented West Slope records for Red-necked Grebe, a bird in basic plumage at Highline Res., *Mesa*,

28 December 2002 (DWR †; 2002-118; 7-0). Apparently, this bird spent the entire period of 12 December 2002 to 9 July 2003 at this location (Righter et al. 2004). Since this species is almost unknown in the state in summer, the lack of any additional documentation submitted to the Committee is unfortunate. It is never too late, however.

BROWN PELICAN - *Pelecanus occidentalis* (13/7). A pelican in (apparently) first-basic plumage tarried at LSP 7 August - 7 September 2002 (TL †; 2002-169; 7-0) and was seen by numerous Colorado birders. Unfortunately, only one observer submitted documentation, that detailing the bird's presence on 5 September.

#LITTLE BLUE HERON - *Egretta caerulea*. An adult stalked about 10 miles east of Gunnison, *Gunnison*, 20 April 2002 (BZ †, KZ; 2002-64; 6-1). Andrews and Righter (1992) report no previous county records.

TRICOLORED HERON - *Egretta tricolor* (20/8). A juvenile on the Meredith Res. outlet canal, *Crowley*, 15-31 August 2002 (SO v, LS †; 2002-168; 7-0) was probably the same bird found at Lake Cheraw, *Otero*, on 13 August. Unfortunately, the CBRC received no documentation on the *Otero* sighting. The documentations received covered 15-25 August.

REDDISH EGRET - *Egretta rufescens* (7/5). Nickell photographed a juvenile dark-morph Reddish Egret at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, 1 September 2002 (KN †, JK; 2001-77; 7-0).

GLOSSY IBIS - *Plegadis falcinellus* (28/24). Three different adults were in a large flock of White-faced Ibis on Buckley Road just southwest of Barr Lake 2-3 May 2002 (DF, TL, CLW; 2002-131; 7-0). This count represents the largest number of Glossy Ibis found in the state at one time and place. *El Paso* finally recorded its first accepted Glossy Ibis record when Maynard found an adult at Big Johnson Res. 4 May 2002 (BM †; 2002-69; 7-0). Finally, an adult still in full breeding colors at Loloff Res., *Weld*, 27 August 2002 (KN †; 2002-196; 6-1) provided a first accepted fall record for the species in Colorado.

#BROAD-WINGED HAWK - *Buteo platypterus*. An adult photographed in *Custer* on 19 July 2002 a "few miles north of Wetmore" (BKP in litt.; CLW †; 2002-186; 6-1) provided a first county record.

GYRFALCON - *Falco rusticolus* (9/8). An adult gray-morph visited the area between Gould and Walden in North Park, *Jackson*, in February 2002, with the dates of known occurrence being the 20th and the 25th when Hopper saw it on both dates (RH †; 2002-27; 6-1). This record is the first accepted away from the eastern plains.

PURPLE GALLINULE - *Porphyryla martinica* (2/1). An adult spent the last week of August 2002 in the yards of a Loveland, *Larimer*, neighborhood (DF, PG, RH †, RO, CM; 2002-73; 7-0). Specific dates of occurrence are 26 August - 3 September and documentation dates are

27-31 August. This bird provided the second state record, with the first record being of a bird in August 1978 near Durango, *La Plata*.

COMMON MOORHEN - *Gallinula chloropus* (8/2). An adult alternately frustrated (by remaining out of sight) and delighted (by allowing itself to be glimpsed) a small number of observers that could get to a small, marshy pond in the vicinity of Barbour Ponds State Wildlife Area, *Weld*, on 4 May 2002 (RMe, CO, RH, AS †; 2002-50; 7-0). The bird had probably dropped into the site the night before and, as the marsh was probably not conducive for a long stay, the bird departed the next night, as it was not seen again.

RED KNOT - *Calidris canutus* (20/8). An individual wholly in basic at ACR, *Bent*, 24 March 2002 (DN †; 2002-203; 6-1), photographed but not described, was a complete surprise. Red Knots are rare migrants through the state, spring and fall, but spring birds usually arrive in late April and May and are typically found in alternate plumage. Nelson states (pers. comm.) that the reservoir was frozen for most of the previous winter, so the bird did not winter at the site. What the bird was doing at this location on this date in this plumage is mostly incomprehensible. Andrews and Righter (1992) depicts one previous late March record, but does not provide any details on what would be an anomalous record.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER - *Tryngites subruficollis* (25/10). A juvenile allowed itself to be photographed at Milton Res., *Weld*, 6 September 2002 (RO †; 2002-82; 7-0).

RED PHALAROPE - *Phalaropus fulicaria* (25/9). An individual in some transitional plumage foraged at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, 11-18 August 2002 (DE, RH †; 2002-197; 7-0), though was documented only on the 11th. Whether the bird was a full adult already very far along in its pre-basic molt (such that it had fairly little remaining red plumage) or was a first-cycle bird that had not attained full red plumage is undetermined.

LAUGHING GULL - *Larus philadelphia* (29/17). A sub-adult visited Boyd Lake, *Larimer*, 23 April 2002 (RH †; 2002-137; 7-0). Contrary to the account of this occurrence in Wood and Semo (2002), the pictures submitted to the CBRC illustrate an individual with some black in the tail and too much black in the wingtip for the bird to be an adult; it probably was in second-basic plumage. An alternate-plumaged adult was at Union Res., *Weld*, 8-17 May 2002 (BS †; 2002-45; 7-0) but with submitted documentation accounting only for the 9th.

MEW GULL - *Larus canus brachyrhynchus* (23/13). A basic-plumaged adult was at Seeley Lake, *Weld*, 1-2 November 2002 (TL †, NKr; 2002-157; 7-0).



Adult Mew Gull at Seeley Lake, *Weld*, on 2 November 2002. Photo by Tony Leukering.

#EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Two birds in La Porte, *Larimer*, from at least April 2001 (RH †, TL, KV, TV; 2002-57; 7-0) provided the first record for the county.

* WHITE-WINGED DOVE - *Zenaida asiatica*. Though the Committee decided to remove this species from all review lists effective 1 January 2002, we here detail results of one of the few reports that we received from the 2002 invasion. The first report of the year detailed, with photographs and nice sketches, two birds at Pueblo, *Pueblo*, from at least 18 January to 12 February 2002 (RM †; 2002-20; 7-0).

INCA DOVE - *Columbina inca* (13/10). The Committee received a single photo (with no description) of an adult at Rye, *Pueblo*, 20 July 2002 (CLW †; 2002-158; 6-1).

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO - *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (15/2). A first-cycle individual (that is, a bird in its first spring) flopped into a mist net run by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory at LCC on 27 May 2002 (BG; 2002-150; 7-0). The date fits well with typical spring-migration periods of *Coccyzus* cuckoos at this latitude.

SNOWY OWL - *Bubo scandiaca* (10/3). In the best flight into Colorado in recent memory, at least six Snowy Owls winged their way into the state in the winter of 2002 (Gent 2002). Of these, the CBRC has received documentation on five and we here detail the results of the circulation of one. The first of the "invasion" was a juvenile female that posed for numerous pictures near Riverside Res., *Weld*, 15-29 February 2002 (JK †, TB, DE, JG, PH, RH †, NKr, AM, RO, BS †, DS; 2002-6; 7-0). One report on this bird mentioned a second individual Snowy Owl with it, but it was the only report to do so and did not sufficiently describe the second individual for acceptance. All pictures that the CBRC received appear to show the same individual.

Finally, the account of this occurrence in Gent (2002) cites dates of occurrence only through 24 February; one documentation that the CBRC received places the bird at this location at least until the 29th.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD - *Cyananthus latirostris* (1/1). One of the most amazing occurrences of the crazy fall of 2002 was the discovery of a female Broad-billed Hummingbird at a feeder in Clifton, *Mesa* (DF †, TL †, DN †, RO, GW †, CLW †, SB, BM; 2002-100; 7-0). Wood, particularly, provided exceedingly thorough photographic and written details. Though the bird had apparently been present since at least July, the birding community only found out about it in November when Bouricius went to check out the report of a very late “Black-chinned Hummingbird”. The most amazing aspect of this occurrence is that the bird had been banded in Louisiana the previous January. Hopefully, the particulars involved in this story will put pen to paper (or phosphor to screen) and get the details published in this journal.

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD - *Eugenes fulgens* (9/5). An adult male exposed its bright green gorget to Korte at a feeder in Collbran, *Mesa*, 4-5 July 2002 (NKe †; 2002-71; 7-0) and provided a second county record: the first, a male in May 1965, at Colorado National Monument (Righter et al. 2004). This record was not mentioned in Andrews and Righter (1992) and predates the CBRC, so has not been reviewed. Another Magnificent, this time a female, was present at a feeder at “The Tunnel Camp” about 4 miles north of Chambers Lake, *Larimer*, on 9 July 2002 (HH †; 2002-113; 6-1). The CBRC thanks Ron Ryder for forwarding the latter report.

#BLACK PHOEBE - *Sayornis nigricans*. While scouting a field trip for the Durango CFO convention, Leukering found a Black Phoebe along Piedra Creek above Navajo Res., *Archuleta*, 24 May 2002 (TL, LS †; 2002-83; 7-0). The field trip on the 26th turned up a second bird there and the CBRC received documentation covering both dates.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER - *Pyrocephala rubinus* (21/8). Schmoker photographed quite nicely a male in first basic at Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, that was present 11-18 May 2002 (BS †, TL; 2002-58; 7-0). The bird spent much of the eight days that it was present conducting flight displays, but, apparently, never attracted a female to the site and no one could find it after the 18th. However, an adult male was nearby (<0.5 miles away) in September (N. Gobris), so perhaps it had summered on the Ranch somewhere.

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER - *Myiodynastes luteiventris* (1/1). Of the set of incredible records from the amazing, rarity-filled fall of 2002, the occurrence of an adult Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher at ACR, *Bent*, 18-19

September 2002 (DN †, RH †, TL †; 2002-77; 7-0) is arguably the least expected of the lot and the most likely not to be repeated. Though numerous Colorado birders searched for the bird all day on the 20th, it was not seen again, despite the vague rumor that a single observer reported seeing the bird very briefly that day. The bird's confiding, unretiring habits on the two days that it was present suggest that it had departed and was not simply skulking among the dense tamarisk stand.

Ageing *Myiodynastes* flycatchers can be difficult. However, since adults molt on the winter grounds and thus have worn flight feathers in fall and since juveniles are recently fledged so have fairly fresh flight feathers in fall (Pyle 1997), critical views can produce an accurate assessment of a bird's relative age. The ACR bird is certainly an adult. In addition, the long and wide dark shaft streak on the outermost rectrix also proves the age (Pyle 1997). See the back cover of this journal for pictures of this bird that illustrate both of these features. Expect to see additional details published in this journal.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - *Tyrannus forficatus* (18/13). A pair set up housekeeping at the tall tower on the east side of US 287 about 10 miles south of Lamar, *Prowers*, 5 May - 11 July (at least) 2002 (TB †, RO †; 2002-54; 7-0) and the two submissions received span the dates of known occurrence. One of the reporters mentioned the presence of three ready-to-fledge nestlings on 11 July, but did not describe them. However, that reporter did provide a photograph of the nest, though the nestlings are not discernible in the photo.

#JUNIPER TITMOUSE - *Baeolophus ridgwayi*. One visited the Davis yard in *Larimer* only 200 feet north of *Boulder*, northwest of *Lyons*, on 15 April 2002 (RD †; 2002-42; 7-0).

#BROWN THRASHER - *Toxostoma rufum*. One visited a feeder near *Olathe*, *Montrose*, from October 1999 to at least late February 2000 (DG †, AR; 2002-9; 6-1) and provided a first reviewed and accepted county record.

#CURVE-BILLED THRASHER - *Toxostoma curvirostre*. One spent the winter of 2001-2002 in *Windsor*, *Weld*, but was documented only on 5 January 2002 (RH †, MM; 2002-59; 7-0). What was, undoubtedly, the same individual has been present at the site in each of the two succeeding winters, though has not been documented as such. Some speculated that the bird might be referable to the Mexican and southern Arizona subspecies, *palmeri*, but the fairly bright white throat visible in one of the three pictures submitted suggest that it is,

instead, referable to the subspecies resident in Colorado, *oberholseri*. Andrews and Righter (1992) report only one previous *Weld* occurrence.

#PROTHONOTARY WARBLER - *Protonotaria citrea*. Hollingsworth caught and banded an individual in his yard in Woodland Park, *Teller*, 17 October 2001 (JH †; 2002-213; 7-0). The report stated that the bird was an immature female, but it described a “bright deep yellow-orange head and breast” which, in the Committee’s opinion, is more male-like. Additionally, one of the two submitted photos shows the underside of the tail reasonably well and the amount of white visible on the inner web of the outermost rectrix is consistent with that of male Prothonotary Warblers and inconsistent with that of females, at least according to Pyle (1997). We suggest that the bird was a male, but do not provide conjecture on the age of the bird.

KENTUCKY WARBLER - *Oporornis formosus* (29/12). A male skulked along the South Platte River upstream from Kingfisher Bridge in Chatfield State Park, *Douglas*, 7 May 2002 (NP, AS †; 2002-204; 7-0).

HEPATIC TANAGER - *Piranga flava* (17/5). An adult male was a surprise find at Golden, *Jefferson*, 9 September 2002 (BB †; 2002-173; 7-0). Andrews and Righter (1992) reported no previous county records.

#SUMMER TANAGER - *Piranga rubra*. A mostly yellow individual graced the housing area at BPNWR 6 October 2002 (SH †, AH; 2002-101; 7-0). The description states that the “bird had splotches of pale red all over her body” and the provided pictures illustrate some of those. Adult males are always red and immature males are typically splotchy, but usually not this extensively until initiation of their pre-alternate molt in March (Pyle 1997). Additionally, the splotches of red on an immature male are bright and contrast strongly with the yellow plumage, an aspect which does not match the features shown by this bird. Therefore, the reporter’s assessment of sex, female, may very well be correct and, if so, then the bird is an adult female (immature females do not have red in the plumage). Additionally, if it is an adult female, then the bird is most likely referable to the eastern race, *rubra*, rather than either of the two western races, *cooperi* and *ochracea*, in which females usually do not exhibit red plumage (Pyle 1997).

Finally, for whatever reason accounts for the recent increase in submissions to the CBRC from Browns Park NWR (probably the arrival of Suzanne Halvorson and her husband as employees there), the Committee is very much appreciative of the increase in reports (see the Rose-breasted Grosbeak account, below) from this distant and under-birded corner of the state.

EASTERN TOWHEE - *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (10/8). A first-cycle female scratched around just south of John Martin Res., *Bent*, for the entire winter of 2002-2003 (DN †, DF †, BM †, GW †; 2002-115; 7-0). Documentation dates span 20 December 2002 - 16 March 2003, but Nelson found the bird on 7 December and last saw it in spring. The CBRC received at least nine pictures of the bird which illustrate well the various plumage features identifying the species – except for the patch of white at the base of the primaries, which is, amazingly, covered by other feather tracts in every picture! Of interest, though, is that every picture that shows the secondaries well, shows the same patch of pale brown, retained, juvenal inner secondaries that contrast strongly with the darker replaced tertials and outer secondaries. These retained feathers prove the age of the bird as an immature in first-basic plumage (Pyle 1997).

* CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - *Spizella pallida*. An individual that spent the winter of 2001-2002 at LCC (DL †; 2002-174; 7-0) provided one of few, if not the first, acceptable winter records for the state. The Committee received a single documentation detailing the bird's occurrence 18 December 2001 - 2 January 2002, but the bird was apparently still present on 21 March 2002. Unfortunately, the single photograph, though proving the identification, does not provide any of the details necessary to age the bird.

#FIELD SPARROW - *Spizella pusilla*. An individual at the Boulder Community Gardens, *Boulder*, 9-10 December 2002 (BS †, RT; 2002-111; 7-0) provided one of very few acceptable winter records for the state, a rare record for *Boulder*, and, most importantly, the first state record of an individual apparently referable to the eastern subspecies, *pusilla* (as opposed to the expected western subspecies *arenacea*). The brightness and strong rufescent aspect of the plumage of this bird lead to the subspecific conclusion.

#BLACK-THROATED SPARROW - *Amphispiza bilineata*. One of the more unexpected records of 2002 was of a pair of Black-throated Sparrows that apparently nested successfully along the Devil's Backbone Trail above Loveland, *Larimer*, in summer 2002 (RH †, DBy; 2002-198; 6-1). The Committee received only one documentation (pictures only, no description) of a sighting on 3 July and only of a singing male.

* ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK - *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Apparently the same adult male visited feeders at BPNWR 9-11 November 2002 and at a residence in Sunbeam, *Moffat*, 25 November - 7 December 2002 (SH, DP †; 2002-117; 7-0), with the two submitted photos taken at the second location. There is more than 20 miles between the two locations; one has to be amazed that the bird was ever seen again

after leaving the refuge! The extensive pink breast patch prove the age and sex.

PAINTED BUNTING - *Passerina ciris* (24/16). The year 2002 saw a passel of Painted Buntings occur in southern Colorado. The first, a green bird, visited the Brenneman yard in La Junta, *Otero*, 16 May 2002 (DBn, GB †; 2002-68; 7-0). Just visible in the single photo were molt limits in both the secondaries and primaries (old, retained inner secondaries and old, retained outer primaries, both contrasting with green-edged replaced feathers), indicating a bird in its first plumage cycle - that is, less than one year old. Pyle (1997) indicates for Painted Buntings in this plumage that, "unless there are some red or blue body feathers present, the sexes usually are not separated reliably by plumage alone...." Thus, though the bird appeared to be a female, and may very well have been, we are here reporting it as an unknown-sex subadult.

The second bird was another first-cycle green bird, caught at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's banding station at the LCC 22 May 2002 (BG †; 2002-181; 7-0) that was sexed in hand as a female. Molt limits are visible in the pictures of this bird, too. The third was the only party-colored bird of the lot, an adult male at a feeder in Placerville 23-26 July 2002 (JS; 2002-81; 7-0) that provided, obviously, the first county record in greatly under-birded *San Miguel*. The final Painted Bunting of the year was another green bird, this one brightening a few birders' day at LSP 8 September 2002 (BKP; 2002-133; 7-0).

#WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL - *Loxia leucoptera*. One graced the feeders at the Nelson house in Las Animas, *Bent*, 31 December 2001 - 6 January 2002 (RO †, DN; 2002-26; 7-0), but with submitted documentation covering only 4 January. This event kicked off one of the largest invasions of the species onto the plains in the state's birding history. For details on some aspects of this flight, see Leatherman and Nelson (2003).

As the submitted picture was not of high quality, Olson's written description was important in determining the age and sex of the bird. His description seems to support the contention that the bird was an immature male, as he described streaking on the rump and flanks (retained juvenal plumage feature) and a "brownish salmon" color on the head and back (first basic plumage feature). It is through details like these, items that are unimportant in establishing the correct identification to species, that the CBRC is able to determine age and

sex of individual rarities. This is also why the Committee prefers detailed plumage descriptions and NOT just a brief listing of species-identification-relevant field marks in documentations. Now if we can just get more observers to learn about the critical importance of molt and molt limits (see Pyle 1997) in age (and, therefore, sex) determination in birds. These data would greatly assist science in determining what features of age and sex are correlated with vagrancy in birds.

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Also, thanks to both Susan Allerton and Jim Beatty for making us aware of a few mistakes in an earlier CBRC report. Any continued mistakes are certainly ours and we doubt that those included here are the last to be found.

Reporters and Cited Observers

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