

The 81st Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

Introduction

This report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) documents accepted records of three species new to the state of Colorado: Yellow Grosbeak, Cassia Crossbill and Rufous-backed Robin. The official Colorado State list is now 518 species. Also in this report are the state's third record of Thick-billed Kingbird, the third and fourth records of both Mexican Whip-poor-will and Magnificent Frigatebird. In addition, this report includes the fifth record of Ruff, the seventh and eighth records of Harris's Hawk, and the eighth record of Smith's Longspur. Finally, note that the reports of Smew and Monk Parakeet were not accepted and not added to the state list. This report discusses a total of 69 records that were submitted by 55 observers.

Accepted Species New to the State

Rufous-backed Robin *Turdus rufopalliatu*s (CD*, BP*, KB*, PG*, SR*; 2022-001; 7-0): An adult was found by Brenda Wright and Coen Dexter in Denny Park, which is just east of Cortez, Montezuma, on 18 Jan 2022. It was very



Rufous-backed Robin, 1/25/2022, Montezuma County. Photo by Sue Riffe.

cooperative and was seen by many birders over the next two weeks into early February. The winter of 2021-2022 saw many more reports of this species in Arizona and Southern California than is usual, so this occurrence wasn't totally unexpected.

Cassia Crossbill *Loxia sinesciuris* (CN; 2021-011; 7-0): Christian Nunes recorded a family of 3 Crossbills, including a singing male, on Arapahoe Forest Road 555, which is southeast of Hot Sulphur Springs, Grand, on 16 July 2021. Several months later, he analyzed the spectrographs of these recordings and realized they were diagnostic for this species, which was confirmed by 3 experts. Even though this family included one juvenile, it was too old to determine that the species had bred in Colorado. More details are given in the article by Nunes (2022).

Yellow Grosbeak *Pheucticus chrysopleplus* (BP*, WA*, CT*, PG*, CB*, SR*; 2021-001; 7-0): A probable one year old male appeared in the yard of Gib Rokich on 28 May 2021, which is just east of I-25 midway between Colorado City and Walsenburg, Huerfano. This was totally unexpected, as occurrences of this species in the USA are very few and far between. Gib hosted a very large number of birders over the next few days, who all got to see this extremely rare bird, and it was last seen on 1 June 2021. More details are given in the article by Klaver (2021).



Yellow Grosbeak, 5/28/2021, Huerfano County. Photo by Brandon Percival.

Accepted Records

Northeast (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, Yuma)

Brant (Black) *Branta bernicla nigricans* (SM*; 2017-004; 7-0): An immature bird was seen at Aurora Res., Arapahoe, on 15 Jan 2017. (RH*; 2019-012): An adult was photographed at Frederick Res., Weld, on 31 Jan 2019.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* (ST*; 2019-021): An adult was photographed at Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe, on 8 May 2019.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* (CT*; 2019-014; 7-0): An immature bird was nicely documented at Aurora Res., Arapahoe, on 20 Feb 2019.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* (JK*, RO*; 2020-025; 7-0): A female bird was seen at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, on 8 Nov 2020. The female only stayed around for about 3 hours, but in that time was seen by many birders. This the 4th record of this species in Colorado. The first record was seen in September 1985 first just north of Chatfield Res., Jefferson, and then at Green Mountain Res., Summit, where it died and the skin is at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. The second record was in June 2013 near Walden, Jackson.



Magnificent Frigatebird, 11/8/2020, Arapahoe County. Photo by Joey Kellner.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* (KM*; 2018-074; 7-0): An adult and an immature bird were seen at Stalker Pond, Yuma, between 24 Aug and 7 Sep 2018. This species was seen at this location over the summer of 2017, and it is possible, but not confirmed, that it bred there in 2018.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* (ZS*, MM*, PG*, GM*, CA, DF*; 2017-044; 7-0): An



White Ibis, 6/20/2017, Adams County. Photo by Mark Minner-Lee.

adult was seen by many observers at Clear Creek Valley Park, *Adams*, between 18 and 24 June 2017.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* (RH*; 2011-199): An adult was well photographed at Nunn, *Weld*, on 7 Aug 2011.

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius* (JM*; 2016-075; 5-2, 6-1): An adult was seen at Crow Valley Campground, *Weld*, on 2 Sep 2016. Even with good photographs, there was considerable discussion on distinguishing this bird from a Cassin's Vireo.

Purple Martin *Progne subis* (CS*; 2019-022): An adult female was well photographed at Barr Lake SP, *Adams*, on 15 May 2019.

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus stellaris* (DD*; 2018-047; 7-0): An adult was seen near Hale, *Yuma*, on 12 May 2018.

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana* (AS; 2019-023): 5 birds, including two adult



Sedge Wren, 5/12/2018, Yuma County. Photo by David Dowell.

males, were seen at South Platte Park, *Arapahoe*, on 10 Oct 2019.

Baird's Sparrow *Ammodramus bairdii* (SM*; 2018-051; 7-0): 5 singing males, some with bands, and a female were seen and heard at Meadow Springs Ranch, *Weld*, on 5 June 2018. This is one of the nesting locations for this species documented over the past 5 years.

Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (DD*, KM*; 2015-022; 4-3, 6-1, 7-0): A male was seen at the Tamarack Ranch SWA, *Logan*, between 21 Feb and 8 Mar 2015. Despite good photographs, there was a vigorous debate within the committee over whether this bird, with a little white in the primaries, was a hybrid with Spotted Towhee, as northeast Colorado is well known as an area where hybrids occur.

East Central (Cheyenne, El Paso, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* (BM*; 2016-078; 7-0): An immature male was in the Old Farm Road neighborhood of northeast Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 25 Sep 2016.

Smith's Longspur *Calcarius pictus* (MP; 2018-084; 7-0): An immature bird was nicely photographed on CR 52 just

north of CR M, which is southeast of Burlington, *Kit Carson*, on 11 Jan 2018. This is the 8th state record, and an unusual winter sighting of this species in Colorado.

Lucy's Warbler *Leiothlypis luciae* (BM*; 2018-040; 7-0): An adult was seen at Sinton Pond Open Space, which is in north Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 14 Apr 2018.

Southeast (Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo)

Mexican Whip-poor-will *Antrostomus arizonae* (KM; 2020-059; 7-0): One adult was first heard singing at McBride Creek in the newly designated Fishers Peak SP, which is northeast of Trinidad, *Las Animas*, on 16 May 2020. Two birds were heard singing in the same location on 31 May and 5 June. This is the 4th state record of this species in Colorado, and was part of a significant number of birds found well north of their usual range in the summer of 2020.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* (TL*; 2018-092; 7-0): Adult male and female birds were at the house of Janeal Thompson in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 11 Sep 2018. This is the best time of year and one of the best locations to see this species in Colorado.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (BP*; 2003-157; 4-3, 5-2, 7-0): A non-breeding bird was seen at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 24 Sep 2003. This report went through three rounds of voting because the description was extremely short and the photograph is out of focus.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* (DD*; 2018-043; 7-0): A bird in transitional plumage was photographed at Neeskah Res., which is between Eads and Lamar, *Kiowa*, on

27 Apr 2018. This is the 5th documented record of this species in Colorado.

Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* (BM*; 2018-038; 7-0): An immature bird was seen at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 29 Mar 2018.



Yellow-billed Loon, 3/29/2018, Pueblo County. Photo by Bill Maynard.



Magnificent Frigatebird, 11/5/2020, Bent County. Photo by Samantha Colvin.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* (NV*, SC*; 2020-073; 7-0): A female bird was seen at John Martin Res., *Bent*, on 5 Nov 2020. This female was first reported by Norma Verhoef, but it was seen by only a few other birders before flying west in the early afternoon. This is the 3rd state record of this species in Colorado, and occurred 3 days before a different female was seen at Cherry Creek Res.

Swainson's Warbler *Limnithlypis swainsonii* (DL*, BP*, TL*; 2018-045; 7-0): An adult was



Swainson's Warbler, 5/6/2018, Prowers County. Photo by Dave Leatherman.

seen and photographed by many observers at the Riverside Cemetery in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 6 May 2018.

Painted Redstart *Myioborus pictus* (BP*, TL*; 2019-008; 7-0): An adult male was seen by many observers at the courthouse in Eads, *Kiowa*, on 2 May 2019. (DR; 2019-009; 7-0): Another male in breeding plumage was seen at the Community College in Lamar, *Prowers*, on 13 May 2019.

Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* (BP*; 2018-048; 7-0): An adult male was seen by many observers at Rose Pond in Chico Basin Ranch, *Pueblo*, on 13 May 2018.

North Central (Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer)

Brant (Black) *Branta bernicla nigricans* (AB*; 2018-086): An adult was seen at Timnath Res., *Larimer*, on 14 Nov 2018.

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* (RH*; 2018-039; 7-0): An adult female in breeding plumage was seen at Long Pond and surrounding lakes, *Larimer*, on 12 Apr 2018.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* (DD*; 2018-087; 7-0): An immature bird was seen at Horseshoe

Lake in Loveland, *Larimer*, on 16 Nov 2018. (PH*; 2019-017; 7-0): An adult was well photographed at the county landfill in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 2 Jan 2019.

Least Tern *Sterna antillarum* (CG; 2015-156; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Walden Res., *Jackson*, on 21 Jun 2015.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus* (RB*; 2018-016; 7-0): An adult was seen in east Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 14 Oct 2018. (RB*; 2019-015; 7-0): An adult was nicely photographed in southeast Fort



Harris's Hawk, 2/21/2019, Larimer County. Photo by Robert Beauchamp.

Collins, *Larimer*, on 21 Feb 2019. These 7th and 8th sightings of this species in Colorado may well have been the same individual, but this was not certain, so they were kept as separate reports. An interesting speculation is that the previous report 2017-042 of an adult in the same area in Dec 2017 just might have been the same individual.

Purple Finch *Haemorhous purpureus* (KK*; 2019-013; 7-0): An adult female was photographed at the house of Kevin Keirn in Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on 17 Feb 2019.

Central (Chaffee, Clear Creek, Douglas, Fremont, Gilpin, Jefferson, Lake, Park, Summit, Teller)

Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope* (BM*; 2018-005; 7-0): An adult male was seen in Canon City, *Fremont*, on 5 Jan 2018.

Mexican Whip-poor-will *Antrostomus arizonae* (GD, PG, BP, RH; 2020-019; 7-0): This bird was first heard singing along Oak Creek Grade Road, which is south of Canon City, *Fremont*, on 6 May 2020 by Gerald DeBoer. Many more people heard it singing on several subsequent evenings, and the last documented report is from 22 July 2020. This is the 3rd record for Colorado: The first was in Waterton Canyon in Jefferson County in 1992 and the second was near Parker in Elbert County in 2004.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* (ST*; 2018-075; 7-0): An immature bird was photographed at Main Reservoir, which is in Lakewood, *Jefferson*, on 28 Aug 2018. (DH*, BP*; 2019-007; 7-0): An adult was seen at Sell Lake in Canon City, *Fremont*, between 23 and 27 Apr 2019.

Thick-billed Longspur *Rhynchophanes mccownii* (DTQ*; 2019-024): An adult in non-breeding plumage was photographed at Manitou Lake, *Teller*, on 12 Oct 2019. This was a new record for this species in Teller County.

West Central (Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Pitkin)

Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* (KM*; 2018-033; 7-0): A bird in non-breeding plumage was seen at Blue Mesa Res., *Gunnison*, on 13 Feb 2018.

Thick-billed Kingbird *Tyrannus crassirostris* (DTu*; 2018-083; 7-0): An



Thick-billed Kingbird, 12/16/2018, Mesa County. Photo by Debbie Tubridy.

adult was beautifully photographed just north of Grand Junction, *Mesa*, on 16 Dec 2018. This is the 3rd record of this species in Colorado: The first was in Waterton Canyon in Jefferson County in 1992 and the second was near Parker in Elbert County in 2004.

Purple Finch *Haemorhous purpureus* (CD; 2009-500; 7-0): A female or first-winter male was seen at a feeder in Fruita, *Mesa*, on 10 Jan 2009.

Golden-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (CD*; 1989-500; 7-0): An immature in non-breeding plumage was seen at the Clifton Wildlife Park in south Grand Junction, *Mesa*, between 21 and 28 Nov 1989.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea* (AR, CD*; 2016-065; 5-2, 7-0): An adult male was seen by many observers at the home of Andrea Robinsong in Hotchkiss, *Delta*, between 25 and 28 May 2016.

Southwest (Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan, San Miguel)

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* (LR*; 2017-062; 7-0): An adult female was nicely photographed coming to a feeder just southwest of Mancos,

Montezuma, between 5 and 7 Oct 2017.

Winter Wren *Troglodytes hiemalis* (KM*, JS; 2018-034; 7-0): An adult was seen at the McCabe Creek outlet to the San Juan River, which is south of Chimney Rock near the border with New Mexico, *Archuleta*, on 16 and 17 Feb 2018.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (AZ; 2015-161): An immature bird was banded just north of Ridgway, *Ouray*, on 18 Sep 2015.

Records Not Accepted

Northeast (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, Yuma)

Smew *Mergellus albellus*. (2014-206; 0-7): 4 adults were reported at the Denver section of the South Platte Greenbelt, *Denver*, on 14 Feb 2014. The description was short, and this is an area where Barrow's Goldeneyes occur regularly in winter.

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*. (2016-032; 0-7): A bird was reported in downtown Denver, *Denver*, on 20 May 2016. This was an intriguing sighting of a rather distinctive species, but there was no actual description of the bird in the report.

Western Gull *Larus occidentalis*. (2018-076; 5-2, 0-7): An immature female was reported at Aurora Reservoir, *Arapahoe*, on 7 Oct 2018. This report was originally supported by one outside expert, but other outside experts and 2 committee members thought that it definitely was a Herring Gull. This persuaded the other committee members in their second round votes.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*. (2015-016; 5-2, 3-4): An

immature bird was reported at Barr Lake SP, *Adams*, on 5 Feb 2015. The dissenting members in the first round thought that the Thayer's race of Iceland Gull was not eliminated, and this persuaded 2 more committee members in the second round.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*. (1983-001; 0-7): An adult was reported on the east side of Congress Park, *Denver*, between 23 June 1983 and 5 May 1985. The committee unanimously agreed with the identification on this very old report, but thought that the bird was an escapee, which eventually died.

Southeast (Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo)

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula*. (2015-042; 4-3, 2-5): A bird was reported in Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 10 April 2015. Unfortunately, there were no photographs of this bird, and committee members thought the description did not eliminate a hybrid with Mallard or Mexican Duck.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*. (2011-40; 2-5): A bird of the Eurasian race (Common Teal) was reported at Pueblo West, *Pueblo*, on 7 Apr 2011. Committee members thought that the bold horizontal white bar of this race could not be seen in the photographs, so that they were inconclusive in showing a bird of the Eurasian race.

Costa's Hummingbird *Calypte costae*. (2015-106; 3-4): An immature female was reported in Rye, *Pueblo*, on 20 Sep 2015. This was a very brief sighting, and some committee members thought that the description did not eliminate Calliope Hummingbird.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus*. (2017-057; 4-3, 3-4): An immature bird was seen at Neenoshe Reservoir, *Kiowa*, on 19 Sep 2017. Some committee members thought that the description did not rule out an immature Parasitic Jaeger.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*. (2016-119; 2-5): An adult in breeding plumage was reported at Thurston Reservoir SWA, *Prowers*, on 28 May 2016. Nothing was written about how other species were eliminated, and members thought Franklin's Gull could not be ruled out.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*. (2013-227; 5-2, 4-3, 1-6): An adult was photographed at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 5 Jan 2013, and reported as the first state record of the *intermedius* subspecies from Europe. This record produced much discussion among the committee, but it was finally decided that the photographs did not adequately eliminate the usual subspecies seen in Colorado, *graellsii*.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris*. (2018-073; 2-5): A bird in non-breeding plumage was reported at Rye, *Pueblo*, on 29 Aug 2018. This bird was only seen briefly, and committee members thought other *Empidonax* flycatchers were not adequately eliminated.

North Central (Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*. (2013-316; 0-7): An immature male was reported in Livermore, *Larimer*, on 27 Jul 2013. Committee members thought that the brief description did not eliminate other hummingbirds that are more common at this location.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*. (2017-089; 3-4): An immature bird was reported at Boyd Lake SP, *Larimer*, on 2 Dec 2017. Although the report mentioned photographs, none were submitted, and committee members thought other species and hybrids were not adequately eliminated.

Sprague's Pipit *Anthus spragueii*. (2017-091; 0-7): An adult was reported at the Davidson Mesa Open Space near Superior, *Boulder*, on 6 Oct 2017. However, the photographs show the bird to be a Western Meadowlark.

South Central (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Huerfano, Rio Grande, Saguache)

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*. (2018-078; 1-6): An adult was reported at the Monte Vista NWR, *Rio Grande*, on 8 Apr 2018. Again, the report mentions photographs but none were submitted, and committee members thought other bluebird species were not adequately eliminated.

Baird's Sparrow *Ammodramus bairdii*. (2014-207; 1-6): An adult was reported just east of La Jara in the San Luis Valley, *Conejos*, on 1 Sep 2014. Committee members thought that the brief sighting and description did not adequately eliminate other, more common, sparrows.

West Central (Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Pitkin)

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus*. (2017-090; 0-7): An immature female was reported east of Fruita, *Mesa*, on 8 Apr 2017. Committee members thought that the very brief description did not adequately eliminate a Peregrine Falcon.

Reporters and Cited Observers

CA: Christine Alexander, WA: William Anderson, AB: Andrew Bankert, RB: Robert Beauchamp, CB: Carl Bendorf, KB: Karel Buckley, SC: Samantha Colvin, GD: Gerald DeBoer, CD: Coen Dexter, DD: David Dowell, DF: Doug Faulkner, PG: Peter Gent, CG: Christopher Goulart, RH: Rachel Hopper, DH: Derek Hudgins, PH: Paul Hurtado, KK: Kevin Keirn, JK: Joey Kellner, DL: David Leatherman, TL: Tony Leukering, JM: Joe Mammoser, GM: George Mayfield, BM: Bill Maynard, KM: Kathy Mihm Dunning, MM: Mark Minner-Lee, SM: Steven Mlodinow, CN: Christian Nunes, RO: Ric Olson, BP: Brandon Percival, MP: Mark Peterson, SR: Sue Riffe, AR: Andrea Robinsong, LR: Leona Ryter, ZS: Zachary Schiff, CS: Cathy Sheeter, AS: Amanda Spears, JS: Jason St. Pierre, ST: Santiago Tabares, CT: Cheryl Teuton, DTo: David Tønnessen, DTu: Debbie Tubridy, NV: Norma Verhoef, AZ: Amanda Ziegelbauer,

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Committee Functions

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its Main Review List (<https://cobrc.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 (<https://cobrc.org/Reporting/>). Alternatively, one can request an electronic document from the Chair or Secretary (see this journal inside front cover for contact information).

Report Format

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithological Society's (AOS) Checklist of North American Birds (AOS 1998) through the 62nd Supplement (Chesser et al. 2021). We present the initials of the contributing observer(s), the 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 initial observer of the bird is underlined if known and is presented first. Additional contributors follow in time order by last name. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture are indicated with an asterisk. In this report, county names are italicized.

Committee News

Peter Gent has taken over as Chairman of the CBRC from Mark Peterson, but Mark remains on the committee as a voting member. Kathy Mihm Dunning and David Dowell have finished their terms on the CBRC, and Bill Maynard and Steven Mlodinow have left the committee. I wish to thank them for their voting and service to the committee. Jason St. Pierre has been renewed as a committee member for 2022-2024, and new members on the CBRC for the same three year terms are Eric DeFonso (Hygiene), David Tønnessen (Colorado Springs) and Eric Hynes (Telluride).

Literature Cited

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Klaver, E. 2021. A Yellow Grosbeak in Colorado, Colorado Birds 55(4), 218-219.

*Nunes, C. 2022. First Record of Cassia Crossbill (*Loxia sinesciuris*) in Colorado, Colorado Birds 56(2), 141-144.*