

## REPORTS FROM THE CFO OFFICIAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

Jack Reddall, Chairman  
CFO Official Records Committee  
4450 South Alton Street  
Englewood, Colorado 80110

GRAY HAWK - - - - Buteo nitidus

The CFO Official Records Committee has examined the documentation submitted to substantiate the sighting of a Gray Hawk at the foot of Lookout Mountain in Jefferson County on the morning of April 24, 1972. A single bird was reportedly observed for approximately thirty minutes by a lone observer. After reviewing the data submitted by this observer the CFO Official Records Committee has ruled that this sighting is invalid due to the extreme lack of detailed information to support the presence of a species so far from its normal range. Therefore, as of this date, the Gray Hawk is not considered a valid species for the state of Colorado.

## Chairman's comment:

It is very disconcerting when sight reports for new or rare and unusual species are received with limited documentation and brief descriptions. This is particularly unfortunate when, as in this case, the observer who made the report is regarded by many as a very competent field man. However, it must be stressed that the CFO Official Records Committee can only work from the details as they are received from the observer. If these details are very brief and do not include key field marks, then the Committee has no choice but to find as they did in this case irrespective of the competence of the observer. It is hoped that as we gain more experience in dealing with sight reports, both as observers and Committee members, that we will become more proficient in reporting (and of course first and foremost - studying) what we observe in the field. The more details that are presented of what was actually seen in the field, the greater the chance that the record will be accepted.

December 9, 1972

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Editor's Note: Record of this sighting was published in The Lark Bunting, 7 (8):5, May 1972.

CASPIAN TERN - - - - Hydroprogne caspia

The Check-List of the Birds of the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge issued June 1970 lists the Caspian Tern as "rare" in spring and fall. This, so far as can be determined is the only report of this species occurring within the state of Colorado. Unfortunately, there is no quantitative data provided as to what constitutes "rare" when compared to the other listed glossary of abundance, i.e., "occasional", "uncommon", "common" and "abundant". Regrettably, most national wildlife refuge check-lists throughout the United States suffer from this malady.

Mr. Dave Griffiths, CFO Official Records Committee member from Pueblo contacted the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge regarding the occurrence of Caspian Terns and received the following reply from Mr. Charles R. Bryant:

"We have researched our records for the Caspian Tern observations and found only one observation. This was two birds observed on April 27, 1958, and were noted again on April 31 (30), 1958. Our records do not indicate who made the observation."

Based on the foregoing, the Chairman of the Official Records Committee had no choice but to rule this record unsatisfactory. Without adequate documentation, the Official Records Committee had nothing with which to make a judgment. As of this date the Caspian Tern is not considered a valid species for the state of Colorado.

Chairman's comment:

Although this record cannot be accepted, the occurrence of Caspian Terns in Colorado is to be expected any year now. They have been recorded several times in adjoining states and it is only a matter of time before a valid, well-documented report will be submitted.

November 22, 1972

ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD - - - - Selasphorus sasin

The CFO Official Records Committee has reviewed the documentation submitted with respect to the report of an occurrence of an Allen's Hummingbird in the Colorado Springs area from July 30, 1972 off and on until September 5, 1972. The CFO Official Records Committee has ruled that this report of the Allen's Hummingbird is unsatisfactory due to the great difficulty of field separation of this species and the Rufous Hummingbird which it greatly resembles. The submitted documentation was unfortunately not convincing enough for the Committee to accept the occurrence of this species which enjoys an extremely limited range in California (and possibly Oregon and Washington?). Therefore, the Allen's Hummingbird remains an invalid species for the state of Colorado.

## Chairman's comment:

This type of report is extremely difficult for the CFO Official Records Committee to deal with. Because there are great variations amongst the two regular and fairly common Colorado hummingbirds (Broad-tailed and Rufous) particularly with the mixtures of females and immatures, both in size and plumages, it is practically impossible to accept a sight report of such a species with so limited a range as the Allen's Hummingbird in our state. It unquestionably would take an expert who is thoroughly familiar with the Allen's Hummingbird before an acceptance could be considered. Even then, the only acceptable evidence would be the collection of a specimen duly examined and identified by someone thoroughly familiar with western hummingbirds. Irrespective of what most of the popular field guides depict, the green back of the Allen's Hummingbird is not always a diagnostic field mark in separating this species from the Rufous Hummingbird. In the hand, an examination of the tail feathers is one of the key diagnostic marks. In the Rufous Hummingbird the middle tail feather is broad, pointed at tip; the second tail feather from the middle is deeply notched on inner web, sinuated on outer web. The Allen's Hummingbird on the other hand displays two very narrow outer tail feathers; the second tail feather from the middle is without notch or sinuation; the outer tail feather is much less than .10 inch wide. Possibly what we need in this case are some extremely sharp-eyed Colorado observers!

December 28, 1972

S. rufus maleS. sasin male

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD - - - - Lampornis clemenciae

The CFO Official Records Committee has reviewed the documentation along with numerous black and white photographs of the Blue-throated Hummingbird reported from the Colorado Springs area during the summer months of 1972. Based primarily on an examination of these photographs taken and submitted by Mr. Dominic A. Bartol, Jr. of 2718 North Prospect, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907, the Committee has ruled to accept this species (a female) as the first authentic record\* of the Blue-throated Hummingbird occurring in Colorado and has approved its addition to the official state list of the birds of Colorado.

According to information received from Mr. Bartol, "an unusual Hummer, possibly a Rivoli's (Hummingbird)" was observed about 7:00 P.M. on June 29, 1972, by Miss Bernhardina Johnson at her kitchen window feeder, Lytle-Star Route, Colorado Springs. The same bird (evidently) was seen again by Miss Johnson on the following evening, June 30, about 7:00 P.M. Mr. and Mrs. Bartol unsuccessfully attempted to observe the bird during the ensuing three weeks. Then, about 6:30 P.M. on July 29, 1972, the bird reappeared at Miss Johnson's feeder and she notified the Bartol's immediately. Mr. and Mrs. Bartol managed to observe the bird (a female) on the afternoon of July 30 when Mr. Bartol was able to obtain a number of excellent black and white and color photographs. Several other observers reportedly were able to view this bird as follows:

- July 30 - 4:00 P.M. until 5:30 P.M. (Lindts)
- July 31 - From late afternoon until dark (Johnson)
- August 1 - 6:45 P.M. (Johnson/Bartols)
- August 2 - 10:00 A.M. and again at 12:00 Noon, then intermittently until 7:30 P.M. (Johnson and Dr. Wilfred Powell and daughter Evelyn D. Powell, Box 2217, University Station, Enid, Oklahoma 73701)
- August 3 - 9:00 A.M., 12:00 Noon and 6:30 P.M. (Johnson/Bartols); and at 7:30 P.M. (Johnson)
- August 4 - 10:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. (Johnson/Bartols) NOTE: On this date Mr. Bartol reports, "Several dozen black and white photos as well as color photos taken by DAB. Also, DAB and Johnson saw both adult and immature sitting alongside each other on one of the several favorite perches. DAB unable to photo both adult and immature at the same time". Mr. Bartol further reports, "additionally, Mrs. Merlyn Heimbecker and daughter Carlyn, Rock Creek Park, Colorado saw adult and immature".

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\*Editor's Note: The 1970 sightings reported by Winston W. Brockner, "Blue-throated Hummingbird in Colorado", Colorado Field Ornithologist, 9:27-28, July 1971 must be considered invalid. See pages 20-21 of this issue of the Colorado Field Ornithologist and American Birds, 26 (5):885, October 1972 for further comments on the 1972 sightings.

It is unclear from Mr. Bartol's report whether Miss Johnson and the Heinbeckers are neighbors and possibly could have seen the same bird. Furthermore, since no details regarding the alleged sighting of an immature were provided, the Official Records Committee could not accept this report. One Official Records Committee member, Dr. Paul Julian of Boulder did question one or two of Mr. Bartol's photographs suggesting that possibly the bird pictured might have been an immature since the photograph did not reveal the white-tipped rectrices. However, Dr. Julian quickly points out that Bent says the white-tipped rectrices are present in birds of all ages and thus dismisses the probability of an immature unless more specific detail is furnished.

November 26, 1972

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WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD - - - - Hylocharis leucotis

The only reference to the White-eared Hummingbird occurring in Colorado comes from Dr. William A. Davis' Birds in Western Colorado (1969) page 22. This report refers to a female seen and sketched on Grand Mesa, July 23, 1963, by several observers. The Chairman, CFO Official Records Committee contacted the author regarding this report and, in a letter dated October 29, 1972, Dr. Davis wrote:

"The White-eared Hummingbird is another story; but should probably be on a hypothetical list if we have one. (We don't as yet - Chairman). It was seen by Lucy Ela, who is reliable and honest and three other experienced women. She (Ela) gave me a sketch and description; is sure of her identification. Unfortunately the sketch and description are lost."

The Chairman mentioned this to Mr. Harold Holt and Mr. Holt said he recalls seeing the aforementioned sketch and details some time ago, but didn't know their whereabouts today. In view of the fact that the documentation is evidently no longer available for Official Records Committee inspection, this report must be ruled unsatisfactory. Therefore, as of this date the White-eared Hummingbird is not considered a valid species for Colorado.

Chairman's comment:

Field separation of female White-eared Hummingbirds and females of other western hummingbirds (particularly the Broad-billed Hummingbird) is often extremely difficult, even under the most ideal conditions. Great caution must be exercised when identifying female hummingbirds. Some, in fact, are indistinguishable in the field. Should anyone know the whereabouts of the documents submitted by Lucy Ela, please contact the Chairman of the Official Records Committee.

November 22, 1972

GILDED FLICKER - - - - Colaptes chrysoides

The CFO Official Records Committee has reviewed all available documentation with accompanying photographs (black and white) surrounding the now much publicized report of a Gilded Flicker in the Colorado Springs area during the 1970 Christmas Bird Count. The initial report without substantiation was accepted and published in American Birds (The Seventy-First Christmas Bird Count, April 1971, Volume 25, Number 2, page 450) and subsequently retracted by American Birds (The Seventy-Second Christmas Bird Count, April 1972, Volume 26, Number 2, page 145). Considerable correspondence was generated by several Colorado birders regarding the validity of this record, much of which has appeared in print in the "Letters to the Editor" column of the Colorado Field Ornithologist (see issues Number 11, pages 2 and 3; Number 12, pages 2 through 7; and Number 13, page 2). The Official Records Committee has ruled that the Gilded Flicker report is unsatisfactory due to the acute problem of field separation between this species and the many hybrid flickers frequenting the Colorado Springs area. The written documentation along with the photographic evidence was not convincing enough to support such a tricky identification. Therefore, the Gilded Flicker record is rejected and this species is not as of this date considered a valid species for the state of Colorado.

November 22, 1972

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BLACK PHOEBE - - - - Sayornis nigricans

The CFO Official Records Committee has reviewed the documentation along with four clear, recognizable color photographs of the Black Phoebe reported from the Pueblo area during the spring and summer months of 1972. Written documentation was supplied by Claire A. Griffiths and Donna M. Bregenzer both of Pueblo. The color photographs were taken and submitted by Michael Schultz of Security. Based upon the information presented, the Committee has ruled to accept this species as the first authentic record of an occurrence in Colorado, and has approved its addition to the official state list of the birds of Colorado.

An excellent and detailed account of the appearance of the Black Phoebe in the Pueblo area was submitted by Jerry C. Ligon and David A. Griffiths and published in the Colorado Field Ornithologist, September 1972, No. 13, pages 3 and 4.

All documentation and color photographs are on file with the Official Records Committee.

January 20, 1973

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Editor's Note: See American Birds, 26 (5):285, October 1972 for additional information and photographs regarding this report.

BEARDLESS FLYCATCHER - - - - Camptostoma imberbe

There are three reports\* of the Beardless Flycatcher occurring in Colorado as follows:

Sight records on June 10, 1962 and April 23, 1963, both from Mesa County. One allegedly caught and banded at Colorado National Monument on September 15, 1964.

The Chairman of the Official Records Committee contacted Dr. William A. Davis who provided the following information regarding these reports:

"The Beardless Flycatcher is definitely dropped as a Colorado record . . . (observers) would or could not back them (reports) at all."

As of this date the Beardless Flycatcher is considered an invalid species for the state of Colorado.

November 22, 1972

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\*Editor's Note: See William A. Davis' Birds in Western Colorado (1969), p. 25 for original reports and William A. Davis' "Additions and Corrections to 'Birds in Western Colorado'"; Colorado Field Ornithologist, 8:32, Summer 1970 for a retraction of the reports.

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WHITE-EYED VIREO - - - - Vireo griseus

The CFO Official Records Committee has examined the documentation submitted to substantiate the sighting of a White-eyed Vireo in Bear Canyon, South Boulder, Colorado. A single bird was seen and reported by three observers on May 11, 12 and 14, 1972. After reviewing the information submitted to verify this sight report, the CFO Official Records Committee has ruled that it be rejected. As of this date the White-eyed Vireo is not considered as a valid species occurring within the state of Colorado. While the documentation received from the three observers was quite good and complete, a majority of the Committee members expressed concern over the question of the exact coloration of the eye which was reported as ranging from white to gray to brown. Because of this problem with the description and the fact that at no time was the bird heard to sing (which certainly would have been a convincing mark - Chairman), the Committee felt it had to turn down the report.

December 9, 1972

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Editor's Note: See Paul Julian's "White-eyed Vireo" in The Lark Bunting, 7 (9):5, June 1972 for the original report of the above sightings, and David W. Lupton's "Colorado Spring Count for 1972", Colorado Field Ornithologist, 13:8, September 1972 for an additional sighting report of this species on the Boulder Spring Count, May 13, 1972. These sightings are also mentioned in American Birds, 26 (4):790, September 1972.