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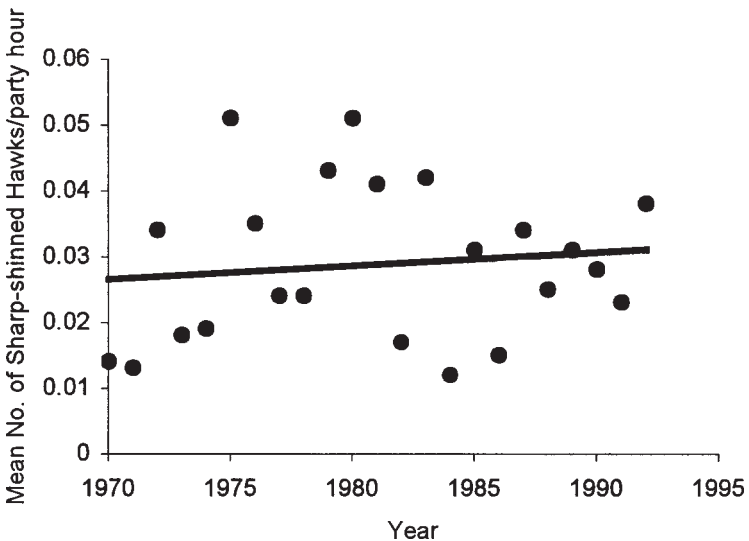
**Cover photo:** Hairy Woodpecker near Silverthorne, Summit County, April 1998. By Tony Leukering.



Slaty-backed Gull in Loveland in March, by Randy Siebert. If accepted, this will be the first Colorado record for this Asian species. [Editor's note: This image has been altered from the original. For clarity, I digitally removed another gull standing directly behind the slaty.]

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**Erratum in Vol. 34, No. 1:** On page 36, the graph labeled **Fig. 1f** is incorrect. The correct graph is printed below.



## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Scott W. Gillihan

I can't say enough about Cynthia Melcher, my predecessor at the editor's desk. The journal has been *so* good under her guidance, in fact, that I was reluctant to take it over. I first approached Cynthia back in 1997 to talk about eventually serving as editor, but it wasn't until quite recently that I made the commitment. I hesitated for so long because I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to put in the same time and energy that Cynthia has devoted to it, and the journal might suffer a noticeable drop in quality during my tenure. I didn't want to be known as the editor who let the journal slip. However, if my fears are realized, it won't be for lack of preparation. Cynthia's thoroughness as an editor extends also to her thoroughness as an editor *trainer*. She has been exceptionally generous with her time over the past couple of months, doing all she can to ease the transition and to prepare me for the task, and for that I am grateful. I will do my best to maintain the high standards that she set.

Whenever there is a change in editorial staff, changes in editorial content are sure to follow. Editors can't help but put their personal stamp on the work that crosses their desk. Because I am by profession an ornithologist, one might expect a journal that I edit to reflect my interests in avian research. However, this is *your* journal, and it will continue to reflect the varied interests of the CFO members. The *JCFO* will not become a purely scientific, peer-reviewed, research-oriented journal. There will be scientific articles, to be sure, but they will be balanced with other material. My feeling is that the journal should offer a mix of articles, so that researchers, conservationists, naturalists, birders, and listers can all find something of interest in each issue. The journal may undergo some cosmetic changes as I master the desktop publishing software, but don't look for any significant changes in the varied content.

There are sound reasons for this approach. State and regional journals offer the *only* opportunity to publish information on casual observations of bird life, often of one-time or short-duration events, without replicates or experimental design or statistical analyses. The large scientific journals routinely reject papers on topics such as natural history, noteworthy behavior, unusual nest sites, abnormal plumages, and aberrant behavior. However, serious amateurs and professional ornithologists need this sort of information. There is a staggering lack of basic life history information for many bird species, especially here in the under-studied West. That lack of information hampers effective natural resource management and conservation efforts. State and

regional journals are the only places to publish such information, and the only place to read it. In Colorado, it's up to each of *you* to help fill the gaps in our knowledge, and to make sure that those observations get published in the *JCFO*.

To add to the value of your observations, abstracts of most *JCFO* articles will appear in the Recent Ornithological Literature (ROL) supplement of the prestigious ornithological journal, the *Auk*. This collection of abstracts from small and "obscure" journals is a valuable source of natural history information for researchers, managers, and others, now made even more valuable by its availability on the Internet (<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/birdnet/ROL/index.html>). Your observations, published in the *JCFO*, become available to researchers and others around the world. And I know for a fact that *JCFO* article abstracts will appear in the ROL, because I'm responsible for submitting them (see my note in the April 1998 issue of the *JCFO*).

To facilitate the first steps in this global exchange of information, I will accept journal submissions in most any form—typed or handwritten note, telephone call, e-mail message, electronic file on diskette, or others. Don't worry if you think you can't write well enough, or if you're intimidated by the Author's Guidelines. You don't need to write a "manuscript." Write me a letter. Or give me a call. But don't let your valuable observations of natural history fade with the passage of time—share them with the world. By way of "priming the pump," I have included in this issue a note that I pulled off the COBIRDS listserve and printed with the author's permission, about an unusual event involving corvids. This is *exactly* the type of short, informal article that I would like to print in the journal: interesting to amateurs, valuable to professionals. Please use this as your inspiration to contribute your knowledge.

—SWG

P.S. If you send me e-mail, *please* put "JCFO" somewhere in the subject line. I receive scores of e-mail messages daily. If it's not clear to me that a message is important, I often delete it without reading it. Including a descriptive subject line, such as "JCFO: creeper nest," guarantees that I will read your message.



## **CFO BOARD MINUTES, 2-12-00, CONDENSED FOR *JCFO***

### President's Report

President Leon Bright has written to the CDOW reiterating our support for non-game research funding.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer BB Hahn has corrected the figures in the 2000 budget to reflect the stipend and expenses for the new editor and stressed the need to meet the projected figures for journal corporate sponsorships to keep the budget in balance.

### Website

HostPro.com was selected by Rachel Kolokoff for CFO's domain-name website. Warren Finch's *JCFO* Index can be presented in various formats and she will work on the details for the best presentation. CFO's site will also be added to various Internet Search Engines.

### Colorado Bird Records Committee

The committee met in December, 1999 and resolved the undecided votes for 1997 and 1998. The summary will be published in the next *JCFO*. Two hundred forty three reports were received for 1999 and are now being circulated. The state list, currently 465 species, has been updated on the website.

### Membership

Current paid memberships stand at 350.

### Journal Editor

Linda Vidal was thanked for her gift of PageMaker software to the new editor. Cynthia Melcher will prepare a memorandum of understanding for the journal editor for approval by the board of directors.

### Ronald A. Ryder Award

The recipient of the award for the year 2000 was selected.

### Annual Convention

The Grand Junction committee continues to make excellent progress for an exciting 2000 convention. Pete Dunne will be the keynote speaker.

### Funded Projects

Seven requests were received by the committee. The board voted to divide the allocated funds between Merkle's study and Duane Nelson's project.

## “PISHING” UP A FEW GOOD BIRDERS FOR THE NAMC

Linda Vidal

**The North American Migration Count (NAMC)** is scheduled for **Saturday May 13, 2000**. Please contact: Linda Vidal, 855 Wooden Deer Rd, Carbondale, CO 81623; phone 970-704-9950; e-mail [vidal@rof.net](mailto:vidal@rof.net), for forms and instructions. The veterans from last year include; Dave Clark for Eagle and Garfield County; Dale Abrams in Pitkin County, John Kretzinger for Montrose County, Dick Schottler in Adams County. We need compilers and participants for all other counties!

### The NAMC: Fact and Fiction

1) Approach NAMC as a **fun day of birding** during one of the best weekends of the year. No mittens, snow boots, earmuffs and no thermos of hot chocolate you forgot in the back seat of your birding car to open six weeks later.

2) You can go to your **favorite birding areas!** It is not like an atlas block where they send you out to the middle of a wheat field. Count birds in the birdy places.

3) A few simple requirements: a) Bird for a minimum of 8 hours. If you have obligations, split the count. Let your crew bird for 5 hours in the morning and find another crew that is willing to count in the afternoon. We need 8 plus party hours. b) Count the birds you find, keeping track of your hours and mileage. c) Special categories are available for **feeder watchers**, stationary observers who like to sit on a ridge and **count hawks** or anything from one spot, and **owlers**.

4) It is just like a Christmas Bird Count except we cover a whole county. A perfect day for you **county listers!** The naysayers are concerned with: a) I just can't cover a whole county. You don't need to. Cover all habitats, then try to duplicate your coverage in future years. b) The data cannot be comparable because the counties are all different sizes. A piece of cake for the ornithologists with 9th grade algebra. They know how many square miles are in each county and it is very easy to standardize the data.

5) You don't have to be an elite birder with a Colorado list of 400 species to participate. If you can count, know common and uncommon birds, and are able to look up rare ones in a field guide, then you are the person we need! You can send in documentation for a rare bird, which is great since many people are interested in rarities. However, we won't beat you over the head with a bunch of rare bird forms or question your ability. Just do your very best, make careful identifications and most of all, have a fun day.

6) Some species are poorly counted because they occupy ranges north of the Breeding Bird survey routes, south of the Christmas Bird Count circles, and the publication date for the Yukon Breeding Bird Atlas is off in the future someplace. Certain species such as the Semipalmated, White-rumped, Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers and the Golden Plover are poorly represented on those other counts as are many other neotropical migrants. The "North American Migration Count" is indeed very important!

*What are you waiting for? Don't delay, please call Linda Vidal and sign up for a county today!*

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:  
RONALD A. RYDER AWARD FOR  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGY**

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**SELECTION CRITERIA**

- 1. For distinguished service to the Colorado Field Ornithologists and its goals.
- 2. For scholarly contributions to the Colorado Field Ornithologists and to Colorado field ornithology.
- 3. For sharing knowledge of Colorado field ornithology with the people of Colorado.

**NOMINATION & SELECTION PROCESS**

- 1. The Award will be given every year.
- 2. Only living persons may be nominated.
- 3. Nominations may be made by the membership at large.
- 4. The Board selects and approves an awardee for **announcement at the Annual Colorado Field Ornithologists' Convention.**
- 5. The Award will be a plaque designed to match the original plaque given to Dr. Ronald A. Ryder.
- 6. **Nominations should be submitted in writing to the Award Committee Chairperson on or before February 1** to be considered by the Colorado Field Ornithologists' Board of Directors.

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Submit nominations to Award Committee Chair:  
Rich Levad, 2924 Ronda Lee Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81503  
970/242-3979; levadgj@mesa.kl2.co.us

## UPCOMING CFO FIELD TRIPS

7 May 2000 -- (Gotcha Birdie!) REMINDER! Mark Janos takes you to Colorado bird mecca: Willow Creek behind Lamar Community College, as well as local SWAs and reservoirs. If you haven't birded southeastern Colorado you haven't birded Colorado. Meet at the parking lot on the north side of Lamar Community College at 7:00 AM. Please call Mark at least one week ahead for trip details and directions to the college: 719-544-5002.

13 May 2000 -- INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRDDAY! JOIN YOUR LOCAL GROUPS FOR COUNT DAY! Please participate in any active bird counts with Audubon chapters or other groups.

14 May 2000 -- (Lookie Lou) "**A' Larking We Will Go**" - Join Raymond Davis for a trip out to Pawnee National Grasslands to see the numerous courting prairie birds. Expect to see **Lark** Buntings, Horned **Larks**, Western Meadow**larks**, and possibly **Lark** Sparrows. Also Chestnut-collared and McGown's Longspurs, Burrowing Owls, Loggerhead Shrikes, and possibly Mountain Plovers. Meet at the Crow Creek Campground "Grass No Good Up-Side Down" interpretive sign at 7:30 AM. The campground is just north of Hwy 14 near Briggsdale on Weld Cnty Rd 77. Briggsdale is 50 miles west of Sterling, and 40 miles east of Ft. Collins. We'll bird the campground for a bit and then plan on all-day car caravans, with some flat walking over prairie. Any who can should camp Saturday night on your own; great migrant birding in the campground (usually an eastern warbler or vireo), as well as Northern Mockingbirds, Orchard Orioles, and Brown Thrashers. Call Davis at 303-823-5332 for more information; he'll attempt to coordinate car pooling from the south. This is a great trip for beginning birders who haven't seen and heard the summer breeders that fill the short-grass prairie with song.

26-29 May 2000 -- Memorial Day Weekend -- CFO Convention in Grand Junction.

6-8 June 2000 -- (Lookie Lou) CHIRICAHUA MOUNTAINS IN ARIZONA. Join Jim Dennis on a two-day birding excursion into southeastern Arizona. See the special notice in this issue for details.

24-25 June 2000 -- (Lookie Lou/Education) Joint field trip with Arkansas Valley Audubon Society and New Mexico State biologist Steve Carey to see the birds and butterflies of Sugarite State Park in New Mexico and Lake Dorothy in Colorado. This is the second annual Butterfly Count led by Ray Stanford and



Steve Carey. It just so happens to be held in great birding territory. We will meet in the Sugarite State Park Group Campground area. To get to Sugarite, take NM State Hwy 72 east off I-25 and follow the signs. There are motels in Raton and Trinidad, such as the Budget Host/Derrick Motor Inn in Trinidad (a reasonably-priced NOT FANCY “birder” motel) 719-846-3307. Limit of 30 participants. There is a \$5.00 fee to cover the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) count data research. Please call Pearle Sandstrom-Smith at least a week before for information and reservations 719-543-6427.

8-9 July 2000 -- North Park by chartered bus. Join Boulder Audubon and Raymond Davis in exploring Arapahoe National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding valley. Plenty of breeding waterbirds in these high marshes and ponds, as well as a good chance for Sage Grouse. In 1998, we got great looks at Sage Thrasher, numerous breeding ducks and American Avocets, and 7 Sage Grouse, as well as Moose, Badger, and White-tailed Prairie Dog. This is an overnight, with reasonable accommodations and bus fares (\$65 to \$100). Limited to 28 participants - confirm at 303-530-0973.

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NOTICE TO FIELD TRIP PARTICIPANTS

Please contact the field trip leader at least one week ahead if you plan to participate. Trips often go where participant numbers must be limited or where notice of participant numbers is required. Contacting the leader in advance also helps him/her plan the best possible trip, ensures that you know where/when to meet, what to bring, etc. Please arrive no later than the scheduled meeting time; leaders may not be able to delay departure for late arrivals. Carpool drivers should inform passengers of their schedule prior to departure to avoid scheduling conflicts. Leaders will make every effort to keep the group together, and drivers should make every effort to stay with the group.

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**WANTED: FIELD TRIP LEADERS.** It is not a difficult job – it is going birding with friends. You can really tell people “where to go” and they like it! You don’t have to know every species of bird in North America – there will be a participant or two who will do that! Please call Pearle Sandstrom-Smith and fill a void for leaders: 719-543-6427.



## **CHIRICAHUA MOUNTAINS TRIP**

A two day birding excursion to the Chiricahua Mountains of southeastern Arizona will take place on June 7 and 8, 2000. Travel to Portal, Arizona and return to Colorado will be up to each individual. The group size will be limited to 16 participants. We will meet at the little parking lot across from the Portal Store at 4:00 P.M. on Tuesday, June 6 to finalize the plans for the following two days. Tentatively, the plan is to bird the South Fork of Cave Creek (South Cave Creek Canyon) on the first morning. Although vehicles are allowed to drive the canyon road, we will walk and do our birding that way. There is a \$3.00/day use fee for driving in the canyon but not for walking. Possession of tape players in the canyon is strictly forbidden (as it is in most of Coronado National Forest). Target birds will be Elegant Trogon (what else?), Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Strickland's Woodpecker, Mexican Jay and Hutton's Vireo. That afternoon we will head up the mountains to Rustler and Barfoot Parks to look for Hepatic Tanager, Yellow-eyed Junco, Olive Warbler and Red-faced Warbler. Starting at dusk, we will listen for Poor-will, Southwestern Whip-poor-will, Elf Owl and Whiskered Screech Owl. Depending on the results of the first day, the second day will allow us to search for Mexican Chickadee, Greater Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Bendire's Thrasher, and Crissal Thrasher. Other species that should be easier to find are Verdin, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Scott's Oriole, Magnificent Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Bridled Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, and Painted Redstart.

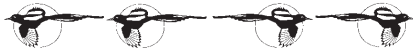
This is planned to be a leisure birding experience. We will take our time, look at the birds, butterflies, flowers, and whatever strikes our fancy. We will have an opportunity to discuss the ecology of the Chiricahua Mountains and surrounding area. The birding will be geared to the beginning-to-intermediate birder. Although we will be walking, we will not rush and will take things slowly.

Each person will be responsible for their own food. There is a small store in Portal and a slightly larger one in Rodeo, New Mexico, about 15 miles away. There is also a small café in Portal, which probably won't be open before we start in the mornings but would be available for lunches/dinners. It is suggested that everyone have with them morning and afternoon "snacks" and lunches, if possible. June starts to get quite warm in SE Arizona, so water is a must. Everyone should have plenty of drinking water with them. Water is available for canteens and water jugs at the campgrounds. Insects are generally not a problem but it is wise to have insect repellent along. Hats and sunscreen are also recommended.

Camping is available at three U.S. Forest Service campgrounds between Portal and Cave Creek Canyon. Cave Creek Canyon is day use only, no camping. Campgrounds are on a first-come first-served basis. Lodging is available at the Portal Peak Lodge (520-558-2223), Myrtle Craft Cottage (520-558-2443) and Cathedral Rock Lodge (520-558-2254). There are probably other lodgings also.

For more information or to reserve your spot on this trip, call Pearle Sandstrom-Smith, 719-543-6427.

*The trip leader will be Jim Dennis. Jim has been a professional wildlife biologist for the Colorado Division of Wildlife for 28 years. Prior to that, he worked for the National Audubon Society at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and in Maine on Bald Eagle research. He spent five months in the Dominican Republic working on distribution and taxonomy of birds (and reptiles and amphibians). His personal birding trips have taken him throughout the Caribbean, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Belize, Mexico, Cuba, and Scotland.*



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### CFO CONVENTION 2000

The Colorado Field Ornithologists' Convention for the year 2000 will be held at the Holiday Inn in Grand Junction, 26-29 May. Our featured guest will be Pete Dunne, the country's premier speaker and writer on the topic of birding. Pete will speak at the banquet on Saturday evening, 27 May. Topics for the papers session on Saturday afternoon include Cattle Egrets (Ron Ryder), Gray Vireos (Glenn Giroir), bird monitoring (Tony Leukering), Boreal Owls (Tom Holland), and Grace's Warblers (Scott Hutchings). Rooms are available at local hotels, but Grand Junction is hosting a lot of out-of-towners that weekend, so make your reservations ASAP. For more information, check the announcement in the January 2000 issue of the JCFO or on the CFO web site (<http://www.cfo-link.org>), or contact one of the convention co-chairs: Rich Levad (970-242-3979; [levadj@juno.com](mailto:levadj@juno.com)) or Aileen Roberts (970-243-8854; [redwing@gjct.net](mailto:redwing@gjct.net)).

Field trips, Pete Dunne, papers presentations, scenery, friends, birds, and a great t-shirt — this is not a convention to miss!



## **Colorado Bird Observatory** **Occasional Paper Number 4**



### **FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF FRANKLIN'S GULL FOR COLORADO**

Rich Levad  
Colorado Bird Observatory  
13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Franklin's Gulls (*Larus pipixcan*) breed primarily throughout the prairie pothole country of Canada and the northern Great Plains states; smaller isolated breeding populations nest in western Nebraska, southwestern Montana, northwestern Wyoming, southeastern Idaho, northern Utah, central Oregon, and western Nevada (Peterson 1990, Luce et al. 1997, National Geographic Society 1999). They are expanding their breeding range (Peterson 1990) and have increased dramatically in Colorado since the 1920's (Andrews and Righter 1992). They are now abundant fall migrants and common spring

migrants on the eastern plains of Colorado and rare to uncommon summer visitors in early summer in the western valleys, mountain parks, and eastern plains of Colorado (Andrews and Righter 1992). Several recent sightings, especially in North Park and at Lower Latham Reservoir, Weld County, have aroused suspicions of nesting in Colorado (Ron Ryder and Tony Leukering, pers. comm.).

In July 1998, while censusing nesting Eared Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*) at Walden Reservoir, Jackson County, for the Colorado Bird Observatory's *Monitoring Colorado's Birds* program, Glenn Giroir, Sue Bonfield, and I encountered a pair of Franklin's Gulls flying with a group of 14 Forster's Terns (*Sterna forsteri*). The birds aggressively dived and screamed at us as we canoed near an island, which was bordered by a band of cattails about 20 meters wide and 100 meters long. The Franklin's Gulls reacted as aggressively to our intrusion as did the terns, diving within three feet of our heads. As we approached the island, we spotted several juvenile terns swimming among the many Eared Grebes in the area. We searched the cattails for signs of nesting by the gulls but were unsuccessful.

Later, as we counted grebes further west on the reservoir, two juvenile Franklin's Gulls flew by our canoes. The previous day, we had seen and photographed a juvenile Franklin's Gull at MacFarlane Reservoir. We left North Park with strong suspicions that Franklin's Gulls had nested there that season, but all of the youngsters we saw were capable of full flight, and the possibility remained that these birds were early migrants.

I next stopped at Walden Reservoir on the afternoon of 20 July 1999. Tony Leukering was to meet me the next morning to conduct the grebe count. Curious about the Forster's Terns and Franklin's Gulls, I launched a canoe and paddled toward the island. Before I had traversed half of the distance, a flock of Forster's Terns met me to circle and protest. Four adult Franklin's Gulls joined the terns in diving and screaming at me. I continued toward the island and began to see flightless juvenile terns on the water. Among them I spotted a juvenile bird that was clearly not a tern but a juvenile Franklin's Gull. Although capricious gusts of wind prevented me from capturing and banding the bird, I was able to photograph it.

Later that evening, I conducted a transect in the wetlands at Lake John Annex. Two dozen Forster's Terns which harassed me throughout the transect were joined by two adult Franklin's Gulls. These gulls, however, were not as aggressive as those at Walden Reservoir, and I could find no evidence of young birds.

The following morning, Tony arrived and we set out to see the gulls. By paddling along the cattails we were able to find, capture, and band four flightless juvenile Franklin's Gulls. During the day, we saw at least five adult Franklin's and another eight juvenile birds in flight. The confirmation of breeding here indicates that these juveniles probably originated here and that the youngsters seen the previous year also were Walden Reservoir products. The species has been added as a top priority for monitoring by Colorado Bird Observatory's *Monitoring Colorado's Birds* program.

### Literature Cited

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## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' MISSION STATEMENT

The Colorado Field Ornithologists exists to: promote the field study, Conservation, and enjoyment of Colorado Birds; review sightings of rare birds through the Colorado Bird Records Committee and maintain the authoritative list of Colorado birds; publish the *Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists*; and conduct field trips and workshops, and hold annual conventions.



## WINTER RANGE EXPANSION OF LESSER GOLDFINCHES

Alan Versaw

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Several factors influence the winter range of birds in temperate climates. Until recently, the primary factors influencing the winter ranges of North American species were climatic. Recently, though, the popularization of winter bird-feeding has emerged as a prominent factor. Generous supplies of seed, freely dispensed from a staggering variety of feeders, claim a lion's share of the credit for the winter range expansions of several species.

To date, the better-documented examples have clustered—along with the human population—mainly across the eastern third of the continent. The dramatic winter range expansions of the Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) and Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), to cite two prominent examples, have brought comparatively little joy to birdfeeders west of the Mississippi River.

Recently, however, at least one certifiably western species has joined the ranks of species rapidly expanding their winter ranges—the Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*). And, while the extent to which bird feeders have contributed to this range expansion may be a matter of debate, the role of feeders cannot be lightly dismissed. Certainly, though, a recent spate of warmer winters must also receive consideration.

Niger seed, the favored feeder offering of Lesser Goldfinches, has enjoyed widespread use in Colorado and the interior West for only a little over a decade. During this time, Colorado and most of Utah have seen Lesser Goldfinches go from almost non-existent in winter to widely distributed and unmistakably on the increase. Similar patterns may hold in northeastern Nevada and northern New Mexico, but a dearth of reporting stations makes trends more difficult to detect in these sparsely-populated states. Christmas Bird Count tallies exemplify the dramatic increase in winter reports of Lesser Goldfinches across the entire region (Table 1). While the coincidence of use of niger seed and range expansion is suggestive, a conclusion of causation is, as yet, unwarranted.

Within Colorado, reports increased steadily through the 1990s, punctuated by a dramatic increase for the winters (December through February) of 1998-99

**Table 1.** Numbers of Lesser Goldfinches on CBCs, 1985-2000.

	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00
<b>COLORADO</b>																
Boulder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Colo. Springs	9	8	0	0	12	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	5	4
Denver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Fountain Creek <sup>1</sup>												19	0	0		
Grand Junction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	39	1	11	30
Lake Isabel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mesa <sup>2</sup>											0	0	0	0	0	29
Montrose											0	0	0	0	0	1
Penrose		0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Pueblo	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>UTAH</b>																
Cedar City	0	0	17	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	0	8
Dinosaur/Jensen				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0



Table 1, cont'd.

Kanab	1	0	0	0	12	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moab	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	12	4	15	16	13
Provo	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	13	13
Salt Lake City	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	3	0	10	8	5	2	9
Zion	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	30	0	18	43	0	25	54	60
N NEW MEXICO															
Espanola	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Farmington	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	12
Las Vegas	0	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Santa Fe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
NE NEVADA															
Elko					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	14	9

Other regional counts where the species is relatively regular and abundant:

St. George, UT; Truckee Meadows (Reno), NV; Carson City, NV; Fallon, NV.

<sup>1</sup>Only an official Audubon count in first year of existence (1995-96), data supplied by Alan Versaw.

<sup>2</sup>Not an official Audubon count, data supplied by Rich Levad.

and 1999-2000. Reports came from at least 10 different localities within the state in 1998-99 and nearly that many again through January 2000 (Gent 1999; Brandon Percival, pers. comm.). While most reports are of individuals or small groups of birds, present for no more than a few days, the most telling reports involve overwintering birds. These records leave the distinct impression of a bird busily rewriting a reputation that quite recently said it does not overwinter north of central New Mexico (Watt and Willoughby 1999).

The apparent first record of overwintering birds in Colorado was of two individuals at Ron Lambeth's feeder, just west of Grand Junction, during the winter of 1993-94 (Dexter 1994). The overwhelming majority of reports of overwintering individuals continue to pour in from the Grand Junction area. Ronda Woodward, Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright, and Aileen Roberts have documented overwintering groups from different parts of the Grand Valley. In Ronda Woodward's case, the goldfinches have stayed over three winters: 1996-97, 1998-99, and 1999-2000. The largest group of overwintering goldfinches spent the winter of 1998-99 at the campus of the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo. Paul Hurtado reported upwards of 30 individuals lingering throughout the period. For my part, at least five Lesser Goldfinches visited my feeder in Colorado Springs throughout the winter of 1998-99. As many as eight Lesser Goldfinches have visited my feeder in a single day during the winter of 1999-2000, but appearances have been much less consistent than in the previous winter. To date, the northernmost overwintering record for Colorado comes from Chip Clouse's backyard in Ft. Collins, where one adult male remained through February 2000.

Only in the case of the goldfinches at the campus of the University of Southern Colorado is the birds' proximity to backyard feeding stations uncertain. While niger seed is associated with a majority of the winter records in Colorado, the birds visiting Ron Lambeth's feeding station in 1993-94 came to offerings of black oil sunflower and milo (Ron Lambeth, pers. comm.). Although niger seed ranks as the species' undisputed favorite feeder offering, they readily accept small black oil sunflower seeds as well—particularly when the competition for the sunflower seeds is not excessive.

As of this writing, no overwintering records, and very few winter records of any sort, exist far from urban and suburban areas. A few individuals have been reported from riparian areas in or near centers of human population, but reports from rural areas remain strikingly few, perhaps due in part to limited observer coverage.

Clearly, the *casual* moniker assigned to the winter status for the species by

Andrews and Righter (1992) no longer applies. In the Grand Valley, at least, the status of the species merits promotion to *uncommon* (1-10 per day, usually seen daily—as defined by Andrews and Righter) or better. More careful attention paid to goldfinches frequenting feeders could expand this promotion of status to much of the I-25 corridor, at least as far north as Colorado Springs.

Records culled from Utah Christmas Bird Counts detail the emergence of a similar pattern in the Beehive State (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2000a). If anything, the upward trend appeared somewhat sooner in Utah. The Moab Count began reporting Lesser Goldfinches in 1990-91 and has reported them annually since 1995. The Salt Lake City count has reported Lesser Goldfinches every year but one since 1992. A similar situation prevails in Provo. In the southwest portion of Utah, Lesser Goldfinches are perennially present in large numbers for the St. George Count, but have been increasing dramatically on the Zion National Park Count since the early 1990s. Cedar City has recently witnessed a somewhat less startling increase in numbers. The steady increase in residential development near the south boundary of Zion National Park may be influencing the increase in Lesser Goldfinch numbers there, an area closer than Cedar City (both in distance and climate) to the species' traditional wintering grounds in southwestern Washington County.

Mark Stackhouse (pers. comm.) reports that Lesser Goldfinches may have lingered in the Salt Lake Valley throughout the winter one or two years prior to the time (1992) they were first reported on the Christmas count. Since that time “they have become increasingly widespread and numerous.” Up until 1995, the winter reports were restricted to a small area perhaps two or three miles north of downtown Salt Lake City, but have since become much more generally reported around the city. Recent winter reports have emerged from communities as far north as Logan and Ogden. This more northerly penetration in Utah seems consistent with the earlier records of overwintering individuals (north of Washington County) for that state.

In all cases, the birds lingering through January and February seem remarkably winter hardy for a bird of such small stature, slightly less than 10 grams on average (Watt and Willoughby 1999). In no case have observers noted a sizable decline in numbers of individuals through the course of a winter. Of course, the continued availability of well-stocked feeders renders considerations of mass considerably less significant than they would be without the feeders.

In all the excitement over the sudden explosion of winter records for this species, however, one note of qualification must be added. At least as early as

1953-54, and for approximately 50% of the counts since that year, the Colorado Springs Christmas Bird Count has reported Lesser Goldfinches (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2000a). If authentic, these reports indicate that Lesser Goldfinches might well have overwintered in the state, almost entirely without notice, for nearly 50 years! Unfortunately, however, these reports have gone almost entirely without accompanying documentation. The very fact that rare bird reports were not filed for these birds strongly suggests that the reports were made with little or no knowledge of the species' winter status in Colorado, a situation which almost automatically casts the reports in a more difficult light. Moreover, none of the long-time pillars of the Colorado Springs birding community with whom I have discussed the topic possesses any first-hand knowledge of these reports. Most of these people cautiously regard Lesser Goldfinches as rather recent arrivals on the winter scene of Colorado Springs. Still, the tantalizing possibility remains. Any concrete information regarding the long history of Lesser Goldfinch reports on the Colorado Springs Christmas Bird Count would be sincerely welcomed within Colorado's ornithological community.

Similar problems of unverified reports plague the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) data. Although this middle-of-February event boasts a history of only three years (1998-2000), numerous reports of Lesser Goldfinches have flooded in from Utah, Colorado, and even northeastern Nevada (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2000b). Not surprisingly, nearly all of these reports cluster within areas of higher human population densities—the Wahsatch Front, the Colorado River Valley, and the Front Range. The absence of any process of verification, however, renders it difficult to draw many firm conclusions from the GBBC data. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of reports from areas well north of the recognized winter range make a convincing case that some change is afoot.

Regardless of the uncertainties surrounding the GBBC and the Colorado Springs CBC reports, carefully documented reports streaming in from Utah and Colorado provide crucial evidence that the species is in the midst of a dramatic winter range expansion within the Rocky Mountain region. Sharply higher numbers in the last two winters suggest that we may still be witnessing only the leading edge of this expansion. Consistent reporting of Lesser Goldfinches in winter, particularly from points near the northern edge of the expansion, will help us to better understand both the where and the why of this fascinating phenomenon.

The presence of overwintering Lesser Goldfinches leads directly to the question of whether or not changes in winter range might be accompanied by

changes in breeding patterns. Although the data to date are scant, indications point to the conclusion that at least some individuals are breeding earlier. Both Coen Dexter (pers. comm.) and Ronda Woodward (pers. comm.) have reported adult birds attending fledglings near feeders as early as the end of April. Although California's Lesser Goldfinches typically breed in April, similar behavior in our state pushes the breeding calendar ahead by a minimum of two months. In California, the coming of April coincides with the end of the rainy season. Therefore, birds breeding in April should have an abundance of weed seeds to feed their young. The presence of well-supplied feeders appears to be effecting a similarly advanced breeding timetable here in Colorado. It remains unclear what long-term impacts such changes may have on the species.

The implications of an alteration in breeding season are particularly interesting with respect to the question of subspeciation of Lesser Goldfinches. Watt and Willoughby (1999) advance the differing breeding and molt cycles of the Pacific coast (*hesperophila*) and Rocky Mountain (*psaltria*) populations as important evidence for subspeciation. However, if at least one of these physiological indicators of subspeciation turns out to be little more than a flexible response to abundant supplies of seed, then the breadth of the gap between races may need to pass under further scrutiny.

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## RECENT ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE PERTAINING TO COLORADO, No. 8

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If the reader is aware of any paper regarding Colorado's birds in journals not reviewed regularly in this section, I would appreciate a reprint or a full citation for the paper so that I may include it in this feature.

Cox, N. 1996. **Colorado State University's campus owls.** *Owls Magazine* 3(3):9.

This parallels a paper in a recent JCFO issue; however, this short article follows a very old pair of Great Horned Owls that was present on the "Oval" for 15 years.

Knopf, F. L. 1996. **Prairie legacies - birds.** Pp. 135-148 in F. L. Knopf and F. B. Samson, eds. *Prairie Conservation*. Island Press, Covelo, CA.

Fritz Knopf (ecologist at the Midcontinent Ecological Science Center, Fort Collins) gives an overview (in chapter 10) of the endemic bird species along with the secondary species inhabiting the North American Prairie. This includes the zones of vegetation that various species prefer, from the shortgrass to the ecotones associated with the tallgrass prairie. He reviews the population status of each grassland species with Breeding Bird Survey trend results and, with endemic species, he also uses Christmas Bird Count trend results to show the annual rates of change. Many grassland species are in decline. To his credit, Knopf is one of the few avian ecologists who actually considers that declining grassland bird populations may be due to problems on the wintering grounds or migratory-stopover locations, and not just on the breeding grounds.





## LOUISE HERING'S 42-YEAR BREEDING BIRD STUDY ON ENCHANTED MESA

Stephen Jones and Paula Hansley

### Introduction

When Louise Hering found Bushtits (*Psaltriparus minimus*) nesting on Boulder's Enchanted Mesa in 1953 (Hering 1955), she decided the mesa would make a perfect setting for a long-term bird study. Hering had honed her bird identification skills in the mountains west of Boulder and in the Black Forest, near Colorado Springs, where she studied breeding birds while completing her Master's thesis in ecology at the University of Colorado (Hering 1946). When Hering began her work on Enchanted Mesa in 1954, she couldn't have guessed that her study would continue for 42 years, becoming the longest-running breeding bird study in Colorado.

Over the years, dramatic changes occurred on the mesa. Originally private land, Enchanted Mesa was purchased by the City of Boulder in 1961 after a developer revealed plans to build a hotel below the famous Flatirons rock formation. This purchase spawned the City of Boulder Open Space program, a national model for urban land conservation, and resulted in the creation of a new conservation group, PLAN Boulder County. In 1982 the Boulder Parks and Recreation Department initiated a massive tree-thinning operation, called Project Greenslope, on the mesa. The goal was to curb a mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) outbreak and reduce fire hazard, but some angry citizens complained that the forest contractors had devastated Enchanted

Mesa, removing snags where nuthatches nested, carving out roads, and dragging logs across patches of shrubbery. A spring 1990 windstorm snapped off the crowns of dozens of 10-15 cm (4-6 in) diameter ponderosa pines on the mesa. In September 1998 the Parks Department conducted a low-intensity controlled burn that removed decadent ground vegetation but scarred most of the ponderosa pines in the plot.

During the course of her breeding bird study and a concurrent winter bird census, Hering visited the mesa more than 600 times and observed 105 species, including a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) that flew so close Hering could feel the whoosh of air as it zoomed by, two pairs of nesting Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus*), and a Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) that circled her at eye-level as it homed in on a motionless fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*). "I never got bored with the study," she says. "Always there was something to see. I loved being on the mesa, and I felt I belonged there."

Travel and work commitments kept Hering away from her plot in 1955 and 1957-60, but between 1961 and 1990 she completed breeding and winter surveys each year. After 1991, Dave Hallock and Barbara Beall took over, and thanks to their efforts, we can present 32 years of nearly continuous data (34 years total) spanning the period from 1954-95.

### Study Area

Enchanted Mesa is located in Boulder Mountain Park, 0.8 km (0.5 mi) southwest of the City of Boulder, in the eastern part of S1, T1S, R71W. Boulder Mountain Park is a 25 km<sup>2</sup> (9 mi<sup>2</sup>) mosaic of cliffs, talus slopes, mixed coniferous forests, foothills shrublands, grasslands, and mountain riparian woodlands.

Boulder Mountain Park supports more than 90 species of breeding birds, including 15 birds of prey, 5 woodpeckers, and 8 warblers. Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forests and woodlands within the Park support more than 55 breeding species, including Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Northern Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*), Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*), Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*), Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), and Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) (Jones 1989, Kingery 1998).

Enchanted Mesa lies near the eastern edge of Boulder Mountain Park. The mesa is bounded to the north by Bluebell Creek, to the south by Skunk Creek, to the west by the steep slopes of Green Mountain, and to the east by subdivisions and patches of grassland. The study plot is situated in the



northeast corner of the mesa at an elevation of 1900 m (6235 ft; Hering 1978). A closed one-lane road frequently used by hikers and joggers cuts through the plot. Several social trails radiate out from this road.

Dominant vegetation on the mesa-top is ponderosa pine forest and ponderosa pine woodland. Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) grows in shaded ravines on the north and west sides of the mesa, but not within the study plot (Cooper 1984). The forest and woodland understory is dominated by mixed grasses, including *Hesperostipa comata*, *Muhlenbergia montana*, and *Poa* spp. Scattered shrubs include *Negundo aceroides*, *Rhus trilobata*, *Mahonia repens*, *Physocarpus monogynus*, and *Ribes* spp. (Weber and Wittman 1996).

Although the mesa was never logged commercially on a large scale, areas of the ponderosa pine forest were cut by ranchers and other local residents during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a result of these disturbances and suppression of natural fires, the mesa is forested by second-growth stands with a majority of the trees in the 50- to 150-year age class (Robbins and Dodds 1908, Colorado State Forest Service 1982, Boulder Mt. Parks 1999).

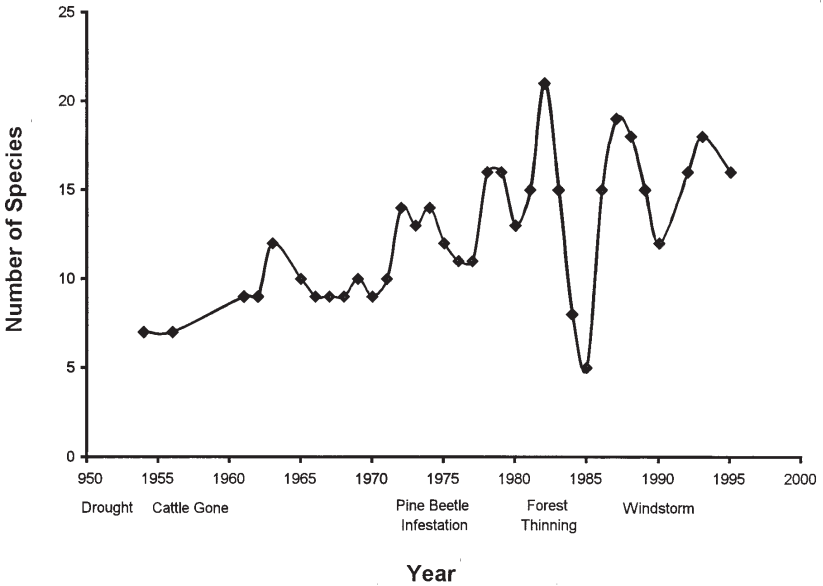
### Methods

The Breeding Bird Census (BBC) is a standardized monitoring program initiated by the National Audubon Society in 1937 to estimate breeding bird densities in specific habitat types throughout North America. Volunteers locate and mark off rectangular plots of approximately 8-60 ha (20-150 ac) in areas of "uniform" habitat. They then conduct a minimum of 8-12 counts during the nesting cycle of most species found on the plot, and conduct additional counts to detect species that breed earlier or later (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology 1991). Hering's plot is approximately 8.1 ha (20 ac).

Counts are conducted during early morning or late afternoon. One to two observers walk along varying routes within each plot, marking the approximate position of territorial males and nests as they are encountered. Birds flying over the plot are not counted. At the end of each breeding season, observers estimate the number of territories for each species and record the number of nests and fledglings seen.

### Results and Discussion

Hering and subsequent observers visited the Enchanted Mesa plot an average of 15 times per breeding season (approximately 1 April-30 July). Total annual observer hours varied considerably from year to year, from a low of 7 hr in 1978 to a high of 37 hr in 1984 (mean = 22 hr). However, for the duration of the study,

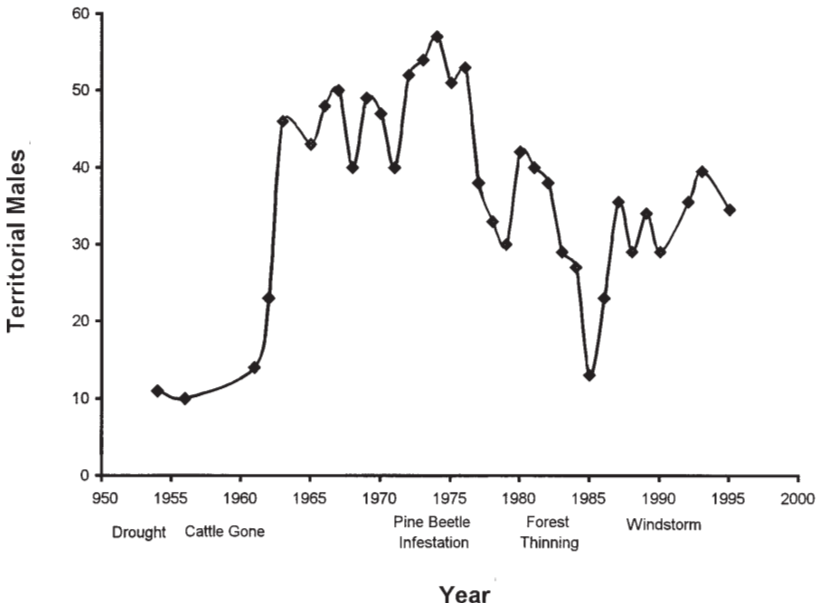


**Figure 1.** Number of species counted on Breeding Bird Census, 1954-1995, Enchanted Mesa, Boulder County.

annual observer hours varied independently of both annual species observed ( $r = -0.082$ ) and annual individuals observed ( $r = -0.140$ ).

A total of 28 territorial species were observed within the plot (Table 1). The total number of territorial species observed increased from the earliest counts in the 1950s to the 1990s, in a generally upward trend with a short, dramatic decline during and after the 1982 forest thinning operation (Fig. 1). The density of territorial males increased sharply from 1956-63, peaked in 1974, decreased from 1974-85, and then increased erratically from 1985-95 (Fig. 2).

Environmental disturbances in western coniferous forests can contribute to decreases or increases in breeding bird populations (Diem 1980, Scott and Oldmeyer 1983, Mannan and Meslow 1984, Bock and Fleck 1995). Environmental disturbances on the mesa that might have affected bird populations include cattle grazing during the 1950s, a drought during the mid-1950s, the 1970s mountain pine beetle infestation, forest thinning and brush

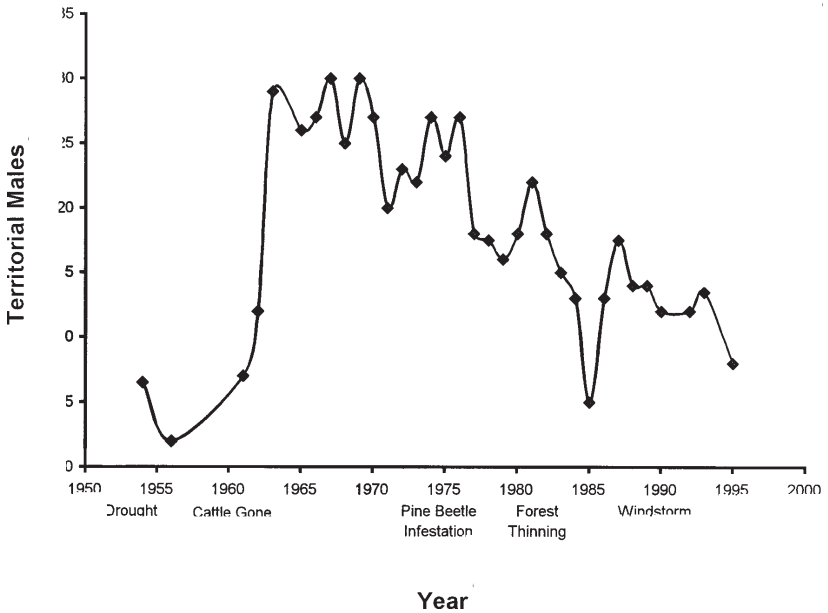


**Figure 2.** Number of territorial males of all species counted on Breeding Bird Census, 1954-1995, Enchanted Mesa, Boulder County.

removal during 1982, the 1990 windstorm that toppled small trees and created snags, and increased recreational activity throughout the study period (S. Armstead, pers. comm.). To examine potential impacts of these disturbances on nesting birds, we grouped breeding species into three categories: ground, shrub, and lower canopy nesters; cavity nesters; and canopy nesters (species that nested primarily in mature conifers) (Ehrlich, et al. 1988, Kingery 1998; see Table 1).

### **Ground, Shrub, and Lower Canopy Nesting Species**

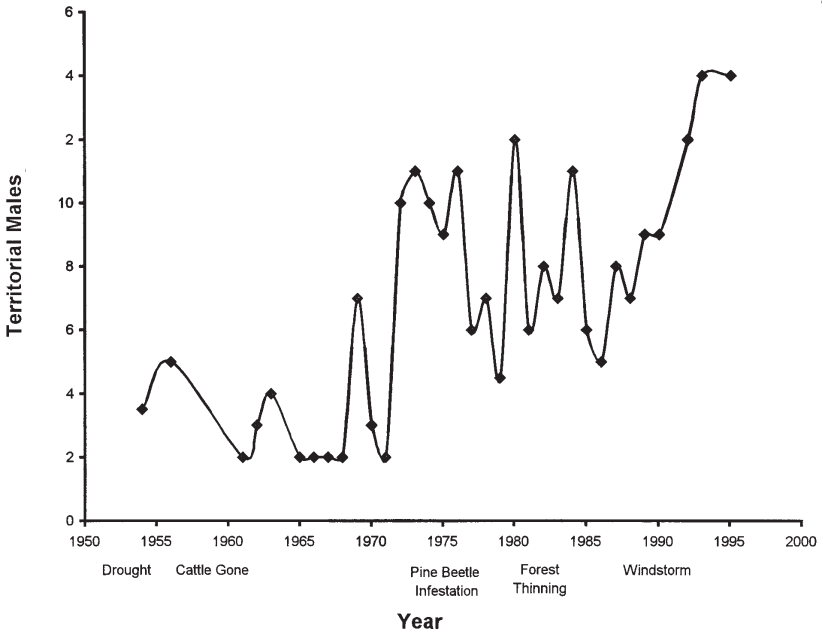
Density of ground, shrub, and lower canopy nesters increased sharply from 1956-67 (Fig. 3). Cattle grazing on the mesa during the 1950s may have reduced overall shrub and grass cover. All cattle had been removed by 1961 (L. Hering, pers. comm.), but shrub vegetation would have required several years to recover from stresses caused by grazing. This recovery may have been counteracted by increased shading of shrubs and grasses as the forest matured, along with increased disturbance of ground and shrub nesting birds



**Figure 3.** Number of territorial males of ground, shrub, and lower canopy nesting species counted on Breeding Bird Census, 1954-1995, Enchanted Mesa, Boulder County.

by hikers and their pets as recreational pressure intensified.

Densities declined erratically from 1969-95 (Fig. 3). Mourning Doves (*Zenaida macroura*) and Chipping Sparrows (*Spizella passerina*) experienced the greatest apparent declines (Table 1). Mourning Doves are habitat generalists that nest in a wide variety of Colorado ecosystems, but they avoid closed-canopy forests and reach highest nesting densities in human-disturbed environments (Kuenning 1998). In Colorado, Chipping Sparrows nest primarily in coniferous forests and woodlands, reaching highest nesting densities in piñon-juniper and ponderosa pine woodlands (Versaw 1998). The numerical decline of these two species suggests a transition from open-canopy to closed-canopy forest on the mesa, a trend noted in the Project Greenslope operation manual (Colorado State Forest Service 1982) and by a 1999 forest inventory (Mantione and Smith 1999).



**Figure 4.** Number of territorial males of cavity nesting species counted on Breeding Bird Census, 1954-1995, Enchanted Mesa, Boulder County.

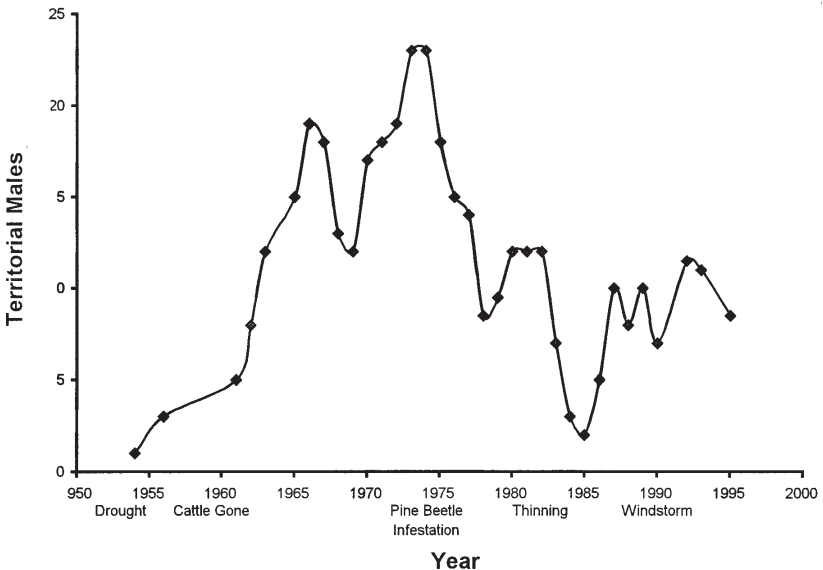
Recent studies confirm that fire suppression and removal of grazing livestock have resulted in closed-canopy forests replacing open-canopy woodlands on the mesas west of Boulder (Veblen and Lorenz 1991, Mantione and Smith 1999). The 1982 forest thinning on Enchanted Mesa opened up the forest somewhat, but post-thinning basal areas probably still exceeded those of ponderosa pine woodlands on the mesa prior to European settlement (Robbins and Dodds 1908, Colorado State Forest 1982, Jones 1989, Veblen and Lorenz 1991, Mantione and Smith 1999).

**Cavity Nesting Species**

Density of cavity nesting birds increased erratically throughout the study period (Fig. 4). Secondary cavity nesters, including Violet-green Swallows (*Tachycineta thalassina*), Mountain Chickadees (*Poecile gambeli*), and Pygmy Nuthatches (*Sitta pygmaea*), accounted for most of these increases (Table 1).

No major logging or forestry operations occurred on the mesa between 1954 and 1981 (A. Wichmann, pers. comm.). The Mountain Pine Beetle infestation that swept through the area during the 1970s (Colorado State Forest Service 1982) provided foraging opportunities for insectivores and created snags that were later used by cavity nesting birds. However, many snags were removed during the 1982 forest thinning (A. Wichmann and L. Hering, pers. comm.).

Growing awareness of the importance of snags for cavity nesting birds has contributed to a change in forest management practices on Enchanted Mesa. During the 1950s, dead trees were routinely harvested for firewood. The operating manual for Project Greenslope (Colorado State Forest Service 1982) acknowledged the importance of snags for cavity nesting birds but set a minimum prescription of only one "large" snag/acre (0.4 ha). After completion of Project Greenslope, Boulder Mountain Parks staff pursued a "hands-off" policy with respect to snags, removing dead trees only to suppress insect infestations or eliminate potential hazards near trails (Jones 1989, 1991; A. Wichmann, pers. comm.). It is likely that these changes in management practices contributed to the increased density of cavity nesting birds.



**Figure 5.** Number of territorial males of canopy nesting species counted on Breeding Bird Census, 1954-1995, Enchanted Mesa, Boulder County.

### **Canopy Nesting Species**

Birds that typically nest in the lower to upper forest canopy nested irregularly on the plot throughout the study period, with numbers peaking during the mid-1970s, near the height of the mountain pine beetle infestation (Fig. 5). Plot densities of two insectivores, Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) and Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*) declined by more than 50% from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s (Table 1). However, two other canopy nesting insectivores, Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) and Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) were not detected on the plot until after 1979 (Table 1). In 1993 and 1995, Hammond's Flycatcher density exceeded that of both Western Wood-Pewee and Plumbeous Vireo.

These changes in the composition of the plot's canopy nesting bird population may reflect the transition from open-canopy to more mature closed-canopy forest on the mesa. In the Central Rockies, Western Wood-Pewees and Plumbeous Vireos typically nest in open-canopy woodlands (Baker 1998, Chace 1998), whereas Hammond's Flycatchers use mature, closed-canopy forests (Sedgwick 1998).

Human disturbance along an expanding network of social trails may have contributed to the decline in densities of Western Wood-Pewees. In a study of recreational impacts on songbirds nesting on City of Boulder open space, Miller, et al. (1998) found reduced numbers of Western Wood-Pewees near heavily-used trails.

### **Urban-adapted Species**

One of the major influences on the Enchanted Mesa forest environment from 1954-95 was the growth of recreational activity in the Boulder Mountain Park. During the 1960s, Hering (pers. comm.) rarely encountered more than a half-dozen hikers along the 1 km (0.6 mi) trail leading up to the plot. On a recent Sunday morning, we met 27 hikers along this same trail. Annual visits to the Mountain Park more than doubled from 1970-95 (S. Armstead, pers. comm.).

Habitat fragmentation caused by the widening and proliferation of trails, in concert with disturbance of nesting birds by humans and their pets, may benefit some habitat generalists and adventive species at the expense of forest specialists and native species (Harris and Silva-Lopez 1992, Engels and Sexton 1994, Paton 1994). In their study of breeding bird densities in Boulder Mountain Park, Miller, et al. (1998) identified nine species that nested in significantly lower densities near trails. Six of those species nested on Hering's plot, with three (Mourning Dove, Western Wood-Pewee, and Chipping Sparrow) nesting in declining numbers from 1965-95; one (Pygmy

**Table 1.** Mean annual number of territorial males on Enchanted Mesa Breeding Bird Census, Boulder County.

Species	Nesting habitat <sup>1</sup>	1954-56 <sup>2</sup>	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-95 <sup>3</sup>
Mourning Dove	low	1.5	5.2	5.2	2.2	0.9
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	low	0.0	0.1	1.7	1.3	1.0
Downy Woodpecker	cav	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Hairy Woodpecker	cav	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	1.0
Northern Flicker	cav	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.3
Western Wood-Pewee	high	0.0	6.6	9.1	3.7	3.9
Hammond's Flycatcher	high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	2.4
Cordilleran Flycatcher	low	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Violet-green Swallow	cav	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.3
Steller's Jay	low	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.0
Black-billed Magpie	low	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.3
Mountain Chickadee	cav	1.5	0.4	1.9	0.7	1.8
White-breasted Nuthatch	cav	0.5	0.7	1.4	0.7	0.8
Pygmy Nuthatch	cav	1.8	1.3	3.3	4.3	7.5
House Wren	cav	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.8



Table 1, cont'd.

American Robin	low	1.5	4.9	5.0	4.5	2.9
Plumbeous Vireo	high	0.0	1.8	3.9	1.4	1.5
Yellow-rumped Warbler	high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Western Tanager	high	1.0	0.9	1.9	0.9	1.0
Black-headed Grosbeak	low	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Spotted Towhee	low	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.9
Chipping Sparrow	low	0.0	9.0	7.7	3.2	4.1
Dark-eyed Junco	low	0.5	0.7	1.1	1.2	0.0
Western Meadowlark	low	1.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Brown-headed Cowbird	--	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3
House Finch	low	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Pine Siskin	high	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.1	0.8
Lesser Goldfinch	low	0.0	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.4
Total number of species		10	17	19	24	22

<sup>1</sup>Nesting habitat codes: low (ground, shrub, lower canopy), cav (cavity), high (upper canopy)

<sup>2</sup>Data were not collected in 1955.

<sup>3</sup>Data were not available for 1991 or 1994.

Nuthatch) nesting in increasing numbers; and two (Mountain Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta carolinensis*) nesting irregularly (Table 1).

House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), which typically nest near urban areas, first appeared on the plot in 1992 and continued to nest there through 1995. Black-billed Magpies (*Pica pica*) first nested on the plot in 1978 and have nested irregularly since then. In contrast, European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), abundant in and around Boulder County urban areas, did not nest on the plot during the study period. American Robins, which often thrive in human-disturbed environments (Miller, et al. 1998, Kingery 1998), nested on the plot throughout the study period but in declining numbers after 1970.

Without controls on other environmental factors, it is not possible to quantify the impacts of increased recreational activity on a single study plot. However, the data suggest that as recreational activity increased, Enchanted Mesa became less hospitable to ground and shrub nesting birds and more attractive to some urban-adapted species.

### Conclusions

Because BBC protocol are applied differently by different observers and require observers to count territories rather than individual birds, the BBC methodology is hard to replicate and results are difficult to interpret (Terborgh 1990). For example, singing male Chipping Sparrows often congregate during late spring in small areas of the forest before dispersing to breeding territories. Males may remain in these "staging areas" for three weeks or more and could be mistaken for territorial males. For non-singing species such as Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) and Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothus ater*), territorial behavior is difficult to detect. Furthermore, since BBC observations are limited to a single plot, as opposed to a random distribution of points or plots, it is virtually impossible to separate very local influences (such as the construction of a single trail or the burning of a small area of forest) from more widespread influences (such as a regional drought or insect infestation).

Nevertheless, the data from Louise Hering's study suggest that substantive changes occurred in Enchanted Mesa's breeding avifauna from 1954-95. Numbers of ground, shrub, and lower canopy nesting birds appeared to decline as the forest matured and recreational pressures intensified. Numbers of cavity nesting birds apparently increased as forestry practices evolved toward protecting standing dead trees. Nesting bird populations peaked during the 1970s mountain pine beetle infestation and fluctuated sharply downward and then upward during and immediately after the forest thinning operation of 1982.

As breeding birds on the mesa continue to react to recent environmental disturbances and to evolving forestry practices, we should gain a better understanding of the relationship between forest conditions and bird populations. For now, Hering's research provides a unique long-term view of a Colorado breeding bird population while illustrating the complexity of natural and not-so-natural processes in Front Range ponderosa pine forests.

### Acknowledgments

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## AMERICAN CROW CAUGHT ON ELECTRIC FENCE

Lowell Baumunk  
Littleton, CO

On the afternoon of 26 December 1999, I heard a large commotion of bird sounds coming from the cottonwoods and willows along the canal behind our house. I saw a large congregation of American Crows and Black-billed Magpies, perhaps ten to fifteen of each, all calling noisily. More birds of both species could be seen approaching the area from all directions.

I guessed that they might be mobbing an owl or a hawk, but when I approached the area I saw that the object of their attention was a crow stuck in our neighbor's fence at an awkward angle. On close inspection I could see that the crow had perched on the electrified top wire and then reached down with its beak and grabbed the grounded wire below. Its feet were gripping the top wire, its beak was clamped onto the lower wire, and its body was vibrating spasmodically.

With a stick, I was able to break it away from the fence, and it half hopped and half flew into some nearby bushes. It had been on the fence at least ten minutes, and perhaps considerably longer.

I wonder how to interpret the behavior of the other birds. Were they showing concern for their stricken comrade? It is interesting that magpies, as well as crows, were involved. And of course the result was that the unfortunate crow was rescued because of the behavior of the other corvids!

**NEWS FROM THE FIELD:  
FALL 1999 REPORT (AUGUST - NOVEMBER)**

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The 1999 fall season started with a rather wet August, which continued the quite wet and cool summer. September was more like average, with some hot spells. However, it was very dry and warm throughout October and, especially, November. The first taste of cold weather came over the last week of the month, including Thanksgiving. The mild weather meant that some individuals of several summer species remained in Colorado well beyond their usual departure dates. These included American White Pelican, Cattle Egret, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Mountain Plover, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Gray Catbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, and Lesser Goldfinch.

There were an increased number of reports of several species this fall. These included Short-billed Dowitcher, which I think is probably because the juveniles are looked for much more systematically now. Both Lesser and Great Black-backed Gull observations are increasing in the state, and Eurasian Collared-Dove and Great-tailed Grackle are expanding their ranges in Colorado.

The reader of this report should be aware that many of the sightings used in this report were taken from postings to the COBIRDS electronic bulletin board. Not all of the rare and unusual species have been supported by documentation sent to the Colorado Bird Records Committee. Birds in capital letters have less than ten accepted Colorado records, and underlined species are those for which the committee desires written documentation. If you need an electronic version of the rare bird documentation form, it can be retrieved from the CFO Web page (<http://www.cfo-link.org>). If you need a hard copy, please use the one on the inside of the journal's mailer. Documentation should be sent to the chairperson, Bill Lisowsky (address on the form).

Thanks to everyone who sent me their sightings, and to Brandon Percival, who collected the postings off COBIRDS and elsewhere. Please send your winter season sightings to me either by email or snail mail.

Abbreviations: C.C. = Community College; C.V.C.G. = Crow Valley Camp-ground in Weld County; F.C.R.P. = Fountain Creek Regional Park in El Paso County; S.T.P. = Sewage Treatment Plant; S.W.A. = State Wildlife Area; W.R.G.B. = Wheat Ridge Greenbelt in Jefferson County. County names are italicized.

**Red-throated Loon**: The adult found at Wolford Mt. Rec. Area, *Grand*, during the summer stayed until Sep 12 (TL), when it had changed into basic, or winter, plumage. Another bird in basic plumage was seen at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on Nov 27 (PS).

**Pacific Loon**: There were twenty-five reports this fall, but the only one from the West Slope was an adult at Highline Res. in *Mesa* on Nov 1 (DWr).

**Red-necked Grebe**: First-year birds were seen at Jumbo Res., *Logan*, on Oct 10 (RK, BKP), and at Boulder Res., *Boulder*, on Oct 30-31 (SF, SSe, TL, mob) and Nov 7 (DW). A basic plumaged adult was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, during the period Nov 7-28 (MJ, mob).

**American White Pelican**: There were at least seven reports at the end of the fall period in late November, all from the eastern plains.

**Brown Pelican**: The adult and immature found during the summer at John Martin Res., *Bent*, stayed until at least Aug 29 (mob).

**Neotropic Cormorant**: Single adults were seen at John Martin Res., *Bent*, on Aug 22 (CLW) and at Strauss Cabin L., *Larimer*, on Oct 9 (PS).

**Least Bittern**: The two found at Fort Lyon, *Bent*, were heard again on Aug 6 (CLW, JK, SS).

**Little Blue Heron**: An immature was seen at Lochbuie, *Adams*, on Aug 5-7 (CLW, mob), Aug 15 (KS), and on Aug 29 (TD).

**Cattle Egret**: A late lingering individual was at Wellington, *Larimer*, on Nov 11 (WPL, KH).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: Single immatures of this species were seen at L. Cheraw, *Otero*, on Aug 29 (BKP, MJ, PH), and at L. Henry, *Crowley*, on Sep 5 (DJ).

**Greater White-fronted Goose**: One was at Utah Park, Aurora, *Arapahoe*, on Nov 19-21 (BGU, mob), and another was at Rocky Mt. L., *Denver*, on Nov 22 (GW). Two were seen at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on Nov 25 (PS), and single individuals were at Blende and Vineland, *Pueblo*, on Nov 26 (DSi, DJ).

**Snow Goose**: Five very early returning birds were seen at Nee Noshe Res., *Kiowa*, on Aug 6 (DF, CLW).

**Ross's Goose**: Good numbers were seen along the Front Range in November as well as the higher numbers farther east on the plains. One was seen on the West Slope at Highline Res., *Mesa*, on Nov 3 (RL).

- BLACK BRANT:** An adult was very cooperative and seen by many birders at Utah Park, Aurora, *Arapahoe*, Nov 16-21 (DB, mob).
- Trumpeter Swan:** The individual that has been around Boulder since last winter was at Boulder Valley Ranch, *Boulder*, throughout the fall period. Another bird was seen at Union Res., *Weld*, on Oct 29 (SM).
- Tundra Swan:** Three were seen on the West Slope at Highline Res., *Mesa*, on Nov 1 (DWr), two were in North Park at Arapaho N.W.R., *Jackson*, on Nov 14 (M&DM), and one was at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, on Nov 26 (AV).
- Blue-winged Teal:** Lingered individuals of this species were at Rocky Ford S.T.P., *Otero*, on 5 Nov (BKP), and at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on 6 Nov (BKP).
- Cinnamon Teal:** A late bird was seen at Clark Res., *Huerfano*, on 18 Nov (DSi).
- Greater Scaup:** Several were seen along the Front Range this fall, but the most unusual location was a single female at Windy Gap Res., *Grand*, on 21 Oct (DF, TL, RL).
- Surf Scoter:** All reports this season were of females or immatures. One was at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, between 30 Oct-13 Nov (BG, AV, mob), one was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 2 Nov (BKP), two were at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on Nov 6 (CFO, BKP), one was at Juniata Res., *Mesa*, on Nov 11 (RL), and one was at Rifle Gap Res., *Garfield*, on 28-30 Nov (KPo, VZ).
- White-winged Scoter:** An immature bird was at Hamilton Res., *Larimer*, on 30 Oct (SJD, mob), two males were at Standley L., *Jefferson*, on 1 Nov (TD), one was at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, on 15 Nov (D&DM), one female was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 27 Nov (BKP), and three were at Aurora Res., *Arapahoe*, between 28-29 Nov (GW).
- Black Scoter:** An immature female stayed at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, between Nov 5-28 (MJ, mob), and an adult male was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on Nov 10 (BKP).
- Barrow's Goldeneye:** Several were seen at their usual haunts in western Colorado and along the Front Range. An unusual sighting quite far east was two males at L. Henry, *Crowley*, on 21 Nov (MJ, BKP).
- Hooded Merganser:** One was in an unusual location at Wolford Mt. Rec. Area, *Grand*, on Oct 22 (DF, TL, RL).
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** Single immatures were seen at Boulder, *Boulder*, on Sep 7 (RT), and at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on Oct 2 (DAL).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** Several were reported from the Front Range, but more



unusual was one seen on the West Slope at Grand Jct., *Mesa*, on Sep 20 (RL).

**Harlan's Hawk:** 61 were seen in the Lamar area on 13-14 Nov (BW, JHa), which is the most that Brian Wheeler has ever seen on a single trip.

**GYRFALCON:** One was seen between Oak Creek & Steamboat Sprs., *Routt*, on 13 Nov (M&DM), and a report has been sent to the Records Committee.

**Black Rail:** Up to seven were heard at Fort Lyon, *Bent*, between Aug 6-13 (CLW, JK, SS, mob).

**American Golden-Plover:** One was at Rd. 48, *Weld*, between Sep 13-21 (BBH, TD, mob), one was at Timnath Res., *Larimer*, on Oct 3 (SM), and seven were at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on Oct 15 (JR).

**Mountain Plover:** A late lingering individual was at Metro L., *Pueblo*, on Oct 17 (DSi).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** One was at John Martin Res., *Bent*, on Aug 14 (BKP, RO, DQ, RK, MBo), and one was at Rd. 48, *Weld*, between Sep 9-13 (SM) and was well seen by many observers.

**Sanderling:** One was seen at the unusual mountain location of Wolford Mt. Rec. Area, *Grand*, on Sep 19 (TL).

**Least Sandpiper:** An unusual West Slope sighting was at Totten Res., *Montezuma*, on Nov 13 (RL).

**Dunlin:** One was at Red Lion S.W.A., *Logan*, on Sep 12 (BK).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** The only report this season was one at Weld County Rd. 48, *Weld*, on Sep 7 (SM).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** There were seven reports this season, which is more than usual. However, all but the last were of juvenal plumaged birds, which are fairly easy to identify. One was at Stoneham, *Weld*, on Sep 3 (WPL, JMa, JB, JHi), one at Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, on Sep 5 (JV, PG), one at La Junta Sewer Ponds, *Otero*, on Sep 6 (BKP, SC), one at Timnath Res., *Larimer*, on Sep 8 (SJD), one at Rd. 48, *Weld*, on Sep 16 (SM, JHi), one at Stoneham, *Weld*, on Sep 19 (NE, DSc, KS, JK), one at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on Oct 9 (PS), and finally one adult at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on Oct 16 (DAL).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** A dark morph juvenile was at Standley L., *Jefferson*, on Oct 30-Nov 1 (NE, TL, JR, mob), one juvenile at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on Nov 6 (CFO, BKP, DSi), and a dark morph juvenile at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, between 12-28 Nov (BB, DF, JR).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** An adult bird was at Windsor Res., *Weld*, on Oct 18 (SJD), and one juvenile at Hamilton Res., *Larimer*, on Oct 31 (PS).

**Little Gull:** A bird in juvenal plumage was at Union Res., *Weld*, on Oct 5-6 (SJD, mob), and an adult in basic (winter) plumage was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 27 Nov (TL, MJ, PG, BKP).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** There were still more than 150 at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 27 Nov (MJ, PG, BKP), which is a very large congregation.

**Mew Gull:** A second-year bird was seen at L. Holbrook, *Otero*, on Oct 17 (MJ), and single adults were seen at Union Res., *Weld*, between 18-20 Nov (JV, SD), and at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 20-21 Nov (SD, JV, PG, mob).

**Thayer's Gull:** Six or seven individuals, mostly first-year birds, were seen at Front Range locations in October and November.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Single immatures were seen at Timnath Res., *Larimer*, on Aug 28-31 (PS, SJD, mob), and at Strauss Cabin L., *Larimer*, on Sep 30 and Oct 12 (SJD). An adult was at L. Holbrook, *Otero*, between Sep 27-Oct 4 (MJ, BKP, mob), one at L. Cheraw, *Otero*, on Oct 17 (MJ), and one was at Baseline Res., *Boulder*, on Oct 3 (PP). Finally, an adult and two second-year birds were at Warren L., *Larimer*, between 14-23 Nov (SJD, JF). This is a large number of sightings of this species, which was considered very rare in Colorado until a few years ago.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** An adult found during the summer at John Martin Res., *Bent*, stayed until Sep 13 (mob), one immature was at Timnath Res., *Larimer*, on Aug 22 (RD, JV), one adult was at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between Oct 29-Nov 29 (BKP, mob), and lastly one adult was at L. Meredith, *Crowley*, on Oct 31 (MJ, BD, BKP). Again, this is a large number of reports of a species that was very rare in Colorado until a few years ago.

**Sabine's Gull:** There were ten reports this season, mostly juveniles as usual, and all were from the Front Range.

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** An adult in basic plumage was seen at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, on 25 Nov (BKP).

**Caspian Tern:** Two adults found during the summer at John Martin Res., *Bent*, stayed until Aug 6 (mob), one was at Union Res., *Weld*, on Aug 29 (DF), two were at Strauss Cabin L., *Larimer*, on 31 Aug-1 Sept (AC, SJD), and lastly two were at L. Holbrook, *Otero*, on Sep 11 (BKP).

**ARCTIC TERN:** An adult was seen at Union Res., *Weld*, on Oct 5 (DF, TL).

**EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE:** One was along Hwy 50, in eastern *Pueblo* on Sep 27 (MJ), and eleven were in Springfield, *Baca*, on Oct 7 (VAT). The breeding flock in Rocky Ford, *Otero*, continues to be present.

**INCA DOVE:** One was seen at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, on Oct 7 (VAT).

**Burrowing Owl:** One was seen at the very unusual elevation and location of 11,000 feet in *Gilpin* on 26 Sep (BBa, PM).

**Blue-throated Hummingbird:** An adult female was seen at Black Forest, *El*

*Paso*, on Aug 29 (BBH).

**MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD**: The female found during the summer just west of Boulder, *Boulder*, stayed until Aug 10 (CLW).

**Black-chinned Hummingbird**: Breeding was confirmed in Springfield, *Baca*, by observation of a female and two hatched juveniles on Aug 3 (DSv).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**: Birds seen at unusual locations were one at Pueblo, *Pueblo*, on Oct 4 (MJ), and one at Lamar, *Prowers*, between Oct 25-28 (DAL).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: One was seen at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 24 Nov (DSi).

**Gray Flycatcher**: Single birds on the eastern plains were seen at Ft. Lyon, *Bent*, on Sep 19 (MJ), at Castlewood Canyon, *Douglas*, on Sep 19 (H&UK), and one at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on Sep 22 (BKP).

**Black Phoebe**: An immature bird was seen at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on Aug 23 (DSi).

**Great Crested Flycatcher**: Single individuals were seen at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, between Aug 21-Sep 14 (BKP, RK), one at Lamar C.C., *Prowers*, on Aug 28 (BKP, TD), and one at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on Sep 4 (DFO).

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER**: An adult was seen near C.V.C.G., *Weld*, between Aug 29-31 (SJD, JF, mob).

**White-eyed Vireo**: One was at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, between Aug 26-Sep 11 (KS, mob).

**Yellow-throated Vireo**: Single individuals were seen at Highlands Ranch, *Jefferson*, on Aug 25 (SS), at F.C.R.P., *El Paso*, on Sep 13 (JWe), at W.R.G.B., *Jefferson*, on Sep 18 (TD), and at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on Oct 7 (DAL).

**Cassin's Vireo**: Single birds seen in far eastern Colorado were at C.V.C.G., *Weld*, on Sep 7 (JF, SJD, RK), and at Fort Lyon, *Bent*, on Sep 19 (BKP, MJ, BD).

**BLUE-HEADED VIREO**: One was at Rocky Mt. Arsenal, *Adams*, on Sep 12 (DFO), a male was at W.R.G.B., *Jefferson*, between Sep 14-16 (VR, mob), one was at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, between Sep 15-18 (BKP, MJ, mob), and one at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on Sep 19 (DAL).

**Philadelphia Vireo**: One was at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, on Aug 21 (BKP), and one was at Lamar, *Prowers*, on Sep 26 (DAL).

**Western Scrub-Jay**: Some were seen in the eastern Arkansas River valley this fall, with one at Lamar, *Prowers*, between Sep 26-27 (DAL).

**Carolina Wren**: One was at Lamar C.C., *Prowers*, on Sep 1 (BKP), and one was at Boulder, *Boulder*, between 11 Oct-26 Nov (BGh).

- Winter Wren:** Several were seen this fall in the usual locations along the Front Range, but an early arrival was one in south *Pueblo* on Aug 28(BBH).
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** A late lingering individual was at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on Nov 3 (BKP).
- Eastern Bluebird:** After breeding in Grand Junction in the summer, this species continued to be seen there and at many locations along the Front Range. This is well west of its usual range in Colorado.
- Gray Catbird:** A late individual was at Fort Carson, *El Paso*, on Nov 22 (RB).
- Curve-billed Thrasher:** One was well north of its usual Colorado range when it was seen in *Larimer* between Aug 25-28 (CB).
- Sprague's Pipit:** A few were reported from locations in northeastern Colorado during October.
- Golden-winged Warbler:** A male was seen at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson*, on Aug 24 (KS), and a female was at W.R.G.B., *Jefferson*, on Sep 14-15 (VR, mob).
- Tennessee Warbler:** There were seven reported this season from the Front Range, mostly in September.
- Nashville Warbler:** Seventeen were reported this fall from the Front Range, with an immature male of the eastern race banded at Barr L., *Adams*, on Oct 1 (GG).
- Northern Parula:** Five reports this season, all from eastern Colorado.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Four reports this fall from eastern Colorado.
- Magnolia Warbler:** Six reports this season, all from eastern Colorado.
- Cape May Warbler:** Single males were seen at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on Sep 16 (MJ), and at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, on Oct 24-25 (DSi, DJ).
- Black-throated Blue Warbler:** An unusual West Slope record was of a male seen at Eagle, *Eagle*, on Sep 24 (JMe). A male was at C.V.C.G., *Weld*, on Sep 27 (C&KF), a female was at Pueblo City Park, *Pueblo*, between Oct 3-16 (MJ, BKP, DE), and a male was at C.V.C.G., *Weld*, on Oct 10 (JHi, TH).
- Black-throated Gray Warbler:** Two were seen on the plains this season, with one at L. Estes, *Larimer*, on Sep 2 (SR), and one at Bear Creek L. Park, *Jefferson*, on Aug 22 (MBI) and Sep 12 (VR).
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** A male was seen at W.R.G.B., *Jefferson*, on Sep 18 (TD).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** A first fall female was at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 18 Nov (DSi).
- Grace's Warbler:** One was at Rye, *Pueblo*, on Aug 17 (DSi).
- Prairie Warbler:** A first year male was east of Ft. Lyon, *Bent*, on Sep 19 (BKP, MJ, BD).

- Palm Warbler:** A single bird of the western race was at Windsor, *Weld*, between Sep 15-17 (MM), two were at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, between Oct 3-4 (BKP, MJ), one was at C.V.C.G., *Weld*, on Oct 10-11 (DAL, mob), and one was near Baseline Res., *Boulder*, on Oct 17 (BK).
- Blackpoll Warbler:** Five reports this season, all from eastern Colorado.
- Black-and-white Warbler:** Five reports this fall, with one at L. Estes, *Larimer*, on Sep 4 (W&RR).
- American Redstart:** Twenty one reports this fall, with the high count being five at C.V.C.G., *Weld*, on Aug 29 (SJD, JF).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** A male was seen at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on Sep 8 (TD), and another male was at W.R.G.B., *Jefferson*, on Sep 14 (GW).
- Worm-eating Warbler:** One was banded at Lykins Gulch, *Boulder*, in mid-Sep (JHa).
- Ovenbird:** Sixteen reports this season, all from eastern Colorado.
- Northern Waterthrush:** Twelve reports this fall from eastern Colorado.
- Hooded Warbler:** A female was seen at Gregory Canyon, *Boulder*, on Aug 6 (TD), and a male was at Prewitt Res., *Washington*, on Sep 4 (DFO).
- Summer Tanager:** A female was seen at Pueblo, *Pueblo*, on Oct 4 (BD, JD), and an adult male was seen at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on 21-22 Nov (BDi, SJD, JF). A photograph of this bird was on the front cover of the preceding issue of the Journal of the CFO (SJD).
- EASTERN TOWHEE:** A male was at Franktown, *Douglas*, between Oct 16-17 (H&UK), and a female was at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on Oct 19 (DSi).
- Field Sparrow:** One was seen at the Last Chance Reststop, *Washington*, on Oct 10 (BKP), one was at Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on Oct 19 (DSi), and one was at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, on Oct 27 (DAL).
- HENSLOW'S SPARROW:** One was seen in *Sedgwick* on Oct 10 (JK, BKP).
- LE CONTE'S SPARROW:** One was seen in *Sedgwick* on Oct 10 (CFO).
- Fox Sparrow:** Single individuals of the eastern race were seen at Ft. Collins, *Larimer*, on Sep 26 (PS), and at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on Oct 7 (BKP).
- Swamp Sparrow:** Seven reports this fall, with the most unusual location being one at Grandview Cemetery, *Larimer*, on Oct 18 (DAL).
- White-throated Sparrow:** Twenty three reports this season, which is probably more than normal. Only one report came from the West Slope, with an adult being banded at Cibolla Creek, near Powderhorn, *Gunnison*, on 2 Oct (SBo).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Ten reports this fall, all from eastern Colorado.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** An immature was seen at C.V.C.G., *Weld*, on Oct 1 (DAL).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** A female was at Boulder, *Boulder*, on Aug 10 (S&MP), a female was at W.R.G.B., *Jefferson*, on Sep 14 (VR), a female was at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, between Sep 27-Oct 2 (BKP), and an immature male was at Franktown, *Douglas*, between Oct 28-Nov 1 (H&UK).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Two males were seen at Silverthorne, *Summit*, on 21 Nov (TL). This is likely the first record for Summit County.

**Baltimore Oriole:** Six were seen at Tamarack Ranch S.W.A., *Logan*, on Sep 3 (WPL, JMa, JB, JHi).

**Bullock's Oriole:** An adult male was at a feeder in Brighton, *Adams*, on 29 Nov (MBI).

**Purple Finch:** A female was seen at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, on Oct 26 (DAL), and a male was at Franktown, *Douglas*, on Oct 28-30 (H&UK).

**Common Redpoll:** One was seen at Hamilton Res., *Larimer*, on Oct 30 (SJD), and two were at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, between 20-28 Nov (BKP, mob).

**Lesser Goldfinch:** There have again been several reports of this species lingering very late in the fall, with three being seen at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 21 Nov (TL,DF).

There have also been reports this season of three species that are presently not on the CFO State List. Documentation on all three species has been sent to the CFO Records Committee, so that they will be evaluated, and the results printed in this journal in a future report of the CFO Records Committee. I urge readers to wait until that report is published before assuming that these species will be added to the CFO State List.

**WHITE-TAILED KITE:** A bird was seen between Cortez and Mancos, *Montezuma*, on 5 Nov (EH). There have never been any accepted records for this species in Colorado. This species has been steadily expanding its range in the southwestern part of the country, and individuals wandering to southwest Colorado has been expected for some years. However, this report is by a single observer, so that even if the record is accepted, the species will not be added to the CFO State List. This species has been documented in some of the states adjacent to Colorado.

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE:** A male was seen well at Jackson Res., *Morgan*, on a DFO field trip on 20 Nov (DQ, GE, DFO). There have

been many reports of this species submitted to the Records Committee, and four have been accepted, but they are all by single observers. Three of these sightings are from the northeastern plains of Colorado, and three of the dates are in November or December. It is well known that this species occurs far to the north of its breeding range in late fall. It has been seen in all the states that surround Colorado and in Canada.

**SMITH'S LONGSPUR:** A winter-plumaged bird was seen near Estes Park, *Larimer*, on Oct 17 (SR, JWr). This species used to be on the CFO State List, but was removed more than 20 years ago. The reason was that the main field mark used in the accepted records was the white wing patch. It was pointed out by Van Rensen that this did not eliminate Chestnut-collared Longspur. This species winters mainly in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, so that it would be most expected to occur in the far-eastern plains. Scott Seltman of Kansas has told me that he has heard a few flying overhead when birding in Baca County, Colorado.

Observers: Dave Allured (DA), Larry Arnold (LA), Bev Baker (BBA), John Barber (JB), Chuck Bell (CB), Mary Jane Black (MJB), Michele Bloom (MBL), Sue Bonfield (SB), Ann Bonnell (AB), Maggie Boswell (MBo), Steve Bouricius (SBo), Dan Bridges (DB), Leon Bright (LBr), Bob Brown (BB), Lea Ann Brown (LAB), Richard Bunn (RB), Sherry Chapman (SC), Cade & Mary Coldren (C&MC), Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO), Cindy Cornelius (CC), Alex Cringan (AC), Ruth Carol Cushman (RCC), Ray Davis (RD), Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO), Bob Dickson (BD), Johnnie Dickson (JD), Todd Dilley (TD), Beth Dillon (BDi), Stephen Dinsmore (SJD), Sharon Dooley (SD), Jon Dunn (JLD), David Elwonger (DE), Norm Erthal (NE), Gail Evans (GE), Doug Faulkner (DF), Joe Fontaine (JF), Carol & Ken Fredricks (C&KF), Steve Frye (SF), Peter Gent (PG), Glenn Giroir (GG), Beverly Gholson (BGh), Bob Goycoolea (BG), Beverlee Guild (BGU), BB Hahn (BBH), Paula Hansley (PHa), Joe Harrison (JHa), Thomas Heinrich (TH), Erik Henderson (EH), Joe Himmel (JHi), Ken Hollinga (KH), Paul Hurtado (PH), Mark Janos (MJ), Dave Johnson (DJ), Tina Jones (TJ), Bill Kaempfer (BK), Joe and Norma Kamby (J&NK), Joey Kellner (JK), Laurent Kergoat (LK), Hugh & Urling Kingery (H&UK), Rachel Kolokoff (RK), Nick Komar (NK), Jo Ann Kozan (JAK), Greg Lasley (GWL), Dave Leatherman (DAL), Tony Leukering (TL), Rich Levad (RL), Norm Lewis (NL), William Lisowsky (WPL), Marcia Maeda (MM), Joe Mammoser (JMa), Steve & Kathy Martin (S&KM), Bill Maynard (BM), Virginia & John Maynard (V&JM), Jack Merchant (JMe), Steve Messick (SM), Mike & Danette Meyer (M&DM), Paul Mintier (PM),

Diana & Don Mullineaux (D&DM), Ric Olson (RO), Stan Oswald (SO), Ken Pals (KP), Isa & Linda Paulson (I&LP), Greg Pasquariello (GP), Brandon Percival (BKP), Peter Plage (PP), Suzi and Myron Plooster (S&MP), Kim Potter (KPo), Dave Quesenberry (DQ), Scott Rashid (SR), Warner & Ruth Reeser (W&RR), Van Remsen (VR), Bob Righter (BR), Joe Rigli (JRi), Joe Roller (JR), Larry Semo (LS), Scott Severs (SSe), Karleen Scofield (KS), Dick Schottler (DSc), David Silverman (DSi), Steve Stachowiak (SS), Dan Svingen (DSv), Paul Sweet (PS), Richard Trinkner (RT), Van Truan (VAT), John Vanderpoel (JV), Alan Versaw (AV), Glenn Walbek (GW), David Waltman (DW), Susan Ward (SW), Jim Watts (JWa), Rosie Watts (RW), Jeff Webster (JWe), Brian Wheeler (BW), Walt Wilson (WW), Margaret Winter (MW), Christopher Wood (CLW), Dave Wright (DWr), J. Wright (JWr), Vic Zerbi (VZ).

