

The 89th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

Introduction

The 66th Supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds was published in August 2025 (Chesser et al. 2025). The most significant change affecting birds in Colorado was the split of Warbling Vireo into Eastern Warbling Vireo and Western Warbling Vireo. The eastern species occurs mostly on the Eastern Plains, and the western species occurs mostly in the mountains and Western Colorado, with some overlap of the two species near the Front Range in, probably, Adams, Boulder, Larimer and Weld counties. The best way to separate the species is by the notable differences in their songs, which has been highlighted recently in this journal (DeFonso 2022). This split added one to the Colorado state bird list, which now stands at 522 species.

Another change affecting Colorado birds was the split of Herring Gull into four species, so that the birds seen here are now American Herring Gulls. This split elevated Vega Gull to a full species. That species breeds in western Alaska and the far east of Russia, and there are quite a few records from the Lower 48 states, including eBird records in Utah and Oklahoma. This species could occur in Colorado: two records have been submitted to the CBRC in the past, but neither was accepted. In addition, species splits mean that birds seen in Colorado are now called Hudsonian Whimbrel and Northern Yellow Warbler. Other changes included a reordering of bird families so that Limpkin and Cranes now come before Rails, and Ibises and Spoonbills now come before Pelicans and Herons.

This 89th Report of the CBRC documents decisions on records submitted in the first six months of 2025 and includes some older records that went to a third round of voting. This report documents the second state record of Lawrence's Goldfinch, the third record of Cactus Wren, the third and fourth records of both Vaux's Swift and Yellow Grosbeak, the fourth records of Anhinga and Tropical Kingbird, the fifth and sixth records of Black-bellied Whistling Duck, the sixth record of Hooded Oriole, the seventh record of Black-chinned Sparrow and the ninth record of Crested Caracara. The above represents a very large number of rare birds from late 2024 and the first six months of 2025.

Documentations of the 39 records in this report were submitted by 48 observers, and I thank them for their support of the CBRC. Accepted records received either 6 or 7 positive votes from various combinations of 7 committee members. AWR indicates Accepted Without Review and applies to species not on the CBRC Review List.

Accepted Records

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

Brant *Branta bernicla* (Archer Silverman*; 2024-054; 7-0): An adult of the Black Brant race was at Kittredge West Lake in Montbello, *Denver*, on 23 Nov 2024, and provides for the first record in Denver County.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* (Kin DuBois*; 2025-002; AWR): A male was seen along the South Platte River in Littleton, *Arapahoe*, on 29 Apr 2025.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* (Jason Zolle*, Ethan Cleveland*, Glenn Walbek*; 2025-026; 7-0): A bird was photographed and

recorded in the south part of Cherry Creek State Park, *Arapahoe*, on 30 Jun 2025, and provided the fourth Colorado record of this species.

Sprague's Pipit *Anthus spragueii* (Luke Pheneger; 2024-049; 5-2, 6-1): Three birds were recorded in the Snyder Prairie State Land Trust, which is south of Otis, *Washington*, on 18 Oct 2024. This is the first record in Washington County.

Yellow Grosbeak *Pheucticus chrysopheplus* (Courtney Rella*, Matt Newport*; 2025-012; 7-0): One was seen at a feeder along the Kiowa-Bennett Road, *Arapahoe*, on 8 May 2025. This is the third record of this species in Colorado but also see the North Central region below.



Tropical Kingbird.
6/30/2025, Arapahoe
County. Photo by
Ethan Cleveland.

EAST CENTRAL (Cheyenne, El Paso, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* (Luis Matheus*; 2025-029; 7-0): One was nicely photographed along County Road 44 several miles southwest of Burlington, *Kit Carson*, on 8 Jul 2025. This is the first record in Kit Carson County, and this species has been seen with increasing regularity in Colorado over the last few years.

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

Mexican Duck *Anas diazi* (Doug Faulkner*, 2013-320; 4-3, 4-3, 6-1): A male was photographed at close range in the Pueblo Reservoir area on the Pueblo CBC, *Pueblo*, on 14 Dec 2013.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens* (Duane Nelson*, Cole Sage; 2025-018; 7-0): A dark-morph juvenile was in the south part of Adobe Creek Reservoir (Blue Lake), *Bent*, between 20 May and 4 Jun 2025.

Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* (Bruce Dunbar*; 2025-008; 7-0): A bird was photographed soaring above the Goodnight Barn parking lot just east of Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on 27 Apr 2025.

Crested Caracara *Caracara plancus* (Brandon Percival*; 2025-009; 7-0): A bird remained in the area along Siloam Road, which is east of Greenwood, *Pueblo*, between 12 and 15 Mar 2025. This is the first record in Pueblo County, and ninth of this species in Colorado.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* (Joey Kellner*; 2025-022; 7-0): A bird was seen at the corner of County Roads 177.9 and 193.5, which is south of Higbee, *Las Animas*, between 14 and 23 Jun 2025. This is the third state record of this species in Colorado: the second record was on 29 Mar 2024 about 8 miles west of this location.

Baird's Sparrow *Ammodramus bairdii* (Luke Pheneger; 2024-051; 5-2, 6-1): Two birds were recorded south of Chivington, *Kiowa*, on 13 Apr 2024.

NORTH CENTRAL (Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer)

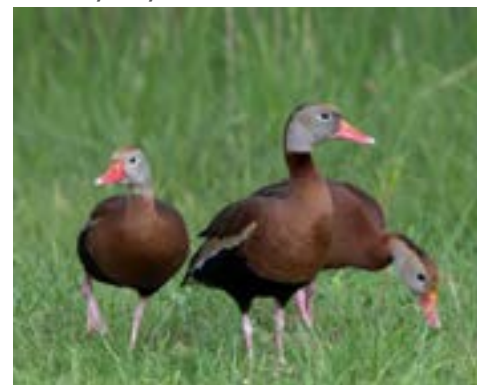
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* (Mike Artmann*; 2024-053; 7-0): A bird was seen at West Lake in northeast Broomfield, *Broomfield*, on 10 Aug 2024. (Kristin Tobias*, Kevin Rutherford*; 2025-004; 7-0): Three birds were found by Tobias at the South Boulder Recreation Center, *Boulder*, on 9 May 2025. These are the fifth and sixth records of this species in Colorado,



Crested Caracara. 3/12/2025, Pueblo County. Photo by John Bruder.



Cactus Wren. 6/14/2025, Las Animas County. Photo by Joey Kellner.



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck. 5/9/2025, Boulder County. Photo by Kevin Rutherford.

and it seems to be occurring more frequently in recent years.

Brant *Branta bernicla* (Jeff Percell*; 2025-005; 7-0): A bird of the black

race (*nigricans*) was seen at Thomas Reservoir in Erie, *Boulder*, on 21 Feb 2025.

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi* (Simon Tolzmann*; 2024-055; 6-1): A bird was photographed flying over Medicine Bow Curve in Rocky Mountain National Park, *Larimer*, on 15 Sep 2024. This is the third record of this species in Colorado, and the first from the northern Front Range.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Ellen Harris, Leslie Sutton*; 2025-015; AWR): One was found by Harris at Lagerman Reservoir near Niwot, *Boulder*, in the late afternoon of 21 May 2025. It stayed for only a few hours but was a new county bird for many observers.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* (Greg Levandoski, Leslie Sutton*, Jim Ward*, Tony Leukering, Peter Burke*, Brandon Percival*, Cassandra Stroud; 2025-017; 7-0): An adult female was found by Levandoski at a pond on north 95th



Anhinga. 6/2/2025, Boulder County. Photo by Leslie Sutton.

Lucy's Warbler.
4/29/2025, Larimer
County. Photo by Dave
Leatherman.



Street east of Gunbarrel, *Boulder*, on 2 Jun 2025. This is the fourth record of this species in Colorado, and the first since one was seen flying east of Barr Lake in May 2003. The first two records were of birds collected in the north Denver area in 1927 and 1931. This bird was featured in the Denver Post and on 9News and became something of a celebrity, as it

was easily viewed from 95th Street. It was last reported on 24 Aug 2025, and I estimate that it was seen by many hundreds of people and probably close to a thousand people.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* (Sheila Webber*; 2025-001; AWR): A breeding plumaged male



Yellow Grosbeak.
6/4/2025, 7/1/2025,
5/8/2025, Gilpin,
Larimer and
Arapahoe Counties.
Photos by Christian
Nunes, Daniel
Cronk and Jonathan
Bowser.



Hermit Warbler.
6/8/2025, Jefferson
County. Photo by
Timo Mitzen.

was seen along Old Apple Valley Road northwest of Lyons, *Boulder*, on 2 Apr 2025. It stayed around for a few days and was seen by many observers.

Lucy's Warbler *Leiothlypis luciae* (Dave Leatherman*; 2025-010; 7-0): One was at Sheldon Lake in Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 29 and 30 Apr 2025. This is the first record in Larimer County, and this species has been seen with increasing frequency along the northern Front Range in recent years.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica* (Jake Miller*; 2025-016; AWR): A breeding plumaged male was seen in the Matthews-Reeser Sanctuary in Estes Park, *Larimer*, on 22 May 2025.

Yellow Grosbeak *Pheucticus chrysopleus* (Rob Rutledge, Edward Raynor*; 2025-027; 7-0): A bird was seen coming to a feeder in Estes Park, *Larimer*, between 27 Jun and 23 Aug 2025. This was the third sighting of this bird in the northern Front Range this summer. Very careful analysis of this

bird's plumage by Owen Robertson and Archer Silverman (2025) and by Cathy Sheeter, who assembled the photographs of the bird seen in Arapahoe, Gilpin and Larimer counties persuaded the Committee that this was the same individual, and thus should be counted as just the third record in Colorado.

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

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* (David Orth-Moore*, Fran Rulon-Miller; 2025-007; 7-0): A breeding-plumaged bird was seen at Franz Lake northwest of Salida, *Chaffee*, on 1 May 2025. This is a new species for Chaffee County, and one of very few records in the Colorado mountains.

Hermit Warbler *Setophaga occidentalis* (Timo Mitzen*; 2025-019; 7-0): An adult male in alternate plumage was seen in Golden Gate State Park, *Jefferson*, on 8 Jun 2025.

Yellow Grosbeak *Pheucticus chrysopheplus* (Peter Burke*, Peter Gent*; 2025-020; 7-0): The second report of this bird this year was at the feeder of Bethany Thibideau northeast of Rollinsville, *Gilpin*, on 4 Jun 2025. Unfortunately, it stayed for only two days and provided the third Colorado record; see the discussion and photograph above.

SOUTH CENTRAL (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Huerfano, Rio Grande, Saguache)

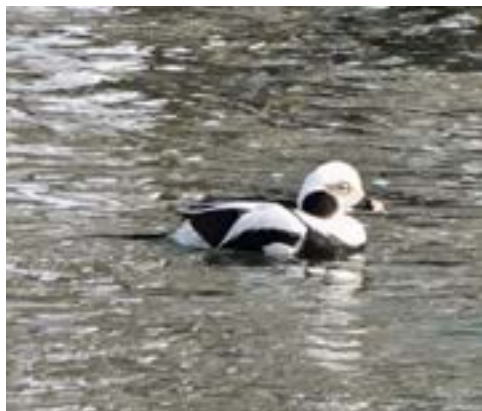
Lawrence's Goldfinch *Spinus lawrencei* (Robert Raker*, Glenn Walbek*, Peter Burke*; 2025-011; 7-0): A male in breeding plumage was at the Gib Rokich Ranch southeast of Apache City, *Huerfano*, between 27 and 29 Apr 2025. This was the second exceptionally rare bird seen at this ranch, as the state's first record of Yellow Grosbeak stayed there for several days in late May 2021. This is the second record of this species in Colorado; the first was of a male that stayed at a feeder in Grand Junction for several days in late May 2007.

NORTHWEST (Eagle, Garfield, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt)



Lawrence's Goldfinch. 4/27/2025, Huerfano County. Photo by Glenn Walbek.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* (Heather McGregor*; 2023-071; AWR): A beautiful male in full non-breeding plumage wintered on the Colorado River in Glenwood Springs, *Garfield*, from 9 Dec 2023 through 12 Mar 2024.



Long-tailed Duck. 12/9/2023, Garfield County. Photo by Vic Zerbi.

WEST CENTRAL (Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Pitkin)

Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus* (Kimberlee Douglass*; 2025-024; 7-0): A breeding-plumaged male was seen at a feeder northwest of Gunnison, *Gunnison*, on 16 Jun 2025. This is the sixth record of this species in Colorado, and the first since one was in northeast Denver on 24 Apr 2019.

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

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi* (Coen Dexter, Brenda Wright*; 2025-014; 7-0): One was photographed over the southeast corner of McPhee Reservoir near Dolores, *Montezuma*, on 6 May



Hooded Oriole. 6/16/2025, Gunnison County. Photo by Kimberlee Douglass.

2025. This is the fourth record of this species in Colorado.

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* (Kurt Hillman*; 2025-013; 7-0): A bird in breeding plumage was photographed at Pastorius Reservoir southeast of Durango, *La Plata*, on 10 May 2025. This is the first CBRC documented record of this species on the Colorado West Slope, and so the first record in La Plata County.

Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* (Coen Dexter, Brenda Wright*, Jason St.

Pierre*; 2025-006; 7-0): A bird in non-breeding plumage was photographed at McPhee Reservoir northwest of Dolores, *Montezuma*, on 30 Apr 2025. This is the first record from Montezuma County.

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus* (Kristi Streiffert*; 2025-003; AWR): A bird in transitional plumage was photographed at Pastorius State Wildlife area, *La Plata*, on 11 Apr 2025.

Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* (Coen Dexter, Brenda Wright*, Luke Pheneger; 2025-025; 7-0): Two adults in breeding plumage were photographed at McElmo Canyons View in Mesa Verde National Park, *Montezuma*, on 27 Jun 2025. Mike Thompson had heard one during a Breeding Bird Survey quite near this location a few weeks earlier. This indicates there is likely a small breeding population in this area of Montezuma County. This is the seventh record of this species in Colorado and the first since two records in 2012.

Black-chinned Sparrow. 6/27/2025, Montezuma County. Photo by Brenda Wright.



Yellow Grosbeak *Pheucticus chrysopheplus* (Anonymous*; 2025-021; 7-0): A bird was photographed at a feeder in Lake City, *Hinsdale*, on 9 Jun 2025. This was only four days after the Gilpin County bird was seen, and two weeks before the Larimer County bird was first seen. Committee members concluded that it was extremely unlikely that the same bird made this very long round trip during June, and this record was of a different individual so it provides the fourth record of this species in Colorado.

Not Accepted Records

EAST CENTRAL (Cheyenne, El Paso, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln)

Puna Ibis *Plegadis ridgwayi*. (2025-028; NAWR) The bird in the photograph taken at Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 26 Apr 2025 is a White-faced Ibis.

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

Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*. (2024-046; 4-3, 2-5): A bird was seen below the Pueblo Reservoir dam and at Valco Ponds, *Pueblo*, on 18 and 19 Apr 2024. The photographs of this bird were sent to out-of-state people with much more experience with this difficult species. They concluded that the photographs do not show definitive field marks of Vaux's Swift, and this persuaded two committee members to change their vote in the second round.

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*. (2024-016; 5-2, 4-3, 0-7): A

bird was photographed along Higbee Valley Road, *Otero*, on 3 May 2024. This record provoked a very lively debate when it was discussed in the third round. Photographs from another eBird report were also viewed, and these threw doubt on the identification. It was assumed that only one waterthrush was present, and therefore all committee members thought in the third round of voting that there was doubt about the identification.

NORTH CENTRAL (Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer)

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*. (2025-030; 0-7): A bird was seen in a backyard in western Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 11 Jul 2025. All committee members concluded that the identification was correct, but that the natural occurrence of this bird was questionable.

NORTHWEST (Eagle, Garfield, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt)

Chihuahuan Meadowlark *Sturnella lilianae*. (2024-023; 5-2, 4-3, 5-2): A bird was photographed and recorded at Big Marvine Peak, which is several miles southeast of Dinosaur, *Rio Blanco*, on 18 Jun 2024. This was a follow-up to a sighting about a month earlier, but conditions were difficult as it was windy and many meadowlarks were in the area. A majority of committee members voted in favor of this record, but two members thought that there was just enough doubt about the identification that they voted not to accept it in all three rounds of voting.

Committee Functions

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its Review List (<https://cobrc.org/ReviewList.aspx>), species with no prior accepted record in Colorado, and sightings of regularly occurring species that are considered out-of-range or out-of-season. Documentary materials should be submitted online at the CBRC website (<https://cobrc.org>).

Committee News

Committee members voting on these records were Linda Chittum, Eric DeFonso, Peter Gent, Michael Lester, Ric Olson, Mark Peterson, Cathy Sheeter, Mike Thompson and David Tonnessen, and I thank them for their service on the Committee.

Report Format

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithological Society's (AOS) Checklist of North American Birds (AOS 1998) through the 66th Supplement (Chesser et al. 2025) by region. We present the accession number, the names of the contributing observer(s), and the vote tally in the first round and, if relevant, the second and third rounds (with the number of "accept" votes on the left side of the dash). The initial observer of the bird, if known, is presented first. Additional contributors follow in chronological order of the sighting. Observers submitting a photograph or video capture are indicated with an asterisk. In this report, SP indicates a State Park and SWA a State Wildlife Area.

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