

The 73rd Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

MARK PETERSON, CHAIRMAN CBRC | PETER GENT, MEMBER CBRC

INTRODUCTION

Colorado becomes the first non-coastal, non-border U.S. state to crack the 500 barrier.

This 73rd report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC or Committee) presents the results of deliberations of the CBRC involving 26 reports submitted by 21 observers, documenting 9 new additions to the Colorado state list in the period from May 2015 to October 2018.

Per CBRC bylaws, all accepted records received a final 7-0 or 6-1 vote to accept. In addition, one species was removed from the state list because the American Ornithological Society (AOS; formerly the American Ornithologists' Union) lumped Thayer's Gull (previously *Larus thayeri*) with Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoideus*) (Chesser et al. 2017). Therefore, with this publication the Colorado state list now stands at 507 species. Thus, Colorado becomes the first non-coastal, non-border U. S. state to crack the 500 barrier. We also note that because of decisions by the AOS, the names of four Colorado species have been changed since the 72nd report. Green Violetear has been split, with the species occurring in the U.S. now named Mexican Violetear. Both Magnificent Hummingbird and Gray Jay revert to previously used names -- Rivoli's Hummingbird and Canada Jay, respectively, while Western Scrub-Jay was split, with Colorado's representative now known as Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay.

Committee members voting on these reports were David Dowell (Longmont), John Drummond (Colorado Springs), Kathy Mihm Dunning (Denver), Doug Faulkner (Arvada), Peter Gent (Boulder), Tony Leukering (Largo, Florida), Bill Maynard (Colorado Springs), Dan Maynard (Denver), Steven Mlodinow (Longmont), Christian Nunes (Lyons), Mark Peterson (Colorado Springs), Bill Schmoker (Longmont), and Glenn Walbek (Castle Rock).

COMMITTEE NEWS

The CBRC continues to recruit excellent members from the local birding community.

The CFO board has approved a change to the Colorado Bird Record Committee bylaws that was recommended to the board by CBRC Chair Mark Petersen. The change allows the appointment of additional members to the CBRC (formerly capped at seven, including the CBRC Chair), and is based on the desire to enable the CBRC to review submitted records on a more timely basis. All records submitted to the CBRC will continue to be reviewed by seven members of the CBRC, but will be spread out among more members of the CBRC, thus reducing the load for each member. An added benefit is that records submitted by CBRC members can still receive a full seven-member review, without having to use the submitting member in the reviewing process for their own submissions.

The relevant portion of the bylaw change is found in Paragraph V.A., which now reads as follows:

"The CBRC shall consist of at least seven members: a Chairperson (hereafter, "Chair") and at least six regular members. The Chair will assign seven members to evaluate and offer opinions (i.e. "vote") on records submitted for review to the CBRC. No opinion on an individual bird record may be rendered by the CBRC without the votes of all assigned voting

members. All CBRC members are appointed by the President of the CFO as described in Section V.D.”

The entirety of the CBRC bylaws can be accessed at <https://cobrc.org/>.

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

The Committee solicits documentation of reports in Colorado for all species published in its Main Review List (coloradobirdrecords.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: coloradobirdrecords.org. Alternatively, one can request an electronic document from the Chair or Secretary (see this journal's inside front cover for the most up-to-date contact information).

REPORT FORMAT

The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) *Check-list of North American Birds 7th Edition* (AOU 1998) through the 59th Supplement (Chesser et al. 2018). We present the accession number and the vote tally in the first round and, if relevant, the second and third rounds (with the number of “accept” votes on the left side of the dash) in the following format: (Accession number; accept votes – not accept votes).

ACCEPTED SPECIES NEW TO THE STATE LIST

California Quail – *Callipepla californica* (2018-002; 7-0). One was found and photographed by Kenny Frisch on 7 April 2018 at the Canyon Visitors Center of Dinosaur National Monument along Highway 40 about a mile east of the town of Dinosaur (Moffat County). The bird was seen by a number of Colorado birders at this location over the following two weeks. Additional reports were received from Arthur Bezuidenhout and Peter Gent.



California Quail. Moffat County. 7 April 2018. Photo by Kenny Frisch.

This species was introduced into the Salt Lake City area in 1869 and has spread through much of Utah since. There are regular e-bird reports of a resident population in the area of Jensen and Vernal in eastern Utah, which is about 30 miles west of the area of this sighting. A few birders have briefly seen quail previously in Moffat County that they thought were California Quail, rather than the similar Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*) which breeds farther south in western Colorado. However, no photographs or other material to confirm these single-observer sightings were obtained.

PURPLE SANDPIPER -- *Calidris maritima* (2016-077; 7-0). Photographed by Jack and Ryan Bushong on December 16, 2016 at the Blue River Arm of Dillon Reservoir (Summit County), the Bushongs found this bird during a snow storm when they were returning to Dillon from a day of skiing. Many Colorado birders got to see this bird over the next two weeks, as it was seen through the end of 2016. Additional reports were received from David Blue, Doug Faulkner, Peter Gent, Rudi Nuissl, and Brandon Percival. The photographs and descriptions documented the orange-yellow base to the bill and the bright orange legs, which were used to distinguish this bird from the similar Rock Sandpiper of the Pacific coast.



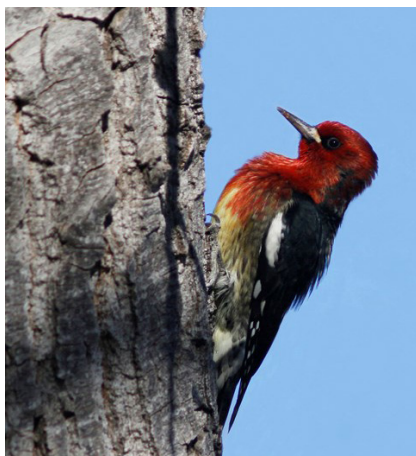
Purple Sandpiper, Summit County, December 2016. Photo by David Blue.

The Purple Sandpiper breeds on Baffin Island, the southern coast of Greenland, and in Iceland. It typically winters along the northeast coast of the USA. A few occur on the Great Lakes and inland areas of the eastern USA on migration. A few have ventured much farther west with a record from Montana, one from southwest Utah, and two from California (both in April 2016).

BROWN BOOBY – *Sula leucogaster* (2016-047; 7-0). Photographed around noon by Peter Bandurian on 22 June 2016 at Rowena in Left Hand Canyon (Boulder County), Peter found the bird scrambling around on rocks near the road away from the creek. Birders looked for this bird a few days later when word got out, but it was not re-found. However, a volunteer at a bird-rehabilitation center did re-find the bird a few days later along the Peak-to-Peak highway and took it to the center. The bird was found to be suffering from an infection of West Nile virus and died a couple of weeks later.

The Brown Booby is a common species in the tropical oceans. It breeds in the Gulf of California, and some can be found around Florida, especially near the Dry Tortugas. The totally brown head and neck darker than the brown upper parts shown in the photographs suggest that the Colorado bird is from the Atlantic *leucogaster* race. It is very rare north of these locations, but a few have wandered as far north as Nova Scotia, Canada and inland in the USA. Indeed, one was seen at Harlan County Lake in south-central Nebraska in June 2017.

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER – *Sphyrapicus ruber* (2017-039; 7-0). David Tønnessen found and photographed this bird on 21 December 2017 just south of the Broadmoor Hotel in western Colorado Springs (El Paso County), providing for his second first Colorado record of the year (See below)! Many Colorado birders saw this cooperative bird, and it was in the same location until at least 2 March 2018. Additional reports were received from Brandon



*Red-breasted Sapsucker, El Paso County.
December 2017. Photo by Bill Maynard*

Percival and Sue Riffe. David Tønnessen gives a detailed account of this occurrence (Tønnessen 2018).

The Red-breasted Sapsucker is an uncommon species in the western coastal ranges of the USA and Canada. Most migrate south or move to lower elevations in winter. The northern birds (nominate *ruber*) breed in southeast Alaska and northwest Canada and migrate the farthest south. This race has red reaching farther down the breast and a yellower belly than the more southerly *daggetti* race. The many excellent photographs of the Colorado bird show it to be referable to *ruber*. There are a few records of this species from Utah and two records from western New Mexico.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD – *Tyrannus melancholicus* (2017-040; 7-0: 2017-041; 6-1: 2018-008; 7-0). The first bird was found and photographed by David Tønnessen on 17 September 2017 just north of the banding station in the north section of Chico Basin Ranch (El Paso County). The bird was seen only for a few minutes before it flew away to the northwest. The second bird was found and photographed by Brenda Wright and Coen Dexter a couple of weeks later on 2 October 2017 just southwest of Nucla (Montrose County). The bird was re-found and diagnostically photographed the next morning in a nearby location but was not seen again after 3 October. The third bird was found by Frank Farrell and confirmed by Michael Lester on 5 October 2018 along and west of the entrance road to South Platte Reservoir (Jefferson County). It was seen, heard calling, and photographed by many birders over the next week. Additional reports were received from Peter Gent, Bill Maynard, Steven Mlodinow, and Brandon Percival.



Tropical Kingbird, Montrose County. 2 October 2017. Photo by Coen Dexter.

The Tropical Kingbird is an abundant species in Central and South America. It is resident at low elevations in northern Mexico, with different subspecies occurring east of the Sierra Madre Oriental and west of the Sierra Madre Occidental. The breeding ranges of both subspecies creep into the U.S. in southernmost Texas and southeastern Arizona. However, it has been known to wander much farther north, particularly in fall and especially to the Pacific coast, north to British Columbia. The species is considerably rarer as a vagrant in the East, with a few records of the species from the Great Lakes and northeastern USA. There are records from Amarillo, Texas, and three records from northern Utah.



Couch's Kingbird, Prowers County, 19 April 2016.
Photo by David Leatherman.

COUCH'S KINGBIRD – *Tyrannus couchii* (2016-068; 7-0). Found and photographed by David Leatherman on 19 April 2016 in northern Lamar (Prowers County), this bird, like the state's first Tropical Kingbird, was seen for about ten minutes. The CBRC requested opinions as to the bird's identification from outside experts. All thought that the photographs showed a Couch's Kingbird, although one expert noted that it was very difficult to definitively eliminate Tropical Kingbird from consideration. However, the report carefully documented that the bird's call was very similar to that of a Western Kingbird, which was an important factor in the report being unanimously accepted.

Couch's Kingbird is visually very similar to Tropical Kingbird and was considered a race of that species until the 1980s. However, the two species' voices, especially their calls, are notably different, and they live side-by-side in eastern Mexico without inter-breeding. Couch's Kingbird is common in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas in summer, and a few remain there over the winter months. The species has been expanding its breeding range in Texas both north and east in this millennium, and there are prior records from as far north as Lubbock, Texas. With two records from eastern New Mexico; it is not particularly surprising that one found its way to Colorado. The bird is named after American soldier and naturalist Darius Couch (1822 – 1897). The scientific names of a spiny lizard (*Sceloporus couchii*) and a garter snake (*Thamnophis couchii*) also pay homage to Mr. Couch.

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER – *Tyrannus savana* (2018-004; 7-0: 2018-009; 7-0). The first bird was found and photographed by James Fortune on 14 September 2018 on a private ranch near Buckeye Road and about 0.3 miles west of County Road 7 in Larimer County. Many birders searched without success for the bird later that day and the next morning. However, on 21 October 2018, Laura Steadman and Melissa Mezger found a second bird at Prince Lake #2 (Boulder County). Many birders were able to see the bird that afternoon and throughout the next two days, only to have it vanish after the late afternoon of 23 October. This bird had a full-length tail, so appeared to be a different individual than the first bird. Reports were received from Peter Gent, Kevin Keirn, and Brandon Percival.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher is a common species of Middle and South America, its breeding range reaching into central-eastern Mexico. Breeders in southern South America migrate to the tropics to winter. A small number of Fork-taileds arrive in the U.S. and Canada in the boreal spring as a result of continuing their austral northward fall migration much too far. However, many more of the species are found north of Mexico in the boreal fall,

presumably after wintering in the correct area, but then leaving in the austral spring in the wrong direction. The nearest record to northeast Colorado is one from Mud Lake in very western Missouri.



Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Boulder County. October 2018. Photo by Peter Gent.

CACTUS WREN-*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* (2018-001; 7-0). This bird was found and photographed by Kaye Lafreniere on 22 March 2018 near Woodmen Road and I-25 in northern Colorado Springs (El Paso County). This information did not reach Colorado birders for a few days, so the bird was not seen again. Even though this was a single-observer record, the photographs clearly show a Cactus Wren.



Cactus Wren, El Paso County. 22 March 2018. Photo by Kaye Lafreniere.

The Cactus Wren is a common species occupying arid habitats in the southern USA and Mexico. The year-round range extends to northeast New Mexico, reaching to within about 70 miles of Colorado. Therefore, this species was expected nearer to the southeast corner of the state, rather than considerably farther northwest in Colorado Springs.

GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER –*Basileuterus culicivorus* (2018-003; 7-0). Glenn Walbek found this eye-popping and unexpected rarity in the evening of 15 May 2018 at the Mitchek Ranch along County Road 9 (Cheyenne County). This cooperative bird was seen there daily for the next 2 weeks by well over 100 birders, including some from out of state. Glenn relates the story of finding this bird for *Colorado Birds* (Walbek 2018). Additional reports were received from Peter Gent and Bill Maynard. The bird fed in the extensive chokecherry bushes along the county road and was not seen again after these bushes stopped flowering (Leatherman 2018).



Golden-crowned Warbler, Cheyenne County, 15 May 2018. Photo by Glenn Walbek.

Golden-crowned Warbler has a disjunct range in Central and South America which reaches fairly far northward in both eastern and western Mexico. In the USA, it is casual in winter in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, but there is one record from Melrose Woods in eastern New Mexico (May 2004).

SPECIES REMOVED FROM THE STATE LIST

THAYER'S GULL -- *Larus thayeri*. In 2017, the AOS lumped Thayer's Gull with Iceland Gull (Chesser et al. 2017). Of course, Thayer's Gull is of regular occurrence in Colorado, whereas Iceland Gull was a CBRC review species, with only 46 records accepted. We encourage Colorado observers to continue to distinguish between *Larus thayeri* and *Larus kumlienii* when reporting observations of Iceland Gull.

SPECIES ON THE STATE LIST WITH NAME CHANGES

MEXICAN VIOLETEAR--*Colibri thalassinus*. In 2016, the AOS split Green Violetear into Mexican Violetear, which occurs from the south USA to Nicaragua, and Lesser Violetear, which occurs from Costa Rica south to the Andes of Bolivia, Chesser et al. (2016).

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD -- *Eugenes fulgens*. In 2017, the AOS split Magnificent Hummingbird, so that the northern population reverted to its old name of Rivoli's Hummingbird (Chesser et al. 2017). This species is named for Francois Victor Massena (1799-1863), who was the 2nd Duke of Rivoli and a very keen naturalist.

CANADA JAY-- *Perisoreus canadensis*. In 2018, the AOS agreed to change the name of this species to Canada Jay, a request made by a Canadian consortium endeavoring to have the species named as the national bird of Canada (Chesser et al. 2018). The decision was a bit controversial, as the name "Canada Jay" was last used as the common name of a subspecies of *Perisoreus canadensis* (AOU 1957).

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY--*Aphelocoma woodhouseii*. In 2016, the AOS split Western Scrub-Jay into Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay of the Interior West and California Scrub-Jay of California (Chesser et al. 2016). The Interior West species is named after Samuel W. Woodhouse (1821-1904), a doctor and naturalist who went on expeditions to the southwest USA (1849-1852).

REPORTERS AND CITED OBSERVERS

The CBRC thanks the following individuals for submitting records of, or discovering and reporting, the new state species in Colorado discussed in this report: Peter Bandurian, Arthur Bezuidenhout, David Blue, Jack Bushong, Ryan Bushong, Coen Dexter, Frank Farrell, Doug Faulkner, James Fortune, Kenny Frisch, Peter Gent, Kevin Keirn, Kaye Lafreniere, David Leatherman, Michael Lester, Bill Maynard, Melissa Mezger, Rudi Nuissl, Brandon Percival, Sue Riffe, Laura Steadman, David Tønnessen, Glenn Walbek, and Brenda Wright.

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