

# The 83rd Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

## Introduction

This 83rd Report of the CBRC documents the 5th state record of Pyrrhuloxia, and the 7th state record of Crested Caracara. Common Gull was not added to the state list, so that the Colorado state list remains at 519 species. The 51 records documented in this report were mostly submitted in 2020, 2021, and early 2022 by 42 observers. Thanks to the observers for their support of the CBRC, especially the several first-time reporters who sent in records about the Pyrrhuloxia. Accepted records received either six or seven positive votes from various combinations of seven committee members. AWR indicates Accepted Without Review and applies to species that are not on the CBRC Review List.

## Accepted Records

**NORTHEAST**—Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, Yuma

**Brant** – *Branta bernicla* (GS\*; 2021-015; 7-0): An adult was seen and photographed at Quincy Reservoir, Arapahoe, on 3 Mar 2021.

**Hudsonian Godwit** – *Limosa haemastica* (ED\*; 2021-022; 7-0): A male and female in breeding plumage were seen near Beecher Island, Yuma, on 8 May 2021.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – *Nyctanassa violacea* (JB\*; 2021-018; 7-0):

An adult was seen in the Denver section of the Bear Creek Greenbelt, Denver, from 16 to 23 Apr 2021 and was seen by a large number of observers.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. 4/23/2021, Denver County. Photo by John Breitsch.

**Snowy Owl** – *Bubo scandiacus* (PL\*; 2021-013; AWR): A probable first-year male was seen along I-76 near Prewitt Res., Washington, on 7 Dec 2021. (AL\*; 2022-005; ANR): An immature female was seen on Rd 104 near Rd 73 in the Pawnee National Grasslands, Weld, on 20 Feb 2022. These bring the number of Snowy Owl records from the Eastern Plains to nearly 40, so that the CBRC removed this species from the Review List, except for reports from the West Slope where it is very rare.

**Cape May Warbler** – *Setophaga tigrina* (DD\*; 2021-030; AWR): An adult male in breeding plumage was photographed near Hale, Yuma, on 16 May 2021.

**Pyrrhuloxia** – *Cardinalis sinuatus* (TS, AP\*, BG\*, JS\*, FB\*, MD-H\*, SR\*; 2022-002; 7-0): A first-year male was initially identified by Taylor Smith in Newton St., West Denver, Denver, on 11 Feb 2022. It stayed around for at least the next 2 weeks and was seen by many birders who added this species to their state lists. This is the 5th documented occurrence of this desert species in Colorado, the first sighting since 2011 in the San Luis Valley, and the first to be seen by many people.

**EAST CENTRAL**—Cheyenne, El Paso, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln

**Common Black Hawk** – *Buteogallus anthracinus* (JGe\*; 2021-019; 7-0): An adult was briefly seen in the northern section of Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, on 7 May 2021.

**Connecticut Warbler** – *Oporornis agilis* (BP\*; 2017-092; 6-1): An adult was seen at the Thompson Ranch, which is east of Hwy 71 north of Limon, Lincoln, on 3 Oct 2017.



Pyrrhuloxia. 2/12/2022, Denver County. Photo by John Salisbury.

**Prairie Warbler** – *Setophaga discolor* (BP\*; 2021-033; 7-0): An adult male was photographed in the northern section of Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, on 13 May 2021.



Prairie Warbler. 5/13/2021, El Paso County. Photo by Brandon Percival.

**SOUTHEAST**—Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo

**Eurasian Wigeon** – *Mareca penelope* (BP\*; 2021-016; 7-0): An adult male was seen at Valco Ponds in Pueblo, Pueblo, from 18 to 22 Dec 2021.

**Hudsonian Godwit** – *Limosa haemastica* (DD\*; 2021-020; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Lake Meredith, Crowley, on 30 Apr 2021.

**Neotropic Cormorant** – *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (BP\*, RT\*; 2021-017; 7-0): An adult was seen at Valco Ponds in Pueblo, Pueblo, from 25 Mar to 23 Apr 2021.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – *Nyctanassa violacea* (BP\*; 2020-076; 7-0): An adult was seen in Pueblo City Park, Pueblo, from 27 May to 5 Aug 2020. (BP\*; 2020-056; 7-0): An immature bird was seen and photographed at Valco Ponds in Pueblo, Pueblo, from 7 to 16 Sep 2020.



Snow Bunting. 11/18/2021, Crowley County. Photo by Brandon Percival.

**Snow Bunting** – *Plectrophenax nivalis* (BP\*; 2021-026; 7-0): One was photographed at Lake Henry, Crowley, on 18 Nov 2021.

**Cape May Warbler** – *Setophaga tigrina* (BP\*; 2020-078; 7-0): A female in breeding plumage was seen at Melody Tempel Grove, Bent, on 6 May 2020. (BP\*; 2021-027; ANR): A male in breeding plumage was seen at the rest stop in Holly, Prowers, on 6 and 7 May 2021. (BP\*; 2021-029; 7-0): A female in breeding plumage was seen at the headquarters of Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo, on 14 and 15 May 2021. (DS\*; 2021-031; 7-0): Probably the same bird was seen at Rose Pond in Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo, on 16 May 2021. These bring the number of Cape May Warbler records from the Eastern Plains to 45, so that the CBRC removed this species from the Review List, except for reports from the West Slope where it is very rare.

**NORTH CENTRAL**—Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer

**Hudsonian Godwit** – *Limosa haemastica* (ED\*, PG\*; 2021-021; 7-0): 15 birds were seen at Lagerman Res., which is just northwest of Niwot, Boulder, on 3 May 2021. This is likely the largest flock of this species ever seen in Colorado.

**Pacific Wren** – *Troglodytes pacificus* (SR, RH; 2020-077; 6-1): A bird was heard and recorded along the Old Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park, Larimer, on 6 and 21 Jul 2020. This is another intriguing summer record of this species in RMNP. Does it breed there occasionally?

**Townsend's x Black-throated Green Warbler** – *Setophaga townsendi x virens* (CB\*; 2021-007; AWR): A male was nicely photographed at Upper Beaver Meadows in Rocky Mountain National Park, Larimer, on 20 Sep 2021. Steve Mlodinow commented that the black throat of this adult male bulges onto the upper chest and then the black somewhat flows into the side streaking, reminiscent of a male Black-throated Green Warbler. In addition, the yellow crescent under the eye seems particularly large and there is a lot of green mixed into the black of the auriculars. More information on occurrences of this rather rare hybrid in Colorado can be found in Mlodinow et al. (2014).

**CENTRAL**—Chaffee, Clear Creek, Douglas, Fremont, Gilpin, Jefferson, Lake, Park, Summit, Teller

**Rivoli's Hummingbird** – *Eugenes fulgens* (JH\*; 2021-023; 6-1): An adult male was photographed at the feeder of Meg Nyberg in Floyd Hill, Clear Creek, on 18 May 2021.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** – *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (SW\*; 2022-012; AWR): A first-year bird was seen at the Chalk Cliff Fish Hatchery in Nathrop, Chaffee, from 9 to 11 Mar 2022. This was the first documented record of this species in Chaffee.

**Eastern Meadowlark** – *Sturnella magna* (BP\*; 2021-036; 6-1): An adult was seen and recorded just north of Wetmore, Fremont, from 27 May to 1 Jun 2021.

**Cape May Warbler** – *Setophaga tigrina* (SS\*; 2021-028; 7-0): A male in breeding plumage was seen at Manitou Lake and Trout Creek, Teller, from 10 to 13 May 2021.

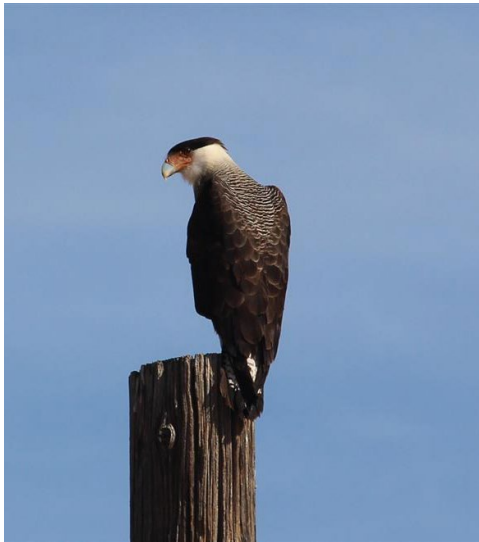


Hybrid Townsend's/Black-throated Green Warbler. 9/20/21, Larimer County. Photo by Carl Bendorf.

**Canada Warbler** – *Cardellina canadensis* (ST\*; 2021-035; 7-0): A male in breeding plumage was seen at the Audubon Nature Center, which is south of Chatfield SP, Jefferson, from 29 to 31 May 2021.

**SOUTH CENTRAL**—Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Huerfano, Rio Grande, Saguache

**Crested Caracara** – *Caracara plancus* (CA\*; 2021-025; 7-0): An adult was very nicely photographed just east of Monte Vista, Rio Grande, on 7 Mar 2021. This is the 7th record of this species in Colorado and the first since three different birds were seen in 2017.



Crested Caracara. 3/7/2021, Rio Grande County. Photo by Cary Aloia.

**Chestnut-collared Longspur** – *Calcarius ornatus* (JR\*; 2022-009; AWR): A bird was seen at Sanchez Reservoir SWA, Costilla, on 2 Apr 2022. This is the first record for Costilla in the CBRC database.

**Cape May Warbler** – *Setophaga tigrina* (BP\*; 2021-032; 7-0): A bird in non-breeding plumage was seen at Lathrop SP, Huerfano, on 1 Dec 2021.

**NORTHWEST**—Eagle, Garfield, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt

**Grasshopper Sparrow** – *Ammodramus savannarum* (JGI\*; 2020-079; 6-1): A bird was seen at the Carbondale Nature Park, Garfield, on 9 Sep 2020. This may well be the first documented record of this species in Garfield.

**SOUTHWEST**—Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan, San Miguel

**Long-billed Curlew** – *Numenius americanus* (CM\*; 2022-007; AWR): One was photographed at Pastorius SWA, La Plata, on 30 Mar 2022.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** – *Larus fuscus* (KS\*; 2022-006; AWR): An adult was photographed at Pastorius SWA, La Plata, on 1 Apr 2022.

**Caspian Tern** – *Hydroprogne caspia* (CM\*; 2022-008; AWR): An adult was photographed at Pastorius SWA, La Plata, on 11 Apr 2022. This and the previous two records were all newly documented species in the CBRC database in just a few days from a single location in La Plata!

**Lapland Longspur** – *Calcarius lapponicus* (KM\*; 2021-012; AWR): A male in transitional plumage was seen on Hwy 141 south of Naturita, San

Miguel, on 15 Feb 2021. This is the first record for San Miguel in the CBRC database.



Lapland Longspur. 2/15/2021, San Miguel County. Photo by Kathy Mihm Dunning.

**Painted Redstart** – *Myioborus pictus* (CU\*; 2021-034; 7-0): An adult was seen at Box Canyon Falls Park in Ouray, Ouray, on 29 Apr 2021.



Painted Redstart. 4/29/2021, Ouray County. Photo by Cliff Utech.

## Not Accepted Records

**NORTHEAST**—Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld, Yuma

**Pomarine Jaeger** – *Stercorarius pomarinus*. (2017-068; 5-2, 4-3, 5-2): An immature jaeger was briefly seen and photographed at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, on 20 Oct 2017. This record produced a spirited debate and disagreement among the committee members despite 12 photographs being submitted, although the bird's image is quite small in all of them. The photographs were sent to one outside expert, who agreed with the identification. Despite most

committee members agreeing with the identification, a minority thought that the record showed an immature Parasitic Jaeger. This just illustrates how difficult it is to identify immature birds of these two species.

**Common Gull** – *Larus canus*. (2021-014; 3-4): Two reports were received about an immature bird that was first seen at Cherry Creek SP, Arapahoe, on 15 Oct 1988, and was later seen at Prospect Park, Jefferson, on 3 Jan 1989. The first report contained old written notes by both Jack Reddall and the reporter. The second report also contained old written notes by the observer stating that the “European Race” of Mew Gull was listed on the Rare Bird Alert in early 1989. These notes produced three positive votes, but the remaining committee members thought that these old notes, in addition to there being no photographs, did not eliminate an immature Short-billed Gull, and were not definitive enough to support a first state record of this European species in Colorado.

**Glaucous-winged Gull** – *Larus glaucescens*. (2017-020; 5-2, 4-3, 3-4): An immature bird was seen at Union Reservoir, Weld, on 29 Apr 2017. That the bird was seen at a distance of 100 yards and no photographs were obtained persuaded more committee members not to support this record as it went through all three rounds. Immature Glaucous-winged Gulls, and other large gull species, are extremely variable in this plumage and hybrids are not rare.

**Eastern Towhee** – *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*. (2018-055; 5-2, 3-4): An adult male was seen at Tamarack Ranch SWA, Logan, on 16 Jun 2018. This bird was seen only briefly and not photographed, which made several committee members uneasy because this location is well known for having hybrids between Eastern and Spotted Towhees.

**EAST CENTRAL**—Cheyenne, El Paso, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln

**Vaux's Swift** – *Chaetura vauxi*. (2021-037; 2-5): A bird was seen and photographed at Red Rock Canyon Open Space, near Manitou Springs, El Paso, on 30 May 2021. Even though two committee members thought the 11 photographs showed a Vaux's Swift, the majority thought that they did not clearly eliminate the more expected Chimney Swift. This is a rather difficult identification when the bird is moving very quickly.

**King Rail** – *Rallus elegans*. (2016-058; 4-3, 4-3, 3-4): A bird was heard and recorded at Brett Gray Ranch, Lincoln, on 9 May 2016. This recording produced disagreement among committee members in all three rounds as to whether it was definitive for a King Rail, or whether it could have been a Virginia Rail making an unusual call. One committee member even mentioned the possibility of a hybrid between these two species.

**Chihuahuan Meadowlark** – *Sturnella liliاناe*. (2010-198; 3-4): An adult was seen just northeast of the intersection of Hwy 287 and Road 94, Cheyenne, on 1 May 2010. This bird occurred ten years before the record was submitted and the record did not include photographs or a recording, so a majority of committee members thought that Eastern Meadowlark had not been adequately eliminated.

**SOUTHEAST**—Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo

**Purple Finch** – *Haemorhous purpureus*. (2018-007; 5-2, 5-2, 4-3): A bird was heard and very briefly seen at Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, on 13 Jan 2018. In all three rounds, a majority of committee members voted to accept this record, but enough members thought the description and lack of a recording provided uncertainty that other finch species were adequately eliminated.

**Bronzed Cowbird** – *Molothrus aeneus*. (2019-058; 5-2, 3-4): An adult was very briefly seen in Rye, Pueblo, on 28 Apr 2019. The bird was described as entirely black from head to tail, but some committee members thought that the glossy blue wings, especially of a male, should have been noticeable on this species. There are only two accepted records in Colorado: the first from Lakewood in 1990, and the second from Lamar in 2017.

**NORTH CENTRAL**—Boulder, Broomfield, Grand, Jackson, Larimer

**Eurasian Wigeon** – *Mareca penelope*. (2019-027; 5-2, 3-4): A male was photographed at Cobb Lake SWA near Wellington, Larimer, on 29 Mar 2019. Reviewers pointed out that the photographs showed the sides of this bird as tan-pink, even though the description said they were gray. This led to a majority of committee members in the second round thinking that this bird had some American Wigeon genes.

**Great Black-backed Gull** – *Larus marinus*. (2020-004; 4-3, 3-4): An immature bird was seen at Warren Lake, Larimer, on 30 Jan 2020. This record caused some intense discussion among committee members, but in the second round of voting a majority of the members thought that the two submitted photographs showed an immature Herring Gull.

**Cactus Wren** – *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*. (2021-038; 2-5): A bird was seen at the Devil's Backbone Open Space west of Loveland, Larimer, on 31 Aug 2021. No photographs or recordings were submitted with this record, which made assessing it much more difficult. Some committee members thought that Sage Thrasher had not been adequately eliminated, and most were not convinced by the description. There is only one accepted record of this species in Colorado, which is of a bird seen in north Colorado Springs in March 2018.

**WEST CENTRAL**—Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Pitkin

**Arctic Tern** – *Sterna paradisaea*. (2019-032; 4-3, 0-7): A bird in transitional plumage was seen at Fruitgrowers Res., Delta, on 5 Oct 2019. It was noted by some committee members in the first round that there was too much red in the bill and the legs were too long for an Arctic Tern, so they concluded the photographs showed a young Common Tern. In the fall, these two species can be very difficult to identify with certainty.

**SOUTHWEST**—Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan, San Miguel

**White-winged Crossbill** – *Loxia leucoptera*. (2020-080; 2-5): A flock of 25 birds was very briefly seen flying over Denny Lake in Cortez, Montezuma, on 24 Nov 2020. No photographs or recordings were submitted with this record, which again made assessing it much more difficult. Most committee members thought that the description did not adequately eliminate Red Crossbill and that 25 birds would be a very large flock of this species, which is usually seen in Colorado in much smaller numbers.

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## Reporters and Cited Observers

CA: Cary Aloia, FB: Finley Baker, CB: Carl Bendorf, JB: John Breitsch, ED: Eric DeFonso, MD: Meredith Denton-Hedrick, DD: David Dowell, JGe: Jacqui Geiselman, BG: Brian Genge, PG: Peter Gent, JGl: Jake Glassman, JH: JoAnn Hackos, RH: Rachel Hopper, AL: Adrian Lakin, PL: Phil Lyon, CM: Chris MacDonald, KM: Kathy Mihm Dunning, BP: Brandon Percival, AP: Andrea Poland, JR: John Rawinski, SR: Sue Riffe, JS: John Salisbury, SS: Scott Shaum, TS: Taylor Smith, GS: Geoffrey Stacks, KS: Kristi Streiffert, DS: Donna Stumpp, ST: Santiago Tabares Erices, RT: Richard Taylor, CU: Clifford Utech, SW: Sally Waterhouse.

## 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: Eric DeFonso, David Dowell, Kathy Mihm Dunning, Peter Gent, Rachel Hopper, Eric Hynes, Tony Leukering, Steve Mlodinow, Ric Olson, Mark Peterson, Cathy Sheeter, Jason St. Pierre, and David Tonnessen. I thank them for their time and support of the CBRC. In addition, Ric Olson has been reappointed to the committee for a second three-year term for 2023 through 2025.

## 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 63rd Supplement (Chesser et al. 2022) by region. We present the accession number, the initials 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 is underlined if known and 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.

## References

- American Ornithological Society (AOS). 1998. Checklist of North American Birds. 7th ed. Allen Press, Lawrence, Kansas.*
- Chesser, R. T., S. M. Billerman, K. J. Burns, C. Cicero, J. L. Dunn, B. E. Hernandez-Banos, R. A. Jimenez, A. W. Kratter, N. A. Mason, P. C. Rasmussen, J. V. Remsen, Jr., D. F. Stotz, and K. Winker. 2022. Sixty-third supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds. Ornithology 139, (3) 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ornithology/ukac020>*
- Mlodinow, S.G., G. Walbek, and D.A. Leatherman. 2014. Two recent records of apparent Black-throated Green Warbler × Townsend's Warbler in Colorado. Colorado Birds 48: 102-106.*