

Acknowledgments

As always, the sightings reported by contributing observers to eBird and COBirds are greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Coen Dexter for continuing to compile a comprehensive Western Slope report and to John Rawinski for sharing data from the San Luis Valley.

In the list of reports above the following abbreviations are used: **CR** – County Road; **m.ob.** – many observers; **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge; **Res.** – Reservoir; **SP** – State Park; **SWA** – State Wildlife Area

References

COBirds. 2023. *Colorado Birds Google Group by Colorado Field Ornithologists [Google Group]*. Available: <https://groups.google.com/g/cobirds>.

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The 84th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

Introduction

This 84th Report of the CBRC documents the 2nd state record of Yellow Rail, Purple Sandpiper and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, the 2nd through 4th state records of Cassia Crossbill, and the 3rd state record of Garganey, Slaty-backed Gull and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Also included are the 4th state records of Thick-billed Kingbird and Brambling, the 5th state record of Mexican Whip-poor-will, the 9th state record of Harris's Hawk and the 10th state record of Eastern Whip-poor-will. 2022 will be remembered for an amazing array of really rare species that were seen and heard during the year: more information of some of these sightings can be found in the article in Colorado Birds by Gent (2023). The 53 records documented in this report were seen mostly in 2022, but a few very old records and some that went through 3 rounds of voting are also finally included. These records were submitted by 40 observers, and I thank them for their support of the CBRC: I especially thank Brandon Percival who submitted reports on 12 species in this report. 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 that are not on the CBRC Review List.

On 6 July 2023 the American Ornithological Society published the 64th Supplement to the Check-list of North American Birds (Chesser et al. 2023). Two changes affect birds residing in Colorado. Northern Goshawk was split into two species: Eurasian Goshawk and American Goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*), reversing a decision in 1957 to lump the two species. Cordilleran and Pacific-slope Flycatchers were lumped back into Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), reversing a decision in 1989 to split these species. Neither Eurasian Goshawk nor Pacific-slope Flycatcher were recorded in Colorado, so the Colorado state list remains at 519 species.

Accepted Records

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

Mexican Duck – *Anas diazi* (SM*; 2013-318; 7-0): A male in breeding plumage was photographed at Loloff Res. which is southeast of Kersey, Weld, on 13 Jul 2013.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – *Calidris acuminata* (DD*; 2022-036; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Stewart's Pond which is just south of La Salle, Weld, on 27 May 2022. This is the 3rd state record and the first in spring. The bird was with three Pectoral Sandpipers, but the rufous cap and white eyering clearly distinguished it from the American species that is most similar to it. The first Colorado record was at Prince Lake #2 east of Boulder in Oct 1975, and the second was at the northwest corner of John Martin Res. in Oct 2000.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. 5/27/2022, Weld County. Photo by David Dowell.

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

Mexican Whip-poor-will – *Antrostomus arizonae* (DSu; 2022-043; 7-0): A bird was recorded and briefly seen at Rock Creek Canyon Road, which is 4 miles south of Colorado Springs, El Paso, on 14 Jun 2022. This 5th state record of this species had been found and recorded a few days earlier by Rebecca Laroche.

Common Gallinule – *Gallinula galeata* (TB*, MG, BP*, JD*, AD*; 2022-034; 7-0): An adult was documented at Cross Creek Regional Park in north Fountain, El Paso, between 19 and 21 Apr 2022, although it stayed there considerably longer.



Common Gallinule. 4/19/2022, El Paso County. Photo by John Drummond.

Piping Plover – *Charadrius melodus* (KL*; 2022-010; AWR): An adult in breeding plumage was photographed at Big Johnson Res., which is southeast of Colorado Springs, El Paso, on 4 May 2022.

Red Knot – *Calidris canutus* (KM*; 2022-035; 7-0): An immature bird in transitional plumage was seen on CR

25 a few miles northeast of Kit Carson, Cheyenne, on 9 Sep 2022.

White Ibis – *Eudocimus albus* (JF*, MG*, AD*; 2022-029; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was documented at Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso, between 6 and 12 May 2022. However, this bird stayed around for at least two weeks before it made its way north to be seen in Adams, Boulder and Jefferson counties over the summer.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher – *Myiodynastes luteiventris* (PB*, KK*; 2022-044; 7-0): An adult was seen briefly in the north part of Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso, on 10 Sep 2022. This is the 2nd state record of this species in Colorado: The first was seen at Blue Lake in Bent County in Sep 2002.



Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher. 9/10/2022, El Paso County. Photo by Graham Ray.

Pacific Wren – *Troglodytes pacificus* (TB*; 2022-047; 6-1): An adult was seen and recorded at Rampart Park in north Colorado Springs, El Paso, on 25 Feb 2022. The recording helped to distinguish this bird from a possible Winter Wren.

Lucy's Warbler – *Leiothlypis luciae* (SB*; 2022-049; 7-0): An adult male in

breeding plumage was banded at Clear Springs Ranch (formerly Hanna Ranch), which is south of Colorado Springs, El Paso, on 23 May 2022.

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

Eurasian Wigeon – *Mareca penelope* (BP*; 2022-023; 7-0): An adult male was seen at Valco Ponds west of Pueblo, Pueblo, between 26 and 28 Feb 2022.

Eastern Whip-poor-will – *Antrostomus vociferus* (JK; 2022-041; 7-0): An adult was heard and recorded at Two Buttes SWA, Baca, between 16 and 20 Sep 2022. The recording helped to eliminate Mexican Whip-poor-will as a possibility.

Purple Sandpiper – *Calidris maritima* (JK*, BP*; 2022-053; 7-0): An immature bird in transitional plumage was seen and beautifully photographed at Lake Henry, Crowley, on 6 and 7 Oct 2022. This is the 2nd state record: The first was seen at the south end of Lake Dillon in Summit County in Dec 2016.



Purple Sandpiper. 10/7/2022, Crowley County. Photo by Joey Kellner.

Yellow-billed Loon – *Gavia adamsii* (BP*, SR*; 2022-025; 7-0): Two birds in basic plumage were seen at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, between 8 Jan and 19 Mar 2022.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – *Nyctanassa violacea* (BP*; 2022-027; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Pueblo City Park, Pueblo, on 1 Jun 2022. (BP*; 2022-028; 7-0): An immature bird was photographed at Valco Ponds west of Pueblo, Pueblo, on 1 Oct 2022.

Harris's Hawk – *Parabuteo unicinctus* (BP*; 2022-032; 6-1): An adult was photographed by Lindsay Carleton in Pueblo West, Pueblo, on 12 Mar 2022. This is the 9th state record of this southwestern species in Colorado.



Harris's Hawk. 3/12/22, Pueblo County. Photo by Lindsay Carleton.

Philadelphia Vireo – *Vireo philadelphicus* (BP*; 2022-018; AWR): Two birds in basic plumage were seen together at Ordway Res., Crowley, on 8 Oct 2022.

Pacific Wren – *Troglodytes pacificus* (BP*; 2022-046; 7-0): An adult was seen and recorded at Valco Ponds west of Pueblo, Pueblo, on 27 Jan 2022.

Sedge Wren – *Cistothorus stellaris* (BP*; 2022-048; 7-0): An adult was seen also at Valco Ponds, Pueblo, on 6 Nov 2022.

Brambling – *Fringilla montifringilla* (JS*; 2022-051; 7-0): An immature bird was photographed at the Lamar Community College, Prowers, on 31 Oct 2022. This is the 4th state record of this species, and the first since one at Bear Creek Lake Park near Morrison in Nov 2012.



Brambling. 10/31/2022, Prowers County. Photo by Jill Smith.

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

Garganey – *Spatula querquedula* (BT*, PC*; 2022-024; 7-0): An adult male in breeding plumage was seen by many at Boyd Lake State Park in Loveland, Larimer, on 8 May 2022. This is the 3rd state record of this species: the first was at Jackson Res. in Apr 1990 and the second was at Sombrero Marsh in Boulder in Mar 1992.



Garganey. 5/8/2022, Larimer County. Photo by Kevin Rutherford.

Eurasian Wigeon – *Mareca penelope* (ED*; 2022-022; 7-0): An adult male in breeding plumage was seen by many at Pella Crossing Park near Hygiene, Boulder, between 12 and 23 Jan 2022.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – *Calidris subruficollis* (PG*; 2022-021; AWR): An immature bird in transitional plumage was seen at Lagerman Res. southwest of Longmont, Boulder, between 10 and 12 Sep 2022.

Slaty-backed Gull – *Larus schistisagus* (JB, AL*, SR*; 2022-038; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Boyd Lake State Park in Loveland, Larimer, between 20 and 26 Mar 2022. This is the 3rd state record of this species: the first was at Horseshoe Lake and other locations in Larimer County in Mar 2000, and the second was at Aurora Res. in Dec 2013.

Great Black-backed Gull – *Larus marinus* (JB*; 2016-120; 5-2, 5-2, 7-0): An adult was photographed at Boulder Res., Boulder, on 12 Mar 2016. It should be noted that the photograph was not available until the 3rd round of voting.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – *Nyctanassa violacea* (PG*; 2022-016; AWR): An immature bird in transitional plumage was seen at Pella Crossing Park near Hygiene, Boulder, on 30 and 31 Oct 2022.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. 10/30/2022, Boulder County. Photo by Leslie Sutton.

White Ibis – *Eudocimus albus* (SS*, PG*, JP*; 2022-030; 7-0): An adult in breeding plumage was seen at Golden Ponds Park in Longmont, Boulder, on 30 May 2022. This is highly likely the same bird that was seen earlier in May at Fountain Creek Park, and then was seen at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal on 29 May. Very likely the same bird was subsequently seen at Belmar Park in Lakewood on 25 Jun.

Sedge Wren – *Cistothorus stellaris* (KR*; 2022-015; AWR): An adult was photographed along the White Rocks Trail east of Boulder, Boulder, on 23 Oct 2022.

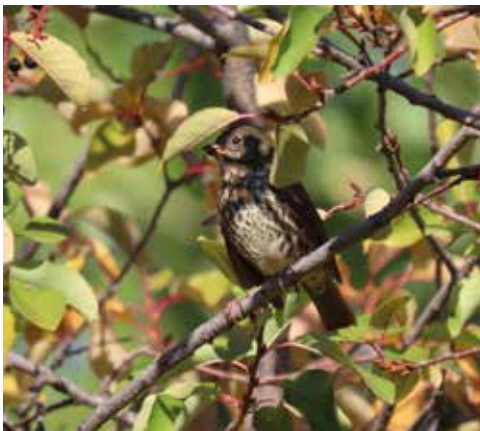
Curve-billed Thrasher – *Toxostoma curvirostre* (SR*; 2022-011; AWR): An adult in breeding plumage was photographed along Terry Lake Road northeast of Buckeye, Larimer, on 11



Sedge Wren. 10/23/2022, Boulder County. Photo by Kevin Rutherford.

Jul 2022. I believe a pair was nesting at this location, which is nearly 200 miles north of its usual breeding locations in Colorado, but the CBRC did not receive any documentation of this.

Fox Sparrow (Sooty) – *Passerella iliaca unalaschcensis* (KS*; 2022-055; 6-1): An adult of the Sooty race was seen in south Boulder, Boulder, on 11 Oct 2022. This is only the 2nd record of this race in Colorado: the first was in northeast Boulder in Dec 2020 and early 2021.



Fox Sparrow (Sooty). 10/11/2022, Boulder County. Photo by Kieran Schnitzspahn.

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

Lesser Nighthawk – *Chordeiles acutipennis* (GG*; 2022-040; 7-0): An adult was photographed flying over Franz Res. just northwest of Salida, Chaffee, on 6 May 2022. This bird was seen between 5 and 8 May, and is a new county record for Chaffee.

Anna's Hummingbird – *Calypte anna* (RO*; 2022-042; 7-0): An immature male with flecks of red all around the head was seen coming to a feeder at a house just north of Castle Pines, Douglas, on 17 Sep 2022.

American Golden-Plover – *Pluvialis dominica* (GM*; 2022-020; AWR): An adult in basic plumage was photographed at Bassam Park, which is near Nathrop, Chaffee, on 24 May 2022.

Brown Pelican – *Pelecanus occidentalis* (ML*; 2022-026; 7-0): An adult was seen at Chatfield Res., Jefferson, on 17 Apr 2022. The bird was also seen on 15 and 16 Apr.

Red-headed Woodpecker – *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* (KD*; 2022-014; AWR): An immature bird was photographed in south Salida, Chaffee, on 12 Sep 2022.

Cassia Crossbill – *Loxia sinesciuris* (ED, PG; 2022-056; 7-0): 8 birds were heard and recorded at the Alfred Bailey Bird Nesting Area north of Silverthorne, Summit, on 17 Jul 2022. Many birders went to hear and see these birds over

the subsequent two weeks, but the only other report received was of 4 birds seen and recorded on 25 Jul 2022. These recordings were approved by Nathan Pieplow. This is the 2nd record of this species in Colorado: the first was of 5 birds recorded southeast of Hot Sulphur Springs in Grand County in Jul 2021.

Lucy's Warbler – *Leiothlypis luciae* (DSc; 2016-118; 7-0): An adult male was seen at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, Jefferson, on 17 and 18 May 2016.

Chestnut-sided Warbler – *Setophaga pensylvanica* (KD*; 2022-013; AWR): An adult male in breeding plumage was seen at Sands Lake in north Salida, Chaffee, on 13 May 2022.

Yellow-throated Warbler – *Setophaga dominica* (TH*; 2022-017; AWR): An adult male was photographed coming to a feeder in Littleton, Jefferson, on 12 Nov 2022. A very nice bird to have on your yard list!

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

Yellow Rail – *Coturnicops noveboracensis* (ED, BP; 2022-033; 7-0): One bird was heard calling and recorded at Monte Vista NWR, Rio Grande, on the morning of 12 Jul 2022. Two birds were heard and recorded very early on 14 Jul 2022. These birds were heard by many people at this location for at least the next two weeks. This is the 2nd state record: the first was of a bird collected at Barr Lake in Jul 1906. This was a

complete surprise given that the species has not been detected in Colorado for well over a century: see the article in Colorado Birds by DeFonso (2022).

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

Cassia Crossbill – *Loxia sinesciuris* (JR; 2022-058; 7-0): Two birds were recorded at Sylvan Lake State Park south of Eagle, Eagle, on 3 Aug 2022. This is the 4th state record of this species, and again the recording was approved by Nathan Pieplow.

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

Mississippi Kite – *Ictinia mississippiensis* (LC*; 2022-019; AWR): An immature bird was photographed in east Grand Junction, Mesa, on 5 Jun 2022.

Thick-billed Kingbird – *Tyrannus crassirostris* (LC*, RO*, BP*; 2022-045; 7-0): An adult was seen just southwest of Highline Lake SP, Mesa, between 21 and 26 Sep 2022. This is the 4th state record of this species in Colorado: the 3rd



Thick-billed Kingbird, 9/21/2022, Mesa County. Photo by Linda Chittum.

record was also in the Grand Junction area in Dec 2018.

Eastern Phoebe – *Sayornis phoebe* (LC; 2023-002; AWR): An adult was seen and recorded at Horsethief Canyon SWA west of Fruita, Mesa, on 19 Oct 2022.

Cassia Crossbill – *Loxia sinesciuris* (KM; 2022-057; 7-0): A bird was recorded just south of Norrie, Pitkin, on 2 Aug 2022. This is the 3rd state record of this species, and the recording was approved by Nathan Pieplow and Christian Nunes.

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

Mexican Duck – *Anas diazi* (SM*; 2014-208; 6-1): A pair of adults was photographed at Vallecito Res., La Plata, on 14 Apr 2014.

Mexican Duck – *Anas diazi* (SM*; 2014-209; 7-0): An adult male was photographed at McPhee Res. near Dolores, Montezuma, on 15 Apr 2014.

Not Accepted Records

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

Rivoli's Hummingbird – *Eugenes fulgens*. (2020-060; 5-2, 4-3, 3-4): An adult female was rather briefly seen at the visitor center in Fountain Creek Regional Park, El Paso, on 23 May 2020. After the 3rd round discussion, a

majority of voting members thought the description was limited and insufficient to rule out a Blue-throated Mountain-Gem.

White-tailed Kite – *Elanus leucurus*. (2022-054; 2-5): An adult was seen at Cross Creek Regional Park in east Fountain, El Paso, on 22 Apr 2022. Several committee members mentioned that the description was rather brief, and did not mention either the dark shoulders or the black wrist spots on the under wing. There is only one accepted record of this species in Colorado: an adult seen northwest of Holly in Prowers County in May 2019.

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

Chihuahuan Meadowlark – *Sturnella liliana*. (2012-047; 7-0, 4-3, 4-3): A male was seen 2 miles east of Carrizo Picnic Area on CR M, Baca, on 14 Apr 2012. This record was originally submitted and accepted as an Eastern Meadowlark. However, the location is close to where some Chihuahuan Meadowlarks records have been accepted, so the record was recirculated. It caused a lively debate among the committee members, but in both rounds 2 and 3 some members thought there was a very high probability that it was a hybrid between the two species.

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

Rivoli's Hummingbird – *Eugenes fulgens*. (2017-047; 5-2, 5-2, 4-3): An adult female was fairly briefly seen at Golden Gate Canyon SP, Gilpin, on 25 Jul 2017. This record also went for 3 rounds and caused a lively debate. However, in the end some members thought that the description did not definitively eliminate a female of other large hummingbird species possible in Colorado.

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

Short-billed Dowitcher – *Limnodromus griseus*. (2022-037; 2-5): An adult in transitional plumage was seen at Russell Lakes SWA, Saguache, on 21 Apr 2021. Several committee members thought that the short description and photographs did not adequately eliminate the much more expected Long-billed Dowitcher.

Reporters and Cited Observers

TB: Tanja Britton, SB: Steven Brown, JB: Josh Bruening, PB: Peter Burke, JB: Jack Bushong, LC: Linda Chittum, PC: Patricia Cullen, ED: Eric DeFonso, DD: David Dowell, AD: Aaron Driscoll, JD: John Drummond, KD: Kat Dunlavey, JF: Jenyva Fox, PG: Peter Gent, MG: Melvin Goff, GG: Gregg Goodrich, TH: Toby Harp, KK: Kathryn Kay, JK: Joey Kellner, AL: Adrian Lakin, KL: Kara Laszczyk, ML: Michael Lester, GM: Greg Mihalik, KM: Kathy Mihm Dunning, SM: Steven Mlodinow, RO: Ric Olson, JP: Jeff Percell, BP: Brandon Percival, SR: Sue Riffe, JR: JoAnn Potter Riggall, KR: Kevin Rutherford, KS: Kieran Schnitzspahn, DSc: Dick Schottler, JS: Jill Smith, SS: Sarah Spotten, DSu: David Suddjian, BT: Bryan Tarbox.

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, Peter Gent, Eric Hynes, Tony Leukering, 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, Eric Hynes has recently relocated to Maine and has resigned from the committee. Michael Lester, from Littleton, CO, has joined 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 64th Supplement (Chesser et al. 2023) 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, 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, NWR indicates a National Wildlife Refuge, Res. a reservoir, SP a State Park, and SWA a State Wildlife Area.

References

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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., and K. Winker: 2023. *Sixty-fourth Supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds*. *Ornithology* 140, (3) 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ornithology/ukad023>.

DeFonso, E., 2022. *A ghost from the past: Yellow Rail in Colorado*. *Colorado Birds*, 56(4), 309-314.

Gent, P. R., 2023. *2022 – Year of the Twos*. *Colorado Birds*, 57(1), 9-12.



A gloomy mass of storm clouds sets in over your local birding patch in early September. A small group of seven, slender, white birds drops in suddenly, feeding low over the water on what is the only reservoir for miles. Tense with excitement, you focus your optics on these birds and discover a common conundrum for birders. The delicate shapes dancing above the water have the recognizable, pale patterns of terns, but which of this confusing bunch could they be?

This article will guide you through identification of the most notorious genus of terns in Colorado, the *Sterna* terns, and provide a brief overview of the other three expected species also found in the state, to cover a total of six species. Terns of the genus *Sterna* are the most closely related to each other of these six species, and therefore are often confused, particularly in immature and non-breeding plumages, where all six species can share resemblance.



A black cap and dusky-tipped wings are typical of the *Sterna* terns, while the combined orange bill and legs and whitish belly are typical only of a Forster's Tern in breeding plumage. Photographed by Martina Nordstrand in May 2021.



A Common Tern in breeding plumage. While bill and feet color is not always easily apparent, this species has slightly less black in the bill and grayer undersides than a Forster's Tern. Photographed by David Tønnessen in June 2023.



A white cheek and throat area contrasts well with a grayer underside in breeding-plumage Arctic Terns, even without the shadow in this photo enhancing that effect. Photographed by Peter Burke in July 2018.