

The 87th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

Introduction

In July, the American Ornithological Society published its 2024 update to the Checklist of North American Birds (Chesser et al., 2024). The most significant decision affecting species seen in Colorado was that Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll and Lesser Redpoll were all lumped into a single species: Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*). The CBRC had six records of Hoary Redpoll, all from the very large invasion of redpolls during the winter of 2012-2013. Colorado was involved in this decision because two of the authors on the most influential paper leading to this decision (Funk et al., 2021) work at The University of Colorado Boulder.

In addition, several species seen in Colorado had changes made to their common or scientific names. Mountain and Snowy Plovers were moved from the genus *Charadrius* to *Anarhynchus*. Least Bittern was moved from the genus *Ixobrychus* to *Botaurus*. Cattle Egret was split into two species and changed genus, so that the birds in North America are now Western Cattle-Egret (*Ardea ibis*). The hyphen was removed from Night-Heron, so that the two species become Black-crowned Night Heron and Yellow-crowned Night Heron. Barn Owl was split into three species, so that the birds in North America are now American Barn Owl (*Tyto furcata*). House Wren was split into seven species, so that the birds in Colorado are now Northern House Wren.

This 87th Report of the CBRC documents decisions on records submitted in the first six months of 2024, which includes a number of older records. It also includes a record from September, which is of a Golden-fronted Woodpecker. This new species to Colorado compensates for the “loss” of Hoary Redpoll discussed above, so that the official Colorado state list remains at 520 species. In addition, this report details the second state records of four species: Vaux’s Swift, White-tailed Kite, Cactus Wren and Yellow Grosbeak, all seen within the space of a few months. Also documented in this report are the sixth record of Brambling, the seventh and eighth records of Black Vulture and the seventh record of Cassia Crossbill.

Also of interest are records of two species that were not accepted by the committee: both Ruffed Grouse and California Condor were identified correctly, but were

not accepted because of the status of their respective introduced populations. The 49 records in this report were submitted by 32 observers, and I thank them for their support of the CBRC. Accepted records received either six or seven positive votes from various combinations of seven of the nine 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)

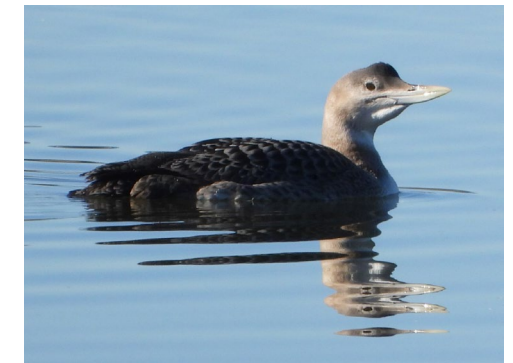
Black Rail – *Laterallus jamaicensis* (Doug Faulkner, Eric DeFonso; 2018-095; AWR): One was recorded at Lower Latham Reservoir, *Weld*, on 2 and 5 Jun 2018. At 7pm on both evenings, it was loudly singing its “ki-ka-a-doo” song. This is well north of its usual range in Colorado, most of which is along the Arkansas River in southeast Colorado.

Hudsonian Godwit – *Limosa haemastica* (Luke Pheneger*; 2022-068; 7-0): One in breeding plumage was photographed at Stewart’s Pond, *Weld*, on 14 May 2022. (Cole Sage*; 2023-068; 7-0): Another bird in breeding plumage was photographed at Cherry Creek State Park, *Arapahoe*, on 6 May 2023.

Red Knot – *Calidris canutus* (Luke Pheneger*; 2022-071; 7-0): A bird still with a substantial amount of its breeding plumage was photographed at Prewitt Reservoir SWA, *Washington*, on 30 Jul 2022.

Yellow-billed Loon – *Gavia adamsii* (Doug Faulkner*; 2020-093; 7-0): A juvenile bird was photographed on Cell No. 3 next to the South Platte River

just southwest of Brighton, *Adams*, on 6 Nov 2020. (Cole Sage*; 2022-067; 7-0): Another individual was nicely photographed at Cherry Creek State Park, *Arapahoe*, on 25 Nov 2022.



Yellow-billed Loon. 11/25/22, Arapahoe County. Photo by Cole Sage.

Long-eared Owl – *Asio otus* (David Schutt*; 2024-003; AWR): An adult ate a large rodent at 9:30am and spent the rest of the day perched in a Blue Spruce in the Pelican Hills neighborhood of Windsor, *Weld*, on 31 Mar 2024.

Eastern Wood-Pewee – *Contopus virens* (Luke Pheneger*; 2022-069; 7-0): One was photographed and audio-recorded at Prewitt Reservoir SWA, *Washington*, on 18 May 2022.

White-eyed Vireo – *Vireo griseus* (Luke Pheneger*; 2023-065; 6-1) One was photographed at Prewitt Reservoir SWA, *Washington*, on 30 Sep 2023.

Yellow-throated Vireo – *Vireo flavifrons* (Cole Sage*; 2020-098; AWR): One was photographed in the town of Ovid, *Sedgwick*, on 23 May 2020.

Sedge Wren – *Cistothorus stellaris* (Cole Sage*; 2022-073; 7-0): One was photographed on the bank of the South Platte River just north of C470, *Arapahoe*, on 6 Jan 2022. This bird stayed in this location until at least 16 Jan 2022.

Fox Sparrow (Red) – *Passerella iliaca iliaca/zaboria* (Archer Silverman*; 2024-002; AWR): One stayed in a backyard near City Park, *Denver*, between 16 Dec 2022 and 20 Mar 2023, and was seen by at least 30 observers.

Blue-winged Warbler – *Vermivora cyanoptera* (Luke Pheneger*; 2022-070; 7-0): A bird in breeding plumage was photographed and recorded at Prewitt Reservoir SWA, *Washington*, on 18 May 2022.

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

Brant – *Branta bernicla* (Aaron Driscoll*, Brandon Percival; 2024-005; 7-0): A bird of the western black race was seen at the Broadmoor Hotel pond, *El Paso*, between 21 Jan and 2 Feb 2024.

Rivoli's Hummingbird – *Eugenes fulgens* (Kara Carragher*; 2024-021; 7-0): A female was photographed at a feeder just southeast of the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, on 11 Jun 2024.



Brant. 1/22/24, El Paso County. Photo by Aaron Driscoll.



Rivoli's Hummingbird. 6/11/24, El Paso County. Photo by Kara Carragher.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird – *Archilochus colubris* (Angela Koehler*; 2023-053; 5-2, 6-1): A female was photographed at a feeder in Elizabeth, *Elbert*, on 30 Sep 2023.

Acorn Woodpecker – *Melanerpes formicivorus* (Brandon Percival*; 2024-022; 7-0): Two birds were seen at Stratton Open Space in Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, between 18 Jun and 27 Jul 2024.

Golden-fronted Woodpecker – *Melanerpes aurifrons* (Glenn Walbek*, Steve Stachowiak*, Brandon Percival*, Peter Gent*; 2024-030; 7-0): An immature female was found in a juniper hedgerow near the junction of roads H and 53, which is a few miles southeast of Cheyenne Wells, *Cheyenne*, on 17 Sep 2024. This is a new species for Colorado, and it remained there for at least a week and was seen by many birders. This species breeds as far north as the Amarillo area, which is less than 150 miles south of Colorado, so it is not too surprising that it has now been documented in Colorado.



Golden-fronted Woodpecker. 9/17/24, Cheyenne County. Photo by Glenn Walbek.

Eastern Wood-Pewee – *Contopus virens* (Luke Pheneger; 2020-095; 6-1): A bird was recorded at Flagler Reservoir SWA, *Kit Carson*, on 7 Sep 2020.

Sprague's Pipit – *Anthus spragueii* (Luke Pheneger*; 2023-066; 7-0): 17 birds were reported at Spring Valley State Land Trust, which is at the junction of roads MM and 45 about 4 miles west of US 385, *Kit Carson*, on 14 Oct 2023. This is by far the largest concentration of this species ever reported in Colorado, and the report is supported by a photograph and two recordings.

Lucy's Warbler – *Leiothlypis luciae* (Scott Shaum*; 2024-017; 7-0): A male in breeding plumage was photographed at Clear Springs Ranch (formerly Hanna Ranch), *El Paso*, on 10 May 2024.

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

Black Rail – *Laterallus jamaicensis* (Luke Pheneger; 2023-046; 5-2, 6-1): A bird was recorded at Cottonwood Canyon, *Baca*, on 15 May 2023.

Neotropic Cormorant – *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (Luke Pheneger*; 2023-064; 7-0): One was photographed at Midwestern Farms SWA, *Prowers*, on 14 May 2023.

Tricolored Heron – *Egretta tricolor* (Luke Pheneger*; 2024-020; 7-0): An adult was photographed flying over Two Buttes Reservoir, *Baca*, on 1 May 2024.

Black Vulture – *Coragyps atratus* (Dave Daniher; 2024-019; 6-1): An adult was seen roosting on a private ranch near the Higbee Cemetery, *Otero*, on 17 Jun 2024. This bird provides the eighth record of this species in Colorado, and a new species for Otero County: note that about half of the state records have been recorded in 2023 and 2024.

Philadelphia Vireo – *Vireo philadelphicus* (Luke Pheneger*; 2022-072; 7-0): A bird was photographed at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 24 Sep 2022.

Cactus Wren – *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* (Luke Pheneger*; 2024-

011; 7-0): A bird was photographed just northwest of the Picketwire Corrals on Rourke Road, *Otero*, on 29 Mar 2024. This is the second record of this species in Colorado: the first record was in a private yard in north Colorado Springs on 22 Mar 2018.



Cactus Wren. 3/29/2024, *Otero* County. Photo by Luke Pheneger.

Gray-cheeked Thrush – *Catharus minimus* (Luke Pheneger*; 2020-097; 7-0): Two birds were seen at Melody Tempel Grove, *Bent*, on 8 May 2020.

Sagebrush Sparrow – *Artemisiospiza nevadensis* (Brandon Percival*; 2024-001; AWR): A bird was photographed near the junction of roads R and 25, *Otero*, on 30 Mar 2024, providing a first record for *Otero* County.

Yellow Grosbeak – *Pheucticus chrysopleus* (Bob Panariso*; 2024-014; 7-0): One was photographed at a private house in East Blende, *Pueblo*, on 11 May 2024. This is the second record of this species in Colorado; the first was seen by a large number of birders at the Gib Rokich ranch in Huerfano County between 28 and 31 May 2018.



Yellow Grosbeak. 5/11/2024, *Pueblo* County. Photo by Bob Panariso.

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

Pacific Wren – *Troglodytes pacificus* (William Rowe*; 2024-024; 7-0): An adult was photographed and recorded at the Calypso Cascades in Wild Basin, *Boulder*, on 28 Jun 2024. This seems to be a location where this species occurs quite regularly in the breeding season: one of very few known locations in Colorado.

Sedge Wren – *Cistothorus stellaris* (Luke Pheneger*; 2020-096; 7-0): A bird was photographed at Country Vista Park east of Broomfield, *Broomfield*, on 17 Oct 2020.

Brambling – *Fringilla montifringilla* (Laura Stump*; 2024-009; 7-0): A bird was photographed in a private yard in west Loveland, *Larimer*, on 17 Apr 2024. This is the sixth record of this species in Colorado. The fifth bird spent the early part of 2024 in Colorado Springs, where it was last seen on 2 Apr: could this have been the same bird on its way back north?



Brambling. 4/17/2024, *Larimer* County. Photo by Laura Stump.

White-throated Sparrow – *Zonotrichia albicollis* (Steve and Debbie Bouricius*; 2024-004; AWR): A bird was seen in Peaceful Valley, *Boulder*, between 27 and 30 Apr 2024, where it was nicely photographed in the snow.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – *Pheucticus ludovicianus* (Gerrienne Hudson*; 2024-027; AWR): A male in breeding plumage was photographed in a yard in central Broomfield, *Broomfield*, on 11 Jun 2024.

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

Black Scoter – *Melanitta americana* (Ryan Stander*; 2023-063; AWR): A female or young bird was photographed at Platte Canyon Reservoir, *Douglas*, on 12 Nov 2023. This bird was present between 1 and 17 Nov 2023.

Yellow-billed Loon – *Gavia adamsii* (Doug Faulkner*; 2020-092; 6-1): An immature bird was photographed at

Chatfield State Park, *Jefferson*, on 1 Feb 2020.

Glossy Ibis – *Plegadis falcinellus* (Kayla Bruegger*; 2024-015; AWR): An adult in breeding plumage was nicely photographed in Keystone, *Summit*, on 18 May 2024. The observer wrote that this was the first ibis she had ever seen, and it just happened to be the first Glossy Ibis documented in Summit County!

Scott's Oriole – *Icterus parisorum* (Sally Waterhouse*; 2024-018; AWR): A male in breeding plumage was photographed at a feeder in Salida, *Chaffee*, on 10 May 2024.

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

Cassia Crossbill – *Loxia sinesciuris* (Kathy Mihm Dunning; 2023-060; 5-2, 6-1): A bird was recorded at East Meadow Creek Trail north of Vail, *Eagle*, on 21 Sep 2023. This is the seventh record of this species in Colorado, and adds another data point to the mystery of the distribution of this species in the state.

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

Long-tailed Jaeger – *Stercorarius longicaudus* (Amy Hudechek*; 2020-094; 7-0): A juvenile was nicely photographed at a small reservoir next to the Colorado River in west Grand Junction, *Mesa*, on 20 Sep 2020. This represents a new species for Mesa County.



Long-tailed Jaeger. 9/20/2020, Mesa County. Photo by Amy Hudechek

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

Vaux's Swift – *Chaetura vauxi* (Mike Thompson*; 2023-067; 6-1): A bird was photographed just west of the McElmo Inn, which is west of Cortez, *Montezuma*, on 22 Sep 2023. This is the second record of this species in Colorado: the first was seen along the Arkansas River just below Pueblo Reservoir dam on 28 Apr 2015.

Black Vulture – *Coragyps atratus* (Chris MacDonald*; 2024-007; 7-0): An adult was photographed in Hermosa north of Durango, *La Plata*, on 17 Mar 2024. This is the seventh record of this species in Colorado, and a new species for La Plata County.

White-tailed Kite – *Elanus leucurus* (Mike Thompson*, Coen Dexter*, Chris MacDonald*; 2024-012; 7-0): An adult was beautifully photographed on Road B southeast of the Yucca House National Monument, *Montezuma*, on 30 and 31 Mar 2024. This bird provides the second record of this species in Colorado: the first was seen northwest of Holly in Prowers County on 27 May 2019.

Indigo Bunting – *Passerina cyanea* (Emily and Chris MacDonald; 2024-025; 7-0): A singing male was recorded in Hermosa north of Durango, *La Plata*, on 5 Jul 2024.

Not Accepted Records

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

Long-tailed Jaeger – *Stercorarius longicaudus*. (2023-051; 5-2, 3-4): A non-adult bird was seen at Adobe Creek Reservoir, *Bent*, on 2 Sep 2023. The photographs were of a very distant bird sitting on the water, and several committee members thought that these and the description did not eliminate a non-adult Parasitic Jaeger.



Black Vulture. 3/17/2024, La Plata County. Photo by Chris MacDonald.



White-tailed Kite. 3/30/2024, Montezuma County. Photo by Mike Thompson.

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

American Woodcock – *Scolopax minor*. (2024-008; 0-7): A bird was seen in the southeast part of Pine Ridge Natural Area of Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 17 Jan 2024. All committee members thought that the very brief description did not eliminate other long-billed shorebirds such as Wilson's Snipe.

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

Ruffed Grouse – *Bonasa umbellus*. (2024-006; 1-6): A bird was photographed on Mountain Springs Road which is a few miles southwest of Glenwood Springs, *Garfield*, on 22 Mar 2024. It has now been determined by Kathy Mihm Dunning and Linda Chittum that Colorado Parks and Wildlife released a total of 54 birds in nearby Garfield State Wildlife Area as follows: 25 in 2016, 9 in 2017, and 20 in 2018. Most of the committee thought that the birds have been around for only a few years, and it's not clear that the population is sustaining itself, so they voted "Not Accepted; establishment of introduced population questionable." Two members thought that a population needs to be around for at least 15 years, or longer, before it can be thought of as "established." This situation is very different to the Ruffed Grouse seen in the very northwest corner of

Colorado because there is an established population just to the west in northeast Utah.

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

California Condor – *Gymnogyps californianus*. (2015-163; 4-3, 2-5): An immature bird was photographed by Franz Carver at Summit Ridge south of Dolores, *Montezuma*, on 16 Apr 2015. The wing tag of N8 confirmed that this bird was hatched at the San Diego Zoo and released at the Grand Canyon sometime later. This is the second time California Condor has been seen in Colorado: the first was when 3 birds landed on the Land's End visitor center on the Grand Mesa in Aug 1998. In that case, the CBRC decided not to accept the record as those birds were also reared in captivity. A majority of the current members agreed with this decision, and voted "Not Accepted; natural occurrence questionable." As the population of this species continues to increase, sooner or later a bird produced in the wild will be seen in Colorado and then the CBRC might vote differently.

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 (cobrc.org).

Committee News

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

Report Format

The records in each section of this report are arranged taxonomically following the American Ornithological Society's (AOS) Checklist of North American Birds (AOS 1998) through the 65th Supplement (Chesser et al. 2024). Presented are 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.

References

American Ornithological Society (AOS). (1998). Checklist of North American Birds. 7th ed. Allen Press, Lawrence, Kansas.

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*Funk, E. R., Mason, N. A., Pálsson, S., Albrecht, T., Johnson, J. A., & Taylor, S.A. (2021). A supergene underlies linked variation in color and morphology in a Holarctic songbird. *Nature Communications* 12:6833.*

My Weld County Big Day

By Jeff Purcell

On Saturday September 14 I did some birding, well quite a bit of birding actually. I was participating in the CFO Colorado Birding Challenge. The goal of the COBC is to form teams and have a Big Day, limiting your territory to a specific county within Colorado, all while raising awareness and money for bird conservation.

Due to the nature of needing to attend to various commitments during the course of the day, I was flying solo and participating in the non-competitive category – that means I was just in it for the birds. The last couple of years I participated in Broomfield County (27.5 sq. miles), but this year I decided to target my home county of Weld (4,022 sq. miles).

Since I wasn't being super competitive, I didn't head out after owls in the pre-dawn dark, but I did have a few spots where I expected to be able to see them.

I felt like I was getting a bit of a late start, but my Big Day started when my oldest daughter opened the front door heading out to her cross country meet just after 6:30 a.m. at which point I heard a Blue Jay screaming from across the neighborhood. I followed out the door, not too far behind with my camera (cased) and coffee in hand. A few steps down the driveway a Cooper's Hawk called out from directly above me in the Cottonwood. Needless to say I wasn't quick enough to get a photo of the accipiter though I had a great vantage point.

My first stop from home was the Front Range Landfill as it also happened to be Dump Day in Erie, a spring & fall tradition where Erie residents can drop off a load for free, and we had some stuff I needed to haul off. Well, it wasn't like they show in the movies – while there were great vistas from atop Mt. Erie, there were no birds. I did see one bird on my way out of the dump – a likely Western Kingbird, but it was in a no stopping zone so I didn't list the bird.

I spent the next hour or so in my local patch along Coal Creek observing a few of my targeted species for the area including a Barn Owl and a couple of Blue Grosbeaks amongst other expected species.

I paused for a 2-hour break to watch my middle daughter's volleyball game at Erie High School – where I didn't find an expected Great Horned Owl that had been hanging out a couple days earlier. I did see a Eurasian Collared Dove and a few Western Meadowlarks, as well as a good volleyball match.