

The 90th Report of the Colorado Bird Records Committee

By Peter R. Gent, Chairman of the CBRC

Introduction

This 90th Report of the CBRC documents decisions on records submitted in the last six months of 2025 and includes some older records as well. This report documents the second state record of Crissal Thrasher, the third records of Mottled Duck and Wood Stork, the seventh record of Swallow-tailed Kite and the tenth record of Crested Caracara. Documentations of the 35 records in this report were submitted by 30 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 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)

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* (Timo Mitzen*; 2025-032; 7-0): A calling adult was very nicely photographed at Tamarack Ranch Wildlife Area, Logan, on 6 Jul 2025.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (Joel Zigman; 2025-053; AWR): A long-staying individual was seen at Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe, on 28 Nov 2025.

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Jason Zolle*; 2025-050; 7-0): An immature bird was seen at Aurora Res., Arapahoe, on 6 Nov 2025.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* (Cole Sage*; 2025-057; 6-1): An adult was seen at Aurora Res., Arapahoe, also on 6 Nov 2025.

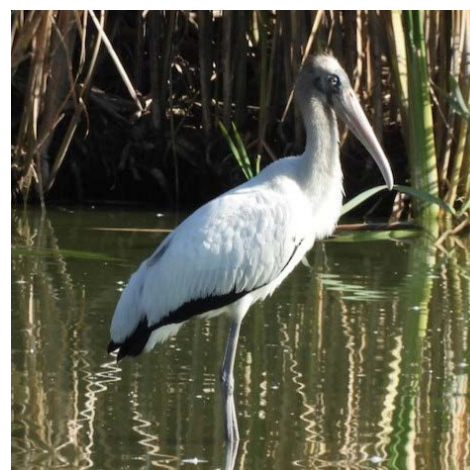
Wood Stork *Mycteria americana* (Patrick O'Driscoll*, Dan Zmolek*, Matt Hofeditz*, Brandon Percival, Holly Houser*; 2025-036; 7-0): An immature bird was first seen by O'Driscoll flying over City Park, Denver, on 17 Aug 2025. It was next photographed by a remote camera flying just north of Superior, Boulder, on 18 Aug 2025. Then it was found by Hofeditz at Alexx and Michaels Pond, Broomfield, on 20 Aug 2025. It stayed there for nearly a month until 11 Sep 2025 and was seen by a huge number of birders and local residents. This is the 3rd record of this species in Colorado: the first two were specimens collected in Littleton in 1902 and in Denver in 1934.



Black-billed Cuckoo. 7/6/2025, Logan County. Photo by Timo Mitzen.

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* (Patrick O'Driscoll*; 2025-043; 7-0): A male graced the feeder in a central Denver neighborhood, Denver, in the afternoon of 23 Oct 2025.

Pacific Wren *Troglodytes pacificus* (Archer Silverman*; 2025-060; 7-0): A bird was heard and seen at Hale Ponds, which is very close to the Kansas border



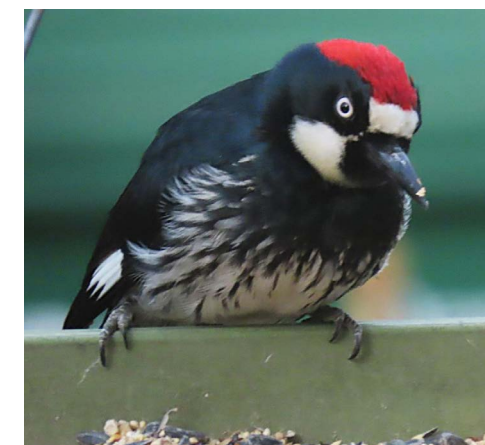
Wood Stork. 8/20/2025, Broomfield County. Photo by Matt Hofeditz.

east of Hale, Yuma, between 27 Dec 2025 and 13 Jan 2026. This is a very surprising location for this species of the western USA.

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus stellaris* (Kevin Williams*; 2025-048; 7-0): One was seen, photographed and recorded at Willow Spring Open Space, which is west of Centennial, Arapahoe, on 5 Nov 2025.

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

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula* (Luke Pheneger*, Brian Genge*; 2025-039; 6-1): One was seen at the playa east of CR 34, which is north of Firstview on Hwy 40, Cheyenne, on 27 Sep 2025. Unfortunately, this playa was very large this fall, and so the bird was only seen intermittently until 21 Oct 2025. This is the 3rd record of this species in Colorado: the previous records are in Morgan and Kiowa counties in 2013 and 2018 respectively.



Acorn Woodpecker. 10/23/2025, Denver County. Photo by Patrick O'Driscoll.

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* (Kelsey Crona, Brandon Percival*, Doug Faulkner*; 2025-035; 7-0): One was seen in the Widefield area, which is southeast of Colorado Springs, *El Paso*, between 18 and 21 Aug 2025. This is the 7th state record of this species: the two previous records are both in Lamar in 2017 and 2020.



Mottled Duck. 9/27/2025, Cheyenne County. Photo by Brian Genge.

Baird's Sparrow *Ammodramus bairdii* (Diana Beatty*; 2025-055; 7-0): One was recorded on a Breeding Bird Survey just south of Hwy 40 east of Rush, *Lincoln*, on 19 Jun 2025.

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

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata* (Beth Payne*; 2025-038; 7-0): One was at Box Springs, which is on Hwy 71 north of Ordway, *Crowley*, on 2 Sep 2025.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Beth Payne*, Diane Roberts*; 2025-052; AWR): Four birds were at Lake Meredith, *Crowley*, on 23 May 2025. This is a large flock of this species in Colorado and was part of a good number of birds seen in the spring of 2025.



Swallow-tailed Kite. 8/19/2025, El Paso County. Photo by Coen Kliever.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* (Courtney Rella*; 2025-037; 7-0): A bird was perched at the Lamar Community College, *Prowers*, on 24 Aug 2025.

Crested Caracara *Caracara plancus* (Sarah Goos*; 2025-044; 7-0): A bird was seen at Cedarwood, which is east of Colorado City, *Pueblo*, on 27 Oct 2025. This is the 10th record of this species in Colorado, seven of which have been since 2017.



Common Gallinule. 9/2/2025, Crowley County. Photo by Beth Payne.

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

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* (Peter Gent*; 2025-040; AWR): A bird was seen at Dodd Res., which is just west of Niwot, at Golden Ponds in Longmont and at the "Anhinga pond" on N 95th St., *Boulder*, between 11 Oct and 30 Nov 2025. This had been anticipated for some time as this species has been seen in nearly all of the other counties along the Front Range.

American Barn Owl *Tyto furcata* (Mike McGinley*; 2026-008; AWR): Two birds were seen in a backyard spruce tree just north of Donath Res., which is between Loveland and Fort Collins, *Larimer*, on 16 Mar 2026.

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

American Golden-Plover *Pluvialis dominica* (Jesse Casias*; 2025-031; 7-0): One was seen at Smith Res. in the San Luis Valley, *Costilla*, on 8 May 2025.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Jesse Casias*; 2025-033; 7-0): One was seen also at Smith Res., *Costilla*, on 24 Jul 2025.

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

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* (JoAnn Potter Riggle; 2025-042; AWR): An immature bird was nicely photographed along Bush Creek Road just north of Sylvan State Park,

Eagle, on 23 Oct 2025. This species is rare on the West Slope.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum* (Kenneth Eyster*; 2025-045; AWR): A bird was seen at the Walking Mountains Science Center in Avon, *Eagle*, on 3 Sep 2025. This species is also rather uncommon on the West Slope.

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

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (Coen Dexter*; 2025-041; AWR): One was seen at McPhee Res., which is north of Dolores, *Montezuma*, on 26 Jul 2025.

Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* (Don Marsh*; 2026-001; 7-0): An immature bird was seen at Ridgway Res., which is north of Ridgway, *Ouray*, between 2 and 7 Jan 2026.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus elegans* (Mike Thompson*; 2025-058; 7-0): An immature bird was seen along McElmo Creek about 10 miles west of Cortez, *Montezuma*, between 11 Dec 2025 and 25 Mar 2026. The rich reddish color of this individual confirms it as the first state record of the western subspecies *elegans*.

Red-tailed Hawk (leucistic) *Buteo jamaicensis* (Kristine Holasek*, Tom Caglioti*; 2026-003; AWR): An almost uniformly white individual was seen a few miles southwest of Durango, *La Plata*, on 17 Jan 2026.



Red-shouldered Hawk. 12/14/2025, Montezuma County. Photo by Mike Thompson.



Crissal Thrasher. 1/2/2026, Montezuma County. Photo by Mike Thompson.

Crissal Thrasher *Toxostoma crissale* (Mike Thompson*; 2025-059; 7-0): A bird was first identified from a recording made at Lower Yellowjacket Canyon, which is about 20 miles west of Cortez and very close to the Utah border, *Montezuma*, on 5 Nov 2025. It was first seen on 2 Jan 2026 and a few times more

through March 2026, but has been very difficult to see in the thick brush.

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens* (Coen Dexter*; 2025-063; AWR): A male in full breeding plumage was photographed at a private residence in Lewis, which is northwest of Cortez, *Montezuma*, on 26 Dec 2025.

Not Accepted Records

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

Gray Partridge *Perdix perdix*. (2025-054; 1-6): An adult was photographed on CR 69 a few miles northwest of

Briggsdale in the Pawnee National Grasslands, *Weld*, on 12 May 2025. All members agreed with the identification, but six members questioned whether this was a natural occurrence as it is approved by Colorado Parks and Wildlife for release on private property. This species breeds in Wyoming, but there are only a few eBird records from the southern part of that state. It is certainly possible that a naturally occurring bird will be seen in northern Colorado in the future.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Archilochus colubris. (2025-034; 2-5): A female was photographed and recorded near Big Dry Creek Trail in the Cherry Knolls neighborhood, *Arapahoe*, on 31 Jul 2025. A majority of members thought that the record did not rule out the much more common Black-chinned Hummingbird.

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*. (2025-056; 3-4): A bird was photographed at Union Reservoir on the Longmont Christmas Bird Count, *Weld*, on 20 Dec 2025. The photograph is not of great quality and some members thought that it did not eliminate other possibilities such as Bonaparte's Gull.

Vega Gull *Larus argentatus vegae*. (2025-049; 0-7): A bird was photographed at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, on 7 Nov 2025. All members thought that the photographs of a distant bird sitting on a rock did not eliminate the possibility that this was an American Herring Gull.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*. (2020-099; 4-3, 3-4): A bird was photographed at South Platte Park which

is a couple of miles north of Chatfield State Park, *Arapahoe*, on 27 Sep 2020. This record generated a spirited discussion among committee members. However, the bird's tail was completely obscured in the photograph, which led some members to think that the bird could not be identified for certain.

Mourning Warbler *Geothlypis*

philadelphia. (2025-051; 0-7): A female or immature bird was seen along the Big Dry Creek Trail between Colorado and University Boulevards, *Arapahoe*, on 22 Aug 2022. All members thought that the photograph did not eliminate the much more common McGillivray's Warbler.

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

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*. (2025-047; 1-6): A bird was seen at Fossil Creek Res., *Larimer*, on 27 Oct 2025. Most members thought that the distant photographs taken in fading light were not definitive enough to support the identification and two thought that Lesser Yellowlegs was not adequately eliminated.

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

California Condor *Gymnogyps californianus*. (2024-056; 1-6): One was seen in Glenwood Canyon just east of No Name, *Garfield*, on 16 Sep 2024. Most members thought that it was very difficult to tell the bird's size from the very brief video taken from a moving vehicle, and two thought that an immature Eagle was not adequately eliminated.

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

Ric Olson and Mark Peterson rotated off the Committee at the end of 2025, and I thank them for their many years of service. They were replaced by Brian Genge, who is serving for the first time, and Brandon Percival, who has served on the Committee before, for three year terms through 2028. Committee members voting on these records were Linda Chittum, Eric DeFonso, Brian Genge, Peter Gent, Michael Lester, Ric Olson, Brandon Percival, 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.

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, O. Johnson, N. A. Mason, and P. C. Rasmussen, 2025. *Sixty-sixth Supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds*. *Ornithology* 142, (3) 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ornithology/ukaf0195>

The Hungry Bird

A Warbler Solves Its Problem

By David Leatherman
daleatherman@msn.com

Having cut my teeth as a young birder in the eastern United States, warblers are a favorite group. One of my favorite favorites is Black-throated Blue Warbler (BTBW) (*Setophaga caerulescens*). This essay details the rather remarkable story of Colorado's first overwintering BTBW. The setting is the west side of Fort Collins in Larimer County.

This tale's subject, a male, was first observed in late September 2025 by Barb and John Messineo in their backyard at 137 Bryan Avenue. This initial encounter was fleeting, in poor light and prevented identification. It was a birder's nightmare: "the good bird that got away." Or so the Messineos thought. Luckily, a little over a month later, EJ Raynor independently observed and identified the mystery bird as a BTBW along Fort Collins Ditch #2 near his townhome. This location is less than 100 meters from the Messineo's yard. He alerted the clan to the presence of our stellar visitor. For me, what made this even more exciting was its proximity to my "patch" of Grandview Cemetery, a place I have visited almost 3,000 times over the last 52 years. Was Black-throated Blue Warbler among the 200+ species I have seen there? No.

Black-throated Blue Warblers are rare but somewhat regular spring and fall migrants in Colorado. In our collective knowledge, they have neither bred nor wintered within the state. My personal experience in Colorado is they are most likely in late autumn (October through early November). If a rare species can ever be called "on schedule," basically this one was.

I visited EJ's ditch and the surrounding neighborhood three times before having success on 25 November 2025. The bird came up from a backyard just east of the cemetery entrance and landed in a female green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) within the cemetery boundary (Figure 1). After coming to grips with my disbelief and snapping a few quick photos, the sprite darted back over the privacy fence into the yard from whence it came five minutes earlier.