

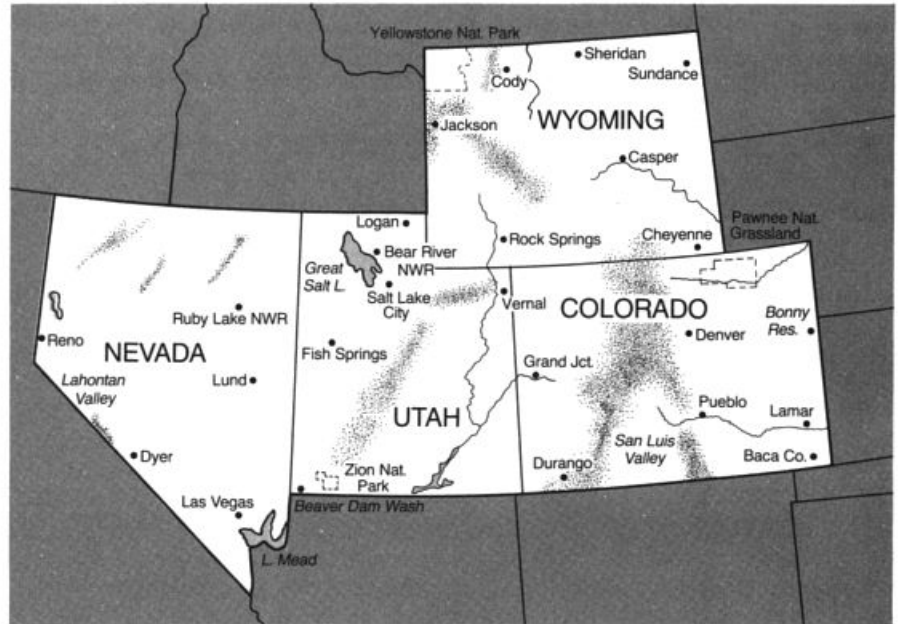
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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *Field Notes* are keyed on page 965.

mountain west region



VAN A. TRUAN and BRANDON K. PERCIVAL

This summer began dry but cool in most areas. Many late migrants were reported into mid-June. Snow flurries continued in higher elevations into the first week of June in the Rockies and northern mountains of Nevada. In July, the monsoons hit the Region and continued beyond the summer reporting period. With higher than usual moisture reported throughout the Region, there were several reports of flooded nesting and hail losses. The high winter snow pack had streams and lakes running full throughout the Region into mid-July. This high moisture content helped provide good cover vegetation for food and nesting birds, and there appears to be plenty of food for wintering birds (e.g. sunflowers are everywhere). With the predicted El Niño coming, a good winter crop may be necessary to help birds, if heavy snows arrive in both the Rockies and Sierras as predicted.

Abbreviations: C.V.C.G. (Crow Valley Camp Ground, CO); P.N.G. (Pawnee Nat'l Grassland, CO); R.M.N.P. (Rocky Mountain Nat'l Park, CO); S.W.A. (State Wildlife Area).

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

The highest counts of over-summering Com. Loons were noted in Colorado this year. It began with two at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo*, June 6 (BKP); one at Rifle Gap, *Garfield*, June 24 (KMP); three at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, July 25 (one in breeding plumage and two in winter plumage; BKP, BD); a peak of seven birds (all gray-brown plumaged) at Big Johnson Res. June 27 (RB); another on North Catamount Res. (Pikes Peak Highway), *Teller*, July 14–20 (RB), and a summer-plumaged bird at Big Johnson Res. July 24 (RB). Rarely seen in summer, a Horned Grebe was at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*, CO, July 21–29 (BB). Eared Grebes were reported as having "an average hatch" in North Park, CO; interestingly, some birds were still incubating July 23 (RAR). Also, nesting counts were made at Stillwater N.W.R., *Churchill*, NV, June 18 (273 nests), July 1 (592 nests), and July 15 (430 nests) (BH). On June 12, 3 pairs of W. Grebes were discovered nesting for the first time at Walker L., NV (GC), and one was at Las Vegas, NV, July 5 (RPS). Another was reported from Antelope Res., P.N.G., *Weld*, CO, June 1–7 (BBa, DW, IG). A pair of Clark's Grebes also nested for the first time

at Walker L., NV, June 12 (GC). Other Nevada nesting counts included 98 nests at Lower Foxtail L. June 19 (BH), 50 nests at Stillwater N.W.R. June 19 (BH), and one nest at Las Vegas July 5 (RPS).

Two of Colorado's 3 nesting colonies of Am. White Pelican did very well, with approximately 1000 young at Riverside Res., *Weld*, and about 200 young in North Park; due to low water from dam repairs, no nesting occurred at Antero Res., *Park* (RAR). At Pyramid Lake, NV, there were 3889 adults with 3492 young June 3, and 4438 young by July 17 (RBu). Double-crested Cormorants were observed all summer at Hart's Basin, *Delta*, and along the Colorado R. near De Beque, but breeding still is unconfirmed on the W. Slope of Colorado (RL). The nesting colony at Walden Res., CO, produced 200+ young (RAR), and at Pyramid Lake, NV, June 3, 702 adults and 100 young were counted, with 672 adults and young July 17 (RBu). A single was also at L. Estes, *Larimer*, CO, though the summer (SR).

Single American Bitterns were noted w. of Ft. Lyon, *Bent*, CO, June 11 (BKP, SC), s. of Beebe Draw June 26 (WPL), and at Russell Lakes, *Saguache*, CO (DB). In Nevada, single Least Bitterns were reported from Carson L. June 19 (RBu), Leter Res., *Churchill*, July 11 (BH), Stillwater N.W.R. July 22 (BH), and a possible immature at Carson L. July 26 (CE).

Ryder reported that no heron nesting occurred in the former Riverside Res., CO, colony, though a pair of Snowy Egrets nested on the island. Great Egrets were reported from Boulder, CO, June 26 (JF) and July 27; another at Bartel's Res., CO, July 26 (SR); and one at Ft. Lyon marsh, *Bent*, CO, July 28 (BKP, MJ, BD). In Colorado, three Cattle Egrets were at Hart's Basin July 1-9 (RL) and one July 25 (TL, GA, DF); 12 at Nee Noshe, *Kiowa*, July 12 & 16 (BKP, m.ob.); an adult at Hart's Basin July 12 (DAL); and four e. of Las Animas, *Bent*, July 30. Rare in San Luis Valley, CO, a Green Heron visited Monte Vista N.W.R. June 2 (RSc). In Arapaho N.W.R., CO, Ryder banded 35 young Black-crowned Night-Herons July 23. This may have been a good nesting season for this part of Colorado.

WATERFOWL

Extremely late Ross's Geese were reported from Grand L., *Grand*, CO, June 9 (TL, SB) and another at Mt. Carmel Junction, *Kane*, UT June 14 (SS). A Canvasback stopped at Las Vegas, NV, July 12 (RPS). Fairly rare in the e. plains in summer, a male Lesser

Scaup was near Lamar, CO, July 1 (DAL). A late White-winged Scoter was reported at Henderson Ponds, NV, June 3 (GC, DHo). Infrequent in summer in Colorado, a female Com. Goldeneye was seen n. of Wellington June 14, and two males summered at Big Johnson Res. The latter provided the first *El Paso* summer records (RB). A pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes was reported June 14 s.w. of Yampa, *Routt*, CO (DH). A late Bufflehead graced Runyon L., *Pueblo*, CO, June 2 (DS). Probably the most unusual waterfowl of the season were at Big Johnson Res. e. of Colorado Springs. Three female-type Hooded Mergansers stayed the season for the first summer records for *El Paso* (RB). And possibly a first Colorado summer record, two female **Red-breasted Mergansers** also summered there (RB, BM, JW). The birds were identified by the "feather-upper mandible pattern and feathering of the face was not truncated at the base of the upper mandible—rather it extended anteriorly toward the nostrils" (RB).

RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS

A nesting Osprey at De Beque, CO, produced one fledgling for the first recent *Mesa* breeding record (RL). This species is once again returning to n. Colorado as a local breeder, with 2 nests with young at Ft. Collins along the Platte R. (BDi), nests being built at Redfeather Lakes in late June (E. Petterson), and one observed at L. Estes throughout the period (SR, S&JR, JT). North of usual breeding areas, a Mississippi Kite was near LaSalle, CO, July 30 (JH). With the cool spring, it appears that Swainson's Hawks nested later this year on the e. plains of Colorado. Ryder reported a poor year for Golden Eagle, possibly due to low rabbit numbers. Peregrine Falcons had 2 successful nests in *Eagle*, CO, with each fledging three birds (KMP). Others were reported from Silt, *Garfield*, CO, June 12; near La Junta, CO, July 11, probably following early shorebird migration (BKP); and Royal Gorge, *Fremont*, CO, July 29 (DAL). Four young Sharp-tailed Grouse were e. of Hereford, CO, in June (BDi). Black Rails were in equal numbers at the now "usual" sites in *Otero* and *Bent*, CO.

SHOREBIRDS

In n. Colorado, a surprisingly early movement of shorebirds occurred from June 29-July 1, when 10 species pushed the earliest fall dates recorded in 35 years of personal record keeping (JH).

Twelve Mt. Plovers were reported at Adobe Cr (Blue L.) Res, *Bent*, CO, July 26

(DB); BBS reports indicated normal numbers of this species in s.e. Colorado, but Ryder found none on 3 BBS coverages n. of Nunn, probably due to tall vegetation. He did band two of three young in each of 2 broods at Meadow Springs Ranch/Terry Bison Ranch. Also, Leatherman had normal numbers on his BBS routes. Not usually seen in high numbers at Lower Latham Res., *Weld*, CO, at least 60 Am. Avocets were feeding in one small slough June 26 (JH, WPL). Four early Greater Yellowlegs were at Lower Latham June 29 (JH) and up to four visited Las Vegas, NV, July 12-31 (RPS). Five Lesser Yellowlegs graced Lower Latham, CO, June 29. Three Solitary Sandpipers stopped at Murphy's Res., CO, July 7 (BD). Three Willets were at Hart's Basin, CO, through summer, although breeding was unconfirmed (RL). Upland Sandpipers were along the Nebraska/ Colorado border in *Weld* June 24 & 30, and two were sighted at Nee Noshe Res., CO, July 16 (BKP, MJ). A Whimbrel was reported from Las Vegas, NV, July 26 (RPS, J&MC). Early Marbled Godwits included two at Lower Latham, CO, June 29, with 18 July 1 (JH). At Hart's Basin, CO, a Semipalmated Sandpiper arrived July 9, six W. Sandpipers July 9, six Least Sandpipers July 2, and a Baird's Sandpiper July 9 (RL). A Pectoral Sandpiper stopped at Adobe Creek Res., CO, July 11 (BKP, SC). A high count of 37 Stilt Sandpipers was noted at Galeton, CO, July 22 (JH), and one was at Las Vegas, NV, July 26 (RPS). Three Red-necked Phalaropes were counted at L. Meredith, *Crowley*, CO July 21 (MD). An ad. female Red Phalarope was reported from South Park, Antero Res., CO, June 8 (TL, SB).

GULLS THROUGH OWLS

A 2nd-year **Mew Gull** graced Ruby Lake N.W.R., NV, May 26 to the end of June (JRT). Uncommon in summer in w. Colorado, a Ring-billed Gull was seen at Hart's Basin July 15 (RL). In Colorado, California Gulls had "an outstanding year in North Park and at Riverside Res.," with 500 young at Walden Res. and 750+ at Riverside (RAR). Also, two were at Confluence Park in Delta, *Delta*, CO, July 19 (RL). A 2nd-summer Great Black-backed Gull stayed at Nee Noshe Res., CO, June 1-July 16 (DN, m.ob.). A Caspian Tern was at Hart's Basin, CO, July 15 (RL). An amazing **Royal Tern** at Nee Noshe Res. July 15-16 (DN, DSc, BKP, MJ, DB, NE, BD) provided the first Colorado record for this species. The bird was in adult winter plumage. A rare high mountain find was an ad Forster's Tern at

Deep L. (10,500 feet), *Garfield*, CO, July 6 (KMP, LB). Least Terns again nested at Ne Noshe and John Martin Res., *Bent*, CO, but due to high water in irrigation storage reservoirs and extremely heavy rains, most nests failed. A Least was at Las Vegas, NV, July 15 (RPS).

At least five **Eurasian Collared-Doves** remained in Rocky Ford, *Otero*, CO, throughout the period (VAT, BD, m.ob.); no nesting was reported. A White-winged Dove was reported at Corn Cr., *Clark*, NV, June 3 (GC, DHo). Rare in Colorado, a Black-billed Cuckoo was at Ft. Collins June 6 (JM) and another at Upper Queens Res., *Kiowa*, July 19 (DJ). It is assumed that there is some nesting of this species in e. Colorado. It appears that Yellow-billed Cuckoos had a good year in Colorado. Reports came from many e. plains sites, and one was reported singing at Olathe, *Montrose* (RL, TL). A single bird was at Ruby Lake N.W.R., NV, June 8 (JRT). For the 2nd year, no Barn Owls were reported in n. Colorado. It appears that Flammulated Owls had a good year. Reports were received from the Wet Mts., *Custer*, CO; Sheep Range, *Clark*, NV (JWa); Mt. Rose (Thomas Cr. Drainage), NV (MM); and three adults and 12 juveniles were banded on Uncompahgre Plateau, CO, July 16 & 24 (RL). Three prairie BBS surveys in s.e. Colorado had normal numbers of Burrowing Owls (VAT). Nesting Long-eared Owls were reported from Cottonwood Canyon, *Baca*, CO (DB), and Ft. Carson, *El Paso*, CO (RB). A Short-eared Owl was found near Hereford, CO, in June (RAR).

GOATSUCKERS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

A Lesser Nighthawk was directly compared with a pursuing Com. Nighthawk in a remote area of *Las Animas*, CO (RB). Seven Com. Poorwills were banded n. of Kremmling, *Grand*, CO (AL, MW, BGi). Two to three Whip-poor-wills were heard in the Sheep Range, *Clark*, NV, July 12 (JWa). Black Swifts were seen in small numbers throughout the summer on the Pikes Peak massif (RB), and 3 pairs nested under Rifle Falls, *Garfield*, CO, first observed July 29 (KMP). Chimney Swifts were reported as "common" in Cheyenne, WY, this summer (JLD). A male **Blue-throated Hummingbird** was in Cottonwood Canyon, *Las Animas*, CO, July 16 (DB). This species is extremely rare e. of the foothills. In a continued northerly expansion, Wyoming had a possible first-nesting **Black-chinned Hummingbird** in Linwood Canyon, *Sweetwater*,

June 21–July 31 (RS, JS). A nesting pair of Ladder-backed Woodpeckers was reported 15 mi s. of Las Animas, *Bent*, CO (VAT, BD). Two Black-backed Woodpeckers were reported from Little Valley, Carson Range, near Carson City, NV, July 9 (MM), and two males along the L. Tahoe Rim Trail, s. of Hwy 50, July 15. This species appears to be in normal numbers in these areas (MM). Five active nesting Three-toed Woodpeckers were at Baylor Park, near Glenwood Springs, *Garfield*, CO, July 8–11 (EWW). A Pileated Woodpecker was calling in July at Little Valley, NV (*fide* MM). Also noted were several large rectangular and oval holes in a dead tree and a lot of very fresh wood chips at the base of the several trees.

An E. Wood-Pewee was at Chatfield S.P., *Jefferson*, CO, June 15 (BB). Reports of Least Flycatcher came from the e. foothills of Colorado at 3 locations: four at Chatfield S.P. June 15 (BB), one at Bear Cr. Nature Center, *El Paso*, June 8 (RB), and three near the confluence of Tenmile and Stonewall creeks, *Larimer*, June 20 (DH). A Black Phoebe report came from Mason Valley W.M.A., *Lyon*, NV, June 11 (LN). A pair of Ash-throated Flycatchers was found nesting in Little Firehole Canyon, *Sweetwater*, WY, June 29 (RS). Nine Cassin's Kingbirds were recorded on the Animas BBS route s. of Durango, CO, June 9 (TL, SB). Expanding into w. Colorado and the Great Basin, an E. Kingbird was reported nesting at Fravert Res., near Rifle, *Garfield*, CO (KMP). Others were observed on the Animas BBS route June 9 (TL, SB); from Corn Cr., NV, June 7 (one; JWa); 3 nests near Farmington, UT (CW); one in Morgan, UT, June 19 (VAS); and one at Gypsum, *Eagle*, CO, July 23 (KMP). A lost Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was at Corn Cr., NV, June 6 (JWa).

SWALLOWS THROUGH VIREOS

Purple Martins were observed in usual numbers in w. Colorado mountains (TL, RL). Increasing sightings of Blue Jay continued in w. Colorado, with one in Eagle June 23–July 5 (JMe). A Winter Wren was noted at Government Cr., n. slope of Boulder Mt., UT, June 1–July 11 (AS) and, rarely seen in Nevada in summer, one was observed at Little Valley, Carson Range, near Carson City, NV, July 9 (JE, MM). Rarely reported from the Ruby Range (Island L.), NV, an Am. Dipper was found July 26 (MM). Rare in the Colorado mountains, a pair of E. Bluebirds was near Estes Park in July. Reports of both Western and Mountain bluebirds were noticeably scarce from

many areas around Estes Park and R.M.N.P. Bunn reported a nesting Townsend's Solitaire near the summit of Pikes Peak at about 14,000' Aug. 10. Veeries were reported in higher numbers this summer in Colorado. One was along Tarryall Cr., n w of Como, *Park*, June 19 (TL, SB), one s.e. of Eagle June 23 (JMe), and up to four near Woodland Park, *Teller* (AV et al.). Also, one was in Huntsville, UT, June 14 (VAS).

A late migrant Gray Catbird was at Corn Cr., NV, June 3 (GC, DHo). On the Willow Pass BBS in the Colorado Flattop Range, a Sage Thrasher sang at 10,400' July 6 (KMP). An ad. female White-eyed Vireo banded at the Turkey Cr. MAPS Station, *El Paso*, CO, June 17 (RB, BM) provided the 2nd summer record for this species at the station since 1993. A possible n.e. range expansion may be occurring, as more Gray Vireo sightings were reported and 3 nests were observed. If identified correctly, this species now nests in s.e. Colorado piñon/juniper habitat. Two nests were found in Welsh Canyon, *Las Animas*, June 24 (BM), one was singing in Picketwire Canyon, *Las Animas*, June 27 (BG); another nested in Spring Canyon, *Las Animas*, July 4 (RB), and one was observed in Temple Canyon, *Fremont*, in July (DA). With the splits of the 3 discernible subspecies of "Solitary" Vireos, we hope new information on their ranges and distribution will be gained from birders reporting their sightings. A Cassin's Vireo was reported from Little Valley, near Carson City, NV, July 9. "It appears that Plumbeous Vireo is more common, but I see Cassin's every year in this area. I have never found a Cassin's breeding in Nevada, but I have seen them frequently during breeding season," reported Meyers. A Red-eyed Vireo was at C.V.C.G., CO, June 3 (DAL) and one was along Boulder Cr., CO, in mid-July (Sse).

WARBLERS

A migrant male Blue-winged Warbler was discovered along Little Fountain Cr., *El Paso*, CO, June 1 (RB). Rare in Nevada, a N Parula graced Corn Cr. June 6 (RPS). A female Chestnut-sided Warbler was found at Linwood Canyon, *Sweetwater*, WY, July 13–31 (RS). A late female Magnolia Warbler visited *Pueblo*, CO, June 3 (BD, JD). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was discovered inside Concourse C at Denver International Airport June 14 (TL, GA, AL). We wonder which return flight it was waiting for, or if it was just waiting for its baggage? Another one was observed in R M N P June 26 (WR). A Black-throated



At the Turkey Creek MAPS station in El Paso County, central Colorado, this White-eyed Vireo was captured for banding on June 17, 1997. Photograph/Richard Bunn and Bill Maynard

Gray Warbler was reported from Fallon, NV, June 21 (RF). Other late migrants were a singing male Prairie Warbler at Bonny Res., Yuma, CO, June 1 (DQ, GE); a Bay-breasted Warbler at Wellington, CO, June 2 (S&KM); and an Am. Redstart at Corn Cr., NV, June 6 (RPS). A N. Waterthrush remained in Wayne, UT, May 30–July 1 (AS). Possibly the rarest warblers this season occurred in Nevada, with a **Louisiana Waterthrush** at Ruby Lake N.W.R. July 26 (JRT) and a **Canada Warbler** along Corn Cr. June 6 (RPS).

TANAGERS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

Hepatic Tanagers returned in June and July to their site in Spring Canyon, Las Animas, CO (BM), where they were discovered in 1990. A Summer Tanager was at Corn Cr., NV, June 3 (GC, DHo). A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Corn Cr. June 6 (RPS), and a pair nested in Rist Canyon, near Ft. Collins, CO, for the 3rd consecutive year (BDi). A pair of Blue Grosbeaks was seen at Walker L., NV, June 12 (GC); the species was also reported breeding at Rifle Marsh and Fravert Res., CO, and four were at De Beque, Garfield, CO, July 27 (KMP). At Corn Cr., NV, a pair of Indigo Buntings may have nested June 7–July 31 (RPS); other Indigos included a singing male in Washoe, NV, June 11 (GC), a male in Wayne, UT, July 3 (AS), and one in Spring Cr. Canyon, Iron, UT, July 12 (SS). Dickcissels showed up in higher numbers and new locations in n.e. Colorado: 5 or more n.e. of

Briggsdale July 11 (JH), two at Galeton July 25, three s. of Weld County Rd., three near St. Vrain Canyon, Boulder, July 13 (SR), and a total of 19 on Ft. Carson, El Paso, all summer (RB). Probably a resident, an E. Towhee was at Tamarack Ranch S.W.A., Logan, CO, June 21 (BB).

A Rufous-crowned Sparrow at Spring Cr. Canyon July 12 provided the first Utah record outside Washington County (SS). In typical pattern, Cassin's Sparrows were erratic in numbers this year. Most areas of e. Colorado reported low numbers, and BB-Sers had low counts to back up other observations. A Brewer's Sparrow was singing near Medicine Bow Curve, R.M.N.P., CO, at 11,800' July 10 (TL, JB). Five Lark Sparrows were observed at Lime Park (9,400'), Thomasville, Eagle, CO, July 30 (KMP). A pair of Bobolinks was on Little Humboldt Ranch, Humboldt, NV, June 25 (LN); a male at Stillwater N.W.R., NV, July 7 provided the first Lahontan Valley record (RF); and three males and four females were in Morgan, UT, July 14 (VAS). A Com. Grackle was reported on the Animas BBS route, La Plata, CO, June 9 (TL, SB). In Boulder, CO, Brown-headed Cowbirds were detected parasitizing nests of Song Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, Spotted Towhee, and Blue Grosbeak (JF); and Orange-crowned Warbler was parasitized in Glenwood Springs (KMP). Two Scott's Orioles were at Big Cr., Toiyabe Mts., Lader, NV, June 29 (RF), and a singing male was found in June in the pinyon/juniper 20+ mi n.e. of Trinidad, Las Animas (BM). This species may be nesting there. Red Crossbills continued to be reported in small bands from the plains of e. Colorado this summer. Also, they were observed in good numbers in late July in the Uncompahgre Plateau, Montrose, CO (RL, TL).

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