

Early fall in Wyoming saw near-normal rainfall, particularly from August thunderstorms, though the rest of fall's precipitation was below normal in that state. In Colorado, by contrast, August marked the twelfth consecutive month with much-below-normal precipitation statewide, but between September and November, the state's precipitation returned to near normal. Nevertheless, by the end of the period, some areas in southern Colorado still had had less than 10 cm of moisture since September 2001. Long-term moisture deficits were so severe that Colorado experienced its driest (and Wyoming its second driest) January to November on record.

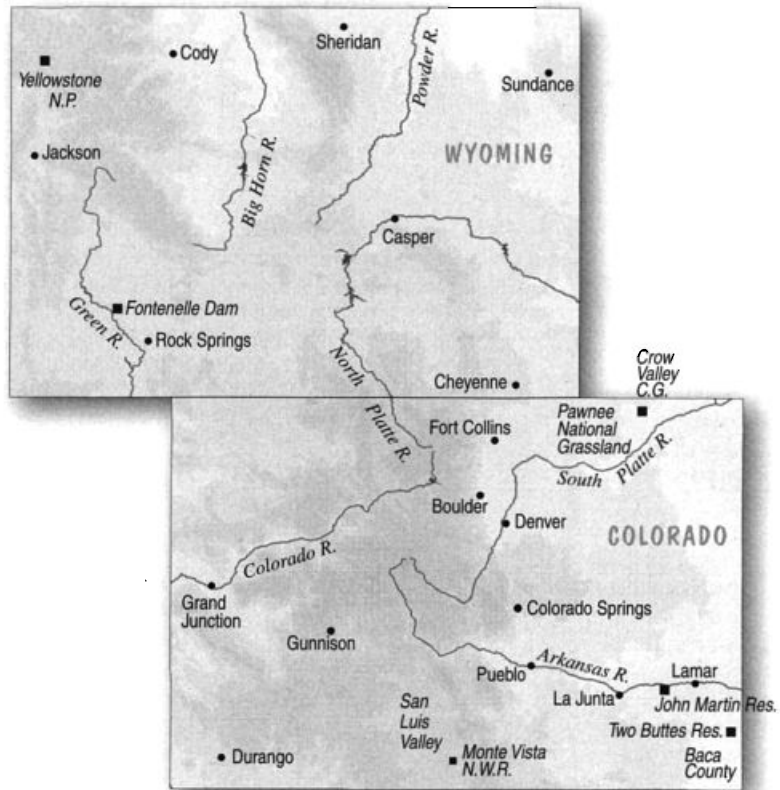
The drought seriously depleted nectar resources, both in terms of the number of flowering plants and the amount of nectar per flower in the foothills and mountains (*vide* Joey Kellner). Many observers commented on the impressive number of hummingbirds in both states, including unprecedented numbers of Rufous, Calliope, and to a lesser extent Broad-tailed Hummingbirds on the plains of Wyoming and Colorado.

Dry conditions also strongly correlated with the appearance of Western Scrub-Jays and Steller's Jays at lower elevations, including the length of the I-25 corridor in Colorado, the Arkansas River Valley, and the Grand Valley. Long-term spatial analysis of corvid and hummingbird movements in relation to moisture conditions in the West would be most interesting.

What most birders will likely remember about the fall of 2002 was not the drought but the record number of first state records for Colorado and the high-end rarities in Wyoming. Colorado observers found an incredible six species that would represent first state records: Arctic Loon, Black Vulture, Broad-billed Hummingbird, and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher were photographed and/or videotaped, while there were well-described sight-records for Cave Swallow and Smith's Longspur. Wyoming highlights included Mississippi Kite, Mew Gull, Arctic Tern, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Canada Warbler.

Abbreviations: C.B.R. (Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo and El Paso, CO); C.V.C.G. (Crow Valley Campground, Weld, CO); E.K.W. (Edness

Mountain West



Kimball Wilkins State Park, *Natrona*, WY); F.C.R.P. (Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, CO); W.H.R. (Wyoming Hereford Ranch, *Laramie*, WY). All sightings are from Colorado, unless otherwise indicated.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

A Red-necked Grebe at Trinidad L., *Las Animas* 21 Oct (VAT) was the first for that county. Just to the n., a subad. Brown Pelican at Lathrop S.P., *Huerfano* 7 Aug—7 Sep (JKe, RM, m. ob.) was also a county first. A juv. Little Blue Heron was nw. of Rocky Ford, *Otero/Crowley* 24 Aug (BKP). A juv. Tricol-

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SA The reservoirs along the e. flank of the Rocky Mountains provide superb bird habitat. The total number of individuals is not high when compared with other regions, but the relative frequency of many species is often surprising. Consider loons, where in an average fall season, Common Loons may only outnumber Pacific Loons at these reservoirs by 3:1. In an average fall, we reasonably expect 15–20 Pacific Loons, mostly e. of the Rockies. At least one or 2 Red-throated Loons are typically found; the lack of any this season is worthy of comment. This fall, single juv. Yellow-billed Loons were observed at Boyd L., *Larimer* 3–13 Nov (NK, m. ob.), Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, 17–23 Nov (IS, TE, m. ob.), and Big Johnson Res., *El Paso* 24 Nov (BG). The Kingerys found an odd loon on 17 Nov in a gravel pit pond near Franktown, *Douglas*. By 19 Nov, birders were able to closely observe, photograph, and videotape the loon—an adult **Arctic Loon**, Colorado's first and the second interior record for the Lower 48 states. On 20 Nov, the bird left the pond and was relocated 21 Nov at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe* (BBn), where it stayed through the 22nd.

ored Heron was at L. Cheraw, Otero 13 Aug (RM); perhaps the same bird was near Rocky Ford, 16-31 Aug (SO, m. ob.). Prewitt Res., Washington hosted the state's 7th Reddish Egret, a dark-morph juv. 1 Sep (JMK, v. o.). A juv. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was along the Arkansas R., w. of Pueblo 27-28 Aug (BKP, m. ob.). Long expected in Colorado, an ad. Black Vulture at John Martin Res., Bent 13-14 Aug (ph. DN, m. ob.) provided the state with its first record.

While regular in e. Wyoming, 2 Greater White-fronted Geese at Goldeneye Res., Natrona WY 30 Oct (CEM) were w. of usual. The only documented Trumpeter Swan in Colorado was a juv. at Chatfield Res. 27 Nov (JMK). By contrast, Tundra Swans made a strong showing in Colorado: 2 at N. Poudre Res. #3, Larimer 1-2 Nov (DAL, RH); 2 ads. and a juv. at Lathrop State Park 2-11 Nov (JKe, JBy, RM); a juv. w. of Pueblo 17-28 Nov+ (RM, BKP, CS, m. ob.); and 2 ads. and 3 juvs. at Standley L., Jefferson 25 Nov (JBn; the ads. remained until 28 Nov; v. o.). Eight Tundra Swans were at Fontenelle Reservoir, WY 8 Nov (SP). A male Eurasian Wigeon delighted observers at Pueblo City Park 12 Oct-30 Nov+ (MY, LB, CS, m. ob.). A female American Black Duck at Lower Latham Res., Weld 30 Nov (TL, RO, JBs) was about the 18th reported from Colorado. It was a fine season for sea ducks in both states. Two Surf Scoters were at Buffalo, Johnson, WY 27 Oct (J&GL) and Evansville, WY 1 Nov (CEM, BRn). One was at Fontenelle Reservoir, WY 8 Nov (SP). Two White-winged Scoters were at Goldeneye Res., WY 28 Oct (CEM). Up to 2 Long-tailed Ducks were at Gray Reef Res., Natrona 3-5 Nov (DF, J&GL, CEM), and another was at Alcova Reservoir, Natrona on 3 Nov (DF).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

An ad. Mississippi Kite was seen far w. of its usual haunts at Green River, Sweetwater 9 Sep (vt. CLW), providing Wyoming with its 4th record. Broad-winged Hawks in Wyoming included singles at E.K.W. 23 Aug and 2 Oct

(CEM); Colorado reported average numbers. An ad. Zone-tailed Hawk soaring over Douby Draw, Boulder 6 Aug (CLW, BSc) was Colorado's 3rd record and one of the northernmost for w. North America.

Colorado's 2nd Purple Gallinule stalked garden invertebrates by day and roosted in a spruce tree by night in a Loveland backyard, Larimer 26 Aug-3 Sep (Cyndi Mosch, m. ob.). Single Red Knots were at Adobe Creek Res., Bent 7 Sep (BKP, LE) and Jackson Res., Morgan 20-21 Sep (JMK, NE, GW, m. ob.). Rarely reported from sw. Colorado, 2 Dunlin were at Totten Res., Montezuma 16 Aug (JBy, PD). Two Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Colorado represented an average fall, with juvs. at Milton Res., Weld 6 Sep (RO) and Jackson Res. 20 Sep (JMK, NE, GW). A juv. Ruff at L. Meredith, Crowley 5-8 Oct (SO, m. ob.) was only the 2nd Colorado record. Considered very rare in Wyoming, a juv. Short-billed Dowitcher was at Cheyenne, WY 8 Sep (DF, ET). Red Phalaropes staged one of the best showings ever in Colorado, with singles reported from: Jackson Res. 11 (DF) & 18 Aug (JMK, v.o.); Milton Res. 25 Aug (RO); Barr L., Adams 10 Sep (TL); Chatfield Res. 17 Sep (JMK, JBH); and Big Johnson Res., El Paso 5 Oct (TL, NG, SY).

A juv. Little Gull was at Poudre Res. #3, Larimer 9 Sep (RH), with others at Standley L., Jefferson 12 Sep (LS) and Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe 17 Sep (2 birds; TL, RO). An ad. Mew Gull was at Green River, WY 10 Nov (RS); there are few Wyoming reports of the species. Another ad. Mew Gull was at Seeley

L., Weld 1-2 Nov (NK, TL, NG, NP), and a 3rd was at Mulligan Res. & Union Res., Weld 30 Nov (TL, JBs, RO). A juv. Glaucous-winged Gull was reported from Horsetooth Res., Larimer 30 Nov (NK, v. o.). An ad. Great Black-backed Gull, accidental in the West, was at Aurora Res., Arapahoe 23-30 Nov (GW). Sabine's Gulls in Wyoming included singles at Goldeneye Res. 4 Oct (BSO) and at Evansville 1 Nov (CEM). Four Common Terns were in Evansville, WY 6 Oct (J&GL). What may be Wyoming's first photographed Arctic Tern was at Goldeneye Res., Natrona 18-19 Sep (ph. DF, CEM, J&GL), and a juv. was at Standley L. 10-11 Sep (TL, LS, NG).

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

Three White-winged Doves including a copulating pair were seen in La Junta, Otero 4 Aug (SO), and 8 were in the same area on 5 Oct (SO). Another White-winged Dove was at Standley L. 8 Sep (LS). As many as 6 Inca Doves were at Lamar, Prowers 29 Sep-30 Nov+ (JT), and another was in Las Animas, Bent 7-9 Nov (DN). A Greater Roadrunner was found at Salida, Chaffee 20 Oct (SY), a first for the county. An ad. male Snowy Owl was observed s. of L. Meredith, Crowley 29 Nov (SO).

A Red-bellied Woodpecker was at W.H.R., WY 28 Sep (DF, J&GL et al.); there are at most three previous records for the state. An Alder Flycatcher photographed n. of Ordway, Crowley 25 Aug (LS, TL), was the first fall record for the state. An ad. male Vermilion Flycatcher was at C.B.R., Pueblo 25 Sep (NG, RG). Great Crested Flycatchers were found along the Front Range, in Ft. Collins, Colorado City, and Colorado Springs. The land-bird of the season was a very unexpected Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher at Adobe Creek Res., Bent 18-19 Sep (DN, m. ob.), not surprisingly, a first for Colorado. The summering White-eyed Vireo at Rye stayed to 14 Sep; another was at Lamar 17 Sep (JT). Single Blue-headed Vireos were in Las Animas 10 Sep (DN), Castlewood Canyon State Park, Douglas 14-16 Sep (KM, HEK), and at Durango, La Plata 25 Oct (BRR), w. Colorado's first. Single Philadelphia Vireos were at C.V.C.G. 26 Sep (DAL), in w. Colorado at Nucla, Montrose 30 Sep (CD, BW), and at Ft. Collins 4 Oct (RH). A Blue Jay wandered w. to Wilson, WY 28 Oct-30 Nov (DSt). An ad. Cave Swallow was briefly observed near John Martin Res. 23 Aug (DN), providing Colorado with yet another potential first state record.



This juvenile Yellow-billed Loon was found at Boyd Lake, Larimer, Colorado on 10 November 2002. The species has been annual in the state in the last decade. Photograph by Andrew Spencer.



A first documented record for Colorado, long expected, was this Black Vulture at Hasty Campground 14 August 2002. Photograph by Chris Wood.



This adult Purple Gallinule was found in a backyard in Loveland, Colorado (here 27 August 2002); it furnished a second state record. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

SA Late fall hummingbirds receive very close scrutiny and for good reason. Late this fall, a report of a hummingbird thought to have been a very late Black-chinned Hummingbird was of sufficient interest to avid hummingbird-bander Steve Bouricius to cause him to drive over and take a look. The result: Colorado's first Broad-billed Hummingbird, an ad. female at Clifton, Mesa 12-30 Nov+ (Bob Myer, SB, m. ob.). Remarkably, this bird had been present since mid-summer. But grab hold of your bootstraps, folks: Bouricius captured this bird to band it, only to discover that it already had already been banded: in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on 5 Jan 2002!

The only Carolina Wren reported was in Lamar 27 Nov (JT). A Winter Wren was at E.K.W. 2 Oct (CEM). A flock of 75 Bushtits including dependent young in Boulder 3 Aug (TF) was probably the largest flock of this species found along the Front Range n. of El Paso; this area has few breeding records of Bushtit and none for the atlas period. Away from their usual haunts, small flocks of Bushtits were recorded at four locations in the s. and e. suburbs of the Denver Metro area in Aug, including 2 at Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe* 18 Aug (Karl Stecher). Eastern Bluebirds appeared in above-average numbers along the foothills, the most out-of-range being 2 at Alcova Res., WY 5 Oct (CEM, J&GJ) and an ad. male at Green R., *Sweetwater*, WY 8-10 Nov (C&BB, RS). A Gray-cheeked Thrush reported in Colorado City, *Pueblo* 31 Oct (DSi) was very late and only the 2nd documented fall report for Colorado. A strong showing for Wood Thrushes in Colorado this fall was composed of single birds at C.V.C.G. 27-28 Sep (RO, SM), C.B.R., *El Paso* 4 Oct (NG); Niwot, *Boulder* 7 Oct (CLW, SLH), and Ft. Lyon, *Bent* 26 Oct (BKP, KH). A Varied Thrush was sw. of Cody, *Park*, WY 12 Oct (CW); another female was at Ft. Lyon 24-26 Oct (DN, m. ob.). A Northern Mockingbird turned up in *Natrona*, WY 29 Sep (HS), where rare. A *Sprague's* Pipit seen at L. Meredith 8 Oct (CLW, DN) was the first documented away from ne. Colorado.

WARBLERS THROUGH GROSBILLS

The dearth of cold fronts contributed to a lackluster warbler migration in the Region. Rare in fall, a male Blue-winged Warbler was at Pueblo City Park 23 Oct—1 Nov (BKP, KH, m. ob.) and was probably killed by an *Accipiter* 3 Nov. This bird was joined by a duller Blue-winged on 28 Oct (CLW et al.). A *Magnolia* Warbler was reported from *Chaffee* 10 Oct (RM). Blackburnian Warbler reports hailed from Ft. Collins 20 Sep (JBn, v. o.) and at Dixon Res., Ft. Collins 29 Sep (NK). Single Pine Warblers were observed w. of Pueblo 27 Aug (BKP) and 17 Sep (MY), at Chatfield Res. 8 Sep (AS), and at Pueblo City Park 28 Oct (CLW et al.). A first-fall *Prairie* Warbler was at C.V.C.G. 3 Sep (JBF, BKP, RH, DAL, JH), and another was seen in *Chaffee* 10-11



This juvenile Ruff at Lake Meredith, Crowley County, Colorado was present 5-8 (here 6) October 2002 and constituted Colorado's second state record. Photograph by Rachel Hopper.

Oct (RM). A *Yellow Palm* Warbler was reported from L. Estes, *Larimer* 10 Sep (GM, SRo). This subspecies is quite rare in Colorado, and most records are from the late fall and early winter. A first-fall male Bay-breasted Warbler was at Ft. Collins 25-26 Sep (JM, RH). Also in Ft. Collins was a female Prothonotary Warbler 14-21 Sep (DAL m. ob.). An imm. *Mourning* Warbler found in Durango, *La Plata* 12 Sep (JBy, PD) was the first for w. Colorado. A *Canada* Warbler was at Milton Res. 6-7 Sep (RO). Wyoming warbler highlights included at least 6 *Nashville* Warblers. A *Black-throated Blue* Warbler was at E.K.W. 25 Aug (BRn), and W.H.R. hosted 2 *Black-throated Green* Warblers—a probable ad. male on 19 Sep and a probable first-fall female on 22 Sep (DF). The ranch also held a *Western Palm* Warbler 19 Sep (CLW, JH). Wyoming's most stellar warbler was a *Canada* Warbler e. of Rock Springs 9 Sep (CLW)—only the 3rd or 4th for Wyoming.

An ad. male *Hepatic Tanager* was photographed in Golden, *Jefferson* 9 Sep (BBI), well n. of its breeding range in the state. A *Summer Tanager* at Brown's Park N.W.R., *Moffat* 6 Oct (SH) afforded a rare nw. Colorado sighting. An ad. male *Scarlet Tanager* was in *El Paso* 29 Sep (MPe). An ad. *Eastern Towhee* was reported from F.C.R.P. 4-5 Oct (KP, BG et al.). A *Swamp Sparrow* was at Alcova Res., *Natrona*, WY 5 Oct (J&GL, CEM). A first-year *Golden-crowned Sparrow* was near Rocky Ford, *Otero* 22-23

Oct (SO) and another at a feeder in Lewis, *Montezuma* 29 Oct—1 Nov (BP, D&MH). Two *Smith's Longspurs* along the shore of Barr L., *Adams* 11 Sep (TL, DF, LK) may

finally provide Colorado with its first state record of this most overdue species. There have been several reports of this species in Colorado through the years, but until now, none have been sufficiently documented for a first state record. *Single Snow Buntings* were n. of Canon City, *Fremont* 20 Nov (ph. JJ) and at Pueblo Reservoir 24 Nov (BSc, JS). *Snow Buntings* were first reported in Wyoming at the Jackson Power Plant 25 Nov (SP).

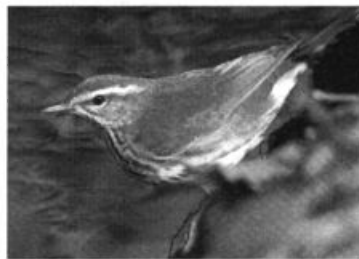
A *Rose-breasted Grosbeak* was in *Natrona*, WY 5 Oct (J&GL). *Painted Buntings* were recorded from se. Colorado, where a first-fall female was at Lathrop S.P. 8 Sep (BKP, LE), and an ad. female was w. of Pueblo 10 Sep (RM). *Single* female or juv. *Purple Finches* were at Lamar 2-8 Nov (JT) and Boulder 4 Nov (MPI). A female *Lesser Goldfinch* was at *Grayrocks Res., Platte*, WY 18 Sep (DF).

Cited observers: Jason Beason (JBn), Jim Beatty (JBy), Joe Bens (JBs), Bob Brown (BBn), Brenda Burrell (BBI), Steve Bourcius, Cliff & Bev Boevers (C&BB), Leon Bright,

Peter Derven, Coen Dexter, Beth Dillon, Lisa Edwards, Tammy Ellsworth, Norm Erthal, Doug Faulkner, Joe B. Fontaine, Nancy Gobris, Ren Gobris, Bob Goycoolea, Suzanne Halvorson, Stephanie L. Hanson, J.B. Hayes (JBH), Dean & Mona Hill (D&MH), Joe Himmel, Ken Hollinga, Rachel Hopper, Jack Hugus, Paul Hurtado, Jeff Jones, Jonathan Kelley (JKe), Joey M. Kellner, Loch Kilpatrick, Hugh E. Kingery, Urling Kingery, Nick Komar, Jim & Gloria Lawrence (J&GL), David A. Leatherman, Tony Leukering, Roger Linfield (RLn), Joe Mammoser, Gary Matthews, Steve Messick, Karen Metz, Christian E. Michelson, Rich Miller, C. Mosch Duane Nelson, Ric Olson, Stan Oswald, Ken Pals, Susan Patla, Brandon K. Percival, Mark Peterson (MPe), Nathan Pipelow, Myron Plooster (MPI), Bill Prather, Betty Rickman (BRn), Bob Righter (BRr), Scott Roederer (SRo), Hustace Scott, Ira Sanders, Bill Schmoker (BSc), Jim Schmoker, Larry Semo, David Silverman (DSi), Bob South, Cliff Smith, Rick Steenburg, David Stokes (DSt), Elena Thomas, Janeal Thompson, Van A. Truan, Glenn Walbek, Cynthia Wolf, Christopher L. Wood, Andrew Spencer, Brenda Wright, Mark Yaeger, Sherrie York. ●



This female Broad-billed Hummingbird, a state first, was at Clifton, Mesa County, Colorado, 12 November through 22 December 2002, here photographed 14 November. Photograph by Glenn Walbek.



Several unusual warblers were seen in eastern Colorado in early November, including this Northern Waterthrush nicely photographed along Boulder Creek, in Boulder, Colorado on the late date of 3 November 2002. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.