

SA This was an unprecedented summer for **White-winged Crossbills** in Colorado, thanks in no small part to the large masting of conifer cones, particularly spruces. Since early spring, White-winged Crossbills have been found in at least a dozen Colorado counties, with reports from the Medicine Bow Mts., the Gore Range, the Flat Tops, the Elk Mts., and Grand Mesa. Particularly noteworthy were sightings from s. Colorado, where White-winged Crossbills were widely noted in the San Juan Mts., with reports from San Juan, Mineral, Hinsdale, and Conejos (v. o.); and the La Garita Mts., in Saguache. The continued abundance of cones should be enough to encourage observers to strap on some skis or snowshoes in an attempt to document breeding White-winged Crossbills this winter.

Cook L. in the Bearlodge Mts. (EA). This same area hosted Golden-winged Warblers last summer and is a premier locale for intrepid birders to search for other e. breeders in Wyoming. A female American Redstart banded along Trout Cr. 8 Jun (P. Gould) was the first recorded in *Teller*. An Ovenbird in Sinks Canyon, *Fremont*, WY 29 Jun (JD) was w. of usual, while one at a golf course in Alamosa 29 Jun–18 Jul (JS, m. ob.) established the first breeding-season record for the San Luis Valley. Two singing Hooded Warblers were found in Colorado, one in Cottonwood Canyon, *Baca/Las Animas* 22 Jun (NK) and another near Gregory Canyon, *Boulder* 3 Jul (A. Paulios). Up to 3 Hepatic Tanagers were seen near Prior 3 Jun–9 Jul (TL, N. Gobris et al.). While this species is a local breeder in se.

Colorado, almost all were on private property, and these were the first reliable and accessible Hepatic Tanagers in Colorado in over a decade. A pair of Hepatic Tanagers was also reported from *El Paso* 30 Jul (GW, A. Spencer). A Rufous-crowned Sparrow s. of Walsenburg 9 Jul (VAT) was at a new location for this species. Rare even in migration on the West Slope, a singing Clay-colored Sparrow (JB) near Craig, *Moffat* 8 Jun was most unexpected. At least 2 male Painted Buntings continued to be seen in Cottonwood Canyon through 22 Jun (NK). Very rare outside of extreme e. Colorado, single singing male Baltimore Orioles were found at Barr 6–12 Jul (E. Zorawowicz, m. ob.) and w. of Ft Collins 9 Jun–1 Jul (JPB, m. ob.). This appears to have been a fine season for Lesser Goldfinches,

with several reports from as far e. as *Elbert* and *Lincoln* (v. o.), and a female at Beaver Cr. in Wyoming's Bearlodge Mts. (EA).

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Great Basin



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Much of the Great Basin Region experienced a fifth consecutive summer of drought. Water levels in many streams, lakes, and reservoirs remained at all-time lows. Despite a slightly cooler-than-average spring season, June and July were very hot, with areas in the southern portion of the Region experiencing record-high mean temperatures in July. Despite the drought and heat, or perhaps because of it, there were many unusual and rare bird sightings throughout the Region. Highlights of the summer season include Acorn and Pileated Woodpeckers in Nevada, an Elf Owl at Lytle Ranch, and possibly Utah's first Curve-billed Thrasher record.

Abbreviations: Bear River (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, *Box Elder*, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek, Desert N.W.R., *Clark*, NV); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, *Clark* NV); Hurricane S.P. (Hurricane/SR-9 Sewage Ponds, *Washington*, UT); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, *Washington*, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, *Esmeralda*, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., *Uintah*, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills Golf Course, St. George, *Washington*, UT); S.M.M.W.P. (Scott M. Matheson Wetlands Preserve, Moab, *Grand*, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., *Washington*, UT).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

An albino Eared Grebe was a peculiar sight at Soda L., *Churchill*, NV 14 Jun (TL). Although American White Pelicans breed in n. Utah and Nevada and are regular migrants throughout the Region, a high count of 6081 on 22 Jul (BO) at Bear River was notable. A single Brown Pelican was reported, without details, by a visitor to the H.B.V.P. on 14 Jun (p. a., *fide* JB). American Bitterns are rare but regular summer residents in the Region, and this summer there were three reports: 3 at Ouray 4 Jun (EC), where regular, and singles at H.B.V.P. 13 Jul (JB) and at Bear River 29 Jul (BBe). Least Bitterns are rare summer visitors to the Region; 2 at Overton W.M.A., *Clark*, NV 14 Jun (JCo et al.) and 2 at H.B.V.P. seen periodically throughout the summer (JB, CP) likely represent breeding pairs. A pair of Green Herons, first observed 17 Jun (JH) along the Jordan River Parkway, *Salt Lake*, UT, remained throughout the reporting period. Green Herons are relatively common in sw. Utah and s. Nevada during the summer but are rarely reported from n. Utah. A very high count of 14,910 White-faced Ibis was recorded at Bear River 10 Jul, with 11,437 seen there 22 Jul (BO).

A Hooded Merganser was observed at the Timpanogos Sewage Ponds on the late date of 17 Jun (KCh, EH). Common Mergansers are rarely reported during the summer from low desert areas, so a male at Stratton Pond, *Washington*, UT 17–27 Jun was unusual (KW et al.).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

There are very few records of Bald Eagles nesting in the Region and no recent records from s. Utah; however, 2 ads. were observed periodically this summer at Panguitch L., *Garfield*, UT. Single individuals were observed 31 May and 12 Jun (PS, SS, ML), then 2 ads. were seen 26 Jun (PS). A marked difference in size was observed, suggesting these were a male and female. Another report of a single ad. at Panguitch L. came on 8 Jul (SB). Although there were no formal

searches and, to date, no nest has been located, it is possible these eagles attempted nesting.

Common Black-Hawks were reported again this summer nesting at Lytle 13



This Least Tern, furnishing the seventh record for Utah, was discovered at St. George Golf Course by Mike and John Schijf 28 May (here 31 May) to 1 June 2003, one of several reported from western locations in late spring and early summer. Photograph by Rick Fridell.

Jun (LT, DFe); unfortunately, high winds in early Jul blew the long-used nesting tree down. Hopefully, the hawks will return and select a new nesting location in future years. A pair was observed downstream along the Beaver Dam Wash, *Washington*, UT Jul 6 (KCo, P & SS, RF). The only Red-shouldered Hawk reported this summer was an ad. at Corn Cr. 18 Jul (RS). Zone-tailed Hawks continued their remarkable spring showing with three reports this summer in sw. Utah. The first report was of a soaring ad. on 1 Jun along I-15 near Kanarrville, *Iron* (P & SS), followed closely by another ad. observed along the Santa Clara R. near Baker Res., *Washington* 10 Jun (LT). Another ad., or perhaps the same individual, was observed soaring with Turkey Vultures above the Virgin R. near St. George, *Washington*, UT 27 Jun (KW et al.).

Common Moorhens are uncommon and localized permanent residents in the s. portion of the Region, so reports from Sun R., *Washington*, UT 20 Jun (WH, KW) and H.B.V.P. 20 Jul (JB et al.) were somewhat expected. Unusual moorhen reports came from the n. locations of Ouray 9 Jun (DGr) and Heppler's Pond e. of Richfield, *Sevier*, UT 6 Jul (J&KB).

Bear River was the hotspot for shorebird sightings during the summer. Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets posted high counts of 5173 and 5182, respectively, on 22 Jul (BO). A Whimbrel was reported from Soda L., *Churchill*, NV 9 Jun (LW, JW). A vagrant Red Knot was

observed with a flock of dowitchers at Bear River 28 Jul (p. a., JV, PF), and a Semipalmated Sandpiper was observed there on 1 Jul (BO). Many observers remarked on the somewhat early return of shorebirds this summer, and the following counts of Western Sandpipers at Bear River are indicative of the southbound shorebird migration through the Region: 2300 on 1 Jul, 22,819 on 10 Jul, and 9149 on 22 Jul (BO). A remarkable count of 897 Baird's Sandpipers was recorded at Bear River 22 Jul (BO), and a single Dunlin was observed there on 30 Jul (CG et al.).

Common Terns were observed at three Utah locations: Panguitch L., *Garfield*, 1 Jun (SS), Ouray 8 Jun (DGr), and Lee Kay Ponds, *Salt Lake* 22 Jul (JH). The spring invasion of Least Terns in the Region continued through early summer, with an ad. lingering at the St. George Golf Course, *Washington*, UT 1 Jun (†MS et al.) and 2 imms. remaining at the Provo Airport Dike, *Utah*, UT through 4 Jun (BH, ph. RF). Least Terns were also observed at the H.B.V.P. 4–11 Jun (GS, JCo, RS et al.), with a high count of 4 on 9 Jun (JB). Six Black Terns were observed at Farmington W.M.A., *Davis*, UT on 20 Jun (JCa).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves were observed lingering at several recently reported Utah locations, including Washington City, *Washington* 1–25 Jun (SS, RF), Jensen, *Uintah* 8 Jun (JV et al.), St. George, *Washington* 5 Jul (RF), and Cedar City, *Iron* 8 Jul (SS). The only collared-dove reported during the period from a new location was a single individual at Enterprise, *Washington*, UT 14 Jun (MC et al.). A White-winged Dove photographed at Bountiful, *Davis*, UT 20 Jun (KM) was well n. of its normal range. Inca Dove numbers have been slowly increasing in s. Nevada and sw. Utah over the past decade; 3 visited a feeder at Indian Springs, *Clark*, NV 11 Jul (BG), and a pair observed along Center Street in Kanab, *Kane*, UT 25 Jul (AT, *fide* CT) provided a 3rd county record. The only Yellow-billed Cuckoo reported was seen at Corn Cr. 29 Jun (RS).

Flammulated Owls are uncommon

and seldom-reported summer visitors to the Region, so reports from three locations are noteworthy: Marlette Lake Trail, *Carson City*, NV 26–28 Jun (ph. JW, MMe et al.), Millcreek Canyon, *Salt Lake*, UT 13 Jul (J&KB), and Pine Valley Mountain Campground, *Washington*, UT 20 Jul (LT). A Northern Saw-whet Owl was also heard along the Marlette Lake Trail 7 Jul (MMe, GS, TL). An Elf Owl was observed at Lytle 13 Jun (LT, DFe) and heard again 5 Jul (SS et al.). This location produced Utah's first Elf Owl record in Jul 1999, and they have been irregularly observed at Lytle during most subsequent summers. The only report of Vaux's Swift was a flock of 13 flying over Sun R., *St. George*, *Washington*, UT 26 Jul (WH), most unusual.

Unusual woodpecker sightings were the highlight of the summer reporting season for the 2nd consecutive year. First, a pair of territorial Acorn Woodpeckers was discovered in Verdi, *Washoe*, NV 15 Jun (RB et al., ph. MMe). The woodpeckers remained throughout the summer and were enjoyed by nearly every n. Nevada birder. Remarkably, an Acorn Woodpecker was observed at another Nevada location 26 Jun (Marlette Lake Trail, *Carson City*, JW). Meanwhile in Utah, a lone Acorn Woodpecker—first discovered 15 Oct 2002 along Hwy 12, Boulder Mts., *Garfield*—remained through the summer (PF, DGr, LL). An Acorn Woodpecker was also observed 23 Jul at Devil's Canyon Campground, *San Juan*, a more typical Utah location (BBr). Black-backed Woodpeckers are rare and local in the Carson Range of w. Nevada, so one observed s. of L. Tahoe, *Douglas* 9 Jul was notable (JT, DT, RT). A single Gilded Flicker was reported from the Wee-thump Joshua Tree Forest, *Clark*, NV 11 Jun (JW, RS, DGh). This area produced Nevada's first Gilded Flicker breeding records in 1999. A Pileated Woodpecker was photographed along the Chimney Beach Trail, ne. shore of L. Tahoe, *Washoe*, NV 13 Jun († ph. MMe et al.). This fine bird was viewed by multiple observers through 25 Jun. Two additional Pileated Woodpeckers were reported from Hobart L. Road, *Carson City*, NV 7 Jul (JW).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Nevada produced two reports of Vermilion Flycatcher, with a first-year male at Miller's R.A. 1 Jun (RT, DT) and another at Parker Ranch, *Beatty*, *Nye* 12 Jun (DT). The only Utah report was of a female at Red Hills 1 Jun (S&PS, KCo, RF). A vocal Cassin's Kingbird was at Pigeon Spring, *Esmeralda*, NV 23 Jun

(DP). Wayward Eastern Kingbirds were reported from three Nevada locations: Miller's R.A. 1–9 Jun (RT, DT), Corn Cr. 4–6 Jun (GS, RS), and Carson River Delta, *Lyon* 24 Jun (DM, LC). Nesting Purple Martins were reported from Spanish Fork Canyon, *Utah*, UT 7 Jun (KCh, EH).

Four Black-capped Chickadees were observed at Mary's River Ranch, *Elko*, NV 29 Jun (JW). A singing Winter Wren was reported from Te-ah Campground, Navajo L., *Kane*, UT 8 Jul (BS, CCa). Another off-season Winter Wren was reported from American Fork Canyon, *Utah*, UT 22 Jul (MW). A stray Varied Thrush was observed along the Mirror Lake Highway, between Lily and Lost Lakes, *Summit*, UT on the unusual date of 12 Jun (LS). A Gray Catbird was found along the Price R., s. of Wellington, *Carbon*, UT 1 Jun (KCh, EH). A possible juv. Curve-billed Thrasher was photographed at Red Hills 21 Jun (ph., †EL). Unfortunately, subsequent searches failed to relocate the bird, which would be Utah's first Curve-billed Thrasher record, pending acceptance by the Utah Bird Records Committee. Despite their name, Northern Mockingbirds are rare in n. Nevada and Utah, so 3 on the Snowville B.B.S., *Box Elder*, UT 2 Jun (BBE, BO) and another at Denio Junction, *Humboldt*, NV 3 Jun (MMi, fide JG) were great finds. A Phainopepla was observed in unusual pinyon-juniper habitat near Baker Res., *Washington*, UT 3 Jun (JS).

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS

A singing Virginia's Warbler at Tunnel Cr., L. Tahoe, *Washoe*, NV 4 Jun (WR) was n. of typical breeding range. A singing male Northern Parula, first observed 25 May, remained through 5 Jun at the Watchman Residence, *Zion* (†BS, LB et al.). Nevada produced 2 Northern Parula sightings: a male at Porter Springs, *Pershing* 2 Jun (ph. JW), and a female at Miller's R.A. 8 Jun (DT). There were also 2 vagrant Chestnut-sided Warblers in Nevada, a male at Porter Springs 2 Jun (LW, JW) and a female at Corn Cr. 13 Jun (DT). A well-documented Yellow-throated Warbler was at Garr Ranch, Antelope Island S.P., *Davis*, UT 1 Jun (†J&KB). A male American Redstart returned to the Jordanelle Wetlands, *Wasatch*, UT 25 May–4 Jun (JV, CCo); in a remarkable show of site fidelity, this errant individual was banded at this location last year on 7 Jun 2002. A female American Redstart was at Corn Cr. 7–8 Jun (RS). A possible Worm-eating Warbler was reported,

without details, from Moab, *Grand*, UT 3 Jun (fide DFa). Nearby at the S.M.M.W.P., a female Hooded Warbler was banded by Utah Division of Wildlife Resources personnel (fide DFa). A male Hooded Warbler, first reported on 6 Jun, graced Corn Cr. throughout the summer (RS, GS et al.).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

The only report of Rufous-crowned Sparrow—rare and very local permanent residents in extreme s. Nevada and sw. Utah—was of an individual from the lower slopes of the Virgin Mt. range, *Clark*, NV 13 Jun (JW et al.). The only Rose-breasted Grosbeak reported in the Region was an ad. male near the Cottontail Ranch Brothel, *Esmeralda*, NV 6 Jun (ph. TL), a lonesome vagrant apparently in search of female companionship. The only Indigo Buntings this season were reported from Utah, including a male at Leola Bottoms, *Ouray* 4 Jun (EC), a singing first-year male at Stout Canyon, *Kane*, UT 22 Jun (S & PS), and a male at Gunlock S.P. 27 Jul (LT).

A wayward Bobolink was observed at Corn Cr. 9 Jun (RS, DGh). A female Bronzed Cowbird, first observed at Red Hills in early May, lingered through 2 Jun (KW, MC). Purple Finches were reported from two Nevada locations, with up to 7 at Big Spring, Paradise Range, *Nye* 8–18 Jul (p. a., RB) and a juv. mist-netted and banded at Logan House Cr. in the Tahoe Basin, *Douglas*, 22 Jul (WR). Finally, a male White-winged Crossbill was observed on the Highland Trail, near Mirror L., *Summit*, UT 26 Jul (DGr).

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