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Yet another season of above-normal temperatures in the Region created many opportunities to document the general northward shift in the winter ranges of several species and to find unusual winterers as well. Precipitation ranged from above average in Wyoming and Colorado's northern mountains to below average in Colorado's southern mountains and eastern plains, lead-



A species now found almost annually in Colorado, this Yellow-billed Loon was photographed at Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo County on 4 December 2005. Photographs by Brandon Percival.

ing to a dichotomy of water-"haves" and "have-nots" across the Region. Yet another Mexican/South Texas species delighted Colorado birders, as the state's third and fourth Long-billed Thrashers wintered in different locations. The season proved outstanding for other mimids, remarkable for Hermit Thrushes, and provided a first Regional record for a wintering Northern Waterthrush. A well-traveled Yellow-billed Loon provided a case study of the species' ability to cover large distances in a short time, as well as birders' ability to use modern communication technology to keep abreast of a rare bird's movement. The excitement of these birding opportunities is tempered with concern about the effects of warming climate and shifts in precipitation patterns on local ecosystems.

Abbreviations: Big Johnson (Big Johnson Res., El Paso); Bonny (Bonny Res., Yuma);

Chatfield (Chatfield S.P., Jefferson/Douglas); Cherry Creek (Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe); Chico (Chico Basin Ranch, Pueblo/El Paso); DMNS (Denver Museum of Nature and Science); John Martin (John Martin Res., Bent). "West Slope" denotes locations w. of the Rockies. Due to reporting biases, all locations can be assumed to be in Colorado except that each Wyoming location is noted as such the first time it appears in the text.

WATERFOWL THROUGH FALCONS

Greater White-fronted Geese seemed more numerous in and near the Front Range urban corridor than usual; white geese were mostly unremarkable in occurrence; and Black Brant were a bit more numerous than typical this winter. There were seven reports of Trumpeter Swan, the most interesting coming from Garfield—at Rifle 4 Jan (K. Potter, A. Dahl)—and Mesa, at Jerry Cr. 13-16 Jan (D. Jandreau, LA). Six ad. Trumpeters were a first for Chaffee at Salida 28 Dec-4 Mar (SY, ph. TL, m.ob.). A male Eurasian Wigeon put in two appearances at Rocky Ford, Otero 15 Dec and 31 Jan (MP, m.ob.). The first Cinnamon Teal was earlier than usual, even for that early spring migrant, in Boulder 12 Jan (P. Hansley). Either Greater Scaup is becoming more regular in winter in the Region or, more

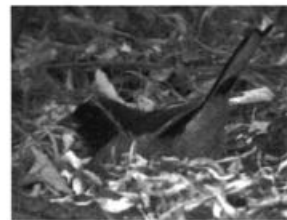
likely, more birders are becoming comfortable with identifying them, as we received 15 reports of 38 individuals. All three scoters were found this winter: single Surfs in Fremont and Pueblo and single White-wingeds in Boulder and Douglas in Dec, when still somewhat expected, with a rarer Black 3-4 Dec at Chatfield (JK, m.ob.). The surprise, though, was an unseasonal White-winged



Providing a third winter record for Colorado was this Black Phoebe along the Arkansas River in Pueblo, Pueblo County on 11 December 2005 (here); it remained into March 2006. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

near Henderson, Adams 25-26 Feb (GW, m.ob.). Of 14 Regional reports of Barrow's Goldeneye, only one came from Wyoming, 6 at Gray Reef Res., Natrona 5-25 Jan (Jide G&JL). A goldeneye x Hooded Merganser hybrid was a nice find at Pueblo Res., Pueblo 26-28 Feb (BKP et al.). The only wintering Ruddy Ducks were reported from Pueblo Res (BKP) and Totten Res., Montezuma (JB).

Odd for so far n. in winter, single Red-necked and Clark's Grebes were reported from the Valmont Res. complex, Boulder 21 Jan (BS, TF et al.). American White Pelicans occasionally winter in Colorado, particularly at the two large se. reservoirs, Pueblo and John Martin, where they did this winter. Almost unprecedented, however, was a single that survived the winter at Cherry Creek (m.ob.). In Wyoming, where the species is even scarcer at this season, 2 were near Glenrock, Converse 11 Feb (CM). A Turkey Vulture s. of Pueblo, Pueblo 14 Dec (T. Crisler) was virtually unprecedented in the state in winter. An amazing 6 Northern Goshawks were reported this winter at low elevations, spread from John Martin on 14 Dec (a juv.; TL et al.) to Tamarack Ranch S.W.A., Logan 8 Jan (a juv.; SL). Only one of these was an ad. (though the ages



This Eastern Towhee at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso County (here 14 January 2006) was one of three that wintered in Colorado this season; it was heard giving call notes typical of Eastern Towhee in winter but in April gave several calls typical of Spotted Towhee. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

of 2 were unreported), at Colorado City, Pueblo 2 Feb (DS). A gray Gyrfalcon (age unreported) visited Clark's Corner, Natrona 12 Dec (CM).

RAILS THROUGH OWLS

Three Soras were tallied on the John Martin C.B.C. 14 Dec (TL, MP et al.), in an area where they are annual in some numbers, but one upriver at Rocky Ford, Otero 15 Dec (MP, TL) provided a first local winter record. Presumably, more effort to locate Soras in winter in Colorado would greatly expand our understanding of their winter range in the Region. Early Sandhill Cranes num-

SA In addition to 6 Common and 2 Pacific Loons, 2 Yellow-billed Loons were reported this season. One at Highline Res., Mesa 25 Dec-16 Jan (LA, R. Levad, m.ob.) provided the first West Slope record of the species. A juv., first found at Chatfield 3 Dec (JK, m.ob.), was present until the early morning of 5 Dec (MP), when it apparently departed. Later that morning, Maynard found what was presumably the same bird at Big Johnson (some 112 km south), where it was seen into the early afternoon. However, by the time Peterson showed up at Big Johnson, the bird was not present, and Percival had found a juv. Yellow-billed at Pueblo Res., another 56 km farther south. So this loon was seen on three bodies of water in four counties in one day! It remained at Pueblo Res. until 14 Dec.



In a fine winter for sapsuckers in Colorado, five Red-naped Sapsuckers were located, including this male at Trinidad, Las Animas County 21 January 2006. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

bered 2 at Cañon City, *Fremont* 11 Feb (RM), 6 near Nepesta, *Pueblo* 19 Feb (SO), and one at Salida, *Chaffee* 26 Feb (SY). Three winter reports of Greater Yellowlegs was more than normal, but 7 Greater Yellowlegs at John Martin 15 Feb (DN) were, presumably, very early spring migrants. For the 2nd year in a row, Spotted Sandpiper successfully wintered at Pueblo (BKP, m.ob.). Single Least (2-9 Dec) and Baird's (2 Dec) Sandpipers were late below Pueblo Res. (BKP). As many as 4 Dunlins wintered e. of Greeley, *Weld* 3 Dec-31 Jan (J. Himmel) for a surprising n. Colorado record. Of somewhat more regularity, a single Dunlin spent the winter along the Arkansas R. at and below Pueblo Res. 11 Dec-20 Feb (BKP, m.ob.).

Odd was an ad. Franklin's Gull in full alternate plumage at Cherry Creek 27 Dec (B. Brown). Seven reports of Mew Gull, a large number, was highlighted by 2 (an ad. and a first-cycle bird) at Pueblo Res. 17 Dec+ (MP, CLW, ph. BKP), a second-cycle bird at Fossil Creek Res., *Larimer* 26 Feb (CW), and a first-

cycle bird at Erie Res., *Boulder* 27 Feb (BS). The 13 reports of 21 Lesser Black-backed Gulls seemed a bit below the recent average. A first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull was a brief visitor to Pueblo Res. 15 Dec (BKP). A possible Herring Gull x Glaucous-winged Gull hybrid was present at the same location 26-28 Feb (BKP); Colorado birders have yet to confirm this hybrid combination in the state, though a few odd gulls have shown characters consistent with it. Five reports of 6 Glaucous Gulls was typical, but 6 Great Black-backed Gulls was above average, though a poorer showing than last winter's record season.

A Band-tailed Pigeon at No Name, *Garfield* 1 Jan (T. McConnell) provided a first local mid-winter record. The spread of White-winged Doves continues, as evidenced by the six reports of 27 of these invaders this winter, all in se. Colorado. Inca Doves continue in their two Colorado strongholds, Lamar, *Prowers* (DAL) and Rocky Ford (SO). Kellner found an imm. Snowy Owl in the middle of the night in s. *Kiowa* 7 Jan, providing the only Regional report this winter. A Burrowing Owl photographed in Pueblo 31 Dec (P. Hurtado) provided a very rare Regional winter record away from the se. corner of Colorado.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH THRUSHES

A Red-headed Woodpecker (age unreported) found 11 Mar near Torrington, *Goshen*, WY was thought to have wintered locally (G&JL). The Region's sole outpost of resident Acorn Woodpeckers continues to prosper near Du-



One of a remarkable four Pine Warblers reported in Colorado this winter, this bird frequented a feeder in Fort Collins, Larimer County throughout the winter (here 17 December 2005). Photograph by Rachel Hopper.

rango, *La Plata* (m.ob.). It was a crazy sapsucker winter in Colorado. An incredible 6 Williamson's Sapsuckers (only one female) were found, half in *Fremont*, where sapsucker searchers have been finding the species regularly in recent winters. However, *Montezuma*, *Chaffee*, and *Pueblo* got in on the action this year, each with single birds. Also amazing, 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were recorded this winter (including 5 in *Fremont* and 4 in *Pueblo*). This species may eventually be removed from the state's review list. Oddly, the most interesting aspect of this sapsucker winter was the unprecedented 5 Red-naped Sapsuckers scattered from *Mesa* to *Las Animas* with, of course, one in *Fremont*.

A Black Phoebe at Valco Ponds S.W.A., *Pueblo* 11 Dec-23 Feb (BKP, m.ob.) provided only the 3rd Colorado winter record. The 12 reports of 17 Say's Phoebes seemed a higher-than-typical number for a Colorado winter. The "elusive" Craig, *Moffat* Blue Jay was noted on 2 Jan (FL). Bushtits basically stayed in the mts. this winter, as the e. extent of sightings this season was marked by 8 on the Inverness Golf Course 9 Feb (S. Stachowiak) and 4 at Cherry Hills Village 26 Feb (K. Stecher), both in w. *Arapahoe*, which is barely onto



Minimally 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a high count, were detected in Colorado in winter 2005-2006; this one was photographed 18 December 2005 at Cañon City, Fremont County. Photograph by Brandon Percival.

SA The winter of 2005-2006 will long be remembered in Colorado because of the remarkable mimid show. Included in the festivities were 7 Gray Catbirds in five counties (plus one in Wyoming at Cheyenne, *Laramie* 7 Dec (DF)), 12 Northern Mockingbirds in eight counties (plus one in Wyoming at Casper, *Natrona* 16 Dec (D. Walgren)), 38 Sage Thrashers in seven counties, and single Brown Thrashers in each of three counties.

In the context of these records, two discoveries of Long-billed Thrashers were nevertheless mind-boggling. Following up on a 6 Jan sighting of Eastern Towhee on the Chico Basin Ranch C.B.C., Percival photographed a *Toxostoma* thrasher 14 Jan; it appeared to be a candidate for Long-billed. Maynard re-found the bird 22 Jan and confirmed Percival's suspicion that the bird was a Long-billed, the 3rd for Colorado. Interestingly, the Russian Olive grove that harbored the Eastern Towhee and the Long-billed Thrasher also supported a Gray Catbird (found 6 Jan; MP), a Brown Thrasher (found 6 Jan; TL), and 1-2 Curve-billed Thrashers (and little else), and certainly provided for one of the best single-site mimid shows in Colorado winter history.

On 20 Feb, Susan Anderson noted a thrasher in her urban yard in Denver. The report made it to the Colorado birding listserv (CObirds), and Andrew Spencer checked on the bird the next day, confirming the suspicion that it, too, was a Long-billed Thrasher! Maynard confirmed that the bird at Chico was still present 21 Feb. Both Long-billed Thrashers survived through late Apr.



Forty-three thrashers of three *Toxostoma* species were found in Colorado in winter 2005-2006, among them this Long-billed Thrasher, the state's third, at Chico Basin Ranch 14 January through (here) 22 February 2006. Photograph by Bill Maynard.

the plains. A Carolina Wren at the Lamar Community College first found 12 Aug was joined by another for the winter (DAL); other singles were found at Valmont Res. 21 Jan (TF) and at Two Buttes S.W.A., *Baca* 22 Jan (BKP, MP). Reports of Winter Wrens were fairly numerous this winter and were highlighted by three reports of "Western" Winter Wrens, which are thought to be quite rare in Colorado (most winter records are of "Eastern" Winter Wrens): Colorado City 29 Jan–2 Feb (DS), Cañon City 18 Dec (CLW, TL), and Ft. Collins, *Larimer* 23–25 Mar, the latter a bird that was thought to have wintered (TL). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 18 Dec at Sundance,



Part of Colorado's unprecedented mimid show this winter was this Gray Catbird (here 31 January 2006) that wintered at the Chico Basin Ranch, one of eight found in the Colorado & Wyoming region over the season. Photograph by Bill Maynard.

Crook, WY (J. Adams) was very late. Four Eastern Bluebirds gracing the Salida C.B.C. 21 Dec (SY, R. Hancock) were rare that far w. and provided for a first *Chaffee* record. The 12 Hermit Thrushes reported this winter in Colorado made a completely unprecedented number; seven counties, from *Mesa* to *Baca*, had single Hermits.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Floyd was involved in the finding of 2 different Northern Parulas this winter, both in Boulder, *Boulder*. The first was an ad. male found 3 Dec, the other a female or imm. male found dead on a sidewalk 15 Jan (A. Carpenter, TF; *DMNS). There is only one previous Colorado winter record for the species. An apparent imm. *Cape May Warbler* was seen very poorly but heard calling quite well by a few observers 16–18 Dec at Pueblo City Park (BKP). An amazing 4 Pine Warblers were found this winter, one each in *Jefferson*, *Pueblo*, *Larimer*, and *Boulder*. All but the *Pueblo* bird wintered and were photographed. However, the warbler highlight of the winter was the Northern Waterthrush found 17 Dec on the Ft. Collins C.B.C. (CW; ph., m.ob.) that provided the first solid Regional winter record of any waterthrush.

Two single Green-tailed Towhees were rus-

tled up this winter in Boulder—18 Dec (J. Harlan) and 28 Jan (M. Arp)—providing rare winter records, particularly for that far north. Three Eastern Towhees apparently wintered in Colorado: a male spent in Boulder 21 Nov–7 Apr+ (ph. R. Byers), a female was at Bonny 22–23 Dec (ph. BS), and the aforementioned male was at Chico 6 Jan into Apr. Despite the latter bird giving nothing but Eastern Towhee call notes in Jan, the bird was heard giving Spotted Towhee-like calls in Apr, sometimes interspersed with Eastern Towhee-like calls (TL). A Spotted Towhee wintering in the same grove may have influenced call-types in this phenotypically pure Eastern Towhee.

A Chipping Sparrow noted 29 Jan at Chico (BKP) but not before or subsequently provided an odd winter record. Two Field Sparrows were found, one at John Martin 14 Dec (*vide* DN) and one at Navajo S.P., *Archuleta* 21 Jan (JB, P. Derven); the latter would provide only the 2nd sw. Colorado record if accepted. A Savannah Sparrow at Brush Hollow Res., *Fremont* 23 Feb (p.a., RM) would provide a first foothill winter record. Eleven Lincoln's Sparrows in Colorado was a high number for winter, particularly compared to the relative paucity of Swamp Sparrows (only 14); Lincoln's Sparrows are usually found with Swamp Sparrows here at this season. A Golden-crowned Sparrow was a nice surprise at *Fruita*, *Mesa* 12 Feb (J. Beason). A female Chestnut-collared Longspur was w. of normal, particularly for winter, s. of Colorado City 11 Feb (DS). We received only two Colorado reports of Snow Bunting this winter, one from the w. edge in *Moffat*, the other on the e. edge in *Yuma*.

Two of the nine reports of Northern Cardinal came from areas w. of normal, single birds near Greeley at the end of Dec (*vide* P. Lightsey) and at Aurora, *Arapahoe* in Jan–Feb (ph. L. Giesecke). A female-plumaged Rose-breasted Grosbeak posed for photographs in Perry Park, *Douglas* 3–4 Dec (C. Zwahlen). The only Rusty Blackbirds this winter were singles at Cañon City 18 Dec (TL, CLW) and at Ft. Collins 29 Jan (LS, RH). Common Grackle seemed more widespread than usual at this season, with reports from eight counties, including *Mesa* and *Fremont*. A male Bullock's Oriole × Baltimore Oriole hybrid was quite unseasonable at Lamar 20–28 Feb (D. Russell). The three Purple Finch reports were all of single brown birds, all from sites of previous recent occurrence: at Las Animas, Bent 2 Dec (DN) and at L. Beckwith, *Pueblo* 25 Dec (DS) and 5 Nov–17 Jan (J. Thompson). The only Colorado winter reports of Common Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak came from w. of Bonny 23 Dec (m.ob.) and Allenspark,



In Colorado, Cañon City was again a hotspot for wintering sapsuckers, with representatives of three species found, including this female Red-naped Sapsucker, here 18 December 2005. Photograph by Tony Leukering.

Boulder 1 Dec (B. Kaempfer), respectively. Addenda: A first-year Broad-winged Hawk was a superb find near Kelly, *Teton*, WY 22 Jun 2005 (J. Bens); there are very few Regional records for the summer period. An office building in Fort Collins, CO claimed the lives of two notable birds: a Golden-winged Warbler 11 May 2005 (the only other state specimen, from 1881, lacks location data) and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in early Jun 2005 (both *DMNS; *vide* J. Harrison).

Cited observers (subregional editors in bold-face): Jean Adams, **Jim Beatty** (sw. Colorado), **Coen Dexter** (w.-cen. Colorado), **Doug Faulkner** (Wyoming), Ted Floyd, Rachel Hopper, Joey Kellner, Steve Larson, Gloria & **Jim Lawrence** (statewide RBA – Wyoming), David A. Leatherman, Tony Leukering, Forrest Luke (nw. Colorado), Bill Maynard, Terry McEneaney (Yellowstone), **Chris Michelson** (Casper, WY), Rich Miller, Duane Nelson, Stan Oswald, **Susan Patla** (Jackson, WY), **Brandon K. Percival** (se. Colorado), Mark Peterson, **Bert Raynes** (Jackson, WY), Bill Schmoker, **Larry Semo** (n.e. Colorado), David Silverman, **Glenn Walbek** (n.-cen. Colorado), Cole Wild, Christopher L. Wood, Sherrie York. Many other individuals contributed information to this report but could not be acknowledged here; all have our thanks. ☺

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