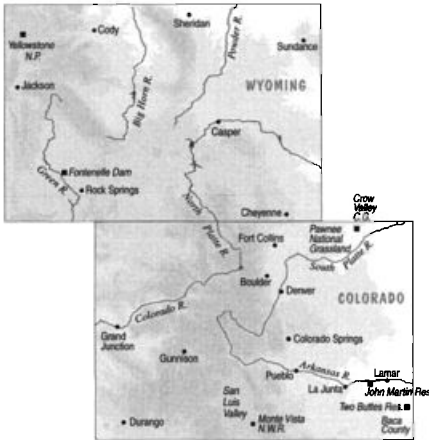


Colorado & Wyoming



Tony Leukering | Bill Schmoker

This year's fall season delivered a refreshing break from the recent Regional trend of warmer-and drier-than-normal conditions. Overall, Wyoming had near-normal temperatures and precipitation, while Colorado had below-normal temperatures combined with above-average precipitation. This helped ease drought conditions in most of Colorado, but the state's central mountains remained abnormally dry and the northeastern plains graded to severe drought near the border with Wyoming and Nebraska. Near-normal conditions were not enough to remedy the water deficit in most of Wyoming, which remained in severe to extreme drought as of 28 November (drought intensities from U.S. Drought Moni-

tor: <<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>>).

In one of the "best" and most enjoyable falls in recent memory, individuals of Yellow-billed Loon, Brown Pelican, and Common Black-Hawk each had long visits, providing area birders unusually protracted opportunities to study each. Whooping Crane, Ruff, Long-billed Murrelet, Costa's Hummingbird, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and Smith's Longspur were among the rarities with much shorter visits (and correspondingly fewer observers). Finally, this fall's report includes many species that were found in unusual numbers, at unusual locations, and/or at unusually late dates, adding to our growing knowledge of bird distribution and status in the Region.

SA Since our predictions in the late 1990s that Park (comprising South Park and the flanking ranges) might be found to be one of the better birding counties in Colorado, a few inveterate Denver- and Colorado Springs-area birders have scrutinized the three major water bodies (Antero, Elevenmile, and Spinney Mountain Reservoirs) there each fall, particularly in late October and November, when hardy waterbirds are passing through the state. Virtually every trip has produced what used to be thought of as surprises—species that are now becoming almost expected. Chief among the targets for these jaunts are scoters, all three of which are regular in this time period in e. Colorado but which are much rarer (or, at least, much more rarely reported) w. of the Front Range.

This fall, trips on 22 & 29 Oct and 5 & 17 Nov may have produced the best known groundings of scoters in the state. In addition, huge numbers of other waterbirds, particularly *Aythya* ducks, Buffleheads, and American Coots, used the three reservoirs during this time. Along with all of these ducks, good numbers of loons were found, with representatives of four species (Table 1; compiled by JK).

Table 1. Numbers of selected waterbirds counted at three South Park, Park reservoirs (Antero, Elevenmile, and Spinney Mountain), late fall 2006.

Species / Date	22 Oct	29 Oct	5 Nov	17 Nov	Notes
Tundra Swan				8	Antero
Gadwall	1900	800	500	26	
American Wigeon	930	1700	630	410	
Mallard	3300	1580	250	132	
Canvasback	327	812	500	21	800 at Antero on 10/29
Redhead	4060	4020	808	208	4000 at Antero in Oct
Ring-necked Duck	85	211	100	304	
Greater Scaup		12			Antero
Lesser Scaup	3600	3340	820	412	3600 at Antero on 10/22
Surf Scoter	3	20	2	8	11 at Antero on 10/29
White-winged Scoter		6	2	1	
Black Scoter		1		1	
Bufflehead	140	3200	7450	1160	4000 at Antero on 11/5
Common Goldeneye			480	358	
Ruddy Duck	220	904	250	27	900 at Antero on 10/29
Red-throated Loon		1			Elevenmile
Pacific Loon	1	4	3		3 at Antero on 10/29
Common Loon	6	7	8		
Yellow-billed Loon	1				Spinney Mountain
Eared Grebe	232	270	2220	320	1400 at Elevenmile on 11/5
American Coot	9500	21,000	14,000	2490	10,000 each at Antero, Spinney Mountain on 10/29
Total waterbirds					
Antero	18,357	25,478	15,643	1611	
Elevenmile	2792	2010	7605	1577	
Spinney Mountain	4083	11,284	5212	2897	
Totals of all waterbirds at all three reservoirs	25,232	38,772	28,460	6085	

SA The Gaviidae kept Colorado birders hopping in what was one of the most loony autumns in memory, with 10 Red-throated, 26 Pacific, and 131 Common Loons. As hoped for every fall, Yellow-billed Loons also put in appearances, with 3 singles, including the above-mentioned South Park bird that provided the first mt. report. An unaged Yellow-billed visited L. DeSmet, *Johnson*, WY 28 Oct–2 Nov (AH et al.) and would provide (p.a.) only the state's 5th record. The last report of the season was of an obliging, but doomed, juv. at Erie Res., *Boulder* 22 Nov–4 Dec (W. Szeliga; ph. BS et al.). It was on a small reservoir, the size of which might have made departure difficult, and was seen to have suffered some sort of injury during the latter half of its stay, as one eye seemed shut and the bird was quite lethargic. Cold weather in late Nov and early Dec closed it in to a bathtub-sized hole in the ice and when an attempt was made at rescue 4 Dec, it submerged and never resurfaced. Unfortunately, the specimen could not be recovered; it would have provided the state's 2nd. As an aside, a large- and pale-billed Common Loon at Union in late Nov (ph. BS) was often confused as a Yellow-billed.

Abbreviations: Barr (Barr Lake S.P., *Adams*); Bonny (Bonny Res., *Yuma*); Chatfield (Chatfield Res., *Douglas/Jefferson*; unless stated, birds were seen in both counties); Cherry Creek (Cherry Creek Res., *Arapahoe*); Chico (Chico Basin Ranch, *El Paso/Pueblo*; particular county noted in text); Crow Valley (Crow Valley Campground, Pawnee N.G., *Weld*); E.K.W. (Edness Kimball Wilkins S.P., *Natrona*, WY); Hereford Ranch (Wyoming Hereford Ranch, *Laramie*, WY); Prewitt (Prewitt Res., *Washington/Logan*; reports are from *Washington* unless specified); Union (Union Res., *Weld*); Valco (Valco Ponds S.W.A., *Pueblo*); Valmont (Valmont Res. complex, *Boulder*). "West Slope" denotes locations west 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 PELICANS

Sixteen Snow Geese (including 2 Blues) 20 Sep e. of Craig, *Moffat* (T. Litteral) were not only a bit early but also on the West Slope, where not all that common. Two Cackling Geese were reported from Vallecito Res., *La Plata* 9 Nov (JBy); the site is also on the West Slope, where occurrence, timing, and subspecific makeup of the species have not yet been determined. The goose of the season, however, was an ad. Black Brant below Pueblo Res., *Pueblo* 7-25 Nov (ph. BKP). The bird provided the 2nd record of the species in Colorado away from the ne. quadrant; the only such record was of subspecies *hrota* in 1964. We received four Colorado reports of Trumpeter Swans (8 total) and 13 of Tundra Swans (57 total) this fall, with the highlight being the 17 ad. Tundras at Union 26 Nov (IS, †TL, ph., m.ob.). Among the Trumpeters were returning individuals in the Boulder and Loveland areas. A one-day-wonder male Eurasian Wigeon brightened Grand Junction, *Mesa* 11 Nov (R. Levad).

Another relatively poor fall for Long-tailed Duck fall was brightened by a very-rare-in-

the-Region ad. male (consorting with a female) at Cherry Creek 22 Nov–7 Dec (S. Kennedy; ph. GW). A Gizzard Shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*) population explosion (and die-off?) at McIntosh Res., *Boulder* in late Nov attracted large numbers of fish-eaters, including 1300 Common Mergansers and 4800 Ring-billed Gulls 26 Nov (TF). The 305 Red-breasted Mergansers at Valmont 23 Nov (TF) may represent a new state maximum.



Brant finally made it onto the extensive Pueblo County, Colorado list in fall 2006: this adult *nigricans* spent a few weeks in the sanctuary of a fenced swimming pond below Pueblo Reservoir 7 (here) through 25 November 2006. Photograph by Brandon K. Percival.

A Pied-billed Grebe and a Ruddy Duck were late far nw. near Jackson, *Teton*, WY 14 Nov (SP). Red-necked Grebes were well represented in the fall waterbird flight, with nine reports of 10 birds from seven Colorado counties. American White Pelicans lingered at numerous locations deep into Nov, with 3 paying the price for suchchutzpah by being frozen into the ice at McIntosh Res., *Boulder* at the end of the month (TF, m.ob.). An older-than-juv. Brown Pelican wandered around ne. Colorado 29 Sep–27 Nov, being seen in four counties (*Morgan*, *Larimer*, *Weld*, and *Boulder*, in that order), with the first sighting at Jackson Res. (IS) and last at McIntosh Res. (m.ob., †TL).

HERONS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

As Cattle Egrets are rarely reported from w. Wyoming now, one in *Lincoln* 5 Sep (*vide SP*)

was of note; the last report of the species this season was from Rifle, *Garfield* 9 Nov (K. Potter). Numerous reports of Green Heron came from typical locales and ended with a single in Pueblo 15 Oct (B. Maynard). Among ardeids, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron provided the only occurrences requiring review: an ad at L. Meredith, *Crowley* 14 Aug (K. Pals et al.) and a juv. at Bonny 4 Sep (P. Janzen).

An Osprey sw. of Creede 21 Sep (CD, BW) may have provided the first specific *Mineral* record. Out-of-range Mississippi Kites included one near Fort Morgan, *Morgan* 19 Aug (TF, AB) and a juv. at Chico, *Pueblo* 2 Sep (BG) that provided a first ranch record. An ad Common Black-Hawk required of would-be observers either luck or much patience at Cañon City, *Fremont* 2-28 Sep (†RM). Of the many fall reports of Broad-winged Hawk, the most interesting were of an ad. at Hereford Ranch 24 Sep (WFO) and of an incredibly late bird in Fort Collins, *Larimer* 24 Nov (R. Sparks). Also incredibly late was a Swainson's Hawk at Greenland, *Douglas* 28 Oct (TF), the only Oct report this year. Conversely, a Rough-legged Hawk at Pawnee 2 Oct (BG) was a bit early. If, as some thought, Merlins in the first half of Sep were early (such as one at Spring Park Res., *Eagle* 8 Sep [DFi]), what, then, would they think of 3 singles in Aug (with the first being at L. DeWeese, *Custer* 19 Aug [BKP])?

An ad. Whooping Crane with Sandhill Cranes flying over Nee-gronda Res., *Kiowa* 1 Nov (p.a., BKP et al.) would provide only the 3rd modern Colorado record. Records of note of Black-bellied Plover include two West Slope records—one each at Miramonte Res., *San Miguel* 5 Aug (CW, BW) and McPhee Res., *Montezuma* 27 Sep (SA)—a high count of 33 at Jackson Res., *Morgan* 15 Oct (JK et al.), and a late flock of 4 at Jackson Res. 23 Nov (DAL). Two American Golden-Plovers at Craig 4-5 Nov (FL) were not only late but also provided a first for *Moffat*. Single Snowy Plovers were out of range at Jackson Res. and at Prewitt 27 Aug (both JK et al.). A juv. Piping Plover was also out of range at Prewitt 7-8 Aug (BG); an unaged bird there 19 Aug (TF, AB) may have been the same individual.

The southbound Upland Sandpiper movement was highlighted by 13 (mostly singles) detected traveling over Prewitt 1 Aug (TL). Of 5 Ruddy Turnstones reported, singles were found at Prewitt 1 (A. Morrison, TL) & 25 Aug (JK et al.) and at Jackson Res. 25-29 Aug (JK et al.); 2 graced Barr 29 Aug (WF) Sanderlings on the West Slope, where rare, included singles at Ridgway Res., *Ouray* 8 Sep (TL), Fruitgrowers Res., *Delta* 20 Sep (FL), and Pastorius Res., *La Plata* 21 Sep (J. Wein-



Colorado Black Phoebes are expanding their ranges in time as well as space, demonstrated by this bird returning for another fall (and second subsequent winter) below Pueblo Reservoir, Pueblo County, Colorado (here 16 August 2006). Photograph by Brandon K. Percival.

gartner, SA). A Dunlin on the e. foothill edge at Colorado City, Pueblo 23-24 Oct (D. Silverman) was outshone by an individual in the mts. at L. DeWeese 23 Oct (RM). There were 3 Dunlins at Jackson Res. 17-19 Nov (DAL), and Highline Res., Mesa hosted the last of the year 27 Nov (L. Arnold). Five juv. Buff-breasted Sandpipers were found by Colorado birders this fall, with the first at Jackson Res. 28 Aug (BG), another one to 2 there 24 Sep-1 Oct (TL, m.ob.), and singles at Big Johnson Res., El Paso 28 Sep (JD) and Chatfield, Douglas 8 Oct (AS).

The shorebird of the season was Colorado's 3rd Ruff, a juv. found at Evilsizer L., Lincoln 27 Sep (ph., †BG). The only Short-billed Dowitchers away from e. Colorado were one at Miramonte Res. 5 Aug (CD, ph. BW) and a juv. at the Hebron Waterfowl Area, Jackson 7 Aug (AS). The 4 Red Phalaropes found this fall occurred in a narrow corridor in space, but not in time, with single basic-plumaged birds found at L. DeWeese 5 Aug (FL), Big Johnson Res. 22 Aug-2 Sep (MP), Fossil Creek Res., Larimer 21 Sep (AS), and Chatfield, Douglas/Jefferson 8 Oct (†JK).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS

A well-photographed juv. Pomarine Jaeger found at Cherry Creek 24 Sep (ph. GW) stayed through 4 Oct, on which date, what was probably the same individual was found not far away at Chatfield (ph. GW) and stayed there through 8 Oct. A probable juv. Long-tailed Jaeger was noted at Cherry Creek 5 Sep (ph. GW; ph. analysis by M. O'Brien), and another graced Standley L., Jefferson 26-28 Sep, that locale's 2nd this decade.

After last fall's (probably) hurricane-caused bonanza of Laughing Gulls, this fall's only report, of an ad., came from near Greeley, Weld

1-14 Oct (SM). Single ad. Little Gulls were found, in the typically wide fall window, near L. Meredith 8 Sep (GW), Neeग्रonda Res. 29 Oct-3 Nov (a first for Kiowa; MP), and Pueblo Res. 11 Nov (MY), whereas a juv. Bonaparte's Gull was quite early 28 Aug at Jackson Res. (BG). Other than the returning ad. in the Union Res. area, the only other report of Mew Gull was of an ad. at Douglas Res., Larimer 23-25 Nov (TL). An excellent indicator of how early California Gulls leave breeding areas was the 1000 at Valmont 10 Aug (TF). Very rare

Aug Herring Gulls were reported from Fruitgrowers Res. (V. Zerbi) and Chatfield (J. Roller); one in water-poor Elbert 8 Oct was found on a more typical date (BKP). The earliest of some 23 Lesser Black-backed Gulls reported was one spied at Barr 28 Aug (WF). The field marks of a large imm. *Larus* found at McIntosh Res. 26-27 Nov (ph. TL) fit the characters of first-cycle Slaty-backed Gull, but the skittishness of the bird prevented definite ageing (either first- or second-cycle) and so precluded definite identification; then the reservoir froze. The 38 Sabine's Gulls provided for a sub-par fall, but an ad. at Big Meadows Res. 9 Sep (possibly a first for Mineral; JBy) and a juv. at Pastorius Res. 14 Sep (J. & J. Rees, SA) were in sw. Colorado, where rare. At Cherry Creek, a juv. Black-legged Kittiwake was present 2-11 Nov (GW), nicely overlapped by an ad. 3-9



Though now known to be rare but regular in migration in Colorado, this Blue-headed Vireo banded at Barr Lake State Park, Adams County, Colorado 6 September 2006 provided one of relatively few well-documented occurrences and was only the second to be captured in the twenty years of fall banding at this site. Photograph by Steven Brown.

Nov (P. Pratt), the latter quite rare in the Region; juvs. at Lathrop S.P. 18-21 Nov (MP, †BKP) and Mt. Elbert Forebay 20 Nov (†SY, ph. R. Hancock) provided firsts for *Huerfano*

and *Lake*, respectively.

Common Terns have become more commonly and widely reported in the Region in recent years, as evidenced by this fall's 18 reports totaling 50 birds 2 Aug-29 Oct. The most interesting included an imm. at Pastorius Res. 14 Sep (rare in the sw.; SA), an ad. and a juv. visiting Fontenelle Res., Lincoln, WY 30 Sep (M. J. Iliff), and the fairly late bird at Neeग्रonda Res. 29 Oct (MP et al.). Closer scrutiny of *Sterna* terns has also greatly increased the apparent incidence of Arctic Tern,



Colorado's only reported Scissor-tailed Flycatcher of the autumn 2006 season gave county lists a double-dip by perching along the road that forms the border between Pueblo County and Otero County 19-29 (here 24) September. Photograph by Brandon K. Percival.

with 3 this fall in a very tight window: single juvs. at Union Res. 17-20 Sep (B. & I. Prather) and Fossil Creek Res., Larimer 21 Sep (NK, AS) and an alternate-plumaged ad. at L. Beckwith, Pueblo 22-23 Sep (†DS, ph. BKP). A murrelet, almost certainly a Long-billed Murrelet, was seen at great distance at Blue Mesa Res., Gunnison 18 Nov (T. Hicks).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

The spread of doves continues. Up to 17 Eurasian Collared-Doves were in Hartsel in late Oct (MP, ph. TL), providing for a first for montane Park.

Three White-winged Doves through the winter in Guernsey, Platte, WY (*vide* K. Kranik) and a juv. in Meeker, Rio Blanco 3-20 Sep (E. Hollowed) likewise indicate the spread of that species. Otherwise, nearly all other of the 15 reports of White-winged Dove originated from se. Colorado. By contrast, Inca Dove continues to be found only in the two long-term locations of Lamar and Rocky Ford. The high count of Long-eared Owl came 9 Nov from Chico, El Paso (MP), where 34 were counted. A Short-eared Owl at Horse Thief S.W.A., Mesa 26 Sep (C. Dodson) provided for a rare West Slope report. Lesser Nighthawk is known in Colorado primarily as an overshooting spring migrant, particularly in the se. and the Grand Junction area. This fall, we received reports of the species from three sw. locales: as many as 3 at Nucla, Montrose 1 Aug-24 Sep (†CD, m.ob.), one at Dolores, Montezuma 16 Aug (†JBy), and a road-killed bird at Gateway, Mesa 11 Sep (CD). However, the use of wing shape in the identification of these birds may not withstand further scrutiny; it is conceivable that juv. Common Nighthawks might have more Lesser-like

SA Southeastern Colorado has become the Region's hummingbird mecca, with *Prowers* leading the way. With reports from only three yards (the Paulsen, Thompson, and Stulp yards), we get a good feeling for the magnitude of this fall's hummer flight out there between the main migration ranges of e. and w. hummingbird species. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, for which there are fewer than 10 Colorado records, was found twice in the county this fall. Single imm. and ad. males were found, with the former present 3-10 Sep (JT), the latter on 23 Sep only (LP). Black-chinned Hummingbirds visited all three yards 1 Aug–24 Sep, with as many as 3 at the Thompson yard. Even rarer in Colorado than Ruby-throated, a female-plumaged **Costa's Hummingbird** was ogled at the Stulp residence all day on 22 Sep and then on the afternoon of the 23rd. Paulsen reported a female-plumaged Costa's at her feeder only on the morning of the 23rd; the locations are separated by 24 km. To round things out, the Stulp yard hosted a Calliope Hummingbird 6 Aug and the Thompson yard a Broad-tailed Hummingbird on the same date.

wingtips. Common Poorwills were tardy 5 Nov near Trinidad, *Las Animas* (T. Crisler) and 19 Nov at Duck Creek S.W.A., *Logan* (SL). A

bird identified as a juv. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was photographed at Prewitt 1 Sep (SL).

A female Red-bellied Woodpecker at Hereford Ranch 21 Aug–12 Sep (ph. DAL) would provide Wyoming's 4th or 5th record (another is pending). Seven reports totaling 9 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were received in Colorado, the highlight a single bird at Manitou L., *Teller* 28 Sep (MP) in the mts., where still very rare. Single Red-naped Sapsuckers at Flagler, *Kit Carson* 17 Sep (MP et al.) and at Lamar 25 Sep (DAL) were well out on the plains, where rare. Single Eastern Wood-Pewees sang along Boulder Cr., *Boulder* 5-22 Aug (TF) and Fountain Cr., *El Paso* 18 Sep (BKP et al.). Even rarer, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was reported from Crow Valley 15 Sep (AS et al.), thus making this the 3rd consecutive migration season in which the species graced Colorado—and that after only one previous accepted record. A Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher banded at Barr 25 Aug (TL, SN) fell just barely outside the measurement overlap on the side of Pacific-slope, so was relegated to the uncertain category. Another "Western Flycatcher" banded there 1 Sep (p.a., †SN) fell well outside the overlap zone and would account for the first Colorado record of Pacific-slope Flycatcher.

Black Phoebes outside typical range included singles at Trinidad, *Las Animas* 12 Sep (RM) and Colorado City 16 Sep (DS). Of the seven reports of Eastern Phoebe, the farthest w. was from Salida 31 Oct (RM), the latest from Neenoshe Res., *Kiowa* 1-3 Nov (DN). The only Great Crested Flycatcher well out of range was a single at Valco 26-29 Aug (RM).

Single Western and Cassin's Kingbirds were very late and late, respectively, at the Fox Ranch, *Yuma* 1 Oct (MP). Two Scissor-tailed

Flycatchers were found this fall, the first, a typical one-day wonder, was well nw. near Craig 19 Sep (ph. M. Albee). However, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher w.-sw. of Fowler 19-29 Sep was photographed on both sides of the *Otero/Pueblo* border and was the first long-staying migrant of the species in quite some time.



As Colorado has only one previous accepted fall record of the species, this Gray-cheeked Thrush banded at Barr Lake State Park, Adams County, Colorado 11 October 2006 was unexpected there. Photograph by Joanne Haller.

VIREOS THROUGH THRUSHES

A very late White-eyed Vireo was quite out of place 29 Oct at Wetmore (p.a.,

RM), where it would provide only the 2nd *Custer* record. For a species that is incredibly rare in Colorado away from the very far e., individual Bell's Vireos at Prewitt, *Logan* 19 Aug (TF, AB), *Crow Valley* 25-26 Aug (GW et al.), and *Rye Mountain Park, Pueblo* 26 Aug (DS) were eye-popping finds. Though Cassin's Vireos in e. Colorado no longer raise eyebrows, the whopping 17 at Prewitt 27 Aug (JK et al.) made for a new Colorado maximum. Of the four reports of Blue-headed Vireo this fall, one banded at Barr 6 Sep (†SN, ph. S. Brown) was early, one found n. of Wild Horse 17 Sep (BKP et al.) accounts for the first *Cheyenne* report, and one at Hasty, *Bent* 29 Oct (MP) was a bit late (all p.a.). Of the nine Philadelphia Vireo reports, the 2 on the West Slope—30 Aug at Gunnison (JBy) and 23 Sep with a Red-eyed Vireo at Craig (FL)—were of most interest, the latter providing a first for *Moffat*.

A Western Scrub-Jay was well out of range at Lamar 25 Sep (DAL), as were the 25 Pinyon Jays at Governor Basin, *Ouray* 28 Aug (SA), though the latter were only out of range elevationally, being at 3300 m. Two escaped Pied Crows (*Corvus albus*; sub-Saharan species), one of them banded, wandered around *Denver* 28 Sep+ (†A. Koehler, †H Kingery). Two *Pueblo* reports of Purple Martin, which is rare in e. Colorado, made for a "good" fall. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow at Navajo Res., *Archuleta* 29 Oct (JBy) was incredibly late, and a Cave Swallow at Valco 16 Sep (BKP) made for the state's 5th undocumented single-observer report; we still await the first confirmed Colorado record. White-breasted Nuthatches of the e subspecies were found as far w. as Prewitt 19 Aug (TF, AB) and Hasty 29 Oct (BKP et al.). A Canyon Wren visited Lamar 1 Sep (BG)—some 50 km from the nearest known breeding area and, for such a typically sedentary species, well out of range. Two *Fremont* reports of Carolina Wren, 7-29 Aug at Cañon City and 24 Sep upstream at Texas Creek (both RM), could conceivably have referred to the same individual, though a winter report from Cañon City might suggest otherwise. Of the 13 reports of Winter Wren, observers classified 5 of them to subspecies group (2 w., 3 e.), though our experience suggests that "Westerns" are rarer here than are "Easterns." The only West Slope report, where the species is still considered a "rare winter visitor," was of a bird banded at Grand Junction 19 Oct (GG). Peterson found all the Sedge Wrens reported this fall, with 2 singing at Flagler S.W.A., *Kit Carson* 17 Sep and one at *Kit Carson, Cheyenne* 2 Nov.



Most Colorado Wood Thrush records are from spring, so this individual banded at Barr Lake State Park, Adams County, Colorado 6 October 2006 provided a rare fall record. Interestingly, all three Adams County records are all from fall, and all have been birds found in mist nets at this site. Photograph by Jessica Lux.

The 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Governor Basin 28 Aug (SA) were quite a surprise, as they were at 3570 m, and singles tarried in *Pueblo* 6 Nov (MY) and *Bent* 21 Nov (DN). A male Eastern Bluebird at Wetmore 25 Nov (RM) was in the mountains, where quite rare. A Gray-cheeked Thrush banded at Barr 11 Oct (†SN, ph. J Haller) provided only the 2nd firm fall Colorado record. An Eastern Hermit Thrush was

identified at the Fox Ranch 14 Oct (TF) and added to the very few Colorado reports of the subspecies group. Three fall Wood Thrushes made for a great total and included one in Wyoming, at E.K.W. 2 Sep (CM). Both Colorado birds were found 7 Oct, one at Crow



Prothonotary Warbler is much more common in spring in Colorado than in fall, so this individual banded at Barr Lake State Park, Adams County, Colorado 24 October 2006 provided rare, and very late, record. Photograph by Tony Leukering.

Valley (SM), the other less than 80 km due s. at Barr (†SN, ph. J. Lux).

PIPITS THROUGH FINCHES

An unprecedented seven reports of Sprague's Pipit, all from ne. Colorado, spanned 14 Sep–16 Oct. However, without the five reports from Gibbons, who was working on a playa survey project on the e. plains, the remaining reports would have constituted a typical fall in the Region, which again underscores the importance of being in the right place at the right time. A Blue-winged Warbler at Neenoshe Res. 3 Nov (†JBy) was incredibly late and would provide a first for Kiowa; a Golden-winged Warbler at Cañon City 18 Aug (RM) provided a Fremont first. Tennessee Warblers in atypical places included singles at Casper, Natrona, WY 18 Aug (G&JL), Craig 23 Aug (FL), and Gunnison 30 Aug (JBy); one at Neegrando Res., Kiowa 29 Oct (BKP, MP) was quite late.

Nashville Warblers were present in Wyoming at Casper 18 Aug (G&JL) and E.K.W. 1 Sep (CM), as was a Magnolia Warbler at E.K.W. 24 Sep (AH, CM). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler graced Salida 13 Oct (RM) for Chaffee's first record; another in a Corbendale yard 23 Oct (D. Clark) did the same for West Slope Garfield. A Black-throat-

ed Green Warbler at Gunnison 30 Aug (p.a., JBy) would provide a first for Gunnison and only a 2nd for Colorado's West Slope. A female Blackburnian Warbler was quite a surprise in a Nucla yard 9 Sep (TL, ph. BW), as it provided a Montrose first and a Colorado West Slope 4th. The only Prairie Warbler was one that brightened E.K.W. 1 Oct (CM). Though the three Palm Warbler reports this fall made for a poor showing, all were of interest, the aforementioned Nov report and 2 from the mts.: Rocky Mountain N.P., Larimer 23 Aug (B. Gill) and Silverthorne, Summit 29 Oct (JK). Single imm. Bay-breasted Warblers were nice finds at Crow Valley 10 Sep (p.a., DAL) and in s. Kit Carson 17 Sep (p.a., BKP). A Blackpoll Warbler 6 Sep at Salida (RM) was in the mts., where the species is not at all common.

An ad. male Black-and-white Warbler was on Colorado's West Slope, where the species is not annual, at L. Catamount, Routt 4 Sep (A. Hilf). An imm. female Prothonotary Warbler banded at Barr 24 Oct (†SN, ph. TL) was nearly record late. Worm-eating Warblers are



Red Fox Sparrows are annual but rare visitors to Colorado in late fall and winter, and this individual, banded at Barr Lake State Park, Adams County, Colorado 13 October 2006, appeared within the typical window of passage for this species. It represents a fourth county record, all of birds banded at this site. Photograph by Glenda Brown.

much more common in the Region in spring than in fall, so it was quite a surprise that one was banded at Grand Junction 19 Oct (ph. GG), providing only the West Slope's 3rd record and first since 1963! Both reports of migrant Hooded Warblers, also more common here in spring than in fall, were from atypical locations: Delta, Delta 22-23 Aug

(JBn) and Natrona, WY 7 Sep (B. Rickman). Four Canada Warblers doubled a typical fall's count, the first at Crow Valley 25-26 Aug (†JK et al.). The next was among the aforementioned horde of Cassin's Vireos and 45 Townsend's Warblers at Prewitt 27 Aug (†JK). The 3rd graced Boulder 3 Sep (SL), while the last provided a Custer first, at L. DeWeese 24 Sep (RM). A Summer Tanager was banded at Barr 16 Oct (ph. SN), and another was an electric addition to the Todovich feeders in El Paso 2-7 Nov (fide N. Pieplow). An imm. male Scarlet Tanager was a nice find at Prewitt 29 Sep (JK).

Laggard towhees included a Green-tailed at Two Buttes S.W.A., Baca 26 Nov (JT) and a Spotted at Wilson, Teton, WY 27 Nov (fide SP). Clay-colored Sparrow is quite rare on the West Slope, so the singles at Pastorius Res. 1 Sep and in Dolores 3 Sep (both JBy) and the 2 at Ridgway S.P., Ouray 3-20 Sep (CD) are, perhaps, connected to the large flight on the e. plains (as evidenced by the record-high 23 banded at Barr this fall [SN]). Single Field Sparrows at Withers Canyon, Otero 29 Oct (DN) and Colorado City 1 Nov (DS) were late and well w. of normal. Unfortunately, the subspecies of these birds was not determined/reported, as they match in timing so well with the Eastern Field Sparrow at Burchfield S.W.A., Baca 28 Oct (MP), though one reported as a Western Field Sparrow was in Jefferson 29 Oct (T. Jones). A Le Conte's Sparrow (with a late Grasshopper Sparrow) was at the Fox Ranch 14 Oct (TF et al.), and 2 were in the Ft. Lyon marshes, Bent 27-29 Oct (MP, BKP). A slightly high count of 3 Red Fox Sparrows was found this fall: one banded at Barr 13 Oct (†SN, ph. G. Brown), one at Neenoshe Res. 29 Oct–3 Nov (BKP, MP), and one near John Martin Res., Bent 16 Nov (DN).

Swamp, White-throated, and Harris's Sparrows are of uncommon occurrence on the West Slope, so reports (all of singles) there are of interest and included Swamps at Grand Junction 13 Oct and Paonia, Delta 22 Oct (both JBn), White-throateds at Nucla 25 Sep (record early on West Slope) through 25 Nov (CD) and near Cortez, Montezuma 3 Nov (D&MH), and a Harris's near Cortez 4 Nov (D&MH). Dark-eyed Juncos typically arrive on the e. plains in early Oct, and Gray-headed Juncos are, if not rare, at least quite uncommon there at any time. However, juncos found there in mid-Sep are usually Gray-headed, so the single at Hereford Ranch 19 Sep (DFa) matched expectations. A poorly photographed longspur near Hugo S.W.A., Lincoln 14 Sep (BG) was probably a Smith's Longspur, and another such bird was identified near Bonny

SA By Nov, most parulids have departed the Region, and most of the Region's birders are concentrating on waterbirds. Some birders, though, continue to scour migrant traps and turn up warblers in amazing number and variety. With the addition of the aforementioned Blue-winged Warbler, parulid records from this Nov, which spanned the entire month, include individuals of 11 species: Orange-crowned Warblers in Lincoln, Pueblo, and Larimer; Nashville Warblers in Otero, Jefferson, and Pueblo (2); Northern Parula in Pueblo; Chestnut-sided Warblers in Jefferson and Boulder; Black-throated Green Warbler in Chaffee; Pine Warblers in Kiowa, Pueblo (2), and El Paso; Western Palm Warbler in Kiowa; Black-and-white Warbler in Chaffee; Ovenbird in Larimer; and Wilson's Warbler in Jefferson. As Chaffee is in the mts., those reports are even more noteworthy.

30 Sep (p.a., AS, A. Boyce). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak 18-26 Nov was not only very late but on the "wrong" side at Paonia (JBn); an even tardier individual was at Boulder 24-28 Nov (TF). A Blue Grosbeak at Valco 7-9 Oct (BKP) provided a new late date for Colorado; a Lazuli Bunting not far away on 14 Oct (BKP)—if not for an older Nov record—would have provided the same for its species.

Colorado birders continue to work out the distribution of Eastern Meadowlark in the state; another datum was provided by a singing bird 5 Oct n. of Two Buttes Res. in Prowers (S. Moss), probably a Lilian's. An ad. male Baltimore Oriole provided a first for Carbon, WY 25 Sep at Saratoga (ph. F. Bergquist), and a Bullock's Oriole 15 Sep at Crow Valley (DAL) was late. A brown-plumaged Purple Finch at Last Chance, Washington 28 Sep (DAL) provided the only report of the season. Lesser Goldfinch has only re-

cently colonized the se. mts. of Wyoming and is rare on the plains anywhere in the Region, so the 3 at Hereford Ranch 21 Sep (WFO) were of interest for multiple reasons.

Addendum: Omitted from the summer 2006 report, a male Eastern Bluebird attended a nest in the upper reaches of Upper Beaver Meadows, Rocky Mountain N.P., Larimer late May-late Jun (S. Roederer). Most interesting was that the female bluebird at that nest was a Western (TL).

Cited observers (subregional editors in bold-face): Susan Allerton, Jason Beason (JBn), **Jim Beatty** (sw. Colorado; JBy), Allan Burns, **Coen Dexter** (w.-cen. Colorado), **Doug Faulkner** (Wyoming; DFa), Dick Filby (DFi), Warren Finch, Ted Floyd, Brian Gibbons, Glenn Giroir, Dean & Mona Hill, Ann Hines, Joey Kellner, Steve Larson, Gloria & Jim

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Idaho & Western Montana



David Trochell

Early autumn was unusually dry and warm in most areas of the Region, but weather patterns reversed course in October and November, bringing much precipitation. While shorebird and waterfowl migration seemed fairly typical, some reports indicated significant movements of passerines in August and September in response to a series of cool, wet frontal systems.

Late-season reports of low passerine numbers in southern Idaho's valleys were especially perplexing and troubling. Some contributors speculated that adequate wild food availability and mild weather may have allowed

birds to forego migration to the area, but others opined that widespread mortality from West Nile Virus was the probable cause. This darker explanation seemed likely, especially after the Center for Disease Control published a fall report documenting nearly a quarter of the nation's cases of West Nile in southern Idaho.

Abbreviations: A.F.R. (American Falls Res., Bingham/Power, ID); Camas (Camas N.W.R., Jefferson, ID); I.P.R. (Island Park Res., Fremont, ID); L.P. (Idaho Bird Observatory's banding station at Lucky Peak near Boise).

GEESE THROUGH PIGEONS

Representing a latilong first was a Greater White-fronted Goose at L. Helena, MT 18 Nov (BM). Unusually late was a Ross's Goose at Bozeman, MT 23 Nov (LAH). A total of 16 Cackling Geese was reported 5-17 Nov, more than three times last autumn's count. Only 4 Eurasian Wigeons were recorded, barely up from last year's weak tally. If accepted, 2 **American Black Ducks** at Camas 16 Oct (†JC) will represent Idaho's 4th record. About average was the season's count of 16 Surf Scoters and 12 White-winged Scoters. Rare **Black Scoters** visited both states, with 2 at L. Helena 17 Oct (ph. BM) providing Montana's 16th record and one in Valley 17-20 Nov (†JC) that will represent Idaho's 3rd record, if

accepted. The fall tally of 8 Long-tailed Ducks was above average. A Red-throated Loon in Kootenai 16 Oct (†LH) brought in Idaho's 29th report. Pacific Loons came through in fairly good numbers, with a total of 13 reported. Staging Common Loons peaked at about 250 at Montana's Ennis L. 22 Oct (EH, JP), one of the Region's primary loon hotspots. Raptor watchers at L.P. made commendable counts of 17 Broad-winged Hawks 10 Sep-3 Oct (JC), and Montana reported 12 at the Bridger Ridge site in mid-late Sep. A surprisingly high tally of 60 staging Bald Eagles was made at Ennis L., MT 25 Nov (AH) Unprecedented was the Gyrfalcon documented at the Bridger Ridge, MT hawkwatch site 28 Oct (CC, JG); one in Lake, MT 9 Nov (BR) was less unusual. Shocking was an estimated 40,000 American Coots at Ennis L., MT 9 Oct (EH, JP).

Usually rare American Golden-Plovers came through in good numbers, with Idaho hosting at least 24 and Montana reporting 26 Idaho birders reported Snowy Plovers in Canyon 7 Aug (†DH) and at A.F.R. 3-5 Sep (†JC), where they are casual visitors. Especially rare in autumn in w. Montana was a Black-necked Stilt in Somers 2 Sep (DC). A Red Knot, less than annual, was a show-stopper at I.P.R. 29 Sep-6 Oct (JC, ph., †CW). Top shorebird honors go to the single **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at L. Helena, MT 3 Sep (ph