

Mountain West



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This summer in the Region appeared normal in temperature and moisture in the southern portions but drier in the northern and western portions. The southern "monsoons" developed early this year and continued through the season. This was especially true in the mountain area of Colorado and in the Denver/Platte River basin.

Abbreviations: S.C.L. (Strauss Cabin L., Ft. Collins, Larimer, CO).

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

A basic-plumaged ad. Pacific Loon was at S.C.L. 16 Jun–31 Jul+ (NK, m. ob.). An ad. Neotropic Cormorant was at Windsor L., Weld 27 Jun (AS). Rarely reported in nw. Colorado, a Double-crested Cormorant was reported from Dinosaur N.M., Moffat 9 Jun (CD, BW, GG, LC). An ad. Tricolored Heron was at S.C.L. 17–22 Jun (NK, RK, DAL, m. ob.). Colorado's 6th **Reddish Egret**, a subad. white morph, frequented Neenoshe Res., Kiowa 5–31 Jul+ (DN, m. ob.). Colorado's 4th White Ibis, an ad., was at the w. end of J.M.R.

1–2 Jun (TD, DJ, DN, CL). With the overpopulation of Snow Goose, summering individuals have become more regular; singles were reported from five Colorado counties, while another was at Table Mt. W.M.A., Goshen, WY 16 & 29 Jun (SJD, WRS).

Several Mottled Ducks (or hybrids) were at Rocky Ford W.T.P., Otero 2–4 Jul (DF, JB, TL, MJ, BKP); there are no accepted records of this species in Colorado. A male Ring-necked Duck was at S.C.L. 13 Jun (SJD). A late male Greater Scaup was at Orlando Res., Huerfano 9 Jun (TL, NG), while summer Buffleheads included a late male there 9 Jun (TL, NG) and up to 2 females at S.C.L. 13 Jun–11 Jul (SJD, LS, NK). Most unusual were summer records of Hooded Merganser: 2 late first-spring males at Ft. Collins, Larimer 1 Jun (DAL); a female at S.C.L. 18 Jun (SJD); 3 females at Bump Sullivan Res., Goshen, WY 29 Jun (SJD); and 2 females at Huerfano Res., Pueblo 28 Jul (CLW, BKP). Colorado's 5th **Common Black-Hawk** was an ad. found e. of Montrose 9 Jun (SJD). This record may indicate a potential range expansion, as it was the 3rd record of the species in Colorado this year. An ad. Peregrine Falcon at Adobe Cr. Res., Kiowa/Bent 4 Jul (TL, NG), another ad. at Barr L., Adams 23 Jul (TL, JB), and yet another at Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso 27 Jul (Stacey Scott) were possible breeders on the e. Plains. Most unusual in summer, an ad. Merlin was reported from Black Mountain, Hinsdale in early Jul (PO).

SA On the evening of 22–23 Jun, the regional editors conducted a rail survey of Bent, Otero, and Pueblo counties in Colorado in an effort to determine where populations of Black Rail occur in se. Colorado and to estimate their numbers. The effort began at sunset and continued until approximately 0400. The wind was calm after a large thunderstorm, and temperatures ranged from 92 down to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. The thunderstorm caused several large wetland areas e. of J.M.R. to remain unsurveyed. Heard individuals were counted; no playback or prerecorded calls were used to stimulate calling. The areas covered were from the w. end of J.M.R. (high water line/tailwater wetlands); w. along roadside wetland ditches and irrigation tailwater areas; and into Pueblo. Most wetland areas contained vegetation dominated by high sedges and rushes 12–40 cm high, with some taller areas of cattail and bulrush. The count total included 85 Virginia Rails, 53 Soras, and an amazing 74 Black Rails, including Pueblo's first Black Rail just e. of Avondale. Other small populations of Blacks occur in other Arkansas Valley counties, such as Baca, Prowers, Crowley, and Kiowa. Well over 100 Black Rails might have been counted had it been possible to expand the survey area to include other probably suitable wetland areas.

CRANES THROUGH SKIMMER

Southeast of normal, a pair of Sandhill Cranes fledged 2 young at Glendevy, Larimer 24 Jun, the first breeding record for that county (NK). A late American Golden-Plover was in Larimer 1 Jun (NK). Colorado's Piping Plover breeding population rebounded from one pair in 1998 to five pairs in 2001. Three pairs successfully fledged 7 young in 2001, the best year since 1997. A female banded in another state joined this population (no one is color-marking Piping Plovers in Colorado; *fide* DN). High counts of 20 Greater Yellowlegs and 37 Lesser Yellowlegs were tallied at Table Mt. W.M.A., Goshen, WY 29 Jun (SJD). Five Willets at Miramonte Res., San Miguel 26 Jun (CD, BW) were a little early. Noteworthy was a Long-billed Curlew well into the mts. at Blue Mesa Res., Gunnison 16 Jun (DF) and 5 at Table Mt. W.M.A., Goshen, WY 22 Jul (SJD). Also of note were 9 Marbled Godwits at Miramonte Res., San Miguel 26 Jun (CD, BW), a Ruddy Turnstone at Adobe Creek Res., Bent 29 Jul (CLW, BKP), and single Semipalmated and Stilt Sandpipers at Table Mt. W.M.A. 16 Jun (SJD).



A subadult white-morph Reddish Egret (on the right) at Neenoshe Reservoir, Kiowa County, Colorado, entertained local birders from 5 July to the end of the period; it furnished the sixth Regional record. This digiscoped image was taken on 20 July. Photograph by Chris Wood.

WRS). Four Red-necked Phalaropes at Bump Sullivan Res., Goshen, WY 22 Jul were the only ones reported (SJD).

For the 3rd summer, a **Pomarine Jaeger** was reported in Colorado: an ad. light morph. at Upper Queens Res. 3 (DF, JB) & 10 Jul (TL, NG) was carefully studied. An ad. Laughing Gull at Adobe Cr. Res. was observed depredating Least Tern nests in mid-Jun (DN). This or another ad. was at Jet L., Kiowa 19–29 Jul (DN, m. ob.). On 19 Jun, 9 Franklin's Gulls with dependent young were at Walden N.W.R., Jackson (NK); this is the only known breeding site in Colorado. Rare summer visitors, single ad. Herring Gulls were at J.M.R. 3 Jun and Pueblo Res. 24 Jul (both BKP). Possibly the first summer record for the Region, a Glaucous-winged Gull in third-summer plumage was at Boyd Lake S.P., Larimer 16 Jul (DF). An ad. Great Black-backed Gull visited at least five reservoirs (up to 40 mi distant) in e. Colorado all summer—in one instance, the bird was observed trying to mate with a California Gull (DN et al.).

Up to 14 Caspian Terns remained at S.C.L. 3 Jun–17 Jul (NK, DAL, m. ob.). Single **Arctic Terns** were described from S.C.L. 17–18 Jun (SJD, m. ob.), Windsor L., Weld 22–27 Jun (SJD, m. ob.), and Bonny Res., Yuma 1 Jul (LS). Despite four consecutive years with high reproductive success, Least Tern numbers in e. Colorado dropped from 33 pairs in 1998 to 25 in 1999, 19 in 2000, and only 20 pairs in 2001. This summer, 31 young fledged (DN). N. of normal was an ad. Least Tern at S.C.L. 25 Jun (SJD). A high count of 32 Black Terns at two sites s. of Alamosa, Alamosa 20 Jul appeared to be breeding. The Region's first **Black Skimmer** was an ad. at Jet L., Kiowa 19–21 Jul (DN, m. ob.).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

A Eurasian Collared-Dove at Montrose 9 Jun

(SJD) was the first West Slope record for Colorado. A pair of White-winged Doves at Pueblo was observed mating 3 Jun, but no young were observed (VAT et al.). Black-billed Cuckoo reports included one in Fort Collins, Larimer 10 Jun (NK) and one at Chatfield Res., Jefferson 28 Jul (AS, JK). Nesting Western Screech-Owls fledged one young at Green R. Campground in Dinosaur N.M., Moffat 12 Jun (CD, BW, GG, LC). Also in Dinosaur N.M., several Burrowing Owls were seen 10 Jun (CD, BW, GG, LC). A male Lesser Nighthawk was seen near Billy Creek S.W.A., Ouray 23 Jul (DF, CLW). A *Chaetura* swift was observed with Violet-green Swallows near Ridgway, Ouray in Jul (CC). Two Acorn Woodpeckers were w. of Pagosa Springs, Archuleta 10 Jun (SJD). A single Eastern Wood-Pewee was singing at Morrison Park, Jefferson 5 Jun (AS, KS), and another was at Tamarack Ranch S.W.A., Logan 14 Jun (DF). A singing Alder Flycatcher was along the S. Platte s. of Ft. Lupton, Weld 4 Jun (CLW, TL). Rare in the mts., an Eastern Phoebe was at Antero Res., Park 2 Jul (RL). Vermilion Flycatchers again nested at Higbee Cemetery, Otero this summer. N. of normal were an Ash-throated Flycatcher near Lander, WY 2 Jun (DF, m. ob.) and a Cassin's Kingbird at Table Mt. W.M.A., Goshen, WY 22 Jul (SJD). An ad. female Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was w. of Last Chance, Washington 24 Jun (DR ph.). Rarely reported from the w. slope, a Red-eyed Vireo was noted s. of Olathe along the Uncompahgre R., Montrose 1 Jun (CD, BW). A Winter Wren was seen in R.M.N.P., Boulder 29 Jul (GW). Veery numbers appeared to be higher this year: one w. of Sargents, Gunnison 14 Jun (JB); 7 heard along Trout Cr., Routt 17 Jun (CC); 3 in Left Hand Canyon e. of Ward, Boulder 22 Jun (TL); 2 in Huerfano S.W.A., Huerfano 7 Jul (NG); and one

along the Conejos R. w. of Fox Creek, Conejos 11 Jul (JB). A Gray-cheeked Thrush was at Flagler S.W.A., Kit Carson 1 Jun (CLW).

WARBLERS THROUGH CROSSBILLS

It was a good season for rare or uncommon e warblers lingering or summering in the Region. A male Blue-winged Warbler was in Colorado City, Pueblo 1 Jul (BKP), and a male Golden-winged Warbler in Red Rocks Park, Jefferson 5 Jun (NG, TL, CLW, AS). A male Northern Parula was s. of Cook L., WY 24 Jun (Nick Block). Chestnut-sided Warbler reports included 3 males: Pass Cr., n. of La Veta, Huerfano 6 Jun (DAL); Colorado City, Pueblo 8 Jun (DS); and a late bird on the Apex Trail, Jefferson 22 Jul (DF). An early Townsend's Warbler was near Canon City, Fremont 31 Jul (AV). A male Prairie Warbler along the Apex Trail 21 Jul (CLW) provided one of the few summer records for this species in Colorado. A male Blackpoll Warbler in Dearthlodge Park, Moffat 9 Jun was a late migrant (CD, BW, GG, LC). Single Black-and-white Warblers included a male at Castlewood Canyon S.P., Douglas 24 Jun (LS) and a female w. of Ft. Collins, Larimer 9 Jul (BKP, DB, m. ob.). A male Kentucky Warbler was a prize in Colorado City, Pueblo 29 Jun (BKP, SC, DS).

A male Summer Tanager was discovered at Sawhill Ponds in Boulder 24 Jun (MP). Several Savannah Sparrows were reported above 11,800 ft in the S. San Juan Wilderness Area, s. of Platoro Reservoir, Conejos (SA). Rare in summer, a male Northern Cardinal was at Rocky Ford, Otero 28 Jul (CLW, BKP). Rare in the mts. w. of the Continental Divide, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found in Vail, Eagle 10–11 Jun (Bob Righter), while an ad. male Indigo Bunting at Lander, WY 8 Jun was a good find there (DF, m. ob.). Both species strayed strongly w. in the previous spring. A male Bobolink was displaying near La Veta, Huerfano 28 Jun (TL, NG). Two Scott's Orioles were detected along the Ninaview B.B.S. route, Las Animas 6 Jun (CLW, BKP). A pair of White-winged Crossbills, scarce in summer, were ne. of Rico, Dolores 4 Jul (CD, BW).

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