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During the first half of December, the Region sported mild temperatures and large numbers of geese, particularly white geese in the lower Arkansas River valley. A series of blizzards and heavy snow marked the rest of the month, with eastern and southeastern Colorado especially hard hit. The strongest storm, primarily 20-21 December, closed Denver International Airport for 45 hours and resulted in a declared state of emergency with the National Guard deployed to rescue thousands of stranded travelers and, later, assist with hay delivery to livestock. Wintering plains birds were hit hard, too. When the deep freeze set in mid-month, most open water froze, sending waterfowl packing either for running water or for more temperate climes. Particularly noteworthy by their relative absence in much of the Region, especially compared to the situation in recent winters, Cackling Geese were very hard to find, except, oddly enough, in northern Colorado between Fort Collins and Greeley. Non-migratory southeastern plains birds appeared to be devastated by the nearly 140 cm of accumulated snow. Survivors often resorted to roadside foraging, leading to much mortality. Starving Western Meadowlarks were observed cannibalizing their road-killed compatriots (*fide* DN). The snow pack was heavy enough in southeastern Colorado that many roads remained closed for much of the period, creating the unusual opportunity to cross-country ski into birding areas like John Martin Reservoir. The snow-bound landscape may have caused an exodus of Chihuahuan Ravens, which showed up in unusual numbers outside typical range and were particularly noted in Boulder County (TF, BS).

Normal precipitation through the rest of the period kept Colorado much above normal

for the seasonal sum. This moisture removed nearly the entire state from drought that has been a recurring theme in this synopsis. Wyoming, however, missed the heavy winter storm activity, with precipitation in December and February near normal and in January below normal. Unfortunately this was not sufficient to alter drought conditions there, and by the end of the reporting period, the entire center and the eastern regions of the state were still characterized by extreme drought, transitioning through severe and moderate drought in the northern, western, and southern portions of the state. As a whole, Colorado's winter temperatures ranked below normal, while Wyoming's ended up near normal.

Open water was more limited than usual throughout much of the Region this season, producing a concentrating effect on wintering birds utilizing the remaining ice-free areas. Hybrid ducks were found in a pleasing spectrum of combinations, six unusual wintering sandpiper species were noted, and the winter gull tally reached a respectable 12 species. A Barn Owl managed to winter in northern Wyoming about 40 km south of the Montana border, and it was a grand season for wintering thrushes, both in number and variety.

Abbreviations: Adams S. Platte (South Platte R. between 70th & 104th, Adams); Bonny (Bonny Res., Yuma); Cherry Creek (Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe); Chico (Chico Basin Ranch, El Paso/Pueblo; particular county noted in text); John Martin (John Martin Res., Bent); Valmont (Valmont Res. complex, Boulder). "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. Because most rarities are seen by multiple observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird(s) are noted.

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Two Greater White-fronted Geese just s. of Durango, La Plata 2 Jan and 4 there on 23 Feb (JBy, SA) provided relatively rare sw. Colorado records. A party wandering around n. Colorado trying to study Cackling Geese 27 Jan found at least 10 apparent *taverneri* at and near Pierce, Weld (SM, TL, B. Tweit); though specimen records exist for the state, little is known of the taxon's occurrence here. Swan

reports included those of presumed returning Trumpeters: lack of open water made these either more difficult to find than in past years (as in Larimer) or simply pushed others out of the area for the winter (as in Chaffee). Single ad. Trumpeter Swans in Boulder 8-26 Feb (L. Andes-George, ph. BS) and at John Martin 26 Feb (DN) may have been wandering winterers or spring migrants. Single ad. and imm. Tundra Swans at Pueblo 16 Jan (BKP et al.) provided not only the sole solid seasonal report but one difficult to interpret, due to the apparently short mid-season stay. Wood Ducks are rare in winter in the Region away from the Pueblo and Grand Junction areas, so 4 at Lochbuie, Weld 31 Dec (LS) and 10 at Ft. Collins through the winter were certainly of interest. Last winter's male Eurasian Wigeon returned to the Rocky Ford, Otero area 13 Dec (SO), but the mid-month cold snap probably kicked it out after the 23rd. A very late male Blue-winged Teal was on the Adams S. Platte 1 Jan (TF), as was the first Cinnamon Teal of



Most Long-tailed Ducks that make it to Colorado are in immature or female plumages. Especially rare in the state (and correspondingly delightful to local birders) are individuals in adult male plumage, as this one found 29 January 2007 (here) on the South Platte River in Adams County. Photograph by Tony Leukering.

the "spring," found right about on time 7 Feb (P. Hicks).

The most interesting of the six reports of Greater Scaup was of a single at Sands L., Chaffee 2 Jan (TL) in the mts., where the species is not at all common. Surf Scoters are Regionally rare in winter, but both individuals found graced the two most likely locales: John Martin 13-14 Dec (DN, ph. TL) and Pueblo Res. 4 Jan+ (P. Hurtado, m.ob.). Long-tailed Ducks made up for their poor fall showing by occurring this winter in what was probably unprecedented numbers. We received at least eight reports of some 12 individuals. An ad. male on the Adams S. Platte 29 Jan-4 Feb (SM, ph. TL, ph. BS) may or may not have been the same individual that brightened Cherry Creek earlier in the winter (see fall report); the two sites are at opposite ends of the Denver Urban C.B.C. circle. Per-

SA Careful scrutiny of the few good waterfowl concentrations enabled many to study hybrid ducks this season. As one might expect, all reported hybrid ducks were males and all identifications tentative. A Gadwall × Northern Shoveler along the Adams S. Platte 24 Nov–17 Feb (ph. T. Deiningner, ph. P. Pratt) was the first of the hybrid reports, followed by an equally striking goldeneye × Hooded Merganser below the Pueblo Res. dam, Pueblo 23 Dec–9 Feb (BKP). On 20 Jan, a Northern Pintail × Green-winged Teal was found near Ft. Collins (J. Hardin, ph. RH), and birders looking unsuccessfully for it on 27 Jan found an American Wigeon × Mallard (TL, ph. SM). A male Ring-necked Duck × Lesser Scaup on the Adams S. Platte was the hybrid of the day 29 Jan (ph. SM). The show continued in Feb, with Henwood finding the following on Bear Cr., Jefferson: American Wigeon × Northern Pintail 7 Feb, Mallard × Northern Pintail 9–21 Feb, and Mallard × American Black Duck 27 Feb–5 Mar. Finally, a few spring reports are, perhaps, more easily included here than in the appropriate season's report. A Blue-winged Teal × Cinnamon Teal returned to Walden Ponds, Boulder 17 Mar (ph. BS) for at least its 5th spring; a Brewer's Duck (Gadwall × Mallard) was at N. Poudre Res. #3, Larimer 1 Apr (TL), and an imm. Bufflehead × Hooded Merganser was a rare find at Saratoga, Carbon, WY 14 Apr (F. Bergquist).

haps more interesting was a West Slope individual that played hide-and-seek with birders in the Roaring Fork valley in Garfield and Eagle 9–16 Dec (L. Williams, m.ob.).

With the large loon flight of the fall, Pacific Loons tarried into early winter in Colorado in larger-than-typical numbers (five reports of 7 birds); the last was at Lathrop S.P., Huerfano 17 Dec (LS). Of the 4 single Colorado Red-necked Grebes, one lasted until 15 Jan, at Pueblo Res. (BKP). Just a decade ago, the 299 Eared Grebes attempting to winter on Pueblo Res. would have been considered an astronomical number; now, it's just higher than average. Rough-legged Hawks were exceedingly scarce, with some observers not tallying the species this winter. A juv. gray Gyrfalcon seen in Jackson 5 Nov (A. Spencer et al.) was, presumably, the same bird recorded on the North Park C.B.C. in the same area 24 Dec (NK; p.a.). The largest tally of late-migrating Sandhill Cranes was of >700 heading southward over Ouray, Ouray 12 Dec (S. Hirshman).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ROADRUNNER

For this Region, the six species of sandpiper reported this season was a large number. Included among these were five reports of Greater Yellowlegs, with one wintering at Walden Ponds (A. Brown), four of Spotted Sandpiper—with one spending its 2nd winter at Valco Ponds S.W.A., Pueblo and being joined there by another early in the season (BKP)—three of Least Sandpiper (with one at Valco Ponds 16–26 Dec [ph. BKP]), plus a late Baird's Sandpiper at Lake Cheraw, Otero 5 Dec (SO). On the last day of the season, an American Avocet appeared at Highline S.P., Mesa (R. Lambeth), shattering the West Slope arrival record by nearly a month.

After mid-Dec and the hard freeze that locked up most water for the winter, Valmont and Pueblo Res. became the reliable gull spots, accounting for 11 of the 12 species of

gull reported during the season; only the juv. Black-legged Kittiwake 7–16 Dec at Cherry Creek (ph. GW) was not recorded at either site. Two Mew Gulls (an ad. and a first-cycle) were in Pueblo, being most reliable at Pueblo Res. 11–20 Dec (RM, BKP). A first-cycle pale-winged gull seen a few times, but never really well, at Valmont 19 Dec–15 Jan (TF) may have been an Iceland Gull. A darker first-cycle Iceland spent 11 Jan–25 Feb at Pueblo Res. (ph. BKP, †SM, m.ob.). Five was the high count of Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Pueblo Res., including 2 first-cycle birds (BKP, TL); 4 were at L. Loveland, Larimer in the first half of Dec (CW et al.). A first-cycle Glaucous-winged Gull at Pueblo Res. 1–8 Dec (BKP) was followed there by what was

with the high count being of 3 (2 first-cycles, one second-cycle) at L. Loveland 7–23 Dec (J. LaFleur). Pueblo Res. held 2–3 Great Black-backed Gulls, and others were at L. Loveland 4–18 Dec (ad.; CW) and at Valmont 20–30 Jan (ad. and first-cycle; TF), the latter of which may have accounted for the report of a similar-aged individual at nearby Erie Res., Boulder 10 Feb (TF).

Band-tailed Pigeons have been wintering in Colorado recently, and this year was no exception, with a single s. of Rye, Pueblo 30 Dec (P. O'Brien) and a flock of >15 all winter at the Green Mountain Falls, El Paso/Teller feeder that has been reliable for the species for over a decade (R. Bunn). We received eight reports of White-winged Dove, with the farthest n. being the single at Loveland, Larimer 15 Dec (ph. TL, MP), the farthest w. being the 2 at Cortez, Montezuma 6 Jan (D. & M. Hill), and the largest number being the 82 wintering in Pueblo (J. Witters, m.ob.). Unlike the rapidly colonizing Eurasian Collared-Dove and White-winged Dove, Colorado's Inca Doves still seem to be stuck in Lamar, Prowers and Rocky Ford, and those groups do not seem to be increasing in size. A Greater Roadrunner sw. of Cortez 26 Dec (JBy, BB) may provide one of very few good West Slope records (p.a.).

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

As Wyoming's winter weather is typically less clement than that of Colorado, Barn Owls are



Great Black-backed Gulls increased their profile in Colorado with another strong showing this winter. Among the visitors was this adult (far right) in Loveland, Larimer County, present 4–18 (here 15) December 2006. Also illustrated in this photograph are Lesser Black-backed, Thayer's, California, and Herring Gulls. Photograph by Tony Leukering.

probably a first-cycle Glaucous-winged hybrid 11 Dec (BKP). A first-cycle Glaucous-winged at Valmont 19 Dec (TF) may have been seen again there on 15 Jan. A third-cycle Glaucous-winged hybrid was at Pueblo Res. 27 Dec (J. Drummond), and another imm. Glaucous-winged was at Big Johnson Res., El Paso 1 Jan (BM). At least 15 Glaucous Gulls were present in Colorado this winter, one of the best winter showings ever,

not known to be regular in the state at that season. Thus, in an atypically brutal winter, one at Ucross, Sheridan 8 Jan (ph. E. Scott) seems even more remarkable, particularly considering that the site is only some 40 km from the Montana border! In the annual e. Colorado sapsucker show, Red-naped, usually the true rarity in winter, outnumbered Williamson's 2:1. The Red-naped were an ad. female at Cañon City 12 Dec–18 Feb (S.



In Colorado, the larid-friendly waters of Cherry Creek Reservoir, Arapahoe County, are proving to be one of the most reliable spots in the state for Black-legged Kittiwake. On the heels of another from November 2006, this juvenile graced the lake 7-16 (here 7) December. Photograph by Glenn Walbek.

Moss) and an ad. male at Beulah, Pueblo 1 Jan (M. Yeager); the Williamson's, an ad. male, graced Colorado City, Pueblo 23 Dec (DS). Another Red-naped (age and sex unreported) was at Nucla 1-7 Dec (CD, BW) on the West Slope, where not quite as seasonally rare. A whopping 14 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found this winter, with 10 being in the sapsucker winter meccas of Fremont and Pueblo (m.ob.). It is still uncertain if the concentration in this two-county area is due to true attractiveness to *Sphyrapicus* or to the obsession of a few of the local birders; we would argue for the latter.

Lingering Say's Phoebe's were noted around the Pueblo Res. area, with 6-7 present during the first half of Dec, with at least some staying into Jan. Surprisingly, one tried to survive far n. on the Jefferson/Denver line, where present 16 Dec-23 Jan (K. Stecher, T. Jones); early spring migrants were first noted in Pueblo 19 Feb (BKP). Chihuahan Ravens are widespread breeders and rare and local winterers in the Region only in se. Colorado; reports farther n. are always met with skepticism, especially considering the difficulties of raven identification. The Boulder area has a recent intriguing history of claims of Chihuahan Ravens, and this winter observers reported up to 6 there 15 Jan-20 Feb (ph. BS, TF et al.). Unprecedented, a Barn Swallow was near Durango, La Plata 30 Dec (R. & H. Morris, L. Flores). Bushtits moved somewhat farther eastward and northward of the Front Range of Colorado, with 4 at Chico, El Paso furnishing a rare ranch record (BKP), as well as groups of birds in Denver and in Arapahoe.

Westerly by a few counties was the White-

breasted Nuthatch (nominat subspecies) in Pueblo 14 Dec (DS); and late was a Rock Wren at Red Rocks Park, Jefferson 16 Dec (B. & L. Brown). In Prowers, the resident Carolina Wren continued at Lamar through the season (DAL, m.ob.); one at Cañon City through the season was more unusual (RM, m.ob.). Colorado is generally between the migration and wintering ranges of the e. and w. populations of Winter Wren, but wintering numbers of both types are apparently on the increase; 11 birds were reported from Boulder, El Paso, Fremont, Pueblo, Otero, and Bent this winter. Very rare in winter away from Grand Junction, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at John Martin 14 Dec (DN).

Bluebirds were present in above-average numbers along the Region's Front Range, with Easterns particularly more common, even as far n. as Larimer (m.ob.). In Wyoming, 2 Easterns were at Casper, Natrona 29 Jan and apparently continued for a bit afterward (H. Scott, CM); this is the 3rd consecutive winter that the species was present in cen. Wyoming. Western and Mountain Bluebirds were noted n. of normal, with as many as 25 Westerns tallied on the Boulder C.B.C. 17 Dec (TF; some lingering through 12 Jan [D. Waltman]) and with groups of up to 36 Mountains present during the period in Douglas, Boulder, and Larimer. A Mountain Bluebird at Bonny 6 Jan (GW) represented a very rare winter ne. Colorado record. Hermit Thrushes winter only rarely in Col-

orado, and usually only in the Grand Junction area; thus, the report of 8 during the winter was interesting, with the most notable being singles (probably *faxonii*) at Bonny 5-6 Jan (BS) and Boulder 15 Jan (TF); one at Rocky Ford, Otero 9 Jan (SO); one in the sw. near Bondad, La Plata 20 Jan (K. & L. Stransky); and an apparent western-subspecies individual in Boulder 20 Feb (TF). In an excellent winter for Varied Thrushes, at least 5 were located, all males: at Crow Valley Campground, Weld 1-19 Dec (ph. DAL); at Fort Collins, Larimer 21 Dec-2 Jan (B. Blinderman, ph. TL) and possibly the same bird 29-31 Jan (A. & J. Cringan); on the Penrose C.B.C. near Florence, Fremont 5-6 Jan (ph. SO); in Boulder 21-23 Jan (D. Sparr); and at Durango 25 Jan (J. Foster, H&RM).

MIMIDS THROUGH FINCHES

Rare in winter were a Gray Catbird at Rockvale, Fremont 5 Jan (DN) and a Northern Mockingbird in Casper 10 Dec (K. Keffer et al.). A Brown Thrasher in Fremont, Wyoming 30 Dec was very far n. (BH); no fewer than 8 noted in Colorado was surprising, particularly the 3 in Boulder, a location where the species is rare during any season, 3 Dec-20 Jan (TF et al.). The only notable report of Bo-



Barn Owls are not especially noted for their winter hardiness, underscoring the significance of this individual found on 8 January 2007 in frosty Ucross, Sheridan County, Wyoming, only about 40 km south of the Montana border. Photograph by Ernesto Scott.

hemian Waxwing was of the single at La Veta, Huerfano 24 Dec (DS). Five species of war-



Colorado's breeding Fox Sparrows, of the Slate-colored group, generally depart the state's mountains in early autumn and proceed to wintering areas without delay—and are thus extremely rarely encountered on the plains, even in migration. This individual, found on the Bonny Christmas Bird County in Yuma County 5 January 2007 was doubly extraordinary for its location (within 10 km of Kansas) and date. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

blers were detected during the winter period in Colorado. A surprising 3 Orange-crowned Warblers lingered into the winter period: a fall holdout in Pueblo 1 Dec (JK), one in Cañon City 3 Dec (RM), and, most surprisingly, one in Denver West, *Jefferson* 7 Jan (J&KS). Two Nashville Warblers tarried in Pueblo 1-6 Dec (BKP, JK et al.), with one present through 16 Dec. Four Yellow-rumped Warblers at Riverton 21-30 Dec (BH) were notable; quite northerly was a single Myrtle at Casper 16 Dec (CM) An incredible 5 Pine Warblers were noted this winter, only 2, though, being seen after the first week of Dec: the Denver West winterer back for its 3rd winter (seen 7 Jan [J&KS]) and an individual in Longmont, *Boulder* 24 Jan (BS).

Extremely rare in winter in the Region, Chipping Sparrows were reported but not documented in Lamar 30 Dec (one; D. Russell) and sw. of Cortez, *Montezuma* 14 Jan (3; SA). As Lark Buntings winter in the Region only in the extreme se. corner of Colorado, very unusual was one s. of Vineland, *Pueblo* 31 Dec (DS). Winter Savannah Sparrows included singles at Pueblo Res. 9-21 Dec (NK, CW) and one at Cañon City 4 Feb (MP). Up to 4 Fox Sparrows were reported during the period, with one of unreported subspecies at Montrose, *Montrose* 5 Jan–28 Feb (D. Sinton, M. Siders) and another such bird at Durango

19 Feb (H&RM, J. Bregar). The Region's breeding Slate-colored Fox Sparrows are very rare out of the mts. (at least in Colorado) and rare in winter, so the individual at Bonny 5 Jan (GW, ph. BS) was of more-than-passing interest. A Red Fox Sparrow was in Colorado Springs, *El Paso* 29 Dec (D. Elwonger). Very rare in sw. Colorado, a Swamp Sparrow was at Yucca House, *Montezuma* 24-25 Jan (SA, P. Derven, JBy). The westernmost White-throated Sparrow was in Grand Junction 8 Dec–12 Feb (m.ob.), and 3 Harris's Sparrows made it w. of the Great Divide: one in *Garfield* 16 Dec (A. Levantin) and 2 at Cortez 17-18 Jan (SA, JBy, BB). A potential first for Colorado was the White-crowned Sparrow of nominate subspecies banded at Barr L., *Adams* and present 30 Nov–17 Mar (TL, S. Nicely). Three Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported, with the returning *Delta* bird back for its 4th year 1-26 Dec (D. Galinat), one in n. *Boulder* 16 Dec–1 Jan (P. Opler, ph. BS), and one in Cañon City 2 Feb+ (RM), the last establishing a first for *Fremont*. Late were the 35 McCown's Longspurs near Las Animas, *Bent* 7 Dec (SO) and even more unusual the male e. of Meeker, *Rio Blanco* 6 Dec (D. Hilkey). Snow Buntings made a modest appearance in Colorado this winter, with 12 in w. *Adams* 23 Dec (A. Boyce) and singles s. to Chico, *Pueblo* 4 Jan (BKP, BM, CW) and

Pueblo Res. 28 Jan (TL, BKP).

Well w. of usual, single male Northern Cardinals were at Colorado Springs (K. Pals, m.ob.) throughout the period and into spring and at Colorado City, *Pueblo* mid-Dec–3 Jan (M. Baker). After a number of winters of lackluster Rusty Blackbird totals, the 25 reported this year (from *Bent*, *Pueblo*, *Douglas*, and *Jefferson*) made a refreshing change, with a good count of 9 at Florence 5 Jan (MP, BM, CW). Common Grackles are fairly rare in winter in Colorado, especially on the West Slope, so the 2 at Ridgway, *Ouray* 8 Jan (CD, BW) were out of place but not nearly so lost as the single at 2840 m in Silverton, *San Juan* on the same date (C. Schultz). Rare in extreme se. Colorado, a Cassin's Finch was at Lamar 8 Jan (J. Thompson). The only Common Redpolls reported from Colorado were one at Bonny 6 Jan (GW) and one unusually far s. at Pueblo Res. 14 Jan (BKP). Lesser Goldfinches have only recently begun wintering in the Region and have only recently colonized Wyoming as a breeder.

Thus, the wintering individual in Cheyenne, *Laramie* (ph. C. Eppler) is doubly of interest. The 8 present throughout the period in *Carbondale*, *Garfield* (D. Filby) were unusual because of the montane location.

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