

## NEW RECORDS AND IMPORTANT RANGE EXTENSIONS OF COLORADO BIRDS.

BY MERRITT CARY, U. S. BIOLOGICAL SURVEY.

THE notes relative to distribution of Colorado birds gathered for the Biological Survey during the field seasons of 1905-06-07, in connection with work on the life zones of that State, contain important geographical or vertical extensions of the known ranges of at least 34 species and subspecies. Moreover, two other species have been found for the first time within the State.

At the request of Dr. C. Hart Merriam, chief of the Biological Survey, these are now placed on record.

**Mergus serrator.** RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.—A mounted specimen was seen in the Estes drug store at La Veta in May, 1907. Mr. E. W. Scott, the owner, stated that it had been shot on a reservoir near the town.

**Egretta candidissima.** SNOWY HERON.—Although occasionally reported from both sides of the mountains, the following two specimens seem worth recording. While in the White River region in 1906 I learned on reliable authority that a Snowy Heron had been killed near White River P. O. the previous summer, being afterward mounted at Meeker. A mounted specimen seen in the Estes drug store at La Veta in May, 1907, is said to have been killed in that vicinity. The altitude of La Veta, 7000 feet, is exceptionally high for this species.

**Helodromas solitarius cinnamomeus.** WESTERN SOLITARY SANDPIPER.—A pair seen on Deer Creek, 10 miles north of Kremmling, Middle Park, July 13, 1905, may have been on their breeding grounds.

**Bartramia longicauda.** BARTRAMIAN SANDPIPER.—This plover is possibly of more general occurrence in western Colorado than has been supposed. Migrating birds were heard at our camp on Bear River, south of Lay, Routt County, the night of August 6, 1905, and others were heard in migration at Meeker on several occasions between August 9 and 14, usually after nightfall. Two were also seen on a meadow near Meeker, August 12.

A lone Bartramian Sandpiper seen August 9, 1907, on a timothy stubble at the head of Smith Fork, in the West Elk Mountains, apparently had become separated from a flock of migrating birds, as it was bewildered, and remarkably tame. The altitude was unusual for *Bartramia*, being over 7000 feet, while the record is the most southwestern for the State.

**Lophortyx californicus.** CALIFORNIA PARTRIDGE.—From Grand Junction, where first introduced, this quail has spread up the Gunnison Valley at least to Hotchkiss, where it was found in abundance in August, 1907.



Also introduced successfully at Mancos, and spreading to quite an extent in Montezuma County. One was seen among the piñons two miles south of Dolores, June 25, 1907, by Mr. R. S. Philips of the U. S. Forest Service.

**Tympanuchus pallidicinctus.** LESSER PRAIRIE HEN.—The few Prairie Chickens reported in the sandhills of southeastern Baca County, between Springfield and the Cimarron River, should be *pallidicinctus*. Unfortunately, while in this region in November, 1907, I was unable to secure specimens.

**Pediocetes phasianellus columbianus.** COLUMBIAN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE.—A specimen of *columbianus* taken near Hahn's Peak in August, 1906, proves quite conclusively the identity of the Sharp-tailed Grouse of northwestern Colorado, and suggests also the probability that all the grouse west of the Continental Divide are this form rather than *campestris*. These grouse were tolerably common in the sage parks between Hahn's Peak and Slater, in both Canadian and Transition zones. Several family parties were encountered, the young being nearly two-thirds grown on August 15.

In 1907, Sharp-tailed Grouse were reported tolerably common on both the northern and southern slopes of the San Miguel Mountains, and in the Lone Mesa region of Dolores County, chiefly above the piñon belt. I flushed one at 9000 feet in the open, park-like country three miles southeast of Lone Mesa, June 27, and another in the oak country eight miles south of Norwood, San Miguel County, July 27. On the slopes of Lone Cone the breeding range is in the partially open oak and aspen country between 8000 and 9500 feet. According to Mr. C. H. Smith of Coventry, it is only during the severest winter months that Sharp-tailed Grouse occur as low as 6500 feet. These grouse were also reported the same year from the upper part of the yellow pine belt near Pagosa Springs, and a very few from the scattered sage parks lying between the McElmo Cañon, Montezuma County, and the Abajo Mountains, Utah.

The known southwestern range of *columbianus* is thus considerably extended.

**Otus flammeola.** FLAMMULATED SCREECH OWL.—A mounted specimen of this rare little owl was seen in a taxidermist's establishment at Glenwood Springs in August, 1905, but its source could not be ascertained.

**Geococcyx californianus.** ROAD-RUNNER.—Abundant in the cedar country of northwestern Baca County, a male specimen being collected at Gaume's Ranch in November, 1907. The northeastern limit of range is at the Rhinehart Stage Station, 22 miles south of Lamar on the Lamar-Springfield stage line, at which point Road-runners are said to be seen occasionally.

**Aëronautus melanoleucus.** WHITE-THROATED SWIFT.—Henderson mentions the occurrence of this species at Pawnee Buttes, in northeastern Weld County, which is the most northeastern record for Colorado. I have, however, found it in abundance at Sheep Mountain, Big Bad Lands, South Dakota, September 2, 1905, apparently at the limit of its dispersion to the northeast.



**Tyrannus tyrannus.** KINGBIRD.—Not uncommon in northwestern Colorado, at least during migration. Noted as follows: Meeker, early August, 1905; Dixon, Wyoming, August 22, 1906; Snake River, 20 miles west of Baggs Crossing, August 22 to 27, 1906; 7 miles west of Rifle, August 14, 1907; Edwards Sheep Camp, east of Sunny Peak, Routt County, August 28, 1906. This last is the most western record in Colorado.

**Aphelocoma woodhousei.** WOODHOUSE JAY.—Troops of Woodhouse Jays were often encountered in the dense growth of cedars (*Juniperus monosperma*) near Gaume's Ranch, in extreme northwestern Baca County, November 26 to 29, 1907, and it seems likely that they winter in that region. This is the most eastern Colorado record.

**Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus.** PIÑON JAY.—Tolerably common in the rough cedar country of northwestern Baca County, November 26 to 29, 1907. Not known to breed, and probably present only as a winter resident.

**Astragalinus psaltria.** ARKANSAS GOLDFINCH.—North in western Colorado to Meeker and Steamboat Springs, at which localities it was common early in August, 1905.

**Junco aikenii.** WHITE-WINGED JUNCO.—Although the commonest junco in the mountains in winter, *aikenii* has not been found in Colorado, heretofore, in the breeding season. During the first few days of June, 1905, I saw several of these juncos in the foothills a few miles west of Boulder, at altitudes varying from 6000 to 7000 feet. On June 11, Mr. Walter Blanchard of Boulder showed me a nest containing young, from which the female was flushed and satisfactorily identified, though unfortunately not secured. This was in the upper part of the yellow pine belt a mile north-east of Magnolia, at an elevation of approximately 7000 feet.

In fall migration *aikenii* extends eastward in the rough cedar country of southeastern Colorado nearly to the Kansas line, a large flock being seen November 27, 1907, at Gaume's Ranch, in Shell Rock Cañon, northwestern Baca County.

**Junco hyemalis montanus.** MONTANA JUNCO.—In Colorado this is one of the most widely distributed juncos in winter. An extreme eastern record is Gaume's Ranch, northwestern Baca County, where several were seen and one collected on November 27, 1907.

**Melospiza georgiana.** SWAMP SPARROW.—One taken October 23, 1907, on the Medano Springs Ranch, in the San Luis Valley, 15 miles northeast of Mosca, is the first record west of the mountains, and the second time the Swamp Sparrow has been found in the State. The specimen was caught in a trap set for mice on the edge of a tulé marsh.

**Pipilo fuscus mesoleucus.** CAÑON TOWHEE.—Occurs commonly in Upper Sonoran zone in all of the region lying south of the Arkansas River and east of the Sangre de Cristo Range, except on the treeless plains of southern Prowers and eastern Baca counties. Very abundant in Shell Rock Cañon, northwestern Baca County, November 26 to 29, 1907, two specimens being collected at Gaume's Ranch; also noted at Caddoa Station,



in the Arkansas Valley west of Lamar, November 30. Gaume's Ranch is very near the eastern limit of its dispersion in Colorado, while Caddoa represents the extreme northeastern limit of *mesoleucus* in the United States.

**Calamospiza melanocorys.** LARK BUNTING.—A belated migrant was noted a few miles east of Saguache, in the San Luis Valley, November 7, 1907.

**Progne subis.** PURPLE MARTIN.—Unusually high records for the martin are: White River Plateau (25 miles southeast of Meeker) between 8000 and 9000 feet—several seen the middle of August, 1905; and Uncompahgre Butte, on the Uncompahgre Plateau—one noted at 9000 feet, July 16, 1907.

**Lanius borealis.** NORTHERN SHRIKE.—One seen from a Santa Fé train at Earl, Las Animas County, November 25, 1907, and several a few days later at Gaume's Ranch, in the northwest corner of Baca County. These localities indicate a southward dispersion in winter nearly if not quite to the southern line of the State.

**Lanivireo solitarius cassini.** CASSIN VIREO.—A specimen was collected September 4, 1906, at Douglas Spring, in the cedar belt at the north base of the Escalante Hills, western Routt County, and two more were heard at the same locality on September 6. A large vireo, presumably *cassini*, was also seen among the piñons at Coventry, Montrose County, in July, 1907.

**Dendroica graciae.** GRACE WARBLER.—Tolerably common in the yellow pine forests of Archuleta County, on the headwaters of the San Juan River, at about 7000 feet, a specimen being taken at Pagosa Springs, May 28, 1907. A very active warbler, almost continually in motion, appearing in nervous haste to catch the small insects which infest the terminal bunches of pine needles.

**Dendroica nigrescens.** BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER.—This warbler extends north in the cedar and piñon country of western Colorado to the Escalante Hills, western Routt County, where several were seen at Douglas Spring, September 4 to 8, 1906. In 1907—Mesa Verde, Montezuma County (7000 feet), common June 14; Sinbad Valley, southwestern Mesa County, common in July; Coventry, a few during July and an immature specimen collected July 25.

**Dendroica townsendi.** TOWNSEND WARBLER.—A male shot August 24, 1906, on Snake River, 20 miles west of Baggs Crossing, was on its southward migration with a large company of Pileolated and Yellow Warblers.

**Geothlypis trichas occidentalis.** WESTERN YELLOW-THROAT.—One was seen July 12, 1905, in a willow copse along Grand River, 5 miles east of Sulphur Springs, Middle Park. The elevation, nearly 8000 feet, is exceptionally high for the Yellow-throat.

**Setophaga ruticilla.** REDSTART.—A few migrating individuals were noted in a large company of Pileolated Warblers on the lower Snake River, 20 miles west of Baggs Crossing, August 25 to 27, 1906.



**Catherpes mexicanus conspersus.** CAÑON WREN.—Noted at various points in western Colorado in 1906–07, chiefly south of the Grand River Valley. North (sparingly) to the lower White River Valley, indicated by one which was heard among the rock ledges 20 miles east of Rangely, September 12, 1906. The most eastern Colorado record for the cañon wren is Gaume's Ranch, northwest Baca County, where a specimen was collected in Shell Rock Cañon, November 27, 1907. Mr. E. J. Gaume states that this wren is a regular breeder in the cliffs near his ranch. The above locality is also important as marking the eastern limit of *conspersus* north of Texas.

**Thryomanes bewicki bairdi.** BAIRD WREN.—A not uncommon summer resident in the piñon and cedar country of western Colorado. The northernmost record for the State is Elk Springs, on the piñon divide eight miles south of Lily, Routt County, where one was seen September 11, 1906. Two others were noted and one collected southwest of Rangely, Rio Blanco County, on September 17.

**Thryomanes bewicki cryptus.** TEXAN WREN.—A Bewick Wren was seen among the cedars on the south rim of Shell Rock Cañon, near Gaume's Ranch, Baca County, November 27, 1907. Though the specimen was not secured, it undoubtedly belonged to this recently separated plains race, rather than to *bairdi* of the mountain region, and is thus the first Colorado record for *cryptus*.

**Cistothorus stellaris.** SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN.—One shot October 23, 1907, in a rank growth of marsh grass on the Medano Springs Ranch, 15 miles northeast of Mosca, is not only the first record for *stellaris* in the San Luis Valley, and west of the mountains, but also for the State. Another individual was seen in a neighboring tulé marsh the following day, in company with a large number of tulé wrens. Although the San Luis Valley is far removed from the known range of *stellaris*, it seems not unlikely that thorough work in the tulé marshes lying along the west base of the Sangre de Cristo Range may reveal it as an occasional summer resident.

**Sitta pygmæa.** PYGMY NUTHATCH.—Noted July 14, 1907, among the yellow pines at the head of Dominguez Creek, on the northern end of the Uncompahgre Plateau,—altitude about 8000 feet. The first Mesa County record for *pygmæa*.

**Bæolophus inornatus griseus.** GRAY TITMOUSE.—At a number of points in the Upper Sonoran zone of western Colorado in 1906–07, chiefly below 7000 feet. North to the Escalante Hills of Routt County, where common September 4 to 8, 1906 — a specimen being taken September 4.

**Psaltiriparus plumbeus.** LEAD-COLORED BUSH-TIT.—The following localities indicate a wide distribution in the cedar and piñon country of western and southwestern Colorado: Escalante Hills, flock of 30 near Douglas Spring, September 4, 1906, two collected; Coventry, small flock, July, 1907; Mesa Verde, 25 miles southwest of Mancos, small flock, June 14, 1907, at 7000 feet; Arboles, small flock, June 8, 1907.

**Poliophtila cærulea obscura.** WESTERN GNATCATCHER.—Not known



from north of Grand Junction, and breeding only in the hottest desert valleys. Tolerably common and one taken among the cedars in dry gulches along the McElmo Cañon, Montezuma County, in June, 1907, and again in July among oak thickets in Sinbad Valley and along Dolores River, in southwestern Mesa County. One also seen May 21, 1907, at Walsenburg, east of the mountains.

**Myadestes townsendi.** TOWNSEND SOLITAIRE.—A nest containing four partially incubated eggs, found July 27, 1906, at 6200 feet in the foothills a few miles southwest of Arkins, Larimer County, was nearly 2000 feet lower than the normal breeding range of the Solitaire in Colorado. The writer has, however, found this species breeding at considerably below 5000 feet in the Pine Ridge region of northwest Nebraska.<sup>1</sup>

Solitaires were abundant in the cedar country of northwest Baca County, November 26 to 29, 1907, where they doubtless winter.

**Sialia mexicana bairdi.** CHESTNUT-BACKED BLUEBIRD.—One seen in July, 1907, near Uncompahgre Butte, on the Uncompahgre Plateau, at 9000 feet, is the first record of *bairdi* in Mesa County.

**Sialia currucoides.** MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD.—Common at Springfield and Gaume's Ranch, Baca County, November 25 to 29, 1907, where reported wintering.

---

Arch 26 (2): 185-186, 1909

**A Recent Instance of the Occurrence of the White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) in Massachusetts.**—I have an adult male White Pelican, in full nuptial plumage with well-developed 'centre-board,' which Dr. Lombard C. Jones of Malden, Massachusetts, was kind enough to secure for me some four years ago, soon after it had been skinned and mounted by Robert Bazin, a Malden taxidermist. It was taken at Sandwich, Massachusetts, possibly on the 12th, but almost certainly on the 13th, of May, 1905, by George W. Kuntz (or Kounze) of Sandwich. He gave it to Eugene Haines (also of Sandwich and familiarly known to Dr. Jones) who sent it in the flesh to Dr. Jones by whom it was received on May 17 and immediately placed in the hands of the taxidermist already mentioned. I bought it a week or two later from Mr. Haines, through Dr. Jones, and it was deposited in my collection on May 31, while the skin was still 'green' and enshrouded in its winding of cotton thread. Mr. Haines reported that Mr. Kuntz (or Kounze) had found the bird lying dead among some beach grass whence he traced its large footprints backward across the beach to the water's edge; here it must either have alighted or — as is perhaps more probable —

---

<sup>1</sup> See Proc. Nebr. Ornith. Union, II, 1901, 79; also *ibid.*, III, 1902, 73.



Cary, Merritt. 1909. "New Records and Important Range Extensions of Colorado Birds." *The Auk* 26, 180–185. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4070289>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/55092>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.2307/4070289>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/87246>

**Holding Institution**

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

**Sponsored by**

Smithsonian

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.