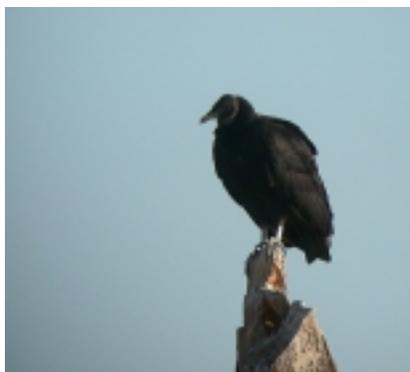


Black Vulture first sighted in Colorado at John Martin Dam

by Duane Nelson
Contract Biologist

The Black Vulture, a sedentary species related to the ubiquitous Turkey Vulture, is found in the United States in Southern Arizona, and from Central Texas throughout the southeast and as far north as southern New York and Connecticut. In “Colorado Birds” (Andrews and Righter, 1992), it states that Black Vultures remain as “hypothetical” in occurrence in Colorado. There have been previous reports, but with no photographs, multiple-observer sightings or adequate documentation. That is, until now.

At 12:40 p.m. on August 13, Duane Nelson, a contractor endangered species biologist with



Although there had been rumored sightings of the black vulture in Colorado, none had been confirmed until now.

the Corps spotted a Black Vulture. The Black Vulture first landed on a metal railing near the south tower of John Martin Dam, and later flew into the structure of the dam itself. The

Vulture remained to roost with Turkey Vultures northeast of Lake Hasty overnight, and into the morning on August 13.

A total of seven additional birdwatchers from as far away as Boulder and Pueblo saw the bird late on August 13 and through 9 a.m. on August 14. However, the same forces that caused it to appear unpredictably caused it to leave its Turkey Vulture cohorts, and it was gone by mid-morning, disappointing many people who traveled from all over Colorado in hopes of catching a glimpse of this rare sight.

Sandy Rayl appointed chief of the Colorado Service Office

Sandy Rayl has been appointed to head the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Colorado Service Office in Denver. The Colorado Office was established at the request of the State of Colorado to improve local coordination and communication with the Corps of Engineers in responding to water resource needs within the state.

Rayl began working for the Corps in 1983, when she was appointed as an archeologist for the Albuquerque District. She has also worked for the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs as an archeologist. Most recently she has worked for the Corps’ Albuquerque District as a project manager and planner. She managed the district’s Acequia Rehabilitation program, Albuquerque’s Southwest

Valley flood damage reduction feasibility study and the Planning Assistance to the States program.

Rayl holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Anthropology and Spanish from the University of Arizona at Tucson, and a Master’s Degree in Anthropology from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

Four Corps districts perform work in Colorado: Albuquerque, Sacramento, Omaha, and Kansas City. Denver’s Colorado Service Office is designed to assure seamless organizational continuity by providing the first level of interface for the State and the Corps and making sure the work of all four districts is coordinated properly and effectively.