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Book Review [of *Wild Birding Colorado: The Big Year of 2010*]

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Book Review

Wild Birding Colorado: The Big Year of 2010 by Cole Wild
in collaboration with Nick Komar

by Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

Nebraska birders might remember seeing reports posted to NEBirds a few years back by Cole Wild, a native Coloradan whose mother's family is from Nebraska. Cole took up birding at age 19, spurred by an earlier high school environmental science class that required identification of 100 species of birds. As with many of us, a brightly-plumaged bird, in this case a Western Tanager, resulted in "the birdwatching gene" in Cole suddenly being "switched to the ON position". Soon after, Cole went on a "what the heck, I'll try it" field trip to see a Kelp Gull at Loveland Reservoir in November 2003, even though he had little idea what a Kelp Gull was and didn't know any Colorado birders. Several of Colorado's top birders were on the field trip, and later that day asked Cole to join them for additional birding, with the result that Cole was hooked.

After a few years of being mentored by other top Colorado birders, Cole felt that by 2010 he was up to a Colorado Big Year and an attempt to break the record of 391 set by Andrew Spencer. His decision was helped by his rather boring job as a lab technician and the difficulty of finding a girlfriend interested in birds, a familiar complaint among young male birders! This book is Cole's account of his 2010 Big Year, which turned out to be a great success, with 412 species counted.

As an aficionado of twitching books (*The Big Year* by Mark Obmascik, *The Big Twitch* by Sean Dooley, *The Biggest Twitch* by Alan Davies and Ruth Miller), I was happy to review Cole's book at the request of collaborator Nick Komar. The PDF file I was sent consisted of 146 pages, which I read at one sitting. For me, it was an exciting page-turner, but then I'm hooked on birding, too! The book is a month-by-month description of Cole's birding trips throughout Colorado, a vast and varied birder's paradise. Of course, a book like this can be read as I did in one sitting, when one becomes engrossed in the chase, but at times I sat back when the competitiveness of birding popped up in my mind and I questioned a few of Cole's sightings. My Records Committee experiences might have come into play here, too. In the end, of course, Cole broke the old record by 21 species and the magical 400 mark by 12, several species more than the few questionable sightings I noticed.

As with other twitching books, the vicarious fun to be had is hard to resist, and I recommend the book for this reason to other birders and especially to those from neighboring states like Nebraska who might be interested in Colorado birding.

The book (ISBN 9781432771034) is available from Outskirtspress.com, Amazon.com, and Expresso Book machines, and retails for \$19.95.