



FORT • COLLINS COLORADO

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WILDLIFE

FOR BIRDWATCHERS, LANDFILL IS

GOLDMINE



AUSTIN HUMPHREYS/THE COLORADOAN

Hundreds of acres of trash attract hungry birds of nearly every description

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I thought I might witness a landmark moment in Colorado birdwatching history at the Larimer County Landfill on Saturday.

It was an overcast afternoon at the county's 640-acre trash depository — basically hog heaven for gulls, which dine mostly on garbage. The fervent squawks of 400-some gulls intermingled with the distant beeps of dump trucks and scrapers.

I stood behind a tall telescope, two seasoned birders stationed beside me at their own scopes. Nick Komar, who leads birding tours around Colorado and has been birdwatching on five continents, agreed to take me out birdwatching at the landfill after I heard it was one of the best bird spots in Northern Colorado. Joining us was Cole Wild, who traveled the state to spot 412 bird species in 2010 and co-authored a book about it with Nick.

I was in impressive company. If only I could get the hang of that telescope.

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DON REICHERT/FOR THE COLORADOAN

Above: A gull eats food scraps at the Larimer County Landfill. Top: Gulls fly overhead as a compacter piles up trash at the Larimer County Landfill on Friday. The landfill is home to thousands of birds.

HEALTH

Larimer is 15th healthiest county

Access to health care better than many places in state

BENTE BIRKELAND
ROCKY MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY RADIO

Colorado is, overall, one of the healthiest states in the country. But with the population growing both larger and older, one of the side effects is a widening disparity in the health ratings of the state's 64 counties.

Where you live in the state does make a difference.

Residents of the mountain communities on the Western Slope generally rank as the healthiest in Colorado, while residents in southeast Colorado and in the San Luis Valley report less healthy numbers, according to data released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and analyzed by Rocky Mountain PBS News.

Larimer County ranks near the top, 15th in overall health outcomes. The county compares favorably to state averages in access to health care, educational attainment and crime rate, among other factors. Larimer scores lowest in physical environment considerations, scoring higher than the state average in average daily density of fine particulate matter in the air, and the percentage of residents who experience housing-related issues including affordability concerns.

For Summit County Commissioner Dan Gibbs, the reasons the Western Slope counties score so well are right outside the front door.

"The amount of sunshine, the world-class skiing, hiking, fly fishing, the ability to go right outside your backyard and experience nature," Gibbs said.

He said the healthy atmosphere inspires people to move to the mountains and stay there. Gibbs has lived in Summit County for more than a decade, and said he's not surprised to learn it's listed as one of the top 10 healthiest Colorado counties.

"People really believe in healthy living. When you're at a restaurant or bar, people are always quick to say, 'Hey what are you doing tomorrow? What kind of mountain bike do you have? Do you want to go hiking, fishing or backpacking?'"

The Johnson Foundation report, released in 2015, looked at a range of factors, from smoking to binge drinking to obesity to premature death.

The RMPBS News analysis of the data found that five out of the ten healthiest counties were on the Western Slope, including Pitkin, home to Aspen, which ranked as the healthiest in the state. Douglas County, a

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FORECAST

5/1/29
Afternoon rain/
t'storms. 10A



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CLINTON, SANDERS SPAR OVER TRADE, WATER CRISIS IN MICHIGAN DEBATE **PAGE 1B**



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