

# The Catch

## **COCORAHS DATA QUALITY—YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED**

FORT COLLINS, CO — Tuesday, July 2, 2007

### **Greetings from Colorado!**

I am overdue for sending out a CoCoRaHS update and there is so MUCH TO TALK ABOUT. All I got in my gauge for the last month was 0.37—not enough to keep down the dust. Our new observers in southern Nevada were shut out in June—a big 0.00" for the month. Meanwhile, in SE Kansas we had several volunteers report in with more than 18" of rain in June. I will be sending out another message shortly going into more detail about the big battle between drought and flood that is raging across and among our CoCoRaHS states. And remember, whenever you want to check on total accumulated precipitation for stations in a particular state or county for any particular period of time, just go to

<http://www.cocorahs.org/ViewData/TotalPrecipSummary.aspx>

### **CoCoRaHS Data Quality—Please help!**

Each month, hundreds of new volunteers are joining CoCoRaHS. This is wonderful, but it also creates some challenges. Many of us are new to the process of reading rain gauges and reporting data online. But we're also new to having lots and lots of people looking at our data every day.

Hundreds of scientists, water managers, news media, and other professionals daily utilize our rain, hail, and snow data. They all very much appreciate the data and your contribution to it, but the most common question we get is,

"How do you know that your volunteers are providing accurate data?"

Most of the reports we receive are GREAT, but all of us make mistakes now and then (such as typing in 25" when you meant to type 0.25", or maybe entering the data into the wrong date).

To help detect these errors, we have a CoCoRaHS volunteer who daily checks the reports for accuracy. If she sees something that looks inconsistent, she may send an e-mail to you to verify your report.

We try not to change any of the data without your agreement, and so we await your response.

If you do receive an email from her, please reply promptly.

This volunteer's email address is: cocorahsqc@msn.com  
<<mailto:cocorahsqc@msn.com>> "qc" stands for "quality control".

Please be certain that your SPAM filter accepts messages from her address.

For us to maintain the confidence of CoCoRaHS data users, it is imperative that suspect reports are verified and corrected as soon as possible. We encourage beginners and we know we will make some mistakes, but we also appreciate your help fixing them.

This is VERY helpful to CoCoRaHS! Thank You!!

### **Bird Mitigation**

Wow, when I asked for your help with suggestions on how to manage birds messing up our rain gauges, I got dozens of great ideas, pictures, drawings, and more. My next message will attempt to summarize the hundreds of pages of good information into a concise primer on bird management. Little did I know what a challenge birds have been for some of you and what great ideas you have to manage them. I even got one photo of a lovely bird sitting IN a CoCoRaHS gauge. That story had a happy ending, but the bird needed help to get out.

Talk to you soon, and for those of you new to the CoCoRaHS network—  
Welcome aboard!!

*Nolan Doesken*  
Colorado State University