



The Painted Redstarts, typically early in returning, may have been seriously affected by the heavy snow in late March and early April; toward the end of the period they were found to be conspicuously scarce in many of their breeding areas.

Broad-tailed Hummingbirds — common summer residents in the Arizona mountains, and normally present there from March onward — appeared in unprecedented numbers in the lowlands around Tucson and Phoenix this spring. Farther east, at the slightly higher elevations of Portal and Silver City, the Broad-taileds were concentrated at feeders, as were orioles (Hooded, Northern and Scott's). This led many local feeder-watchers to report to our area compilers that these species were more common than usual — during weather conditions which, if anything, probably hurt the populations — further evidence that feeder data should be digested carefully, not swallowed whole.

There were scattered reports indicating that the cold and snow may have caused delayed nesting or nesting failure in some species. Piñon Jays actually nested early in northern Arizona, in response to an excellent piñon pine cone crop — but some pairs under observation failed in their first two nesting attempts, and were in their third attempts at the end of the period. Black Hawks arrived in southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico by mid-March, as usual, but most pairs were at least a month late in their nesting. Other possible cases of delay or failure will be clarified when the nesting season reports come in.

Eastern New Mexico fared better than the rest of the Region; not only did that area escape the worst of the cold weather, it also received most of the "rarities" of the season. The latter was owing mainly to intensive mistnet surveys during May at Bonne's Draw, Roosevelt County, and Bell Lake, Lea County. These localities are oasis situations on the southeastern plains, in a section of the state which had never been so intensively worked in spring before. Predictably, these migrant traps produced an impressive list of "Eastern" birds, including three first records for New Mexico. The reader will find these two localities mentioned repeatedly in the account that follows.

LOONS — Seven Com. Loons in one group on Upper Lake Mary, Coconino Co., Ariz., Apr. 8 (RPB) was an unusual concentration. The only report of this

SOUTHWEST REGION

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A cool winter passed into a cold spring — one of the coldest on record in parts of the Region — with temperatures below zero recorded in April, frost on May 6 in Tucson and Nogales, and snowfall at higher elevations into late May. So it was not surprising that observers in Arizona and western New Mexico commented on a delayed migration. Several of the less common wintering species remained later than usual, and various insect-eating birds were termed as up to two weeks behind schedule in their arrival or passage.

Another striking event that was probably related to the cold weather was the appearance of many migrants at lower elevations than normal. Transient Virginia's Warblers were much more numerous than usual in the lowest desert zones. There were more lowland reports than usual of Coues' Flycatchers, Red-faced Warblers, Hepatic Tanagers, and particularly Painted Redstarts.

species in New Mexico was one at Morgan L., San Juan Co., May 25 (WS).

CORMORANTS, HERONS — Records of two Olivaceous Cormorants on the Gila R. in Grant Co., N. Mex., Mar. 24 (*fide* DAZ), and four on Patagonia L., Ariz., in late April (GM) were further proof that observers should not assume all cormorants in this Region to be Double-crested.

S. A.

The increase in reports of Olivaceous Cormorants might reflect only the increased vigilance of observers, as specimen records dating from the 19th century indicate the species has been around for a while. The adaptable Olivaceous, which in South America occupies habitats from rocky coasts and the Amazon to high Andean lakes, may be limited from ranging farther north in North America by competition from the Double-crested. One of the few areas where the two species nest side by side is at Elephant Butte L., in what is New Mexico's only known breeding colony of cormorants and most important heronry. It is also the only locality in the Region where the Olivaceous has been known to attempt nesting, beginning in 1972; this year the species built 4-5 nests there, and two small nestlings seen May 11 (CAH) were the first verification of young actually being produced in the state.

Double-crested, with 150-200 nests active by May 25 (CAH), were still by far the predominant cormorant there. Also present there May 11 were 300-500 nesting Black-crowned Night Herons, four nesting pairs of Snowy Egrets, and one nesting pair of Great Egrets (CAH); the first two species are regular there, but Great Egrets are seldom reported breeding anywhere in New Mexico.

An ad. Little Blue Heron in Phoenix May 15 (SB) was perhaps only the eighth record for Arizona; nearly half the previous occurrences have also been May records in the Phoenix area. A Cattle Egret near Albuquerque May 1 (C. Hyder, *fide* DDe) was at a new northern limit in New Mexico. The species is still rather rare and local in the state, occurring mainly in autumn and to a lesser degree in spring.

DUCKS — A Mexican Duck was reported without details May 10 (*fide* MW) at the Bitter Lake N.W.R., N. Mex., where persistent reports invite a deeper study of the situation. Careful counts showed Blue-winged Teal passing through the Tucson and Phoenix areas in double or more their normal numbers this spring; the Blue-winged is usually a sparse migrant in Arizona. There are few New Mexico records of Surf Scoter, so of interest was a report of two males and a female at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Apr. 22 (G. Zahm).

RAPTORS — Mississippi Kites first appeared in New Mexico in 1955, coinciding with the general increase in their numbers on the southern Great Plains. Small numbers have summered more or less regularly

since then in the Rio Grande Valley and eastward. This May single adults were recorded at the new localities of Bell L. and Boone's Draw (JPH *et al.*), and two adults and two immatures were seen together in the Rio Grande Valley at the Texas/New Mexico border (BP, CD). Old and new records for the Gray Hawk — one seen n.e. of Phoenix Apr. 13-19 (SB, ST, KK) was north of any published record for Arizona (and the world), but we have just learned of an unpublished record from farther north: a nesting pair found in June 1963 at Seven Springs, 25 mi. north of Phoenix (C. Stensrude). In s.w. New Mexico, a pair of **Gray Hawks** photographed in early May (DAZ) marked the first verification of the species' occurrence in the state. The original New Mexican nesting records have been discredited: eggs taken in 1876 actually appear to be those of Cooper's Hawk (see Hubbard, 1974. *Auk* 91: 163-166). Aside from that doubtful record, and sightings near Cliff (1953) and Rodeo (1961), all reports of the Gray Hawk in New Mexico have been since 1973 in the well-worked Silver City region. Possibly the species was overlooked there before; but at least in Arizona the species has been subject to irregular fluctuations in status. These peripheral records should not be taken as evidence of any increase in numbers. Following the winter's unusual number of Merlin sightings, there was a very late report of one near Flagstaff May 20 (S. & A. Alden).

SHOREBIRDS — Analysis of shorebird migration in the Southwest is complicated by the presence of major migratory routes passing just to the east and west of us. In Arizona, several shorebird species have been considered regular only on the lower Colorado River at the western edge of the state. But recent coverage indicates that all the Colorado River migrants may occur east to Painted Rock Dam near Gila Bend when water conditions are right, and most of the same species turn up on the artificial ponds near Phoenix. Just to the east of our Region, the Great Plains carry the greatest shorebird flight on the continent every spring; and many of the typical plains migrants may occur sparingly in e. New Mexico, as evidenced by records from Laguna Grande, Eddy Co., this May.

On May 18-20 at Laguna Grande, the salt lake east of Loving, s.e. New Mexico, JPH *et al.* found a variety of shorebirds including five White-rumped Sandpipers, 15 Baird's Sandpipers, 25 Stilt Sandpipers, and two Semipalmated Sandpipers. These species have all been considered uncommon to rare in the Region, but migrate in numbers through the Great Plains. The Semipalmated in particular has rarely been recorded in New Mexico (the few specimens are all for April-May on the eastern plains), but it may well be overlooked.

Single Am. Golden Plovers at Painted Rock Dam Apr. 26 (SB, SMa) and the Riggs Ponds south of Phoenix May 18-20 (RBo *et al.*) were the first spring records for Arizona since 1953. Single Black-bellied Plovers were at the Riggs Pond Apr. 19-20 (RBo *et al.*) and in Phoenix May 11-16 (RS, ST *et al.*); in c. Arizona the species is an uncommon fall transient, generally rare in spring.

Whimbrels appeared twice in Arizona, where they are very rare transients: one at Painted Rock Dam Apr. 26 (SB, SMa) and one in Phoenix May 25 (BB). Spring

records of Solitary Sandpiper in n. Arizona are scarce; one was at Pipe Springs Nat'l Mon., May 11 (SH). Five Dunlin were at Bell L. Apr. 10 (MCC, CGS) and two at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Apr. 21 (B. Schrank, MW); the species is still considered rare in New Mexico. Two Sanderlings at the Riggs Ponds, May 16-18 (Sma, SB) and one to three at Willcox, Ariz., Apr. 26-May 5 (BJo) were among the few spring records for Arizona. In e. New Mexico where the species may be a regular transient, five were at Laguna Grande May 18-20 (JPH *et al.*). Northern Phalaropes, generally rare in spring in Arizona, appeared in small numbers near Phoenix Apr. 11 - May 25. The species is sometimes abundant in the Gulf of California, where BP saw 3000 off Guaymas, Sonora, Apr. 11.

GULLS, TERNS — Following close on the fourth state record (March, 1975, at L. Havasu), Arizona's fifth **Laughing Gull** — an adult in near-complete breeding plumage — appeared in Phoenix May 18 (RBr, GB, RN, RW *et al.*). Six California Gulls, uncommon migrants away from the Colorado River, were at Willcox Apr. 29 (HF, D. Larkin); another was at Painted Rock Dam May 3 (ST). Two Caspian Terns at Painted Rock Dam Apr. 26-27 (SB, Sma *et al.*) further implied the similarity of the migration there to that on the lower Colorado R., the only part of the Region where the Caspian is known to be at all regular. Only five Least Terns were counted May 10 (JCC *et al.*) at Bitter Lake N.W.R., New Mexico's only breeding colony and almost only place of record for this species.

DOVES — White-winged Doves were recorded at Socorro, N. Mex., with two May 17 and one May 29 (PB); in the Rio Grande Valley the species occurs northward regularly only to the Las Cruces area. Also out-of-range were two Inca Doves at Albuquerque in late May (HS, *vide* DDe). This species ranges northward regularly only to Las Cruces and — recently — Silver City, but stragglers occur elsewhere and could establish new colonies farther north. This would continue a trend of range expansion: Inca Doves evidently began invading Arizona just over a century ago, and have moved northeastward into New Mexico only within the last fifty years.

OWLS — The three Flammulated Owls that obligingly flew into mistnets at Bell L. May 7 (JPH *et al.*) may provide a clue that the species migrates regularly across the grasslands of s.e. New Mexico; there is one other spring record in the vicinity. Spotted Owls were found in two locations below Silver City (RAF) and a dead one was picked up at Randolph Park in Tucson in April (*vide* S.M. Russell). These are low elevations compared to most points where the species is currently known in the Southwest. However, breeding was verified in Lower Sonoran riparian woodland south of Glenwood, N. Mex., in 1973 (B. Hayward); and a century ago there were Spotted Owls nesting at even lower elevations around Tucson — in forests that no longer exist. Possibly this owl will occupy suitable habitats (i.e., tall trees especially in canyons or near cliffs) regardless of elevation. The Long-eared Owl

breaks more rules: records indicate it is rare and local as a breeding bird in the Southwest, but the points where it has been found nesting have been in nearly any mediocre habitat — in fact, it is almost unrecorded in the high mountains where one might expect a bird that ranges well north into the forests of Canada. This spring at least two pairs nested near Silver City (DAZ *et al.*), with young in the nests in late April; a pair brought off at least one young in a dry gulch near Phoenix (SH); a pair nested for the third consecutive year Oracle, Ariz., in mesquite-catchlaw habitat (HF); and a pair was present (but no nest located) throughout the period at the bottom of the Grand Canyon (RRJ).

NIGHTJARS — Migrant Whip-poor-wills are seldom recorded in the lowlands; one was near Redrock, N. Mex., May 3 (BP, CD). Eight Lesser Nighthawks were present May 4-7 and May 16-21 at Bell L., a northern peripheral locality for the species (JPH *et al.*).

HUMMINGBIRDS — Exceptional numbers of Rufous Hummingbirds appeared in s.c. and s.e. Arizona from mid-March through April. Many were around Phoenix, and additional reports came from Tucson, Ramsey Canyon, Globe, and east to Portal and Guadalupe Canyon. A common fall migrant throughout most of the Region, the Rufous is normally extremely rare in spring except in the s.w. corner of Arizona; those that happened to be in the New Mexico half of Guadalupe Canyon (at least six males March 27 — JPH) were among the very few spring records for that state. A Violet-crowned Hummingbird was seen on the early date of May 9 in Madera Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., Ariz. (SMi), where the species is generally an uncommon late-summer stray. Single ♂ Calliope Hummingbirds, rare migrants in spring in s.e. Arizona, turned up Apr. 3 at Ramsey Canyon (M. King), Apr. 6-17 at Portal (SS *et al.*), and May 9 at Madera Canyon (SMi) — i.e., at each of the middle-elevation points where hummers gather conveniently at feeders. A ♀ Rivoli's Hummingbird was present May 2-8 at Glenwood, N. Mex. (LS); the species is very sparse in New Mexico, except perhaps in the Animas Mts. region.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS — Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, regular in extreme e. New Mexico, strayed west to Albuquerque, Las Vegas, and Tularosa. One at Phoenix May 23 (SD, HL) was the only report from Arizona this spring. An E. Phoebe was reported at Silver City May 5-9 (M. Mosely); another at Shiprock May 24 (WS) was the northwesternmost record ever for this species rare in New Mexico. Mist-netting in the s.e. plains of New Mexico during May revealed Hammond's, Dusky and Traill's Flycatchers to be coming through in numbers, with the species peaking in passage in that order. Also netted were single Least Flycatchers May 5, 17 and 19 at Bell L. (JPH *et al.*); there were only two previous verified records for New Mexico. A Vermilion Flycatcher was recorded Apr. 30 near Mormon L., Coconino Co., Ariz., a new locality for the species (GM); the Vermilion has been expanding its range northward slightly over the last 100 years. Bank Swallows have seldom been detected in n. Arizona in spring, but this year they were seen in small

numbers throughout the period along the Colorado R. in the Grand Canyon (SC). In the same area were large numbers of Barn and Tree Swallows, not usually present there; the cold weather this spring may have concentrated these migrants at the bottom of the canyon. Very unusual were four Purple Martins at Morgan L., N. Mex., May 25 (WS); the nearest breeding colonies are in mountains to the west (and east?).

The colony of Blue Jays continues to prosper at Portales, N. Mex., where breeding has been verified in at least two years in the past (A.L. Gennaro). Two nests of Com. Ravens were found May 11 in the prairie region west of Clayton, N. Mex., where White-necked Ravens also nest (JPH). A single Clark's Nutcracker on LS Mesa n.w. of Silver City May 25 (RAF) was at a strangely low elevation for that time of year. After the winter's unusual numbers, Winter Wrens lingered into April in four localities with one until Apr. 29 at Portal (SS).

THRASHERS THROUGH VIREOS — A Brown Thrasher east of Portal May 25 (PN, LL) was very late; normally this species is only a rare fall and winter visitor in Arizona. The **Eastern Bluebird**, known for several years as a regular winter resident at Rattlesnake Springs, Carlsbad N.P., was found nesting there for New Mexico's first breeding record. A pair was photographed feeding noisy young in a nest hole, May 1-4 (JPH *et al.*), and there was probably another nest nearby. The locality is rather well removed from known breeding areas in Texas and s.e. Arizona. In fields near Phoenix where up to four Sprague's Pipits had wintered, one remained until Apr. 9, a late record for this species uncommon in Arizona (KK, JW). A vagrant ♀ Phainopepla at Bell L. May 19 (JPH) was east of the species' normal range. New Mexico's third record of **White-eyed Vireo** was obtained at Bell L., where one was banded May 5 (JPH). There were three reliable reports of Red-eyed Vireo: one near Supai, Coconino Co., Ariz., May 3 (JHi), one east of Phoenix May 17 (ST), and one banded at Bell L. May 18 (JPH). Although this species breeds directly north of the Region it is infrequent here, particularly in spring. A **Philadelphia Vireo** collected at Bell L. May 17 was the first verified record for New Mexico (JPH).

WARBLERS — In terms of variety and rarity, everything happened on the eastern plains of New Mexico. The mistnet surveys at Boone's Draw and Bell L. produced 25 species of warblers — impressive for this Region. Prize birds netted there were **Mourning Warbler** May 7 & 20 at Bell Lake (JPH), and **Canada Warbler** May 24 at Boone's Draw (MCC, CGS), providing the first verified records of these species in New Mexico. Other notable eastern vagrants at one or both of these localities and/or at Clayton included Prothonotary, Tennessee, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Kentucky and Hooded Warblers! Any of these would cause great excitement farther west in the Region — but they may occur regularly in small numbers in extreme e. New Mexico. This situation should be noted by those who believe in easy correlations between vagrants and local wind patterns: during the time when these eastern warb-

lers were appearing, winds in that area were dominantly out of the *southwest*; the only "southwestern" warblers recorded there were six Virginia's, which could have been bound for e. Colorado; no Townsend's, Grace's, or Black-throated Grays were recorded.

True vagrants elsewhere in the Region included a Tennessee Warbler s.e. of Silver City May 8 (DAZ), and a Blackpoll Warbler at Albuquerque May 15-16 (M. Arthur). Reports of sparse but regular migrants in the Region included six Black-and-white Warblers, 11 N. Waterthrushes, and nine Am. Redstarts away from the e. plains of New Mexico where these species in small numbers were not considered unusual. There were a few reports of N. Parulas away from the e. plains, including a singing male found May 31 (ADZ, J. Minot *et al.*) in the Chiricahua Mts., Ariz., where the species has been recorded during late May at least four times in recent years. Nashville Warblers appeared in good numbers in Arizona, where the w. race is known as a common migrant; the few Nashvilles recorded in New Mexico were on the e. plains, and probably represent the eastern race. Ovenbirds in small numbers were not unexpected on the e. plains of New Mexico, but one at Farmington in mid-May (*vide* APN) was only the second record there.

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS — At least four Orchard Orioles were present in late May at Boone's Draw (JPH *et al.*). This is well north of the known breeding range of the species in New Mexico, and it should be checked for possible nesting. Great-tailed Grackles again nested at Lovington, N. Mex., an area which they invaded only recently: a pair was seen with a fledgling there May 21 (JPH *et al.*). Several observers mentioned Com. Grackle sightings in the Farmington region; the status of the bird in n. w. New Mexico is still uncertain, although there is one breeding record there (1971). A ♀ Scarlet Tanager at Boone's Draw May 24 (MCC, CGS) and an ad. male at Bitter Lake N.W.R., May 26 (D. Boggs *et al.*) were the only reports. A ♀ Hepatic Tanager at Bell L. May 7 (JPH *et al.*) was definitely east of the usual range, while a male at Socorro May 4 (PB) represented an unusual lowland report.

FRINGILLIDS — Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, now considered regular in spring, were reported at scattered localities throughout New Mexico and Arizona during May. In fact, at the e. edge of the Region, Rose-breasted outnumbered Black-headed Grosbeaks six to three in mistnet surveys at Boone's Draw and Bell Lake. There was the usual scattering of Indigo Buntings in New Mexico, and a few more than usual reported in Arizona. Nesting was noted south of Albuquerque in the period (HS, *vide* DDe); the Indigo has nested in both Arizona and New Mexico, but we still don't know how widely or frequently this occurs. Following the winter's heavy invasion into Arizona, dispersing Lawrence's Goldfinches finally reached New Mexico. Two were reported from Deming Mar. 3 (M. O'Byrne), several were in the Gila Valley near Cliff May 3 (WB), and one was at Shiprock May 24 (WS). The latter — a male, well-described by a good observer — was by far the northwesternmost ever reported in the state. In Arizona, a few Lawrence's were reported through the end of the

period at Phoenix (ST). There were four convincing reports of Dickcissels: one May 3 near Redrock, N. Mex. (BP, CD), one May 9-11 e. of Tucson (H. Barker, L. Smith), one May 15 at Los Alamos, N. Mex. (B. Lewis), and one May 20 on Bonita Creek, Graham Co., Ariz. (BJo). This is an exceptional number for spring; even in fall the bird is hardly to be expected, except irregularly in eastern New Mexico.

The Lark Bunting is an irregular breeder on the eastern plains of New Mexico. In view of the lush growth present on the plains this spring, it was expected that Lark Buntings would appear in numbers — but they didn't; surprisingly few were observed. Interpretations must await further data.

S. A.

The status of Cassin's Sparrow in the Southwest remains to be clarified, and observers should pay special attention to this species at all times of year. Seasonal variation in their numbers may be exaggerated by the fact that the birds are very conspicuous when they sing, and very inconspicuous when they don't. It has been thought that Cassin's were absent from Arizona during most of May and June; but this year they were heard singing through mid-May in several parts of s. Arizona and adjacent Sonora. Whether some factor (weather?) was causing them to sing more than usual and thus be detected, or whether they remained abnormally late, is impossible to say. On the Jornada Experimental Range near Las Cruces, where numbers of Cassin's seem to vary from year to year, large numbers were present and singing May 27 (BP, R.J. Raitt).

Following the winter's exceptional numbers of White-throated and Swamp Sparrows, a few were recorded as lingering late into the spring. White-throats continued to be seen through late April in s.e. Arizona and s.w. New Mexico, with one as late as May 11 at Patagonia, Ariz. (SD, JW *et al.*). Swamp Sparrows remained through April in s. and c. Arizona, with one still at Patagonia May 17 (DAZ). These late dates might be laid to the law of averages, i.e., with so many around during the winter, a few would stay later than "normal". But weather seems a more probable explanation; the season was characterized by cold, hence — we believe — late nesting and late migration. More to the point, there were also late reports of Harris' and Golden-crowned Sparrows, which were *not* overly numerous this winter. These included two Harris' at Corrales, N. Mex., May 4 (JND), another Harris' at Glenwood, N. Mex., May 7 (LS), and a Golden-crowned at Glenwood May 9 (E. Rose, P. Meyers).

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We would like to encourage birders who visit the Southwest, as well as residents of the Region, to submit details with their reports of unusual sightings. We had to omit a number of records this time — including, probably, some that were valid — because of the total lack of substantiating details. Unusual sight record forms of the Arizona Bird Committee and the New Mexico Ornithological Society are available from the respective editors. Incidentally, if a visitor to an area finds a bird which he knows to be highly unusual there, it is only common courtesy to inform local observers as soon as possible — partly to aid in confirming the record, and partly because we would like to see some of these birds ourselves.