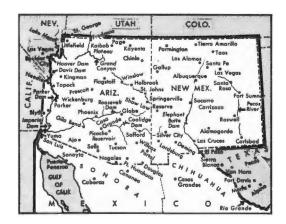
SOUTHWEST REGION

/ Janet Witzeman, John P. Hubbard and Kenn Kaufman

Overall weather patterns in the Southwest during spring 1977 were not perceived to be particularly unusual. It could also be said that this season's bird records—despite the number of boldfaced species below—did not transcend the realm of the expected. In other words, the rarities of the season followed more or less logical extensions of pre-



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viously established patterns. Even the two first state records registered during the period (Costa's Hummingbird in extreme southwestern New Mexico and Rufous-capped Warbler in extreme southeastern Arizona) had been foreshadowed by sightings in adjacent areas. However this is not meant to imply that the season was uninteresting. On the contrary, a remarkable array of records was produced. The fact that many of these were "predictable" merely reinforces the idea that range extensions and rarities do not occur at random, but rather in patterns which may be discovered and extrapolated. If rarities amaze us, so do the patterns which they represent. Southwestern field observers, by discovering the former, are revealing the latter, and the reader may appreciate both in the paragraphs that follow.

GREBES, CORMORANTS—April 3 brought a Horned Grebe to Nogales (DS, SP) and an unprecedented concentration of *nine* to Tucson (C&EW et al.), two of the latter remaining to Apr. 4. The occurrence of spring migrants in s. Arizona is intriguing, since the species is virtually unknown to the south of us, in Mexico! Single Horned Grebes in breeding plumage were noted Apr. 30 on L. Havasu, Ariz. (LBa), and May 18 at McAlister L., N. Mex. (WS).

Olivaceous Cormorants continued to be seen at Patagonia L., Ariz.; between five and 16 were reported there at different times throughout the period (m.ob.). Three at Las Cruces Mar. 5-8 (WHB) were noteworthy.

HERONS—Records of Little Blue Herons, all adults, were one s.e. of Phoenix Apr. 13 (†DC), two at Albuquerque Apr. 16 (M. Milton, fide DDeL), one near Hereford, Ariz., May 23 (TC), and one near Nogales June 5 (†CM, BH et al.); in Arizona this species is now annual in spring in very small numbers. A Louisiana Heron photographed near Las Cruces Apr. 5 (WHB, C.R. Wahl) established the second verified record for New Mexico.

Cattle Egrets were recorded in three areas of s.e. Arizona, where the species is rare. One was at a ranch near Douglas Apr. 24 (DD), nine were on the Willcox golf course Apr. 26 (DS, BJo, MH), and three were on a ranch at 5000 ft on the w. side of the Chiricahuas June 7 (RW, JW).

IBISES—With only one previous record (involving a single individual) of the species in Arizona, we were totally unprepared for Bruce Campbell's report of six White Ibises seen May 3 on the Verde R., below Horseshoe Dam. But those who sought the ibis May 6 found seven individuals, and a



White Ibis, ne. of Phoenix, Ariz., May 11, 1977. Photo by Dick Todd.

flock of ten was seen repeatedly May 7-14—all adults or near-adults (m.ob.; ph., DT, JW). This record brings to mind the occurrence of nine at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., N. Mex., last autumn; apparently the northward wanderings of White Ibises can involve numbers of individuals on occasion.

WATERFOWL—A & Mexican Duck (accompanied by a 9 Mallard) was s.e. of Phoenix May 18-25 (RN). Only once before has this sedentary form wandered n.w. to the Phoenix area: ca. 1943, specimen from Saguaro L.

A bird at Phoenix Mar. 12 (KK, DS) appeared to be a & Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal hybrid; however, KK points out that owing to the possibility of erythristic Blue-wingeds, this hybrid form is probably not safely identifiable in the field.

A drake Harlequin Duck was seen by many and photographed (ph., RW et al.) Mar. 26-27 at Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, apparently marking the first confirmed record for the Republic of Mexico. The bird had been reported about a week earlier (H. Hanson, R. Moss), and may have been present as early as Jan. 1 (H. & C. Norrid); last definite sighting was Apr. 9 (DAZ). Details will be published elsewhere. Also notable in Mexico (possibly the first record for Sonora) was a pair of Hooded Mergansers seen Mar. 24 on the Rio Mayo near San Bernardo (GM).

RAPTORS—On New Mexico's e. fringe, an imm. Broadwinged Hawk (quite rare in the state) was seen at Portales May 12 (JPH et al.); it was seen over the park with a Mississippi Kite, while a Blue Jay called below! Farther afield was an ad. Broad-winged in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., Apr. 14 (†WRS, HS), for Arizona's ninth record. A Zone-tailed Hawk at Kingman, Ariz., Apr. 3 (SL) was near the species' n.w. limit. A pair of Zone-taileds first noted Apr. 28 (DW) in the B.W. Delta was seen in courtship display May 9 (KVR, PM) and remained at least to the end of the period; the species has been known to nest in that area.

Seven pairs of Bald Eagles, the entire known breeding population of the Southwest, attempted nesting on the Salt, Verde, and Colorado Rivers of Arizona this year. Three of these pairs succeeded in fledging two young each, but one of the young birds died subsequently (D. Rubink, KVR et al.).

A Caracara seen Apr. 23 over the B.T. Arboretum near Superior, Ariz. (ST, AG, S&LB), was far n.e. of its normal range.

CRANES, RAILS—As noted in our last report, the six transplanted Whooping Cranes left their New Mexico winter quarters in late February-early March; several were seen passing over Los Alamos, and five appeared in the San Luis Valley, Colo., by Mar. 18 (fide James Travis). One bird from Bosque del Apache N.W.R. went S, however, and showed up in the Uvas Valley of Luna Co., N. Mex., in late March (WW, Dale Shifletts).

The first Clapper Rails heard this spring on the Colorado R., were Mar. 8 at Imperial Dam (JD) and Mar. 9 in the B.W. Delta (KVR). A pair found in May at the Granite Reef Campground e. of Phoenix (DT) provided the only record in c. Arizona this spring.

SHOREBIRDS—The recent proliferation of artificial habitat and of observers in Arizona undoubtedly accounts for the number of exciting shorebird records in the past few migration seasons. In turn, the very recentness of these observational changes is certainly the reason why these shorebird records are still exciting: we are already beginning to sense that most of these "accidentals" will be regular from now on, given sufficient coverage in the right localities.

Most of Arizona's unusual shorebird records this spring were primarily unusual as to season, being traditional fall transient species which were previously unexpected here in spring. Single Baird's Sandpipers were present at Willcox as early as Mar. 20 (BR) and as late as May 11, with a peak of six individuals Apr. 19-25 (RS, TP et al.). This is perhaps the fifth year to produce spring records of Baird's in Arizona. Two Stilt Sandpipers were at Phoenix May 5 (KK, EC, JW), with one remaining until May 19 (JW); Arizona had only three previous spring records. A Sanderling at Willcox Apr. 22-30 (DS et al.) was one of the very few ever recorded in Arizona in spring. At least 15 Marbled Godwits occurred in Arizona, largest concentrations being six below Imperial Dam Apr. 16 (KS) and four at Nogales Apr. 20 (GM); the species has been considered uncommon to rare in spring. Similarly unusual as to season was the N. Phalarope. with singles reported May 21 at Phoenix (RBr), May 27 at Sierra Vista (PJB), and May 30 at Tucson (GM); five were at Willcox May 24-28 (BJo, DS, MH), with one remaining to Tune 4

On a higher plane of rarity, a Ruddy Turnstone seen and photographed (ph. CM: BH et al.) at Nogales Apr. 10 was only Arizona's sixth record and the first to occur in spring. A Whimbrel was at Phoenix May 19 (†RBr) and another was on the Colorado R., opposite Picacho S. P., May 25 (JD, PM); Arizona has less than a score of records so far. Four Red Knots, rare in New Mexico, were reported at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Apr. 25 (MW). Sanderlings are also rare in New Mexico, so three on Apr. 4 and four on Apr. 20 near Alamogordo (LM) were notable.

GULLS—An ad. California Gull was noted May 6 at Charette L., Mora Co., N. Mex. (JPH); the only other two recent state records have involved mid-summer concentrations at lakes in the n.-c. section.

In Arizona. Bonaparte's Gulls occurred in remarkable numbers. In the Yuma area two were noted as early as Apr. 16, with a high count of 12 on Apr. 29 (KS, SSpt). Farther up the Colorado R., at least 21 were seen between Apr. 22 and the end of May, and a few were still present in June (KVR, AEH et al.). At Phoenix, an ad. Bonaparte's was seen Apr. 7 (RBr), and several were present in late May and into June (JW et al.), with a high count of seven on May 28. The species was present at Willcox Apr. 18–June 19: the high count was eight on June 5, with two found dead the previous day (KK, EC, DS). Turnover seemed high at both Phoenix and Willcox, with new and different individuals seen at each visit. The concentration of individuals at both these localities in late May–early June was particularly surprising, since the species is generally absent after mid-May.

DOVES THROUGH OWLS—Four to five White-winged Doves at Socorro Apr. 19 and later (PB) represented an increase there, and two seen at Alamogordo in April (LM) may indicate a range expansion to that area. The first White-wingeds at Redrock, N. Mex., aside from one bird that wintered there, were noted in March (Alton Ford). A Ground Dove, considered rare in extreme s.e. Arizona, was seen near Portal Apr. 26–29 (Will Moir, fide SSpf); and one was seen May 21 near Carlsbad, N. Mex. (MW) where the species has become less regular.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos arrived in late May, which is early for the species, in the lower Pecos Valley (MW) and near Albuquerque (D. Cole); numbers appeared to be up in the Roswell area (MW).

Generally considered rare in the Lower Colorado Valley, Elf Owls were first heard in the B.W. Delta Mar. 7-8. The species was subsequently found in at least eight locations in the B.W. Delta and n. of Needles, Calif., on both sides of the river (KVR et al.). A roost of at least 30 Long-eared Owls was found near Columbus, s.w. N. Mex., Mar. 24 (JPH, MCC). Several were seen on both sides of the Colorado R., n. of Needles Mar. 22–23 (LG, KVR).

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS—In the section of residential Tucson where Chimney Swifts summered last year, sightings of probable individuals recommenced early this May. The first records definitely pertaining to this species were one on May 21 (KK) and four on May 22 (DS, EC). Hundreds of migrating Vaux's Swifts were seen along the Colorado R. on May 9 & 13, in association with minor storm systems, but none was seen there after May 14 (KVR, AEH et al.); one individual at Tucson May 24 (DS, GG) was quite late. A Chaetura sp., at the mouth of Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahuas, May 18 (MB), was in an unusual locality regardless of which species it was.

An ad. 3 Lucifer Hummingbird was near Portal Apr. 27–29 (†SSpf et al.); Arizona records of this species are definitely increasing. An ad. 3 Costa's Hummingbird was present and photographed May 7–22, and an imm. male netted and photographed May 21, in upper Guadalupe Canyon (WHB). These were the first verified records for New Mexico, following several sight records in the same area.

Indicative of the continued spread of Anna's Hummingbird was the discovery of a nest on the Colorado R., n. of Parker Dam. Ariz.. with a female feeding two young Apr. 5 (KVR, AEH). This was the first known nesting for that area, where the species is still uncommon.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH JAYS—An Acorn Woodpecker was seen May 10 on the e. side of the Sandia Mts., central N. Mex. (RLT)—a range for which, unaccountably, there are almost no records. A late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Parker, Ariz., Apr. 26 (KVR) appeared typical of the e. form, S. v. varius, a rare straggler to the Southwest. A Downy Woodpecker seen May 23 at Teec Nos Pos (BH) added to the handful of lowland records for n.e. Arizona.

The only Scissor-tailed Flycatcher noted in Arizona this season was one n.w. of Nogales Apr. 20 (GM), the earliest spring record for the state.

An Empidonax first found in the B.W. Delta Feb. 12 (KVR) was collected Mar. 21 and determined to be a Hammond's Flycatcher—apparently the first winter record for the Lower Colorado Valley (* to A.S.U.). As expected, Hammond's subsequently proved to be a common migrant in that area, outnumbering W. Flycatcher in April (AEH, KVR). The Dusky Flycatcher is virtually unknown as a migrant from the Lower Colorado Valley, but one was taken there in the B.W. Delta Apr. 9 (KVR; * to A.S.U.).

Migrant Purple Martins at lowland points in Arizona where they are rarely noted were a female Apr. 29 at Sierra Vista (BY), a male (* to A.S.U.) May 13 s. of Parker (ML, KC), and a female May 26 near Hereford (KK, MWr, G.G.A.S.).

A Blue Jay seen May 30 at Teec Nos Pos, extreme n.e. Arizona (†KK, JW, EC, DS), was only the second for the state. Also notably far west was one in the Mimbres Valley of s.w. New Mexico Apr. 29 (JPH, BI).

THRASHERS THROUGH VIREOS—Records of Bendire's Thrashers are few on the Arizona side of the Colorado R. Valley, so one collected Mar. 21 at the B.W. Delta (AEH, KVR) is of interest. The Rufous-backed Robins noted last fall and winter were all in Tucson or southward, but this spring singles were found Mar. 12-Apr. 12 at Phoenix (DS, KK, ST) and Apr. 9 at the B.T. Arboretum near Superior (DS). A pair of E. Bluebirds was nest-building May 4 at Bear

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Canyon in the Santa Catalina Mts. (DS, BB, JBt); last summer marked the first record of breeding in this locality, the species' northernmost outpost in Arizona.

In New Mexico, Bohemian Waxwings from the winter invasion remained until mid-April at Los Alamos (LH) and Santa Fe (Mickey Lang). Despite the scarcity of Cedar Waxwings in s. Arizona last winter, a few were seen rather late in the spring with small numbers at Tucson to May 24 and one in Guadalupe Canyon June 4-5 (KK, DS et al.).

A migrant Gray Vireo, local in New Mexico, was seen Apr. 22 in Chihuahuan Desert scrub near Loving (JPH et al.). The Red-eyed Vireo is a rare transient in New Mexico; one seen May 6 in Cherry Creek Canyon n. of Silver City (KJZ, BRZ) may have been a local first.

WARBLERS-The usual rare-but-regular species occurred in about normal numbers. Four Black-and-white Warblers were reported in Arizona, all during May, with one at Teec Nos Pos May 23 (BH) being perhaps the first record for the northeast. Reports of N. Parulas were singles near Deming Mar. 3 and Apr. 10 (WW), one near Superior Apr. 11 (RBo), one near Tucson Apr. 19-20 (ELS), two near Portal Apr. 23 (SSpf, E.M. Cutler), and one at Tucson June 10 (KK). Arizona recorded a total of five N. Waterthrushes and nine Am. Redstarts Apr. 30-June 15. The Tennessee Warbler has become almost annual in spring within the last few years, and no less than five were recorded in the region this season. Singles were noted May 7 n.e. of Phoenix (ST et al.), May 11 in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahuas (DS, KK et al.), May 12 at Boone's Draw, e.-c. N. Mex. (JPH). May 14 at Santa Fe (JE), and May 18 below L. Patagonia, Ariz. (KK).

Locally unusual, a Nashville Warbler at Socorro May 12 (PB) was outside the normal spring range. A & Com. Yellow-throat at Percha Dam S. P., N. Mex., Mar. 26 (WHB) was either a very early migrant or a rare wintering bird. Migrant Red-faced Warblers occurred at unusually low elevations: Apr. 22 at Patagonia (BR et al.), May 6 at Redrock, N. Mex. (KJZ, BRZ), and May 9 at 4900 ft in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahuas (MB). A report of one or two individuals seen May 9 in the Sandia Mts. of c. New Mexico (G. Parker, H. Schwartz, fide RLT) constitutes a local first, and possibly the northeasternmost record for the state.

The region received a fine assortment of eastern warblers this spring. A Prothonotary Warbler was singing May 10 in the B.W. Delta (†KVR) and one was seen May 13 at Roswell (MW); there had been about five previous records for Arizona and about six for New Mexico. A Worm-eating Warbler at Boone's Draw May 8 (†JE) was the fourth or fifth sight record for New Mexico, while one at B.W. Delta May 10 (†KVR) was Arizona's seventh sighting, and the first ever for the w. part of the state. A ? Cape May Warbler meticulously described from the B. T. Arboretum near Superior Apr. 23 (†ST, S&LB, AG) was Arizona's third. Another Cape May Warbler was seen May 21 at Rattlesnake Springs, s.e. N. Mex. (MW), for the state's fifth overall and second spring record. Single Chestnut-sided Warblers were seen May 19 at Round Valley, Chiricahua Mts. (BR, JG), and May 23 at Teec Nos Pos (BH), establishing the first spring records for Arizona. In New Mexico, where there are seven previous May records, single Chestnut-sideds were noted May 12 at Boone's Draw (JPH) and May 28-29 at Cottonwood Gulch (AM).

A Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen and photographed Apr. 29 in Cave Creek Canyon near Portal, Ariz. (RPB et al.): it is interesting to note that three of the five previous spring records in the state have come from the same locality. A ? Bay-breasted Warbler was reported May 30 in the lower Mimbres Valley of s.w. New Mexico (RAF); the species is

quite rare in the state. Also very rare in New Mexico, a 3 Blackpoll Warbler was seen Apr. 30 near Las Cruces (R. Repass et al.). A Palm Warbler seen Apr. 25 at Roper L., s. of Safford, Ariz. (TP, MR, TJ), was the state's second spring occurrence. Another Palm Warbler was seen at Boone's Draw May 8 (JE): New Mexico had only four previous records of the species, three of them in spring.

Arizona records of Kentucky and Hooded Warblers have accumulated in very consistent and somewhat similar patterns: there have been close to ten state records for each, virtually all in spring or early summer in the southeast. Continuing the pattern this season, a Kentucky Warbler was in Ramsey Canyon May 25 (†CY et al.) and a & Hooded Warbler was in Round Valley, Chiricahua Mts., May 20 (†MB et al.); another Hooded Warbler was at Cottonwood Gulch, N. Mex., June 1–4 (AM). Single Ovenbirds were recorded May 10 in the B.W. Delta (†KVR), May 11 near Albuquerque (J.J. Phillips), May 13 in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahua Mts. (†MB et al.), and May 31 near Yuma (†KS, SSpt, S&MF). Some or all of these Ovenbirds may be migrants following a direct course between wintering grounds in western Mexico and breeding areas to the north of this region.

Unquestionably the warbler event of the season, however, was the appearance of Arizona's first Rufous-capped Warbler in Cave Creek Canyon of the Chiricahuas. Discovered May 9 by an observer thoroughly familiar with the species (†Mike Braun), it was seen again early on May 10 (B. Schaughency) but could not be relocated by a horde of subsequent searchers; a bird glimpsed farther up the canyon May 29 (WRS) may have been this species. Following recent sightings of the Rufous-capped in extreme n.e. Sonora (Am. Birds 30: 109), this record constitutes a plausible extension of the species' Mexican distribution.

ICTERIDS-A 9 Bobolink flushed from an alfalfa field at Teec Nos Pos May 30 (DS, †KK, JW, EC) provided the second spring record for Arizona, and the first ever in the northeast aside from a breeding colony noted at Show Low in 1937. The species is also rare and local in New Mexico; one was reported May 1 at Stone L., Rio Arriba Co. (CS). A ♂ Hooded Oriole seen Apr. 20 near Farmington (H.H.Lesperance) was the first ever recorded in n.w. New Mexico. The discovery of a small "colony" of Scott's Orioles (at least five birds seen) near Montoya, e.-c. New Mexico, May 11 (JPH) was unexpected; the locality is at the n.e. limit of the species' range. A ♂ Scott's Oriole was singing in a desert wash n. of Ehrenberg, Ariz., May 7 (KVR), marking one of the very few records in the Lower Colorado Valley. A subadult male of this species seen May 30 at Teec Nos Pos (†KK et al.) was exceptionally far north.

The Great-tailed Grackle, which began its invasion of this region over sixty years ago, continues to expand and consolidate its range. Localities of note in New Mexico during the period included the areas of Glenwood, Santa Rosa, and Portales (JPH et al.), and Truth or Consequences (Walton Hawk). In Arizona, unusual records of the species included Mar. 8 e. of Portal (SSpf) and Apr. 26 n.w. of Bagdad (CST); the first evidence of the species' nesting at Globe was established Apr. 19 (fide BJa). The Bronzed Cowbird, another expanding species, established second local records at two points in New Mexico with one near Socorro May 16–20 (PB) and at least three at Glenwood May 23 (JPH).

FRINGILLIDS—A & Cardinal strayed to Santa Rosa, e.-c. New Mexico May 3 (M. Castillo). A Pyrrhuloxia was reported May 7 and 14 near Cliff, N. Mex. (H. Williams, fide RAF), where the species is rare. There was a substantial movement of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks through the region this

spring, as appears to be usual, with at least a score reported from almost throughout New Mexico and an equal number in s.e. and c. Arizona. At the single locality of Ramsey Canyon, Ariz., where observers (and feeders) were present constantly, no less than eight different individuals were recorded during the period (B&CY, DD et al.); if similar habitats nearby received similar numbers, the total of Rosebreasted Grosbeaks passing through s.e. Arizona this spring must have been in the hundreds.

A territorial of Painted Bunting at Hagerman, N. Mex., May 13 (JPH et al.) was n. of the species' normal range in the lower Pecos Valley. A Dickcissel at Teec Nos Pos May 30 (DS et al.) provided the first record for n.e. Arizona, and one of the few spring records for the state.

Four Evening Grosbeaks at Alamogordo Apr. 8 (LM) were the only ones noted in the s. lowlands of New Mexico during the period, while at Cottonwood Gulch, N. Mex., several in late May and singles June 5 & 8 (AM, JPH) were late. A pair of Evening Grosbeaks with a nest was found May 28 in Sawmill Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Ariz. (PJB et al.); the species had been reported in summer from the Huachucas before, but this is the first definite nesting record there. Up to six Purple Finches were present at feeders at Portal Mar. 22–30 (M, Crutcher, SSpf). Although traditionally rare in s.e. Arizona, the species was recorded at this locality last spring also.

Pine Siskins were scarce in the lowlands of the region last winter; inexplicable, therefore, was the local abundance of the species at Teec Nos Pos, n.e. Ariz., where hundreds were present in a small area May 30 (KK, EC, DS, JW). Single Am. Goldfinches from the winter's flight lingered at Teec Nos Pos May 30 (KK et al.) and at Cottonwood Gulch, N. Mex., June 3 (AM). A pair of Lawrence's Goldfinches nested on the Verde R., n.e. of Phoenix (ST et al.), with nest-building first noted Apr. 10. This is the first breeding record for c. Arizona. and the easternmost ever for the species; details will be published elsewhere.

Four fully-fledged imm. Red Crossbills were seen Apr. 16-18 at Rose Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., Ariz. (SM, TJ, GM), and family groups and juvenals were seen through the spring in the Prescott area (CST); our knowledge of the crossbill's breeding distribution here is still very sketchy. A few Lark Buntings lingered late near Palominas, s.e. Ariz., with 12 seen May 19 (BY) and one as late as May 26 (KK, MWr, G.G.A.S.). Eight Savannah Sparrows were singing e. of Cimarron, N. Mex., May 4-5 (JPH), indicating a new area of probable breeding for this rare and local summer resident. Grasshopper Sparrows are rarely detected in New Mexico, so four singing near Loving Apr. 22 (JPH et al.) were especially interesting. The status of the Rufous-crowned Sparrow in New Mexico e. of the Pecos and s. of the Dry Cimarron rivers is poorly known, so that singles near Montoya May 11 and at Cedar Pt., May 13 (JPH et al.) were noteworthy.

A Golden-crowned Sparrow present at Farmington, N. Mex., through Apr. 11 (Judy Nordstrom et al.) established the first local record. In Arizona, five individuals were recorded this spring from the southeast and the Lower Colorado Valley, including one that remained s. of Parker until the late date of May 11 (AEH, DW). At least a dozen White-throated Sparrows reported in new locations during the spring added more records to the largest invasion ever in Arizona; a late individual was at Patagonia May 16 (VE, fide BY). Notable because of the paucity of records for Sonora, a Swamp Sparrow was far s. near Alamos Mar. 23 (GM). Another at Silver City, N. Mex., Apr. 30 was unusual (DAZ).

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