

SOUTHWEST REGION

/Janet Witzeman, John P. Hubbard and
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Temperatures throughout the Region averaged higher than usual this summer; although the birders may have noticed this, it had no obvious effect on the birdlife. Highlights of the season included northward occurrences of several hummingbird species, plus a number of additions to the summering or breeding avifauna of the Hualapai Mountains in northwestern Arizona.

PELICANS, WATERFOWL — A notable dispersal of Brown Pelicans into the Region occurred, with at least 25 individuals reported from s.w. and s.e. Arizona, all after July 15.



Two Fulvous Whistling Ducks (rarely reported in Arizona in recent years) were noted around July 1 at Cibola N.W.R. (GC) and another was in a nearby flooded field July 13 (RD); these records in the LCV are undoubtedly part of the same pattern of summer dispersal as that which brings the species to California's Imperial Valley. A ♀ N. Shoveler with a brood of three near Luna, s.w. New Mexico, June 25 (RAF) provided a first local breeding record.

RAPTORS — An ad. Goshawk seen June 21 in the Hualapai Mts., Ariz. (KVR), was the first evidence that the species might breed in this isolated range. In New Mexico, Goshawk nests were reported from the Jemez, Sangre de Cristo, and Jicarilla Mts., and the species was also sighted in several other ranges.

A near-ad. Bald Eagle was seen July 25 in the Canadian Canyon w. of Roy, N. Mex. (Dick Brown); this is the first recent summer record there and perhaps the most definite one ever. An ad. pair in Cottonwood Canyon, Zuni Mts., N. Mex., July 1 - 2 (Wendy Brown) was also very unusual. In Arizona, ten pairs of ad. Bald Eagles were on territory this season. Seven nests were active, all on the Salt and Verde Rivers, and a total of seven young fledged successfully.

An injured fledgling Marsh Hawk was found July 25 near Portales, N. Mex. (*vide* Scott Brown), probably representing an infrequent instance of local breeding. In Arizona where the species is not currently known to nest, there were early sightings of singles n. of Ehrenberg July 19 (GHR,BW) and e. of Bisbee July 22 (†HPL); in addition, a pair was seen sporadically through the season s. of Apache Pass, s.e. Ariz. (RR).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS — Common Snipe were present for the fourth consecutive summer at Los Ojos (Parkview) in n. New Mexico (two on June 22, JPH), but could not be found in the nearby Canjilon area, where present last year. The species is not known to summer regularly elsewhere in the Region. A Long-billed Curlew w. of Magdalena, N. Mex., May 31 (JPH) was probably on its breeding grounds, but in an area where now infrequently reported.

The LCV produced an impressive number of Whimbrels for Arizona, with one at Martinez L., July 7 - 9 (SFu), one across the river from Picacho S.P., July 13 (ph.,KVR,DB), another four at Martinez L., July 15 (JDB), one near Poston July 18 (GHR), and one s. of Bullhead City July 28 (BW). KVR points out that the increase in records may be due in part to increased coverage of flooded fields.



Whimbrel with Willets, Lower Colorado River, July 13, 1978. Photo/ Ken Rosenberg.

The third summer record of California Gull in New Mexico was established by 45 birds (mainly adults) seen June 24 (JPH) at Heron L., the same locality where 31 were recorded in July 1975. One was collected June 27 (CGS) for the first state specimen. A Franklin's Gull was reported June 6 (HK) at Luna L., White Mts., a part of Arizona from which there are few records; also notable were three on June 5 and two on June 25 at Holloman L., near Alamogordo (LM).

DOVES, CUCKOOS — The White-winged Dove continues to expand N in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico, albeit in small numbers. At least one probable breeding pair was present from mid-April through the summer at Albuquerque (PT); others were again present at Socorro (PB) and Alamogordo (LM), with nesting noted at the latter point July 8 - 16 (Gerri Smith).

A Groove-billed Ani was well-described and definitively photographed at Oasis S.P., near Portales, June 15 (DD) for New Mexico's first summer record.

OWLS, NIGHTJARS — A Screech Owl at Cottonwood Gulch, N. Mex., from May 24 through at least June 19 (AMc) was apparently the first record for the Zuni Mts., since 1887. A Short-eared Owl found June 9 near Sunrise L., White Mts. (EC, KK), provided a first summer record for Arizona.

In the area n. of Tucson where a Buff-collared Nightjar was found in May, the species was heard and seen sporadically as late as July 19. On July 18, there were definitely at least two individuals calling at this location (DSz, RSt, DWF *et al.*).

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS — Five Black Swifts were seen July 19 (JPH *et al.*) at over 12,000 ft above L. Peak, e. of Santa Fe, the same area where five were seen in early August 1977. These records could indicate the presence of a local breeding population; the species has not yet been found nesting in New Mexico. Chimney Swifts summered in Tucson for the third consecutive year, with five seen June 30 (BH) being the maximum count.

The **Plain-capped Starthroat** (*Heliomaster constantii*), recorded but once before in the United States, made news this summer. One probable individual was glimpsed in Sycamore Canyon June 17 (DSz, SP); another was seen briefly but well s.w. of Patagonia June 24 (E.A. Cardiff *et al.*) and in the same general area an unfamiliar large, long-billed hummer was seen July 15 (Liz Mills). Finally, one was found at a feeder in Patagonia July 15 (Steve Larson), and this bird was seen by many and photographed through July 20. All of these sightings were within a few miles of Nogales, where the only previous United States record was established in September 1969. This species might be recorded in s. Arizona more often if hummingbird feeders were not so scarce around the 4000-ft level.

The second and third records of Rivoli's Hummingbird in the White Mts. region of e.c. Arizona were provided by an ad. male at Greer June 3 - 11 (BB *et al.*) and another at South Fork Ranch near Springerville June 16 - Sept. 3 (BJo); occurrences of the species n. of the Graham Mts. have been few and scattered. An apparent Blue-throated Hummingbird was present during the period at Mogollon, N. Mex. (Bill & Nikki English); this would be a local first, and perhaps the fourth credible record for the state n. of the immediate Mexican border area. Another individual was rumored to have been present nearby at Luna during the period (*vide* R. Jenks).

The Berylline Hummingbird is rapidly becoming a summer staple in Arizona. This year one appeared at Ramsey Canyon June 8, a new early record; by June 18 there were clearly two present, in July there may have been as many as *five* adults, and the species was present well into September for a new *late* record. In addition, a nest was found (second for the U.S.), which fledged two young (details to be published elsewhere). This was the fourth consecutive (sixth or seventh overall) summer of occurrence for the species in the U.S.

BECARDS, FLYCATCHERS — Two pairs of Rose-throated Becards with nests were found June 17 - 18 in Sycamore Canyon, Ariz. (DSz, BH, SP). The only earlier records for Sycamore, previously unpublished, were of singles May 2 - 8, 1972 (J. Comfort) and June 12, 1977 (BH).

Thick-billed Kingbirds continued to expand and consolidate their Arizona range. The species was present in good numbers in "traditional" locations this summer. At Oro Blanco and California Gulch, where first re-

corded last summer, the species was found again this year June 13 - 14 (GM,PW,H.Brokaw *et al.*). In addition, one was n. of Nogales June 10 (KJZ), three were found in June in Sycamore Canyon (DSz,BH *et al.*), and three were found in Brown Canyon on the e. side of the Baboquivari Mts. (SM,BR), the latter being the westernmost summering locality yet discovered. Both Sycamore and Brown Canyons also hosted Sulphurbellied Flycatchers w. of the species' previously reported range, with four pairs in Sycamore June 17 - 18 (DSz,SP,KGr) and three individuals in Brown (SM,BR); previously unpublished were sightings of the species in Sycamore Canyon in 1968, 1971, 1973, 1976 and 1977 (GM *et al.*).

A Tropical Kingbird seen June 5 at B.W. Delta (KVR,GHR) was well w. and n. of the species' breeding range, and may have been an "overshooting" migrant. The only recent summer records of the E. Phoebe in New Mexico are from the vicinity of El Pueblo, San Miguel County, where the species was noted July 4 this year (WH). A Black Phoebe at Cottonwood Gulch July 29 (AMc) was apparently the first specific record for the Zuni Mts. of New Mexico, which are n. of the species' usual limits.

First found summering (and breeding) in the Zuni Mts. last year, the Dusky Flycatcher was found again this summer in that range, with two in Kettner Canyon June 10 - 11 (AMc). Two Gray Flycatchers were noted June 14 (JPH) in the Jicarilla Mts., N. Mex., at the s.e. limit of the breeding range, where first reported last year. A Coues' Flycatcher that sang on several occasions July 6 at Glenwood, N. Mex. (BCM), was at an unusually low elevation for summer and established a first local record.

SWALLOWS, CORVIDS — Historically unknown as breeders in the isolated Hualapai Mts. of Arizona, Violet-green Swallows were "fairly common" there in July 1977; this June the species was again common there, and three nests were found (KVR,AEH *et al.*). Tree Swallows, first found nesting in Arizona in 1973 n. of the Grand Canyon, are now colonizing (or being detected in) the White Mts. region. A nest was found (and other adults seen carrying material) at Lee Valley Res., May 28 (DSz *et al.*), a pair was at Scott's L., near Show Low May 29 (DSz *et al.*), and at least one pair was near Sunrise June 10 - 11 (KK,EC). Six Purple Martins seen over the higher elevations of the Animas Mts., N. Mex., July 1 (JPH) provided the first summer record for that range.

A White-necked Raven nest with young found July 1 along U.S.60, e. of Bernardo (JPH) established the northernmost breeding record for the Rio Grande Basin of New Mexico. Six Com. Crows were noted June 5 e. of Fence L., N. Mex., a new locality record (JPH).

TITMICE THROUGH THRASHERS — Two Plain Titmice seen July 1 in the Animas Mts., s.w. New Mexico (CGS), were at the s. periphery of the species' range and apparently provided the first local record. Red-breasted Nuthatches were recorded for the first time in summer in the Animas Mts. (two on July 1, JPH) and in the Gallina Mts., near Corona, N. Mex. (three on June 21, CGS).

A pair of Brown Creepers was found in Arizona's Hualapai Mts., in July 1977 and a singing bird was noted there this year on June 21, both sightings being in suitable breeding habitat (KVR); the species was not previously reported there in summer. Another new n. outpost for Cactus Wrens in the Rio Grande Basin of New Mexico was indicated by two seen June 17 near Correo, Valencia County (JND *et al.*); these may not represent recent range expansions so much as better coverage of remote areas by birders. A Gray Catbird was seen June 3 near Portal (SHS); there is one previous spring record there (May 1976). A Sage Thrasher was found June 5 e. of Fence L., N. Mex., for the second consecutive summer of occurrence in that s. peripheral locality (JPH).

THRUSHES, KINGLETS — The Am. Robin was another new summering species for the Hualapai Mts., with one singing there June 21 (KVR) and two seen June 25 (ML). The species was also present again (two birds) in the lowland locality of Willow Valley in the LCV, and probably bred (*vide* KVR).

Except for a tentative sighting on June 1 the Veery could not be found at Springerville, its only "regular" locality in the Region, where recorded in the summers of 1936 and 1975 - 77. However, at least one Swainson's Thrush was present and singing in the same place throughout June (BJo *et al.*). This area is at a lower elevation than any of the few points where Swainson's has been found summering in Arizona previously.

At least five singing ♂ Ruby-crowned Kinglets were found in the Hualapai Mts., June 21 (KVR,GHR,TB); this is another new summering species for that range. This kinglet is rather local in summer in the drier mountains of New Mexico, so its presence in Diener Canyon, Zuni Mts., June 9 - 10 (AMc) was noteworthy.

VIREOS — A singing Red-eyed Vireo was seen at B.W. Delta June 28 (KVR); Arizona has a number of odd summer records like this. Another addition to the summer avifauna of the Hualapai Mts. was the Warbling Vireo: several were seen there in July 1977, and three were singing there June 21 this year (KVR,AEH,TB,GHR).

WARBLERS — As usual, the "spring" occurrences of vagrant e. warblers continued into June. The highlight in this category was a **Bay-breasted Warbler** at Capulin Spring, Sandia Mts., N. Mex., June 24 (JND); also notable (although probably annual in Arizona in late spring) was an Ovenbird at Portal June 19 (KGa). A good scattering of N. Parulas was recorded in Arizona, with a female near Springerville May 30, a male there June 3 - 7 (BJo), one in Ramsey Canyon May 30 - June 1 (RH,WD), one in Madera Canyon June 2 (LJ), one at Globe June 7 (BJa), one at Prescott June 7 (CST), and one in California Gulch July 9 (KGr).

Of less excitement but possibly more significance were certain developments regarding summer-resident warblers. At least two pairs of Olive Warblers nested in the Sierra Prieta w. of Prescott, Ariz. (CST); this was a new W extension for the species. The Black-throated Gray Warbler was another addition to the breeding list for the Hualapai Mts.: a pair was noted feeding a young cowbird there in July 1977 and a pair seen there June 21

this year acted as if their nest was nearby (KVR,AEH). The Red-faced Warbler — first seen in the Hualapais in May 1977 — appeared there again this year, with one singing male June 21 (KVR), several birds seen June 25 (ML), and one still present July 30 (BW). Two more records came from the Grand Canyon, n. of the known breeding range: one on the North Rim June 10, 1977 (Mark Larson, *fide* RR), and one on the South Rim near Grand Canyon Village Aug. 5 this year (T. Manns, *fide* Bryan Brown).

Five Wilson's Warblers were found June 23 near Canjilon, N. Mex. (JPH); this species may summer regularly in the San Juan Mts. Along the S. Fork of the Little Colorado R., near Springerville, Ariz., where the Am. Redstart has bred, two singing males were found in June (BJo,JW *et al.*), but evidently neither was paired.

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS — The northward distribution of Scott's Oriole in New Mexico is still being clarified, so of interest were the following records of singles in new or peripheral areas: near Fence L., June 5 (JPH), near La Cienega June 10 (J.R. Travis), near Torreon June 25 (C. Hundertmark), and El Pueblo July 4 (WH).

Seven Great-tailed Grackle nests, the first ever to be actually found in the San Francisco Valley of New Mexico (although fledged young have been seen in the past), were located at Glenwood late May — early June (CLH,JPH). The nests were in trees, evidently because of the destruction of the marsh where past nesting probably occurred; tree nest sites are seldom used in New Mexico except in the Las Cruces area. A ♂ Great-tailed seen June 11 at Snowflake, Ariz., n. of the current breeding range, probably reflected continuing N expansion (KK,JW,EC).

An unmarked egg in a Hooded Oriole nest at Pleasanton in late June, plus a fledgling cowbird at an earlier nest (L.&M. Sumner), were probable evidence that the Bronzed Cowbird now breeds in the San Francisco Valley of New Mexico — although it is still very rarely seen there.

The extended migration periods of the W. Tanager make it difficult to establish summer residency in this species, but several seen in the Hualapai Mts., this June were mostly in pairs, with the males singing (KVR *et al.*); this would be a new breeding species for that range. A sub-adult ♂ Scarlet Tanager was seen June 29 on Sonoita Cr., near Patagonia (RSt). There are only about half a dozen previous Arizona records, none of them for summer dates.

FRINGILLIDS — The Cardinal is apparently expanding its range in the LCV. At new locations were one at the n. end of Imperial N.W.R., June 10 (GHR), a male at Cibola N.W.R., in early August (JDB,GHR), and two males in Yuma all summer (*fide* KVR). A ♂ Painted Bunting was seen near Sierra Vista July 30 (GB *et al.*) and another was near Tombstone Aug. 4 (AC); this species was formerly known as a regular late-summer migrant through s.e. Arizona, but it has seldom been detected in recent years.

Evening Grosbeaks were widely reported, with good numbers in the Sandia Mts., and unusual summer records in the Gallina and Jicarilla Mts. of New Mexico.

Notable breeding stations included Santa Fe (first for the city — Mickey Lang), Garden Canyon in the Huachuca Mts., Ariz. (second consecutive year, DD *et al.*), and the Sierra Prieta w. of Prescott (first definite record, CST).

Although there have been several recent spring records of Purple Finch in the Portal area, a female seen there June 19 (†KGA) was certainly unexpected. A new summering locality for Cassin's Finch in New Mexico was the Sandia Mts., where noted June 26 — July 22 (JND *et al.*). The first nesting attempt for Am. Goldfinch in the Region was established by a pair building a nest found May 31 at Teec Nos Pos, n.e. Ariz. (AG, ST,KVR,GHR). Lawrence's Goldfinches might have bred in the B.W. Delta, where one was heard as late as June 19 (KVR). Exceptionally late was a Lark Bunting n. of San Simon, Ariz., June 3 (WS,SHS).

Continuing investigations (SM,KGr *et al.*) showed Five-striped Sparrows to be present again this summer in all the "new" Arizona locations where they were discovered last year (AB 31:1175). A significant new area — the westernmost known to date — was Baboquivari Canyon, on the w. side of the Baboquivari Mts., where one pair was found July 20 (SM,BR,DSz); the species had not been sought there previously.

After being exceptionally numerous over much of s.e. Arizona and adjacent areas last winter and spring, Cassin's Sparrows seemed oddly scarce in some parts of s.-c. Arizona during July. Numbers also appeared to be reduced on U.S.F.&W.S. Breeding Bird Survey routes on the e. plains of New Mexico, but several critical routes were not run in 1978. A single Cassin's seen June 19 near Cottonwood Gulch, N. Mex. (AMc), was definitely out of normal range.

Three Sage Sparrows were carefully identified s.w. of Horse Springs, Catron County June 16 (BCM,DM) for New Mexico's southernmost summer record ever. Inexplicable were single ad. White-crowned Sparrows in the Lower Sonoran Zone at Tucson July 1 (DE, LB,KK) and near Parker July 8 (KVR); both were of pale-colored forms.

CORRIGENDUM — Delete records of Black-tailed Gnatcatchers in New Mexico, AB 32:1042, as being either equivocal or Blue-gray Gnatcatchers.

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