

SOUTHWEST REGION

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Temperatures over most of the Region remained mild throughout the fall, markedly so in some areas. In Phoenix, to cite one case, the mean monthly temperatures set new all time highs four months in a row, September through December; and temperatures were broken or approached in many other localities.

This mild weather was accompanied by a lingering of migrants, particularly at middle elevations. For example, at Willcox, Arizona on November 20 and 26 —by which dates the local shorebird population is normally reduced to a few Killdeer and Least Sand-



Brown Booby. Lake Havasu, Ariz., Sept. 3, 1977. Compare with imm. Gannet, p. 150. Photo/ Robert Witzeman.

pipers—Stotz and Monson found Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Dunlin, dowitchers, and Spotted and Western Sandpipers. Other examples of this sort were, literally, too numerous to list, especially under our newly reduced word allotment. Taken together, the myriads of slightly late migrants probably add up to the biggest avian event of the season; taken individually, the majority are simply not spectacular enough to report. Circumstances sometimes force us to concentrate on the birdwatching highlights rather than the events of greatest ornithological significance.

The birdwatching highlights of the season, although they were few, were spectacular. In late August—early September, a series of birds normally considered pelagic drew birders from all over Arizona (and much of California) to Lake Havasu on the Lower Colorado River. In late October and November, a bizarre Mexican species drew birders from all over the Southwest (and much of the nation) to Cave Creek Canyon in the Chiricahuas. The latter instance was a variation on a familiar theme: after all, nature enthusiasts have been coming to Cave Creek for years to look for the trogons there. This time, however—as detailed beyond—it was a different species of trogon.

[In the interest of space we are using certain abbreviations for outstanding areas. "Bell L." refers to a small oasis in the grasslands of s.e. New Mexico which turned up many unusual species again this fall. "B.W. Delta" denotes the point where the Bill Williams River enters Lake Havasu, on the Lower Colorado River (hereafter, L.C.R.). The Lower Colorado Valley in a larger sense is initialled L.C.V.]

LOONS — The Arctic Loon's former status of "very rare" in Arizona has been modified somewhat by a gradual accumulation of records from the L.C.R. This fall, three were found, along with nine Commons on L. Havasu Nov. 20 (KK *et al.*); sightings of the species on Havasu continued through December.

BOOBIES THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS — The discovery of a **Brown Booby** at L. Havasu Aug. 19 (GM) marked the beginning of a series of visits and subsequent finds by birders of other sea birds that are rare or new for Arizona. It was still present at the end of the period. A probable second Brown Booby was on

L. Havasu Nov. 20 (RW,JW,KK *et al.*). Even rarer was the **Blue-footed Booby** above Davis Dam on L. Mohave Sept. 7 (CSL), and another, or the same, on L. Havasu Sept. 14 - 24 (JD,SCa,M&DK). Both species of boobies have wandered N to the L.C.R., from the Gulf in late summer and fall only a few times, most recently during the fall of 1971, and the Brown only in 1973.

An Anhinga near Alamos, Son., Nov. 23 - 24 (KK) was north of the species' usual range in w. Mexico.

The Magnificent Frigatebird is being seen more regularly in its summer northward wanderings to the L.C.V. One was seen on L. Havasu Aug. 31 (AEH).

HERONS, SPOONBILLS — A Louisiana Heron, a casual stray to Arizona, was found near Nogales Oct. 29 (†G&LMA). Six Cattle Egrets at Evans L., s.w. New Mexico, in early September established a local first (DMc, *fide* RAF). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night Heron was seen at Bell L., Aug. 31 - Sept. 1 and Sept. 6 - 7 (JPH *et al.*); the bird was collected on the latter date after it was found fatally injured. The species is a rare autumn stray into s. New Mexico.

Three Roseate Spoonbills from the summer's minor invasion remained through August s. of Parker; the last one there was seen Oct. 2 (LC). Another individual was seen Sept. 7 in Arizona about 10 mi n. of Needles, Calif. (CSL).

WATERFOWL — Four White-fronted Geese at White Mountain L., Sept. 16 (GM), were apparently the first ever recorded in n.e. Arizona. An Oldsquaw was at Nogales Nov. 13 (CM,ST *et al.*); the species is casual away from the L.C.V. The only scoters noted in Arizona this fall were one ♂ White-winged on Nelson Res., s. of Springerville Nov. 24 - 26 (†DD,JB) and one ♂ Surf below Davis Dam Nov. 30 (CSL).

RAPTORS — A near ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk** was present in B.W. Delta from at least Oct. 29 through December (†KVR,AEH,DW *et al.*). This second record for Arizona was perhaps not unexpected, in light of the records in s.e. California during autumn 1976 (AB 31:223). An imm. Mississippi Kite reported

Sept. 7 near Patagonia (BW) was possibly a migrant from the breeding colony near Winkelman, Ariz.

QUAIL, CRANES — Twelve Montezuma Quail found Oct. 17 in the Cooks Range n. of Deming (HZ *et al.*) were the first to be recorded in that area. Two Chukars seen Nov. 11 near Alamogordo (*fide* LM) may have been recent escapes or introductions; the species is known to be established in the wild only in the Farmington area.

The first Whooping Cranes to arrive at Bosque del Apache N.W.R. were two on Oct. 15—one of these being the “mystery bird” that has put in one appearance each fall in 1975, 1976, and 1977, but has otherwise disappeared for the remainder of the year. By Nov. 30 there were five birds in the Rio Grande Valley, one near Las Vegas, and apparently three to the south (probably in Mexico). The year-group breakdown was four birds from the 1975 transplant, three from 1976, and two from 1977.

SHOREBIRDS — Two to four Snowy Plovers were seen Oct. 7 - 16 (APN *et al.*) at Morgan L., n.w. New Mexico where the species is rare. A **Ruddy Turnstone** at L. Havasu Sept. 3 (†KK,DSz,EC) was about the seventh for Arizona. The elusive Whimbrel occurred again in the L.C.V., with singles s. of Parker Aug. 3 (AEH).

A probable Semipalmated Sandpiper was photographed at Willcox Aug. 11 (J. Langham) and four to six (identified by call as well as morphological characters) were definitely present Aug. 13-17 (RS, KK *et al.*). Arizona has few records of this difficult species, and its true status in the state is unknown, but the occurrence of multiples at Willcox may reflect the Great Plains element in that locality's migration.

JAEGERS THROUGH SKIMMERS —



Long-tailed Jaeger, Lake Havasu, Ariz., Sept. 4, 1977. First state record. Photo/Robert Witzeman.

S.A.

The most surprising discovery of the “Colorado R. Seabird Group” was the presence of *all three* jaeger species on L. Havasu during early fall. Two ad. **Long-tailed Jaegers** Sept. 4 (ph. RW, †JW) and one Sept. 5 (KK,DSz,EC,GR) supplied the first confirmed records for Arizona. A probable imm. Long-tailed was observed on L. Havasu Sept. 14, along with an ad. **Parasitic Jaeger** (JD,SCa). Single imm. Parasitics were also recorded on Havasu Aug. 27 (DSz,EC,GG), Sept. 3 (ST,KVR *et al.*), and Sept. 5 (KK,GR *et al.*); there are few previous records of this species in Arizona. One imm. **Pomarine Jaeger** was on L. Havasu Sept. 3 - 4, and two were seen Sept. 5 (†KK,DSz, ph.RW, †JW *et al.*); Arizona had only two previous records of this species. The identifications of immatures may be officially listed as tentative, in deference to the known difficulties involved, but direct size comparisons and study of characteristic rectrix shapes would seem to have precluded error. The occurrence of jaegers on reservoirs of the L.C.R. may be a more regular phenomenon than the scarcity of previous records would seem to indicate. It should be noted that all jaegers sighted this fall were from boats well out in the widest portions of L. Havasu, and none was seen from shore; obviously, the birds could have gone undetected in the past. Future September trips to L. Havasu should clarify the situation.

Two Heermann's Gulls were at Phoenix Oct. 6 (RBr) and an immature was s. of Parker Oct. 15 (KC); a few now wander into Arizona each year. Three Sabine's Gulls were noted: one s. of Parker Sept. 18 - 20 (BE,TB,AEH), one at Tucson Oct. 2 (HF), and one on upper L. Havasu Oct. 13 (GM); this species is a regular transient in Arizona in small numbers, especially in the L.C.V. A Caspian Tern was at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Oct. 8 - 16 (MW *et al.*), for one of the few New Mexico records of the species. Arizona's second **Black Skimmer**, only three months after the first, was on upper L. Havasu Sept. 1 - 3 (PL,DR *et al.*; ph. RW,KVR).



Black Skimmer with Com. Terns, Lake Havasu, Ariz., Sept. 3, 1977. Second state record. Photo/Robert Witzeman.

PIGEONS THROUGH SWIFTS — A lone Band-tailed Pigeon was seen at B.W. Delta Oct. 28 (KVR); the species is an extremely rare straggler to the L.C.V. At Alamogordo, N. Mex., where the White-winged Dove is apparently a recent colonizer, the last bird of the fall was seen Oct. 9 (LM). An Inca Dove near Socorro Nov. 7 - 8 (PB) was north of the usual range. A Groove-billed Ani, a casual wanderer to the Region, was seen near Roswell Oct. 20 (P. White, MW) and Nov. 14 (JPH).

A Pygmy Owl at Kirtland, N. Mex., Nov. 21 (CS) was far from its normal habitat in the mountains. Feathers of a Spotted Owl were found Oct. 16 in a canyon on Mt. Taylor n.e. of Grants, N. Mex., establishing the first record for the area.

Five Black Swifts were seen over L. Peak near Santa Fe Aug. 5 (JPH *et al.*); the species is rather rarely observed in New Mexico.

HUMMINGBIRDS — The ♂ Lucifer Hummingbird at Portal noted in our previous report was last seen Sept. 9, but a female was present there Aug. 31 - Oct. 8 (SSpf); an imm. male was at Ramsey Canyon Aug. 25 - 26 (BY), and a female visited Bisbee Oct. 6 - 9 (†DD). These records bring the Arizona total for 1977 up to a minimum of eight individuals, indicating the species' rapid increase here.

The expanding Anna's Hummingbird occurred again in New Mexico. On the e. side of the Sandia Mts., one male was present probably from September - Dec. 10 (Mrs. R. Girard) and another Oct. 21 - Nov. 18 (MH); another was in the Las Cruces area during the period (*vide* W. Baltosser). Very unusual, as to both area and season, were two Rivoli's Hummingbirds on the e. side of the Sandias Oct. 30 into December (MH *et al.*).

TROGONS, WOODPECKERS —

S.A.

The event of the season (if not of the decade) was the *invasion* of **Eared Trogons** (*Euptilotis neoxenus*) to s.e. Arizona. Although this Mexican endemic occurs north to within 100 mi of the U.S. border in n.w. Chihuahua, it has been considered both sedentary and scarce; so ornithologists were astounded to learn of the discovery of an ad. male in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahuas Oct. 23 (Rick Taylor). This bird was seen sporadically through Oct. 31 and almost continuously from Nov. 9 on (ph. AC,BS). Rumors of a second individual were confirmed when a female was seen accompanying the male Nov. 16. By late November there were probably *four* birds in Cave Creek Canyon; three were seen together Nov. 30, but all disappeared promptly thereafter, with the last sighting of two Dec. 2. Amazingly, *another* ad. male was found 75 mi away in Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Dec. 1 - 3 (BJo *et al.*). It would be interesting to know if these occurrences were related to habitat and food supply changes in Mexico. The birds appeared to be feeding principally on madrone berries. See also p. 135-139.

The second report of Pileated Woodpecker in New Mexico was of one at Bandelier Nat'l Mon., from early in the period (date uncertain) until early December (R. Wauer *et al.*).

FLYCATCHERS — An E. Kingbird was s. of Parker Sept. 7-8 (PDM); the species is extremely rare in the L.C.V. (*A.S.U.). A Great Crested Flycatcher was banded Sept. 7 (JPH) at Bell L., s.e. N. Mex., where it is rare but probably regular. Six Least Flycatchers mist-netted in the same locality Sept. 6 - 8 (JPH) added further support to last year's discovery that the species migrates in numbers through the Staked Plains of e. New Mexico.

WRENS THROUGH PHAINOPEPLA — Five or six Cactus Wrens seen Sept. 4 in the Ladron Mts. (O.&L. Van Buskirk) established a new northernmost record for New Mexico.

Near Springerville, at the site of Arizona's best-known Gray Catbird colony, late individuals were seen Oct. 16 (ST,KVR) and Nov. 24 (DD). Brown Thrasher records in Arizona this fall were singles at Teec Nos Pos Oct. 15 (ST,AG,GR,KVR) and Tucson Oct. 27 (CC).

One or more Varied Thrushes were seen sporadically from Oct. 23 on in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahuas (*vide* SSpf), five were found Nov. 19-20 in B.W. Delta (†KK,KVR *et al.*), and one at Grand Canyon Nat'l Mon., Nov. 30 (Mary Beth Rifley *et al.*); Arizona had less than 20 previous records.

A ♀ Phainopepla seen Aug. 3 at Socorro (PB) established a new northernmost record for New Mexico.

SHRIKES, VIREOS — For the second consecutive year New Mexico received a major invasion of N. Shrikes, with at least ten records by the end of the period; southern occurrences were at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Oct. 14 and later (WS), at Bosque del Apache Nov. 20 (RLT), and at Luna Nov. 25 (GM,LS). The movement was less noticeable in Arizona (with few observers in appropriate areas), but a remarkable report was received of one in the L.C.V., s. of Parker Nov. 21 (TB *et al.*); one was collected in the same area sometime in December (*A.S.U.).

A migrant Gray Vireo, rare in the L.C.V., was seen n. of Ehrenberg Oct. 1 (PDM). A Solitary Vireo collected Sept. 8 at Bell L. (JPH) was New Mexico's first specimen of the e. race *V. s. solitarius* (*vide* A.R. Phillips). A Red-eyed Vireo at Farmington, N. Mex., Oct. 22 - 23 (APN) was rare for the area and unusually late. A **Philadelphia Vireo** was at Phoenix Oct. 6 - 7 (ST,†GR *et al.*); Arizona had about six previous records.

WARBLERS — The fall warbler migration in Arizona was considered lackluster in some areas, and "simply terrible" (DSz) at Tucson, with most species present in low numbers and few vagrants found despite increased coverage.

Genuine vagrants recorded in the Region this season included the following: **Golden-winged Warbler**, one at Bandelier Nat'l Mon., N. Mex., Aug. 21 (R.F. Rudell); one ♂ **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Wupatki Nat'l Mon., Ariz., Oct. 18 (†PS,NS) and another at

Patagonia Nov. 9 (†JB *et al.*), one ♀ **Magnolia Warbler** at Bell L., Sept. 7 (JPH); and a Chestnut-sided Warbler at Tucson Sept. 13 (DSz,EC).

No fewer than four **Black-throated Green Warblers** were found in Arizona: two at different locations near Phoenix Oct. 6 (†GR,ST), one on the San Pedro R., Oct. 22 (ST,KVR), and one s.w. of Phoenix Nov. 3 (†GR). Single Ovenbirds were found in different areas of B.W. Delta Sept. 5 (DSz) and Sept. 14 (LC), and an amazing *five* were at Teec Nos Pos Oct. 15 (KVR,ST,GR,AG)—bringing the total found in Arizona this year up to 13. The species may well be a regular rare migrant here. A **Kentucky Warbler** at Phoenix Nov. 3 - 5 (†GR *et al.*) provided the first confirmable fall record for the state, and only the second record away from s.e. Arizona, where the species occurs casually in spring.

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS — Two “Baltimore” Orioles were netted Sept. 7 at Bell L. (JPH), for the first Lea County records of a form which is quite rare in New Mexico. A ♂ Scott’s Oriole near Silver City Nov. 26 (RAF) may have been the same bird that has wintered there for three consecutive years. Two Summer Tanagers seen Sept. 14 at Alamogordo (LM) provided a first record for this locality, which is in the hiatus between the lower Pecos and Rio Grande Valleys; one at Pleasanton, N. Mex., Oct. 29 (JPH) was quite late.

FRINGILLIDS — A ♀ Painted Bunting seen Aug. 25 near Portal (†D. Wolf) was one of the few recent reports for s.e. Arizona. Single Dickcissels, rare transients in Arizona, were noted Sept. 10 at Tucson (DSz,KK,RN) and Sept. 12 at Lakeside (GM). The only Purple Finches recorded this fall were two in B.W. Delta Oct. 31 (KVR) and one there Nov. 19 - 20 (KK,PDM).

Baird’s Sparrows are currently considered rare in New Mexico, so 10+ seen in the Animas Valley Sept. 25 (JPH, Greg Schmitt) were noteworthy, as was one seen and well-described at Cochiti L. near Santa Fe Oct. 9 (B. Isaacs *et al.*). A road-killed individual of this species picked up Oct. 31 in Tucson (B. Henry) was the only recent record for the area.

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