

SOUTHWEST REGION

/John P. Hubbard, Janet Witzeman, and Kenn Kaufman

Mild autumn temperatures and low precipitation into December and later in the Region, and individuals of several species lingered past normal departure times—or even wintered. Among the more notable examples were Long-billed Curlews, Franklin's Gulls, White-winged Doves, nighthawks, and gnatcatchers in southern New Mexico—plus House Wrens, Mockingbirds, Lark Buntings, and Lark Sparrows there and farther north. In southern Arizona the species affected included Olivaceous Cormorant, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, and White-faced Ibises. Both states also featured straggling individuals of other species, e.g., Pectoral Sandpiper, Sabine's Gulls, Solitary Vireo, and Wilson's Warbler in New Mexico and Short-billed Dowitcher and Eastern Kingbird in Arizona. On the other hand, in the latter area there was a dearth of the usual "warm weather" warblers, such as Orange-crowneds and Yellow-rumpeds.

Mildness and dryness aside, some boreal or montane species still made their normal appearances in the Region—but also in numbers and/or in areas not normally observed. These included Oldsquaws, Pine Grosbeaks, and Cassin's Finches in both states, White-fronted Geese in Arizona, and Goshawks, Yellow-shafted Flickers, Northern Shrikes and Snow Buntings in New Mexico. On the other hand, Bald Eagle numbers were down in the latter state, perhaps owing to mild conditions north of there. Fringillid numbers were low for most species in the grasslands of southeastern Arizona, apparently owing to lack of seed crops following sparse summer precipitation.

Rarities included Arizona's first verified records of Kiskadee Flycatcher and Field Sparrow, and a belated report of Greater Scaup for New Mexico.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — Two Arctic Loons remained at Painted Rock Dam at least until Jan. 27 (DSz *et al.*). A small dark grebe at San Simon Cienaga, N. Mex., Dec. 2 and probably Nov. 29 (†RMo *et al.*) was thought to have been a Least, a species unverified in the state. White Pelicans are rare in winter away from the Lower Colorado

Valley (hereafter, L.C.V.), so notable were two at Picacho Res., Jan. 12 and eight at Painted Rock Dam Jan. 13 (DT), and one at Prescott Dec. 3-13 (CT). Two winter records of Olivaceous Cormorant from Arizona were: one at Mittry L., L.C.V., where extremely rare, Dec. 14 until at least Jan. 4 (KVR, AH, ST), and one at L. Patagonia (BH). A few White-faced Ibises again wintered at Cibola N.W.R. (RM).

WATERFOWL —

Nine Whistling Swans were present near Douglas Dec. 8 (DD); the species is uncommon in s.e. Arizona. Notable goose records were: one White-fronted at Nogales all winter—with five there Feb. 17 (BH)—and a Ross' at San Simon Cienaga Dec. 10-Jan. 1 (RM.). Black-bellied Whistling Ducks are rare in Arizona in winter, but five spent the season at Tucson (DSz *et al.*). A ♂ Black Duck at the Phoenix Zoo in January and February (LD, ST, GM *et al.*) was free-flying and quite wild, but its origin is not known. A hybrid ♂ Eur. X Am. Wigeon at Mammoth Feb. 3 (DSz) was a different individual from one there last spring. An ad. ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye at Imperial Dam Jan. 31 (ST) provided the farthest s. record for the species in the L.C.V., and probably the world. Only 15 ± were below Davis Dam during December, January, and decreased to two in February; two were below Parker Dam Feb. 3, and one was 5 mi s. of Parker during the winter (RM). Barrow's Goldeneye was also recorded again at Prescott—2-4 males were at Watson L., Dec. 26-Feb. 22 (CT). Two ♀ Oldsquaws remained at L. McMillan, N. Mex., at least into January (WHO, ph. D&SH); single females were also at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Dec. 22 (†J. H. Epler), and below Davis Dam from late December to at least Feb. 6 (VM, RM). Unusual was a White-winged Scoter at Bluewater L., N. Mex., Dec. 2-18 (†AMc).



RAPTORS THROUGH GALLIFORMS

— A few Goshawks wandered to lower areas of New Mexico, including singles near Stanley Feb. 5 (WS), Bitter Lake N.W.R., in December (†MA *et al.*), and one near Cliff Dec. 29 (Ralph Fisher *et al.*). Only 140 Bald Eagles were counted in New Mexico during January, compared to 273 in January 1979. The actual decrease overall cannot be gauged, because coverage this year was lighter. However, in eight areas equally covered in the 2 years, there was a decline of 29.6% from 1979 to 1980, i.e., 114 vs 162 (*vide* JPH). In Arizona 59 Bald Eagles were counted in two aerial surveys during January (DT). Merlins were conspicuously present in New Mexico, with notable records at Bosque del Apache N.W.R. (†RLT *et al.*) and singles near Artesia Dec. 4-18 and Loving Dec. 22 (†WHO *et al.*). Very early was a pair of Am. Kestrels feeding young at Mesa, e. of Phoenix, Ariz., Feb. 22 (GR, WHO). Wild Turkeys are not now verified in the lower Pecos Valley, but a bird that may have been one was seen w. of Loving Jan. 18 (SW).

CRANES THROUGH GULLS — Worth noting were 28 Sandhill Cranes Dec. 18 at San Simon Cienaga (RM.), where not regular. Long-billed Curlews are rare in winter in New Mexico, but 87 were present e. of Artesia Dec. 5 and one s.e. of there Dec. 9 (WHO *et al.*), plus another s. of Malaga Jan. 27 (†SW). A first verified New Mexico winter

Pectoral Sandpiper was collected at L. McMillan Dec. 5-6 (WHO—*to A.S.U.); the bird appeared to be healthy and in good condition. Previously unknown in winter two Short-billed Dowitchers were present at Nogales Jan. 27 (BH). The late autumn flight of Franklin's Gulls persisted in the lower Pecos Valley with ten birds at L. McMillan Dec. 5 and seven at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Dec. 10; most extraordinary was an immature at L. McMillan Feb. 1-2 & Feb. 18 (WHO *et al.* ph.MA). A **Sabine's Gull** at White Sands Missile Range Jan. 4 († LM) provided a first winter record for New Mexico.

PIGEONS THROUGH NIGHTJARS — White-winged Doves are rare in winter in New Mexico away from Las Cruces, but one was present at Alamogordo December-February (*fide* LM) and three in Carlsbad Dec. 30 (Jim Cheek *et al.*). A single freshly dead Saw-whet Owl was found near Bill Williams Delta Dec. 21 (SG), and two birds were seen near Wenden Feb. 6 (BM). The species is rare and irregular in the lowlands of w.c. Arizona in winter. Quite unusual was a **Lesser Nighthawk** w. of Malaga Dec. 12 († SW), as were two nighthawk sp.—probably this species—at Las Cruces Dec. 15 († TM *et al.*).

WOODPECKERS — More than the usual number of Yellow-shafted Flickers showed up in New Mexico including singles at Farmington Dec. 15 (AN, H. Putnam), Española Dec. 30 (Burt Lewis *et al.*), and in Albuquerque Jan. 30 and Feb. 27 (HS). Two Gila Woodpeckers were at Portal in late December (*fide* SSpf); the species is unusual in the Chiricahua Mts. Williamson's Sapsuckers generally remained upslope, but there were singles near Bluewater L., Jan. 13, at Albuquerque Dec. 29 (Jim Karo *et al.*), and Jan. 23 (AMc) and at Nogales Jan. 20 (BH). A Hairy Woodpecker also moved down to San Simon Cienaga Dec. 18 (RMO), where unusual.

FLYCATCHERS — Arizona's second report and first documented record of **Kiskadee Flycatcher** were provided by a bird at Canoa Ranch, s. of Tucson Dec. 27 to at least Feb. 27 (Georgia Porter *et al.*, †ST, ph. LD). An E. Kingbird s. of Poston, L.C.V., Dec. 20 (EF) was probably the same one recorded near there in the fall. Late were single Cassin's Kingbird at San Simon Cienaga Dec. 9 (RM) and near Portal in late December (*fide* SSpf). Seven individual E. Phoebes in scattered localities in s. Arizona and the L.C.V., was about the normal number for this scarce winter visitant. The W. Flycatcher is rare in winter in the Region, so notable were reports of two at Cibola N.W.R., (SG, RM) and another at Cook's L., Feb. 3 (DSz).

CORVIDS THROUGH THRUSHES — Blue Jays persisted into winter at Ft. Sumner with two there Jan. 13-15, while two were seen in Artesia Jan. 28 (WHO). Common Ravens s. and e. of their known New Mexico range included ten at Ft. Sumner Jan. 13-15 and 1-4 at Sturgeon Ranch, Chaves Co., Feb. 4-8 (WHO). Somewhat unexpected were 60+ calling White-necked Ravens coming off a roost in evergreen woodland n. of Silver City Jan. 31 (JPH). The numbers of Com. Crows

wintering at Cibola N.W.R., this year increased to > 1000 in December, decreasing to 200± by Feb. 29 (*fide* RM).

Winter movements of Dippers into New Mexico nonbreeding areas included one in the Sandia Mts., Dec. 15 & Mar. 7 (RLT *et al.*) and two on Centerfire Cr., near Luna Jan. 1-20 (Dan Campbell). A Brown Thrasher was at the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary from mid-December at least to Jan. 20 (BH) more unusual was one along the Rio Magdalena in n. Sonora Jan. 14 (ST,GR); the species is a rare straggler to Mexico.

SHRIKES THROUGH PIPITS — Gnatcatchers persisted in the s.e. portion of New Mexico into December, including the areas of Roswell, Alamogordo, and Carlsbad; these are all areas where the Black-tailed is unverified and therefore gnatcatchers sighted would likely be Blue-grays; the situation there deserves detailed study. Sprague's Pipit is unusual in far w. Arizona, although a few have been noted in the L.C.V. during the past two winters; this year 2-3 wintered in Dome Valley, e. of Yuma (*fide* RM). In New Mexico, only one was detected in the southeast, near Artesia Dec. 10 (WHO)—where frequent last autumn; one or more probably this species at Las Cruces Dec. 15 († TM *et al.*) represented a new winter locality for the state. While not staging a major invasion, N. Shrikes did penetrate far S in New Mexico, i.e., an immature at Pleasanton Jan. 2 († JE, RSK) and an adult n. of L. McMillan Dec. 9 († WHO).

VIREOS, WARBLERS — A *plumbeus*-type **Solitary Vireo** was seen at Las Cruces Jan. 21 († WB, M. Delasantro); the species is rare in winter in New Mexico. A second winter record of Olive Warbler near Glenwood was of a male and two females Dec. 29 († RSK, Kate Skaggs). The only Black-and-white Warblers of the winter were one at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 22 (SG), and two at Bill Williams Delta Dec. 21 (*fide* KVR). A **Cape May Warbler** near Tucson Jan. 26-Feb. 24+ († Woody Hopf *et al.*) furnished Arizona's fourth ever and second wintering records. Also a second winter record was of a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** in Garden Canyon, Huachuca Mts., throughout the period (RS). Unusual was a Chestnut-sided at Tucson Dec. 22 (GB,AB). A Palm Warbler found at Phoenix in November was seen again Feb. 10 (KVR,GR); about half of the state records for this species have been in winter. A **Wilson's Warbler** at Carlsbad Caverns Dec. 27 († SW) represented the second winter report from the state. Four Painted Redstarts—including one banded that returned for the seventh winter!—were present at Portal (WS,SSpf).

ICTERIDS — A Streaked-backed Oriole was present along the Rio Magdalena, n. Sonora, Mex., Jan. 14 (ST,GR); the species is probably as rare in n. Sonora as it is in s. Arizona. Also present there on that date was a N. "Baltimore" Oriole (ST,GR)—a surprising occurrence and a form not as yet known in winter in Arizona. Two Rusty Blackbirds at Bell L., Lea Co., N. Mex., in late November (Granger Ward) and Dec. 2 (D&SH, ph.) constituted the only report.

FRINGILLIDS — A ♀ *Pyrrhuloxia* near Cliff Dec. 28 († JE,AMc) was only the second record for the area; a Cardinal at San Simon Cienaga Jan. 1 (RMO) was in an area where it is of infrequent occurrence. Cassin's Finches put in a good appearance in both states, at least in and near highland areas. Pine Grosbeaks moved S to several areas where infrequent: up to 25 around Snow Bowl Ski Lodge near Flagstaff in December (GLa,DRP)—with one there Feb. 8 (CB); two near Bluewater Dec. 15 († AMc) for the first record from the Zuni Mts., and 20 in the Sandia Mts., Dec. 15 (RLT *et al.*). Brown-capped Rosy Finches were also present in the Sandias in early January (D&SH).

Most unexpected were **Abert's Towhees** in the upper San Simon drainage, with one n. of Rodeo Jan. 1, and two at the Cienaga Jan. 2 († RMP *et al.*); birds were also present in the Nogales area during the winter, indicating that the species is continuing to advance up the Santa Cruz R. (BH). Seven Brown Towhees at L. McMillan Dec. 5 (WHO) seem to represent a winter incursion into the area. Two Grasshopper Sparrows were found at Cibola N.W.R. (one * to A.S.U.) in early December (RD); the bird is rare in the L.C.V. Notable winter Cassin's Sparrows were one 4 mi. e. of Loving Dec. 22 († WHO) near Rodeo Dec. 29 (Robert Scholes), and one at Phoenix Dec. 7 (ST,GR); the species is quite rare in c. Arizona and in winter in New Mexico. A Yellow-eyed Junco was reported Dec. 23 in Clanton Canyon, Peloncillo Mts., N. Mex. (D&SH), where not previously recorded. Arizona's first record of **Field Sparrow** was provided by a bird at a feeder in Ganado Jan. 10-17 (ph. WL, *fide* GM). A Golden-crowned Sparrow at Glenwood Feb. 14-29 († Dick Nelson) constituted the only New Mexico report and a first for the area. Rare in the L.C.V. two ♂ Lapland Longspurs were present s. of Poston Dec. 1-Dec. 19+ (RD,SG). A flock of 150 Chestnut-collared Longspurs n.e. of Flagstaff Jan. 20-26 (JC,CB,CH) was the first local record in some time. A flock of 33 probable Snow Buntings w. of Roswell Dec. 15 († SW *et al.*) represents an exceptional report of a species very rare in New Mexico and unknown s. of Las Vegas.

ADDENDUM — New Mexico's first verified **Greater Scaup** was taken at Hayden L., Rio Arriba Co., Oct. 25 (Wayne Prentice, *fide* and ph. JPH).

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Abbreviations: †, written details on file with the New Mexico Ornithological Society or Arizona Bird Committee; ph., photo, *, specimen; L.C.V., Lower Colorado Valley; N.W.R., National Wildlife Refuge.—**JOHN P. HUBBARD**, 2016 Valley Rio, Santa Fe N.M. 87501; **JANET WITZEMAN**, 4619 E. Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, AZ. 85018; **KENN KAUFMAN**, Tucson, AZ.

HAWKS, FALCONS — Bald Eagles were