

## SOUTHWEST REGION

/Kenneth V. Rosenberg, John P. Hubbard and Gary H. Rosenberg

After the third consecutive winter of heavy rains, annuals in the deserts and grasslands of Arizona were again lush this spring. Cooler than normal temperatures, especially in May, provided relief (at least for birders) from the normally hot conditions.

Migrant "waves" of passerines are typically nonexistent here in spring, except rarely after a well-timed storm at the height of the season. This spring produced such storm activity in early May, grounding large numbers of migrants at least in central and southwest Arizona. Terrill noted more individual warblers concentrated on the Verde River east of Phoenix May 16 than in any previous spring since 1974. Flocks of warblers and tanagers were seen in the desert away from rivers as well. Apparently no such fallout occurred farther south and east; Stotz noted migration to be poor all season at Tucson.

Despite the large numbers of migrants seen in Arizona, fewer rarities were found than in recent years. In New Mexico a higher proportion of noteworthy birds was reported, including a first record of Louisiana Waterthrush. A trip into Northern Sonora in late May hinted at the potential for new discoveries in the southern parts of our region. It should be noted that virtually all of the mesquite previously reported killed by the freeze of 1978-79 has resprouted nicely and was partially green this spring. Bird populations are expected to recover, although unfortunately, no close monitoring of these communities has been undertaken.

### LOONS THROUGH

**HERONS**—The only regional Com. Loon away from the lower Colorado River valley (hereafter LCV) was one in breeding plumage at Abiquiu L., N. Mex., Apr. 11 (JH, JT). An Arctic Loon was at an unusual location, on a small reservoir in the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., Apr. 5-19 (HS *et al.*—ph.). A Horned Grebe was seen on L. Mojave, Ariz., Mar. 25 (RM) and a breeding-plumaged individual at Heron L., N. Mex., Apr. 11 (JH, JT). The status of the two "phases" of W. Grebe is being better documented in the Region. One of each was sighted at Conchas L., N. Mex., Mar. 3 (JH). In the LCV, Martin noted the dark phase birds forming tight flocks before departing in March. After Mar. 29, only light phase birds remained to breed.

Olivaceous Cormorants were reported from L. Patagonia, Ariz., where regular, and one bird was at San Simon Cienega, s.w. N. Mex., May 6 (R. Morse).

An ad. Little Blue Heron at Laguna Seca, Rio Arriba Co., May 15 (APN—ph) was well n. of the "normal" range in New Mexico and represented a local first. A Cattle Egret at Kayenta Apr. 30 (Chuck Sexton) furnished perhaps a second record for n.e. Arizona. This species is still irregular and has not bred in the state, so the presence of 50 birds in



breeding plumage in the Dome Valley e. of Yuma throughout the period is of special interest (RM). A new breeding colony of Snowy Egrets was located near Artesia, N. Mex., with 23 birds on nests May 24, along with ten Black-crowned Night Herons on nests (MA). Two Louisiana Herons were reported from Arizona; one at Sells May 16 (V. Mowbray) and one s. of Tucson May 30 (*vide* WD).

An Am. Bittern at Bill Williams Delta (hereafter, BWD) May 26 (RM) occurred much later than usual and adds to the suspicion of breeding in the LCV.

**WATERFOWL, RAPTORS**—Five Canada Geese near Albuquerque May 17 (DH *et al.*) may represent stragglers from farther east or south. Three Ross' Geese at Ute L., N. Mex., with 100+ Snow Geese Mar. 4-5 (*vide* JH) represented a first local sighting. Another Ross' near Douglas, Ariz., remained

until Mar. 30 (DD, R. Bailowitz).

A pair of Mexican Ducks at L. McMillan, Pecos Valley, N. Mex., May 15 (WH *et al.*) may represent the first specific report from that area. A ♀ Wood Duck was seen at Bitter L. N.W.R. as late as May 8-14 (MA, WHO). More than 72 Red-breasted Mergansers at Loving Mar. 16 (MA, WHO) represented a very high count for New Mexico.

Arizona's borders were penetrated—barely—this spring by two different **White-tailed Kites**, for about the sixth and seventh state records. One was observed at Cibola N.W.R. in the LCV Mar. 22 (†BW), and the other was near San Simon in the extreme s.e. Apr. 18 (WS). Since populations of this species are expanding in both s. California and w. Mexico, it is possible, if not likely, that these individuals represent wanderers from these two separate regions. A Mississippi Kite in the Gila Valley, N. Mex., May 3 (RF *et al.*) provided the third record for the general area.

A Goshawk at Portal until May 18 was at an unusually low elevation for this species on that date (WS). An ad. "Harlan's" Hawk e. of Tucumcari Mar. 4 (JH, JV) provided a first local sighting of a form rarely seen in New Mexico. Only two Broad-winged Hawks were reported, both in e. New Mexico near Artesia; an adult Apr. 26-27, and an immature May 1-15 (MA, WHO). A Harris' Hawk at Alamogordo Apr. 12 (LM) was west of this species' normal range in New Mexico. An ad. Bald Eagle at Cliff, N. Mex., Apr. 23 (John Egbert) was rather late.

Two Marsh Hawk nests were found at Artesia May 18 (MA) and another at Rattlesnake Spring May 10 (WH); the species is rare as a breeder in New Mexico.

#### S.A.

In Arizona, Marsh Hawks are known to linger into May and even casually into summer. There have been no breeding records in this century, and such birds are generally considered to be transients or late wintering individuals. The discovery of a nest with three eggs in a desert grassland at Vicksburg on the early date of Apr. 23 (BM—ph) sheds new light on this species' status. Ironically, this nest was bulldozed, before any young fledged, by Central Arizona Project workers attempting to create a lake as mitigation for loss of wildlife habitat! Late spring birds should be watched more closely, as they may occasionally breed close at hand and then disperse.

**CRANES THROUGH TERNS**—A report was received of 13 extraordinarily late Sandhill Cranes in the Gila Valley, N. Mex., May 3 (RAF *et al.*); a first local record was provided by 50 birds e. of Farmington Apr. 1 (R. Sitta, Jr., *vide* APN). A late Black-bellied Plover was observed in full breeding plumage May 28 at Poston, Ariz. (MK). Two breeding-plumaged Piping Plovers at Puerto Peñasco, Son., Apr. 4 (KK, ST, LT, EC), probably represented individuals from the local wintering population. A Whimbrel near Poston May 27 (MK) continues the pattern of regular spring occurrence in the LCV. New Mexico had its first spring **Short-billed**

**Dowitcher** at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., May 4 (DH, †SH).

A first-year Thayer's Gull and a first-year Glaucous-winged Gull at Puerto Peñasco Apr. 4 furnished two of the few records of either species for Sonora (KK, ST, LT, EC). A California Gull at Morgan L., N. Mex., Apr. 13 (ph—DH *et al.*) and May 15 (AN *et al.*) represented a local first; six at Heron L., N. Mex., Apr. 11 (JH, JT) were the first recorded there in spring. Increased coverage of n. Arizona lakes is clarifying the status of gulls in that area; this spring two ad. Californias and an ad. Franklin's were at Ashurst L., Apr. 1, and two ad. Franklin's were at Peck's L., Apr. 15 (DP). Also of interest were two ad. Franklin's at Puerto Peñasco, Son., Apr. 4 and one adult at Guaymas, Son., Apr. 6 (KK, ST, LT, EC). Five Bonaparte's Gulls were in the lower Pecos valley, N. Mex., Mar. 17-May 8, where rare in spring (WHO *et al.*).

A Common Tern was at L. McMillan, N. Mex., May 3 (MA, WHO); this species is very rare in the region in spring.

**DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS**—Doves occurred n. of their usual range in New Mexico with an Inca at Alamogordo Apr. 15-May 4 (LM *et al.*) and a White-winged at Tularosa Mar. 22 (*vide* LM). Extraordinary was an Elf Owl netted at Boone's Draw, N. Mex., May 13 (JH *et al.* \* to Smithsonian); some 175 mi from the nearest population in w. Texas and 300 mi from areas of occurrence in s.w. New Mexico.

#### S.A.

Two Flammulated Owls were netted and banded at Boone's Draw May 12 (ph—JH *et al.*). The evidence continues to mount that occurrences of this species in spring in the e. plains of New Mexico are no coincidence. In the month of May in the years 1971, 1975, and 1980, mistnets have yielded six birds at Oasis S.P., Boone's Draw, and Bell L. These reports may indicate the existence of a regular migratory route through the area, but it is also possible that these birds could have been blown off a more w. route by strong SW winds. Our knowledge of this owl away from breeding areas is also increasing in Arizona aided by a previously unpublished report of a calling bird in lowland mesquite along the Santa Maria R., Jan. 22-24, 1980 (BM *et al.*); an individual that most likely wintered locally.

Unprecedented was the discovery of 12 active Long-eared Owl nests in desert washes of w.c. Arizona, where last winter's population was tallied at 275+ birds (BM). Nest sites varied from old Red-tailed nests in Saguaro cacti to stick nests built entirely by the owls in mesquites.

Two Whip-poor-wills were noted in the lowlands of New Mexico: at Alamogordo Apr. 17 (*vide* LM), and in Dona Ana County n. of El Paso May 4 (KZ).

**SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**—Single swifts likely to be Chimneys were at Albuquerque May 3 (†RT) and Percha Dam S.P., N. Mex., May 4 (DH, †SH).

Others reported as Chimneys were two at Ft. Sumner, N. Mex., May 3 (WHO *et al.*). A well described Black Swift was seen near Alamo L., Ariz., May 11 by an observer experienced with this species (†JZ). There is still no documentation of this species in the state, although sight records are becoming more frequent.

Records of Costa's Hummingbirds in Guadalupe Canyon, N. Mex., continue to mount, with at least ten birds present Apr. 24-25 & May 5-7. On May 7 a female was observed building a nest there (William Baltosser). An Anna's Hummingbird was far east at Alamogordo, N. Mex., Apr. 11 (*vide* LM). A very late ♀ Calliope Hummingbird at Phoenix May 14 (ST, GR) provided one of few lowland sightings in spring.

Again, Rufous Hummingbird appeared at Portal Apr. 7, where it is rare in spring (SS). Violet-crowned Hummingbirds arrived very early, with one at Portal Apr. 6-10 (SS) and one at Sonoita Cr., Ariz., Apr. 12 (BH). Peripheral Broad-billed Hummingbirds were at Superior, Ariz., where probably regular; 4-6 birds were present there all spring. Incredible was a hatchling hummer, rescued from a Phoenix yard and raised by Kathy Ingram, that grew up to be a Broad-billed; this represents the northwesternmost breeding of this species.

A Coppery-tailed Trogon in Guadalupe Can., Ariz., May 18 represents about the third record in that locality for this species (Douglas Kraus, Arnold Moorehouse). Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers of the e. race *S. v. varius* were identified in New Mexico: a female in Dona Ana County n. of El Paso Apr. 27 (KZ) and an immature at Roswell Mar. 11 (WHO).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS**—Again the only Arizona report of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher came from the LCV; one at L. Havasu City May 25 (Phillip Pryde). Tucson's wintering Great Kiskadee was seen as late as early May (*vide* BM). A Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher on upper Eagle Cr., Ariz., May 21 (RD), was well n. of its usual range and was probably an over-shooting migrant. A Great Crested Flycatcher was seen and heard at Boone's Draw May 14 (JH). Peripheral Olivaceous Flycatchers were 3-4 on Bonita Cr., Ariz., May 12-13 (TC) and one in a Phoenix yard May 11-13 (ph—KR, ST, LT), for a first local record. The same yard also hosted a possible Least Flycatcher May 4-6 (ST *et al.*, ph—LST); three definite Leasts were netted at Boone's Draw May 11-14 (JH *et al.*). It is likely that few birds of this species regularly migrate through the region from their wintering grounds in w. Mexico. A well described Gray Flycatcher at L. McMillan Apr. 6 (†MA) provided the easternmost record for New Mexico. A Vermilion Flycatcher at Boone's Draw May 12-13 (JH) was north of its usual range.

Tucson's **Cave Swallow** returned to the U. of A. campus Apr. 11 (DS), where it appeared last spring, furnishing a first state record. Lowland reports of Purple Martins in New Mexico included seven at Albuquerque May 15 (RT), several at Percha Dam S.P., May 4 (DH, SH) and one at Alamogordo Apr. 26 (*vide* LM).

**JAYS THROUGH THRASHERS**—Several Blue Jays at Ft. Sumner and one near Artesia through the spring (WH *et al.*) may indicate a new area of regular occurrence for New Mexico. Eighteen Com. Crows between Ute Cr. and Logan, N. Mex., Mar. 5 (JH, JV) follow a first record for that area last summer. Also notable were two at Farmington May 17 (AN *et al.*) and 19 in the Gila Valley, N. Mex.—along with two nests—May 3 (RAF *et al.*). Black-billed Magpie numbers continue to increase at Española, N. Mex., where May counts showed 300 vs. only 200 in 1977 (William Stone *et al.*).

An unusually low-elevation nest of Bush-tits was observed through the spring in Sonoran desert scrub at Roosevelt L, Ariz. (KR). A Dipper on the Sacramento R., N. Mex., Mar. 7 represented an unusual record for the s.e. highlands (L. Woltering, *vide* LM). Winter Wrens were seen in notable numbers and late into Spring in New Mexico, with five in the Roswell area May 8-9 and single birds at Artesia May 19 and Ft. Sumner May 26 (all sightings WHO *et al.*).

A Gray Catbird at Petrified Forest N.M. May 27 (George Johnson) provided one of the few records of this species away from its breeding range in Arizona. A probable Le Conte's Thrasher at Tuzigoot, Verde Valley, Ariz., May 15 would represent an unusual extralimital record for this normally sedentary species (†Joe and Kathy Zarki).

**THRUSHES THROUGH VIREOS**—The observation of a breeding pair of Am. Robins in a Phoenix cemetery May 19 (SD, HL) adds to the list of this species' recent desert lowland nesting sites. A probable Rufous-backed Robin reported from Oak Cr., Ariz., Mar. 26 (Alma Greene) was considerably farther north than previously recorded. New Mexico's second verified **Varied Thrush** was a male photographed e. of Roswell Apr. 18 (Annie Williams). A sighting of two imm. E. Bluebirds at Ft. Sumner May 25 (Pierre Thomsin) suggests that they breed locally; otherwise breeding bluebirds are known to occur in New Mexico only at Rattlesnake Spr. A Swainson's Thrush reported from BWD Mar. 19 was extremely early (†RM, MK).

Two Water Pipits near Poston, Ariz., May 27 (BWo) were very late migrants. The only Sprague's Pipit report was of a bird heard at Loving N. Mex., Mar. 15 (WH). A  $\phi$  Phainopepla near Rattlesnake Spr., Mar. 24 (WHO) and several pairs in Walnut Canyon and Sitting Bull Falls May 30 (J.N. Durrie) suggest that this species is becoming more regular in the Carlsbad, N. Mex., area.

A Hutton's Vireo e. of Yuma May 5 (RM) provided a first record of a spring migrant from the LCV. The second local report of a Gray Vireo came from Pleasanton, N. Mex., Apr. 22 (JH).

**WOOD WARBLERS**—Of the "rare but regular" warblers in Arizona only two Black-and-whites, two Am. Redstarts, two N. Parulas, four N. Waterthrushes, and no Tennessees were reported; all down from previous springs. Tennessee Warblers were reported more frequently than usual in New Mexico, with 14+ Apr. 20-May 19.

A Lucy's Warbler at Alamogordo May 3-4

(LM *et al.*) furnished the second report from the Tularosa Basin, N. Mex. Still of special interest in this region were: a  $\sigma$  Magnolia Warbler at Bonita Cr., Ariz., May 18 (†TC), a  $\sigma$  Chestnut-sided and a  $\sigma$  Bay-breasted on the Rio Sonora n.e. of Hermosillo, Son., May 28 (RD, GR, BW), another  $\sigma$  Bay-breasted on the Little Colo. R. near Springerville, Ariz., May 31 (BJo), a  $\phi$  Blackpoll near Farmington, N. Mex., May 17 (†AN), a male banded at Boone's Draw May 13 (JH *et al.*), and a Palm Warbler in Albuquerque May 17 (DH *et al.*).

In addition, Tucson's wintering Cape May Warbler was seen until the end of March, when it was moulting into spring plumage (WDA). By far the rarest warbler of the season, which would represent a first state record if accepted, was an almost certain **Louisiana Waterthrush** at La Cienega, Sandia Mts., N. Mex., Apr. 6-14 (M.L. Arthur *et al.*, ph—DH).

Finally, of more local interest, singing Red-faced Warblers again this spring in the Hualapai Mts., Ariz., confirm more solidly a n.w. extension of this species' breeding range (RM, Bob Hall); and at least three different Painted Redstarts in lower Sonoran locations in Arizona Mar. 21-Apr. 10 were most unusual.

**ICTERIDS, TANAGERS**—A singing  $\sigma$  Bobolink n.e. of Roswell, N. Mex., May 17 (WHO) furnished the only regional report this spring. Common Grackles continued their spread in New Mexico with about four at Blackrock, Zuni Reservation Apr. 28-May 30 (A. Schmierer); this is tantalizingly close (25 mi) to Arizona where observers have still failed to record this species. A single Rusty Blackbird Mar. 24 at Rattlesnake Springs (WHO) represented the only spring report.

#### S.A.

Orioles made big news in the Region this spring. No fewer than **eight pairs** of Orchard Orioles were discovered along 2 mi of the Rio Sonora, n.e. of Hermosillo, Son. May 28 (GR, BW, WHO, RD, ph—KR). These included ad. and imm. singing males and females. Copulation was observed, suggesting that an established breeding colony may exist here, less than 150 mi due s. of Nogales, Ariz. The only other orioles present were Streak-backed. We discovered another singing  $\sigma$  Orchard May 30, just 12 mi s. of the border at Douglas. This species is at best considered a very rare transient in Arizona and w. New Mexico, has not been known to breed w. of the Mexican Plateau and e. New Mexico, and is rare in Sonora (although it winters commonly n. to s. Sinaloa). This discovery not only adds to our information about the poorly-known avifauna of n.w. Mexico, but raises questions as to the status of supposed "vagrant" Orchard Orioles sighted irregularly in late spring and summer along rivers in Arizona and s.w. New Mexico.

Also of note was a  $\sigma$  "Baltimore" Oriole that arrived on the Verde R. n.e. of Phoenix May 7 and remained to breed with a  $\phi$  "Bullock's" (AH, VH, ph—AL, KR).

Another  $\sigma$  "Baltimore" was sighted n. of Ehrenberg, Ariz., Apr. 5 (RM).

A singing  $\sigma$  Hepatic Tanager in cottonwoods near Magdalena, Son., May 27 seemed out of place (GR *et al.*). Sightings of 13 Summer Tanagers at Ft. Sumner May 25-27 (MA, WHO) suggest that a substantial population exists there, n. of the known range. A bird banded at Boone's Draw May 15 (Greg Schmitt) was of the e. race *P.r. rubra*, and represented a first local record.

**FRINGILLIDS**—A  $\sigma$  Cardinal in Hidalgo County Mar. 19 (D. Campbell *et al.*) was east of its usual range in New Mexico. A count of 250+ Varied Buntings along 2 mi of the Rio Sonora, n.e. of Hermosillo, Son., May 28 (many of which were migrants) was intriguing, since this species is not very abundant anywhere to the n. in Arizona (RD *et al.*).

Two Painted Buntings at Sturgeon Ranch, lower Pecos valley, N. Mex., May 17 (MA, WHO) were n. of their usual range. Remnants of last winter's Cassin's Finch flight were about six birds e. of their usual range at Montoya, N. Mex., Mar. 6 (JH), and lingered in the lowlands at Portal until Apr. 22 (SS).

The presence of an Arizona population of Lawrence's Goldfinches was not suspected before 1977. For the fourth consecutive spring, nesting was confirmed on the Verde R., near Phoenix, where a nest with eggs was found May 5 (AH). This species was also found along the Hassayampa and Santa Maria Rivers in w.c. Arizona in May (JZ); breeding birds typically arrive in March and appear separate from the wintering flocks that invade our Region from the west. A Red Crossbill was feeding a fledgling at Cedar Spr., Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., May 18 (AN). There is still no unequivocal breeding record for the state.

Four White-throated Sparrows until May 21, and six Golden-crowned Sparrows until Apr. 26 were about normal for Arizona in numbers and dates. More unusual were single Golden-crowns at Kirtland, N. Mex., Apr. 20 (*vide* AN) and e. of Albuquerque Apr. 13 (HS). The only Harris' Sparrow was at a feeder n. of Yuma for a week until Apr. 22 (GRn *et al.*). A pair of Fox Sparrows at Hart Prairie, San Francisco Peaks, Ariz., May 26 (DP) was intriguing since this species does not breed in the Southwest.

**CORRIGENDUM**—AB 34:188. Broad-tailed Hummingbird should be Broad-billed Hummingbird.

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ABBREVIATIONS: †, written details on file with N. Mex. Ornithological Society or Ariz. Bird Committee; \*, specimen.

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