

SOUTHWEST REGION

/Kenneth V. Rosenberg, John P. Hubbard and Scott B. Terrill

Observers throughout the Region generally agreed that weather patterns were "normal" for the spring and seemed to bear little relation to the numerous unusual bird records reported. Notable exceptions were two severe storms that swept across northern Arizona in mid-May, bringing near-freezing temperatures, strong easterly winds, and some snow, even to lowland areas. Consequently, a single trip to northeast Arizona "oases" May 16-20 recorded tremendous numbers of grounded migrants, including many significant records of shore- and other water birds. The same

system may have contributed to the excellent shorebird migration and other unusual occurrences at Zuni in west-central New Mexico.

To many birders the most noteworthy birds of the season were concentrated along the borders of the Region. The first regional record of Anhinga in over 100 years came from the extreme southeast corner, whereas Arizona's first-ever Red-necked Grebe appeared in the far west. Detailed below are New Mexico's first documented Lucifer Hummingbirds, the



fourth United States appearance of Black-capped Gnatcatcher, and probably the first regional occurrence of Royal Tern. Bizarre is the best term to describe the wayward albatross rescued from downtown Yuma, certainly for birders, the outstanding event of the season.

LOONS TO ANHINGA—The imm. **Red-throated Loon** at Albuquerque remained through Mar. 31 (m.ob., ph.), extending the stay of New Mexico's first confirmed record of this species. Another loon, probably this species, was present just southward at Isleta Apr. 1-9 (WHO *et al.*). A first for Arizona was a breeding-plumaged **Red-necked Grebe** on lower L. Havasu Mar. 23 (CR, ph., MK).

S.A.

The bird of the season was a **Laysan Albatross** found on a Yuma, Ariz., street May 14 by Milton Haderlee. The bird survived on fish for two days until it was taken to San Diego's Sea World. There, it was photographed, and upon recovering fully was to be released in the Pacific Ocean (*vide* G. McCaskie). This phenomenal occurrence is not without precedent, however; another Laysan Albatross was seen flying over the s. California desert May 5, 1976 (AB 30:888).

An imm. Olivaceous Cormorant at L. McMillan Apr. 28-May 10 (†WCH) represents perhaps the best-documented record for the lower Pecos Valley (hereafter, L.Pec.V.). Of 13 Double-crested Cormorants at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Mar. 23, at least five had black nuptial plumes; this suggests that an e. race occurs in the L.Pec.V., whereas the w. *albociliatus* seems to be the form of the lower Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico (JH). The wintering birds persisted at Morgan L., N. Mex., with three there Mar. 17, and one at Farmington May 9 was a first for that city (AN).

A ♀ **Anhinga** at Hobbs, N. Mex., Apr. 25 (†C. Levine, R. Russell) was most unusual; the only documented record for New Mexico (and the Region) was obtained in the 1850s.

HERONS THROUGH WATERFOWL—Cattle Egrets fanned out in small numbers over the w. part of the Region Apr. 15-May 21, including in such unlikely areas as Virden (JH), Alma (T.A. Gatz), Zuni (JT), and Santa Fe (R. Gonzales) in New Mexico, and Richville (ST), Superior (SW), Green Valley (J. Saba), and Phoenix (KR) in Arizona. This species has not yet become firmly established in the Region.

Single herons thought to be Louisianas, but with dark underparts, were seen at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Apr. 25-29 and Loving May 19+ (WCH *et al.*). Could these be hybrids with Little Blues in an area where both species are rare? A Little Blue Heron at Espanola, N. Mex., May 17 (B&W West) was n. of the usual range. Two Great Egrets and two Snowy Egrets at Many Farms L., n.e. Ariz., May 19 were in an area from where few records exist (ST, LT). An Am. Bittern at Zuni, N. Mex., May 16 (JT) was unusual and late.

Late Snow Geese in New Mexico typically involve single birds (probably injured or ill), so two at Fenton L., Jemez Mts., May 12-31

(M. Swain) were more unusual. A lone White-fronted Goose at Parker in the lower Colorado valley (hereafter, L.C.V.) Mar. 28 provided the first spring record there in many years (ST *et al.*).

Black-bellied Whistling Ducks were widely scattered in s.e. Arizona, including e. of Portal where they are very rare (RS). More than normal numbers of "Mexican-type" Ducks were recorded in the L.Pec.V., with at least five birds between Roswell and Loving Mar. 16-18 (WCH *et al.*). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was on the Colorado R., at Parker Mar. 20-28 (ph., MK, KR). One of two wintering ♀ Wood Ducks lingered until May 20 near Nogales, Ariz. (DS, KK *et al.*); others were present near Albuquerque, including a male through May 25 (WHO *et al.*). The two White-winged Scoters on L. Havasu stayed until Mar. 12, and the Black Scoter remained at Parker Dam until at least Mar. 30, when it was acquiring ad. male plumage (MK).

RAPTORS AND PTARMIGAN—Mississippi Kites again returned to the Roswell area, where largely unreported in recent years, with seven there May 25 (WCH). An ad. and imm. Goshawk near Arivaca, Ariz., Mar. 1 (DS), and three near Albuquerque Apr. 1-15 (WHO *et al.*) were unusual for lowland localities. An active Ferruginous Hawk nest near Kingman was among the few ever found in Arizona (BM). Notable Broad-winged Hawks in New Mexico were an adult Apr. 20 and an immature May 26 near Albuquerque (WHO *et al.*), and an adult May 3 at Zuni (JT). Harris' Hawk continues to be seen at San Simon Cienega, extreme s.e. Arizona, with one there Mar. 31 (T. Supplee).

Eleven pairs of White-tailed Ptarmigan from Colorado were liberated in the Pecos Wilderness of n. New Mexico in late May, in an effort to restore this species to ancestral range in the Sangre de Cristo Mts. (JH).

SHOREBIRDS AND LARIDS—Paired and defensive Am. Avocets at Many Farms L., Chinle, and Petrified Forest N.P., in n.e. Arizona in late May suggested local breeding, which has been noted at few localities in the state (ST, LT, KR, DS). Two Snowy Plovers at Many Farms L., May 19 (ST, LT) and one near Holbrook May 31 (KR, DS) were perhaps first n.e. Arizona reports. Unusual plovers in New Mexico were a Mountain at Zuni Mar. 22 (JT), an Am. Golden at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Apr. 5 (†N&DJ), and the state's second report of **Piping Plover** at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., also on Apr. 5 (†D&SH).

Two Whimbrels over L. Havasu Mar. 28 (ST, LT) were a bit early, as was a Willet at Phoenix Apr. 4 (ST *et al.*). New Mexico's third **Ruddy Turnstone** was at Zuni May 10 (†JT); the previous records were in the L.Pec.V. Another of this species dropped down at Ganado L., Ariz., during a severe storm May 20 (ST, LT). Sanderlings appeared in good numbers for spring in New Mexico, including 21 at Morgan L., San Juan Co., May 17 (AN *et al.*). Two Short-billed Dowitchers were heard at Phoenix May 5, where very rare in spring (ST, RW).

Pectoral Sandpipers, exceedingly rare in the w. part of the Region in spring, were reported early this season at Zuni, N. Mex., Mar. 20 (JT), Morgan L., N. Mex., Mar. 22 (AN), and Tucson, Ariz., Apr. 4 (SG *et al.*).

A Stilt Sandpiper at Zuni May 12-14 was w. of the usual range in New Mexico (ph., JT). Usually rare in spring, N. Phalarope made a better-than-average showing in New Mexico and n.e. Arizona, including six at Chinle May 19 and 15 at Ganado L., May 20 (ST, LT, ph.).

Unexpected was an ad. **Thayer's Gull** at Zuni, N. Mex., on the late date of May 5 (†JT). Easterly California Gulls were one at Morgan L., N. Mex., Apr. 26 (AN), two at Zuni May 9 (†JT), one at Luna L., Ariz., May 13 (TG, M. Delamore), and ten at Ganado L., Ariz., May 20 (ST, LT). An ad. Franklin's Gull with very pink plumage was at Bill Williams Delta in the L.C.V. Mar. 28 (ph., KR *et al.*); there are very few spring records there. Another adult was at Page, Ariz., May 19 (ST, LT).

Four Forster's Terns May 20 at Ganado L. (ST, LT), and two at Luna L., May 13 (TG, M. Delamore), furnished the first spring records for n.e. Arizona. Even more unusual in spring was a Com. Tern May 20 at Lyman L., n. of Springerville, Ariz. (ST, LT). Four birds identified as **Royal Terns** were at Tucson briefly May 15 (WD, GG, DS *et al.*, ph., SG). Photos are still being circulated among experts to positively eliminate the possibility of Elegant Tern; either species would be new to Arizona and the Region.

OWLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS—A Flammulated Owl calling at Cottonwood Gulch, Zuni Mts., Mar. 15 (DM) was very early. A Ferruginous Owl was at a desert tank near Ajo, Ariz., in April (BM). More surprising was a Saw-whet Owl in mesquites at another tank in that area in April (BM); lowland records are very few and are primarily from in mid-winter.

A Chimney Swift was well seen near Phoenix May 20 (†DS). Several swifts, identified as Vaux's, were in extreme e. Arizona near Eagar May 22 (BJo, MH); any *Chaetura* species is very rare there. With these, was a larger all-black swift, most likely a Black (BJo, MH). Although amazingly early, another reasonably well-described swift identified as a Black Swift, was seen Mar. 31 at Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahua Mts. (†R.F. Koes *et al.*); despite persistent sight records, Arizona lacks documentation of this species in the state.

Lucifer Hummingbird was verified for the first time in New Mexico, as at least two males and three females were present in the Peloncillo Mts., near Rodeo Apr. 5+ (RS *et al.*, ph.). A ♂ Costa's in Antelope Pass, Peloncillo Mts., Apr. 23 (W. Baltosser, * to Smithsonian) represents the northernmost verified record for New Mexico.

Two Rufous Hummingbirds in the Chiricahua Mts., Apr. 5-15 & 25 add to the now-annual records there in spring. Two White-eared Hummingbirds in Rose Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., May 6 (J. Bock) and one at nearby Summerhaven May 23-June 7 (F&W Hopf *et al.*) were the only ones reported from Arizona this spring. Broad-billed Hummingbirds persisted at such peripheral locations as Portal and Superior, Ariz.

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS—Downy Woodpeckers were present in moderate numbers in cottonwoods in the Albuquerque area, with the southernmost nest yet for the area Los Lunas Apr. 28. In contrast,

Hairy Woodpeckers were very rare in that area (WHO *et al.*).

Although not a significant record, a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Benson Apr. 21-23 (BF) was the only Arizona report of this species. A well-seen and calling **Great Crested Flycatcher** at the Navajo town of Tes Nez Iah, n.e. Ariz., May 19 (†ST, LT) represented only a third state record, but close on the heels of the second record last October at nearby Kayenta. Four E. Phoebees were present Apr. 24 near Villanueva, San Miguel Co., a known breeding locale in New Mexico. Three Black Phoebees, including a nesting pair, were also present (JH); nesting overlap between these 2 species has not previously been demonstrated in the state. Black Phoebees were also found breeding in the Zuni Mts., N. Mex., where seven birds and 2 nests were found at Bluewater L., Apr. 17-May 31 (DM). Two migrant E. Phoebees were noted in Arizona where very rare in spring; Apr. 20-24 at Portal (SS, R. Morse) and May 16 at Fredonia (GR).

Forty-six Willow Flycatchers was a high count at Teec Nos Pos, n.e. Ariz., May 19 (ST, LT). [Were these singing birds?—Ed.] Two reports of calling Least Flycatchers were received; May 13 at Albuquerque (†WHO) and May 19 near Chinle, n.e. Ariz. (ST, LT); this species is very rare in spring in the Region, especially westward. Five Gray Flycatchers, including two pairs and three singing birds, were found near Soldier Spring, Guadalupe Mts., May 31 (WCH, SW) and 5-7 singing Dusksies were found on Alegros Mt., Cantron Co., May 11-13 (DM *et al.*). Both of these locations, if nesting areas, are well s. of the known breeding range of these species in New Mexico. A pair of Buff-breasted Flycatchers in Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., Apr. 16 into the summer (J&G Maender *et al.*) were in an area from which few recent records exist. Coues' Flycatcher is becoming well established in canyons s. of Flagstaff at the n. limit of its range in Arizona (JC, R.P. Balda). A rare lowland migrant was noted in residential Tempe Apr. 28 (ST).

SWALLOWS THROUGH THRASHERS—A large concentration of swallows at Ganado L., n.e. Ariz., during a severe storm on May 20 included 1000+ Violet-greens, 500+ Trees, and 2000+ Cliffs (ST, LT); this is late for large numbers of migrants in this area. Tucson's Cave Swallow returned for its third summer by Apr. 13 (L. Lavine). Rumors of a pair together there remain unconfirmed. Migrant Purple Martins in n.e. Arizona are of interest; this season, six were at Many Farms L., May 19 and four were among the swallows at Ganado L., May 20 (ST, LT).

Blue Jays persisted in the L.Pec.V., with birds at Ft. Sumner Mar. 27-29 & Apr. 25, and singles near Roswell Apr. 11 and at L. McMillan Apr. 6 (WCH *et al.*). A Red-breasted Nuthatch at Teec Nos Pos, n.e. Ariz., May 19 (ST, LT) was very late for a lowland migrant. The only migrant Brown Thrasher in the w. part of the Region was at Mesa, Ariz., Apr. 28 (KR).

THRUSHES TO VIREOS—A Rufous-backed Robin near Hereford, Ariz., Mar. 28 (†J.M. Bealer) was among the few reported in recent years. A probable Gray-cheeked

Thrush was at L. McMillan, N. Mex., May 12 (†WCH); this is the rarest *Catharus* thrush species recorded in the Region. Eastern Bluebirds again bred in the Pecos Valley region, as evidence by a nest with eggs and an adult with a fledgling at Rattlesnake Springs Apr. 25 (SW), and a pair carrying nesting material at Ft. Sumner Mar. 27-29 (WCH). More unusual was a male at Cottonwood Gulch Apr. 13 (DM); a first record in New Mexico w. of the Rio Grande and n. of the Gila Basin. A pair of Mountain Bluebirds was found using a nest box along a "bluebird trail" in the Sonoita grassland, s.e. Ariz., May 10, and young were noted May 19 (J. Church *et al.*). These birds were well out of the normal breeding range.

S.A.

Causing a stir nationwide was the discovery of a nesting pair of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** in Chino Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., Ariz., May 17 (†Bruce Barrett, KK *et al.*). Well into its nesting cycle, the pair seemed oblivious to the many who came to see and photograph it (including a TV news team); four young were successfully fledged May 24 (*vide* S. Mills). This represents the fourth occurrence and second nesting n. of the Mexican border; details will be published elsewhere.

An ad. ♂ Black-tailed Gnatcatcher at Lee's Ferry on the Colorado R., near the Utah border May 16 was far from the usual range and represented the farthest n. occurrence of the species (†LT, ST). Another ad. male was seen the same day at Tuzigoot N.M., in the upper Verde Valley, where also previously unrecorded (LT, ST).

Two Red-eyed Vireos were seen in Arizona; in Garden Canyon, Huachuca Mts., May 26 (LT, ST) and Chino Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., May 30 (P. Vickery, G. Porter). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was at Bell L., May 20 (N&DJ) for about the fifth New Mexico record.

WOOD WARBLERS—Of the rare-but-regularly occurring species in the Region, two Black-and-white Warblers, two N. Parulas and four Am. Redstarts in Arizona were below average, although six Tennessee Warblers and 11-12 N. Waterthrushes were slightly high for the state in spring. An additional four Tennessees and at least 19 N. Waterthrushes were in the Albuquerque area in May (WHO). A Prothonotary Warbler was banded and photographed at Albuquerque May 2 (WHO, ph., SH) and another was at Sabino Canyon near Tucson, Ariz., May 22-24 (B. Koenig, J. Coxhead *et al.*, ph., ST). First verifications were obtained of the **Worm-eating Warbler** in New Mexico, with single birds at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Apr. 23 (ph., L. Marlatt) and Ft. Sumner Apr. 24 (T. Hildebrandt, * to Smithsonian). Another bird was seen in Hondo Canyon, Sandia Mts., May 3 (GP, HS), and an additional two turned up in Arizona, at Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., about May 21 (R. Rowlett *et al.*) and near Eagar May 23 (†BJo, MH). Also verified for the first time in New Mexico was the **Golden-winged Warbler**, based on a male that lingered in Albuquerque May 8-18 (M. Deutman *et al.*, ph., DH). Amazingly, a

singing **Blue-winged Warbler** turned up in the same city during that period May 14 (WHO *et al.*), for about the third state sighting. Other very rare warblers included a Cape May at Bloomfield, N. Mex., in the period (†J&J Rees), a singing Yellow-throated near Eagar, Ariz., May 22-June 7 (†BJo, MH), and a ♂ Bay-breasted found dead in Albuquerque May 13 (N. Hight, * to U. New Mexico). In addition, New Mexico recorded two Chestnut-sideds at Albuquerque May 4 & 16 (WHO) and two Palms, at Sandia P., Apr. 22 (HS) and at Albuquerque Apr. 24 (WHO).

An incredible five Kentucky Warblers were seen in the Region, with different birds at Tucson May 2 (E. Bessler) and May 24-25 (PN), a singing male at Albuquerque May 12 (SH, WHO), another near Eagar, Ariz., May 18-21 (†BJo, MH, ph., ST, LT), and a bird at Cave Cr. Canyon May 28 (RN). Two ♂ Hooded Warblers were also found in Arizona, at Cave Cr. Canyon May 8-10 (T. Goldsmith *et al.*) and at Guadalupe Canyon May 11 (F. Oatman). Two different Olive Warblers s. of Flagstaff, Ariz., in March (C. Benkman, J. Brawn) and individual Painted Redstarts in the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., Apr. 9 (GP) & 22 (HS) were at the periphery of their ranges. Among the large numbers of common warblers grounded in n.w. Arizona, 50+ MacGillivray's at Teec Nos Pos May 19 was a high count (ST, LT).

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS—Two singing ♂ Bobolinks at Teec Nos Pos, Ariz., May 19 (ph., ST, LT) were among very few spring records in the state. Eastern Meadowlarks were present on the Zuni Reservation with 1-5 birds there Mar. 13-May 23 (JT); one was also at Cottonwood Gulch Apr. 20 & 30, two were near San Rafael May 25 (DM), and four in the Albuquerque area Apr. 15-May 27 (WHO *et al.*). These localities are at the n. limit of the species' range in w. New Mexico.

An ad. male, sub-adult male, and female Hooded Orioles were present together at Lee's Ferry, Ariz., May 16 (ST, LT), and the ad. male was there May 24 (GR). This spot near the Utah border is far n. of any known areas of occurrence in this region. A ♂ N. (Baltimore) Oriole at Zuni, N. Mex., May 11 & 21 (JT) was also unusual. Most unexpected was a ♀ Rusty Blackbird at Springerville, Ariz., on the late date of May 21 (†ST, LT). Great-tailed Grackles continue to advance on the n. frontier of their range with n. Arizona sightings in May at Lee's Ferry (four), Tuba City (four), Marble Canyon (five adults, 2 fledglings), and McNary (eight adults and nests—all ST, LT, GR), and another male at nearby Zuni, N. Mex. (JT). Common Grackles were present in New Mexico at Artesia, where they were seen carrying food in May (WCH *et al.*), and they also returned to Farmington (AN). A ♀ Scarlet Tanager at Lee's Ferry May 24 (†GR) furnished only a tenth Arizona record. A ♂ Summer Tanager, thought to be the s.w. race *cooperi*, was well n. of its usual range at Petrified Forest N.P., Ariz., May 20 (ST, LT). This species again returned to the Ft. Sumner-Roswell, N. Mex. area with ten there in April and May (WCH *et al.*).

FRINGILLIDS—Indigo Buntings were also very widely reported, with possible male hybrid Indigo X Lazulis noted on Fossil Cr.,

near Strawberry, Ariz., May 10 (KR) and near Albuquerque May 19-30 (J.N. Durrie *et al.*). A singing ♂ Purple Finch at Ganado May 31 (DS, KR) was the latest on record for the Region and the first ever in n.e. Arizona. Its song suggested the nominate race, which is casual in the Region. Also lingering late in the lowlands of n.e. Arizona were large numbers of Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches, although this may be a regular occurrence. An exceptionally high count of 130 goldfinches at Ganado May 20 (LT, ST) was down to five birds by May 31 (KR, DS). Ten or more Red Crossbills were present in the s. Guadalupe Mts., May 31, including an adult with a fledgling (WCH, SW).

In the L.Pec.V., singing Rufous-sided Towhees were largely restricted to the Artesia-L., McMillan area, with two fledglings there May 18 (WCH *et al.*). Singing Grasshopper Sparrows staged an influx into that area, with at least 40 between Artesia and Loving, and two at Ft. Sumner Apr. 17-29 (WCH *et al.*). Only a single non-singing bird was noted in May near Artesia. Extralimital Cassin's Sparrows in Arizona were a "skylarking" individual near Poston Apr. 24 (†MK) for a first L.C.V. record, and another

singing bird in Mesa Apr. 28 (†KR). A Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco was seen e. of Roswell Mar. 4-9 (WCH, RM); far s. of the usual range in New Mexico. A Clay-colored Sparrow at Teec Nos Pos May 19 (ST, LT) provided the only Arizona report, and an ad. Black-chinned Sparrow at Phoenix Apr. 19 (KR) furnished one of very few lowland records. A late Harris' Sparrow was at Benson, Ariz., Apr. 23-27 (BF). A count of 10-12 Chestnut-collared Longspurs at Zuni, N. Mex., Mar. 22 was a first sighting for that area (JT). The only McCown's reported in the period were singles at L. McMillan Mar. 1 (WCH) at Ft. Sumner Mar. 29 (RM).

ADDENDUM—The White-tailed Tropicbird specimen from Scottsdale, Ariz., August 1980, has been identified as the race *P. l. dorotheae* which breeds on s. Pacific islands and in Hawaii (*fide* G. Watson, Smithsonian). This represents the first specimen of this race from North America.

CORRIGENDUM—The imm. Gray Hawk reported at Artesia, N. Mex., in September-October 1980 (*AB* 35:212) was actually a Broad-winged (*fide* Richard Glinski). [Al-

though this correction was sent to *AB* in time to have been revised, it was inadvertently omitted from *AB* 35:212—Ed.]

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