

SOUTHWEST REGION ARIZONA

/Janet Witzeman

Spring is the name we give to that time of year when four noteworthy phenomena occur simultaneously: late staying winter visitors, "early" (pre-June) breeders, regular transients more common in fall



than spring and, of course, the rare and accidental migrants that provide the excitement of the season. In the report that follows there are all of the above, but because of Arizona's geographical location and climate, a large percentage of the records fall into the first two categories—the winter visitors, already here, are reluctant to leave, and many of the lowland breeders prefer to nest before onset of the heat of summer.

This spring there were more than usual late staying higher elevation species in the lowlands of southeastern Arizona. The southeast did not receive the rains that fell in the central part of the state during the period, so the mountains were quite dry there.

For excitement there was an Arctic Tern in Tucson, a Black-legged Kittiwake in Phoenix, Broad-winged Hawks in Prescott and the Lower Colorado River, and a Yellow-throated Warbler in Patagonia; plus surprises of a local nature in each of the state's diverse regions.

GREBES THROUGH HERONS — Two Horned Grebes, sparse migrants in spring, were on L. Havasu Apr. 4 (RH, CH). Dark-phase W. Grebes on L. Havasu decreased steadily during March, but nine remained to the late date of May 18. The light-phase birds, remaining to breed, increased to a total of 433 there during the period (MK *et al.*). One W. Grebe was seen May 8 at Tuzigoot N.M., in n. Arizona, where the species is uncommon (RF). An Olivaceous Cormorant was at Nogales Apr. 27; and one observed all period at Patagonia L. was not unexpected (DDe, SG, RS *et al.*).

A Little Blue Heron at Canoa May 15 (GP) represented about the 15th record for the state, most of which have occurred in spring. More unusual was a Louisiana Heron at Nogales Apr. 13 (†B. Harrington-Tweit, †G. Walter). Of the 15 or so previous records, only three have

been in spring. Twenty Black-crowned Night Herons May 5 were at St. Johns Res., n.e. Arizona where the species is seldom recorded (BHe). A group of 30 Cattle Egrets was seen near Yuma Apr. 16 (RF); one near Sedona May 7 (T. Hager, *vide* AG) was one of only a few recorded for n. Arizona.

WATERFOWL — One Whistling Swan remaining from the winter's invasion was at a pond near Portal Mar. 6 (PN). On Mar. 20 a third White-fronted Goose joined the two that wintered in Tucson (GP *et al.*). More Black-bellied Whistling Ducks moved into the Tucson area during the period—18 were counted at three locations (BK, EB, GG); two were farther s.e. at Benson the latter half of April (SG) and two were at Picacho Res., Apr. 22 (TGA). A pair of Mallards found on a nest with 12 eggs, and later young, at Cibola N.W.R. represented the first recent record of the species' breeding on the Lower Colorado R. (hereafter, L.C.R.) (*vide* MK). Two Eur. Wigeons were reported—one at Tucson during March (LJ, E. Stewart), and one on Black Mesa Mar. 5 (CL) was the second for n.e. Arizona. One of four Wood Ducks near Nogales remained until at least May 23 (SE *et al.*); nine were near Flagstaff Mar. 6 (JC, L. Metelman); one was still at Prescott May 15 (CT); and two May 12 in the Bill Williams Delta (hereafter, B.W. Delta) were suspected of attempting to breed (RH, MK).

Six Greater Scaup were counted on n. L. Havasu Mar. 9 and two on the B.W. Delta Mar. 20 (MK). An imm. Barrow's Goldeneye was at Parker Mar. 2 (JJ, CH) and three below Parker Dam remained until at least Mar. 19 (RH, CH, JJ). A ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye at Phoenix provided a first local record and one of three away from the L.C.R. during the winter. Two ♀ Com. Goldeneyes were below Parker Dam on the late date of May 17 (CR, MK). The ♂ Surf Scoter below Parker Dam remained until Mar. 19 (MK).

Four ad. and four young Com. Mergansers were found on Burro Cr., 40 mi e. of the L.C.R., near Alamo Dam May 20 (HW, *vide* CH). Previously the species was known to breed only in e. Arizona—below the Mogollon Rim and in the White Mts.

RAPTORS — A White-tailed Kite in s.e. Arizona along the New Mexico border Apr. 5 added to the growing number of records of this species in the state in recent years. Seven of the ten previous records have been from the s.e. part of the state also. A Goshawk in the foothills of the Tucson Mts., Mar. 28-31 was at an unusual lowland locality (SL, *vide* GM). Two individual Broad-winged Hawks were from areas of the state where the species has not been recorded previously: at Prescott Apr. 10-14 (RF, H & AG *et al.*) and at Cibola N.W.R., Apr. 21 (†HW, CH). Most of the dozen or so records have come from the southeast. A pair of Zone-tailed Hawks was found at a nest in a new area—in remote Pine Canyon in the Atascosa Mts., w. of Nogales May 22 (BH, RBa). The desert-nesting Bald Eagles enjoyed another successful year, thanks in part to the biologists who transferred two of the young from abandoned to active nests. Thirteen young fledged from seven nests along the Salt and Verde Rivers (*vide* RW).

RAILS, SHOREBIRDS — Thirteen Clapper Rails counted May 19-23 at a new (but previously unchecked) area—Arlington, w. of Phoenix—represented the highest number ever found away from the L.C.R. (R. Todd *et al.*).

A Ruddy Turnstone was at Willcox May 2-8 (SG, B. Crider, S. Heath). All but three of the previous dozen or so records have occurred in fall. A Whimbrel at Nogales Apr. 27 (PN) represented the third spring record from that area and the only one reported during the period. Spring records of Solitary Sandpiper and Dunlin are scarce on the L.C.R., so one of each at Cibola N.W.R., Apr. 22 was of interest (MD, MK); another Dunlin was at Mammoth May 12 (J. Bates). Marbled Godwit (uncommon in spring) was recorded in two areas—one at Picacho Res., Apr. 21 (R. Henry) and three s. of Phoenix Apr. 23 (RW). Unusual were the large flocks of Willets in the southeast—50 were counted s.e. of Portal Apr. 30, May 1 (W & SS, B & MS), 25 were near McNeal Apr. 26 (AM) and 26 were at St. David May 1 (AM, DDa).

Usually uncommon in spring, N. Phalarope was recorded in four areas of the state: seven at L. Havasu May 17 provided only the second spring record for the L.C.R. (RH, HW), two treated for injuries (K. Ingram) from rocks having been thrown into a flock e. of Phoenix May 20, two at Willcox May 29 (JS) and in the northeast: individuals at Ganado I. and Many Farms L., June 3 (KK, JW, SD, HL).

GULLS, TERNS — A second-winter Herring Gull, a sparse transient, was seen with five Ring-billed Gulls w. of Holbrook May 5 (JC, SE, TM). Individual California Gulls, uncommon migrants away from the L.C.R., were at Tucson Apr. 2 (JS), at Benson Apr. 11 (SG), and a second-year bird at Tucson May 26 (KK, GM). Six ad. Franklin's Gulls on L. Havasu Apr. 26 doubled the previous spring records for the L.C.R. More than usual reports of ad. Franklin's Gulls came from other parts of the state as well: one s. of Phoenix Mar. 7 (RF), one at Benson Apr. 6 (SG), one at Glen Canyon Dam Apr. 2 (JD), two s.e. of Flagstaff Apr. 27 (JC, TM) and two at Prescott May 15 (CT). The only reports of Bonaparte's Gull came from the L.C.R.

A temporary pond, created by winter rains on the Salt R., e. of Phoenix, attracted a Black-legged Kittiwake Mar. 17-18 (MA, TGA). This was three weeks later than previous "spring" records, and only the second of the dozen state records away from the L.C.R. or Painted Rock Dam.

An Arctic Tern, found at Tucson May 18 (†KK *et al.*), was only the third or fourth for the state and the first in spring. Small numbers go through the Salton Sea in late May-early June.

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A Band-tailed Pigeon was still at a low elevation in Nogales on the late date of May 31 (BH). Two individual Ground Doves wandered to Portal (where they are rarely recorded) May 13 & 16 (RM, B & MS). A pair of Long-eared Owls nested again for the third consecutive year near Sasabe, w. of Nogales (RBo)—another locality for this spring nesting bird. A Saw-whet Owl was found calling along the Hitchcock Trail above Bear Cr., Santa Catalina Mts., Mar. 8 (ph. A.B. van den Berg). The species is sparse and erratic in the state, especially in the thoroughly-studied Santa Catalinas, where there has been only one previous record: a pair was found in the same area in October, 1958.

An ad. ♂ Costa's Hummingbird at feeders in Portal during six days Mar. 27-Apr. 19 (W & SS, RM) represented only the second record and first in spring for the Chiricahua Mts. An Anna's Hummingbird, also uncommon in the Chiricahuas, was at a Portal feeder Mar. 31 (SS). Individual Rufous Hummingbirds were recorded in three areas of s.e. Arizona where it is uncommon in spring: Madera Canyon Mar. 1 (R. Perzley), Ramsey Canyon Mar. 8 (T & DC) and Portal Mar. 22 + (SS). Farther n. where it is even more uncommon in spring, a male was seen at Prescott Mar. 15 (TGo). Individual Calliope Hummingbirds, sparse spring migrants, were at feeders in Ramsey Canyon Mar. 23-Apr. 28 (T & DC) and at Portal Apr. 4 (W & SS).

Coppery-tailed Trogons (three pairs and one male!) were discovered in a new area—in Pine Canyon, Atascosa Mts., May 21, 22 (BH, RBa).

The winter's invasion of Lewis' Woodpeckers into middle elevations around Prescott continued into early May (CT); reports were also received from Sedona (AG), Payson (SD), and a few at lower elevation sites in c. and s. Arizona (m.ob.). The winter's invasion of Williamson's Sapsuckers in Prescott also continued into spring with high numbers still present May 12 (CT).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CORVIDS — This spring's Scissor-tailed Flycatcher report came from the Nogales sewage ponds—one was there Apr. 25 (BH). A Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher near Nogales May 31 represented one of only a handful of lowland records in the Santa Cruz R. drainage (BH). There was one E. Phoebe reported—at Patagonia Mar. 20 (TGo, RBr, M. Eubanks). Individual late W. Wood Pewees were at Quitobaquito Springs May 29 and at Puerto Peñasco, Son., Mex., May 31 (SB, RW).

Arizona's only Cave Swallow returned to Tucson for the fourth consecutive summer Apr. 12 (DS).

Six Clark's Nutcrackers s. of Rustler Park in the Chiricahua Mts. (where the species has not been known to breed) May 22 was surprising, especially since there were no sightings there during the winter (C. McMoran).

CREEPERS THROUGH VIREOS—Individual Brown Creepers were still at three lowland spots on the L.C.R. the third week in March (JJ, CR, RH, MK). Individual Winter Wrens were found at Patagonia (BK), Huachuca Canyon (SG), Sheelite Canyon (JS) and B.W. Delta (JJ, CH) between mid-March and early April. A Bewick's Wren was carrying nesting material at Cibola N.W.R., May 1 (HW). The species has been found nesting only once on the L.C.R., s. of Topock.

A Rufous-backed Robin (with a large flock of Am. Robins) in

Arivaipa Canyon Mar. 7 (SG) was only the fourth to be recorded during the past five winters. Individual Townsend's Solitaires lingered into March at three areas on the L.C.R. (MK, RH); two to three were in Arivaipa Canyon at least to Apr. 18 (SG) and one was at Burro Cr. as late as May 21 (HW).

One pair of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** had returned to Chino Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., by Mar. 5 (WD *et al.*), and *three pairs* were observed there Mar. 20 (BHa). In addition, a male was found on May 30 at the spot on Sonoita Cr. where the first individuals of this species in the U.S. were discovered in 1971 (BHa)!

Two of the Golden-crowned Kinglets in the B.W. Delta lingered until Apr. 5 (RH). Noteworthy was a N. Shrike in the White Mts. on the very late date of May 14 (GM, R. Stringer).

Many Bell's Vireos singing in the honey mesquite habitat along Burro Cr., May 20 were of interest, since the species is uncommon just 40 mi w. on the L.C.R. (HW). During May up to six were singing at Cibola N.W.R., and two were at B.W. Delta May 28 (RH).

WARBLERS — A **Yellow-throated Warbler** found at Patagonia Mar. 15 remained until at least Mar. 28 (J.R. Riddell, GM *et al.*, ph. B. Drew). The date was earlier by a month than the previous seven state records, and raises the question of whether it might have wintered nearby. An ad. ♂ Bay-breasted Warbler along Sycamore Cr., n.e. of Phoenix Apr. 24 (TGo) furnished about the tenth state record. A Palm Warbler was seen near Eager, n.e. Arizona May 15 (J. Woolfenden). Only three of the state's 20 or so previous records have been in spring.

Again (as was the case during the previous spring and fall) multiple sightings of Worm-eating Warbler added another three individuals to the 17 or so previous records: in Cave Cr. Canyon Apr. 14, 15 (RM *et al.*), at Spring Cr., Flagstaff Apr. 15 (SE, JC, BC) and at Saguaro N.M., Tucson May 14 (†P. Willburn *et al.*). Hooded Warbler has also become more regular. One was near Portal May 12 (RM). An Ovenbird was at Portal May 26 (RS).

Numbers of usually more common regular "eastern" migrants were lower than usual. No Am. Redstarts were reported, only one each of Black-and-white and Tennessee warblers and five N. Waterthrushes, including one in the n.e. at Zion Dam, Little Colorado R., May 16 (GM, BHe). Three individual N. Parulas were recorded at Patagonia, B.W. Delta and e. of Phoenix.

The wintering Chestnut-sided Warbler at Tucson remained to Mar. 21 (GG). An ad. ♂ Olive Warbler at Walnut Canyon in mid-April was in a new location and at the n. limit of its range (M. Guntert). A Red-faced Warbler in a mesquite bosque s. of Tucson May 5, put in one of only a few lowland appearances of this species (D. Taylor, *vide* TGA).

The most interesting warbler of the season was a singing **Fan-tailed Warbler** found May 22 in Arroyo Cajon Bonito, n.e. Sonora, Mex.—just 5 mi s. of the Arizona border (S.M. Russell). A week later a second individual was found at the same place (DDA, GM *et al.*). Fan-tailed Warbler has been recorded in Arizona (and the U.S.) once—21 years ago.

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS — A ♀ Orchard Oriole in Cave Cr. Canyon May 24, 25 (†RS) added to the growing numbers of this scarce migrant. The ♂ Streak-backed Oriole that wintered in Tucson remained until Mar. 16 (M. Chalif). Two Great-tailed Grackles at Lakeside and one at McNary May 13 (GM) provided further evidence of this species' expansion into the White Mts. In Flagstaff where the species has become very common in recent years, there were numerous nests found around the lakes of Anderson Mesa s. e. of town (JC).

A ♂ Scarlet Tanager in Arivaipa Canyon Primitive Area May 18 (R. Smith, *vide* SG) was the 11th for the state. Several Summer Tanagers in Burro Cr. Canyon May 20 were interesting considering the scarcity of the species just 40 mi w. on the L.C.R. (HW).

FRINGILLIDS — Indigo Buntings were reported from most of the riparian areas of the southeast (*vide* SG), but only two were reported from the Portal area where they were abundant last year (SS). A possible hybrid Indigo x Lazuli Bunting was observed at Patagonia May 23 (TGA, M. Jakle) and two in Arivaipa Canyon May 1 (SG). Nine reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks came from s.e. Arizona during the period.

Additional Evening Grosbeak reports from the winter's invasion came from the Sierra Ancha Mts.—20 on Apr. 24 (RF), along Wet Beaver Cr., and at feeders around Sedona in May (*vide* AG). The large concentrations around Skull Valley, w. of Prescott were still present the end of May (CT). Lingered Cassin's Finches were reported

during March and April from Huachuca Canyon—40, Arivaipa Canyon—10 (SG), Sycamore Cr.—two pairs with a pair of Purple Finches (PB), and at Portal two remained at feeders until May 6 (SS). Pine Siskins were common to abundant during the period and widely reported from near Ehrenberg to May 23 (MK), Sycamore Cr. (RF, PB), Arivaipa Canyon (SG), Portal to May 19 (SS), Onion Saddle, Chiricahua Mts.—85 on May 31 (S.G. Williams *et al.*), Globe (BJ) and St. Johns (BHe). American Goldfinches in small numbers were also widespread: on the L.C.R. Arivaipa Canyon, Tuzigoot N.M., Phoenix, Portal; and at Patagonia one remained until May 23 (T.R. Oliver). Lawrence's Goldfinches from the winter's invasion remained at several areas in s. Arizona and the L.C.R. into mid-April; 175+ were counted s.w. of Prescott and large numbers near Wickenburg Mar. 14 (CT); one seen n. of Ehrenberg May 7 may have bred in the area (JJ).

Rufous-winged Sparrow nested in a Tucson yard—two adults with two grown immatures were observed there May 11 (GM). A Yellow-eyed Junco found near Mt. Union, the highest peak in Yavapai County May 14 (CT) was considerably farther n. than the species has been recorded previously.

CORRIGENDA — AB 36:205. The dates of the Hooded Warbler at Prescott were Aug. 4 to Oct. 4. The Magnolia Warbler was recorded at Wickenburg (not Prescott). The Pyrrhuloxia at Globe did not represent the second record there. Individuals have been recorded almost every year since the early 1970s. The first record there was in 1955.

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