

SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona

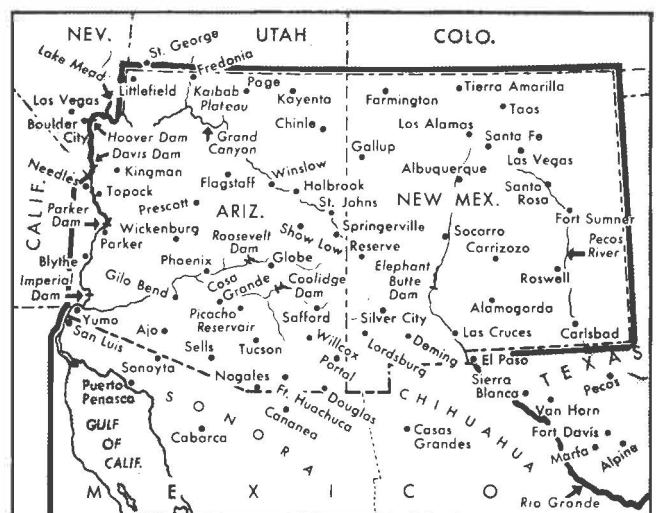
/Janet Witzeman

The wettest winter and spring in 40 years produced a lush desert and a brilliant wildflower display. However, this allowed the migrants to spread out instead of concentrating at the regular oases, and fewer rarities than usual were reported. In northern Arizona, shorebirds were nearly nonexistent because of the high water in the lakes there.

In the report which follows, many of the interesting accounts are of transients not necessarily uncommon to the state, but noteworthy because they are more unusual in spring than fall.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Common Loons away from the Lower Colorado River (hereafter, L.C.R.) were two s. of Kayenta, n.e. Ariz., Apr. 15 (CLaR), one at Becker L., near Springerville Apr. 16 (BHe) and a loon (probably Common) at Horseshoe Dam, n.e. of Phoenix Apr. 2 (RW). Besides the usual scattering of Cattle Egrets in s. and w. Arizona, a few were recorded in e. and n. Arizona where the species is uncommon: two at San Carlos Res., e. of Globe Mar. 30 (GM, BJ), two at Sedona Apr. 12, one s. of Sedona Apr. 15, one at L. Montezuma Apr. 22 and one at Mormon L., May 18 (A. Greene *et al.*).

As usual Black-bellied Whistling Ducks appeared during April in the Tucson-Nogales area. In Phoenix, where the species is uncommon, 3-8 were present Mar. 30-May 8 at least (RBr, TG, MJ). A pair of Blue-



winged Teal with six young in s.w. Phoenix May 10 (RBr) represented one of the few nesting records for the state and the first below the Rim. Individual Eur. Wigeons were at Tucson Mar. 8-12 (J. Drewek, L. Jones) and Lower L. Mary Mar. 8 (JSh). There are about a dozen records for the state. A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers, uncommon in

n. Arizona, were observed at the bottom of the Grand Canyon on the late date of May 29 (DSte).

RAPTORS — Adding to the total of straggling White-tailed Kites in Arizona were singles at Dudleyville Apr. 29 (D. Brown, *fide* SSu) and n. of the Gila R., and Interstate 10 on May 12 & 18 (TG, S. Vaughan). A one-year-old imm. Mississippi Kite at Nogales May 11 was a local first; the species is very rarely seen away from its limited Arizona breeding area (KK, LH).

An ad. Zone-tailed Hawk was observed at Bill Williams Delta (hereafter, B.W. Delta) May 20 (HW). The species is a rare and irregular summer resident there. Black Hawk is very rare as a migrant in far w. Arizona where one was seen at Dome Valley Mar. 25 (†RH, CH, LL, JJ). At B.W. Delta, where one has summered for several years, one was seen Apr. 13 and May 20 (DK, HW, KC). The isolated, small and uniquely adapted population of desert-nesting Bald Eagles fledged a high of 14 young again (as in 1981). A high of three young was fledged for each of 2 nests that would be inundated if Orme Dam were built (*fide* RW).

At least one female and two ♂ Marsh Hawks at Arlington, w. of Phoenix May 24 raised the possibility that the species may be nesting there (DT).

RAILS, SHOREBIRDS — Clapper Rails responded to taped calls at 2 areas in c. Arizona — two birds (unpaired) at a marsh e. of Phoenix May 18, and only two pairs May 24 at the Arlington marsh where numbers were much higher last year (DT).

An Am. Golden Plover, only the sixth spring visitor to the state, was found at Willcox May 24 (R. Taylor). A Black-bellied Plover, also uncommon in spring, was seen e. of Phoenix May 13 (L. Harrison, D. Jones, *fide* TG). As usual, Long-billed Curlews congregated in large flocks s. of Phoenix; a high of 350 was counted there Mar. 20 (SG). Up to 20 were at McNeal, s.e. Ariz., Apr. 14 (AM). Unusual were two Whimbrels at Nogales May 2 (KK, DStj, R & JW) and one in s.w. Phoenix May 19 (TC). On the L.C.R., where the species is more regular, three were at Cibola N.W.R., Mar. 12 (CH *et al.*) and 15 w. of Roll Mar. 18 (RH, JJ). Marbled Godwit is an uncommon spring migrant, especially in n. Arizona, so of interest was the large flock of 125 at Montezuma L., Apr. 21 (S. Hyde, *fide* CT).

Surprising was a Red Phalarope in s.w. Phoenix May 9 (RBr *et al.*) and two at Nogales May 11 (KK, LH). There were only 2 previous spring records for the state.

GULLS, CUCKOOS — A Herring Gull, an uncommon visitor, was at Davis Dam Mar. 12 (PL). A Franklin's Gull, uncommon on the L.C.R., was observed at L. Havasu City Mar. 15 (TC, M. Norris). One Heermann's Gull straggled N; an adult was seen at Cibola N.W.R., Apr. 19 (†RH). This spring's Bonaparte's Gull reports came from Dudleyville (M. O'Brien), Arivaca (JSa), four at Gila Bend and eight at Painted Rock Dam (RF, DStj).

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at Portal (where it is uncommon) May 22-25 (S & WS *et al.*).

OWLS, NIGHTJARS — A Ferruginous Owl was seen Mar. 17 in the same area of n.w. Tucson where it was found nesting a year ago (SSu). An Elf Owl, scarce on the L.C.R., was at B.W. Delta Apr. 13 (DK). A nest of Spotted Owl was found May 22 in the Patagonia Mts., where the status of the species is poorly known (N. Krug).

By late May Buff-collared Nightjars had returned to Arivaipa and Guadalupe Canyons, with a copulating pair seen at the latter area May 18 (R. Stallcup *et al.*).

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS — A large, all dark swift, identified as a Black Swift, was seen at Portal May 23 (RM). There have been several sight records of this species in the Chiricahuas the past few years, and although it is a probable transient, there are no verified records.

A ♀ Lucifer Hummingbird was at Portal Apr. 25-May 6 (SS) and a male there May 20 (B. & M. Schaughency). Calliope Hummingbird is a sparse spring migrant — a male was at Ramsey Canyon Apr. 16-17 & May 1 (T & DC).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — An E. Kingbird was observed up

Havasu Cr., at the bottom of the Grand Canyon May 28 (DSte). The species is an uncommon summer visitor to the state; there are about 4 previous records for the Grand Canyon region. Four individual E. Phoebees were recorded in s. Arizona during March and April (CDeW, PL, KK *et al.*), and on the L.C.R., where the species is uncommon, one was seen n. of Ehrenberg May 30 (†KC, JJ). In addition to the small population of Buff-breasted Flycatchers in the Huachuca Mts., a few were found in the Chiricahua Mts. (Salisbury Canyon) and Santa Catalina Mts. (Rose Canyon) (RBo *et al.*). This species may be reclaiming some of its former range. Coues' Flycatcher was recorded in 3 areas away from its usual range — at Dome Valley, L.C.R., Apr. 17 (†DK, LL), one singing May 2 in Oak Cr. Canyon (where it has nested at least once) (JC, TM) and one singing in the Pinal Mts., May 31 (BJ).

Arizona's Cave Swallow returned for the fifth season to the U. of Arizona Library at Tucson May 17 (J. Dunning, SSu), but by the end of the month there were definitely two present (JSa *et al.*).

NUTHATCHES THROUGH GNATCATCHERS — A Red-breasted Nuthatch observed near Tacna, e. of Yuma May 24 (RH, KC) was very late for a desert locality. A surprising number of catbirds was recorded away from the species' breeding area: one in Arivaipa Canyon Apr. 11 (SG), one at Portal May 18-19 (R. Balda *et al.*), one at Kino Springs (since December) remained until Apr. 23 (JBo, m.ob.) and the one at Prescott (since December) remained until Apr. 28 (CT). A Brown Thrasher at Cibola N.W.R., Mar. 6 may have wintered locally (†DK).

Finishing up the best season in years were six additional Rufous-backed Robins: in Tucson Estates Mar. 7-Apr. 4 (AG, J. Rogers), at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Mar. 8 (AG), Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson Mar. 10 (CDeW), Canoa Ranch Apr. 17-22 (SG), Madera Canyon Apr. 29 (T. Meyer) and Patagonia Sanctuary May 17-21 (R. Baxter, G & DJ, RF *et al.*).

A Wood Thrush at Portal May 12-21 (†F. Luke, SS, PN *et al.*) was the 10th for the state. The only previous spring record was also from Portal. A pair of Black-capped Gnatcatchers returned to Chino Canyon for the third season in early May (ph., G. Lasley, KK *et al.*).

VIREOS, WARBLERS — On the L.C.R., where Bell's Vireo is uncommon, approximately 15 singing males were recorded from Cibola N.W.R., n. to n. of Ehrenberg May 5-31, and four at B.W. Delta in May (DK, RH).

A **Fan-tailed Warbler**, which would represent only the second record for Arizona and the U.S., was reported in Sheelite Canyon, Huachuca Mts., May 19 (†G & DJ). Although the bird could not be located subsequently, the details reported would seem to rule out all other species. A **Blackpoll Warbler** was discovered at Cibola N.W.R., Apr. 29 (†DK); of the approximately 16 state records, this represents one of the few in spring.

A Palm Warbler near Parks, w. of Flagstaff May 15 (G. Bateman) was only the fourth recorded in spring out of a total of about 21 overall. A ♂ Kentucky Warbler on the e. fork of Coalmine Wash. s. of Kayenta May 7 (CLaR) was one of the few ever recorded in n. Arizona.

Individual Worm-eating Warblers (becoming more common in recent years) were found at Cave Cr. Canyon, Portal Apr. 18-May 1 (G. Smith *et al.*, *fide* SS) and at Patagonia Apr. 23 (JBo, DDe). An Ovenbird was reported near Portal Apr. 25 (BK). The only N. Parula reported was one at Ramsey Canyon May 21 (T & DC).

Two Black-and-white Warblers were recorded in s.e. Arizona during March and April (CDeW, RM) and one in n. Arizona at Prescott May 5 (CT). There were two Am. Redstarts and four N. Waterthrushes reported during the period.

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH SPARROWS — Along the L.C.R., and lower Gila R., Yellow-headed Blackbirds breed only locally, so of interest was the colony with flying young observed at Arlington on the Gila R., w. of Phoenix May 24 (DT).

A ♂ **Painted Bunting** was discovered at Bright Angel Cr., at the bottom of the Grand Canyon May 11 (C. Fritzinger, B. Dimmock, K. Crumbo, CT). This furnished the first record for the Grand Canyon region, one of only three for n. Arizona and the first spring record for the state.

Individual Cardinals were found at 3 locations on the L.C.R., where

they are uncommon: a female at Parker Mar. 5 (RH, DK), a male at Ehrenberg May 1 and a male n. of Ehrenberg during May (RH). Three reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeak came from s.e. Arizona, one from the L.C.R., and three from n. Arizona during the period. Five Evening Grosbeaks, scarce wanderers in the state, were seen in Guadalupe Canyon Mar. 27 (DDa, AM). Following a winter in which Lawrence's Goldfinches were virtually absent, one at Cibola N.W.R., Mar. 12 (DK) and one at Wickenburg Mar. 13 (PL) may have been spring arrivals from Arizona's very sparse breeding population.

A pair of Black-chinned Sparrows, uncommon winter residents in Yuma County, was observed in the Kofa Mts., Mar. 21 (JC, DP). Reports of White-throated Sparrows in March came from Patagonia (CDeW, JEo) and Phoenix (PL, JW).

CORRIGENDA — The following record of Streak-backed Oriole at Tucson should be changed to Hooded Oriole: *AB* 36:882. The observer for the imm. Brown Pelican at Nogales Dec. 4, 1982 (*AB* 37:325) was Richard Bailowitz.

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