
SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona, Sonora

/Janet Witzeman, David Stejskal

The winter was mild and the driest on record. The usual January rains did not materialize.

Northern Arizona had an invasion of boreal species—Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Bohemian Waxwings, Cassin's Finches, Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks. The ponderosa pine crop was outstanding. The berry crops—mistletoe and juniper—were locally abundant and attracted large numbers of Townsend's Solitaires, bluebirds, American Robins, Hermit Thrushes, Sage Thrashers and Cedar Waxwings.

Much of the streamside brushy thicket type habitat over Arizona was destroyed during the fall floods and probably was a contributing factor in the lower than usual number of Lincoln's and White-crowned sparrows.

Although none of the rare southward wandering Siberian species reached Arizona, a visitor from far north arrived just in time to be added to Arizona's new state checklist.



LOONS THROUGH IBISES — The only Arctic Loon reported for the period was one below Davis Dam Jan. 21-28 (VM, RN). Common Loon is uncommon in winter away from P.R.D., and the lower Colorado River (hereafter, L.C.R.); one was at Phoenix for a first local record Dec. 19 (RW). The first **Yellow-billed Loon** for the state was found at Painted Rock Dam (hereafter, P.R.D.) Jan. 15 where it remained at least to Feb. 11 (DSj, CB, RF, ph., JW). It was very far s. and one of only a handful of inland records, although recent Colorado occurrences had led Arizona birders to be on the lookout for this species.



Yellow-billed Loon, Painted Rock Dam, Ariz., Jan. 16, 1984. Photo/J. Witzeman.

Two Horned Grebes at Prescott in January and February were unusual as the species does not normally appear before March there (CT). Other Horned Grebes away from the L.C.R., were one at Chandler Jan. 20 into March (D & MS *et al.*) and one on Saguaro L., e. of Phoenix Feb. 17 (TC). A **Red-necked Grebe** on L. Mohave Jan. 18 (†MK) was only the 2nd for the state. Western Grebe is uncommon in winter in n. and s.e. Arizona; one was at Prescott during January and February (CT) and two (one light-phase and one dark-phase) were at McNeal, s. of Elfrida Dec. 2-5 (ph., AM).

A Red-billed Tropicbird was seen from shore at Puerto Penasco, Sonora Feb. 20 (TG *et al.*). An Am. White Pelican was present at Phoenix in early January and another one was at Show Low Jan. 6 (DT); the species is uncommon in winter away from the L.C.R., and P.R.D. An emaciated Brown Pelican was picked up in s.w. Phoenix in early December (DT) and another late individual was at P.R.D., Dec. 4 (D & MS).

A Great Blue Heron at an almost frozen lake in the White Mts., Jan. 6 was unexpected (DT). Three individual egrets, all rare in the s.e. in winter, were recorded: at McNeal, a Great Egret Dec. 29-Jan. 3 and a Cattle Egret Dec. 2-3 (AM *et al.*), and at Tucson, a Snowy Egret Dec. 22-Jan. 15 (m.ob.). A Green-backed Heron was unusually far n. at Page Springs during the period (A. Green, JC). A flock of 16 White-faced Ibis remained through the period at Cibola N.W.R. (DK), one was at Willcox Jan. 9 (TC) and one at Casa Grande Jan. 21 (JS).

WATERFOWL — Tundra Swans were recorded in the n. and n.e. again during January and February: one on L. Mary (B. Syderman), five

at lakes in Prescott (CT *et al.*) and 34 at Little Ortega L., near Concho (BH, DT). Individual Snow Geese, uncommon in n. Arizona, were on Lower L. Mary Feb. 11-27 (RF, JC) and at Prescott all winter into March (CT). In addition to the ten Ross' Geese at Cibola N.W.R., through the period (DK) there was one in Phoenix Dec. 3-mid-January (DSj, TC *et al.*), one at Casa Grande Jan. 21-Feb. 6 (JS, PB) and one n.e. of Prescott into March (CT). Canada Geese (especially Lessers) were abundant n.e. of Prescott (CT) and 1000 were counted on Anderson Mesa s. of Flagstaff Jan. 9 (DT).

Numbers of Wood Ducks continued to increase n.e. of Prescott; at least 40 were present through the period (CT). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was recorded again (as was one last winter) at McNeal Jan. 28 (AM *et al.*). More Greater Scaup than usual were recorded: two at Benson in late December and one at Portal Jan. 1 (FS), one at McNeal Jan. 2 (FS, JS), a male at the Bisbee/Douglas sewage ponds Jan. 28-Feb. 11 (AM, TD) and a male at Chandler Feb. 26 to late March (DSj *et al.*). A ♀ Oldsquaw, rare away from the L.C.R., spent the winter at a pond in Chandler Dec. 13-Mar. 25 when it was found dead (†D & MS *et al.*).

Most of the scoter records in the state have been in late fall, so unusual were the two Surf Scoters at Davis Dam Feb. 8, one since Jan. 21 (VM, GM) and a White-winged Scoter on L. Mohave Jan. 15 (G. Mueller). A ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye at Prescott Jan. 7 was the 4th for that area (CT). The species was back at Davis Dam in large numbers again—increasingly steadily from late November to early February when 52 were counted (GM *et al.*); four were below Parker Dam Jan. 7 (D & MS). High numbers of Bufflehead (25-35) wintered at Prescott (CT).

Hooded Mergansers away from the L.C.R., are uncommon, and when present occur only in ones or twos, so unusual were the six at Prescott (CT *et al.*) and six at 2 lakes in Tucson (BD *et al.*) during the period. A Com. Merganser, uncommon in s.e. Arizona, was at McNeal Dec. 24 (AM).

RAPTORs — Records of Black-shouldered Kites continued to increase in s.c. Arizona: one at Arlington, w. of Phoenix Dec. 29-Jan. 15 (ph., DT *et al.*), one to two at Gila Bend Jan. 7-Feb. 2 (RF, A. Guenther *et al.*), two in Chandler Jan. 28+ (BA, PB *et al.*) and one along I-10 n. of Picacho Feb. 10 (*fide* TG). In s.e. Arizona one was near Douglas Dec. 4 (AM *et al.*) and one in the San Rafael grasslands Feb. 24 (B. Sutton, L. Dombrowski).

Wintering Bald Eagles were found more commonly in the s. than usual: one near Douglas Dec. 12 (R. Hayostek), one at McNeal Jan. 2 (†FS, JS), six in the San Rafael grasslands Feb. 4 (GP *et al.*), one at Cibola N.W.R., during the period (DK, KC *et al.*) and at least one in n.w. Phoenix in December (DT, TC). The annual mid-winter survey in the n. recorded 211 individuals, an increase of 25% over last year; the population shifted W to lakes in the Flagstaff area as the lakes in the White Mts., were frozen this winter (DT).

A banded Harris' Hawk at Parker Dec. 4 & 5 and again Feb. 9 (KC, LL) was probably from the recent re-introduction effort on the L.C.R. A Zone-tailed Hawk e. of Phoenix Jan. 29-Feb. 10 (M. Carpenter, M. Axelrod) represented one of the few winter records for the state. High numbers of Ferruginous Hawks were wintering in s.e. Arizona—53 were counted between Bisbee and Willcox Jan. 29 (AM, TD).

Individual Crested Caracaras, uncommon away from the Papago Indian Reservation, were observed at Tucson Dec. 21 (AM) and n. of Oracle Jct., Feb. 2 (ph., MJ).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS — A Black-bellied Plover in Chandler Dec. 9-Jan. 21 represented only the 2nd winter record for the state. At least 85 Mountain Plovers were found wintering near Elfrida (AM *et al.*), a high number for this species that was not found wintering there before 1978, and since then only in small numbers. American Avocets are uncommon in the s.e. in winter; one was at the Bisbee/Douglas Airport ponds Dec. 4 (AM), one at McNeal Jan. 11 at least to Feb. 2 (AM, T & DC) and 15 at Willcox Feb. 15 (GM). Individual Long-billed Curlews, uncommon in winter, were at Chandler Jan. 28 (BA) and at McNeal Feb. 13 (AM, GM). A Dunlin, rare in winter in the s.e., was at Willcox Feb. 15 (GM). A Wilson's Phalarope at Willcox Feb. 15+ represented the first mid-winter record for the state (GM *et al.*).

Bonaparte's Gull is an uncommon winter visitor in low numbers, so unprecedented were the 75-100 at P.R.D., Jan. 28 (DSj *et al.*) and the seven at McNeal Dec. 2 (AM). There are few winter records of Califor-

nia Gull away from the L.C.R.; one was far e., at McNeal Jan. 2 (†FS, JS) and one at P.R.D., Feb. 11 (DSj *et al.*). A Forster's Tern at P.R.D. Jan. 28 (DSj) was one of only a few winter records for the state.

OWLS THROUGH SAPSUCKERS — Our knowledge of Spotted Owl in the n. is spotty, so of interest was one heard and seen n. of Oak Cr. Canyon Feb. 25 (D & MS). A White-throated Swift at Prescott Dec. 18 and six there Feb. 5 (J. & M. Cherry, CT) furnished the first winter records there.

A Violet-crowned Hummingbird visited a feeder in Douglas Dec. 26-Feb. 16 (B. Smith, AM, ph., D. Dispatch); there have been only 2 previous winter records. A ♂ Blue-throated Hummingbird remained at a Portal feeder at least to Feb. 19 when it was joined by a female and a second male (RM, S & WS). Magnificent Hummingbirds remained at Portal feeders until late December and one at Ramsey Canyon feeders until Dec. 21 (D. Collazo). A Black-chinned Hummingbird returned to Portal feeders on the early date of Feb. 26 (RM). A ♂ Costa's Hummingbird, rare in the s.e., was at a Portal feeder Feb. 4 and another or the same was at the Southwest Research Station the same day (S & WS). An early ♂ Broad-tailed Hummingbird was at a Portal feeder Feb. 13 (RM).

Winter records of Elegant Trogon are few: one was in Sycamore Canyon, w. of Nogales Dec. 26 (SM *et al.*) and one in Garden Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Feb. 7 (RS). A juv. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*S.v. varius*) was in Ehrenberg Dec. 4-5 (†DK, JJ).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — A Greater Pewee, a sparse winter resident, was present w. of Phoenix at least from Feb. 22-Mar. 12 (PB, TC *et al.*). Individual W. Flycatchers, uncommon in winter, were at Ehrenberg Dec. 10 (DK) and n.w. of Phoenix Dec. 28 (RBr *et al.*). Four individual E. Phoebes were reported: at Prescott Dec. 18 into March (CT), at Reddington Pass, e. of Tucson Jan. 18 (CdeW) and Patagonia Sanctuary Jan. 24 (JB, CdeW, GM); one e. of Tucson Nov. 28-Jan. 28 had been banded there Jan. 27, 1983 (C. Corchran, P. Walters). A Thick-billed Kingbird in the Bill Williams Delta Dec. 22 furnished the 4th winter record for the L.C.R. (*fide* KVR). At least one, and possibly two, Rose-throated Becards in Harshaw Canyon, Patagonia Dec. 18 (NK) represented the first winter record for the state.

Indicative of the mild winter were the three N. Rough-winged Swallows that overwintered in Tucson (GM *et al.*) and the Tree Swallows far e., at McNeal—eight in December and three still present in February (AM *et al.*). An early Cliff Swallow was at Davis Dam Feb. 7 (GM).

CHICKADEES THROUGH WAXWINGS — The Mountain Chickadee is an uncommon winter visitor to the lowlands, especially on the L.C.R.; one was at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 14-Feb. 21 (DK, LL). A Brown Creeper, also uncommon on the L.C.R., was at Ehrenberg Dec. 10 to late January (S. Anderson).

A **Sedge Wren** at El Golfo, Mex., Dec. 4 (PP, SH) was the first for Sonora. In addition to the Golden-crowned Kinglets around Prescott, one was at Globe Dec. 16-19 (M. McKusick) and one at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 2 (DK, KC). Black-capped Gnatcatchers were found in Chino Canyon in winter for the first time; a pair plus another male were observed there in mid-January and Feb. 11 (KG, SG).

There was a small invasion of Varied Thrushes: individuals were seen in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 4-11 (DSj), at Beaver Dam Wash, n.w. Arizona Dec. 9 (MK) and at Quitobaquito, Organ Pipe Cactus N.M., Jan. 19 at least to Feb. 2 (KG *et al.*). There were two Brown Thrashers—one at Patagonia through the period (m.ob.) and one near Elfrida Jan. 2-Feb. 21 (AM *et al.*). Crissal Thrasher had not been recorded w. of the Growler Mts., and Papago Well in w. Pima Co, so of interest were eight seen w. of there near Tule Well Dec. 20 (S. Russell).

A Sprague's Pipit, sparse winter resident on the L.C.R., was seen n. of Ehrenberg Jan. 21 (†DK). A major invasion of up to 100+ Bohemian Waxwings occurred in Flagstaff from early February into March (JC *et al.*), the first of any consequence since February 1979.

VIREOS, WARBLERS — A Gray Vireo at Catalina State P., Tucson Jan. 8 (GM) was well away from the species' usual wintering areas in s.w. Arizona and coastal Sonora. Five Hutton's Vireos in 3 locations in Oak Cr. Canyon in late January and early February were n. of the species' winter range.

The N. Parula at Patagonia Dec. 18 (*fide* NK) was probably only a late migrant, but one in Tucson Feb. 25 into March (C. Williamson *et al.*) may have wintered; there was only one previous true winter record for the state. In the past it has not been unusual for one or two Chestnut-sided Warblers to be recorded in late December in s. Arizona lowlands, but unprecedented were the seven or more recorded this winter: one at Palominas, s.e. Arizona Dec. 3 (DD, †AM), two at Phoenix Dec. 4 with one remaining at least to Jan. 1 (DSj *et al.*), two in Tucson in late December (m.ob.), a late individual along the Verde R., e. of Phoenix Jan. 29-30, that may have wintered (CH, PB), and at least one at Boyce Thompson Arboretum all period into March (†D & MS, DSj) represented only the 2nd true winter record for the state.

A Louisiana Waterthrush found at Patagonia Dec. 18 (RS) was seen there again Mar. 13 (TC). There have been about 10 previous state records. Two MacGillivray's Warblers were recorded in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 19 (†KR, †RW), one of which was present Dec. 11 into early January (DSj). There were only about 4 previous December records.

A few Yellow-rumped Warblers were present all period in Flagstaff where they are not usually found in winter (JC *et al.*). Ten **Palm Warblers** (w. race) observed Dec. 4 at El Golfo, Mex., at the n. end of the Gulf of California (PP, SH) represented the first record for Sonora. There are a number of winter records for Arizona. Two Black-throated Gray Warblers were observed in the Sierra Pinta Dec. 20 (JB, GM *et al.*); the species is uncommon in winter in s.w. Arizona.

A Black-and-white Warbler and two Am. Redstarts were present in s.w. Phoenix through the period (DSj *et al.*). A second Black-and-white Warbler was at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 9-Jan. 19 (†DK, KC) and an Am. Redstart was there until Dec. 10 (KC, DK). A N. Waterthrush and a Yellow Warbler were at Phoenix from November into early January (DSj); two Yellow Warblers were at Parker Dec. 21 (*fide* KR) and three at Arlington Dec. 30 (*fide* J. Shipley).

SPARROWS, BLACKBIRDS, FINCHES — An Am. Tree Sparrow (a sparse winter resident in n. Arizona) frequented a feeder in Flagstaff Jan. 24-Feb. 3 (G. Bateman). Two Clay-colored sparrows were carefully studied in the Atascosa Mts., Dec. 26 (S. Mills *et al.*); the species is a rare winter resident, especially w. of Nogales. Three to four Swamp Sparrows, uncommon and irregular winter visitors, were seen at El Golfo, Sonora Dec. 4 (PP, SH). Golden-crowned and Harris' sparrows are both uncommon winter visitors. Two of each were recorded in Tucson—one Golden-crowned Dec. 23 (G. Fox) and another at Saguaro, N.M., from late December on (m.ob.); an imm. Harris' Sparrow was at San Xavier Mission Feb. 10-26 (D. Morton *et al.*) and one banded in n. Tucson remained Jan. 28-Mar. 6 (R. Chapin). Another Harris' Sparrow was at Prescott Dec. 18 (CT).

Over 100 McCown's Longspurs s. of Elfrida Feb. 15 into March (AM, GM *et al.*) was a new high number for this uncommon and irregular winter resident of s.e. Arizona. In with them was a bird that provided the first record of Lapland Longspur for s.e. Arizona—a male seen there Feb. 20 (†AM, T & DC).

Numbers of Great-tailed Grackles spent the entire winter at Page (ph., W. Gustavson, *fide* E. Sorensen); the species was not recorded in winter in n. Arizona before 1980. Records of orioles in winter are usually at feeders, but all of the Hooded Orioles and two of the Scott's Orioles were not at feeders this winter: an ad. ♂ Hooded Oriole at Ehrenberg through the period, two imm. ♂ Hooded Orioles were there in early winter and one immature there Feb. 29 (DK *et al.*). Another Hooded Oriole was at Boyce Thompson Arboretum Dec. 28 (D & MS). There were two Scott's Orioles in Ramsey Canyon Dec. 31 (DD *et al.*); the two in the Atascosa Mts., Dec. 26 were away from feeders (SM *et al.*).

Red Crossbills bred again in the Prescott area: males were singing and displaying early in the winter and juveniles were observed in late February (CT).

CORRIGENDUM — The Red Phalarope, Oct. 22-23, 1983, was at Gila Bend, not Chandler.

CONTRIBUTORS (Area compilers in boldface) — Bob Aylesworth, Charles Babbitt, Pat Beall, Jerry Bock, Robert Bradley, Tom & Debbie Clark, Ken Clough, **John Coons** (Flagstaff), Troy Corman, Doug Danforth, Tom Deecken, Salome Demarce, Carol deWaard, Barney Dunning, Richard Ferguson, Tom Gatz, Sharon Goldwasser, Grace Gregg,

Kathy Groschupf, Brian Heap, Steve Howell, Chuck Hunter, **Betty Jackson** (Globe), Janet Jackson, Marty Jakle, Mark Kasprzyk, **Kenn Kaufman** (Advisor), **Dave Krueper** (L.C.R.), Neil Krug, Linda La-Claire, Scott Mills, Gale Monson, **Arnold Moorhouse** (Huachuca Mts. & McNeal), Robert Morse, Vince Mowbray, Phil Norton, Robert Norton, Georgia Porter, Larry Pyc, Peter Pyle, Ken Rosenberg, John Saba, Fritz Schneider, Robert Smith, **Sally Spofford** (Portal), Walter Spofford, David & Myra Styer, **Sherman Suter** (Tucson), Dick Todd, **Carl Tomoff** (Prescott), Robert Witzeman.—**JANET WITZEMAN, 4619 E. Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85018; DAVID STEJSKAL (DSj), Phoenix, AZ.**