

Arizona, Sonora

The first half of the spring was characterized by very dry weather, which was a continuation of conditions during the winter. There was no precipitation in most areas of the state from early January through late April, at which time the drought conditions were ended by a cold storm front originating in the Pacific followed by warm, wet weather from the south in early May—weather more typical of July and August. The heavy rains probably had something to do with the preponderance of reports of singing Cassin's Sparrows in the southeast. This species is not usually detected in any numbers until July when the usual summer rains commence.

NEV. UTAH COLO.

St. George Fredonia

Lake Mead Littlefield Kaibab Plateau Page Kayenta

Los Vegas Boulder City Hoover Dam Davis Dam Kingman Grand Canyon Chinle

Needles Topock Flagstaff Winslow Farmington

Parker Dam Prescott ARIZ. Los Alamos Santa Fe Taos

Blythe Imperial Dam Wickenburg Roosevelt Show Low St. Johns Albuquerque Los Vegas

Gila Bend Phoenix Globe Springerville Santa Rosa Fort Sumner

Yuma San Luis Ajo Picoacho Reservoir Safford Elephant Butte Dam Socorro Carrizozo Pecos River

Sanoyia Nogales Douglas Lordsburg Deming Alamogordo Roswell Carlsbad

Puerto Penasco Sierra Blanca El Paso

GULF OF CALIF. S O N O R A C H I U A H U A TEXAS

M E X I C O

Cabarcia Cananea Casas Grandes Van Horn Fort Davis Marfa Alpine

Rio Grande

Completely unexpected was the imm. **Red-billed Tropicbird** found in an agricultural field s. of Camp Verde Apr. 7 (*vide* DT, ph. K.

Ingram). The bird, exhausted and dehydrated, was brought to the Ariz. Game and Fish Dept., in Phoenix, and was subsequently transported to Sea World in San Diego for rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the bird died in early June (*to U. of Ariz.). There were 2 previous records for the state: Apr. 10, 1905 near Phoenix and Sept. 15, 1927 near Dos Cabezas, Cochise Co.



Immature Red-billed Tropicbird found in exhausted condition s. of Camp Verde, Ariz., Apr. 7, 1984. Third Arizona record. Photo/Kathy Ingram.

Single Double-crested Cormorants were noted near Show Low Mar. 30 (M. Larson) and near St. Johns Apr. 29 (BH). Double-crested Cormorants are sparse in n. Arizona. Both Double-crested Cormorants and Great Blue Herons were found nesting at Picacho Res., Mar. 30 with one and 15 nests noted, respectively (D & MSy). This is a new nesting locality for both species. At least 350 Cattle Egrets at Quigley Ponds n. of Tacna May 26 was a high concentration for the state (DT). Cattle Egrets in n. Arizona, where uncommon, included four on Apr. 21 at Cottonwood (A. Greene) and one at Prescott Apr. 17-20 (CT). A bit more exciting was the ad. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** found near Dudleyville on the San Pedro R., May 8-25 (O. Scott, D. Lee *et al.*, ph. GM, JSa). There had been 2 previous undocumented sightings for the state, both in spring.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS — Fulvous Whistling-Ducks have become exceptionally rare in the state in recent years, with the last report of a wild bird in 1978. So, unexpected was the individual reported May 30 at Prescott (†H. & A. Gaither). This represents the first record for the Prescott area this century. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks appeared in larger than usual numbers in the s.e. and s.c. portions of the state, with 75+ individuals reported. A flock of eight "Black" Brant at Punto Cirio, Sonora May 26 was late for the Gulf of California (ph. D. Brown).

An early Turkey Vulture was seen near Palominas Mar. 4 (GM, D. Fischer). The expansion story of the decade continues to be that of the Black-shouldered Kite. No fewer than 30 individuals were reported, mostly from the southeast (24), but also from c. Arizona (five) and one from the L.C.R. Most of the reports pertain to individual birds but no fewer than five pairs were noted including one pair copulating n. of Marana.

The desert-nesting Bald Eagle population on the Salt and Verde Rivers fledged a record 15 young. The previous high of 14 was set last year and in 1981. The Bill Williams Delta Com. Black-Hawk returned Apr. 5 for the 6th consecutive year (DK). A Crested Caracara seen at the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary Apr. 7 was unusual, as the species is rarely encountered outside the Papago Indian Reservation (RBa *et al.*)

SHOREBIRDS — The only Black-bellied Plover reported was one Apr. 30 w. of Tucson (JB *et al.*). Much rarer was the Lesser Golden-Plover at Willcox May 23-29 (RS, †J. & A. Price *et al.*). This may have been the same individual reported last year in May at Willcox. There have been only 6 previous spring records for the state and only about two dozen overall. Two Snowy Plovers at Many Farms L., May 17 (GM)

represented only the 3rd record for n. Arizona.

Black-necked Stilts had been unrecorded in n.e. Arizona until this spring when two were found at Ganado L., May 19 (DSj, CH). An incredible concentration of 96 Whimbrels was seen Apr. 28 near Yuma (PN *et al.*). This was by far the largest single-day number ever recorded in the state. The Marbled Godwit is an uncommon spring migrant throughout the state but is particularly sparse in the n.e., so of interest were individual birds seen at St. Johns Apr. 21 & 27 & May 5 (all BH). Even rarer in spring are Semipalmated and Pectoral sandpipers. A Semipalmated was found w. of Tucson Apr. 30 (JB, †SSu), and a Pectoral was at Willcox Apr. 14-18 (JSa, JB). Short-billed Dowitcher is also quite rare in spring in Arizona, so of interest were three w. of Tucson Apr. 27 (KK, DSj). The Red-necked Phalarope is at best an uncommon spring migrant in the state with individual birds and occasional small flocks being noted mostly in the first half of May. Unusual was a flock of 30+ at Ganado L., May 19 (DSj, CH) and 20 at Willcox May 25 (GM). A Red Phalarope w. of Tucson Apr. 29-30 provided the 5th spring record for the state (KK *et al.*).

GULLS AND TERNS — More Franklin's Gulls were reported this spring than is usual with three in Prescott Apr. 7 through mid-April (CT), one at Sierra Vista Apr. 26 (GM), five on Lower L. Mary May 4 (JSh), and four at Willcox May 10 (JD *et al.*). California Gulls are uncommon away from the L.C.R., and rarely reported in n.e. Arizona, so a 2nd-year bird at Ganado L., May 19 was noteworthy (CH, DSj). A bird reported as a Herring Gull (age?) was at Patagonia L., Apr. 13 (D. Fraser *et al.*) and two ad. Herring Gulls were at Prescott Apr. 14 (CT). One-to-two Caspian Terns at Prescott Apr. 11-22 were in an area where the species is considered to be unusual (CT). An ad. Com. Tern at Many Farms L., May 24 established only the 4th spring record for the state (PL). An ad. Forster's Tern the same day at Ganado L. provided about the 3rd spring record for n.e. Arizona, the paucity of records probably owing to a lack of observers.

CUCKOOS THROUGH NIGHTJARS — A Yellow-billed Cuckoo s.w. of Phoenix May 6 was about 3-4 weeks earlier than usual and may represent the earliest arrival date ever for the state (DSj, CH). Several Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls in n.w. Tucson were first noted in mid-March (m.ob.) and another was noted at Organ Pipe Cactus N.M., Mar. 11 (P. Warshall). A juv. Long-eared Owl, an uncommon breeder in the state, was found at Silvercreek Ranch n.e. of Douglas May 21 (RS). Exciting was the discovery of one-to-three or more N. Saw-whet Owls on Mt. Bigelow in the Santa Catalina Mts., n. of Tucson, Mar. 10+ (JSa, FH *et al.*), and another found at Rose Canyon in the same range Apr. 23 to mid-May (LD, FH). There had only been 2 previous records for the Santa Catalinas. Buff-collared Nightjars returned to Aravaipa and Guadalupe Canyons and were first detected May 8 & May 20, respectively.

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH KINGFISHERS — A ♂ White-eared Hummingbird in Madera Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., May 24-30 (JSa, JB) furnished the 2nd believable record for that range. A Violet-crowned Hummingbird, also in Madera Canyon, arrived on the very early date of Apr. 20 (P. MacKenzie, m.ob.). A ♂ Magnificent Hummingbird at a Payson feeder May 23 was n. of that species' usual range (JW *et al.*). Four Lucifer Hummingbirds were noted during the period with a female at Portal Apr. 11-25 (W & SSP), two males also in Portal Apr. 14-30 (B. & M. Schaughency), and another male at Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mts., May 15 (†J. Arvin *et al.*). A ♂ Costa's Hummingbird was in Portal Mar. 23-31 (W & SSP, RM). This is e. of the species' normal range. A possible ♂ Green Kingfisher was seen in the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary Mar. 19 (†N. Haverlack). This species has been recorded relatively infrequently in the state in the past decade, due possibly to flood damage to its habitat on the Rio Magdalena in n. Sonora, the likely source for most Arizona birds.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS — A Least Flycatcher was carefully observed May 20 at Petrified Forest N.P., by observers familiar with this and similar species (†DSj, †CH). Another *Empidonax* observed and heard calling at Becker L., n. of Springerville, May 19 was thought at the time to be an **Alder Flycatcher** (†DSj, †CH). Unfortunately, the bird was not collected and its identification remains tentative at best. If correct, it would represent a first state record. Unexpected was a Buff-breasted Flycatcher on Sonoita Cr., Apr. 29 (RTS). This

species is rarely reported during migration below 5000'. The only previous record for the area was on Mar. 30, 1927. A possible Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was observed near Helvetia on the n. side of the Santa Rita Mts., on the incredible date of Mar. 6 (†IR). If valid, this would represent either a very early migrant or a bird that wintered locally. There are no winter records for the state. One of the Tucson Cave Swallows returned for the 5th year Mar. 19 (T. Huels, m.ob.; see AB vol. 38:281-283, 1984).

JAYS THROUGH THRUSHES — Two Black-billed Magpies were found at Many Farms L., May 17 (GM). This is the extreme s. limit of the species' normal range in the state at this time of year. One of a pair of Mountain Chickadees found earlier this year was seen again Mar. 24 in Chiricahua N.M. (RT). This species was unrecorded in the Chiricahuas until the winter of 1981-1982. A ♂ Black-capped Gnatcatcher in Florida Wash (just e. of Chino Canyon) Mar. 3 was at a new locality for this species (†L. Galloway). The only Rufous-backed Robin to be reported this winter/spring was one in Guadalupe Canyon on the late date of May 20 (RS, H. Morris). This was only the 3rd or 4th found in the state later than mid-April. The Varied Thrush, which staged a minor invasion this year in the state, was reported from Phoenix Apr. 4-6 (C. Merrill, *fide* RW) and from the Southwestern Research Station in the Chiricahuas Mar. 10-12 (*fide* W & SSP).

THRASHERS THROUGH VIREOS — A Gray Catbird in Portal May 11-13 furnished the 7th local record for the species (RT, G. Montgomery *et al.*). The Brown Thrashers that spent the winter in Elfrida and in the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary remained until Apr. 21 & Apr. 14, respectively. Surprising was a Curve-billed Thrasher at Petrified Forest N.P., May 20 (CH, DSj); this furnished the first record in Arizona n. of the Mogollon Rim. The flock of Bohemian Waxwings in Flagstaff first found in February built up to 150+ in March with one seen as late as Apr. 10 (JC). Another Bohemian Waxwing was seen in a flock of Cedar Waxwings in Prescott Apr. 8-16 (CT). This represented the first record for Yavapai Co. Large numbers of Phainopeplas in Portal during the last week in March, and s.w. of Phoenix late April+, were unusual (W & SSP, RM, DSj). The only Red-eyed Vireo reported was one in Madera Canyon May 5-25 (D. Lee, †O. Scott, m.ob.).

WOOD WARBLERS — The assortment of e. warblers this spring was somewhat better than average with 13 species reported, including the rare-but-regulars. Three Tennessee Warblers were found with one s.w. of Phoenix Mar. 10 (DSj), one at Patagonia Apr. 21 (B. Sutton), and another in Kayenta May 22 (PL). The March bird had probably wintered locally. The N. Parula found in February at Tucson remained to at least Mar. 7 (m.ob.) and another was found n. of Tucson at Cortaro Rd., Apr. 15 (†FH). The Chestnut-sided Warbler that wintered at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum near Superior was seen as late as Apr. 3 (TCI). A ♂ Magnolia Warbler was found at Ganado May 24 (†PL), representing one of the few spring records for the state. A ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler observed in Ramsey Canyon Mar. 19-Apr. 12 (†L. Brand, †C. Jones, †M. Shepard *et al.*) undoubtedly wintered locally. Two Black-throated Green Warblers were reported with one very early male in Prescott Apr. 7 (CT, A. & H. Gaither) and another male in Miller Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Apr. 29 (†TM). Quite unexpected was Arizona's first record of a "Yellow" Palm Warbler with one seen s. of Flagstaff Apr. 27 (†TCO, J. Babcock); this also provided the 6th spring record for the state for this species. Amazingly, *three* Prothonotary Warblers were reported with two in Nogales May 16 (†IR, F. Piersol) and a female in Littlefield in extreme n.w. Arizona May 19 (†PL). Only one Ovenbird was reported in the state, at Teec Nos Pos May 24 (†PL). A total of five Hooded Warblers was reported (all males) with one Apr. 13 in Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary (†R. Ridout, P. Tufts, D. Fraser); one at Page Springs near Sedona (as last spring/summer) May 2+ (A. Greene *et al.*); one at Dudleyville on the San Pedro R., May 15 and another at Kino Springs May 17 (both RS *et al.*); and yet another in the Sierra Ancha n. of Globe May 19 (RF *et al.*). Two Black-and-white Warblers, two Am. Redstarts, and three N. Waterthrushes were reported, all from n. Arizona in late May.

S.A.

Completely outclassing all of the e. vagrant warblers were the two Mexican vagrant warblers found this spring in the Huachuca Mts. On Apr. 28, a singing ad. **Crescent-chested Warbler** was found in Ramsey Canyon with a *second* individual found shortly afterward (†JB, LD *et al.*, ph. N. Bock). The apparent pair remained to at least May 17, but no evidence of nesting could be found. This provided the 2nd record for both Arizona and the United States. It is interesting that this record came so soon after the first United States record, from Sept. 1983, also in the Huachuca. This species does not normally occur n. of e.c. Sonora. Only slightly less exciting was a singing **Fan-tailed Warbler** found May 24 in upper Garden Canyon (ph. & †T. Strong, †J. Huntington, J. Cardell). Unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated the following day in spite of intensive searching by numerous observers. This was the 3rd record for the United States and for Arizona. Interestingly, the Fan-tailed Warbler found last year in Scheelite Canyon was in an area less than one mile from this year's bird. All 3 Arizona records plus the record for extreme n.e. Sonora have fallen within the narrow time span of May 19-28.

PYRRHULOXIA THROUGH LONGSPURS — A pair of Pyrrhuloxias at New River n. of Phoenix Apr. 3 was n. of that species' usual range in Arizona (H. Dahnke, *fide* DT). A total of 12 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was reported for the period with seven in s.e. Arizona and five in the n. one-half of that state. Indigo Bunting records for the n.e. corner of the state are surprisingly few, so of interest was a singing male at Ganado May 20-24 (DSj, CH, PL) and another male at Sanders May 20 (DSj, CH). Cassin's Sparrow had a fairly impressive spring with numbers of singing birds noted in the s.e. part of the state during late April and May, and also single individuals noted in some unusual localities. A singing bird was noted Apr. 14-15 about 10 mi n. of *Puerto Peñasco*, Sonora in the dunes behind the beach (R & JW). This was the first record for the area and possibly the first for coastal n.w. Sonora. Another singing bird was found near Chandler May 3 (D & MSy), which is n. of the species' usual range. Even farther n., a bird was found in Oak Cr. Canyon near Sedona May 5 in roadside brush (JSh). A Clay-colored Sparrow was netted near Tucson Apr. 18 (R. Bowers). A Five-striped Sparrow returned to Chino Canyon on the early date of May 6 (B. Hallett). The only Fox Sparrow reported was one (*schistacea*) in Guadalupe Canyon Mar. 25 (TCI). The Golden-crowned Sparrow found at Saguaro N.M. this winter was last seen during the last week of March (m.ob.). The Harris' Sparrow reported earlier in Tucson remained until Apr. 17 (R. Chapin). The flock of McCown's Longspurs found earlier near McNeal was present until at least Mar. 2 (GM *et al.*). The Lapland Longspur in the same area was seen again Mar. 4 (AM).

ICTERIDS THROUGH FINCHES — A ♂ "Baltimore" N. Oriole was found near Portal May 9 (JD *et al.*). This race is extremely rare in Arizona. The impressive numbers of Purple Finches in and around Prescott this winter persisted until March with a few remaining until early April (CT *et al.*), thus ending the most significant flight ever in the Prescott area. Red Crossbills continued to experience a successful breeding season in the Prescott area with juveniles noted in the Bradshaw and Sierra Prieta Mts., in mid-April (CT). Two Evening Grosbeaks at Teec Nos Pos May 22 were late for that locality (PL).

CONTRIBUTORS (Area compilers in boldface) — Charles Babbitt, Robin Baxter (RBA), Pat Beall, Jerry Bock, Robert Bradley (RBR), Tom Clark (TCI), **John Coons** (Flagstaff), Troy Corman (TCO), Doug Danforth, Salome Demaree, Carol DeWaard, Louis Dombrowski, Jon Dunn, Richard Ferguson, Tom Gatz, Sharon Goldwasser, Grace Gregg, Brian Heap, Fred Hopf, Chuck Hunter, **Betty Jackson** (Globe), **Kenn Kaufman** (Advisor), **Dave Krueper** (L.C.R.), Paul Lehman, Terry Meyer, Scott Mills, Gale Monson, **Arnold Moorhouse** (Huachuca Mts. & McNeal), Robert Morse, Phil Norton, Robert Norton, Georgia Porter, Larry Pyc, Irene Ritch, John Saba (JSa), John Shipley (JSh), R.T. Smith, **Sally Spofford** (Portal, SSP), Walter Spofford, Rich Stallcup, David & Myra Styer (D & MSy), **Sherman Suter** (Tucson, SSu), Rick Taylor, Dick Todd, **Carl Tomoff** (Prescott), Robert Witzeman. — **DAVID STEJSKAL** (DSj), 8032 N. 11th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85021; **JANET WITZEMAN**, 4619 E. Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85018.