

SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona, Sonora

/David Stejskal and Janet Witzeman

The fall invasion of montane and irruptive species that many of us have been anticipating for the last three years finally materialized this fall. By early September, nuthatches, jays, Lawrence's Goldfinches and Red Crossbills were being reported throughout southern Arizona and by late September-early October woodpeckers, bluebirds, American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Mountain Chickadees and other species joined the movement. Although this fall was no match for the invasion of 1972-1973, it did provide additional excitement for Arizona birders.

Several interesting reports were received from the little-birded north-eastern corner of the state this fall. Especially interesting were the waterfowl and shorebird records, some of which provided first records for the northeast. Continued coverage of this area will help us to re-evaluate the status of many species previously unknown or little-known in that section of the state.

Readers will notice an obvious lack of records from the Lower Colorado River this fall. It should be pointed out that most of the active observers on the river in recent years were involved with an Arizona State University revegetation project which has recently lost much of its funding and, consequently, most of its employees. Observers in other areas of the state should make an increased effort in the future to bird this very productive section of the state.

ABBREVIATION — L.C.R. = Lower Colorado River.

LOONS THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS — The only loons reported this fall were Commons, and the only Com. Loons away from the L.C.R. were one at Picacho Res., Oct. 2 (JB), up to seven by mid-October around Prescott (CT), and one at Menagers Dam on the Papago Indian Reservation Oct. 20 (GM). A Horned Grebe Oct. 30 at Sunrise L. in the White Mts. was in an area where the species is rarely reported (GM). At least one light-phase "Clark's" W. Grebe was on Ganado L., Oct. 7 (CH *et al.*). "Clark's" is found chiefly in the w. part of the state (L.C.R. especially) and is reported occasionally in s.e. Arizona. This may represent the first record of "Clark's" for n.e. Arizona. An Am. White Pelican in Chino Valley Sept. 29-Oct. 28 was in an area where considered uncommon (CT).

Unprecedented numbers of Am. White Pelicans were recorded in n.e. Arizona this fall with 175 Sept. 30 on Many Farms L., building up to 300 by Oct. 4. Two were still present Oct. 25. Two more were at Ganado L., Oct. 7. Another flock of 200 was at Round Rock L., Oct. 15 (all BrJ). American White Pelican is normally thought to be a rare migrant in n. Arizona. The usual post-breeding dispersal of Brown Pelicans from the Gulf of California brought at least seven to s.w. Arizona, including two immatures on L. Havasu Aug. 20-Nov. 12 (S. Vaughn, S. Ranney *et al.*), two immatures at Painted Rock Dam Aug. 5 (DS *et al.*), and one immature at Bartlett L., n.e. of Phoenix, in early September (J. Burton). Two birds on L. Pleasant n. of Phoenix were



reported as adults, but this seems unlikely (date & observer unknown). An imm. Magnificent Frigatebird w. of Tucson Oct. 1 was both late and very far e. for this uncommon wanderer from the Gulf of California (J. Boone, L. Lawrence).

HERONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — A Great Egret at Prescott Oct. 12 was unusual (CT). Another at Ganado L., Nov. 5 represented one of the few recent records for n.e. Arizona (BrJ). Sixty+ Cattle Egrets n. of Nogales Sept. 2 was a high number for s.e. Arizona (SSu, SG). Seven were at Prescott Sept. 23-25 (CT). In n.e. Arizona, 26 were at Many Farms L., Nov. 6 with at least one remaining through the period. Six more were found 3 mi n. of Many Farms Nov. 13 and an additional 19 were at Moaning L. near Chinle Nov. 9 (all BrJ). Prior to this fall, Cattle Egret was considered accidental in n.e. Arizona with the only records being of single birds in spring.

As usual, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were found at scattered locations in s.c. Arizona n. to n. of Phoenix and e. to Dudleyville, with a high count of 24 at Nogales Aug. 23 (TC *et al.*). Most unusual was a pair with 10 young at Sun Lakes s. of Phoenix in August (RB). The species is an uncommon breeder in the state and has bred only once before in Maricopa County. Tundra Swan is considered a rare migrant in n.e. Arizona, so of interest were two Nov. 4 at Many Farms L. (BrJ), five Nov. 21 at Luna L. (R. Fisher), and another Nov. 30 at Tsaila L. (BrJ). More unusual were 18 Snow Geese Nov. 3 at Many Farms L. with two to three remaining to Nov. 9 (BrJ). Two Ross' Geese were found near McNeal Nov. 7 with Snow Geese (AM). Ross' Goose has occurred nearly annually in s.e. Arizona recently. Unexpected was a Ross' Goose found Oct. 25-31 at Many Farms L. and three more there Nov. 3, with one remaining until Nov. 20 (all BrJ). This species was previously unrecorded in n.e. Arizona. A ♂ Wood Duck was found Aug. 9 at Nelson Res., 10 mi s. of Springerville (N. & J. Strickling), where it is considered rare at any time of year, especially in summer. A complete surprise was the ad. ♂ **Black Scoter** shot by a hunter at Mormon L., Nov. 14 (*Univ. of Ariz.). This provided only the 5th record for Arizona, and 4 of the 5 are from November. A Ø White-winged Scoter found at Parker Dam Nov. 11 remained through the period (BrJ *et al.*). There are still fewer than 2 dozen records for this species in the state.

RAPTORS — A total of 19 Black-shouldered Kites was reported with 13 in s.e. Arizona, five in c. Arizona and one on the L.C.R. An imm. Mississippi Kite was found at Patagonia Aug. 13 (KK, SSu, RT). and another or the same there Sept. 2 (SSu, SG). Mississippi Kite is unusual away from the Lower San Pedro R. Very unusual was an imm. Gray Hawk at Douglas Sept. 14 (AM). There are few authentic records away from the regular breeding areas in the state. Almost as unusual was a Crested Caracara at McNeal Oct. 31 (AM). Another was seen 3 mi s. of Green Valley, where less unusual. Nov. 27 (B. Buttery).

SHOREBIRDS — More Black-bellied Plovers than usual were found, especially in the northeast where considered casual. One was found on the Santa Cruz R. (location?) Sept. 28 (C. Faanes); two were near McNeal Oct. 16 (AM); one was at Many Farms L., Sept. 30; one was at Ganado L., Oct. 14; three to four were at Many Farms L., Nov. 3-4, and another was there Nov. 13 (all BrJ). A Lesser Golden-Plover at Chandler Oct. 9-10 was unexpected (DS *et al.*). There have been few records of this species in the state during the last 7-8 years. Three to four dozen Mountain Plovers e. of Kansas Settlement were in an area where they are becoming regular in winter (AM). A Black-necked Stilt at Ganado L., Sept. 30 provided only the 2nd or 3rd record for the n.e. (BrJ). A Solitary Sandpiper s.w. of Phoenix Nov. 2+ was in the same area where one attempted to winter in 1982-1983 (DS). A Whimbrel at Kino Springs Aug. 27-Sept. 5 (B. Bates *Str. et al.*) added to the handful of recent records from the Nogales area; Whimbrels are otherwise quite rare in s.e. Arizona. Red Knot is becoming almost annual in the state during fall. This year, one was at Chandler Oct. 2-3 (CB, PB *et al.*). Four Sanderlings were at L. Havasu Sept. 3 (J. Sterling, KVR, CH), and another was at Chandler Oct. 2-10 (CB *et al.*). Three juv. Semipalmated Sandpipers were reported this fall with one w. of Tucson Aug. 14-16 (R. Stallcup, SSu, JS), another at Willcox Aug. 26 (TC *et al.*), and a 3rd at Avondale Aug. 30 (†DS); it is interesting to note the brief span of dates. Dunlin had previously been unrecorded in n. Arizona, but this fall two to three were at Many Farms L., Nov. 4+ (BrJ). More Short-billed

Dowitchers than usual were reported in the Willcox area and also w. of Phoenix. Several were at Willcox between Aug. 12 and Oct. 20 (KK, SSu, RT, JS *et al.*); an adult was at Avondale Aug. 23 (DS); four immatures were there Sept. 7 (DS *et al.*) with at least one still there Sept. 9 (KVR, CH, JW); another immature was there Oct. 13 (DS). One Red Phalarope was recorded this fall, Oct. 4 at Avondale (DS).

JAEGERS THROUGH SKIMMER — Surprising was the juv. Parasitic Jaeger shot by a hunter n. of Gila Bend Sept. 1 (ph. DT). There are at least a dozen records for the state from late August to mid-October, with all coming from the L.C.R. and Lower Gila R. An ad. Laughing Gull in basic plumage was found at Nogales Oct. 25 (†JS). Interestingly, this was the 3rd Laughing Gull in 3 years at this location, all during fall. There are fewer than 10 records for the state. A first-year Herring Gull at Menagers Dam Oct. 19 was at an unusual locality (GM, D. Fischer). Herring Gull is unusual anywhere away from the L.C.R. This fall's Sabine's Gulls were one at L. Havasu Sept. 6 (obs.?) and one w. of Tucson Sept. 26 (ph. TG). Incredible was the discovery of two **Black Skimmers** at Willcox Aug. 4 (†J. Price). The 2 or 3 previous records for the state were from along the L.C.R. and almost certainly originated in the Gulf of California. The origin of these birds is not so readily discernible. It may be more reasonable to think these birds arrived at Willcox via the Mexican highlands; see AB 36: 255-257 for a discussion of this possibility.

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS —

S.A.

The status of **Ruddy Ground-Dove** (*Columbina talpacoti*) in Arizona has become something of an issue during the past few years in light of the recent records that have accumulated in this state and elsewhere. No fewer than five records have been obtained in Arizona since the fall of 1981. A summary of these records is as follows: Oct. 21, 1981, two at the Stockton Ranch s.w. of Phoenix (KVR, ph. CH); Dec. 31, 1981, one with Inca Doves on a lawn at Rio Verde Ranch n.e. of Phoenix (SD *et al.*); Sept. 24, 1983, an ad. male with Inca Doves and Com. Ground-Doves feeding in a dirt road in Patagonia adjacent to Sonoita Cr. (DS, J. Bates, JS, CD); Nov. 17-Dec. 27, 1983, a male in a Green Valley yard feeding with Inca Doves (ph. D. Garver *et al.*); Oct. 14, 1984, a male at the Gila Bend sewage ponds n. of Gila Bend (†DS).

The origin of these birds is uncertain, but it is interesting to note that all these records fell between late September and late December, which is nearly the same as the pattern of vagrancy for Com. Ground-Dove in North America and for Ruddy Ground-Dove in s. Texas. It is also interesting to note that s. California has had two Ruddy Ground-Doves during this period (Nov. 24-26, 1978 and the fall of 1984). Another bird was recorded in New Mexico near El Paso Oct. 29-31, 1984, and yet another was in s. Texas in the fall of 1984.

Although Ruddy Ground-Dove can be found regularly n. to the Rio Fuerte Valley in n. Sinaloa, the status of this bird in Sonora is still unclear. The first report of this species was near Alamos in s.e. Sonora in early November 1982 (RT *et al.*) without any further comment. On Nov. 23, 1984, an ad. male was found on the Rio Cuchujaqui s. of Alamos (SB, CH *et al.*), and Dec. 29, 1984 a pair was found w. of Alamos in an overgrown field (DS, N. Krug). Since there are no records between s.e. Sonora and the Arizona border, the possibility of the Arizona birds (or the California and New Mexico birds) being escapees or releases cannot be ruled out. We will have to await further records n. of s.e. Sonora that fit the pattern in Arizona before a decision can be made on the wild status of these birds.

Amazing was the report of a **Black-billed Cuckoo** w. of Portal Oct. 2 (J. Arvin). This species is still on Arizona's hypothetical list because the two previous records for the state (also in fall) were also single-observer sight reports. Black-billed Cuckoo is exceedingly rare anywhere in the far West. A late Buff-collared Nightjar was flushed during the daytime in Chino Canyon Sept. 7 (B. Keelan). The five Chimney Swifts that spent most of the summer on the Univ. of Arizona campus in Tucson were last seen during the last week of August (m.ob.). A ♂ White-eared

Hummingbird, a sparse visitor to the mountains of s.e. Arizona, was at Portal from the beginning of the period to Sept. 1 (W&SSp). A ♀ Berylline Hummingbird was found in Chiricahua Nat'l Mon. on Aug. 18 feeding in a thistle patch, and Sept. 5 it was observed on a nest with two young birds! The two offspring fledged Sept. 14 & 15. Berylline Hummingbird has nested twice in the state before, only once successfully (†S. Williams, ph. TC, m.ob.). A ♀ Lucifer Hummingbird was found in Copper Canyon, Coronado Nat'l Mon., Aug. 16 (DD); another female was found near Sonoita Aug. 29 (GM); two to three individuals were present in Portal from August to Oct. 16 (W&SSp, RM).

KINGFISHERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — The Green Kingfisher at Kino Springs this summer remained through the period (m.ob.); another was seen along Sonoita Cr. near Patagonia Aug. 22 (W. Hopf); one was near Arivaca Sept. 5 (GM); yet another was above Patagonia L. along Sonoita Cr. from Sept. 17 to at least Sept. 25 (GM, JS). Green Kingfisher is usually found during the fall and winter months in the state. There are few previous summer records.

Lewis' Woodpeckers staged one of the more impressive flights to the lowlands in recent years. They were termed "common" in places in s.e. Arizona from Sept. 25 on (*fide* SSu) and were also found at scattered locations in c. Arizona during the period. A few Acorn Woodpeckers were found in the lowlands this fall, including one at McNeal Sept. 19 (AM), one at Cook's L., Sept. 29 (DS, RF, RN), one at Tempe Sept. 30 (SB), and two more on the ASU campus in Tempe (S. Rissing, CH). As usual, a few Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers of the e. race *varius* were reported. One was at Becker L., Oct. 6 (CH *et al.*) and another was at Ganado L., Oct. 7 (CH *et al.*). Another ad. female was at Paloma, w. of Gila Bend, Oct. 14 (DS). One immature in the Sierra de Alamos of s.e. Sonora Nov. 24 represented one of the few records for that state (CH *et al.*). A Red-breasted Sapsucker was at Harshaw near Patagonia Nov. 5-8 (m.ob., *fide* SSu). Lowland reports of Williamson's Sapsucker included a female Oct. 7 at Rackensack Gulch n.e. of Phoenix (RB) and another individual at the Tucson sewage ponds Nov. 27 (E. Bessler).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CORVIDS — A Greater Pewee at Patagonia Aug. 29 was exceptionally low for that date (GM). Another in Madera Canyon Nov. 23 was late for that location (H. Ranson). Buff-breasted Flycatchers continued to show up in unexpected locations: one was in Madera Canyon Aug. 17 (B. Brock) and another was at Pima Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., Sept. 9 (SSu). Historically, Buff-breasted Flycatcher was much more widespread in s. Arizona and occurred n. to the Prescott area and the White Mts. region; the origin of these two individuals is uncertain. Two Tropical Kingbirds Aug. 25 near Winkelman on the San Pedro R. were n. of where they are usually found on that river (CH). The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher found this summer at Patagonia remained until Sept. 22.

Jays staged one of the best invasions to the lowlands since the fall of 1972, although it was hardly what one would call impressive. Steller's and Scrub jays were each reported from several lowland areas from late September on, but no more than one or two individuals at each location. Pinyon Jays were reported in the southeast from late September on. Records there included a few small flocks in the Chiricahuas (m.ob.), numbers at Safford Sept. 23 (CH), two + at Ash Flats Sept. 10 (BeJ), and about 75 Nov. 15-20 in the Dagoon Mts. (m.ob.). Exceptional was a small flock flying over the Salt R. bed s.w. of Phoenix Oct. 27 (DS). Unusual was a Clark's Nutcracker reported near Greaterville in the Santa Rita Mts. foothills Oct. 17 (D. Garver). Truly perplexing were the scattered reports of Black-billed Magpies in and around Tucson after mid-October (m.ob.). Most reports were of single birds, but there were several reports of pairs, adding to the confusion of speculating their origin; however, it was suggested that all the reports pertained to just two wide-ranging escapees (KK). Two Am. Crows s.w. of Phoenix Nov. 7 were at an unusual locality (TC).

CHICKADEES THROUGH VIREOS — Mountain Chickadees began to appear at lower elevations in s. Arizona by the first week of October with one at Rackensack Gulch Oct. 7 (RB); two were at Globe Oct. 10 (BeJ); numbers appeared in the Chino and Verde valleys by mid-October (CT); five to 10 were at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum Nov. 3+ (RF *et al.*); one was on the ASU campus from late November on (CH). In n. Arizona, 10± were found in Ganado Wash Sept. 16, which seemed early for that location (KK, DS, CH). Red-breasted Nuthatches

appeared at various lowland locations in s. Arizona beginning Sept. 6. A Canyon Wren at Paloma Oct. 14 was at an odd location (DS). Single Townsend's Solitaires in Litchfield Park Oct. 25 (TC) and s.w. Phoenix Oct. 27 (DS) were the only ones reported in the lowlands. The only Rufous-backed Robin of the fall was at Patagonia Nov. 12+ (†A. & J. Price, M. White). A Gray Catbird was found at Chinle Sept. 22 (BrJ) and another was at Hereford Nov. 11 (†J. & V. Bealer). Individual Red-eyed Vireos were seen in Madera Canyon Aug. 17 (B. Brock) and e. of Tucson Sept. 9 (B. Sutton).

WOOD WARBLERS — Single Tennessee Warblers were found during the period at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum Sept. 23 (RF) and at Tucson Oct. 30 (JB). A N. Parula was found near Winkleman Aug. 25 (CH). Northern Parula is much more frequent as a spring vagrant than it is in fall. One of the Tropical Parulas in Madera Canyon remained until at least Sept. 13 (B. Barber). At least two Yellow Warblers were s.w. of Phoenix Nov. 2+ in their usual wintering spots (DS, TC). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was s.w. of Phoenix Oct. 27 (DS, CB) and another was in a Phoenix yard from Nov. 4 on (RB). A Magnolia Warbler at Becker L., Sept. 15 was in an area of the state where it may prove to be a rare but regular migrant (CH, †KK, DS). An imm. ♂ **Cape May Warbler** was netted at Tucson Nov. 29 and was seen in the area through early December (C. Corchran, CD). There are only about one-half dozen records for Arizona. A Palm Warbler at Ganado L., Oct. 7 furnished only the 2nd record for n.e. Arizona (RF *et al.*). A Blackpoll Warbler was found along Ganado Wash Sept. 16 (CH, KK, DS). Like Palm Warbler, Blackpoll records are almost exclusively from the fall. A Louisiana Waterthrush was reported from Madera Canyon Nov. 23 (†H. Ranson). Most Arizona records are from canyons in the Mexican border ranges during late fall-winter. A ♂ Kentucky Warbler at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum Nov. 9 provided the latest fall record for the state (ph. RF *et al.*). Five Black-and-white Warblers, three Am. Redstarts, and three N. Waterthrushes were reported for the period.

GROSBEAKS THROUGH SPARROWS — Only two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported with one at Parker Sept. 3 (CH *et al.*) and another at Ganado L., Sept. 16 (DS, KK, CH). An imm. Painted Bunting was banded at Wilmot Cienega, Tucson Aug. 13 (RBo). Remarkable for both the date and location was a ♀ Painted Bunting at Page Springs w. of Sedona Nov. 15 (RF). No fewer than nine Dickcissels were reported with two males and three females near Nogales Aug. 19 (J. Palting), one at Willcox (date? J. Price), one Sept. 15 at Becker L. (KK, DS, CH), one at the Rough Rock sewage ponds Sept. 19-22 (BrJ), and one at Canoa Pond Sept. 24 (JS). Only one or two individuals are usually reported each fall. Two Clay-colored Sparrows were netted at Wilmot Cienega Aug. 28 (RBo). Ten to 20 Am. Tree Sparrows were found 3 mi n. of Many Farms Nov. 30+ (BrJ). This bird is probably much more common in n.e. Arizona than is generally believed. A Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Menagers Dam Oct. 20 (GM) and another was at Page Springs Nov. 15 (RF).

ICTERIDS THROUGH FINCHES — A Bobolink was found at the Rough Rock sewage ponds Sept. 19 (BrJ). At least one E. Meadowlark was singing n. of Marana Aug. 19 in a lush, overgrown field. This species was previously unrecorded in this area during the breeding season (DS, RN).

The only Purple Finch reported was a female at Ahwatukee Oct. 25 (PB). Cassin's Finches were reported in and around Portal beginning in late October (m.ob.) and also in the Santa Rita Mts. in late October. Red Crossbills were reported by a number of observers in s. Arizona from late October on. Exceptional were four around Portal for most of the summer through late September (W&SSp) and at least one small flock in Tucson from early August until mid-November, when large numbers suddenly arrived in town (KK). Many reports were also received for Lawrence's Goldfinch throughout s. Arizona w. to the Gila Bend area from late August on.

CONTRIBUTORS (Area compilers in boldface) — C. Babbitt, P. Beall, J. Bock, R. Bowers (RBo), R. Bradley, S. Burge, T. Corman, D. Danforth, S. Demaree, C. deWaard, R. Ferguson, T. Gatz, S. Goldwasser, C. Hunter, B. **Jackson** (BeJ, Globe), B. Jacobs (BrJ), K. Kaufman, G. Monson, A. **Moorhouse** (Huachuca Mts. & McNeal), R. Morse, R. Norton, K.V. Rosenberg, J. Saba, S. **Spofford** (SSp, Por-

tal), W. Spofford, S. **Suter** (SSu, Tucson), R. Taylor, D. Todd, C. **Tomoff** (Prescott).—**DAVID STEJSKAL**, 8032 N. 11th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85021; **JANET WITZEMAN**, 4619 E. Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85018.