

Arizona, Sonora

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After last winter's major invasion of "everything," the contrast this winter of the opposite situation (having no or low numbers of "everything") was startling. There were several phenomena at work this year.

Much of the make-up of the winter bird population in Arizona is actually determined two seasons earlier. The winter residents depend upon the food produced in summer, if they are to survive here. This year the very dry summer resulted in low food supplies over most of the state, of seeds, acorns, and berries; thus seed-eaters and berry-eating birds were affected. There were no, or few, Evening Grosbeaks, robins, bluebirds, solitaires, Hermit Thrushes, or waxwings anywhere in the state except in a relatively small area around Sedona and Camp Verde where the food supply was not as severely affected by last summer's drought.

Another factor is the cyclical nature of the cone crop. Every four or five years the pinyon and ponderosa pines produce a low crop of nuts, and this was one of those years. Red Crossbills were virtually absent. However, the crop was "patchy" and although there were no Pinyon Jays in most northern locations, they did not descend to southern Arizona because they found food—again in the area around Sedona and Camp Verde.

An early freeze in November in northern Arizona caused many birds that might have stayed for the winter to move on through. Also, there was very little movement downslope of montane species to the lowlands. On a positive note, the mild weather (January was the warmest and driest on record) prompted the early arrival and early nesting of many species responding to the early spring.

Despite all of the above, the winter was not uninteresting, and as always there were a few surprises.

ABBREVIATIONS — L.C.R. = Lower Colorado River; P.R.D. = Painted Rock Dam.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Two Red-throated Loons at L. Havasu Feb. 8 (†CH, CB et al.) represented about the 7th state record; all but 2 of the previous records were also on the L.C.R. Common Loons away from the L.C.R. were two e. of Phoenix Dec. 20 (J. Margart et al.) and one at Many Farms L., n.e. Arizona, Jan. 19–23 (BrJ). Five Horned Grebes at P.R.D., Jan. 15 (PBe, RBr et al.) were more than usual for this scarce winter visitor. The first W. Grebe at Many Farms L. arrived on the early date of Feb. 2 (BrJ).

An imm. Double-crested Cormorant, uncommon away from the L.C.R. and larger lakes in winter, was observed in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 8 (RN, DS). A single Olivaceous Cormorant was at L. Patagonia again (as last winter) Feb. 17 (DSi). A Great Egret was at Solitaire (near Globe) Feb. 5, where it has been recorded only once before (J. Spenser). Great Egrets (two) and Snowy Egrets (four) were present again at McNeal all winter, and a Cattle Egret was recorded there Dec. 8 (AM). A high 150–200 Black-crowned Night-Herons were counted in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 8 (DS, RN). Three White-faced Ibises, uncommon in winter, were seen at Topock Marsh, L.C.R., Feb. 1 (DS, RN, RF).

Surprising was the flock of 17 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Martinez L., Yuma, Dec. 21 into January (fide DR). Although the species was formerly a common winter resident there, sometimes occurring in flocks, since 1961 there have been fewer than 10 records, primarily of only singles or pairs. Black-



bellied Whistling-Ducks, uncommon in winter, were present at 2 locations s. of Phoenix; the flock of 13 at the Gilbert sewage ponds remained at least to Jan. 13 (DS, PBU), and 11 were at the Sun Lakes ponds at least through February (D. Ross).

A single Tundra Swan at San Simon Cienaga, s.e. Arizona, Jan. 27 to at least Feb. 8 (AM, TD, WS et al.) was the only one reported during the winter, but there was a belated report of a flock of eight photographed near Globe Nov. 16 that may have remained longer (S. Cooper). A single Greater White-fronted Goose, also uncommon, was at Davis Dam Jan. 26 (CH). Up to six Snow Geese, uncommon in n. Arizona, were present n. of Many Farms Jan. 5–19 (BrJ). A "Blue" Snow Goose, an uncommon form in Arizona, was observed at Horseshoe Dam, n.e. of Phoenix, Dec. 8 (W. Camp). Eleven Ross' Geese were reported during the period, the majority from s.c. Arizona (m.ob.), but one was n. of Many Farms Dec. 7 with 400+ Canada Geese, representing only the 2nd record for the northeast. Canada Geese are uncommon in n.e. Arizona also.

Migration of Blue-winged Teal sometimes begins in January; an early migrant or returnee was a ♂ Blue-winged Teal at Kayenta sewage ponds Jan. 4 (†BrJ). Three early returning ♂ Cinnamon Teal were at Round Rock L., n. of Many Farms, Feb. 1 (BrJ). Individual ♂ Greater Scaup were observed at Gila Farms pond s. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (CB) and at L. Havasu Feb. 8 (CH, CB et al.). There were three Oldsquaws reported: a male at McNeal Dec. 30–Feb. 15 (AM, J. Palmer et al.) furnished only the 2nd record for the s.e. corner of the state, an immature at Prescott Dec. 11 (BT) was the 3rd for n. Arizona, and one was at Parker Dam Dec. 27 to at least Feb. 1 (CH et al.). White-winged Scoter was recorded below Parker Dam again this winter; two were observed there, plus a 3rd individual at Bill Williams Delta Dec. 27 (CH et al.). Up to eight Barrow's Goldeneyes were recorded near Parker during the period (CH et al.), and a female was at Davis Dam Feb. 1 (DS, RN, RF). An ad. ♂ Hooded Merganser at Many Farms L., Dec. 21–Feb. 2 (BrJ, CL), represented the 2nd record for that area and one of only a few for the northeast. Individual ♀ Hooded Mergansers were present all winter at park ponds in Tucson (m.ob.) and Mesa, e. of Phoenix (H. Jensen.)

RAPTORS — Three Black Vultures at Marana, n. of Tucson, Feb. 3 were farther n. than usual (JSa). Two Turkey Vultures, uncommon in the Altar Valley in winter, were seen at Aguirre L., Buenos Aires N.W.R., Dec. 7 (GM). Ospreys only occasionally winter in the lower-elevation river valleys; two to four individuals remained all winter along the Salt and Verde rivers e. of Phoenix (m.ob.) and one was seen at P.R.D., Jan. 18 (DS,

RN). A new location for Black-shouldered Kite in the state was at Yuma, where two individuals present during December (RBr et al.) may have been the two that spent the summer and fall farther s. of Yuma (DR). Up to three were at Arlington, w. of Phoenix, at least to mid-January (JSh, DS, RN), and individuals were recorded from s. of Tucson, Sonoita, Elfrida, and Kansas Settlement during the period (AM, m.ob.).

In s.e. Arizona, a few Bald Eagles (three adults, one immature) were found wintering as usual in the San Rafael Valley (GP), an adult and an immature were at Elfrida during February (AM, DSI), and an adult was at Parker Canyon L. all winter (m.ob.). In n. Arizona, results of an aerial survey over Anderson Mesa, s. of Flagstaff, Jan. 10 were 26 adults and eight imm. Bald Eagles counted (D. Todd). A pair of Harris' Hawks, observed mating Dec. 2 at Arlington where they had not been recorded previously (JSh), may have represented dispersal from the recent introductions on the L.C.R. Harris' Hawks at other new locales were up to two individuals at a Phoenix park during January and February (SD, HL), and two at Cook's L., Feb. 2 (GM). In s.e. Arizona, 10 Harris' Hawks were counted near Elfrida Jan. 1 (AM et al.), five were counted during the Sulphur Springs Valley Hawkwatch Feb. 8 (AM, DD et al.), and three were seen in the Dragon Mts., Feb. 20 (TD). Again this winter, as last, there were two reports of **Red-shouldered Hawk**, a rare visitor to the state; one near Cottonwood Dec. 31 (CL) was the first for n. Arizona, at least since 1937, and the other was an adult seen near Poston, L.C.R., Jan. 17 (GM). Fifty-four Ferruginous Hawks and eight Golden Eagles were counted during the Sulphur Springs Valley Hawkwatch Feb. 8 (AM, DD, TD, M. Evans).

A Crested Caracara at Hereford Nov. 19 (D. Richards, C. Barrett) was far e. of its normal range, and another, or the same, was seen there Dec. 14 (AM, DD, TD). Farther n. than usual were two on the w. side of Avra Valley, w. of Tucson, Jan. 4 (fide R. Dulaney). An ad. Merlin at Rock Point, n. of Many Farms, Jan. 18 (BrJ) was of interest as records from that part of the state are scarce.

TURKEY THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — Resident Wild Turkeys are seldom encountered, so of interest were one heard at Deering Park, near Prescott, Dec. 22 (R. Houser) and one at Jerome Jan. 4 (fide W. Osborn). Four Virginia Rails were found at San Simon Cienaga (where they had not been recorded previously) Jan. 27 (AM, TD, L. Siebert); another was recorded at Hereford Dec. 14 (AM, DD).

Numbers of wintering Mountain Plovers built up again in s.e. Arizona with 100 counted at Elfrida Jan. 6 and a new high of 120 at McNeal Feb. 7 (AM, DSI). Wintering Am. Avocets away from the L.C.R. and Gila R. were one at McNeal Dec. 4 (AM) and one at the Gilbert sewage ponds, s. of Phoenix, Jan. 13 (DS, PBu). The N. Jacana present near Nogales since June was last seen Jan. 3 (R. Duerksen). Unprecedented numbers of Long-billed Curlews wintered at McNeal; up to 90 were counted there in January (AM et al.). A small flock of about one-half dozen wintered at Gilbert as well (PBu). Twelve Greater Yellowlegs at Buenos Aires N.W.R., Dec. 7 were seen swimming like phalaropes (GM). A **Red Phalarope** at Puerto Lobos, Sonora, Feb. 28 (JBa, ph. RBo) may have provided the first winter record for that state.

Two Bonaparte's Gulls, uncommon in winter, were seen at P.R.D., Dec. 28 (CB). A first-year Heermann's Gull at Parker Dec. 28 represented the first winter record for the L.C.R. (CH). A 2nd-year California Gull was at P.R.D., Jan. 12 (RN). There are few winter records of Forster's Tern in the state, so of interest were two that remained from November at least to Jan. 17 at or near the Bill Williams arm of L. Havasu (M. Jakle, GM et al.). A single Inca Dove spent the winter at Portal again (B. Schaughency et al.).

A Spotted Owl, rarely reported in winter, was seen at Portal Dec. 18 and again Jan. 16 (S & WS et al.). Four groups of Long-eared Owls, uncommon winter residents, were found during the period. Three individuals were observed Jan. 18 at Rock

Point, n.e. Arizona, where the roost was first discovered last winter (BrJ). In s.e. Arizona, there were 3 roosts: eight birds in the Pedregosa Mts., n.e. of Douglas, in mid-December (AM, DD, TD), 12 in the Dragoon Mts. w. of Willcox in late December (K. Rosenberg), and nine in the Swisshelm Mts. n. of Douglas Jan. 1 (TD, A. Johnstone). A single Long-eared Owl was found Dec. 22 at Prescott, where the species is considered to be rare (CT). Four Short-eared Owls were recorded Feb. 20 at McNeal, where the species is not common (AM, RM). A N. Saw-whet Owl was found in a wash e. of Yuma Dec. 14 (fL. & B. Schmidt et al.); this furnished one of only a few lowland winter records, all of which have come from the w. part of the state.

Seven White-throated Swifts at Sierra Pinta, Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 20 (AM et al.) represented the first desert record w. of the Growler Mts. Seventy-five White-throated Swifts at Elfrida Feb. 21 made a high number for that part of the state (AM, RBo).

The 5th and 6th winter records of Violet-crowned Hummingbird were provided by individuals at Green Valley, s. of Tucson, Dec. 5–Feb. 9 (D. Garver) and at Tucson in late February (B. Davis). A high of nine Blue-throated Hummingbirds remained at Portal feeders through December, but only two were there in January and February (S & WS et al.). A ♂ Anna's Hummingbird discovered in a cypress-juniper woodland near Oak Creek Canyon Jan. 22 (CT) was far n. and higher in elevation than its usual habitat; there have been only about 4 previous records overall from n. Arizona, and the only previous winter record from the n. occurred farther s. at Prescott.

TROGONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Two Elegant Trogons found just n. of the Mexican border in Sycamore Canyon, Atascosa Mts., Dec. 26 (Jsa, JBa) represented one of only a few winter records. Three Green Kingfishers (more than usual) were recorded: one at Green Valley Dec. 19 (GP), one at Nogales Dec. 25 at least to Feb. 9 (JBo et al.) that may represent the same individual present at nearby Kino Springs in the fall, and the one at Arivaca in the fall remained at least to Dec. 30 (BrJ).

As in the fall, there were a few Lewis' Woodpeckers at lower elevations: one at Portal Dec. 28 (SS), one s. of Willcox Jan. 2 (BrJ), one at Ehrenberg Jan. 18 (GM, CH et al.), and three at Payson, n.e. of Phoenix, Feb. 17 (J. Poe). Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported: one at Patagonia Jan. 6 (J. Dunn) and one at Molino Basin, Santa Catalina Mts., Jan. 14 (JBo). Individual ♂ Williamson's Sapsuckers in Tucson Jan. 28 (H. Metcalf) and at Parker Canyon L., Feb. 15 (AM, DD, TD) were at low elevations and away from their usual wintering areas. Five Downy Woodpeckers were reported from areas around Many Farms and Chinle in late December and January; "nearly every cottonwood grove in the Chinle Valley has one or two individuals; this is much increased over the last few years" (BrJ).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CORVIDS — There were more wintering N. Beardless-Tyrannulets than usual; the species was found at 3 places around Tucson, and three individuals were recorded in the canyons w. of Nogales Dec. 26 (SM). The Greater Pewee at Tucson remained at least to Feb. 7 (m.ob.). There were two E. Phoebes reported this winter: one along the Verde R., e. of Phoenix, through the period (TG, S. Loch), and one in s.w. Phoenix at least to Jan. 12 (CB). Twenty Ash-throated Flycatchers counted at Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 19 was an unusually high number for winter (GM, SR, AM). Individuals were also seen w. of Arivaca Dec. 7 (GM), at P.R.D., Jan. 15 (PBu), and at Tucson Jan. 26 (J. Drewick). A very late Cassin's Kingbird was observed at Green Valley Dec. 30–Jan. 1 (B. Buttery).

Early returning swallows were a Tree Swallow at Sells Jan. 26 (J & AP) that may have wintered there, two Violet-green Swallows Feb. 8, and 30 on Feb. 16 at a park in Tucson (GM). The first Cliff Swallows back at the University of Arizona campus were 2 weeks early; with them on the early date of Feb. 9 was the ♂ Cave Swallow, back for its 8th season (TH). Six

Barn Swallows were still in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 8 (DS, RN).

The only lowland Scrub Jays reported were on the L.C.R.: four at Parker Dec. 28 (CH et al.) and one s.w. of Poston Jan. 18 (GM et al.). A Black-billed Magpie was observed in a new location on Laguna Cr., Kayenta, Jan. 4 (CL). There were high numbers of Am. Crows and Com. Ravens around Flagstaff this winter; "both species have increased tenfold since 1969" (JM). Chihuahuan Ravens were abundant in the McNeal-Elfrida area Feb. 26; a flock of 400+ was seen feeding on seeds of unharvested pumpkins (GM).

CHICKADEES THROUGH KINGLETS — A Black-capped Chickadee at Chinle Wash, n. of Many Farms, Jan. 5–19 (ph., †Brj et al.) represented one of the few records of this sparse winter visitor to n. Arizona. The only lowland Mountain Chickadee reported was at Tucson through mid-February (m.ob.). Common Bushtits were found nest-building at Patagonia Feb. 15, a month earlier than usual (J & AP).

Individual Winter Wrens were observed along the Verde R. e. of Phoenix Dec. 18 (DS, RN) and near the entrance to Madera Canyon Jan. 25 to at least Feb. 28 (RF, GM et al.). There were relatively few at Prescott this winter (four), and one was in Oak Creek Canyon Jan. 9 (CT). Marsh Wrens have been found in winter in suitable habitat on the Navajo Indian Reservation; up to three observed at the Tsaille sewage lagoons e. of Chinle Jan. 3–Feb. 27 (Brj) appeared to be wintering at this new location.

Two Am. Dippers were found at a new location, below the dam at Tsaille L., Dec. 25, and up to three were observed singing and establishing territories there Feb. 1–28 (Brj). An Am. Dipper, uncommon in winter in s.e. Arizona, was seen in Sabino Canyon Jan. 21 (B. Wallmering); two and possibly three individuals were observed on upper Cave Creek at John Hands and above Herb Martyr in the Chiricahua Mts., Feb. 13+ (RP). The only Golden-crowned Kinglets reported in the lowlands were individuals in s.e. Phoenix Dec. 8 (DS) and at Pena Blanca L., Dec. 26 (SM).

THRASHERS THROUGH TANAGERS — A Brown Thrasher, an uncommon visitor to the state, was observed in n.e. Tucson Feb. 3 (S. Foster). Two Bendire's Thrashers at San Bernardino Ranch near Douglas Dec. 7 represented the first record for that area (AM, DD, TD).

Sprague's Pipits, sparse and local winter residents, continued to be seen at McNeal through the winter; six were counted there Dec. 1 (DD, RM) and three were still present Feb. 25 (AM, GM et al.). Six N. Shrikes (more than usual) were found in the area of Many Farms, Lukachukai, Chinle, and Tsaille in the northeast (Brj). An imm. N. Shrike near P.R.D., Dec. 28–29 (CB et al.) provided the 5th record for the Phoenix-Gila Bend area.

A Yellow-throated Warbler at the mouth of Madera Canyon from Jan. 21 at least into March (fide SG, m.ob.) provided the 2nd winter record for the state. There are now 11 records overall. There were two Louisiana Waterthrushes this winter—one at Patagonia again for the 4th winter, remaining at least to mid-February (m.ob.), and one below Herb Martyr Dam, Chiricahua Mts., Feb. 13 (RP).

A Nashville Warbler at Bill Williams Delta Dec. 27 (CH) and a ♀ Townsend's Warbler at Parker Jan. 17–Feb. 1 (GM et al.) both represented the first respective winter records for the L.C.R.

There were four Yellow Warblers reported: at Fountain Hills, n.e. of Phoenix, Dec. 7 (DS), at Arlington, w. of Phoenix, Jan. 18 (DS, RN), in s.w. Phoenix Jan. 24 (TC), and at Parker Feb. 1 (RN, DS, RF). One, possibly two, N. Waterthrushes were observed in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 8 (DS, RN). A ♂ Olive Warbler, discovered in a mixed flock foraging in the pine-oak forest at Granite Basin, Prescott, represented the first winter record for that area (CT).

Hepatic Tanager is a sparse winter visitor to s.e. Arizona. Two were reported this period: a female in Sycamore Canyon

Dec. 26 (fide SM) and a male at Madera Canyon Dec. 28–Feb. 8 (M. Egger et al.).

BUNTINGS THROUGH FINCHES — An imm. ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was observed at Patagonia Dec. 1 (RS). Even more uncommon in winter were the two Black-headed Grosbeaks at Tucson, one Dec. 23 (†DD, AM) and another Jan. 20 (P. Walters). A ♂ Blue Grosbeak, an irregular sparse winter resident in s. Arizona, was found at Patagonia Feb. 16 (JBo, BS et al.). Eleven Lazuli Buntings near Elfrida Jan. 1 (SR) was a large number for this uncommon winter resident. A ♂ Painted Bunting frequented a feeder n. of Green Valley Feb. 25–27 (C. Graham et al.); the only other winter record (January 1965) came from the same general area.

A Rufous-sided Towhee, a sparse visitor to the L.C.R., was seen s.w. of Poston Jan. 18 (GM). Stray Abert's Towhees were found at San Simon Cienega, extreme s.e. Arizona: two Jan. 27 (AM, TD) and three Feb. 8 (WS, RM, RP). American Tree Sparrows were found wintering again near Many Farms, with up to 10 at one area and one with a large flock of White-crowned at a 2nd location (Brj). A Clay-colored Sparrow, a sparse winter resident, was observed at Rincon Creek e. of Tucson Jan. 2 (SM). Brewer's Sparrows are usually absent from n. Arizona in winter, so of interest was one with Am. Tree Sparrows n. of Many Farms Jan. 5–Feb. 23 (Brj).

Four Fox Sparrows were reported, one w. of Nogales Dec. 26 (fide SM), one at Portal Jan. 27 into February (C. & A. Robbins) and two at Patagonia Feb. 27 (DSi). About eight White-throated Sparrows and four Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported from s. and w. Arizona during the period.

In this winter of the "un-vasion" there was one small invasion—that of Harris' Sparrow—mainly to n. Arizona. In addition to the ones reported in fall at Ganado (one) and Prescott (two), two were recorded at Flagstaff (R. Balda) and one at Sedona (AG) in early December, and one at Camp Verde Dec. 27 (fide S. Hyde). Up to seven (one adult and six immatures) were seen along Chinle Wash, n. of Many Farms, Jan. 10 at least to Feb. 2 (†Brj, DS, RN). In the s. an adult was present at Tucson through December (ph. N. Böck). Not since the winter of 1972–1973 have they been so numerous and so widespread.

A Yellow-eyed Junco observed at Prescott Dec. 22 was far n. of its normal range; it represented the 2nd record for Yavapai County and the first in winter (CT). Fifty+ Yellow-eyed Juncos at and around a feeding station in lower Madera Canyon Feb. 11 was an extraordinary number for that elevation (GM). High numbers of Chestnut-collared Longspurs (2000±) were found at Elfrida Feb. 13 (AM, RBo).

An imm. ♂ Hooded Oriole was present at a feeder in Tempe, s. of Phoenix, during January (fide CH).

Pine Grosbeak, an uncommon resident in the White and San Francisco mountains, was found in a new location: 22 were counted in pinyon-juniper habitat at 7500' elevation near the rim of a canyon on Black Mesa near Kayenta, n.e. Arizona, Jan. 4 (CL). Surprising in a year when finches were scarce was the report of two Purple Finches; a male s. of Alamos, Sonora, Dec. 27 represented one of the few records for the mainland of Mexico (DS, D. Jones), and one was at Patagonia Feb. 26 (DSi). There were only relatively small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks around this winter: a small flock of 15 at Portal Dec. 26+ (BS), 20± at Patagonia Dec. 30 (Brj), and one at Catalina S.P., n. of Tucson, Feb. 23 (CT).

ADDENDA — A belated report was of a road-kill turned in to the Univ. of Arizona of an imm. ♂ Philadelphia Vireo from n.w. Tucson, Oct. 5, 1985 (fide JBa). A record inadvertently omitted from the fall report was that of a Tennessee Warbler at Prescott Sept. 30 (E. & R. Backus, CT), for one of the few records for n. Arizona. In AB 39:946, a ♀ Com. Merganser observed on the Gila R. e. of Safford June 7, 1985 was said to be in suitable breeding habitat. Proof of breeding there was actually obtained in May–June 1978 with up to 20 ducklings seen in the Gila R. "Box" between Safford and Guthrie; the adults nested on cliffs and exposed roots of mesquite trees and fed mainly on catfish (Tom Clark, fide GM).

CORRIGENDUM — AB 39:948, the Cave Swallow at Tucson was (is) a male (not a female as stated), and a 2nd attempt to nest with a ♀ Cliff Swallow in the summer of 1985 was successful (TH).

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