

SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona, Sonora

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Weather across Arizona was milder throughout than in recent years. Precipitation was generally above average in March, and monsoon-like weather started in late May—about a month earlier than usual.

Again this season, more enlightening records were obtained from the northeastern part of the state, but it was sad to learn that Brad Jacobs had moved back to Missouri after the period, thus creating a birding vacuum in northeastern Arizona once again. Hopefully, this will encourage more birders from across the state to visit this productive area in his absence.

Elsewhere in the state, migration of common species was fairly unspectacular, but a couple of second state records at widely scattered points across the state provided some excitement.

ABBREVIATIONS — B.T.A. = Boyce Thompson Arboretum; L.C.R. = Lower Colorado River; P.R.D. = Painted Rock Dam; S.H.S.P. = Snyder Hill Sewage Ponds.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — A basic-plumaged Red-throated Loon at Willow L., Prescott, May 11 represented about the 9th record for the state and the 2nd for the Prescott region (†RTh). A Least Grebe at the Sierra Vista sewage ponds Apr. 7 furnished one of the few records of this species during the past decade in the state and provided the first record for Cochise County (†B. & K. Jauch). For the 2nd spring in a row, Horned Grebes were recorded in n.e. Arizona with nine breeding-plumaged birds at Many Farms L., Mar. 22 (BrJ). Clark's Grebes away from s.w. Arizona included one bird at Pena Blanca L., Apr. 28 (EH, NC, CW), and a group of three birds at Round



Rock L. in n.e. Arizona May 18–19 (BrJ). The status of this species outside of the s.w. part of the state is still poorly known.

An imm. Olivaceous Cormorant was found Apr. 5 at Kino Springs and then at Guevavi Ranch n. of Nogales thereafter through the end of the period (JS, m.ob.). A Least Bittern strayed to Quitobaquito Pond, Organ Pipe Cactus N.M., Apr. 19 (C. Stiles). Two Snowy Egrets May 29 on the Blue R. in the White Mts. were unusual (TGa, RMe, AA). Cattle Egrets in s.e. Arizona included 10 at Patagonia L., Apr. 20 (L. Moody), and two near Douglas at the Cochise College sewage ponds May 10 (AM, TD). Cattle Egret is still quite rare in n.e. Arizona, so four at Tsaile L., May 15 were noteworthy (BrJ). White-faced Ibises were reported to be more numerous than usual this spring in s.e. Arizona with 350+ at McNeal Apr. 23 being the largest flock reported (AM).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS — A pair of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at the Gilbert sewage ponds s.e. of Phoenix May 6+ furnished one of the few spring records for the state (PB et al.). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks began arriving in the state this spring by late March when two were reported from the Buenos Aires N.W.R., Mar. 24. By late April, flocks of as many as 40 birds were reported from the Nogales area and near Tucson. By the end of the period, Black-bellieds were reported from near Douglas n.w. across the state to the Gila R., w. of Phoenix. A flock of seven Ross' Geese at Many Farms L., Mar. 22 and what was thought to be a different flock of eight there Apr. 5 provided n.e. Arizona with 2 of its few records (BrJ). A pair of seemingly wild Canada Geese hatched at least one young bird at Tsailé L., May 17, representing one of the few legitimate nestings for the state (BrJ). Another late individual was found at Point of Pines L. on the Mogollon Rim May 29 (TGa, RMe, AA). The ♂ Oldsquaw reported this winter at McNeal remained until Apr. 9 (AM). Surprising were two ♂ Surf Scoters at P.R.D., Mar. 16 (TC). There was one previous March record for the state.

A flock of 16 Black Vultures Apr. 27 in Cananea, Sonora, were n.e. of their usual range (AM). Black-shouldered Kites were again widely reported, including at least four in the San Simon Cienega on the Arizona-New Mexico border from April on (J. Goehring, J. Hubbard), a pair near Bouse, Yuma Co., in early May (RBr), and an immature s.w. of Prescott Mar. 29 (†R. Houser et al.). This last represents the farthest n.w. that the species has been recorded in the state. A pair of Mississippi Kites was again reported from the Marana pecan grove n. of Tucson May 17 (TGa). Truly exciting was the discovery of an active Bald Eagle nest along the Rio Yaqui, Sonora, about 175 mi s. of the Arizona border in March (B. Brown, P. Warren, S. Anderson). The nest, built on an Hecho cactus, later failed in April, but represented the first Sonoran and first inland Mexico nesting record. Another new nest was found along Canyon Cr. in the Fort Apache Indian Reservation May 1 and contained one nearly-grown nestling. Twelve Bald Eagle nests along the Salt, Verde, Gila, and Big Sandy rivers fledged a total of 17 young, five fewer than last year (TGa, RMe).

Two Harris' Hawk nests were found in April on the s. side of Roosevelt L., where they were first discovered nesting last year (JPo). Far e. of the normal range was a pair of Gray Hawks at San Bernardino N.W.R., e. of Douglas, Mar. 29 (AM, RFi). Totally surprising was the discovery of a nest there May 6 (AM, TGa). The closest nesting area in the state is along the San Pedro R. about 50 mi to the west. Large flocks of migrating Swainson's Hawks are a fairly common sight during the fall in the state but are almost never encountered during the spring, so a flock of 100+ feeding on grasshoppers in a field s. of Bowie Apr. 19 was a surprise (F. Keim et al.). An early individual was at San Bernardino N.W.R., Mar. 27 (AM, DSi). A pair of Zone-tailed Hawks was discovered nesting at B.T.A., Mar. 28 (GM). This is apparently a new nesting area for this species.

GROUSE THROUGH GULLS — Blue Grouse droppings were found in the Chuska Mts. in n.e. Arizona Apr. 24, in the same area where a Blue Grouse was seen last year (BrJ, P. Ryan). The status of Blue Grouse in this range is poorly known. Good numbers of Montezuma Quail continued to be reported in s.e. Arizona throughout the period (m.ob.).

Eight singing Virginia Rails and 10 singing Soras May 19 at the Tsailé sewage ponds might indicate breeding at this locality (BrJ). The only other n. Arizona breeding locality recorded for Virginia Rail was at Pipe Springs N.M. in 1974. A basic-plumaged Lesser Golden-Plover at Willcox Apr. 30–31 provided about the 8th spring record for the state (†EH, NC, CW, M. Price). A very early (or wintering?) Snowy Plover was found at Wahweap Bay, L. Powell, Apr. 3 (GM). Extremely unusual was a Mountain Plover near Avondale, w. of Phoenix, May 11 (RBr). There had been no previous April or May records for the state. Black-necked Stilt is still quite scarce in n.e. Arizona, so one at Moaning L., s. of Chinle, Apr. 6 was noteworthy (BrJ).

Seven Am. Avocets at Many Farms L., Mar. 22 may have established the earliest spring record for n.e. Arizona (BrJ). At least one pair of Am. Avocets was found nesting near McNeal May 6 (AM, TGa). This is a new breeding locality for this species.

The only Whimbrel reported this spring was at S.H.S.P., w. of Tucson, Apr. 21–25 (JD, WC et al.). The shorebird of the season, without doubt, was the alternate-plumaged **Hudsonian Godwit** at Willcox May 24–27 (†BS, ph. JBa, m.ob.). The only previous verified record for the state was also here in May 1976. Sanderlings reported this spring included two at Willcox Apr. 27 (DJ), one at the Gilbert sewage ponds May 6 (PB), and another at Willcox May 25 (TC). Sanderling is much scarcer in the spring than it is in the fall. Twelve W. Sandpipers at S.H.S.P., Mar. 7 was a high count for that date, and probably represented birds that had wintered locally (GM). More Baird's Sandpipers than usual appeared this spring, including one at S.H.S.P., Mar. 6 (JBo), another there Mar. 30 (SSu), three near Avondale Apr. 27 (RBr), and another at Willcox May 26 (TC). Dunlin is unusual in spring in s.e. Arizona away from Willcox, so one Apr. 2 and another Apr. 23 near McNeal were of interest (AM). A breeding-plumaged Stilt Sandpiper at Tsailé L., May 12 provided the first spring record for n. Arizona (BrJ).

A Long-billed Dowitcher at Tsailé L., Mar. 6 was very early for n.e. Arizona (BrJ). Large flocks of Red-necked Phalaropes were again recorded this spring with the most notable being 115 at a pond on the Gila R. Indian Reservation s. of Phoenix May 17, 85 on Tsailé L. May 26 (BrJ) and 40 at Willcox May 28 (GR). Red-necked Phalarope is usually a scarce spring migrant in the state. A Red Phalarope found at Ganado L., May 24 provided the first spring and the 2nd overall record for n.e. Arizona (ph., †CB, †BrJ, BuJ). Franklin's Gulls reported this spring included one at Willcox Mar. 22 (DD, TD, AM), one at Many Farms L., Apr. 5 (BrJ), and 10–12 at San Carlos Res., s.e. of Globe, Apr. 22 (BeJ). The only California Gull reported away from the L.C.R. was an adult at Wahweap Bay, L. Powell, Apr. 3 (GM). A dark-backed ad. gull at Willow L., Prescott, May 2 (†RTh) was thought to be a W. Gull, which would provide either the 2nd or 3rd record for the state, but certain key features were not seen.



Red Phalarope at Ganado Lake, Ariz., May 24, 1986. Quite likely a one-year-old bird that will not attain full adult alternate (breeding) plumage this year. Photo/Charles Babbitt.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — An Inca Dove, a sparse visitant to the Portal area, was at a feeder through March (W & SSP). A Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl was heard at the border in Sycamore Canyon w. of Nogales May 18 (RNI). This bird's status in Sycamore Canyon is still not clear. One and possibly two Spotted Owls were heard and one was seen at Canyon de Chelly N.M., May 11 (CL, BrJ, R. Sigun). Spotted Owl had not been reported previously from this area. Long-eared Owl was again found nesting in n.e. Arizona this spring, with 3 nests being located: 2 at Moaning L. were found Apr. 6 and another nest at Many Farms L., Apr. 20 (BrJ). Apparently, only the Many Farms nest was successful, fledging two young. As many as four Buff-collared Nightjars were again found at the mouth of Madera Canyon in mid-May (m.ob.). The first apparent Vaux's Swift record for n.e. Arizona was established this spring with a well-described individual at the Rock Point sewage ponds May 19 (BrJ). All other *Chaetura* sightings for n.e. Arizona have been reported as Chimney Swifts.

The only White-eared Hummingbird reported was a ♀ bird that stayed only one day at a Portal feeder May 14 (W & SSP). An incredibly early Berylline Hummingbird was seen in Huachuca Canyon Apr. 22 (†T. Strong). This was about 6 weeks earlier than the earliest previous record. The Violet-crowned Hummingbird that wintered in Green Valley was last seen Apr. 2 (DG). There were only about 3 previous winter records for the state. A ♂ Blue-throated Hummingbird at Summerhaven in the Santa Catalina Mts., May 6 was unusual (GM). A ♂ Lucifer Hummingbird was at a Portal feeder May 10 and then again May 17+ (m.ob.). Another ♂ bird was reported from Guadalupe Canyon May 19 (†H. & P. Green). Anna's Hummingbird was found nesting for the first time in the Portal area this year, with the nest being found Apr. 25 (RTa, CG, JH). Rufous Hummingbird is rarely reported in s.e. Arizona during spring, so an ad. ♂ Rufous at Portal May 27–29 (W & SSP) and another one or two individuals at Globe Apr. 1–19 (*vide* BeJ) were noteworthy.

A complete surprise was the report of a ♂ Eared Trogon in S. Fork, Chiricahua Mts., May 26 (†K. & J. Munthe). All previous records for the state had fallen between August and December. The only Green Kingfisher reported was in Nogales May 25 (S. Hoffman). An ad. Red-breasted Sapsucker was at Sycamore Canyon Mar. 15 (BrJ) and another was reported from "s. of the Grand Canyon" Mar. 18 (M. Kielb, S. Doehlert). A Downy Woodpecker at Cardenas Cr. in the Grand Canyon Apr. 12 was w. of that species' range (CT).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH GNATCATCHERS

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet was again reported from B.T.A., with one bird Mar. 28 (GM) and then a pair at a nest Mar. 30 (CB *et al.*). This species was first found here in August 1985, and this was the first recorded nesting for B.T.A. As in April 1984, a migrating Buff-breasted Flycatcher was found on Sonoita Cr., this time Apr. 12 (DD, TD, J. & B. Epler). Three E. Phoebes were reported: one n. of Phoenix at Sunflower Mar. 5 (m.ob.), another at Ft. McDowell e. of Phoenix Apr. 13 (TGa), and another at Patagonia May 5 (JS). The first two records represent birds that had wintered locally. Out of place was the ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher at Petrified Forest N.M. headquarters May 31 (GR). There are very few records of this species in n.e. Arizona. An E. Kingbird was found at Patagonia May 17 (R. Stallcup *et al.*) for one of the few records for s.e. Arizona.

A very early Barn Swallow was seen checking buildings at Navajo Community College at Tsaile Apr. 1 (BrJ). A nesting attempt by the Univ. of Arizona Cave Swallow with a Cliff Swallow was unsuccessful (TH).

The status of Black-capped Gnatcatcher in Chino and Sycamore canyons was a bit hazy this spring. A ♀ Black-capped was reported in Sycamore Mar. 19 (JBo, DSi), but none was found there after that in spite of several trips to look for the birds. In Chino, Black-cappeds were first reported in mid-April but only one ♀ bird could be found there May 14 (DS *et al.*). An unbanded pair was found farther up the canyon than usual

May 26 (RBr, CK). Observers should exercise extreme caution when identifying Black-cappeds: the outer rectrices are always entirely white in Black-capped and Blue-gray gnatcatchers. If there is any black in the outer tail feathers, the bird must be a Black-tailed or perhaps a hybrid.

THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS — A Veery was heard at the S. Fork of the Little Colorado R., near Springerville May 29 (GR). This is the only spot in the Southwest where this species is known to breed. A Varied Thrush was reported from the Kaibab Nat'l Forest s. of the Grand Canyon Mar. 17 (M. Kielb, S. Doehlert). A Gray Catbird was found at the S.W. Research Station near Portal May 29, providing about the 8th local record (*vide* SSP). Two Brown Thrashers were reported: one at Rio Rico Apr. 10 (R. Olsen, H. Hally, DG) and another in Phoenix May 23 (R. Ritchie *et al.*). Bendire's Thrasher was again found nesting in the Sulphur Springs Valley at Sunizona Apr. 21 (AM). The first nesting records for this valley were obtained in May 1985. Four Sprague's Pipits were seen near McNeal Mar. 2 (AM, CG). A late N. Shrike was reported s. of Flagstaff Apr. 5 (M.L. Rosegay).

Gray Vireo was again found at Redington Pass e. of Tucson this spring, with a singing individual there Mar. 29 (GG, JBo, JBa). This species seems to be becoming more regular in this area. Another Gray Vireo was seen in Chino Canyon Apr. 29, marking the first record for the Santa Rita Mts. and for Santa Cruz County (GM). A Philadelphia Vireo was a surprise at Guevavi Ranch May 10 (†A.N. Gulthelil). This was one of only a few spring records for the state. A true surprise was the singing ad. ♂ Blue-winged Warbler in Sycamore Canyon May 24 (†B. Lewis, R. Davis). This was only the 3rd record for the state, and the first for spring. A N. Parula was found in S. Fork, Chiricahua Mts., Apr. 19–20 (m.ob.). The Yellow-throated Warbler first found at the mouth of Madera Canyon in January was last reported Apr. 5 (DS, RFe). A Worm-eating Warbler was seen in Sycamore Canyon May 18 (†RNI). Four Ovenbirds were reported for the period: a singing ♂ bird was at Granite Cr., Prescott, May 13 (CT), another near Hereford on the San Pedro R., May 17 (†H. & P. Green), another in a Phoenix yard May 21 (R. Ritchie *et al.*), and yet another at S. Fork, Chiricahua Mts., the same day (RMo). Prior to this year, there were only 6 spring records for the state. A report of a Louisiana Waterthrush in Madera Canyon Mar. 20 probably represented a bird that had wintered locally (†R. Hadley). A Kentucky Warbler was reported from Huachuca Canyon May 31 (*vide* Apr). One Black-and-white Warbler and three N. Waterthrushes were recorded for the period. A Painted Redstart Apr. 12 at Cardenas Cr. at the bottom of the Grand Canyon provided about the 4th record for that area (CT).

GROSBEAKS THROUGH FINCHES — Only four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, all males, were reported this spring, evenly split between n. and s. Arizona. Out of place was the Black-chinned Sparrow at Puerto Lobos, Sonora, Mar. 1 (JBa, RBo). Five-striped Sparrow is rarely reported from the Baboquivari Mts., so five birds in Baboquivari Canyon on the w. side of that range May 10–11 were interesting (†W. McDowell, CG, R. Bailowitz). The Golden-crowned Sparrow first found frequenting a feeder in Portal during the winter was last seen Apr. 17 (W & SSP). One of the imm. Harris' Sparrows found earlier this year in Chinle Wash n. of Many Farms was seen again Mar. 23 (BrJ). Another Harris' Sparrow was reported from a Bisbee feeder in mid-May, quite late for the state (*vide* SR).

An ad. ♂ Rusty Blackbird was found at Willcox Mar. 2 (†JPr). There are still only about 2 dozen records for this species in the state. A Hooded Oriole at Kayenta May 12 provided one of the few records of this species in n.e. Arizona (CL).

With virtually no reports of montane finches in the lowlands during the winter period, it was surprising to learn of the reports of a few small flocks of Cassin's Finches appearing in March and April. At Tsaile, numbers of Cassin's built up to about 20 birds by mid-April at BrJ's feeder. A small flock of seven birds was at Canoa Ranch Mar. 28 (SSu), and large num-

bers were found at Cherry Cr., n. of Cordes Jct., Apr. 2 (SD et al.). The small flock of Evening Grosbeaks found in Portal during the winter was present through March (RMO).

ADDENDUM — A belated report was received of a Varied Thrush near Yuma Mar. 22–Apr. 7, 1985 (T. Whiteway).

CORRIGENDA — AB 40:150, the six Greater White-fronted Geese at Ganado L. were found Sept. 28, not Sept. 21 (BrJ). AB 40:152, the Red-eyed Vireo in Keams Canyon was seen Sept. 14–15, not Sept. 21 (BrJ).

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