

Arizona, Sonora

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The major event of the season was the large invasion of thrushes throughout the state. There was also a small invasion of Harris' Sparrows. An excellent crop of berries and seeds supported record numbers of several species around Prescott, including an influx of Purple Finches. The two severe cold spells in January and February seemed to have caused a setback in the development of vegetation in southern Arizona.

In the report which follows are the usual interesting examples of species that managed to winter farther north and/or at a colder location than usual.

ABBREVIATIONS — B.T.A. = Boyce Thompson Arboretum; L.C.R. = Lower Colorado River; P.R.D. = Painted Rock Dam; S.P.R. = San Pedro River.

GREBES THROUGH IBISES — A Horned Grebe at Many Farms L., Feb. 15 (DS, RF, RN, SG) represented the first winter record for n.e. Arizona. Western Grebe is an uncommon winter visitor to s.e. Arizona, so of interest were up to two at McNeal during December (AM, BH) and one at Patagonia L., Dec. 5 (BH et al.).

An ad. Brown Pelican observed in the Bill Williams arm of L. Havasu Jan. 15–17 (R. Beaudry et al.) was most unusual, as there are scarcely any records of this species in winter and only a few records of an adult anytime. An Am. White Pelican, uncommon in winter away from the L.C.R. and P.R.D., was at Prescott Dec. 13–20 (fide CT). A Double-crested Cormorant was seen Feb. 23 at McNeal (AM) where it has been recorded only once previously in winter.

An Am. Bittern, a sparse winter resident, was observed at Prescott Dec. 2 (RH). Up to four Cattle Egrets, uncommon winter visitors in s.e. Arizona, were recorded at McNeal Dec. 15, and one at Elfrida Dec. 3 (AM). A high number of 500 wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons was counted e. of P.R.D., Jan. 7 (DT). A White-faced Ibis, rare in winter away from the L.C.R., was present through the period at McNeal (AM).

WATERFOWL — Tundra Swans were reported at 3 locations: one at the San Bernardino Ranch, e. of Douglas, Dec. 5 (B. Robertson, M. Ellis), one at Prescott Dec. 20 (fide CT), and at 2 lakes s.w. of Concho, n.e. Arizona, where there were 18 Dec. 23 and two Feb. 6 (GM). Two Greater White-fronted Geese, sparse winter visitors, especially in n. Arizona, were at Prescott Feb. 22–24 (†BT). Four Ross' Geese were observed at McNeal Dec. 3+ (AM et al.). Twenty-two Canada Geese near Cook's L., Feb. 6 were of interest as the species is seldom seen on the lower S.P.R. (GM).

A Wood Duck, rare in s.e. Arizona, was observed at McNeal Jan. 22 (AM, BM, WS, RP). Early single ♂ Blue-winged Teal were seen e. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (A. Higgins), at P.R.D., Jan. 24 (RW et al.), and at Kino Springs Jan. 31 (DD, TD, AM). Early single ♂ Cinnamon Teal were seen at Elfrida Jan. 11 and at Kino Springs Jan. 12 (JD et al.). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was present during the period, for the 2nd time, at a pond in Phoenix (T. Chew); another individual was recorded at Elfrida Jan. 1 (JS et al.). There were three Oldsquaws in the state during the winter. In addition to the one at Parker Dam (since November), there was one at Prescott Jan. 14–Mar. 26 (†BT, RH et al.), and one at P.R.D., Jan. 24–25 (LH, RW et al.). The ♀ Surf Scoter at Parker Dam remained at least to Feb. 6 (SG et al.). The peak count of Barrow's Goldeneyes below Parker Dam was of 15 (including two males) Jan. 23 (GM, GG). Three Hooded Mergansers in the Phoenix area and four more in s.e. Arizona



through the period were slightly more than usual (m.ob.). Three ♀ Com. Mergansers, uncommon in s.e. Arizona, were observed at McNeal Dec. 12 (AM). A high number of 310+ was counted at Little Mormon L. near Show Low Feb. 6 (GM). A ♀ Red-breasted Merganser, rare in s.e. Arizona, was observed at Portal Dec. 26 (M. Ward).

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS — Reports of Bald Eagles in areas where they are not commonly found were: an adult at Many Farms L., Feb. 8 (CL et al.), an adult and an immature at Ganado L., Feb. 7 (GM, TH) and the immature again at Ganado L., Feb. 15 (DS, RF, RN, SG), an adult at Parker Canyon L., Dec. 4 (TD), an adult near Portal Dec. 12 (fide SS), an adult at McNeal from Jan. 1 on, plus an immature there Feb. 17, and an immature at Elfrida Feb. 5 (AM et al.); plus an adult and immature at Cananea, Son., Mexico, Jan. 31 (AM, DD, TD). Harris' Hawk is "certainly expanding its range at a relatively rapid rate" (GM). Additional new or unusual locations were noted for two at Willcox in January (W & SS), one near Black Canyon City in January (JBU), one s. of Arivaipa Cr. and one w. of Oracle Feb. 9 (GM), and one s. of Ajo Dec. 20 and Feb. 17 (GM). An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk, a rare winter visitor, was observed along the Hassayampa R., s. of Wickenburg, Feb. 28 (H. Messing, fide TG). A high number of 20 adult and imm. Golden Eagles was observed feeding on sheep carcasses in Elfrida Dec. 3 (AM). A pair of Golden Eagles was found nesting Feb. 23 on the same windmill as last year (AM).

Single Crested Caracaras, wandering far e. of their normal range, were observed during the first one-half of December at Elfrida (AM et al.) and s. of Sierra Vista Dec. 20 (fide DD).

Numbers of Sandhill Cranes at McNeal and Elfrida built up from 600+ in December to a high of 2400+ by mid-February (AM et al.). A lone Sandhill Crane along the Verde R., e. of Phoenix, Feb. 8 & 11 was at an odd location (M. Collie).

The flock of Mountain Plovers was present again at Elfrida all winter; 131 were counted there Jan. 27 (AM, RT et al.). At the s. end of the Colorado R. Indian Reservation, 50+ counted Jan. 21 (JBo, GM) were the first to be reported in w. Arizona for several years. Two very late Solitary Sandpipers were observed in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 15 (†DS, CH). A large group of Long-billed Curlews was found wintering again in the McNeal/Elfrida area; 75 were counted Feb. 9 (AM et al.). Another large group of 55 was reported at Gilbert, s. of Phoenix, Jan. 14 (SG). Two Dunlins, sparse winter visitors, were present at the Gilbert sewage ponds through Dec. 12 (SG), and one in Tucson re-

maintained to Dec. 16 (H. Brody, R. Freeman). A late Red Phalarope was found at sewage ponds in Tucson Dec. 7 (BH).

Individual Bonaparte's Gulls, uncommon in winter, were seen at Roosevelt L., Dec. 10 (DB, D. Stahlecker), at sewage ponds in Tucson Dec. 11 and Jan. 6 (TG, WD), and near Parker Dam Feb. 6 (SG). A California Gull was observed at Prescott Dec. 20 (fide CT). Single Forster's Terns were reported at Patagonia L., Dec. 5 (BH, JD et al.) and at Roosevelt L., Jan. 12 (TG, DB).

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A road-killed ad. ♀ Spotted Owl was found on Arizona Hwy 88 n.w. of Globe at 3500', Feb. 20 (C. McKusick, fide BJ), adding another location for the records of this seldom-encountered owl. Short-eared Owls, uncommon in s.e. Arizona, were found near McNeal for the 2nd winter; two were observed there from Dec. 4 at least to Jan. 1 (BH, AM et al.). Twelve probable Vaux's Swifts, seen flying over Patagonia Feb. 4 (†J & AP), were n. of their usual wintering grounds.

A ♂ Broad-billed Hummingbird was in Sabino Canyon, Tucson, at least from Jan. 20 to Feb. 16 and probably was present all winter; the species is scarce in winter, especially away from feeders (KK). Two ♂ Magnificent Hummingbirds were still frequenting feeders in Madera Canyon Dec. 6, but were absent when feeders were checked Jan. 10 (JD).

Two Elegant Trogons were found on the s. side of the Santa Rita Mts., Dec. 20–21 (G. Taylor); the species is rare in winter. The Green Kingfisher at Kino Springs was present at least into February (m.ob.). One on the upper S.P.R. (since November) remained at least until Dec. 17 (DK).

Four of the Lewis' Woodpeckers at Molino Basin (since November) remained through the season (m.ob.). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was observed e. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (PB). Four Red-breasted Sapsuckers were reported: one at Sullivan L., Prescott, Dec. 2 (RH), one e. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (SD), one at Sycamore Res., Santa Catalina Mts., Dec. 21–Jan. 1 (JBo, JBa), and the one at Catalina S.P., Tucson, that "clearly showed hybrid characteristics" (JD) was present from November through the period (m.ob.).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — N. Beardless-Tyrannulet was first found at B.T.A. as recently as Fall 1985, was found nesting there for the first time in Summer 1986, and now was discovered wintering at this new northernmost locality; an individual present all fall remained at least to Jan. 13 (CT, CH). Three Greater Pewees wintered in the Tucson area and one in the Atascosa Mts. (m.ob.).

A Least Flycatcher was observed along the Salt R., e. of Phoenix, Dec. 22–24 (†DS, RN et al.); the individual at B.T.A. since October was seen again Jan. 13 (CT). Numbers of Hammond's Flycatchers on the upper S.P.R. decreased after the large storms in January, but the species was still found on a regular basis through the winter in proper habitat (DK et al.); four were counted along Sonoita Cr., Dec. 5 (BH). Dusky Flycatcher was found to be a rare wintering species throughout the S.P.R. valley, preferring tall stands of cottonwoods and foraging in the upper one-third of the canopy (DK, TC); three were counted along Sonoita Cr., Dec. 5 (BH). Three Gray Flycatchers were observed at Big Wash, Falcon Valley, w. of Oracle, Jan. 7 (GM).

The E. Phoebe on the upper S.P.R. (since September) remained at least to Feb. 14 (DK). Ash-throated Flycatcher is uncommon to rare in winter s. and e. of Tucson, so of interest were singles at Elfrida Dec. 18–Jan. 8, in the Swisshelm Mts. w. of Elfrida Feb. 5 (AM et al.), at Patagonia L., Dec. 5 (BH), and in Falcon Valley w. of Oracle Jan. 7 (GM). The species was also more common than usual in the Sonoran Desert (GM). A ♂ Rose-throated Becard, found along Arivaca Cr., Dec. 23 (SM et al.), provided the 2nd winter record for the state.

Early Tree Swallows were one at Kino Springs in mid-January (fide JBa) and two s. of Pinal Air Park, Pima Co., Jan. 28 (WD, GM). The Cave Swallow returned to Tucson Feb. 23, but it was not seen after the snowstorm at month's end (TH). Three

late Barn Swallows were seen in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 15 (DS, CH) and one in Tucson "wintered" at least through Jan. 1 (m.ob.).

TITMICE THROUGH STARLING — A Plain Titmouse was found out of its normal habitat at 2800' in Falcon Valley Jan. 7 (GM). Individual Winter Wrens were found at Prescott Dec. 20 (CT), at Madera Canyon Feb. 8 at least to Feb. 14 (JBo, DH), and above the dam in Sabino Canyon, Tucson, at least from mid-January to mid-March (KK). An Am. Dipper at Prescott Dec. 20+ was new for that area; the one at B.T.A. remained through the period (CT, RF et al.), and one was back in Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahuas, for at least the 3rd winter (RP). Golden-crowned Kinglets were widespread and in high numbers in the forests around Prescott during the winter (CT). A ♂ Black-capped Gnatcatcher was heard calling and observed at Kino Springs Jan. 10 (†JD, JBo et al.); this was a new location and one of only a few reported in winter.

The invasion of the thrushes was the main event of the season. By December exceptional numbers of Townsend's Solitaires had reached the s. Arizona mountains, and by mid-January there were scattered solitaires all over the deserts of the Tucson-Nogales area; many of the birds remained into April (KK, DS et al.). There were also record high numbers of Townsend's Solitaires in Prescott and Camp Verde, and numbers n. and e. of Phoenix. There were high numbers of both bluebirds, robins, and Hermit Thrushes as well, in Prescott, Camp Verde, Sedona, and farther south. Over 1000 W. Bluebirds were counted along the Salt/Verde Rivers e. of Phoenix in December (m.ob.) and this huge influx extended through s. Arizona, even to some being recorded in the Sulphur Springs Valley where they are seldom seen (AM). Over 600 Mountain Bluebirds were counted Jan. 12 in the Kino Springs/Guevavi Ranch area alone (JD et al.). American Robins were numerous throughout the state, even on the e. part of the Navajo Indian Reservation (GM); numbers in most areas increased in January or February (m.ob.). A Rufous-backed Robin spent the winter, at least from Dec. 14, at Kino Springs (D. Jones, m.ob.). Another uncommon



Rufous-backed Robin at Kino Springs, near Nogales, Ariz., February 1987. Photo/Rick Bowers.

thrush visitor was Varied Thrush, discovered along Arivaca Cr., Buenos Aires N.W.R., Dec. 23–24 (AM, DD, B. Robertson).

There were two Brown Thrashers reported during the period: one at B.T.A., Nov. 30–Dec. 1, and the other at Elfrida Feb. 11 (S & RR, AM). By mid-December the number of Sprague's Pipits at McNeal had risen to at least six (AM et al.). An exceptionally large concentration of 1000+ Eur. Starlings was observed at Many Farms Feb. 7 (GM).

WARBLERS, TANAGERS — A possible Tropical Parula was reported at Sonoita Cr., Patagonia, Feb. 1 (†J & AP); there has been only one confirmed state record of this species. A ♂ **Cape May Warbler**, discovered at Fountain Hills, e. of Phoenix, Dec. 22–24 (†M. Eubanks, A. Collister, RBr et al.), provided the 5th winter record and 9th overall for Arizona. A ♂ Townsend's Warbler, uncommon in winter, was seen at B.T.A., Feb. 22 (DH). Even more uncommon was the Hermit Warbler seen in Sabino Canyon Dec. 22 (JBo, JBa). A N. Waterthrush, present since fall, remained at least to Jan. 4 at Nogales (JS, JBo et al.); another was found Jan. 9 along Arivaca Cr. (GG, R. Dorrance).

No fewer than three Louisiana Waterthrushes were found this winter: one at Sycamore Res., Santa Catalina Mts., Dec. 22 (JBo, JBa); one in Madera Canyon Feb. 14 (BS); and one farther n. than usual at Seven Springs, n.e. of Phoenix, Jan. 21–31, furnishing the first record for Maricopa County (H. Beatty, †SD, LH, RH, ph. JBu). The only Wilson's Warbler of the winter was one seen in Huachuca Canyon Jan. 27 (J. & B. Epler).

An ad. ♂ Hepatic Tanager, uncommon in winter, was seen in lower Madera Canyon Jan. 10 (JD). A Summer Tanager found near Nogales Feb. 7 (JS et al.) represented one of only a few winter records for the state.

BUNTINGS THROUGH FINCHES — A ♂ Pyrrhuloxia at Tuba City, Navajo Indian Reservation, Dec. 20 (WA, ph. SSt) represented a big leap north; previous northernmost records were from w. of Prescott. A Blue Grosbeak, an uncommon winter resident, was observed at Patagonia Dec. 13 (R. Smith).

An Abert's Towhee at Elfrida Feb. 11 was the first for the Sulphur Springs Valley (AM). A Black-chinned Sparrow was found in Drift Hills, Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 19 (SR); the species is a rare winter visitor to s.w. Arizona. Two Five-striped Sparrows, rare in winter, were found in Holden Canyon, Atascosa Mts., Dec. 26 (JBo). An e. race Fox Sparrow was observed at Elfrida Feb. 11 (AM, RN et al.). A Swamp Sparrow was observed at McNeal Dec. 4 and two were seen at Kino Springs Dec. 5 (BH). A White-throated Sparrow spent the winter at B.T.A., (CH, CB); another was seen along Sonoita Cr., Dec. 5 (BH), and a few were recorded on the CBCs as usual. Two Golden-crowned Sparrows spent the winter in Sedona (VG), an immature was observed in Molino Basin, Santa Catalina Mts., Nov. 11 (BD, RBo), and two immatures were seen in Florida Wash, below Madera Canyon, Feb. 14 (DH, P. Zucker).

A small influx of Harris' Sparrows took place again as last winter. In addition to the two reported in November, there was one at Tuba City Dec. 11–Mar. 9 (WA, SSt), and two or three at Sedona all winter (VG); farther s. were one at Tucson Jan. 16 (NB) and two immatures on the upper S.P.R., one Dec. 4–Feb. 28 and the 2nd Jan. 31–Feb. 28 (ph. DK). Unprecedented numbers of McCown's Longspurs (150–300) were at McNeal from early December into March (AM, S. Perry et al.).

The ad. Rusty Blackbird on the upper S.P.R. since Nov. 30 was last seen Dec. 17 (DK, ph. TC). Individual Hooded Orioles frequented feeders during the winter at Tucson (H. Ware), and s.e. of Phoenix at Tempe (fide PB) and Mesa (A. Comeau).

Purple Finches staged the largest invasion ever recorded into the Prescott area; not only high numbers (i.e., over 75 counted in a 5-mi stretch), but also widespread, in many localities from the chaparral to riparian woodlands, as well as into the coniferous forest (CT). Pine Siskins were also abundant in the Prescott area (CT) and also at feeders in Portal (SS). Large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were found in n.e. Arizona: 40 at Teec Nos Pos Feb. 8 (GM, CL), 150 at Ganado Wash

Feb. 15, and 300–400 at Canyon de Chelly Feb. 16 (DS, RF, RN, SG).

ADDENDUM — AB 40:1237, regarding the nesting pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks in Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahuas, on July 16 an adult was observed with two fledglings (TC).

CORRIGENDA — AB 40:1237, the Harris' Hawks at Cochise July 17, 1986 did not represent the northernmost record for the Sulphur Springs Valley as stated; they have been recorded n. of there for the past 2 years during the breeding season and 14 mi n.e. of Willcox during migration, plus a pair n. of San Simon in both winter and summer (JP). AB 40:1238, the Belted Kingfisher at S. Fork, w. of Eagar, was seen July 4, not June 4 as stated (TC). AB 40:1239, the statement that Curve-billed Thrashers had not been recorded before at Willcox is incorrect; they are not uncommon breeders 14 mi n.e. of Willcox, and the species was recorded at least once (July 14, 1985) at Willcox (JP).

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