

SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona

Gary H. Rosenberg and David Stejskal

We would like to begin this report by praising our friend Janet Witzeman, who has been involved with the Arizona section of *American Birds* since 1975. Her enthusiasm and dedication to Arizona ornithology has been an inspiration to all of us interested in the distribution of Arizona birds. We thank her for the many years she has dedicated herself to compiling records and writing this report and hope she will continue to be involved in some capacity for years to come. Janet is still secretary of the Arizona Bird Committee, and all details of rarities within Arizona should be sent to her at 4619 East Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, Arizona, 85018.

The season began extremely dry throughout the state with Arizona experiencing the summer drought that plagued most of the nation. Then the summer rains began, about a week late, but did it ever rain. This must have been one of the wettest summers on record; in one day the Southwestern Research Station in Cave Creek Canyon measured 2.8 inches of precipitation. Many areas in south-east Arizona were so green that they more resembled Colorado than the arid Southwest. Grassland sparrows had a field day and were more abundance than we have ever seen them.

ABBREVIATIONS — A.B.C. = Arizona Bird Committee; S.P.R. = San Pedro River. Place names in *italics* are counties.

GREBES TO DUCKS — A very late Eared Grebe was found dead on the new, paved road near L. Pleasant (RC, CH). Since W. and Clark's grebes have been split into 2 species by the A.O.U., each season brings us closer to understanding the distributional limits of the 2 forms in Arizona. Cow Springs L., Coconino, where three W. Grebes were sighted June 30, (CL)



may represent a new nesting area for this species in n. Arizona away from the Colorado R.

Incredibly, Arizona's 2nd record of *Laysan Albatross* was provided when on July 18 one was found dead along the Gila Gravity Main Canal, near Interstate 8 on the e. side of Yuma (ph. T. Peebles, fide B. Grossi). Arizona's previous record was also from Yuma May 14, 1981. This represented at least the 5th inland w. U.S. record, all from spring or summer. Unfortunately, the specimen was discarded! An Am. White Pelican on Willow L. near Prescott through June 13 (CT) was late; there are no confirmed breeding records for Arizona. The only reports of Brown Pelican came from Tucson, where one was observed July 11 (J. Bartell) and another (or same?) was seen by thousands on the local news July 19–20 (SG et al.) on the other side of the city. Great Egret, a sparse transient in n. Ar-

izona, was seen at Prescott July 20 (CT). Three separate reports of Tricolored Heron from the Santa Cruz Valley might have been of one wandering individual; one was at the Tucson Sewage Ponds June 21 (WD), one was at Green Valley July 22–27 (DG et al.), and one was at Tanque Verde Ranch in e. Tucson (CD, CC). Two Green-backed Herons (possibly breeding?) at Cow Springs L. June 30 (CL) would provide the first nesting record of this species in Arizona north of the Mogollon Rim. Six Black-crowned Night-Herons also seen at Cow Springs L. June 30 (CL) may have been at a new nesting locality in Arizona, where its distributional limits are poorly known.

Seven Canada Geese on Becker L., Springerville, June 1 (DS) were most likely part of an introduced population, but two at Many Farms L. June 4 (DS) were thought to be wild birds. A ♀ Cinnamon Teal with 12 downy young along the Salt R. in s.w. Phoenix July 3 (D & PS) further suggested that this species is a regular nester in the Phoenix area. Nonbreeding summer records of Redhead, a sparse nesting species in Arizona, are not unusual, but a flock of 20 at Gila Farms Pond south of Phoenix July 26 (DS) represented a very high number away from the mountains; it was thought to have been present all summer. Two ♀ Red-breasted Mergansers were present throughout the period at Kayenta (CL); this species has summered irregularly on the Colorado R. but never in n. Arizona.

RAPTORS TO TERNS — Black-shouldered Kite numbers in Arizona continued to increase with at least 2 pairs attempting nesting this summer; two present along Sonoita Cr. near Patagonia all spring were apparently unsuccessful, with one of the pair being found dead (R. Baxter). A 2nd pair present all period near Hereford on the upper S.P.R. (DK, TC) tried to test twice but was unsuccessful. Another kite was seen near Madera Canyon July 30 (HM). A brown-plumaged N. Harrier July 13 at Kayenta (CL) probably was an early migrant. Unusual was an ad. Com. Black-Hawk May 4–June 16 along the upper S.P.R. (DK, TC), where there are few recent summer records. Gray Hawks were very successful along the upper S.P.R., where 11 nests produced 18 fledglings (DK, TC); this sensitive area supports the highest density of Gray Hawk in the United States. An interesting report of a possible ad. Short-tailed Hawk (light-phased) was received from Sawmill Canyon, Huachuca Mts., July 21 (JD); although this would represent a first Arizona (w. U.S.) record, the observer did not officially submit the record because of lack of photo or specimen. It is interesting to note that this is the 2nd late summer sighting in recent years by very reliable observers and may reflect dispersal from w. Mexico. An ad. Swainson's Hawk in s.w. Phoenix July 10 (DS) was at a location where this species is not known to nest.

An imm. Virginia Rail captured live near the Snyder Hill Sewage Ponds, s.w. Tucson, (fide GM,* U. of A.) was well away from known nesting areas in s. Arizona. Likewise, a pair (?) of Sora present all period at a pond at the Twin Lakes Golf Course near Willcox may have provided a new nesting locality for s. Arizona. Three present at Keams Canyon July 31 (CL) probably suggested local nesting. An ad. Com. Moorhen at Ganado L. June 3 (DS) provided only the 2nd record for n.e. Arizona.

In recent years shorebird habitat in the Phoenix area has fluctuated wildly, sometimes supporting nesting Am. Avocets. This year 9 pairs (with at least three young) were present July 3 along the Salt R. in s.w. Phoenix, confirming local nesting. A Long-billed Curlew June 2 at Lyman L. south of St. Johns provided one of few spring records for Apache. Several early Semipalmated Sandpipers (presumably all juveniles) were reported as follows: one at Ruthrauff Ponds, Tucson, July 26–28 (JS) with two there July 30 (DH), and two at Willcox July 30–31 (WR, JS, DJ). Thirty-eight Baird's Sandpipers were at Willcox July 23 (JK et al.), an early date for such a large concentration. Three ad. Stilt Sandpipers were seen at Willcox July 23 (JK et al.). Another uncommon fall transient, Short-billed Dowitcher, was present in w. Phoenix at the Avondale Sewage Treatment Plant, where three adults were seen July 14 (DS). An ad. Long-

billed Dowitcher June 3 south of Chinle (DS) provided one of the few June records for Arizona.

An ad. Laughing Gull was reported from Willcox June 15 (†DK) and again June 25–26 (D. Pearson, BS). Written details submitted suggested Laughing but lacked critical characteristics (i.e., direct comparisons with Franklin's). Unfortunately, no photos were taken despite the fact that several observers saw the bird on at least 3 different days. If accepted by the A.B.C., it would establish about a 10th state record. Also present at Willcox during the period were several Franklin's Gulls: eight there June 12 (DK, TC); one there June 15–27 (DK et al.); and three there July 2 (WD). Another was present in Tucson July 10 (JS). In n. Arizona two adults were at Ganado L. June 2 (DS), one 2nd summer was south of Chinle June 3 (DS), and another 2nd summer was at Cow Springs L. west of Kayenta June 29 (CL). Very unusual for summer was a Bonaparte's Gull June 15 at Parker Canyon L. (S. Levy). A Caspian Tern at Ganado L. June 3 (DS) provided only the 2nd n.e. Arizona record. Three adults at Prescott July 8 (CT) furnished the first-ever summer records for the Prescott area.

CUCKOOS TO KINGFISHERS — Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported nesting at Picacho Res. (CB) and along the Hasayampa R. near Wickenburg July 28 (Jeff Cooper). On the upper S.P.R., research revealed a density of about eight birds per 40 hectares. A pair and nest of Com. Nighthawk were found at Meadow Valley east of Patagonia on the very early date of June 6 (S. Levy).

Throughout s.e. Arizona, hummingbird numbers appeared drastically down from past years, at least as suggested by vast reductions of hummingbird use of regular feeders. In Cave Creek Canyon, R. Morse estimated an 80% reduction of individuals attending his feeders (based upon sugar-water use), and similar reductions of resident hummingbirds were reported at all the regular feeder localities. Numbers appeared normal at the beginning of the season but rapidly decreased throughout the month of July. It was unbelievable to sit at the feeders at The Mile Hi in Ramsey Canyon for 2 hours and see only two or three individual hummingbirds! It was also our impression that numbers appeared to be even further reduced at those feeders that allowed extensive banding (Madera Canyon and Mile Hi), and we wonder whether or not the banding had an adverse effect on the residents, further reducing an already low population.

Rarities were reduced as much as residents this summer. A White-eared Hummingbird was seen away from feeders below the S. Fork Campground, Cave Creek Canyon, July 2–4 (JK), and another was reported at Madera Canyon July 7 (R. Freeman). Broad-billed Hummingbirds were reported away from their normal nesting areas; one was at Globe through late June (C. McKusick), and another frequented the feeders above Portal in mid-July (W & SSp). The ad. Berylline Hummingbird present at the feeders at Madera Canyon in May remained until June 5 (m.ob.). At least four individual Lucifer Hummingbirds were seen at feeders between late June and mid-July; a female was present at Spofford's feeder June 27 into July (fide SSp); a male was at Madera Canyon July 5–7 (D. Suddjian, GP), and an imm. male there July 9 was joined by two more males July 10 (JS). Two Lucifers were last seen at Madera July 17. The only report of Allen's Hummingbird received this summer was of an ad. male at Madera Canyon July 10 (JS, JH).

Further evidence that Belted Kingfisher nests in c. Arizona came from Granite Cr. near Prescott, where two were present throughout the period. Also one was seen July 9 at S. Fork in the White Mts. (TC), where they have been suspected of nesting for some time. A pair of kingfishers were also present throughout the period at Page Springs south of Sedona, where they successfully nested last year, but this year no young were found (JC).

Another ♀ Green Kingfisher was seen July 26 in California Gulch (RBo).

The most exciting news of the summer was provided by the successful nesting of Green Kingfisher along the Upper San Pedro R. about one mi north of the Hwy 90 bridge. A pair has been present along this stretch of river for 2 years and thought to have nested last year as well. D. Krueper and T. Corman first observed a female leaving a burrow June 3. From that date on both a male and female were seen frequenting the burrow until June 21, when both adults were seen entering the burrow with food many times over a 3-hour observation period. On June 30 the male was again observed entering the burrow with food several times. On July 16 both the male and female were observed feeding two fledglings outside the burrow about one mi to the south of the nesting area. To the best of our knowledge, this represented the first nesting record for Arizona and the first U.S. nesting record outside of Texas.

FLYCATCHERS TO VIREOS — Surprising was a singing N. Beardless-Tyrannulet at Cave Creek Ranch, Portal, July 19 (JD et al.). Two Buff-breasted Flycatchers were found again in Pine Canyon June 8 on the w. side of the Chiricahua Mts., where the species has been found nesting for the past 4 years (RM). A pair of Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers at the Roadside Rest, Sonoita Cr., were present all period and were suspected of nesting. This locality would be a new and unusually low elevation breeding area in s.e. Arizona. Nesting was confirmed for Dusky-capped Flycatcher on the upper S.P.R. for the first time, when two adults with three fledglings were seen west of Fairbank June 17 (TC). A Thick-billed Kingbird was out of its normal range in White-tail Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., June 12 (RT). The only report of E. Kingbird came from Kayenta June 4 (DS), and an ad. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found in Peppersauce Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., July 20 (†T. Metcalf, D. Bennett).

A ♀ Purple Martin June 6 on the Upper S.P.R. (DK) was at an unusual locality and was probably a northbound migrant. Very late was a single Bank Swallow June 2 at Lyman L. (DS), providing the first June record for the state. A singing ♂ House Wren was at an unusually low elevation July 20 on the Upper S.P.R. south of Hwy 90 (DK). An Am. Dipper seen carrying food 2 mi above Herb Martyr Dam on Cave Cr., Chiricahua Mts., June 17 (R. Plage) may have represented only the 2nd nesting attempt for this mountain range; an unsuccessful nest was found in Cave Creek Canyon in May 1973 (W. Spofford). A pair of Am. Robins nested again in Phoenix with young fledged in early July (P. Barnes, fide S. Demaree).

A report of a singing ♂ White-eyed Vireo, apparently also tape-recorded, in E. Whitetail Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., June 11 (RT, RM) would represent only the 5th or 6th state record. Gray Vireo was found again at Redington Pass June 8 in the Rincon Mts. (JBo), where it has been known to nest in the past. A single Red-eyed Vireo was found at Dudleyville on the Lower S.P.R. June 4 (E. Dunn).

WARBLERS TO FINCHES — A ♀ Black-throated Blue Warbler 2 mi south of Charleston on the upper S.P.R. June 10 (DK) provided only the 3rd June record for the state. A ♀ Black-and-white Warbler July 16 at Cook's L., Lower S.P.R. (DS et al.), was very early. Four Am. Redstarts were reported during the period: one female at Becker L., Springerville, June 1 (DS); one imm. male along Ganado Wash June 3 (DS); one (sex?) along Sonoita Cr. July 9 (CD); and one imm. male south of St. David June 21 (TC). An Ovenbird was seen in S. Fork, Cave Creek Canyon, June 13–14 (J & G. Maender, RM). A singing ♂ Com. Yellowthroat at Keams Canyon July 30 (CL) provided a first local record. Hooded Warblers were reported with greater

than normal frequency in s.e. Arizona this summer. One female was at Portal June 8 (B. Phillip, fide SSp); a singing male first found May 29 south of Charleston, Upper S.P.R. (DK), remained until June 10; another singing male was found south of Fairbank, Upper S.P.R., June 8 (TC, DK); and two were reported from the Roadside Rest, Sonoita Cr., June 27 (D. Wimpfheimer, S. Sapphire). A well-described Slate-throated Redstart was reported from Sawmill Canyon, Huachuca Mts., July 13 (†R. Buttery, W. Dilley, B. Gardner) but could not be relocated despite intense searching. If accepted by the A.B.C., it would represent only the 3rd Arizona record.

A ♂ Yellow Grosbeak was reported from Onion Saddle, Chiricahua Mts., July 17 (J. & P. Wright); virtually all of the Arizona records are from June or July. A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at Ganado June 3 (DS); this species appears regularly as a spring migrant in n.e. Arizona. Varied Buntings were found north of their normal breeding range; three males at Catalina S.P., Santa Catalina Mts., June 8–July 13 (CT) were at the n. limit of their expected range, and two to three imm. males with one female gathering nesting material July 29 at Boyce Thompson Arboretum east of Phoenix were well north of their previously known nesting localities (CT).

Cassin's Sparrows were abundant throughout s.e. Arizona beginning with the onset of the summer monsoons, so it was not surprising to find them extraliminally; two males July 11, three males July 18, and four males with two females Aug. 1 approximately 7 mi east of Prescott at the edge of the Prescott Valley (CT) were the farthest northwest the species has been found in the state. A Savannah Sparrow July 30 at Keams Canyon (CL) was at an unusual locality. An ad. (dark-lored) White-crowned Sparrow north of Hwy 90, Upper S.P.R., June 30 (TC) was exceptional considering all previous summer records for the lower Sonoran Zone were of the race *Z. l. gambelii*. Pine Siskins were found nesting at lower than normal elevations this summer; an adult was seen feeding a fledgling in S. Fork, Chiricahua Mts., July 9, and two were seen at Sunny Flat Campground, Chiricahua Mts., July 8–12 (D. Suddjian).

CONTRIBUTORS — Charles Babbitt, Jerry Bock, Rick Bowers (RBo), Ron Christofferson, John Coons, C. Corchran, Troy Corman, Doug Danforth, William Davis, Salome Demaree, Carol DeWard, Jon Dunn, Tom Gatz, Sharon Goldwasser, Jack Halloway, Craig Heath, Dave Hoffman, Betty Jackson (Globe), Dan Jones, Kenn Kaufman, Jeff Kingery (Tucson), Dave Krueper (upper S.P.R.), Chuck LaRue, Seymour Levy, Henry Messing, Gale Monson, Robert Morse, Georgia Porter, Will Russell, John Saba, Sally Spofford (SSp) (Portal), Walter Spofford, Patrick Stejskal, Bill Sutton, Rick Taylor, Carl Tomoff (Prescott), Janet Witzeman (Phoenix).—GARY H. ROSENBERG, 5441 N. Swan Rd., Apt. 313, Tucson, AZ 85718; DAVID STEJSKAL, 8032 N. 11th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85021.