
SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona

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Unusual weather in the state this spring made little perceived impact, as is usual, on the birdlife of Arizona. A few exceptions were that during a brief period of rain in southeast Arizona in early April, Cassin's Sparrows were again induced to sing for a short while; after a late cold front from the Pacific had blown through the state in mid-April, Sedona birders found an amazing variety of water birds at Peck's Lake in the Verde Valley; and another

very late cold front from the Pacific on the evening of May 29 blew in Arizona's first documented Elegant Tern.

Although the winter of 1987-1988 was an invasion year of montane species to the lowlands, cardueline finches were not conspicuous anywhere. It is interesting that starting in late March and continuing through the period numerous reports were received of small numbers of Purple and Cassin's finches and of larger numbers (sometimes hundreds) of Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks nearly throughout. Where they came from (or where they were going) is anyone's guess. Curiously, Red Crossbills did not take part in this movement.



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

LOONS TO HERONS — A Pacific Loon, a scarce winter resident and transient on the L.C.R., was at Davis Dam Mar. 10 (DS). Seldom reported in spring, a Horned Grebe at Peck's L., Verde Valley, Apr. 22 was a surprise (VG et al.). A Clark's Grebe in Tucson Apr. 10 (RK) and another in Green Valley May 30–31 (DG) added to our growing knowledge of this species' status away from the L.C.R.

Larger than usual numbers of Am. White Pelicans (around 330) were reported from various parts of the state, including 80 west of San Carlos Res. Apr. 18 (TG, DF), 24 at Peck's L. Apr. 22 (VG et al.), and 13 at Willcox Apr. 24 (JH). The vast majority (200) of the individuals reported were concentrated at Topock Marsh in mid-March (v.o.). Double-crested Cormorant is infrequently reported from n.e. Arizona as a transient, so one at Cow Springs L., H.I.R., Mar. 13–25 (CL, WA, SS) and three more at Becker L. May 16 (SG) were noteworthy. Eight Olivaceous Cormorants at Patagonia L. Mar. 12 (SG) and another ad. bird at Nogales May 14 (DS, JP et al.) were the only ones reported.

The Am. Bittern that wintered at Nogales was last seen Apr. 24 (JBo, m.ob.). Possibly the same bird was found at nearby Guevavi Ranch May 11–14 (DW et al.). Sad was the news of the total failure of the largest Great Blue Heron rookery on the S.P.R. north of Fairbank (fide TC). A Tricolored Heron (without supporting details) was reported from Green Valley May 27, providing one of the few spring records of this species (F. Elmore). A Green-backed Heron on a nest at B.T.A. May 11 provided the first known nesting record of this species for the area (SG).

WATERFOWL, RAPTORS — A pair of Greater White-fronted Geese at Kellner Canyon south of Globe Apr. 18 were at an unusual location (fK, Condit). The Greater White-fronted Goose that wintered in Tucson was last seen May 7 (JK, BS et al.). The Ross' Goose wintering on Tucson's e. side was last seen Apr. 26 (E. Bessler, W. Davis et al.), while the Ross' at the Palominas Ranch, S.P.R., was last seen on the very late date of May 17 (TC). The only Wood Ducks reported for the spring, other than those reported previously during the winter, were five birds on the Salt R. above Roosevelt L. in early April (D. Von Gonten) and two more at the confluence of the Verde R. and Oak Cr. Apr. 14 (M, DF). Very exciting was the discovery of a ♂ **Garganey** at the Buenos Aires N.W.R. Apr. 8–12 (Univ. of AZ ornithology class, m.ob., ph. R. Witzeman). This provided the first record for the state and one of only a few south of

Alaska. Because of the remoteness of the area and since this record falls into an emerging pattern of occurrence on the West Coast, there is little doubt that this was indeed a wild bird. One of the ♂ Eur. Wigeon found earlier in Phoenix remained until Mar. 13 (A. Zimmerman). A ♂ and two ♀ Greater Scaup were reported from Cow Springs L., H.I.R., Mar. 13–20 (CL, WA, SS). This species is extremely rare away from the L.C.R. A subad. ♂ Surf Scoter on the L.C.R. below Parker Dam Mar. 10–19 had probably wintered in the area (DS et al.), but an ad. ♂ Surf Scoter at Sierra Vista Apr. 7 was clearly a migrant (DK, TC). Most of the Hooded Mergansers reported during the winter had left before March, so a ♂ Hooded on the Verde R. below Bartlett Dam Mar. 25–Apr. 15 was noteworthy (B. Bock, S. Fetting).

Single Black-shouldered Kites at Alamo L. Mar. 15 (R. Schweitzer, S. Moeller) and in Chino Valley Mar. 29–Apr. 30 (R. Houser, H & AG) were farther northwest than usual. Pairs of kites north of Hereford, near Sahuarita, and along Sonoita Cr. were suspected of nesting this year (v.o.). An ad. N. Goshawk at B.T.A. Mar. 21 had probably wintered in the area (CT). An ad. Harris' Hawk in Skull Valley west of Prescott Feb. 23 may have dispersed from the recent releases of this species on the L.C.R. or may have been part of the recent natural increase enjoyed by this species to the south (V. Miller et al.). An imm. Gray Hawk, infrequently reported from the Lower S.P.R., was at Cook's L. May 8 (GM). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk, a very rare vagrant to the state, was found at Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mts., May 20 (fJK, GR). Large flocks of Swainson's Hawks are a rare phenomenon in the state during spring, so a flock of 25–30 birds near Buckeye Apr. 3 (TC) and another flock of about 30 birds near Sahuarita May 14 (B. Pollock) were unexpected.

TURKEY TO TERNS — Three ♀ Wild Turkeys near Honeymoon, Eagle Cr., Apr. 24 were in a new area (GM). The Virginia Rail that spent much of the winter in Nogales was, unfortunately, found dead on the road May 27 (JH).

The only Snowy Plovers reported for the period were two to six individuals at Willcox May 10 through the period (DW, GR et al.). Whimbrel is very rare in spring away from the L.C.R., so one bird at Sierra Vista Apr. 15 (RK), two at Peck's L. Apr. 22 (VG et al.), and another near McNeal May 11 (GR, JK) were all surprises. Very exciting was the discovery of three **Hudsonian Godwits** at Willcox May 17–22 (fKK, RBo, DW et al., ph.), providing either the 3rd or 4th record for the state. One of the same birds, or quite possibly a different one, was present here May 27–30 (G. Wilhelm et al.). According to JPr, no Hudsonians were present at Willcox May 24–26. A Marbled Godwit at Topock Marsh Mar. 10–19 may have wintered locally (DS et al.). A flock of 150 Marbleds was downed by bad weather at Peck's L. Apr. 22 (VG et al.).

The only Sanderling reported was one bird at Kayenta May 21 (CL). This species is quite rare in n. Arizona. A well-described Semipalmated Sandpiper was also in Kayenta Apr. 24 (fCL). Arizona birders have only recently begun to determine the true status of this species in the state. Baird's Sandpiper, normally a very rare spring transient in the state, was reported from 2 areas during the period. Three Baird's were found at Buenos Aires N.W.R. Apr. 11–12 (KS, LHK, J. Dunn), and two more were at Willcox May 19–20 (TC, DK et al.). Another rare spring transient, Short-billed Dowitcher, was reported for the period with two (*L.g. hendersoni*) at Willcox May 19–20 (TC, DK et al.). Three Wilson's Phalaropes Mar. 15 at Prescott were early (H & AG). Large numbers of Red-necked Phalaropes in the state during spring are unusual, so flocks of 20 at Willcox May 14 (B. Zimmer) and 45 there May 18 (JBo) were noteworthy.

Sixteen Franklin's Gulls, many more than usual, were reported nearly statewide from mid-April to late May (v.o.). An ad. Franklin's at Havasu S.P. Mar. 10–19 provided one of the few spring records for the L.C.R. (DS et al.). No less than 33 Bonaparte's Gulls, far more than usual, were also reported

nearly statewide mid-April to mid-May (v.o.). Herring Gull is very rare in the state away from the L.C.R., so one at Prescott Mar. 14 was a surprise (BT).

A Caspian Tern at Gila Bend Apr. 17 (RF) and another at Peck's L. Apr. 18 (VG et al.) were the only ones reported. A complete surprise was the discovery of an **Elegant Tern** May 30 at P.R.D., establishing the first documented record of this species for the state (RF, SD, L. Hatcher, ph. DS, ph. CB). There have been only 2 or 3 previous inland North American records for this species. A Least Tern (only about a dozen previous state records) put in a brief appearance at Willcox May 27 (G. Wilhelm, †DS et al.).

DOVES TO WOODPECKERS—The two ♂ **Ruddy Ground-Doves** frequenting a feeder in a Green Valley yard during the winter remained through mid-April (*vide* JK). Normally arriving in early June, Yellow-billed Cuckoos were somewhat early this year on the S.P.R., with the first reported near Hereford May 24, the 2nd near St. David May 26, and the 3rd and 4th between Fairbank and Hereford May 31 (TC). As many as three N. Saw-whet Owls were reported again from Pinery Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., from late April through the period (RBo, m.ob.). Buff-collared Nightjars arrived at both Madera Canyon (KK, RBo et al.) and Aravaipa Canyon (DW et al.) on May 17, at least 10 days later than usual.

A recently fledged Broad-billed Hummingbird north of Tucson near Esperero Canyon indicated a very early nesting for this species in the state (G. Porter). Very surprising was an early Berylline Hummingbird in Madera Canyon May 13 through the end of the period (RBo, KK et al.). Numerous observers noted Broad-tailed Hummingbirds lingering in the lowlands much later than usual this spring. Exceptional was an ad. ♂ Broad-tailed in a n. Tucson neighborhood Apr. 10 to at least June 2 (KK, LHK).

Truly extraordinary, if accepted by the Arizona Bird Committee, was the report of a ♂ Green Kingfisher at Topock Marsh Mar. 25 (†F. & F. Clowery). There had been no previous record in Arizona west of Arivaca.

S.A.

At long last, the first evidence of Green Kingfishers breeding in Arizona was obtained this spring. On May 19, TC had just relocated a pair of kingfishers found earlier in the day by DK on the Upper S.P.R. south of Fairbank. When relocated, the birds were perched very close together and were giving "cooing and chattering" calls that TC had never heard before. After a short while he observed the birds copulate near a 6-foot-high dirt bank next to the river. On May 24, TC observed the ♀ bird enter a burrow 3½–4 ft above the river, where she stayed for about 10 minutes. Whether the pair successfully raised any young here remains to be seen.

Single Acorn Woodpeckers on the Upper S.P.R. May 19–22 & 25 provided the 2nd and 3rd records for this area (TC). Williamson's Sapsucker is seldom reported from the lowlands, so a ♀ bird at B.T.A. Feb. 20–Mar. 22 (CT), a ♂ bird there also Mar. 12–22 (CT et al.), and another ♂ Williamson's on the Upper S.P.R. Mar. 19 (TC) were all unusual. Intriguing was the report of a Downy Woodpecker at Quitobaquito Spring, Organpipe Cactus N.M., Mar. 3 (M. Denny). This area is adjacent to Mexico, for which country there is no record of the species. Another Downy was found at Honeymoon, Eagle Cr., Apr. 24, providing a first local record (GM). A ♂ "Yellow-shafted Flicker, a sparse visitor to the state, was found near St. David Apr. 11 (DK).

FLYCATCHERS TO CREEPER—A Greater Pewee north of Fairbank, Upper S.P.R., Apr. 18 added to the few lowland records for this species during migration (DK). A Least Flycatcher, a sparse vagrant to the state, was found at Fairbank

May 16 (†DK). A Buff-breasted Flycatcher in Madera Canyon May 23 provided only the 4th recent record for the Santa Rita Mts. (KK, RBo et al.). There were no records here between 1920 and Apr. 17, 1984. One or two Dusky-capped Flycatchers were again present north of Fairbank, where they are not known to breed, through May (TC). An early and rare E. Kingbird was reported from Patagonia Apr. 25 (V. Berkman), and another individual was briefly seen along the S. Fork of Cave Cr., Chiricahua Mts., May 17 (JP).

A **Blue Jay** was present at Camp Verde north of Phoenix Mar. 16–May 4 (†G. Lollman). If accepted, it would establish only the 3rd record for the state. Scrub Jays remained in the lowlands somewhat longer than usual, as two were still at Catalina S.P. Apr. 28–30 (CT), and two more were very late at B.T.A. May 10 (SG). Very unusual was the report of a Black-billed Magpie east of Phoenix on the Salt R. Indian Reservation Mar. 28 (†B. Parfitt, †J. Bricker). Since this species was not found elsewhere outside its known breeding range in n.e. Arizona this year, we cannot rule out that this was a man-assisted vagrant. American Crow is infrequently reported from the Prescott area, so six birds there through Mar. 14 were noteworthy (CT).

Individual Mt. Chickadees that descended to the lowlands during the fall generally did not remain for the entire winter period, so single birds at Woods Ranch, Aravaipa Cr., Mar. 31 (GM) and another at B.T.A. Apr. 1 (CT) probably represented migrants. Totally unprecedented was the report of a Plain Titmouse in Yuma Apr. 6 (J. Braley et al.)! Not near any known breeding area, this normally nonmigratory bird could have come from the east or the west. A small flock of Red-breasted Nuthatches was present in another Yuma yard the same day (B. Turpin). A single Pygmy Nuthatch near St. David Apr. 11 provided the first record for the Upper S.P.R. (DK). A very late Brown Creeper was at B.T.A. May 10 (SG).

THRUSHES TO WARBLERS—A Wood Thrush was reported (without supporting details) from Nogales Apr. 24 (JB). This species has been recorded in Arizona only 11 times before. The Rufous-backed Robin found earlier at Patagonia was last seen Mar. 21 (R. Baxter, †MP). A Varied Thrush on the S. Fork of Cave Cr., Chiricahua Mts., Apr. 13 was the 6th individual reported in the state since October 1987 (RK). Two Brown Thrashers, rare vagrants to the state, were reported with one at a feeder in Portal Apr. 10 through the period (B. Schaughency) and the other at Montezuma Well south of Sedona May 3 (CT). Bohemian Waxwings were reported from 2 areas of the state with a flock of 11 seen 10 mi south of Camp Verde mid-February to early March (M. Collie, F. Knoll) and another flock of 15 found Mar. 20 at Cow Springs L., H.I.R. (CL et al.). This species occurs very irregularly in the state.

A Yellow-throated Vireo was reported (without supporting details) from Molino Basin, Santa Catalina Mts., May 17 (F. Stoop, *vide* GG). There are still fewer than 20 records of this species for Arizona. An early Warbling Vireo was found at California Gulch west of Nogales Mar. 5 (DS).

A singing Palm Warbler was reported (without supporting details) from a n. Tucson yard May 13 (WR et al.). There had been only 5 previous spring records for the state. A ♂ Prothonotary Warbler was found at Patagonia May 16 (†Ch), and another was reported (without supporting details) from Portal May 23–24 (RM et al.). There are now about 30 records of this species for the state. An Ovenbird, less frequently reported in spring than in fall, was found in Miller Canyon, Huachuca Mts., May 15 (DJ). Three Hooded Warblers, about an average number, were reported for the period, with a ♀ bird in Tucson Apr. 15 (S. Berky, *vide* GG), a singing ♂ bird at B.T.A. May 17 (SG et al.), and another singing ♂ Hooded on the Upper S.P.R. south of Charleston (DK). A Red-faced Warbler was out of habitat in the tall cottonwoods of the Upper S.P.R. east of Sierra Vista May 14 (JP, DS, TC et al.). Two Black-and-white Warblers, three Am. Redstarts, and two N. Waterthrushes were reported.

GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES — Six Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, slightly below normal, were reported for the period. A Cassin's Sparrow at Sells Apr. 6 was west of this species' normal range (GM). A singing Rufous-winged Sparrow at California Gulch Mar. 5 was in a new area (DS, CH, PG) as was the road-killed individual on the road to Aravaipa Canyon Apr. 17 (RK). Five Golden-crowned Sparrows, far more than usual, were reported, with one at Catalina S.P. Mar. 7 (KN), another in n. Tucson until Apr. 24 (L. Westenburg), one at a Tucson feeder until Mar. 17 (KN), a 4th at Portal Mar. 13–Apr. 30 (SSp, m.ob.), and a 5th at B.T.A. May 8 (CT). Individual Harris' Sparrows were at Green Valley Mar. 5–Apr. 27 (MP et al.) and at B.T.A. (since Jan. 28) until May 1 (CT et al.). Although there seemed to be more of the rare *Zonotrichia* sparrows present, White-crowns were thought to be down drastically (fide GM).

A Rusty Blackbird, an extremely rare vagrant to Arizona, was reported (without supporting details) along Arivaca Cr., Buenos Aires N.W.R., Mar. 16–19 (B. Buttery et al.). A Great-tailed Grackle at Portal during May furnished only the 2nd local record (SSp). A Common Grackle at Willcox May 18 was a real surprise, as there were only 2 previous verified records for the state (M. Price, †JPr). A ♂ Orchard Oriole was reported (without supporting details) from a n. Tucson yard May 14 (WR). A subad. ♂ Hooded Oriole made a rare appearance at Kayenta May 23 (CL). There are very few records of this species in n.e. Arizona. The ♂ **Streak-backed Oriole** found Feb. 26 in Green Valley was last reported May 11 (N. McNeal).

Numbers of Purple Finches in Portal built up from two birds in March to eight there through April (m.ob.). Another ♂ Purple was in Madera Canyon Mar. 20 (DS, B. Cowart), and two more ♀ birds were found at Patagonia (TC). Cassin's Finches were much more widespread across the s. one-half of the state through the period, with the latest reports being six in lower Sycamore Canyon west of Nogales May 17 (CHo) and at least five at the Southwestern Research Station, Chiricahua Mts., May 17–19 (DS, JP et al.). "Several" Red Crossbills in Tucson Apr. 18 provided the only lowland report (GG). Individual and small flocks of Pine Siskins were nearly everywhere during May, and exceptional numbers were recorded in some of the s.e. mountains. Truly impressive were 750–1000 in and above Rustler Park, Chiricahua Mts., May 26 (DS, T. & R. Janzen). Evening Grosbeaks almost went unreported in s. Arizona, but in c. and n. Arizona large numbers were present in some areas until late May. In Prescott, numbers built up to about 250 around town by late April. By mid-May, numbers had diminished there (CT). In the Flagstaff area, especially on the n.e. side of the San Francisco Peaks, very large numbers (200–300) were present through May (JC, DS et al.).

CORRIGENDA — The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher reported in the 1987 fall report (AB 42:114) was the 2nd for Navajo, not the first as stated. The Hooded Warbler mentioned in the same report southwest of Phoenix (AB 42:115) was seen Nov. 23, not Nov. 13.

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