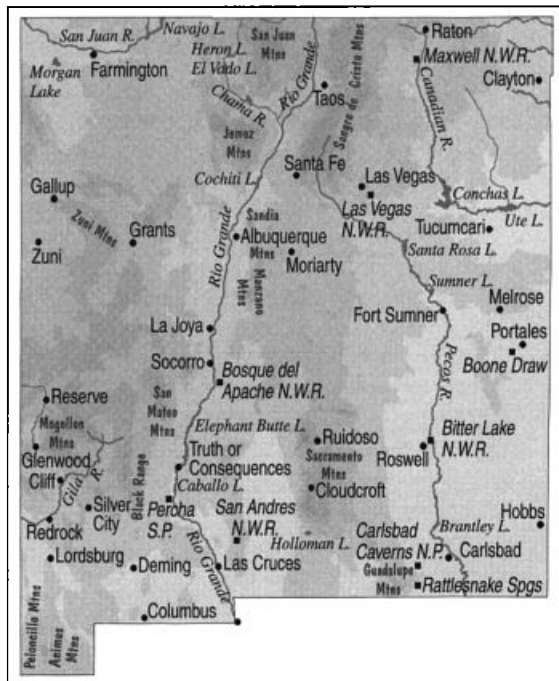


New Mexico



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Warm and dry conditions were the rule for Winter 2001-2002, with blowing dust replacing blowing snow, and with many species lingering late or wintering far north of usual. In sharp contrast to last winter, there was little evidence of montane species in lowland areas, while sparrows and other grassland birds were again scarce in parched rangelands. Birding proceeded with enthusiasm, however, and another newly documented species pushed the New Mexico list comfortably beyond the 500 mark.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); C.C.N.P. (Carlsbad Caverns N. P.); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte L.); L.V.N.W.R. (Las Vegas N.W.R.); Maxwell (Maxwell N.W.R. and vicinity); R.G.N.C. (Rio Grande Nature Center, Albuquerque); R.G.V. (Rio Grande Valley); U.N.M. (University of New Mexico).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

An active loon season produced a **Red-throated Loon** at Willow L., *Eddy* 1 Dec (vt. JO) and 16 Dec (CR). A Pacific Loon crash-landed on a wet road near Sumner L. 4 Dec (ph. RG), where it was retrieved and later released at the

lake; other Pacifics were one each at Conchas L. 3 Jan (WH) and Brantley L. 15 Feb (SW). The few Horned Grebes were relegated to e. lakes; high count was 6 at Conchas L. 12 Jan (JO, JEP). Far n. for the season was an Eared Grebe at Clayton 19 Dec (CR). Although water levels were low, an aerial survey counted some 3000 *Aechmophorus* grebes at E.B.L. 15 Jan (MW); at nearby Caballo L. 30 Dec, Westerns outnumbered Clark's about 5:1 (BZ). High count for wintering American White Pelicans was 90 at E.B.L. 15 Jan (MW). Neotropic Cormorants outnumbered Double-crested wherever the two species occurred together; highs for Neotropics were 51 at Bosque 15 Dec (SC) and 23 at Sunland Park 1-2 Jan (MS, JZ). Now quite rare, an American Bittern was at Bosque 8 (ph. BZ) & 21 Jan (DE, BN, CR). The 5 Snowy Egrets at Six Mile Dam, *Eddy* 29 Jan (SW) provided a notable winter "concentration." Early were 3 White-faced Ibis at Percha 28 Feb (GE). Greater White-fronted Geese were at Maxwell, B.L.N.W.R., and Caballo L.; high count was 7 at Clayton L. 26 Jan (JO). Tundra Swans made a good showing, with 5 at Maxwell 3 Dec—28 Feb (m. ob., ph. DC), 7 at L.V.N.W.R. 29 Dec (JT), 3 at Ute L. 7 Jan (MW), and one at Bosque 2 Jan—24 Feb (m. ob.). A Mute Swan was lurking about E.B.L. 17 Feb (JT). Wood Ducks were widely reported from the R.G.V. east, including aerial estimates of 25 at Santa Rosa L. and 20 at Bottomless L. 5 Dec (MW), plus counts of 28 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF), 324 at

Albuquerque 16 Dec (HS), and 94 in the Avalon—Brantley area 20 Dec (TH). Now regular in winter, single male Eurasian Wigeon were at R.G.N.C. 3 Feb (CMB), Bear Canyon L. 22 Jan (EL), and Deming 8 Feb (LM). A male Greater Scaup was at R.G.N.C. 16-23 Feb (JO, JEP, JT, DE, BN); 3 probable Greaters were at Tyrone 24 Feb (JO, EL). A female **Surf Scoter** at Stubblefield L. 7 Dec (ph. DC, vt. P Sandstrom-Smith) furnished the only scoter report. Other ducks of interest were a Long-tailed at L. Avalon 1 Dec (JEP, vt. JO), 140 Buffleheads below Cochiti Dam 22 Feb (WH), and a male **Barrow's Goldeneye** on the Rio Grande at Embudo 16 Feb (JO, JEP). Evidence of overwintering by Ospreys was provided by up to 2 in the E.B.L. area 5-21 Jan (JO, JEP, DE, BN). Single White-tailed Kites were in *Luna* 21 Dec (LM) and 19 Feb (RM); drought conditions, leading to reduced prey, were likely responsible for low kite numbers. Accidental in winter, an imm. Common Black-Hawk was at Hill, *Dona Ana* 17 Jan (GE). Harris's Hawks in peripheral locales were singles at Bosque 1 Jan—24 Feb (m. ob.), e. of Tolar, *Roosevelt* 10 Dec (RG), and the Jornada grasslands 5 Jan (BZ). Nicely documented was a w. **Red-shoudered Hawk** at Casa Colorado, s. *Valencia* 17 Feb (CR, vt. JO). The resident **Aplomado Falcon** pair in s. New Mexico remained on territory through the winter, with copulation and nest site inspection noted 22 Feb (RM); a 2nd territory, maintained by at least one ad., was documented elsewhere 2 Feb (JO, JEP) and later (RM). Meanwhile, plans for massive releases of captive Aplomados into s. New Mexico, which some fear may obliterate this natural colonization event, proceeded aggressively. Unusual in mid-winter, single Peregrine Falcons were at Albuquerque 13 Jan (CR), Sandia Mts. 30 Dec (NV), Bosque 8 & 21 Jan (BZ, CR), E.B.L. 1 & 21 Jan (JO, DE, BN), and near Hermanas 27 Dec (JO).

PARTRIDGES THROUGH OWLS

A Chukar near Ruidoso 15 Dec (A. Powell) provided evidence that game farm birds continue to escape. Unusual for the n. were 10 Scaled Quail near Cimarron 23 Feb (JEP) Northerly were 2 Virginia Rails at Stubblefield L. 1 Jan (DC) and a Sora at Albuquerque 16 Dec (N. Pederson). Common Moorhens were in the Gila, Rio Grande, and Pecos valleys, including singles near Cliff 29 Dec (RS) and at Bosque 15 Dec—19 Jan (SC, WW, JO) and 3 each at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE) and Six Mile Dam 29 Jan (SW). The experimental Whooping Crane population that winters in New Mexico was down to its last individual, which passed over Albuquerque, with thou-

sands of northbound Sandhills, 28 Feb (GM). Noteworthy for winter were 3 Snowy Plovers at Brantley L. 28 Dec (SW), where one lingered 31 Dec (JO) and 31 Jan (SW). Surprising for mid-winter were up to 5 Black-necked Stilts in the Anapra—Sunland Park area 1 & 9 Jan (MS, JZ, WW). Late were single American Avocets at Bosque 15 Dec (RG) and L. Avalon 1 Dec (JEP), early was one at B.L.N.W.R. 1 Feb (GW). Notably late Long-billed Curlews were 6 near Otis 16 Dec (SW), singles near Hermanas 21 & 27 Dec (LM, JO), and 2 near Luis Lopez 12 Jan (RG). Highs for Dunlins were 9-10 at B.L.N.W.R. 4 Dec—1 Feb (GW). Late for the n. were single Bonaparte's Gulls at Eagle Nest 1 Dec (DC) and Sunmer L. 12 Dec (WW) and 2 at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW); high was 30 at L. Avalon 1 Dec (JEP). One to three California Gulls wintered s. to Sunland Park 25 Dec—19 Jan (m. ob.); noteworthy were 8 at Eagle Nest 7 Dec (DC). Single first-winter Thayer's Gulls documented at the Socorro dump 3-16 Jan (CMB, JEP, vt. JO) and E.B.L. 19 Jan—2 Feb (JEP, DE, BN, vt. JO) may have been the same bird. New for New Mexico was an ad **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Sunland Park, discovered 25 Dec (vt. JO) and present through 8 Jan (m. ob., ph. BZ). Amazingly, another ad. Lesser Black-backed was described from Bosque 5 Jan (DR). An ad. **Glaucous Gull**, first seen at Springer L. 8 Dec (DC), subsequently moved to Stubblefield L., where present 9-20 Dec (CR, ph. DC). Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their rapid colonization of New Mexico, with reports from 20 locales from the R.G.V. east; west were 2 at Magdalena 24 Feb (JO) and up to 5 at Columbus 27 Dec—15 Feb (JO, JEP, LM) while highs were 80 at Clayton 19 Dec (CR), 96 at Roswell 15 Dec (SB), 24 at San Miguel, *Dona Ana* 4 Jan (ph. BZ), and 31 at Loving 16 Dec (C. Cranston). White-winged Doves maintained their impressive presence in range and numbers, including n. to Santa Fe and Clayton; notable highs were 691 at Roswell 15 Dec (SB), 871 at La Luz 2 Jan (J. Mangimeli), 138 at Silver City 15 Dec (RS), and a healthy 19,783 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). Inca Doves are now resident n. to Albuquerque, where there were 5 on 12 Dec (HS); notable was an Inca n. to Cerrillos, *Santa Fe* 17 Feb (AF). The only Common Ground-Dove struck a window at Deming 28 Dec (*; LM). A Western Screech-Owl was e. to Clayton L. 26 Jan (JO). A Spotted Owl was reported without details near Questa 16 Dec (R. Weber), where there have been no recent records. Seemingly out of place in the desert borderlands was a Long-eared Owl at Pancho Villa S.P. 24 Jan—15 Feb (J. & S. Hammon et al.). Now rare, single Short-eared

Owls were at Zuni 30 Dec (JAT), Bosque 2 Dec (WW), and near Antelope Wells 4 Jan (S. Smith *vide* AC, NM-C).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH RAVENS

With no previous New Mexico winter records, **Violet-crowned Hummingbirds** staged a mini-invasion in *Dona Ana* this season, with singles at Anthony 3 Nov—25 Feb (ph. H. Bigelow) and Las Cruces 23-24 Feb (ph. R. & B. Dickenshied); a 3rd was present Nov-Feb across the line at El Paso (BZ). A Broad-billed Hummingbird reportedly wintered at Carlsbad (E. Pierce, *vide* SW). Wintering Anna's may be increasing n. to Albuquerque, where up to 4 (3 banded) were present Dec—Feb (JD-M, HS, CH, CMB); elsewhere, single Anna's were present in Dec at Las Cruces (GE) and near Carlsbad (TH). Surprising for the date and n. locale was an ad. female **Costa's Hummingbird** at Placitas 5-26 Jan (JD-M, HS, CMB); measurements, photos, and diagnostic feathers confirmed the identification (W. Baltosser). *Selasphorus* hummers included one at Albuquerque 16 Dec (HS), a probable Broad-tailed at Carlsbad 5 Dec—28 Feb (SW), and several likely Rufous, including 3 at Silver City 15 Dec (*vide* RS), 2 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (*vide* GE), and one near Carlsbad 20 Dec (*vide* TH). Early was a male Broad-tailed in P.O. Canyon 27 Feb (CL). Judging from reports, Lewis's Woodpeckers must be thriving in the upper R.G.V., with 104 at Dixon 15 Dec (RT) and 85 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF); s. of expected were singles at White Signal, *Grant* 20 Dec (*vide* EL) and Las Animas Cr., *Sierra* 2 Dec—6 Jan (m. ob.) and 2 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). A Red-headed Woodpecker at Carlsbad 7 Feb (SW), where the species formerly nested, was the first there since 1995. Gila Woodpeckers continued much in evidence in *Hidalgo*; noteworthy were singles in Clanton Canyon 27 Feb (LM) and on Deer Cr. near Antelope Wells 10 Feb (AC, NM-C). South was a Downy Woodpecker near Caballo 30 Dec (MS, JZ). Providing challenges were several overwintering *Empidonax* flycatchers, highlighted by single vocal Dusky Flycatchers at Percha 30 Dec—19 Jan (BZ, JNP, JEP, JO) and Bosque 21 Jan (CR, DE, BN) and a vocal Cordilleran at Leasburg S.P. 1 Dec—6 Jan (MS, JZ, ph. & audiotape BZ). Other empids were a "Western" at Bosque 15 Dec (DLH) and single unidentified birds at Glenwood 3 Feb (JO) and Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). Unusual were 2 Black Phoebes n. to Espanola 5 Jan (BF). Eastern Phoebes were at five R.G.V. locales Dec—Jan; farther w. was one near Deming 10-15 Feb (LM, CR, vt. JO). Say's Phoebes leave n. New Mexico in winter, so noteworthy were one at

Clayton 19 Dec (CR) and 2 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF). Vermilion Flycatchers lingering in the lower R.G.V. were one at Palomas 30 Dec (GE) and one to 2 near Radium Springs 1 & 5 Dec (MS, JZ, ph. BZ). Single Northern Shrikes wandered s. to Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW), Sevilleta N.W.R. 22 Dec (PB), and Bosque 1 Dec (CMB); others remained farther n. in *Taos*, *Santa Fe*, *Colfax*, and *Union*. Late lingering vireos were a Plumbeous at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE) and a Cassin's at Percha 2 Dec (DE, BN) and 30 Dec (JNP, ph. BZ). Several Steller's Jays drifted into atypical habitat, including one at Corrales 16 Dec (WH), 3 near Caballo 30 Dec (MS, JZ), up to 6 in the Santa Rosa area 16 Dec—3 Feb (WW, JEP, CR, vt. JO), and 2 at Roswell 15 Dec (SB). Blue Jays were prevalent in the e. from *Colfax* and *Union* s. to *Eddy*, west were singles at Santa Fe 22 Dec (D. Einspahr), Albuquerque all season (MLA), and Water Canyon 7 Jan (BZ). Getting an early start were Western Scrub-Jays carrying nest material in the Animas Mts. 2 Feb (AC, NM-C) and Mexican Jays nest-building in the Peloncillo Mts. 13 Feb (CL). East were 47 Pinyon Jays at Mills Canyon 9 Jan (DC). Black-billed Magpies pushing the range limits included 5 at Albuquerque 16 Dec (HS) and singles at Mills Canyon 6 Dec (DC) and Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW); 29 were s. to the Dilia area 24 Dec (JO). American Crow numbers exploded in the lower R.G.V., including 5000 n. of Las Cruces 5 Dec (MS, JZ, BZ) and 10,250 at Las Cruces 15 Dec (GE). Two Common Ravens were near White's City, *Eddy*, 16 Feb (SW), where considered scarce.

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Cave Swallows returned to C.C.N.P. 28 Jan (*vide* SW), two weeks earlier than usual. Enjoying global warming were 2 Barn Swallows at Bosque 9 Jan (WW). Unusual for the Organ Mts. was a Bushtit at Aguirre Springs 3 Dec (BZ); notable was a flock of 61 Bushtits at P.O. Canyon 27 Dec (CL). Several House Wrens lingered late or overwintered in the lower Rio Grande and Pecos valleys, including singles at Caballo L. 30 Dec (BZ), Santa Teresa 1 Jan (MS, JZ), and Sunland Park 9 Jan (WW), plus 5 near Loving 16 Dec (CR) and 4 at C.C.N.P. 15 Dec (SW). A Winter Wren was at Percha 2 Dec (DE, BN), and another was singing at Carlsbad 3 Feb (SW); Six Mile Dam hosted 3 on 16 Dec (CR). Cold-hardy Marsh Wrens included 2 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF), one to 2 in *Colfax* 1-24 Jan (DC), one near Folsom 26 Jan (JO), and 4 at Clayton 19 Dec (CR)

A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was n. to Sevilleta N.W.R. 20 Dec (DK); notable for the sw. were 2 Black-taileds in the Animas Valley

29 Dec (CR). Eastern Bluebirds made a strong showing from the R.G.V. east, including one at San Juan Pueblo 16 Feb (JO, JEP), 6 at Espanola 5 Jan (BF), and 4 at Cimarron 23 Feb (JO, JEP), plus highs of 22 at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW) and 15 at Puerto de Luna 22 Dec (JO). Quite late was a Gray Catbird at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW); astonishingly early was one singing in Mills Canyon along the Canadian R. 22 Feb (DC). Northern Mockingbirds are unexpected in n. New Mexico in winter, so noteworthy were 3 each at Clayton 19 Dec (CR) and Conchas L. 3 Jan (WH), plus singles at Zuni 1 Jan (JAT), Dixon 15 Dec (RT), and Mills Canyon 9 Jan (DC). For the 3rd consecutive year, a Brown Thrasher wintered at Corrales (WH); far w. was another at Zuni 1 Jan (JAT). Noteworthy for mid-winter was a Sprague's Pipit near Hermanas 12 Jan (RM); others, possibly representing late or early migrants, were 2 at Sevilleta N.W.R. 20 Dec (DK), 5 near Hermanas 4-14 Dec (RM), and one near Gage 27 Feb (RM). Cedar Waxwings were prevalent in mid-Dec but unreported in Jan; earliest returnees were 78 in the Animas Mts. 2 Feb (AC, NM-C). North for the season was a Phainopepla w. of Abo Pass, Socorro 21 Jan (RA). Three Olive Warblers were in the Organ Mts. above Aguirre Springs 3 Dec (BZ), the 2nd consecutive winter the species has occurred there.

Orange-crowned Warblers are now expected in winter in the lower R.G.V.; far n. were singles at Espanola 5 Jan (BF) and Bosque 15 Dec (SC). Well detailed were a male **Nashville Warbler** at Las Cruces 13-20 Jan (CWB) and a female **Northern Parula** at Leasburg S.P. 1 & 5 Dec (MS, JZ, BZ). A Northern Waterthrush was found by gull seekers at Sunland Park 29 Dec (SW) and 5 Jan (JO, JEP). If accepted, a well-described **Louisiana Waterthrush** along Little Bear Cr., Catron 4 Dec (GL) would be a New Mexico winter first. Many more Common Yellowthroats than usual were reported, including singles n. to Zuni 1 Jan (JAT), La Joya 22 Dec (CR), and Bosque Redondo 1 Jan (JO) and w. to the Animas Valley 31 Jan & 7 Feb (AC, NM-C). A male **Wilson's Warbler** at Las Cruces 15 Dec (CWB) furnished a winter first for New Mexico.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A puzzling female tanager at Rio Rancho 4-9 Jan (PD, HS) conveniently became a window-kill on the latter date (*U.N.M.), allowing positive identification as a **Scarlet Tanager** (R. Dickerman); there are few previous winter records for anywhere in the U.S., and none for New Mexico. Similarly surprising was a female **Western Tanager** near R.G.N.C. 1 Jan (JEP).

Rufous-crowned Sparrows may be overlooked in n. New Mexico in winter; this season produced one at Clayton 19 Dec (CR), 2-3 in Mills Canyon 9 & 19 Jan (DC), and 6 at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW). Well s. of expected were single American Tree Sparrows at Bosque 15 Dec (DLH), Alto, *Lincoln* 19-22 Feb (JM), and C.C.N.P. 15 Dec (SW). Swamp Sparrows on the edge of typical range were singles at Tijeras Cr., Sandia Mts. 13 & 27 Jan (JO, BV) and the Animas Valley 7 Feb (ph. NM-C). Single Harris's Sparrows were in the R.G.V. at San Acacia 9 Dec (BV), Luis Lopez Dec—Feb (vt. JO), and e. of Luis Lopez 28 Jan—5 Feb (vt. JO); 2 were near L. Roberts 2-24 Feb (EL, CR, vt. JO). A male Northern Cardinal was n. to Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW), and 2 males were at nearby Agua Negra Cr. 22 Dec (vt. JO); yet another male was at Sumner Dam 12 Dec (WW). The species has only recently appeared so far n. in the Pecos Valley. Pyrrhuloxias wandering n. included singles near Sedan, *Union* 27 Jan (vt. JO) and Albuquerque 16 Dec—26 Jan (A. Rominger, CR, JO, JEP) and 2 each at Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW) and Puerto de Luna 12 Dec (WW). They were unusually prevalent in *Hidalgo*, including 25 in and near the Peloncillo Mts. 30 Dec (AC) and 15 at Double Adobe, Animas Mts. 2 Feb (AC, NM-C).


Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at L.V.N.W.R. 29 Dec (GB) and one 20 Jan (BV); the species is unexpected so far n. in winter. Quite rare in New Mexico, one to 2 **Rusty Blackbirds** were at Portales 30 Jan (CR) and 9 Feb (JEP, vt. JO); less well documented were one at Espanola 2 Dec (JT) and 2 at L. Avalon 21 Feb (SW). Common Grackles lingering n. of expected areas included singles at Maxwell 2-4 Dec (DC), Clayton 19 Dec (CR), Las Vegas 29 Dec (GB), and Santa Rosa 16 Dec (WW). A Great-tailed Grackle was at Raton 16 Dec (DC). Brown-headed Cowbirds continued to increase their winter presence, with reports from 12 locales including 187 at Clayton 19 Dec (CR); not surprisingly, feedlots were the favored habitats. For the 3rd consecutive winter, a mixed flock of rosy-finches wintered at Sandia Crest; from 6 on 6 Dec, the flock grew to 95 on 13 Jan, then decreased to 25 by 23 Feb, with Blacks comprising roughly 60%, Gray-crowneds 30%, and Brown-capped 10% (m. ob., vt. WH). Among the several Cassin's Finch reports were an impressive 80 at Emory Pass 2 Jan (WW), plus 8 in the Pinos Altos Mts. 20 Feb (LM) and 2 at Silver City 15 Dec (RS). A Red Crossbill was in the seldom-visited Oscura Mts. 6 Dec (DAH). Lesser Goldfinches have quietly become a regular wintering species across s. New Mexico and n. to Albuquerque, where small numbers were present Dec—Feb

(WH, DM); farther n. were 20 at Farmington 15 Dec (A. Nelson) and 3 at Mills Canyon 9 Jan (DC). Unusual so near the Mexican border were 13 American Goldfinches in the Animas Valley 31 Jan (AC, NM-C).

Initialed observers: Richard Anderson, Mary Lou Arthur, Pat Basham, Craig W. Binkman, Sherry Bixler, George Blanchard, Celestyn M. Brozek, David Cleary, Alan Craig, Steven Cox, Joan Day-Martin, Page Draper, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Andrew Fenner, Bernard Foy, Rebecca Gracey, Cindy Harris, David L. Hawksworth, Tom Hines, David A. Holdermann, William Howe, David Krueper, Gregory Levandoski, Eugene Lewis, Carroll Littlefield, Larry Malone, David Mehlman, Raymond Meyer, Gale Monson, Narca Moore-Craig, John Morton, Bruce Neville, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, David Rintoul, Christopher Rustay, Hart Schwarz, Marcy Scott, Roland Shook, Robert Templeton, Joyce Takamine, John A. Trochet, Brad Vaughn, Nick Vaughn, Gordon Warrick, Mark Watson, Steve West, William West, James Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer.




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