

Arizona



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Abbreviations: Arizona Bird Committee (A.B.C.); Avra Valley S.T.P. (A.V.S.T.P.); Banning Creek Field Station, Mule Mts. (B.C.F.S.); Boyce Thompson Arboretum (B.T.A.); Gila Farms Pond (G.F.P.); Has-sayampa River Preserve (H.R.P.); Lower Colorado River Valley (L.C.R.V.); Navajo Indian Reservation (N.I.R.); Santa Cruz River (S.C.R.); San Pedro River (S.P.R.); Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson (S.W.T.).

LOONS THROUGH MERGANSERS

Pacific Loons, casual after mid-Apr, were found at Luna L. 16 May (†C. Haynie), Montezuma Well 20 May–13 Jun (D. Green, m. ob.), and Big L. 27 May (†YK). Least Grebe, though regular in recent years, remains a casual visitant. The individual at S.W.T. went undetected after 24 May (m. ob.). Another Least Grebe was discovered just 15 km away at Sam Lena Park 19 Apr+ (†GB, ph. GHR). A Clark's Grebe at Willcox 31 Mar (D. West) was an early migrant. Three Brown Pelicans, remnants from last year's invasion, remained near Tempe Town L. through the period (m. ob.). Neotropic Cormorant sightings continue to accumulate in *Maricopa*. County-wide, 22 were tallied on 10 May, with 2 found nest-building at Paloma (TC, m. ob.). Arizona has few nesting records. Farther e., 2 Neotropics among Double-cresteds at Roosevelt Dam 10 May were likely the first for

Gila (J. Kopitzke, *vide* TC). A Double-crested Cormorant was at Kingfisher Pond, upper S.P.R. 23 May (DSj), where accidental. A Tricolored Heron was reported from Patagonia L. 27 May (R. Duerksen). Cattle Egrets were found nesting at Paloma 10 May (TC). Arizona's few nesting records are mostly from this area. With only six prior records, a White Ibis near Arlington 9 May (†D. Luehrs et al.) was a good find. Another sighted upriver at 91st Ave. 24 May (M. Plagens) was likely the same individual.

The Long-tailed Duck at G.F.P. was last seen on 19 Apr (PD), a late date. Very rare along the Mogollon Rim, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers were on Rainbow L., Lakeside 14 Mar–4 Apr (GC, DR).

KITES THROUGH TERNS

White-tailed Kites continue to be sporadic, with singles reported se. of Sonoita 3 Mar (TC), at A.V.S.T.P. 19 Mar (PS), and near Firebird L. 26 May (R. Ditch). Conversely, Mississippi Kites continue to do well along the S.P.R. In addition to the Dudleyville colony, 3 returned to St. David by 11 May (H. Lauchstedt), and 2 were near Cascabel 16 May (D. Wright et al.). Another at Arivaca Cienega 25–28 May (R. Duerksen et al.) provided one of few *Pima* reports. A pair of Gray Hawks at Cluff Ranch, Graham 2 Apr (L. Averill-Murray, B. Metheny)—with nesting detected later in the month—reflected the species' northward expansion. At H.R.P., the resident Red-shouldered Hawk pair continued 15 Mar+ (J. Bock, *vide* TC). A Short-tailed Hawk was reported sporadically 23 May+ in the Rustler/Barfoot area of the Chiricahua Mts. (B. Chapman et al.). Crested Caracaras wandered again, perhaps due to the persistent drought conditions, with individuals at Green Valley 3 Mar (G. West), Sierra Vista 3 May (*vide* RH), along the S.P.R. near Aravaipa Cr. 3 May (*vide* TC), and along Arivaca Rd. 4 May (MMS, ph. GHR).

The lone Sandhill Crane returned to Luna L. by 27 May+ (YK). Single Black-bellied Plovers, casual in spring, were at Willcox 7 May (J. Short, DP) and 21–28 May (ph. DSj). Snowy Plovers were present at Willcox 6–18 May, with a peak of 3 on the last date (m. ob.). Whimbrels are uncommon transients in the L.C.R.V., sometimes in small flocks. Unprecedented in Arizona were flocks near Yuma on 14 Apr reportedly numbering over 200 (DT, *vide* HD). Thirty the next day (HD) was also remarkable, though these numbers pale in comparison to those at the nearby Salton Sea. Away from the L.C.R.V., Whimbrel is a casual transient. Singles at Willcox 7 (DP) & 27 May (B. Doyle, RF) and 2 there 14 May (ph. B. & K. Zimmer) were notable. A Hudsonian Godwit reported at Palo Verde 26 May (†PM) was only a 2nd for *Maricopa*; there are just five accepted state records.

Single Sanderlings were at Yuma 14 Apr

(DT, *fide* HD), Willcox 3–6 May (RH), and A.V.S.T.P. 10 May (J. Higgins). Semi-palmated Sandpipers, casual in spring, were reported from Willcox 24 Apr (J. McCabe) and 3 (J. Hirth) & 29 May (MMS et al.), the latter a very late date. A great find was the **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Willcox 15–26 May (ph. DSj, GHR, m. ob.), only a 7th state record. A Baird's Sandpiper at Gila Bend 10 May (TC) was a first May *Maricopa* record. A Pectoral Sandpiper at Willcox 17 May (ph. GHR) was also casual and late. A calling Short-billed Dowitcher at Yuma on the early date of 14 Apr (DT, *fide* HD) was one of very few found in spring in the L.C.R.V. The only others reported were singles at Willcox 11 May (DSj) and 15–23 May (ph. DSj). A Red-necked Phalarope along the S.C.R. in Marana 3 Mar (J. & SL) appeared weak and may have wintered locally. There are very few winter records. A Red Phalarope at Lakeside 3 Apr (†J. Videle) provided one of few local records.

A Laughing Gull at Willcox 27 May (ph. RF, T. Godfrey) adds to the fewer than 20 state records. Bonaparte's Gull was well represented, with 20 reported statewide. Early singles were at Patagonia L. 15 Mar (SB), Amado S.T.P. 19 Mar (K. Graves), and Willcox 27 Mar (E. Shoben). In spring, terns are sparse away from the L.C.R.V. An unprecedented group of 3 **Elegant Terns** at Arivaca L. 30 Apr (†S. Tingley et al.) would make only a 6th state record—as well as the earliest ever. Prior to 1980, there were fewer than a dozen Arizona **Least Tern** records (Monson and Phillips 1981), with 3 more in the 1980s. From 1990 to 2002, there were 36 additional reports. This spring no fewer than 12 Least Terns were reported, bringing the total to near 60. Singles were at Nogales 15 Apr (J. Hayes), Willow Tank, Portal 4 May (RT), Willcox 7 May (DP), Patagonia L. 13 May (G. Morgan), Willcox 16 May (A. Core), Gila Bend S.T.P. 24 May (TC), and Palo Verde 25 May (Josh Burns). Two were seen intermittently at Willcox 18–25 May, with one present through 29 May (ph. DSj, m. ob.), and 3 were together at Thatcher S.T.P. 26 May (SB). With their status so clearly changed, the question is: where are these birds heading? Black Tern reports included an incredible-for-spring 40 at Willcox 28 May (RWe). More typically, only 3 others were reported, all at Willcox 28–29 May (DSj, MPo et al.).

DOVES THROUGH FLICKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to prosper statewide, though in small numbers at

most locales. Local firsts were reported from 10 areas. White-winged Doves continue to move n., with 5 reported from the Prescott region (CST et al.) and one at Ganado 12 May (CL). Following the winter Ruddy Ground-Dove invasion, new reports were received of 2 at Tubac 7 Apr (A. Ports), 2 near Arivaca L. 16 Apr (J&SL), and one at Sun City 22 Apr (D. Litzenberger). One continued at Prescott through the late date of 18 May (CST, C. Collins). One to 2 were at Red Rock into Jun (m. ob.). No definite signs of nesting were reported.

A Northern Saw-whet Owl in an e. Scottsdale yard 8–11 Mar (ph. B. Schaefer et al.) was at a low elevation, where casual. About a month early, a Lesser Nighthawk was at Marana 16 Mar (CL). Buff-collared Nightjars were again detected at the Oro Blanco mine site near California Gulch 6 May+ (DSj, MMS, m. ob.).

A male White-eared Hummingbird in Miller Canyon 24 May+ (W. Wallraven, TB, ph. BF) was the only one reported. A male Berylline Hummingbird was found in Ramsey Canyon on the very early date of 9 Mar+



This nicely-photographed White-rumped Sandpiper, present at Willcox 15–26 May 2003 (here 16 May), furnished Arizona's seventh firm record. Photograph by Gary H. Rosenberg.

(J. Hirth et al.). Hybrid hummingbirds of apparent Berylline ancestry returned to Miller Canyon 11 Mar+ (TB) and Ash Canyon 28 Apr (MJB). Violet-crowned Hummingbirds away from more typical areas were singles in Ash Canyon 5 Mar+ (MJB) and lower Carr Canyon 6 Mar (H. Brodtkin), with 3 at B.C.F.S. 7 Mar (SW et al.). Nesting activity was again reported at B.C.F.S. Up to 12 Lucifer Hummingbirds were found in eastside Huachuca Mt. canyons beginning 25 Mar (MJB, TB, R. Hamilton, ph. J. Woodley, m. ob.), reflecting their recent expansion. A male was at B.C.F.S. feeders 1–21 Apr (SW). An ad. male Costa's Hummingbird in cen. Prescott 26 Feb–2 Mar (and probably earlier) was a first local winter record (J. Spencer, CST).

A pair of Belted Kingfishers has been observed during the past three springs using cavities along an irrigation canal in Safford in Apr and May, suggesting the first s. Arizona nesting in many years (K. Williams, *fide* TC). It is a sparse breeder in n. Arizona.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

A Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet at the B.T.A. 9 Mar (TC) was at the n. edge of its breeding range in Arizona. Intriguing was a report of a well-described singing Least Flycatcher from along Hwy 60 at Timber Camp 20 May (†DTo); there have been very few spring records accepted in the state, and this report will be evaluated by the A.B.C. A Gray Flycatcher at Cameron 11 Apr (CL) was the earliest report ever for the N.I.R. Buff-breasted Flycatchers away from normal nesting localities in the Huachuca Mts. included one in the Rincon Mts. near Helen's Dome 20 Apr (DSj) for the 3rd consecutive year, and another 26 Apr+ near the Southwest Research Station in Cave Creek Canyon (HD), where this species has become regular. The Eastern Phoebes that wintered at

Patagonia L. and in sw. Phoenix both remained until mid-Mar. Two additional Eastern Phoebes were reported from the Prescott region this spring, one near Date Cr. 3 Apr (K. O'Neill, *fide* CT), and another along Granite Cr. 5 Apr (CST); this species is considered casual anywhere in the state in spring, particularly away from s. Arizona.

Tropical Kingbirds were found at a number of localities this spring, including H.R.P., Arivaca, two spots along the upper S.P.R., Tubac, Winkleman, and Kino Springs, where the habitat is in serious decline. Thick-billed Kingbirds were also found at a number of interesting locations; the individual that wintered at

Yuma remained until 12 Mar (HD), one was in California Gulch 8 May+ (DSj), one was in Florida Canyon 18 May (WR), and one was at Portal 20 May+ (RWe).

Casual in spring anywhere in Arizona, a White-eyed Vireo was found singing at Flagstaff 14 May (†JP), providing about a 15th record for the state. Three different Red-eyed Vireos were reported this spring, with one in Madera Canyon 19 May (†M. Hickey), one singing in Miller Canyon 25 May (L. & M. Conrad), and one at Portal 28 May (RWe); reports of Red-eyeds have increased again in recent years, in contrast to the situation in s. California, for instance. After a number of Pinyon Jay reports from the winter period, flocks remained at a number of se. Arizona locations well into May;

largest concentrations reported included 200 at B.C.E.S. 24 Mar–18 Apr (SW) and 80 in French Joe Canyon 30 Mar–15 May (SF et al.). Clark's Nutcrackers lingered into the spring at highland locations in both the Huachuca and Chiricahua Mts.; at least 5 were present at Rustler Park until at least 26 May (MMS et al.), but the report of about 30 there 20 May (YK et al.) was unprecedented. A pair of American Crows was found nesting at an unusually low elevation at Chinle 13 May (CL).

The pair of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** found at Patagonia L. in Oct remained in the same general area through the spring. Nest-building was observed 12 Mar (F. Fekel; ph. J. Zabriskie, J. Burns), young were observed in the nest 20 Apr (P. Kelly), with 3 young that fledged by the end of Apr remaining in the area through May (m. ob.). Another pair of Black-capped was located in Leslie Canyon 16 Apr (vt., †NM-C, AC), providing the first documented record for the Chiricahua Mts. Amazingly, yet another pair was found nest-building along Sonoita Cr. s. of Patagonia 24 May+ (ph. DSj). This is the first time since 1997 that multiple Black-capped have attempted nesting in Arizona.

An Eastern Bluebird at Wenima Wildlife Area near Springerville 20 Mar (DR) was away from normal breeding areas in the state. At least 3 of the Rufous-backed Robins that appeared during the fall and winter—singles at B.T.A., Patagonia L., and Florida Canyon—remained until mid-Mar. Another found at Tubac 9–18 Apr (DTo, m. ob.) may have wintered locally. A Varied Thrush was reported associating with American Robins near the top of Mt. Lemmon, Santa Catalina Mts. 11 May (PD); this species is casual at best during the spring. A Gray Catbird at Portal 26–30 May (RWe) provided the only report of this species this spring. The Brown Thrasher at B.T.A. during the winter remained there until at least 22 Apr (CST). Another that was located along Arivaca Cr. 7 Apr (DTo) could have wintered locally. An American Pipit at Willcox 22 May (YK) was late for this species in se. Arizona.

WARBLERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

A singing male Tennessee Warbler was in a Yuma yard 9 May (HD), where casual in spring. Extraordinary was a **Crescent-ched Warbler** found in Madera Canyon 25–28 Apr (J. & P. Kelly, R. Walcott, vt. E. Conrad, †GB, †MMS); this represents only a 5th report for Arizona. The Northern Parula that wintered along the Salt R. in sw. Phoenix was last reported 15 Mar (m. ob.). Other Northern Parula reports from the spring included one male at Tucson 4–6 Apr (MMS et al.), another male s. of Wickenburg 6 Apr (M. Rupp), and one at Rose Creek Golf Course s. of Young 25 May (T. Price). A

Yellow Warbler reported at Tucson 28 Feb (PS) was extremely early and may have wintered locally along the S.C.R. Also early was a Hermit Warbler near Aspen Springs, *Yavapai* 1 Apr (B. Hartl). A Grace's Warbler in a Scottsdale yard 18 Apr (J. Bartley) and another along the Agua Fria R. near Hwy 74 26 Apr (TC) were at unusually low elevations; Grace's are seldom seen in the lowlands during migration. A singing male Prairie Warbler was reported from Madera Canyon 21 May (B. McKnight, †PS); there are still fewer than 10 accepted records from Arizona. The Palm Warbler that wintered at Kino Springs near Nogales was last reported 21 Mar (ph. KK).

The Black-and-white Warbler that wintered at the H.R.P. was last seen 22 Mar (R. Witzeman, S. Burge). Another, a singing male, was in South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon 9 May (JC). A Prothonotary Warbler at Reid Park, Tucson 8 Apr (MPo, MMS) provided the earliest spring record for se. Arizona. Also casual in spring, a Worm-eating Warbler was in Madera Canyon 14–15 May (G. & N. Gover, m. ob.). A singing male Ovenbird was in Florida Canyon 18 May (WR et al.), while another was located in French Joe Canyon the same day (DSj). Single Northern Waterthrushes were at Slaughter Ranch e. of Douglas 14 May (RWe), Willcox 16 (MMS) & 18 May (MMS), and along the Agua Fria R. 18 May (TC); this species has proven to be a rare but regular migrant in s. Arizona. A male Kentucky Warbler came to a birdbath at Tolleson 9 May (BG), and another singing male was in Cave Creek Canyon 25 May (R. & B. Colwell, T. Olson, audiotape RWe, RAR); this species is casual to rare in s. Arizona in spring, especially in the canyons of the se. portion of the state. A late MacGillivray's Warbler was in cen. Tucson 26 May (SF). As with Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler appears to be a somewhat regular late-spring visitor to s. Arizona. Reports this spring included one in Garden Canyon 18 Apr (MK), a female at Tempe 10 May (†D. Stuart), and a male in Madera Canyon 27 May (E. Post). Painted Redstarts appeared widespread as migrants in the lowlands, with no fewer than 9 individuals reported 18 Mar–9 Apr (m. ob.). The now-famous pair of Rufous-capped Warblers remained in French Joe Canyon throughout the spring and once again showed signs of attempting breeding.

A male Flame-colored Tanager appeared 10 Apr at the exact location in Miller Canyon where one spent the summer of 2002 (J. Woodley, †W. Bouseman, m. ob.); it was present throughout the period. In addition to the ad. male, as many as 2 other tanagers showing characters of hybridization with Western Tanager were present 2–17 May (SW et al.). A female Flame-colored Tanager

was well described from Ramsey Canyon 16 Apr (†M. Pretti). Another male Flame-colored was located in Madera Canyon 2 May+ (M. Zloba; ph. RF BF; m. ob.) and was joined by an apparent pure female 18 May+ (SB, m. ob.). The pair was seen gathering nesting material 23 May (B. Pollock). There have been fewer than 10 accepted records from Arizona, and only three previous nesting pairs involving pure birds.

Arizona's 2nd Eastern Towhee, located at a Flagstaff feeder in Dec, remained until 24 Apr (ph. JC). Several of the Fox Sparrows mentioned in the winter report lingered into at least Mar. Additional reports of Sooty Fox Sparrows from the spring included one at Kitt Peak 8 Mar (F. Fekel), one at the Desert Museum near Tucson 6 Apr (W. Anderson), and one along the Blue R., *Greenlee* 6 Apr (DR). In addition to the many White-throated Sparrows found during the winter, at least 7 more were found during the spring statewide. The Harris's Sparrow found at Marana during the winter remained until 15 Mar (ph. KK). No fewer than 23 different White-crowned Sparrows, presumably all *oriantha*, were found in se. Arizona after 22 May, with the latest reported at Portal 14 Jun (m. ob.). Five Golden-crowned Sparrows, typically casual in spring, were also reported in s. Arizona during the spring. At least 11 different Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported this spring; this species has become almost uncommon as a spring visitor in recent years. A female Dickcissel was in a Portal yard 19 May (†RWe).

An ad. male Baltimore Oriole was along the upper S.P.R. 7 May (†RJ, JJ). A male Purple Finch was first seen at Patagonia 15 Mar (†S. Atkinson) and was later present with a female 21–27 Mar (ph. DSj); this species is casual anywhere in Arizona during spring. An American Goldfinch at Portal 25 May (RWe) was late.

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