

Arizona



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Numbers of migrants of most families were noted to be low statewide. Although rainfall was better than in recent springs, prolonged drought continued to affect all areas. At San Carlos Lake, improved coverage yielded several interesting records.

Abbreviations: A.B.C. (Arizona Bird Committee), A.V.S.T.P. (Avra Valley S.T.P.), B.T.A. (Boyce Thompson Arboretum), H.R.P. (Hassayampa River Preserve), L.C.R.V. (lower Colorado River valley), M.F.L. (Many Farms L.), N.I.R. (Navajo Indian Reservation), P.L.S.P. (Patagonia L. State Park), S.C.L. (San Carlos L.), S.P.R. (San Pedro R.), Sweetwater (Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson), U.L.M. (Upper L. Mary), Whitewater (Whitewater Draw W.A.)

LOONS THROUGH CRANES

Both of the Tucson Least Grebes continued through the season (m.ob.). The indi-

vidual at Sweetwater was observed building a nest in May (DS et al.). At S.C.L., 700 *Aechmophorus* grebes on 8 May (KK) reflected the reservoir's importance as a stopover site. Reports of Clark's Grebes away from large lakes were few, with singles at Chandler 3 Apr (PD), Willcox 7 Apr (SH), and Roper L. 19 Apr (M. Hodgson). A Magnificent Frigatebird soaring with Turkey Vultures over Mammoth 11 May (ph. J. Levy) was earlier than previous records of this casual visitor from the Sea of Cortez.

An American Bittern along the Santa Cruz R. at Rio Rico 18 May (JC) was a late migrant. An ad. Little Blue Heron was in Tucson 24 Apr (RT, ph. MMS); most Arizona records are from May and Jun. Chiefly a summer and fall vagrant, a Tricolored Heron in Chandler 11-12 Mar (D. Clark, R. Ditch) was a surprise. Cattle Egrets were again observed constructing nests at Paloma 3 May (ph. MMS, KK). The Palo Verde White Ibis was last reported 13 Mar (RW).

A wintering imm. Snow Goose that tarried in Tucson until 25 May (m.ob.) was very late. Wood Ducks occasionally linger in se. Arizona; this year, a female was at A.V.S.T.P. 8 May+ (JH, m.ob.). The Tucson Eurasian Wigeon was present through 22 Apr (MMS). Another (or the same?) male appeared at A.V.S.T.P. 24-30 Apr (MPO, ph. MMS). Totally unexpected was an apparent male **Mexican Duck**, currently categorized as the *diazi* subspecies of Mallard, at Kachina Wetlands 23 Mar-25 May (†, ph. JP et al.). Virtually all prior Arizona records of this taxon have been from the se. corner of the state. A male Greater Scaup was a good find 21 Mar-9 Apr at Benson S.T.P. (GB et al.). Casual in the upper S.P.R. valley, up to 4 Hooded Mergansers were present on a Hereford pond this spring (MM), with the last lingering to 27 Apr. Seventeen Red-breasted Mergansers at Willow L., Prescott 5 Apr (CST) was a large flock away from the L.C.R.V.

Ospreys arrived early, with individuals at P.L.S.P. 16 Mar (JM), Kaibab L. 19 Mar (E. Morral), and U.L.M. 21 Mar (JP). The only White-tailed Kite report was from Arlington 14 Mar (PD). Mississippi Kites returned by 15 Apr to the colony recently founded at St. David (H. Lauchstedt). A Harris's Hawk near Tuzigoot 23 Mar (D. van Gaussig) was one of few reports ever from the middle Verde Valley. At least one Red-shouldered Hawk continued at H.R.P. through the period (O. Harbour). Casual as spring migrants, single Broad-winged Hawks were reported from Montezuma Well 18 Apr (R. Radd) and Marana 24 Apr (†K. Kroesen et al.). Short-tailed Hawks returned to Barfoot Park, Chiricahua Mts. by 9 May+ (DS, m.ob.), with up to 2 re-

ported. A Sandhill Crane with a bad leg was very late at Willcox on 10 May (DP).

PLOVERS THROUGH TERNS

Many shorebird species arrived early, though overall migrant numbers were considered low statewide. It was an above-average spring for *Pluvialis*. Black-bellied Plover reports were: up to 2 at Willcox on the very early date of 14–20 Mar (KK, SH), one early at Whitewater 21 Mar (GB), 2 at Willcox 18 Apr (JM), and one at S.C.L. 25 Apr (MMS et al.). An American Golden-Plover at Willcox 24–26 Mar (RWe et al., ph. JW) was likely the earliest ever in the state. Single golden-plovers at S.C.L. 25 Apr (MMS et al.) and Greer 2 May (DR) were not identified to species. The wintering Snowy Plovers at S.C.L. were missed after 17 Mar (KK). Casual on the N.I.R., 2 Snowy Plovers were at Kayenta S.T.P. 16 May (CL). A group of 26 Semipalmated Plovers at U.L.M. 30 Apr was a very large flock for Arizona (JP).

Willet flocks are regular in spring, but 98 at Whitewater 24 Apr (KK) and 100 at S.C.L. 25 Apr (MMS) were notably large groups. A Whimbrel at Apache Station W.A. 11 Apr–3 May (†KK) was the only one reported statewide. Flocks of Marbled Godwits seen 30 Apr included 13 at Mormon L., 23 at Sedona S.T.P., and 23 at U.L.M. (JP, T. Fry), more than expected locally. The only Sanderlings reported were singles at Whitewater 3–7 Apr (SH) and Gila Bend 15 Apr (BG). Casual in spring, Semipalmated Sandpipers were at A.V.S.T.P. 24–26 Apr (ph. MMS, m.ob.) and 30 Apr–3 May (ph. DS, m.ob.); 2 others were reported without details. Apparently early northbound migrants, Western Sandpipers were reported from El Mirage 3 Mar (E. Lattuner) and Whitewater 21 Mar (GB, PS). Conversely, a Least Sandpiper at M.F.L. 23 May (CL) was the latest-ever spring migrant on the N.I.R. Early migrant Baird's Sandpipers (rare in spring) were one at Whitewater 22–27 Mar (D. West, MM) and 2 there 31 Mar (KK). A Wilson's Phalarope at Tuba City S.T.P. 11 Mar (CL) was the earliest N.I.R. record by at least a month.

An ad. Laughing Gull at S.C.L. 30 Apr (†KK) was casual and a local first. Franklin's Gulls were reported in above-average numbers from Coconino, Maricopa, and S.C.L. (m.ob.). A wandering Heermann's Gull at Arivaca L. 15 Apr (J. Levy) was a nice find. A first-summer Herring Gull at Whitewater 25 Mar (†RW) was only the 2nd for se. in spring. A second-summer bird reported at Mormon L. 30 Apr (†JP) was one of few ever near Flagstaff. Caspian Terns put in a good

showing away from the L.C.R.V., with up to 9 at S.C.L. simultaneously 18 Apr–8 May (RW, KK, JE), one at Prescott 18 Apr (CST), one at Cholla L. 29 Apr (JV), 3 at Ashurst L. 16 May (T. Linda), 2 in Mesa 16 May (J. McKay), and 2 at M.F.L. 23 May (CL). After last year's bumper crop, Least Tern numbers returned to recent norms. Singles were at S.C.L. 25 Apr (KK), Tucson 29 Apr (F. Churchill), and at Willcox 9–10 (J. Hand, DP) & 28 May (B. Carlson).

DOVES THROUGH SAPSUCKERS

Continuing recent trends, a few White-winged Doves were found n.: singles were in Flagstaff 2 Mar (*vide* R. Ditch), along the Blue R. 10 May (DR, GC), in Sedona 11 May (T. Fry), and in Canyon de Chelly 12 May (CL), while several were in Eagar 12 May+ (GC, DR). A few Ruddy Ground-Doves were reported sporadically from Red Rock through the period (m.ob.). A male in Prescott 22 Mar–5 Apr (CST) was a winter holdover. A male in w. Phoenix 25 May+ (RMJ) was intriguing; the first state nesting record was from *Maricopa*. Several weeks early, a Common Poorwill was calling in the Tucson Mts. 13 Mar (J. Hays). Buff-collared Nightjars returned to the Oro Blanco Mine site near California Gulch 15 Apr+, with up to three pairs reported (KK, M. Brown, m.ob.)

Hummingbird numbers were down an estimated 90 percent at feeding stations in se. this spring (TB, MJB, DJ et al.). Poor breeding in successive drought years is the suspected cause. White-eared Hummingbirds were seen on the e. side of the Huachuca Mts. A male was at Beatty's intermittently 25 Apr+ (ph. K. Nickel). Nearer 1500 m elevation in Miller Canyon, a male was seen 25 Apr (B. Feltner) and 22 May (J. Hand). Returning hybrid hummingbirds apparently involving Berylline parentage were singles in Miller Canyon 22 Mar+ (TB) and Ramsey Canyon 15 May+ (MP). Lucifer Hummingbirds returned to eastside Huachuca Mts. and the Mule Mts. again by 25 Mar (MJB, S. Williamson, B. Behrstock, B. Feltner, JW). In Portal, only one Lucifer was reported, a male on 5 May (DJ). A female was in French Joe Canyon 18 May (MP), where they are occasional. Accidental in spring, an ad. male Allen's Hummingbird was banded in Arivaca 23 Mar (†G. West). A pair of Elegant Trogons was found near the Wildcat Mine in seldom-birded Temporal Gulch, Santa Rita Mts. 9–23 May (M. Brown, T. Army). One in California Gulch 13 May+ (SH, m.ob.) was in poor habitat. At B.T.A., a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported 11–14 Mar (†S. Ganley).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulets continue their expansion northward and westward, with singles once again at the B.T.A. 1 Apr–8 May (CST) and H.R.P. 2 May+ (PD), plus 3 along Pinto Cr. nw. of Globe 28 May–16 Jun (S. Sferra). Single Greater Pewees at Parks 2 May (CL) and at Brannigan Park 18 May (CL), both above the Mogollon Rim w. of Flagstaff, were well n. of usual breeding areas in the state. Migrants of this species are seldom seen in lowland areas; one at P.L.S.P. 2 Apr (MMS) was thus of interest. A Buff-breasted Flycatcher was in Sawmill Canyon, Huachuca Mts. on the early date of 20 Mar (S. & M. Turner). Small local breeding populations of this species now appear to be well established in the Herb Martyr area of Cave Creek Canyon (*vide* DJ), as well as in Temporal Gulch in the Santa Rita Mts. (M. Brown et al.). An Eastern Phoebe along the S.P.R. near Hwy 90 on 19 Mar (P. Sockness) likely wintered locally.

Well n. of normal breeding areas in the state, a well-described, calling Dusky-capped Flycatcher was in Overgaard 2 May (†K. Penland); there are only a few previous sightings for this species above the Mogollon Rim in Arizona. A Brown-crested Flycatcher reported from Green Valley 8 Apr (BM) was one of the earliest reports ever in se. Arizona. Tropical Kingbirds were again at two locations on the upper S.P.R., with one at Kingfisher Pond 20 May (DS) and one near Hereford 21 May+ (MM). Elsewhere, the species continues to be found at new localities in ne. Tucson, with one again at Castle Rock Estates on the very early date of 29 Apr (B. Nicholas, MMS, MPo) and a pair at Tucson Country Club 13–27 May (MMS, PS). The Thick-billed Kingbird found in Yuma during the winter remained until at least 23 Mar (J. Coker; ph. HD). The Rose-throated Becard found along the Santa Cruz R. at Tumacacori during the winter was last reported 30 Mar (m.ob.). Elsewhere, single male becards were found at Guadalupe Canyon 12 May (S. Tingley), at the usual Patagonia Roadside Rest breeding site 14–22 May (K. Zimmer et al.), and at the unusual location of lower Madera Canyon 22 May (R. Wilt).

Casual in the state, a White-eyed Vireo was reported from Wenima W.A. near Springerville 8 May (GC, DR), and a singing male was along the upper S.P.R. 20–22 May (v.r. DS et al.). Intriguing was the report of a Gray Vireo from Canyon del Muerto near Chinle 16 May (CL), as this species is not known to breed anywhere in *Apache*. A Warbling Vireo near Hereford 7 Mar (MM) was very early. A

Red-eyed Vireo, casual in the state, was well described from Dudleyville 29 May (†D. Jeness).

Perhaps a continuation of last winter's minor corvid movement around the state, Steller's Jays were reported this spring from odd localities, including at least 10 at H.R.P. 21 Mar (PD), 10–15 at Portal 15 Apr (DJ), and singles at Patagonia 1 Mar–2 Apr (SH, m.ob.), nw. Tucson 2 Mar (R. Bailowicz), and below Madera Canyon 28 Mar (C. Cathers). Western Scrub-Jays were also found at scattered localities away from breeding areas this spring, including truly wandering birds at White Tank Regional Park, *Maricopa* 5 Mar (HD) and at Tacna 13 Mar (HD). American Crows continue to be found at scattered sites on the N.I.R., with 2 at Cow Springs L. 2 Apr (CL) and 2 at the mouth of Canyon de Chelly 12–25 May (CL). One in Chino Valley 4 Apr (CST) was also out of range.

Of note were 20+ Tree Swallows on 22 Apr at A.V.S.T.P. (DS), a late date for a large concentration. The Winter Wren (giving a typical "western-type" call) found at Sabino Canyon during the winter and the individual that wintered along Sonoita Cr. above P.L.S.P. (heard giving an "eastern-type" call) were both last reported 10 Mar (WR; m.ob.); the status and distribution in Arizona of the two distinct types of Winter Wrens remains poorly known.

Reports of Black-capped Gnatcatcher from expected areas in se. Arizona continued to increase this spring. The male that was found along Proctor Rd. below Madera Canyon during the winter was again reported 7 (JB) & 23 Mar (K. McBride). The pair found in Montosa Canyon last fall was present until at least 30 Mar (MMS et al.). A single female was reported 6–16 May from Brown Canyon (S. Johnsen), where this species was found breeding in 1996. The pair found at Rock Corral Spring, Tumacacori Mts. during the winter was reported again 15 May (M. Kehl). At P.L.S.P., where Black-capped have bred for at least two years, the pair successfully raised 2 young by 17 May (DS et al.) and was seen nest-building again 21 May (SH). Another pair was reported to have nested successfully within the Patagonia–Sonoita Creek Preserve in May (R. Romea, C. Sprecher, M. Brown). Despite the recent plethora of sightings, we still urge caution in identification of this species and request that details of all sightings be forwarded to the A.B.C.

The Rufous-backed Robin found at P.L.S.P. during the fall was last reported 3

Apr (m.ob.), while another was reported from the Tres Rios N.A. near Phoenix 6 Mar (†E. Lattuner). A Gray Catbird was at Cameron 28 May (CL); there are fewer than 20 previous N.I.R. records. The Brown Thrasher that wintered at the B.T.A. was last reported 18 Apr (L. Bickford), while another was banded at Arivaca 1 Apr (M. Hunnicutt).

WARBLERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Five Northern Parulas were found in se. Arizona between 27 Apr and 15 May—about average for spring season. Two different Chestnut-sided Warblers, casual during spring, were found in the Chiricahua Mts., one singing male in Portal 28 May (G. Smith) and one subad. male in E. Whitetail Canyon 31 May (RT). A singing male Black-throated Blue Warbler at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix 12–25 Apr (S. Barnes et al.; v.r. PD, ph. JWo) provided the first spring *Maricopa* record. Rarely seen in the lowlands during migration, a Grace's Warbler was along the Agua Fria R. near Badger Springs Wash 8 May (CST). A Palm Warbler along the Blue R., *Greenlee* 10 May (DR) provided the only report this spring. A male Bay-breasted Warbler was reported from H.R.P. 30 May (O. Harbour); there were only four prior *Maricopa* records. A Prothonotary Warbler along the upper S.P.R. near Hereford 11–15 May (C. Thomas et al.) was the only one this spring. An unseen Kentucky Warbler was reported singing from the Patagonia Roadside Rest 24 May (J. Malosh, B. Carlson et al.). Two different female Hooded Warblers were located, one banded in Florida Canyon 9 May (L. Halsey), another in a Tolleson yard 21 May (ph. BG). A male Red-faced Warbler at Rustler Park 16 Mar (D. Baumann) was nearly a month earlier than normal arrival in Arizona. The now-resident pair of Rufous-capped Warblers in French Joe Canyon was reported throughout the period. Another Rufous-capped was located in South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon 27 Apr (DJ et al.; ph. RWe, R. Shantz), and yet another was reported from Sycamore Canyon, *Santa Cruz* 12 & 22 May (M. Anderson, G. Worthington et al.); away from French Joe Canyon, this species remains a casual vagrant that requires full documentation to the A.B.C.

A male Flame-colored Tanager discovered in Madera Canyon 1 Apr (B. Gibbons et al., m.ob.; ph. MMS, GHR, CDB) was joined by a female by 6 Apr; the pair was found nesting by 1 Jun. This may be only the 2nd "pure" pair ever found nesting in Arizona. At least 2 hybrid Flame-colored ×

Western Tanagers were present this spring in Miller Canyon (S. Williamson).

The Clay-colored Sparrow found at Sam Lena Park, Tucson during fall was present until 27 Apr (MMS). A Grasshopper Sparrow at the Kachina Wetlands 23 Mar (JP) was away from known breeding areas in the state. At least 16 White-throated Sparrows were found around the state this spring, a higher number than usual. The find of the season was a male Yellow Grosbeak present at the Arizona–Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson 17–21 May (†L. Harris et al.; ph. JWo, MMS, GHR) providing only a 15th Arizona record, and only the 2nd since 1994. It was another excellent spring for Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Arizona, with no fewer than 15 separate reports, virtually all males. A male Varied Bunting along the upper S.P.R. near Fairbank 7–21 Mar (J. Stewart; ph. JWo) either wintered locally or was an escapee; there is only one previous accepted winter record for the state. The species normally does not arrive as a migrant/breeder until late May. The only Painted Bunting of the spring was a male along the Agua Fria R. near Badger Springs Wash 8 May (CST). A Dickcissel, casual in spring, was at Lee's Ferry 8 May (J. Spence).

A male Orchard Oriole in Tucson 4–27 Mar (J. Ogden; †MMS, ph. GB) likely wintered locally. A female was present at Paradise 27 Apr–3 May (J. Lewis, JBo et al.; ph. R. Shantz). Hooded Orioles were found away from usual breeding areas at Blue R. 16 May (DR) and Rimmy Jim Tank n. of Flagstaff 24 May (JP). Male Baltimore Orioles were at Hunt 8 May (ph., †J. Videle) and at Carr Canyon 17 May (ph. SH). Two Lawrence's Goldfinches along Sycamore Cr. near Sunflower 18 Apr (K. & C. Radamaker) may have been nesting locally; this species nested in small numbers along the Verde R. ne. of Phoenix during the late 1970s.

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