

The season was marked by two state firsts, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Tufted Flycatcher, along with a state-second Le Conte's Sparrow. Ample rainfall in most areas raised reservoir levels and moderated the effects of prolonged drought.

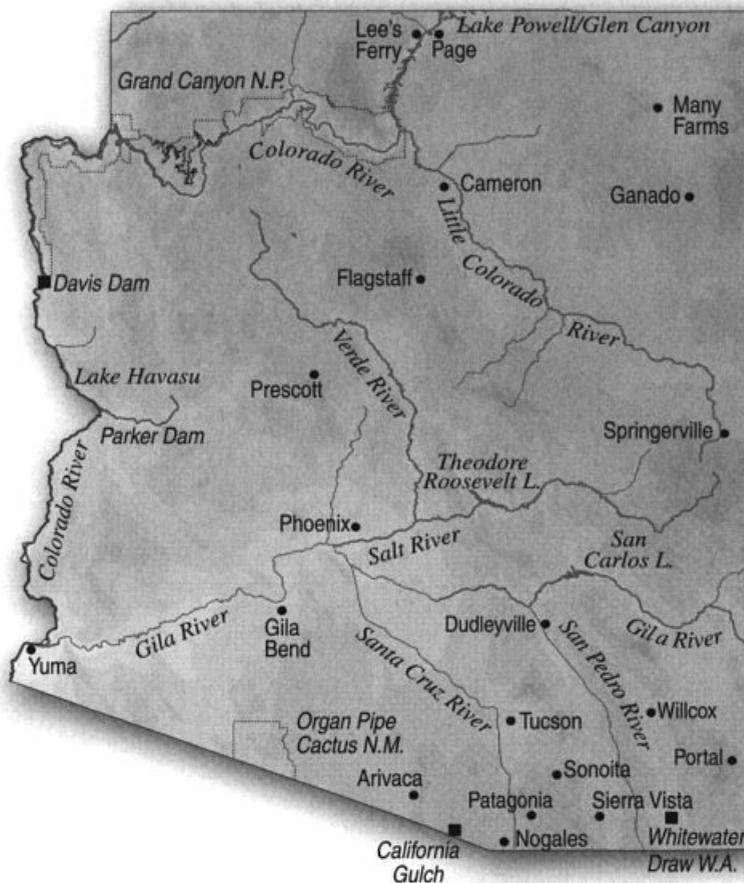
Abbreviations: A.B.C. (Arizona Bird Committee); A.V.S.T.P. (Avra Valley S.T.P.); B.T.A. (Boyce Thompson Arboretum); H.R.P. (Hassayampa River Preserve); L.C.R.V. (Lower Colorado River Valley); P.A.P. (Pinal Airpark Pecan grove); P.L.S.P. (Patagonia Lake S.P.); S.C.L. (San Carlos L.); S.P.R. (San Pedro R.); Sweetwater (Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson); Whitewater (Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area).

LOONS THROUGH CARACARA

Rare in Arizona, one to 2 Pacific Loons were on L. Havasu 8 Dec–27 Feb (RP, TC). Rare away from the L.C.R.V., single Common Loons were reported at Sedona S.T.P. 5 Dec (T. Fry), Peña Blanca L. 8 Dec (R. Brookner), and Phoenix 17 Dec (*fide* TC). At Sweetwater, the Least Grebe vanished again after 11 Jan (m.ob.). Casual in winter, 3 Brown Pelicans were seen at scattered locations in s. Arizona following the summer invasion (J. Truan, *fide* TC, R. Magill). Far more unusual was one n. to Prescott 14 Feb (*fide* CST). In residential Chandler, the Neotropic Cormorant rookery found last winter had active nests 5 Feb. *Several hundred* Neotropics seen nearby the same day were far beyond any expectations of just a few years ago (both TC). At their old stronghold of P.L.S.P., numbers rose from one on 1 Dec to 21 by 26 Feb (SH, m.ob.). Hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants were also in Chandler 5 Feb (TC). The White Ibis in Palo Verde was seen through 11 Jan (ph. HD).

The identity of a small *Branta* goose at A.V.S.T.P. 16 Dec–5 Apr (PK, ph. MMS et al.) was avidly debated but eventually considered likely to be a small *parvipes* Canada Goose. Following the recent split of Canada and Cackling Geese, the A.B.C. would like to review documentation for all suspected Cackling Geese in Arizona. Tundra Swans were more widely reported than usual: 3 at Fool Hollow L. 18 Dec–19 Jan (J. Videle), one in Chino Valley 19 Dec–6 Jan (CST), one at Willow L. 20 Dec (CST), one at Sullivan L. 30 Dec–21 Jan (J. Saar et al.), and 12 wintering at Havasu N.W.R. (K. Blair). Most Arizona records of Eurasian Wigeon pertain to males, making a female n. of Mittry L. 18 Dec–8 Feb an exceptional find (A. Borgardt, †J. Coker, ph. HD). Up to 3 males wintered in Scottsdale (J. Allen, ph. M. Weber; RB; ph. J. Woodley), and another was at Page 3 Jan (J. Spence). A Surf Scoter at Willcox 11 Dec (ph. R. Fray) was a late migrant. A White-winged Scoter at Parker Dam 4 Dec (C. Bab-

Arizona



bitt) may have lingered from the fall. Single Long-tailed Ducks appeared at P.L.S.P. 4–5 Dec (P. Walsh, ph. SH) and the Parker Strip 20–28 Dec (D. Pearson); the species is casual in Arizona. At Glen Canyon Dam, 59 Barrow's Goldeneyes 3 Jan (*fide* J. Spence) was a high count. The only others reported were 4 at Parker Dam (m.ob.). Casual along the upper S.P.R., 2 Hooded Mergansers were near Hereford 2 Dec+ (M. Marsden); 2 at Pinetop 19 Jan were also notable (J. Videle). Two Red-breasted Mergansers in Palo Verde 8 Dec (RP) and one in Tucson 29 Dec–7 Jan (MMS) were casual.

White-tailed Kites were more widely reported, with 2 near Buckeye 12–28 Dec (J. McCabe) and singles near Tres Rios 17 Dec (*fide* TC), at Yuma 26 Dec–7 Feb (HD), along the upper S.P.R. 27 Dec (EW), in the San Rafael Valley 18 Feb (M. Kehl), at Robbins Butte 19 Feb (T. Hildebrandt), at P.A.P. 27 Feb+ (J. Scheibe), and at Red Rock 5 Feb (MMS, MP). A report of a Common Black-Hawk at Page Springs 13 Feb (R. Radd) elicited an undocumented report that it had

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This female *Archilochus* hummingbird—first detected 20 December 2004 and studied carefully 1 January 2005, then later netted, measured, and identified as a female Ruby-throated—was present at a Tucson feeder all winter, providing a first Arizona record. Photograph by Rich Hoyer.

wintered (D. Greer). This species is all but unknown during the winter in Arizona. More regular in recent years, but still very rare, Red-shouldered Hawks were reported as follows: one continuing along Granite Cr., Prescott through 13 Dec (†CST), 2 continuing at H.R.P. 18 Dec (*vide* V. Montgomery), and one in Patagonia 18 Dec–17 Feb (EW, †P. & D. Nagle). In Tucson, one or more Zone-tailed Hawks wintered again (PK, MP, DS). Harlan's Hawk is a sparse winter visitor; reports came from Marana 5 Dec (GHR), Santa Cruz Flats 5–15 Dec (GHR), and Phoenix 17 Dec (TC). Crested Caracaras are wont to wander in winter, and singles showed up s. of Tucson 10 Dec (RP) and w. of Red Rock 28 Jan+ (DJ).

CRANES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Near Cottonwood, 2 Sandhill Cranes on 19 Dec (JP) were a rare sight, as they are not expected to winter in the Verde Valley. There was a single report of Snowy Plover at S.C.L. 26 Dec (KK). The rising reservoir level there has substantially decreased shorebird habitat. There are very few winter reports of Semipalmated Plover in Arizona; one in Scottsdale 19 Feb (C. Ross) follows two previous *Maricopa* records. Mountain Plovers were sparse early in the winter, but numbers eventually peaked at 30+ near McNeal 20 Jan (SH) and 175 in the Santa Cruz Flats on 5 Feb (MMS, MP). In Yuma, one was reported 22 Jan (HD). A Greater Yellowlegs in Chino Valley 19 Dec–16 Jan (CST) was far n. for

winter. At Palo Verde, up to 6 Dunlin were present 4 Dec–21 Jan (PD, R. Widner et al.), while one was at Green Valley S.T.P. 12 Dec–16 Jan (G. Crandall). Wilson's Phalarope is casual in Arizona in winter; singles were near Tres Rios 17 Dec (†W. Thurber) and at A.V.S.T.P. 18 Feb (PK). Likewise, single Red Phalaropes were at S.C.L. 26 Dec (†KK) and Willcox 6 Jan (ph. D. Fenn).

The only Bonaparte's Gulls reported were singles at P.L.S.P. 4 Dec (P. Walsh) and Somerton 25 Feb (HD). A few White-winged Doves were reported in n. Arizona: one in Kayenta all winter (Chaz LaRue), 2 near Willow L. all winter (CST), and one to 2 at three separate Flagstaff feeders (E. Morral, R. Balda, J. Logan). Ruddy Ground-Doves continued at Red Rock, with up to 5 reported (m.ob., ph. MMS), with a mention of breeding behavior on 26 Feb (M. Kehl). Elsewhere, 2 were along the S.P.R. at San Pedro House 22 Nov–26 Dec (SH, ph. C. Bradshaw), 6 were just inside Arizona on the Portal C.B.C. 1 Jan (DJa), 2 were in Hereford 6–27 Jan (ph. RB), 2 were at Tacna 13 Jan (PEL), and one was at Willcox 16 Jan (B. Grossi)—an above-average total (18) for the season. Only a 2nd local record, a Greater Roadrunner was at Cow Springs L. 10 Dec (CL). Common Poorwills are casual in winter; 4 were seen in Portal late Dec–early Jan (DJa, RW), and one was in Bisbee 10 Jan (J. Whetstone).

At the n. edge of the species' range, a Broad-billed Hummingbird again wintered at B.T.A. (R. Wright). There were scattered

reports of Violet-crowned Hummingbirds in se. up to mid-Dec (m.ob.); additionally, one wintered in lower Ramsey Canyon (J. Hirth) and 2 wintered in Portal (RW). Spring arrivals showed at Patagonia 25 Jan+ (R. Baxter) and the Mule Mts. 26 Jan+ (S. Williamson). Overshooting birds were seen in Green Valley (*vide* MMS) and Marana, both 26 Feb (*vide* R. Grohman). On 1 Jan Rich Hoyer heard and photographed a female *Archilochus* hummingbird in active primary molt at his Tucson feeder. Careful study by Hoyer and others suggested that it was a Ruby-throated. On 11 Jan, it was captured, measured, and confirmed as an ASY female Ruby-throated Hummingbird (ph. R. Hoyer, ph., †S. Williamson), an Arizona first and the 18th hummingbird species for the state. It remained through 14 Apr.

Reflecting mild weather, Elegant Trogons were more numerous than usual, with one at P.L.S.P. (m.ob.), up to 2 in Madera Canyon (P. Johnson, L. Calvo), and one in Huachuca Canyon (EW) all winter, plus one at Tubac 8 Jan (ph. E. DeKoker). A lone Green Kingfisher was reported along the upper S.P.R. through 30 Dec (m.ob.). The species remains at a population ebb in Arizona. Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at B.T.A. 20 Jan+ (†PEL) and Mittry L. 18 Dec (†J. Coker). Apparent hybrid Red-breasted × Red-naped Sapsuckers were at B.T.A. 20–29 Jan (PEL, ph. M. Vandewater) and the Santa Catalina Mts 20 Jan (MMS). A relatively clear-cut Red-breasted Sapsucker was at Peña Blanca L. 20–27 Jan (C. Morely, ph., †C. Lundblad). Two likely Red-breasted Sapsuckers at Mittry L. 14 Nov+ (ph. HD) and a "possible" from P.L.S.P. 1–5 Dec (D. Touret, ph. MMS) will also be reviewed by the A.B.C. A small movement of Downy Woodpeckers was seen, with singles in Overgaard 5 Dec (K. Penland), Granite Dells 12–19 Dec (G. Burford, CST), near Flagstaff 26 Dec (JC), and Cow Springs L. 20–27 Dec (CL). Rare winter visitors, Yellow-shafted Flickers were reported at Phoenix 17 Dec (TC), near Flagstaff 26 Dec (JC), at San Bernardino N.W.R. 6 Jan (RW), and in Scottsdale 7 Jan+ (J. Bartley).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

Without question, one of the more amazing discoveries from Arizona in recent years was a Tufted Flycatcher found by out-of-state birders along the Colorado R. on L. Mohave at White Rock Canyon near Willow Springs 24 Feb (ph., †J. & S. Servantez); excellent photographs confirm the presence of one individual (2 were reported), which will represent a first state (and 3rd U.S.) record of this species. A Greater Pewee found late in the fall along the S.P.R. near Kingfisher Pond remained until at least 6 Dec (P. Sockness, M. Pretti), while another was found singing along the Santa Cruz R. near Tubac 6–23

Dec (GHR et al.); this species is casual in riparian areas in s. Arizona during winter. A Gray Flycatcher along Granite Cr. near Prescott 27 Nov–20 Feb (CST) was well n. of normal wintering areas and represented one of only a few local winter reports. A calling Pacific-slope Flycatcher, also casual in winter, remained at Sweetwater 11 Nov–4 Dec (MMS). A report of a Buff-breasted Flycatcher at Walker Canyon w. of Nogales 12 Jan (D. Touret) would represent an Arizona winter first, but it went undocumented. Five Eastern Phoebes were found in s. Arizona between 24 Nov and 1 Jan, about average for a winter season. A late Dusky-capped Flycatcher was at P.L.S.P. 8 Dec (SH). A Thick-billed Kingbird returned to Yuma for the 3rd consecutive winter 30 Jan+ (HD).

The only Northern Shrikes reported were from the usual (irregular) winter areas in n. Arizona, with one on Black Mesa 10 Feb (CL) and another at Twin Arrows, 32 km e. of Flagstaff, 25 Feb (CL). A Hutton's Vireo at Bill Williams N.W.R. 27 Dec (M. J. Iliff) represented one of fewer than 10 winter reports ever from the L.C.R.V. A very late Warbling Vireo was in Gilbert 11 Dec (PD). It is always odd when corvids only semi-invade s. Arizona, and this winter this seemed to be the case for several species: Pinyon Jay: a single flock of nearly 50 near Oracle 29 Dec (DJ)—but no further reports; Clark's Nutcracker: 3 were s. to the Santa Catalina Mts., with reports from scattered sites there 12 Dec+ (S. Birky et al.)—but no further reports; and American Crow: present in a couple of odd localities, with 2 seen at Jeddito, w. of Keams Canyon 4 Feb (CL) and 20 reported from Roper Lake S.P. 9 Feb (P. Walsh)—but again, no sign of a more widespread movement.

A late Violet-green Swallow was at A.V.S.T.P. 5 Dec (J. Higgins), whereas singles there 21 Jan (PK) and at B.T.A. 5 Feb (PM, CD) were likely early northbound migrants. Barn Swallows, rare in the state during winter, were scattered around s. Arizona in late Dec and early Jan, but more unusual were 20 at Yuma 13 Jan (PEL). A count of 15 Mountain Chickadees on the Glen Canyon C.B.C. (fide J. Spence) was higher than usual for areas away from breeding sites. There was a small push of Red-breasted Nuthatches into lowland areas during late Dec and early Jan, with at least five separate reports across s. Arizona but few after that. Always nice in s. Arizona, an American Dipper was found in upper Ramsey Canyon 10 Jan (J. Hirth).

Black-capped Gnatcatchers continued all winter at P.L.S.P., but the exact number present remains uncertain; there appear to have been at least two different pairs (with reports of as many as three more pairs up Sonoita Cr.), which would not be surprising given recent breeding success in the area (SH, M.

Brown, m.ob.). Away from P.L.S.P., one male was reported from Montosa Canyon, Santa Rita Mts. 22 Feb (RH), while one to 2 were seen in Rock Corral Canyon, Tumacacori Mts. 27 Nov and 22 Jan (R. Klotz, M. Kehl), both locations of prior sightings during the past few years. It was an excellent winter for Varied Thrush in Arizona, with 2 at Oak Flat Campground, Gila 19 Nov–24 Dec (E. Strong et al.) and singles at Granite Basin 21–24 Dec (E. Moore, CST et al.), Portal 1 Jan (T. & L. Gates), Paulden, Yavapai 8 Jan (J. Saar), and Huachuca Canyon 24 Feb–8 Mar (A. Miller). This species is normally a casual fall and winter visitor to s. Arizona. The Brown Thrasher found at B.T.A. during the fall was seen through mid-Jan (CD). Another was at Buenos Aires N.W.R. 17 Dec (RP), and another was reported from the Village of Oak Creek in mid-Jan (fide R. Radd); this species remains a rare but regular winter visitor in the state. A Curve-billed Thrasher at Prescott 8–31 Dec (ph. J. Morgan et al.) was away from known breeding areas and represented a first local record.

WARBLERS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

An Olive Warbler was present at B.T.A. for the 2nd straight winter 5 Dec–7 Jan (PM, CD); this species is casual in winter n. of the Santa Catalina Mts. The only Northern Parula of the season was found on the Gila River C.B.C. 27 Dec (fide TC). Similarly, the only Yellow Warbler of the winter was on the Phoenix–Ires Rios C.B.C. 17 Dec (TC). A Pine Warbler at Tolleson 19 Dec (ph. BG) provided only a 4th *Maricopa* record. Five Black-and-white Warblers and 2 American Redstarts were reported, about average for a winter. The Louisiana Waterthrush found along Sonoita Cr. above P.L.S.P. during Oct was reported through Mar (m.ob.); another was found near Hwy 90 along the S.P.R. 9 Dec–7 Jan (GHR et al.). More unusual in winter was a male Hooded Warbler in a Scottsdale yard 15 Nov–21 Dec (J. Bartley), representing a 4th winter *Maricopa* record. Scarce in winter, a Wilson's Warbler was reported from Sweetwater 30 Nov+ (L. Liese); one at Chandler 22 Feb (L. Long) was likely a northbound migrant.

Hepatic Tanagers were more prevalent than usual during Dec and early Jan at several se. canyon locations, with at least 7 reported. The only Clay-colored Sparrow of the season was in Tucson 16–17 Feb (MMS), an indication of the generally poor winter sparrow numbers in s. Arizona. Ironically, one of the best birds of the year was a well-documented Le Conte's Sparrow found along the Santa Cruz R. in Marana 19 Dec–9 Feb (P. Salomon, †, ph. KK; ph. CDB, GB, GHR, DS), providing only a 2nd Arizona record. There was the usual scattering of 4–5 Slate-colored Fox Sparrows, while a Fox Sparrow at

Madera Canyon 13–17 Feb (S. Finnegan) was identified as a Red, likely *zaboria* from the w. Arctic. Whereas grassland sparrows were down in numbers this winter, several rarer species were found in higher-than-normal numbers. No fewer than 15 White-throated and 7 Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported statewide, both above normal. Harris's Sparrows also were reported in greater numbers, with singles reported during the fall at Oak Flat Campground remaining until at least 12 Dec (E. Strong et al.), in a Portal yard 1 Dec+ (RW), at Marana 19 Dec (S. Olmstead), at Continental 10 Dec+ (ph. SH), and in the Avra Valley 23 Feb (R. Wright, ph. RH). Still surprisingly scarce anywhere in Arizona, 3 Lapland Longspurs were located in a flock of McCown's in the Sulphur Springs Valley 9 Jan (†JLD).

A Common Grackle, casual anywhere in the state, was reported from P.L.S.P. 7 Jan (†P. Walsh). The male Orchard Oriole that returned to a Tucson yard for the 2nd straight winter, first reported 13 Nov, remained into Mar (J. Ogden, †MMS). This winter was perhaps the largest flight year in memory for Pine Grosbeaks in Arizona. After several were found in the White Mts. and the Grand Canyon region during the fall, large groups were detected in the mountains n. and w. of Flagstaff beginning with 14 at Slate Mt., 48 km nw. of Flagstaff, 22 Dec (S. & E. Clark), then possibly as many as 40–50 there 28 Dec (JC, CL). Beginning 1 Jan, small groups of up to 15 were found at various points along the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, with reports through 15 Jan (B. Gatlin, R. Rogers, ph. JC, ph. MMS). Historically, Pine Grosbeak has been an irregular breeding species in the White Mts. of e. Arizona, with other scattered reports from Black Mesa, but never have so many been found in the state in one year. Both Cassin's Finches and Red Crossbills were found in lowland areas in s. Arizona during the winter, but numbers of both were relatively low and did not signify a major flight year. It was a moderate invasion year for Lawrence's Goldfinch in s. Arizona this winter, with the largest concentration of 60+ found along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson throughout the season (m.ob.). One n. to Overgaard 24–25 Feb (ph. K. Penland) was unexpected.

Observers: Robert Behrstock, Chris D. Besh, Gavin Bieber, John Coons, Troy Corman, Henry Detwiler, Pierre Deviche, Cynthia Donald, Jon L. Dunn, Bill Grossi, Stuart Healy, Rich Hoyer, Dave Jasper (Portal), Doug Jenness, Keith Kamper (Tucson RBA), Philip Kline, Chuck LaRue, Paul E. Lehman, Pete Moulton, Richard Palmer, Molly Pollock, John Prather, Gary H. Rosenberg, Will Russell, Dave Stejskal, Mark M. Stevenson, Carl S. Tomoff (Prescott), Richard Webster, Erika Wilson, Janet Witzeman (*Maricopa*). 🐦