

NOTES ON SOME BIRDS OF SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA

By GALE MONSON

The author was employed in southern Arizona from March, 1939, to October, 1940, with his headquarters at Warren (near Bisbee) and Tucson. During this time he was much afield, and was able to make frequent ornithological observations. The more important of these are the subject of this paper, with the addition of one record obtained in December, 1940, and a few pertinent records by other observers. The records pertain mainly to extensions of known ranges, unseasonable occurrences, early arrivals or late departures, and additional records of species of casual occurrence. All specimens mentioned are in the author's personal collection, unless otherwise indicated. Invaluable assistance in the preparation of the manuscript was received from Allan R. Phillips.

Egretta thula. Brewster Egret. One was seen on January 31, 1940, in a flooded irrigated field at Pomerene, Cochise County, across the San Pedro River from Benson. This is the first published winter record of the species in Arizona, aside from Arnold's (Condor, 44, 1942:183) recent records from Yuma.

Anser albifrons. White-fronted Goose. A dead bird was picked up near a sewage pond on the Tucson City Farm on June 1, 1939, apparently killed by a trespassing hunter about April 8; it was seen alive by Albert R. Purchase of Tucson in early April. Examination by Phillips establishes the specimen as *A. a. albifrons*, forming the first definite published record of that subspecies for the state. Its measurements were: wing, 403 mm.; tail (rather worn), 112 mm.; exposed culmen, 50 mm.; tarsus, about 75 mm. On October 4, 1940, in company with Albert H. Trowbridge of the Fish and Wildlife Service, I saw a flock of six White-fronted Geese at Aguirre Lake on the Ranchos Buenos Aires in the Altar Valley, north of Sasabe, Pima County.

Nyroca americana. Redhead. Although fall, winter, and spring records of the Redhead from southern Arizona are not infrequent, I do not know of any summer records. A male seen at a small irrigation pond near Hereford, Cochise County, on June 13, 1940, is thus of interest.

Mergus merganser. American Merganser. This bird is sufficiently rare in southern Arizona that a flock of 16 seen on March 12, 1940, on the San Pedro River about four miles north of Hereford, is worth recording.

Buteo swainsoni. Swainson Hawk. The fall departure date of this species in southern Arizona is so poorly known that the following late fall records are of value: three seen north of Sasabe on October 4, 1940; one seen near Fort Huachuca, Cochise County, on October 5, 1939; and a flock of 36 seen in the San Rafael Valley, Santa Cruz County, and two near Elgin, Santa Cruz County, on October 9, 1940.

Asturina plagiata. Mexican Goshawk. One seen just south of Tumacacori Mission, Santa Cruz County, on March 22, 1940, probably a spring arrival; one seen two miles southwest of Patagonia, Santa Cruz County, on May 28, 1940; one streaked juvenile seen two miles southwest of Patagonia on August 8, 1940; and one adult seen along the Santa Cruz River near San Xavier Mission, Pima County, on October 2, 1940, possibly a fall departure date. A February record (1935) for the Baboquivari Mountains, Pima County, which I published (Condor, 38, 1936:176) I am now convinced is a case of mistaken identification, and I wish to retract the record.

Urubitinga anthracina. Mexican Black Hawk. I have the following records from two miles southwest of Patagonia: two seen on March 19, 1940, possibly a spring arrival date; one seen on May 28; and one seen on August 8, 1940.

Polyborus cheriway. Audubon Caracara. One seen on November 22, 1939, at San Miguel on the Papago Indian Reservation, Pima County; and two seen two miles north of Continental, Pima County, on January 13, 1940.

Falco fusco-coerulescens. Aplomado Falcon. One adult observed on November 13, 1939, about four miles southeast of McNeal in the Sulphur Springs Valley, Cochise County. I watched it for several minutes through 6x binoculars at 100 feet distance as it perched on a fence post. The species has not been noted in Arizona in many years.

Numenius americanus. Long-billed Curlew. The following records were obtained: one seen at Hereford on April 4, 1939; flock of eight seen at the Willcox Playa three miles southeast of Cochise, Cochise County, on August 11, 1939; and two seen at Aguirre Lake on the Ranchos Buenos Aires in the Altar Valley on October 4, 1940.

Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus. Long-billed Dowitcher. One adult female was seen at a small

pond just northwest of Tucson on December 31, 1939, and was collected the following day. This is the first winter record for Arizona.

Chlidonias nigra. Black Tern. One was seen at a sewage pond on the Tucson City Farm on June 3, 1939.

Columba fasciata. Band-tailed Pigeon. One was flushed from a nest containing one egg in an oak (*Quercus emoryi*) in the Upper Sonoran chaparral on the Mule Mountains above Bisbee on July 10, 1939. Seven other Band-tails were seen on this date in the same locality. The species has not hitherto been known to nest in these mountains.

Scardafella inca. Inca Dove. Two were seen at Warren on September 25, 1939, and six on October 19, 1939. In the spring and summer of 1940 Inca Doves were noted on almost every occasion when I was in Warren, six appearing to be the number present. No observations were made at Warren during the fall of 1940. These records would seem to be evidence that the bird has extended its range eastward, since it was not seen by me at Warren in the spring and summer of 1939, and it has not been regularly recorded in Cochise County east of the San Pedro Valley.

Speotyto cunicularia. Burrowing Owl. Previous to the virtual extinction of the prairie dog in southeastern Arizona, this bird was perhaps a common resident. At the present time, however, it is very rare during the breeding season. A pair was observed at frequent intervals from May 1 to November 3, 1939, about two miles north of Elfrida in the Sulphur Springs Valley, Cochise County. One to four young were seen at the same place in July, 1939. On August 15, 1940, I saw two at the Randolph Park golf course in Tucson; various people have informed me that these owls had been present all that summer and therefore may have bred there.

Colaptes. Flickers. During the breeding season in southern Arizona *Colaptes cafer* is considered to be restricted to the Transition Zone and *C. chrysoides* is considered a permanent resident of the sahuaro cactus associations in the Lower Sonoran Zone. The following sight records (based only on color beneath wings and tail), therefore, are of interest: *cafer*, seen in willows at Elgin on April 10, 1940, and June 29, 1939; in cottonwoods along the Gila River at Solomonville, Graham County, on May 2, 1939, and at Bryce (near Pima), Graham County, on May 3, 1939; in cottonwoods at Hereford on May 17, 1940, and July 26, 1939; in cottonwoods at St. David, Cochise County, on June 8 and 13, 1939, and on July 18, 1939; and in mesquites near Charleston, Cochise County, on July 12 and 13, 1939. *Chrysoides* was seen near Benson on February 13, 1940; in cottonwoods at St. David on March 1, 1940, on June 9, 13, and 30, 1939, and July 1, 1939; in cottonwoods at Hereford on April 28, 1939, on July 26, 1939, and on September 29, 1939; in east foothills of the Whetstone Mountains, Cochise County, on May 12, 1939; near Johnson, Cochise County, on May 24, 1939; near Dragoon, Cochise County, on May 24, 1940; in willows at Elgin on June 19, 1940, and on June 29, 1939; and near Charleston on July 13, 1939. From some of these observations it may be seen that both red-shafted and yellow-shafted birds are present during the breeding season in the same localities, leading one to the hypothesis that *cafer* and *chrysoides* either breed outside of their supposed ranges or that hybrids are breeding in the areas separating the ranges of the two species. An adult yellow-shafted bird taken on June 19, 1940, near Elgin, is apparently *chrysoides* x *cafer*.

Asyndesmus lewis. Lewis' Woodpecker. One was seen in the Mule Mountains above Bisbee on October 13, 1939, and a flock of thirteen (including one adult female collected) was seen in the western foothills of the Huachuca Mountains near Canelo, Santa Cruz County, on October 9, 1940.

Tyrannus vociferans. Cassin Kingbird. Seen at Warren as late as November 3, 4, and 6 in 1939.

Myiarchus tuberculifer olivascens. Olivaceous Flycatcher. A male taken two miles southwest of Patagonia on April 10, 1940, is the earliest published spring record for the state.

Empidonax traillii brewsteri. Traill Flycatcher. A male was taken about 6½ miles south of Broadway along Wilmot Road at Tucson on September 28, 1940. This specimen perhaps indicates the date of fall departure in Arizona. It is just equalled by a record reported by Swarth (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., ser. 4, 18, 1929:309).

Camptostoma imberbe. Beardless Flycatcher. A male with greatly enlarged testes was taken two miles southwest of Patagonia on May 28, 1940, indicating that the species breeds in the locality. Two others were seen at the same place on August 8, 1940. Swarth (*op. cit.*:310) has questioned whether it bred at Patagonia.

Petrochelidon albifrons melanogaster. Mexican Cliff Swallow. Two adult females taken from a nesting colony 4½ miles west of Sonoita, Santa Cruz County, on May 29, 1940, and two adult males taken from another colony 9 miles northeast of Douglas on June 12, 1940; all proved to be of this subspecies.

Psaltriparus minimus. Bush-tit. That this Upper Sonoran species occasionally wanders into the Lower Sonoran Zone, even in the summer, is evidenced by a flock of 21 seen in mesquites along a dry wash a few miles west of Charleston on July 13, 1939. The locality is about ten miles air-line from the nearest Upper Sonoran plant life.

Oreoscoptes montanus. Sage Thrasher. A juvenile, fully grown but still in full juvenal plumage, was taken on June 4, 1940, about five miles south of Gleeson, on the west side of the Sulphur Springs Valley, Cochise County. This record is extremely unusual, for I have never before or since met with the species anywhere in southern Arizona during the breeding season, and I know of no other recorded specimens. The date would seem too early for the bird to have been reared in the northern part of the state!

Vireo belli. Bell Vireo. Six were noted, some singing, on September 25, 1940, along the Santa Cruz River near San Xavier Mission. This is the latest date I have noted the species in Arizona.

Vireo solitarius. Solitary Vireo. One was seen at St. David on December 15, 1939, thus extending the winter range of this bird eastward in Arizona to the San Pedro Valley.

Vermivora celata. Orange-crowned Warbler. A female identified as *V. c. lutescens* was taken 2 miles southwest of Patagonia on March 21, 1940. An immature female identified as *V. c. orestera* was taken at the same locality on August 8, 1940. The record of *orestera* represents an unusually early fall arrival and that of *lutescens* seems to be unusual for southern Arizona. Most Arizona records of *lutescens* actually pertain to *orestera* (see Oberholser, Auk, 22, 1905:242-247, and Swarth, Condor, 37, 1935:203).

Vermivora ruficapilla ridgwayi. Calaveras Warbler. Two were seen (including one immature collected) on August 8, 1940, two miles southwest of Patagonia.

Vermivora virginiae. Virginia Warbler. One was seen on July 4, 1940, in a canyon on the south side of the Santa Catalina Mountains, Pima County, in the upper part of the Lower Sonoran Zone. During the breeding season the species is usually restricted to the Transition Zone.

Vermivora luciae. Lucy Warbler. One was seen on September 25, 1940, along the Santa Cruz River near San Xavier Mission. This is the latest date I have found the species in Arizona.

Compsothlypis americana pusilla. Northern Parula Warbler. A molting male (Phillips collection no. 108) was taken by Allan R. Phillips from a flock of mixed warblers and vireos on the Santa Cruz River near San Xavier Mission on March 26, 1938. A female was seen by the author on December 28, 1940, on the western outskirts of Tucson with a small group of Audubon Warblers in a mesquite patch (Audubon Magazine, 43, 1941:139); careful observation was made, so as not to confuse it with any of the Mexican species which might possibly occur in the Tucson region. These are the first and second records for the state.

Dendroica occidentalis. Hermit Warbler. Two, an adult male and a young male, were seen on July 30, 1939, between Columbine and High Peak in the Graham Mountains, Graham County, apparently an early fall arrival date.

Dendroica graciae. Grace Warbler. A male was seen at St. David on April 19, 1939; this is the first lowland record for the state.

Geothlypis trichas chryseola. Golden Yellow-throat. A breeding male taken on June 5, 1940, in the Sulphur Springs Valley about eight miles east of Lowell, Cochise County, is of this subspecies. Yellow-throats in this locality have chosen an unusual nesting site, in that no surface water is present. The plant association consists of a growth of large sacaton (*Sporobolus*) with frequent *Acacia*, *Clematis*, and mesquite.

Piranga rubra cooperi. Cooper Tanager. A male was taken on April 14, 1940, at the Santa Cruz River near San Xavier Mission. This is the earliest spring record for Arizona.

Guiraca caerulea. Blue Grosbeak. A male was seen on October 31, 1939, near Hereford; this constitutes the latest fall record for the state. In the summers of 1939 and 1940, several Blue Grosbeak nests were found in the same area where the Yellow-throats occurred, eight miles east of Lowell. This certainly is an odd nesting habitat for this species, also.

Passerina cyanea. Indigo Bunting. A male was seen on May 10, 1940, at Feldman, Pinal County, in a field along the San Pedro River.

Passerina amoena. Lazuli Bunting. A male was seen on June 25, 1940, at Feldman.

Spinus tristis pallidus. Pale Goldfinch. A flock of eight was seen at St. David on March 1, 1940; and a male was collected at Patagonia on March 21, 1940.

Ammodramus savannarum. Grasshopper Sparrow. Two singing males and a female were seen on May 23, 1940, about six miles north of Elgin; a male and the female were collected. Testes of the male were greatly enlarged. Another male with enlarged testes was taken on May 29, 1940, about two miles north of Elgin. A singing male was seen on June 18, 1940, east of Lochiel in the San Rafael Valley, Santa Cruz County. On August 7, 1940, a male (singing but testes not enlarged) was taken and four others were noted in an alfalfa field along the Babocomari River a few miles east of Elgin. The species was also frequently noted, and taken, during the fall and winter in several localities in southeastern Arizona.

Spizella passerina arizonae. Western Chipping Sparrow. Two females and one male (all adults)

were taken on June 18, 1940, and others were seen at Sunnyside on the west side of the Huachuca Mountains, Cochise County; a pair was taken on June 21, 1940, in Rucker Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains, Cochise County. These are the first breeding-season specimens to be taken south of the White Mountains in the central part of the state and form the first summer records for the Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains. Chipping Sparrows were found nesting in junipers at Sunnyside in the summers from 1916 to 1937, inclusive, except 1924, by E. C. Jacot, who has informed the author as to their presence. The specimens are all *arizonae*; they show no significant departures in the direction of *S. p. mexicana*.

Spizella pallida. Clay-colored Sparrow. A female was taken from a flock of Brewer Sparrows on March 29, 1940, about eight miles northeast of Elfrida. There are very few authentic records for Arizona.

Spizella breweri breweri. Brewer Sparrow. An adult male was taken on July 2, 1940, a few miles south of Vail, Pima County. This record is considerably earlier than the regular fall arrival in southern Arizona. More normal arrival dates are July 31, 1939 (adult female taken 11 miles north of Douglas), and August 8, 1939 (one taken about five miles northeast of Gleeson).

Spizella atrogularis atrogularis. Mexican Black-chinned Sparrow. This bird was first discovered breeding in the Mule Mountains above Bisbee on July 10, 1939, when two adults and one young were observed. A pair of adults was taken at the same locality on June 14, 1940.

Melospiza melodia saltonis. Desert Song Sparrow. A small population still exists along Sonoita Creek near Patagonia; song sparrows were frequently observed and occasionally taken there. One also was noted on the San Pedro River at St. David on June 28, 1939. It is a common resident along the Gila River at Safford, Graham County, where a male was taken on April 15, 1939, and it has been frequently observed.

Rhynchophanes mccownii. McCown Longspur. The fact that this species has not been noted in southern Arizona for a number of years makes recent observations of interest. It was often seen (usually in company with Chestnut-collared Longspurs) from October 16, 1939 (east of Pearce), to February 20, 1940 (San Rafael Valley), in the Sulphur Springs Valley and in the Sonoita-Elgin-San Rafael region. A female was taken December 5, 1939, about two miles northwest of Elgin.

Calcarius ornatus. Chestnut-collared Longspur. A flock of about 30 was seen at the Randolph Park golf course in Tucson on October 16, 1940. Dr. Charles T. Vorhies informs me by letter that on January 25, 1941, in company with E. C. Jacot, he saw a flock of about 50 at a small watering hole in the Altar Valley about 25 miles north of Sasabe, where Dr. Vorhies took a female. These records are from much further west than the species' usual winter range in Arizona.

Yuma, Arizona, August 5, 1942.