

New Mexico

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The mild winter weather continued through March, but ended abruptly in April with a series of cold, windy, and often wet western systems. Birding was not spectacular but did prove exciting on occasion, and included one species new to the state and another last verified over a half century ago.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (*Bitter Lake N.W.R.*); Bosque (*Bosque del Apache N.W.R.*); and Zuni (*Zuni Indian Reservation*).

Loons to Waterfowl

Late were single Com. Loons at Ute L. (JO), B.L.N.W.R. (SN), Zuni (DC), and L. Roberts (*fide* RF) May 13–29, as was a Horned Grebe in San Juan Apr. 23 (TR). Double-crested Cormorants bred n. to Santa Rosa L., with 30 nests there Apr. 25 (DS). Four Great Egrets wandered N to Española May 7 (BF *et al.*). Late Snowy Egrets in areas where it is not known to breed included singles at Moriarty May 29 (JO) and Hurley May 27 (EL) and three at a newly discovered Lordsburg marsh May 28 (SOW), where there were also two Cattle Egrets May 27 (JO). New nesting locales for Black-crowned Night-Herons were established, with small numbers at Morgan L., May 3 (TR) and on the Pecos R. near Loving April 29–30 (WH). White-faced Ibises inundated the state from Hidalgo and Lea n. to San Juan and Union April–mid-May (m.ob.); earliest were singles at Tyrone Mar. 30 (EL) and Hobbs Mar. 25 (JO). Among several White-faceds at Fort Sumner Apr. 14–15 was what, if videotape images prove diagnostic, will be New Mexico's first Glossy Ibis (CR *et al.*, v.t. S. Cox); another possible Glossy was at Santa Rosa L., Apr. 25 (DS). Lingering Tundra Swans included one at Maxwell N.W.R., Mar. 12 (JO) and four at Bosque Mar. 5 (JP, JO). Wood Ducks continued to appear in out-of-the-way places, including four at San Ildefonso May 7 (CR), ≤four at Ute Cr., *Harding* Apr. 15 (CR, PRS) and, later, two at Fort Sumner Apr. 15 (JO) and three at Jal L., Mar. 2 (P. Morris), with at least one there May 6–7 (JO, JD). Well-described was a Blue-winged x Cinnamon male at B.L.N.W.R., Mar. 17 (CR). Only recently verified, Eur. Wigeons have become almost regular—this spring found a male at Bosque Apr. 1–8 (JP, JO, PRS, SW) and another male at Caballo L., Mar. 19 (JO) and Apr. 1–9 (JP, JO, LC); undetailed was a female at Caballo L., Apr. 8 (CS). An Oldsquaw at B.L.N.W.R., Mar. 24 (SN) was the

only report. Single Surf Scoters entertained many at Bosque May 8–12 and B.L.N.-W.R., May 10–20 (v.o.).

Raptors to Quail

The year's first Turkey Vulture arrived at Carlsbad Mar. 8 (D&JH). Osprey numbers continued to reflect this raptor's strong recovery, with often multiple reports from over 25 locales statewide (m.ob.), including 71 at the Sandia Mts. lookout Mar. 20–May 2 (HWI), up nearly 40% from the 10-year average there. Single White-tailed Kites were at the Armendariz Ranch, *Sierra*, Mar. 14 (A. Henry) and near Otis Mar. 25 (SW *et al.*). Early arriving Mississippi Kites were singles at Albuquerque Apr. 24–25 (B. Ostyn) and Brantley L., Apr. 22 (JP). Late N. Harriers in potential breeding areas included singles at Maxwell N.W.R., May 23 (DM), Columbus May 27 (SOW), and Carlsbad May 26 (TH, *fide* SW). More evidence of Harris' Hawks occupying the Rio Grande Valley was provided by two at Leasburg Mar. 31 and three at Mesilla Mar. 26 (*fide* CS). An imm. buteo at B.L.N.W.R., May 20 (RM, ph. CMB) may prove to be the first Gray Hawk verified for the Pecos Valley. Broad-winged Hawks, regular but typically scarce New Mexico migrants, made a strong showing, including a record-tying seven at the Sandia Mts. lookout Apr. 8–29 (HWI), plus one–two Apr. 22–May 13 at Fort Sumner (JO), Boone's Draw (JP, ph. JO), Tatum (JO), Ladder Ranch, Sierra (S. Dobrott), Rattlesnake Springs (v.o.), and Hobbs (JO). North of the normal range was a Zone-tailed Hawk at Farmington May 11 (ph. TR). The 18 Merlins that passed the Sandia Mts. lookout Mar. 4–Apr. 29 (HWI) handily beat the old record of nine, and was 350% above the 10-year average. Numbers of Scaled and Gambel's quail were up in the southwest (v.o.), probably owing to abundant winter rains there, but quail numbers were down in the dry southeast (SW).

Plovers to Terns

Black-bellied Plovers put in an impressive showing at B.L.N.W.R., with 14 Apr. 22 (SN *et al.*) dwindling to one May 19 (JO); another was at Bosque May 10–12 (JO, PB, RT). A Piping Plover at Brantley L., Apr. 29 (ph. JO) provided the state's 2nd confirmed record; another possible Piping was at Santa Rosa L., Apr. 24 (DS). First-ever systematic surveys for breeding Mt. Plovers located 56 at 13 sites in Taos, Colfax, Union, Mora, Harding, San Miguel, Sandoval, Cibola, and Socorro Apr. 11–May 31 (L. Sager *et al.*); surveys will continue into the summer. About two dozen each of Black-necked Stilts and Am. Avocets seemed very much at home at the Lordsburg marsh in late May (CR,



Piping Plover at Brantley Lake, New Mexico, April 29, 1995. Second confirmed state record. Photograph/Jerry R. Oldenettel.

JO, SOW), which would be a new breeding locale for each. Westerly were one–two Solitary Sandpipers in San Juan May 5 (TR) and Mangas Apr. 25–29 (RF). Noteworthy were two Whimbrels at B.L.N.W.R., May 19 (JO). Small to moderate numbers of Marbled Godwits were in the Cimarron, Canadian, Pecos, Rio Grande, San Juan, and Zuni drainages Apr. 7–May 16 (v.o.). A probable Hudsonian Godwit at B.L.N.-W.R., May 19 (CMB) furnished New Mexico's 11th report and the first in 3 years. The only White-rumped Sandpiper was in Harding May 29 (JO). Dunlins are scarce migrants, so six were noteworthy at Bottomless Lakes S.P., Mar. 26 (JO, LC) and 15 at Lag. Grande Apr. 22 (SW, SL); elsewhere were singles at Bosque, B.L.N.W.R., and near Las Cruces (v.o.). Notably early was a Wilson's Phalarope at Bosque Mar. 11 (JP). Among the several Red-necked Phalaropes reported from 6 locales Apr. 22–May 19 (v.o.) were four–five at Bosque May 12–18 (WH, JO, DM), at least two at B.L.N.W.R., May 13–19 (SN, RM, JO), and three at Holloman L., May 17 (CR). An early Franklin's Gull was at Bosque Mar. 11 (JP); an ad. California at the Lordsburg playa Apr. 8 (JP, JO) provided a local first. Late Forster's Terns included singles at Tucumcari L., May 29 (JO) and L. Avalon May 31 (*fide* SW). Westerly Least Terns included singles at San Ildefonso May 8 (PRS), Bosque May 11 (PB, RT), and Holloman L., May 27 (ph. BZ).

Doves to Woodpeckers

About 100 Band-tailed Pigeons were visiting Silver City feeders late April–May (EL), perhaps because of food scarcity in nearby mountains; a Band-tailed was unusual at Rattlesnake Springs Apr. 30 (WH). White-winged Doves continued their northward advance, including ≤four at Mangas by Apr. 26 (RF) and one singing at Logan Apr. 15 (CR, PRS). Incas beyond their usual range were one at Fort Sumner Apr. 29 (JP) and

two at Jal May 20 (JO). The only Com. Ground-Dove was at Mangas May 26 (RF). Easterly was a Flamulated Owl at the n. Roosevelt migrant trap May 12 (JP, ph. JO), where there was also a Long-eared May 6 (JP, LC); a Long-eared nest at Morgan L. had two young May 12 (TR). Surveys for Whiskered Screech-Owls found 7 territories in 2 Peloncillo Mts. canyons May 8 & 11 (SOW); Westerns were also present there. Earliest Lesser Nighthawks were at Bosque Apr. 25 (JO) and Carlsbad Apr. 12 (SL *fide* SW); unusual were flocks totaling >200 Lessers near Bosque May 18 (J. Hobart). A probable Chuck-will's-widow was in n. Roosevelt May 11 (C. Black, ph. J. Black); New Mexico's only previous occurrence was a fall 1987 Roosevelt specimen. Chimney Swifts were restricted to the east, with one–three at Tucumcari May 29 (JO), Roswell May 13 (S. Bixler), Carlsbad May 3 (SW), and Rattlesnake Springs Apr. 22 (JP, JO). Far east was a ♂ Broad-billed Hummingbird in the Organ Mts., May 15–17 (JA, ph. BZ). Remarkably early was a ♀ Blue-throated in Post Office Canyon Mar. 12 (RTS), where Lucifers returned Mar. 20 (RTS). The ♀ Magnificent that wintered at Ruidoso was still there Mar. 16 (CR); others included one–four at 2 Grant locales into May (RF, BZ) and one–two at Post Office Canyon Apr. 29 & May 11–27 (RTS). One–two ♂ Anna's, often described as singing, were in 3 Peloncillo Mts. canyons April–May (v.o.), but breeding was not documented. Costa's Hummingbirds staged an impressive invasion, with two territorial males at Mayberry Canyon, San Andres Mts., Mar. 29–Apr. 26 and one still there



Costa's Hummingbird in the San Andres Mountains, New Mexico, March 29, 1995. One of two territorial males found there this spring. Photograph/Mara E. Weisenberger.

May 25 (ph. MW), a courting pair on the lower Gila R., Mar. 27 (DAZ, PFB) where a male was heard Mar. 23 (SOW, RWS), and single males in the Burro Mts., Apr. 12 (DAZ, PFB) and Guadalupe Canyon Apr. 8 (JP, JO). A ♂ Elegant Trogon had returned to the Peloncillo Mts., Apr. 9 (JP, JO). Southerly was a Lewis' Woodpecker near San Lorenzo, *Grant*, May 21 (EL); easterly was a Red-headed at Mesilla Mar. 19 (BN, DE). Acorn Woodpeckers reportedly were absent from Water Canyon (JP); singles appeared in unlikely settings, including at Socorro May 5 (PB) and Carrizalillo Spring, *Luna*, May 18 (CR). A Downy Woodpecker at B.L.N.W.R., Apr. 29–30 (CR, WH) was a surprise; notably south was another Downy at Ruidoso Mar. 16 (CR). A Williamson's Sapsucker at Carlsbad Mar. 13–16 (TH, *fide* SW) provided a rare treat. The only Three-toed report was from Hausner Canyon, Zuni Mts., May 27 (HS).

Flycatchers to Gnatcatchers

A N. Beardless-Tyrannulet was in Guadalupe Canyon Mar. 4, where there were about five Apr. 8 and May 28 (JP, JO). Small numbers of Greater Pewees were in the Pinos Altos (RF, ph. BZ) and Animas (SOW) ranges in May. A wood-pewee that may have been an Eastern (a species verified only once in New Mexico) was at Rattlesnake Springs May 18 (CMB) & 20 (JO), but descriptions of vocalizations were equivocal. At least one Least Flycatcher was at Boone's Draw May 6 (JP, JO, LC), where rare but regular; westerly was one at Percha May 27 (BZ). A Buff-breasted Flycatcher in Clanton Canyon May 20 (DE, CR, ph. BN) would be the first verified for New Mexico in over half a century if photos prove diagnostic. Vermilion Flycatchers pushing their n.e. limits included a male at Logan Apr. 15 (CR, PRS), a pair at Conchas L. through May (MP), and a male at Boone's Draw Apr. 27 (SOW) into May (JP, JO). Westerly was a singing E. Phoebe at San Ildefonso May 1–7 (PRS, CR), as were three E. Kingbirds near Peña Blanca, *Sandoval*, May 29 (CR). Far east and late were 15 Violet-green Swallows below Conchas Dam May 29 (JO). For the 4th consecutive year, several pairs of Cave Swallows nested at La Union, *Doña Ana* (BZ). Remnants of the winter's lowland jay invasion included one Steller's at Percha Mar. 19 (JO) and six at Rattlesnake Springs Apr. 22–23 (JO, SW), with at least one there Apr. 30 (WH). There were also two–four Scrub Jays there Apr. 30 (WH) and May 20 (SW); far east Scrubs were singles at Gallegos, *Harding*, Apr. 15 (CR) and Conchas L., Mar. 15–Apr. 12 (MP). Certainly unexpected, and undoubtedly an escape, was a Green Jay at Las Cruces May 20–21 (SH *et*



Buff-breasted Flycatcher in Clanton Canyon, Peloncillo Mountains, New Mexico, May 20, 1995. First verified state record in over half a century. Photograph/Bruce D. Neville.

al., ph. & v.t.). Black-billed Magpies at their s. limits included one near Isleta May 3 (WH) and three at Dilia Mar. 5 (CR). Plain Titmice, near their s. limit in the Organ Mts., were feeding young there May 29 (GE). Late for the plains was a Red-breasted Nuthatch in n. Roosevelt May 21 (JO). A late Winter Wren at Farmington May 13 (TR) furnished one of few *San Juan* reports. Efforts to detect Black-tailed Gnatcatchers in the southwest paid off with three at San Simon Cienega Mar. 3 (JP, JO), one singing at nearby Granite Gap Mar. 9 (A&N Craig), and two at San Andres N.W.R., May 11 (MW).

Thrushes to Tanagers

Late was a singing Swainson's Thrush in Guadalupe Canyon May 28 (JP, JO, LC), as were two singing Gray Catbirds at Zuni May 29 (DC). The apparent Long-billed Thrasher at Rattlesnake Springs since February was seen at least through Apr. 22 (JP, JO), while one–two Browns plus a "mystery" thrasher were there Apr. 30 (WH) into May (v.o.); in the west was a Brown at Morgan L., Mar. 7–Apr. 23 (TR). Remarkably early was a Crissal Thrasher nest with nestlings at Petroglyph N.M., Mar. 11 (HS), indicating nest initiation about mid-February. Cedar Waxwings made a strong showing statewide, with small-to-moderate numbers s. in late May to Guadalupe Canyon (JO), the San Andres (MW) and Organ (GE) ranges, Holloman L. (GE), and Rattlesnake Springs (JO). Peripheral was a Phainopepla at B.L.N.W.R., May 13 (RM). Stragglers from winter's impressive N. Shrike invasion were singles Mar. 4–16 at Lamy (CR), L.V.N.W.R. (S. Baldwin), Union (JO), and Melrose (CR). A White-eyed Vireo was singing at Fort Sumner April 15 (JO).



Yellow-throated Vireo at Boone's Draw, New Mexico, April 30, 1995. Photograph/ Jerry R. Oldenettel.

One–two Yellow-throated Vireos at Boone's Draw Apr. 23–May 6 (JP, phs. JO) were not seen May 12 or later (JP). Among the better-detailed rare warblers were several at Rattlesnake Springs including a **Blue-winged Warbler** May 10–11 (RM, DE), a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** May 18 (RM), a **Yellow-throated Warbler** Apr. 22 (JP, JO), and a



Kentucky Warbler at Boone's Draw, New Mexico, May 13, 1995. Photograph/ Jerry R. Oldenettel.

Blackpoll Warbler May 14 (JP, JO). Other notables were a Kentucky Warbler at Boone's Draw May 13 (JP, ph. JO) and a Hooded Warbler in Sawmill Canyon, Magdalena Mts., May 20 (HS). Surprisingly far east was a Lucy's at Boone's Draw May 13 (JP, LC, ph. JO). Northern Parulas had a good season, with one–two Apr. 22–May 12 at n. Roosevelt (JO), Boone's Draw (JP, LL, JO), B.L.N.W.R (SN), and Rattlesnake Springs (RM, DE). Single Chestnut-sideds were at 4 locales May 6–21 (v.o.), including one w. to the Magdalena Mts. (DM). In the rare but regular group were at least seven Black-and-whites and nine Am. Redstarts plus one–three N. Waterthrushes at about a dozen sites statewide. Ovenbirds were represented by one–two in n. Roosevelt (JP, LC, ph. JO) and singles at Las Cruces (ph. SH) and Rattlesnake Springs (RM) Apr. 30–May 22. Unexpected so far east was a ♂ Hepatic Tanager in n. Roosevelt May 5–6 (JP, ph. JO). Earliest Summer Tanagers in the east were singles at Sumner L., Apr. 20 (PES), Rattlesnake Springs Apr. 16 (SW), and Hobbs Apr. 22 (JO).

Cardinals to Finches

Northern Cardinals are now firmly established in *Eddy*; this season, one–two were e. to Jal and Eunice and n. to Tucumcari L. (JO). Also northerly was a Pyrrhuloxia at Boone's Draw Apr. 23–30 (JO, JP, LL). Usually considered scarce, one–three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were at 15(!) locales Apr.

27–May 23 (v.o.), including one w. to San Lorenzo (RF). A singing Varied Bunting at Dripping Springs, *Doña Ana*, May 17–18 (JA, EW) furnished a local first. Far north and a Santa Fe first was a ♂ Painted Bunting Apr. 29–May 9 (ph. N. Downen). Westerly Cassin's Sparrows were seven at Maxwell N.W.R., May 23 (DM) and three near Cochiri May 29 (CR); perhaps reflecting dry, windy conditions in the southwest, Cassin's were detected in below-normal numbers near Lordsburg, Gage, Hachita, and Columbus May 27–30 (SOW). A sparrow fitting the description of Am. Tree was at Santa Fe on the very late date of May 13 (L. Mowbray). Surveys for grassland birds revealed an impressive 20 Savannah and 22 Grasshopper sparrows singing at Maxwell N.W.R., May 23 (DM); other Savannahs included five at Zuni May 29 (DC). Late and a local first was an ad. Golden-crowned Sparrow near Cuba May 4 (C. Cooper). Two ♂ Bobolinks at Caballo L., May 17 (S. Sermay) provided the only report. Easterly and a local first were single Bronzed Cowbirds at Hobbs May 6 & 20 (ph. JO). Single Orchard Orioles strayed n. to near Melrose May 5 (JO) and B.L.N.W.R., May 13–20 (RM); single Hoodeds were n. to Conchas L., Apr. 28 (MP) and B.L.N.W.R., May 13 (SN, RM). A Cassin's Finch was at Ruidoso Mar. 16 (CR), where rarely reported. The mild late-winter weather induced some House Finches to breed early, evidenced by a nest with eggs at Santa Fe Mar. 15 (DS) and recently-fledged young at Tyrone Mar. 23 (EL). Late for the east were 40 Pine Siskins at Conchas L., May 2 (MP), two at Boone's Draw May 17 (CR), and one at Rattlesnake Springs May 20 (SW, SL). Small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were e. to Roy and Mills Canyon (CR, PRS) and Timberon (M. Ellison) but were unreported in the southwest.

Initialed observers: Jennifer Atchley, Pat Basham, Paul F. Boucher, Celestyn M. Brozek, David Cleary, Louis Cuellar, Jon Dunn, Doug Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Ralph Fisher, Bernie Foy, Hawk Watch International, Sue Hill, Tommy Hines, Dick & Jean Hoffman, William Howe, Lane Leckman, Eugene Lewis, Sherry Lynch, Sonia Najera, Bruce Neville, David Mehlman, Ray Meyer, Jerry Oldenettel, John Parmeter, Mary Peckinpaugh, Tim Reeves, Chris Rustay, Catherine Sandell, Robert T. Scholes, Hart Schwarz, Roger W. Skaggs, Patricia R. Snider, Paul E. Steel, Ross Teuber, Mara Weisenberger, Steve West, S. O. Williams, Eleanor Wootten, Barry Zimmer, Dale A. Zimmerman.

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