

arizona region



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After a winter and spring that brought one of the largest finch invasions to Arizona, the summer reminded us what the term “snowbirds” really means. Summer monsoons were slow to kick in, but once they did, southern Arizona had an about normal rainy season and became green and alive with sparrows. A few “Mexican” strays, mainly hummingbirds, dominated this summer’s rarities. Also, the Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas crews were hard at work turning up a variety of interesting records.

Abbreviations: A.B.C. (*Arizona Bird Committee*); L.C.R.V. (*Lower Colorado R. Valley*); G.F.P. (*Gila Farms Pond*); M.F.L. (*Many Farms Lake*); N.I.R. (*Navajo Indian Reservation*); P.A.P. (*Pinal Air Park*); P.R.D. (*Painted Rock Dam*); U.S.P.R. (*Upper San Pedro R.*); S.T.P. (*Sewage Treatment Plant*); S.S.V. (*Sulphur Springs Valley*).

GREBS THROUGH HAWKS

Unusual anywhere in s.e. Arizona was a summering Clark’s Grebe seen at the Avra Valley S.T.P. June 5–July 5 (NC, MS); there are still very few migrant records of this species away from known breeding areas in the state. An Eared Grebe was at the Green Valley S.T.P. June 16 (MS), and two were at Willcox June 23 (MS), but no signs of nesting activity were noted. During the past few years, Neotropical Cormorants have been

found at several odd localities throughout s. Arizona; this summer one was on a pond in Scottsdale May 27–July 4 (*fide* SGa), and another was at the El Mirage Pond in s.w. Phoenix July 22 (RBr).

Casual in the state during the summer, an imm. **Roseate Spoonbill** was found at Gillespie Dam along the Gila R. n.e. of Gila Bend July 19–22 (D. Alexander, †S. Peterson, †MS); this is only the 5th record for *Maricopa*, the last one being 20 years ago, also at Gillespie Dam in July! A Great Egret at Kayenta June 20 (CL) provided one of the few summer records for the N.I.R. Another species that is casual during late summer in s.e. Arizona is Tricolored Heron; one was at Reid Park in Tucson July 11 (ph. G. Hentz, MS). A Green Heron was at Lee’s Ferry throughout the period (CL).

Still a very rare nesting species in the state, 2 pairs of Wood Ducks were found nesting at Tavasci Marsh, *Yavapai*, in June (*fide* SGa). This summer appeared to be good for over-summering ducks: a Blue-winged Teal was at Willcox June 23 (MS); a male N. Shoveler was at the Avra Valley S.T.P. June 7 (MS), while 2 pairs were at Willcox June 23 (MS); and two male Am. Wigeon were in Tucson June 7, with two males and a female there July 11 (MS), and another Am. Wigeon was present at Green Valley S.T.P. June 16 (MS). Exceptional were two female Com. Goldeneyes summering throughout the period at Glen Canyon (CL). Also very late was a Buffle-

head at Sun City near Phoenix May 25 (K. Larson).

A report of two Black Vultures about 4 mi n. of Fairbank June 24 (†P. Gaede) provided the first believable record for U.S.P.R. (*fide* DK). Ospreys appear to be doing quite well in n. Arizona; one was in the Grand Canyon June 2 (M. Yard), one was in Glen Canyon June 18–July 9 (CL), and a total of 19 adults were observed throughout the period at a variety of lakes on the s. Kaibab Plateau (E. Morrall). One in s.w. Phoenix July 21 (RWi) was out-of-place for this season. Single White-tailed Kites were seen in Arlington along the Gila R. May 24 (*fide* SGa), and at the Avra Valley S.T.P. July 4 (GHe). Our understanding of the breeding range of Zone-tailed Hawk in n. Arizona is increasing, with a nest being located about 20 mi n.w. of Seligman June 29 (AF, PF). Troy Corman, heading up Arizona’s Breeding Bird Atlas, also reports having heard of another nest from the North Kaibab Plateau, which would make sense given recent discoveries from nearby Mt. Trumbull area. Also a very sparse breeder in the n. portion of the state is Ferruginous Hawk; this summer 4 nests were located n. and n.w. of Seligman June 24–29 (C. Wise, M. Hall, K. Short, TC, AF, PF).

SHOREBIRDS TO KINGFISHERS

An Am. Avocet found at a small tank 15 mi n. of Mt. Trumbull, Arizona Strip, June 16 (TC) was away from known nesting areas in the state. A very late Greater Yellowlegs was at the Avra Valley S.T.P. June 5 (NC). Early Solitary Sandpipers were reported at El Mirage Pond, s.w. Phoenix, July 11 (RBr, TC, PM), with two there July 12, and at Gilbert July 23 (M. Larson). Two individual Whimbrels were reported from Willcox June 14 (†B. Percival), and another was at the Gilbert/Riggs Rd. Ponds July 4 (RJ, PM); this species is a casual summer visitor to s. Arizona.

Very early were reports of individual Long-billed Curlews at Waddell, w. of Phoenix, June 20 (L. Albert), and at Wahweap, L. Powell, June 30 (CL). Also early was a Marbled Godwit at El Mirage Pond July 15–16 (SGa). Almost unknown as a summer migrant, an ad. Sanderling was at Willcox July 28 (CDB, MS). The only report

of an ad. Semipalmated Sandpiper this July came from n. Arizona, with one at Cow Springs L. July 12 (CL). A Com. Snipe was seen at Eagar July 20 (T. McCarthey), while another was seen in suitable breeding habitat at Mexican Hay L., White Mts., July 25 (K Short); although there have been several summer reports from near Springerville in suitable habitat, this species has yet to be found nesting in the state.

Very late was a migrant Franklin's Gull at Wahweap June 18 (CL). The recent increase in spring records of Least Tern extended into the summer season, with one found at Cow Springs L. June 20 (CL), providing one of the few records for n. Arizona; another first summer bird was at the Avra Valley S.T.P. July 4 (ph. GHe).

After several years of apparent decline in the Phoenix area (as well as in most other portions of the state), it was heartening to find several Burrowing Owls in areas where the species was once common (*fide* JW). A juvenile N. Saw-whet Owl was photographed in Madera Canyon June 2 (R. Hassler); this species is thought to be an irregular breeding bird in the Santa Rita Mts. Up to 11 Lesser Nighthawks were seen around Page June 30–July 9 (CL); the distribution of this desert species in n. Arizona is poorly known.

Individual White-eared Hummingbirds were seen sporadically throughout the period at Ramsey, Carr, and Miller canyons in the Huachuca Mts. Exciting, but frustrating, was a **Plain-capped Starthroat** that intermittently visited a feeder in Madera Canyon July 8 through the end of the period (†NC; ph. MS, m.ob.); this species is a casual visitor from Mexico, mainly during summer. Also casual summer visitors, two **Berylline Hummingbirds** were present in Ramsey Canyon beginning July 19 (†J. Nance, m.ob.), and may have attempted nesting. A female Lucifer Hummingbird was seen again in French Joe Canyon July 19 (NC), further suggesting local nesting. At least 2–3 pairs of Green Kingfishers were thought to have nested along the U.S.P.R. during the summer (*fide* DK).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH VIREOS

At least 50 pairs of Willow Flycatchers, along with at least 30 nests, were located during surveys of the Colorado R. at Topock and the L. Mead delta, as well as along the Virgin R. in n.w. Arizona. The Arizona breeding race was recently listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an endangered species. Another nesting pair was located on the Hassayampa R. Preserve in early

June, providing the first nesting record for *Maricopa*, but the nest was parasitized by a cowbird! The Buff-breasted Flycatcher found in Bear Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., during the spring was still present June 25 (MS). According to Jasper, a well-established colony of Buff-breasted is now present above the Southwest Research Station in Cave Cr. Canyon; there have been sightings annually from there for the past several years.

Still practically accidental in n. Arizona is Vermilion Flycatcher; this summer one was found at Lee's Ferry June 1–4 (L. Bush, C. Goetze, S. Davidson), while another was present along the Little Colorado R. n.w. of Winslow (PF, M. Hall).

A Tree Swallow was reported entering a cavity at Seven Springs June 19 (BD, LH, AV); this species is not known to nest away from the high elevations in n. Arizona. An early Bank Swallow was seen at the Avra Valley S.T.P. July 12 (MS). A family group of Am. Dippers was in Piute Canyon June 19 (CL), an area where this species was not known to nest. The pair of **Black-capped Gnatcatchers** that attempted nesting in Brown Canyon in April and May were seen sporadically throughout the period (*fide* R. Hanson). The now-famous male that mated, and attempted nesting with a female Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, was seen until at least June 12 in Chino Canyon. It should be noted that the possibility that this individual was potentially a hybrid is still being evaluated by the A.B.C.

A Gray Catbird was present along the U.S.P.R. near Hereford July 5–9 (W. McCrady et al.); this provided only a 4th local record, and the first from summer. Crissal Thrashers were found nesting on Marble Platform, w. of The Gap, n. of Flagstaff (M. Hall), providing the first nesting record for the N.I.R. Several nests of this species were found again in the Arizona Strip area, as well as near Seligman, suggesting that it is a widespread nesting species throughout n.w. Arizona. An Am. Pipit 12 mi n. of Mt. Trumbull June 15 (TC) was very late for a northbound migrant, whereas an individual at Willcox July 17 (DJa) was very early for s. Arizona.

The Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas crew found several Gray Vireos in the s.e. corner of the N.I.R., where they were previously unknown. A Bell's Vireo was along Kaibito Cr. 14 mi s.e. of Page July 7–10 (CL), while another was in Glen Canyon July 7 (CL); this species' distribution in n.w. Arizona is poorly known. A White-eyed Vireo was also reported from Kaibito Cr July 3 (CL, D

Smith, J. Muller), and, if accepted, would provide only the 2nd record for n. Arizona

WARBLERS TO CROSSBILLS

A N. Parula along the U.S.P.R. near the Hwy 90 bridge July 18 (†J. Nance, V. Lewis) was unusual for this season. A female Magnolia Warbler was apparently netted near Alamo Wash, Organ Pipe Cactus N.M., June 18 (J. Petterson, S. Cherry, T. Tibbitts), and, if accepted, would provide a first record for summer. An Ovenbird was banded along the U.S.P.R. June 25 (JWh). A Kentucky Warbler was near Kirkland, *Yavapai*, June 22 (†L. Piest); midsummer is the best season for this casual visitor in the state.

The Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas crew found several nests of Hepatic Tanagers near Seligman, as well as in the s.e. corner of the N.I.R., both being new breeding areas for this species. A Summer Tanager was at Cameron July 28 (CL), where it is a casual transient at best. A female **Flame-colored Tanager** was seen carrying nesting material with a male W. Tanager in Miller Canyon June 1 (TC), and another female Flame-colored was in Carr Canyon June 10. After a few years of being present during the summer at Bog Springs, Madera Canyon, there was no sign this year of the "controversial" male Flame-colored Tanager (possible hybrid), but the presence of a potentially mixed pair in Miller Canyon provides more circumstantial evidence that the two species may be hybridizing occasionally in Arizona.

Individual Indigo Buntings were seen at Granite Reef Picnic Area May 27 (RBr, CBa), and at Potato Canyon July 10 (AF). A male Painted Bunting was along Stateline Rd. below Portal during the end of July (DJa), and another male was at the George Walker House in Paradise July 31 (LH, D Julian). A very early Savannah Sparrow was at Wahweap July 9 (CL).

Eastern Meadowlarks were found nesting n.w. of Seligman June 26–29 (TC et al.), providing what may be the farthest northwest extension of this species' breeding range. Common Grackles were reported from Lee's Ferry June 1–July 2, with two there July 29–31 (CL), and from the bottom of the Grand Canyon June 8–9 (N. Brown, M. Yard); this species is still a casual visitor anywhere in the state, but it appears to be more regular in the n. portion.

Two different active nests of Streak-backed Orioles were present near the Dudleyville Crossing along the lower San Pedro R. June 23 through the period (*fide* TC), this is the 5th consecutive year that this

species has nested somewhere along the San Pedro R.

Two males and a female Cassin's Finch were present at the feeders at the George Walker House in Paradise in July (D. Julian, DJa), and a male Red Crossbill was at the Spoffords' feeders in Portal June 24 (ph. MS); both these records probably represent lingering effects of the massive finch invasion from last winter.

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *Field Notes* are keyed on page 965.

new mexico region



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Ample precipitation provided generally excellent food and cover conditions, especially for grassland species, while attention to breeding birds verified a new nesting species for the state.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (*Bitter Lake N.W.R.*); Bosque N.W.R. (*Bosque del Apache N.W.R.*); E.B.L. (*Elephant Butte Lake*); R.G.V. (*Rio Grande Valley*); Zuni (*Zuni Indian Reservation*).

LOONS TO DUCKS

Any loon in New Mexico in summer is a surprise—this season found a late Pacific at Conchas L. June 1 (JO). Nine Eared Grebe nests with eggs were discovered at Toadlena L., *San Juan*, July 11 (BGF), but no breeding was noted at Zuni (DC); the 900 Eared nests at Stinking L. July 9 (DS) were judged average for there. Three Clark's Grebes lingered late at Bill Evans L. June 14 (EL), with one still there June 21 (RF). Moderate numbers of Am. White Pelicans summered in the north, including 62 at Stinking L. July 9 (DS) and eight at El Vado L. June 20 (PRS); their likely source was Antero L. in Colorado, where dam construction disrupted nesting (*fide* R.A. Ryder). The sub-ad. **Brown Pelican** at Las Cruces in May was last seen there June 1 (ph. SW), but it

was likely the same individual seen at Caballo L. June 11–12 (SM); an "apparent adult" Brown provided a local first at Bill Evans L. June 28–29 (DH, *fide* DAZ).

A vocal Am. Bittern was at Zuni June 5–8 (DC). Great Blue Herons established a colony on Las Animas Cr., *Sierra*, where 2 (of 5 active) nests had large young June 14 (GE). Unusual was a Great Egret in *Luna* June 2 (LM). An ad. Little Blue Heron at Bosque N.W.R. June–July (v.o.) provided the only report. Far from known breeding areas were single Cattle Egrets at Calley's L., *Mora*, June 6 (CR) and Lordsburg marsh July 7 (JO). Green Herons were rarely recorded were two at Bosque Redondo L. July 26 (JO), and singles below Bill Evans L. June 6 (RSS) and at Deming July 6 (LM).

Black-crowned Night-Herons moved into residential areas in s. Albuquerque and at Bosque Farms, where there were 10 and 100 pairs, respectively, in June (WH). A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was at Bosque N.W.R. in early June (MO). All 15 White-faced Ibis nests at Stinking L. June 11 failed, while ibises failed to attempt nesting at previously occupied Zuni (DC) and Bosque N.W.R. (MO) colonies. A Wood Duck e. of Lordsburg July 6 (JO) was unusual, as were three Green-winged Teal near Hope, *Eddy*, June 13 (SW). Several Ring-necked Ducks persisted into the