

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



## SARTOR O. WILLIAMS III

**A**mple 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

summer in the west, with singles at Chuska L. July 27 (JO) and Nutria L. June 5–July 1 (DC), and three at Bluewater L. June 9 (DC). A Bufflehead was at Nutria L. June 14 & 24 (DC).

**OSPREYS TO PHALAROPEs**

All three *Rio Arriba* Osprey nests were successful, fledging a total of eight young by late July (DS). White-tailed Kites continued to tantalize, with singles near Deming June 26 (JP) and near Gila July 20 (SS, *fide* DAZ), but evidence of breeding remained elusive. Two–three Mississippi Kites were conspicuous at Ft. Sumner June 14 (WH) & 22 (BRF). Noteworthy were single ad. Bald Eagles at Stubblefield L. July 19 (JO), Black L. June 28 (CR) and July 9 (PRS), and Cedar Crest July 25 (K. Schneider); elsewhere, the *Colfax* nest fledged one (SOW) and the *Sierra* nest two (SM). Summering N. Harriers rebounded with the end of dry conditions, especially in the Pecos Valley, where there were four at 3 sites near Roswell June 11 (WH); in the southwest were singles at Lordsburg July 5 (JEP, JO)

and w. of Columbus July 16 (JNP), plus one–two on various dates between June 2 and July 6 in the middle Animas Valley (JEP, JO, SOW). Noteworthy for the southeast was a Zone-tailed Hawk nest in Turkey Canyon near Queen (SW). Alarming were estimates that New Mexico's Lesser Prairie-Chickens had declined by 85% over the past decade; herbicide programs, coupled with grazing and drought, were believed responsible. More encouraging were reports that N. Bobwhite and Scaled and Gambel's quail numbers were up in most areas, likely reflecting favorable weather conditions (m.ob.).

Summering Mt. Plovers were reported from 5 counties, with six at Farley June 25 (SOW), five at Grenville June 12 (KS), and singles near Pueblo Pintado, *McKinley*, June 14 (J. Place), at Zuni June 27 (DC), in the N. Plains, *Cibola*, June 7 (DC), and at Santo Domingo June 8 (JO); 10 at Moriarty July 26 were presumed early migrants (JO). A Black-necked Stilt was unusual at Bill Evans L. June 21 (RF). A Solitary Sandpiper was early at Bosque N.W.R. July 6 (JO), as were



**Red Phalarope at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico, June 4, 1997. Discovered in late May, this bird represented a rare record and an odd season of occurrence. Photograph/Barry R. Zimmer**

five Willets at E.B.L. July 3 (JO) and one at Lordsburg playa July 5 (JO, JEP). Benefiting from favorable conditions, summering Long-billed Curlews were well-represented from Maxwell (KG, JO) w. to Sedan (KG) and s. to Delia (SOW), Pastura (WH), and Pep (D. Leal); singles were unusual at Zuni June 27 (DC) and Holloman L. June 20 (CR), as were two at Lordsburg July 5 (JO, JEP). White-rumped Sandpipers are now recognized as regular in the east into early June; this season found three at Chicosa L. June 6 (CR) and 21 at B.L.N.W.R. June 10 (WH). Noteworthy were two Pectoral Sandpipers at Deming July 17 (LM). Two Long-billed Dowitchers lingered at Bosque N.W.R. through June 28 (JO); one was early at Deming July 25 (LM).

Common Snipe undoubtedly breed in New Mexico, but conclusive proof is lacking; this season found four winnowing plus two others seen in the high Tusas Valley w. of Tres Piedras June 25 (SOW), one winnowing at Parkview June 26 (SOW), and 11 near Angel Fire June 28 (CR). The **Red Phalarope** at Bosque N.W.R. in late May was still present June 4 (ph. BZ) & 6 (JEP, JO).

**GULLS TO SWIFTS**

High counts for summering—but non-breeding—Ring-billed Gulls were up to 50 at Stinking L. June 7 (DS), 10 at E.B.L. June 28 (JO), and six at Caballo L. July 17 (GE). Small numbers of California Gulls likewise summered, especially in the north, including 20 at Stinking L. June 7 (DS) plus others there later (DS, PRS), 15 at Heron L. July 12



**At Burn Lake in Las Cruces, New Mexico, this sub-adult Brown Pelican was present from May to June 1, 1997, when this photo was taken. The same individual or a similar one showed up later in June just to the north at Caballo Lake. Photograph/Steve West**



**North of their previously known outpost in Roswell, this Eurasian Collared-Dove provided a first record for Fort Sumner, New Mexico, on July 26, 1997.**  
**Photograph/Jerry R. Oldenettel**

(JO) and 23 there July 18 (CR), and three at Bluewater L. June 17 (DC). An ad. **Arctic Tern** at E.B.L. July 3 (ph. JO) provided the 3rd New Mexico record. The small Least Tern colony near Roswell had 5 nests by early June (J. Montgomery, K. Johnson), about average for the past 5 years. One Least wandered to Malpais Spring, *Otero*, June 8 (JP), and a migrant was at Clayton July 20 (WC).

Band-tailed Pigeons were widely reported from montane areas, including an active nest in the Animas Mts. July 25 (NMC); presumed non-breeders included 25 at Quarai July 19 (HS), up to 130 at Silver City feeders mid-June (DAZ), and five in the Organ Mts. June 17 (JNP). A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** at Ft. Sumner July 26 (JEP, ph. JO) provided a new location; two were at

Roswell June 19 (SW), where present since 1995. White-winged Doves continued their northward advance, with one at Farmington June 16 (TR), one-two at Santa Fe June-July (W. West), plus two singing at nearby Rancho Encantado July 13 (BRF), and one singing at Logan June 2 (SOW). "Urban" White-winged were judged firmly established at Silver City, with some 75 pairs there, but fewer were noted in nearby river valleys (DAZ). The only Com. Ground-Dove reports were of singles at Bosque N.W.R. June 2 (DH) and near Gila July 4 (JEP, JO).

Two Yellow-billed Cuckoos at Hillsboro July 29 (DAZ, MAZ) were in an area where seldom reported; elsewhere, one-six cuckoos were noted at 14 locales from Shiprock (TR) and Maxwell (JO) s. to the Guadalupe

Mts. (SW) and Hobbs (DH), and included adults with begging juveniles at Mangas July 26 (RF). Two Elf Owls in Dark Canyon, Guadalupe Mts., June 16 (SW) furnished an *Eddy* first and provided additional evidence of this species' ongoing range expansion. A vocal Lesser Nighthawk 25 mi n. of Roswell June 11 (WH) was near the n. edge of the Pecos Valley range. Three Black Swifts at Heron L. July 19 (CR) were far from known nesting locales. A Chimney Swift at Silver City July 8 (DAZ) provided a local first; elsewhere, two were at Albuquerque July 1 (JEP, JO), while five was the maximum at Clayton (WC).

#### **HUMMINGBIRDS TO SWALLOWS**

**Magnificent Hummingbird** was added to the list of species definitely known to breed in New Mexico, with a female on a nest in the Animas Mts. June 13-14 (JEP, AMC, ph. JO). Lucifers were scarce, with but one-two males and no females at their P.O. Canyon stronghold June-July (RTS) and none reported elsewhere. A male Anna's was n. to Mangas July 27; the only additional Anna's were a few in P.O. Canyon June-July (RTS) and two elsewhere in the Peloncillo Mts. July 5 (AMC, JEP). The season's earliest Rufous Hummingbird was an ad. male at Pinos Altos June 23 (R. Kleinman, *vide* DAZ), followed by one at La Cueva, *Mora*, June 27 (CR).

Southerly was a pair of Belted Kingfishers in s. Albuquerque June 23 (WH). An ad. Red-headed Woodpecker was west at Belen July 20 (JO); unusual was an Acorn Woodpecker in desert scrub 25 mi e. of Columbus June 11 (JNP). A female Gila Woodpecker was e. of the Animas Mts. on Deer Cr. June 10 (SOW), where a male was present in May. Southerly Downy Woodpeckers included a pair in the Pinos Altos Mts. June 2 (BZ) and one near Cloudcroft July 21 (CR). A pair of Three-toed Woodpeckers was nesting in the Dome Burn, Jemez Mts., June 29 (JO); a male Three-toed in the Pinos Alto Mts. July 1 (LM) was far south.

Noteworthy for June 17 was an Olive-sided Flycatcher in the Gallinas Mts. near Corona (HS); another was near Cloudcroft June 21 (CR). A Willow Flycatcher nest near Shiprock July 9 (TR) provided a *San Juan* first; unfortunately, it produced only cowbirds and a renesting effort there July 26 failed (TR). In the Cliff-Gila Valley, about 156 Willow Flycatcher pairs were reported in June (*vide* DAZ); this figure was similar to 1995 and 1996 estimates there, and continued to demonstrate the impor-

tance of that area to the southwestern subspecies. Dusky Flycatchers were rarely reported were three at 7500 ft. in the Zuni Mts. (HS), two singing in pines near Angel Fire June 28 (CR), and one at 8500 ft. in the Sandia Mts. June 3 (HS).

Summering Gray Flycatchers made an impressive showing, with reports from 20 locales and including 11 BBS routes; highs included 10 near Pecos June 30 (CR), five at Zuni June 27 (DC), and 4 pairs at Little Walnut near Silver City (DAZ), while at the s.e. edge of the range were three in the s. Sacramento Mts. June 10 (WH) and one in the Guadalupe Mts. June 18 (SW). An ad. and juv. Black Phoebe were n. to Valmora July 19 (JO). A singing but unmated E. Phoebe was at Albuquerque's Montaño Bridge June 4–July 3 (DS, JEP, WH).

At least two Brown-crested Flycatchers were e. to Las Animas Cr., *Sierra*, June 20–21 (JEP) & 28 (JO), where now annual. The flycatcher of the season was a newly-molted imm. **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** at Silver City July 31 (MAZ). Only one Thick-billed Kingbird was detected June 11–13 on a 2-mi Guadalupe Canyon transect (SOW), where in most years 3 pairs summer. One–two E. Kingbirds were at 7 *San Juan* locales June 14–July 22 (TR); up to 5 active territories were at San Juan Pueblo, including 2 nests with large young July 7 & 18 (DS). Southerly and in pinyon habitat was a Purple Martin near Piñon, *Otero*, June 10 (WH).

### JAYS TO THRASHERS

Noteworthy for the south was a post-breeding flock of 60 Pinyon Jays at Silver City July 31 (DAZ). Up to 20 Clark's Nutcrackers were s. to Emory Pass June 9, and six were there June 12 (P.F. Boucher); breeding in the Black Range is likely but as yet unproven. Black-billed Magpies pushed their R.G.V. breeding frontier s. by 25 mi, with two fledglings being fed by adults in s. Albuquerque June 22 (WH).

Up to 10 Mexican Chickadees were in the Animas Mts. June 13–14 (AMC, JEP, JO) and July 25 (NMC); on the latter date an adult was seen "carrying food," but actual nesting was not documented. Three Mt. Chickadees were in the Organ Mts. June 17 (JNP), where not known to breed. A Cactus Wren "at nest" near Sumner L. July 26 (JO) provided a new location; additional northeasterly Cactus reports were two e. of Sabinoso June 6 (CR) and four at 4 sites in *Harding* June 3 (SOW). Bewick's Wrens were throughout Albuquerque's R.G.V. June–July (WH), where they were rare or

absent in the early 1980s. A **Winter Wren** singing below Jemez Falls July 11 & 13 (JEP, JO) furnished the 2nd Jemez Mts. summer report in 3 years. The Stinking L. Marsh Wren colony persisted, with 13 clutches located June 11 (DS).

An Am. Dipper was on the N. Fork Ruidoso R., *Otero*, July 2 (A. Powell). Black-tailed Gnatcatchers in and near the Guadalupe Mts. included single males on the w. side June 10 (WH) and on the e. side at Big Canyon June 21 (SW). One–two singing Veerys were between Vadito and Sipapu, *Taos*, June 22–July 12 (v.o.); that area remains the most likely New Mexico breeding locale. Late were two Swainson's Thrushes near Rodeo June 1 (RTS). Gray Catbirds continued to appear in peripheral areas, including one–two below Navajo Dam June 1–22 (TR), two at Zuni's Upper Nutria June 5 (DC), individuals in *Valencia* at Madrone June 7 & 28 (JEP, JO) and Bosque July 20 (JO), and one at Bosque N.W.R. June 29 (DE, BN). The persistent (but unmated) **Long-billed Thrasher** at Bosque Redondo L. was still singing June 14 (WH), June 22 (tape BRF), and July 26 (JEP, JO); a pair of Brown Thrashers there was feeding young June 22 (BRF). Curve-billed Thrashers fledged a 2nd brood at El-dorado near Santa Fe by June 22 (SOW).

### PHAINOPEPLAS TO DICKCISSEL

Single Phainopeplas pushed n. to Alma June 15 (JO), Riley June 20 (HS), Isleta July 20 (JO), and Quarai July 19 (HS), but no breeding was detected in those peripheral areas. Far northwest was a **White-eyed Vireo** near Bloomfield June 21 (ph. TR), providing the 2nd *San Juan* record. Bell's Vireos at Rattlesnake Springs suffered an alarmingly high cowbird parasitism rate (87%!), with 13 of 15 nests impacted (D. Roemer). Of three Bell's nests discovered above E.B.L., all were abandoned following cowbird parasitism (L. White). A Gray Vireo nest near Aztec July 4—a *San Juan* first—contained two nestlings that likely fledged July 9 (ph. TR); elsewhere, up to 16 Grays, including a fledgling, were at Big Canyon, *Eddy*, June 21 (SW). Two pairs of Hutton's Vireos e. to the Organ Mts. June 17 (JNP) were suggestive of local breeding.

Late for Mesilla was a Warbling Vireo June 3 (R. Meyer). A **Blue-winged Warbler** was banded at Bosque N.W.R. June 5 (DH). A Yellow Warbler singing s. of Belen June 7 (WH) was noteworthy, as the species is now scarce there in summer. For the 2nd consecutive year, an **Ovenbird** was singing in



Very far west for the species was this White-eyed Vireo near Bloomfield, in the northwestern corner of New Mexico, on June 21, 1997. Photograph/Tim Reeves

the San Juan Mts. n. of El Rito, *Rio Arriba*, June 27 (JEP) and July 2 (PRS); adding to the intrigue was another singing in the Jemez Mts. n. of Cañones, *Sandoval*, June 29 (WH).

Summer Tanagers far n. were two on the Canadian R. near Sabinoso June 6 (CR) and one in a prairie grove s. of Vaughn, *Guadalupe*, June 7 (SW). Peripheral N. Cardinals were single males near Conchas L. and Tucumcari June 7 (CR). A Lazuli Bunting singing in s. Albuquerque June 23 (WH) was at the s. limits of the breeding range; just to the south, an Indigo was feeding fledglings at Belen July 20 (JO). In *San Juan*, two–three apparent Lazuli x Indigo hybrids were noted July 3 & 20 (ph. TR). A male Varied Bunting was singing July 14 in San Andres Canyon (WH, M. Weisenberger), where also reported May 29. Far north were three Painted Buntings, including two singing males, near Tucumcari June 7 (CR). Dickcissels found especially favorable conditions in the northeast, with reports of one–five at 9 sites in *Colfax*, *Union*, *Harding*, *Mora*, *San Miguel*, and *DeBaca* (v.o.).

### TOWHEES TO JUNCOS

Noteworthy was a Green-tailed Towhee singing in the Magdalena Mts. June 7 (JEP, JO). Only a small population of Abert's Towhees persists in the Cliff-Gila Valley (DAZ), where a nest in late June contained towhee and cowbird eggs and a pair in early

July was feeding fledgling towhees and cowbirds (*fide* DAZ). Botteri's Sparrows returned to the Animas Valley, where there were 24 occupied territories June 8–11 (SOW). The only Botteri's e. of the Continental Divide was one singing in unlikely habitat at McKinney Flats June 10 (SOW). With ample spring and summer rains, Cassin's Sparrows rebounded nicely in the east, but the species was scarce or absent in previously occupied range in the southwest.

At the s. fringe of the breeding range were two Brewer's Sparrows singing at Spur Lake Basin n. of Luna June 15 (SOW). North of usual was a Black-chinned Sparrow at El Malpais Nat'l Mon. June 15 (JEP, JO). Late for the borderlands area were single Vesper Sparrows in the s. Animas Valley and at San Luis Pass June 9 (SOW). Lark Buntings experienced perhaps their best summer ever in n.e. New Mexico, with multiple reports of "incredible numbers" throughout June from *Colfax* and *Union* s. to *Torrance*, *Lincoln*, and *Quay*, including highs of 64 at Maxwell June 10 (KG), 63 s. of Abbott June 27 (HS), 206 near Grenville June 12 (KS), 57 e. of Las Vegas June 7 (CR),

and 31 s. of Encino June 6 (SOW), and with breeding documented in *Colfax* (HS, SOW) and *Harding* (HS). Far south was a male Lark Bunting at Caprock June 5 (SOW), while in the northwest, fledglings were seen at 2 *San Juan* sites July 18 & 19 (ph. TR).

Summering Savannah Sparrows included one at Zuni June 5 & 14 (DC), two at Parkview June 26 (SOW), 27 near Angel Fire June 28 (CR), and eight at Maxwell June 10 (KG). Good grass cover in the east favored Grasshopper Sparrows, with small to moderate numbers at 9 n.e. sites, including two at Chicoso L. June 6 (CR) and seven near Rosebud June 2 (W. Maynard), plus singles near Variadaro June 7 (CR) and Pastura June 14 (WH). In the southeast were two near Roswell June 11 (WH), three near Caprock June 5 (SOW), and one at Hobbs June 7, DH). In *Hidalgo*, *ammolegus* Grasshopper Sparrows reversed a 5-year decline, with 57 in the Animas Valley and 16 in the Playas Valley June 9–10 (SOW). At least one of 10 Yellow-eyed Juncos in the Animas Mts. June 13–14 was a juvenile (AMC, JEP, JO), while of 30 there July 25, 22 were young of the year (NMC).

## BOBOLINKS TO FINCHES

Five Bobolinks were at Parkview June 20 (DE, BN), but none was seen there July 12 (JO), following recent mowing of fields. Northerly E. Meadowlarks were singles at Zuni June 18 & 26 (DC) and Rowe Mesa June 30 (CR), and two in *Harding* June 3 (SOW); 13 Easterns but no Westerns were near Riley June 20 (HS). Brewer's Blackbirds again were s. to the Sacramento Mts., with 14 at Mescalero July 28 (GE) and three near Cloudcroft June 21 (CR).

There was no shortage of Bronzed Cowbirds from *Catron* and *Hidalgo* e. to *Sierra*, *Luna*, and *Doña Ana* (v.o.); a Bullock's Oriole was feeding a Bronzed at Tyrone, *Grant*, July 16 (EL). Well n. of the usual Pecos Valley range was a singing Orchard Oriole at B.L.N.W.R. June 11 (WH). Once regular at Silver City, Hooded Orioles were absent there this year (DAZ). Noteworthy for the south was a mating pair of Cassin's Finches in the Organ Mts. July 5 (GE). Only small numbers of Red Crossbills were detected, these restricted to the n. highlands, the Zuni area, and the Mogollon Mts. (v.o.).

Late Am. Goldfinches were singles June 1 at Albuquerque (WH), Rio Rancho (WH), and near Gallinas, *San Miguel* (CR), but up to nine summered at 3 Zuni sites, including up to four at Sand Springs Canyon June 9–21 (DC) and three at Black Rock Canyon June 30 (DC). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce in the north; noteworthy for the south were singles near Gila July 11 & 13 (*fide* DAZ) and at Pinon Altos June 2 (BZ), and six at Ruidoso July 27–29 (JNP).

**Initialed observers:** David Cleary, Wes Cook, Alan M. Craig, Narca Moore Craig, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Brian G. Fedorko, Ralph Fisher, Bernard R. Foy, Kathy Granillo, David Hawksworth, William Howe, Eugene Lewis, Larry Malone, Sue McClenahan, Bruce Neville, Jerry Oldenettel, Mike Oldham, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, John Puschock, Tim Reeves, Christopher Rustay, Robert T. Scholes, Hart Schwarz, Ken Seyffert, Roland S. Shook, Patricia R. Snider, Dale Stahlecker, Scott Stoleson, Steve West, S. O. Williams, Barry Zimmer, Dale A. Zimmerman, Marian A. Zimmerman.

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