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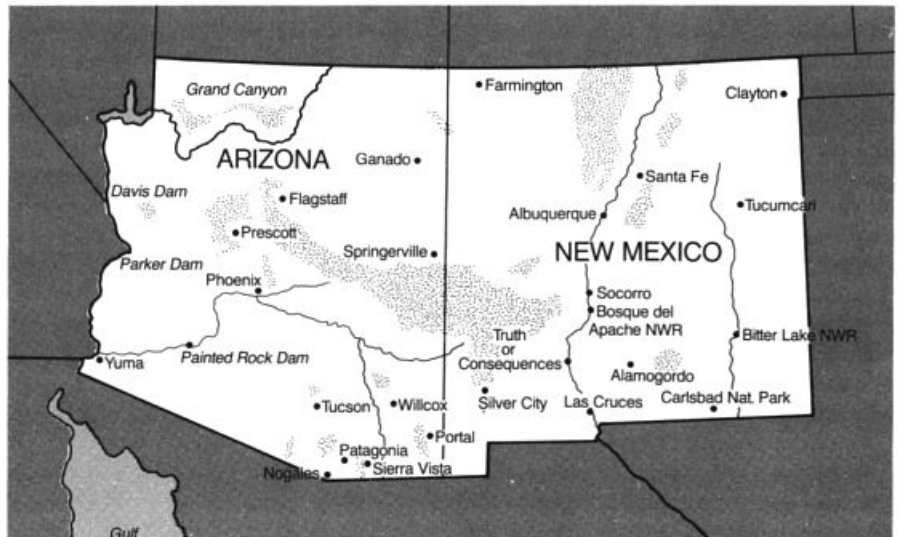
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new mexico region



SARTOR O. WILLIAMS III

Continuing a recent trend, New Mexico's fall season was generally wetter and warmer than "usual." Although the well-publicized Pacific storms of late September only brushed the state, they nevertheless may have assisted the arrival of a previously unreported waterbird—New Mexico's 494th verified species, pending acceptance by the Bird Records Committee. Meanwhile, conspicuously lacking was any repeat of last year's massive incursion of finches, parids, nuthatches, and jays.

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*); L.V.N.W.R. (*Las Vegas N.W.R.*); N.R.T. (*north Roosevelt Co. migrant trap*); R.G.V. (*Rio Grande Valley*).

LOONS TO DUCKS

An exciting loon season was capped by a **Red-throated Loon** at Stubblefield L. Nov. 8 (JEP, JO) and single Pacifics at Stubblefield Nov. 8 (JEP, JO), Cochiti L. Nov. 10 (WH), and Nutria L. Nov. 9–26 (JO, ph. DC). Common Loons lived up to their name with one–four at 13 sites in 9 counties; earliest was one at Clayton L. September 28 (DE, BN). Horned Grebes were rarely reported included singles at Chuska L. Nov. 9 (JO)

and near Lordsburg Nov. 28 (JO). A pair of Clark's Grebes with three young was at Bosque N.W.R. Aug. 25 (PS); one Clark's and five Westerns were at Cannon A.F.B. Oct. 23 (RR), where not previously reported. Late for the north was an Am. White Pelican at Morgan L. Nov. 22 (TR); 52 were still at E.B.L. Nov. 29 (CR). A juv. Brown Pelican at Sumner L. Oct. 25 (JEP, ph. JO) furnished the 3rd *DeBacca* record. Noteworthy for the Pecos Valley were up to five Neotropical Cormorants at B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 6 (SW) & 31 (JO). At Bosque N.W.R., Neotropics generally outnumbered Double-crested by a ratio of 10:1 September–November (v.o.); 40 of 56 Neotropics there Oct. 16 were in breeding plumage (SOW).

Peripheral Great Egrets were singles near Ft. Sumner Sept. 10 (PS) and at Deming Sept. 5 (LM). An ad. Little Blue Heron at Bosque N.W.R. Aug. 8, 12, & 26 (JO, M. Patten, PS) was the only report; a Tricolored was n. to B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 20 (ph. WR) & 31 (CR, DE, BN, JO). A remarkable two **Reddish Egrets** were photo-documented—an adult at B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 4 (ph. WR) and an immature at E.B.L. Aug. 31 (WW) until Sept. 6 (DE, BN, JEP, ph. JO); first recorded in New Mexico only in 1991, these represented the state's 5th and 6th records. Late was a Cattle Egret at Mangas Nov. 15–25 (RF).

Up to three apparently wild **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** were at Bosque N.W.R. Nov. 18–19 (W. McCrady, W. Hutcheson) and Nov. 28 (ph. R. Wenrick); there is but one accepted New Mexico record. Earliest Tundra Swans were single adults at Springer L. and L.V.N.W.R. Nov. 8 (JEP, JO). Ross's Geese at new locales were five at Cherry L., *Mora*, Nov. 8 (JO) and three at Williams Playa, *Curry*, Oct. 24 (JEP). Two Wood Ducks were at Zuni Oct. 13 (DC); another was at the San Jon sewage ponds Nov. 26 (JO). An overwintering Ring-necked Duck was still at Chuska L. Aug. 17 & 23 (JO). A Greater Scaup was w. to Farmington Nov. 2 (TR). **Surf Scoters** made an impressive showing, with singles at Cannon A.F.B. Oct. 21–23 (RR), Sumner L. Nov. 27 (ph. JO), Tyrone Oct. 19 (DZ, EL), and Sunland Park Nov. 9–13 (JNP), plus three at Bosque N.W.R. Oct. 26 (DE, BN). Two **White-winged Scoters** were at Maxwell N.W.R. Nov. 22 (DE, BN). Noteworthy was a Red-breasted Merganser w. to Nutria L. Nov. 22 (DC).

VULTURES TO PHALAROPES

Only a few Turkey Vultures lingered past mid-October; 25 at Carlsbad Oct. 23 (SW) was a large number for so late. A near-record 47 Ospreys were counted at the Manzano Mts. hawk watch site Aug. 30–Oct. 12 (H.W.I.); notably late was one at Morgan L. Nov. 22 (ph. TR). An ad. Bald Eagle in the Jemez Mts. Sept. 25 (*fide* T. Johnson) was unusually early. An ad. Com. Black-Hawk was still at San Patricio, *Lincoln*, Aug. 25 (*fide* AP); last in the Gila Valley were three at Cliff Oct. 9 (SOW) and another downstream from there Oct. 17 (RSS). Five Broad-winged Hawks passed the Manzano Mts. lookout Sept. 28–Oct. 13 (H.W.I.); a Zone-tailed was there Sept. 27 (H.W.I.). Far south was a Rough-legged Hawk near Cloverdale Nov. 29 (JO, AC). Early were single Merlins at Bosque N.W.R. Aug. 25 (PS), Mangas Sept. 9 (RF), and Columbus Sept. 13 (LM); a near-record 42 passed the Manzano Mts. lookout Sept. 11–Nov. 3 (H.W.I.), more than double the recent 5-year average there.

Extraordinary was a report of six probable Lesser Prairie-Chickens in s. *Union* this fall (*fide* J. Hall); none have been verified in n.e. New Mexico for many years. Far north was a Com. Moorhen at Texico Sept. 1 (JO). Early was a Sandhill Crane at Deming Oct. 5 (LM).

Single **American Golden-Plovers** were at E.B.L. Sept. 6 (JEP, DE, BN, ph. JO) and at Onava, *San Miguel*, Sept. 24–25 (WW,



At a small sewage pond south of Farmington, New Mexico, in the arid Four Corners region, a coastal species like this Wandering Tattler was a most unexpected visitor on October 4, 1997. Some observers reported hearing the callnotes that would rule out the very similar, and remotely possible, Gray-tailed Tattler. Photograph/Tim Reeves

PS). Subsequent Onava visits produced a Black-bellied Plover Sept. 27–28 (CR, DE); other Black-bellieds were four at Stubblefield L. Nov. 8 (JEP, JO), two at Holloman L. Oct. 3 (GE), and singles at B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 31 (JO) and Bosque N.W.R. Oct. 11 (JO). Moderate numbers of Mt. Plovers stopped over at the Moriarty and Los Lunas turf farms Aug. 9–Oct. 9 (v.o.); high count was 179 at Los Lunas Sept. 9 (CR). Several shorebirds lingered late, including two Black-necked Stilts at B.L.N.W.R. Nov. 8 (SW), 10 Am. Avocets at E.B.L. Nov. 29 (CR), a Solitary Sandpiper at Bosque N.W.R. Oct. 11 (CR), and 10 Willets at B.L.N.W.R. Nov. 8 (SW).

New Mexico's first-ever tattler, apparently a **Wandering Tattler**, was present at the Navajo Agricultural ponds 9 mi s. of Farmington Sept. 27–Oct. 5 (v.o., phs. J. Rees, TR, LG). Upland Sandpipers w. of usual were one at Bosque Redondo Aug. 30 (CR) and 10 at B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 22 (JEP, JO). Especially rare in fall, two Whimbrels were at Onava Sept. 24–25 (WW, PS). Late were 36 Long-billed Curlews near Deming Nov. 21 (LM). A **Ruddy Turnstone** at E.B.L. Aug. 9 (B. Locke) provided the first New Mexico record in over 3 years. Pectoral Sandpipers had a good season, with reports from 9 counties; highs were 10 near Farmington Oct. 10 (JO) and 17 at Moriarty Sept. 21 (CR), while one was late at Bosque N.W.R. Nov. 19 (JO). Impressive were 100 Stilt Sandpipers at B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 3 (DE, BN). **Red Phalaropes** are always notewor-

thy; this season found one at L.V.N.W.R. Oct. 26 (JO) and two at Bosque N.W.R. Oct. 11 (DE, BN).

GULLS TO OWLS

A first-winter **Heermann's Gull** at the Lordsburg playa Oct. 23 (T. Gill) provided only the 5th well-documented New Mexico record and, surprisingly, the first for fall. Single Thayer's Gulls were at Storrie L. Nov. 22 (JEP, JO) and E.B.L. Nov. 15 & 19 (JEP, JO, CR); an apparent Thayer's × Herring hybrid was at Storrie L. Nov. 22 (ph. JO). A fair season for Sabine's Gulls found singles at Farmington Sept. 21 (TR), Sumner L. Sept. 21 (CR), and Portales Sept. 10 (PS), and two (including a rare adult) at E.B.L. Sept. 6 (DE, BN, JEP, JO). One was very late at Bosque N.W.R. Nov. 16 (JO).

A Caspian Tern at B.L.N.W.R. Aug. 3 (DE, BN) provided the only report. A Com. Tern was late at L.V.N.W.R. Oct. 26 (ph. JO). Black Terns seemed relatively scarce; Blacks where seldom recorded were three e. to Clayton L. Sept. 22 (WC), and singles at Tyrone Sept. 4 (EL) and Deming Aug. 18 (LM).

The Silver City White-winged Dove population continued to thrive and, unlike Gila Valley White-wingeds, showed no evidence of fall migration (DZ); late highs were 44 at Silver City Nov. 27 (EL) and 30 at nearby Tyrone Nov. 30 (*fide* DZ). An Inca Dove was far north to Aztec Oct. 29–Nov. 11 (TR), and two were at Albuquerque in early August (S. Doher). Incas continued to

expand in *Eddy*, where two adults with a fledgling were at Carlsbad Sept. 24 (SW). A vocal W. Screech-Owl was on the Oklahoma line at Corruppa Cr. Sept. 28 (CR, DE, BN).

SWIFTS TO FLYCATCHERS

Only 4 Black Swift nests, each with one nestling, were active at the Jemez Mts. "colony" Aug. 21 (HS), down from six in 1996. On the hummingbird front, the continuing presence of Magnificents in the Sacramento Mts. was evidenced by two at Ruidoso Aug. 28 and two at Bonita L. Aug. 29 (D. Harris, *vide* AP). A male Blue-throated at P.O. Canyon Oct. 29 (RTS) was the only report. Lucifers seemed more scarce than usual throughout the Peloncillo Mts.; the last at P.O. Canyon was a female Oct. 2 (RTS). Post-breeding Anna's were reported during the period at Silver City (DZ), Deming (LM), and 2 Peloncillo Mts. sites (RTS, WB).

Elegant Trogons failed to breed in the Peloncillo Mts. this year; last reported were two males—but no females—there Aug. 6–7 (WB). A Lewis's Woodpecker was s. in the middle R.G.V. to Vequita, *Socorro*, Sept. 7 (50). A Red-headed was w. to Los Alamos Sept. 9 (JT), and a Red-naped Sapsucker was e. to the Oklahoma line in *Union* Oct. 1 (PS). Noteworthy were two Downy Woodpeckers on the Gila R. below Riverside Oct. 25 (LM).

All Least Flycatcher reports were from *Roosevelt*, almost entirely during the period Aug. 30–Sept. 21 (v.o.). Unusually early was an undetailed possible Least at N.R.T. Aug. 3 (DE, BN). An ad. Gray Flycatcher was feeding a fledgling near Springtime Camp Grounds, San Mateo Mts., Aug. 20 (GE). One–two Great Crested Flycatchers at N.R.T. Sept. 10–14 (v.o.) were the only ones reported. Surprising for the season and the locale was a vocal **Thick-billed Kingbird** far north at Glenwood Nov. 29 (C. Green). The last Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were singles at Boone's Draw Oct. 18 (JEP, JO) and Otis Oct. 19 (SW).

JAYS TO THRASHERS

There was little noticeable movement of jays. Single Steller's Jays in the Albuquerque bosque Nov. 22 (CR) and the Gila Valley below Riverside Oct. 17 (RSS) were the only submontane reports. The only R.G.V. Blue Jay reported was one at Santa Fe Nov. 7 (SOW, G. Schmitt). A Clark's Nutcracker was e. to Clayton Nov. 10 (WC); another was low at Malpais N.M. Aug. 22 (PS). Noteworthy were three Am. Crows s. to the

Florida Mts. Aug. 18 (LM). Easterly Com. Ravens were one–two on the Oklahoma line in *Union* Sept. 28 (CR), near Broadview Aug. 30 (CR), and at Boone's Draw Aug. 31 (CR). Certainly out of range was a flock of 70 vocal Chihuahuan Ravens at Onava, *San Miguel*, Sept. 27 (CR).

A Bridled Titmouse was in the R.G.V. at Percha from Aug. 31 into November (JNP, JEP, JO), and another (or the same) was at Caballo Dam Nov. 29 (CR). Two Cactus Wrens were n. to Ft. Sumner Sept. 10 (PS). A Winter Wren at Clovis Oct. 18 (DE, BN) provided the only report. Undetailed was a possible Sedge Wren at Cannon A.F.B. Oct. 21 (RR). A few Marsh Wrens lingered north, including singles Nov. 22 at Morgan L. (TR), Cochiti Dam (JO), and Stubblefield L. (DE, BN), while two were at San Jon Nov. 26 (JO). Not necessarily a pretty site was two Black-tailed Gnatcatchers feeding a young cowbird at Las Cruces Aug. 21 (GE). Demonstrating amazing tenacity was the lonely Long-billed Thrasher at Bosque Redondo L. (v.o.), still there through Nov. 1 (JO). One–two Brown Thrashers were in *Union*, *Roosevelt*, *DeBaca*, and *Chaves* Aug. 30–Nov. 22 (v.o.).

PIPITS TO WARBLERS

The only Sprague's Pipits were one at Santa Teresa Nov. 16 (JNP) and two near Cloverdale Nov. 29 (JO, AC). Cedar Waxwings were conspicuously absent, with 20 at Farmington Nov. 16 (TR) providing the only report. Phainopeplas were seldom reported were one at Tyrone Nov. 3–26 (EL) and two in the Florida Mts. Nov. 19 (LM); east were singles at Carlsbad Sept. 20 (SW) and Rattlesnake Springs Sept. 13 (SW). Single N. Shrikes put in appearances at Farmington Nov. 21 (TR), Los Alamos Nov. 30 (MM), and Cerrillos Nov. 9 (L. Sager).

A **White-eyed Vireo** at Sabinal, *Socorro*, Sept. 7–16 (JO, WW) furnished the state's first September record, while a Yellow-throated Vireo at Cliff Aug. 21–22 (S. Stolesen) provided a first for *Grant*. Very rare in New Mexico, a **Philadelphia Vireo** at N.R.T. Oct. 22–24 (JEP, JO) was, by 4 days, the state's latest ever.

Three Nashville Warblers at 2 *Roosevelt* sites Oct. 19 (CR, DE, BN) were the last of the season. Among the rarer warblers were a Magnolia at Albuquerque Oct. 8 (D. Cutten), a Black-throated Blue at Moriarty Sept. 28 (CR), a

Black-throated Green at N.R.T. Oct. 19 (BN), single Prothonotaries at Bosque Refuge Sept. 10 (DF *et al.*) and Percha Sept. 6 (JEP, DE, BN, ph. JO), and single Black-and-whites at N.R.T. Sept. 1 & 10 (JO, PS) and Percha Sept. 6 (v.o.). Noteworthy for fall was an Ovenbird at N.R.T. Oct. 19 (DE).

CARDINALS TO FINCHES

A male N. Cardinal frequented a Portales feeder from Sept. 25 through the season (G. Pfaffenberger); north was a Pyrrhuloxia at N.R.T. Oct. 23–25 (JO, JEP). A young male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported from Los Alamos Aug. 10 (JT). Late was a Blue Grosbeak at Carlsbad Oct. 11 (SW). Linger-ing Lazuli Buntings were two at Deming Oct. 14 (LM) and three in the Animas Valley Nov. 29 (JO, AC). Noteworthy Painted Buntings were singles seen at N.R.T. Sept. 10 & 13 (PS, DE, BN) and Percha Sept. 20 (JEP), and banded at Albuquerque in August (NC *et al.*) and Rhodes Canyon, San Andres Mts., Aug. 20 (B. North, *vide* M. Weisenberger). A Dickcissel on Otero Mesa Sept. 16 (R. Meyer) furnished a local first.

The earliest Am. Tree Sparrow was one at Galisteo Nov. 2 (JT); notably early for so far south was another banded at Albuquerque Nov. 9 (LG). Unusual for so late in the season were 50 Brewer's Sparrows n. to Petroglyph N.M. Nov. 29 (HS). Judging from (invariably undetailed) sightings, Clay-colored Sparrows may have been more numerous than usual in the R.G.V. and the southwest; notable were 15 banded at Albuquerque in September (NC *et al.*) and 11 banded at Bosque Refuge Sept. 3–11



Now considered rare in New Mexico, and seldom well documented there, this Baird's Sparrow was near Cloverdale in the Animas Valley on November 29, 1997. Photograph/Jerry R. Oldenettel

(DF et al.). A very good season for Field Sparrows found one–two on Corrupma Cr., Union, Sept. 28 (CR, DE) and Oct. 1 (PS), and at Boone's Draw Oct. 19 (CR, DE, BN), plus one at Cannon A.F.B. Nov. 6 (RR) and two–four at N.R.T. Oct. 18–Nov. 1 (v.o.). Late was a Vesper Sparrow at Petroglyph N.M. Nov. 16 (HS), as was a Lark Sparrow at Caballo Dam Nov. 23 (SW). Now very rare in New Mexico, a **Baird's Sparrow** was near Cloverdale Nov. 29 (AC, ph. JO). Noteworthy was a late dark-lored White-crowned Sparrow at Columbus Nov. 28 (JO).

Up to three Lapland Longspurs were reported at Maxwell N.W.R. Nov. 8 (JEP, JO), where a Chestnut-collared was "heard" on the early date of Sept. 27 (CR). A Bobolink at Moriarty Sept. 13 (ph. JO) provided a *Torrance* first. Late was a vocal E. Meadowlark n. to w. Albuquerque Nov. 29 (HS), where the species is not known to winter. Also late was a Com. Grackle at Albuquerque Nov. 7 (PS). A **Rusty Blackbird** at San Jon Nov. 26 (JO) furnished a local first. Noteworthy orioles were an Orchard n. to Boone's Draw Aug. 31 (CR), a Hooded in the seldom visited Florida Mts. Sept. 8 (LM), and a very late Bullock's at Caballo Dam Nov. 28–29 (CR, ph. LG).

In stark contrast to last year's spectacular finch movements, this season found Cassin's Finches practically nonexistent anywhere in New Mexico, Red Crossbills in only very small numbers and in only a few montane areas in the north and west, and Evening Grosbeaks in but tiny numbers—and those few restricted to the Jemez and Zuni mountains. Meanwhile, there was no encore for Lawrence's Goldfinch—not a single one was reported. What a difference a year makes!

Initialed observers: William Baltosser, David Cleary, Wes Cook, Nancy Cox, Alan Craig, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Deborah Finch, Ralph Fisher, Larry Gorbet, HawkWatch International, William Howe, Eugene Lewis, Martin MacRoberts, Larry Malone, Bruce Neville, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, Anita Powell, William Radke, Ross Rasmussen, Tim Reeves, Christopher Rustay, Robert T. Scholes, Hart Schwarz, Roland S. Shook, Patricia Snider, Joyce Takamine, Steve West, William West, S. O. Williams, Dale Zimmerman.

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alaska region



T. G. TOBISH, JR.

Fall 1997 shaped up as a classic example of what is nearly always the most exciting and challenging season in Alaska. Major weather influences coupled with wandering, first-time migrant juvenile birds from all points typically produce a fascinating blend of extralimital and unusual records from beyond the Region and odd or extreme dates. Each Fall migration's profile presents the largest amount of new and pioneering information each year. For the first time since 1991, Middleton Island was covered for a short period in late September, with the standard exciting results—five new island records and other noteworthy North Gulf finds. Although there have now been about eight Fall season surveys at Middleton, every new trip continues to produce numerous extralimital or new Gulf Coast or Southcoastal reports, odd or extreme date records, and new Regional reports. Another Fall bird tour covered the Gambell-Nome area in August and was timed to encounter a heavy build-up of Beringian passerines and more than a few notable Asiatics. Between this trip and the active field presence in the Pribilofs, Bering Sea coverage continues to be concentrated.

This year's weather patterns and associated local conditions made as much news as unusual bird records. More so than most Fall seasons, this season's storm patterns were regularly influenced or based on fading north-tracking North Pacific typhoons

that eventually spin off the Aleutian Low across the Gulf of Alaska. Although most of these systems concentrate in the early Fall, several large storms of this group hit the Gulf Coast after mid-September. One of these downgraded typhoons, *Dave*, produced a massive low pressure cell (<960 MB), which stalled over itself in the North Gulf east of Kodiak before tracking north onto the western Mainland. Heavy bird movements were noted from several sites following this storm system. What was possibly more influential on general bird movements may have been surface temperatures in the southern Bering Sea and North Pacific waters. By early September, various oceanographic reports detailed near-record surface temperatures at 8–15°F above normal in the southeast Bering Sea and across the North Gulf from Resurrection Bay to Unimak Pass. These are unprecedented conditions that did not diminish until well into November. As a result, surface-feeding seabird (mostly shearwaters and murre) die-offs were the heaviest in many years and widespread after early August. Bering Sea pack ice was 600 miles north of average at the end of November, a condition with no historic comparison. This warm water certainly influenced weather conditions at least south of the Interior, and aside from a mid-October high pressure cold snap, which brought freeze-up, the season was otherwise mild and wet. The Aleutian Low also acted rather anomalously, tracking east periodically to the west