

arizona region



GARY H. ROSENBERG
and **CHRIS BENESH**

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

GREBES THROUGH NEW WORLD VULTURES

The **Least Grebe** photographed at Willcox during the fall season was relocated there Dec. 19 (D. Pearson et al.) and was seen sporadically through Jan. 10 (RH), representing only the 3rd documented record during the past 20 years. Although regular in small numbers in winter at lakes along the Colorado R., 21 Horned Grebes at L. Powell Feb. 1 (CL, JSp) represented an exceptionally high count for Arizona. Western Grebes lingered into the winter at a few of the larger ponds and lakes in the s.e. portion of the state; four remained at Patagonia L. through Dec. 28 (MS), and two were at a pond along the S.C.R. in Tucson as late as Jan. 8 (MS).

Eight Am. White Pelicans near Antelope I. on L. Powell Dec. 16 (CL et al.) were rather late for that region as was one lingering at Willow L. near Prescott to at least Dec. 16 (W. Bull, CT). Also, as many as five were present Jan. 28–Feb. 28 at Picacho Res. (GH et al.) where this species has not been known to winter. A wayward Brown Pelican was seen at Horseshoe L. Feb. 6 (RP); there are very few mid-winter records away from P.R.D. A very high count of 211 Snowy

Egrets was made along the Gila R. w. of Phoenix Dec. 30 (*fide* TC). Two exceptionally high counts of Great Egrets were reported from the Phoenix area: 349 present along the Gila R. w. of Phoenix Dec. 30 (*fide* TC); and 85 at a pond in Sun Lakes Jan. 24 (MS). Also noteworthy, three Great Egrets overwintered in the Prescott region (CT). Twenty Cattle Egrets were at a pond in Nogales Dec. 4 (JBo); this species is considered casual in this region during winter. Two White-faced Ibis, a casual winter visitor in s.e. Arizona, were at Picacho Res. Jan. 31 (MS); another was present at Granite Cr. to at least Jan. 10 (CT), providing the first winter record for *Yavapai*. A Black Vulture in downtown Sierra Vista Jan. 18–22 (D. Danforth) was well e. of this species' normal distribution in s.e. Arizona.

SWANS THROUGH MERGANSERS

Two Trumpeter Swans were seen along the Colorado R. at the bottom of the Grand Canyon Jan. 8 & 22 (CL, NB, L. Neimi); these individuals, it was learned, were wintering birds from a transplanted population along the Green R. in Wyoming. All Arizona sightings are suspected of being individuals from transplanted populations. No fewer than six different Greater White-fronted Geese were seen during the period; one at Page Jan. 26 (CL, S. Davidson) probably represented only the 2nd winter record for n. Arizona. A greater-than-usual number of reports (17) were received for small flocks of Snow Geese at scattered localities with high counts of 48 along the Verde R. n.e. of Phoenix Dec. 18 (M. Chew, T. Stadel) and 44 at Willcox Feb. 22 (SM). Ross's Geese were also seen in greater-than-usual numbers around the state (about 36 individuals) with unusually high concentrations of eight at L. Havasu City Jan. 31–Feb. 1 (MS) and 13 at Willcox Feb. 22 (SM). Two were at Nogales S.T.P. Dec. 27 through at least Jan. 21, including an incredible "blue-morph" Ross's (MP, ph. MS, PL), representing the first documented record of this form. Three different small "Cackling-type" Canada Geese were reported; one was present at Page Dec. 14 through the period (CL), one was at Kino Springs in Nogales Dec. 29–Feb. 20 (MP et al., ph. MS), and one returned (never left?) to Wellton Jan. 15–19 (PL, RH).

Two female-plumaged Blue-winged Teal were at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson Dec. 2 (JN), and six were at the nearby Roger Road S.T.P. Jan. 14 (MS); this species is still considered casual in s.e. Arizona during winter. Two different male Eur. Wigeons were found again this winter in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area, and a female was well described from Nogales Dec. 28 (MP). Although we received a couple of reports of a "pure" Eur. Wigeon from Willcox, the only physical documentation provided referred to a definite hybrid American × Eurasian Wigeon present there throughout the period (ph. MS).

Extraordinary concentrations (for Arizona) of Canvasbacks were reported at a number of localities; high counts included 163 on Kingfisher Pond along the upper S.P.R. Jan. 14 (S. Dinsmore, D. Ely) and 195 on a pond at Gilbert Jan. 17 (RJ). At least one female Greater Scaup was at the Sweetwater Wetlands Dec. 16–28 (MS). Virtually every pond or lake in the Region hosted Com. Goldeneyes this winter, particularly during December and January, with at least 20 different reports received; the individual sightings are too many to list, but one incredible concentration of at least 2200 was found in Glen Canyon during surveys conducted Jan. 8 (CL, JSp). A nice count of at least 61 Barrow's Goldeneyes was made at Glen Canyon Jan. 2 (CL, RR), but more significant was a female found in the bottom of the Grand Canyon Jan. 11 (CL), providing a first local record for this species.

A Surf Scoter at P.R.D. Dec. 6–13 (RJ, SG) provided one of the few December records for *Maricopa*. Two White-winged Scoters at Willcox Jan. 16 (M. Martin et al.) represented only the 2nd January record from s.e. Arizona. Two Oldsquaws were found, one below Glen Canyon Dam Jan. 2 (CL, RR) and the other below Parker Dam Jan. 31 (ph. MS); this species has proven to be nearly annual below the major dams along the Colorado R. during winter. A slightly above-average number of Red-breasted Mergansers was found, particularly along the L.C.R.V. Of more interest, though, were single birds along the S.C.R., Tucson, Dec. 6–7 (MS) and at Roper Lake S.P. Dec. 27 (MP) This species is casual at best anywhere in s.e. Arizona during winter.

KITES THROUGH GULLS

The only White-tailed Kites reported were one w of Three Points Dec. 12 (L. Liese) and another at the Arivaca Cienega Feb. 3 (D. Flower). Two Zone-tailed Hawks in Tucson, one Jan. 29 (JH) and the other Feb. 19 (V. McKennon), were both likely very early northbound migrants. Single Crested Caracaras were seen away from known areas of regular occurrence: one near Elfrida Dec. 5 (GR), one near Friendly Corners Dec. 25 (MS), one flying over the Phoenix Zoo (P. Warren; *fide* RJ), and another at the P.A.P. pecan grove Jan. 17–19 (JN).

Five Snowy Plovers at P.R.D. Dec. 6, three remaining until Jan. 14 (RJ, PL), provided only the 3rd winter record for *Mari-copa* A Semipalmated Plover there Dec. 13–20 (JyWi) also provided a 3rd winter county record. Until recently, Black-necked Stilt was considered a rare winter visitor to s. Arizona; this season provided further evidence that the winter status of this species has certainly changed in recent years with at least 46 present along the S.C.R. in Tucson (MS), at least four present at Picacho Res. Dec 25–Jan. 31 (MS), and another 17 seen at the Central Arizona College near Casa Grande Jan. 24 (MS). Three Am. Avocets were along the S.C.R. in Tucson Dec. 6–Jan. 28 (MS); this species is casual in s.e. Arizona during winter. Also casual during this season is Lesser Yellowlegs; this winter one was along the S.C.R. in Tucson Jan. 20 through the period (PL; ph. MS), and another was in Gilbert Feb. 20. (RJ).

No fewer than 10 individual Dunlin, usually casual at best, were seen around s. Arizona this winter, including one as far north as Granite Cr. through Dec. 20 (CT) that provided the first *Yavapai* winter record. Western Sandpipers lingered into the end of December in greater-than-usual numbers at a variety of locations in s. Arizona; exceptional were four at P.R.D. as late as Jan. 14 (PL) and another five along the S.C.R. in Tucson Jan. 28 (MS). One of the better water birds of the season was a well-described ad. **Mew Gull** at Bullhead City Jan. 29 (J. Pike); there were about 10 previous state records.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

An amazing 16 individual Ruddy Ground-Doves were seen during the period; this species has become so regular during winter that the A.B.C. recently removed it from the review list.

A male Broad-billed Hummingbird found in Prescott Oct. 20 remained until Dec 20 (S Roman, V. Miller, CT), providing

the 2nd documented record for *Yavapai*. Of interest was a Violet-crowned Hummingbird that apparently wintered near Portal (AC, NMC); there are very few winter records away from Tucson, Patagonia, and Bisbee. Three male Anna's Hummingbirds seen at the bottom of the Grand Canyon Jan. 16–17 (CL) were n. of this species' normal range in the state. Another sign of a mild winter were four different overwintering Elegant Trogons in s. Arizona.

Three different Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found, one at Reid Park in Tucson Dec. 20–Jan. 3 (JBo, MS), one male at Topock Feb. 1 (MS), and another male at the bottom of the Grand Canyon Feb. 12 (RR, CL et al.); this species is still casual anywhere in the state during the winter.

One of the more confounding identification problems in Arizona involves the separation of Red-breasted Sapsuckers (*daggetti* females?) from presumed hybrids between Red-breasted and Red-naped sapsuckers (*daggetti* x *nuchalis*), as adequate information concerning the variation within Red-breasted and criteria useful in identifying hybrids has yet to be adequately addressed in the literature. This winter two individuals fell into this gray area of field identification: a bird videotaped at Texas Canyon Jan. 3 (M. Edwards, v.t. CDB) and another photographed on Mt. Lemmon Feb. 24 (M. Kehl; ph. MS). The only N. "Yellow-shafted" Flickers reported were singles near Paulden Dec. 2–31 (P. Govendich, *fide* CT) and along the S.P.R. near Hereford Dec. 13 (SH).

FLYCATCHERS

THROUGH THRASHERS

The only report of Greater Pewee was a single bird in Tucson Dec. 20 through the period (JBo). Exceptionally rare in winter in the Prescott region, a Hammond's Flycatcher was present through the period at Granite Dells (CT). Rather remarkable was a Gray Flycatcher reported from RM208 in the Grand Canyon Feb. 21 (CL, RR); this likely represents the first winter record for n. Arizona. Dusky Flycatchers were widely reported. Of particular interest was one found rather far west near Tacna Jan. 15–19 (PL) and another one rather far north along the Verde R. Dec. 18 (TC). Very rare in winter, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher was observed at the Hassayampa R. Preserve Jan. 31 (RJ). The only report of E. Phoebe involved one near Carefree Dec. 28 (W. Thurber). Fifteen Vermilion Flycatchers in the Tacna-Wellton region Jan. 14–15 (PL, RH) furnished a high concentration for winter. Exceptionally rare in winter, a

Thick-billed Kingbird was photographed in Parker Feb. 2 (ph. MS).

A N. Shrike at Gray Mt. Jan. 6 (CL) provided the only report and represented a below-average showing for this species in the state. As was the case last winter, there were a greater-than-normal number of Barn Swallow reports: one was at the Avra Valley S.T.P. Dec. 7 (MS); two were at Gilbert Dec. 28 (RJ); 10 were in Tacna Jan. 14 (PL); and one was still present at Gilbert Jan. 17 (RJ). Rather remarkable was a singing Hutton's Vireo in the Grand Canyon at RM204 Feb. 21 (CL, RR et al.), the first record for n. Arizona.

Four House Wrens were found in the lower Grand Canyon Jan. 17–18 (CL, NB), with another there Feb. 21 (RR); these represent the first winter reports for the Grand Canyon though further investigation may prove them to be regular there in winter. Winter Wrens lived up to their name, being found in numerous locations and in higher-than-normal numbers, with the first sightings coming in late November. A female **Black-capped Gnatcatcher** was discovered in Chino Canyon Feb. 23 and remained through the period (tape RH et al.); a problematic male, resembling the bird present in 1997, was discovered there Feb. 27 (RH).

Five Rufous-backed Robins provided a better-than-average showing for this species; singles were at B.T.A. Nov. 18–Jan 25 (J. Bartley), along the upper S.P.R. near Hereford Dec. 5–Jan. 2 (I. Levine, J. Levine, m.ob., v.t. CDB), at Central Arizona College Dec. 7 through the period (A. Willcox, m.ob.), at Oak Flat Jan. 2–Feb. 3 (BD), and at Peña Blanca L. Feb. 3 through the period (B. Jenkins). Rare in winter, single Varied Thrushes included one at B.T.A. Dec. 17–28 (*fide* SGa); one at Sycamore Res., Santa Catalina Mts., Dec. 26 (JBo); and one in Marana Jan. 24–29 (C. Greene, ph. MS).

There was some rare mimids reported, including a Gray Catbird in Madera Canyon Jan. 2 through the period (JN, m.ob.) and another at Beaver Dam Wash in n.w. Arizona Jan. 9 (S. Summers). Brown Thrasher reports included one that wintered at B.T.A. (J. Bartley), one along the S.C.R. Dec. 20–Jan. 7 (JHa, M. Patton, m.ob.), one along Soñita Cr. in Patagonia Jan. 1 (JN, RH), and one along Proctor Rd, Madera Canyon, Jan. 24 through the period (JHa). A Crissal Thrasher found in Page Dec. 19 (JSp) remained through mid-January; there are very few winter records for n. Arizona.

OLIVE WARBLER THROUGH COWBIRDS

Olive Warblers were reported in greater-than-normal numbers; ten spent the winter in Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahua Mts. (DJa), and two were seen rather far from breeding habitat in French Joe Canyon Feb. 15 (B. Norton). Quite a surprise was a well-described **Blue-winged Warbler** found near the Mexico border in lower Sycamore Canyon Dec. 20 (AF, S. Mills). Casual in winter, a N. Parula was in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 30–Jan. 1. Three Chestnut-sided Warblers furnished an average showing with singles in s.w. Phoenix Jan. 17 (CBa, JiB), Scottsdale Jan. 22 (S. Eyden), and Phoenix Feb. 9–10 (T. Cordery et al.). The Cape May Warbler found in e. Tucson in late November remained until Dec. 3 (JHa). Arizona's 7th **Pine Warbler** was discovered at Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson, Jan. 23–26 (TC, ph. MS). Rare in winter, a Yellow Warbler at Indian Bend Wash Dec. 27 (CDB, M. Edwards) and another at Granite Cr. Dells Dec. 19–20 (CT) provided the first winter records for the Prescott region. Two Black-and-white Warbler reports were received, with one along the Verde R. Dec. 18 (TC) and another one at Indian Bend Wash Feb. 28 (*vide* SGa); this species is rare in winter. Quite surprising was the Worm-eating Warbler

visiting a backyard birdbath in Phoenix Dec. 17 (ph. B. Grossi).

Casual in winter, single N. Waterthrushes were in s.w. Phoenix Jan. 4 (RJ, SGa) and at the Walnut Cr. ranger station Feb. 2 (B. Pranter). The Louisiana Waterthrush reported from Sycamore Canyon this past fall was actually found by Curtis Smith and Sue Carnahan Nov. 28; this casual visitor remained through the winter. A Com. Yellowthroat present in the Grand Canyon Jan. 10–Feb. 14 (CL et al.) may represent the first winter record for n. Arizona. Quite rare during the winter season, single Hooded Warblers were found in Oak Cr. Canyon Dec. 17 (D. Herron) and in s.w. Phoenix Jan. 3 (*vide* SGa). Indicative of the mild winter, a single Wilson's Warbler was at Patagonia L. Jan. 3 (P. Salomon); two more seen along the S.C.R. near Marana Feb. 24 (RH) may have been very early spring arrivals. The **Rufous-capped Warbler** found along the upper S.P.R. in November remained until Dec. 30 (m.ob.). Amazingly, a 2nd Rufous-capped Warbler was found in Sycamore Canyon Dec. 23 (ph. GHR, v.t. CDB) in the precise spot where one held territory in 1994; there are still fewer than 10 state records. A Yellow-breasted Chat wintered at B.T.A. for the 3rd consecutive winter (B. Koenig et al.).

Very rare in winter, a W. Tanager was reported from w. of Buckeye Dec. 30 (M. Fibel). A Green-tailed Towhee in Page Dec. 10–25 (J. Alston, JSp) was noteworthy; this species is considered accidental in winter in n. Arizona. A Chipping Sparrow in the Grand Canyon Jan. 18 (CL) represents one of the first winter records for n. Arizona. Seven Clay-colored Sparrows were reported from s.e. Arizona Dec. 4–Jan. 30. Arizona's 3rd documented **Field Sparrow** (and the first for s. Arizona) was discovered by Curtis Smith while he was searching for other nearby rarities at the San Pedro R. Inn s. of Hereford Dec. 12; this rarity was well documented with photos and written descriptions (ph. MS, ph. GHR, CDB, SM, m. ob.) and was last seen Feb. 21.

Lark Buntings are rare in n. Arizona during migration, but one found in Page Feb. 9 (C. Goetze) was remarkable. Greater-than-normal numbers of Fox Sparrows were reported from s. Arizona this winter. Rare in Arizona, three Harris's Sparrows were reported, with one at a South Mt. park residence Dec. 28 through the period (L. Shaberly), a 2nd at Picacho Res. Feb. 13 (D. Pearson), and a 3rd at the Prescott S.T.P., also Feb. 13 (CT). A male Black-headed Grosbeak w. of Prescott Dec. 6 through the period (E. Lovejoy) provided the 2nd winter record for *Yavapai*. Bronzed Cowbirds are very localized in winter in Arizona, but this winter they were reported from a number of locations; two were in Roll Jan. 15 (PL, RH), eight were in Wellton (PL, RH), and six were seen w. of Douglas Feb. 22 (SM).

Contributors (area compilers in boldface):

Charlie Babbitt, Jerry Bock, Hank Brodtkin, Nikolle Brown, Jim Burns (JiB), Alan Craig, **John Coons** (Flagstaff), Troy Corman, Rich Ditch, Aaron Flesch, Steve Ganley (SGa), **Jay Hand** (Tucson), Stuart Healy, George Hentz, Rich Hoyer, **Dave Jasper** (Portal), Roy Jones, **Dave Krueper** (Sierra Vista), Steve Mlodinow, Narca Moore-Craig, Jeremy Nance, Richard Palmer, Mike Patten, **Roger Radd** (Cottonwood), John Spence, **John Spencer** (Globe), Dave Stejskal, **Mark Stevenson** (Tucson), **Carl S. Tomoff** (Prescott), **Jack Whetstone** (Sierra Vista), Sheri Williamson, Jay Withgott (JyWi), **Janet Witzeman** (Phoenix), Robert Witzeman, Tom Wood.

Gary H. Rosenberg, P.O. Box 91856, Tucson, AZ 85752-1856 (garyhr@rtd.com), and **Chris D. Benesh**, 4308 E. Poe St., Tucson, AZ 85711 (cbenesh@rtd.com)

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