

New Mexico

CONTRIBUTORS: Charles Babbitt, Steve Barlow, Jack Bartley (JBa), Robin Baxter, Tom Beatty, Chris D. Benesh, Barbara Bickel, Jerry Bock (JBo), Hank Brodtkin, Matt Brown, John Coons, **Troy Corman** (Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas), Henry Detwiler, Pierre Deviche, Rich Ditch, Jon L. Dunn, Jeff Estis, Shawnee Finnegan, Lex Glover, Clive Green, Bill Grossi, Jay Hand, Stuart Healy, John Hirth, Rich Hoyer, Rob Hunt (RHu), **Marge Imperatrice** (Globe), Melody Kehl, Ken Kertell, Heidi Lauchstedt, Chuck LaRue, Jim Levy, Seymour Levy, Bill Massey, Tracy McCarthy, Norma Miller, Brian Nicholas, Dick Palmer, Dave Pearson (DPe), Bev Pickering, Molly Pollock (MPo), Mark Pretti, Donna Roten, Will Russell, **Bill Scott** (SE Arizona), Bob Schutsky (BSc), James Smith, Dave Stejskal, Mark M. Stevenson, Rick Taylor, **Carl Tomoff** (Prescott), David West, George West, Jack Whetstone (JWh), John Williams (JWi), Sheri Williamson, **Janet Witzeman** (Phoenix), Tom Wood.



Sartor O. Williams III

New Mexico Bird Records Committee
1819 Meadowview Drive, NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104-2511
(sunbittern@earthlink.net)

Extrême drought conditions continued into summer 2002, with forest and range fires and dry rivers and reservoirs dominating the news, indeed the national news. Breeding birds were affected and many species—especially Neotropical migrants—abandoned the effort and began to wander; scattered July rains, however, allowed some resident species to nest successfully. Several genuine rarities were documented, as was the first successful Aplomado Falcon nest in half a century.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte Lake); L.V.N.W.R. (Las Vegas N.W.R.); Maxwell (Maxwell N.W.R. and vicinity); N.R.T. (n. Roosevelt migrant trap near Melrose); R.G.V. (Rio Grande Valley); R.S. (Rattlesnake Springs area, *Eddy*); Sevilleta (Sevilleta N.W.R.).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Causing excitement were up to 3 Common Loons summering at Stubblefield L. 7 Jun—31 Jul (DC, JP, JO, BP). Perhaps refugees from drought conditions farther n., American White Pelicans appeared at several locales, including highs of 240 near Mosquero 16 Jun (CR), 40 at E.B.L. 3 Jul (WW), and 26 at Maxwell 22 Jul (DC). High count for Neotropical Cormorant was only 34 at Bosque 21 Jul (CR); one was n. to La Joya 11 Jul (WH). A well-described female **Anhinga** along the Rio Grande in White Rock Canyon, *Sandoval* 1 Jun (SF) furnished the state's 4th record. Noteworthy waterbirds included a Great Egret n. to the Cimarron area 6 Jun (DC), an imm. Little Blue Heron at Bosque 21 Jul (CR), a Tricolored Heron at B.L.N.W.R. 17-31 Jul (GW et al.), and an imm. **Reddish Egret** at Bosque Redondo 7-10 Jun (vt. JO, ph. J. Levy). The ad. **White Ibis** in the Bosque-La Joya area in May was last reported at Bosque 4 Jun (R. Kruidenier). Two imm. **Roseate Spoonbills** at B.L.N.W.R. 24-25 Jul (JM, ph. B. McGee) furnished only the 3rd well-documented New Mexico record and the first since 1984.

Wood Ducks a bit out of range included singles at Stubblefield L. 29 Jun—6 Jul (ph. DC) and near Black L., *Colfax* 30 Jun (CR, PS) Post-breeding ducks of several species arrived unusually early, including 3 Lesser Scaup at Holloman L. 28 Jun (MS, JZ). Unusual were one to 2 Ring-necked Ducks at Tyrone on various dates 2 Jun—28 Jul (EL), as were 3 at Maxwell 13 Jul (BP). A Common Merganser with 4 young was on the Cimarron R. e. of Cimarron 3 Jun (DC).

New Mexico's breeding Osprey population increased to 14 pairs this season, with 12 in the Heron-El Vado area (DS), one at Cochiti (M Watson), and a new one at Ramah (T. Johnson); none were known prior to 1990. Perhaps drought-related, Osprey productivity was poor in the Heron-El Vado area (DS), while in *Colfax*, only one of three active Bald Eagle nests was successful (SOW). Typical of dry years, there was no evidence of Northern Harriers breeding in the Pecos Valley, including at B.L.N.W.R. (WH, GW). A juv. **Gray Hawk** was in Guadalupe Canyon 5 Jul (JP, JO), the 2nd consecutive year for the species there. Two Common Black-Hawks were n. in the Pecos Valley to Santa Rosa 1 Jun (DE, BN), while in *Lincoln* a record 10 occupied territories were in the R. Ruidoso, R. Bonito, and Hondo R. valleys, with 6 active nests under observation in Jun (DS, R. Troy). In the sw, black-hawks continued to thrive in the Cliff-Gila Valley, where there were 28 pairs in Jun (SS), and an active nest was near Mimbres 10 Jun (C. Hayes). Unusual was a Zone-tailed Hawk near Radium Springs 2 Jun and 9 Jul (MS, JZ). The resident **Aplomado Falcon** pair in s. New Mexico fledged 3 young by 31 Jul (RM), marking the first successful nesting by naturally occurring Aplomados in New Mexico—and the United States—in 50 years. This historic natural recolonization continued to be threatened by proposed releases of hundreds of captive Aplomados of tropical lowland origin into the high desert grasslands of w. Texas and s. New Mexico.

PHEASANTS THROUGH CUCKOOS

A Ring-necked Pheasant with chicks on Ponil Cr near Cimarron 20 Jul (ph. DC) furnished one of the few breeding records for *Colfax*. Most encouraging was evidence of up to 5 White-tailed Ptarmigan on Latir Peak 11 Jun (ER, BL), where last documented in 1978. Although rarely reported, a small population of Blue Grouse persists in the mountains e. of Mogollon, where 2 were near Silver Creek Divide 15 Jul (J. & M. Carter). The 3 Lesser Prairie-Chickens 5 km ne. of Broadview, *Curry* 11 Jun (LS) were at the n. fringe of the

currently occupied New Mexico range; overall, the species has been nearly eliminated from over 80% of its historic range. Snowy Plovers peaked with 371 at B.L.N.W.R. 21 Jun (GW) and 18 at Holloman L. 14 Jun (GE); Snowies elsewhere were up to 5 at Maxwell 4–15 Jun (DC), 2 at Springer L. 13 Jul (JP, JO), and 5 at Sumner L. 7 Jun (JO). Early was a Semipalmated Plover at Stubblefield L. 31 Jul (DC). Mountain Plovers with chicks were near Costilla, *Taos* 27 Jun (BL), Farley 13 Jul (JP, JO), and Santo Domingo 11 Jun (WW). Early was a Solitary Sandpiper at Sevilleta 11 Jul (WH); one to 2 Solitaries were at Bosque 21 Jul (CR), Luis Lopez 22 Jul (JO), and *Hidalgo* 24 Jul (LM), and 4 were near Pep 25 Jul (LS). Presumably early fall Willets were one near Cimarron 20 Jun (DC) and 7 at B.L.N.W.R. 21 Jun (GW); up to 3 were at E.B.L. by 7 Jul (JP, JO). At least 8 migrant Upland Sandpipers were near Portales 24 Jul (LS). Owing to dry conditions, Long-billed Curlews fared poorly in New Mexico breeding areas, and several appeared in non-breeding areas quite early, including one at Albuquerque 9 Jun (BN) and 51 near Loving 6 Jun (SW). Early were 5 Marbled Godwits at E.B.L. 7 Jul (JP, JO) and one at Springer L. 18 Jul (DC); one at Tyrone 28 Jul (EL) provided a local first. Late were 2 Sanderlings at B.L.N.W.R. 4 Jun (WH); early was one at Stubblefield L. 6 Jul (DC). A flock of about 30 White-rumped Sandpipers frequented Sumner L. 1–7 Jun (DE, BN, WH, JO), and farther w., 10 were near Cimarron 6 Jun (DC) and one at Ruby Ranch near Las Vegas 9 Jun (WW); in the e., 4 were at Portales 1 Jun (JO) and one was at Brantley L. 2 Jun (JO). Unusual for the date and locale were 3 Pectoral Sandpipers at Deming 13 Jul (LM). Late Stilt Sandpipers were singles at Maxwell 4 Jun (DC) and Sumner L. 1 Jun (DE, BN) and 13 at B.L.N.W.R. 7 Jun (GW). Suggestive of local breeding was a winnowing Wilson's Snipe at Springer L. 4 Jun (SOW); 6 were on Ponil Cr. near Cimarron 6 Jun (DC).

Lingering from the spring invasion was a **Laughing Gull** at Sumner L. 4 Jun (ph. WH). Unusual were 14 Forster's Terns at Bosque 3 Jul (WW). Least Terns enjoyed a relatively good breeding season at B.L.N.W.R.—of 11 pairs present, nine successfully hatched chicks, and 17 eventually fledged (JM); elsewhere, 5 Least Terns were at Brantley L. 9 Jun (JO) and one was at Holloman L. 28 Jun (MS, JZ). Black Terns are unexpected anywhere in New Mexico in late Jun, so noteworthy were 2 at Stubblefield L. 15 Jun (DC), 2 at B.L.N.W.R. 21 Jun (GW), and 9 at Maxwell 29 Jun (DC). Eurasian Collared-Doves continued much in

evidence in Silver City and from the R G V eastward (m. ob.); noteworthy were 2 at Los Alamos 7 Jul (*fide* JT). Far n. was a White-winged Dove at Maxwell 27 Jun and 10 Jul (ph. DC); unusual carnivorous behavior by White-winged was observed at Roswell, where the doves perched on algal mats in the Spring R. and fed on damselflies attempting to lay eggs (R. Larsen). A vocal Common Ground-Dove was near Radium Springs 6–9 Jun (MS, ph. JZ), while at least 4—and possibly 7—were at Clanton Cienega, Animas Valley, 6 Jun (JP, vt. JO). Yellow-billed Cuckoos where seldom reported included 3 on Perico Cr., *Union* 27 Jun (HS), 2 at Portales 24 Jul (LS), and one on Little Cherry Cr., Pinos Altos Mts. 10 Jul (DF).

OWLS THROUGH BECARDS

A vocal Whiskered Screech-Owl at P.O. Canyon 18 Jun (CL) furnished a local first and the northernmost yet for the Peloncillo Mts. Some 500 Burrowing Owls were at 83 of 131 prairie dog towns visited in *Quay*, *Curry*, and *Roosevelt* through the period (LS), and 29 ads. plus a similar number of young were at one site near Pep 29 Jun (SS); encouraging for the sw. were 10, including 5 juvs., in the s. Animas Valley 17 Jul (JR). Three young Long-eared Owls were in a nest at La Madera, *Sandoval* 15 Jun (ph. R. Gracey). A vocal Northern Saw-whet Owl was on Eagle Peak, *Catron* 15 Jun (JO); breeding-season records in the sw. are scarce. Westerly Chimney Swifts were one at Raton 13 Jul (BP) and 2 at Las Vegas 12 Jun (WW); White-throateds far e. were 4 visiting nests at the Mosquero escarpment 16 Jun (CR) and one at the caprock escarpment near Bellview, *Curry* 11 Jun (LS).

Single male Broad-billed Hummingbirds were n. in the Peloncillo Mts. to P.O. Canyon 13 Jun—31 Jul (CL) and Skeleton Canyon 27 Jun (JO) and e. to Carlsbad 13 Jun and 27 Jul (E. Pierce, *fide* SW). A **Berylline Hummingbird** was visiting thistles in the s. Animas Valley near San Luis Pass 10 Jun (SOW); there is but one previous New Mexico record. Single Magnificants were at four *Grant* sites 7–18 Jul (JP, JO. P. Tabor, S. Scott); in the Sacramento Mts., one was on the R. Penasco 16 Jun (WH). Lucifer Hummingbirds away from their P.O. Canyon stronghold were one each in Skeleton Canyon 28 Jul (JP, vt. JO) and Clanton Canyon 24 Jul (LM). An Anna's in P.O. Canyon through the period was joined by another there 18–19 Jul (CL); other post-breeding Anna's were singles at Deming 12–13 Jul (LM) and Carlsbad 26 Jul (SW). Earliest fall migrant Calliopes were singles at Deming 4 Jul (LM) and at Luis

Lopez (JO) and Radium Springs (MS, JZ) 9 Jul, earliest Rufous returnees were singles at Los Alamos 27 Jun (JT), Manzano Mts. 27 Jun (TH) and Coyote Cr., *Mora* 30 Jun (CR). A totally green-backed male *Selasphorus* hummingbird at Luis Lopez 24-26 Jul (JP, vt. JO) may have been an Allen's; a mostly green-backed Rufous was present at the same time.

A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers nesting at Carlsbad 28 Jun produced one young by 30 Jul (*vide* SW), apparently the first successful *Eddy* breeding in many years. Noteworthy for the Manzano Mts. were one to 3 Acorn Woodpeckers 18 Jun—17 Jul (TH) Three-toed Woodpeckers are resident in the higher reaches of the Mogollon Mts.; remarkably low, however, was an ad. male near San Francisco Hot Springs 14 Jul (HW). A Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet pair was adding lining to a Guadalupe Canyon nest 11-13 Jun (SOW). An Olive-sided Flycatcher was in the Gallinas Mts. near Corona 15 Jun (HS), where summer residency is possible but not proven. There was good news for endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatchers in the middle R.G.V., with a record 12 territories in the La Joya—Sevilleta area, three territories in new areas n. of Bosque, and a record 56 territories near San Marcial Jun—Jul (Bureau of Reclamation); elsewhere, four pairs on Ponil Cr 14 Jun—24 Jul (DC) furnished a *Colfax* summer first, beavers created new habitat for a pair at Blackrock near Zuni in Jun (S. Albert), and a single was on the Pecos R. at Villanueva 27 Jun (GM). Now widespread in summer in n. New Mexico, 2-6 Gray Flycatchers were found s. to Reserve (JO), Vick's Peak (HS), White Oaks (SOW), and Pinon (WH) 2-16 Jun. A vocal Dusky Flycatcher was s. to Pumphouse Canyon near Cloudcroft 16 Jun (SW). Far n. and a *Colfax* first was a Black Phoebe nest near Cimarron that produced fledglings by 13 Jul (ph. DC); a reported 40 Black Phoebes were feasting on flies at a Peralta horse barn 13 Jun (KC). There are few verified Eastern Phoebe nests for New Mexico, so noteworthy was a nesting pair at Mills Canyon, *Harding* 25 Jun (HS, DC) that produced at least one fledgling by 16 Jul (ph. DC). Noteworthy for the high elevation were 2 Say's Phoebes at Sandia Crest 9 Jun (BV), where one was reported in May. A pair of Vermilion Flycatchers was ne. to Santa Rosa 7 Jun (JO). A Great Crested Flycatcher near Portales 10 Jul (LS) provided the only report Thick-billed Kingbirds were notably scarce in Guadalupe Canyon, with but one there 11-13 Jun (SOW) and 2 noted 5 Jul (JP, JO) A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher strayed w. to Sumner L. 16 Jul (M. MacRoberts). An ad.

male **Rose-throated Becard** was reported at Las Cruces 6-7 Jun (J. Green, L. Schulte); never verified in New Mexico, this was the first to be reported since 1984.

VIREOS THROUGH PHAINOPEPLA

A strong showing by **White-eyed Vireos** produced singing singles on the Cimarron R. near Cimarron 8 Jul (ph. DC) and on the Gila R. near Gila 17 Jun (HW, DF); another (or the same) was on the Gila R. above Mogollon Cr. 24 Jun (HW). Encouraging were 10 Bell's Vireos at Redrock 4 Jun (RW), and Bell's was described as more plentiful than usual in the Cliff-Gila Valley (SS). Noteworthy Gray Vireos were singles singing in the Caja del Rio area, *Santa Fe* 23 & 28 Jun (JO, JP), 10 at seven sites in the Quebradas area, *Socorro* 6 Jun (*vide* NC), and at least one in Guadalupe Canyon 11-13 Jun (SOW). Unexpected for the date and location were one to 2 Hutton's Vireos in Guadalupe Canyon 11-13 Jun (SOW) and 5 Jul (JP, JO). A Red-eyed Vireo was near Gila 1 Jul (KB, DF).

Blue Jay reports have increased recently in *Colfax*; this season one summered at Maxwell 12 Jun—21 Jul, where it was joined by another 22-31 Jul (ph. DC). Peripheral Black-billed Magpies were singles s. to Peralta 16 Jun (KC), Canyon Blanco, sw. *San Miguel* 29 Jun (JO), and Mills Canyon 16 Jul (DC). Chihuahuan Ravens have only recently been found nesting n. to *Mora* and *Colfax*; this season, nests were documented n. of Wagon Mound (B. Willard) and at several *Colfax* sites, including e. of Springer (B. Willard), s. of Abbott 12 Jun and 11 Jul (DC), and n. of Maxwell 4 Jun (K. Granillo). Additional evidence of Purple Martin colonization of the Sangre de Cristo Mts. was provided by 15 on the Sapello R. at San Ignacio, *San Miguel* 27 Jul (WW) and one near Rowe 8 Jun (CR). Far e. were 2 Violet-green Swallows at the Mosquero escarpment 16 Jun (CR). Owing to construction disturbance, w. Albuquerque's Calabacillas Arroyo Bank Swallow colony was reduced to about 175 nesting pairs 7 Jul (WH). A family group of at least 4 Mexican Chickadees was in Indian Creek Canyon, Animas Mts. 14 Jun (SOW, AC). A Juniper Titmouse at the Mosquero escarpment was far e. of expected. Brown Creepers were seldom reported were singing singles at P.O. Flats, Zuni Mts. 12 Jun (HS) and the Gallinas Mts. near Corona 15 Jun (HS); noteworthy were 12 near Cloudcroft 16 Jun (WH).

Cactus Wrens on their ne. frontier were one in s. *Harding* 21 Jun (DC), 3 e. of Pastura 4 Jun (WH), and one near Rogers, *Roosevelt* 10 Jul (LS). Black-tailed Gnatcatchers in the

sw. were 3 at Redrock 4 Jun (RW) and singles there 4 Jul (JO) and at San Simon Cienega 5 Jul (JP) and Guadalupe Canyon 12 Jun (SOW). Two Townsend's Solitaries were in the Gallinas Mts. 15 Jun (HS), where the species is a regular but rare breeder; noteworthy was a vocal one in the Manzano Mts. 16 Jun (TH). A single Veery near Vadito, *Taos*, 2 Jul (WW) furnished the only report of this scarce breeder; 2 vocal Swainson's Thrushes were in that same area 29 Jun (JP) and 2 Jul (WW). The **Wood Thrush** found at N.R.T. 31 May lingered until 9 Jun (JP, DE, BN, WH, JO, SW). Gray Catbirds in the middle and lower R.G.V. included 2 at Sevilleta 11 Jul (WH) and singles at Bosque 21 Jul (CR) and Radium Springs 24 Jul (JZ). Single Brown Thrashers were near Cimarron 30 Jul (DC) and at Boone's Draw 23 Jul (LS). A pair of Bendire's Thrashers in the Caja del Rio area near Santa Fe 11 Jun (WW) produced at least one fledgling by 23 Jun (vt. JO). Late were 2 Cedar Waxwings at Dawson Cemetery near Cimarron 5 Jun (DC) A Phainopepla wandered n. to Bluewater Cr, Zuni Mts. 11 Jun (HS); another was e to near Mayhill 18 Jun (SW).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Several unusual warblers livened up the season, including single singing Northern Parulas at Corrales 25 Jun (DK) and Quara 16 Jun (NP), an ad. male **Magnolia Warbler** at N.R.T. 2 Jun (DE, BN), a **Yellow-throated Warbler** at R.S. 21 Jul (BV), a female **Bay-breasted Warbler** at Eagle Cr., *Lincoln* 17 Jun (SW), and single Black-and-white Warblers at N.R.T. 4 Jun (WH) and near Gila 17 Jul (KB). At Corrales on 25 Jun were a singing American Redstart, a singing Ovenbird, and 3 singing Hooded Warblers (DK); single Hoodeds were also there 16 Jun and 16 Jul (DK). Most remarkable was a probable **Canada Warbler**, described as a female, on the Gila R. above Cliff on the very early date of 22 Jul (HW); there are but eight previous New Mexico records and none in fall earlier than 11 Sep. A Red-faced Warbler was n. to Diener Canyon, Zuni Mts. 29 Jun (J DeLong); in the se., 6 Red-faceds were along the Rio Penasco near Cloudcroft 15-16 Jun (WH). Hepatic Tanagers are scarce in the Manzano Mts., so noteworthy were one near Cedro 30 Jun (JO), a pair in Tajique Canyon 19 Jun (HS), and one at Quara 16 Jun (NP), early for the lowlands was one at R.S. 21 Jun (BV). Summer Tanagers in the ne. included singles at Villanueva 27 Jun (GM) and near Sabinoso 16 Jun (CR). Western Tanagers were conspicuous in lowland areas by mid-