

Arizona



Gary H. Rosenberg

(PASSERINES)

P.O. Box 91856

Tucson, Arizona 85752-1856

(ghrosenberg@comcast.net)

Mark M. Stevenson

(NON-PASSERINES)

4201 East Monte Vista Drive #J207

Tucson, Arizona 85712-5554

(drbrdr@att.net)

Abbreviations: Arizona Bird Committee (A.B.C.), Boyce Thompson Arboretum (B.T.A.), Gila Farms Pond (G.F.P.), Hassayampa River Preserve (H.R.P.), lower Colorado River Valley (L.C.R.V.), Navajo Indian Reservation (N.I.R.), Pinal Airpark Pecan Grove (P.A.P.), San Pedro River (S.P.R.), Santa Cruz River (S.C.R.), Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson (S.W.T.), Tohono O'odham Reservation (T.O.R.).

GREBES THROUGH MERGANSERS

The Least Grebe continued at S.W.T. through the period. (m. ob.). A Red-necked Grebe on the Colorado R. in Yuma 15 Dec (ph., †HD) was about the 10th for Arizona. Most records are from the L.C.R.V. The only Clark's Grebe away from the large lakes was one in Marana 8 Feb (SB). Three Brown Pelicans on Tempe Town L. 29 Jan+ were among the few that have ever wintered in Arizona and were likely holdovers from summer. Neotropical Cormorants have certainly colonized *Maricopa* in recent years, with up to 50 estimated to be present this winter (TC, m. ob.), chiefly in the Phoenix "valley." A Great Egret at Willow L., Prescott 1 Dec–4 Jan (CT) was far n. for winter. An imm. Tricolored Heron on the Gila R. at 115th Ave. 17 Dec–12 Jan (†TC) made the first Arizona winter record. A Black-crowned Night Heron at Willow L. 20 Jan (CT) was also far north.

A juv. blue morph Snow Goose, casual in

the state, accompanied a white ad. at Lyman L. 14 Dec (MMS, MPo). Small-form Canada Geese are casual in Arizona; the resident bird at Wellton golf course was again reported 9–14 Jan (PEL), while another was at Fountain Hills 21 Jan–24 Feb (KR, TC). In light of several w. reintroduction programs, the provenance of **Trumpeter Swans** in Arizona is still uncertain. There are only two accepted records, both of unbanded birds. This winter saw perhaps the largest influx ever, with 13 Trumpeters statewide: 7 unbanded birds at Kachina Wetlands, Flagstaff 7 Dec (S. Ordway, ph. P. Kegley), 2 neck-banded juvs. at Cibola N.W.R. 20–30 Dec (fide M. Muchowski), and a neck-banded ad. from Idaho that accompanied an unbanded pair and imm. at Camp Verde 30–31 Dec (K. Fultz, et al., ph. MMS, RR). A single unbanded ad. located nearby 11 Jan–10 Feb (TC, m. ob.) was likely a survivor of the latter group. Conversely, Tundra Swans were few, with 3 at Tacna 10 Dec (B. Henry) and one at Page S.T.P. 26 Dec–11 Jan (J. Spence, CL).

Eurasian Wigeons continue to be sparse: an ad. male at Sun City West 27 Nov–17 Jan (CT) and the continuing male in Scottsdale 1 Dec+ (ph. J. Woodley, m. ob.) were the only ones reported. The male American Wigeon x Eurasian Wigeon hybrid returned to Willcox for a 5th winter 7 Dec+ (JHi). A male Cinnamon Teal at Cow Springs L. 19 Dec (CL) was a first winter record for the N.I.R. A female Tufted Duck reported from the Sedona S.T.P. 21 Dec (†JP) was of great interest and will be reviewed by the A.B.C.; there is only one accepted record of Tufted Duck for Arizona, a male that returned to Mesa for multiple winters. Three of the 4 White-winged Scoters found in fall on L. Havasu wintered 1 Dec–5 Apr (CB et al.). A lone Long-tailed Duck, casual in the state, was at G. F. P. 8 Dec and 24 Feb+ (PD). Barrow's Goldeneyes are casual away from the Colorado R.; 2 were in *Apache* this winter, with single males reported from Lyman L. 14–21 Dec (MMS, MPo) and Nelson Res. 15 Dec (DR, GC). Twelve Hooded Mergansers at Rainbow L., Pinetop 14 Dec (GC et al.) was a large number for n. Arizona. Typically sparse, single Red-breasted Mergansers were at Roosevelt Dam 28 Dec (MPo, MMS), L. Powell 11 Jan (MMS, MPo), and Tempe Town L. 29 Jan (T. Gaskill).

KITES THROUGH GULLS

Notable White-tailed Kite reports were up to 5 in the San Rafael Valley (m. ob.) but none on the Gila River C.B.C. (TC). The Arlington Valley had been a population center for the species. Adding to but a handful of winter records of Gray Hawk for Arizona, an ad. was in Amado 9 Dec–25 Jan (C. Gottlund-Stevens, m. ob.), and what was likely the same bird was seen in ne. Tucson 29 Jan (WR). In addition to the resident pair at H.R.P. (TC, m. ob.), single Red-shouldered Hawks were at Pasture Canyon through 19 Dec (CL), Katherine Landing 3 Dec (†MMS, MPo), and Green Valley 10–28 Dec (R. Wolcott, ph. KK). The

species remains an irregular, casual, mainly winter visitor. Single Zone-tailed Hawks were noted in Tucson through the season (m. ob.), in Dudleyville 4 Jan (TM), and in Yuma 15 Feb (A. & H. Borghardt, *fide* HD). They are casual in winter.

In addition to the Harlan's Red-tailed Hawks noted in fall, singles were reported from the San Rafael Valley 14 Dec (GB, PS) and Beaver Dam Wash 29 Jan+ (R. Fridell). A few lone Crested Caracaras wandered from their core T.O.R. range: 17 km w. of Casa Grande 10 Jan (PS), Green Valley 20 Jan (C. Morley), and Red Rock 17 Feb (D. Jeness).

Rare at any time in the n. and accidental there in winter, Common Moorhens were spotted at Prescott 7 Dec (CT) and Pinetop 14 Dec (GC, DR, S. Sitko), reflecting mild weather. Few reports of Mountain Plover were received. In addition to the Western Sod Farm flock, separate groups of 8 and 12 were noted in the Sulfur Springs Valley 5 Dec–17 Jan (SH, MMS et al.).

A Greater Yellowlegs at Lyman L. 9–15 Dec was very late at that elevation (DR et al.). Casual in winter, Western Sandpipers were: 2 at El Mirage 7 Dec–12 Jan (TC et al.), with singles along the S.C.R. in Marana 15 Dec–22 Jan (m. ob.) and in Roll 5 Jan (PEL). Up to 4 Dunlin wintered along the S.C.R. in Marana (WR, m. ob.), while up to 3 were at El Mirage 7 Dec–21 Jan (TC, m. ob.). Accidental in winter, 2 Wilson's Phalaropes were in Chandler 25 Nov–15 Feb (PD, P. Moulton). Also accidental in winter, 5 Bonaparte's Gulls were at Willcox 7 Dec (JHi et al.), and one strayed to Willow L. 6 Feb (B. Thomen, W. Anderson). Casual at any season, an ad. Heerman's Gull at Amado followed the pattern of sporadic brief appearances on 2 Feb (J. Murray). California Gull reports were of 3 at Roosevelt L. 5 Dec (JE), one at Willcox 12 Dec (SH), and one at Green Valley S.T.P. 22 Dec (PS), all accidentals.

DOVES THROUGH FLICKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase, with most noted in rural areas. A few reported from Prescott and Flagstaff were in more suburban settings (CT, JP et al.). "Ringed Turtle-Doves" continue to be seen in some of the same areas, highlighting the need for careful observation. The major fall Ruddy Ground-Dove invasion continued, with 33 additional birds—making a very high total of 76. Notable flocks were 6 at El Mirage 8 Dec (BG, m. ob.), 8 in the Mohawk Valley 9 Jan (PEL, CW), and 8 at Red Rock 12 Feb+ (J. McCabe, m. ob.). Farther nw., 3 were in Prescott 8 Jan+ (CT), only a 3rd local record.

Accidental in the lowlands, an imm. Spotted Owl that roosted in a yard in Oro Valley 24 Feb–30 Mar (B. Ericsson, m. ob.) was not far from breeding areas in the Catalina Mts. Casual away from the mountains, a Northern Saw-whet Owl was in a desert wash in the White Tank Mts. 7 Dec (J. Rorabaugh). A Lesser Nighthawk on the Gila R. C.B.C. 27

Dec was one of very few recent winter records (*fide* TC).

A reported first-fall male Berylline Hummingbird in Ramsey Canyon through at least 1 Jan (m. ob.) unfortunately went undocumented. (There are as yet no documented winter records for the state; the presence of multiple summering hybrid hummingbirds resembling Berylline magnifies the need for documentation.) Violet-crowned Hummingbirds were present in good numbers, with up to 15 at feeders from Portal to Tucson (m. ob.), 9 of which appeared 1–24 Jan, suggesting early arrival. Very late-lingering Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were in lower Carr Canyon 12 Dec (H. Brodtkin) and Tucson 21 Dec (DSj). Spring males arrived as early as 2 Feb in E. Whitetail Canyon (RT), with several more in mid-elevation canyons by mid-Feb, when still casual (m. ob.). A Rufous Hummingbird on the Ramsey Canyon C.B.C. 28 Dec (*fide* T. Mouras) and a *Selasphorus* species on the Portal C.B.C. 28 Dec (*fide* LG) were quite late.

A single Green Kingfisher along the upper S.P.R. 20 Dec–16 Jan (T. Mouras, S. Kunzer, m. ob.) was the first reported in the state since the preceding Feb. In addition to the 20 Lewis's Woodpeckers reported from fall, 25 more were reported from Camp Verde southward (m. ob.), well above average. Six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, casual in winter, was a recent high total: the ad. male continued in Green Valley through 23 Feb (m. ob.), with another at Kino Springs 16 Feb+ (RH et al.), while single juvs. were at Peña Blanca L. 9 Dec (GHR et al.), along the Verde R 19 Dec (TC, †TM), in Nogales 22 Dec–1 Jan (ph. KR et al.), and in lower Miller Canyon 19 Dec (JH, SF). Casual in Arizona, single Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flickers were at Nogales 12 Feb (C. DeWaard) and P.A.P. 13 Feb+ (C. Green, m. ob.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH THRASHERS

A Gray Flycatcher found along the Verde R. downstream from Camp Verde 1 Jan (TC) was n. of its normal wintering range. Eastern Phoebe were found in higher-than-usual frequency this season, with 2 at Patagonia L. 30 Oct+ (P. Walsh, C. Benesh, MMS, m. ob.), one at Portal at an unusually high elevation for winter 9 Dec (RWe), one reported near Tumacacori 18 Dec (GB), one at Tubac 3 Jan (ph. KK), one located along the Salt R. in sw. Phoenix 11 Jan–15 Mar (M. Vandewater), and one along the S.C.R. near Rio Rico 15 Jan–28 Feb (M. Kehl et al.). Vermilion Flycatchers winter regularly in small numbers at lower elevations, yet 23 located on the Santa Catalina

Mts. C.B.C. 14 Dec was an unusually high count (*fide* B. Bates). Other Vermilions of note included one at Prescott 19 Dec (†CT), providing only a 2nd local winter record, and one from Page Springs 21 Dec (RR). Very late, and likely wintering locally, was a Cassin's Kingbird at Patagonia 1 Jan (DT); this species is casual in the se. during the winter season. More astounding was the discovery of a **Thick-billed Kingbird** at Yuma 15–22 Feb (J. Coker, ph. HD); there were about seven previous records from the L.C.R.V., four of which were from late fall and winter.

The only Northern Shrike reported from usual winter localities in n. Arizona was one continuing in the Klethla Valley sw. of Kayenta through 26 Jan (CL, m. ob.). A Bell's Vireo that lingered late into the fall ended up wintering at B.T.A. and was heard singing sporadically through 1 Mar (JBo et al.), providing one of few reliable winter records. At least 8 Cassin's and 3 Plumbeous Vireos were found around s. Arizona, further indicating that both forms are regular in winter. What appeared to be a major corvid flight to Arizona ended up fizzling out by Jan, a pattern that is fairly typical. Steller's Jays showed up in the lowlands, with one in Sun City near Phoenix 27 Nov–2 Jan (CT et



This Least Grebe, casual in winter in Arizona, was present the entire winter at Sweetwater Wetlands in Tucson. Photograph by Gary Rosenberg.

al.), 4 in Mohave Wash on the Bill Williams C.B.C. 15 Dec (*fide* K. Blair), one in Dudleyville 24 Dec (M. O'Brien), and 2 in Oro Valley 14 Feb (B. Abelson). Pinyon Jays were an enigma this winter, with a large group of 200+ present near Parker Canyon L. 15 Dec–27 Jan (SB et al.) but apparently no others reported. Only a few Western Scrub-Jays were reported in the lowlands. Clark's Nutcracker made a more impressive movement into the state. The 3 that appeared in Sawmill Canyon, Huachuca Mts. during Oct remained there through Feb, while 2 each

were found in Mohave Wash on the Bill Williams C.B.C. 15 Dec (*fide* K. Blair) and on the Portal C.B.C. 28 Dec (*fide* LG). A high count of 20 was tallied in upper Ramsey Canyon 28 Dec (*fide* T. Mouras). American Crows out of their normal range included one at Dudleyville 4 Jan (G. Clark, T. Price) and 2 at Prescott 12 Jan–8 Feb (R. Davis).

At least 9 Tree Swallows were reported between late Dec and early Feb, suggesting a small number of overwintering birds. Twenty Northern Rough-winged Swallows in sw. Phoenix 7 Dec (TC) was a late date for that number. A single Cliff Swallow at Mittry L. 21 Dec (†J. Coker, B. Miller) was very late; this species is casual at best during the winter. Two at G.F.P. 8 Feb (PD) were likely early migrants.

At least 14 Barn Swallows, also casual in winter, were found at scattered locations during the last week of Dec, with only one bird detected later, at Tucson 24 Jan (L. Liese). There were scattered lowland reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches from late Nov to late Dec (m. ob.) but none reported later. Winter Wrens are irregularly reported in the state; therefore, singles in Pasture Canyon 19 Dec (CL), at Portal 28 Dec (RWe), and at Carefree 30 Dec (TC) were noteworthy. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Becker L. in Springerville 5 Dec (DR) was extremely late for n. Arizona. The pair of Black-capped Gnatcatchers located at Patagonia L. during the fall (RH et al.) remained there the entire winter.

Quite interesting was the movement of Eastern Bluebirds into (or around) Arizona during the winter. Three were found in St. David 18 Dec (ph. SH), where accidental. A bird thought to be of the e. subspecies, nominate *sialis*, was at Kino Springs near Nogales 16 Jan (PEL), and another 3 also identified as *sialis* were at Cow Springs L. in late Dec (CL), providing a first N.I.R. report. Finally, 5 were at Wenima Wildlife Area near Springerville 24 Jan–28 Feb (DR). *Birds of Arizona* (Phillips et al.) cites multiple Arizona winter specimen records for *sialis*. It was perhaps the best year in memory for Rufous-backed Robins, with no fewer than 9 individuals found: the B.T.A. bird remained through the winter, and singles were in sw. Phoenix 14 Dec (TC), along Sonoita Cr. above Patagonia L. 15 Dec–19 Mar (R. Wilt), near Robbins Butte 20 Dec (M. Severson, *fide* TC), at Calabasas Park, Nogales 22 Dec–1 Jan (KR), on the Carefree C.B.C. 30 Dec (N. Shroud), at the Florida Canyon Work Station 15 Jan–9 Mar (K. McBride et al.), in Lyle Canyon 15 Jan (B. Allan), and in E. Whitetail Canyon 31 Jan (RT). Single Varied Thrushes were reported from Granite Basin 11–19 Dec (CT), Flagstaff 28 Dec–7 Feb (D. Herron), Prescott 29 Dec (S. Neely), near Carefree 30 Dec (W. Thurber), and another (or possibly the same female) from Prescott 16 Feb (W. Anderson); this species is still considered a casual winter visitor to Arizona.

Very unusual in winter, a Gray Catbird was found in Ramsey Canyon 28 Dec–5 Jan (B. Stocku; ph. MMS). Four Brown Thrashers, about normal for a winter, were found: at the B.T.A. again all winter, at Portal 28 Dec (*fide* LG), in Flagstaff 3 Jan–7 Feb (CL), and at Page Springs 26 Jan–16 Feb for the 3rd consecutive winter (RR).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Northern Parula continues to be a rare but regular winter visitor to the state, with one spending the entire winter along the Salt R. in sw. Phoenix (m. ob.), one at Sycamore Res., Catalina Mts. 14 Dec (JBo), one along the Verde R. s. of Hwy 87 19 Dec (TC, TM), one to 2 along the S.C.R. in Marana 7 Feb (K. Kroesen, S. Wilbor), and one along Sonoita Cr. above Patagonia L. 15 Feb (WR). Yellow War-

blers are usually casual during the winter; this year, at least 6 were found at scattered localities, mostly in mid-Dec, suggesting lingering fall birds, but at least one was present during mid-winter, along the S.C.R. in Marana 23 Jan (RH). A Magnolia Warbler at Topock 2 Dec (†MMS, MPo) represented one of the few winter reports ever for the state. Palm Warblers have been appearing more frequently in recent years, but winter reports are still few; this year, one was at Golden Shores 2 Dec (†MMS, MPo), one was found at Kino Springs 13 Dec–21 Mar (H. Bergtholdt et al.; ph. KK), and one was at Roll 9 Jan (CW). Seven Black-and-white Warblers, perhaps a few more than usual, were found this winter. American Redstarts, also rare but regular, were reported from Rio Rico 21 Dec (GB) and near Robbins Butte 27 Dec (TC). The usual number of Louisiana Waterthrushes was found, with the one along the S.P.R. continuing through 23 Feb (P. Walsh, m. ob.), and up to 2 along Sonoita Cr. above Patagonia L. all winter (SH, WR et al.). A Wilson's Warbler at Patagonia L. 1 Dec (MPo et al.) might be considered a late migrant, whereas one along the S.C.R. in Marana 23 Jan (RH) and another (or the same) along a different section of the river 7 Feb (K. Kroesen, S. Wilbor) likely wintered locally. Amazingly, the pair of Rufous-capped Warblers continued to be reported all winter from now-famous French Joe Canyon, where they appear to have taken up residency (RH et al.).

A male Hepatic Tanager was reported from the S.C.R. in Tucson 7 Feb (T. Martin et al.), an odd locality for a wintering bird. A male Summer Tanager in Tucson 17 Dec (JH) was thought to be an "eastern" bird. The bird of the season was certainly the female Eastern Towhee attending a Flagstaff feeder 15 Dec+ (ph. JC), providing what is certainly the westernmost record for the U.S. and only the 2nd for Arizona. American Tree Sparrow was once thought to be a rare but regular winter visitor in n. Arizona, particularly near Springerville, yet very few recent sightings have occurred; this winter, one was present at Wenima Wildlife Area 11 Dec–10 Feb, with another present there 25 Jan (DR et al.), and 2–3 were reported from Pasture Canyon 26 Dec–18 Jan (CL et al.). A Chipping Sparrow at Overgaard 22 Jan (K. Penland) represented one of the few winter reports ever from n. Arizona. A very cooperative Clay-colored Sparrow was present in Tucson 15 Dec–7 Feb (ph. RH), while others reported included one near Sierra Vista 1 Jan (SH) and another in Sabino Canyon 10 Jan–28 Feb (JLD et al.). Outside the normal winter range in Arizona, a Grasshopper Sparrow was at Roll 9 Jan (PEL, CW). Including the roughly 20 Fox Sparrows found statewide during the fall season, more than 45 Fox Sparrows were found between Oct 2002 and Jan 2003, certainly an unprecedented number. Of this high count, no fewer than 8 were identified as Sooty and 4 as Red. The rest, roughly 75%, were determined to be

the Rocky Mountain form, Slate-colored (with a few unidentified to form). Even though few of these individuals were actually documented and identification can be tricky between the various forms, a year such as this certainly sheds insight into the status of the various forms occurring in Arizona. At least 10 Swamp Sparrows were found statewide, the most significant coming from Pasture Canyon in n. Arizona 19 Dec–22 Jan (CL), where casual. About 20 White-throated Sparrows, a higher-than-usual number, were found this season. Single Harris's Sparrows were at Gisela 26 Dec (JE), near Cook's L. 4 Jan (TC), and along the S.C.R. in Marana 24 Feb–15 Mar (A. Morgan; ph. KK). Six Golden-crowned Sparrows, about normal for a winter, were reported; one sighting from Pasture Canyon 10–22 Jan (CL et al.) provided only a 2nd N.I.R. record.

Indigo Buntings, casual in the state in winter, were at Madera Canyon 14 Dec (GB) and along the S.C.R. near Marana 8 Feb (RH). Single Rusty Blackbirds, still a "review species," were in Pasture Canyon 26 Dec–10 Jan (CL, ph. MMS et al.) and Ganado L. 22 Jan (†PEL). An Orchard Oriole, casual in the state at any season, was along the S.C.R. 8–15 Feb (ph. RH et al.). More interesting was a deep-orange Hooded Oriole at Tumacacori 20 Dec (G. Martinez; ph. RH, MMS, MPo), clearly not of the breeding race found in Arizona. This, as far as we could tell, was a first Arizona record of a non-breeding form, details of which will be published elsewhere. A "normal" Hooded Oriole, also casual in winter, was in ne. Tucson 9 Dec (K. Englander). Wintering Bullock's Orioles were reported from Prescott 18 Dec–9 Jan (D. Moll, CT) and, for the 3rd consecutive winter, from Continental 5–20 Feb (K. McBride).

Scattered Cassin's Finches were reported from lowland localities, mostly appearing in Jan. This was clearly one of the better years in recent memory for Lawrence's Goldfinches in s. Arizona, with hundreds present at numerous localities in the S.C.R. Valley between Tucson and Nogales; a high count of 747 was reported on the Tucson C.B.C. 15 Dec (m. ob.).

Contributors (area compilers in boldface): Charles Babbit, Steve Barlow, Gavin Bieber, Jerry Bock (JBo), **John Coons** (Flagstaff), Troy Corman, Gary Crandall, Henry Detwiler, Pierre Deviche, Jon L. Dunn, Jeff Estis, Shawneen Finnegan, Larry Gates, Bill Grossi, Jay Hand, Stuart Healy, John Higgins (JHi), Rich Hoyer, Ken Kertell, Chuck LaRue, Paul E. Lehman, Tracy McCarthey, Molly Pollock (MPo), John Prather, Kurt Radamaker, Roger Radd, Donna Roten, Will Russell, Peter Salomon, Dave Stejskal (DSj), Mark M. Stevenson (MMS), Bill Scott (SE Arizona), Rick Taylor, Carl Tomoff (Prescott), Diane Touret, Richard Webster (RWe), **Janet Witze-man** (Phoenix), Chris Wood. ☉