

(JO), and 3 at Valley of Fires, Lincoln 4 Dec (CR, BN). Attracting national attention was a **Yellow Grosbeak** at Albuquerque. First noticed in early Dec (ph. R. Powell) and 5 Jan (ph. M. Ratliff), it was discovered by birders 22 Jan (JEP, JO et al.) and enjoyed (and photographed) by hundreds through the season. Apparently a subad. male, the grosbeak frequented feeders in the North Valley through 1 Feb, then relocated to the University area mid-Feb–Mar (m.ob.).

An impressive **Rusty Blackbird** season produced 3 at Ute L. 27 Dec (ph. DC), one at B.L.N.W.R. 1-3 Dec (JH, JEP, ph. JO), 3 at R.S. 17 Dec–7 Jan (JEP, ph. JO, JB, DK, CGL), and 2 at Las Cruces 17 Dec (W. Whitford). Common Grackles continued to linger or overwinter n. and w. of expected, but haphazard reporting continued to confuse the issue; credible reports included one w. to Playas 10 Jan (P. Lehman) and 2 at Deming 29 Jan (LM), singles n. to Albuquerque 18 Dec (A. Rominger) and San Antonio 2 Jan (JEP), 3 at Eagle Nest 3 Dec (DC), one at Maxwell 1 Jan

(ph. DC), and 6 at Santa Rosa 14 Dec (WW). Up to 10 Bronzed Cowbirds were at Las Cruces Dec–Feb (m.ob., ph. BZ). A male **Bullock's Oriole**, first noted at Percha in late Nov, remained Dec–Jan (ph. CGL, ph. JO, JEP) and was last reported 3 Feb (BN, CR). The dependable three-species flock of rosy-finches entertained many at Sandia Crest, where 271 were banded through 25 Feb—203 Blacks, 39 Brown-capped, and 29 Gray-crowned (NC, SC et al.); a three-species flock of 30 at Eagle Nest 13 Dec (DC) provided the only additional locale. What was described as an eastern **Purple Finch** was at Percha 24 Jan (G. Bieber). Montane finches were notably scarce—small numbers of Cassin's Finches were reported on seven widely scattered C.B.C.s, Red Crossbills were detected only twice during the season, and the few Evening Grosbeaks reported were largely restricted to the Sangre de Cristo Mts. Lesser Goldfinch continued to make its winter presence known n. of expected, including outnumbering American Goldfinch 28 to 24 at Farmington 17 Dec (AN).

Initialed observers: Jonathan Balkin, Matt Baumann, David Beatty, David Cleary, Nancy Cox, Steve Cox, Alan Craig, Craig Cranston, Robert Doster, Deanna Einspahr, Trevor Fetz, Bernard Foy, David Griffin, David Hawksworth, William Howe, Jeff Howland, Charles Hundertmark, Jim Krakowski, David Krueper, Carroll D. Littlefield, Carl G. Lundblad, Martin MacRoberts, Larry Malone, Raymond Meyer, Narca Moore-Craig, Alan Nelson, Bruce Neville, Frank Oatman, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Patton, Nick Pederson, Mary Ristow, Christopher Rustay, Janet Ruth, Lawry Sager, Marcy Scott, Roland Shook, Dale Stahlecker, John Trochet, Brad Vaughn, Gordon Warrick, Mark Watson, Richard Webster, Steve West, William West, Elton Williams, S. O. Williams, James Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer, Dale Zimmerman. ☺

Sartor O. Williams III, Southwest Natural History Institute, 1819 Meadowview Drive NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104-2511, (sunbittern@earthlink.net)

Arizona



Mark M. Stevenson | Gary H. Rosenberg

La Niña conditions resulted in an extremely dry winter statewide: there were 143 straight days without rain in Phoenix, a record, and essentially no snowpack in the mountains. Mild temperatures allowed many species to winter in unusually high numbers. Two potential first state records were documented, a Royal Tern and a Brown-chested Martin.

Abbreviations: A.B.B.A. (Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas), A.B.C. (Arizona Bird Committee), A.V.S.T.P. (Avra Valley S.T.P.), B.T.A. (Boyce Thompson Arboretum), G.W.R. (Gilbert Water Ranch), H.R.P. (Hassayampa R. Preserve), L.C.R.V. (lower Colorado R. valley), P.L.S.P. (Patagonia Lake S.P.), S.P.R. (San Pedro R.), Whitewater (Whitewater Draw W.A.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CORMORANTS

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks have been extremely scarce in Arizona in recent decades. The one-day Scottsdale record from Nov heralded a change. What was presumably the same bird was relocated 2-29 Dec on Chaparral L. (H. Bond, ph. PD) and again 7 Jan+ at nearby McCormick Ranch (TC, DY). In Green Valley, a flock of 18 was on a golf course pond 3 Dec (ph. C. Triple), and other singles turned up in e. Mesa 4 Dec–29 Feb (M. Tomme, ph. MW) and at Topock Marsh 13-28 Dec (†A. Haskew; D. Henderson). Casual in Prescott, 2 Snow Geese were present 18 Dec+ (CST). Ross's Goose is accidental in the Grand Canyon region, so 5 at CRM-8 on 4 Feb (CL, ph. G. Nealon) were remarkable. Still very rare in the state, **Cackling Goose** reports included 3 in Scottsdale 17 Jan–3 Feb (†PL; ph. N. Kaznajian), 2 near the confluence of the Gila R. and Agua Fria R. 13 Feb (ph., †MMO), and 3 on L. Mary 19 Feb (JP).

Six unbanded **Trumpeter Swans** seen at Kino Springs 6-9 Jan (R. & R. Thompson, ph. L. Smith) relocated to Corona de Tucson S.T.P. 15-26 Jan (B. Howard, ph. A. Tozier); there are only two prior records for se. Arizona, both since 1994, and few for the state. Eurasian Wigeon reports included one at Flagstaff 9-21 Dec (ph. N. Gaines) and 2-3 in Scottsdale (TC, J. Jones, m.ob.) all season. A hybrid wigeon was at Sun City 23 Nov–13 Dec (CST); another returned to Willcox 24 Dec+ (SH). In addition to the Mexican Ducks reported in the fall at Gilbert, another was in Chandler 12 Feb (MMO).

Surf Scoter is a rare, primarily late-fall migrant; reports came from Prescott L. 28-30 Nov (CST, ph. S. Burk), Many Farms L. 1 Dec (MMS, MP), and Ashurst L. 3 Dec (JP). By far the rarest scoter in the Southwest, a **Black Scoter** at Saguaro L. 18 Feb–3 Mar (J. Rusinow, S. Fried, ph. KR) made only the 8th state record. Nearly annual in the state in winter, single Long-tailed Ducks were at Watson L. 3-13 Dec (ph. S. Burk) and Parker Dam 4 Dec–19 Feb (H. Van Oosten). While 3 Barrow's Goldeneyes at Parker Dam 8 Dec–15 Jan (H. Van Oosten) were fewer than expected there, an ad. male near the confluence of the Gila R. and Agua Fria R. 29 Jan–4 Mar (ph. BG) was only a 2nd *Maricopa* record and one of very few from s. Arizona away from the L.C.R.V.

Chukars inhabit some of the least-visited areas of n. Arizona, so knowledge of the extent of their range is incomplete. In lower Glen Canyon, 37 were seen 1 Oct at the mouth of Waterholes Canyon (G. Nealon), several flocks were near Lowery Thumb 17 Dec (CL), 12 were on Echo Peaks 28 Jan (CL), and 40 were near Lowery Spring at the base of Vermilion Cliffs 18 Feb (JP), apparently representing a recent range expansion (*vide* CL). In Tucson, both of the long-reported Least Grebes were present all season (m.ob.) One reported from P.L.S.P. 14 Dec (†G. Jones) will be reviewed by the A.B.C.; they are typically found on small ponds. Horned Grebe is a casual transient and wintering species away from the Colorado R.; singles were reported near Granite Cr. 25-26 Nov (CST), P.L.S.P. 24-30 Dec (W. Russell), and Roosevelt L. 26 Dec (KR). Although Western Grebes may nest in almost any month in the L.C.R.V., most nesting occurs Apr-Jul (A.B.B.A.) and even later at higher elevations; five or six pairs with downy young at Roosevelt L. 4 Jan (KR) were very early there. Dependent juv. Clark's Grebes at Martinez L. on 16 Jan (HD) were early even for the L.C.R.V. A few Brown Pelicans wintered in the L.C.R.V., with one at Mitry L. 23 Jan (T. Staudt) and up to 6 on L. Havasu through 14 Feb (K. Blair). Continuing the recent range expansion and population growth, several hundred Neotropical Cormorants were reported from greater Phoenix (TC, DY et al.). At their traditional P.L.S.P. location, none were present until 2 Feb (SH).

EGRETS THROUGH ANI

A Great Egret at Lyman L. 25 Dec-8 Jan (PL, JO) was unexpected that far n. in winter. Also farther n. than usual was a Green Heron at Willow L. 11 Dec (CST). The enigmatic White Ibis was seen again in the Arlington area 18-27 Dec (TC et al.); what is apparently the same individual has been present there in multiple consecutive seasons. Black Vultures winter along the international border from Nogales westward, near Phoenix, and irregularly in the Santa Cruz valley; thus, 2 at Douglas in Dec were unexpected (A. Moorehouse). Numbers of White-tailed Kites have fluctuated in s. Arizona since the species first arrived in the late 1970s. Some 21 reports this season represented a big upswing from recent winters: 3 near Portal (DJ), one or more near Elfrida (GB, H. Hansen), 2 at Hereford (MMA), one near Lochiel (R. Wolcott), 4 in the San Rafael Valley (C. Braun), one near Elgin (m.ob.), one near

A.V.S.T.P. (J. McCabe, RT), 2 in the Santa Cruz Flats (m.ob.), up to 3 at Paloma (TC, TM), one near Buckeye (J. Hammon), and 2+ in the Tacna-Welton area (PL, HD). Red-shouldered Hawk is casual in the state except for a resident pair at H.R.P. This winter, two pairs were reported in and near the preserve by several observers (C. Fisher, H. Beatty, TC, TM). A Zone-tailed Hawk in the Santa Cruz Flats 18 Jan (PL, ph. N. Kazanjian) was in an area where they have not been reported in winter. Continuing recent trends, Crested Caracaras wandered farther outside their core w. Pima range, including one near Portal 3 Dec (DJ), up to 4 in the Santa Cruz Flats (MW, M. Kehl), one near the Gila R.-Agua Fria R. confluence 29 Dec-13 Feb (K. & L. Bielek), one near Whitewater 1 Jan (D. Palmer), one near Arlington 22-27 Jan (TC, T. Hildebrandt), one at Red Rock 23 Jan+ (RW), and one near Marana 2 Feb (K. Kroesen).



This apparent Brown-chested Martin was found by Rick Wright on 3 February 2006 at Patagonia Lake State Park, Santa Cruz County, Arizona. If accepted, it will furnish a first record for Arizona and a third for North America. Photograph by Gregg Rosenberg.

A Black Rail reported from Topock Marsh 28 Dec (†N. Miller) was at about the n. limit of the species' range in the L.C.R.V. The wintering Sandhill Crane count in the Sulfur Springs Valley was the 2nd highest ever at 30,000+ (Arizona Department of Game & Fish). Reports of Mountain Plovers included 300+ in Yuma 1-14 Dec (HD), up to 50 in the Santa Cruz Flats (MW, PD), and up to 41 near Elfrida (SH, EW). Given the large amount of agricultural habitat that goes unsurveyed, it is difficult to assess the true size of the species' wintering population in Arizona. A few northbound American Avocets arrived several weeks early at multiple locations in se. Arizona beginning 13 Feb. Casual in the state in winter, a Lesser Yellowlegs was at G.W.R. 10 Dec-18 Feb (R. Ditch, RH). A flyby Dunlin at A.V.S.T.P. 21 Dec (DS) and 2, farther n. than is typical, at Willow L. 31 Dec-5 Jan (W. Bull, W. Anderson) were the only ones reported. An ad. Heermann's Gull was at Parker Canyon L. 15 Jan (MB); the species is casual in every season but occurs primarily in late fall. Sparse away from the L.C.R.V., 2 Herring Gulls were at Roosevelt L. 2 Dec (MMS, MP), and one was at Saguaro L. 3 Dec+ (KR). There are virtually no tern records from se. in winter, so it was doubly surprising when a first state record Royal Tern made a few turns around the large pond at Willcox 15 Feb (ph., †M. Victoria). The species is uncommon year-round on the Sea of Cortez but rarely strays inland; even at the Salton Sea it is only a casual summer visitor.

Ruddy Ground-Doves had another impressive season. Outstanding was one that sur-

vived single-digit temperatures in Flagstaff 6 Dec-4 Jan (CL, ph. J. Coons), providing a first *Coconino* record. Not quite as far n., one was in Granite Cr. Park, Prescott 21-28 Nov (B. Pranter, S. McDougall et al.); one seen one km away 21-24 Jan (CST) may have been the same individual. Notable concentrations included up to 19 at Red Rock 4 Dec (GB), 10 at Kino Springs (SH), 12 at El Mirage 15 Dec (TC), and 27 in a yard in w. Phoenix 15 Jan (TC, TM). Smaller numbers were at scattered locations from Yuma to Whitewater and n. to Mesa. The Groove-billed Ani at G.W.R. was last reported 11 Dec (m.ob.)

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A male Broad-billed Hummingbird in Yuma 25 Nov-14 Dec (ph. HD) furnished one of fewer than 10 records for the L.C.R.V., where it occurs as a fall and winter transient. In addition to 5 wintering Violet-crowned Hummingbirds in se. Arizona, northbound migrants began appearing in the 2nd week of Feb, with 6 in by the end of the month, a strong early showing. Unexpected in winter, a Costa's Hummingbird was in Portal through 12 Feb (DJ). Casual in winter, Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were reported from Ash Canyon all winter (MJB), Phoenix 30 Oct-23 Jan (P. Hershberber), in Prescott (first local winter record) 21 Dec+ (CST), and in Clarkdale 24 Dec-5 Jan (ph. D. Van Gausig). An early imm. male Broad-tailed was at G.W.R. 11-18 Feb (RH, ph. J. Holloway). By the last week of Feb, early individuals were as far n. as Payson and Pine (J. Estis, L. Estis). The first northbound Rufous Hummingbirds arrived in Yuma on the early dates of 17 Feb (HD) and 18 Feb (A. Borgardt). The hummer of the season was an imm. male *Selasphorus* that wintered at a feeder in lower Miller Canyon, eventually molting to reveal itself as Arizona's first winter Allen's Hummingbird (C. Melton, ph. C. van Cleve). Another sign of the warm winter, Elegant Trogons were more widely reported. Of 16 reported, 4 in Humboldt Canyon, Patagonia Mts 28 Dec+, 3 together below the mouth of Madera Canyon 28 Dec (*vide* R. Freeman), and one taking suet in Ash Canyon 25 Jan+ (MJB, ph. C. van Cleve) were the most remarkable. Scarce Green Kingfishers were reported on the upper S.P.R. (m.ob.) and at P.L.S.P. (m.ob.). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports included singles in Marana 3-8 Dec (GB, †RH), near Portal 1 Jan (N. Moore-Craig), in Seven Springs Wash 2 Jan (TC), and in Bisbee, a juv. 4 Feb (J. Whetstone). With the challenges presented by intergrade sapsuckers, Red-breasted Sapsuckers reported from the Catalina Mts. 4 Dec (ph. M. Kehl),

Yuma 2 Jan (ph. HD), and Avondale 9-20 Jan (ph. J. Truan) will be reviewed by the A.B.C. Another individual was well described from E. Whitetail Canyon in the Chiricahua Mts. 25 Feb (RT) but was not photographed.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS

Greater Pewee is rare to casual in s. Arizona during the winter, mainly in the lowlands; therefore, several reports in late fall and early winter from higher-than-usual elevations were indicative of the dry, warm winter: singles were near Prescott 18 Nov (CST), in Madera Canyon 11 Dec (G. Jones), in Ramsey Canyon 18-29 Jan (EW), at Patagonia 20-22 Jan (JWo), and again in Madera Canyon 22-26 Jan (SF). Hammond's Flycatcher winters regularly in riparian areas in s. Arizona, but reports from the Prescott area in Granite Basin 19 Dec-1 Apr (CST), Granite Dells 21 Dec-24 Mar (D. Moll), and Lynx Cr. 1 Jan (S. & S. Burk), as well as singles at Sunflower 16 Jan (TC) and Bill Williams N.W.R. 9 Feb (K. Blair), were likely a result of the mild winter. A Dusky Flycatcher was at Sunflower 16 Jan (TC). "Western Flycatchers" (Pacific-slope/Cordilleran) are normally rarer than the other *Empidonax* species during winter, but reports of no fewer than 6 (likely all Pacific-slopes) were received. Although Eastern Phoebe is a rare-but-regular winter visitor, nine reports was a greater number than usual for one season. A high count of 67 Vermilion Flycatchers on the Tucson Valley C.B.C. in late Dec (*vide* S. Birky) was nearly double the previous high, another indication of the mild conditions. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher at Quigley W.A. near Yuma 25 Dec-12 Jan (HD, PL) provided one of few winter records ever for the L.C.R.V. In a normal winter, there might be a scattering of Ash-throated Flycatchers found in proper winter habitat in s. Arizona; this winter no fewer than 50 were reported, clearly indicating that this species wintered farther n. than the typical winter range, which is largely in w. Mexico. Cassin's Kingbirds also lingered into the winter, with one in Tucson 28 Dec (GHR), at least 6 in the Santa Rita Mts. 1 Jan (G. West), and one near Painted Rock Dam 26 Feb (KR et al.) providing the first *Maricopa* winter record. The Thick-billed Kingbird that returned to Yuma for a 3rd winter remained throughout the period (HD). A Rose-throated Becard (either female or imm. male) at P.L. S.P. 4 Dec-4 Feb provided one of the few winter records for Arizona.

A Bell's Vireo, casual at best during the winter in Arizona, was at G.W.R. 15 Jan+ (RH). Another reported from Tucson 27 Feb (V. McKinnon) may have been an early migrant. Two Warbling Vireos at Yuma 28 Feb+ (A. &

H. Borgardt, HD) were likely early migrants. The sensational bird of the year (or decade!) was a probable **Brown-chested Martin** photographed at P.L. S.P. 3 Feb (†RW, D. Smyth; ph. Greg Rosenberg). If accepted by the A.B.C., this would represent the first record for Arizona, as well as for the w. United States; there are just two other U.S. records. It is always difficult determining whether swallows seen during the winter season are lingering individuals, wintering birds, or early migrants. This season, scattered Tree Swallows were reported in early Dec, then again in mid-Feb. A Violet-green Swallow was in Hereford 8 Jan (M. Marsden), and several were reported from Saguaro L. 28 Jan (D. Stuart). Northern Rough-winged Swallows were numerous in Dec, with a high total of 214 on the Salt/Verde Rivers C.B.C. 14 Dec (*vide* KR), followed by scattered reports in Jan. At least 12 Barn Swallows were also reported during the winter; individuals reported in late Feb likely represented early returning migrants.

The **Carolina Wren** found in Cave Creek Canyon near Portal in fall was reported into Mar (ph. O. Niehuis, v.r. PD; †J. Hirth); one of the two previous state records remained for nearly two years. About 12 reports of Winter Wrens were received from scattered localities in s. Arizona, perhaps slightly more than usual; both "eastern" and "western" call-types were reported, once again suggesting that birds of both subspecies groups winter in Arizona, though the actual status of each is still uncertain. A pair of Black-capped Gnatcatchers along Sonoita Cr. sw. of Patagonia 18 Dec (†MMS, MP) perhaps represent a previously unreported pair. Pairs continued at several established localities, including Proctor Rd. below Madera Canyon, Montosa Canyon, and P.L.S.P. Exceptional for the winter season, a Wood Thrush was in Cave Creek Canyon near Portal 4-12 Dec (M. Meyers; ph. M. Brooks); most of the previous Arizona records are from either fall or late spring. It was an above-average winter for Rufous-backed Robin, with 3 found: one in lower Miller Canyon 3 Jan-3 Mar (C. van Cleve; ph. C. Melton), one at B.T.A. 8 Jan-27 Mar (ph. O. Niehuis, M. Weber), and one in Ramsey Canyon 11-31 Jan (R. Romea). Varied Thrush, casual in the state during winter, was found in Huachuca Canyon 3 Dec (*vide* E. Wilson), nearby Scheelite Canyon 7 Dec (RW, D. Smyth), Granite Basin near Prescott 11 Jan (CST), and in Flagstaff mid-Feb-7 Mar (R. Ray, *vide* P. Kegley). The 2 Gray Catbirds found in Portal in fall wintered there (L. Gates). Sage Thrashers were found farther n. than usual this winter: singles were at Prescott 21 Dec (CST), Overgaard 29 Dec (K. Penland), and at several other

sites above the Mogollon Rim (m.ob.); this species is casual at best during winter in n. Arizona. The Brown Thrashers found during the fall season at B.T.A. and near Hereford were both present throughout the season. A Curve-billed Thrasher was found wintering in Prescott 12 Dec+ (J. Morgan), where this species is considered accidental. A Sprague's Pipit found on the Gila River C.B.C. 27 Dec (TC) was n. and w. of this species' normal winter range in Arizona.

WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

An Olive Warbler reported on the San Francisco Peaks w. of Flagstaff 11 Feb (J. Prather) was perhaps the first winter report from n. Arizona. A Tennessee Warbler, casual in the state during winter, was in Sabino Canyon 21-31 Dec (WR). A Nashville Warbler in Yuma 23 Feb-1 Mar (A. & H. Borgardt, HD) was likely a very early spring migrant. Extraordinary was the report of a Lucy's Warbler from Whitewater 4 Dec (RH); the species is virtually unknown from the state in winter. Northern Parula, normally very rare in the state in winter, was seen with more frequency than usual, with no fewer than nine sightings, mostly during Dec. Another indication of the very mild winter, at least 13 Yellow Warblers were reported in s. Arizona. Four Chestnut-sided Warblers, about normal for any given winter, included one in Scottsdale 2-15 Dec (J. Newel), one in sw Phoenix 4-17 Dec (TC), one in Marana 14 Dec (RH), and one at Imperial N.W.R. 18 Dec (ph. HD). A Magnolia Warbler, casual in the state in winter, was reported from Rio Rico 17 Dec (J. Ambrose). Black-throated Blue Warbler is also casual in winter; a male was in Sawmill Canyon 10 Dec (A. & A. Miller), while one in Granite Basin near Prescott 19 Dec-6 Jan (D. Moll, CST) provided a first local winter record. Two Yellow-rumped Warblers found on 18 Dec (E. Morral) provided a Mormon Lake C.B.C. first. A Hermit Warbler, casual in the state in winter, was reported from nw. Tucson 18 Dec (E. Moll, S. Walker, M. Flory). The Prairie Warbler found at G.W.R. during the fall was last reported 4 Feb (m.ob.). Another first-year female Prairie was in Chandler 7-21 Jan (†TC, D. Yellan); this species has become more prevalent in Arizona during the past 15 years. The only Palm Warbler reported was at Punkin Center 11-19 Feb (ph. KR), probably representing a first *Gila* record. Ten Black-and-white Warblers were reported between 3 Dec and 2 Jan. Only one American Redstart was reported. The Ovenbird found at the Phoenix Desert Botanical Gardens during the fall was still being seen as of 27 Feb (ph. PD). Louisiana Waterthrushes wintered at the same localities as last year, along Sonoita Cr. above

