SOUTHWEST REGION / Gale Monson

The wet, cold conditions of the preceding winter lingered into spring, making the first five months of 1973 one of the dampest and coolest on record. The high country of east central Arizona and west central



New Mexico, according to long-time residents, has not seen such weather for decades. On May 16, those parts of the White Mountains plateau of Arizona above 9000 feet were still 75 per cent snow-covered, much of them with drifts many feet deep. Many of the lakes were partially ice-covered at that late date, one (Lee Valley Reservoir) with ice from shore to shore! At the same time, quaking aspens showed no sign of green, even at 8500 feet or lower. At Flagstaff, Ariz. aspens

were just leafing out on June 1. The same sort of conditions prevailed in the higher parts of the Mogollon Mountains in New Mexico. At lower elevations, one saw the remarkable sight of icicles 20 feet long still hanging from a cliff on the north side of Kennedy Peak in the Galiuro Mountains, Graham Co., Ariz. on Apr. 11, and snow was still plainly visible on Baboquivari Peak in Pima Co., Ariz. at the end of April.

The southern deserts, often sere and brown by mid-April, stayed green throughout May. Flowers on such plants as mesquite, palo verde, and saguaro were a full two weeks late; the palo verde bloom was the heaviest in years. Annual plants had an unusually good season, with an abundance of leafage and flowers. The result of all this was a super-plenty of food, both plant and insect, resulting in turn in an unusually wide distribution of birds on the desert. Feeders were not as well-attended as usual. Lakes and reservoirs were full or nearly so, and streams cascaded down many canyons normally dry.

In keeping with the vegetative schedule, bird arrivals and departures were well behind normal dates. Most observers discerned a scarcity of birds, particularly of warblers. Apparently the prevailing snow and cold at high elevations kept some birds in the lowlands much later than usual, although the large amount of food available may have been what detained them. Among the highlights of the season were unusual appearances of Bobolinks in New Mexico and Texas (west to the Gila Valley!), a surge in the expansion of Great-tailed Grackles into new territory, unprecedented numbers of Evening Grosbeaks below the Transition Zone, Lark Buntings in the northern part of the Region, Cassin's Sparrows singing throughout the period, and numbers of Harris' Sparrows lingering into May.

CORMORANTS, HERONS—Nesting Doublecrested Cormorants at Elephant Butte Marsh, Sierra Co., N. Mex. were fewer this year, with only 10 nests occupied on May 5 (CHu, CHy). Small numbers of Cattle Egrets continued to be seen in the Phoenix area (SD *et al.*) and 40 were found in a field in Riverside Co. near Palo Verde, Calif., May 14 (JWi, RWi). At Tucumcari Marsh, Quay Co., N. Mex., 25-50 pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons were nesting Apr. 28 and May 28 (CHu, CHy, BE).

WATERFOWL—A White-fronted Goose was at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., N. Mex., May 14-28, and 2 were at Tule Springs Park, near Las Vegas, Nev., May 27 (VM). Three Black-bellied Tree Ducks were found at flooded fields n.n.w. of Elfrida, Cochise Co., Ariz. on May 16 and 8 on May 30 (Lyle Sowls, Bonnie Swarbrick). A White-winged Scoter was reported at La Choya, Sonora, Mex., Apr. 1 (SD). A pair of Com. Mergansers were noted on the Rio de los Pinos, Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., May 27 (GZ). A Red-breasted Merganser was lingering on the Rio Grande near Santa Clara, Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., May 29 (RWo).

HAWKS—Hard on the heels of the report of a White-tailed Kite in Arizona in February came the sighting of 2 in Chaves Co., N. Mex., one over Roswell and one about 8 mi. to the north, both Apr. 1 (AC); there are two previous hypothetical records for the state. A Mississippi Kite was seen near Gila, Grant Co., N. Mex., May 12 (DZ), a westernmost record for the state. The Goshawk present in n.w. Phoenix at the end of March stayed until Apr. 14 (DS), one was seen at San Juan Pueblo, Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., Apr. 21 (PS), one was over Los Alamos Apr. 28 (PS), and one was at Bitter Lake N.W.R., N. Mex., May 5 (LK). An ad. Broad-winged Hawk was identified at Corn Creek on the Desert Natl. Wildlife Range, Clark Co., Nev., May 7 for the first Nevada record (CL, KS); details will be published elsewhere. An immature was carefully identified near Gila May 12 (DZ) for a possible second record for New Mexico. A Roughlegged Hawk was found south of Lyden, Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., Apr. 21 (PS). From 35 to 40 Ferruginous Hawks were migrating N high over Bosque Ref., Apr. 6 (DD et al.). An ad. Gray Hawk was found in s.w. New Mexico May 16 (DZ). An ad. Bald Eagle was seen 10 mi. east of Fredonia, Coconino Co., Ariz., Apr. 1 (RWI). Two nestlings were seen along the Salt R. in Gila Co., Ariz., Apr. 22 (Betty Jackson). A Merlin was observed at Corn Creek Apr. 15 (VM). Only 4 Peregrine Falcons, from two localities, were reported.

RAILS—A call-count of the endangered Yuma subspecies of the Clapper Rail, made during late May, yielded a total of 700 birds along the Colorado R. from the Mexico border to the Topock area of Havasu N.W.R., Ariz.-Calif., and another 200 below the border (Roy Tomlinson, Dick Todd, *et al.*). This was the first time such a count has been run.

SHOREBIRDS-Semipalmated Plover were reported from New Mexico as follows: one at La Cueva, Mora Co., Apr. 22 (JD et al.), 2 at Tucumcari Marsh Apr. 28 (CHu, CHy, BE), and one at Bitter Lake Ref., May 12 (MWI). Four were at Phoenix May 6 (JWi). A Black-bellied Plover was observed at Las Vegas Wash, on L. Mead near Las Vegas, Nev., Apr. 14 (VM), and another was at Bitter Lake Ref., May 18 (DB). A very late Com. Snipe was found at a marsh in the San Pedro Valley, Cochise Co., Ariz., May 29 (WBA). Some unusual numbers of Willets were observed: 20 at L. Pleasant, Maricopa Co., Ariz., Apr. 27 (SD), 22 on May 1 and 33 on May 10 at Bosque Ref. (GZ), 18 at a windmill tank 15 mi. south of Datil, Catron Co., N. Mex., May 20 (BM), and 16 at Tucson May 23 (HF). At Bosque Ref. on May 6, 35 Whiterumped Sandpipers were counted (CHu, Robt. Jost). At least 500 Marbled Godwits were still present about 15 mi. north of La Choya, Sonora, Mex., May 29-31 (SL).

GULLS, TERNS—Twenty-three Ring-billed Gulls were following a plow with White-necked Ravens south of Bonita, Graham Co., Ariz., Apr. 10 (GM), and an unusually large number of 500 were feeding in an alfalfa field at Bosque Ref., Apr. 18 (GZ). A Bonaparte's Gull was found May 12 at Horizon L., east of El Paso (BHB). A Caspian Tern was carefully identified at L. McMillan, Eddy Co., N. Mex., Apr. 28 (MWI) for another hypothetical New Mexico record. A record number of at least 275 Black Terns was counted at Bosque Ref., May 14 (GZ).

DOVES, ANIS, OWLS—Nine Inca Doves were observed in the Mohave Valley, Mohave Co., Ariz., n.e. of Needles, Calif., May 17 (SB). One of the 2 Groove-billed Anis reported at Phoenix last season remained until at least Apr. 8 (JWi). A Whiskered Owl was heard in Sycamore Canyon, Pajarito Mts., Santa Cruz Co., Ariz., May 29 (TP). Two Burrowing Owls were seen north of La Choya, Sonora, Mex., May 29-31 (SL). A Long-eared Owl nest with 5 young was discovered northwest of Oracle, Pinal Co., Ariz., Apr. 29 (Rich Glinski).

NIGHTJARS, SWIFTS—Two Com. Nighthawks were seen and heard about 6 mi. west of Ruby, Santa Cruz Co., Ariz., May 29 (TP, SH). The species did not arrive at Las Vegas, N. Mex. until May 30 (WH). Two Chimney Swifts were flying over central Tucson May 27 (TP). A White-throated Swift perched in a willow at Picacho Res., Pinal Co., Ariz., May 10 (SL).

HUMMINGBIRDS—A neat bit of ornithological sleuthing by TP, assisted by SH, turned up the first Lucifer Hummingbird nest in Arizona, in Guadalupe Canyon, Cochise Co. on May 20. The nest, in a small cholla cactus, held two eggs, and photographs were taken. (It will be recalled that the editor rather questioned a sight record of a ? seen in the same area Apr. 1, 1972.) Three of Costa's Hummingbirds were located in the Arizona portion of Guadalupe Canyon, and 2 on the New Mexico side, May 18-20 (TP); not only is the species virtually unrecorded from this area, but 33 are seldom seen in Arizona anywhere in the spring after late May. A well-nigh incredible record was that of a d Anna's Hummingbird in Albuquerque Apr. 15-20; the bird was photographed (DD et al.). It is subsequent to the first New Mexico record obtained last fall at Silver City, Grant Co. A ? Rivoli Hummingbird was seen at a feeder with Broad-tailed Hummers at Greer, Apache Co., Ariz., May 14 (GM).

KINGFISHERS, WOODPECKERS—A Green Kingfisher was identified at Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, Mex., Apr. 1 (SD *et al.*). An Acorn Woodpecker remained in Tucson until Apr. 5 (GG), 2 were seen at Cliff, Grant Co., N. Mex., May 28 (JD, PF), and one was near La Cueva, on the west side of the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., May 28-30 (Tom Smylie). A Lewis' Woodpecker stayed in e. Phoenix until May 5 (JWi), and 1-2 were seen at Corn Creek, Desert Wildlife Range, Nev., May 7-13 (CL, VM, KS). Two Hairy Woodpeckers were found at Elephant Butte Marsh Apr. 7 (CHu, BE), and one was at Cliff May 28 (JD, PF). A pair of Downy Woodpeckers was at Bitter Lake Ref., May 17 (LK *et al.*).

FLYCATCHERS—Say's Phoebe did not arrive at Cedar Crest, Sandia Mts., N. Mex. until Apr. 12, and was not seen again until May 3; it usually arrives at mid-March (BM). Two Willow Flycatchers were singing near Lewis Springs, Cochise Co., Ariz. on the San Pedro R., May 4 (Chas. McMoran), and another was heard about 5 mi. north of Whites City, Eddy Co., N. Mex., May 26 (CHu).

CORVIDS-Many corvids from the great 1972-1973 flight lingered in the lowlands well into spring and even to the end of the period. A Blue Jay was seen at La Cueva, Sandoval Co., N. Mex., May 16 (MS). Steller's Jays remained in small numbers to the middle of May: one was at Bitter Lake Ref., May 7 (LK et al.), one was at Farmington, San Juan Co., May 12 (AN), one was in the e. foothills of the Tucson Mts., Ariz., May 13 (SI), one was north of Elephant Butte Marsh May 14 (GZ), 10-12 were flying N near Willcox, Cochise Co., Ariz., May 16 (SL), and one was at Hermanas, Luna Co., N. Mex., May 25-26 (BM), Scrub Jays seemingly pulled out earlier, the only late ones reported being 2 at Socorro, Socorro Co., N. Mex., May 5 (MWk) and 2 south of Roswell, N. Mex., May 7 (JC). More reports of Black-billed Magpies nesting in the n.e. part of the Navaio Indian Reservation in Arizona came in: three birds and two nests seen along Chinle Wash between Many Farms and Round Rock; seven old nests, some recently active, and 21+ birds seen at Teec Nos Pas; all in orchards and cottonwoods and fields May 26 (RB, Vernon Mayes).

These Piñon Jay records are of interest: 65 seen at Silver City, N. Mex., Apr. 17 (DBS), 5 still in Albuquerque Apr. 29 (Rita Nicklas), small numbers in Dragoon Mts., Cochise Co., Ariz., May 3 (GM), about 20 at Bitter Lake Ref., May 18 (LK), and small numbers in the Burro Mts., Grant Co., N. Mex., May 18 (DZ). No fledglings had appeared in the Flagstaff, Ariz. area up to late May (RB). At least 12 Clark's Nutcrackers were still at Portal, Chiricahua Mts., Ariz., May 2 (SS), a flightless young was brought to PS at Los Alamos May 20, at least 2 were at Cedar Crest, Sandia Mts., May 24 (BM), and one was found at Buckhorn, Grant Co., N. Mex., May 27 (Ralph Fisher).

PARIDS, NUTHATCHES, DIPPERS-A pair of Mexican Chickadees was seen carrying food into a nesthole in a silverleaf oak in South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., May 29-June 1 (DBS, R. West); this is the first nest known to have been found in the United States (aside from those in nest boxes). and is at an extremely low elevation (5400 feet). A Mountain Chickadee was at Elephant Butte Marsh Apr. 7 (CHu, BE). Late Red-breasted Nuthatches were 2 at Albuquerque to Apr. 27 (JD) and one at Bosque Ref., May 15 (DZ). A Dipper nest was discovered at the John Hands picnic area in Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahua Mts., May 3; it held four eggs and was photographed (SS, Walter Spofford); the following week the nest was deserted and the eggs gone (Steve Speich). This is a first nesting record for the Chiricahuas and, aside from the Santa Catalina Mts., for s. Arizona.

THRUSHES—Many Am. Robin nests were reported at El Paso (GW). A second New Mexico record for Varied Thrush came from near Española, Apr. 26 and May 15 (Sue Noel). One in lower Sabino Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., Ariz. remained until Apr. 5 (Alice McDonnel), a ? was found at Mopah Springs, Turtle Mts., San Bernardino Co., Calif., Apr. 4 (JS), and a 3 was seen perched in an ocotillo along US Hwy. 95 about 20 mi. north of Blythe, Riverside Co., Calif., Apr. 12 (JS). A Swainson's Thrush was banded at Sycamore Well, Alamo Hueco Mts., Hidalgo Co., N. Mex., May 28 (BM). A Townsend's Solitaire lingered at Sycamore Well May 26-28 (BM).

GNATCATCHERS, WAXWINGS—A 3 Blacktailed Gnatcatcher was found near Redrock, Grant Co., N. Mex., May 11 (DZ). At Las Vegas, Nev., 25 Bohemian Waxwings remained to Apr. 15 (VM).

VIREOS, WARBLERS-A Bell's Vireo was reported at Pipe Spring Natl. Monument, Mohave Co., Ariz., May 15 (RWI). A Solitary Vireo was seen at Sycamore Well, Alamo Hueco Mts., May 26-28 (BM). A Tennessee Warbler was noted at Bitter Lake Ref., Apr. 25 (LK), and 2 were at Corn Creek, Desert Wildlife Range, May 8 (CL, KS, HS). A Lucy's Warbler was banded at Hermanas, N. Mex., Apr. 20 (BM). A 3 Northern Parula was found at Rattlesnake Springs. Eddy Co., N. Mex., Apr. 1 (AC). A Magnolia Warbler was banded and photographed at Sycamore Well May 28 (BM); it was the second of its species to be banded in New Mexico by BM. A late of Townsend's Warbler was seen in Guadalupe Canyon, Ariz., May 20 (TP). A ? Black-throated Green Warbler was carefully identified at Hermanas Apr. 20 (BM). A & Yellow-throated Warbler was photographed at Bitter Lake Ref., Apr. 25 (Bruce Sorrie, Paul Donohue, JC, DB) for the first documented record for the state. Unusual Grace's Warbler reports were one on Apr. 8 and 2 on Apr. 15 at Tule Springs Park, near Las Vegas, Nev. (VM, CL respectively) and 4 in the Farmington, N. Mex. vicinity May 12 (AN et al.). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was banded and photographed at Hermanas May 26 (BM) and a 3 was seen at Corn Creek May 27 (GK, Rolf & Sue Peterson et al.). An Ovenbird was found at Corn Creek May 27 (VM). Red-faced Warblers were common in late May on the headwaters of Wet Beaver Creek, Coconino Co., Ariz. (RB). Single Painted Redstarts were seen at two localities in Tucson Apr. 1 & 3 (GG).

ICTERIDS-Unheard-of Bobolink reports came in from extreme w. Texas and New Mexico. On May 12, 14 were seen at Horizon L., east of El Paso (BHB) and 40 were found near Gila, Grant Co., N. Mex. (DZ) plus 2 dd more in the Gila area (Bruce Hayward). One was seen at Las Vegas May 17 (WH). Two pairs of Orchard Orioles were found at Luis Lopez, near Socorro, N. Mex., May 5 (MWk). Two 3 Hooded Orioles were identified at Corrales. Sandoval Co., N. Mex., May 5 (Ross Teuber). A ♂ Northern Oriole, Baltimore subspecies, was found at Corn Creek, Desert Wildlife Range, May 18 (CL, PA) for the first Nevada record for the subspecies. The Great-tailed Grackle continued its range expansion even more rapidly than in recent years, with records as far north as Pahranagat L., Lincoln Co., Nev., where a d was seen Apr. 28-May 2 (J. & Kay Burk), a first specimen

for Nevada taken at Tule Springs Park near Las Vegas Apr. 16 (CL *et al.*) and courtship observed there May 18 (CL, PA), 2 at Mohave Indian Reservation, Clark Co., Nev., Apr. 11 (CL), one at Topock Farm on Havasu Ref., Ariz., May 1 (SB), and several records in April and May from the general Blythe, Calif. area (JS). In New Mexico, up to 3 were observed at Dixon, Rio Arriba Co., Apr. 12 and May 21 (JWh), and eight nests were found at Tucumcari Marsh May 28 (CHu, CHy). A pair of Com. Grackles was seen at Corn Creek May 3 and a d May 4 (VM, CL), and many were nesting at Isleta, Bernalillo Co., N. Mex., May 6 & 26 (JD).

TANAGERS, FINCHES—A d Scarlet Tanager was observed at Bosque Ref., May 14 (GZ). About 8 Pyrrhuloxias were present through the period at "Sunsites" east of the Dragoon Mts., Ariz. (WBA). A d was banded at Hermanas Apr. 20; at least 12 were in the vicinity of Sycamore Well, Alamo Hueco Mts., Apr. 22 but none May 26-28 (BM). A Blue Grosbeak was seen at Fenton L., 17 miles west of Jemez Springs, Sandoval Co., N. Mex., May 15 (MS). An Indigo Bunting was at Bitter Lake Ref., May 17 (MWI), and one was at Los Ojos, Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., May 27 (PS). A ♂ Varied Bunting was identified at Elephant Butte Res., Sierra Co., N. Mex., May 25 (CHy, BE), and a pair was seen at Charleston, Cochise Co., Ariz., May 26 (Douglas Danforth). A d Dickcissel was found near Roswell May 24 (Irl Cassell). Many Evening Grosbeaks were reported, the birds becoming more common about mid-April. The records included 200 at Socorro, N. Mex., May 2 (MWK), 2 at Las Cruces, Dona Ana Co., N. Mex., May 4 (Debra Hickman), 2 dd at Lost L. resort 30 mi. north of Blythe, Calif., May 7 (JS), 8 at Seven Springs, Maricopa Co., Ariz., May 9 (ER et al.), as many as 440 in the Farmington, N. Mex. area May 12 (AN et al.), 60 at Corn Creek, Desert Wildlife Range and Tule Springs Park, near Las Vegas, Nev., May 18 (CL, PA), still about 570 in the Española, N. Mex. area May 19 (RWo et al.), a pair at Sedona, Coconino Co., Ariz., May 21 (DBS), 2 at Pipe Spring Nat'l Monument, Ariz., May 24 (RWl), 50 to 100 still present at Alameda, Bernalillo Co., N. Mex., May 30 (CHu), and still present May 31 at Cedar Crest, Sandia Mts. (BM), Albuquerque (PB), and Los Alamos (PS). A pair of Purple Finches was lingering in the e. foothills of the Tucson Mts., Apr. 26 (SL), and 8 were at Corn Creek May 16 (CL, GK, Bruce & Marian Meier). The last Cassin's Finches were seen in Albuquerque Apr. 27 (JD), 4 were at Corn Creek May 7 (CL, KS), several were at Cave Creek, Maricopa Co., Ariz., May 10 (ER), 15 were at Farmington May 12 (AN et al.), and they were present until mid-May at Cedar Crest (BM) and Los Alamos (PS).

Two Pine Grosbeaks were eating pinyon buds at Los Alamos Apr. 15 (L. Hawkins) and one was seen at Del Monte Ranch, Taos Co., N. Mex. the same date (WH). Many more Pine Siskins were present in the lower country than usual; records included 18 at Elephant Butte Marsh May 24 (CHu, CHy, BE), huge flocks in Chama, Rio Arriba Co., N. Mex., May 27 (PS), and 4 in creosote bush-mesquite at Sycamore Canyon, Alamo Hueco Mts., May 28 (BM). An ad.

Red Crossbill was watched feeding a juvenile on the ground at Evergreen Cemetery, Tucson, where the birds had wintered, Apr. 15 (Ruth Steffens, fide HF); if it could have been documented, this would have been the first lowland breeding record in Arizona. Twelve Red Crossbills were still in n.w. Phoenix May 14 (DS), with one lingering to May 6 (fide SD). There were highly unusual reports of Lark Buntings from the n. part of the Region: "common" on dry lands 10 mi. south of Pipe Spring Nat'l Monument May 16 (RWI), about 150 at Santa Fe May 14 (PS), and several reports of 1-4 seen in San Juan Co., N. Mex., including one about 20 mi. east of Bloomfield May 21 (AN et al.). Late for such large numbers were 250+ in several flocks in uplands 4 mi. east of Bosque Ref., May 16 (GZ).

Two Grasshopper Sparrows were seen east of the Dragoon Mts., May 28 (WBA). Unusual localities for Rufous-crowned Sparrows were Tule Springs Park where one was seen Apr. 8 (VM) and Corn Creek where one sang May 3-4 (VM, CL). An unusual feature of the season was singing Cassin's Sparrows: singing abundantly east of the Dragoon Mts. in mid-April continuing into May, but the singing less prominent toward late May (WBA), several singing in grasslands east of Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mts., May 6 (Robt. Bradley) and singing at Horizon L., east of El Paso, May 12 (Bill Hunt) and May 19 (GW, Carl & Linda Jones). Botteri's Sparrows showed up early in s.e. Arizona: one (4 later) singing east of Dragoon Mts., May 18 (WBA), and one singing in Ephraim Canyon west of Nogales, Santa Cruz Co., Ariz., May 20 (Bill Harrison). A Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed subspecies) was still in Phoenix May 15 (SD) and another was still at Los Alamos May 31 (PS). The remarkable 1972-1973 invasion of Harris' Sparrows resulted in a number of late records: 3 still at Cave Creek, Maricopa Co., Ariz., Apr. 15 (fide ER), up to 17 at Bosque Ref., Apr. 16 (GZ), one at Las Vegas, N. Mex., May 3 (WH), 1+ at Dixon, N. Mex., May 4 (JWh), as many as 11 at Albuquerque May 8 (PB), 3 at Corn Creek May 8 (CL, HS, KS), 2 at Pipe Spring Nat'l Monument May 8 (RWI), and 3 at Farmington May 12 (Judy Nordstrom). A Swamp Sparrow banded at Hermanas Feb. 17 was recaptured Apr. 20 (BM).

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