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In the world of periodicals, it's often said that publishing the second issue may even be more important than the first. It's proof that the journal fills a significant need and can be confidently sustained.

Note from editor

So, we are pleased to offer this second issue of *Arizona Birds Online* and to announce that we plan to get it out on a regular quarterly basis. We have taken steps in this issue to establish standards appropriate for a journal that aims to contribute to the scientific understanding of bird distribution, migration, and identification in Arizona. Our goal is a quarterly that field ornithologists, both amateur and professional, will read, contribute to, and refer to others. We are looking forward to the day when we can publish it in print form.

We welcome articles, book reviews, photos, and artwork related to birds and birding in Arizona. Also, if you would like to help out with proofreading or design, please let us know. For details about contributing articles or helping in production, email Doug Jenness at: D.JENNESS@hotmail.com or write to: 4375 E. Rollins Rd., Catalina, AZ 85739.

In this issue

Breeding status and distribution of Lawrence's Goldfinch in Arizona.....3

Slate-throated Redstart: Arizona's fifth record.....7

First record of Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Arizona.....10

Status and distribution of Black Vulture in Arizona, with notes on bird finding....11

Notes on nesting Osprey in Kaibab National Forest.....15

West to Oracle: Samuel Rhoads in Arizona.....19

Cover photo: Kurt Rademaker

Breeding Status and Distribution of Lawrence's Goldfinch in Arizona

TROY E. CORMAN¹ and KURT RADAMAKER²

Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*) is typically a bird of the oak belt in cismontane California and northwestern Baja California. This species breeds sporadically in the southern regions of California, where it prefers riparian and open woodlands of arid and semiarid foothills and valleys, usually near water (Small 1994). Even within their normal California range, the breeding status and distribution of these goldfinches is poorly understood. Lawrence's Goldfinch seasonal distribution is erratic; they may appear in an area to breed (sometimes in considerable numbers) for a season or two, and thereafter not return to that location to nest for a number of years (Small 1994).

These goldfinches also stage unpredictable fall and winter incursions into the eastern Sonoran Desert regions, particularly in southern Arizona and northern Sonora (Monson and Phillips 1981, Russell and Monson 1998, Patten 2001). From year to year, their numbers will vary, with some years having large influxes reaching localities as far north in Arizona as the upper Verde River and Oak Creek drainages, east to New Mexico, and occasionally western Texas. Local congregations at favorite foraging areas sometimes contain 150 or more individuals, particularly within the Santa Cruz River valley of southeastern Arizona (Tucson Audubon Society 2004). During other years, the species can be quite scarce or absent in Arizona, although at least a few individuals were reported in the state every year for the past decade. They are reported most years in the southeastern part of the state, less frequently in central and western regions, and there are less than five records north of the Mogollon Rim. Surprisingly, even with so few records, Apache remains the only county above the Mogollon Rim without a record of Lawrence's Goldfinch.

In Arizona, the species normally occurs between October and April, with individuals occasionally arriving as early as late August and lingering into May. Wintering populations of Law-

rence's Goldfinches begin migrating out of Arizona by mid- to late February, with the majority of individuals dispersing by mid-March (Corman 2005). Nonbreeding birds are occasionally seen during the summer months in Arizona (Monson and Phillips 1981). One of the most recent of these reports is of an individual at a livestock tank on Hualapai tribal land, Coconino County, on 21 July 1999 (P.



Richard Ditch

Adult female Lawrence's Goldfinch at Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Pinal County 10 April 2005

Friederici: unpublished *Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas* data). During the summer of 2002, an unprecedented total of 12 individuals were also detected in eight scattered southeastern Arizona localities from 23 June to 26 July (Rosenberg and Stevenson 2002).

Prior to 2005, there were only six reports of Lawrence's Goldfinches nesting in Arizona (table 1) with the first noted in 1952 (Phillips et al. 1964). Breeding activity was not reported for this species during the statewide Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas project conducted primarily between 1993-2000 (Corman 2005). However, evidence suggests at least one pair nested after the *Atlas* project period; near Gisela, Gila County, in 2003.

After nearly a decade of drought or near-drought conditions in Arizona, the winter and

early spring of 2005 was notably wet and cool, with above normal amounts of precipitation. It was not an exceptional year for wintering Lawrence's Goldfinch, however. Arizona saw only scattered individuals and flocks in southern regions of the state. During the spring of 2005, breeding evidence was first noted at the Hassayampa River Preserve, Maricopa County, when on 12 March, Corman discovered two pairs of Lawrence's Goldfinches, with one female actively constructing a nest. The nest was placed in a clump of mistletoe high in a cottonwood. A male would closely follow her to and from the nest site singing exuberantly with each visit to the nest. Pairs and/or individuals were noted at this location through mid-May, but successful nesting was never determined.

Lawrence's Goldfinches were also confirmed nesting for the first time in Pinal County when C. Tomoff discovered a nest with at least three young on 10 April at Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Tomoff first noted a courting pair in this area on 3 March. This nest was built in an Arizona cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) and individuals were noted in the area through early May. H. Detwiler periodically monitored a pair of Lawrence's Goldfinches at Betty's Kitchen (near Laguna Dam), Yuma County, throughout much of

March and April. Detwiler photographed the pair copulating on 29 April; this, combined with their lengthy stay, suggests they at least attempted to nest at this location.

Arizona's breeding records of Lawrence's Goldfinches have come primarily from lowland riparian woodlands dominated by Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), Goodding willow (*Salix gooddingii*), tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.), and mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.). Thus, it is not surprising that the few nests discovered were primarily in cottonwood and tamarisk. All sites were directly adjacent to perennial water sources; an important feature of nesting and typical wintering habitat for this species (Linsdale 1968, Davis 1999). In Arizona, breeding evidence has been observed at elevations ranging from approximately 46-880 m (150-2900 ft), although they have been reported nesting from sea level to above 2700 m (9000 ft) in California (Small 1994).

It is not clearly understood what environmental factors entice Lawrence's Goldfinch to periodically nest in Arizona. Their nesting occurrences do not appear tied to large population influxes since many previous nesting records did not follow a significant winter population incursion. However, our personal observations and other evidence suggest a possible correlation be-

Table 1. Arizona Lawrence's Goldfinch Breeding Records Prior to 2005

Date	Breeding Evidence	Location	County	Observer
15 March 1952	Nest collected after young fledged in mid-April	Near Parker	La Paz	G. Bradt
10 April 1977	Pair w/ fledglings	Verde River near Fountain Hills	Maricopa	S. Terrill A. Gast
7 May 1978	Two pairs w/ nests	Verde River near Fountain Hills	Maricopa	K. Kaufman G. Rosenberg
April-May 1979	Nest w/ young	Bill Williams River delta	La Paz - Mohave	J. Bean A. Laurenzi
Late June or early July 1980	Juveniles	Hassayampa River near Wick-enburg	Maricopa	C. Tomoff
12 June 2003	Juvenile at feeder after ad. male was first detected there on 26 May	Gisela, near Tonto Creek	Gila	J. Estis
<i>Sources:</i> Phillips et al. 1964; Linsdale 1968; Monson and Phillips 1981; Rosenberg et al. 1991; Witze-man et al. 1997				

tween cool, wet springs and subsequent lush growth of annuals in southern and central Arizona, and the local nesting of Lawrence's Goldfinches in the state. Away from Arizona, this hypothesis is further corroborated by sporadic nesting activity under similar environmental conditions in arid regions of eastern California (Garrett and Dunn 1981, Yee et al. 1994, McCaskie 1996) and northeastern Baja California, Mexico (Erickson and Howell 2001).

Acknowledgments

We greatly appreciate Henry Detwiler and Carl Tomoff for additional details of their nesting activity observations and thank Roy Jones for his helpful review of this document.

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Henry Detwiler

Copulating pair of Lawrence's Goldfinches at Betty's Kitchen, Yuma County 29 April 2005

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Slate-throated Redstart: Arizona's Fifth Record

KEITH KAMPER

This note documents the fifth record (pending acceptance by the Arizona Bird Committee) of an apparent adult (sex undetermined) Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) for Arizona, a single bird photographed in Carr Canyon, Huachuca Mountains, Cochise County, from 26 May to 5 June 2005. It provides comments on context, distribution, field identification, and information on the demise of this bird.

On 26 May visiting birder Dr. Larry King observed a redstart near the Comfort Springs Trail in Carr Canyon, exhibiting field marks consistent with Slate-throated Redstart. He described what he saw on the Tucson (Southeast Arizona) Rare Bird Alert voice mailbox; admirably, he did not call the bird a Slate-throated Redstart as his observation was very brief. On 28 May Phil Norton relocated and positively identified the bird in question as a Slate-throated Redstart. He observed the bird in a dry creek bed at about 2130 m (7000 ft), just off the Comfort Springs Trail near the head of the canyon. The bird was observed and photographed by many from 29 May through 5 June, at which date the bird was found dead. The redstart spent much of its time feeding actively in the vicinity of the dry creek bed, with observations ranging to a wet creek bed several hundred feet away. Second growth and mature Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and big-tooth maple (*Acer grandidentatum*) predominated; a few sapling white pines (*Pinus strobiformis*) were also present. The redstart carcass was found near the wet stream bed by Jay Hand.

Description and identification

Given adequate views, postjuvenile Slate-throated Redstart should not be confused with any other species. It is superficially similar to Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*) but was distinguished from that species by a combination of characteristics.

This bird's wings were completely slate gray, not black as in Painted Redstart. It lacked a white wing patch on the coverts and exhibited no white edges to the tertials; Painted shows both



Keith Kamper

Slate-throated Redstart 29 May 2005. Note chestnut patch on crown.

marks. The underparts and face were slate rather than jet black. The chestnut patch on the crown was visible at close range; this is lacking in the Painted Redstart. The bird did not exhibit the white arc under the eye that Painted Redstart shows. The red of the underparts was not as deep as Painted and was slightly more extensive. The tail often showed less white than Painted Redstart. White marks were present on retrices 4-6, with R6 showing the most extensive white, but it did not run the length of the tail as in Painted. Finally, the tail was slightly more graduated (Dunn and Garrett 1997).

The lack of any white on R3 led some to wonder if this bird might not be the most northerly subspecies: *miniatus*. Kimball L. Garrett, Ornithology Collections Manager, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, examined five reasonably unworn nominate *M. m. miniatus* (mainly from Chihuahua, Mexico) and four reasonably unworn *M. m. intermedius* (from Guatemala). While the sample size is too small to be scientific, the results showed that most unworn nominate (northern) birds show a trace of white on r3, but some may lack it (and many or most worn birds may not show white). There did not

appear to be any sexual dimorphism in this character. Garrett suggests that this bird is likely the expected nominate *miniatus* and that it falls within the normal range of variation of that subspecies.

Distribution and status

Slate-throated Redstart is largely resident from northern Mexico to South America (Howell and Webb 1995). Russell and Monson (1998) noted this species as a rare summer resident as far north as southern Sonora. Dunn et al. (2002) considers this species accidental in the U. S. Southwest. There are currently 12 accepted records for the United States in addition to this most current sighting. Arizona's four prior records are as follows: Miller Canyon, Huachuca Mountains, Cochise County 10-16 April 1976; Cave Creek Canyon, Chiricahua Mountains, Cochise County 2 May 1978; Cave Creek Canyon 29 March 1993; Madera Canyon, Santa Rita Mountains, Pima/Santa Cruz Counties 26 May 1996. New Mexico has one record, a single bird at Stevens Tank, Lea County 16 April 1962 (Dunn et al. 2002). Texas has seven accepted records from five counties. The



Keith Kamper

Shawneen Finnegan holds dead Slate-throated Redstart in southeastern Arizona's Carr Canyon 5 June 2005, shortly after it was found

first record occurred in April 1990; the most recent was in May 2003 (Mark Lockwood, letter to author, 27 July 2005).

Necropsy results

Larry L. Norris (2005), National Park Service and the University of Arizona (UA), reported that the specimen was examined by Greg Greene, Research Assistant, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. The right outer tail feather was the only missing flight feather. Fat was present in the furcular depression (wishbone area) and it weighed 7.9 grams. The bird was considered healthy. It suffered trauma to the back of the head and the right hip region consistent with an attack from above. It is likely that the bird was struck by a predator, possibly an accipiter. A Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) was observed in the area on 5 June, near where the carcass was found. The sex of the bird could not be determined because the blood and innards had pretty much turned to mush in the three days after it was found dead, because it could not be frozen prior to West Nile Virus (WNV) testing. Due to a massive hematoma in the hip and rump area it was not possible to dissect there. The Arizona Veterinary Diagnostic Lab test for WNV was negative. The carcass was destroyed during the WNV testing and necropsy (Norris, letter to author, 27 July 2005).

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Larry L. Norris, Kimball L. Garrett, Mark Lockwood, Pat Snider, and Greg Greene for their valuable contributions. Many thanks are due to Roy Jones and Troy Corman for reviewing this note. Their insights, knowledge, and suggestions were most useful.

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First record of Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Arizona



Text and digiscoped images by Richard C. Hoyer using an Olympus C-4000 ZOOM digital camera with a Leica Apo-Televid 77 spotting scope and 32X wide-angle eyepiece.

8 February 2005

First seen on 19 or 20 December 2004, Arizona's first Ruby-throated Hummingbird was recognized as an *Archilochus sp.*, but with only a single fleeting glimpse was passed off as a probable Costa's Hummingbird. When resighted on 1 January 2005, and confirmed to that genus after all, recordings were made, digiscoped images were obtained, and a firestorm of interest was ignited. At least 32 people stopped by 3919 N. Vine Ave. in north-central Tucson before the bird was captured on 11 January and confirmed to species. They noted its clean white throat contrasting with the face mask, dark green upperparts including the entire crown, shortish bill, short wings falling well short of the tail tip, and lack of tail wagging in hovering flight.

3 March 2005

Throughout its stay at least 140 visitors saw this bird. It was last sighted on 14 April (although it may have stayed a few days more) and during this time it was in continuous molt of the heavily worn wing and tail feathers. In this photo, the distinctive pointed tip and straight edge of the inner web of p6, the fourth primary visible from outermost, is quite noticeable. The last primary to molt is p9, still very worn here, while p10 is just emerging as a pin-feather. Note missing tail feathers.

Status and Distribution of Black Vulture in Arizona, with notes on bird finding

ROY M. JONES

Black Vulture, *Coragyps atratus*, is the most abundant of seven vulture species in the New World (Buckley 1999). It is primarily resident throughout its extensive range; perhaps moving short distances seasonally or during severe weather. In Central and South America, it is widespread and common and is especially abundant around human population centers. Black Vultures frequent fish docks, markets, garbage dumps, and cattle country; otherwise, they inhabit open areas to 2800 m (approximately 9200 ft) rarely venturing into dense, undisturbed forests. Of all the New World vultures, Black Vultures have benefited most from human activity (del Hoyo et al. 1994, AOU 1998).

The northern limits of the Black Vulture's range is in the United States, where its eastern population is resident from western Texas, eastern Oklahoma, and southern Missouri eastward, north to southern Illinois, southern Indiana, central Ohio, south-central Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Some portions of the northern and highest elevation populations retreat southward for the winter months; however, throughout the range some individuals remain year-round. For the last several decades, it has been expanding northward where it is currently casual from North Dakota and Wisconsin east to Nova Scotia. (AOU 1998, Buckley 1999)

In the western United States, Black Vultures occur regularly only in Arizona, although, there are accepted records for California and New Mexico (AOU 1998). For Arizona, the most recent in-depth treatments come from Monson and Phillips (1981), Rea (1998), and Corman (2005). This manuscript updates the status and distribution for Black Vulture in Arizona since Monson and Phillips (1981) and provides locations where interested observers might find them.



Jim Burns

The best places to find Black Vultures in Arizona are Patagonia and Nogales in the southeast, along the Santa Cruz River north of Tucson, and for those not venturing to the southeast part of the state, the areas west of Phoenix along the Gila and Salt Rivers.

Status and distribution

A relative newcomer to Arizona, the Black Vulture is a sparse and locally uncommon resident along the borderlands of south-central Arizona from Patagonia and Nogales west to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. It is regular, sometimes in abundance, north along the Santa Cruz Valley to the confluence of the Santa Cruz and Gila Rivers. This core range has been consistent since at least the mid-1960s (Rea 1983). In recent years, small numbers have begun roosting at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and showing up at the Avra Valley Wastewater Treatment Facility and elsewhere in the Avra Valley, west of the Tucson Mountains. At Sells, on the Tohono O'odham tribal lands, where it is thought the species reaches its peak abundance, the largest concentrations recorded were >190, 19 Nov 1986 (Stejskal and Witzeman 1987), and another 100

were there 15 November 1997 (Benesh and Rosenberg 1998). At Nogales, 221 were counted during the 2002 Christmas Bird Count, with five other annual counts of >100 individuals (*vide* J. Bache-Wiig). Other large concentrations (more than 30) were reported from near the Salt and Gila Rivers confluence, Maricopa County; Pinal Airpark pecan grove, Pima County; Red Rock feedlot, Pinal County; and >100 were at Picacho Reservoir, Pinal County, 26 October 2001 (C. Benesh and M. Stevenson, personal communication). After many years of absence, the species returned to the northwestern reaches of its historic range (Phillips et al. 1964) along the confluence of the Salt and Gila Rivers west of Phoenix. It was first noted wandering north on 23 October 1988 (Rosenberg and Stejskal 1989), and by the turn of the century, was a resident along the Gila River from Laveen west to Palo Verde. Corman (2005)

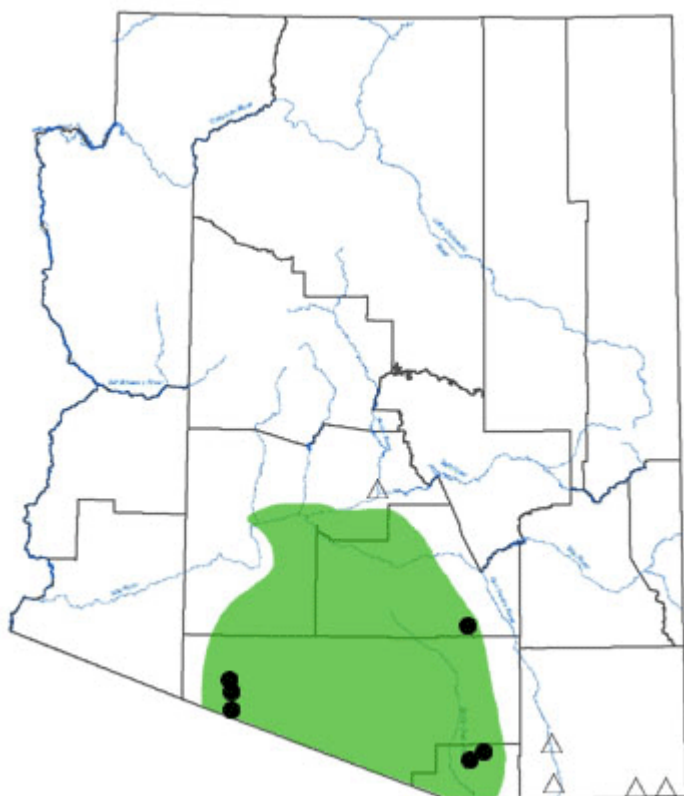
suggests nesting as far north as the White Tank Mountains, Maricopa Co. Black Vulture populations in Arizona are stable or slightly increasing.

Habitat

Unlike the species in Central and South America, Black Vultures in Arizona are not typically found in large cities, preferring instead to remain in the open desert where large mammals, such as free-ranging cattle and horses more often succumb to starvation and thirst (Corman 2005), and roadkills are easier to access. As U.S. cities became more sanitary over the last 80 years, the vultures were decreasingly found living close to humans. They still occur in small rural towns, however, and sometimes nest near humans (Buckley 1999). Corman (2005) found that during the breeding season, Black Vultures in Arizona are most often in desert scrub habitat where there are large saguaros and trees, less often in sparsely vegetated desert areas, and sparingly in small towns, agricultural fields, pecan orchards, riparian woodlands, dense washes, and semiarid grasslands from 300-1200 m (approximately 1000-4000 ft) in elevation. Although the *Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas* data was collected during the breeding season only, it is likely that these same habitats are used year-round in approximately the same densities. Only six active nests have been reported in Arizona, three in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, where they may nest nearly every year at Twin Peaks, and one each at Patagonia, north of the Santa Catalina Mountains, and south of Sonoita (Rea 1998, Corman 2005, T. Tibbitts, personal communication).

Movements

There is little movement outside the immediate vicinity of the species' known range. During fall and winter, Black Vultures often amass in large, roosting flocks; however, Phillips et al. (1964) hypothesize these concentrations are the product of the most favorable feeding grounds attracting birds from a wider area of residency, not from a seasonal movement. Considering how high Black Vultures soar and how this allows them to travel great distances quickly, it is remarkable that we do not see many far-flung vagrants. There



- YEAR-ROUND RANGE
- NESTING SITE
- OUT-OF-RANGE SIGHTING

continues to be no accepted records within the lower Colorado River Valley. The California Bird Records Committee did not accept the single report from the California side of the Colorado River near Parker Dam (Rosenberg et al. 1991). There is a recent history of individuals wandering north to Chandler and Queen Creek, but this is within the historic range. Other wandering individuals were at the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers 14 May 2005 (*fide* T. Corman), south of Sierra Vista 9 August 1989 (Rosenberg and Stejskal 1990), and at the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, Cochise County, east of Douglas, 26 April 2005 (R. Webster, personal communication). Although, Monson and Philips (1981) comment that the species is present at the latter location February – July, this is the only record I could find, with another individual at Douglas 30 May 1984 (Stejskal and Witzeman 1984).

Black Vultures are very opportunistic, with ephemeral food sources, sometimes directly associated with humans, likely playing a role in range expansion. A primitive slaughterhouse along the Gila River was one of the first locations where the species was found during the 1990s west of Phoenix, and another on the outskirts of Tucson attracted birds in the early years (Phillips et al. 1964).

Where to find Black Vultures

The best places to find Black Vultures are Patagonia and Nogales in the southeast, along the Santa Cruz River north of Tucson, and for those not venturing to the southeast part of the state, the areas west of Phoenix along the Gila and Salt Rivers. At Patagonia, look for the vultures at the Roadside Rest and at the Patagonia Sonoita Creek Sanctuary. Kettles of Black Vultures are often seen just north of Nogales in the flat agricultural areas along the Santa Cruz River. Also look for them in the areas surrounding the Nogales Wastewater Treatment Facility (to date the facility itself remains closed to the public). North of Tucson, check for roosting birds at the Pinal Airpark pecan grove or near the feedlot in Red Rock, and when water is present, Picacho Reservoir also supports sizable numbers. In Phoenix, watch for soaring birds over dairy farms and agricultural areas, as well as perched on the high-tension transmission towers just north of Phoenix Inter-

national Raceway and the Gila River.

Acknowledgments

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Notes on Nesting Osprey in the Kaibab National Forest

ELAINE MORRALL

The amazing Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), placed between the hawk and falcon families, is the only species in the family Pandionidae, named after Pandion. In Greek legend he was the King of Athens and known as the King of Sea Eagles from the Greek *halos* (sea) and *aetos* (eagle) (Terres 1980). One of the most widely distributed birds in the world, it lives in Europe, Asia, south to Spain, northern Africa, southern China, the East Indies, Australia, and some Pacific islands (Terres 1980). Generally found near or on fishing waters, however, it will sometimes nest miles away from foraging areas. Osprey feed almost exclusively on fish; therefore, it lives along seacoasts, rivers, and inland lakes, including several of the man-made fishing lakes scattered throughout the Kaibab National Forest (Kaibab) south of the Grand Canyon. In North America, the primary race, *carolinensis*, does not nest south of Baja California, but does breed as far north as central Alaska (Wheeler 2003).

In the fall, northern North America populations of Osprey migrate south to winter in Mexico and Central and South America via numerous routes. One known route is included in the Veracruz River of Raptors Project in eastern Mexico, where observers tallied 2,232 Ospreys traveling south in the fall of 2004 (Rodriguez Mesa 2004). Total migratory populations elsewhere are not known. An estimated 800-900 Ospreys are residential breeders along Mexico's west coast, the Sea of Cortez, and Baja California (Dodd and Vahle 1998). Arizona is the prime breeding state in the Southwest, but a few nest sites are also found in northern New Mexico (Wheeler 2003). In Arizona, Ospreys nest primarily in central regions of the state and winter fairly commonly along the lower Colorado, Gila, Verde, and Salt Rivers (Driscoll 2005).

In 1987, under the direction of U.S. Forest Service personnel, nine volunteer birders surveyed nine man-made lakes on the Kaibab for nesting Osprey. Only one nest was found – at Scholz



Jim Burns

Arizona is a prime breeding state for Osprey

Lake. Since then, Kaibab Ospreys have been surveyed and monitored in an effort to track improvement from the sadly depleted population of earlier decades. For some years following 1987, Osprey observations were scarce. In 1992, however, the *Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas* project began, with Whitehorse Lake located in an *Atlas* block on the Kaibab. Although the other eight lakes were not situated within *Atlas* priority blocks, an effort was made to survey them at least once each season. This article describes the findings of the annual surveys.

These lakes and nest sites are located in that part of the Kaibab within 32 km (20 mi) of the city

of Williams, Coconino County. To visit these lakes, it is useful to purchase a Kaibab forest map in order to select forest roads. Lakes that host Osprey nests range in elevation from approximately 2000-2100 m (6500-6900 ft). Ponderosa pines (*Pinus ponderosa*) of varying sizes predominate; in addition, some forest areas have abundant Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambelii*).

The surveys were conducted as a census with subsequent monitoring. One to three observers surveyed the nine lakes by driving to each one, followed by walking whatever distance required to adequately view previous nests or survey surrounding trees for new nests. For efficiency, a "circle route" was developed by driving I-40 (and Highway 64) to Kaibab and Cataract Lakes. Then traveling south through Williams, past Santa Fe Reservoir on Perkinsville Highway to Dogtown Lake, east to Poquette Tank, and farther east to Whitehorse Lake. The route then turned south to

JD Dam, west to Perkins' Tank, then back east to Scholz Lake, and I-40 to Flagstaff. Round-trip mileage from Flagstaff averaged about 130 miles. Sometimes this route was driven in reverse, either direction taking seven to eight hours.

As the Osprey population on the Kaibab lakes had only to expand, it was exciting to find three nests in July 1992. The next few years the survey areas were visited only once each spring, but in later years, we would visit the nests in May, then again in July to count nestlings before they fledged (table 1). After 1995, only two spring surveys were missed entirely, although the summer nestling count provided the number of successful nests. Currently four lakes on the Kaibab provide active Osprey nest sites: Whitehorse Lake (3), JD Dam (1), Poquette Tank (1), and Kaibab Lake (1). During the past 14 years, active nests had also been periodically noted at Scholz Lake and Santa Fe Reservoir. Perkins Tank and Cataract and

Table 1. Summary of Nesting Osprey Observations on Kaibab National Forest

Year	First Visit Date	# of Active Nests	Second Visit Date	# of Active Nests	# of Young	Comments
1992	No early visit		18 July	3	5	First regular visit
1993	13 June	4				
1994	11 May	1				Only 1 lake surveyed
1995*	21 May	3				1 nest fallen
1996*	7 April	2	21 July	4	5	
1997*	20 April	6	15 July	5	5	1 nest failed
1998	9 May	5	6 Aug	4	8	1 nest fallen, normal precipitation
1999*	No early visit		6 Aug	5	8	
2000*	21 May	5	21 July	3	4	2 nests failed
2001*	3 June	5	16 July	6	8	1 new nest
2002*	24 April	7	26 July	5	7	2 nests failed
2003*	11 April	5	27 June	4	7	1 nest failed
2004*	No early visit		7 July	4	6	Lakes very low or dry
2005	9 May	6	8 July	5	11	Wet winter – lakes full. 1 nest inactivated, but adults present

* Denotes years of drought or near-drought conditions

Dogtown Lakes have not provided nest sites.

Without exception, the ponderosa pine is the tree of choice for Osprey nests, either live trees or snags (dead-standing). The latter are favored if they are as tall as or taller than surrounding trees. Essential to selecting a nest tree are nearby lookout perches, commonly snags or flat-topped live trees. The current nest at Kaibab Lake sits on a platform installed on top of a snag prior to the initiation of these surveys. On occasion, a second pair of Osprey would build a second nest and it would disappear after a year or so, perhaps due to high winds. A typical nest is built of interwoven sticks and lined with grasses or pine needles. Because nests are normally reused, additional material is added each spring, which eventually creates a large, heavy nest that is durable for many years. If a nest falls, the pair might rebuild it the next spring, but usually will pick another nearby snag or tree, or perhaps move to an entirely new site.

Table 1 summarizes the Osprey survey results. After three to four years of maturing to adulthood, Osprey will return to their nestling area looking for a breeding territory (Terres 1980). As long as reliable fishing waters and tall snags or trees are available, Ospreys will nest as close as 0.1 mile to each other. The reason for failed nesting attempts is quite varied and often unknown. The typical indication of a failed nest often includes one or two adult Ospreys sitting on nearby perches, often calling for long periods, and not tending the nest that earlier was brooded. A fallen nest speaks of disaster as well. In July, strong thunderstorm winds can topple the nest and nestlings to the ground before they are capable of flight.

The new nest discovered on the second visit in 2001 does not indicate a new nest was built in the time between visits, only that on the first visit it had not been detected. Nests are typically constructed and eggs are laid in April and May. Plentiful fishing waters in 2005 appear to have contributed towards an all-time high of nestlings. The nest at Kaibab Lake and nest #2 at Whitehorse Lake each held three apparently healthy nestlings this year. Nest #3 at Whitehorse had one nestling, nest #1 had two, and the JD Dam nest had two nestlings already as large as the parents.

During the 10 years from 1995 through 2004,

only 1998 could be considered as having “normal” precipitation. So far, precipitation levels for 2005 are above normal with full lakes that have been stocked with fish, to which the ospreys have responded well (NOAA). The nest site surveys do not seem to show a definite drought-related pattern of success or failure. It appears that the Osprey adapted to the increasingly arid climate, when most of the major lakes were either dry or lacked sufficient water to sustain a fishery, by traveling longer distances to fish. As long as one or two lake fisheries were available, the birds adjusted immediately, illustrating their survival flexibility.

These Osprey surveys are a result of the *Arizona Breeding Bird Atlas* where citizen scientists (nonprofessionals) volunteered their time to census and monitor bird species for breeding status within a designated block of approximately 10 square miles. The observers on the Kaibab took a great interest in Ospreys, not only because they are large and easy to see, but, because their behavior became most interesting to watch, as well as other bird species in the vicinity. Such activities as the *Atlas* project, Christmas Bird Counts, and Arizona Important Bird Areas can be called “birding with a purpose.” All birders can benefit themselves and contribute to knowledge by assisting with ongoing surveys. Simply contact your local Audubon Society, Arizona Game and Fish Department, or U.S. Forest Service office for such opportunities.

Arizona has come a very long way since Phillips et al. (1964) noted: “How this magnificent hawk can survive in Arizona is a marvel, considering that even fish-and-game rangers are instructed to shoot them on sight. Man cannot tolerate an animal that is a better fisherman than he is!” Thankfully, this activity ended once Osprey and many other species were finally included for protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1972.

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West to Oracle: Samuel Rhoads in Arizona

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Hard as it is for my nonbirding friends to believe, summer is the season for out-of-state birders to visit southeast Arizona.

The tradition of warm-season visits to the state is a venerable one, antedating the first Lane guide by nearly three-quarters of a century. One of the earliest traveling birders to visit our area was Samuel N. Rhoads, a well-known New Jersey observer who spent five weeks in Pima and Pinal Counties in the summer of 1891. Unlike most present-day visitors to the state, Rhoads not only observed the local birds but collected specimens for the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, where the nearly 400 skins he took can still be examined today.

Much has changed in the Santa Catalinas in the last century. Human intervention has altered habitats, and the ranges of certain birds have contracted or expanded in response. Early reports such as that published by Rhoads in the *Proceedings* of the Philadelphia Academy for 1892 provide an invaluable “baseline” for comparison — and a fascinating glimpse into what it was like to bird the Catalinas more than 100 years ago.

Rhoads left Texas on 6 or 7 June 1891, arriving in Tucson on 10 June. He described Oracle, his base for much of his stay in Arizona, as “a post-hamlet situated in the oak belt” of the mountains; in just over a month’s birding and collecting, he recorded 126 species, most of them represented by specimens secured in the canyons of the Santa Catalinas near Oracle.

Many of the birds Rhoads recorded are still common and expected in the area today. Others are much rarer than Rhoads found them, and a few appear to have actually increased.

The modern birder visiting Peppersauce Canyon and similar sites in the northern Catalinas will encounter many (but not all!) of the same birds as this ornithological pioneer — and will appreciate them more, perhaps, by recalling Samuel Rhoads’s experiences with them more than a century ago.

California Condor: One was shot near the summit of Mt. Lemmon “several years” before Rhoads’s visit.

Crested Caracara: Rhoads found this bird “occasionally” at Oracle. The species is now very local in Arizona.

Scaled Quail: Rhoads found mixed flocks of Scaled and Gambel’s Quail in the oaks, and collected a specimen of the former in Oracle.

Montezuma Quail: Rhoads found this bird as high as 7,000 feet in the Catalinas, where it is now much more rarely observed than in other ranges to the south and east.

“Gould’s” Turkey: Rhoads never saw this bird in the Catalinas. Once common, he says, it



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Rhoads found Scaled Quail in the oaks near Oracle, Pinal County

was wiped out by a disastrous fire on Mt. Lemmon.

Spotted Owl: This bird can still be heard in the Catalinas, but is probably much less common now than when Rhoads saw several in the summer of 1891.

Magnificent Hummingbird: Rhoads seems to have been the first ornithologist to observe this species in the Catalinas, where it is now common at high elevations.

“Red-shafted” Flicker: Rhoads described this now-common species as rare even at high elevations.

Greater Pewee: Rhoads found this species to be abundant in the ponderosa pines of the Catalinas; if his identifications were correct, the bird has greatly decreased since his time.

Gray Vireo: Now scarce and local in the area, this bird was listed by Rhoads as “frequent.”

Botteri’s Sparrow: Three were collected in “thick bunches of bear-grass” near Catalina, where the bird is now decidedly unexpected.

Canyon Towhee: Rhoads was the first ornithologist to note in print the “remarkable” similarity between the songs of this bird and the Northern Cardinal.

Of equal interest are some species Rhoads did not find on his visit to Oracle:

Inca Dove: Now a familiar town bird, the Inca Dove had arrived in Tucson not many years before Rhoads’s visit, and was still very local, if not rare.

Great-tailed Grackle: This abundant species did not arrive in Arizona until the late 1930s.

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