

UNUSUAL BIRDS IN THE VICINITY OF PIPE SPRING, ARIZONA

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Arizona north of the Grand Canyon and west of the Kaibab Plateau has been largely neglected by ornithologists. My two-year stay (October 1972-October 1974) at Pipe Spring National Monument, Mohave County, Arizona resulted in a number of interesting observations which are presented below. Two species were recorded in Arizona for the first time.

At an elevation of 1500 m, Pipe Spring is on the dividing line between the sagebrush (*Artemisia*) desert leading 50 miles south to the Grand Canyon and the pinyon (*Pinus edulis*) and juniper (*Juniperus*) covered mesas stretching northwards to central Utah. As in most desert areas temperature extremes are great. Just seven years (1967-1974) of weather records at Pipe Spring show extremes of 107° and -15°F. Annual precipitation averages 9 inches with most occurring in July and August.

In this dry area almost devoid of surface water three small oases are magnets for migrating birds. Pipe Spring National Monument has 15 acres of cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*), poplars (*Populus nigra*, *P. alba*), orchards, gardens, and pasture lands. It has two small ponds. Kaibab village, 3 miles north of Pipe Spring on the Kaibab Indian Reservation, has a 2-acre oasis with two small stock ponds. Moccasin village, 4 miles north of Pipe Spring, has 100 acres under cultivation with twelve homes, orchards, gardens, pastures, and cottonwoods edged by scrub oak (*Quercus*) covered hills and a spring.

Away from the three oases, two stock watering ponds in the sagebrush desert attract birds. Riggs Pond, 7 miles east of Pipe Spring, has no surrounding vegetation except sage. Two-mile Pond, 3 miles northeast of Pipe Spring, has an area of bulrushes, cattails, and willows. Both of these ponds held water through 1973 but dried up in September 1974 during a prolonged drought. They account for all the shorebird sightings and most of the waterfowl.

During my two-year stay I found 195 species of birds. Six additional species were recorded by others in earlier years for a total of 201 species within a 7.5 mile radius of Pipe Spring. Unusual records included:

WHITE PELICAN, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*. One at Kaibab Pond 28 Oct. through 11 Nov. 1972.

GREEN HERON, *Butorides virescens*. One at Pipe Spring 3 Oct. 1973.

SNOWY EGRET, *Egretta thula*. Four sightings totaling 41 birds were made between 18 Apr. and 8 May 1974. High count was 20 on 18 Apr. Six more were seen on 21 Sep. 1974.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON, *Nycticorax nycticorax*. One flew over Pipe Spring at dusk 7 May 1973.

LEAST BITTERN, *Ixobrychus exilis*. A female or subadult was found at Pipe Spring Pond 23-24 July 1973 catching small carp. It hid in willows, as no typical marsh vegetation was present.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, *Buteo lagopus*. Frequent sightings were made during the winters of 1972-73 and 1973-74. First fall sightings were on 1 Nov. in both years.

BALD EAGLE, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. One immature was seen in early February 1973 at Pipe Spring.

VIRGINIA RAIL, *Rallus limicola*. Nested in a 0.2 ha cattail marsh at Two-mile Pond and fledged two young in 1974.

COMMON GALLINULE, *Gallinula chloropus*. One at Two-mile Pond 8-9 June 1974.

NOTES

SEMPALMATED PLOVER, *Charadrius semipalmatus*. One in breeding plumage was seen at Two-mile Pond 17, 20 and 21 August 1974.

FRANKLIN'S GULL, *Larus pipixcan*. An immature was seen 23 Sep. 1974 at Riggs Pond. Presumably the same bird was found automobile-killed on the road the next day 2 miles west of the pond.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK, *Chordeiles minor*. Late dates were of two on 20 Sep. 1974 and one on 24 Sep. 1974, all at Kaibab village.

STELLER'S JAY, *Cyanocitta stelleri*. They were common at Moccasin and Pipe Spring from at least 31 Oct 1972 through 10 Mar. 1973. This was an invasion year; none were seen the following winter.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE, *Pica pica*. Two were seen at Pipe Spring 25 Oct. 1973. Although they are quite common 50 miles north in Utah at a higher elevation, this is the first modern record in Arizona west of the Kaibab Plateau.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, *Parus atricapillus*. Small groups of up to nine individuals were present at Pipe Spring and Moccasin from at least 31 Oct. 1972 through 5 Jan. 1973. Pipe Spring is the only place in Arizona where they have been reported with any regularity, having been reported there on four Christmas Bird Counts in ten years between 1964 and 1973. None were observed during the winter of 1973-74.

BROWN THRASHER, *Toxostoma rufum*. One was present in my backyard at Pipe Spring daily 9-15 July 1974.

CRISSAL THRASHER, *Toxostoma dorsale*. One was found in scrub oaks at Moccasin 24 Jan. 1973. This is the same area where one was reported by Barbara Lund on the 1966 Pipe Spring Christmas Bird Count.

VARIED THRUSH, *Ixoreus naevius*. A male at Moccasin 29 Sep. 1974 was eating wild grapes with a flock of American Robins.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH, *Catbarus ustulatus*. Phillips, Marshall and Monson (The Birds of Arizona, 1966) consider the Swainson's Thrush to be rare in Arizona in the fall and limited primarily to southeastern Arizona. Therefore, a Swainson's Thrush 26 Sep. 1974 at Pipe Spring is significant.

PHAINOPEPLA, *Pbainopepla nitens*. Nine summer sightings were made of individuals with extreme dates of 31 May (1974) and 16 Sep. (1973). All were seen at Moccasin.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER, *Mniotilta varia*. The sighting of a female 24-26 Sep. 1974 at Pipe Spring is worthy of note.

NORTHERN PARULA, *Parula americana*. A subadult male (black and cinnamon on breast present but indistinct) was closely studied 27 Sep. 1974 at Kaibab.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER, *Dendroica caerulescens*. Considered to be a casual transient in Arizona (Phillips et al. op. cit.), the Black-throated Blue Warbler was recorded three times at the same spot at Pipe Spring in the autumn of 1974. A female was seen 27-28 Sep. A male was present 28-29 Sep. and a second male was found 1 Oct. The last male was also seen by Gale Monson. It was not the same male seen earlier.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER, *Dendroica pensylvanica*. Three sightings of immature Chestnut-sided Warblers were made in one week in the fall of 1974. One was recorded at Kaibab 27-28 Sep. A second was seen 28 Sep. at Pipe Spring. Another, probably a third individual, was seen at Pipe Spring 1 Oct. by the author and Gale Monson.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, *Seiurus noveboracensis*. Single individuals were seen at both Pipe Spring and Moccasin 11-15 May 1973; singles were also seen at Pipe Spring 21 Aug. and 4-8 Sep. 1974.

MOURNING WARBLER, *Oporornis philadelphia*. The first Arizona record of the Mourning Warbler was established 31 May 1974 at Pipe Spring when a male was found. The specimen was salvaged and given to the University of Arizona (UA 12168).

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CANADA WARBLER, *Wilsonia canadensis*. The first Canada Warbler recorded in Arizona was a female found 29 Sep. 1974 at Pipe Spring. Again the specimen was salvaged and given to the University of Arizona (UA 11945). The skull was completely ossified.

AMERICAN REDSTART, *Setophaga ruticilla*. My records indicate three on 8 Sep. 1973 at Pipe Spring, a female 22 May 1974 at Two-mile Pond, and a male 9 Sep. 1974 at Moccasin.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE, *Cassidix mexicanus*. The most northerly Arizona record of a Great-tailed Grackle was that of a male at Pipe Spring 8-9 July 1974.

HARRIS' SPARROW, *Zonotrichia querula*. Present at both Moccasin and Pipe Spring, the Harris' Sparrow was seen from 9 Nov. 1972 through 8 May 1973. The highest count observed during this period was ten.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, *Zonotrichia albicollis*. There were three at Moccasin 2-3 Feb. 1973 and one at Pipe Spring 28 Apr. through 2 May 1974.



Sketch by Dave Winkler