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R. Tumlison

*Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, AR*

R. Kannan

*University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, Fort Smith, AR*

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# Rare Birds in Arkansas: Historical Observations and New Records

R. Tumblison<sup>1</sup> and R. Kannan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Applied Professional Sciences and Technology, Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, AR 71999*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Biology, University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, Fort Smith, AR 72913*

\*Correspondence: tumblison@hsu.edu

Running Title: Update of rare birds in Arkansas

## Abstract

Diligent members of birding communities are quick to report rare sightings of birds, which often lead to multiple observations and photographic documentation. Verified reports and images of birds in Arkansas are curated by the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS), which has led to an appreciation of which species are common versus rare. We gathered historic (literature) and more recent unpublished records of rare birds (those with fewer than 10 reports, per AAS) to document the historic and current state of knowledge of those species. Currently, there are a total of 425 species of birds reported in Arkansas, of which 54 are considered rare (not including species first documented in Arkansas after 2009). A little less than half of these species have no new reports since 2009.

## Introduction

Increasing numbers of observations of birds can be attributed to both an increasing number of birds over time and to an increasing number of observers making reports. New records are of particular interest to birders and professional ornithologists as anthropogenic climate change continues to alter known distributions of birds.

Knowledge of occurrence and distributions of birds in Arkansas has grown substantially since the first compilations in the 1900s. This is due partly to an increase in the number of avian enthusiasts and the evolution of systems of reporting and validating observations (i.e., Ar-birds, eBird), but also is dynamic due to changes in habitats and climate. The flight responses of birds to weather, food shortages, migration patterns, and other conditions can result in observations of individual birds far from their normal ranges. Since the early days of record-keeping, 17 species of birds that nested or wintered in, or migrated through Arkansas no longer occur here, and 2 of those species are extinct (James 1974, McKinley and James 1984). Some species

of birds declined to near absence in Arkansas, but have been documented still breeding here (e.g., Willow Flycatchers [Holiman and James 2003], or have recently bred for the first time in over 100 years (Swallow-tailed Kite [Wills and Tumblison 2021]). Other species are breeding here for the first time (Ellis and Kannan 2004, Kannan *et al.* 2019, Tumblison *et al.* 2021), or have expanded breeding range within the state (Tumblison 2009). Exotic species also have established and breed in Arkansas (e.g., Fielder *et al.* 2012).

Howell (1911) reported 242 species of birds in Arkansas, Wheeler (1924) reported 272 (but James and Neal [1986] noted that some of those should not have been included), and Baerg (1931, 1951) reported 277 and 324, respectively. James and Neal (1986) reported 366 species, James *et al.* (1994) documented additional species to reach 380, and further additions by James *et al.* (2007, 2009) raised the state count to 405.

## Methods and Materials

To consolidate knowledge of distribution and dates of occurrence of rare birds in Arkansas (considered by AAS to be rare in the state, meaning that there are under 10 occurrences known for each species), we gathered historical information from literature and surveyed records verified and published by the Arkansas Audubon Society (Ar-birds 2023), the citizen science website hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (eBird 2023, hereafter, eBird)), and reports on the discussion list ARBIRD-L ([ARBIRD-L@listserv.uark.edu](mailto:ARBIRD-L@listserv.uark.edu)) hosted at the University of Arkansas. Earlier records that were not included in previous works (James and Neal 1986, James *et al.* 1994, 2007, 2009) also have been added. Web links (eBird) to first records or photographs of some of these Arkansas birds are referenced in-text as a citation preceded by A:, to indicate the reference is cited in Appendix I (e.g., A: Mills 1992). Status of birds considered as new in 2007 (James *et al.* 2007) but which have accumulated >10 observations so are no longer considered rare, are updated in Appendix II. Typical

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North American distributions of the birds reported herein are as shown in Peterson (2008).

### Results and Discussion

Of the 54 species listed by the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS) as rare (not including new species added after the update by James *et al.* [2009]), 25 species have not been recorded again and 29 species have new reports. We update history of each species from the rare list in the following accounts. First reports are credited to the original observer(s) as much as possible.

#### Order Anseriformes:

**Brant (*Branta bernicla*)** – Normally a bird of the tundra, reported first in Arkansas by Jeff R. Wilson from near Turrell and Wapanocca NWR (Crittenden Co.), on 13 January 1990 and 20 January 1990, respectively (James *et al.* 1994). No new records.

**Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*)** – This bird ranges mostly in Eurasia to the Aleutians. Widespread but casual records exist in North America. James and Neal (1986) reported a male on 1 April 1984 from a shallow pond near the Arkansas River northwest of Little Rock (Pulaski Co.). No new records.

**Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)** – This is a duck of Eurasia and a visitor to northern Atlantic and Pacific coasts, but rarely found inland. All records in Arkansas have been from Lake Dardanelle in Pope/Yell Cos. The first state record was an adult male seen 20 November 2001 by Herschel Raney (A: AAS Admin 2001). The second record was about 5 years later, including photos of an adult male seen from 20 February to 11 March 2006 (James *et al.* 2007). The third state record was an adult male was seen from 18 November through 19 March 2007 at Lake Dardanelle, Pope/Yell Cos.

**Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)** – This bird breeds mostly in Canada and winters in western U.S. All documented Arkansas records have been single male birds seen on Lake Dardanelle (Yell Co.) on the Arkansas River. It is a winter visitor, present from late November through mid-February. The first observation was by Kenny Nichols *et al.* on 2 February 2002 (A: AAS Admin 2002), and the second was observed on 2 and 8 February 2003. Seven years later, the species was observed on 19 and 23-26 December 2010, and last seen on 29 January 2011. The fourth record was observed from 3 December 2011 until 19 February 2012, the fifth from 24 November 2012 to 23 February 2013, and the sixth on 2 January and 2 February 2014.

#### Order Galliformes:

**Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)** – Mostly a bird of Canada and the northern U.S., James and Neal (1986) described its historic distribution in Arkansas and concluded that natural populations apparently were extirpated by 1900. Efforts at reintroduction did result in reproduction. Undated reports have been on birds released along the Buffalo River (Newton and Searcy Cos.). Dated reports began from the Christmas Bird Count in Newton Co. on 12 December 1983 (Ar-Birds 2023). Grouse released by AGFC in 1984-1985 were reported in the Ponca area (Newton Co.) on 9 October 1988, and near Red Star (Madison Co.) on 1 April 1990. Their drumming was heard on 10 April 1993 at Whiting Mt. (Franklin Co.) and the birds had been reported there on various dates in April from 1989-1993 and 1995. Recently released birds were reported near Cowell (Newton Co.) on 23 June 1995. The bird was reported in the Ozark National Forest (Pope Co.) on 1 February 1999, and in Newton Co. again on 19 May 2001.

#### Order Gaviiformes:

**Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*)** – A bird of the tundra and NW coasts, the first observation in Arkansas was an immature bird seen between 18-30 November 1991 in Carroll Co. near the dam of Beaver Lake (James *et al.* 1994). Another record was made about 19 years later, on 7 and 10 February 2010 at Lake Maumelle (Pulaski Co.).

#### Order Podicipediformes:

**Least Grebe (*Tachybaptus dominicus*)** – A species of southern Texas and Mexico, the only observation reported in Arkansas, attributed first to Mike Mlodinow and Jacque Brown, was an adult in breeding plumage, seen and photographed from 3-7 August 2008 at Charlie Craig State Fish Hatchery at Centerton (Benton Co.) (A: AAS Admin 2008). Its presence was believed to have been caused by Hurricane Dolly (James *et al.* 2009, 2010). No new records.

#### Order Pelecaniformes:

**Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*)** – A seabird of eastern coasts, first seen in Arkansas on 25 July 2005 in Marion Co. at Bull Shoals Lake (James *et al.* 2007). No new records.

#### Order: Falconiformes

**Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)** – A bird typical of northern and western North America, James and Neal (1986) compiled a partial history for this raptor in Arkansas, including an adult female from Winslow

(Washington Co.) on 5 November 1926, a bird killed in Sharp Co. on 7 December 1981, 1 shot near Bryant in Saline Co. on 30 November 1982, and a bird with injured wing from Conway (Faulkner Co.) on 11 January 1983. Other birds not previously accounted (reported in *Ar-Birds* 2023) include 1 from 26 November 1958, with a locality listed only as US-64 in Woodruff Co., a male shot near Snow Lake (Desha Co.) on 19 December 1963, and another shot near Metalton (Carroll Co.) on 20 March 1966 (which had been banded as a migrant juvenile at Cedar Grove, Wisconsin in 1955). Another bird was shot at Jerusalem (Conway Co.) on 12 December 1982. Almost 3 decades passed before a new record, which was an adult photographed near the Brentwood/Winslow area (Washington Co.) on 10 November 2012.

### Order Gruiformes:

**Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)** – Most typical of eastern and southern coastal marshes, first recorded in Arkansas Co. on 7 October 1939 and 13 September 1948 (Baerg 1951). An individual was observed on 19 October 1952 in a rice field in Crittenden Co. (Coffey 1981, as reported in James and Neal 1986), and 16 years later near Slovak (Prairie Co.) on 9 September 1968. One appeared at the Joe Hogan State Fish Hatchery (Lonoke Co.) on 19 September 1972 (James and Neal 1986). Another 29 years passed before any new sightings. Reported in eBird, from 7-16 October 2000, 11 individuals were seen near West Memphis (Crittenden Co.), and on 13 October 2000 an individual was seen near Turrell (Crittenden Co.). The last 3 reported sightings have been in Desha Co.: On 15 September 2001, a bird was flushed from cattails on a fish farm; on 27 October 2020, 2 individuals were seen in agricultural fields near Rohwer; and another near Rohwer on 30 October 2020.

**Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*)** – James and Neal (1986) summarized the 3-4 historic records from 1820-1914. Considered to be near extinction, this bird is on the endangered species list and monitored. The first modern record in Arkansas was a juvenile seen by James O. Willis from 27 November to 1 December 2007 in a rice field near McGehee (Desha Co.) and was captured and placed with an adult near Chattanooga TN (A: AAS Admin 2007). Ten years later, 2 individuals were seen in agricultural fields near Cherry Valley (Cross Co.), on 1 and 8 February 2017. These were documented as captive-bred birds released in October 2016 as part of an attempt to establish experimental eastern populations that might migrate from Wisconsin to Florida. They stayed until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February

but 1 was killed by a vehicle. From 6 November to 16 December 2018, 1 female was photographed in a rice field near Roe (Monroe Co.). This bird was tracked to Arkansas City (Desha Co.). It left Arkansas on 24 December and proceeded to Alabama. On 4 and 8 October 2019, 1 individual was photographed at Holla Bend NWR (Pope Co.) by several observers (e.g., A: Ohanyan 2019) and was seen at least to 28 October. This banded bird was from the effort to establish a non-migratory flock in Louisiana (J. Neal, *pers. comm.*).

### Order Charadriiformes:

**Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)** – Typical of eastern and southern coasts, the first state record was photographed and observed at Charlie Craig State Fish Hatchery in Centerton (Benton Co.), from 18-24 May 1986 (James *et al.* 1994). The second and third records were observed at Saul's Fish Farm near Des Arc (Prairie Co.), where an adult male was photographed and observed from 26 July to 20 September 1997, and perhaps the same bird again from 25 July through 12 September 1998 (James *et al.* 2007). No new records.

**Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*)** – A bird of western plains, the only Arkansas record was reported from a *Lespedeza* field in Arkansas Co., observed by Brooke Meanley on 16 December 1951 (Baerg 1951).

**Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*)** – A more western species, the first state record was attributed to Edith Halberg *et al.* of a sighting on 11 July 1961 near Lonoke (Lonoke Co.) (A: AAS Admin 1961). Thirteen years later, an individual was seen again in Lonoke Co. at Anderson's Minnow Farm on 17 August 1974 (James and Neal 1986). New records include a male seen and photographed at Charlie Craig State Fish Hatchery in Centerton (Benton Co.) from 5-8 May 2001, a single adult male photographed on 28 March 2006 at Saul's Fish Farms near Hickory Plains (Prairie Co.), and an individual photographed at Bald Knob NWR (White Co.) and seen from 19-21 September 2014. A Desha Co. record from Camp Nine was on 7 and 9 September 2016.

**Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)** – This Old-World shorebird is often a migrant along the east coast, and casual inland and along the west coast. First reported in Arkansas on 2-3 August 2003 from Saul Fish Farms near Des Arc (Prairie Co.), then from the same county at Treadway Fish Farms near Hickory Ridge on 17 August 2004 (James *et al.* 2007). No new records.

**Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)** – Most typical of eastern coasts, this species was first reported by James G. Holt (A: AAS Admin 1976), then by others 29-30 November and 3-4 December 1976 on the Hopefield Chute on the west (Arkansas) side of the

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Mississippi River, though it technically was in TN due to the state border lines made during the original survey of the Mississippi River. The bird was, technically, in Shelby Co., TN, but also listed as being seen in Arkansas (thus, Crittenden Co.). No new records.

**Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)** – Typically a coastal seabird, the first record in Arkansas was an adult seen 21 August into early October 1983 at Millwood Lake (Little River Co.) (James and Neal 1986). It was photographed on 8 October by Charles Mills. An individual seen in Hempstead Co. on 6 September 2008 likely was brought on the winds of Hurricane Gustav (James *et al.* 2010). No new records.

**Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)** – A tundra to oceanic bird, all records in Arkansas have been juvenile or subadult birds seen at Millwood Lake (Hempstead Co.). The first Arkansas record was seen from 29 September through 4 October 1974 (James and Neal 1986). Newer unpublished observations occurred on 12 October 1992, 26-28 September 1997, and 5 September 2000 (e.g., A: Mills 1992).

**Black-headed Gull (*Choricocephalus ridibundus*)** – A Eurasian bird mostly seen in North America on the eastern coast, the first record in Arkansas was an adult seen by Charles Mills *et al.* on 29 December 1990 on Millwood Lake (Little River Co.) (A: AAS Admin 1990). The second, from the eastern side of the state, was seen on 8 January 1991 in Chicot Co. at Lake Chicot (James *et al.* 1994). Since then, additional observations have been made on 11 December 1999 at Millwood Lake (Howard Co.), 25 November through 31 December 2001 at Millwood Lake (Hempstead and Lafayette Cos.), 10 February 2002 at Lake Norfolk (Baxter Co.), and 15 November 2002 at Lake Dardanelle (Pope and Yell Cos.) (James *et al.* 2007). No new records.

**California Gull (*Larus californicus*)** – This western gull was first documented in Arkansas by Kenny Nichols *et al.* on 10 January 2004 at Lake Dardanelle Lock and Dam (Pope Co.) (A: AAS Admin 2004). All but 1 of the other records also have been at Lake Dardanelle: on 7 March 2004 (Pope Co.), 19 February through 12 March 2005 (Yell Co.), 3 December 2005 through 11 March 2006 (Yell Co.), and on 17 and 26 December 2005 at Russellville (Pope Co.) (James *et al.* 2007). Six years after these records, new records of the species were reported again on Lake Dardanelle (Yell Co.) 23 January 2011, 9 December 2012, and 20 September 2013.

**Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*)** – A southeastern and oceanic species, the first records of this bird in Arkansas were based on specimens found dead

on 4 September 1950 in Van Buren Co. and on 13 September 1961 in Cleveland Co., both believed to have arrived due to hurricanes, and another hurricane-related occurrence in Chicot Co. on 4 October 2002 (James and Neal 1986, James *et al.* 2010). Between 2-6 September 2008, 15 Sooty Terns appeared in Benton, Chicot, Hempstead, Ouachita, and Pope Cos. soon after Hurricane Gustav forced them from the Gulf Coast (James *et al.* 2010). More recent records include an immature photographed by Rick Carson in Mulberry (Crawford Co.) on 17 June 2014 (A: AAS Admin 2014) and a juvenile seen at Bois d'Arc Lake (Hempstead Co.) on 23 June 2017.

**Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*)** – A southeastern oceanic species, both records from Arkansas were believed to have resulted from effects of hurricanes. Winds from Hurricane Elena were thought to have been responsible for the first record, seen at Lake Millwood (Little River Co.) on 7 September 1985 (James and Neal 1986). Hurricane Gustav likely delivered a bird seen at Millwood Lake (Hempstead Co.) on 3 September 2008 (James *et al.* 2010). No new records.

**Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)** – A southeastern oceanic species, it was documented in Arkansas on 26 April 2009 on Camp Nine Road near McGehee (Desha Co.) (James *et al.* 2009). A new record from the same area was seen 4 July 2023.

**Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*)** – A species primarily of southern and eastern coasts, James *et al.* (1994) noted the first Arkansas record from Baerg (1951) seen 26 August 1950 in Arkansas Co., a second record in Arkansas Co. witnessed on 28 September 1951, and a bird seen 14-15 June 1986 near Lonoke (Lonoke Co.). James *et al.* (2007) added records seen 13 August 2002 near Texarkana (Miller Co.) and 25 September 2005 at White Oak Lake (Ouachita Co.). Hurricanes were believed to have resulted in these birds appearing in 2008: Gustav for birds at White Oak Lake on 2 September 2008 and Charlie Craig State Fish Hatchery in Centerton (Benton Co.) on 4 September 2008, and Ike at Millwood Lake (Little River Co.) on 16 September 2008 (James *et al.* 2010). New records reported in eBird include sightings on 1 September 2012 at DeGray Lake (Clark Co.), 9 January 2016 at Lake Dardanelle dam (Yell Co.), 19 August 2020 at Cook's Landing (Pulaski Co.), 8 May 2020 at Lake Norfolk (Baxter Co.), and 9 July 2020 at Lake Dardanelle (Yell Co.).

**Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)** – A bird of southern and western U.S. coasts, James and Neal (1986) reported earliest Arkansas records from near El

Dorado (Union Co.; 1 from the 1930s, the other 28 October 1968) and from Jefferson Co. near Pine Bluff (23 August 1969). Newer records reported in eBird include Monroe Co. (12 September 2005) and a photographic record (A: Wilson 2005) from Crittenden Co (17 September 2005). Three Black Skimmers were reported from Hempstead, Howard, and Pulaski Cos. after hurricanes in September 2008 (James *et al.* 2010). No new records.

#### **Order Strigiformes:**

**Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*)** – This northern bird usually occurs in the tundra and seldom ventures as far south as Arkansas. The earliest individuals known were taxidermy mounts from the 1940s-1950s in Jefferson and Faulkner Cos., and a sighting reported on 4 January 1955 at Morrilton (Conway Co.) (James and Neal 1986). Newer records appeared 10 years later, beginning with a sick probable female or immature male captured (later rehabilitated) by Louis Lackey *et al.* on 24 and 27 November 2005 near Quitman (Cleburne Co.) (A: AAS Admin 2005). On 26 December 2011, a photo by Randall Williams was submitted of 1 near Lake Dardanelle SP (Pope Co.) (A: AAS Admin 2011). Other eBird reports include photos taken at Hot Springs at Lake Hamilton (Garland Co.) on 8 January 2012 and Little Rock (Pulaski Co.) during November-December 2013. At Cache River NWR (Woodruff Co.), an individual was flushed from a rice field on 3 January 2022, and in January 2022 the species was seen near Swifton in Jackson and Craighead Cos.

#### **Order Apodiformes:**

**White-throated Swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)** – A bird of dry mountains in the western U.S. and Mexico, the first Arkansas record was a specimen thought to have been forced eastward by dust storms, then collected in Hot Springs (Garland Co.) on 4 May 1935 (Gregg 1935). Otherwise, it has been seen only in December in Arkansas. It was reported from the Buffalo River along Big Bluff (Newton Co.) on 19 December 1981 (James and Neal 1986). Reports in eBird exist from Dardanelle Lock & Dam (Pope/Yell Co.) on 11 December 1999, and Mt. Magazine (Logan Co.) on 24 December 2012 (A: Linz 2012).

**Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*)** – This western hummingbird was first observed in Arkansas at White Hall (Jefferson Co.) from 1 October 2005 to 30 March 2006 (caught, photographed, and banded 5 January 2006; Doster *et al.* 2006). New observations from Conway (Faulkner Co.), reported in eBird, note an immature individual was

photographed and seen from 21-25 November 2008, and at a different location in Conway for several days around 20 December 2008. The species reappeared in Conway on 19 January and 25 February 2009 (Ar-birds 2023). The species was not reported again until photographed in Arkadelphia (Clark Co.) on 7 July 2017.

**Mexican Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*)** – Formerly known as Green Violetear, the northernmost distribution for this bird usually is Texas, though scattered records have occurred in eastern U.S. in recent years. The first reported Arkansas record was on 16 September (and photographed on 7 October) 1984 at Fort Smith (Sebastian Co.; Shepherd *et al.* 1988). Since then, the following have been reported in eBird: a male photographed and seen from 2-4 June 1989 near Arkadelphia (Clark Co.); 1 near Lurton (Newton Co.), from 6-23 July 1990; at Rogers (Benton Co.) from 4 August - 5 September 1990; a bird video-recorded 7 July 1996 by Jim Mayo near Ben Hur (Newton Co.); an adult video-recorded at Gentry (Benton Co.) from 21-22 August 2000; and an individual photographed visiting feeders near Eureka Springs (Carroll Co.) 11-16 July 2022.

**Rivoli's Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*)** – Formerly known as Magnificent Hummingbird, this is a bird of the southwestern U.S. and Mexico. James *et al.* (2007) reported the only Arkansas record of this species, which was an adult male photographed by Charles Mills on 18 July 1993 near Arkadelphia (Clark Co.). No new records.

**Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus calliope*)** – Typically a western species, the first report in Arkansas was an immature male trapped and banded by Perk Floyd on 19 October 1999 from DeQueen (Sevier Co.). Other reports include an immature male trapped 1 November 2000 and seen at least 16 December 2000 in Searcy (White Co.) and an adult male photographed near Ferndale (Pulaski Co.), seen from 1 November 2003 to 1 April 2004. Presumably the same bird returned to the site 24 September and stayed until 25 December 2004 (James *et al.* 2007). New records from Little Rock (Pulaski Co.) include an individual seen 20 November to 4 December 2007 (banded on 25 November 2007); and a second-year male photographed 31 January 2010, which had been observed since October 2009, and observed again on 31 March 2010.

**Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)** – The first official state record of this western bird was an immature female seen from 28 August 1996 through 21 September 1996 (banded on 4 September) in DeQueen (Sevier Co.) (James *et al.* 2007). An adult female seen near Mayflower (Faulkner

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Co.) from late October to 25 November 1998 was banded 8 November 1998. An immature female was present near Arkadelphia (Clark Co.) from early December 2002 through 22 January 2003. An adult female from near Beebe (White Co.) was trapped and banded on 7 January 2006 (James *et al.* 2007). Fourteen years later, a bird was photographed by Michael Linz on 3 December 2020 in Wynne (Cross Co.) (A: Linz 2020) and seen by many through January 2021.

**Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*)** – A species largely of Mexico and the southern U.S., known in Arkansas from a single immature bird photographed in Searcy (White Co.). The bird was seen from 12 November 1992 through 10 March 1993 (James *et al.* 1994). No new records.

**Order: Piciformes:**

**Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)** – A species of the western U.S., first observed in Arkansas from 30 June through 3 July 1967 at Mount Sequoyah, Fayetteville (Washington Co.) (James and Neal 1986).

**Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*)** – Believed to have been extirpated from Arkansas (James and Neal 1986), this large woodpecker was reinstated as a potentially existing bird based on evidence from 2004-2005 in Bayou DeView (Monroe Co.) (Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2005, James *et al.* 2007). No confirmed sightings have occurred since then.

**Order: Passeriformes:**

**Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*)** – Typically a species of the Gulf Coast of the U.S. and Mexico, recorded first in Arkansas from Millwood Lake (Howard Co.) by David Arbour, 3-30 December 1995 (James *et al.* 2007). After 28 years, Tim Kaufman photographed the second record on 21 April 2023, along Hasley Road south of Arkadelphia (Clark Co.). This bird seen 24-25 April 2003 was photographed and its identity verified by vocalizations.

**Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*)** – This typically southwestern species has not been reported in Arkansas in 55 years. The only reports were from Faulkner Lake (Pulaski Co.) on 12 June 1965, and from El Dorado (Union Co.) on 19 May 1967 (James and Neal 1986).

**Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*)** – Typical of Caribbean islands and coastal eastern North America, observed in Arkansas only on 12 May 2007 at Holla Bend NWR (Pope Co.) (James *et al.* 2007). No new records.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*)** – Typically a bird of the tropics, the first observation in

Arkansas was 14-17 January 1995 near Pontoon, Yell Co. (Shepherd and Smith 1996). James *et al.* (2007) argued that the bird was of the subspecies *T. s. monachus*, representing populations from Central America. A new record, also consistent with the subspecies *T. s. monachus*, was seen and photographed by Dick Baxter (A: Baxter 2020) and others between 16-27 November 2020 on AR State Hwy 4 near the Isaac Lake bridge (Desha Co.).

**Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis*)** – James *et al.* (2009) reported that the first record of this northern species was from near Maysville (Benton Co.), seen on 25 and 30 December 2007. They may have overlooked Howell (1911) who recorded both Northern and Loggerhead shrikes, including 2 much earlier sight records of Northern Shrike. One was from Fayetteville (Washington Co.) (date and year unclear) and the other from Van Buren (Crawford Co.) in December 1910. Also, Baerg (1951) reported collecting a specimen in Fayetteville on 27 December 1928. The species also was not included in James and Neal (1986). More recently, a bird was seen, photographed, and reported in eBird 6-10 March 2011 at Woolsey Wet Prairie (Washington Co.) by several observers (see A: Caulk 2011).

**Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*)** – James and Neal (1986) referred to the only record in Arkansas, a specimen killed at Earl (Crittenden Co.) around 1 April 1891 and sent to Memphis for identification (Mitchell 1894).

**Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)** – A species typical of the north through Alaska, reports in Arkansas include a small flock seen in the western Ozarks during the spring of 1921 (Baerg 1931), another at Winslow (Washington Co.) on 12 May 1931 (Black 1932), an observation at Clarksville (Johnson Co.) on 23 April 1947 (Baerg 1951), and there again on 27 January (James and Neal 1986). It has not been reported again in Arkansas for over 60 years.

**Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)** – A western species, this was first reported from Arkansas by James and Neal (1986) as seen in Farville (northeast of Jonesboro, Craighead Co.) on 24 November 1979 (Lavers 1980, James and Neal 1986). From 5-9 October 2004, an individual was seen and photographed (A: Baxter 2004) near Craighead Forest (vic. Jonesboro, again in Craighead Co.). Another new record, also from northeast Arkansas, was reported from Scatter Creek WMA (Greene Co.), which was photographed on 22 May 2018 (Ar-birds 2023).

**Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)** – A common bird in western North America through Alaska, the first record in Arkansas was an immature male seen

and photographed by Max and Helen Parker in Garland Co. on 9-10 November 1985 at Andrew H. Hulsey State Fish Hatchery (James and Neal 1986). New records documented in eBird include an adult male seen and photographed on 23 March 2013 near Oppelo (Conway Co.), and a female photographed on 1 November 2021 at Robinson Point Public Use Area of Norfork Lake (Baxter Co.) (Graves 2023, this issue).

**Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)** – This common New England species has not been recorded in Arkansas since the report by James *et al.* (1994), seen 18-21 October 1990 at Okay Landing on Millwood Lake (Howard Co.).

**Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*)** – A typically northern bird, the first reports in Arkansas were of a single male photographed near Mountain Home (Baxter Co.) in early January 1978, 3 birds seen at Mena (Polk Co.) on 15 July 1980 (and probably the same birds again at the location on 24 August 1980), and a single bird at Diamond Head (Garland Co.) on 14 March 1981 (James and Neal 1986). The most recent record was over 3 decades ago: 1 male and either a female or immature seen at Wynne (Cross Co.) on 19 March 1989 (Ar-birds 2023).

**Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*)** – A species most common in the western U.S. to northern South America, the first Lesser Goldfinch recorded from Arkansas was a male reported in Benton Co. among American Goldfinches at a feeder between Decatur and Gravette on 4 March 1984 (James and Neal 1986). It had been seen since the previous summer, and the same bird was seen several more times until spring 1985. Other reports in eBird are: a sighting in Rogers (Benton Co.) 14-17 May 2006; Gentry (Benton Co.) 9-12 May 2012; Mabelvale (Saline Co.) 30 November 2012; Gravette (Benton Co.) 15 March 2016; Hot Springs Village (Garland Co.) 18 May 2017; Otter Creek neighborhood (Little Rock, Pulaski Co.) 13 May 2020, and in the Hillcrest neighborhood in that area 20 March and 3 April 2021.

**Thick-billed Longspur (*Rhyncophanes mccownii*)** – A western species reported only from Okay Levee at Millwood Lake (Howard Co.), including an immature female seen on 19 October 1996 and later an adult male on 30 October 1996 (James *et al.* 2007). No new records.

**Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)** – A species of the north, the first Arkansas record was a specimen from Calion (Union Co.) collected 6 November 1959 after an extreme cold period. Eight years later at Burns Farm (vic. Jonesboro, Craighead Co.), an individual was seen 23, 28, 31 October and 5 November 1967 (James

and Neal 1986). After a hiatus of about 33 years, an adult female was reported on eBird by Jeff R. Wilson from that same area again on 25-26 December 2000. A male was photographed at Mt. Magazine State Park (Logan Co.) on 17 December 2005 (Ar-birds 2023). The species also was photographed on 18 and 24 November 2007 at Okay Levee, Millwood Lake (Howard Co.) (A: Mills 2007).

**Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)** – Most common in the western plains states, the first confirmed Arkansas record was an adult male that appeared on 15 May 2002 at Holla Bend NWR (Pope Co.), followed by sightings near St. Charles (Arkansas Co.) from 24 February - 4 March 2006 (James *et al.* 2007). New records include a winter male reported near Crockett's Bluff (Arkansas Co.) on 24 February 2006, a sighting on 4 June 2009 near Lead Hill in the NE part of Boone Co., and an adult male in breeding plumage seen 18 May 2013 near Lake Dardanelle (Yell Co.). A first spring male was seen and photographed 13-15 May 2017 near Paris (Logan Co.), and on 7-8 June 2017 a bird was seen at Camp Nine (Desha Co.). A bird was seen and photographed by several observers at Bald Knob (White Co.) on 6 May 2023.

**Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*)** – A common species in western North America, this bird was reported in Arkansas only from El Dorado (Union Co.) on 8 November 1952 (James and Neal 1986). No new records.

**Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)** – A western species first recorded in Arkansas as an adult male seen from 13 February to 16 March 1963 in El Dorado (Union Co.). Another adult male was seen also in El Dorado from 15 January to 20 February 1965 (James and Neal 1986). From 27-29 January 1994, an adult male was sighted in Little Rock (Pulaski Co.), and an adult female was seen on 23-24 December 1995 near Gum Springs (Clark Co.) (James *et al.* 2007). After a 22-year gap, 2 new records are known. On 3 May 2017, a female was photographed by Gary Frigon in Bella Vista (Benton Co.) (A: AAS Admin 2017), and from 28 April to 1 May 2018 an adult male was photographed by many observers (e.g., A: Nichols 2018) at Lake Dardanelle (Yell Co.).

**Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*)** – A bird typically of the southwest, the first Arkansas record was seen and photographed from 15 February through 18 April 2005 between Story and Mt. Ida (Montgomery Co.) (James *et al.* 2007). Several new observations were made and reported in eBird beginning about 6 years later. From 4-11 February 2011 a sighting occurred in Benton (Saline Co.). Apparently, the same bird was seen



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and photographed again at that location on 29 March and 5 April 2011. At a different Benton location, 1 was seen on 24 March and about 2 weeks prior. From 15-28 March 2020, an individual was seen and photographed in Bigelow (Pulaski Co.). From 26-28 March 2020, an individual was recorded near Arkadelphia (Clark Co.), and on 14 February 2021 a report was made from an unspecified location in Columbia Co. Most of these birds were reported to have been seen at feeders.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)** – A bird largely of western U.S. and Mexico, the Arkansas record reported by James *et al.* (2007), observed 10 October 2005 near Jonesboro (Craighead Co.) remains the only record known.

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**Appendix I**

Links to eBird websites documenting first records or photographs of some rare birds in Arkansas.

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## Appendix II

Status of birds first reported in Arkansas between 1985 and 2007 (James *et al.* 1994, 2007) but currently not considered rare due to >10 records. We used Ar-birds records because they were used historically to determine whether a species was be considered rare in Arkansas. Current records listed below are from Ar-birds as of 29 September 2023. (Note: many more records may be shown in eBird due to more birders reporting observations to that site in recent years).

**Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)** – Known from Cleburne, Carroll, Chicot, Benton, Pope, Clark Cos. by 2007. Currently 39 records, mostly from large lakes.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)** – Known from Chicot, Pope/Yell, and Little River Cos. by 2007. Currently 74 records, scattered across the state but most along the Arkansas River and Lake Dardanelle.

**Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)** – First records from Boone and Jefferson Cos., spread to 36 counties and became common statewide by 2005. Currently 116 records from all over the state.

**White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)** – First records were from Union and Little River Cos., then more than 20 records were submitted before 2007 (mostly SW Arkansas). Currently 126 records scattered statewide.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)** – First reported from Union, Pulaski, and Hempstead Cos., 7 records by 2007. Currently 13 records, mostly near Little Rock and along US Hwy 167.

**Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*)** – First reported from Arkansas and Faulkner Cos., 5 records by 2007 adding Sevier and Clark Cos. Currently 14 records scattered across the state.

**Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)** – A new taxonomic entity that includes former subspecies of Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), so was a new species because of the name change. Nine reports with the name had been made by 2007. Currently 81 records, scattered statewide but especially along the Arkansas River.

**Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)** – Had been considered extirpated but reappeared in Pope, Cleburne, Faulkner, Washington, Pike, Baxter, Benton, Fulton, White, Newton, Pulaski, and Yell, Cos. by 2007. Magness Lake in Cleburne Co. has been a repetitive

location. Currently 93 records, mostly in the northern half of the state.

**Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*)** – First reported from Desha and Chicot Cos. but numerous records accumulated by 2007. Currently 67 records, mostly in SE Arkansas.

**Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)** – First reported from St. Francis, Cleburne, and Lafayette Cos., then Miller, Hempstead, and White Cos. by 2007. Currently 54 records, scattered over the state.

**Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*)** – Arkansas observations were formerly treated as **Thayer's Gull**

**(*Larus thayeri*)**, which is now considered a subspecies of the Iceland Gull. First reported from Pope and Yell Cos. Currently 15 records, centered around Lake Dardanelle.

**Cave Swallow (*Hirundo fulva*)** – Only reported from Little River Co. and the Millwood Lake area to 2007. Currently 45 records, most in SW Arkansas.

**Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)** – Added as a new species due to taxonomic changes, was an uncommon visitor over the state by 2007. Currently 119 records, scattered statewide.