



Selected Bosque Bird Information Cards

Some bird species can be found all year at one location and are considered “year-round residents” of that location. Other species are present at a location only during certain times of year and are considered “migrants.” They may be present during breeding season, wintering season or during spring or fall (or both) migrations.

Each of the following cards represents one of these categories of migratory status and presents photos and information about a New Mexico bird that fits the category. Teachers could use the cards as background reading for themselves or students or as part of an activity of some kind with students. For example, individual students or groups could be in charge of presenting information from the cards to the rest of the class; the cards could be used as a springboard for further research on birds of New Mexico or students could prepare some kind of graphic comparing the migratory status of the different birds in order to teach others in the school community.

In addition to the seven cards below, use the list “Migratory Birds Frequently Found in New Mexico” in this chapter for extension activities in conjunction with these cards or independently.



Newly banded Lazuli Bunting

Photograph by Laurel Ladwig



Year-round Resident

Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*)

The Greater Roadrunner is a member of the family of birds called Cuckoos. Birds in the cuckoo family can be found throughout the world and are adapted to many different environments. The Greater Roadrunner favors arid lands like New Mexico and is year-round resident here. Not surprisingly, roadrunners are often found on or along roadways and edges of agricultural fields in rural as well as more urban areas like Albuquerque. They are adapted to living around humans and consequently are known by many different regional names (roadrunner, paisano, chaparral and correcaminos are just a few used in New Mexico).



Photograph by Laurel Ladwig

Summer Resident

Black-chinned Hummingbirds (*Archilochus alexanderi*)

Black-chinned Hummingbirds are among the most adaptable of all hummingbirds and are found in urban areas and recently disturbed natural areas as well as pristine natural areas. They winter along the Pacific coast of Mexico and Central America and migrate north to breeding grounds that extend from northern Mexico up into southern Canada. In the southwestern US, they are most com-



Photograph by Laurel Ladwig

mon in canyons and along rivers. They are in New Mexico from about mid-April through mid-October and are the most common nesting bird in the bosque.



Winter Resident

Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*)

Sandhill Cranes nest in wetlands near the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and north into Canada. Some individuals of a subspecies called the Lesser Sandhill Crane actually travel all the way to Siberia to nest. These birds begin to arrive in New Mexico in September in pairs, trios and fours: family units with young of the year. Later in September and on into October, huge, high-flying flocks arrive or stop-in on their way to parts further south. Over the winter, thousands of Sandhill Cranes reside throughout New Mexico. They migrate back to northern nesting grounds in February and March.



Photograph by Laurel Ladwig

Spring and Fall Migration

Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)

Wilson's Warblers pass through our area during migration. They can be found in Albuquerque in April through June when traveling north to their breeding grounds and August through October when heading back south for the winter. They migrate at night either singly or in small groups of other Wilson's Warblers or other warbler species. Wilson's Warblers eat mostly insects and occasionally berries and look for suitable habitat during migration. They are most often found near the bosque but can be seen throughout the city, gleaning trees for insects. They breed throughout Alaska and Canada and there are small pockets of birds that breed more southerly in the American west. They build a cup-shaped nest on the ground under bunches of grass or at the base of shrubs.



Photograph by Laurel Ladwig



Summer Resident

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)

Yellow-billed Cuckoos nest in the Rio Grande bosque. The timing of their breeding is tied to the local food supply. They begin breeding when food is abundant and their entire breeding cycle takes only 17 days, from egg-laying to fledging. Within minutes after they are born, baby cuckoos can climb and perch using their feet and bills. The nestlings have bursting feather sheaths which allow them to transform into fully feathered young cuckoos in only two hours. The western sub-species was classified as threatened in October 2014 and much of the Middle Rio Grande bosque is designated as critical habitat for the species. It is usually heard rather than seen.



Photograph by Laurel Ladwig

Listen to the sounds made by Yellow-billed Cuckoos:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Yellow-billed_Cuckoo/sounds

Winter Resident

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)

White-crowned Sparrows winter here and can be found in flocks along roadsides and in grain fields, and close to thickets and shrubs. White-crowned Sparrows have magnetite in the fascia of their heads and necks that may make them capable of magnetic navigation. Because male White-crowned Sparrows learn the songs they grow up with and typically breed close to where they were raised, song dialects frequently form. Males on the edge of two dialects may be bilingual and able to sing both dialects. A migrating White-crowned Sparrow was once tracked moving 480 kilometers (300 miles) in a single night. Alaskan White-crowned Sparrows migrate about 4000 kilometers (2,600 miles) to winter in Southern California. The oldest recorded White-crowned Sparrow was 13 years 4 months old.



Photograph by Laurel Ladwig



Variable. Present year-round.

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)

Chipping Sparrows are present in the Albuquerque area throughout the year. They are most often observed in town during migration and are also found in low numbers in the winter. During breeding season they are most easily observed in the mountains and foothills. Chipping Sparrows can be seen in trees, but also forage on the ground. They eat seeds from a variety of grasses and add extra protein to their diet during breeding season by eating insects.



Photograph by Ashli Maruster Gorbet

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