



Birds of the Ironwood Forest

Sharp-shinned Hawk

- Long tailed hawks with rounded wings
- Females are substantially larger than males
- Generally found in dense forest areas
- During migration they are usually seen in open habitats along ridgelines.
- Known to have distinctive flap and glide flight patterns



White-throated Swift

- One of the fastest birds in North America
- Commonly found in canyons, foothills, and mountains in the SW
- Highly social birds, known to roost in groups of hundreds
- Nest in large cavities in cliffs and large rocks



Rufous-winged Sparrow

- Only found in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona and Mexico
- It depends on the summer monsoons to begin nesting
- They typically nest in shrubs
- They stay bonded for life and remain in the same area year-round



Back-throated Sparrow

- Commonly found in open, shrubby deserts
- The males hold a large territory when nesting first begins
- Males are known to sing from high perches while the females build the nests
- During the winter the birds primarily eat seeds while in the summer switching mostly to insects



Verdin

- Known to be very vocal and conspicuous
- A small yellow and grey songbird
- The Verdin builds two separate nests, one for breeding and another for roosting
- They consistently build nests year round
- The roosting nests are much thicker intended for insulation during the winter
- Commonly found in thorny shrub



Great Horned Owl

- Most commonly found in forests but can also be spotted in a variety of habitats
- Fierce predators that will eat large mammals to small rodents and amphibians
- Their eyes don't move but their heads are able to turn more than 180 degrees
- Their soft feathers allow them to fly silently without being noticed
- Typically dive from above for their food



Red-tailed Hawk

- The most common hawk in North America
- They have a shrill, high-pitch screech
- The species have been seen hunting in pairs, approaching prey from opposite directions
- Often found in open woodlands
- Courting hawks will dance together in the sky often diving together and touching briefly before claspng talons and diving in spirals



Lark Bunting

- Found in grassland habitats where they feed in groups
- Breeding males are black with white wings and a grey bill
- Immature males and females are sandy brown
- Pairs are often monogamous and nest close to one another
- They have two different flight-song types, making them unique among other birds



Gambel's Quail

- Lives in the Sonoran, Mohave and Chihuahuan deserts
- Lives below 5,500 feet elevation
- Resides in mesquite thickets along river valleys and arroyos in shrubs, cactus and grasslands
- Commonly found in groups



Cactus Wren

- Known to destroy the nests of other birds
- They rarely drink water but instead hydrate through cactus and fruits
- The state bird of Arizona
- Known to attack species that will destroy their nests such as squirrels



Pyrrhuloxia

- Forage in the winter in flocks with as many as 1,000 birds
- They get most of their water from insects during the spring and summer
- Closely related to Northern Cardinals
- Fierce and vocal with their territory



Lesser Goldfinch

- Most common in California and Texas with pockets of other ranges
- Usually gather in shrubby oak, cottonwood and willow habitats
- Known to eat sunflower seeds and prefer plants similar to sunflowers



House Finch

- Originally only found in the SW but was introduced to Hawaii and Eastern U.S. States
- The red appears from the molt found in their food
- They only feed their nestlings plant-based food



Turkey Vulture

- They have become accustomed to humans usually found feeding off human leavings
- Commonly seen along the road or farm fields
- Use keen sense of smell to track fresh carcasses
- They are consummate scavengers



Canyon Wren

- Known to not drink water, but instead gets all water from eating insects
- Known to forage along the sides of desert springs
- They can climb up, down and across rocks
- Nests in narrow rock crevices



Lesser Nighthawk

- Eggs are laid directly on the ground instead of a nest like most other birds
- The eggs are often moved into shadier areas when the sun gets too hot
- Nestling nighthawks can walk after a day of birth.



Gilded Flicker

- Large and common woodpecker
- Found in the Sonoran Desert in Saguaro Cactus
- Known to ground forage for insects



Common Raven

- Breeding pairs try to maintain their own territory and restrict other birds from the area
- Young birds are known to play with sticks, throwing them into the air and catching them
- Known to be very smart and excellent hunters



Black-Throated Gray Warbler

- A short-to-medium migrant
- Moves from the Western U.S. states only as far south as Mexico
- They are known to follow mountain ranges and the Pacific Coastline southward
- Found commonly in forest areas in the Rocky Mountains



Pacific-slope Flycatcher

- This bird is usually extremely difficult to distinguish
- Some hybridize with Cordilleran Flycatchers
- The breeding region is on the Channel Islands off Southern California



Prairie Falcon

- Sometimes bathes in river shallows but commonly dust-bathes
- Highly susceptible to eggshell thinning effects of DDT
- Seen to commonly play with objects in their habitats like sticks or pebbles
- Notoriously aggressive in protecting territory



American Kestrel

- Known as North America's little falcon
- One of the most colorful raptors
- One of the smallest birds of prey, which makes them prey for a lot of larger birds of prey
- They hide surplus kills in grass clumps, roots or bushes to save for later



Greater Roadrunner

- They can reach up to two feet in height
- They have been spotted eastward in places such as Louisiana and Missouri
- Can reach to a top speed of 43 miles an hour which is twice as fast as other roadrunners



Cliff Swallow

- Usually known to nest in colonies although it can nest solitarily as well
- Some will lay their eggs in another's nest
- When the young leave their nest they congregate in groups called creches



Scott's Oriole

- Closely associated to Yuccas
- Forages on Yucca plants and insects within them
- These birds start singing before sunrise which is earlier than other birds



Loggerhead Shrike

- These can kill and carry an animal as big as itself
- It transports large prey in its feet and smaller prey in its beak
- Prey include butterflies to toads, then they wait up to three days to eat them, which allows the poison to break down



Gila Woodpecker

- Male Gilas primarily forage on saguaro cacti trunks and branches and the female will eat the diseased areas
- When the woodpeckers make a nest in the saguaro they won't use it for three months to give it time to dry out



Northern Mockingbird

- They can sing all day and often into the night
- Nocturnal singers are usually unmated males
- They typically sing from February to August and then again from September to November



White-crowned Sparrow

- Usually at the edges of brushy habitats
- Also found in open ground but within the shrubs or trees
- A large sparrow with a small bill and long tail found all the way from Alaska to the Southwest



Mourning Dove

- They tend to busily feed on the ground in groups, both eating and storing seeds.
- They will store the seeds to fly to a safer place to eat and digest the seeds
- The most abundant game bird in North America



White-winged Dove

- They eat mostly nectar, pollen, fruit and seeds of the saguaro cactus
- Migration is timed with the fruiting schedule of the saguaros because they are so dependent on it
- They can also drink water without moving their heads



Rock Wren

- Can have a song repertoire of more than 100 song types
- They usually build a walkway that leads to their nest made of pebbles or stones
- Even when in captivity this bird is known not to drink water



Purple Martin

- They get all their food and water during flight
- Purple Martins roost together by the thousands in late summer
- Martins that are north for breeding may return to the same location several weeks later



Black-tailed Gnatcatcher

- One of the smallest songbirds of North America
- They weigh about as much as a nickel
- They may stick with one mate for life, since they don't migrate but spend the whole year in one small area



Western Tanager

- They live in open woods all over the west, especially in evergreens
- They obtain their red color from the insects in their diet
- This species ranges further north than any other tanager, where they may spend two months migrating



Canyon Towhee

- They time their nesting with summer and winter rains, allowing them to nest twice a year
- Common on the ground and underneath shrubs in scrubby habitats
- Their color being so like dirt they can blend in incredibly well



Common Poorwill

- During the winter they will lower their body heat to 41 degrees Fahrenheit and reduce their oxygen intake by 90%
- Like they can adjust to the cold they can also adjust to the heat by panting and releasing water
- Often found nesting in the ground in scrub



Ladder-backed Woodpecker

- Mostly found in the Sonoran Desert but can also be found in pinyon pine forests as well
- Sometimes hybridizes with Nuttall's Woodpecker
- Often quiet and inconspicuous



Harris's Hawk

- Known to play by chasing insects or jumping on sticks
- Sometimes seen hunting in groups rather than singularly
- They nest in social units ranging anywhere from one hawk to seven



House Sparrow

- They frequently take dust baths and sometimes defend the spot against others
- Prefers to nest in man-made objects
- Now common across America even as far as Northern Canada



Western Screech Owl

- They will sometimes perch on trees during the day but primarily remain entirely invisible, pressing their body against the tree
- A fierce predator, they will sometimes take prey larger than themselves, but most commonly eat bats, insects and worms



Ash-throated Flycatcher

- Often found in open woodlands
- Known to occasionally use snakeskin to form it's nests as well as mammal hair
- Common all over the U.S. as they have been seen in all states



Brown-headed Cowbird

- Known to have several different mates during a single season
- They lay eggs in the nests of more than 220 species of birds
- Known to leave their eggs in other nests for their babies to then be raised by other bird species



Phainopepla

- Known to often perch in shrubs and catch insects on the wing
- They have a special digestive tract to be able to digest mistletoe fruit
- They mimic the calls of other birds
- Nesting schedule is adapted to the season when their favored food is ripened



Western Flycatcher

- Found in forest habitats where they breed in forests and mountains along the West Coast
- Known as the Western Flycatcher until 1989, now known as the Pacific-slope Flycatcher



Bell's Vireo

- They nest from the Midwest to Southwest into Mexico
- During the breeding season males will sing continuously
- Sometimes during the breeding season pairs will forage together moving through branches of trees in a spiral to find insects in the vegetation



Nashville Warbler

- They migrate along the Atlantic Coast their first-year but then migrate inland the following years
- They breed in north-central North America as well as part of the Pacific Northwest
- They nest on the ground and eat only insects



Orange-crowned Warbler

- Most nest on the ground to avoid their nest being robbed by other birds
- Their song is much more variable compared to other warblers
- They begin their spring migration earlier than most other species and stay further north for winter



Western Kingbird

- Commonly found in grasslands in the western part of the U.S.
- The range has been spreading due to human activities both by providing habitats and interfering with them
- Known to aggressively fend off predators from their territories



House Wren

- They have one of the largest ranges of any songbird, being seen from Canada to South America
- Known to nest inside tree holes and nest boxes
- Wrens are known to harass and even attack other birds and sometimes attacking the nests in sites they want as their own



Curve-billed Thrasher

- Their bills are designed to be able to perfectly hunt insects
- Usually found in scrub habitats where they forage the ground for food
- Their bills allow them to keep a safe distance from otherwise poisonous insects



Crissal Thrasher

- Usually nest next to a large branch which restricts the access to the nest
- They are known to walk and run around its territory more than it flies around
- They are more likely to run to cover than to fly



Brewer's Sparrow

- Adapted to arid environments all year round
- In summer and spring their songs can last more than 15 seconds
- They're very dependent upon Sagebrush, it is where they live, what they eat and where they nest



Say's Phoebe

- Commonly unaffected by people and known to nest on buildings
- They breed further north than any other flycatcher and are only limited by nesting sites
- Known to be in the U.S. for over 400,000 years



Citation

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>