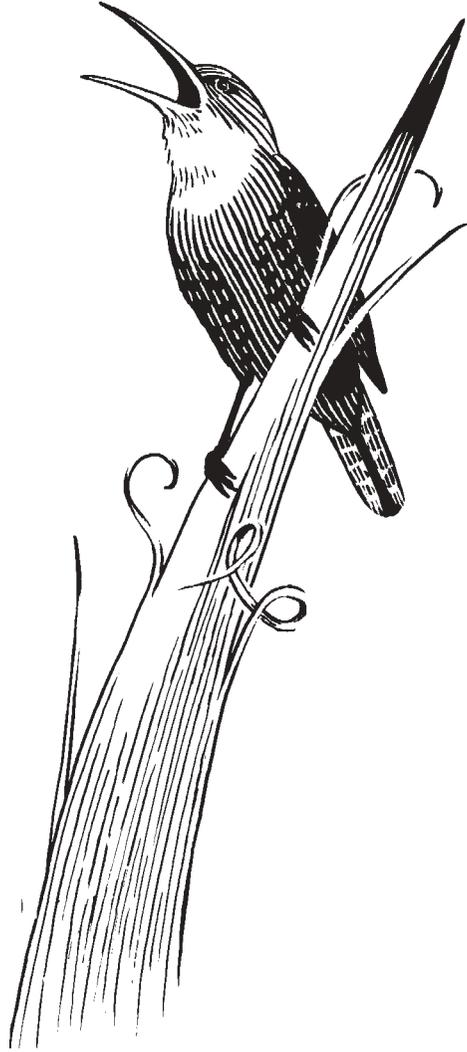


# Birding Guide to El Malpais



By Ken Jones

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# Introduction

This guide is intended to provide the visiting birder with an updated checklist and basic information on the best locations for finding the many species of birds that breed or migrate through El Malpais. El Malpais National Conservation Area and National Monument encompass over 400,000 acres, with much of this area covered by rugged lava flows. The area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service with each agency following different management objectives. A wide variety of habitat types can be found at El Malpais including grasslands, forests, shrub, cliffs, and a limited amount of riparian. Elevations range from about 6450 to 8375 feet above sea level. The area is considered to be semi-arid with average precipitation around 12 inches per year.

Visitation at El Malpais is relatively low and few birders leave the beaten track to explore more remote areas. While this guide concentrates on the readily accessible areas, the adventurous birder can find virtually unvisited places to look for additional species. Over 200 species have been identified at El Malpais and more should be added to this list as an increasing number of birders visit the area. The best time to attempt to find unlisted species is during migration.

The format of this guide provides a brief description of habitats and locations of each habitat, a summary of the best easily accessible birding locations, a species checklist with identification tips, and the best locations for seeing each species.

A few notes of caution are in order for visitors to El Malpais. When birding from the paved highways, always pull completely off the road. Although our roads may appear to be deserted, traffic often tends to travel faster than the posted speed limit. On Highway 117, be sure to find a solid spot of the shoulder to park, then walk back to view the birds. All of the dirt roads in the area can become impassable when wet, even for 4WD vehicles. Tow trucks will not go into some of the more remote areas of El Malpais and it could be days before someone comes to the rescue. It is safer to stay off wet roads and to leave an area if rain is threatening.

Do not trespass on private or tribal lands, even for a life bird. Maps and information for El Malpais can be obtained at the BLM Ranger Station on Highway 117, the NPS Information Center on Highway 53, and at the Northwest New Mexico Visitor Center in Grants (I-40 at exit 85).



## **Habitats**

The following habitat types can be found at El Malpais. Most locations have a combination of habitats.

**Grassland:** North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon, Pie Town Road, south end of County Road 42.

**Shrub:** Lava flow margins on the east side, Narrows Picnic Area, Lava Falls.

**Pinyon-Juniper Woodland:** Primary habitat type at El Malpais, found throughout the area.

**Riparian:** Cebolla Springs, playa lakes. The Cebolla Springs area is the only permanent riparian area within El Malpais; all other ponds and lakes are seasonal.

**Ponderosa Pine:** Chain of Craters, NPS Information Center, El Calderon, north end of County Road 42.

**Cliff:** Highway 117, La Ventana Natural Arch, Narrows.

## **Birding Locations**

The following areas will provide the visiting birder with ample opportunity to explore the various habitats that can be found at El Malpais. Most of these areas are accessible by paved road, although some can only be reached by traveling on dirt roads. Dirt roads may become impassable when wet, so be sure to inquire about road conditions before venturing into remote areas. Almost all of these locations will require birders to hike and explore the areas in order to see the highest number of species. With proper effort up to 30 species may be seen in most locations.

**Highway 117.** The main access route to the east side of El Malpais begins at exit 89 on I-40. This road provides access to the BLM Ranger Station, Sandstone Bluffs Overlook, Zuni-Acoma Trail, La Ventana Natural Arch, Narrows Picnic Area, North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon, Lava Falls, Homestead Canyon, Armijo Canyon, Pie Town Road (County Road 41), and the southern end of County Road 42. Along the way the road passes pinyon-juniper woodlands, grasslands, and cliffs.

**BLM Ranger Station/Sandstone Bluffs Area.** Located about 10 miles south of I-40 on Highway 117, this area will give birders a quick introduction to El Malpais and the varied habitats to be found here. In addition the BLM Ranger Station has exhibits and information about the area. This is also the last chance for water. Ranger Station hours are from 8:30 to 4:30. Within this area birders can find all of the habitat types described above with the exception of riparian. Birders on Highway 117 with limited time should make this their first stop. The area includes all of the areas from the overlook to about two miles north of the BLM Ranger Station and Nature Trail.

**La Ventana Natural Arch.** Located 18 miles south of I-40 on Highway 117, La Ventana is a convenient stop with good cliff habitat and a small area of mixed grassland, shrub, and pinyon-juniper habitats. This area usually has a good variety of birds.

**Narrows Picnic Area.** Located 23 miles south of I-40 on Highway 117, the Narrows Picnic Area is probably the best birding location in El Malpais. All habitat types except riparian can be found in this area. This is a great location for birders who like to hike and explore while birding and provides easy access to North Pasture, Narrows Rim, and Cebolla

Wilderness. Includes the areas within ½ mile of the picnic area and the Narrows Rim Trail.

North Pasture. Located between the Narrows and Cebolla Canyon, this area includes a wide variety of habitat types. Includes the areas from Highway 117 east to the top of Cebollita Mesa.

Cebolla Canyon. Located off Highway 117; turn east south of mile marker 31. Cebolla Canyon extends for about 15 miles through the east side of El Malpais. All of the habitat types can be found in the canyon. Includes the main canyon, all side canyons, side slopes, and mesa tops. A high clearance vehicle is required for the Cebolla Canyon Road.

Cebolla Springs. The only true riparian area located within El Malpais. The spring is located 10.5 miles up Cebolla Canyon with riparian conditions extending several miles downstream. An effort is currently underway to restore this area and riparian conditions should continue to improve in the future. A high clearance vehicle is required to reach this area.

County Road 41. Also known as Pie Town Road, this dirt road begins off Highway 117 32 miles south of I-40. County Road 41 provides access to Homestead and Armijo Canyons.

Homestead Canyon. Homestead Canyon can be reached from a dirt road that runs east off Pie Town Road (County Road 41) about 34 miles south of I-40.

Armijo Canyon. Located off Pie Town Road 35.7 miles south of I-40, Armijo Canyon is another good choice for the birder who enjoys hiking. Habitat types are similar to Homestead Canyon with fewer grasslands and more ponderosa pine woodlands. A small spring and stock pond are located about two miles up Armijo Canyon. Includes the main canyon, side canyons, side slopes, and mesa tops.

Highway 53. The main access route to the west side of El Malpais beginning at exit 81 on I-40. This road provides access to the Zuni-Acoma Trail, El Calderon, the NPS Information Center, the northern end of County Road 42, and Cibola National Forest. Along the way the road passes wetlands, grasslands, and various forest types.

Zuni-Acoma Trail. Trailheads are located on both Highway 117 and Highway 53. The habitat types change as the trail is followed across the lava flows. The Highway 117 trailhead is located 15 miles south of I-40 and has primarily pinyon-juniper habitat. The Highway 53 trailhead is located 18 miles south of I-40 and has ponderosa pine and grassland habitat.

El Calderon. Located 21 miles south of I-40 on Highway 53, El Calderon offers easy access to ponderosa pine, pinyon-juniper, and grassland habitats. In addition visitors can explore the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a lava tube, other volcanic features, and watch bat flights at the El Calderon area. Includes the areas within 1½ miles of the El Calderon parking area.

NPS Information Center. Located 23 miles south of I-40 on Highway 53, this is a convenient spot to stop for information and watch birds. There are several areas to hike near the information center that provide access to varied habitats. This is probably the best place to stop if you are traveling on Highway 53 and have limited time. Hours are from 8:30 to 4:30. Includes the areas within 1½ miles of the Information Center.

County Road 42. Also known as the Chain of Craters Backcountry Byway, this dirt road provides access to the west side of El Malpais and connects Highway 53 and Highway 117. A high-clearance vehicle is needed for this road south of Big Tubes.

Chain of Craters. Located west of County Road 42, the Chain of Craters extends for about 15 miles. This area has a wide variety of forested and grassland habitats and is a good area for birders who enjoy hiking. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail runs through the Chain of Craters from Cerro Rendija to Cerro Brillante. Includes the area from Big Tubes to Cerro Brillante.

Grants. Many of the common birds can easily be seen in the Grants area; other species are more easily located here. Areas to bird in Grants include Mesa Boulevard, Lobo Canyon Road, the Riverwalk, and Golf Course Road.

## Status

**Common:** Present and should be seen in proper habitat and season.

**Uncommon:** Present and may be seen in proper habitat and season.

**Rare:** Only a few individuals may be present in proper habitat and season. Also used for species that may be present only for a very brief period at times.

**Occasional:** One or two individuals seen every few years.

**Casual:** Outside of expected range or migration route.

**Summer:** Species found in the area from spring until fall.

**Resident:** Species found in the area year round. Numbers may vary.

**Migrant:** Species found during migration only.

**Winter:** Species found in the area from fall until spring.

This checklist is based on the American Ornithologists' Union 7th edition (1998).



# Bird Finding Guide to El Malpais

Species

Comments

Status

Habitat

Locations

## PELICANS (PELECANIDAE)

American White Pelican

Casual, summer

Soaring. Best seen at Bluewater Lake State Park.

## BITTERNS AND HERONS (ARDEIDAE)

The best locations for spotting these species within El Malpais would be either the playa lakes and seasonal ponds located along the major roads or the Cebolla Springs area.

Great Blue Heron

Rare, summer

Springs and ponds

Solitary hunter, flies with neck curled in an S shape. Sometimes hunts in pastures and meadows.

Great Egret

Casual, summer

Springs and ponds

Forages in the open, claims and defends a hunting territory.

Snowy Egret

Occasional migrant

Springs and ponds

Highly social, actively feeds in shallow open water.

Cattle Egret

Occasional migrant

Springs and pastures

Prefers to feed on dry land. Usually associated with ranching and farming operations.

Black-crowned Night Heron

Occasional, summer  
Ponds

Roosts during the day, feeds at night.

IBISES (THRESKIORNITHIDAE)

White-faced Ibis

Occasional migrant  
Springs and wet meadows  
Cebolla Springs

Usually seen in flocks. Flies with a straight neck. Feeds in shallow water or wet meadows.

VULTURES (CATHARTIDAE)

Turkey Vulture

Common, summer  
Soaring  
Hwy 117 & 53

Soars with wings held in a V, rocks from side to side.

SWANS, GEESE, AND DUCKS (ANATIDAE)

The best locations for spotting these species within El Malpais would be at the playa lakes or seasonal ponds located along the major roads.

Canada Goose

Occasional migrant  
Golf Course

Soaring

Snow Goose

Casual migrant  
Soaring

Usually seen in flocks.

Gadwall

Uncommon migrant  
Ponds

Surface feeder. Our drabest dabbling duck.

American Widgeon

Uncommon migrant  
Ponds

Surface feeder. Feeds on stems and leaves of aquatic plants. Often seen in deep water with diving ducks.

Mallard

Common resident  
Ponds

Most common duck seen in this area.  
Surface feeder.

Blue-winged Teal

Uncommon migrant  
Ponds

Feeds on the surface in small bodies of shallow water.

Cinnamon Teal

Rare migrant  
Ponds

Feeds on the surface in small bodies of shallow water.

Northern Shoveler

Rare migrant  
Ponds

Surface feeder, unique large shovel-shaped bill.

Northern Pintail

Rare migrant  
Ponds

Surface feeder. Slim, long-necked duck with central tail feathers.

Green-winged Teal

Uncommon migrant  
Pond

Smallest dabbling duck in North America. Surface feeder.

Canvasback

Rare migrant  
Ponds

Diver, feeds in both deep and shallow water.

Bufflehead

Rare migrant  
Ponds

Diver, sits high in the water. Smallest North American diving duck.

Common Goldeneye

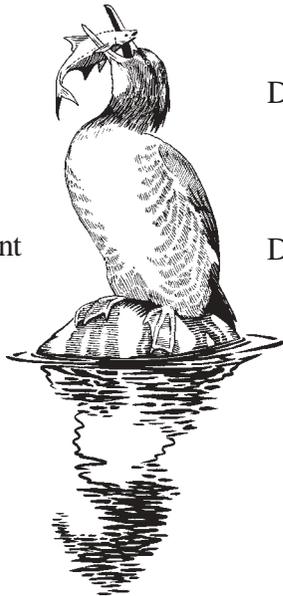
Rare migrant  
Ponds

Diver, prefers deeper bodies of water.

Common Merganser

Casual migrant  
Ponds

Diver, prefers clear bodies of water.



Ruddy Duck

Occasional migrant  
Ponds

Diver, stout and chunky with a stiff tail, sits low and slowly sinks underwater.

## EAGLES AND HAWKS (ACCIPITRIDAE)

### Osprey

Casual migrant  
Soaring

Most likely seen at Bluewater Lake.

### Bald Eagle

Rare migrant  
Soaring  
Hwy 117 & 53

Sometimes seen feeding on carrion by the roadside.

### Northern Harrier

Common resident  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Low flying, rocks from side to side, has a large white rump patch. Uses low perches. Often hovers.

### Sharp-shinned Hawk

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Feeds on small birds, prefers coniferous forests. Square tail, flies with rapid wing beats and short glides.

### Cooper's Hawk

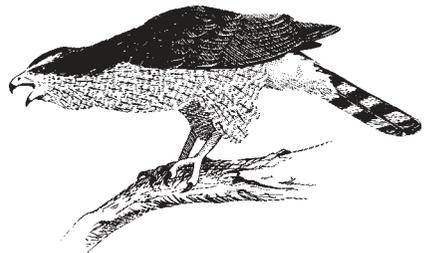
Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
NPS IC, Armijo Canyon

Slightly larger than the sharp-shinned, prefers open woodlands. Seen in urban areas.

### Northern Goshawk

Occasional resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters,  
Armijo Canyon

Found deep in mature coniferous forests. Sometimes seen gliding silently through the forest canopy.



### Swainson's Hawk

Rare, summer  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117, Pie Town Road

Nests in dense foliage of isolated trees, forages over open grasslands. Often feeds on large insects. Soars with wings angled slightly up.

### Red-tailed Hawk

Common resident  
Grasslands, woodlands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Most common hawk seen in the area.  
Uses a wide variety of habitats, nests in the tops of tall trees or on cliffs.

### Ferruginous Hawk

Rare, winter  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117, Pie Town Road

Feeds on rodents and rabbits. Hunts from a low perch or from the ground.  
Soars with wings held in a shallow V.

### Golden Eagle

Rare resident  
Grasslands  
North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon

Nests on steep cliffs. Usually hunts by soaring and diving on prey.

## FALCONS (FALCONIDAE)

### American Kestrel

Common resident  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Common along roadsides perching on fences and power lines. Often seen hovering.



### Merlin

Rare, winter  
Grasslands, woodlands  
Pie Town Road

Pursues small birds over open habitat.  
Nests in open woodlands. Hunts from a low perch or while flying low.

### Prairie Falcon

Rare resident  
Grasslands  
North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon

Nests on cliffs near hunting grounds.  
Often hunts prey close to the ground.

## Peregrine Falcon

Rare resident  
Cliffs  
La Ventana, Narrows

Hunts from lofty exposed perches, nests on steep cliffs. Flies high and swiftly dives on birds.

## GROUSE, TURKEYS, AND QUAIL (PHASIANIDAE)

### Wild Turkey

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Sand Canyon, NPS IC,  
El Calderon

Roosts in trees, feeds in forest openings, preferring mixed ponderosa oak woodlands. Usually seen in small flocks.

### Scaled Quail

Rare resident  
Tall grasslands  
North Pasture,  
BLM Ranger Station

Found in coveys in tall grasslands mixed with shrubs.

## CRANES (GRUIDAE)

### Sandhill Crane

Casual

Soaring

## RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS (RALLIDAE)

The best locations for spotting these species within El Malpais would be at the playa lakes and seasonal ponds located along the major roads or at the Cebolla Springs area.

### Virginia Rail

Rare migrant  
Marshes

Stays in dense marsh cover, rarely seen, most often heard.

### Sora

Rare, summer  
Marshes

Seldom seen, stays in dense cattails or reeds.

### American Coot

Rare, summer  
Ponds

Diver, nests in cattails and rushes. Tolerant of humans, rarely flies when disturbed.

## PLOVERS (CHARADRIIDAE)

### Killdeer

Uncommon resident  
Sparse grasslands  
South CR 42, Cebolla Springs

Nests in open sparse fields. Feeds mostly on insects.

### Mountain Plover

Rare migrant  
Short grasslands  
South CR 42

Winters in semi-arid areas and bare fields.

## STILTS AND AVOCETS (RECURVIROSTRIDAE)

### American Avocet

Occasional migrant  
Shallow ponds  
Cebolla Springs

Prefers shallow alkaline or brackish water with mud flats.

## SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES (SCOLOPACIDAE)

The best locations for spotting these species would be at the playa lakes or seasonal ponds near the main roads, or at the Cebolla Springs area.

### Solitary Sandpiper

Rare migrant  
Ponds and marshes

Does not form flocks. Bobs when approached, has an erratic flight pattern.

### Willet

Rare migrant  
Ponds and marshes

Usually feeds on shoreline and mud flats.

### Spotted Sandpiper

Rare, summer  
Ponds and marshes

Solitary, walks with a bobbing motion, flies in a semicircle when disturbed, prefers sand or pebble shorelines.

### Long-billed Curlew

Rare migrant  
Grasslands, marshes

Hunts for insects in shoreline vegetation. May be seen far from water. Largest North American shorebird.

### Least Sandpiper

Rare migrant  
Ponds and marshes

Prefers small ponds, usually feeds from the surface of the ground.

Upland Sandpiper Occasional migrant South CR 42	Found in open grasslands.
Long-billed Dowitcher Occasional migrant Ponds and marshes	Gregarious, seen in small flocks.
Common Snipe Occasional Marshes and wet meadows	Takes off explosively when flushed, flies a zigzag pattern for a short distance before settling back down.
Wilson's Phalarope Occasional migrant Ponds and marshes	Uses a variety of feeding techniques while in the water. Most often seen swimming but also feeds on shore.
Red-necked Phalarope Casual Ponds	Smallest phalarope.
<b>GULLS AND TERNS (LARIDAE)</b>	
Franklin's Gull Occasional migrant Varied Grants	Feeds in pastures and fields.
Ring-billed Gull Occasional migrant Varied Grants	Tolerant of human activity, often seen in parking lots.
<b>PIGEONS AND DOVES (COLUMBIDAE)</b>	
Rock Dove Common resident Cliffs and towns Grants	Nests on tall cliffs, most often seen in urban areas.
White-winged Dove Common resident Towns Grants, local communities	Prefers areas near water. Often seen in residential areas.

Inca Dove	Grants, BLM Ranger Station	May be attempting to colonize the area.
Eurasian Collared Dove	Grants, outlying communities	Has recently colonized the area.
Mourning Dove	Common resident Varied Hwy 117, Cebolla Canyon	Forages over open ground. Forms large flocks in the fall.
CUCKOOS AND ROADRUNNERS (CUCULIDAE)		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Occasional, summer Riparian Cebolla Canyon	Found in riparian areas and woodland thickets.
Greater Roadrunner	Uncommon resident Grasslands Hwy 117 & 53	Prefers grasslands mixed with thickets of large shrubs. Sometimes seen early in the day perching in the sun. State bird of New Mexico.
OWLS (STRIGIDAE)		
Flammulated Owl	Occasional, summer Riparian Cebolla Canyon	Prefers ponderosa forests, shy and retiring, perches deep in canopy next to trunk. Almost strictly nocturnal.
Western Screech Owl	Occasional resident Woodlands El Calderon, North Pasture	Uses a wide variety of wooded habitats, cavity nester.
Great Horned Owl	Uncommon resident Woodlands Cebolla Canyon, Armijo Canyon	Found in open woodlands. May be seen perching in the open during the day.
Northern Pygmy Owl	Occasional resident Woodlands North Pasture	Found in open woodlands with meadows or large openings, often hunts during the day. Active at dusk.

### Burrowing Owl

Rare, summer  
Grasslands  
North Pasture, Armijo Canyon

Found in old prairie dog towns, perches near nest hole.

### Long-eared Owl

Occasional resident  
Woodlands  
Homestead Canyon,  
Armijo Canyon

Quiet and secretive, roosts in dense foliage, hunts over open country.

### Northern Saw-whet Owl

Occasional, summer  
Woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Chain of Craters

Found in open ponderosa woodlands and dense canyon growth, very tame when roosting.

## GOATSUCKERS (CAPRIMULGIDAE)

### Common Nighthawk

Common, summer  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Forages high over open habitat. Often seen diving, most active at dawn and dusk.



### Common Poorwill

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Hunts silently just above bushes or low over openings, usually from the ground or a low perch. Often seen resting on back roads at night.

### Whip-poor-will

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon, Sand Canyon

Found in pine oak woodlands, hunts low over the ground. Mostly nocturnal.

## SWIFTS (APODIDAE)

### White-throated Swift

Common, summer  
Cliffs  
La Ventana, Narrows

Hunts over high ridges. Often seen with violet-green swallows. Nests in cliff crevices.

## HUMMINGBIRDS (TROCHILIDAE)

The best location for viewing hummingbirds is the BLM Ranger Station on Highway 117. Feeders are located at the Ranger Station in summer.

### Magnificent Hummingbird

Casual, summer  
Woodlands

Prefers mountain woodlands, usually in canyons or near streams. Normally found in southern New Mexico.

### Black-chinned Hummingbird

Common, summer  
Woodlands

Uses a wide variety of open wooded habitats. Prefers semi-arid areas.

### Calliope Hummingbird

Rare, summer  
Grasslands  
Woodlands



Found at higher elevations in open grasslands, forest clearings and edges. Smallest North American bird.

### Broad-tailed Hummingbird

Common, summer  
Woodlands

Found in open pinyon-juniper and ponderosa woodlands.

### Rufous Hummingbird

Common, summer  
Grasslands, woodlands

Found in forest edges and thickets, very aggressive.

## KINGFISHERS (ALCEDINIDAE)

### Belted Kingfisher

Occasional, summer  
Ponds  
Hwy 117, Cebolla Springs

Hunts clear, calm waters from a perch or by hovering.

## WOODPECKERS (PICIDAE)

### Lewis's Woodpecker

Uncommon resident  
Woodland  
North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon

Prefers open forests. Often catches insects in flight.

### Acorn Woodpecker

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area,  
El Calderon

Found in mixed open ponderosa oak woodlands. Often seen in small groups.

Red-naped Sapsucker Uncommon, summer Woodlands North Pasture, NPS IC	Prefers coniferous forest edges.
Williamson's Sapsucker Uncommon, summer Woodlands North Pasture, Chain of Craters	Prefers open ponderosa pine forests.
Ladder-backed Woodpecker Rare resident Woodlands, towns Narrows Picnic Area, El Calderon	Found in mixed pinyon-juniper oak woodlands and deciduous trees in urban areas.
Downy Woodpecker Uncommon resident Woodlands El Calderon, Narrows Picnic Area	Uses a wide variety of wooded habitats, prefers deciduous trees. Smallest North American woodpecker.
Hairy Woodpecker Uncommon resident Woodlands NPS IC, North Pasture	Often spirals up trees while feeding, prefers deciduous trees.
Northern Flicker Common resident Woodlands Narrows Picnic Area, NPS IC	Prefers open forests with large scattered trees and open ground. Often feeds on the ground.
<b>TYRANT FLYCATCHERS (TYRANNIDAE)</b>	
Olive-sided Flycatcher Rare migrant Woodlands North Pasture, NPS IC	Found in the tallest treetops, prefers forest clearings and edges.
Western Wood-Pewee Uncommon, summer Woodlands North Pasture, El Calderon	Uses all open wooded habitats, feeds in forest clearings. Uses low to mid-level perches when hunting.

Hammond's Flycatcher

Rare migrant  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, El Calderon

Found in tall dense shady groves, feeds at all levels in trees.

Dusky Flycatcher

Rare migrant  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, El Calderon

Prefers open woodlands with shrubby understory. Hunts from low exposed perches.

Gray Flycatcher

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
Sandstone Bluffs, La Ventana

Prefers pinyon-juniper woodlands with shrubby understory. Feeds close to the ground.

Cordillian Flycatcher

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters

Prefers moist shaded ponderosa forests mixed with oaks. Feeds at various levels in trees.

Black Phoebe

Occasional, summer  
Cebolla Canyon

Prefers open terrain, nesting near water. Uses low perches, feeds near the ground.

Say's Phoebe

Common, summer  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117, Cebolla Canyon

Nests on cliffs, in earthen banks and under building eaves in open habitat. Feeds near the ground.

Ash-throated Flycatcher

Common, summer  
Woodlands  
El Calderon, Armijo Canyon

Found in open woodlands with brushy understory, uses low perches. Cavity nester.

Cassin's Kingbird

Common, summer  
Woodlands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Seen in open woodlands bordering grasslands.



Western Kingbird

Common, summer  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Seen perching on fences and wires.  
Prefers arid savannas and grasslands  
with scattered trees.

SHRIKES (LANIIDAE)

Northern Shrike

Occasional, winter  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters

Perches higher and is tamer than  
Loggerhead Shrike. Feeds on small  
birds in winter. Sometimes seen  
hovering, pumps tail.

Loggerhead Shrike

Uncommon resident  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117

Solitary hunter, perches on wires,  
fences, bushes in open country.

VIREOS (VIREONIDAE)

Gray Vireo

Occasional, summer  
Woodlands  
Sandstone Bluffs, North Pasture

Found in foothills in pinyon-juniper  
woodlands. Active, bobs tail.

Plumbeous Vireo

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, El Calderon

Sings from high perches in open pine  
woodlands with a shrub and oak  
understory. Forages in upper levels of  
trees.

Warbling Vireo

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
NPS IC

Prefers deciduous trees near moist  
meadows. Forages high in dense  
canopy.

JAYS, MAGPIES, AND CROWS (CORVIDAE)

Steller's Jay

Common resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, NPS IC

Found in ponderosa pine, moves to  
lower elevations in winter.

Western Scrub Jay

Common resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area, NPS IC

Found in pinyon-juniper woodlands.  
Usually seen singly or in pairs.

## Pinyon Jay

Common resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area, NPS IC

Found in pinyon-juniper woodlands,  
almost always seen in flocks.

## Clark's Nutcracker

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, north CR 42

Prefers higher elevation woodlands,  
moves to lower elevations in winter.

## American Crow

Rare resident  
Varied  
Hwy 117

Smaller than a raven, has a rounded tail.  
Forages over open areas.

## Common Raven

Common resident  
Varied  
Hwy 117 & 53

Seen everywhere, nests on rocky cliffs  
and in tall trees.

## LARKS (ALAUDIDAE)

### Horned Lark

Common resident  
Short grasslands  
South CR 42, Pie Town Road

Found in open country habitats. Often  
seen on roadsides, very nervous and  
easily disturbed. Usually seen in flocks.

## SWALLOWS (HIRUNDINIDAE)

### Purple Martin

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon, North Pasture

Found in open woodlands, nests in tree  
cavities.

### Tree Swallow

Rare migrant  
Woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon

Forms flocks during migration. Feeds on  
insects and berries. Found in open  
areas. Early migrant.

### Violet-Green Swallow

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon, North Pasture

Nests in colonies on cliffs and in tree  
cavities near open ponderosa  
woodlands. Early migrant. Forages  
higher than other swallows.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Uncommon migrant  
Varied  
Cebolla Canyon

Forages low over water, marshes or open grasslands. Nests in crevices and cavities in banks.

Bank Swallow

Rare migrant  
North Ponds and springs  
Cebolla Canyon

Nests in colonies in banks near water.  
Smallest American swallow.

Barn Swallow

Common, summer  
Cliffs and towns  
Grants

Nests on bridges, cliffs, and buildings near wet meadows and pastures.

Cliff Swallow

Common, summer  
Cliffs  
Hwy 117, Cebolla Canyon

Nests in colonies on cliffs near a mud source.

CHICKADEES AND TITMICE (PARIDAE)

Mountain Chickadee

Common resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area,  
El Calderon

Found in higher elevation woodlands.  
Gleans insects from tree branches.



Juniper Titmouse

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area,  
El Calderon

Found in pinyon-juniper oak woodlands. Feeds on insects in the canopy.

## BUSHTITS (AEGITHALIDAE)

### Bushtit

Common resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area, NPS IC

Found in loose flocks in pinyon-juniper woodlands. Forages in cover for insects. Feeds low in trees.

## NUTHATCHES (SITTIDAE)

### Red-breasted Nuthatch

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Found in higher levels of dense conifers, hunts insects on tree trunks and main branches. Feeds on nuts and seeds in winter.

### White-breasted Nuthatch

Common resident  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area, NPS IC

Found in open forests with large, well-spaced trees. Feeds low in trees on trunk and main branches. Feeds on nuts and seeds in the winter.

### Pygmy Nuthatch

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Frequently seen in loose flocks, prefers open forests of large ponderosa. Forages high in trees, most often on smaller branches.

## CREEPERS (CERTHIIDAE)

### Brown Creeper

Rare resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Usually solitary, almost always moves upwards along tree trunks and branches. Prefers mature forests.

## WRENS (TROGLODYTIDAE)

### Cactus Wren

Casual  
Grasslands, shrublands with cholla cactus.

One sighting in Grants.



### Rock Wren

Common resident  
Canyons  
Armijo Canyon,  
Homestead Canyon

Found in scrubland, on talus slopes, and in steep canyons. Often seen hopping over rocks.

### Canyon Wren

Uncommon resident  
Canyons  
Armijo Canyon,  
Cebolla Canyon

Found in steep shady canyons with dense growth.

### Bewick's Wren

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
Sandstone Bluffs,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in shrubby woodlands with cavities and crevices for nesting. Often flicks its tail. Very active forager.

### House Wren

Uncommon migrant  
Varied  
Chain of Craters, North Pasture

Nests in tree cavities. Very aggressive. Prefers open deciduous woodlands and thickets. Very active forager.

### Marsh Wren

Occasional migrant  
Marshes  
Cebolla Springs

Found in tall, emergent vegetation. Very aggressive.

## THRUSHES (MUSCICAPIDAE)

### Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
BLM Ranger Station,  
Sandstone Bluffs

Prefers arid hillsides with scattered oaks and dense thickets. Constantly flicks tail.

### Golden-crowned Kinglet

Uncommon migrant  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Highly active, found at various levels in dense conifers.

### Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area,  
El Calderon

Nests only in coniferous forests. Feeds at all levels in trees and shrubs.

### Western Bluebird

Common resident  
Woodlands, grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53,  
Cebolla Canyon

Prefers open woodlands, often seen perching on fences and wires. Usually seen in small flocks.

Mountain Bluebird Common resident Woodlands, grasslands Hwy 117 & 53, Cebolla Canyon	Prefers open woodlands with large grassy openings, often seen perching on fences and wires. Hovers and feeds low over the ground.
Townsend's Solitaire Uncommon, winter Woodlands Chain of Craters, Cebolla Canyon	Nests in mixed open conifer woodlands, moves to lower elevations in winter. Forages from a perch and on the ground, also feeds on juniper berries.
Swainson's Thrush Rare, migrant Woodlands Chain of Craters, El Calderon	Shy, found in thickets under ponderosa pine. Remains calm when seen.
Hermit Thrush Rare, summer Woodlands El Calderon	Prefers moist groves, very active, often pumps tail and flicks wings. Forages on the ground in dense cover.
American Robin Common, summer Varied Cebolla Canyon, El Calderon	Feeds on the ground in a wide variety of habitats, also feeds in fruit-bearing trees.
MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS (MIMIDAE)	
Gray Catbird Rare migrant Woodlands Sandstone Bluffs, BLM Ranger Station	Found in dense thickets. Avoids coniferous forests.
Northern Mockingbird Common, summer Varied Sandstone Bluffs, Hwy 117	Prefers open habitat with shrubs, often found around human habitations.
Sage Thrasher Uncommon resident Grasslands Sandstone Bluffs, BLM Ranger Station	Found in dense shrub and thickets.

Bendire's Thrasher

Rare, summer  
Grasslands  
Sandstone Bluffs,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in dense shrub and thickets.  
Forages on the ground.

Curve-billed Thrasher

Rare resident  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Often seen in the open.

STARLINGS (STURNIDAE)

European Starling

Common resident  
Towns  
Grants

Found in flocks.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS (MOTACILLIDAE)

American Pipit

Occasional migrant  
Grasslands  
South CR 42

Found in open short grasslands.

WAXWINGS (BOMBYCILLIDAE)

Cedar Waxwing

Uncommon migrant  
Woodlands, towns  
Cebolla Canyon, Grants

Seen in flocks feeding on berries and  
small fruits in open deciduous  
woodlands and urban areas.

Northern Waxwing

Casual, winter  
Residential areas, woodlands  
Grants

Seen in flocks feeding on berries and  
fruits.

SILKY FLYCATCHERS (PTILOGONATIDAE)

Phainopepla

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
Hwy 117

Feeds heavily on mistletoe berries,  
prefers open arid areas.

## WOOD WARBLERS (PARULIDAE)

### Orange-crowned Warbler

Uncommon migrant  
Woodlands  
North Pasture,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in open brushy woodlands and forest edges. Forages in low and middle levels of trees and shrubs.

### Virginia's Warbler

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Homestead Canyon

Found in brushy pinyon and ponderosa woodlands. Shy and timid, forages in dense thickets close to the ground.

### Yellow Warbler

Uncommon, summer  
Varied  
Cebolla Canyon, North Pasture

Prefers shrubby areas, often found in urban areas.

### Yellow-rumped Warbler

Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in brushy open woodlands and edges. Forages at all levels.



### Black-throated Gray Warbler

Rare, summer  
Woodlands  
El Calderon, Cebolla Canyon

Found in open pinyon-juniper woodlands with thick shrub cover. Usually stays out of sight.

### Townsend's Warbler

Uncommon migrant  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters

Found in coniferous forests. Forages in the canopy of dense mature conifers.

### Grace's Warbler

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, El Calderon

Found in tall open ponderosa forests. Forages in the canopy.

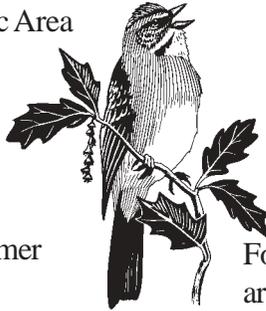
American Redstart	
Occasional migrant	Found in brushy woodlands, prefers deciduous trees. Usually active and visible.
Woodlands	
North Pasture, El Calderon	
Northern Waterthrush	
Rare migrant	Found in moist woodlands and thickets.
Woodlands	Forages on the ground.
Cebolla Canyon	
MacGillivray's Warbler	
Uncommon migrant	Found in dense undergrowth of ponderosa pine forests. Forages within a few feet of the ground.
Woodlands	
Chain of Craters, El Calderon	
Worm-eating Warbler	
Casual	One sighting in Grants.
Common Yellowthroat	
Rare, summer	Found in dense moist undergrowth and thickets, stays near the ground.
Woodlands, riparian	
Cebolla Canyon	
Wilson's Warbler	
Uncommon migrant	Prefers woodlands with thickets and brush, stays near the ground.
Woodlands	
El Calderon, Cebolla Canyon	
Yellow-breasted Chat	
Rare migrant	Prefers dense thicket and brush, favors moist areas.
Varied	
Cebolla Canyon	
TANAGERS (THRAUPIDAE)	
Hepatic Tanager	
Uncommon, summer	Prefers open ponderosa pine forests.
Woodlands	Usually forages high in trees.
Chain of Craters, El Calderon	
Western Tanager	
Uncommon, summer	Found in the canopy of tall open coniferous forests.
Woodlands	
Chain of Craters, El Calderon	

## FINCHES AND SPARROWS (EMBERIZIDAE)

### Green-tailed Towhee

Common, summer  
Grasslands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in dense brush. Hops through cover, stays near the ground.



### Spotted Towhee

Common, summer  
Woodlands  
Narrows Picnic Area,  
Sandstone Bluffs

Found in dense undergrowth. Prefers areas with an accumulation of leaf litter.

### Canyon Towhee

Common, summer  
Woodlands  
BLM Ranger Station,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in wooded canyons and brushy hillsides. Feeds almost entirely on the ground.

### Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Rare migrant  
Grasslands  
Sandstone Bluffs

Found on rocky slopes with grass and shrubs.

### American Tree Sparrow

Casual, winter  
Grasslands  
El Calderon

Prefers grasslands and weedy fields with scattered trees.

### Chipping Sparrow

Common, summer  
Woodlands  
Chain of Craters, North Pasture

Prefers edges of open pine woodlands and edge thickets.

### Brewer's Sparrow

Uncommon migrant  
Woodlands, grasslands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Sandstone Bluffs

Found in open semi-desert areas.

- Vesper Sparrow  
Common, summer  
Grasslands  
Cebolla Canyon, Hwy 117  
Found in roadside brush and shrubby grasslands.
- Lark Sparrow  
Uncommon, summer  
Grasslands, woodlands  
Hwy 117, South CR 42  
Found in fields and open woodlands.  
Forms flocks in winter.
- Black-throated Sparrow  
Occasional, summer  
Grasslands, woodlands  
La Ventana, Sandstone Bluffs  
Found on rocky slopes in open pinyon-juniper woodlands mixed with rabbitbrush.
- Sage Sparrow  
Rare migrant  
Grasslands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Sandstone Bluffs  
Found in open flat brushy grasslands, often runs instead of flying. Secretive, flicks tail while hopping.
- Lark Bunting  
Rare migrant  
Short grasslands  
South CR 42  
Found in short sparse grasslands. Forms flocks in the fall.
- Savannah Sparrow  
Occasional migrant  
Grasslands  
Cebolla Canyon  
Prefers wet grassy areas. Rarely strays from cover. Often seen in flocks.
- Song Sparrow  
Uncommon, winter  
Woodlands, grasslands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Homestead Canyon  
Found in dense thickets and forest edges. Pumps tail in flight.
- Lincoln's Sparrow  
Rare, winter  
Grasslands, woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon, La Ventana  
Found in thickets. Very shy.

White-throated Sparrow

Rare, winter  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, El Calderon

Prefers thickets in woodland edges and clearings.

White-crowned Sparrow

Common, winter  
Grasslands, woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in woodland edges and clearings, brushy grasslands and roadsides.

Dark-eyed Junco

Common resident  
Varied  
Cebolla Canyon, North CR 42

Found in a wide variety of habitats.  
Moves to higher elevations in summer.

Chestnut-collared Longspur

Rare, winter  
Grasslands  
Pie Town Road, Hwy 117

Usually shy, prefers dense grasslands.

GROSBEAKS AND BUNTINGS (CARDINALIDAE)

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Occasional migrant  
Woodlands  
El Calderon, Chain of Craters

Found in open deciduous woodlands with tall understory.

Black-headed Grosbeak

Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, NPS IC

Found in open woodlands and forest edges with scrubby undergrowth.

Blue Grosbeak

Uncommon, summer  
Grasslands, woodlands  
Cebolla Canyon,  
BLM Ranger Station

Prefers moist woodland edges, also seen on brushy roadsides.

Lazuli Bunting

Rare migrant  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, El Calderon

Found in open woodlands mixed with dense shrubs, sings from treetops.

Indigo Bunting

Rare migrant  
Woodlands  
North Pasture, El Calderon

Prefers deciduous woodland clearings  
and edges.

MEADOWLARKS, BLACKBIRDS, AND ORIOLES (ICTERIDAE)

Red-winged Blackbird

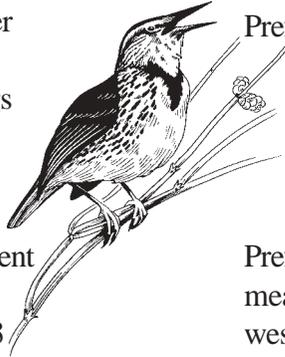
Common resident  
Marshes, ponds  
Cebolla Springs

Seen in flocks. Feeds on the ground.

Eastern Meadowlark

Casual, summer  
Grasslands  
Cebolla Springs

Prefers tall, moist grasslands.



Western Meadowlark

Common resident  
Grasslands  
Hwy 117 & 53

Prefers short grasslands. Almost all  
meadowlarks seen in the area are  
western.

Yellow-headed Blackbird

Rare migrant  
Marshes, ponds  
Cebolla Springs

Sometimes seen with flocks of red-  
winged blackbirds.

Brewer's Blackbird

Common, summer  
Marshes, springs  
Grants

Found in open areas, often seen around  
human settlements.

Common Grackle

Rare, summer  
Fields, towns  
Grants

Found in wooded edges, agricultural  
and urban areas.

Great-tailed Grackle

Common resident  
Fields, towns  
Grants

Found in agricultural and urban areas.

Brown-headed Cowbird  
Common, summer  
Varied  
Cebolla Canyon

Usually seen in flocks. Found in woodland edges and grasslands.

Bullock's Oriole  
Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands, towns  
Narrows Picnic Area, Grants

Prefers deciduous trees in moist areas.  
Often seen in urban areas.

Scott's Oriole  
Uncommon, summer  
Woodlands, grasslands  
Sandstone Bluffs,  
Narrows Picnic Area

Found in pinyon-juniper woodlands.

#### OLD WORLD FINCHES (FRINGILLIDAE)

Cassin's Finch  
Uncommon, winter  
Woodlands  
NPS IC, El Calderon

Found in open ponderosa forests. Often associates with crossbills.

House Finch  
Common resident  
Woodlands, towns  
BLM Ranger Station, Grants

Prefers urban areas and open woodlands.

Red Crossbill  
Uncommon resident  
Woodlands  
NPS IC, Chain of Craters

Very gregarious, follows cone crops.

Pine Siskin  
Uncommon resident  
Woodlands, grasslands  
North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon

Found in small flocks at all levels of the forest, feeds in fields in winter.

Lesser Goldfinch  
Common, summer  
Grasslands, woodlands  
North Pasture, Cebolla Canyon

Prefers weedy fields and open areas.  
Nests in scrub oak thickets.

American Goldfinch

Uncommon, winter  
Grasslands, woodlands  
North Pasture, Hwy 117

Seen in flocks in open woodlands,  
weedy fields, and along roadsides.

Evening Grosbeak

Uncommon migrant  
Woodlands, towns  
Cebolla Canyon

Seen in flocks feeding on buds, seeds,  
and fruits.

WEAVER FINCHES

House Sparrow

Common resident  
Towns  
Grants

Seen everywhere in urban areas.

