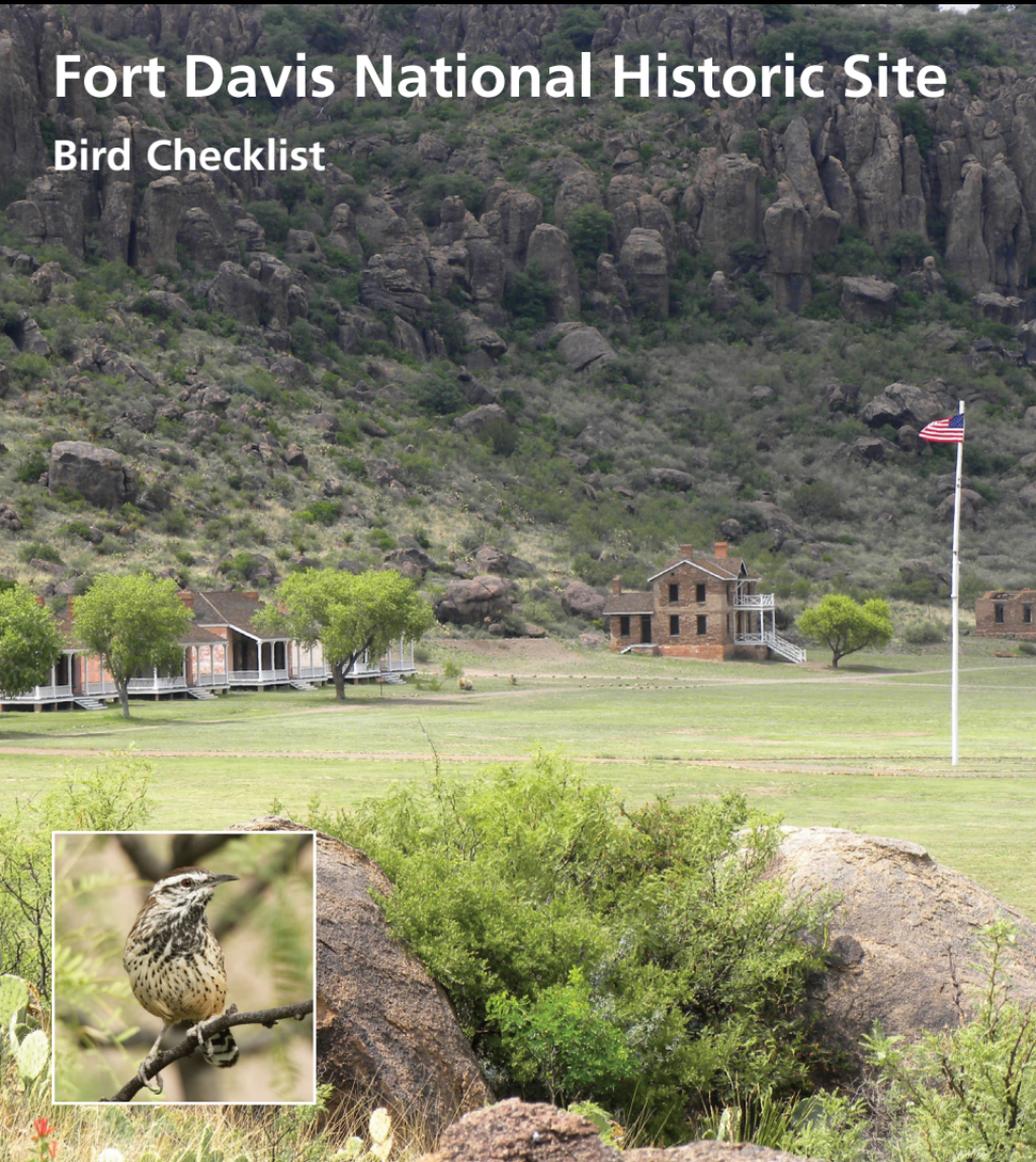




Fort Davis National Historic Site

Bird Checklist



The Birds of Fort Davis

Fort Davis National Historic Site (NHS) sits within a hot spot for bird diversity in west Texas. The Davis Mountains are a sky island with environments ranging from grassland to desert scrub to montane forest that host an array of bird species. The historic site is located in the foothills of the Davis Mountains and is an excellent place to see species that are representative of the range's lower elevations. While not all species that are present in the Davis Mountains have been observed at Fort Davis NHS, 152 species have been recorded within the park boundary.

Northern
Cardinal



Davis Mountains

The Davis Mountains are within the mountainous part of the Chihuahuan Desert in West Texas known as the Trans-Pecos region. The Davis Mountains are the largest mountain range located entirely within Texas, with elevations reaching nearly 8,400 feet. Formed by volcanic activity approximately 35 million years ago, the Davis Mountains have higher elevations and a cooler, wetter environment than the surrounding desert landscape.

More than 400 species of birds have been recorded in Jeff Davis County, including an amazing diversity of hummingbirds. Fifteen species of hummingbirds have been observed in the Davis Mountains including four species (Black-chinned, Anna's, Broad-tailed, and Rufous) found at Fort Davis NHS. The higher elevations of the Davis Mountains also provide habitat for species that otherwise would not be present in the ecoregion, including Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Western Tanager.

Fort Davis NHS

Fort Davis contains important habitat for both resident and migrant bird species. Sixty-three species, like Barn Swallows and Rock Wrens, breed or potentially breed in the park. It also is an important stopover for migrants such as warblers and swallows.

The intricate pattern of vegetation at Fort Davis NHS includes both natural and managed environments, providing varied bird habitats. The parade grounds are a mowed

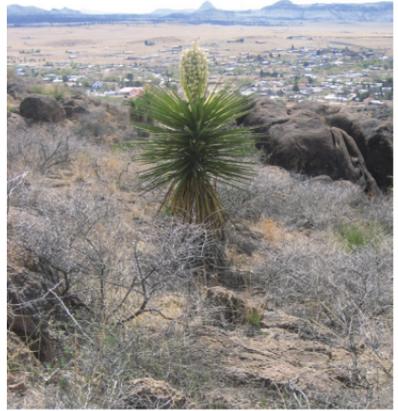


grassland where Rock Wrens are commonly seen flitting around ruins. The historic cottonwood grove near the visitor center is one of the few stands of large trees in the park and is used by flycatchers and raptors.

North-facing slopes above the fort grounds consist mostly of oak-dominated woodlands which attract Say's Phoebes and Cactus Wrens. South-facing slopes are generally covered by a mixture of desert shrublands and grasslands. Cassin's Kingbirds inhabit the shrublands and quail can be frequently observed in grassland areas.

Hospital Canyon, west of the fort, supports dry riparian vegetation and hosts the greatest diversity of bird species in the historic site.

Species such as Phainopepla, Canyon Towhee, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, and Scott's Oriole as well as raptors, sparrows, and wrens may be found there.



Yucca in bloom on Tall Grass Loop Trail

Threats and Stressors

At 523 acres in size, Fort Davis NHS is only a small portion of the Davis Mountains foothills ecosystem. Bird habitats in the park are intricately connected to the larger landscape. The historic site has few stands of large trees and no reliable source of open water. The closest water source is the intermittent Limpia Creek, located north of the fort across Texas Highway 118. The spread of invasive non-native plant species in the region can also impact bird habitat, as can changes in land cover. Grasslands in the Chihuahuan Desert are additionally susceptible to degradation and encroachment by shrubs.

Changes in vegetative communities due to climate change can also impact birds. For example, the Chihuahuan Desert provides important wintering habitat for grassland birds. Warmer and drier conditions may degrade these habitats. Some grassland bird species such as Cassin's Sparrow, Black-chinned Sparrow, and Scaled Quail found at Fort Davis are especially sensitive to increased temperatures.



Rufous Hummingbird

Birding Hot Spots

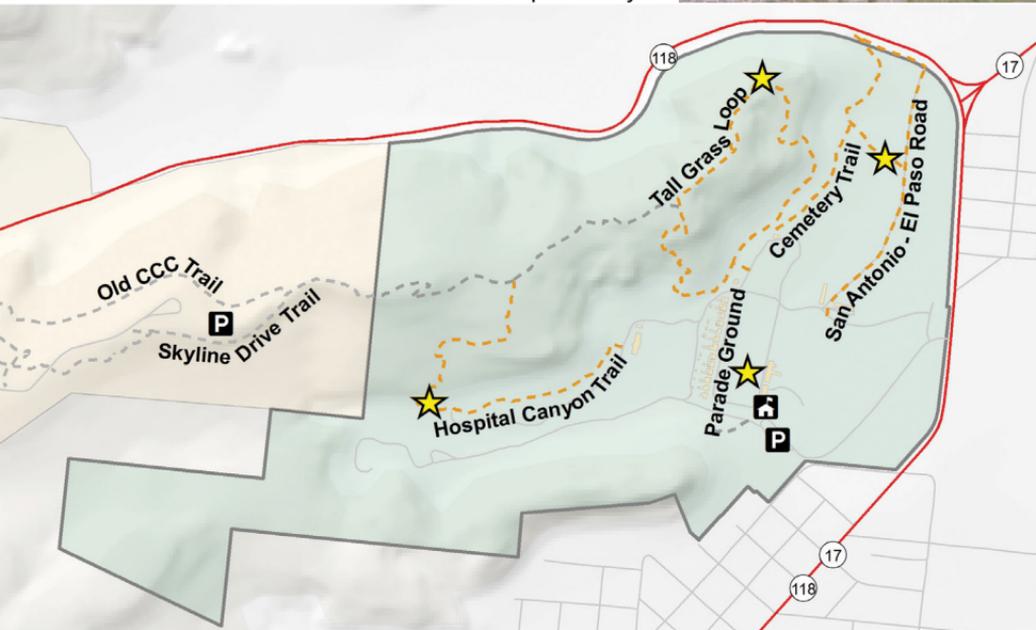
Historic Fort & Parade Grounds – Many foundations and structures provide places for wrens, phoebes, and swallows to forage and nest. Raptors may also be observed here.

Cemetery Trail & Historic San Antonio–El Paso Road – This is a fairly flat area with abundant shrubs where Cactus Wrens are common. The loop trail is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long.

Tall Grass Loop & Hospital Canyon – These trails lead to the higher elevations in the park where there may be nesting Red-tailed Hawks and/or Great Horned Owls. One might also hear or see Cactus Wrens or coveys of Scaled and Montezuma Quail. Each trail is approximately 1 to 1.5 miles long.



Hospital Canyon



Fort Davis NHS
Davis Mountains State Park

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Checklist Key

This checklist provides information on the abundance of bird species found in Fort Davis NHS, the habitat each uses, and in what season each is found.

Abundance

- **Common** – May be seen daily but not in large numbers
- **Uncommon** – Likely to be seen monthly; may be locally common
- **Rare** – Present, but usually seen only a few times each year
- **Occasional** – Seen in the park at least once every few years, but not necessarily every year
- **Accidental** – Seen no more than a few times; birds that have strayed out of their normal range/habitat

Habitat

- **R – Riparian:** Habitats dominated by oaks and netleaf hackberry along dry washes such as Limpia Creek and Hospital Canyon
- **D – Desert:** Habitats that include cacti and shrubs
- **G – Grassland:** Habitats that include a mix of grasses and desert shrubs
- **W – Woodlands:** Habitats including small trees such as oaks, Pinchot's juniper and netleaf hackberry

Season

- **Resident** – Found year-round
- **Summer** – Found predominantly in the summer months (June–August)
- **Winter** – Found predominantly in the winter months (November–February)
- **Migrant** – Found predominantly during spring and/or fall migratory periods (March–May, September–October)

The information in this list is based on bird observations, inventories and surveys at Fort Davis NHS. However, bird lists are always works in progress. The list is arranged by family and uses common names following the American Ornithologists' Union's Checklist of North American Birds 7th edition and its supplements through 2018.



Scaled Quail



Montezuma Quail



Mourning Dove



Lesser Nighthawk

Checklist

Waterfowl (Anatidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Mallard	Occasional	R	Winter

New World Quail (Odontophoridae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Scaled Quail	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
Montezuma Quail	Rare	R, D, G, W	Resident

Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Rock Pigeon	Occasional	W	Resident
Band-tailed Pigeon	Occasional	G	Migrant
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Uncommon	R, D, G	Resident
Inca Dove	Occasional	G	Resident
White-winged Dove	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Mourning Dove	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident

Cuckoos and Roadrunners (Cuculidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Occasional	R	Summer
Greater Roadrunner	Rare	R, D, G, W	Resident

Goatsuckers (Caprimulgidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Lesser Nighthawk	Occasional	R, D, G, W	Summer
Common Nighthawk	Occasional	R, D, G, W	Migrant

Evening Activities

Although the park is closed to visitors in the evening, nighthawks and other wildlife such as deer and aoudads are active after hours and use park grounds to hunt and graze. People may view these animals from the park entrance using binoculars. Like Great Horned Owls, nighthawks have a very conspicuous call that can be heard over long distances.

Swifts (Apodidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
White-throated Swift	Rare	R, D, G, W	Resident

Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Common	R, D, G, W	Summer
Anna's Hummingbird	Accidental	G	Migrant
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Rufous Hummingbird	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant

Plovers (Charadriidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Killdeer	Occasional	D, G	Resident

Bitterns, Herons and Allies (Ardeidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Great Blue Heron	Rare	R, D, G	Resident

New World Vultures (Cathartidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Turkey Vulture	Common	R, D, G, W	Summer

Hawks, Kites, Eagles and Allies (Accipitridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Swallow-tailed Kite	Accidental	W	Migrant
Golden Eagle	Occasional	D, G, W	Winter
Northern Harrier	Rare	D, G	Winter
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Cooper's Hawk	Rare	R, D, G, W	Resident
Common Black Hawk	Occasional	R	Summer

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT SHANTZ (BOTH PAGES)



Black-chinned Hummingbird



Turkey Vulture

Look closely when you see a kettle (flock) of Turkey Vultures flying overhead. Zone-tailed Hawks associate with Turkey Vultures in order to surprise prey species that are not concerned about the presence of scavengers. Zone-tailed Hawks resemble Turkey Vultures in flight profile, but have a different tail pattern, have stiffer, quicker wing beats, and are more agile.



Zone-tailed Hawk



Red-tailed Hawk



Great Horned Owl



Ladder-backed Woodpecker



American Kestrel

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Harris's Hawk	Accidental	G	Winter
Gray Hawk	Occasional	R	Summer
Swainson's Hawk	Uncommon	D, G	Summer
Zone-tailed Hawk	Occasional	R, D, G, W	Summer
Red-tailed Hawk	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
Ferruginous Hawk	Occasional	G	Migrant

Typical Owls (Strigidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Flammulated Owl	Occasional	W	Migrant
Western Screech-Owl	Occasional	W	Resident
Great Horned Owl	Rare	R, D, G, W	Resident
Elf Owl	Occasional	D, W	Resident

Woodpeckers and Allies (Picidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Acorn Woodpecker	Uncommon	R, W	Resident
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
Northern Flicker	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Winter

Falcons (Falconidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
American Kestrel	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
Prairie Falcon	Rare	G	Resident

Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Uncommon	R, D, G	Summer
Cassin's Kingbird	Common	R, D, G, W	Summer
Western Kingbird	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Summer

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT SHANTZ (BOTH PAGES)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Western Wood-Pewee	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Gray Flycatcher	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Dusky Flycatcher	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Cordilleran Flycatcher	Occasional	R, W	Migrant
Black Phoebe	Rare	R	Resident
Say's Phoebe	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Vermilion Flycatcher	Uncommon	R, D, G	Resident

Shrikes (Laniidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Loggerhead Shrike	Rare	D, G	Resident

Vireos (Vireonidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Bell's Vireo	Uncommon	R, G	Summer
Hutton's Vireo	Occasional	G, W	Winter
Cassin's Vireo	Occasional	G	Summer
Plumbeous Vireo	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Warbling Vireo	Occasional	W	Migrant

Jays and Ravens (Corvidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Steller's Jay	Occasional	R, W	Winter
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay	Uncommon	W	Resident
Chihuahuan Raven	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
Common Raven	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident

Larks (Alaudidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Horned Lark	Occasional	D, G	Winter



Say's Phoebe

Look for nests of Say's Phoebes at the top of the wooden columns of the porches of historic buildings. Say's Phoebes typically have three or four chicks that are cared for by both parents for about two weeks after hatching.



Vermilion Flycatcher



Common Raven



Cliff Swallow

Cliff Swallows are very acrobatic birds that use mud to build nests on the ceilings of porches and doorways. Adults have a pale forehead, red neck-collar and blue on the top of their heads and upper back.



Rock Wren



Cactus Wren

Swallows (Hirundinidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Tree Swallow	Occasional	G	Migrant
Violet-green Swallow	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Cliff Swallow	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Cave Swallow	Occasional	R, D, G, W	Summer
Barn Swallow	Uncommon	R, D, G	Summer

Chickadees and Titmice (Paridae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Black-crested Titmouse	Common	R, W	Resident

Verdins (Remizidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Verdin	Uncommon	R, D, G	Resident

Bushtits (Aegithalidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Bushtit	Rare	R, W	Resident

Nuthatches (Sittidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Occasional	R, W	Winter
White-breasted Nuthatch	Rare	R, W	Winter

Wrens (Troglodytidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Rock Wren	Common	D, G, W	Resident
Canyon Wren	Common	W	Resident
House Wren	Rare	R, D, G, W	Winter
Bewick's Wren	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Cactus Wren	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident

Gnatcatchers (Poliotilidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	Occasional	D, G	Resident

Kinglets (Regulidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant

Thrushes (Turdidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Eastern Bluebird	Occasional	G	Migrant
Western Bluebird	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Mountain Bluebird	Occasional	R, D, G, W	Winter
Townsend's Solitaire	Rare	R, W	Winter
Hermit Thrush	Rare	R, W	Winter
American Robin	Rare	R, D, W	Migrant

Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Curve-billed Thrasher	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Sage Thrasher	Occasional	G	Migrant
Northern Mockingbird	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident

Starlings (Sturnidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
European Starling	Uncommon	R, D, G	Resident

Waxwings (Bombycillidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Cedar Waxwing	Rare	R, W	Winter



Ruby-crowned Kinglet



Mountain Bluebird



Curve-billed Thrasher



Northern Mockingbird



Cedar Waxwing

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT SHANTZ (BOTH PAGES)



Phainopepla



House Sparrow



House Finch



Rufous-crowned Sparrow



Canyon Towhee

Silky-flycatchers (Ptiliogonatidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Phainopepla	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident

Old World Sparrows (Passeridae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Sparrow	Common	R, D, G	Resident

Finches (Fringillidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
House Finch	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Cassin's Finch	Occasional	R, W	Winter
Pine Siskin	Rare	R, D, G, W	Winter
Lesser Goldfinch	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
American Goldfinch	Rare	R, D, G, W	Winter

New World Sparrows and Towhees (Passerellidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Green-tailed Towhee	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Spotted Towhee	Rare	R, W	Winter
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	Common	D, G, W	Resident
Canyon Towhee	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Cassin's Sparrow	Uncommon	D, G	Summer
Chipping Sparrow	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Winter
Clay-colored Sparrow	Rare	R, D, G, W	Winter

Phainopepla

Phainopeplas are the northernmost species of Silky-flycatchers, and their range extends north into the southwestern United States. While Phainopeplas do catch some flying insects, they specialize in mistletoe berries and other fruit. The male is black with red eyes and a white wing patch which is visible on flying birds. The female is grayish with brown eyes and a less pronounced wing patch.

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Brewer's Sparrow	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Winter
Field Sparrow	Occasional	G	Migrant
Black-chinned Sparrow	Uncommon	G, W	Resident
Vesper Sparrow	Uncommon	D, G	Winter
Lark Sparrow	Uncommon	R, D, G	Summer
Black-throated Sparrow	Common	D, G, W	Resident
Lark Bunting	Rare	D, G	Migrant
Savannah Sparrow	Rare	D, G	Winter
Grasshopper Sparrow	Occasional	D, G	Winter
Song Sparrow	Rare	R	Migrant
Lincoln's Sparrow	Rare	R, D, G	Winter
Swamp Sparrow	Occasional	R, G	Migrant
White-throated Sparrow	Accidental	R, D, G, W	Winter
White-crowned Sparrow	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Winter
Dark-eyed Junco	Rare	R, D, G, W	Winter

Yellow-breasted Chat (Icteriidae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-breasted Chat	Occasional	G	Summer

Blackbirds, Orioles, and Allies (Icteridae)

√ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Rare	R, D, G	Winter
Eastern Meadowlark	Uncommon	D, G	Resident
Western Meadowlark	Rare	D, G	Winter
Orchard Oriole	Occasional	R, D, G	Migrant
Bullock's Oriole	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Scott's Oriole	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Summer
Bronzed Cowbird	Rare	R, D, G, W	Summer



Black-throated Sparrow



White-crowned Sparrow



Yellow-breasted Chat



Yellow-headed Blackbird



Scott's Oriole



Summer Tanager (male)



Summer Tanager (female)



Pyrrhuloxia

At first glance, a Pyrrhuloxia may be mistaken for a female Northern Cardinal. The Pyrrhuloxia is a close relative that inhabits the arid grasslands and mesquite forests of the high desert.



Blue Grosbeak

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Brown-headed Cowbird	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Summer
Brewer's Blackbird	Uncommon	R, D, G	Winter
Great-tailed Grackle	Uncommon	R, D, G	Resident

Wood-Warblers (Parulidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Blue-winged Warbler	Accidental	W	Migrant
Black-and-white Warbler	Occasional	W	Migrant
Orange-crowned Warbler	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Virginia's Warbler	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
MacGillivray's Warbler	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Yellow Warbler	Rare	R	Migrant
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Common	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Townsend's Warbler	Occasional	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Wilson's Warbler	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Migrant

Piranga Tanagers, Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)

✓ Common Name	Abundance	Habitat	Season
Hepatic Tanager	Occasional	R, W	Migrant
Summer Tanager	Common	R	Summer
Western Tanager	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Northern Cardinal	Common	R, D, G, W	Resident
Pyrrhuloxia	Uncommon	R, D, G, W	Resident
Black-headed Grosbeak	Rare	R, D, G, W	Migrant
Blue Grosbeak	Uncommon	R, D, G	Summer
Indigo Bunting	Rare	R, D, G	Migrant
Varied Bunting	Occasional	R, G	Migrant
Painted Bunting	Rare	R, D, G	Migrant

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT SHANTZ (BOTH PAGES)

Report Your Sightings

Please contact the Fort Davis NHS Visitor Center if you have rare or unusual sightings. Provide observer(s), date, species, location, and habitat. Include a description of the bird (especially for species not on the list) and, if possible, a photo. The visitor center is open daily from 8 am to 5 pm, or can be reached at 432-426-3224 ext. 226.

You may also comment on the species list or report new sightings at NPSpecies, the National Park Service species information portal (irma.nps.gov/NPSpecies/Suggest).



Western Tanager

Acknowledgments

All bird identification photos, unless otherwise noted, were generously provided courtesy of Robert Shantz (rshantz.com).

This bird checklist is a collaboration between the Chihuahuan Desert Inventory and Monitoring Network and Fort Davis NHS. The Chihuahuan Desert Network is one of 32 National Park Service inventory and monitoring networks that assess the condition of park ecosystems and develop a stronger scientific basis for stewardship of natural resources.

Thanks to Josh Burns and Mark Lockwood for their comments on the species list. Also thanks to Bill Manhart, John Heiner, Marcia Wilson, Missy Powell, Henry Whitenack, Lindsay Smythe and Megan Podolinsky for their work on this project. Special thanks to Allyson Mathis, Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative.

COVER: OFFICERS' ROW. NPS PHOTO. INSET: CACTUS WREN. PHOTO BY ROBERT SHANTZ

REAR COVER: PHOTOGRAPHER'S TRAIL. NPS PHOTO. INSET: SUMMER TANAGER. PHOTO BY ROBERT SHANTZ

Chihuahuan Desert Network Inventory & Monitoring Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Chihuahuan Desert Network
New Mexico State University, MSC 3ARP
3655 Research Drive, Genesis Building D
Las Cruces, NM 88003
www.nps.gov/im/chdn

Fort Davis National Historic Site
PO Box 1379
101 Lt. Flipper Dr. #1379
Fort Davis, TX 79734
www.nps.gov/foda

