



Be a friend to BIRDS



From Sandhill cranes in the Bosque to hummingbirds in our backyards, Albuquerque is home to hundreds of migratory and resident bird species, soaring through the sky and filling the air with song.

Songbirds, raptors, roadrunners and ravens all rely on our open spaces, parks, backyards and balconies for resting, feeding, nesting, and raising their young.

Enjoy the presence of our feathered friends but keep your distance: all migratory birds are protected by federal law.

Roadrunners, our state bird, are not shy, and you may see them sunbathing in the morning or coming to

explore your yard. But don't be tempted to lure and feed them: roadrunners are fierce carnivores, eating rattlesnakes, scorpions, and tarantulas. While lizards are their diet staple, roadrunners also hunt small mammals, so beware if you have a very small pet.

Despite their fierce nature, roadrunners suffer from habitat loss due to urban sprawl and traffic.

Coexisting with birds in our environment

Window collisions kill nearly 1 billion birds each year. Here's how to make your windows safer:

- Keep bird feeders, baths close to windows (max. 3 ft)
- Hang strands of thin cord or ribbons in front of the problem window, spaced closely (max. 4" apart).
- Apply subtle but dense patterns of visible markings (small dots or lines) to the outside of your window, using bird tape, safety film, or removable paint.
- Use bug screens year-round.
- Use external sun shades or awnings.
- Close exterior shutters or pull down exterior solar shades when you're not there.

Protect raptors at risk. Raptors, or birds of prey, such as eagles, hawks, owls, and falcons, are at the top of the food chain (and help control the population of snakes and rodents). Yet they breed slowly and produce only few offspring. This makes them sensitive

to threats, such as habitat loss, climate change, poisoning, electrocution on overland wires, and collisions with cars.

- Don't use poison to control rodents: it may kill the owls and other raptors that eat rodents.

Baby birds: do they need your help?

- As with most wildlife, the best thing is usually to leave them alone.
- During spring months, fledglings will hop around on the ground. They are still being cared for by their parents, who are likely close by. Leave fledglings alone and keep your pets away.
- A 'naked' baby bird on the ground may be a nestling who has fallen out of the nest. Carefully put the nestling back into the nest or, if you don't see a nest, in a nearby shrub. The parents will hear them, and it's not true that they will reject the baby just because you handled them.

ACTION TIPS

Be a friend to birds! Here's what you can do.

TIP #1

How to keep pigeons at bay

Fresh bird droppings do not pose a health risk, but please avoid contact with any animal droppings.

- Don't feed pigeons, and don't poison pigeons—it's against city law!
- Don't attract pigeons by feeding songbirds on the ground—use a bird feeder instead.
- Use wires, angled wood or metal strips, or netting to deter roosting on balconies or ledges.

TIP #2

How to prevent birds from eating your fruit

Birds like fruit and berries as much as we do! If possible, share your gardens' bounty. If you want to limit bird access:

- Cover your berry bushes, cherry trees, and tomato plants with netting once flowering ends.
- Use the netting with the smallest holes you can find ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch mesh or smaller would be best), and prop the netting up with stakes, poles or a frame to avoid entangling birds or other wildlife. Don't leave unused netting lying around in your yard.

TIP #3

How to avoid dive-bombing birds

Some bird species may dive-bomb humans when they feel threatened or are defending their nests. Cooper's Hawks, who breed in May and June, are very protective of their nest sites. Hawks usually try to avoid humans, but they will try to deter you from getting close to their eggs or young. Once their babies turn into fledglings in July, the protective behavior will stop.

- Keep your distance: If you spot a hawk's nest or young, or see it circling overhead and hear warning calls, leave the area.
- Don't turn your back and don't run: face the hawk and walk away.
- Duck to move out of the bird's flight line.
- Wave your arms and be loud: hawks don't like loud noises and big movements.
- Carry an umbrella, wear a hat and sunglasses: if you can't avoid the area, protect yourself.
- Set up a flag in your yard: hawks don't like unexpected movements.

NEED HELP?



If you find an injured bird, contact a rehabilitator before you attempt to help the bird: WildlifeRescueNM.org

If you find an injured raptor, roadrunner, raven or crow, call the Raptor Rescue Hotline at 505-999-7740 (HawksAloft.org)

For more information on coexisting with our Albuquerque wildlife, visit cabq.gov/coexistwithwildlife