

## BIRDS OF CATALINA HEIGHTS 7 AREA

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Birds have lived with humans in urban environments since they were first constructed. Humans and some birds find that urban areas readily provide food, water and shelter. Population density, therefore, also can be much greater in cities than in natural environments. Bird species that do well in urban habitats are adaptable and able to adjust to the opportunities and constraints of urban life. Alien bird species such as the rock dove, European starling and house sparrow are common in the cities of our nation and also are found in our area.

Many bird species, unfortunately, do not do well in cities. This is especially true of species that feed in or beneath shrubs (like Common ground doves) and are low-flying or nest on the ground (like Gambel's quail). Ground cover in most urban landscapes is limited and does not provide adequate hiding areas for the birds from cats, dogs or other predators. Insect-eating birds, like flycatchers and warblers, also are much less common in more urban, less vegetated areas.

Southern Arizona is noted for its diverse bird life, which gets even richer during migration periods in spring and fall when many birds pass through on their way to or from their wintering grounds further south. Natural areas with high plant species diversity and low human population densities typically support a greater number of bird species than urban areas. In the Tucson area, particularly where residential development has maintained the native vegetation, many bird species can persist. The bird species count for Tucson in 2001 was 140, some 66 of which have been spotted in the Cat7 area. And there are ways to encourage birds. The best way is to make sure there are large areas of native vegetation where birds can find the resources that backyards and manicured landscapes can't provide. Plants should be of various sizes, shapes and growth forms (forbs, shrubs, trees) to satisfy the varied needs of different bird species: for nesting sites, hiding places, roosts, and look-out perches. Native plants provide the native insects or native fruits the birds know and desire. Dead trees and limbs should be left in place if possible so they can be used as perches or nests.

It is not necessary to have bird feeders in our yards to enjoy their presence. Homeowners, however, who do provide food should be very careful. Feeding stations and birdbaths can spread bird diseases; damp or spoiled food can cause infections and attract other animals. Putting out only the amount of food that can be consumed in less than thirty minutes will reduce the risks of spoiled food, disease and attracting other animals. Cats and dogs should be monitored and controlled since they are a problem to birds, especially those that roost, nest and forage on the ground. Pesticides to control insects should be avoided as much as possible and *fresh* water should be provided daily.

We hope this article will encourage the reader's interest in birds found in our own neighborhood. Urban and suburban areas will continue to grow; yet this growth need not be a disaster for all native wildlife. Through informed land use, Tucson, and especially unique areas such as Cat7, may be able to sustain a diverse bird and animal community, aiding in the conservation of species as well as enhancing the quality of life for the human residents.

The following list of birds was compiled in 2001 by Dr. William Calder III, a leading expert on humming birds and one of our neighbors. This list was prepared from his many years

of observation in our neighborhood in the foothills area of Tucson, Arizona. Species listed as “residents” should be visible in the Cat7 area as well as other parts of the Catalina Foothills Estates Development throughout most of the year. Several species are noted as “migrants”, meaning that it is very unlikely that they will be seen. The other categories of observation frequency are described in the footnotes to the bird list.

**References Used and Additional Reading:**

Cochran, C. and K. Duffek. nd. *Tucson Bird Watching Guide*. Arizona Game and Fish Department and Tucson Audubon Society, Tucson Arizona.

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Peterson, R.T. 1990. *A Field Guide to Western Birds*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts.

The Tucson Bird Count: Birding, Science, Conservation. 2002.

<http://www.tucsonbirds.org/index.html>.

**Bird List for Cat7 Area**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Observation*
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	F
White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	F
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	F
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	F
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	R
Cooper’s Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	R
Gray Hawk	<i>Buteo nitidus</i>	Ra
Harris’s Hawk	<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>	R
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	R
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	R
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	R
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	W
Prairie Falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	W
Gambel’s Quail	<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	R
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	F
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	A
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	S
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	R, M, S, W
Common Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	S
Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>	R
Western Screech-Owl	<i>Otus kennicottii</i>	R
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	R
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>	Ra
Elf Owl	<i>Micrathene whitneyi</i>	S

Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	S
Broad-billed Hummingbird	<i>Cynanthus latirostris</i>	Ra
Black-Chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	S
Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	R
Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>	R
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>	M
Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	M
Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	R
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>	R
Gilded Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Ra
Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	W
Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rabinus</i>	Ra
Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	S
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Ra
Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>	M, S
Verdin	<i>Auriparus flaviceps</i>	R
Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	R
Rock Wren	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>	Ra
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	W
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	R
Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	R
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	A
Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>	R
Lucy's Warbler	<i>Vermivora luciae</i>	R, S
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	M
Canyon Towhee	<i>Pipilo fuscus</i>	R
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	W
Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>	R
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>	R
Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>	R
Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	M
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	M
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>	M
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	M
Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	Ra
Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	S
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	S
Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	M
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	R
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Ra
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	R
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	A

\* M: migrant F: fly by S: summer W: winter R: resident Ra: rare A: alien

