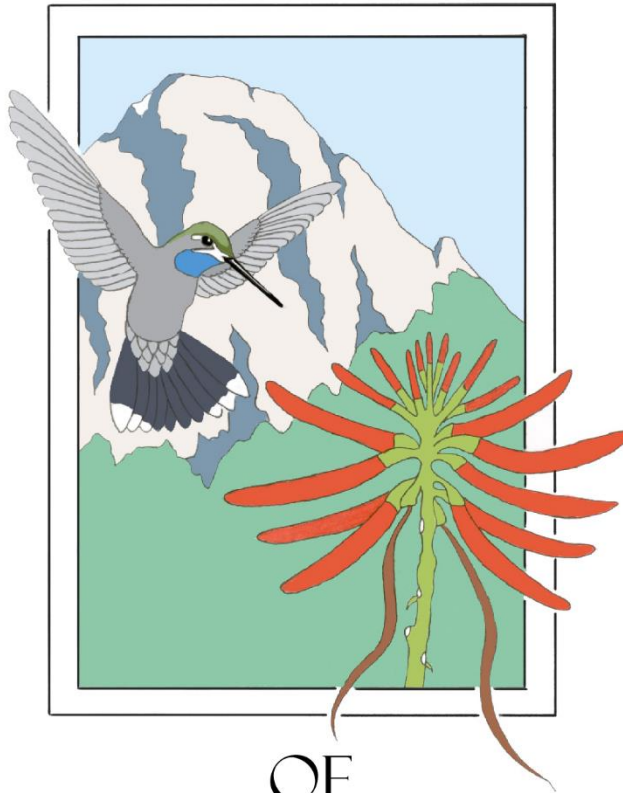


FRIENDS



OF

MADERA CANYON

Madera Canyon: Proctor Trail Birds



Western Screech-Owl



Madera Canyon is in the Santa Rita Mountains, just east of Green Valley and Sahuarita, Arizona.

The Santa Ritas are a "Sky Island" mountain range. They are SO tall that the temperature gets cooler the higher up in elevation you go!



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The cooler temperatures allow different kinds of plants and animals to live up in the mountains than in the hot, dry desert below.



In the very middle of the Santa Ritas, below the highest peaks, Madera Canyon is a perfect place to find these plants and animals-

especially, birds!



Hooded Oriole on Ocotillo flowers

Birds are vertebrates (animals with a backbone) with five defining characteristics:



1) Beak

2) Feathers

3) Wings (with feathers)

4) Tail (with feathers)

5) Scaled legs & feet
(with claws)

Greater Roadrunner



Southeast Arizona is one of the top three places to bird-watch in the USA. And, over 260 different species of birds have been seen around Madera Canyon!

This is the trail-head at Proctor Parking Area. The Proctor Trail is an excellent place to start birding Madera Canyon.



The loop trail is an easy walk through 5 different plant communities- there is good habitat for many birds!

Semi-desert Grassland grows around the Proctor Parking Area and Trail-head.



Semi-desert Grassland grows around the Proctor Parking Area and Trail-head.



This plant community has lots of grass!
There are also many shrubs and small mesquite trees scattered across the land.



Say's Phoebe ('fee-bee') are brownish flycatchers with a black tail.

They are **year-round residents** of the grassland habitat. (This means they live around Proctor all year!)

Say's Phoebe



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Say's Phoebe

They often nest under the roof of buildings at Proctor and fly swiftly to catch insects out of the air to feed their hungry chicks!



Say's Phoebe nest with chicks



It is easy to see how the **Black-throated Sparrow** got its name!

They are also **year-round residents** in the grassland around Proctor.

These sparrows like to nest in thorny bushes and spiny cholla cactus that grow in the grassland and desert below.

Black-throated Sparrow

Western Kingbirds come to the grasslands to hunt insects and nest during summer. They are **summer migrants** and fly south to spend the winter.



Western Kingbird

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Logger-head Shrike

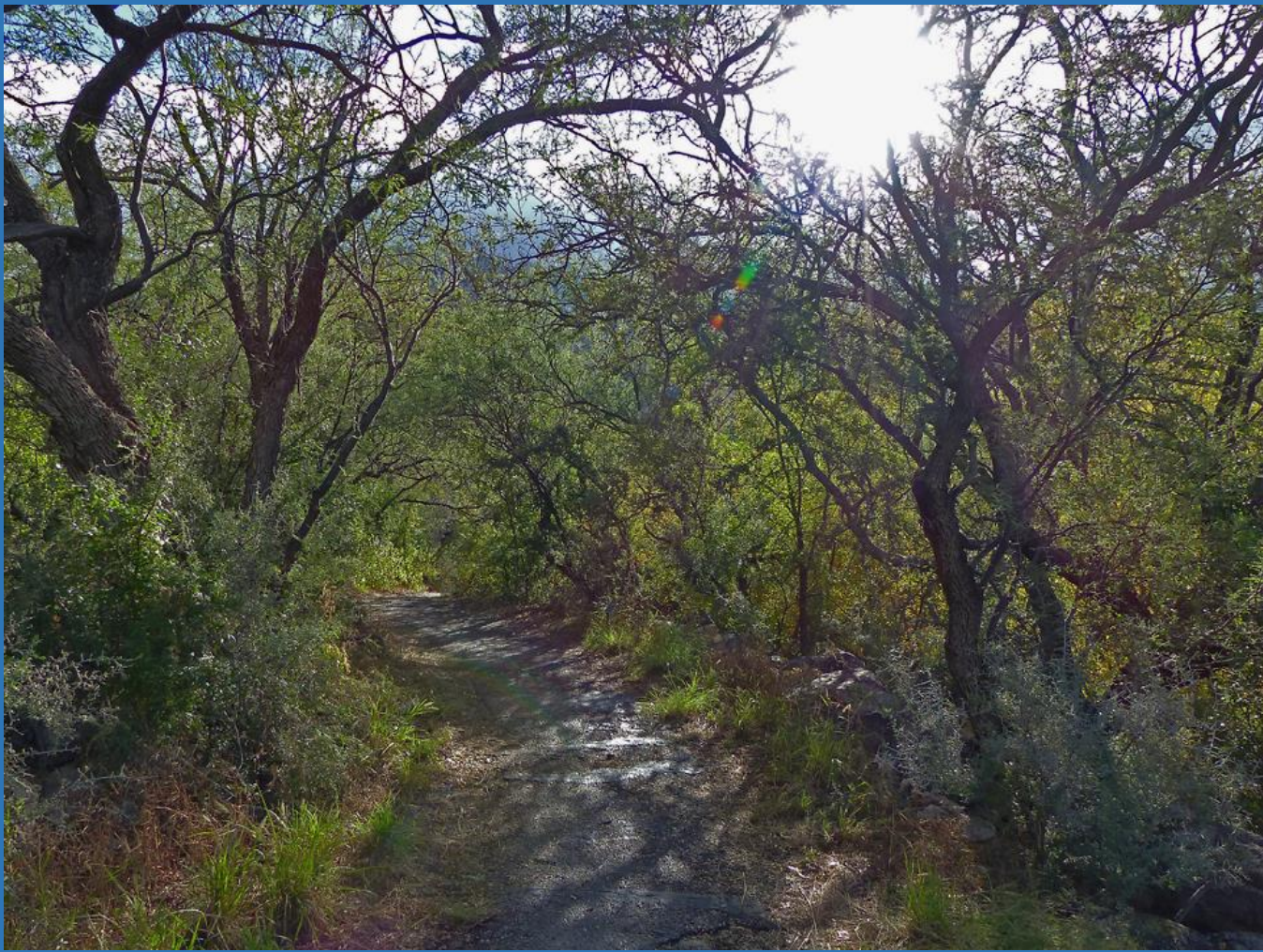


Western Kingbird

Logger-head Shrikes fly from further north to the Grasslands. They spend the winter here where it is warmer. They are **winter migrants**.

As the trail approaches Madera Creek, the mesquite trees grow closer and closer together. They make a special "forest" plant community called a **Mesquite Bosque**.





In the Mesquite Bosque, many shrubs and plants grow in the sun and shade under the mesquites. This makes excellent habitat for birds!

Here is a bright male
Northern Cardinal.
Females have duller
colors to blend in
and hide well in the
thick plant foliage.



Northern Cardinal

Northern Cardinal Nest with eggs



Northern Cardinals eat
seeds, fruit and insects.
They live and nest in the
Mesquite Bosque.
They are **year-round**
residents here.



Verdins are year-round residents in the Mesquite Bosque too. These tiny birds look like their faces are dipped in yellow mustard!

Verdin nest



Verdin

Verdins build a ball-shaped nest from many little twigs with an entrance on the side.



Bell's Vireo are small, dull-colored birds, but have a **VERY** loud voice! They are **summer migrants** that nest in the Mesquite Bosque along the trail.

Bell's Vireo



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Varied Bunting

Bell's Vireo

Varied Buntings are small finches. They are **summer migrants** from Mexico. Males are very colorful! Varied Buntings also nest in the Mesquite Bosque.



Green-tailed Towhees are winter migrants.



Green-tailed Towhee

They visit and feed in the Mesquite Bosque during the winter, then fly north in the spring.

The Riparian Woodland plant community grows along Madera Creek here.

There are big trees, like cottonwood, sycamore, ash and willow that only grow near water. Shrubs and small plants grow in the shade underneath.

Many birds live in this lush habitat too!

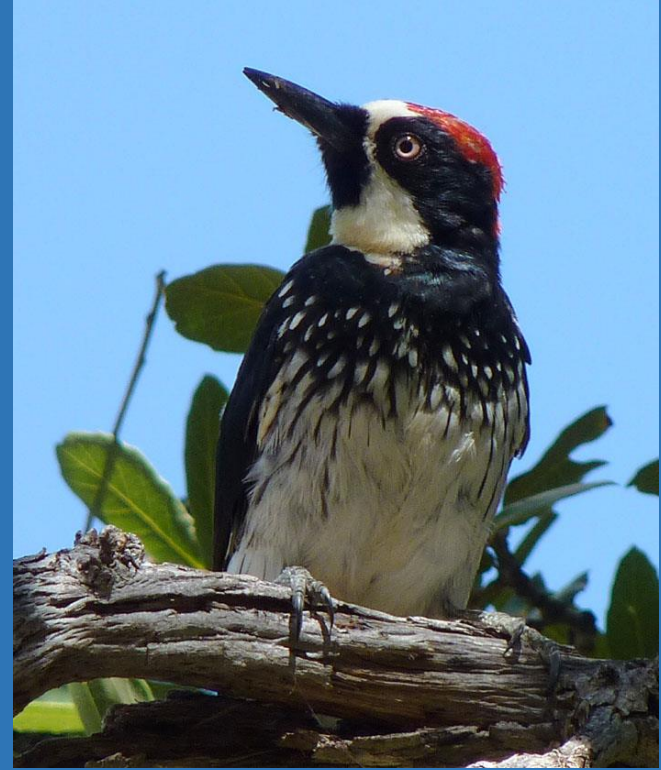


The Proctor Trail follows Madera Creek for



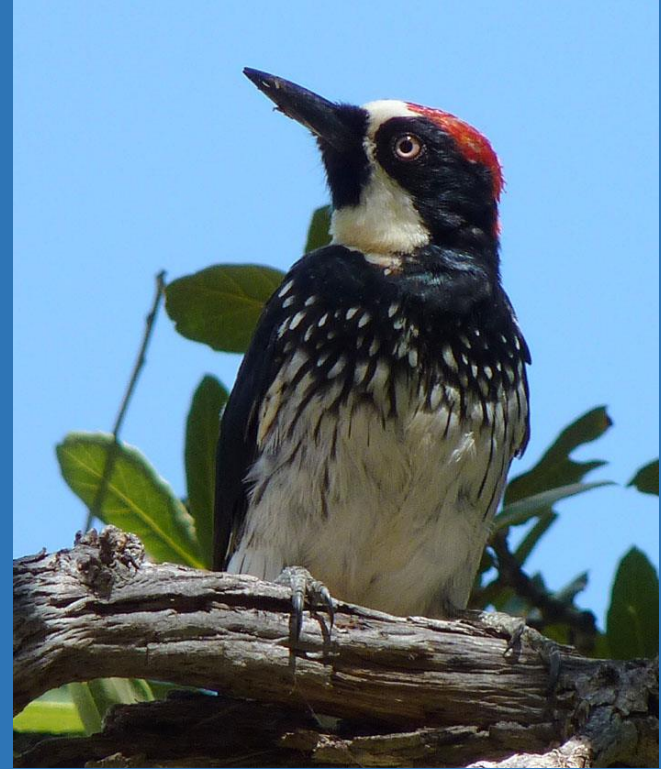
excellent bird watching in the Riparian Woodland.

Acorn Woodpeckers chip out nest holes in the soft wood of sycamore and cottonwood trees. They are year-round residents that gather and store acorns for winter food.



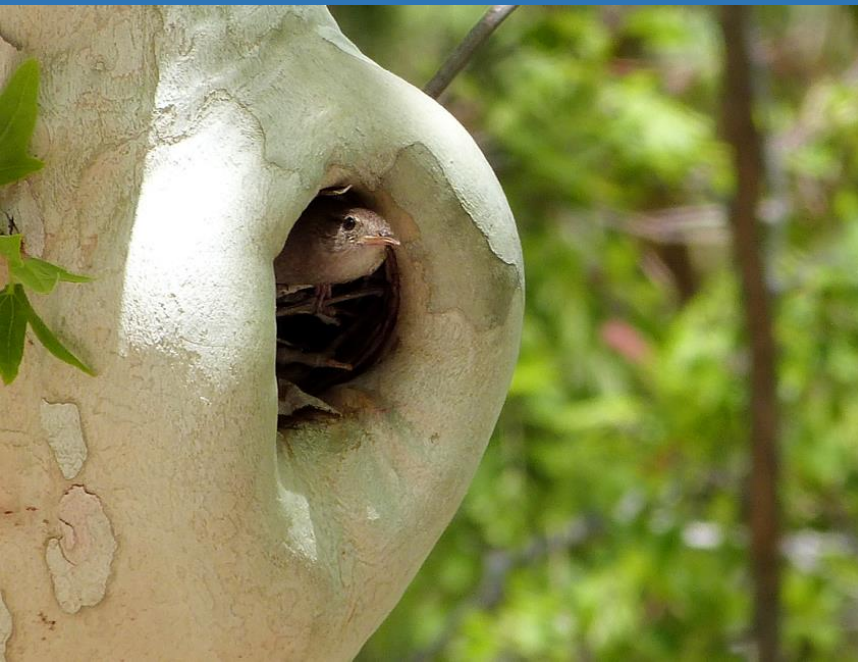
Acorn Woodpecker

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Acorn Woodpecker

House Wren in woodpecker hole



Many birds, like this House Wren, build their nests in old woodpecker holes. These wrens are summer migrants that nest here.

Summer Tanager female



Summer Tanager male



There are 3 colorful Tanager species that nest in Madera Canyon. Here are a male and female Summer Tanager. They are summer migrants that really like the Riparian Woodland along the creek.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are rare summer-migrants. They nest in the Riparian Woodland in the canyon.

In recent years, they seem to be disappearing and becoming more rare.

Like many kinds of birds, Yellow-billed Cuckoos are having a hard time living with climate change!



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Yellow-rumped Warblers return to Madera Canyon to spend the winter. They hunt insects in the big trees of the Riparian Woodland. They are **winter-migrants** that fly away further north in the spring.



Yellow-rumped Warbler

Up the trail, new trees start to appear!



Mexican Blue Oak in habitat

Up the trail, new trees start to appear!



Oaks and junipers mix in with the mesquites. This is the start of the **Oak/Juniper Woodland**-the 4th plant community along the Proctor Trail.

Alligator Juniper in habitat



As we hike up in elevation, it gets cooler!
The mesquites start to disappear.
Oak and juniper become the main "forest" trees.



Mexican Jay

Mexican Jays are year-round residents that thrive in the Oak/Juniper Woodland.

Loud and noisy, these jays travel in large family flocks.

Curious omnivores, the flock explores the woods for arthropods, acorns, berries- even potato chips if they can steal them from a picnic!



Bridled Titmouse

Very cute with a tall, striped cap, **Bridled Titmouse** are also **year-round residents** in the canyon here. They often flock with other small birds, like vireos, warblers and kinglets. All help watch out for predators as they search around for food.

Cooper's Hawks are fierce predators- swift, agile fliers that hunt and eat mainly birds.

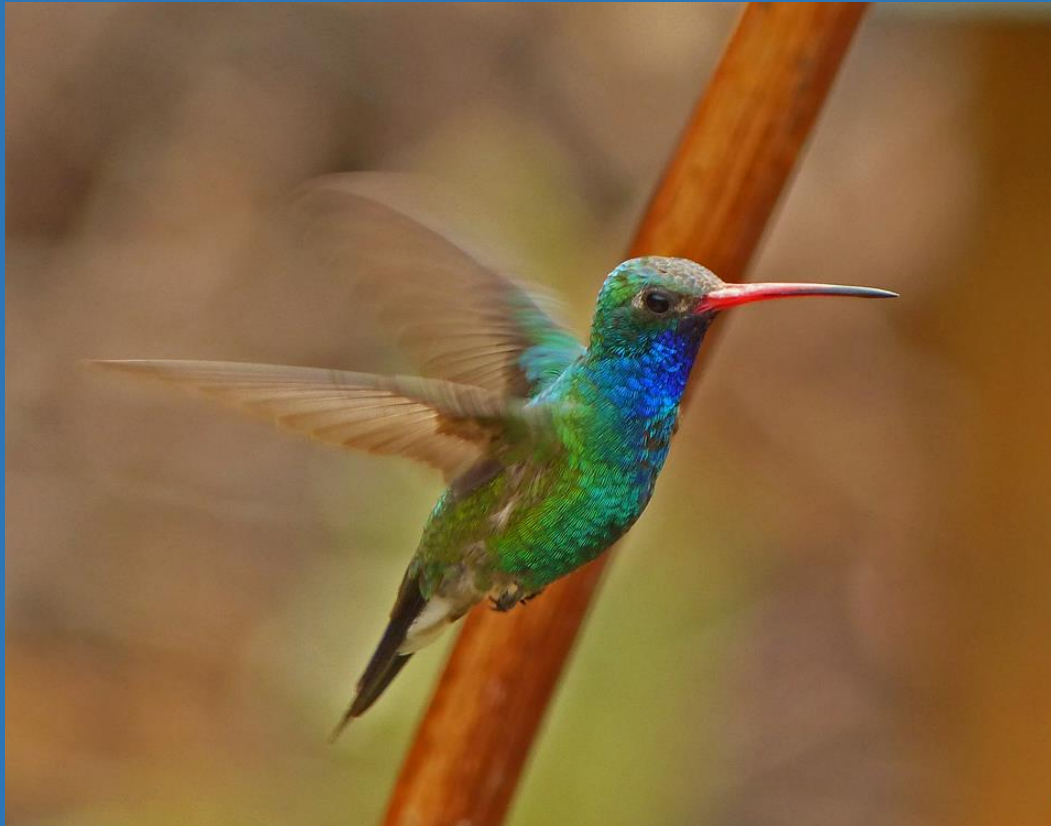
In summer, many Cooper's Hawks move up into the mountains and nest in the Oak/Juniper and Riparian Woodlands.

But they are **year-round residents** that can be found in almost any habitat the rest of the year.



Young Cooper's Hawk

15 different species of hummingbirds have been recorded in Madera Canyon!



Broad-billed
Hummingbird
male

15 different species of hummingbirds have been recorded in Madera Canyon!



Broad-billed
Hummingbird
male

Six species, like this Broad-billed Hummingbird, are summer-nesting migrants. The other ones just stop for a rest during migration or are rare.

Finding a hummingbird
nest along the Proctor
Trail in the summer



is one of the most fun
things to discover in
Madera Canyon!

Stay back and be quiet!



Hermit Thrush

Hermit Thrushes are interesting birds. They don't all behave the same way!

In summer, thrushes nest in the pine forest and along the creek higher up in the canyon.

But for winter, some migrate south out of Arizona. Others stay here! The "stay at home" thrushes move down to lower elevation, like on the Proctor Trail, to spend the colder winter months.

Along the trail above the creek is a steep hillside.



The hill is covered in boulders with many shrubs and widely scattered trees. It looks different!

On this hillside grows the last new plant community we will see on the Proctor Trail- the **Chaparral**. With lots of sunshine, boulders and rocky soil, it is a hard place to grow, but many plants still do!





Montezuma Quail male

Grass and shrubs growing between rocks in the Chaparral are a great hiding place for **Montezuma Quail**.

Not seen very often, these small quail are experts at staying still, quiet and hidden. But if discovered, they fly away suddenly with a whir of wings and lots of noise!

Montezuma Quail are **year-round residents**.

Lesser Goldfinches are year-round residents along the Proctor Trail.

They can often be seen feeding on seeds of grass, thistles and wild sunflowers growing on the sunny hillside above the trail.

They usually fly in a flock and like to sing from high tree branches along the creek.



Lesser Goldfinch male



Ash-throated Flycatcher

Ash-throated Flycatchers are summer migrants that nest in old woodpecker holes.

The Chaparral along the Proctor Trail is a favorite place to hunt for insects.

Flying easily from tree to tree, Ash-throated Flycatchers sit on branches and scan for flying insects. When they see one, they fly out and snatch it in midair- even wasps and bees!

Western Bluebirds are one of many colorful birds seen in Madera Canyon.

Bluebirds are **winter migrants** on the Proctor Trail. They come down from the high mountain pine forests to spend the colder months at lower, warmer elevation.

They often flock together in the Chaparral.



Western Bluebird male



There is so much to see along the Proctor Trail
in Madera Canyon, you might forget to look up...
Remember- birds have wings and fly!



Young Red-tailed Hawk

Red-tailed Hawks are year-round residents of southeast Arizona, including Madera Canyon.

These carnivorous raptors are often seen soaring above the Proctor Trail.



Common Ravens are another year-round resident of southeast Arizona.



Common Raven



Ravens are very curious, vocal birds. They make a variety of interesting calls. They are often seen flying and calling from around the Proctor Trail.



Turkey Vultures are summer migrants to southeast Arizona.

Turkey Vulture



These big vultures hold their wings in a "V" shape when soaring over the canyon. They often roost together at night in a tall sycamore or cottonwood tree along Madera Creek.

When you come to Madera Canyon, please hike on the Proctor Trail to discover lots of nature-



Blue
Grosbeak
male

especially, the beautiful birds!



The End

For more information on birds & birding visit:

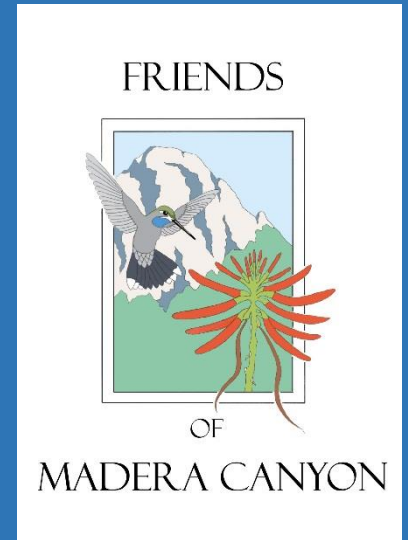
www.friendsofmaderacanyon.org
(download Madera Canyon Bird List pdf)

Tucson Audubon Society- www.tucsonaudubon.org

National Audubon Society- www.audubon.org

Cornell Ornithology Lab- www.birds.cornell.edu

Credits:



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Montezuma Quail photo- Tom Vezo

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