

Common Birds of the Sierras

Sequoia National Forest



1. Stellar Jay – These noisy birds are quite commonly seen in the mid to high elevations in the Sierra Nevada. They are pigeon sized with deep blue colored wings, tail and breast with a black crest on their head. This Jay is quite bold, beware of it trying to steal your food while picnicking!



2. Clark's Nutcracker – These large black and white birds are found in higher elevation pine forests. They are in the jay family and are quite noisy as well! They store pine nuts in caches a winter food supply.



3. Pinyon or Scrub Jay – These blue and gray birds inhabit foothill oak woodland forests. In fall they harvest acorns and store them in holes dug into the ground with their bills.

4. American Robin – These brownish gray birds with rusty colored chests are commonly seen in open grasslands and meadows foraging for worms, insects, or berries. In the wintertime robins live at lower elevations in the foothills and central valley.



5. California or Brown Towhee – Despite their plain plumage and song, Towhees are familiar and well-loved birds. They nest in dense shrubbery and forage on the ground for insects and seeds.



6. Western Tanager – These brightly colored birds migrate from their wintering grounds in Mexico to their summer breeding grounds in the Sierra in early summer. The males with their bright yellow bodies, red heads, and black wings are often seen in the mixed conifer forests searching for insects along the branches of trees.



7. Dark-eyed Junco – These widespread birds have gray bodies with black heads and flashy white tail-edges. Juncos spend their time in ponderosa pine forests up to tree line in meadows and moist open forests.

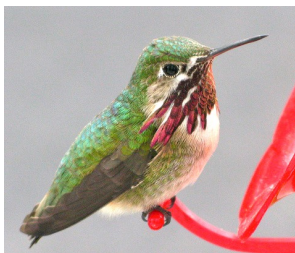


8. Mountain Chickadee – These small hardy gray birds with black caps inhabit the Sierra year-round. In the spring their call is a sweet whistled “dee-do-do” with the identical second and third notes lower than the first.

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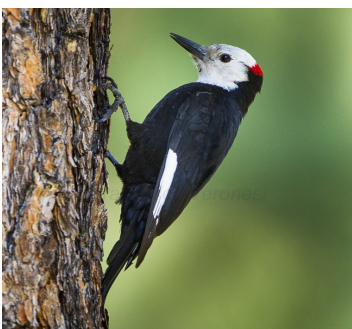
9. Calliope Hummingbird -

The smallest bird in the United States, the Calliope Hummingbird nests in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Four species of hummingbirds nest in the Sequoia National Forest: Anna's, Black-Chinned, Calliope and Costa's. The Calliope is found on the forest only during the summer.



10. Acorn Woodpecker

– These woodpeckers are mostly black with a curve of white on their face and a red cap. They live in foothills woodland forests as well as mixed-conifer forests where they cache a supply of acorns in a granary, usually an old oak tree and sometimes a telephone pole or fence post.



11. White-headed Woodpecker

–This large woodpecker has a black body and a white head. They are often heard gently drumming or calling a rapid “pik, pik, pik.” They nest in pine forests and may be seen in the lower elevations during winter.



12. California Quail – Two species of quail occur on the Forest, California and Mountain Quail. These birds are easily recognizable by the feathers or stipe coming up from their heads. The stipe of the California Quail forms a question mark and that of the Mountain Quail is straight.

Mountain Quail usually nest at higher elevations. Both species occur in family groups called coveys and when startled run and fly for cover.

13. Red-tailed Hawk – These large chocolate brown raptors with a red tail are the most commonly seen in the Sierra Nevada from the foothills all the way up to the highest elevations. They prey on squirrels, gophers, mice, snakes, and lizards in open areas and they kill with a direct dive.



Thank you for your help in making forest visits enjoyable and safe! Plan ahead by obtaining a National Forest map at one of the following offices:

Hume Lake Ranger District
35860 East Kings Canyon Road
Dunlap, CA 93621
[559-338-2251](tel:559-338-2251)

Kern River Ranger District
11380 Kernville Rd.
Kernville, CA 93238
[760-376-3781](tel:760-376-3781)

Western Divide Ranger District
32588 Hwy 190
Springville, CA 93265
[559-539-2607](tel:559-539-2607)

Forest Supervisor's Office
220 E Morton Ave
Porterville, CA 93257
[559-784-1500](tel:559-784-1500)

14. Great Horned Owl – Great Horned owls can be found in almost any habitat but prefer open environments and can be identified by its prominent ear tufts. They are predatory and can kill and fly away with an animal up to three times its own weight! They often prey upon birds, snakes, fish, and even porcupines, skunks, and house cats!



15. Turkey Vulture – Identify large kettles of vultures gliding on columns of warm air thermals along the foothills and mountain ridges. The vulture is a flying janitor, searching for carrion to clean up along our roadways. They are the only birds known to have a sense of smell.

