

# Bird ID

Birds can be identified by size and shape, as well as color or field markings (spots, stripes, eyerings, etc.). Some birds have distinctive ways of flying, like Gila woodpeckers; others have a call or song you'll never forget, like the cactus wren. Here are just a few of the many birds to be found in Tohono Chul Park. How many have you seen?

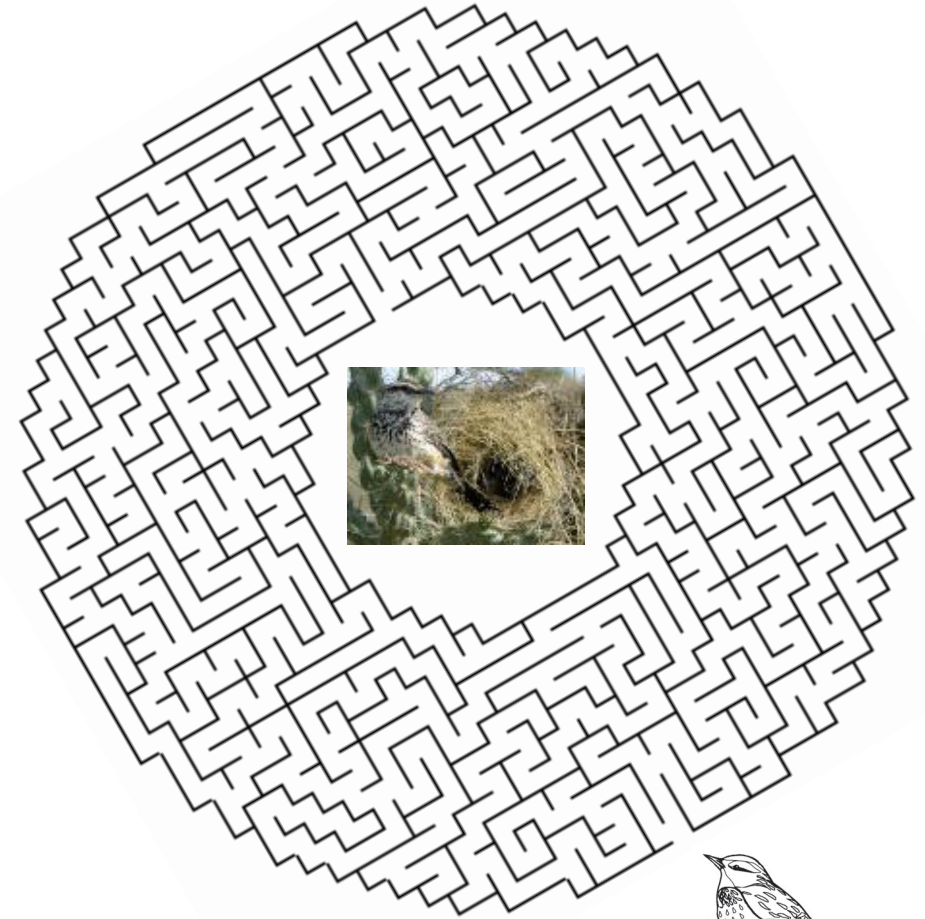


TOHONO CHUL  
PARK

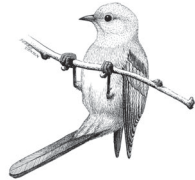
FOR THE BIRDS!

## Home Sweet Nest

help the cactus wren return safely to her nest



Cooper's hawk



verdin



Gila woodpecker



Costa's hummingbird



cactus wren



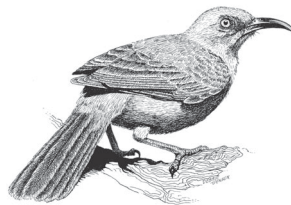
Gambel's quail



brown-crested flycatcher



roadrunner



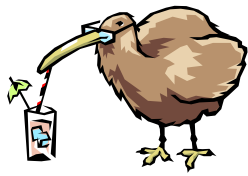
curve-billed thrasher



### Quick – what is the state bird of Arizona?

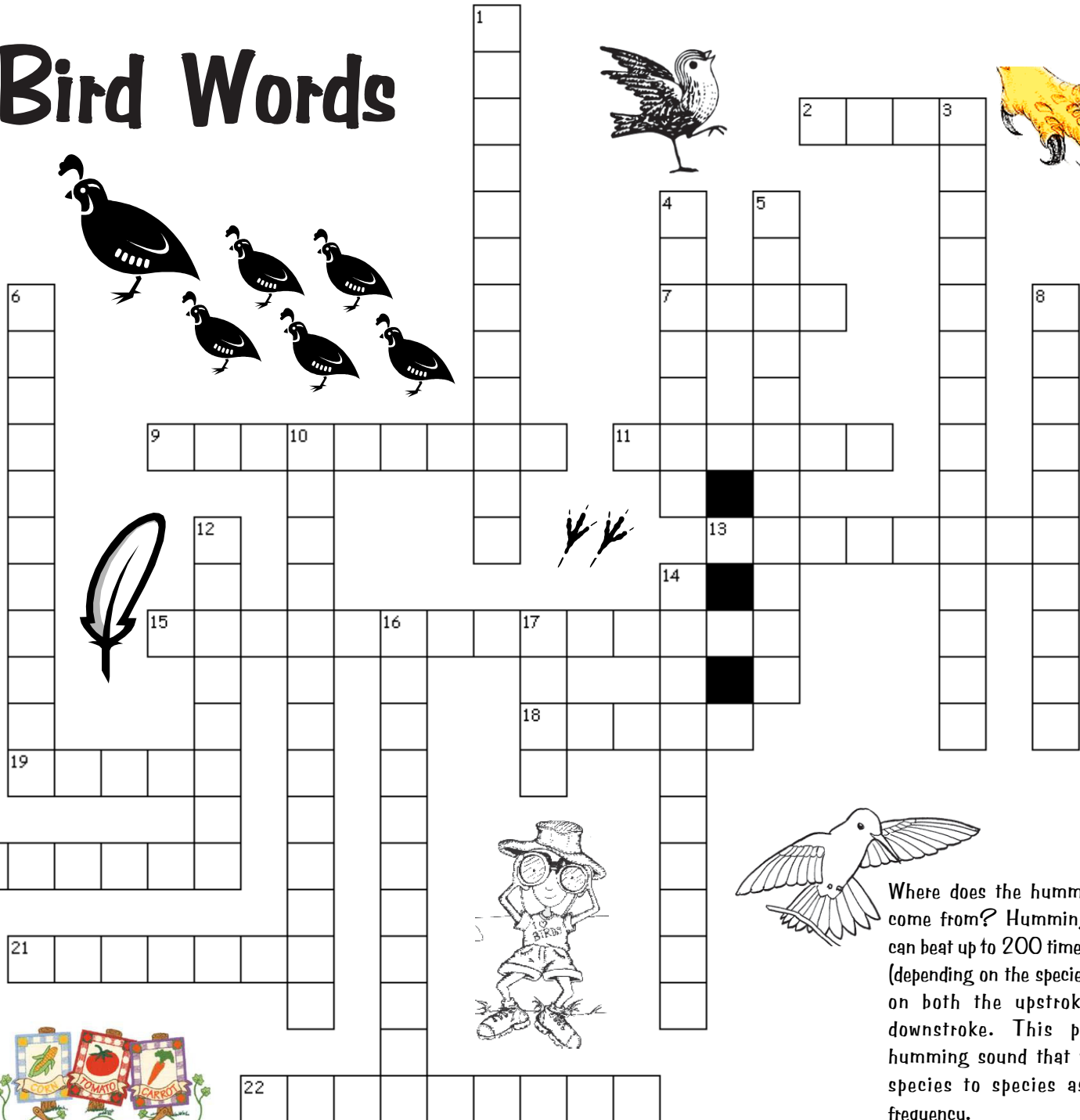
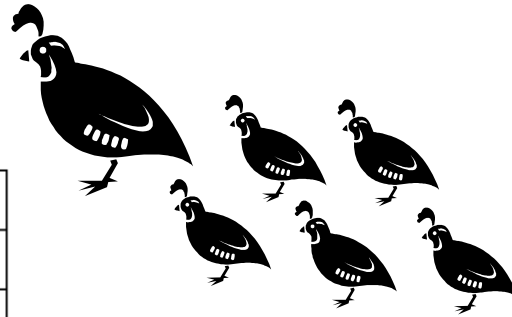
If you said, roadrunner, you're off by one state to the east (it belongs to New Mexico). The correct answer is the cactus wren. Did you know the cactus wren is one of the few birds who actually sleeps in its football-shaped nest even when not rearing young? This largest of North American wrens will build several nests in a season, some acting as empty decoys for unsuspecting predators, and some for grown children who haven't left the territory yet.

*bird illustrations by Debbie Jensen*



Most birds drink by scooping water up in their beaks and tilting their heads back so it drizzles down their throats – not so the mourning dove! Like using a soda straw, doves, submerge their beaks into standing water and drink continuously, sucking up and swallowing water without raising their heads. This way they can drink up to six times faster than other birds, shortening the time they spend at a waterhole and thus avoiding predators.

# Bird Words



Hummingbirds are New World species, ranging from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America. Of the 18 species found in the U.S., only one lives east of the Mississippi River, the Ruby-throated. ALL 18 species have been seen in AZ either as residents or passing through during migration.



Where does the hummers' "hum" come from? Hummingbird wings can beat up to 200 times per second (depending on the species), vibrating on both the upstroke and the downstroke. This produces a humming sound that varies from species to species as does the frequency.



It may seem so, but owls really can't rotate their heads 360° as many people think. As a night vision adaptation, owls have extremely large eyes in proportion to the size of their heads and their eyes are fixed in place by a bony structure called a sclerotic ring. As a result, they have to turn their heads to move their eyes. Head rotation for most owl species is 270° – far enough to see directly behind them!



The so-called "black cardinal" actually isn't. The Phainopepla, whose name means "silky robe", is not related to cardinals at all; rather it is a silky flycatcher, a tropical group of birds named for the silky appearance of their feathers. Phainopeplas, which also feed on insects, rely almost exclusively on desert mistletoe berries during winter months. In fact, many blame the birds for the spread of the parasitic plant. Phainopeplas and other birds disperse mistletoe seeds in their droppings, leaving small deposits on the branches of desert trees. Before you remove every bit of mistletoe from your trees, consider that fewer mistletoe berries may mean fewer birds come spring.

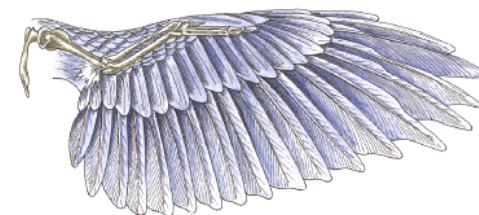
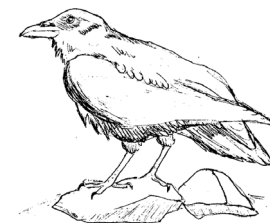


Did you know that a woodpecker's tongue may be up to three times as long as its beak! Woodpeckers have developed a variety of adaptations: their zygodactyl feet (two toes front and two toes back) allow them to cling to vertical surfaces, stiff tail feathers providing the brace; their brain is fits tightly into their skull to avoid concussions; and their tongue is sharp and barbed, allowing it to skewer an insect and pull it from a cavity. In order to fish around in those insect tunnels, a woodpecker needs a long tongue, sometimes so long that it actually wraps around and over the skull, coming back out through its nostril or around the eye socket!



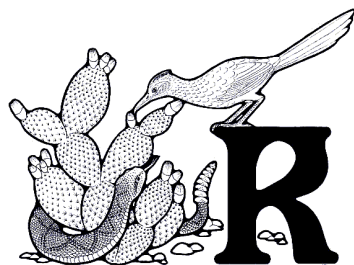
## Across

2. Flight mechanism
7. All purpose tool
9. Following the sun
11. Raptors use them to hold onto things
13. What makes birds different from all other animals
15. Backwards my head isn't
18. Gardeners get mad when birds steal these
19. Quoth me - "nevermore"
20. In my family there is safety in numbers
21. I immigrated from jolly olde England
22. Symbol of the United States

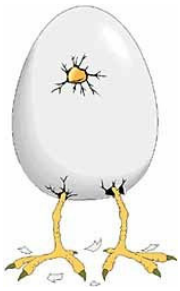


## Down

1. I like to sip my drinks
3. My tongue is longer than my mouth
4. What birds need to survive
5. Some people call me the "black cardinal"
6. Those funny humans with binoculars
8. AZ's state bird
10. I'm named for the color of my tail
12. My distinctive color makes me stand out anywhere
14. I catch and eat rattlesnakes
16. My wings beat 200 times per second
17. The place birds call home



# Beaks and Feet



A bird's beak is an all purpose tool that allows it to build a nest, or secure it's food. In many ways, a bird's beak resembles some of the tools we use everyday. Talking of toes, a bird's feet are used for everything from perching or walking to capturing prey. Can you match the beak to the tool, to the feet, and then to the food the bird eats? We've even given you some handy clues!



**Northern Cardinal**

a strong beak makes this the original nutcracker



**Bald Eagle**

talons are as important for defense as for hunting



**Northern Pintail**

a vegetarian duck strains its food from the water



hummingbirds don't walk



**Brown Thrasher**

thrashers scratch and pick their dinner from leaf litter

