



New and Rare Bird Species Identified through Landbird Monitoring at Coronado National Memorial

2011

Introduction

Landbirds are monitored annually at Coronado National Memorial (NMem), as well as the other ten parks in the Sonoran Desert Network (SODN). In April and May 2011, two transects were surveyed at the park, and one species, the red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*), was detected at the park for the first time. Two other species observed, the magnificent hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) and the sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), were not new but are rare species at the park.

Life History

Red-breasted nuthatch

The red-breasted nuthatch is a very small (4.3 inches [11 cm]), active bird that searches for insects on tree trunks and branches. It has a long, pointed beak, a very short neck and tail, broad, short wings, and a plump body. Its back is blue-gray, its underside is a rusty-cinnamon, and its head has a black cap and stripe through the eye, with a white stripe in between. The bird moves up, down, and sideways over trunks and branches during its search for insects. Red-breasted nuthatches are most often found in coniferous forests, but they also inhabit deciduous forests. In the summer, they eat primarily insects and spiders, but in fall and winter they often eat conifer seeds. The species nests in cavities in dead trees or dead parts of trees, where it lays 2–8 white, red-brown-speckled eggs. In some areas of southern Arizona, the bird may be found only in winter, while in other areas it may be found year-round. Populations are increasing throughout most of its range. [Listen](#).



Red-breasted nuthatch.

Magnificent hummingbird

The magnificent hummingbird, previously known as Rivoli's hummingbird, is the second-largest hummingbird in the U.S. The adult male has an iridescent purple crown, a green throat, and a black belly. Females are duller in coloration and lack the purple crown. The species inhabits areas such as open woodlands, clearings and edges of humid montane forests, and

pine-oak habitat. The bird feeds on flower nectar and pollen, as well as small insects. Magnificent hummingbirds lay two white eggs in small, cup-shaped nests made of plants. The species is one of several hummingbird species that are found regularly in the U.S. only in southeast Arizona, where it is a summer breeder; the bird is found year-round in parts of Mexico and Central America. [Listen](#).



Magnificent hummingbird.

Sharp-shinned hawk

The sharp-shinned hawk is a small hawk (length 9.4–13.4 inches [24–34 cm]). The female may weigh nearly twice as much as the male, which represents the greatest gender size difference among hawk species in the U.S. The sharp-shinned hawk has a long, barred tail and short, rounded wings. Its plumage is blue-gray above and white below with rusty barring. This hawk has a relatively small head, a short neck, and thin legs. The species nests in forests, usually those with conifers, but winters in a variety of habitats. Its nest is built of large conifer twigs and lined with chips of bark; it is placed on the limb of a densely-branched tree 20–60 feet (6–18 meters) in the air. The bird lays 4–5 bluish, spotted eggs. The sharp-shinned hawk eats mostly small birds, but also large insects and small mammals. It is sometimes observed at bird feeders preying on other birds. In Arizona and New Mexico, the species may be found year-round or only during the winter months. [Listen](#).



Sharp-shinned hawk.

Links and References

Information in this brief came primarily from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds, an online bird guide available at <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide>. Additional details come from The Encyclopedia of North American Birds, M. Vanner, 2003, Parragon Publishing, U.K. Bird sounds courtesy of the Macaulay Library.