

Open Space Alliance,
Urban Conservation Treaty
for Migratory Birds:

Birding Hotspot Guide



www.fws.gov/birds/uctmbga

UCTMB Background

The Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds (UCTMB) is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service project started in 1999. UCTMB works with cities and partners to protect migratory birds through education, hazard reduction, citizen science, conservation, and habitat improvement in urban and suburban areas. Albuquerque was named as one of the UCTMB national cities in 2014 due to its abundant local, state and federal protected land that



supports wildlife and serves as ideal habitat for nesting and migratory birds. The Rio Grande, the fourth longest river on the continent, flows through the heart of the urban area and is the basis for the Rio Grande flyway. The Rio Grande is one of the most important flyways for migratory waterfowl in North America. Migration is intrinsically tied to seasonal changes and weather patterns. Studies show that numerous birds are altering their patterns of migration, mating, and nesting due to changes in climate. Citizens around the world can help the scientific community better understand these changes through simple observations. Post your observations on iNaturalist.org or eBird.org today!

Geocaching: Burque Birding GeoFlight

The Burque Birding GeoFlight geocache series was developed by the Open Space Alliance in partnership with Bernco Geocachers to highlight birding hotspots throughout the area. There are twelve geocaches, each of which includes a unique collectible bird card that corresponds to a month of the 2015 Seasonal Sightings phenological calendar. While supplies last, there are also a limited number of Birding GeoFlight Coins available for cachers who find at least nine



of the twelve geocaches and record answers to each geocache question on their GeoFlight Passport. For birding hotspots that host a geocache, identification codes are provided in this guide. To obtain geocache coordinates for Burque Birding GeoFlight geocaches, go to www.geocaching.com, open a free account, and search for the geocache codes provided in this guide. Please visit www.berncogov.openspace or www.openspacealliance.org for more information. Or, download the free c:geo app for your smartphone, and search for Burque Birding Geoflight. Discover what makes Albuquerque a special place for birds, name the common birds, and have fun geocaching at some of the area's most scenic birding locations!

Birding 101

Interest and Patience - The first thing you need is an interest in getting outdoors and watching birds. The second thing is a little patience with yourself and birds. Birds are great at hiding, and it is not always easy to see them at first, much less identify all the species of birds in the area. However, a little patience and persistence can be greatly rewarded when the birds reveal themselves.

Equipment and Material - The most basic equipment is your senses, especially sight and hearing. However, birding is made easier if you have a few other things at your disposal, including a pair of binoculars, a local field guide, and a notebook. Binoculars can range greatly in price and quality, so pick the right pair for your needs and budget. A notebook helps to keep track of what you see and where, and field notes can help you identify birds later.

Finally, make sure to be prepared for the outdoors by dressing for the weather and bringing plenty of water and snacks.

Backyard Birding - While it is rewarding to visit an area where there are a variety of birds and to explore open space, you can also watch birds from your backyard by setting up a bird feeder.

There are a number of citizen science opportunities, such as eBird, that allow you to record and add your sightings to those of other birdwatchers. Knowing your observations are part of larger scientific studies and comparing them to what other art seeing around the nation can be very exciting.

Have Fun - The most important thing about birding is to have fun. Birding is like most things in life: you get better at it the more you do it, so get outdoors and let your ambitions soar!



City of Albuquerque Open Space Visitors Center

Geocache: GC5DEAW

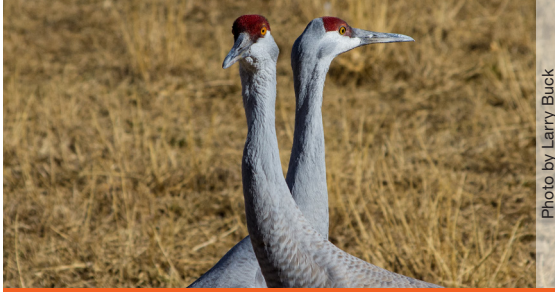


Photo by Larry Buck

Sandhill Crane - *Grus canadensis*

- ☐ Sandhill Crane
- ☐ Northern Harrier
- ☐ Mourning Dove
- ☐ American Kestrel
- ☐ Lesser Goldfinch
- ☐ House Finch

Description: The City of Albuquerque has one of the most ambitious open space programs in the country. In fact, Albuquerque tops the list for the highest percentage of parkland and open space for small cities in the United States! Over 29,000 acres of open space protect unique landscapes and sensitive habitat while providing miles of recreation trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Start exploring at the Open Space Visitor Center. Nestled at the west edge of the Rio Grande bosque, the Center overlooks a wetland and 18 acres of agricultural fields dedicated to supporting wildlife. It offers educational exhibits, a dynamic art gallery, demonstration gardens, a trailhead, as well as programs and events.

Pajarito Open Space

Geocache: GC5D60K



Photo by Lou Feltz

White-Crowned Sparrow - *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

- ☐ White-crowned Sparrow
- ☐ Cooper's Hawk
- ☐ White-winged Dove
- ☐ American Kestrel
- ☐ Common Raven
- ☐ Yellow-headed Blackbird

Description: Pajarito Open Space comprises 20 acres of farmland located in the South Valley. For many years, the property was owned by the Beck family who managed it as a small family dairy farm with surrounding alfalfa fields. Today, a local farmer continues that tradition by growing alfalfa for Rasband Dairy and mixed grains for wildlife. The walking trail around Pajarito Open Space's perimeter is part of Albuquerque Prescription Trails, a program which promotes walking outdoors for a healthier lifestyle. The property offers scenic views of the west mesa and year-round bird watching opportunities. Site amenities include picnic tables and benches as well as several interpretive signs discussing the area's rich history.

Atrisco Bosque Trail

Geocache: GC5D74Z



Yellow-Rumped Warbler - *Setophaga coronata*

- ☐ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- ☐ Mallard
- ☐ Bald Eagle
- ☐ Downy Woodpecker
- ☐ Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- ☐ Blue Grosbeak

Description: The Rio Grande Valley State Park Open Space is a 4,300 acre riverside forest referred to locally as the bosque (which is Spanish for “forest”). Large cottonwood trees, coyote willow, and New Mexico olive create a cool, shady forest and provide habitat for beaver, numerous bird species, turtles, and snakes. It extends along the Rio Grande from Sandia Pueblo north of Albuquerque all the way to Isleta Pueblo in the south. Visitors can enjoy year-around recreation on multi-use trails as well as wheelchair- accessible picnic areas. The land is jointly managed by the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Atrisco Bosque Trail is an element of the Rio Grande Valley State Park Open Space.

Sanchez Farm Open Space

Geocache: GC5DG4G



Red-Wing Blackbird - *Agelaius phoeniceus*

- ☐ Red-winged Blackbird
- ☐ Turkey Vulture
- ☐ Western Kingbird
- ☐ Ash-throated Flycatcher
- ☐ Spotted Towhee
- ☐ Western Meadowlark

Description: This 14-acre property in the South Valley was owned and farmed by the Sanchez family for more than 300 years before the Bernalillo County's Public Works Division purchased it to serve as a storm drainage facility. Today, the property provides important ecological functions with an established wetlands and bioswales to mitigate water pollution. The site is community farmed with extensive educational programming led by the La Plazita Institute (LPI). Open Space staff and LPI have worked with The Recuerda a César Chávez Committee since 2010 to organize a large-scale César Chávez Day of Service where hundreds of students come to the farm to learn about César Chávez and hands-on farming. Sanchez Farm also has a perimeter walking trail.

Carlito Springs Open Space

Geocache: GC5DGPN



Western Tanager - *Piranga ludoviciana*

- ☐ Western Tanager
- ☐ Rufous Hummingbird
- ☐ Warbling Vireo
- ☐ Mountain Chickadee
- ☐ Juniper Titmouse
- ☐ Black-headed Grosbeak

Description: Located on the southeast face of the Sandia Mountains near the village of Tijeras, Carlito Springs encompasses 179 acres and ranges in elevation from 6,300 feet to 7,000 feet. It is named for the spring that flows from exposed bedrock in the north-central portion of the property. This spring once provided water to a residence and several cabins and continues to feed several ponds and a lush riparian environment, including ornamental gardens and an orchard. This spring water also provide critical habitat for many species of birds and animals. Visitors can enjoy a newly established trail that ascends through pinion-juniper woodlands to the historic structures and spring and loops down to the orchard with terraced gardens and a variety of fruit trees.

Elena Gallegos Open Space

Geocache: GC5DEJW



Black-Chinned Hummingbird - *Archilochus alexandri*

- ☐ Black-chinned Hummingbird
- ☐ Gambel's Quail
- ☐ Western Scrub-Jay
- ☐ Northern Mockingbird
- ☐ Canyon Towhee
- ☐ Black-chinned Sparrow
- ☐ Scott's Oriole

Description: The 640-acre park is a gem in the Open Space system. From an elevation of about 6,500 feet, visitors can view Mt. Taylor to the west, the Jemez Mountains to the north and the vast Tijeras Arroyo to the south. The landscape supports a piñon-juniper habitat. Pack rat nests, coyote and bear scat, and even the elusive cougar may be spotted in the area. Seven covered picnic areas and two reservation areas with barbecue grills provide magnificent views. There is a network of multi-use trails, as well as two hiking trails for foot traffic only which provide access to the Sandia Mountain Wilderness area. On the north boundary of the picnic area is the Cottonwood Springs Trail, a self-guiding trail accessible to all people, leading to a pond and wildlife blind.

Durand Open Space

Geocache: GC5D60R



Indigo Bunting - *Passerina cyanea*

- ☐ Indigo Bunting
- ☐ Northern Flicker
- ☐ American Crow
- ☐ Bewick's Wren
- ☐ Great-tailed Grackle
- ☐ Lark Sparrow

Description: The Durand Open Space property was owned by the Durand family for approximately 100 years and was farmed in alfalfa and used as permanent pasture. In the mid-1950s, the property was put into use as a landing strip for single- and twin-engine airplanes. The strip was closed in the 1970s, and the property reverted to agriculture. In 1999, the Durand family sold the 10-acre property to Bernalillo County to preserve it from development. Visitors can now enjoy a perimeter walking trail around scenic fields complete with picnic tables and benches. The northwest section of the property includes a community gathering space with tables, benches, a shade structure, wooden sculptures, interpretive signs, and a memorial to the Durand family.

Ojito de San Antonio Open Space

Geocache: GC5DGQB



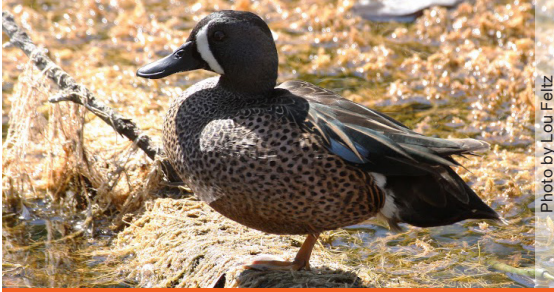
Western Bluebird - *Sialia mexicana*

- ☐ Western Bluebird
- ☐ Band-tailed Pigeon
- ☐ Broad-tailed Hummingbird
- ☐ Black-headed Grosbeak
- ☐ American Robin
- ☐ Chipping Sparrow

Description: Located east of Albuquerque in the Sandia Mountains, the 88-acre Ojito de San Antonio Open Space was purchased by Bernalillo County in 1999. Residents of the nearby historic village of San Antonio had encouraged its purchase to prevent residential development and to preserve an ancient acequia system that has provided life-giving water to residents, wildlife and flora since the 18th century. Ojito de San Antonio is characterized by a grassy meadow surrounded by steep, piñon-juniper forested foothills and is an ideal spot for wildlife viewing. Due to prolonged drought, the springs have gone dry; however, groundwater still supports a lush riparian area. The property was listed as a birding hotspot by the Central New Mexico Audubon Society.

Rio Grande Nature Center State Park

Geocache: GC5D76P



Blue-Winged Teal - *Anas discors*

- ☐ Blue-winged teal
- ☐ Green-winged Teal
- ☐ Sandhill Crane
- ☐ Greater Roadrunner
- ☐ Black Phoebe
- ☐ White-breasted Nuthatch
- ☐ Summer Tanager

Description: Located on the central Rio Grande flyway, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park offers excellent bird watching throughout the year. Visitors can observe about 250 different species, including roadrunners and wood ducks. A highlight of the visitor center is its glass-walled library, which allows observation of pond residents such as ducks, geese, turtles, frogs, snakes and muskrats in their natural habitat. There are also two outdoor viewing areas overlooking ponds, two gardens with bird-feeding stations and access to trails through the bosque, or riverside forest. The park offers guided bird walks every Saturday and Sunday at 8:30AM as well as naturalist- led hikes, public lectures, teacher workshops and nature-themed festivals.

Bachechi Open Space

Geocache: GC5DEHW



Ruby-Crowned Kinglet - *Regulus calendula*

- ☐ Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- ☐ Wood Duck
- ☐ Cedar Waxwing
- ☐ Black-capped Chickadee
- ☐ Song Sparrow
- ☐ Dark-eyed Junco

Description: Bachechi Open Space consists of 28 acres of bosque, wetlands, grasslands, and other areas with native vegetation that provides a rich environment for wildlife. The property is located near the Rio Grande and the Paseo del Bosque Trail. Bachechi Open Space promotes non-competitive recreational uses and environmental educational opportunities. It features a network of trails with interpretive signs highlighting the site's features, including an acequia, a pecan grove, an arboretum, and a rose garden. While visiting the property, make sure to pick up information at the Bachechi Environmental Education Building about the many free public events, such as the Naturalist Series and fun activities for the whole family.

Tingley Ponds

Geocache: GC5D7E2



Photo by Larry Buck

Northern Shoveler - *Anas clypeata*

- ☐ Northern Shoveler
- ☐ Canvasback
- ☐ Ring-necked Duck
- ☐ Ruddy Duck
- ☐ Pied-billed Grebe
- ☐ Black-crowned Night-Heron
- ☐ Belted Kingfisher

Description: Located south of the Central Avenue Bridge on the east side of the Rio Grande, the Tingley Ponds were constructed by the City of Albuquerque in the 1930's as a recreational aquatic area that was hydrologically connected to the Rio Grande. A restoration project completed in 2005 established observation areas close to wetland communities. These are used to educate observers regarding the wetland ecosystems and wildlife. The restoration project also increased fishing opportunities for the public, and established a defined trail system for bicyclists and hikers. The trail system also provides rest areas that support passive recreational activities, including bird watching, photography, and general aesthetic appreciation.

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

Geocache: GC5D6Y8



Photo by Michele Weisz

Bald Eagle - *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

- ☐ Bald Eagle
- ☐ Canada Goose
- ☐ Swainson's Hawk
- ☐ Killdeer
- ☐ American Kestrel
- ☐ Say's Phoebe
- ☐ Cliff Swallow

Description: Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is the Southwest's first urban wildlife refuge. It serves as an urban oasis for both wildlife and people. Established on a former dairy farm just a few miles south of New Mexico's largest metropolitan area, the refuge offers a unique environmental education and recreation opportunity in a highly populated area while promoting a wildlife conservation message. It is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a national network of lands and waters managed for the benefit of wildlife, habitat and you. The refuge will fulfill the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to work with community partners to establish a 21st century conservation ethic and reconnect people to the natural world.

Petroglyph National Monument



Red-tailed Hawk - *Buteo jamaicensis*

- ☐ Red-tailed Hawk
- ☐ Scaled Quail
- ☐ Rock Wren
- ☐ Canyon Wren
- ☐ Crissal Thrasher
- ☐ Black-throated Sparrow

Description: Petroglyph National Monument protects one of the largest petroglyph sites in North America, featuring designs and symbols carved onto volcanic rocks by Native Americans and Spanish settlers 400 to 700 years ago. These images are a valuable record of cultural expression and hold profound spiritual significance for contemporary Native Americans and for the descendants of the early Spanish settlers. While enjoying your birding experience at the Monument, be sure to keep an eye out for the bird petroglyph! Visitor center is open daily 8:00 am to 5:00 pm MST. Petroglyph viewing trails are 1-2 miles away. WNPA park store & federal land passes available.

University of New Mexico Duck Pond



Barn Swallow - *Hirundo rustica*

- ☐ Cooper's Hawk
- ☐ Ladder-backed Woodpecker
- ☐ Barn Swallow
- ☐ Bushtit
- ☐ American Robin

Description: Founded in 1889 as New Mexico's flagship institution, The University of New Mexico now occupies nearly 800 acres near old Route 66 in the heart of Albuquerque, a metropolitan area of more than 500,000 people. From the magnificent mesas to the west, past the banks of the historic Rio Grande to the Sandia Mountains to the east, Albuquerque is a blend of culture and cuisine, styles and stories, people, pursuits and panoramas. Offering a distinctive campus environment with a Pueblo Revival architectural theme, the campus buildings echo nearby Pueblo Indian villages. The nationally recognized campus arboretum and the popular duck pond offer an outstanding botanical and ornithological experience in the midst of one of New Mexico's great public open spaces.

This guide was produced in collaboration with the following organizations:



The Open Space Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote public awareness and conservation of Open Space lands, and to educate the public about the natural, historic, cultural, educational, and recreational aspects of Open Space areas.

