

Birder's Guide

City of Rocks National Reserve



**Checklist and guide to finding over 160 species of birds
in City of Rocks, Castle Rocks, and the Almo Valley**



City of Rocks National Reserve is a partnership between the National Park Service and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation



(Cover) Black-throated Gray Warbler perched on a pinyon pine, photographed in Smoky Mountain Campground, Castle Rocks State Park.

(Above) Pinyon Jay perched in Utah Juniper, photographed along 850 E Little Cove Ranch Road.

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Prepared by
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
and the
National Park Service

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(Above) The 14,407-acre City of Rocks National Reserve is the focal point of the City of Rocks checklist area. The view is south to Elephant Rock and Twin Sisters from campsite 14.

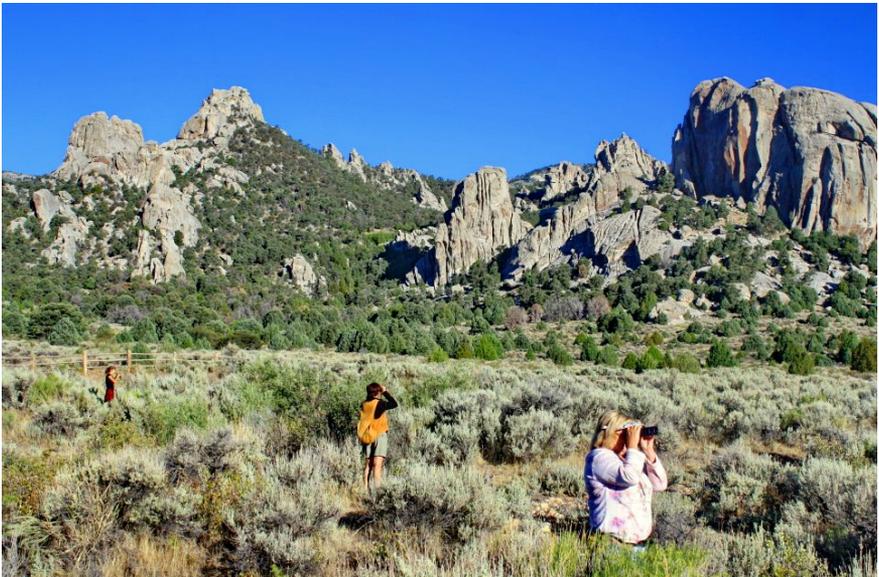
Introduction

There are few places in Idaho other than the City of Rocks checklist area where such a high concentration of bird species are encountered, making this a top birding destination. The City of Rocks checklist area includes the National Reserve, Castle Rocks State Park, and the Almo and Upper Raft River valleys.

The checklist area is further defined as the watershed south of Cache Peak, west of the Jim Sage Mountain crest, north of the Utah border and east of the Birch Creek Road. The area includes approximately 150 square miles (over 96,000 acres), and elevations ranging from 5,026 to 10,339 feet. See pages 22-23 for map of the official checklist area, park boundaries, area roads, and birding hotspots.

Geographically, this area is unique and biologically diverse. The vast wetlands of the Great Salt Lake lie just south of the Raft River Mountains. The Snake River Plain is 45 miles north. Between these vital waters, birds find rest on local farm ponds, along riparian streams, upon the cliffs and within the canyons of the southern Albion Mountains. Habitat varies greatly, from greasewood flats and sagebrush steppe, to dense woodlands of pinyon-juniper, mountain mahogany, aspen-fir, and alpine.

Equally unique is the geology. Two types of granite, one over a hundred times older than the other, are exposed and rise 600 feet from the landscape as sculpted monoliths and towers. The checklist area also includes quartzite cliffs, rhyolitic mountains, and schist outcrops. You will find this rugged topography and network of roads and trails optimal for a full day of productive birding. A single day of birding (especially in late May and early June) may offer over 120 species if all of these habitats are exploited. Even in winter, one might find over 40!



Castle Rocks State Park, includes three units: Ranch (photo), Smoky Mountain Campground, and the Administrative Site.

Best Birding Times and Locations

The absolute best time to bird City of Rocks is May 15 through June 15. Perhaps the most productive week is June 1-7. For this reason, the park sponsors an annual Big Day Birding Blitz on the first Saturday in June. The competitive event includes one team attempting to check-off more observations than another, but beginners and non-competitive birders can join other walks and programs. In any case, over 120 species are expected to be observed in a single day by all competitors combined.

Birders are wise to begin their day just before dawn to enjoy the songs of flycatchers or drumming of woodpeckers, and to continue at least an hour after dusk to observe owls and poorwills. As previously mentioned, the successful birder will not fail to spend time in all habitat types, and will not remain long in unproductive areas.

Some of the most productive birding locations are as follows:

Castle Rocks State Park

1. From the picnic shelter to the Almo Creek Wetland, including the orchard at the lodge
2. From Stines Creek Picnic Area to Stines Creek northwest of Castle Rock
3. Brackenbury Wash that exits southeast from the granite formations of Castle Rocks
4. Castle Rock Pond and surrounding wet meadows
5. Smoky Mountain Campground and Circle Creek Canyon Trail
6. Visitor Center bird feeders and box elder trees

City of Rocks National Reserve

7. Bath Rock/Creekside Towers Trail to overlook
8. Parking Lot Rock and Window Rock Canyon
9. Riparian area along Emery Creek and Canyon
10. Indian Grove aspen-fir forest and meadows

Almo

11. Big Cove Road/Little Cove Ranch Road fields and fencerows
12. Narrows Road/EY Road pastures, fields, and fencerows
13. Lynn-Almo Road to Utah border greasewood and sagebrush
14. Hwy 77 Spur roadsides, fencerows, and power poles

Sawtooth National Forest

15. Fir forests and meadows along Logger Spring Road

Bureau of Land Management

16. Jim Sage Canyon riparian, rocky hillsides, juniper woodlands

These birding hotspots are productive locations to observe many species; however, the following chart lists the most interesting species located there and their preferred habitat:

Species of Interest	Location	Habitat
Greater Sage-Grouse	14	Roadside sagebrush
Burrowing Owl	12, 13	Roadside greasewood
Common Poorwill	5, 7, 8	Roads, open woods
Olive-sided Flycatcher	2, 3, 15	Open woodlands
Gray Flycatcher	3, 5, 8, 16	Dry woodlands
Plumbeous Vireo	3, 5, 16	Open Juniper woods
Western Scrub Jay	3, 5, 16	Pinyon-Juniper woods
Pinyon Jay	5, 11	Pinyon-Juniper woods
Juniper Titmouse	5, 11	Juniper woodlands
Bushtit	2, 3, 5, 7, 16	Dry open woodlands
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	3, 5, 16	Dry open woodlands
Sage Thrasher	5, 12, 13	Sagebrush flats
Virginia's Warbler	3, 8	Dry open woodlands
Black-throated Gray Warbler	5, 11	Pinyon-Juniper woods

Suggested Auto Birding Route

Let's say it is peak spring migration, and you spent the night in the Castle Rock Lodge. The next morning you got up and birded on foot all the hotspots around you, such as the orchard, Almo Creek Wetlands, Brackenbury Wash, and the Stines Creek Picnic Area. Now you are ready for some road birding. We suggest the following Almo Valley and Upper Raft River Valley loop route with the top three birds to watch for between mileposts:

- 0.0 Castle Rocks Shelter Parking Lot, turn right (east)
Gray Partridge, Wilson's Snipe, Sandhill Crane
- 0.4 Castle Rocks Pond on right (south)
Spotted Sandpiper, Short-eared Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow
- 0.6 Park Entrance, continue straight (east) on 2800 S
- 0.6 Private Pond on left (north) no trespassing
Sora, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Mallard, Canada Goose
- 1.6 Little Cove Ranch Rd on left (north) .5 miles side trip
Juniper Titmouse, Pinyon Jay, Western Scrub Jay
- 2.0 Junction of Hwy 77 Spur, turn left (northeast)
Lark Sparrow, Pinyon Jay, Black-throated Gray Warbler
- 2.3 Cemetery (Sunny Cedar Rest) on left (north)
Pinyon Jay, Lazuli Bunting, Juniper Titmouse
- 2.4 Junction of 2800 S, turn right (south/east)
Lark Sparrow, Prairie Falcon, Swainson's Hawk
- 3.8 Junction of Narrows Road, turn right (south)
Golden Eagle, Harris's Sparrow, Western Kingbird
- 7.3 Look for small occasional wetland on right (southwest)

American Coot, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal

7.5 Look for small road on left (north) leading to small pond

7.6 Gravel Pit on left (north)

Bank Swallow, Golden Eagle, Loggerhead Shrike

8.6 Jeep road to Jim Sage Canyon on left (north) 3.5-miles

Plumbeous Vireo, Gray Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

10.0 Riparian/willow area on right (south)

Lazuli Bunting, Great Blue Heron, Fox Sparrow

10.8 Junction of EY Road, turn right (south)

10.9 Raft River Crossing

Blue-winged Teal, Ferruginous Hawk, Belted Kingfisher

12.1 Junction of road to Yost, UT (4 miles to Utah border)

Brewers Sparrow, Golden Eagle, Horned Lark

14.5 Raft River Crossing

*Cinnamon Teal, Bank Swallow, Savannah Sparrow,
Northern Harrier, Long-billed Curlew, Burrowing Owl,
Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, Swainson's Hawk*

18.1 Junction of Almo-Lynn Road, turn right (north)

18.8 Turn right into Visitor Center (for info or to report), or

19.4 Turn left (west) onto 2975 S

20.1 Turn right (north) onto 750 E

22.0 Turn left (west) into Castle Rocks State Park

22.6 Tour ends at Castle Rocks Shelter Parking Lot

Species Descriptions: Pages 10-42 that follow list 163 species of birds documented in the checklist area, as verified by Wallace Keck, principle observer and park superintendent. The species order follows the Checklist of North American Birds, 7th Edition, which can be downloaded at:

<http://checklist.aou.org/>

_____ **Snow Goose** made a surprising stopover in fields north of Almo on March 15, 2014, and was easily photographed. No other observations have been noted, but flocks may be observed in flight during early spring migration.

_____ **Canada Goose** can be seen every year on local farm ponds, in flight, and at Castle Rock Pond. Breeding birds depart by August. Nesting pairs are increasing in the checklist area.

_____ **Mallard** can be seen year-round, but numbers swell in the checklist area beginning mid-March. Nesting pairs are fairly common in wet meadows and along Almo Creek and Raft River. Breeding birds depart or disperse by August.

_____ **Blue-winged Teal** is uncommon, but has been observed along pools of Raft River. A pair was recorded on June 6, 2015 in flight over the EY Road crossing of Raft River, west of the Narrows.

_____ **Cinnamon Teal** is the most common of the three teal species in the checklist area, and breeding pairs can be found along the Raft River beginning in mid-April. Birds likely depart by August.

_____ **Green-winged Teal** is uncommon, but was photographed on May 18, 2012 in a small wetland just southwest of the Narrows Road not far from the large roadside borrow pit. (See 7.5 on Auto Birding Route, page 8).

_____ **Gray Partridge** is often observed in Castle Rocks near the picnic shelter and lodge, and near the entrance to Castle Rocks State Park. As permanent residents, they may be encountered or flushed from tall grass nearly any time of year. Also look on eastside of 750 E, south of 2975 S.

_____ **Ring-necked Pheasant** is more often heard than seen, but look for them along 750 E, halfway between 2800 S and 2950 S. Birds are often heard in the field immediately east of the Visitor Center. Also look for them near the junction of EY Road and Narrows Road. (Permanent Resident).

_____ **Greater Sage-Grouse** is best encountered on Hwy 77 Spur roadsides near the waste transfer station and east of the Almo Cemetery (Sunny Cedar Rest). Look for them also in the sagebrush steppe south of Castle Rock and west of City of Rocks at the junction of City of Rocks Road and Birch Creek Road. This is a permanent resident and confirmed nester. Small leks (courtship areas) have been documented in previous years in the Castle Rocks pasture east of Almo Creek and north of the entrance road.

_____ **Dusky Grouse** was first confirmed and recorded in the checklist area on July 30, 2015, crossing the road at Finger Rock. Other unconfirmed sightings were reported in the shrubby landscapes above 7,500 feet south of Indian Grove. Preferred habitat is brushy mountain slopes.

_____ **Wild Turkey** sightings are uncommon, but have been documented nearly every year crossing Hwy 77 Spur about 200 yards south of the Big Cove Road junction. Wild Turkey have also been observed east and south of Smoky Mountain Campground in the pinyon-juniper woodlands, usually not far from the edges of woods.

_____ **American White Pelican** is almost only ever seen in the checklist area in flight above 10,000 feet, during spring migration. Small flocks make their way from the Great Salt Lake to the Snake River. Nearest location to see pelicans on water is Lynn Reservoir, Oakley Reservoir, and the Snake River from Lake Walcott to Burley.

_____ **Great Blue Heron** has been documented along the Raft River south of Almo and occasionally on farm ponds during spring and fall migration. It is more common outside the area along the Snake River or south to the Great Salt Lake.

_____ **Great Egret** was observed and photographed on May 7, 2013 in a pasture north of Almo. Observations are not expected outside of the spring migration (April-May).

_____ **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was observed along the Raft River just upstream of the EY Road bridge. The July 7 observation suggests a small breeding population may be in that area, or that these are post-breeding transient birds.

_____ **Turkey Vulture** arrives to the checklist area around late February or early March. By summer, they are quite common and easily observed riding thermals. Birds often perch overnight on fence posts and cottonwoods in the Almo Valley and also on rocks and pinnacles in City of Rocks, especially Buzzards Perch. Vultures are absent from the checklist area by early October.

_____ **Osprey** passes through the Almo Valley in mid to late April. One was photographed perched in a cottonwood near the Castle Rock Lodge on April 29, 2012. In other years, a single bird was observed perched on a power pole near the Durfee Hot Spring. Sightings are serendipitous and unpredictable.

_____ **Bald Eagle** sightings are more frequent than Osprey—mostly single birds in flight or perched near road-kill in winter months. They are vagrant or transient beginning in December and absent usually after March. They are almost always seen in the Almo Valley, and almost never in the state park or reserve.

_____ **Northern Harrier** is a permanent resident and is observed hunting low over a number of habitats, from pastures of the Almo Valley and Big Cove to the rocky outcrops between Elephant Rock and Lookout Rock in the Reserve. Once snow has left the high country, the Harrier is easily seen hunting windswept hills above 7,500 feet.

_____ **Sharp-shinned Hawk** is secretive, and observations are usually unpredictable. These smallest of accipiters are occasionally seen near the visitor center bird feeders, waiting to attack unsuspecting songbirds. They have also been encountered near the Almo Creek Wetland in willows, or in open woodlands of pinyon-juniper on Little Cove Ranch Road. (Permanent Resident).

_____ **Cooper's Hawk** is generally found in higher elevations within the checklist area than the Sharp-shinned Hawk. Look for Cooper's near the junction of City of Rocks Road and Twin Sisters Road, around Register Rock to Elephant Rock, and also Big Cove. (Permanent Resident).

_____ **Northern Goshawk** is rare, but does nest in the Reserve near Flaming Rock. They are easily identified by their piercing call and harassing behavior when hikers approach too close. When this occurs, nearby trails and climbing routes are temporarily closed. (Possible Permanent Resident).

_____ **Swainson's Hawk** arrives by mid-April and remains until mid-September. They are easily encountered on power poles along Narrows Road, EY Road, and Highway 77 Spur. Most observations are in the greater Almo Valley and few are observed in the high elevations of City of Rocks.

_____ **Red-tailed Hawk** is a permanent resident and can be observed soaring over nearly all habitats. A pair have

consistently nested in the tall Lombardi Poplar near the Castle Rock Lodge. Look for them perched on power poles along Narrows Road, EY Road, and Highway 77 Spur.

Ferruginous Hawk is uncommon, but observed each year generally in the Almo Valley, especially near the junction of Hwy 77 Spur and Narrows Road. Another frequent location is south of the EY Road bridge crossing of Raft River. Nesting activity has also been recorded in the transition zone from juniper to sagebrush southeast of Smoky Mountain and also in Jim Sage Canyon.

Rough-legged Hawk arrives in late September, after the last Swainson's Hawk has departed. They become increasingly numerous and often are the most common hawk in winter, primarily observed in the Almo Valley and Big Cove. Most have left this area for the far north by mid-April.

Golden Eagle is a permanent resident and the largest bird of prey in the checklist area. Nesting pairs are found on the northwest cliffs of Smoky Mountain, northwest of the Sunny Cedar Rest Cemetery and Walters Canyon north of Finger Rock. The best location to observe this bird is along the Narrows Road, perched on power poles or soaring over the low ridges southeast of Jim Sage Canyon.

Sora was overlooked for years in the checklist area, but now is routinely found near the entrance of Castle Rocks (Ranch Unit). Listen for them on the small farm pond just north of the road. (Pond is located on private property, so listen and look for them from the county road). There are probably others to be found wherever cattails occur on lower Almo Creek and Raft River.

American Coot is uncommon, mostly observed in spring

migration. One was photographed on May 18, 2012 in a small wetland just south of the Narrows Road not far from the large roadside borrow pit. The most suitable habitat is found along the Raft River just before leaving the checklist area. Look also in winter on Castle Rock Pond.

Sandhill Crane arrives by mid-March and is often located first by call. Their loud rolling cries echo across the pastures and wet meadows of the Big Cove, north Almo Valley, and Circle Creek. Nesting pairs have been located in the Almo Creek Wetland and lower Circle Creek below the Tracy ruins inside the Reserve. Cranes leave the area by mid-September.

Killdeer is a harbinger of spring, arriving to the area the first week of March. They are easily found by late March at the Castle Rock Pond and wet pastures of Almo Valley. They nest in open, unprotected graveled roadsides near water. There are few records after early August.

Spotted Sandpiper arrives in early May to the banks of Castle Rock Pond, Almo Creek, and Raft River. Birds nest and remain in the area until early August. Rarely more than a half dozen are observed together.

Long-billed Curlew arrives the first week of April and breeds in the irrigated fields of the Almo Valley and open grasslands east of Emigrant Canyon. While relatively uncommon, they are observed every year. Look for them along the EY Road or occasionally east of the visitor center.

Wilson's Snipe arrives in late March and remains through late July as a breeding bird. They are often heard over wet meadows of the Big Cove, and are easily seen at dawn or dusk along the road to Castle Rocks from the

entrance to the Almo Creek bridge.

_____ **Wilson's Phalarope** may nest near waters of the Almo Valley, but as yet is only confirmed as a spring migrant. Look for them on the farm pond northeast of Durfee Hot Spring. The pond is on private property, so observe with a scope from the pull-out along Highway 77 Spur.

_____ **California Gull** is only seen in migration from the Great Salt Lake to the Snake River across Almo Valley. Birds may be seen occasionally feeding over freshly tilled fields.

_____ **Rock Pigeon** is a fairly common permanent resident of the cliffs and pinnacles of City of Rocks and Castle Rocks. Look for them also near barns and ranching structures in the valley, especially just south and west of the visitor center, or Reed Springs Road.

_____ **Eurasian Collared Dove** first appeared in the checklist area in 2004 and quickly became the most common dove observed in and around the village of Almo. They are almost always seen while driving Highway 77 Spur from Durfee Hot Spring south to the visitor center. (Invasive Permanent Resident).

_____ **Mourning Dove** arrives by mid-April and remains until mid-September. This breeding species is best encountered away from territory claimed by the Eurasian Collared Dove. Look for them along fence rows and power lines of Big Cove Road, Narrows Road, and EY Road.

_____ **Barn Owl** is rarely seen in the checklist area, but is a common nesting bird on the cliffs of the Raft River Narrows, one mile east of the checklist area. One Barn Owl was briefly observed in the Box Elder trees at the visitor

center in August 2015. Look on south face of Castle Rock.

_____ **Western Screech Owl** is rarely observed, but is occasionally heard and reported in Smoky Mountain Campground and at Circle Creek Overlook. Additional observations are needed.

_____ **Great Horned Owl** is the most common owl of the checklist area. It is a permanent resident, often heard in winter. This owl is most common in cottonwoods, elms, and poplar trees in Almo and old ranch sites. It is also a common nesting bird on the cliffs of the Raft River Narrows, one mile east of the checklist area.

_____ **Burrowing Owl** is a confirmed nester within the checklist area, arriving in late spring and seemingly absent after mid-August. Birds are uncommon, but encountered along the EY Road and Lynn-Almo Road, perched on sagebrush.

_____ **Long-eared Owl** was recently photographed and confirmed along the Circle Creek Canyon Trail between Smoky Mountain Campground and the Reserve's eastern boundary. They are believed to be year-round residents, but are very secretive and overlooked.

_____ **Short-eared Owl** sightings have become increasingly more common over the pastures and sagebrush flats of Almo Valley as well as over the Castle Rocks pasture and pond. It may be a year-round resident, but numbers seem to decline in the winter. Look for them at dusk and dawn.

_____ **Northern Saw-whet Owl** has been reported at the Circle Creek Overlook by sound only. More observations are needed. Best location might be Indian Grove and the fir forests along Logger Spring Road in the Sawtooth

National Forest.

_____ **Common Nighthawk** is a late arrival to the summer breeding grounds of the checklist area, usually not before June 1. Birds are easily seen and heard over the Almo Valley, Big Cove, and Smoky Mountain Campground at dusk. Nighthawks depart the area by mid-September.

_____ **Common Poorwill** arrives as early as the first week of May, but are more frequently heard by late May. Birds seem to prefer the pinyon-juniper woodlands, but can also be encountered after dark along roads traversing the Reserve. Look for red eye reflection when illuminated by headlights. Birds leave by September.

_____ **White-throated Swift** arrives in mid-April and can be heard diving and swarming around the taller granite cliffs of the Reserve and Castle Rocks. Birds nest in cracks and crevices of the granite rocks. September 24, 2015 is the latest record.

_____ **Black-chinned Hummingbird** arrives the first week of May and departs by the last week of August. It is the most common hummingbird of the checklist area. Besides bird feeders at the visitor center and local businesses, look for them at Stines Creek Picnic Area, Smoky Mountain Campground, Parking Lot Rock, and Indian Grove.

_____ **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** arrives mid-May and seems to leave earlier than Black-chinned. Broad-tailed is noisy in flight, and can be located by call. Look for them in open woodlands on Creekside Towers Trail, Parking Lot Rock, and Indian Grove.

_____ **Rufous Hummingbird** is less numerous in the spring

than during the early fall migration, where it is seen frequently guarding and defending feeders. Rufous probably do not nest here, but by July they can be seen in Smoky Mountain Campground and in higher elevations like Finger Rock and Indian Grove.

Calliope Hummingbird is poorly documented in the checklist area and is likely only seen in fall migration. Calliope is probably more common in the highest of elevations where few birders spend time looking. A few birds appear at Almo area feeders annually.

Belted Kingfisher is a permanent resident of the checklist area, but uncommon. Almost all observations have been along the Raft River where the EY Road crosses. Birds are noisy in flight, especially where they have been flushed from riparian trees or power lines. (frequently seen in Elba)

Lewis's Woodpecker is at best accidental in the checklist area during the spring migration. There are only a handful of records, all in mid-May. One individual hunted for a few days up and down the fence line west of the visitor center on May 24, 2008. Best locations might be Logger Spring Road and Sawtooth National Forest.

Red-naped Sapsucker may be seen as early as the last week of March, but by late April they are frequently encountered in aspen groves throughout City of Rocks and Castle Rocks. Sightings persist through the second week of September. (Breeding Bird).

Downy Woodpecker is a permanent resident, but less common here than in urban and settled areas. This woodpecker is most frequently sighted in the Castle Rock Lodge orchard, or in trees around residences of Almo. Also

try the Sawtooth National Forest.

_____ **Hairy Woodpecker** is also a permanent resident, and more frequently seen in higher elevations such as Indian Grove and along the Logger Spring Road inside the Sawtooth National Forest. There are few fall and early winter records, probably because fewer birders are in the high country during this time.

_____ **Northern Flicker** is a numerous permanent resident, and is easily found in all seasons across almost all habitats. Flickers are also heard from great distances as much as they are seen. Don't be surprised to flush them from sagebrush thickets. Birds frequent wood-sided buildings.

_____ **American Kestrel** is a permanent resident, seen in almost all habitats, but most frequently seen perching on power lines in the Almo Valley and Big Cove. Kestrels are known to nest in the Lombardi poplar and cottonwood trees around the Castle Rock Lodge, so this is a good place to look first. Birds range to grasslands above 7,000 feet.

_____ **Merlin** is unconfirmed, but expected in migration. Please report any sightings in the checklist area.

_____ **Peregrine Falcon** was observed and documented in the 1980's and early 1990's, but has been unconfirmed for decades. Habitat is suitable. Please report any sightings in the checklist area. Photo confirmation is preferred.

_____ **Prairie Falcon** sightings are always a treat, as they are both uncommon and usually of only a single bird. This is a permanent resident, but nests have gone undetected. Most reliable sighting are on power poles along Narrows Road and 2800 S, east of the cemetery to Narrows Road.

_____ **Olive-sided Flycatcher** is uncommonly seen in spring and fall migration. There are a handful of observations annually. Look for them in the Stines Creek riparian area on the north side of Castle Rock. There are sightings as well in the Sawtooth National Forest.

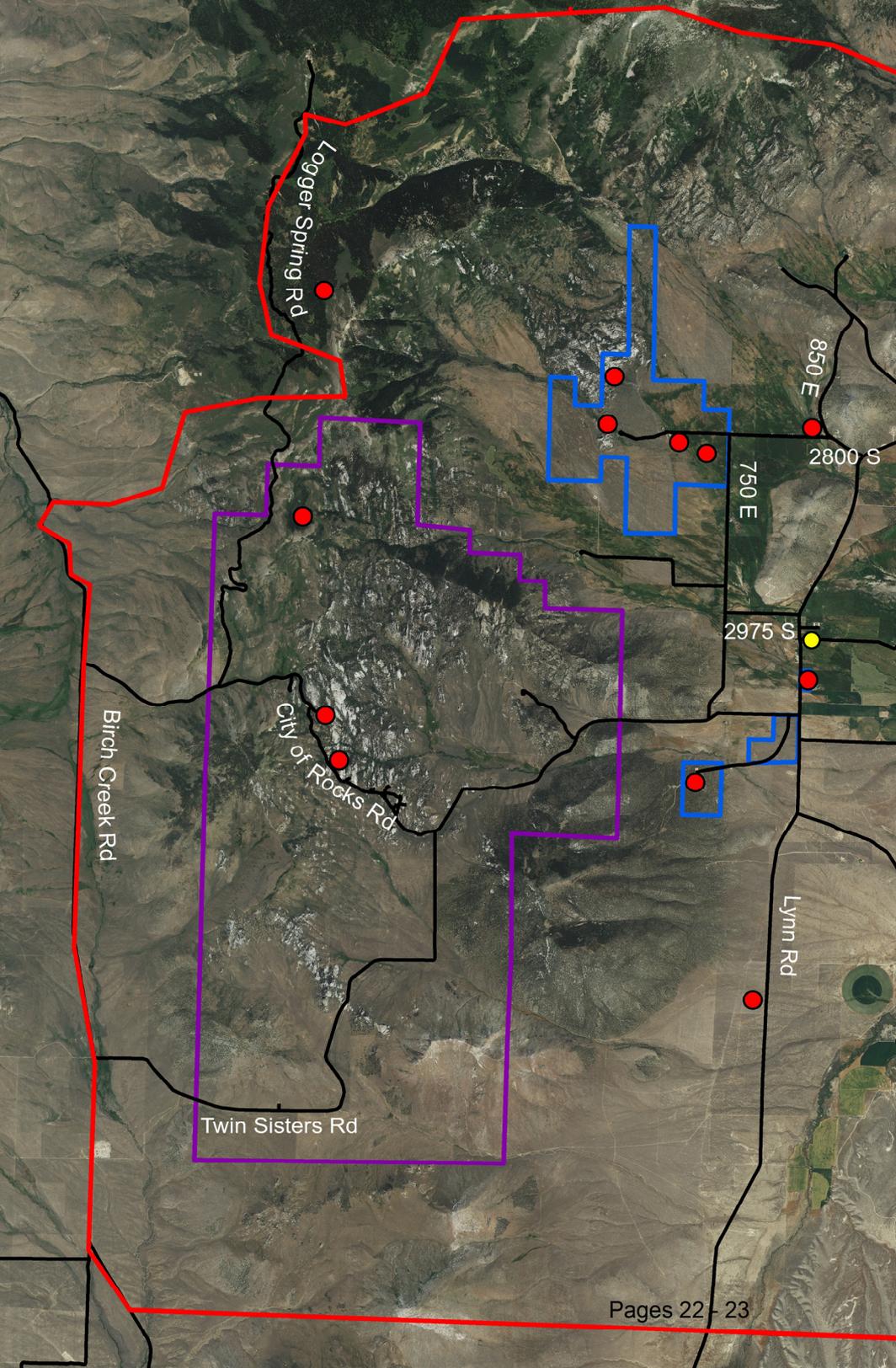
_____ **Western Wood-Pewee** is common and vocal from spring through early migration. Look for them in willow and shrubs from 10-15 feet in riparian areas, especially Almo Creek. They should be easy to find in the Sawtooth National Forest in open stands.

_____ **Willow Flycatcher** is a summer resident, but only a few dependable locations are known in the checklist area. The Birch Creek willows near the confluence of Walters Creek (extreme NW corner of checklist area) is productive. Also try lower Circle Creek willows and the Raft River bridge, eastern-most crossing of the EY Road.

_____ **Hammond's Flycatcher** is likely a more abundant summer resident than records indicate. Since this species prefers high, tall conifers, look for it in the spruce-fir forests of the Sawtooth National Forest along Logger Springs Road.

_____ **Gray Flycatcher** is the most common and sought-after of the *Empids* in the checklist area due to its limited range in Idaho. First arrivals are mid-May, and is a confirmed breeder/nester in the pinyon-juniper woodlands around Smoky Mountain and mixed pinyon-mahogany woodlands in higher elevations from Bath Rock to Finger Rock. Birds remain until late August.

_____ **Dusky Flycatcher** is found in lower elevations and dry brush from Castle Rock to Brackenbury Wash and Twin Sisters in the Reserve. Rarely found in solid stands of



Logger Spring Rd

Birch Creek Rd

City of Rocks Rd

Twin Sisters Rd

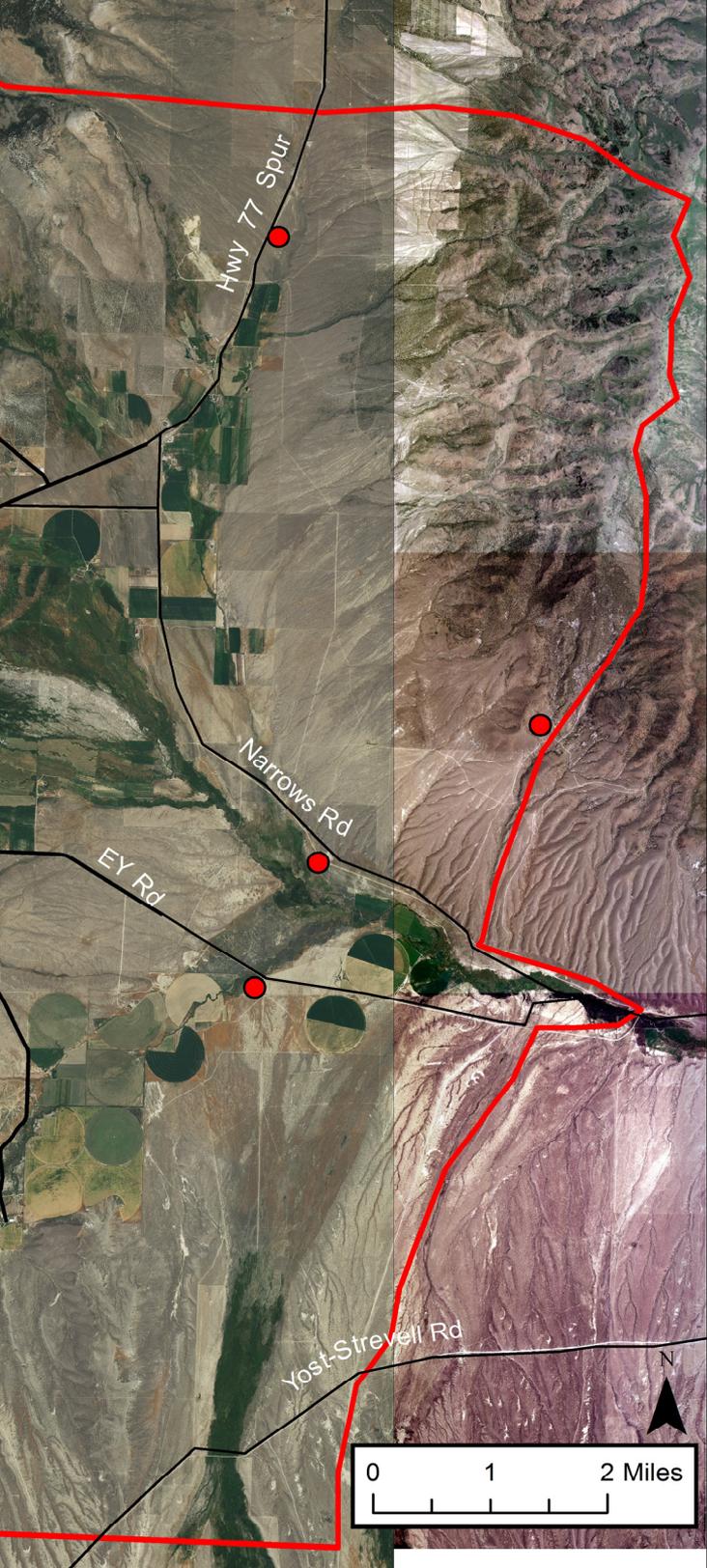
Lynn Rd

850 E

750 E

2800 S

2975 S



City of Rocks Bird Checklist Area

- City of Rocks Bird Checklist Area
- Castle Rocks State Park
- City of Rocks National Reserve
- Almo, Idaho
- Birding Hotspot

The City of Rocks Checklist Area is approximately 150 square miles and over 96,000 acres. This area was chosen for the following reasons: (1) Almo Creek Watershed, (2) diversity of habitat, (3) area most birded by visitors that offers recreational appeal, (4) landmarks serve as easily understood boundaries, (5) includes all ecosystems that birds of the park interact with or depend upon, and (6) offers scientific value and reference for other area land managers. For specific landmarks, place-names and trails, see detailed park, trails, topographical and forest maps available at the visitor center.

pinyon-juniper, look in the open stands of pinyon and mahogany. (Summer Resident).

_____ **Cordilleran Flycatcher** has a distinctive call that is quickly recognized in the spruce-fir forests of Graham Canyon, Indian Grove and Sawtooth National Forest. Arriving by mid-May, they breed and depart by mid-August. Cordilleran is the smaller and more yellow *Empid*.

_____ **Say's Phoebe** arrives much earlier than most migrants—by mid-March. Dependable locations include the visitor center and west from the Circle Creek Overlook along fence posts in open country. Say's Phoebe is still present the third week of September.

_____ **Ash-throated Flycatcher** barely ranges across the Utah state line into Idaho from late May to mid-August. Better locations are 30 miles east of the checklist area, but observations occur every few years, usually in the edge between pinyon-juniper woodlands and sagebrush on the eastern slope of Smoky Mountain.

_____ **Western Kingbird** arrives after the third week of April, becoming numerous and easy to find on fence posts and power lines in Almo, along the Narrows Road and EY Road. Kingbirds breed and then depart by mid-August.

_____ **Eastern Kingbird** is more likely a late summer transient than breeder or migrant. There are few records, one about every three years. Look for them along fence rows and Almo pastures, especially along 750 E.

_____ **Loggerhead Shrike** is the “Summer Shrike” that is fairly common in Almo Valley, especially seen perching on power lines, fences, and tall sagebrush. From mid-April through

August it is the only Shrike species in the checklist area, but records continue into October.

_____ **Northern Shrike** is the “Winter Shrike” inhabiting the same territory as the Loggerhead Shrike had the previous summer, but not as frequently observed. Northern Shrike is the larger of the two species.

_____ **Plumbeous Vireo** barely makes it across the Utah border into Cassia County (and other border counties) to breed at the edge of the pinyon-juniper woodlands. Birds are often heard before seen. Look for them at Smoky Mountain Campground from May to August.

_____ **Cassin’s Vireo** is rarely observed during spring and fall migration and is difficult to distinguish from Plumbeous Vireo. More records are needed. Please report confirmed sightings.

_____ **Warbling Vireo** arrives at the end of April, breeds, and then departs in mid-August. It is easily heard and then quickly located in aspen, willow, chokecherry, and semi-riparian trees and shrubs. Almo Creek Wetland and Stines Creek Picnic Area are best.

_____ **Pinyon Jay** ranges into Idaho’s southern border with Utah and Nevada, but City of Rocks is the best location to see it. From spring to fall, jays prefer juniper woodlands of the low hills north of Durfee Hot Spring to Sunny Cedar Rest. A flock of 30-60 birds frequents the resident feeders on Little Cove Ranch Road. By September, flocks begin to disperse to pinyon woodlands from Smoky Mountain Campground to Twin Sisters and Emigrant Canyon, possibly visiting or making seed caches. Pinyon Jays likely remain in the checklist area year-round, but more information is needed in late

winter. Nest sites have yet to be found.

_____ **Blue Jay** is likely a rare accidental transient. There are only two records: March 9 and April 9, 2005. In Idaho, 2004 was an irruptive year for blue jays.

_____ **Western Scrub-Jay** is a permanent resident of pinyon-juniper woodlands and dry scrub. Birds are often heard before seen. Look for them along Little Cove Ranch Road, Brackenbury Wash, and Smoky Mountain Equestrian Parking Area. Unlike Pinyon Jays, Scrub-Jays are rarely seen in flocks of four or more.

_____ **Clark's Nutcracker** is a permanent resident of higher elevations, usually associated with spruce-fir or Limber Pine from 6,000 feet to Graham Peak (8,867) and Cache Peak (10,339). In fall and winter, birds descend to below Steinfells Dome in the Reserve and upper Brackenbury Wash in Castle Rocks.

_____ **American Crow** might be common elsewhere, but in the checklist area it is generally a transient. A flock of 15-20 seem to favor a cottonwood grove about halfway between Eagle Rock and the Edward's Homesite along upper Almo Creek. In winter, check for flocks in Raft River Valley fields.

_____ **Common Raven** is easily found year-round in all habitats. Nests sites have been confirmed on Finger Rock in the Reserve and on power poles along Narrows Road.

_____ **Horned Lark** is a permanent resident, and almost exclusively found below 5,400 feet in the more deserted roadsides and greasewood flats of the Raft River. A slow drive along the EY Road and Narrows Road should produce sufficient observations.

_____ **Tree Swallow** arrives first among the swallows, usually sending scouts by the third week of March. Breeding birds prefer high country such as Indian Grove and Sawtooth National Forest. Tree Swallow remain in the area through mid-September.

_____ **Violet-green Swallow** is the most common of the six swallow species on the checklist. Birds arrive the third week of April and make their way to the granite cracks and crevices of City of Rocks and Castle Rocks to nest. Birds depart in mid-September.

_____ **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** arrives the last week of April. Because they nest in holes in banks, the best locations to observe them are along Raft River, or feeding over fields along the EY Road and Narrows Road. There are few records after early August, but birds may still be present into September.

_____ **Bank Swallow** nests in banks near Raft River on Reed Spring Road. This species is colonial, and flock size here consists of 15-25 birds. Arrival and departure dates are not well documented due to localized population and few birders visiting the site.

_____ **Cliff Swallow** nesting colonies are found on Keiser's Helmet and Register Rock in the Reserve and on Castle Rock in the state park. Nests of mud can also be found under bridges. Their stay is brief, arriving in early May and Departing in mid-August.

_____ **Barn Swallow** arrives by late April and is present through mid-September. Birds are frequently seen around the visitor center and park maintenance compound, as well as around bridges and barns in the Almo Valley.

_____ **Black-capped Chickadee** is far less common than the Mountain Chickadee. Most observations are February through April at feeders and around urban trees. City of Rocks appears to be on the southwest edge of its range. More information is needed.

_____ **Mountain Chickadee** is a fairly common permanent resident and is found in a variety of habitats, including bird feeders, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and spruce-fir above 7,500 feet. Best locations include Stines Creek, Brackenbury Wash, Smoky Mountain Campground, Parking Lot Rock and Creekside Towers Trail in the Reserve.

_____ **Juniper Titmouse** is a fairly common permanent resident whose habitat preference is pure juniper stands that begin to transition into pinyon-juniper woodlands. Best locations include Smoky Mountain Campground, equestrian parking area, Little Cove Ranch Road, and the pull-out on the curve beyond Circle Creek Overlook Road.

_____ **Bushtit** is almost always seen in small flocks. This permanent resident occurs rarely in Idaho north of the checklist area. Birds seem to prefer shrubby-open dry canyons and drainages. Look for them in Smoky Mountain Campground, along hillsides to Circle Creek Overlook, Parking Lot Rock, Emery Canyon, and Brackenbury Wash.

_____ **Red-breasted Nuthatch** is an uncommon permanent resident of the pinyon woodland and spruce-fir forests. Look in Brackenbury Wash in Castle Rocks, Circle Creek Canyon in City of Rocks, and Sawtooth National Forest.

_____ **White-breasted Nuthatch** is a permanent resident in southern Idaho, but only transient birds enter the checklist area. Observations are few and far between (5/16, 7/9,

10/28). Look for them in Brackenbury Wash, in the Sawtooth National Forest, and at local bird feeders.

_____ **Brown Creeper** records are sparse, but it is confirmed in late spring and summer for Indian Grove, Sawtooth National Forest and Brackenbury Wash. It may be a permanent resident but winter records are needed.

_____ **Rock Wren** arrives by mid-May and departs the end of August. Birds are often heard first, as their buzzy trill echoes across the rocky cliffs above 5,600 feet. Listen for them on Castle Rock and Comp Wall in the state park, or at Twin Sisters, Creekside Towers Trail, upper North Fork Circle Creek Trail and on rocky outcrops of wind-swept ridges up to Graham Peak.

_____ **Canyon Wren** is an uncommon permanent resident, recognized first by its hauntingly beautiful cascade of notes that echo from the rock walls. Look in Hostess Gully on Castle Rock, Comp Wall to the Cowboy Shelter, Parking Lot Rock, and on Twin Sisters.

_____ **House Wren** arrives the end of April and departs the end of August. Like the other wrens, the call is loud, distinctive, and quickly gives away the birds location. Sightings are widespread, and birders will have no trouble observing them in shady, riparian corridors like Almo Creek, Circle Creek, and also aspen groves and upper Brackenbury Wash.

_____ **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** only ranges north to the Snake River, but is easily found at City of Rocks. Gnatcatchers arrive the first week of May, and depart by mid-September. Dry open woodlands are preferred such as Castle Rock to Comp Wall and the south slope of Greene Mountain to Circle Creek Overlook Road.

_____ **Golden-crowned Kinglet** is an uncommon late fall to early spring visitor to the spruce-fir forests of Indian Grove and Sawtooth National Forest.

_____ **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** is a permanent resident of the high elevation forests of Graham Creek, Indian Grove, and Sawtooth National Forest. Birds are easily found in late spring through early fall just as Logger Spring Road enters the forest. Pull over, turn off the engine, and roll down the window. In September, look for them along Stines Creek and Almo Creek willows.

_____ **Mountain Bluebird**, Idaho's State Bird, is common along roadsides and fence rows of 750 E, 2800 S, and City of Rocks Road. A pair has routinely nested in a box along the fence east of the visitor center. First birds arrive by week three of February, and persist in small flocks through late October. Christmas Bird Count sightings on the east side of Jim Sage Mountain suggest that some bluebirds may remain year-round in mild winters.

_____ **Townsend's Solitaire** is a fairly common permanent resident of the Albion Mountains. In the winter, its single-note call is often the only sound in the Silent City of Rocks. Bath Rock, Parking Lot Rock, Stines Creek Picnic Area and Brackenbury Wash are dependable locations.

_____ **Swainson's Thrush** is a rare spring migrant of high elevations and dense forests. Best locations are likely Indian Grove, north-face slope of Graham Canyon, and Sawtooth National Forest. More records are needed. Please report sightings.

_____ **Hermit Thrush** is an uncommon summer resident of spruce-fir forests in high elevations and wooded canyons of

the Inner City. Birds will keep their distance from pursuing birders regardless of stealth, but will approach to investigate recorded songs (use recordings responsibly). Records span the third week of May through mid-July, but may remain into early August. Once singing ceases, birds are difficult to find.

American Robin is a common resident. Contrary to popular opinion, robins do not migrate in the fall and return in the spring, but actually form large flocks that inhabit protected canyons, especially in late November and December. Robins can be found in all habitats throughout the checklist area from spring to fall. The Castle Rock lodge and Stines Creek Picnic Area are dependable locations.

Gray Catbird seems to be expanding its range west along the southern border of Idaho. This summer resident has been observed in Oakley, Birch Creek Canyon, and Elba in recent years, but was absent from the City of Rocks Checklist area until June 23, 2015 when the first Gray Catbird was photographed in the willows next to the Castle Rock Shelter. Riparian thickets of Almo Creek and Raft River are likely to produce future sightings.

Sage Thrasher arrives the last week of April, breeds, and then departs late—the first of October. Birds are quite common and easily encountered along the EY Road, Lynn-Almo Road, and Narrows Road in sagebrush and greasewood flats. Birds prefer elevations below 5,600 feet.

European Starling is an abundant and permanent, non-native resident of the checklist area. Most populations occur in Almo Valley, Big Cove, and at Castle Rock Lodge, but can be encountered almost anywhere below 7,000 feet. Nests are easily found in Lombardi Poplar and cotton-

wood trees around the Lodge. Large flocks gather in late September and are seen perched on powerlines in late fall.

_____ **Bohemian Waxwing** is a transient accidental to the checklist area in winter. There are very few records, and any observation should be reported. Look for them in flocks of Cedar Waxwings, such as was the case at Bath Rock on November 27, 2014.

_____ **Cedar Waxwing** is a permanent resident, though observations are greatest during mid-May. Waxwings are gregarious and may be seen in flocks of a dozen to 30 or more, usually in deciduous trees such as aspen, chokecherry, and cottonwood. Birds are located by their constant high-pitched “sreee” call.

_____ **Orange-crowned Warbler** arrives the end of April and remains to breed in scrubby brush and trees. Song is easy to learn, and birds are best found by ear, but also look in willows of the Stines Creek Picnic Area or along Creekside Towers Trail and Parking Lot Rock. The lack of records after August is likely do to their silence, drab appearance, and difficult detection in brush.

_____ **Nashville Warbler** was first reported and photographed near Bath Rock on June 7, 2014 during the Birding Big Day competition. A small flock was observed (but no photo was taken) at Stines Creek below Sawtooth Spire on September 7, 2015. (Probably present in migration only).

_____ **Virginia Warbler** is one of the special finds in the checklist area due to its limited range in Idaho. Birds arrive mid-May and are found through the end of August or first week of September. Birds breed in dry, open woods such as Brackenbury Gulch, Parking Lot Rock, and open Mountain

Mahogany and Pinyon Pine of the North Fork Circle Creek. Also check habitat between Stines Creek Picnic Area and the NE slope of Castle Rock.

_____ **MacGillivray's Warbler** is present by the third week of May, breeds, and likely departs in mid to late August. There are few records after mid-August. Dependable locations include the Almo Creek Wetland, Stines Creek north of Castle Rock, and South Fork Circle Creek near Window Rock. Habitat preference is mid-elevation intermittent streams with chokecherry and willow.

_____ **American Redstart** was observed May 19, 2012 by Lew Ulrey and Wallace Keck in the Stines Creek Picnic Area. This was the first and only record. (Seen only in migration).

_____ **Yellow Warbler** is a common if not numerous warbler in the checklist area. Birds arrive by mid-May and are easy to find by song in the tall willows of Almo Creek near the Castle Rock Lodge. These warblers are found in all elevations where riparian habitat is present. Records after mid-August are needed.

_____ **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was observed by Wallace Keck on July 1, 1995 in aspens on the north side of Bath Rock. This extremely rare sighting of an adult breeding male, would seem quite the fluke if not for a similar report the same week in Stanley, Idaho. There are many sporadic sightings in the west.

_____ **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, like Yellow Warbler, is quite common, especially in the spring and summer in the Almo Creek willows near the Castle Rock Lodge. Birds arrive by mid-April and persist into mid-October. Fall birds seem to prefer fencerows and are often found with Mountain Blue-

birds along 750 E; and Almo Creek Willows in fall. Listen for chip call in September.

_____ **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (see cover) is another treat for Idaho, found generally south of the Snake River, and specifically in this checklist area in pinyon-juniper woodlands of Smoky Mountain and the hills north of Almo and south of Cache Peak. Birds arrive mid-May and depart mid-August. An active nest was photographed at Smoky Mountain Campground, May 24, 2014.

_____ **Townsend's Warbler** is a rare fall migrant, first documented and confirmed by Ryan Anderson and Wallace Keck on August 8, 2015 in the tall pinyon pines of the Smoky Mountain equestrian parking area.

_____ **Wilson's Warbler** migrates through the checklist area in spring and fall. Spring records are more common (mid-May through the first week of June). A few birds may breed here, and birders should report mid to late June observations. Brushy areas from the Almo Creek Wetlands or Stines Creek are best.

_____ **Yellow-breasted Chat** is uncommon, but probably breeds in the checklist area. (There are frequent sightings just outside the checklist area in summer at both the Upper and Lower Raft River Narrows). Spring sightings are best in the shrubs and willows of lower Stines Creek, below the picnic area. Sightings are expected along the Raft River. More records are needed.

_____ **Green-tailed Towhee** is found between May 10 and September 15. Birds prefer tall sagebrush and open pine woodlands, juniper and Mountain Mahogany. Look in the transition zones between Almo Creek and Castle Rocks,

especially southwest of Brackenbury Wash. In the Reserve, listen for them in the campgrounds from Elephant Rock to King-on-the-Throne.

_____ **Spotted Towhee** is a permanent resident, but few birds are found in the winter. Population swells from mid-March through early September. Spotted Towhees are easy to find from the road between Castle Rock Lodge and Castle Rock, and also north to Brackenbury Wash (May through August). Check these locations for the rare winter bird.

_____ **American Tree Sparrow** ventures south in the winter into the checklist area, and are usually found in small flocks along the Narrows Road and EY Road. Birds are counted on the Jim Sage Christmas Bird Count, and seen through February.

_____ **Chipping Sparrow** arrives after the third week of April, and likely remains through early September, but records after early August are few. Chipping Sparrows prefer open woodlands especially pinyon-juniper of Smoky Mountain Campground and Brackenbury Wash, and Mountain Mahogany of Parking Lot Rock.

_____ **Brewer's Sparrow** arrives after the third week of April and remains into late August. Preferred habitat is pure stands of sagebrush or mixed with Antelope Bitterbrush or native grasses. Look (or better yet listen) for them between the Castle Rock Lodge and the Stines Creek Picnic Area, along the archery course, Backyard Boulders Trail. In the Reserve, look along the California Trail from Camp Rock to beyond Register Rock, and also above Finger Rock to the Sawtooth National Forest boundary.

_____ **Vesper Sparrow** arrives the last week of March, breeds

in the checklist area, and then departs by mid-September. Birds are vocal upon arrival and prefer sagebrush steppe or grass-dominated sagebrush habitat similar to Western Meadowlark. Birds can be seen and heard from Big Cove Road, Castle Rocks pastures, entrance road to Smoky Mountain Campground, and along EY and Narrows Roads. Birds can occur in high elevations as well.

Lark Sparrow arrives the last week of April, breeds, and then departs in August (there are few records after the first week). Most dependable locations have been in the fence row of 2800 S (Big Cove Road) near the junction with Hwy 77 Spur, and also in the fence rows and few scattered juniper on 2800 S, just SE of the Sunny Cedar Rest Cemetery as you drive toward Narrows Rd.

Savannah Sparrow is a recent addition to the checklist, so few records are filed. As of this writing, the only dependable location has been along the EY Road. Stop 4.2 miles east from the junction of the EY Road and Almo-Lynn Road. Look and listen on south side of road toward fence line. This sparrow might be a breeder.

Grasshopper Sparrow, also a recent addition to the checklist, may be an overlooked breeding bird, but the few observations on file are during the spring migration, beginning in mid-May. Look and listen for this sparrow between the Castle Rock Pond and Almo Creek, and also in the short grass area north of the junction of Twin Sisters Road and Birch Creek Road. Please report all sightings.

Fox Sparrow is a mid-May arrival, and possibly a breeder. Its song is loud and fairly distinctive, though by no means frequently encountered. Look for Fox Sparrow in willow thickets in Almo Creek, especially the Almo Creek Wetland.

Please report all sightings of Fox Sparrow.

_____ **Song Sparrow** may be a permanent resident, but their numbers drastically decrease between September and mid-March. It is the most common breeding sparrow in the riparian areas of Almo Creek and Circle Creek below 6,000 feet. Birds are very vocal in spring and early summer. Birds can be coaxed from dense brush by playing recordings.

_____ **Harris's Sparrow** was first reported in the mid-1990's at feeders in Almo in January. No other sightings were documented for nearly 20 years. Kathy Eklund observed and reported one May 10, 2014 along the north end of Narrows Road. One was observed on January 3, 2015 during the Jim Sage Christmas Bird Count at the visitor center. Both birds were photographed.

_____ **White-crowned Sparrow** is a permanent resident. Birds prefer higher elevations in summer. Look for them in open areas along Logger Spring Road above 7,000 feet. By September, birds begin moving to low elevations and are easily found in flocks, especially in the fall, along Big Cove Road, EY Road, and Narrows Road.

_____ **Dark-eyed Junco** is a permanent resident; however, Oregon Junco (subspecies) moves north in early May, and is replaced by Pink-sided Junco (subspecies) in higher elevations—typically above 7,000 feet. During the winter, Oregon Juncos are easily observed in small flocks throughout the checklist area, especially at feeders and roadsides, fence rows, and brushy areas. Pink-sided Juncos are uncommon to fairly common in the summer in the higher elevations, especially in the Sawtooth National Forest.

_____ **Western Tanager** arrives mid-May, breeds, and departs

the area by late August. In late May 2006, visitors had a rare treat when dozens of colorful tanagers suddenly arrived to the lawn and trees of the visitor center. First arrivals are often detected at the visitor center feeders, but soon tanagers take up preferred breeding habitat in riparian willows, dogwoods and chokecherries, especially along upper Almo and Circle Creeks. Also expect to find them in aspen groves and sub-alpine firs of Indian Grove and in the Sawtooth National Forest.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak is an unexpected accidental from east of the Continental Divide; however, there are two confirmed records (with photographs), both observed at the visitor center: May 31 to June 1, 2010 and May 25, 2014.

Black-headed Grosbeak arrives the second week of May, and is sometimes observed at the visitor center feeders. Birds breed in brushy areas, especially riparian willow-dogwood-chokecherry, but also aspen groves. Stines Creek upstream of the picnic area and Brackenbury Wash in Castle Rocks are fairly reliable for observations. There are few records after July.

Lazuli Bunting arrives the first week of May, breeds, and departs by mid-August. This colorful and rather musical bird is fairly easy to find in open juniper at the edge of the sagebrush steppe. Look for them between the Almo Creek Wetland and Eagle Rock Grove Wetland, Brackenbury Wash, the transition from sagebrush to juniper on the road to Smoky Mountain Campground, and then in brushy fencerows in July.

Bobolink sightings in the checklist area are rare—only two (May 27 and June 10); however, a small colony breeds

in grassy fields of Elba, just five miles north of the checklist area. Our sightings might be birds migrating to that area. Birds were observed on power lines in Almo.

_____ **Red-winged Blackbird** is often shown in guidebooks as a permanent resident, but most birds seem to relocate out of the checklist area from September through February. Birds begin to arrive in Almo fields and pastures the first week of March; and populations build significantly in April. Birds are common in Castle Rock pastures, and along Big Cove Road and EY Road.

_____ **Western Meadowlark** is often shown in guidebooks as a permanent resident, but birds seems to relocate out of the checklist area from November through February. The nearby Jim Sage Christmas bird count does include this bird in January. Birds begin arriving early March and become quite common in fields and pastures during the breeding season. Look for them perched on powerlines and fence posts on all valley roads, and breeding in the Castle Rocks pasture.

_____ **Yellow-headed Blackbird** is a recent addition to the checklist. Birds began moving into the Big Cove and Almo farm ponds in spring 2014 and (June 5-6, 2015). Birds likely drop into the checklist area when migrating from the Great Salt Lake to the Snake River.

_____ **Brewers Blackbird** usually arrives the first week of April, but there are sporadic earlier records. The checklist area is at the boundary of seasonal to permanent resident. Birds become common during the breeding season in pastures of the Big Cove or Almo Valley. Birds likely leave the area in late October in flocks. There are no records for November through February.

_____ **Brown-headed Cowbird** arrives the first week of May, and can be observed in almost any habitat or elevation. Best locations are the Big Cove, Almo pastures, and edge between Almo Creek Wetland and the surrounding sagebrush steppe in Castle Rocks. Birds depart late July.

_____ **Bullock's Oriole** arrives the second week of May to the taller deciduous trees of Almo ranch sites and Castle Rocks lodge. Birds are noisy and song is distinct. This breeding bird is among the most colorful in the checklist area. Birds depart late July.

_____ **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** was first reported in the checklist area on March 6, 2005, east of Steinfells Dome. This species was photographed on May 30, 2012 at the park superintendent's residence feeder. There are no other records. These dates may suggest a winter residence and possible rare breeder in higher elevations.

_____ **Pine Grosbeak** was observed at length on February 26, 2012 south of Camp Rock toward the steep grade of Smoky Mountain. This sighting is west of its normal range and is considered accidental. There are no other records.

_____ **House Finch** is not as common in the checklist area as Cassin's Finch, so careful observation is required when distinguishing the two species. Both species are permanent residences. House Finches are most likely to be seen around Almo residences.

_____ **Cassin's Finch** is a common permanent resident of the open woodlands of pinyon-juniper, wherever that habitat is encountered. Fall through spring they can be seen at the visitor center feeders. Look for them in late spring and

summer to move into higher elevations like Indian Grove.

_____ **Red Crossbill** is a permanent resident of the high-elevated sub-alpine fir forests of Indian Grove and Sawtooth National Forest. There are no observations in the checklist area below 6,800 feet.

_____ **Common Redpoll** was first reported in the checklist area by Kathy Eklund, and later photographed by Wallace Keck along the Narrows Road on February 16, 2013 during the Great Backyard Bird Count. This rather large flock of 30+ is the only sighting thus far, as birds do not typically range this far south in the winter.

_____ **Pine Siskin** is a common permanent resident that is easily found at resident thistle feeders from fall to spring, and in mixed woodlands, especially higher elevations in summer. Try Indian Grove and Logger Spring Road in the Sawtooth National Forest in summer, and the visitor center feeders in winter.

_____ **Lesser Goldfinch** was first recorded in the checklist area on April 24, 2012 at the superintendent's resident feeders (Little Cove Ranch Road), but has become a regular at the visitor center feeders each spring (but in small numbers). Earliest record is January 30, and latest record is June 6. A small population might breed in the area.

_____ **American Goldfinch** is a common permanent resident found in a variety of habitats. In winter and spring, check out the visitor center feeders, in summer and fall, watched roadsides and fence rows, especially as common sunflower seeds ripen. Goldfinches are also found in high elevations like Indian Grove in summer.

_____ **Evening Grosbeak** is an expected winter visitor in conifer treetops especially around older ranch homes and feeders; however more observations occur in mid-May, probably as birds prepare to move to higher elevations. Evening Grosbeak is an expected permanent resident, but records do not currently bear that out.

_____ **House Sparrow** is a common permanent resident of the checklist area, and is easily found at the visitor center, and most old ranch homes and buildings. It is rarely if ever encountered above 6,000 feet in the checklist area.

_____ **Addition #1:** _____

_____ **Addition #2:** _____

_____ **Addition #3:** _____

Date: _____

Observers: _____

Field Notes: _____

LGB's (Little Gray Birds) of the City of Rocks Checklist Area can be a challenge. You might be a birder if you can name all three without consulting a field guide. For answers, questions or to report unusual sightings, contact author and superintendent Wallace Keck at 208-824-5911; Wallace_Keck@partner.nps.gov PO Box 169; Almo, ID 83312. Follow us on Facebook!



___ Snow Goose	___ Downy Woodpecker	___ European Starling
___ Canada Goose	___ Hairy Woodpecker	___ Bohemian Waxwing
___ Mallard	___ Northern Flicker	___ Cedar Waxwing
___ Blue-winged Teal	___ American Kestrel	___ Orange-crowned Warbler
___ Cinnamon Teal	___ Merlin	___ Nashville Warbler
___ Green-winged Teal	___ Peregrine Falcon	___ Virginia Warbler
___ Gray Partridge	___ Prairie Falcon	___ MacGillivray's Warbler
___ Ring-necked Pheasant	___ Olive-sided Flycatcher	___ American Redstart
___ Greater Sage-Grouse	___ Western Wood-Pewee	___ Yellow Warbler
___ Dusky Grouse	___ Willow Flycatcher	___ Chestnut-sided Warbler
___ Wild Turkey	___ Hammond's Flycatcher	___ Yellow-rumped Warbler
___ American White Pelican	___ Gray Flycatcher	___ Blck-throated Gray Warbler
___ Great Blue Heron	___ Dusky Flycatcher	___ Townsend's Warbler
___ Great Egret	___ Cordilleran Flycatcher	___ Wilson's Warbler
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	___ Say's Phoebe	___ Yellow-breasted Chat
___ Turkey Vulture	___ Ash-throated Flycatcher	___ Green-tailed Towhee
___ Osprey	___ Western Kingbird	___ Spotted Towhee
___ Bald Eagle	___ Eastern Kingbird	___ American Tree Sparrow
___ Northern Harrier	___ Loggerhead Shrike	___ Chipping Sparrow
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	___ Northern Shrike	___ Brewer's Sparrow
___ Cooper's Hawk	___ Plumbeous Vireo	___ Vesper Sparrow
___ Northern Goshawk	___ Cassin's Vireo	___ Lark Sparrow
___ Swainson's Hawk	___ Warbling Vireo	___ Savannah Sparrow
___ Red-tailed Hawk	___ Pinyon Jay	___ Grasshopper Sparrow
___ Ferruginous Hawk	___ Blue Jay	___ Fox Sparrow
___ Rough-legged Hawk	___ Western Scrub-Jay	___ Song Sparrow
___ Golden Eagle	___ Clark's Nutcracker	___ Harris's Sparrow
___ Sora	___ American Crow	___ White-crowned Sparrow
___ American Coot	___ Common Raven	___ Dark-eyed Junco
___ Sandhill Crane	___ Horned Lark	___ Western Tanager
___ Killdeer	___ Tree Swallow	___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak
___ Spotted Sandpiper	___ Violet-green Swallow	___ Black-headed Grosbeak
___ Long-billed Curlew	___ N. Rough-winged Swallow	___ Lazuli Bunting
___ Wilson's Snipe	___ Bank Swallow	___ Bobolink
___ Wilson's Phalarope	___ Cliff Swallow	___ Red-winged Blackbird
___ California Gull	___ Barn Swallow	___ Western Meadowlark
___ Rock Pigeon	___ Black-capped Chickadee	___ Yellow-headed Blackbird
___ Eurasian Collared Dove	___ Mountain Chickadee	___ Brewers Blackbird
___ Mourning Dove	___ Juniper Titmouse	___ Brown-headed Cowbird
___ Barn Owl	___ Bushtit	___ Bullock's Oriole
___ Western Screech Owl	___ Red-breasted Nuthatch	___ Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
___ Great Horned Owl	___ White-breasted Nuthatch i	___ Pine Grosbeak
___ Burrowing Owl	___ Brown Creeper	___ House Finch
___ Long-eared Owl	___ Rock Wren	___ Cassin's Finch
___ Short-eared Owl	___ Canyon Wren	___ Red Crossbill
___ Northern Saw-whet Owl	___ House Wren	___ Common Redpoll
___ Common Nighthawk	___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	___ Pine Siskin
___ Common Poorwill	___ Golden-crowned Kinglet	___ Lesser Goldfinch
___ White-throated Swift	___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet	___ American Goldfinch
___ Black-chinned Hummingbird	___ Mountain Bluebird	___ Evening Grosbeak
___ Broad-tailed Hummingbird	___ Townsend's Solitaire	___ House Sparrow
___ Rufous Hummingbird	___ Swainson's Thrush	
___ Calliope Hummingbird	___ Hermit Thrush	
___ Belted Kingfisher	___ American Robin	
___ Lewis's Woodpecker	___ Gray Catbird	
___ Red-naped Sapsucker	___ Sage Thrasher	