



Birds in the Red River Valley

A partial list of birds in the gallery forest
(the narrow band of forest along the river) of the Red River today.

Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

Length: 10"-14"

Features: Small size; wings short, rounded: tail long, barred; breast finely striped with cinnamon. Fly by flapping wings several times & gliding with wings flat or slightly bowed, then flapping a few more times.

Habitat: Woodlands, brushy areas.

Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Length: 19"-26"; wing span 4 1/2"

Features: Bright tail, conspicuous in flight; throat & underparts white with dark belly band. Holds its position in a stiff breeze; hunts from the air and from exposed perches.

Habitat: Open woodlands.

Black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*)

Length: 10 1/2"-12 1/2"

Features: Long slim bird; grey-brown above, white below; underside of tail black; 3 pr. of large white spots, reddish-brown wing patches visible in flight. Call: *cuk-cuk-cuk*.

Habitat: Moist second-growth woodlands, brushy areas near water.

Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

Length: 18"-24"

Features: Large size, widely spaced ear tufts; mottled brown above, lighter below with fine dark barring. Various calls include a series of muffled hoots: *hoo-hoo-hoo, hoooo-hoo*.

Habitat: Scrub areas, woodlands, bottomlands.

Downy woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)

Length: 5"-6 1/2"

Features: Small size, short bill; black & white pattern on head & wings; white back; red patch on head. Barbed tongues to extract wood-boring insects from trees.

Habitat: Woodlands, orchards, suburbs, parks.

Hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*)

Length & Features: Similar to Downy

Woodpecker, but larger. Forest dweller; probably named for the short feathers around its nostrils.

Yellow-bellied sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)

Length: 7"-8 1/2"

Features: Long white wing stripe; black, white, and red pattern on head & neck. Drills rows of holes in birches & orchard trees, removing the nutritious inner bark, & eating the sap that runs out, as well as the insects trapped in it.

Habitat: Forests, woodlands, orchards, parks.

Yellow shafted flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Length: 10"-13"

Features: White rump; black crescent at throat; yellow on underside of wings & tail; male with mustache of black. Often seen on the ground, searching for ants & licking them up with its long tongue. Call: *wick-a, whik-a, wick-a*.

Habitat: Farmlands, suburbs, parks, open forests.

Great crested flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*)

Length: 7"-9"

Features: Reddish-brown tail & wing patch; yellow belly; whitish wingbars; slight crest. Calls: loud, clear *wheep* or rolling *crreep*.

Least flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*)

Length: 4 1/2"-5"

Features: Small size; belly white or pale yellow; head & back olive-gray; whitish eye ring & wingbars. Call: *chebec*—as often as 75 times a minute, Male sometimes adds a warble—*chebec, tree-treo, chebec, tree-chou*.

Habitat: Open forests, orchards, rural towns, parks.

Eastern wood pewee (*Contopus virens*)

Length: 5"-6"

Features: brownish olive above, whitish below; conspicuous white wingbars; no eye ring. Call: *Pee-a-wee*, up and down in pitch, repeated every 5-10 seconds.

Blue jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

Length: 9 1/2"-12"

Features: Pointed crest; black "necklace"; bright blue above with white on wings & tail. Noisy bird known for raucous voice & wide variety of calls, cries, & screams.

Habitat: Woodlands, farmlands, suburbs, city parks.

Common crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

Length: 16"-20"

Features: Glossy black, with black bill, legs, and feet; rounded wings and tail. Most intelligent of birds.

Habitat: Forests; woods near water; open areas; farmlands; suburbs.

Black-capped chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)

Length: 4 1/2"-5 1/2"

Features: Mostly light gray; black cap and throat; white cheek patch. Call: *chick-a-dee*.

Habitat: Mixed & deciduous forests, suburbs, parks.

White-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)

Length: 5"-6"

Features: Black crown and nape; blue-gray above, white below; bill long & straight. Habitually climb down tree trunks headfirst, gathering insects & insect eggs from crevices under the bark.

Habitat: Mixed & deciduous forests, groves, suburbs.

American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Length: 9"-11"

Features: Bright reddish-orange below; dark gray above, broken eye ring & white-tipped tail.

Habitat: Open forests, farmlands, suburbs, parks, sheltered areas with fruit trees.

Yellow-throated vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)

Red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)

Length: 5"-6 1/2"

Features: White eye stripe; gray cap greenish above, white below; no wingbars. Persistent singer with lengthy passages of short, two-to six-note phrases.

Habitat: Deciduous woodlands, suburbs.

Warbling vireo (*Vireo gilvus*)

Length: 4 1/2"-5 1/2"

Features: No conspicuous markings; grayish green above, white below.

Habitat: Open mixed & deciduous forests; groves; orchards; shade trees in towns & suburbs.

Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Length: 4"-5"

Features: Mostly yellow; male streaked with reddish on breast; female duller. Call: *pip-pip-pip-*

sissewa-is-sweet & wee-see-wee-see-wiss-wiss.

Habitat: Riverside woodlands, wet thickets, brushy marsh edges, orchards, suburbs, parks.

American redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

Length: 4"-5 1/2"

Features: Male black, with white belly & orangish patches on wings & tail; female grayish above, white below with yellow patches. One of commonest warblers. Call: set of single or double notes on one pitch, which may end with a higher or lower note—*xee-xee-xee-xee-xee-xeeo*.

Habitat: Second-growth deciduous forests, thickets, suburbs, parks.

Baltimore oriole (*Icterus galbula*)

Length: 6"-7 1/2"

Features: Sharp-pointed bill; male bright orange, with black on head, throat, back, wings, & tail; female pale yellow or orange below, brownish above, with white wingbars.

Habitat: Open deciduous woodlands; shade trees in farmlands, towns, cities.

Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)

Length: 6"-7"

Features: Male scarlet, with black wings & tail; female yellowish green, with darker wings & tail.

Habitat: Thick deciduous woodlands, parks.

Rose-breasted grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

Length: 7"-8"

Features: Heavy bill; male with rose breast patch & black & white pattern; female streaked brown, with white eye stripe & wingbars.

Habitat: Deciduous woodlands, groves.

Indigo bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)

Length: 4 1/2"-5 1/2"

Features: Male indigo-blue, with blackish wings & tail, no wingbars; female brown above, whitish below, with faint streaking on breast. One of few birds singing at mid-day: *sir, chewe, chewe, cheer, cheer, swe, swe, chir, chir, chir, sir, sir, see, see, fish, fist, fish.*

Habitat: Brushy areas, scrubby fields.

For More Information:

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May 2005