

# 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: *Peea-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:**River Keepers  
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