

Natural History of the Gray Vireo



Habitat

Gray vireos live in open areas with lots of oak trees and junipers. They like to stay near rocky slopes, arroyos, and steep hills.



Nesting

Gray vireos usually build their nests in juniper trees. They pick tall, wide junipers. Their nests are about 8 feet above the ground. The mother bird lays about three eggs.

Food

Gray vireos hunt for food in trees. They jump on insects or catch them while flying.



Migration

Gray vireos come to southern New Mexico in April and leave in August. The rest of the year, they live in Mexico.



Possible Threats

The biggest danger to gray vireos is losing their habitat. People cut down juniper trees for different reasons, such as:

- Using the wood for fires
- Making more space for livestock
- Clearing land to get oil and gas



Another danger to gray vireos is the brown-headed cowbird. This bird lays its egg in a gray vireo's nest. When this happens, some gray vireos leave their nests. If they stay, the cowbird chick grows bigger than the gray vireo chicks. The cowbird chick takes most of the food, so the gray vireo chicks might not get enough to eat.



References

- DeLong, John P. and Sartor O. Williams III. 2006. Status report and biological review of the gray vireo in New Mexico. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. Conservation Services Division. Santa Fe, New Mexico. 31 p.
- Harris, Jonathan P., Loren M. Smith, and Scott T. McMurtry. 2020. A multiscale analysis of Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) nest-site selection in central New Mexico. *Avian Conservation & Ecology*. 15(1):12.
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. 2007. Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) recovery plan. NM Dept. of Game and Fish, Conservation Services Division. Santa Fe, New Mexico. 30 p.