

## 8. OLD DAM OVERLOOK

The trail leads to benches beside the original 1881 stone dam that once provided water to a growing city.

*The trail elevation affords good views of migrant warblers including Wilson's, Audubon's, Orange-crowned, Yellow, and MacGillivray's. Carefully check the dense grove of willows beside the path near the dam.*

## 9. UPPER POND

The canyon closes in here to shelter cottonwoods and abundant willows.

*Listen for warblers. Black-capped Chickadee can be found here, with a few Mountains that descend from above. Ruby-crowned Kinglet and many more species may be present in migration.*

## 10. BEAVER PONDS

This part of the preserve is the best birding spot in terms of diversity. The beavers are still actively shaping the area creating a series of evolving ponds containing snags used by many flycatchers. Some of the larger trees have been fenced for protection so a closed-canopy bosque persists on the south side.

*Woodpeckers including Hairy, Downy, Ladder-backed, Red-shafted Flicker, and Red-naped and Williamson's Sapsucker can be found year-round. In migration and in summer, you are likely to find warblers, flycatchers, as well as Black-headed Grosbeak, and hummingbirds. Arrive early to listen for Warbling, and Plumbeous Vireos, Hermit Thrush, Spotted Towhee, Western Tanager, and Bullock's Oriole.*



*Olive-sided and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Black and Say's Phoebes, Cassin's and Western Kingbirds make use of the perches over the water and up the opposite slope, while Empidonax flycatchers may be seen in the bosque (riparian woods). Lazuli Bunting and House Wren are possible as well.*

## 11. MARSH OVERLOOK

A few feet away on a rock outcrop, you get a slightly better view up and down the canyon.

*Listen for Virginia Rail and Sora. Herons may be present, and warblers and flycatchers can be seen using perches below.*

## 12. POND OVERLOOK

A pond, all that remains of the old Two-mile Reservoir, holds water year-round and hosts an extensive area of cattails.

*You will find migrant ducks, resident American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, swallows, White-throated Swift, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Great-tailed and Common Grackle, and Belted Kingfisher. The shore may hold a Spotted Sandpiper.*

## 13. SHRUB MEADOW

Earth from the deconstructed dam was piled here, and plant succession has given rise to a thriving area of shrubs including Four-winged Saltbush, Chamisa, Big Sage, and others.

*This is a prime location for White-crowned, Lincoln's, Vesper, Chipping, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Spotted and Canyon Towhees, and Gray-headed, Pink-sided, and Oregon Juncos. It is also an opportune place to look skyward for hawks, vultures, and eagles. Western and Mountain Bluebirds and Band-tailed Pigeons may fly over too. Note the profusion of dragonflies and butterflies in summer.*

## LOWER PARKING

As you near the lower parking lot, a trail branches to the south which can be used to return to the Audubon Center.

*Check the inviting group of cottonwoods beside the bypass channel of the river which is attractive to migrants. Around the lower lot, look for Black-headed Grosbeak, Bushtit, Mountain Chickadee, American Magpie, and Juniper Titmouse.*



You can get more information and a bird checklist at:

[www.NM.Audubon.org/center/](http://www.NM.Audubon.org/center/)

or at:

[www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/newmexico/index.htm](http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/newmexico/index.htm)

Please note that dogs and bicycles are not allowed on either the Preserve or Audubon trails.

The upper parking lot is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM; the lower lot during daylight hours.

*Contributors include Bernie Foy, Tom Jervis, Dawn Foy, Carlyn Jervis, and Jonathan Batkin. Map by Natural Resource Institute [www.NRI-NM.org](http://www.NRI-NM.org).*

*Photos by Warren Berg.*

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# Birding Santa Fe Canyon



Without a doubt, the best birding spot close to downtown Santa Fe is the portion of Santa Fe Canyon at the end of Upper Canyon Road. The Nature Conservancy's Santa Fe Canyon Preserve and the Randall Davey Audubon Center and Sanctuary form a contiguous parcel of 660 acres that is protected for its striking landscapes and wildlife habitat. It is also designated as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International. Bounded by thousands of acres of national forest land, the Preserve and Sanctuary provide an easily accessible and peaceful sanctuary for plants, animals and visitors that is worth visiting in all seasons.

To reach the area, take Alameda St. east from downtown Santa Fe. Turn left onto Upper Canyon Rd. to the lower parking lot just off Cerro Gordo Rd. or to the upper parking lot at the Audubon Center. Points of interest and what to expect are described below starting from the upper lot, but all the areas can be reached from either lot.



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## 1. RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY

The historic home of painter Randall Davey was originally the first sawmill in Santa Fe until Davey remodeled it into a residence in 1920. The sanctuary provides birding opportunities on its landscaped grounds, particularly at a number of feeders near the buildings, as well as in natural areas on the property.

Hummingbird activity can be intense, with nesting Black-chinned and Broad-tailed and migrant Rufous and Calliope. Many birds frequent the feeders summer and winter including Western Scrub Jay, House Finch, Canyon and Spotted Towhees, both Mountain and Black-capped Chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers.



Canyon Towhee

After visiting the gardens and feeders, return to the nature shop and follow the stone stairs up the slope. Please pay the \$2 trail fee at the store or in the donation box at the trail head.

## 2. OLD MEADOW

This area was by turns an agricultural field and Randall Davey's horse pasture. It is being actively invaded by shrubs and trees which will be kept thinned out to preserve the open aspect. It includes the remnants of the "Highline Ditch," which fed the electrical power plant now restored at the Water History Park at the corner of E. Alameda and Upper Canyon Rd.

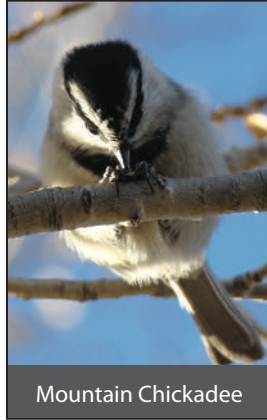


Townsend's Solitaire

As at the Upper Meadow (7), there are abundant perches nearby to be checked for jays and Clark's Nutcracker. Nuthatches may be found, as well as Juniper Titmouse, Townsend's Solitaire and other piñon-juniper birds. Gray Flycatcher may be found as well.

## 3. THE PERCH

This shade shelter is often used for educational programs but offers a glimpse of the dam on the Santa Fe River that impounds Nichols Reservoir, part of the city of Santa Fe's current water system. The shade is a welcome respite on hot summer days and provides good views of meadow habitat and the upper Santa Fe River Canyon.



Mountain Chickadee

In addition to the usual meadow birds, keep an eye on the sky for Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks in summer, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Merlin in winter, Peregrine Falcon, Swainson's Hawk, and Osprey in migration, and Golden Eagle.

## 4. BEAR CANYON

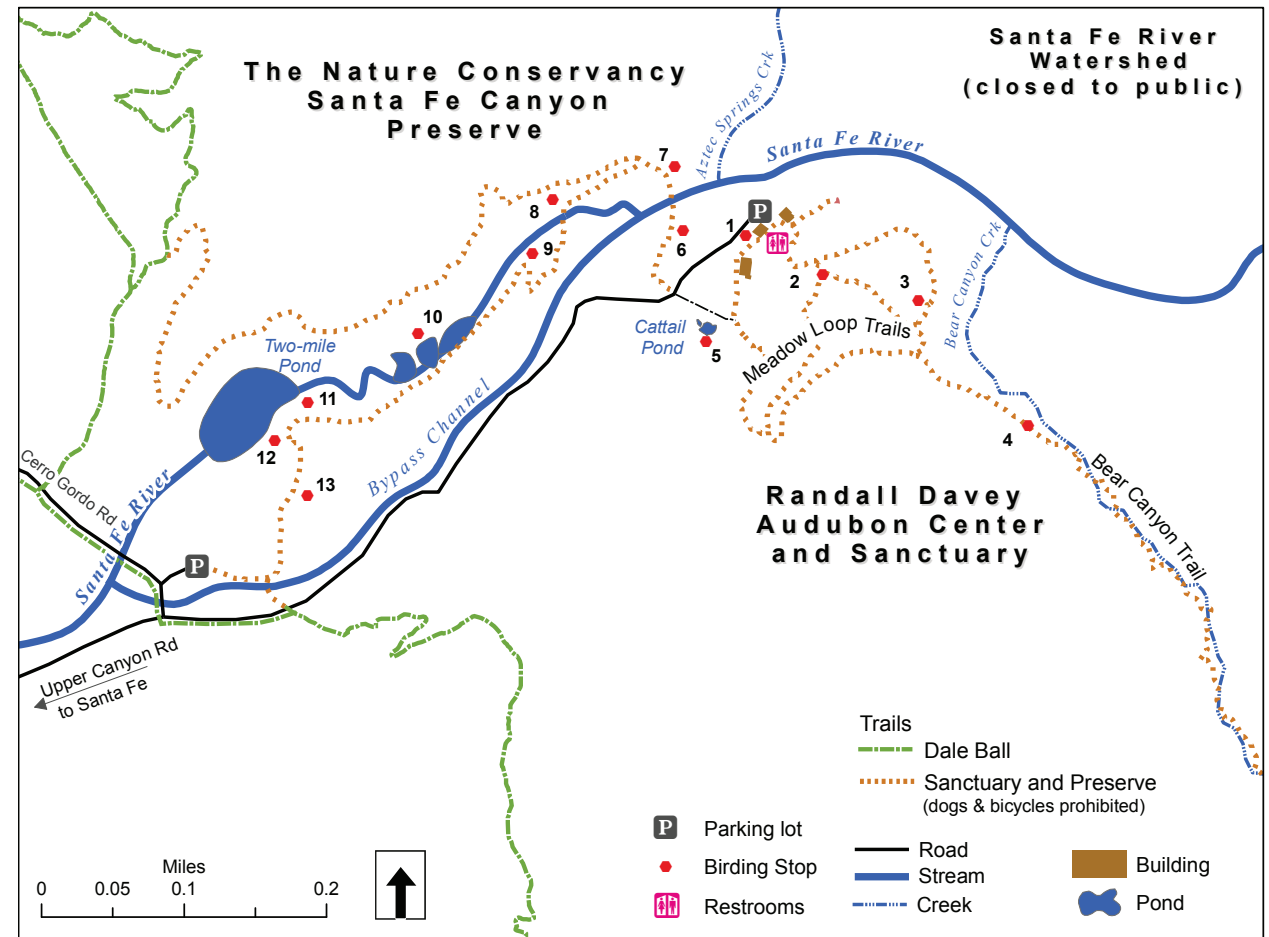
The trail continues up the hill, and forks left to Bear Canyon climbing through mature Ponderosa Pine and mixed conifer forest.

Pygmy Nuthatch, Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, and other montane species can be found here all year. Grace's and Black-throated Gray Warbler in summer. Townsend's Warbler occurs in the fall and Wild Turkey leave tracks in the snow in winter.

## 5. CONSTRUCTED WETLAND

This small series of wetlands is designed to treat the sewage from the Audubon Center, although it is not always used for this purpose. Nevertheless, the area is kept wet using water from the acequia (irrigation ditch) so it still attracts water-seeking birds who usually remain hidden in the thick brush.

To access the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, continue down the driveway, cross the road, and follow the trail down the steps and through mature Piñon Pine and One-seed and Rocky Mountain Juniper, which may hold a different selection of birds.



## 6. RIVER CROSSING

In spring you may get your feet wet here and in summer, the willows can be very thick.

Look for passerines such as warblers, vireos, and finches. Golden-crowned Kinglet and Cedar Waxwing may be present in winter and Green-tailed Towhee in migration.



Black-headed Grosbeak

## 7. UPPER MEADOW

This open flat field is recovering more slowly than the rest of the preserve, possibly because of compacted or highly disturbed soils.

There are abundant perches nearby to be checked for Western Scrub, Piñon, and Steller's Jays and Clark's Nutcracker. White-breasted, Red-breasted, and Pygmy Nuthatches may be found, as well as Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and other piñon-juniper birds. Lewis's Woodpecker occurs occasionally. Townsend's Solitaire can be abundant in fall (when they frequently sing) and winter. Look for finches, including Cassin's Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, Lesser and American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak, and Red Crossbill.