

AMERICAN DIPPER (*CINCLUS MEXICANUS*)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G3 / MBTA; not listed under the ESA.

Distribution: Resident throughout AK and western Canada, and in isolated populations in most western states and Mexico from eastern Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast. Present on Navajo Nation on east and west faces of the Chuska Mountains, upper Canyon de Chelly, Little Colorado River, and upper Piute Canyon near Navajo Mountain. Potential exists anywhere perennial streams have the proper habitat parameters.

Habitat: Nests near clear, unpolluted streams usually ≤ 15 m in width and ≤ 2 m in depth, with a variety of riffles, pools, and waterfalls with substrate of rocks, sand, and rubble; instream and streamside boulders are necessary for perches. Nests are placed on ledges or in crevices on stream-bank structures of small cliffs, large rocks, fallen logs and tree roots. Streams used in winter may be larger and deeper, but lack of ice is major selection factor.

Similar Species: Body size, coloration, behavior, and habitat distinguish this species.

Phenology:

- e.MAR-l.APR: arrival to breeding areas, pair formation, mating
- l.MAR-l.JUN: egg-laying/incubation (14-17 days) (2nd broods possible)
- m.APR-m.AUG: nestling period (24-26 days)
- m.MAY-m.AUG: fledging period
- l.MAY-m.SEP: independence (4-24 days) and dispersal of young
- e.OCT-l.DEC: migration if necessary; non-migratory if stream remains unfrozen

Survey Method: ≥ 1 pedestrian surveys with high-power optics recommended for breeding pairs during 1 APR-15 JUL; habitat evaluation may be done year-round.

Avoidance: For nesting habitat, no surface disturbance within 15-60 m (depending on stream category, per Navajo Natural Heritage Program, 1994) of occupied habitat; no activity within 0.2 km ($\frac{1}{8}$ mi) of active nest during 15 MAR-15 AUG; buffer may be less depending on activity type and duration, but not less than 0.1 km; avoid upstream activities that affect water quantity and chemistry within occupied habitat.

References:

- Kingery, H.E. 1996. American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*). In The Birds of North America, No.229 (A.Poole and F.Gill, eds.) The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and the American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C. (description p.2)
- Navajo Natural Heritage Program. 1994. Draft Guidance, Navajo Nation Aquatic Resources Protection Plan. Window Rock, AZ.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1984. Draft habitat suitability index model for American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*). Division Ecological Services, Sacramento, CA.