

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO
(COCCYZUS AMERICANUS)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G2 / western U.S. 'Distinct Population Segment' listed as candidate on 25 JUL 2001 (66FR:38611); MBTA.

Distribution: Breeding range includes all eastern U.S. states, and formerly throughout most western U.S. states and northern Mexico (extirpated from British Columbia, WA, OR, and NV). Currently the western U.S. cuckoo population (which includes the Navajo Nation) is comprised of rare, local breeders in disjunct riparian habitats of major river valleys. Breeding may occur at all elevations throughout Navajo Nation, but currently only known from several sections of the San Juan River. Potential for breeding may also occur along the Little Colorado and Colorado rivers, within Canyon de Chelly, Chinle Valley, and other canyons or streams with appropriate habitat. Winters in Central and South America; migratory habitat for Navajo Nation is unknown.

Habitat: Nests within close proximity to water in mature riparian woodlands with dense understories that are, preferably, ≥ 17 ha with a minimum of 3 ha of closed-canopy broad-leaved forest; will also nest in orchards adjacent to river bottoms. Preferred riparian woodlands and nest substrate consists of willow, cottonwood, alder, mesquite, hackberry, soapberry, and cultivated fruit trees.

Similar Species: Body/tail size and shape, coloration, and call distinguish this species.

Phenology:

- l.MAY-l.JUN: arrival to breeding areas
- m.JUN-m.JUL: pair formation and nest building
- l.JUN-e.AUG: egg laying and incubation (9-11 days)
- m.JUL-l.AUG: nestling period (7-9 days)
- l.AUG-l.SEP: adults and young depart breeding area

Survey Method: ≥ 2 tape-playback surveys between 15 JUN-30 JUL, separated by ≥ 10 days.

Avoidance: No activity within 0.2 km ($\frac{1}{8}$ mi) of active nest from 1 JUN-15 SEP; extreme disturbances (e.g. blasting) may require larger buffer; no alteration of suitable habitat year-round within 0.4 km of habitat patches used for breeding, or potential habitat until surveyed.

References:

Hughes, J.M. 1999. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No.418 (A.Poole and F.Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. (description p.2)