

GRAY VIREO
(VIREO VICINIOR)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G4 / MBTA; not listed under the ESA.

Distribution: Breeding range includes mostly montane regions and adjacent scrubland of southwestern U.S. from south-central NM north to northwestern CO, southwest to southern NV and to southeastern AZ; local breeding in southern CA and southwestern TX; winters mostly in south-central AZ, Sonora Mexico, and the Baja Peninsula; also in southwestern TX. Distribution on Navajo Nation is relatively unknown; but potential occurs throughout pinyon-juniper woodlands of Navajo Nation.

Habitat: Prefers mixed juniper/pinyon, juniper sagebrush associations, and possibly in dry brushland and oak scrub woodlands; continuous shrub cover 0.5 – 2 m in height is important component of breeding habitat in CA and TX parts of range, possibly on Navajo Nation also. Nests in CO were 2 m above ground in 3 m tall junipers, on average; also nests in pinyon pine, sagebrush, sumac, mountain mahogany, and oak species. Species is often separated from other *Vireo* species by elevation preferences.

Similar Species: Most like, and may share habitat at higher elevations with, Plumbeous Vireo which has bold white eye rings and above beak and slower song; similar in appearance to Bell's Vireo which is not a breeding bird of Navajo Nation; Juniper Titmouse has slight tufted head and call similar to chickadee; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is smaller and has darker gray colors, thin beak, and strong white outer edge of tail, which is usually held upright; Gray Flycatcher has slight olive coloration on dorsum and whitish below, shows white on outer edge of tail, which is dropped down slowly upon perching; bushtit is smaller and shows brown cheek patch, and usually found in large, active flock.

Phenology:

- e.MAR-l.APR: arrival to breeding area, courtship, nest-building (peak of migration is l.MAR-m.APR)
- m.MAY-l.JUN: egg-laying and incubation (12-14 days)
- l.MAY-m.AUG: nestling period (13-14 days)
- l.JUN-l.AUG: fledging, independence of young
- m.AUG-m.OCT: migration to wintering area (peak of migration is m.SEP)

Survey Method: Conduct 1 tape-playback survey between 15 MAY and 10 JUN in appropriate habitat (P-J stands between 5,800-7,200 ft. elev.) from dawn to noon; if no VIVI found, repeat survey between 15 and 30 JUN. Use 3, 2-min. listening periods with 2, 20-30 sec. tape-playing at survey points spaced 200-300 m apart. (Protocol per: DeLong and Williams, 2006, Appendix C. Protocol for surveying for Gray Vireos in New Mexico.)

Avoidance: No activity within 0.2 km (1/8 mi) of active nest site during 1 MAY-31 AUG; buffer may be less depending on activity type and duration, but not less than 0.1 km; no habitat alteration year-round within 0.2 km of nest site (=12 ha or 30 acre).

References:

- Barlow, J.C., S.N. Leckie, and C.T. Baril. 1999. Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*). In The Birds of North America, No.447 (A.Poole, and F.Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- DeLong, J.P. and S.O. Williams III. 2006. Status report and biological review of the gray vireo in New Mexico. New Mexico Dept. Game and Fish Report.