

Outdoor Recreation

is

Outdoor Education

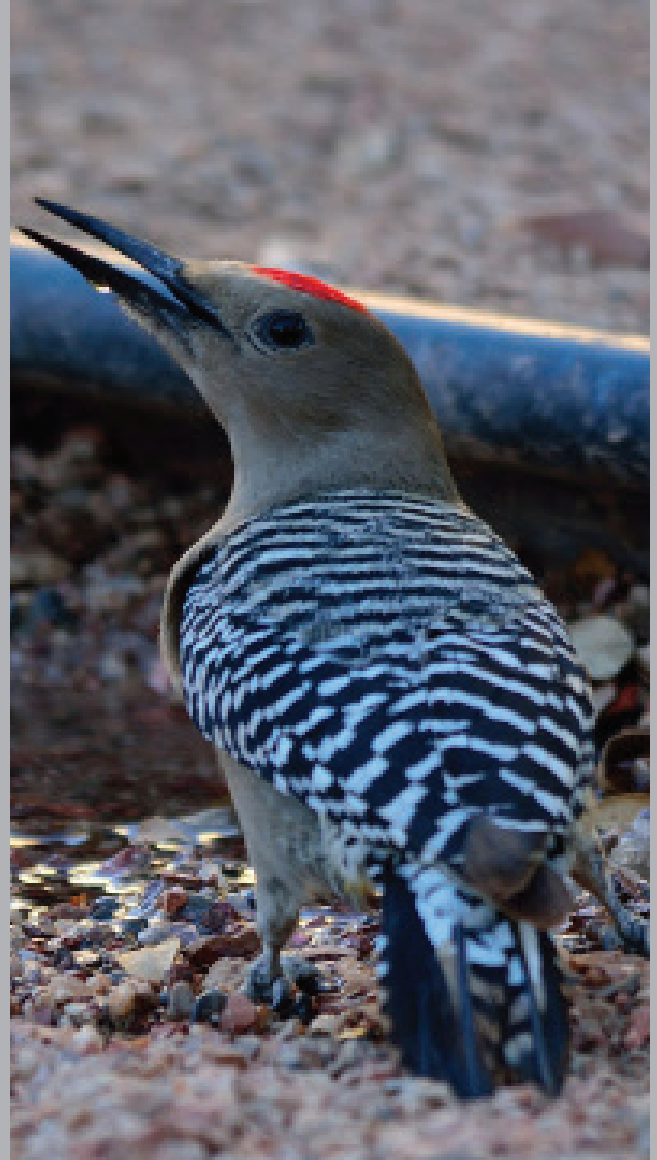
Learning About New Mexico's Wildlife Gila Woodpecker

Gila woodpecker **(*Melanerpes uropygialis*)**

The Gila Woodpecker is an aggressive and striking bird. It may be distinguished from other woodpeckers by a combination of barred black-and-white upper parts, white patches on the rump and at the bases of the primary feathers, and a light grayish-brown head.

This bird was not recorded in New Mexico until the beginning of the 20th century, which has led to speculation that it may be a recent invader. If that's true, this woodpecker reached its present range in the Gila Valley by the early 1900s and was considered common at Red Rock in September 1908.

In New Mexico, it is found in lower woodlands, especially cottonwoods, and along stream courses. It feeds on insects and fruits, and at times it catches flies. The nest is a hole excavated in a tree, typically in a cottonwood limb fairly high above the ground.



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