juniper, and oak woodlands.

9. Lake Roberts
This is the area most beautiful mountain lake and offers excellent birding in marshes and on the ponderosa pine and oak hillsides.

Location: North on NM 15 north then right on NM 35 to Lake Roberts. You can also take Hwy 180 east, left on NM 152, then left on NM 35. Mile marker 25.

Travel time one way: 1 hour 15 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets, picnic tables.

Habitat: Aquatic, ponderosa pine, pinyon-juniper woodlands.

Birding East of Silver City

10. Ft. Bayard Wildlife Refuge
Historic Ft. Bayard was a frontier cavalry fort in the late 1800’s. A National Cemetery is located here. National Recreation Trails in the refuge offer pleasant hiking and opportunities to see elk.

Location: East on Hwy 180, turn left at light to Ft Bayard then follow the signs for forest road 536. The road dead ends in 3 miles and you can pull off at several locations along the way to bird.

Travel time one way: 15 minutes.

Facilities: None.

Habitat: Riparian, pinyon-juniper woodlands.

11. Black Range
The Black Range offers a beautiful variety of mountain scenery from desert foothills to mixed conifer and aspen forests. Convenient places to park and bird are at the primitive National Forest campgrounds along NM 152. These are Lower Gallinas and Upper Gallinas Campgrounds, and Iron Creek Campground.

Location: East on Hwy 180 then left on NM 152.

Travel time one way: 1 hour.

Facilities: Toilets, picnic tables.

Habitat: Riparian, ponderosa pine, pinyon-juniper, woodlands.

Birding West of Silver City

12. Redrock Road
This dirt road winds through the forested foothills of the Burro Mountains. It goes into the Gila National Forest but there is some private property within the forest boundary and you shouldn’t enter private land. There are many side roads and pull offs where you can park. Birding is good in the forest and the many small, brushy washes.

Location: West on Hwy 180 about 13 miles, then left on Mangas Valley Road, go about five miles then right on Forest Road 851 (Redrock Road).

Travel time one way: 45 minutes.

Facilities: None.

Habitat: Ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper woodlands, brushy hillsides.

13. Mangas Springs
This small marsh along the highway is an oasis in the surrounding arid grasslands. It attracts many birds and is a great place to stop on your way to the Gila River Bird Habitat Management Unit.

Location: West on Hwy 180 about 17.5 miles. Between mile posts 96 and 95 turn left onto McMillen Road. This half mile section of road parallels the highway. The marsh is on private property that borders the road. Before the road rejoins the highway there is a trash barrel and a pull off where you can park and walk along the fence to bird.

Travel time one way: 20 minutes.

Facilities: None.

Habitat: Marsh, cottonwood and willow woods.

14. Bill Evans Lake
This small fishing reservoir can be visited in conjunction with the Gila River Bird Habitat Management Unit.

Location: West on Hwy 180 then left at the Bill Evans Lake turnoff, mile marker 87.

Travel time one way: 45 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets.

Habitat: Aquatic.

15. Gila River Bird Habitat Management Unit
This stretch of the Gila River is managed for bird habitat and a great variety of species can be seen.

Location: West on Hwy 180 then left at the Bill Evans Lake turnoff, mile marker 87. In about three and a half miles, and before ascending the hill to the lake, proceed straight on a gravel road that goes south. Continue on the gravel road for about five miles to River Vista. There are paths through the woods along the river. You can also drive another mile and a half down river to Billings Vista. A trail goes down river to lush riparian woodlands. Use caution if you ford the river and don’t cross at all if the river is high and you can’t see the bottom.

Travel time one way: 1 hour.

Facilities: Toilet at River Vista only.

Habitat: Riparian woodlands.

16. Mogollon Creek & the Gila River
This area offers opportunities to see Bighorn Sheep.

Location: West on Hwy 180 to Cliff, mile marker 84, right on NM 211. When NM 211 curves right, go straight on NM 293. It’s about seven miles from Hwy 180 to the end of the road. There is a primitive National Forest campground on the south side of the creek where you can park and bird. You can also bird south along the Gila River.

Travel time one way: 45 minutes.

Facilities: Toilet.

Habitat: Riparian woods and brushy land.

17. Catwalk of Whitewater Canyon
The Catwalk National Recreation Trail, made up of metal walkways attached to the rock walls of Whitewater Canyon, make this a unique birding excursion. Stop at the Glenwood Ranger Station south of Glenwood to get an informative “Catwalk of Whitewater Canyon” brochure.

Location: West on Hwy 180 to Glenwood, mile marker 50, then turn right on NM 174.

Travel time one way: 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets and picnic area.

Habitat: Riparian, pinyon-juniper woodlands.

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Diversity
Approximately 65% of the bird species in New Mexico have been seen in Grant County. The lush riparian habitat of the river valleys, the scenic mountains of the Gila National Forest, and surrounding grasslands offer many opportunities to see a variety of species throughout the year.

This guide serves as your introduction to birding locations in Grant County. You should obtain the "Birds of the Gila National Forest Check List," listed in reference guides below, to use with this guide.

Maps: Silver City / Grant County Chamber of Commerce Scenic Tours Map available at the Visitor Center at 201 N. Hudson in Silver City, and at the businesses of Chamber members.
Gila National Forest map available at the Gila National Forest office, 3005 E. Camino Del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061, and at District Ranger Stations.
Reference guides: "Birds of the Gila National Forest Check List" is available at the Chamber of Commerce, at several businesses of Chamber members, and also at all Gila National Forest offices.

New Mexico Bird Finding Guide published by the New Mexico Ornithological Society is available at local bookstores, and is highly recommended.

Directions: Directions and approximate travel times in the following descriptions are from Silver City. All birding locations are easy to drive to and no hiking is necessary. The locations are on public lands and right-of-ways, but there are some areas where roads are adjacent to private property. In such cases you can bird from the roads but don’t cross onto private property without permission. Most roads are paved, but there are a few dirt roads and forest campgrounds that can be muddy if there has been recent precipitation. At certain times of year weather conditions can change quickly. Always carry adequate clothing and water.

Birding in & near Silver City

1. The Big Ditch Park in Silver City

Once the main street of Silver City in the late 1800’s this unique park was created by a series of floods in the early 1900’s. Species are limited, but it’s a pleasant place to bird in addition to visiting historic downtown Silver City.

Location: Near the Silver City/Grant Co. Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center where you can park and get directions to Park entrance.

Facilities: Restrooms at Visitor Center.

Habitat: Riparian woods. Feeder at Visitor Center.

2. The Scott Park Municipal Golf Course / Ridge Rd.

The grasslands south of Silver City contrast to the mountains north of town and provide opportunities to view different species.

Location: Go south on Hwy 90, turn left on Ridge Road at the top of the hill then go one mile to Golf Course Road and turn left. Follow the signs to the Club House and check with management before birding at the golf course. The golf course is one of two courses in New Mexico that is in the Audubon Golf Course Sanctuary System and managed to enhance wildlife habitat.

You can also bird in the grasslands by continuing south on Ridge Road which becomes gravel. Most of the land is private property but birding can be done from the road. This is a good location for hawks.

Travel time one way: 15 min. to golf course.

Facilities: Restrooms.

Habitat: Grasslands, brushy washes, ponds.

3. Little Walnut Picnic Area

A short, easy drive north from Silver City.

Location: North on Little Walnut Road. Little Walnut Picnic Area is on the left about a half mile after you cross into the Gila National Forest.

Travel time one way: 15 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets, picnic tables.

Habitat: Ponderosa pine and juniper woodlands.

Birding North of Silver City

NM 15, NM 35, and NM 152 make a scenic loop drive north of Silver City into the Gila National Forest and to the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. Forests, lakes, and river valleys offer a variety of habitats for great birding. There are also numerous hiking trails. Look for trail signs.

4. Cherry Creek & McMillan Campgrounds

This beautiful canyon offers excellent birding for forest species. There are signs indicating the entrances to these forest campgrounds. You can park in them to bird. An added bonus are the spring and summer wildflowers, fall colors, and interesting rock formations.

Location: North on NM 15, milepost 11.5 & 12.5.

Travel time one way: 30 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets, picnic tables.

Habitat: Riparian deciduous, coniferous woodlands.

5. Signal Peak, Forest Road 154

This graveled road ascends the densely forested north slope of Signal Peak and ends at a saddle below the lookout tower. You can park and walk the last quarter mile to the tower. Birding is best en route from Cherry Creek Canyon to the top of the mountain. There are many pull offs along the way where you can park to bird.

Location: North on NM 15 to the upper end of Cherry Creek, turn right on Forest Road 154.

Travel time one way: 1 hour.

Facilities: None.

Habitat: Mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, oak, and aspen forests.

6. Pine Flats

A good place for forest species on your way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings or Lake Roberts. Open flat areas and gentle slopes make walking easy.

Location: North on NM 15, mile marker 18.

Travel time one way: 45 minutes.

Facilities: None.

Habitat: Ponderosa pine and oak woodlands.

7. Grapevine & Forks Campgrounds

Parking at either of these campgrounds gives you access to birding along the Gila River.

Location: North on NM 15, mile marker 39.

Travel time one way: 1 hour 30 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets.

Habitat: Riparian woodlands.

8. The Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

The trails from the Monument entrance and Visitor Center provide good access for birding along the Gila River. The half mile walk to the Cliff Dwellings is very nice and also good birding. Look for Golden Columbine here in the summer. The Visitor Center has a great selection of Native American, southwest and nature books.

Location: North on NM 15, mile marker 46.

Travel time one way: 1 hour 45 minutes.

Facilities: Toilets at the Visitor Center, Cliff Dwellings Entry Station, and picnic areas. There is an entrance fee for Gila Cliff Dwelling National Monument trail.

Habitat: Riparian, ponderosa pine, pinyon-