



Los Alamos' endangered animals

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Of the 41 threatened or endangered animal species in New Mexico, five live—or have potential habitats—within or near the boundaries of the Laboratory. These species are the Mexican Spotted Owl, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Jemez Mountains Salamander, and the newly listed New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Each spring, Mexican Spotted Owl surveys are completed by Laboratory wildlife biologists in six canyons on Laboratory property. When the owls are confirmed during these surveys, the canyons are checked later in the season to determine if nestlings are present. In 2015, two breeding pairs and seven nestlings were confirmed.

Los Alamos biologists perform Jemez Mountain Salamander annual surveys from mid-summer to the beginning of fall in the hopes that the summer monsoons will create wet enough conditions for the salamanders to be above ground. In 2015, two salamanders were found.

Jemez Mountains Salamanders are dark brown on top, with brassy coloring on their sides and gray on their undersides.

During bird breeding season, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher surveys are conducted as biologists walk through two wetland habitats at the Laboratory and play the unique call of the flycatcher. Through these surveys, Willow Flycatchers of unknown subspecies have been detected, but none have been confirmed as Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. Similar surveys will begin for the Yellow-billed Cuckoo in 2016, but there are no surveys for the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse.

Documenting these animals on Laboratory property ensures that the Lab adheres to two federal laws that protect wildlife, the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and ensures these species will continue to have a home at Los Alamos for years to come.

To learn more and to see other articles about how the Laboratory's operations might impact Northern New Mexico, please check out the recently published [Annual Site Environmental Report Summary](#), which details the Lab's commitment to environmental programs.

The endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher is usually less than six inches in length and, while perched, flicks its tail slightly upward.

Los Alamos National Laboratory

www.lanl.gov

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

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