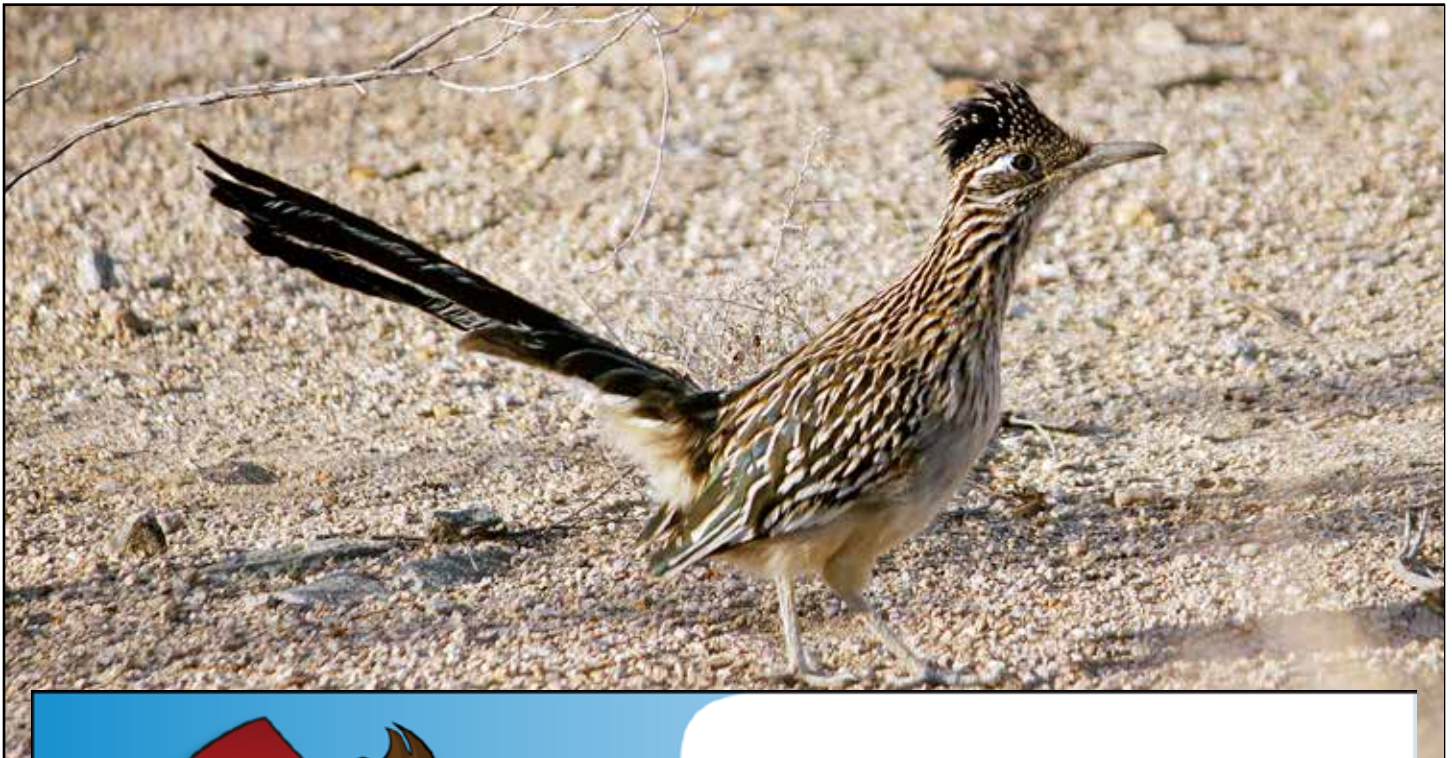


Name: _____



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By Guy Belleranti

The roadrunner is a cool-looking hot weather bird. It has long legs, a long tail, and a crest on its head.

The roadrunner lives in the deserts and open brush lands of the southwestern United States and Mexico. Its black, brown, and white colors blend into these habitats.

The roadrunner runs fast for its size. In fact, if necessary, it can

x-shape. This helps the unique bird run fast over the rough ground.

One reason the roadrunner runs is to catch food. The roadrunner walks quickly in search of prey. Upon spotting the prey, the bird rushes after it, grabbing it with its beak. What is the bird's prey? Insects, spiders, scorpions, rodents, small lizards, small birds and their eggs, and—sometimes—even rattlesnakes. Yes, they can eat venomous snakes and scorpions

Name: _____

without getting ill.

If the prey is large, the roadrunner smashes it against a rock or the ground. And if an insect or small bird flies low enough, the roadrunner can jump straight up to catch the flying food!

But the roadrunner isn't just a meat eater (carnivore). It is an omnivore because it also eats seeds, berries, and cactus fruit.



might include twigs, grasses, feathers, and even snakeskin sheds.



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reason a roadrunner runs. The bird also runs to escape predators. Bobcats, hawks, and coyotes are dangers. If the roadrunner cannot outrun a predator, it hides in a tight spot. Or it uses its small wings to fly onto a small tree or cactus. Yes, this bird can fly, but only for short distances and at low heights.

Roadrunner pairs are usually monogamous. This means they bond for life. Both work together making a nest. Nesting material

weeks. The nestlings that survive will then start leaving the nest to catch food. However, they are still dependent on meals from their parents for several weeks.

The roadrunner's unique ability to run quickly captured the attention of the indigenous people in the area. The roadrunner is featured as a medicine bird and a guardian spirit in Native American and Mexican folktales and legends. It is also New Mexico's state bird.

Name: _____

Running Bird

By Guy Belleranti



1. Why would roadrunners build their nests 2–12 feet off the ground?
 - a. They can only fly 2–12 feet off the ground.
 - b. So they are close to their food sources.
 - c. So they can fly up into the sky easily.
 - d. They want to protect their eggs from predators.
2. What does the word omnivore mean?
 - a. eats only meat
 - b. eats meat and plants
 - c. only eats plants
 - d. eats only insects
3. Reread the following sentence from the article.



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Point	Evidence
"The roadrunner runs fast for its size."	
"One reason the roadrunner runs is to catch food."	
"Catching prey isn't the only reason a roadrunner runs."	

5. Consider the x-shape of roadrunners' feet. Would you be able to tell in which direction the roadrunner is traveling? Explain.

Name: _____

Running Bird



The following terms are vocabulary words from the article.
Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing the corresponding letter on the line.

1. ____ habitats

a. toxic or poisonous

2. ____ predators

b. baby birds



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6. ____ venomous

f. the natural environments animals live

7. ____ incubation

g. stories handed down from the past

8. ____ carnivore

h. people who were the first to live in
an area

9. ____ nestlings

i. animals that hunt and eat other animals

10. ____ legends

j. animal that only eats meat

Name: _____

Running Bird

In the article, "Running Bird," you learned about roadrunners. Compare and contrast roadrunners to another kind of bird. Use specific details from the text in your writing.

You can choose a bird you are already familiar with, or, with your teacher's permission, research a bird online. If you use the internet, on the back of this page, write the address(es) for the website(s) you used for your research.



ANSWER KEY

Running Bird

By Guy Belleranti



1. Why would roadrunners build their nests 2–12 feet off the ground?
 - a. They can only fly 2–12 feet off the ground.
 - b. So they are close to their food sources.
 - c. So they can fly up into the sky easily.

d. They want to protect their eggs from predators.

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3. Consider the x-shape of roadrunners' feet. Would you be able to tell in which direction the roadrunner is traveling? Explain.

Answers may vary. An example is: No, you would not be able to tell which direction a road runner is traveling because an x is the same shape forward as backward (making it impossible to tell the direction a roadrunner is going).

ANSWER KEY

Running Bird



The following terms are vocabulary words from the article.
Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing
the corresponding letter on the line.

1. f habitats

a. toxic or poisonous



10. g legends

j. animal that only eats meat