
VERDIN

in the Xeriscape Garden

Common residents of the Xeriscape Garden, **Verdin** (*Auriparus flaviceps*), are delightful little birds. They are a small bird, about four inches in length with a brownish-gray body and yellow face. They have red to rust colored shoulder patches and their undersides are light in color. The male and female look similar.

The verdins, although shy, have an active, darty movement that along with their size easily distinguishes them from other species. They also have distinct vocalizations. Verdin eat a variety of food including insects, seeds, fruit, as well as nectar from flowers and nectar feeders.



Photo by P. Garrett



RANGE:

Desert southwest from southern California and Nevada, the southwest corner of Utah, western and southern Arizona, southern New Mexico and western to central Texas.

Scientists who study birds have had a hard time grouping this bird taxonomically. It was grouped with the chickadees, honeycreepers and gnatcatchers before the frustrated scientists gave it its own family name: Remizidae in 1998.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE NESTS?

The verdin produce a unique nest with the entry hole at the side or bottom of the nest. The nearly round nest is made of twigs and is roughly the size of a grapefruit. The inside of the nest is lined with feathers or soft grasses.

The nests can be found in cholla cactus, palo verde or mesquite trees to name a few. In our garden, the verdin prefer the Western Hackberry trees.

The verdin nest is used to sleep in as well as for raising young. The females lay three to six eggs that are incubated for 10 days before hatching. After about three weeks, the hatchlings leave the nest.

Photo by P. Garrett



The Arboretum at UNLV serves the campus, the community, and the region through displays of flora adaptable to southern Nevada, the Mojave Desert, and other arid regions. The plant collection supports teaching and research, enhances campus beauty, and fosters awareness of plants in the human environment.