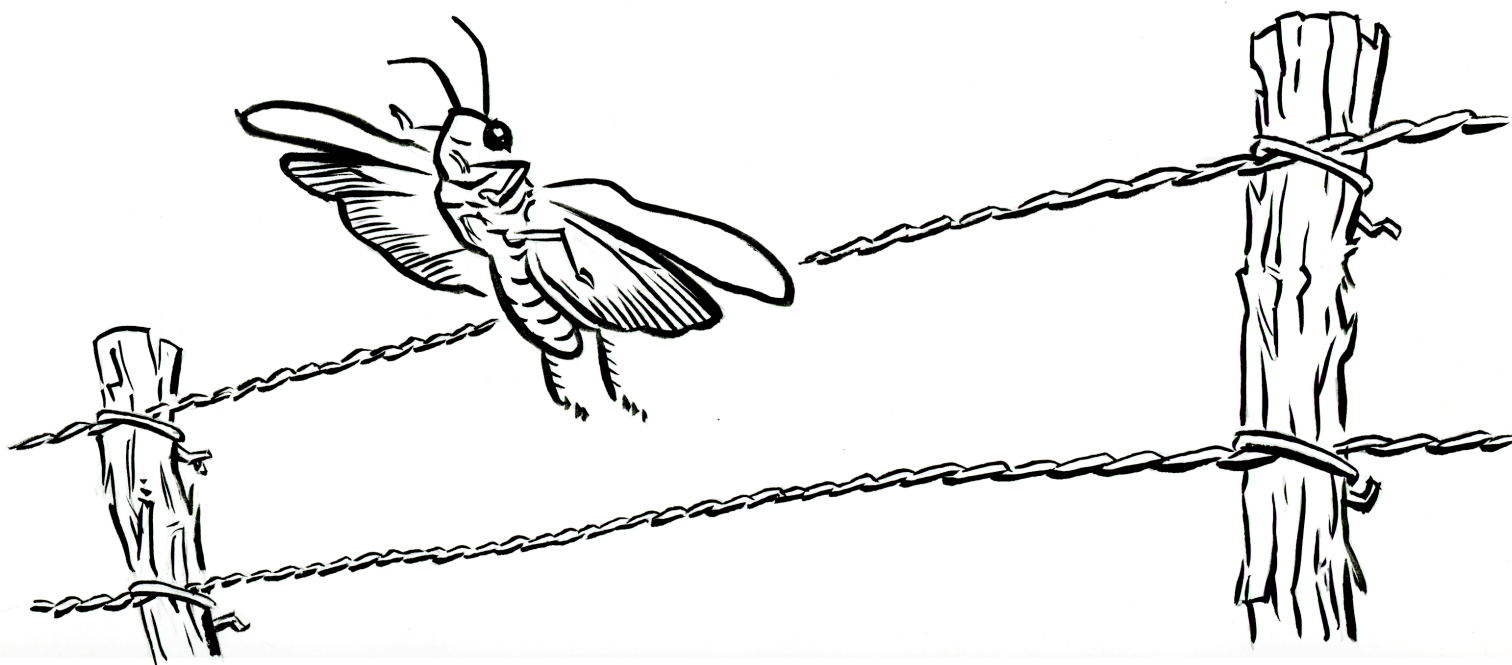
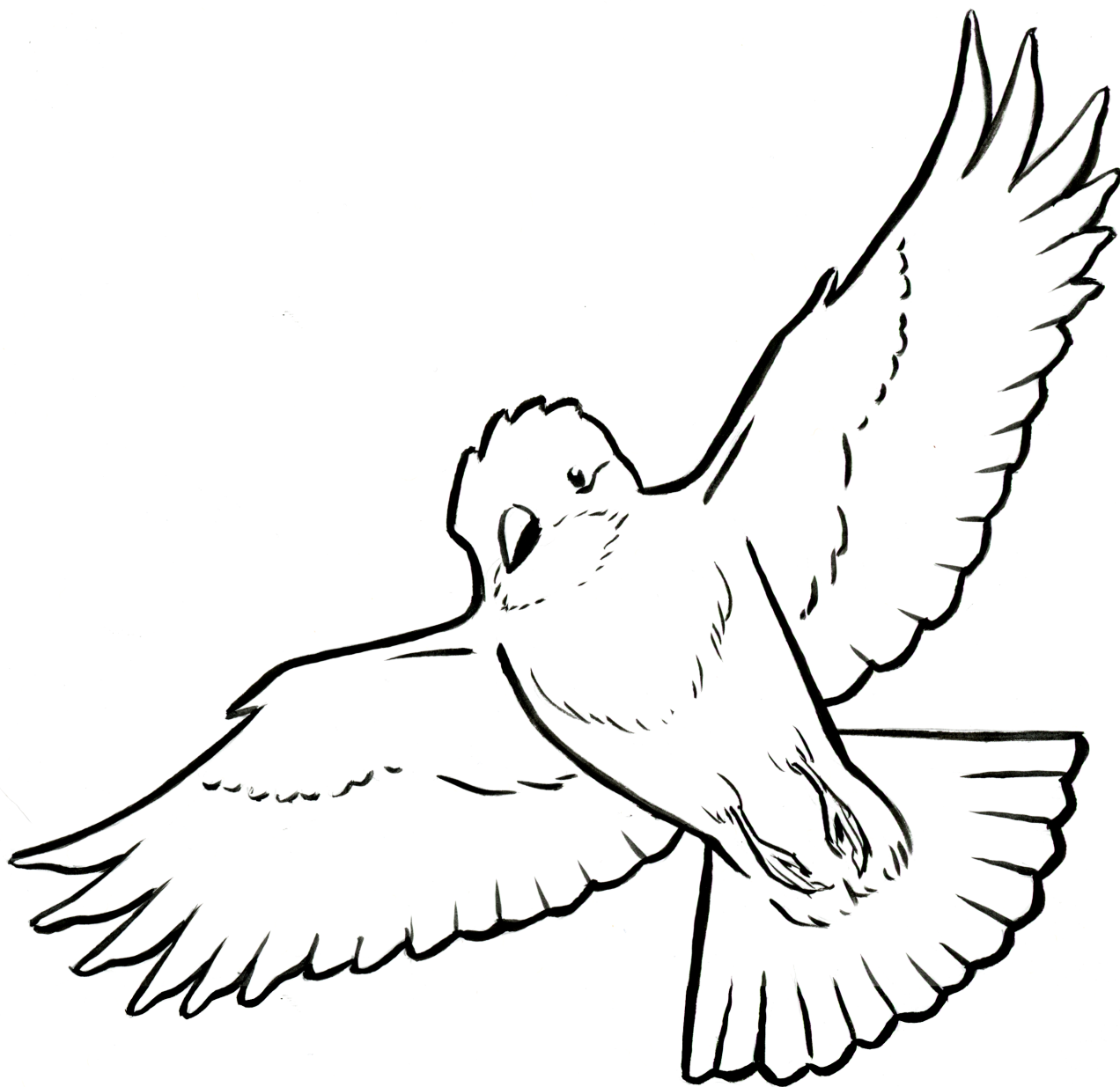


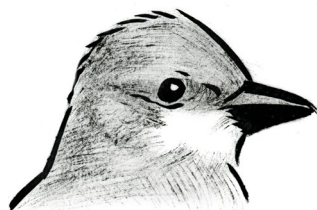
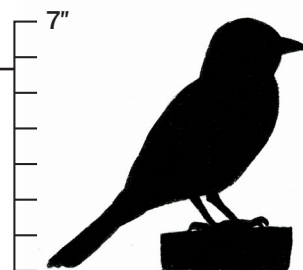


Cassin's Kingbird / Tirano Gritón
English Spanish

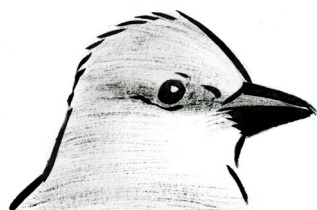
Tyrannus vociferans
Genus Species

Cassin's Kingbird / Tirano Gritón

Cassin's Kingbirds are little birds with a big attitude! Part of a family called "**Tyrant flycatchers**," they live up to that name. These bold little birds eat insects, darting through the air to snatch them right out of the sky. You'll often spot them keeping a sharp eye on everything around them, perched at the very tip of a fence post or on a power line or tree branch – look for their yellow belly, grey head and upper breast, and dark brown tail.



Cassin's Kingbird
Tyrannus vociferans



Western Kingbird
Tyrannus verticalis

Insects get scarce when the weather turns cold, so in winter Cassin's Kingbirds follow the warmth, traveling hundreds of miles down to Mexico. Then they make the long flight back north to the southwestern US where they raise their families from April through October.

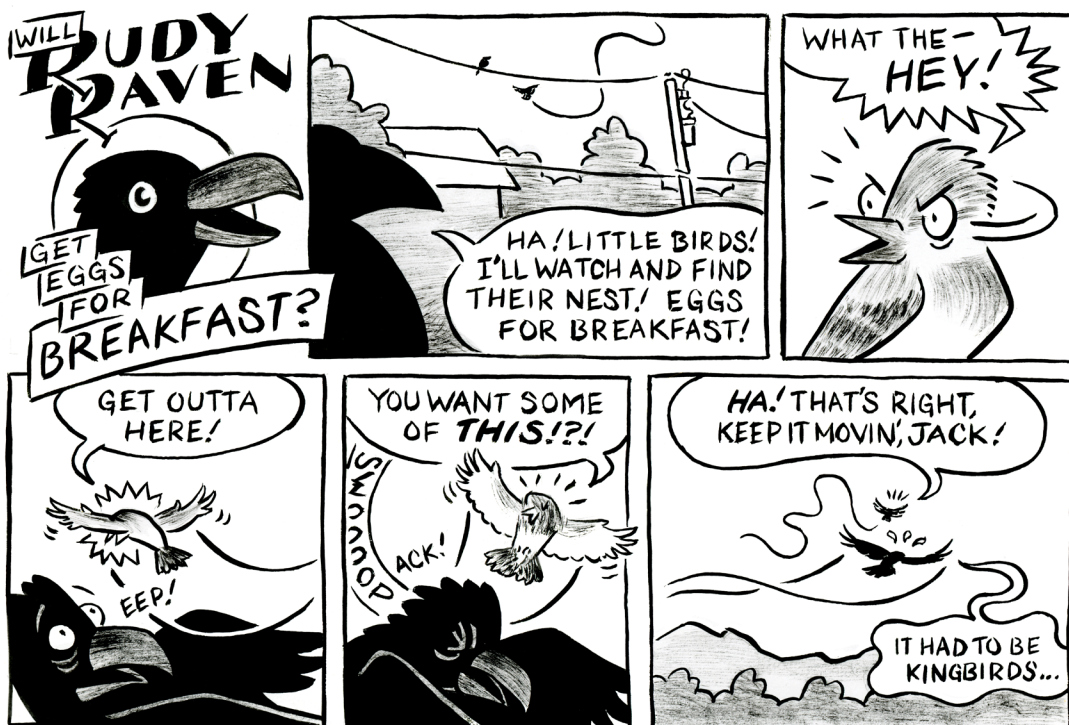
In Texas, they only show up in a couple of small parts of the Trans-Pecos, including the towns of Alpine, Marfa, and Fort Davis. That makes them special. Birdwatchers will travel a long way just to see a bird they can't find anywhere else, and when they visit, they eat at local restaurants, stay in local hotels, and shop at local stores. Just by being themselves, Cassin's Kingbirds can help these towns thrive.

Their close cousin, the **Western Kingbird**, is much more widespread – you might even spot one in your own neighborhood. The two look so alike they can be hard to tell apart, but here's a trick: check the chin! The Cassin's has a darker gray head and chest, which makes its white chin pop. The Western's chin blends in more. The Western Kingbird also tends to feel more at home around people, while the Cassin's prefers the wilder edges of town. Once you know the secrets, you'll always know your kingbird!

One last special thing about Tyrant flycatchers like the Cassin's Kingbird: they are absolutely fearless. When a large bird like a Raven gets too close to a nest, the kingbird doesn't hide, it attacks.

This behavior is called "**mobbing**," and it works! The kingbird swoops and dives until the much larger bird gives up and flies away. Ravens, hawks, even eagles – none of them are safe from an angry kingbird.

And it's not just other birds – kingbirds have been spotted chasing off cats, dogs, and even people who wander too close to a nest.



This coloring and interpretive page is a product of the
Chihuahuan Desert Conservation Arts Initiative
with Principal Artist Chris Ruggia.
See more of Chris's artwork at chrisruggia.com



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