



Montezuma Quail / Codorniz de Moctezuma
English Spanish

Cyrtonyx montezumae
Genus Species

Montezuma Quail / Codorniz de Moctezuma

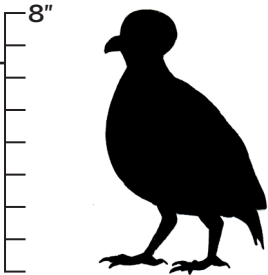
Texas has four types of quail. Three of them* commonly live here in the Trans-Pecos region, which is a small part of the big Chihuahuan Desert. This is one of the only places in Texas where you can find **Montezuma Quail**.

Montezuma Quail are resident **birds**. They don't migrate, but live year-round high up in grassy areas near the desert mountains. These mountain habitats are called "**sky islands**" because they're cut off from each other by huge areas of dry desert. This makes it hard for animals to move between them. We call Montezuma Quail a **relict** species because they used to live across much bigger, connected areas before their sky islands became separated by the desert.

Most quail scratch the ground like chickens to find food. But Montezuma Quail are different. They use their big, curved claws to **dig** deeper underground. They love to eat **tubers** and bulbs, which are parts of plants that grow beneath the surface of the soil.

When danger comes, most quail fly away fast. But Montezuma Quail have a different plan - they **hide**! They stay perfectly still and blend in with the desert grass around them. You could walk just a few feet away and never see one!

This **cryptic** hiding makes them hard to find, and that's why bird watchers love the challenge of spotting them. Many people travel to Trans-Pecos Texas just to see Montezuma Quail. This **ecotourism** helps the economy of the Big Bend area.



Northern Bobwhite
Colinus virginianus



*Gambel's Quail
Callipepla gambelii



*Scaled Quail
Callipepla squamata



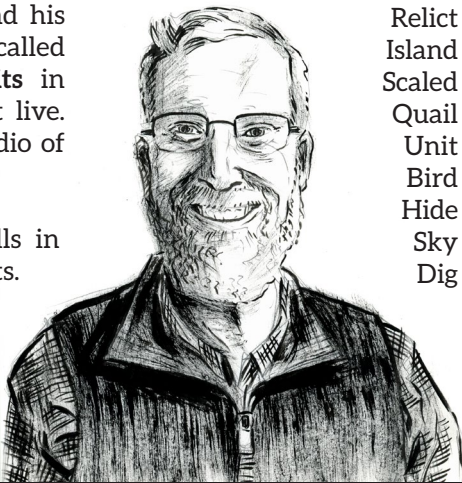
*Montezuma Quail
Cyrtonyx montezumae

We all have more to learn!

Since Montezuma Quail are so good at hiding, scientists don't know exactly how many live in West Texas. Dr. Ryan Luna at Borderlands Research Institute wants to find out.

We can't always see the quail, but they do make sounds. Dr. Luna and his team put special microphones called **Autonomous Recording Units** in places where the quail might live. These devices can capture audio of the birds calling to each other.

Scientists count the quail calls in recordings from different spots. Then they use math to figure out how many quail might live in the whole area, and what kinds of places they like best!



- Autonomous
- Ecotourism
- Recording
- Montezuma
- Bobwhite
- Gambels
- Cryptic
- Tubers
- Relict
- Island
- Scaled
- Quail
- Unit
- Bird
- Hide
- Sky
- Dig

WORD SEARCH

Words can go up, down, forwards, or backwards!

G	A	M	B	E	L	S	E	A	Q
N	U	E	D	I	H	R	T	U	A
I	S	L	A	N	D	E	I	T	M
D	L	I	A	U	Q	B	H	O	U
R	O	M	S	K	Y	U	W	N	Z
O	G	D	R	I	B	T	B	O	E
C	I	T	P	Y	R	C	O	M	T
E	D	E	L	A	C	S	B	O	N
R	E	L	I	C	T	I	N	U	O
E	C	O	T	O	U	R	I	S	M
F	N	A	B	R	E	G	L	O	X
K	C	Y	M	U	N	W	Q	A	P

