



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### **Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands**

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## **Public Safety Notice Northern Goshawks Defend Breeding Territory**

### ***Sandia Ranger District: May - August***

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM – May 21, 2025** – The Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands is advising visitors to the Cienega and Sulphur recreation sites on the Sandia Ranger District that a pair of Northern Goshawks are defending a mating territory along the Amijo, Pine Drop, Cresta, and Valle Trails. Northern Goshawks often defend their breeding territories during nesting season with aggressive behavior, including loud vocalizations, swooping down, and, in rare cases making contact with intruders.

We are strongly encouraging visitors to avoid this area. Visitors that choose to recreate in this area should move quietly and calmly, wear wide brimmed hats, eye protection, and stay alert. If a Goshawk is encountered through alarm calls or defensive behavior, leave the area immediately while keeping eyes on the bird.

“The Northern Goshawk is a large and powerful forest dwelling bird of prey that depends on mature forests to thrive. The Goshawks have started to defend their breeding territory within the Sandia Mountains. Forest Service staff have received reports of these Goshawks aggressively swooping down on forest visitors. The Goshawks will continue to defend their territory through the middle of August, when the young fledge and venture out on their own. This unique species is an important part of a healthy forest ecosystem, and it is important that the public let these impressive raptors have the space and safety they deserve to raise their young successfully. Choosing another part of the district to enjoy is safer for both the Goshawk and for you.” *Andrew Ellis, Wildlife Biologist - USDA Forest Service - Sandia Ranger District*



Visitors to the Sandia Ranger District are encouraged to explore other recreation sites and trails on the Cibola National Forest at:  
[www.fs.usda.gov/r03/cibola/recreation](http://www.fs.usda.gov/r03/cibola/recreation)

Further information contact the Sandia Ranger District:  
11776 Hwy. 337, Tijeras, NM 87059 (505-281-3304)

*Photo: Adult Northern Goshawk. Photo by Jack Kirkley.*

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