

Desert Dashers



Roadrunners live in southwestern North America, Central America, and central Mexico often in dry, shrubby environments. While this two-foot-long bird can fly, it prefers to use its long legs to run. In fact, the roadrunner can take around 12 steps every second! God designed roadrunners with a tail that helps them balance and steer while running.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, creatures didn't hunt one another. But now with death in the world, animals like the roadrunner have special hunting skills to help them catch prey like lizards, scorpions, tarantulas, rodents, other birds, and even rattlesnakes.

In addition to chasing their prey, roadrunners can flash a white spot on their wing to startle prey out of hiding. And by jumping straight up in the air, they can snatch flying creatures, such as insects, hummingbirds, and bats.

To make a large meal easier to swallow, roadrunners will slam the food against rocks to break any bulky bones. They also gulp down horned lizards headfirst, so their backward pointing spines are less likely to tear the roadrunner's organs.

When hunting rattlesnakes, they often work as a team with one bird distracting the snake while the other attacks. If a snake is too long for a roadrunner to slurp down all at once, the bird will walk around with the snake's body hanging out its beak and swallow more as the snake is digested.

Even though roadrunners hunt other creatures because of the fall, these fierce little birds give us a quick glimpse at God's good design.



I'm **Peter Schriemer!**
As a wildlife educator and TV host, I get excited about tracking down God's creatures! Join my adventures on my Answers TV show *Hike & Seek*.





art by Brian Weaver



BIRD SEARCH Can you find this roadrunner hiding in the desert? If that's too easy, find 19 other desert animals!

Fun Facts

- » During the hot desert afternoons, roadrunners stay in the shade. When it gets cooler, they come out to hunt.
- » The roadrunner's predators include raccoons, hawks, and coyotes.
- » Most of a roadrunner's water comes from the prey it eats.
- » A roadrunner sunbathes to raise its body temperature after cold desert nights.
- » Young roadrunners can catch their own prey only three weeks after hatching.
- » Unlike in cartoons, coyotes can run about twice as fast as roadrunners.