



## GEOCOCCYX CALIFORNIANUS

BY SHARON BEALS

### COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary  
United States  
The Greater Roadrunner  
*Geococcyx californianus*

San Diego County, False Bay, California, collected in 1908  
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

In Native American legend the Greater Roadrunner's spirit was endowed with the power to trap a sleeping rattlesnake. Roadrunners pair monogamously, often for life, and nest in thorny bushes, small trees, or cacti. While the male delivers most of the materials, the female assembles a shallow platform of sticks and lines it with leaves, grass, feathers, snakeskin, roots, and often, dry flakes of manure. This nest, collected in 1908, bears a small piece of burlap, perhaps a replacement for snakeskin.

The nests were photographed in four science collections: The California Academy of Sciences, The Western Foundatio...