

## 2020 Huachuca Mountain Elegant Trogon Census

**Census Date:** Saturday May 30, 2020

**Census Time:** 6 to 11 a.m.

**Pre-survey: Zoom meeting – details sent via email and a recording will be made available online. All information for the Huachucas survey, including a recording of the Zoom info meeting is here:**  
[http://aziba.org/?page\\_id=2930](http://aziba.org/?page_id=2930)

Any and all questions pertaining to the census will be welcome in the zoom meeting. If you have questions not answered in the recorded zoom meeting please do call or text Jennie at (520) 360-2213

Posted on the Arizona IBA website at [http://aziba.org/?page\\_id=1994](http://aziba.org/?page_id=1994) are recordings of several types of Elegant Trogon calls to help counters recognize trogon vocalizations--if and when they hear them. (These calls will also be played at the meeting)

- The mp3 file beginning with **Koink** is the common call heard most often – it is likely a male advertising his territory or trying to attract a female. This certainly indicates you have a male but you cannot infer a pair from this call necessarily.
- The mp3 file beginning with **Kow** – you should listen to this one carefully – note the lack of space between each note, it is much more continuous than the Koink call. This does indicate a mated pair and I have sometimes heard both the male and female giving this call to each other. Her voice is considerably lower than his.
- The mp3 file beginning with **W-kkk** – this is an alarm call and it means the Trogons are distressed and you are likely very close to their nest. Back off immediately if you hear this sound. Wait a while and then cautiously try to find the nest if it is possible to do so without alarming the trogons.

Any and all questions pertaining to the census will be welcome at the meeting. Rick will play recordings of several types of Elegant Trogon calls at the meeting to help counters recognize trogon vocalizations--if and when they hear them. Counters need to have a watch or a clock that can be synchronized at the organizational meeting in order to fill out the time forms. If you are unable to print the attached forms, I will have additional copies at the meeting. Please remember to bring a pen or pencil on count day, as well as the census time form and the checklist of other bird species. The census is for the purpose of counting Elegant Trogons, but we are also interested in obtaining a list of other species occupying trogon breeding habitat, although the actual numbers of each of the other species is not required, it is nice to have. I think a good way to think of it is an “eBird quality” check list where gut check guesses of quantities are used – an educated guess of how many Western Wood-pewees you encountered is infinitely better than an X. Please feel free to print an extra copy of each attachment for your personal records.

**Methodology:** Counters should plan on surveying the full length of their assigned canyon territory from approximately 5,000' to approximately 6,500' in elevation. Most roads and trails in the Huachuca Mountains are in or near the canyon bottom sycamore riparian strands, precisely the habitat used most frequently by Elegant Trogons. Counters may work at any pace they choose, but obviously counters in longer canyons will need to cover more terrain in less time than counters in shorter canyons.

Where at all practical, counters should stay on designated trails. Provided the terrain is not too steep or rocky, forays off-trail for the purpose of sexing a calling trogon are permitted, but should be minimized. Do not leave the trail where the terrain is obviously treacherous.

Except for counters on Fort Huachuca and in Ramsey Canyon, the judicious use of taped play-backs is permitted. Counters are not, however, obligated to use playbacks. If a counter decides to use play-backs, recordings need only be used at 0.5 mile intervals at most, and only briefly. Males ordinarily patrol canyon territories about 0.5 miles in length and call relatively frequently in spring, especially early in the morning. If a male is already calling it is unnecessary to use a mechanical playback. The purpose of a playback is only to elicit a response, not to draw the bird closer to the counter. If there is a response call, counters should try to approach close enough for a visual observation. Counters should try to sex the bird or birds (males have iridescent green backs and females are a more neutral olive-brown), and determine whether one, two, or more individuals are involved. Pairs may be calling to one

another. Territorial skirmishes among males are also relatively common in May and June. Occasionally a female is also present at these disputes. Female trogons call much less frequently than males, which makes them more difficult to detect. They are most apt to vocalize when accompanied by a male. Although the female trogon's voice is typically deeper pitched than the male's, for the purposes of this survey, no trogon should be sexed without a direct visual observation.

If a nest is discovered please withdraw to at least 75 feet from the nest tree. Agitated birds emit a sharp "wk-k-k-k" call and usually elevate their tail. This is often a sign that the observer is too near a nest.

**Data Collection:** Data form documents are on the webpage linked at the beginning of this document. Record the start and end time of each observation. Trogons that are heard only should be noted as such using the letter "H" in the correct time cell. Please record the sex and number of any seen trogons—but please do not assign a gender to an unseen trogon. Using approximate mileage from the starting point and approximate elevation, please describe the relative position of the trogon in the canyon. Additionally, counters with GPS devices may record the coordinates of their observations. Do not, however, neglect to include mileage and elevation estimates.

Using distance and direction from a fixed reference point, as well as elevation, also describe as well as possible the location of any active trogon nest or nests (use the back of the form if necessary). Nest descriptions should include species of tree if known (e.g. sycamore, oak, pine), overall height of the tree, position on the tree (trunk or limb, dead or living wood, etc.), and approximate height of the cavity above the ground—as well as any other details that would enable the nest to be refound.

**We cannot meet up after the survey so see information below on how to enter your results online.**

All counters should text Jennie MacFarland at (520-360-2213) as soon as they can obtain a phone signal and report that they are safe. Alternately, you can email Jennie to indicate you are done and safely out.

**Data entry:** Volunteers enter their own data online here: <https://forms.gle/n4dpx8ZA41YVgqvM9> or email a scan or photo of your completed data form to Jennie. For the online data entry, please enter your info within 2 days of the count so you don't forget important details.

If no Elegant Trogons are found in your assigned canyon, please note that fact and still fill out the online data entry or email Jennie.

**Results:** Results will be summarized and posted on the internet on the AZ/NMbirds site. All participants with e-mail will also receive the results summary. Results are also forwarded to the Arizona Game & Fish Department, the Coronado National Forest, and Fort Huachuca, the land management agencies that administer the areas within the census zone.

**Safety:** If at all possible, participants are asked to work with at least one and no more than two other people. Inter-group conversation, of course, should be limited to an absolute minimum and conducted as quietly as possible. Each person, whether "officially" counting Elegant Trogons or not, should bring at least two pints of safe drinking water with them. Do not drink from springs or streams. Bring a snack or picnic lunch. Unless a doctor has ordered you to limit your consumption of salts, be sure to bring some item containing salt (e.g. salted nuts or chips, etc.). Do not leave roads or trails except for the purposes described above. In accordance with Coronado National Forest and Fort Huachuca fire restrictions at the time of this census, no smoking or campfires outside of designated areas are permitted anywhere in the Huachuca Mountains. If any illegal aliens, hunters, birdwatchers, or other recreationalists are encountered, courteously limit the interaction to the briefest possible time. For your own safety, do not confront anyone engaged in any activity you perceive as unlawful. Discontinue the Elegant Trogon census and report the possible crime to officials. In the unlikely event that a Mountain Lion or Black Bear is sighted, make enough noise to alert the animal to your presence. If the animal approaches make louder noises and wave your arms. Do not run or try to climb a tree. Limited areas of the Huachuca Mountains have cell phone reception, but you may consider bringing a cell phone with you during the census.

**Further Information: Jennie MacFarland: Phone Number 520-360-2213; E-mail: [jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:jmacfarland@tucsonaudubon.org)**