

### Imperial Reservoir

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://aziba.org/?page_id=422">http://aziba.org/?page_id=422</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/imperial-reservoir">https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/imperial-reservoir</a></li> </ul>
Priority	Global
Qualifying Criteria	<p>A1: Species of Conservation Concern (<i>California Black Rail</i>)</p> <p>B1: Species of Conservation Concern (<i>Yuma Ridgway's Rail</i>)</p> <p>D3: Species in rare/unique habitat (<i>Low-elevation Riparian and Freshwater Marsh</i>)</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	32.887°N: 114.4586°W
Size	3,535 acres
County	Yuma
Local Communities	Yuma
Description	This IBA consists of the system of impoundments, channels, marshes, and backwaters extending from Imperial Dam upstream to Fisher's Landing (below Martinez Lake). There are two seasons in this lowest reach of the Lower Colorado River: the high-water period, from spring through Thanksgiving, and the low-water period, from autumn to spring.
Mission/Goals	To conserve and protect unique examples of freshwater marsh and lowland riparian communities and the special status avian species that depend on them.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	<p>Land use is primarily recreation (fishing, hunting, and boating), and secondarily wildlife/nature conservation. Imperial Dam is operated with the primary objective of providing water to the All American and Gila Gravity Main canals.</p> <p>Most riparian habitats have been overgrown by tamarisk and some areas by phragmites, but no management actions are presently being taken. Dredging would be a threat to marsh habitat if implemented (no pending proposals). Increasing selenium levels along the lower Colorado River poses a threat to avian populations.</p>
<p>Land Cover Type<sup>1</sup> (%) and Associated Priority<sup>2</sup> Birds</p> <p><sup>1</sup>Southwest Regional Gap Analysis modified to align with ABBA/SWAP habitat types</p> <p><sup>2</sup>AGFD SGCN and IBA Qualifying Species</p>	<p>98.57 Riparian/Freshwater Marsh/Open Water (<i>California Black Rail, Yuma Ridgway's Rail, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bald Eagle, American Bittern, Lincoln's Sparrow, Abert's Towhee, Bell's Vireo</i>)</p> <p>0.89 Sonoran Desertscrub: Uplands (<i>Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p> <p>0.47 Sonoran/Mohave Desertscrub (<i>Western Burrowing Owl, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>0.05 Interior Chaparral</p> <p>0.02 Urban/Residential (<i>Gila Woodpecker, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p>

<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Freshwater Marsh Lowland Riparian Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>This IBA supports substantial populations of Yuma Ridgway’s Rail and California Black Rail. High quality marsh habitat supports other wetland bird populations, such as Virginia Rail, Sora, Least Bittern, and American Bittern. Also, this IBA supports a large wintering population of American Coots (&gt;2000 individuals). The site is part of a major migratory corridor, providing habitat for migrating neotropical birds.</p> <p>Spring and Fall offer the greatest variety of birds and the best birding opportunities. 275 species have been observed on the refuge. The refuge is also important as a wintering area for Canada geese and many species of ducks. Part of this IBA is within the Yuma Christmas Bird Count circle. Species of special conservation status and interest that use the habitats within this IBA include:</p> <p><u>Year-round breeding residents:</u> Pied-billed Grebe, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, California Black Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Least Bittern, Turkey Vulture, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Osprey, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Roadrunner, Turkey Vulture, Gambel’s Quail, Ladder-backed and Gila woodpeckers, Loggerhead Shrike, Black Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Verdin, and Song Sparrow</p> <p><u>Migration:</u> American Bittern, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Hermit, Black-throated Gray, Lucy’s, MacGillivray’s, Townsend’s, Virginia’s, Wilson’s, Nashville, and Yellow Warblers, and Common Yellowthroat</p> <p><u>Winter:</u> Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Ruddy Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Greater Yellow-legs, Long-billed Dowitcher, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-faced Ibis, American White Pelican, Peregrine &amp; Prairie falcons, Merlin, Bald Eagle, and Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warbler</p>

<p>Focal Bird Species</p>	<p><b><u>IBA Qualifying Species</u></b></p> <p>Global: California Black Rail</p> <p>Continental: Yuma Ridgway’s Rail</p> <p><b><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></b></p> <p><u>Tier A:</u> Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bald Eagle, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail</p> <p><u>Tier B:</u> Western Burrowing Owl, American Bittern, Gilded Flicker, California Black Rail, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Gila Woodpecker, Abert’s Towhee, Bell’s Vireo</p> <p><b><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></b></p> <p>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail</p> <p><b><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></b></p> <p>National – Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, California Black Rail, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Virginia’s Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler</p> <p>USFWS Region – Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, California Black Rail, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, Gilded Flicker, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler</p>
<p>NABCI Bird Conservation Region</p>	<p>33: Sonoran and Mojave Deserts</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation</p>
<p>Conservation Land Status**</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Human Population Density</p>	<p>Rural</p>
<p>Legislative District(s)</p>	<p>Arizona Congressional District 4 and State Legislative District 13</p>
<p>NRCS Major Land Resource Area</p>	<p>39: Lower Colorado Desert 52: Sonoran Basin and Range</p>
<p>Visitation, main access, and permits needed</p>	<p>Fisher’s Landing and campground located on the north end of the reservoir and Imperial Dam and Hidden Shores Resort on the south end are places with good access. An excellent resource for birding this IBA and the lower Colorado River region is Southwest Birders web site at <a href="http://www.southwestbirders.com">www.southwestbirders.com</a>.</p>

\*References available written narratives (located on the SJV website) for general habitat types occurring within the IBA.

\*\*Identifies whether the IBA or portions of the IBA have a special land management designation such as: wilderness, primitive area, wildlife area, refuge, park, monument, designated conservation area,

conservation easement, or other similar designation

**IBA Activities:**

<b>Issue or Activity</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Actions</b>
CBC	Medium	Annual winter bird survey	Part of the Yuma CBC circle
Marsh Bird Surveys	High	Annual breeding bird surveys	Az Game & Fish and USFWS lead-
IBA Signage	Medium	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Partial-signs delivered to land managers
IBA Dedication	Complete	A formal recognition event	Dedication completed during 2019 Yuma Bird, Nature, and History Festival
Updated	July 2021		

**Partners:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role(s)</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Bureau of Reclamation	Water manager and Multi-species Conservation Plan	<a href="http://www.lcrmscp.gov">www.lcrmscp.gov</a>	Multi-species Conservation Plan Dam operations
Bureau of Land Management Yuma Field Office	Land manager	7341 E 30th St, Yuma, AZ 85365  <a href="tel:9283173200">Phone: (928) 317-3200</a> <a href="https://www.blm.gov/office/yuma-field-office">https://www.blm.gov/office/yuma-field-office</a>	Vegetation management with partners.
Arizona Game & Fish Department Yuma Region	Wildlife manager in conjunction with Mittry Lake Wildlife Area	9140 28th St, Yuma, AZ 85365  <a href="tel:9283420091">Phone: (928) 342-0091</a>	Annual marsh bird surveys winter water bird survey, colonial nesting bird survey, and waterfowl surveys
Yuma Audubon Society	IBA Stewards	<a href="mailto:yaspresident@yahoo.com">yaspresident@yahoo.com</a>  <a href="http://www.audubonyuma.org/">http://www.audubonyuma.org/</a>	Local members that participate in the CBC and keep eBird records
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Migratory birds, waterfowl, and endangered species lead	P.O. Box 72217 12812 N Wildlife Way Yuma, AZ 85365  Phone: 928-783-3371 Fax: 928-783-0652	Multi-species Conservation Plan partner

**Conservation Targets:**

These are species, communities, or ecological systems that represent and encompass the full array of avian biodiversity found in this IBA.

Conservation Target	Current Condition
Waterbirds and Waterfowl	Good
Marsh Birds	Very Good
Sonoran Desert Birds	Good

**Conservation Challenges:**

Conservation challenges are primarily human activities that immediately affect what we are trying to conserve. Through a Miradi process, it was found that non-native phragmites replacing native marsh and water pollution from agriculture (Selenium) pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.. Strategies: The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Plan is implementing riparian forest and marsh restoration projects.

Challenges	Water Birds and Waterfowl	Sonoran Desert Birds	Marsh Birds	Summary Rating
Climate Change (Drought)	Low	Low	Medium	Low
Water Diversions	Low	NA	Low	Low
Water Pollution	Low	NA	Medium	Medium
Wildfire	NA	Low	low	Low
Invasive Phragmites	Low	NA	Medium	Medium
Disturbance to Birds by Boaters	Low	NA	Low	Low
Summary Ratings:	Low	Low	Low	Medium

Imperial Reservoir	Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database			
Invasive species Non-native plants (tamarisk, arundo)	7	1	3
Pollution Water pollution (Agriculture)	6	1	2
Water Diversions (incl. impact dikes/dams)	5	1	2