

**Lower Colorado River Gadsden Riparian Area**

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/lower-colorado-river-gadsden-riparian-area">http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/lower-colorado-river-gadsden-riparian-area</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://aziba.org/?page_id=436">http://aziba.org/?page_id=436</a></li> </ul>
Priority	State
Qualifying Criteria	<p>D1: Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Abert’s Towhee, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo)</p> <p>D4vii: Outstanding Landbird Stopover (Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo)</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	32.55° N: 114.8° W
Size	2,398 acres
County	Yuma
Local Communities	Gadsden, San Luis, Somerton, Yuma
Description	<p>This is a 3-mile portion of the lower Colorado River within the lowest U.S. division of the river, referred to as the Limitrophe Division. This area provides an example of the lower Colorado River in a relatively natural condition. The upper portion is about 12 miles south of Morelos Dam and the lowest portion is about 1 mile north of the Mexico border. While almost all of the Colorado River is diverted into Mexico's Alamo Canal at Morelos Dam, some permanent flow of water exists in the Limitrophe Division as a result of leakage through Morelos Dam and irrigation wastewater. As opposed to the rest of the lower Colorado River, the Limitrophe Division is still subject to periodic floods (though small in scale) that result when upstream releases exceed the capacity of the Alamo Canal. These flows tend to favor the establishment of native vegetation over exotic, significant native riparian vegetation has become established as a result. Prominent features within this IBA include Hunter's Hole and Gadsden Bend, which include the largest areas of marsh and the healthiest stands of native riparian vegetation within the Limitrophe Division.</p>
Mission/Goals	To support and protect a significant example of low-elevation riparian habitat and the populations of breeding, year-round and migratory birds that depend on it, including state species of conservation concern.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	A conservation plan for Hunter's Hole has been completed by Arizona Game and Fish and awaits funding. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is coordinating an effort to declare the Limitrophe Division an international wildlife refuge. The Cocopah Indian Tribe has recently expressed interest in managing their lands using the criteria from the

	Bureau of Land Management Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation Projects in attempts to reestablish their ties to the river.
<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>49.71 Riparian and Freshwater Emergent Marsh (<i>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bald Eagle, Yuma Ridgway's Rail, Yellow Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p> <p>43.01 Sonoran/Mojave Desertscrub (<i>Western Burrowing Owl, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p> <p>3.81 Sonoran Desertscrub: Uplands (<i>Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p> <p>1.75 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Western Burrowing Owl</i>)</p> <p>1.01 Sonoran Desertscrub: Lower Colorado River (<i>Abert's Towhee</i>)</p> <p>0.71 Other (Agriculture, Mojave Desertscrub, Interior Chaparral) (<i>Western Burrowing Owl, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p>
Related Habitat Accounts*	<p>Lowland Riparian</p> <p>Freshwater Marsh</p> <p>Sonoran Desert</p> <p>Low Grassland</p>
Biological Description	<p>The lower Colorado River is a major migratory corridor for neotropical birds and also provides significant winter and nesting habitat. This IBA is a key segment of this corridor because it includes some of the best riparian habitat along the entire 40-mile stretch of river between the southern international boundary near San Luis and Laguna Dam. It also includes the only significant marsh in that stretch of river.</p> <p>While almost all of the Colorado River is diverted into Mexico's Alamo Canal at Morelos Dam, some permanent flow of water exists in the Limitrophe Division as a result of leakage through Morelos Dam and irrigation wastewater. The vegetation community is primarily riparian, with good stands of Fremont cottonwood (<i>Populus fremontii</i>) and Goodding's willow (<i>Salix gooddingii</i>) at Hunter's Hole and Gadsden Bend. Saltcedar (<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>), arrowweed (<i>Pluchea sericea</i>), and quailbush (<i>Atriplex lentiformis</i>) are dominant elsewhere. A cattail (<i>Typha domingensis</i>) marsh exists at Hunter's Hole and some small pockets of cattail marsh occur elsewhere. Adjacent lands are agricultural and provide some foraging (wheat) and nesting (citrus) habitat.</p>

<p>Focal Bird Species</p>	<p><b><u>IBA Qualifying Species</u></b></p> <p>State - Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Abert’s Towhee, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p><b><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></b></p> <p>Tier 1a – Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bald Eagle, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail,</p> <p>Tier 1b – Western Burrowing Owl, American Bittern, Mountain Plover, Yellow Warbler, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Savannah Sparrow, Abert’s Towhee</p> <p><b><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></b></p> <p>Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p><b><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></b></p> <p>National – Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Mountain Plover, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Costa’s Hummingbird, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Grace’s Warbler</p> <p>USFWS Region – Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Mountain Plover, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, Costa’s Hummingbird, Gilded Flicker, Yellow Warbler, Grace’s Warbler</p>
<p>NABCI Bird Conservation Region</p>	<p>33: Sonoran and Mohave Deserts</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>Jurisdiction of the area is a complex interplay between the Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, International Boundary and Water Commission, Bureau of Land Management, Cocopah Tribe, and various Mexican agencies. The Cocopah Tribe owns adjacent land and has proposed restoration projects in attempts to re-establish their ties to the river.</p>
<p>Conservation Land Status**</p>	<p>A conservation plan for Hunter’s Hole has been completed by Arizona Game and Fish and awaits funding. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is coordinating an effort to declare the Limitrophe Division an international wildlife refuge.</p>
<p>Human Population Density</p>	<p>Rural</p>
<p>Legislative District(s)</p>	<p>Arizona Congressional District 3 and State Legislative District 3</p>
<p>NRCS Major Land Resource Area</p>	<p>39: Lower Colorado Desert</p>

Visitation, main access, and permits needed	Access is difficult and visiting is best recommended with a local guide. An excellent resource for birding this IBA and the lower Colorado River region is <i>Finding Birds in Yuma County, Arizona</i> by Henry Detwiller.
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\*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:**

Issue or Activity	Priority	Description	Actions
eBird data	L	Voluntary eBird submissions	Encourage participation by birders
Coordinate with Mexico Surveys	M	Mexico bird surveys at restoration sites	Coordinate with ProNatura
IBA Signage	L	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Pending – Limited locations for signage.
IBA Dedication	L	A formal recognition event	Pending-Limited opportunities

**Partners:**

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Bureau of Land Management	Land Manager		Access and partner coordination
Arizona Game and Fish Department	Liaison with other partners	Yuma Regional Office Fortuna Road	Local contact
ProNatura	Riparian habitat restoration in Mexico		

**Conservation Targets:**

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

Conservation Target	Current Condition
Desert Birds	Very Good
Marsh Birds	Fair

Conservation Target	Current Condition
Waterbirds and Waterfowl	Good
Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Fair

**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 ..... pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Marsh Birds	Waterfowl and Waterbirds	Riparian Birds	Desert Birds	Summary Rating
Invasive Plants	Medium	Low	High	Low	Medium
Water Pollution	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
Water Diversions	High	High	Very High	Low	High
Summary Ratings:	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Medium

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Threats on National Database				
Invasive species Non-native (tamarisk, arundo)	6	1	2	3
Pollution Water pollution (Agriculture)	6	2	2	2
Water Diversions (incl. impact dikes/dams)	8	3	2	3