

Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch of the National Audubon Society

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/appleton-whittell-research-ranch-national-audubon-society - http://aziba.org/?page_id=199 - http://researchranch.audubon.org/landing/about-us/appleton-whittell-research-ranch-awrr
Priority	State
Qualifying Criteria	<p>D1 Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Botteri's sparrow, Cassin's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Lilian's Eastern Meadowlark)</p> <p>D3 Rare, unique, or exceptional representative habitat/ecological community (desert grassland, un-grazed since 1968)</p> <p>D5 Research and Education</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	31.60280, -110.52170
Size	7,722 acres
County	Santa Cruz
Local Communities	Elgin, Sonoita, Patagonia
Description	This IBA is located in a broad semi-desert grassland in Southeastern Arizona. It is a 12 square mile sanctuary from which livestock has been excluded since 1968.
Mission/Goals	The mission of The Research Ranch is to formulate, test, and demonstrate methods to restore and safeguard the bioregion, and provide assistance to citizens and policy-makers in the protection and stewardship of our native ecosystems, natural resources and quality of life.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	Land use is primarily conservation and research, with limited hunting on National Forest Service land. Management guidelines for the various properties that comprise the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch are outlined in MOUs or MOAs between National Audubon Society and the entity that holds title to the property. The Forest Service portion is designated a Research Natural Area and BLM property is non-recreational, with all roads designated administrative only. Note – the BLM portion of Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch is part of the Las Cienegas NCA.
Land Cover Type ¹ (%) and Associated Priority ² Birds	49.24 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Golden Eagle, Cassin's Sparrow, Botteri's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Western Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Savannah Sparrow, Azure Bluebird</i>)

<p>¹Southwest Regional Gap Analysis modified to align with ABBA/SWAP habitat types</p> <p>²AGFD SGCN and IBA Qualifying Species</p>	<p>37.13 Chihuahuan Desertscrub (<i>Common Nighthawk, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>9.64 Mexican Evergreen Woodland (<i>Common Nighthawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Northern Pygmy Owl, Gould’s Turkey, Whiskered Screech Owl, Arizona Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>1.23 Wash</p> <p>1.19 Interior Chaparral (<i>Common Nighthawk</i>)</p> <p>1.57 Other (Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland, Riparian, Rock, Sonoran Desertscrub: Lower Colorado River) Wash (<i>Common Nighthawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Red-naped Sapsucker</i>)</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Low Grasslands Madrean Pine-Oak Pinyon Juniper Lowland Riparian Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>The Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch encompasses a mix of habitats including semi-desert uplands, oak savannahs, and oak woodlands cut by small ephemeral creeks and riparian habitat.</p>
<p>Focal Bird Species</p>	<p><u>IBA Qualifying Species</u></p> <p>State – Botteri’s sparrow, Cassin’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Lilian’s Eastern Meadowlark</p> <p><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></p> <p>Tier 1a - Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p>Tier 1b - Botteri’s Sparrow, Baird’s Sparrow, Golden Eagle, Grasshopper Sparrow, Western Burrowing owl, Common Nighthawk, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Gould’s Turkey, Lark Bunting, Gila Woodpecker, Arizona Woodpecker, Azure Bluebird, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p>

	National – Swainson’s Hawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Loggerhead Shrike, Lucy’s Warbler, Brewer’s Sparrow, Baird’s Sparrow USFWS Region – Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Western Burrowing Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Lucy’s Warbler, Botteri’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	34: Sierra Madre Occidental
Ownership	National Audubon Society, Swift Current Land and Cattle Co., Coronado National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy
Conservation Land Status**	Designated Conservation Area
Human Population Density	Rural
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 3 and State Legislative District 02
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	41: Southeastern Arizona Basin and Range
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	This IBA is located south of the town of Elgin. The miles before the ranch are not paved but are in good condition. Visitors are asked to e-mail researchranch@audubon.org or call 520-455-5522 before scheduling a trip.

*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
Bird Monitoring	M	Monthly walking transects	AWRR Volunteer
Bird Monitoring	H	Annual roadside point counts grassland birds	Audubon Staff
Christmas Bird Count	H	Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch CBC	Annual volunteer survey coordinated by Audubon
Avian Research	L	Various research projects	Active research and results on file at AWRR
IBA Signage	M	Small IBA signs	Consider larger interpretive sign
IBA Dedication Event	L	Formal dedication	Date to be determined
Updated	February 28, 2020		

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
National Audubon Society	Site Manager and Owner	366 Research Ranch Rd, Elgin, AZ 85611 Phone: (520) 455-5522	Manages the land, buildings, and research program.
U.S. Forest Service (Coronado National Forest)	Land Owner	Tucson Office	Land being managed by NAS through a cooperative agreement.
Bureau of Land Management	Land Owner	Tucson Field Office	Land being managed by NAS through a cooperative agreement.
The Nature Conservancy	Landowner	Phoenix Conservation Center	Canelo Hills Preserve – cienega being managed by NAS – Transfer of land to Audubon in discussion
Swift Current Land & Cattle Co.	Land Owner	N/A	Land being managed by NAS through a contract agreement. Will transfer to BLM upon completion of the Resolution Copper Mine land exchange.
The Research Ranch Foundation	Cooperative Agreement Partner	N/A	Update agreement

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
Grassland Birds	Very Good
Madrean Oak Savannah and Woodland Birds	Very Good
Cottonwood Willow Sycamore Birds	Good

Conservation Challenges:

Conservation challenges immediately affect what we are trying to conserve. Through a Miradi process, it was found that drought poses the greatest threat to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Madrean Oak Savannah and Woodland	Grassland Birds	Cottonwood Willow Sycamore Birds	Summary Rating
Nonnative Grasses	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Fire	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Drought	High	Medium	High	High
Summary Ratings:	Medium	Low	Medium	High

Appleton-Whitwell Research Ranch - National Audubon Society				Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database						
Industrialization/Urbanization	Subdivision	7	2	2	3	
Invasive species	Plants- Lovegrass	8	2	3	3	
Drought		7	2	3	2	
Fire		7	3	2	2	