

Tucson Mountains

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://aziba.org/?page_id=2395
Priority	Continental
Qualifying Criteria	<p>B1: Species of Conservation Concern (<i>Gilded Flicker</i>, <i>Elf Owl</i> and <i>Costa's Hummingbird</i>)</p> <p>D3: Species in rare/unique habitat (<i>Upland Sonoran Desert</i>)</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	32.207° N, 111.16° W
Size	47,155 acres
County	Pima
Local Communities	Tucson
Description	<p>This IBA consists of Saguaro National Park (Tucson Mountain District), Tucson Mountain Park (Pima County), and the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum.</p> <p>The IBA centers on the Tucson Mountains and adjacent upland Sonoran Desert habitat. At lower elevations, the range supports Upland Sonoran Desert habitat, a subdivision of the Sonoran Desert characterized by diverse flora rich in trees and succulents with strong ties to Sinaloa Thorn scrub in Sonora. The upper portions of the range support local areas of desert grassland.</p>
Mission/Goals	To conserve and protect a unique example of upland Sonoran Desert habitat and the populations of special status avian species that depend on it.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	<p>Impact from recreation and urban encroachment are a major conservation issues for this IBA. Tucson is working on managing these issues through the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Large-scale fires from forest management decisions are also a concern and are being assessed by the Coronado National Forest.</p> <p>Buffelgrass is a major threat to the saguaro uplands habitat within this IBA as it changes the fire regime and intensifies fire events, in turn killing native plants - especially cacti. The National Park Service is currently attempting to slow the spread of this invasive grass with various methods of control.</p>
Land Cover Type ¹ (%) and Associated Priority ² Birds	<p>90.53 Sonoran Desertscrub: Uplands (<i>Gilded Flicker</i>, <i>Elf Owl</i>, <i>Costa's Hummingbird</i>, <i>Golden Eagle</i>, <i>Gilded Flicker</i>, <i>Gila Woodpecker</i>, <i>Abert's Towhee</i>, <i>Desert Purple Martin</i>, <i>Bell's Vireo</i>)</p> <p>5.70 Mohave Desertscrub (<i>Golden Eagle</i>, <i>Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p>
¹ Southwest Regional Gap Analysis modified to align with ABBA/SWAP habitat types	

<p>²AGFD SGCN and IBA Qualifying Species</p>	<p>1.59 Sonoran/Mohave Desertscrub (<i>Golden Eagle, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>1.48 Urban/Residential (<i>Costa’s Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Abert’s Towhee</i>)</p> <p>0.70 Other (Interior Chaparral, Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland, Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland, Mesquite, Open-Pit Mine) (<i>Golden Eagle, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow</i>)</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Sonoran Desert Low Grasslands</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>The Sonoran Desert has a greater diversity of life forms and plant communities than the other North American deserts. The Tucson Mountains are a small, isolated desert range west of Tucson in southern Arizona. Some of the densest stands of saguaro to be found anywhere on earth are within this IBA. The Tucson Mountains are floristically rich due to several factors, especially geographic location, elevation range, and habitat diversity. Bi-seasonal rainfall, relatively mild winters, and a range of microclimates and habitats help to support a diverse flora and fauna. The many winter & spring annuals in the flora reflect strong ties with the Mohave Desert in addition to the dominant Sonoran Desert influence of this area. The combination of mild winters with infrequent, modest freezes of short duration, the hot, dry arid foresummer, and summer rainfall favors cacti and subtropical desertscrub species such as ironwood.</p> <p>The Tucson Mountains are in a complex transition zone between several phytogeographic provinces and biotic communities. The range is located in the Arizona Upland, a subdivision of the Sonoran Desert characterized by diverse floras rich in trees and succulents with strong ties to Sinaloan thornscrub in Sonora. The upper portions of the range support local areas of desert grassland.</p> <p>A team of research scientists assembled by the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum recently inventoried this range and found it to be disproportionately rich relative to its size, its paucity of surface water, and its diversity of elevation. In an area of less than forty square miles (100 km²), this botany team encountered over 630 plant species - as rich a local assortment of plants as any desert flora known and representing roughly one-sixth of the Sonoran Desert’s entire plant diversity.</p> <p>This IBA qualifies for Continental status for Gilded Flicker, Elf Owl and Costa’s Hummingbird. Other bird species of interest include Gila Woodpecker and Bell’s Vireo in the lower elevations and Desert Purple Martin in the saguaro-dominated uplands. Other species present within this IBA include Lucy’s Warbler, Abert’s Towhee, Canyon Towhee, Scaled Quail, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, and Brewer’s Sparrow.</p>

Focal Bird Species	<p><u>IBA Qualifying Species</u></p> <p><u>Continental:</u> Gilded Flicker, Elf Owl, Costa’s Hummingbird</p> <p><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></p> <p>Tier A: None</p> <p>Tier B: Golden Eagle, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Savannah Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Abert’s Towhee, Desert Purple Martin, Bell’s Vireo</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National: Costa’s Hummingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Bendire’s Thrasher, Lucy’s Warbler</p> <p>USFWS Region: Golden Eagle, Costa’s Hummingbird, Gilded Flicker, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Bendire’s Thrasher, Lucy’s Warbler, Rufous-winged Sparrow</p>
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	33: Sonoran and Mojave Deserts
Ownership	National Park Service, Pima County Parks & Recreation, and the Bureau of Land Management
Conservation Land Status**	National Park and County Park
Human Population Density	Semi Urban
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 3 and State Legislative Districts 3 and 11
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	52: Sonoran Basin and Range
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	From Tucson: This IBA is located west of Tucson and can be easily accessed via Speedway to Kinney or from the northwest via Picture Rocks Road. Virtually all of this land is open to the public and there are some very well-known recreation areas favored by birders such as Gates Pass, the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, the David Yetman Trail, and many trails in Saguaro National Park.

*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
CBC	H	Tucson Valley circle	
AZ IBA Surveys	H	Annual breeding bird surveys and species specific surveys for Gila Woodpecker and Elf Owl	TAS lead- Encourage eBird entries
Tucson Bird Count	H	Regular volunteer bird surveys	TAS lead
IBA Signage	M	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Partial-TAS lead
IBA Dedication	M	A formal recognition event	Pending-TAS lead

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Saguaro National Park West	Land Manager	Tucson Mountain District 2700 North Kinney Road Tucson, AZ 85743	Maintain trails and public access to the park. Conserve and protect biodiversity values.
Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation	Land Manager	3500 W. River Road Tucson, AZ 85741 520-724-5000	Maintain trails and public access to the park and implement the Sonoran Desert Conservation plan
Tucson Audubon Society		300 E University Blvd # 120, Tucson, AZ 85705 (520) 629-0510 tucsonaudubon.org/	Volunteers coordination IBA and Tucson Bird Count efforts.

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
Xeric Riparian Microphyllic Woodland Birds	Good
Sonoran Desert Birds	Very 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 pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Sonoran Desert Birds	Xeric Riparian Birds	Summary Rating
Non-Native Plants	Medium	High	Medium
Altered Fire Regime	Medium	Very High	High
Vehicle Impacts	Medium	High	Medium
Military Disturbances	Low	Medium	Low
Summary Ratings:	Low	Medium	Medium

Tucson Mountains				Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)	Immediacy (Optional 1-2)
Threats on National Database							
Disturbance to birds	Land based Vehicles	7	2	1	4		
Natural events	Altered Fire Regime	9	3	3	3		
Recreation/tourism		3	1	1	1		
Invasive Non-native species	Bufflegrass	7	2	2	3		