

### Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area

IBA web pages	<a href="http://aziba.org/?page_id=698">http://aziba.org/?page_id=698</a> <a href="http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/whitewater-draw-state-wildlife-area">http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/whitewater-draw-state-wildlife-area</a>
Priority	Global
Qualifying Criteria	A4iii: Concentration of $\geq 20,000$ waterbirds (Sandhill Crane)  D1: Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Bendire's Thrasher, Long-billed Curlew, Scaled Quail, Cassin's Sparrow)  D4vi: Significant concentration of birds (Sandhill Cranes >2000)
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	31.57°N, -109.72°W
Size	1,509 acres
County	Cochise
Local Communities	Willcox, AZ McNeal, AZ
Description	This IBA is dominated by an ephemeral lake, patchy marshlands, and semi-arid Chihuahuan Desert grassland and also contains two small patches of riparian habitat. The property was acquired by the Arizona Game and Fish Department in 1997 and past land uses include farming and ranching – with about thirty percent of the property being irrigated agriculture. Much of this farmland is being returned to native grasslands through rest and active reseeding projects. The surrounding agricultural community of the valley enhances feeding opportunities for wildlife including Sandhill Cranes.
Mission/Goals	The goals for management of the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conserve and enhance sensitive wetland, grassland, and riparian habitat values associated with the Whitewater Draw Property for the benefit of waterfowl, migratory game birds and nongame birds, native amphibians, and reptiles.</li> <li>2. Provide public access, for hunting and watchable wildlife-oriented recreational activities and provide opportunities for appropriate wildlife, oriented public education and research.</li> <li>3. Provide additional and alternative roosting, feeding, and resting areas for migratory birds, especially waterfowl and Sandhill Cranes, beyond those currently available in the area.</li> <li>4. Maintain water rights and water quality and abundance associated with the property, both surface and subterranean.</li> </ol>
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	This IBA is managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department to Meet the goals above. A fifty-acre portion is managed under a cooperatively developed project to install moist soil cells which may

	<p>be flooded throughout the winter months.</p> <p>Over 600 acres are intermittently flooded to support the wetlands and two small patches of riparian habitat. A large portion of the Wildlife Area is comprised of native grasslands, most of which is being rehabilitated. The wetland and grassland communities on the wildlife area provide feeding and loafing sites for Sandhill Cranes, waterfowl, doves, and numerous other terrestrial game and nongame species including Plains Leopard Frogs, one of the most narrowly distributed of all leopard frogs in the state.</p>
<p><b>Land Cover Type<sup>1</sup> (%) and Associated Priority<sup>2</sup> Birds</b></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>47.25 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Bendire's Thrasher, Scaled Quail, Cassin's Sparrow, Botteri's Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, , Gray Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Sage Thrasher, Azure Bluebird, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover</i>)</p> <p>28.38 Freshwater Marsh, Riparian, and Open Water (<i>Long-billed Curlew, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, Clark's Grebe, Belted Kingfisher, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Great Egret Snowy Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Purple Martin, Red-naped Sapsucker, Lincoln's Sparrow, Yellow Warbler</i>)</p> <p>16.56 Chihuahuan Desertscrub (<i>Bendire's Thrasher, Peregrine Falcon</i>)</p> <p>3.64 Wash (<i>Bell's Vireo, Abert's Towhee</i>)</p> <p>3.34 Agriculture (<i>Long-billed Curlew, Sandhill Crane, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl</i>)</p> <p>.83 Other (Mesquite, Sonoran Desertscrub: Lower Colorado River)</p>
<p><b>Related Habitat Accounts*</b></p>	<p>Low Grasslands Freshwater Marsh Lowland Riparian Sonoran Desert</p>
<p><b>Biological Description</b></p>	<p>This IBA is of state and regional significance as the primary wintering area for Sandhill Cranes (<i>Grus canadensis</i>) in Arizona, and includes both the Lesser (most numerous) and Greater subspecies.</p> <p>Whitewater Draw is in the southern Sulphur Springs Valley and cranes come from both the Rocky Mountain population and Mid-Continental population. The area also supports wintering Snow Geese (80-200) and a few Ross's Geese (occasional to 40). Counts of Sandhill Cranes in early January have steadily climbed from 4,000 in 1991 to over 22,000 in 2008 at Whitewater Draw with another 13,000 present 36 miles north in the Willcox Playa area, another 600</p>

	present in the far north of Sulphur Springs Valley at Bonita, AZ, and another 400 present in the Safford Valley near Duncan.
Focal Bird Species	<p><b><u>IBA Qualifying Species</u></b></p> <p>Global: Sandhill Crane</p> <p>State: Bendire’s Thrasher, Long-billed Curlew, Scaled Quail, Cassin’s Sparrow</p> <p><b><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></b></p> <p>Tier A: Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bald Eagle</p> <p>Tier B: Clark’s Grebe, Botteri’s Sparrow, Baird’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Great Egret, Gray Hawk, American Bittern, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Black-Hawk, , Belted Kingfisher, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Snowy Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Sage Thrasher, Osprey, Purple Martin, Azure Bluebird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Bell’s Vireo, Abert’s Towhee, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Gilded Flicker, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Mountain Plover, Burrowing Owl, Yellow Warbler</p> <p><b><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></b></p> <p>Western Yellow-billed cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</p> <p><b><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></b></p> <p>National – Bald Eagle, Swainson’s Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Mountain Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Bewick’s Wren, Bendire’s Thrasher, Lucy’s Warbler, Brewer’s Sparrow</p> <p>USFWS Region – Bald Eagle, Common Black-Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Curlew, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Bendire’s Thrasher, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Botteri’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Bunting</p>
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	34: Sierra Madre Occidental
Ownership	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Conservation Land Status**	State Wildlife Area
Human Population Density	Rural
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 2 and State Legislative District 14

NRCS Major Land Resource Area	53: Southeastern Arizona Basin and Range
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	<p>From Tucson, take I-10 east toward El Paso; merge onto AZ-80 east toward Tombstone/Douglas; turn left onto Davis Road; turn right onto North Central Highway; turn right onto west Bagby Road; turn right onto Coffman Road.</p> <p>To prevent catastrophic abandonment of the roost, posted portions of the area are closed to public entry from October 15 through March 15 annually. This closure has minimal impact on viewing opportunities</p> <p>Overnight public camping is allowed in designated areas only, for no more than three days within a seven day period. Camping is free; however, no utilities are available. There is a vault toilet on site. Open fires are allowed in designated areas only. Motorized vehicle travel is permitted on designated roads, on designated trails, or in designated areas only.</p> <p>To learn more, visit <a href="https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/wheretogo/whitewater/">https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/wheretogo/whitewater/</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:**

Issue or Activity	Priority	Description	Actions
Sandhill Crane Winter Count	H	Annual survey coordinated by AGFD	Provide volunteers
AZ IBA Surveys	M	eBird	TAS lead- Encourage eBird entries
IBA Signage	M	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Installed
IBA Dedication	Done	A formal recognition event	Completed January 2014
Whitewater Draw WA	M	Update management opportunities	Coordinate with AGFD Tucson office Habitat Program

**Partners:**

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Arizona Game and Fish Department	Willcox Wildlife Area Manager and Wings Over	Region V 555 N. Greasewood Rd. Tucson, AZ 85745	Management of Whitewater Draw WA

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role(s)</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Actions</b>
	Willcox partner	520-628-5376	
Tucson Audubon Society	IBA Steward	300 E University Blvd # 120, Tucson, AZ 85705 (520) 629-0510	Primary contact for birding and bird conservation activities and volunteer opportunities.

**Conservation Targets:**

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

<b>Conservation Target</b>	<b>Current Condition</b>
Sandhill Crane	Very Good
Waterbirds and Shorebirds	Good
Waterfowl Birds	Good
Grassland and Upland 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 ..... pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Upland and Grassland Birds</b>	<b>Waterfowl</b>	<b>Sandhill Crane</b>	<b>Waterbirds and Shorebirds</b>	<b>Summary Rating</b>
Groundwater Extraction	NA	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Drought	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Invasive Plants	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low
Summary Ratings:	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

41) Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area			Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database					
Invasive species	Other	6	2	2	2
Natural events	Drought	8	2	3	3
Water Diversions (incl. impact dikes/dams)	Groundwater extraction	8	2	3	3

