

Aubrey Valley and Cliffs

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://aziba.org/?page_id=258 • http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/aubrey-valley-and-cliffs • AzGFD Conservation Opportunity Area
Priority	State
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (<i>Golden Eagle</i>, <i>Ferruginous Hawk</i>) and raptor migration corridor)</p> <p>eBird Bar Chart https://ebird.org/barchart?byr=1975&eyr=2020&bmo=1&emo=12&r=US-AZ_1238</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	35.49° N, 112.99° W
Size	246,538 acres
County	Coconino and Yavapai
Local Communities	Seligman
Description	<p>Aubrey Valley is approximately 46 km northwest of Seligman, AZ, adjacent to historical Route 66. It is dominated by high elevation grassland in the valley and pinyon-juniper along the ridges. This site also contains approximately 25 km of exposed cliff face that follows a northwest-southeast axis.</p> <p>Aubrey Valley is home to Arizona’s largest colony of Gunnison’s prairie dogs (<i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>) and for this reason it was also designated as a reintroduction site for black-footed ferrets. The large prairie dog population provides a regional prey base for resident and migrating raptors including Golden Eagles (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>) and Ferruginous Hawks (<i>Buteo regalis</i>) and also supports synoptic species like Burrowing Owls (<i>Athene cucularia</i>). The extensive cliff line provides abundant raptor nesting and perching opportunities.</p>
Mission/Goals	To conserve and protect an important landscape and the special status avian species that depend on it.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	<p>Audubon supports collection of raptor occurrence data at this location and recommends against wind development that would risk collision of raptors and other wildlife with turbine blades.</p> <p>Big Boquillas (Diamond A) Ranch, in partnership with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, has a sign in for public visitors and manages off road activity.</p> <p>Aubrey Valley is also used as a reintroduction site for black-footed ferrets (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>).</p>

<p>Land Cover Type¹ (%) and Associated Priority² Birds</p> <p>¹Southwest Regional Gap Analysis modified to align with ABBA/SWAP habitat types</p> <p>²AGFD SGCN and IBA Qualifying Species</p>	<p>53.83 Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland (<i>Common Nighthawk, Pinyon Jay</i>)</p> <p>40.34 Cold-temperate (Great Basin)/Plains Grassland and Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grasslands (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Western Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Savannah Sparrow</i>)</p> <p>4.35 Cold-temperate (Great Basin) Desertscrub and Wash (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Western Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Nighthawk</i>)</p> <p>1.36 Ponderosa Pine Forest (<i>Common Nighthawk</i>)</p> <p>0.12 Other (Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland, Interior Chaparral, Rock, Riparian) (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Western Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow</i>).</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Pinyon Juniper High Grassland Cold Desertscrub</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>Brown (1982) characterizes Aubrey Valley as a Plains and Great Basin Grassland Community with annual precipitation averaging 25 to 30 cm. It is dominated by high elevation grassland in the valley and pinyon-juniper along the ridges.</p> <p>Aubrey Valley is extremely important for birds, especially raptors, because it juxtaposes important landscape features with the vital biotic resources raptors need to survive. Sixteen species of raptor have been found here by surveyors during transects and point counts. The valley has abundant small-mammal species, including a large colony of prairie dogs, cottontail rabbits (<i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>), and jackrabbits (<i>Lepus californicus</i>). These provide food for numerous resident and migratory raptorial species.</p> <p>Aubrey Cliffs, the most prominent feature on the landscape, rises approximately 300 m from the valley floor and provides ideal habitat for species such as Golden Eagles, a species of high conservation status. Survey data also show that this area supports high numbers of Ferruginous Hawks, also a species of high conservation status, at certain times of the year.</p> <p>Although no systematic raptor nest searches have been conducted, regional biologists have documented at least one Golden Eagle nest territory and confirmed as active one Ferruginous Hawk nest. The road transect data indicates the area is a significant post-breeding dispersal and migration corridor for these two species. Other raptors are also very abundant in the area, notably Red-tailed Hawks and</p>

	American Kestrels. Burrowing Owls are prevalent throughout the valley, and are consistently seen during Black-footed Ferret spot-light surveys.
Focal Bird Species Bold Type are Road to Recovery species	<p><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need (2022)</u></p> <p>Tier 1: Peregrine Falcon</p> <p>Tier 2: Common Nighthawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Pinyon Jay, Savannah Sparrow, Western Burrowing Owl,</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National: Swainson’s Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay</p> <p>Regional: Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Burrowing Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Pinyon Jay</p>
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	I 6: Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau
Ownership	The Aubrey Valley is part of the Big Boquillas (Diamond A) Ranch and is comprised of checkerboard State Trust and private land owned by the Navajo Nation. Primary and historic use is cattle grazing with grazing rights currently leased to the Cholla Cattle Company.
Conservation Land Status**	None
Human Population Density	Rural
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 2 and State Legislative District 6
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	45: Colorado Plateau
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	Primary access is at Pika Camp gate located north of old Route 66 just before milepost 123. Go through a large gate named Pika Camp and proceed approximately 2.5 miles to a sign in station. Roads are graded, and high clearance vehicles are recommended.

*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
AZ IBA Surveys	M	Annual raptor surveys and encourage eBird entries	Coordinate with AGFD Region 3 about raptor surveys
IBA Signage	L	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Ascertain appropriate locations. Will require agreement of Navajo Nation and Cholla Land and Cattle Company
IBA Dedication	L	A formal recognition event	Date and Location to be Determined
Updated	December 2019		

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Arizona Game and Fish	Wildlife Manager	Region 3 Kingman, AZ	Coordinate raptor surveys and incidental bird observations
Cholla Land and Cattle Company	Manage Big Boquillas Ranch	https://huntbigboranch.com/ranch-rules/	Permission required for access. No trespassing unless licensed big game hunter. Access Fees.
Navajo Nation	Own Big Boquillas Ranch	TBD	Permission to install IBA signage
Arizona State Land Department	Land owner/manager	Natural Resources	TBD

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
Raptors (Hawks and Golden Eagles)	Good
Cold Temperate Grassland Birds	Good
Pinyon-Juniper 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 wind tower development pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Pinyon-Juniper Birds	Grassland Birds	Raptors	Summary Rating
Grazing	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Wind Towers	High	Low	Very High	High
Nonnative Grasses	Medium	High	Low	Low
Summary Ratings:	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Aubrey Valley and Cliffs	Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)	Immediacy (Optional 1-2)
Threats on National Database				
Industrialization/urbanization	3	2	4	2
Wind Towers				
Agricultural Intensification/Expansion	1	2	3	
Grazing				

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