

Chiricahua Mountains

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/chiricahua-mountains-coronado-national-forest http://aziba.org/?page_id=330 NAS Site 2286 AzGFD Conservation Opportunity Areas
Priority	Global
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Global Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Mexican Spotted Owl)</p> <p>State Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Mexican Spotted Owl, American Peregrine Falcon, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Goshawk, Western Grasshopper Sparrow, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Golden Eagle, Western Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Swainson’s Thrush, Common Nighthawk, American Dipper, Evening Grosbeak, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Yellow Warbler, Gray Catbird, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Magnificent Hummingbird, Northern Pygmy Owl, Yellow-eyed Junco, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Gould’s Turkey, Whiskered Screech Owl, Gila Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Botteri’s Sparrow, Abert’s Towhee, Arizona Woodpecker, Mexican Chickadee, Azure Bluebird, Elegant Trogon, Pacific Wren, Thick-billed Kingbird, Bell’s Vireo)</p> <p>Rare, Unique, or Exceptional Representative Habitat/Ecological Community (Madrean Occidental Sky Island)</p> <p>eBird Bar Chart https://ebird.org/barchart?byr=1900&eyr=2020&bmo=1&emo=12&r=US-AZ_2286</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	-109.280000, 31.905700
Size	292,206 acres
County	Cochise
Local Communities	Willcox, AZ Douglas, AZ Portal, AZ
Description	This IBA encompasses the large “sky island” mountain range, the

	<p>Chiricahua Mountains, in southeastern Arizona and is almost 40 miles long by 20 miles wide. The IBA extends from 5000 feet elevation, at the ecotone between grassland and oak, to the top of Chiricahua Peak at 9795 feet. Sierra Madrean species reach the northernmost extension of their ranges within this IBA. This IBA is notable for the incredible diversity of bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian species that occur here due to the numerous life zones that overlap in this sky island.</p>
<p>Mission/Goals</p>	<p>Conservation of a major Madrean occidental sky island that represents a rare/unique habitat mosaic in Arizona, supports populations of breeding, year-round and migratory birds, and provides globally significant habitat for Mexican spotted owls.</p>
<p>Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities</p>	<p>The forest lands are managed for multiple uses with an emphasis on wildlife oriented recreation and hunting. A small lake (Rucker Canyon) is seasonally stocked with rainbow trout by the Arizona Game and Fish Department when water levels are sufficient. A very small part of the range in the northwest corner is protected as the Chiricahua National Monument. The monument protects spectacular erosion features, and provides a scenic drive, many trails, and a visitor center. The small community of Portal, Arizona on the east side of the range, is a primary access point, providing some accommodations and amenities, and is the gateway to numerous campgrounds within the National Forest. Research/Conservation Projects: Southwest Desert Research Station, under the direction of the American Museum of Natural History New York, N.Y., has conducted research on fauna and flora since its founding in 1955.</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>32.62 Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland (<i>Gould's Turkey, Common Nighthawk, Peregrine Falcon, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, Loggerhead Shrike, Scott's Oriole</i>)</p> <p>31.57 Mexican evergreen woodland (<i>Gould's Turkey, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Mexican Spotted Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Whiskered Screech Owl, Western Screech Owl, Common Nighthawk, Arizona Woodpecker, Magnificent Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Arizona Woodpecker, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-eyed Junco, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Mexican Chickadee, Azure Bluebird</i>)</p> <p>10.01 Madrean pine-oak woodland (<i>Gould's Turkey, Mexican Spotted Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Whiskered Screech Owl, Western Screech Owl, Northern Goshawk, Swainson's Thrush, Evening Grosbeak, Magnificent Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Arizona Woodpecker, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-eyed Junco, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Mexican Chickadee, Azure Bluebird, Elegant Trogon, Pacific Wren, Grace's Warbler</i>)</p>

	<p>8.60 Interior chaparral (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Common Nighthawk, Gila Woodpecker, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay</i>)</p> <p>8.20 Semiarid/Sonoran savannah grassland (<i>Western Burrowing Owl, Scaled Quail, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Gila Woodpecker, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel, Botteri's Sparrow, Western Grasshopper Sparrow, Azure Bluebird, Black-Throated Sparrow, Pyrrhuloxia</i>)</p> <p>4.15 Rock (<i>Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon</i>)</p> <p>1.89 Riparian (<i>Gould's Turkey, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Mexican Spotted Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Whiskered Screech Owl, Northern Goshawk, American Dipper, Gray Catbird, Gila Woodpecker, Arizona Woodpecker, Magnificent Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Yellow-eyed Junco, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, MacGillivray's Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Abert's Towhee, Mexican Chickadee, Azure Bluebird, Elegant Trogon, Pacific Wren, Thick-billed Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Western Wood-Pee-wee</i>)</p> <p>1.24 Aspen Mixed Conifer (<i>MacGillivray's Warbler, Northern Goshawk, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Evening Grosbeak, Pacific Wren Band-tailed Pigeon, Hermit Thrush, Cassin's Finch</i>)</p> <p>1.71 Other (Wash, Chihuahua Desertscrub and Sonoran Desertscrub: Lower Colorado River) (<i>Common Nighthawk, Gila Woodpecker, Prairie Falcon, Scaled Quail, Abert's Towhee, Chihuahuan Raven, Cactus Wren</i>)</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Pinyon Juniper Madrean Pine-Oak Pine Low Grassland Lowland Riparian Montane Riparian Mixed Conifer-Aspen</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>Interior Rocky Mountain avifauna meet northern Sierra Madrean avifauna in the Chiricahua Mountains. The Sonoran, Chihuahuan, and Great Basin desert avifauna also collide in this range. Thanks to this diversity, some 375 bird species are known to inhabit the Chiricahua Mountains IBA (Taylor 1997).</p> <p>Sierra Madrean species reach the northernmost extension of their ranges within this IBA. Notable are many bird species, but also mammals like jaguarundis, and trees like the Apache pine. Numerous perennial springs and streams occur within the range, although none</p>

	flow out of the mountains into the surrounding Chihuahuan desert scrub. The main canyons of the range include West Turkey Creek, Rucker, and Cave Creek.
<p>Focal Bird Species</p> <p>Bold Type are Road to Recovery species</p>	<p><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need (2022)</u></p> <p>Tier 1 – American Peregrine Falcon, Mexican Spotted Owl, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Thick-billed Parrot (extirpated)</p> <p>Tier 2 – Abert’s Towhee, American Dipper, American Kestrel, Arizona Botteri’s Sparrow, Arizona Woodpecker, Azure Bluebird, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black-chinned Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Cactus Wren, Cassin’s Finch Chihuahuan Raven, Common Nighthawk, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Elegant Trogon, Evening Grosbeak, Ferruginous Hawk, Gila Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, Grace’s Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Goshawk, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Magnificent Hummingbird, Mexican Chickadee, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Northern Pygmy Owl, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pacific Wren, Prairie Falcon, Pyrrhuloxia, Scott’s Oriole, Swainson’s Thrush, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Thick-billed Kingbird, Scaled Quail, Steller’s Jay, Western Wood-Pee-wee, Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Western Burrowing Owl, Western Grasshopper Sparrow, Western Screech Owl, Whiskered Screech Owl, Yellow-eyed Junco, Yellow Warbler,</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u> Mexican Spotted Owl, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National – Flammulated Owl, Elf Owl, Costa’s Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, Elegant Trogon, Arizona Woodpecker, Olive-Sided Flycatcher, Virginia’s Warbler, Grace’s Warbler Lucy’s Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Brewer’s Sparrow, Black-chinned Sparrow</p> <p>USFWS Region – Peregrine Falcon, Black-chinned Sparrow, Golden Eagle, Flammulated Owl, Elf Owl, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Grace’s Warbler, Olive Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Red-faced Warbler</p>
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	34: Sierra Madre Occidental
Ownership	The US Forest Service (Coronado National Forest, Douglas Ranger District), the US Park Service (Chiricahua National Monument), American Museum of Natural History (Southwest Desert Research Station), and private.
Conservation Land Status**	National Forest and National Park
Human Population Density	Rural

Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 6 and State Legislative District 19
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	41: Southeastern Arizona Basin and Range
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	<p>The small community of Portal, Arizona on the east side of the range, is a primary access point, providing some accommodations and amenities, and is the gateway to numerous campgrounds within the National Forest.</p> <p>From Sierra Vista go east on Hwy 90 then south on Hwy 80 to Bisbee; continue east on Hwy 80 to Douglas; continue northeast on Hwy 80 to Rodeo, NM; and finally go west on Portal Road about 2 miles north of Rodeo. This route is entirely blacktop and is an all-weather route.</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 – Responsible Party
Bird Monitoring	H	Portal CBC	Annual-Coordinated by Arizona Field Ornithologists
Bird Monitoring	H	Portal Breeding Bird Survey	Continue-USGS
Bird Monitoring	H	Hummingbird Monitoring	Hummingbird Monitoring Network
Bird Monitoring	L	AZ IBA Surveys	Tucson Audubon led - Encourage eBird entries
Bird Monitoring	M	USFS spotted owl surveys - conducted periodically	Use data to update global designation criteria
Bird Monitoring	H	IBA Trogon Breeding Surveys	Annual – Tucson Audubon lead
Bird Monitoring	M	Yellow-billed cuckoo surveys USFWS Breeding Survey Protocol	As funding is available
IBA Signage	H	IBA Signs installed at SW Research Station and multiple bird feeder stations on private land.	Partial- Tucson Audubon lead
IBA Dedication	H	A formal recognition event	October 2023- Tucson Audubon lead

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Coronado National Forest	Land Managers	Contact Information	Multiple-use management

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Douglas Ranger District			
National Park Service	Land Managers	Contact Information	Protection of landscape within the Chiricahua National Park including erosion features, scenic drives, many trails, and a visitor center.
Southwest Desert Research Station (Smithsonian Institute of Natural History)	Land Owner and research facility	Contact Information	More about the Southwest Desert Research Station’s research activities can be found on their website .
Private Ranch(es)	One Land Owner-included within the IBA	Contact IBA Program for more information if available	Support conservation easements.

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	Good
Madrean Oak Woodland and Sycamore/ Oak Birds	Very Good
Mixed Conifer and Spruce-Fir 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 drought, wildfire, and woody plant invasion pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Madrean Oak Woodland and Sycamore/Oak Birds	Mixed Conifer, Pine/Oak, and Spruce-Fir Birds	Grassland Birds	Summary Rating
Wild Fire	High	High	Medium	High
Grazing	Low	Low	Medium	Low
Drought	High	Very High	Medium	High
Birder	Low	Low	Low	Low

Challenges	Madrean Oak Woodland and Sycamore/Oak Birds	Mixed Conifer, Pine/Oak, and Spruce-Fir Birds	Grassland Birds	Summary Rating
Disturbance to Birds				
Summary Ratings:	Medium	High	Medium	High

11) Chiricahua Mountains				Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database						
Disturbance to birds	Foot traffic	5		1	2	1
Forest Grazing		5		1	3	1
Natural events	Fire	8		3	2	3
	Drought	8		3	3	2

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