

Verde River Riparian Corridor in the Town of Camp Verde

<p>IBA web pages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Verde IBA - Arizona Important Bird Areas Program (aziba.org) • Important Bird Areas (audubon.org) Site ID 2224 • Arizona Game and Fish Conservation Opportunity Area-Aquatic
<p>Priority</p>	<p>State</p>
<p>Qualifying Criteria</p>	<p>Species of Conservation Concern (<i>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Wood Duck, Common Black Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Abert's Towhee, Bell's Vireo, Gila Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Yellow Warbler, Lucy's Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow</i>)</p> <p>Species in Rare/Unique Habitat (<i>Lowland Riparian and Mesquite Bosque</i>)</p> <p>Education - site supports educational programs with significant content focused on avian ecology (<i>Site included in 2016 Verde River Recreation Master Plan. Ranger programs and bird walks are scheduled to take place at the Montezuma Castle National Monument.</i>)</p>
<p>IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)</p>	<p>34.57° N, -111.87° W</p>
<p>Size</p>	<p>3879.554 acres</p>
<p>County</p>	<p>Yavapai</p>
<p>Local Communities</p>	<p>Town of Camp Verde</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>The Verde River watershed is located in central Arizona. Its headwaters are near Paulden, where underground flows from aquifers in the Big and Little Chino Basins feed seeps and springs. The middle stretch of the Verde River flows through the Verde Valley communities of Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde, on its way toward its confluence with the Salt River just outside of the Phoenix Metro Area. This river is one of Arizona's last remaining perennially flowing rivers and supports healthy Fremont Cottonwood -Gooding's Willow gallery forests, a habitat that is becoming increasingly rare in the Southwest. The Verde River corridor and tributaries within the Town of Camp Verde contain critical habitat for a broad range of wildlife species, including rare and endangered fish, reptiles, and a diverse assemblage of resident and migratory birds.</p> <p>This IBA encompasses the 17-mile stretch of the Verde River riparian corridor on the Yavapai-Apache Nation and in the town of Camp Verde out to the 100-year flood zone. It also includes a segment of</p>

	<p>West Clear Creek, a tributary to the Verde River, from West Clear Creek Campground to the confluence of Clear Creek and the Verde near Shield Ranch and the Rockin’ River Ranch State Park. The upstream boundary of the IBA is east of Interstate 17 and includes the riparian habitats on the Yavapai Apache Nation.</p> <p>This stretch of the Verde is a region with a rich cultural history. The Sinagua people, who built the intricate cliff dwellings found in the area, first settled here and developed water resource infrastructure such as irrigation ditches to grow crops and support their communities. National Park and Monument designations protect some of these archaeological resources, including Montezuma Castle and Montezuma Well. Yavapai-Apache Nation tribal lands are located along the Verde River within the Town of Camp Verde’s boundaries and the region continues to be culturally important to Native American communities with deep and long connections to the Verde Valley and the Verde River. The area also played an important role in early American frontier settlement. The U.S. Army’s Fort Verde and the nearby agricultural community was one of the first communities in central Arizona.</p>
<p>Mission/Goals</p>	<p>To conserve and protect an exceptional example of low-elevation riparian and mesquite bosque habitats and the populations of special status breeding, wintering, and migratory birds that depend on them.</p>
<p>Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities</p>	<p>Current land management is a mix of recreational and conservation management by public land agencies including the Prescott National Forest, Coconino National Forest, and Arizona State Parks. The area also includes municipal land, managed for recreation and tribal land belonging to the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Nearly three quarters of the land along the Verde River along this stretch is privately owned.</p> <p>In 2016, the Town of Camp Verde approved its Verde River Recreational Master Plan, which will “identify priorities for developing and improving recreational amenities along the 17-mile stretch of the Verde River and its tributaries flowing through the Town’s boundaries.” This plan represents broadly supported management goals for the Verde River corridor and its drafting incorporated input from riverfront property owners, public land managers, and other critical stakeholders and landowners. It offers a unified management plan for the region and emphasizes the sensitive development of recreational resources focused on maintaining and enhancing watchable wildlife opportunities along the Verde River.</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>75.44 Riparian/Marshes (<i>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Wood Duck, Common Black Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Abert’s Towhee, Bell’s Vireo, Gila Woodpecker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Yellow Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Lincoln’s Sparrow</i>)</p> <p>15.11 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p>

	<p>4.36 Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland</p> <p>2.44 Wash (<i>Abert's Towhee</i>,</p> <p>1.26 Agriculture</p> <p>1.39 Other (Sonoran Desertscrub: Uplands, Urban/Residential/ Mohave Desertscrub) (<i>Abert's Towhee, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Lowland Riparian Low Grasslands Pinyon Juniper Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>The Verde River and its tributaries, as one of the last healthy and perennially flowing river ecosystems in Arizona, has a unique and important role in supporting a wide range of wildlife species, especially those that rely on intact, high quality riparian habitat. The Verde River watershed supports over 78% of the breeding birds found in Arizona and is critical to several species of concern including the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Yellow Warbler, and Lucy's Warbler.</p> <p>The 17-mile stretch of the Verde River contained in this IBA supports a variety of important woody riparian and wetland vegetation types that provide important habitat for resident and migratory birds as well as a host of other wildlife species. The predominant habitat type is riparian, comprised of Sonoran Deciduous Swamp/Riparian Scrub and Sonoran/Oasis Riparian Forest. Significant stretches support healthy stands of Fremont Cottonwood-Gooding's Willow gallery forests, which are one of the rarest forest types in North America. Adjacent to the riparian corridor are significant areas of mesquite bosque. These areas are characterized by open, park-like conditions with an understory of grassy forbs. This habitat type, while once quite common, has become increasingly rare due to development, either residential or agricultural, in the upland areas near perennial rivers and streams.</p>
<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: Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p>Tier 2: Abert's Towhee, American Kestrel, American Pipit, Black-throated Gray Warbler (migration), Brewer's Blackbird, Bullock's Oriole, Cactus Wren, Canyon Towhee, Common Black Hawk, Costa's Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, Gray Flycatcher, Gray Vireo (migration), Hermit Thrush, Hooded Oriole, Killdeer, Lincoln's Sparrow,</p>

	<p>Loggerhead Shrike, MacGillivray’s Warbler (migration), Prairie Falcon, Red-winged Blackbird, Savannah Sparrow, Scott’s Oriole, Townsend’s Solitaire, Verdin, Vesper Sparrow, Verdin, Western Screech Owl, Western Wood-Pewee (migration), Wood Duck, Woodhouse’s Scrub-Jay, Yellow Warbler</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National – Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Lucy’s Warbler</p> <p>USFWS Region – Common Black Hawk, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler</p>
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	34: Sierra Madre Occidental
Ownership	This IBA includes Arizona State Park, US Forest Service, municipal, county, tribal, and private land.
Conservation Land Status**	State Park, National Forest, Municipal Park, Private
Human Population Density	Rural
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 2 State Legislative District 1
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	50: Mogollon Transition
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	<p>The planned publically accessible areas of the Verde River corridor through the Town of Camp Verde are Parsons Park, Homestead Park, Rezzonico Park, White Bridge River Access Point, Clear Creek River Access Point, Clear Creek Campground Day Use Area, and Rockin’ River Ranch State Park.</p> <p>At a number of these parks and access points, including Parsons Park, Homestead Park, and Rockin’ River Ranch State Park, facilities are still in development, are not yet fully accessible, and do not yet have recreational amenities such as parking, restrooms, trails, or interpretive signage. Currently, the public must contact the agency managing these areas in order to obtain permission to access. For Parsons Park, contact the Town of Camp Verde; for Homestead Park, contact Prescott National Forest; for Rockin’ River Ranch State Park, contact Arizona State Parks.</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
CBC	M		Annual
AZ IBA Surveys	M	Breeding bird and raptor surveys	Implement eBird protocols. Design a raptor count that includes private landowners on the river.
YBCU Surveys	H	Continue surveys coordinated by NAU, USFS, and NPS	Audubon assist with volunteer recruits as needed.
Conservation Strategy	H	Engage stakeholders in evaluating conservation challenges and opportunities	Audubon Arizona will coordinate stakeholder review of the mini-conservation plan
IBA Signage		Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Signs provided to Cottonwood.
IBA Dedication	H	A formal recognition event	Informal event Summer 2019. Larger event planned when Cottonwood river park is opened.
Updated	April 2020		

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Town of Cottonwood	Land Owner/Manager	473 South Main Street, Suite 102 Camp Verde, Arizona 86322 http://www.campverde.az.gov	Open planned riverside parks
Arizona State Parks Rockin' River Ranch	Land Owner/Manager	https://azstateparks.com/rockin-river-ranch-tac https://www.facebook.com/rockinrivererranch/	Open Rocking River Ranch to the public
NPS-Montezuma Castle National Monument	Land Owner/Manager	https://www.nps.gov/moca/index.htm 928-567-3322 x221	Outreach about avian and biodiversity values. Access for bird surveys
Prescott National Forest- Verde Ranger District	Land Owner/Manager	http://www.fs.usda.gov/prescott 928-567-4121	Outreach about avian and biodiversity values.
Yavapai-Apache Nation	Land Owner/Manager	https://yavapai-apache.org/contact-us/ 928-567-1021	Riparian habitat restoration
Salt River Project	Land Owner/Manager	https://www.srpnet.com/environment/wildlife-protection.aspx	Riparian habitat restoration and protection

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
The Nature Conservancy	Land Owner/Manager	https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/arizona/contact-us/	Riparian habitat restoration and protection
Arizona Game and Fish Department	Conservation Easements	http://azgfd.gov	No pending actions
Friends of Verde River	Steward/Watershed Partnership	https://verderiver.org/ https://verderiver.org/watershed-report-card/	Local conservation planning and partnerships, outreach, riparian habitat restoration
Northern Arizona Audubon Society	Bird Surveys and volunteers	http://www.northernarizonaaudubon.org/	CBC and scheduled bird surveys

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
Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Good
Mesquite Bosque 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.

Challenges	Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Mesquite Bosque Birds	Summary Rating
Natural Events/Fire and Drought	High	High	High
Invasive Salt Cedar, Tree of Heaven, Russian Olive, and Arundo	Medium	Low	Medium
Floods	Low	Low	Low
Disturbance to Birds - Boats & OHV	Medium	Medium	Medium

Challenges	Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Mesquite Bosque Birds	Summary Rating
Groundwater Pumping	High	Medium	Medium
Summary Ratings:	Medium	Low	Medium

9) Camp Verde/Verde River		Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)	Immediacy (Optional 1-2)
Threats on National Database					
Recreation/Tourism	Off-road vehicles	5	2	1	2
Invasive Species	Tamarisk, Tree of Heaven, Arundo	6	2	2	2
Natural events	Fire, Drought	8	3	2	3
Water Diversions	Groundwater extraction	6	2	2	2

Camp Verde Important Bird Area

