

Patagonia-Sonoita Creek TNC Preserve

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://aziba.org/?page_id=512 • http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/patagonia-sonoita-creek-tnc
Priority	State
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (<i>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Bell’s Vireo, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Abert’s Towhee, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Gray Hawk Varied Bunting</i>)</p> <p>Rare, Unique, or Exceptional Representative Habitat/Ecological Community (<i>Low-elevation Riparian</i>) (<i>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Bell’s Vireo, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Abert’s Towhee, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Gray Hawk Common Ground-Dove, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Black Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Cassin’s Kingbird, Bridled Titmouse, Bushtit, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick’s Wren, Phainopepla, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Varied Bunting, Hooded Oriole, Bullock’s Oriole, Lesser Goldfinch</i>)</p> <p>: Site at which habitat restoration and public education about the value of restored habitat to birds are significant goals</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	31.53° N, 110.78° W
Size	387 acres
County	Santa Cruz
Local Communities	Patagonia

<p>Description</p>	<p>This IBA lies in the floodplain valley between the Patagonia and Santa Rita Mountains of southeastern Arizona and contains some of the richest remaining riparian habitat in the region. Sonoita Creek, one of the regions few remaining healthy, flowing streams, provides for a wide array of diverse species from endangered fishes to butterflies and birds. This site contains the first two miles of permanent flow of Sonoita Creek and the floodplains adjacent to the stream.</p> <p>The Preserve was The Nature Conservancy’s first project in Arizona, and it is now visited by thousands of people every year seeking to see and experience some facet of its rich natural diversity. Also within this IBA is the Tucson Audubon Society’s Paton Center for Hummingbirds, a premier birding destination and a great location to spot a Violet-crowned hummingbird, a primarily Mexican species that only occurs in the United States in southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico.</p>
<p>Mission/Goals</p>	<p>To conserve and protect an exceptional example of low-elevation riparian habitat and the special status avian species that depend on it.</p>
<p>Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities</p>	<p>The Nature Conservancy is actively managing the Preserve for the benefit of the habitat and the wildlife that depend on it. The site has been a platform for promoting the work of The Nature Conservancy and has served as an outdoor classroom for several innovative environmental education activities. Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active management of the sacaton grassland surrounding Sonoita Creek through various means including invasive species removal. • Ongoing hydrologic research and monitoring • Promotion of the Nature Conservancy’s work through community-based activities seeking to build understanding and support for conservation in southern Arizona.
<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>30.97 Riparian (<i>Western Screech Owl, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Elegant Trogon, Rose-throated Becard, Yellow Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Bell’s Vireo, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Abert’s Towhee, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Gray Hawk, Common Ground-Dove, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Acorn Woodpecker, Gila Woodpecker, Western Wood-Peeewe, Black Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Cassin’s Kingbird, Thick-billed Kingbird, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Black-capped gnatcatcher, Bridled Titmouse, Bushtit, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick’s Wren, Phainopepla, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Varied Bunting, Hooded Oriole, Bullock’s Oriole.</i>)</p>

	<p>29.66 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Gould’s Turkey, Savannah Sparrow, Botteri’s Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Arizona Grasshopper Sparrow, Gila Woodpecker, Azure Bluebird, Lesser Goldfinch</i>)</p> <p>27.82 Mexican Evergreen Woodland (<i>Broad-billed Hummingbird, Arizona Woodpecker, Acorn Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>4.72 Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland</p> <p>3.94 Chihuahuan Desertscrub</p> <p>2.89 Urban and Residential</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Low Grassland Lowland Riparian Madrean Pine-Oak Pinyon Juniper Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>The primary factors supporting the large diversity of bird species within this IBA are the riparian forest, reliable surface water, and proximity to the Huachuca Mountains IBA, one of the Sky Islands in the Sierra Madre Occidental. The riparian area, protected by the TNC Preserve, boasts a magnificent example of the rare Fremont cottonwood-Goodding’s willow forest that once dominated Arizona’s rivers and streams. Some of the cottonwood trees are among the largest (more than 100 feet tall) and oldest (over 130 years old) in the US. This is one of the few remaining sites in Arizona where this once-common forest type still persists.</p> <p>Because of this exceptional riparian forest, this IBA provides extremely important avian habitat, supporting an exceptionally diverse assemblage of riparian associated bird populations - over 275 species have been recorded. Among these species are birds of conservation concern that nest in high densities within this IBA. These include Gray Hawk, Yellow Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, Abert’s Towhee, and Bell’s Vireo. Other species of concern also occur within this IBA and include Northern Breadless Tyrannulet, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Black-bellied Whistling Duck. In recent years, more species of the southern Sierra Madre Occidental have found this habitat and occupied the site for periods. These include the Sinaloan Wren, Rufous-capped Warbler, Plain-capped, and Black-capped Gnatcatcher.</p> <p>The value of this IBA increases through time as residential and grazing pressures upstream in the Sonoita Creek valley escalate. In addition, the biodiversity of avian fauna supported here may prove critical if climate change causes other riparian areas to dry and become more ephemeral in their surface water availability.</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: Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p>Tier 2: Abert’s Towhee, American Kestrel, Arizona Botteri’s Sparrow, Arizona Woodpecker, Azure Bluebird, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Bullock’s Oriole, Common Black Hawk, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Elegant Trogon, Gila Woodpecker, Grasshopper Sparrow, Hooded Oriole, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Rose-throated Becard, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Thick-billed Kingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Western Wood-Pewee, Yellow Warbler</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National: Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Elegant Trogon, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Rufous-winged Sparrow,</p> <p>USFWS Region: Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Botteri’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow</p>
<p>NABCI Bird Conservation Region</p>	<p>34: Sierra Madre Occidental</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>The Nature Conservancy (Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve) and the Tucson Audubon Society (Patton Center for Hummingbirds)</p>
<p>Conservation Land Status**</p>	<p>Nature Conservancy Preserve</p>
<p>Human Population Density</p>	<p>Rural</p>
<p>Legislative District(s)</p>	<p>Arizona Congressional District 7 and State Legislative District 21</p>
<p>NRCS Major Land Resource Area</p>	<p>53: Southeastern Arizona Basin and Range</p>
<p>Visitation, main access, and permits needed</p>	<p>Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve is 60 miles southeast of Tucson. Take I-10 east to Highway 83, exit south to Sonoita, and then turn west onto Highway 82. In Patagonia, turn west on 4th Avenue, turn south on Pennsylvania, cross the creek, and go about one mile to the entrance.</p> <p>Also within this IBA is the Tucson Audubon Society’s Paton Center for Hummingbirds, a premier birding destination. For more information about visiting this site please visit http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/work/patons.html.</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	The IBA is within the Patagonia CBC	Extract IBA data from CBC
AZ IBA Surveys	M	Annual breeding bird surveys & Encourage eBird entries	<i>eBird focus species:</i> Abert's Towhee, Lucy's Warbler, Bell's Vireo, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Tropical Kingbird, Thick-billed Kingbird, and Varied Bunting
Yellow-billed cuckoo surveys	H	USFWS Breeding Survey Protocol	TAS Funded, annual surveys.
Habitat Restoration	H	Habitat restoration with an emphasis on creating cuckoo habitat	Planting of native grasses and trees and rehabilitation of waterway flow
IBA Signage	H	Installed signs identifying the site as an IBA at Paton Center for Hummingbirds.	Signs to be installed at Patagonia-Sonoita Creek TNC property – TAS lead
IBA Dedication	Done	A formal recognition event	Completed with opening of the Paton Center in 2017
Updated	June 2018		

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Tucson Audubon Society	Paton Center and IBA Steward	300 E University Blvd # 120, Tucson, AZ 85705 (520) 629-0510 tucsonaudubon.org/	Community outreach, site management, bird surveys, and advocacy
The Nature Conservancy	TNC Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve	Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve c/o Ramsey Canyon Preserve 27 Ramsey Canyon Road Hereford, AZ 85615	Community outreach and site management
Friends of Sonoita Creek	Watershed Steward	P.O. Box 4508 Rio Rico, AZ 85648 (520) 394-0173 sonoitacreek.org/	Volunteers, watershed projects, and local advocacy for the watershed

Conservation Targets:

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

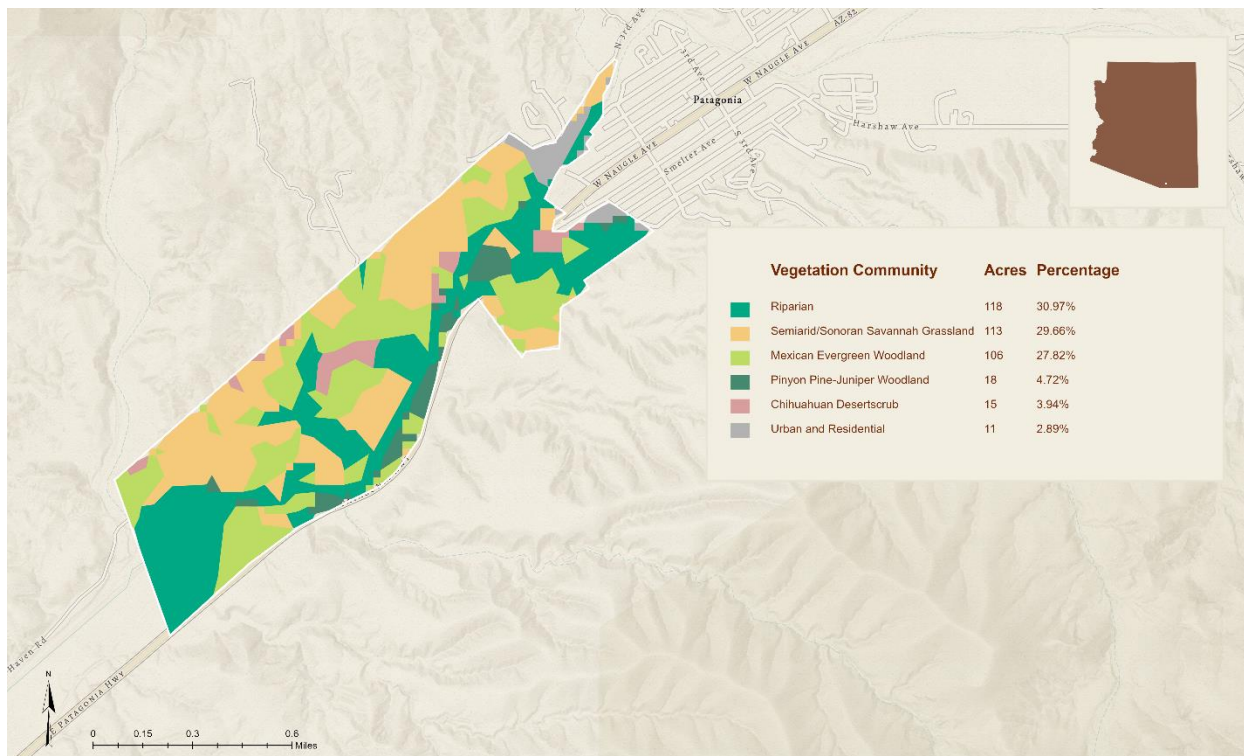
Conservation Target	Current Condition
Semi-arid Grassland Birds	Good
Mexican Evergreen Woodland Birds	Very Good
Riparian Birds	Very Good

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	Semi-arid Grassland Birds	Mexican Evergreen Woodland Birds	Riparian Birds	Summary Rating
Development	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Drought	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Groundwater Pumping	Low	Low	High	Medium
Wild Fire	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Summary Ratings:	Medium	low	Medium	Medium

Sonoita Creek Patagonia TNC Preserve			Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database					
Pollution	Water pollution	6	1	2	3
Water Diversions (incl. impact dikes/dams)	Channelization	7	2	2	3
			3	2	2
Water Diversions (incl. impact dikes/dams)	Groundwater extraction	7			



Patagonia Sonoita Creek - The Nature Conservancy Preserve Important Bird Area

