

Pinaleño Mountains

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/pinaleno-mountains • http://aziba.org/?page_id=1150 • AzGFD Conservation Opportunity Areas
Priority	State
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Species of Conservation Concern (<i>Mexican Spotted Owl, Wild Turkey, Peregrine Falcon, Mexican Whip-poor-will, Northern Pygmy Owl, Magnificent Hummingbird, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Olive Warbler, Virginia’s Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Grace’s Warbler, Red-faced Warbler and Yellow-eyed Junco</i>)</p> <p>Species in rare/unique habitat (<i>Madrean Occidental Sky Island</i>)</p> <p>Bar Charts - eBird</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	32.70° N, 109.87° W
Size	135680 acres
County	Graham
Local Communities	Safford
Description	<p>The Pinaleño Mountains are one of the most northern of the Coronado Forest’s “Sky Islands”. Located in Graham County and south of the agricultural community of Safford, this mountain has historically provided resources, such as lumber from Douglas fir and pine, for people living in the region.</p> <p>Located near the northern limit of the Chiricahua Apache homeland and the southern margins of Western Apache territory, the range is one of the Western Apache’s four holiest mountains and is considered sacred by all of the region’s indigenous communities. Since a determination by the Keeper of the Register in 2002, Dził Nchaa Si An, as it is known in the Western Apache language, ranks as the largest and most extensive (~330,000 acres) property listed on or formally determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Unlike many of the other mountains in the area, the Pinaleños have no lava deposits. The lava-based mountains found throughout Arizona tend to be barren, whereas the Pinaleños and others lacking these deposits have a large number of trees, including many that pre-date Columbus’s arrival in the Americas. Researchers from the University of Arizona Tree Ring Laboratory have discovered living trees that date back to 1257 and 1270 AD, as well as dead trees that date back</p>

	<p>as far as 1102 AD. Botanists say the Douglas firs have survived because the rocky cliffs of the mountains have served as a fire barrier for them.</p> <p>Within this range, a paved road provides access to a fishing lake constructed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department as well as to numerous campgrounds.</p>
Mission/Goals	To conserve and protect a unique example of a Madrean Occidental sky island and the populations of special status avian species that depend on it.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	This is such a fragile ecosystem that even small climate changes can have a profound effect. With potentially larger climate changes underway, the ecology of the Pinalaño's could be threatened. In particular, some view the fires of 2004 and 2017 as events possibly driven in part by climate change. The US Forest Service states that "global climate change and drought are helping to poise the Pinalaño's for epidemic insect or disease outbreaks and catastrophic, stand-replacing fires". Indeed, both of these events have taken place in recent years. The flora and fauna have not evolved to tolerate these new conditions or catastrophic events, so there is a need to use silvicultural management and prescribed burning to begin to restore the natural balance in the remaining forests and woodlands.
<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>24.85 Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland (<i>Wild Turkey, Woodhouse's Scrub jay</i>)</p> <p>23.10 Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland (<i>Band-tailed Pigeon, Wild Turkey, Mexican Whip-poor-will, Northern Pygmy Owl, Magnificent Hummingbird, Virginia's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Yellow-eyed Junco, Whiskered Screech Owl</i>)</p> <p>15.65 Interior Chaparral (<i>Wild Turkey, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Golden Eagle</i>)</p> <p>12.16 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Wild Turkey, Golden Eagle, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>8.26 Spruce-Fir / Mixed Conifer (<i>Band-tailed Pigeon, Wild Turkey, Northern Goshawk, Mexican Spotted Owl, Mexican Whip-poor-will, Virginia's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Yellow-eyed Junco</i>)</p> <p>4.05 Rock (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle</i>)</p> <p>3.11 Ponderosa Pine Forest (<i>Wild Turkey, Northern Pygmy Owl, Olive Warbler, Virginia's Warbler, Grace's Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Yellow-eyed Junco, Northern Goshawk</i>)</p> <p>2.72 Mexican Evergreen Woodland</p>

	<p>2.52 Riparian (<i>Wild Turkey, Magnificent Hummingbird, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Northern Goshawk, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Whiskered Screech Owl, Gila Woodpecker, MacGillivray’s Warbler</i>)</p> <p>1.53 Aspen</p> <p>1.08 Chihuahuan Desertscrub (<i>Golden Eagle, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>0.50 Montane Meadow</p> <p>0.47 Mohave/ Sonoran Desert scrub</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Conifer Forest Pine Pinyon Juniper Madrean Pine-Oak Low Grasslands High Elevation Riparian Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>The Pinaleno Mountains (commonly referred to as Mt. Graham, the highest peak in southern Arizona at 10,700 feet) are an excellent example of a high elevation Sky Island ecosystem, rising roughly 6,800 feet from semi-desert grasslands at the desert floor to mountainous woodlands at the highest peaks (the greatest elevation change in any range on the Coronado National Forest). These forests are comprised of Madrean Evergreen Woodland, Petran Montane Conifer Forest, and Petran Subalpine Conifer Forest.</p> <p>Pinaleno Mountains are the highest of the chain of Madrean Occidental Sky Islands that extend into Mexico but is far enough away from its neighboring ranges that it lacks several bird species found in other similar habitats. This lack of a few southeastern Arizona ‘specialty birds’ such as Mexican Chickadee and Elegant Trogon makes this the least birded of Arizona’s Sky Islands. However, the exceptional high elevation habitat found in this extensive range, representative of Rocky Mountain flora and fauna to the north, makes it vital for the many diverse bird species it supports.</p> <p>This isolated habitat in the Pinaleno Mountains provide habitat for 18 species and subspecies of endemic plants and animals found nowhere else on earth and sustains more life zones than any other isolated mountain in North America, ranging from desert at its base to old-growth spruce and fir forest at its summit. Animals include the Mount Graham red squirrel, Pinaleno pocket gopher, long-tailed vole, Northern Goshawk, Mexican Spotted Owl, and Apache trout, many of which are listed as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.</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: Bald Eagle, Mexican Spotted Owl, Peregrine Falcon</p> <p>Tier 2: American Dipper, American Kestrel, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black-chinned Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Blue-throated Mountain Gem, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Bullock’s Oriole, Cactus Wren, Canyon Towhee, Common Black Hawk, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Flammulated Owl, Ferruginous Hawk (Migration), Flammulated Owl, Golden Eagle, Gila Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, Grace’s Warbler, Gray Flycatcher, Hermit Thrush, Hooded Oriole, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Mountain Chickadee, Northern Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Northern Goshawk, Northern Pygmy Owl (Mountain), Olive-sided Flycatcher, Pyrrhuloxia, Red-faced Warbler, Rivoli’s Hummingbird, Northern Pygmy Owl, Scaled Quail, Scott’s Oriole, Steller’s Jay, Swainson’s Hawk (migration), Swainson’s Thrush (migration), Townsend’s Solitaire, Verdin, , Western Screech Owl, Western Wood-Pewee, Woodhouse’s Scrub Jay, Yellow-eyed Junco, Yellow Warbler</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>Mexican Spotted Owl</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National: Peregrine Falcon, Mexican Spotted Owl, Virginia’s Warbler, Grace’s Warbler, Red-faced Warbler,</p> <p>USFWS Region: Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Olive Warbler, Grace’s Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler</p>
<p>NABCI Bird Conservation Region</p>	<p>34: Sierra Madre Occidental</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>Coronado National Forest</p>
<p>Conservation Land Status**</p>	<p>National Forest</p>
<p>Human Population Density</p>	<p>Rural</p>
<p>Legislative District(s)</p>	<p>Arizona Congressional District 6 and State Legislative District 19</p>
<p>NRCS Major Land Resource Area</p>	<p>41: Southeastern Arizona Basin and Range 38: Mogollon Transition</p>
<p>Visitation, main access, and permits needed</p>	<p>For more information about visiting the Pinaleno Mountains, visit the Coronado National Forest’s Safford Recreation Area website: https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coronado/recreation/recarea/?recid=25310</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
AZ IBA Surveys	L	Annual breeding bird surveys	TAS lead- Encourage eBird entries
USFS spotted owl surveys	M	Contracted surveys conducted periodically	Use data to update global designation criteria
IBA Signage	M	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Pending-TAS lead
IBA Dedication	M	A formal recognition event	Pending-TAS lead

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Coronado National Forest	Land managers	Safford Ranger District 711 14th Avenue, Suite D Safford, AZ 85546 (928) 428-4150	Website: http://www.fs.usda.gov/coronado/
Tucson Audubon Society	IBA Steward	300 E University Blvd # 120, Tucson, AZ 85705 (520) 629-0510 tucsonaudubon.org/	Advocacy and 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
Grassland Birds	Good
Mixed Conifer and Spruce-Fir Birds	Good
High Elevation Riparian Birds	Good
Ponderosa Pine Birds	Good
Pinyon and Juniper Birds	Good

Conservation Challenges:

Conservation challenges are primarily human activities that immediately affect what we are trying to conserve. Through a Miradi process, habitat fragmentation at the higher elevations, drought, and wild fire pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Ponderosa Pine Birds	Pinyon and Juniper Birds	High Elevation Riparian Birds	Mixed Conifer and Spruce/ Fir Forest Birds	Summary Rating
Habitat Fragmentation	Low	Low	High	High	Medium
Drought	High	Medium	High	High	Very High
Wild Fire	High	Medium	Medium	Very High	High
Summary Ratings:	High	Low	High	High	High

Pinaleno Mountains		Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database				
Natural events	Altered Fire Regime	9	3	3
Industrialization/Urbanization	Habitat Fragmentation (Astronomy site, summer camps)	8	2	4
Drought		7	2	3

Pinaleno Mountains Important Bird Area

