

Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/bill-williams-river-national-wildlife-refuge • http://aziba.org/?page_id=272 • AzGFD Conservation Opportunity Area
Priority	Global
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Global: Site Important to Special Status Avian Species of concern (Bell’s Vireo, California Black Rail)</p> <p>Waterbird concentrations (Clark’s Grebe)</p> <p>Continental: Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Yuma Ridgway’s rail, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo)</p> <p>State: Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Golden Eagle, American Bittern, Gilded Flicker, Yellow Warbler, California Black Rail, Gila Woodpecker, Abert’s Towhee, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler)</p> <p>Rare, Unique, or Exceptional Representative Habitat/ Ecological Community (low-elevation riparian and wetlands)</p> <p>eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/barchart?byr=1975&eyr=2020&bmo=1&emo=12&r=US-AZ_1240</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	-114.074400 34.289100
Size	6000 acres
County	La Paz
Local Communities	Parker, Lake Havasu City
Description	Situated in central-western Arizona along the Lower Colorado River, the Bill Williams River extends a short 40 miles before emptying into the Colorado River at Lake Havasu. A portion of the river, the delta and the nine miles closest to the main stem of the Colorado River, is the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge (the IBA). It is the last extensive naturally flood-regenerated riparian and wetlands habitat on the Lower Colorado River.
Mission/Goals	Conservation of an exceptional example of low-elevation desert riparian and wetland habitat and the breeding and migratory birds that depend on it.
Current Habitat Conservation,	As a National Wildlife Refuge, conservation of species and their

<p>Planning, and Management Activities</p>	<p>required habitats is the most important consideration in management of this IBA. The refuge was established primarily to provide habitat for migratory birds, especially neotropical migrants, and to protect native riparian habitats. Land use is focused on wildlife orientated recreation and education. The refuge promotes research wherever possible to better understand the ecological complexity and interactions of these habitats and species, especially for improving the restoration of native habitats and their associated communities elsewhere on the Lower Colorado 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>38.22 Riparian (<i>Bell’s Vireo, Peregrine Falcon (migration), Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bald Eagle, American Bittern (migration), Yellow Warbler, Gila Woodpecker, Abert’s Towhee, Savannah Sparrow (winter), Lincoln’s Sparrow (winter), Lucy’s Warbler</i>)</p> <p>31.04 Sonoran/Mojave desertscrub (<i>Golden Eagle, Gila Woodpecker, Costa’s Hummingbird, Bendire’s Thrasher</i>)</p> <p>18.01 Sonoran desertscrub: Uplands (<i>Golden Eagle, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker</i>)</p> <p>12.00 Marsh and Open Water (<i>Clark’s Grebe</i>)</p> <p>3.85 Marsh (<i>California Black Rail, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail</i>)</p> <p>1.02 Other (Mojave desertscrub, semiarid/Sonoran savannah grassland, Urban/Residential, Backwater and Interior Chaparral) (<i>Savannah Sparrow (winter)</i>)</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Lowland Riparian Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>The Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge is the last extensive naturally flood-regenerated riparian and wetlands habitat on the Lower Colorado River. The riparian zone contains surface water year-round and riparian vegetation creates cooler, more humid conditions than found in the surrounding desert where rainfall averages only 3 inches per year and summer temperature often exceed 120 degrees. In the winter, the warmth allows many plants to keep their leaves, others to bloom in December and January, and insects to remain active. This makes it a vital stopover for the migration and wintering of birds on the Colorado River Flyway. Overall, 343 species have been recorded on the refuge.</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, Peregrine Falcon, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail</p> <p>Tier 2 – Abert’s Towhee, American Bittern (migration), American Pipit (winter), American Kestrel, Bendire’s Thrasher, Brewer’s Blackbird (winter), Bullock’s Oriole, Cactus Wren, Clark’s Grebe, Common Black Hawk, Costa’s Hummingbird, Golden Eagle, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Gray Flycatcher, Hooded Oriole, Killdeer, Lincoln’s Sparrow (winter), Loggerhead Shrike, Olive-sided Flycatcher (migration), Red-winged Blackbird, Savannah Sparrow (winter), Sprague’s Pipit (rare), Swainson’s Hawk (migration), Verdin, Vesper Sparrow (winter), Western Burrowing Owl, Western Grebe, Western Screech Owl</p> <p><u>Federal Threatened or Endangered Species</u></p> <p>Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</p> <p><u>USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern</u></p> <p>National – Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, California Black Rail, Long-billed Curlew, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Costa’s Hummingbird, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bell’s Vireo, Bendire’s Thrasher, Lucy’s Warbler</p> <p>USFWS Region – Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Costa’s Hummingbird, Gilded Flicker, Bell’s Vireo, Bendire’s Thrasher, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler</p>
<p>NABCI Bird Conservation Region</p>	<p>33: Sonoran and Mojave Deserts</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>US Fish and Wildlife Service</p>
<p>Conservation Land Status**</p>	<p>National Wildlife Refuge</p>
<p>Human Population Density</p>	<p>Rural</p>
<p>Legislative District(s)</p>	<p>Arizona Congressional District 9 and State Legislative District 30</p>
<p>NRCS Major Land Resource Area</p>	<p>40: Sonoran Basin and Range</p>
<p>Visitation, main access, and permits needed</p>	<p>From Lake Havasu City, Arizona, follow Arizona Highway 95 south approximately 17 miles. The refuge office will be on the right-hand side of the road between mileposts 160 and 162.</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
Bird Monitoring	H	Bill Williams Delta CBC	Continue - use CBC data
Bird Monitoring	H	USFWS riparian and Marshbird surveys and eBird	Continue – use eBird, Marshbird, and USFWS riparian and Bell’s vireo data
Yellow-billed cuckoo surveys	H	USFWS Breeding Survey Protocol	Part of MSCP Monitoring - continue
IBA Signage	Done	Updated current signs with custom artwork of marsh bird	Completed January, 2016
IBA Dedication	Done	A formal recognition event	Completed January, 2016

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Land Managers	60911 Highway 95 Parker, Arizona 85344 Phone: (928) 667-4144 Fax: (928) 667-3402	Management of the refuge with an emphasis on conservation of neotropical migrant birds, marsh birds, riparian, and marshland habitats.
Friends of the Bill Williams and Havasu National Wildlife Refuge	Friends group	Contact Information	Wildlife education and outreach, volunteer labor for projects and events
Prescott Audubon Society	IBA Stewards	Prescott Audubon	Local members that participate in the CBC and keep eBird records
Arizona Field Ornithologists	Bird Surveys	Contact Information	As scheduled. Members contribute to eBird

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	Very Good
Mesquite Bosque Birds	Very Good
Sonoran Desert Birds	Very Good
Marsh 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 wildfire, OHV users, burros, and drought pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA. Burros are on the refuge and impacting the Mineral Wash Esquerria end. They will continue to expand across the entire refuge. Jeep/OHV groups have chain sawed a route through the refuge and are now using it. It will increase (in size and use) over time.

Challenges	Water Birds	Cottonwood/ Willow Riparian Birds	Mesquite Bosque Birds	Sonoran Desert Birds	Marsh Birds	Summary Rating
Burning of Vegetation - Arson		Medium	High	Medium		Medium
Invasive Salt Cedar and Arundo		Low			Low	Low
Invasive Tamarisk Beetle and Burros		High	High	High		High
Climate Change - Drought		Medium	Medium		High	Medium
Floods		Low			Medium	Low
Disturbance to Birds - Boats & OHV	Low	High	High	High	Low	High
Water Diversions	Low	Low	Low		Low	Low
Summary Ratings:	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge	Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
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Threats on National Database					
Burning of vegetation	Arson	8	3	2	3
			3	3	3
Disturbance to birds	Boats & OHV	9			
Invasive species Plants-	Tamarisk, Arundo	5	1	2	2
Invasive species (animals)	Tamarisk beetle and burros	8	2	2	4
		8	3	2	3
Water Diversions (incl. impact dikes/dams)		6	2	3	1
Floods		5	2	2	1
Climate Change	Drought	8	2	3	3

Reviewed By USFWS biologist August 2019

Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge Important Bird Area

