

Cibola National Wildlife Refuge

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/cibola-national-wildlife-refuge • http://aziba.org/?page_id=340 • AzGFD Conservation Opportunity Area
Priority	Continental
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Continental: Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (Yuma Ridgway's Rail, California Black Rail)</p> <p>State: Waterfowl concentrations > 2000 at one time (Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, American Widgeon, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal)</p> <p>Research and Education</p> <p>eBird Checklist: https://ebird.org/barchart?byr=1900&eyr=2020&bmo=1&emo=12&r=US-AZ_3466</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	33.18'N, -114.41'W
Size	16,627 acres
County	Yuma
Local Communities	Yuma and Blythe, CA
Description	<p>Cibola NWR is located in the floodplain of the lower Colorado River surrounded by a fringe of desert ridges and washes. The refuge encompasses both the historic Colorado River channel as well as a channelized portion constructed in the late 1960's. Along with these main water bodies, several important backwaters are home to many wildlife species that reside in this portion of the Sonoran Desert. Because of the river's life sustaining water, wildlife at the refuge survives in an environment that reaches 120 degrees in the summer and receives an average of only 2 inches of rain per year. Cibola Lake is closed in the winter to provide a safe, undisturbed roosting area for wintering waterfowl and other wildlife.</p>
Mission/Goals	To support populations of breeding, year-round and migratory birds including continental species of concern and significant concentrations of wintering waterfowl.
Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities	Cibola Lake is closed in the winter to provide a safe, undisturbed roosting area for wintering waterfowl and other wildlife. In addition, efforts have been undertaken to clear upland and riparian habitat of invasive Saltcedar (<i>Tamarix chinensis</i>) and to restore the cleared areas with the planting of Fremont Cottonwood (<i>Populus fremontii</i>),

	<p>Godding’s Willow (<i>Salix gooddingii</i>), and mesquites (<i>Prosopis</i> spp.). Avian resources are monitored by a year-round effort conducted along the Lower Colorado River.</p>
<p>Land Cover Type¹ (%) and Associated Priority² Birds</p> <p>¹Southwest Regional Gap Analysis ²AGFD SGCN and IBA Qualifying Species</p>	<p>54.27 Riparian and Freshwater Emergent Marsh (<i>Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bald Eagle, American Bittern, California Black Rail, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Gila Woodpecker, Bell’s Vireo, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Abert’s Towhee</i>)</p> <p>12.86 Agriculture (<i>Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Savannah Sparrow</i>)</p> <p>9.18 Sonoran/Mohave Desertscrub (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Bell’s Vireo, Abert’s Towhee</i>)</p> <p>4.58 Mesquite</p> <p>6.33 Open Water (<i>Canada Goose, White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross’s Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, American Widgeon, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal,, Cinnamon Teal, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon</i>)</p> <p>4.18 Sonoran Desertscrub: Uplands (<i>Peregrine Falcon, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Bell’s Vireo, Abert’s Towhee</i>)</p> <p>0.90 Other (Lower Colorado River Sonoran Desertscrub, Urban/Residential, Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland, Interior Chaparral, Mohave Desertscrub) (<i>Ferruginous Hawk, Falcon, Burrowing Owl, Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Savannah Sparrow, Abert’s Towhee</i>)</p>
	<p>Lowland Riparian Freshwater Marsh Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, located in the floodplain of the lower Colorado River, was established in 1964 as mitigation for the straightening, channelization, and armoring of the banks of the Colorado River by the Bureau of Reclamation to prevent flooding. It protects examples of the marshes, backwaters, and meanders that historically provided wintering grounds for migratory waterfowl and year-round resources for resident birds and other wildlife.</p> <p>From late October through February, the farm fields are full of Canada, Snow, and Ross’ Geese. Mid-late September is the best time to see White-fronted Geese as they are passing through on migration– occasionally several will winter on the refuge. The largest portion of the lower Colorado River population of greater Sandhill</p>

	<p>Cranes winter on the refuge as well as thousands of ducks. Other wintering birds include Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles in the farm fields and occasional Peregrine Falcons. American Kestrels, Northern Harriers, and Prairie Falcons are common.</p>
<p>Focal Bird Species</p> <p>Bold Type are Road to Recovery species</p>	<p><u>AGFD Species of Greatest Conservation Need</u></p> <p>Tier 1 – American Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Yuma Ridgway’s Rail, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</p> <p>Tier 2 –American Bittern (migration), American Kestrel, American Pipit (winter), Abert’s Towhee, Brewer’s Blackbird (winter), Brewer’s Sparrow, Bullock’s Oriole, Clark’s Grebe, Costa’s Hummingbird, Ferruginous Hawk (winter), Gila Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, Hermit Thrush (migration), Hooded Oriole, Horned Lark, Inca Dove, Killdeer, Lincoln’s Sparrow (winter), Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon, Savannah Sparrow (winter), Loggerhead Shrike, Olive-sided Flycatcher (migration), Red-winged Blackbird, Swainson’s Hawk (migration), Swainson’s Thrush (migration), Verdin, Vesper Sparrow (winter), Western Grebe, Western Screech Owl, Western Burrowing Owl, Western Wood-Pewee (migration)</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, California Black Rail, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Dunlin, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Costa’s Hummingbird, Peregrine Falcon, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler)</p> <p>USFWS Region – Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, California Black Rail, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Short-billed Dowitcher, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, Costa’s Hummingbird, Gilded Flicker, Peregrine Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell’s Vireo, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler)</p>
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	33: Sonoran and Mojave Deserts
Ownership	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Conservation Land Status**	National Wildlife Refuge
Human Population Density	Rural

Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 9 and State Legislative District 30
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	39: Lower Colorado Desert 52: Sonoran Basin and Range
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	<p>From Blythe, go approximately 3 miles west on I-10 to Neighbours Boulevard/78 exit. Go south on Neighbours for 12 miles to the Cibola Bridge. After crossing the bridge, continue south for 3.5 miles to headquarters.</p> <p>During the winter season, November through the second week of March, the refuge headquarters are open every day, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.. During the rest of the year, you should call the refuge at 928-857-3253 to check their open hours.</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
Winter Waterfowl Count	M	Ground and aerial surveys	USFWS Lead
Marsh Bird Surveys	H	Annual breeding surveys	USFWS Lead-data entered into Marsh Bird database
Bird Monitoring	H	Motus Station	Operating since 2022
IBA Signage	Done	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Signs delivered to USFWS January 2016
IBA Dedication	Done	A formal recognition event	January 2019

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Kofa National Wildlife Refuge Friends	Friends group for Kofa, Imperial, and Cibola NWR's	Kofa National Wildlife Refuge Friends 9300 East 28th Street Yuma, AZ 85365	Wildlife education and outreach, volunteer labor for projects and events
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Manages riparian, freshwater marsh, and adjacent habitats for the benefit of wildlife.	P.O. Box 72217 12812 N Wildlife Way Yuma, AZ 85365 Phone: 928-783-3371 Fax: 928-783-0652 Email: sally_m_smith@fws.gov	Management of the refuge with an emphasis on conservation of neotropical migrant birds, marsh birds, riparian, and marshland habitats.
Bureau of Reclamation	Manages the Multi-species Conservation Plan (MSCP)		
Yuma Audubon Society	IBA Stewards	yaspresident@yahoo.com	Local members that participate in the CBC and keep eBird records

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
Sonoran Desert Birds	Good
Waterfowl	Very Good
Marsh Birds	Very Good
Waterbirds	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 and invasive tamarisk pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Water Birds	Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Birds	Waterfowl	Sonoran Desert Birds	Marsh Birds	Summary Rating
Invasive Salt Cedar and Arundo		Low			Low	Low
Climate Change (Drought)		Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Invasive Tamarisk Beetle		Medium				Low
Disturbance to Birds by Boaters	Low				Low	Low
Water Pollution	Low	Low	Low		Low	Low
Summary Target Ratings:	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Cibola National Wildlife Refuge			Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database					
Disturbance to birds	Boats	5	1	2	1
Invasive species	Non-native animals (Tamarisk beetle)	8	1	3	4
Invasive species	Non-native plants	5	1	2	2
Pollution	Water pollution	6	1	2	3
Climate Change	Drought	8	2	3	3

Cibola National Wildlife Refuge Important Bird Area



