

Upper Verde River State Wildlife Area

IBA web pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas/upper-verde-river-state-wildlife-area • http://aziba.org/?page_id=685 • Arizona Game and Fish Conservation Opportunity Area
Priority	State
Qualifying Criteria	<p>Site Important to Special Status Avian Species (<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Lucy's Warbler, Bald Eagle, Common Black Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Red-naped Sapsucker, Bell's Vireo, Crissal Thrasher, Black-throated Gray Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Brewer's Sparrow, Bell's Vireo</i>)</p> <p>Rare, Unique, or Exceptional Representative Habitat/Ecological Community (<i>low-elevation riparian</i>)</p> <p>Significant Concentration of Birds (Landbirds, Riparian bird diversity) (<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Summer Tanager, Yellow Warbler, Lucy's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, Black Phoebe, Song Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak</i>)</p> <p>Bar Charts - eBird</p>
IBA Polygon Center Point (Latitude, Longitude)	34.86°N; 112.45°W
Size	1,809 acres
County	Yavapai
Local Communities	Paulden, Chino Valley
Description	<p>The Upper Verde River State Wildlife Area IBA is located approximately eight miles north of Chino Valley in Yavapai County, Arizona and consists of 1,809 acres located along the upper Verde River and lower Granite Creek. IBA includes approximately 3.5 miles of the upper Verde River, draining easterly from the headwaters past the confluence with Granite Creek to the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Prescott National Forest boundary. It also includes 1.5 miles of Granite Creek upstream of its confluence with the Verde.</p> <p>In addition to these two major drainages, the Upper Verde River State Wildlife Area IBA includes the associated floodplains, cliffs, and adjacent uplands. Grazing was once prominent within the Upper Verde Wildlife Area and, although trespass grazing does occur, the habitat has improved dramatically since the Arizona Game and Fish Department purchased the property in 1996. The habitat will continue to improve as restoration plans are enacted, enabling increased cover, foraging, and nesting opportunities for a variety of resident and migratory avian species.</p>

<p>Mission/Goals</p>	<p>Conservation of an exceptional example of low to mid-elevation riparian habitat and the populations of breeding, wintering, and migratory birds that depend on it.</p>
<p>Current Habitat Conservation, Planning, and Management Activities</p>	<p>The Arizona Game and Fish Department’s primary management emphasis for the Upper Verde River State Wildlife Area is to manage riparian habitat and maintain the wildlife area’s notable native fish diversity and abundance (valuable indicators or biotic integrity). Secondary management emphases are environmental education and compatible wildlife oriented recreation.</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>46.68 Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland (<i>Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Common Nighthawk</i>)</p> <p>30.26 Riparian (<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Bald Eagle, Belted Kingfisher, Red-naped Sapsucker, Gila Woodpecker, Crissal Thrasher, Bell’s Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Lucy’s Warbler, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, Black Phoebe, Wood Duck, Summer Tanager, Song Sparrow, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Pacific Wren, Blue Grosbeak</i>)</p> <p>17.21 Interior Chaparral (<i>Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Crissal Thrasher, Common Nighthawk, Black-chinned Sparrow</i>)</p> <p>5.46 Semiarid/Sonoran Savannah Grassland (<i>Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Gila Woodpecker, Common Nighthawk, Brewer’s Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow</i>)</p> <p>0.40 Other (Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland, Sonoran Desertscrub; Lower Colorado River, Mohave Desertscrub , Wash, Sonoran Desertscrub; Uplands)</p>
<p>Related Habitat Accounts*</p>	<p>Pinyon Juniper Lowland Riparian Low Grassland Sonoran Desert</p>
<p>Biological Description</p>	<p>South of the Colorado River, the Verde River represents the most significant perennial waterway in the northern third of the state. In addition to supporting rare/priority riparian breeding species, it also serves as an important stopover and/or wintering grounds for a host of migratory birds. The Upper Verde River Wildlife Area contains the headwaters of the Verde, a lush low to mid-elevation riparian forest, riparian floodplains, cliffs, and adjacent uplands dominated by Pinyon-Juniper forest.</p> <p>The riparian vegetation is characterized as mixed broadleaf deciduous, dominated by Arizona ash (<i>Fraxinus velutina</i>), boxelder (<i>Acer negundo</i>), Arizona walnut (<i>Juglans major</i>) and netleaf hackberry (<i>Celtis reticulata</i>). Tamarisk (<i>Tamarisk pentandra</i>) is occasionally</p>

	<p>interspersed with native tree species. Goodding’s willow (<i>Salix gooddingii</i>), red willow (<i>Salix laevigata</i>) and Fremont cottonwood (<i>Populus fremontii</i>) are also present. Low floodplain terraces are dominated by large stands of desert willow (<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>), while highest terraces are vegetated with velvet mesquite (<i>Prosopis velutina</i>). Varying from the above, the lower Granite Creek supports a well-developed narrowleaf cottonwood (<i>Populus acuminata</i>) riparian forest. These riparian areas are especially important for Neotropic migrants like the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler, and Lucy’s Warbler. These areas can also be important to wintering short-distance migrants such as Cedar Waxwing, Townsend’s Solitaire, and Red-naped Sapsucker.</p> <p>The IBA’s Pinyon-Juniper vegetation provides foraging habitat for Pinyon Jays and Juniper Titmice. White-throated Swifts have been recorded foraging over Granite Creek in spring and Cinnamon Teal may nest along the Sullivan Lake area of the Wildlife Area. Osprey have also been observed at Sullivan Lake.</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</p> <p>Tier 2: Abert’s Towhee, American Kestrel, American Pipit, Black-chinned Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler (migration), Brewer’s Blackbird, Brewer’s Sparrow (winter/migration), Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Bullock’s Oriole, Cactus Wren, Canyon Towhee, Common Black-Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Costa’s Hummingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Golden Eagle, Gray Vireo (migration), Hermit Thrush, Hooded Oriole, Horned Lark, Killdeer, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, MacGillivray’s Warbler (migration), Loggerhead Shrike, Mountain Chickadee, Olive-sided Flycatcher (migration), Pacific Wren, Pinyon Jay, Prairie Falcon, Red-winged Blackbird, Savannah Sparrow, Scott’s Oriole, Townsend’s Solitaire (winter/migration), Verdin, Vesper Sparrow, Verdin, Western Screech Owl, Western Wood-Pewee, 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 – Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Western Yellow-billed</p>

	Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bell’s Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Lucy’s Warbler USFWS Region – Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Lucy’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler
NABCI Bird Conservation Region	34: Sierra Madre Occidental
Ownership	Arizona Game and Fish Department (1056 acres of this IBA are State Trust Lands held by the Arizona Game and Fish Department under a Special Land Use Permit). The upstream portion is private lands in conservation easements managed by The Nature Conservancy.
Conservation Land Status**	State Wildlife Area and conservation easements
Human Population Density	Rural
Legislative District(s)	Arizona Congressional District 2 and State Legislative District 1
NRCS Major Land Resource Area	38: Mogollon Transition
Visitation, main access, and permits needed	From Hwy. 89 in Paulden, take Chino Ranch Road East (USFS 635) approximately 1 mile. Make sharp right, cross railroad tracks and make sharp left. Take very first right and go south approximately 3 miles to enter the main parcel of the property.

*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	Annual breeding bird surveys and Yellow-billed Cuckoo Surveys	Prescott Audubon lead- Encourage eBird entries
IBA Signage	H	Install signs identifying the site as an IBA	Pending
IBA Dedication	M	A formal recognition event	Pending-AGFD Lead

Partners:

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Arizona Game and Fish Department Kingman Office	Land Manager	5325 Stockton Hill Rd. Kingman, AZ 86409 (928) 692-7700	Maintain the Wildlife Area. Coordinate with Audubon for IBA sign installation & surveys

Name	Role(s)	Contact Information	Actions
Prescott Audubon Society	Volunteers for bird surveys and IBA stewards	P.O. Box 4156 – Prescott, Arizona 86302 (928) 778-6502 (928) 848-1513 contact@prescottaudubon.org	Bird surveys and volunteers
The Nature Conservancy	Conservation Easements on Granite Creek and Stillman Lake	115 S McCormick St # 2, Prescott, AZ 86303 <u>(928) 717-2843</u>	Maintain conservation easements.

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
Low Elevation Riparian Birds	Very Good
Pinyon and Juniper Birds	Good
Grassland Birds	Fair

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 groundwater pumping in the Big Chino, drought, and wild fire pose the greatest threats to birds within this IBA.

Challenges	Pinyon and Juniper Birds	Low Elevation Riparian Birds	Summary Rating
Ground Water Pumping	NA	High	High
Drought	Medium	Medium	Medium
Wild Fire	Medium	Medium	Medium
Summary Ratings:	Low	Medium	Medium

Upper Verde River	Severity (1-3)	Scope (1-3)	Permanence (2-4)
Threats on National Database			
Water Pumping	7	2	3
Wild Fire	6	2	2
Drought	6	2	2

Upper Verde River Wildlife Area Important Bird Area

