

Figure 1 Map of the Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) of the United States 3



3 The figure does not show BCR 67 (Hawaii) or two other Bird Conservation Regions from the report that included islands in the Pacific and Caribbean which are either U.S. Territories or other affiliates.

# Mexican Highlands

(Area - 3,705,600 ha)

## Executive Summary

### State Plans

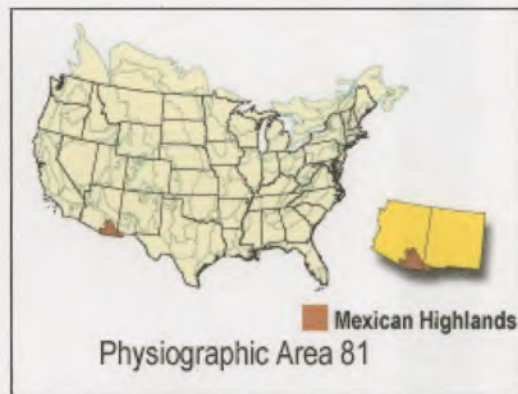
**Arizona**  
 .pdf (815KB)  
**New**  
**Mexico**

[View the Plans](#)



[View Maps](#)

**Description** - The isolated mountain ranges of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico represent the northern terminus of the Sierra Madre Occidental. Elevation determines vegetation, with Douglas fir and pine at higher elevations giving way to oak-dominated forest at lower elevations. Lowlands surrounding the ranges are desert grasslands similar to the Sonoran Desert on the west and Chihuahuan desert on the east.



### Priority Bird Populations and Habitats

#### Pine/Oak

- [Whiskered Screech-Owl](#)
- [Spotted Owl](#)
- [Arizona Woodpecker](#)
- [Buff-breasted Flycatcher](#)
- [Hutton's Vireo](#)
- [Mexican Jay](#)
- [Bridled Titmouse](#)
- [Virginia's Warbler](#)
- [Grace's Warbler](#)
- [Painted Redstart](#)
- [Scott's Oriole](#)

#### Riparian

- [Yellow-billed Cuckoo](#) Western subspecies.
- [Broad-billed Hummingbird](#)
- [Blue-throated Hummingbird](#)
- [Black-chinned Hummingbird](#)
- [Eared Trogon](#)
- [Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet](#)
- [Willow Flycatcher](#) Southwestern subspecies.
- [Cassin's Kingbird](#)
- [Thick-billed Kingbird](#)

- [Bell's Vireo](#)
- [Bewick's Wren](#)
- [Phainopepla](#)
- [Lucy's Warbler](#)
- [Hepatic Tanager](#)
- [Abert's Towhee](#)
- [Varied Bunting](#)
- [Hooded Oriole](#)

---

#### **Pine/Fir and Spruce/Fir**

- [Flammulated Owl](#)
- [Greater Pewee](#)
- [Mexican Chickadee](#)
- [Red-faced Warbler](#)
- [Olive Warbler](#)
- [Yellow-eyed Junco](#)

---

#### **Chihuahuan desert scrub**

- [Scaled Quail](#)
- [Gambel's Quail](#)
- [Greater Roadrunner](#)
- [Elf Owl](#)
- [Common Poorwill](#)
- [Lucifer Hummingbird](#)
- [Costa's Hummingbird](#)
- [Gila Woodpecker](#)
- [Ladder-backed Woodpecker](#)
- [Ash-throated Flycatcher](#)
- [Verdin](#)
- [Cactus Wren](#)
- [Black-tailed Gnatcatcher](#)
- [Bendire's Thrasher](#)
- [Curve-billed Thrasher](#)
- [Crissal Thrasher](#)
- [Black-throated Sparrow](#)

---

#### **Desert grassland**

- [Swainson's Hawk](#)
- [Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl](#) Cactus subspecies.
- [Rufous-winged Sparrow](#)
- [Cassin's Sparrow](#)
- [Botteri's Sparrow](#)
- [Five-striped Sparrow](#)

### Chaparral and Pinyon-Juniper

- [Gray Vireo](#)
- [Black-throated Gray Warbler](#)
- [Canyon Towhee](#)
- [Black-chinned Sparrow](#)

### Cliff/rock

- [White-throated Swift](#)
- [Canyon Wren](#)

[Complete Physiographic Area Priority Scores](#) (Zipped, Dbase5 file 288K)

Key to Abbreviations: AI-Area Importance, PT-Population Trend, TB-Threats to Breeding. Priority Setting Process: [General](#) / [Detailed](#)

**Conservation recommendations and needs** - A large percentage of the area is publicly owned, particularly at higher elevations. Conservation issues are water use, urban development, overgrazing, and recreation. Because this is the northern tip of a system that extends far south of the border, coordination with Mexico regarding priorities, management, and protection is advisable. In the United States, much of the higher elevation habitats in this physiographic area are publicly owned. In those areas, maintenance of the grass-forb woodland understory, often through use of low-intensity fire, can help improve bird habitat as well as reducing the likelihood of catastrophic fires. There is some evidence that bird watchers, through use of tapes and intrusion into territories, have negatively affected some birds. This may be a minor problem, but nevertheless birders should be encourage to observe birder ethics. In lower elevations, riparian strips should be managed for maintenance of multiple levels of vegetation and cottonwood recruitment. Maintenance of core areas of grassland for breeding and wintering species in the face of "ranchette" development is a high priority conservation need.



Return to  
[Physiographic Area Map](#)



Return to  
[Partners in Flight Home Page](#)

Please send comments to:  
Carol Beardmore, PIF Western Regional Coordinator  
[cbeardmore@gf.state.az.us](mailto:cbeardmore@gf.state.az.us)

# Sonoran Desert

(Area - 11,362,300 ha)

## Executive Summary

### State Plans

**Arizona**

.pdf (815KB)

**California**

View the Plans




















[View Maps](#)

**Description** - The Sonoran Desert receives a low and unevenly distributed amount of precipitation over extensive plains and isolated mountains surrounding the northern end of the Gulf of California. In the United States it is centered in southwest Arizona and southeast California and extends south through most of Baja California Norte and Sur and the western half of the state of Sonora. Vegetation is sparse and differs from other American deserts by a greater dominance of trees, including arborescent cacti such as the saguaro. Creosote is a common and widely distributed shrub.














## Priority Bird Populations and Habitats

### Sonoran Desert Grassland and Scrub

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  <a href="#">Gambel's Quail</a>             | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |
|  <a href="#">Inca Dove</a>                  |   |
|  <a href="#">Western Screech-Owl</a>       |   |
|  <a href="#">Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl</a>    | Cactus subspecies.                                    |
|  <a href="#">Elf Owl</a>                  | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |
|  <a href="#">Burrowing Owl</a>            |   |
|  <a href="#">Costa's Hummingbird</a>      |   |
|  <a href="#">Gila Woodpecker</a>          | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |
|  <a href="#">Gilded Flicker</a>           | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |
|  <a href="#">Verdin</a>                   | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |
|  <a href="#">Cactus Wren</a>              |   |
|  <a href="#">Black-tailed Gnatcatcher</a> | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |
|  <a href="#">Bendire's Thrasher</a>       |   |
|  <a href="#">Curve-billed Thrasher</a>    |   |
|  <a href="#">LeConte's Thrasher</a>       |   |
|  <a href="#">Canyon Towhee</a>            |   |
|  <a href="#">Rufous-winged Sparrow</a>    | Highest percent population of any physiographic area. |

### Riparian

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
|  <a href="#">Yellow-billed Cuckoo</a> | Western subspecies.      |
|  <a href="#">Willow Flycatcher</a>    | Southwestern subspecies. |
| <a href="#">Bell's Vireo</a>   |                          |

		<b>Crissal Thrasher</b>	
		<b>Phainopepla</b>	
		<b>Lucy's Warbler</b>	
		<b>Abert's Towhee</b>	Highest percent population of any physiographic area.
		<b>Hooded Oriole</b>	
<hr/>			
<b>Pine/oak and chapparal</b>			
		<b>Virginia's Warbler</b>	
<hr/>			
<b>Wetlands</b>			
		<b>Clapper Rail</b>	Yuma subspecies.
		<b>Black Rail</b>	
<hr/>			
<small>Complete Physiographic Area Priority Scores (Zipped, Dbase5 file 288K)</small>			
<small>Key to Abbreviations: AI-Area Importance, PT-Population Trend, TB-Threats to Breeding. Priority Setting Process: <i>General / Detailed</i></small>			

**Conservation recommendations and needs** - Grazing, water use, fire, and increasing human populations are among the notable conservation issues in the Sonoran Desert.

Riparian forests and woodlands are the most severely threatened habitat type in this physiographic area. Dams, water diversions, clearing for agriculture or development, and grazing are among the pressures on riparian strips, and birds dependent on these systems have declined significantly as a result. Conservation objectives focus on Common Black-Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Willow Flycatcher, and Lucy's Warbler. The varying needs of these four species, in combination, capture the ecological processes that should support the entire riparian avifauna. Existing quality habitat must be maintained for each of these birds and significant additional areas restored to ensure health of populations. This riparian habitat also supports many wintering temperate migrants and is key habitat for in-transit migrants moving through the Sonoran Desert.

The vast majority of priority birds in this system breed in Sonoran Desertscrub habitat. In some cases, particularly in Arizona, large areas of this habitat have been developed for human occupation, driving out many of the more sensitive birds. With the spread of invasive non-native grasses that can serve as better fuel than bare ground, the incidence of fire in this habitat has increased. Native plants are not fire-adapted, and fire-induced changes in the plant community may be harming some bird populations. Grazing, particularly by feral burros, may also be altering vegetative structure and thus the bird community. Maintaining large saguaros and other key components of native vegetation over large areas is an important recommendation.

Sonoran Desert Grasslands are fire-adapted features of some of the larger plains and river valleys of this area that have been seriously reduced largely due to grazing. Birds negatively affected by this change include the Rufous-winged Sparrow and the Masked subspecies of Northern Bobwhite. Maintenance of core remnant grasslands and restoration of additional areas through improved grazing regimes is a high conservation priority.



Return to  
[Physiographic Area Map](#)



Return to  
[Partners in Flight Home Page](#)

Please send comments to:  
Carol Beardmore, PIF Western Regional Coordinator  
[cbeardmore@gf.state.az.us](mailto:cbeardmore@gf.state.az.us)