



Audubon ARIZONA

WATCHLIST 2007

A State of the Birds Report Fall 2007

Forty-seven of Arizona's breeding birds have earned a dubious distinction: a place on Audubon's 2007 WatchList. Using the latest research, including the Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy analyzed population size and trends, distribution, and threats to identify the most critically imperiled birds in the United States. "Red list" species are those at greatest risk of extinction. Birds on the yellow list need effective conservation action to avoid slipping closer to red list status and eventual oblivion. These species may be less familiar than the declining "common" birds identified by Audubon in summer 2007, but they need our help even more. Together, we must do more than watch these species disappear from our world. We must act to save them before time runs out.

The following are some of the WatchList species that depend on Arizona habitat and our conservation commitment. For more information about the complete Arizona list, visit <http://az.audubon.org>.

ARIZONA'S PRIORITY WATCHLIST SPECIES

WatchList
Status



CALIFORNIA CONDOR (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

Once reduced to nine living birds, this species, a member of the vulture family, is slowly recovering thanks to conservation efforts. Arizona's Grand Canyon and Vermillion Cliffs are home to one of three breeding populations in the world!



BLACK RAIL (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)

The California Black Rail can be found in the marshes of the lower Colorado and Gila Rivers near Yuma. Some of the best habitat for this small, elusive marsh bird can be found at Mitty Lake, an Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife Area north of Yuma.



SPOTTED OWL (*Strix occidentalis*)

The "Mexican" subspecies of the Spotted Owl is a bird of deep forest canyons, and nesting populations can be found throughout the mountains of central and eastern Arizona. Threats facing this species are primarily related to loss of old growth forests and wild fires.



GILDED FLICKER (*Colaptes chrysoides*)

The decline of this Sonoran Desert bird is cause for alarm. Populations have declined in riparian areas and where development threatens saguaro cactus. Possible causes for decline are loss of suitable trees and saguaro cactus for nest sites and competition for nesting holes from non-native species such as the European Starling.



SOUTHWEST WILLOW FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax traillii extremus*)

A riparian habitat bird, this federally endangered species requires dense habitats along flowing rivers and streams. Protection of Arizona's flowing rivers is essential for the continued existence of this bird in Arizona. Conservation efforts supported by the Endangered Species Act are helping stabilize and increase populations.





ARIZONA HABITATS AT RISK

Riparian habitats, those places with flowing water and marshlands, are by far the rarest and most endangered places in Arizona. Demands for water and urban encroachment on stream courses threaten remaining riparian lands.

Two of the species featured in the Arizona Top Five Birds at Risk depend upon marshlands or riparian habitats. Recent projects to restore and protect the value of these ecological systems are encouraging.

Grasslands seem like such endless open spaces that the loss of them can easily go undetected. Yet the loss of grasslands is the chief threat to many native species. A new species to the WatchList, Scaled Quail, disappears when grasslands become invaded by brush or houses encroach. The Arizona population of Grasshopper Sparrow is found only in the grasslands of Chino Valley and southeastern Arizona, both threatened by suburban ranchette development. Wintering Lark Buntings, Chestnut-collared Longspurs and Baird's Sparrows all rely on Arizona's grasslands. Other wildlife, like pronghorn antelope, are also dependent upon large expanses of grasslands remaining undeveloped.

Like our grasslands, the Sonoran desert, a signature habitat for Arizona, is threatened by suburban sprawl. Associated with human development is the establishment of invasive grasses that carry wildfire in the desert-fire from which Saguaro cactus do not recover. Responsibility for reversing the declines in bird species that are dependent upon Sonoran desert habitats rests squarely on the shoulders of Arizona residents.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Preserve habitat and cacti for Sonoran desert bird nesting sites. Become knowledgeable about what landscape plants are "invaders," and avoid using them.

Advocate for sufficient open lands to remain undeveloped to support not only grasslands birds, but larger animals such as pronghorn antelope. Support the efforts of local land trusts and open space initiatives sponsored by your county or community.

Become "water wise" in your home and at work. Help Arizona conserve and wisely use water resources, including river, stream and riparian habitats.

Help monitor bird species by participating in Christmas Bird Counts and reporting your sightings to eBird. A project of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird is the world's first comprehensive on-line bird monitoring program;
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/ebird/index.html>.



WHAT AUDUBON ARIZONA IS DOING

Audubon Arizona and Tucson Audubon Society are identifying Important Bird Areas in Arizona and engaging citizens in conservation at these sites. Now numbering 30, the Important Bird Areas call attention to those places in Arizona most important to the continued health of our birds. Northern Arizona and Tucson Audubon Societies have restored habitats for birds and other wildlife, and all nine Audubon chapters in Arizona offer education programs and hands-on workshops to teach young and old alike about the wonders of Arizona's birds and other wildlife.