

Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area Important Bird Area

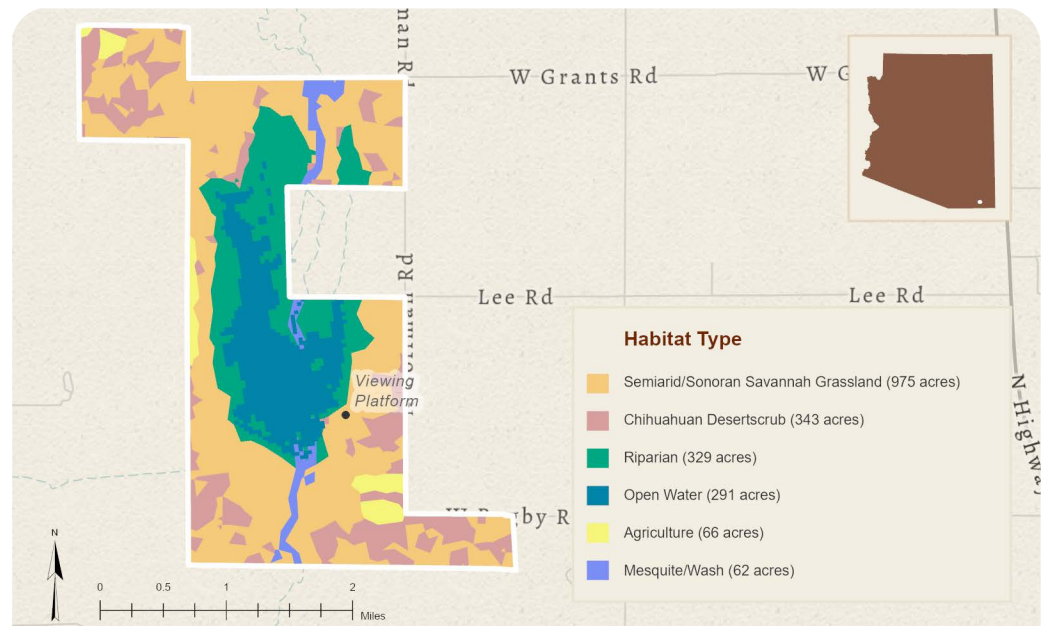
*Important Bird Area near McNeal,
Arizona.*

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program identifies vital bird habitat, raising awareness and designating areas that benefit bird populations.

ABOUT

The Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area IBA is located in southeastern Arizona within Cochise County, east of McNeal and spans 1,509 acres, or 2.4 square miles. The IBA landscape is dominated by an ephemeral lake (a lake that is not present year-round), marshlands, grasslands, and riparian habitat areas. More than 600 acres are occasionally flooded to manage the wetlands and riparian habitat to benefit wildlife. Wetland and grassland areas in the IBA provide feeding and resting sites for the largest winter concentration of Sandhill Cranes (numbering more than 32,000), as well as geese, grebes, ducks, eagles, quail, and other wildlife.

This land was previously used for farming and ranching. In 1997, the Arizona Game and Fish Department acquired the Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area and currently manages the area's water to maintain habitat and vegetation. Much of the farmland is being returned to native grasslands through rest and reseeding projects.



Map of Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area Important Bird Area

PUBLIC ACCESS AND VISITING

The Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Area IBA is a great wildlife watching destination because the public can visit the wintering Sandhill Cranes in the late afternoon when they return to roost in the shallow water. Other activities include overnight public camping, wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, motorized vehicles on designated trails, and more. While certain portions of the area may be closed to public entry throughout the year to prevent abandonment of the roost by the Sandhill Cranes, this has minimal impact on viewing opportunities.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department hosts a Sandhill Crane Cam located within the IBA.

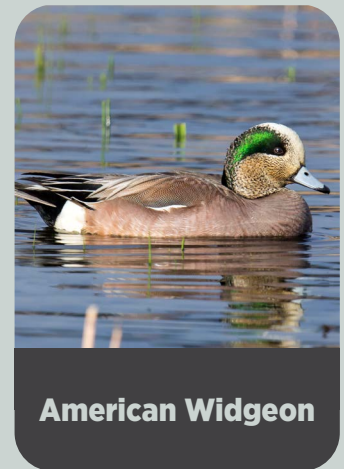
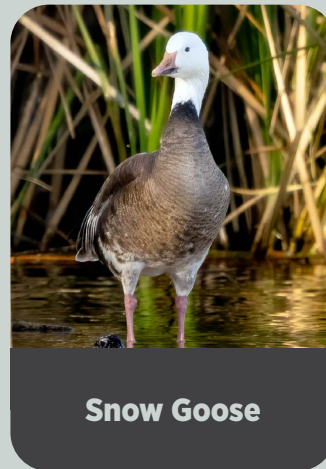
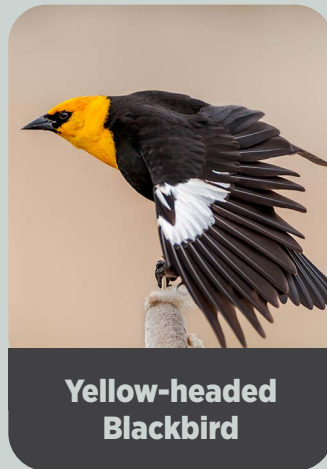
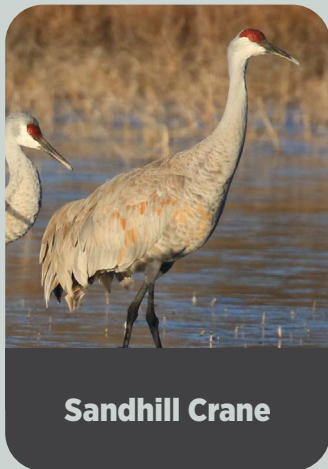
Learn more about visiting the area here:
<https://bit.ly/3ME6S3R>

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Outdoor recreation along Cochise County's rivers, lakes, and streams generates \$279 million annually and supports 2,000 jobs in Arizona. Every year, 78,000 Arizona residents participate in water-based outdoor recreation in Cochise County. The top three outdoor recreation activities in the county include: wildlife watching, camping, and fishing.

Learn more: audubon.org/azrivers

BIRDS OF THE WHITEWATER DRAW WILDLIFE AREA IMPORTANT BIRD AREA



FOR MORE INFORMATION



Cover: Sandhill Cranes flying near Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area. Photo: Steve Koskella/ Audubon Photography Awards

Birds of the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area IBA, left to right: Sandhill Crane. Photo: David Policansky/ Audubon Photography Awards; Yellow-headed Blackbird. Photo: Richard Pick/ Audubon Photography Awards; Snow Goose. Photo: Mick Thompson; American Widgeon. Photo: Mick Thompson