

# Two New IBAs in Arizona

## Arizona Important Bird Areas News

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It has been a very busy and productive season for the Arizona Important Bird Areas Program and it isn't over yet! The amazing and dedicated volunteers that so generously give their time and experience have made possible many different survey efforts all over the state this spring and early summer. We counted Gilded Flickers in the lovely Sonoran Desert habitat on both the east and west side of Tucson in March, as well as Elf Owls in the same locations in April. Migrants along the Lower San Pedro River Global IBA were the main target during our spring surveys in San Manuel, an area of amazing significance to birds that we are focusing on this season. The breeding bird surveys of desert habitat, in partnership with the Tohono O'odham Nation, were only possible because of Tucson Audubon IBA volunteers. This collaborative effort is the first of its kind on the Tohono O'odham Nation. A huge amount of volunteer effort has also gone into the Elegant Trogon census surveys of 4 different sky islands as well as the lowland canyons in the Atascosa Highlands. This diverse and ambitious survey season would not have been possible without the talented and dedicated folks that make up the volunteer crew for this program. Thank you so much.

This leads to the big news of the moment: there are two new Important Bird Areas in Arizona, bringing the grand total up to 45. **Patagonia Mountains IBA** is an area that is great for birds and increasing in popularity as



a birding destination since a Blue Jay was found during an IBA survey here. This is an excellent place for Eastern "Azure" Bluebirds, Montezuma Quail and, as it turns out, Elegant Trogons. Many years of volunteer effort have gone into this mountain range and I am proud to announce that this area is now an IBA. **Joshua Tree IBA**, also known as the Chicken Springs BLM grazing allotment, is a beautiful mix of Mohave and Sonoran desert habitats. Data gathered by IBA volunteers has shown that the towering Joshua Trees make this excellent habitat for Bendire's Thrashers and this new IBA has already been nominated for Global IBA status for this species. This is where the hard work from all of you volunteers pays off: new IBAs for the birds!



EASTERN "AZURE" BLUEBIRD, LOS MANOWITZ



ELEGANT TROGON, LAURENS HALSEY

For the second year, the Arizona IBA Program and Rick Taylor joined forces to census the Elegant Trogons in the four major Sky Islands in SE Arizona plus some of the major canyons in the Atascosa Highlands. The beautiful and mysterious species is a "most wanted" bird for visitors and residents alike and always a treat to see. Once considered rare, they are now locally dependable in the right habitat, and some even stay all winter.

Overall, Elegant Trogon numbers are good and it would appear that southeast Arizona has a stable nesting population. For the **Santa Ritas**, 24 volunteers surveyed in 12 territories within the Madera Canyon complex, and 6 counters checked 4 other canyons in the Santa Rita Mountains. Altogether 23 Elegant Trogons were found: 15 males

and 8 females. All females were in proximity to males with whom they were probably paired, yielding a total of 8 pairs. The **Patagonia Mountains** are a surprisingly good area for Elegant Trogons, and 18 volunteers surveyed in 10 territories in the Patagonia Mountains. Altogether 22 Elegant Trogons were found: 8 pairs, 4 males, and 2 females. The **Huachuca Mountains** were the big winners this year and 32 volunteers surveyed 16 canyons and 38 Elegant Trogons were found, 21 males and 10 females. All females were in proximity to males with whom they were probably paired, yielding a total of 10 pairs. Seven (7) trogons were not identified to gender. The **Chiricahua Mountains** are still showing low numbers of Elegant Trogons, most likely due to the major fire this range experienced a few years ago. Just 6 Elegant Trogons were actually seen by 26 volunteer counters who were surveying 24 contiguous riparian areas averaging approximately 0.4 mile in length in the South Fork-Cave Creek Canyon. A male and a trogon of unknown gender were found in Rucker Canyon. Including Rucker Canyon, the survey produced 4 males, 3 females, and 1 trogon of unknown gender.

Huge thanks to the many volunteers that made these surveys possible!

BENDIRE'S THRASHER, DAVE KREUPER



JOSHUA TREE IBA, DAVE KREUPER