

# Cienega Creek Natural Preserve

## Special Status Wildlife

### Mexican Long-Tongued Bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*)

**Federal Status:** Species of Concern (former Category 2 Candidate, AGFD, 1998)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona (AGFD 1998)

**Other Status:** Forest Service Sensitive; "Red" or "High" rating by the Western Bat Working Group; California Species of Special Concern; Mexico Rara (rare in Mexico); Vulnerable Status 4 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G2 S1

**Description:** The Mexican long-tongued bat is a medium-sized,

nectar feeding bat with a leaf-like flap of skin at the tip of a long, slender nose. The bat has a 14-inch wingspan and weighs about 0.7 pounds. It has medium-sized ears and a very small tail. The color is brown to grayish brown on the upperparts, and paler below. The bat has a long bristle-like tongue, which it uses to sip nectar from various types of agave and cacti (BISON-M, 2000).

**General Location:** A maternity roost is known from the Preserve within the southwestern riparian gallery forest and woodland area, based on confirmed observations by Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation personnel (RECON, 2001).



Illustration by George Maleski,  
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### Lesser Long-Nosed Bat (*Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuena*)

**Federal Status:** Endangered (USFWS, 1988)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona (AGFD, 1996)

**Other Status:** Forest Service Sensitive (Region 3, 1990); Mexico:Threatened (AGFD 1995); Vulnerable Status 2 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G3 S2

**Description:** *L. c. yerbabuena* is medium sized bat with a nose leaf, no tail and an interfemoral membrane that is reduced to a narrow band along each hind leg. It is grayish to reddish brown with an elongated snout. This species has large eyes and reduced ears compared to other bats in Arizona. It is easily confused with the Mexican long-tongued bat, which has a visible tail enclosed in the interfemoral membrane. The tongue is long and tipped with brush-like papillae that facilitate nectar lapping and the teeth are modified, having lost the cutting and crushing cusps essential to successfully forage insects (RECON, 2001).

**General Location:** One specimen was identified within the Preserve by Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Personnel in 1993 (McGann & Associates, 1994).

Occurrence of this species is most likely due to foraging habitat (saguars and agaves) in the upland areas.



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\* Definitions provided at the end of this document

## **Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus ssp. occidentalis*)**

**Federal Status:** Migratory bird under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; Candidate for listing by USFWS (Priority 3)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona (AGFD, 1996)

**Other Status:** California Endangered; Nevada State Protected (LCR MSCP, 1999); Vulnerable Status 2 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G5T3 S3

**Description:** The Western yellow-billed cuckoo is a 10- to 12-inch long slender bird with relatively short, dark legs. The plumage is grayish brown on top and white below. The primary feathers on the wings are rufous (orange-brown) in color and there is a bold black and white pattern under the tail. The mandible of the bill is yellow. Plumage is similar in both sexes. Juveniles have a much paler pattern on the tail and the bill may show little to no yellow (RECON, 2001). Its “song sounds hollow and wooden, a rapid staccato kuk-kuk-kuk that usually slows and descends to a kakakowlp-kowlp ending” (Scott, 1987).

**General Location:** Observations of this bird were recorded during avian surveys conducted in June-July 2004 (Kingsley, 2005).



Illustration by Bill Singleton,  
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## **Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*)**

**Federal Status:** Migratory bird under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

**State Status:** None

**Other Status:** Vulnerable Status 2 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G5T4 S4

**Description:** Bell's vireo is a small, four-inch bird with short, rounded wings that make the tail look long. The feet and bill are bluish-gray. Its plumage is a drab gray-green above and white to yellow below; males and females have similar plumage throughout the year. There are 2 pale wing bars with the lower bar more prominent. The juvenile plumage resembles that of adults in worn summer plumage – essentially white and gray below with more distinct wing bars (RECON, 2001). Its song is somewhat harsh and squeaky, sounding like: zheedle zheedle zheedle zhoo? (pause) zheedle zheedle zheedle zhee! The song has been likened to someone asking a question and then answering it himself (Peterson, 1961).

**General Location:** This bird most likely occurs within the riparian areas of the Preserve



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## **Abert's Towhee (*Pipilo aberti*)**

**Federal Status:** Migratory bird under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

**State Status:** None

**Other Status:** Vulnerable Status 1 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G5 S5

**Description:** The Abert's towhee is a large sparrow with gray-brown upper parts and pinkish-brown underparts. The face is dark brown with a light bill. Unlike many birds, the plumage between the sexes is identical.

**General Location:** This bird occurs along the perennial stream and riparian areas of the Preserve



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\* Definitions provided at the end of this document

## Lowland Leopard Frog (*Rana yavapaiensis*)

**Federal Status:** Species of Concern by USFWS (former Category 2 Candidate)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona (AGFD, 1998)

**Other Status:** Sensitive by USFS Region 3, Rare in Mexico (AGFD, 1998); Vulnerable Status 2 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G4 S4

**Description:** The lowland leopard frog has brown to green skin with spots on its back, and yellow skin on the bottom. Its legs are striped (Stebbins, 1985).

**General Location:** Occurs along the perennial stream and in perennial ponds throughout the Preserve. Populations are declining within the Preserve due to predation and disease (Caldwell, 2009).



Illustration by Bill Singleton,  
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## Mexican Garter Snake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*)

**Federal Status:** Candidate for listing by USFWS (Priority 3)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona (AGFD, 1998)

**Other Status:** Endangered by New Mexico Game and Fish (BISON-M, 2000); Sensitive by USFS Region 3 (AGFD 1998); Threatened in Mexico (AGFD, 1998); Vulnerable Status 2 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G4T3 S2S3

**Description:** The Mexican garter snake is a stout-bodied snake ranging from 18 to 40 inches in length. It is brown or greenish-brown with a yellowish back stripe and another stripe running parallel to each side. Large brown patches on the head are separated from the mouth by a greenish crescent (RECON, 2001).

**General Location:** This snake is found within the perennial stream reaches and riparian areas in the Preserve. Numbers have been declining, which may be a direct correlation with declining frog populations (Caldwell, 2009).



Illustration by George Maleski,  
Pima County Graphic Services

## Desert Box Turtle (*Terrapene ornate luteola*)

**Federal Status:**

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona

**Other Status:** Sensitive by USFS Region 3 (1998); Threatened in Mexico (1995); Vulnerable Status 1 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G5T4 S2S3

**Description:** The Desert box turtle has a hinged shell design, allowing it to completely enclose itself within its shell. The shell is high and rounded, and marked with radiating lines of black or brown on a background of yellow. As the turtle ages, the marking fade and many older individuals become a uniform yellow, tan, or straw color. Male turtles have red irises and the first nail on each hind toe is turned in.

**General Location:** This species occurs within the riparian areas of the Preserve; sightings have been very rare



Illustration by George Maleski,  
Pima County Graphic Services

\* Definitions provided at the end of this document

## Sonoran Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)

**Federal Status:** Candidate for listing by USFWS within the Sonoran Desert region (USFWS, 2010); Threatened in areas outside of the Sonoran Desert (USFWS, 1990)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona

**Other Status:** Sensitive by USFS Region 3 (2007); Threatened in Mexico (1994); BLM Sensitive (USDI, 2008)

**Rankings\*:** G4T4 S4

**Description:** Adults reach sizes of about 8 to 15 inches and have a high domed shell, usually a brownish carapace with definite pattern and prominent growth lines (Stebbins, 1985). The limbs are very stocky, including elephant-like rear limbs; the forelimbs are covered with large conical scales. The tail is short (AGFD, 2010)

**General Location:** This species occurs within the upland and riparian areas of the Preserve



## Gila Topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis*)

**Federal Status:** Endangered (USFWS, 1967)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona

**Other Status:** Sensitive by USFS Region 3 (AGFD, 1998); Threatened in Mexico (AGFD, 1995); Vulnerable Status 1 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G3T3 S2

**Description:** The Gila topminnow is a small fish that is generally tan- to olive-colored, with darker coloration on its back (dorsal) and white coloration on its belly. A dark band is present along the sides. The body is somewhat elongated and the dorsal profile is slightly curved. Breeding males are fully black in color. Males rarely measure more than one inch in length, while females can sometimes reach lengths up to two inches or more (Minckley, 1973).

**General Location:** Small populations of Gila topminnow have recently been observed along the perennial portions of Cienega Creek within the Preserve. These were most likely established from viable populations located in the perennial upper reaches of Cienega Creek (BLM's National Conservation Area) that washed down into the Preserve during storm events.

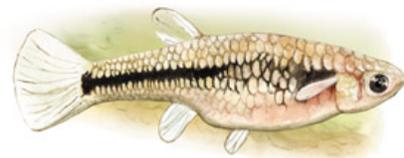


Illustration by George Maleski,  
Pima County Graphic Services

## Longfin Dace (*Agosia chrysogaster*)

**Federal Status:** Species of Concern by USFWS (1994); former Category 2 Candidate (AGFD, 1997); BLM Sensitive Species List (AGFD, 2000)

**State Status:** None

**Other Status:** None

**Rankings\*:** G4 S3S4

**Description:** The Longfin dace is a small (less than 4 inches) silvery minnow with a dark back and white on the belly. A dark band will sometimes be located along the sides just above the mid-section and iridescent gold flecks may develop on the upper sides of both sexes. Breeding males have some yellow on the lower parts of their paired fins (Minckley, 1973).

**General Location:** Established populations of this fish are found throughout the perennial stream flow portions of the Preserve.

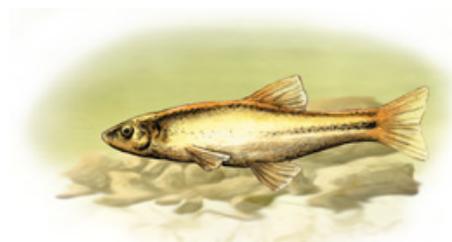


Illustration by Bill Singleton,  
Pima County Graphic Services

\* Definitions provided at the end of this document

## **Gila Chub (*Gila intermedia*)**

**Federal Status:** Endangered (USFWS, 2002)

**State Status:** Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona (AGFD, 1996)

**Other Status:** State Endangered in New Mexico (AGFD, 1997); Sensitive by USFS Region 3; Listed Endangered in Mexico (AGFD, 1999); Vulnerable Status 1 by the SDCP

**Rankings\*:** G2 S2

**Description:** The Gila chub is a small finned, deep bodied, chunky and dark colored minnow (Weedman et al., 1996). Males are rarely greater than 6 inches in length, while females can reach lengths up to 10 inches (Rinne and Minckley, 1991). The scales are large, thick and broadly overlap, and usually have prominent rings. Breeding males are red or orange on the lower cheek and posterior parts of lips, paired fin bases and on the ventro-lateral surfaces (Minckley, 1973).

**General Location:** This fish has been recently observed in large pools within the perennial stream portions of the Preserve. Occurrence of this fish in the Preserve is most likely as a result of individuals being washed down from the upper reaches of Cienega Creek (BLM's National Conservation Area), where populations are more secure and stable.

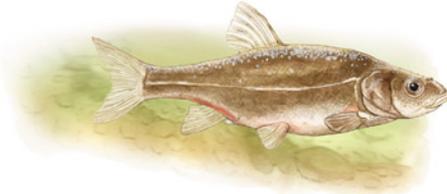


Illustration by George Maleski,  
Pima County Graphic Services

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\* Definitions provided at the end of this document

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## Ranking Definitions

**Global Rank (GRank):** Priority ranking (1 to 5) based on the number of occurrences throughout the entire range of the element.

- G1** Critically Imperiled: Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extinction. Typically 5 or fewer occurrences\* or very few remaining individuals (< 1,000) or acres (< 2,000) or linear miles (< 10).
- G2** Imperiled: Imperiled globally because of rarity or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extinction or elimination. Typically 6 to 20 occurrences\* or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000) or acres (2,000 to 10,000) or linear miles (10 to 50)
- G3** Vulnerable: Vulnerable globally either because very rare and local throughout its range, found only in a restricted range (even if abundant at some locations), or because of other factors making it vulnerable to extinction or elimination. Typically 21 to 100 occurrences\* or between 3,000 to 10,000 individuals.
- G4** Apparently Secure: Uncommon but not rare (although it may be in parts of its range, particularly on the periphery), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern. Typically more than 100 occurrences\* and more than 10,000 individuals.
- G5** Secure: Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range, particularly on the periphery). Not vulnerable in most of its range. Typically with considerably more than 100 occurrences\* and more than 10,000 individuals.
- GH** Possibly Extinct (species): Known from historical occurrences\*, but may nevertheless still be extant; further searching needed.
- GX** Presumed Extinct (species): Believed to be extinct throughout its range. Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.

### Variant Global Ranks

- G#G#** Range Rank: A numeric range rank (e.g., G2G3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty about the exact status of a taxon. Ranges cannot skip more than one rank (e.g., GU should be used rather than G1G4).
- GU** Unrankable: Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends. Note: Whenever possible, the most likely rank is assigned and the question mark qualifier is added (e.g., G2?) to express uncertainty, or a range rank (e.g., G2G3) is used to delineate the limits (range) of uncertainty.
- GNR** The rank is not yet assigned (NR-not ranked), and is applied when the state rank is SNR (former state rank S?=Srank not yet assessed).
- GNA** Conservation status rank is not applicable to the element at the global level. Includes Hybrids (HYB), Invasives, species of “Domestic origin” or “Cultural” communities, and communities that have been “Modified/managed”. These pseudo ranks and all other qualifiers or pseudo ranks are now indicated through the use of new fields in the Distribution Data grid and Distribution Comment field in the Tracker database.

### **Global Rank Qualifiers**

- ? Inexact Numeric Rank: Denotes inexact numeric rank. (The ? is not used in combination with the range ranks).
- Q Questionable Taxonomy that may reduce conservation priority: Distinctiveness of this entity as a taxon at the current level is questionable; resolution of this uncertainty may result in change from a species to a subspecies or hybrid, or inclusion of this taxon in another taxon, with the resulting Element having a lower-priority (numerically higher) conservation status rank.
- C Captive or Cultivated Only (species): Taxon at present is extant only in captivity or cultivation, or as a reintroduced population not yet established.

### **Intraspecific Taxon Ranks**

- T# Intraspecific Taxon (trinomial): The status of intraspecific taxa (subspecies or varieties) are indicated by a “T-rank” following the species’ global rank. Rules for assigning T-ranks follow the same principals outlined above. For example, the global rank of a critically imperiled subspecies of an otherwise widespread and common species would be G5T1. A T subrank cannot imply the subspecies or variety is more abundant than the species, for example, a G1T2 subrank should not occur. A vertebrate animal population (e.g., listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act or assigned candidate status) may be tracked as intraspecific taxon and given a T-rank; in such cases a Q is used after the T-rank to denote the taxon’s informal taxonomic status.

\* The term occurrences refers specifically to Element Occurrences.

**Subnational Heritage Status Rank Definitions (SRank):** The term subnational (or State Rank as commonly referred to in AZ) indicates jurisdictions at the state or provincial level (e.g., California, Navajo Nation, British Columbia).

- S1 Critically Imperiled: Critically imperiled in the subnation because of extreme rarity or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the subnation. Typically 5 or fewer occurrences\* or very few remaining individuals (< 1,000).
- S2 Imperiled: Imperiled in the subnation because of rarity or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the subnation. Typically 6 to 20 occurrences\* or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000).
- S3 Vulnerable: Vulnerable in the subnation either because rare and uncommon, or found only in a restricted range (even if abundant at some locations), or because of other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation. Typically 21 to 100 occurrences\* or between 3,000 and 10,000 individuals.
- S4 Apparently Secure: Uncommon but not rare, and usually widespread in the subnation. Possible cause of long-term concern. Usually more than 100 occurrences\* and more than 10,000 individuals.
- S5 Secure: Common, widespread, and abundant in the subnation. Essentially ineradicable under present conditions. Typically with considerable more than 100 occurrences\* and more than 10,000 individuals.
- SH Possibly Extirpated (Historical): Element occurred historically in the subnation, and there is some expectation that it may be rediscovered. Its presence may not

have been verified in the past 20 years. An Element would become SH without such a 20-year delay if the only known occurrences\* in a subnation were destroyed or if it had been extensively and unsuccessfully looked for. Upon verification of an extant occurrence, SH-ranked Elements would typically receive an S1 rank. The SH rank should be reserved for Elements for which some effort has been made to relocate occurrences, rather than simply using this rank for all Elements not known from verified extant occurrences.

**SX** Presumed Extinct: Element is believed to be extirpated from the subnation. Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.

**SNR** Unranked: Subnational rank not yet assessed. This includes the former rank 'S?'

**SU** Unrankable: Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends.

**S#S#** Range Rank: A numeric range rank (e.g., S2S3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty about the exact status of the Element. Ranges cannot skip more than one rank (e.g., SU is used rather than S1S4).

**SNA** A conservation status rank is not applicable because the Element is not a suitable target of conservation activities for one of the following reasons:

Hybrid: Element represents an interspecific hybrid without conservation value. (Note that hybrids may be assigned a numeric rank if they do have conservation value).

Exotic Origin: Element is not native to the subnation (AZ).

Accidental/Nonregular: Element is not regularly found in the nation or subnation, in other words, infrequent and outside usual range.

Not Confidently Present: Element's presence in the subnation has been reported, but the report is unconfirmed or doubtful; Element has been falsely reported, and may or may not potentially occur; Element was never present in the subnation despite presence in surrounding areas.

No Definable Occurrences\*: Element is native and appears regularly but lacks practical conservation concern in the subnation because it is transient or occurs in a dispersed, unpredictable manner.

Synonym: Element reported as occurring in the subnation, but the state data center does not recognize the taxon; therefore the Element is not assigned a subnational rank.

### **Breeding Status Qualifiers** (animals only)

**B** Breeding: Basic rank refers to the breeding population of the Element in the subnation. May be used in conjunction with an 'N' qualifier, to denote when taxon has both breeding and non-breeding populations in the subnation.

- N** Nonbreeding: Basic rank refers to the non-breeding population of the Element in the subnation.
- M** Migrant: Basic rank refers to the transient/migratory population of the Element in the subnation.

**Note:** A breeding status subrank is only used for animal species that have distinct breeding and/or non-breeding and/or migrant populations in the subnation. A rank for any of the population segments may be assigned alone or may be coupled with one or both of the other segment ranks. In the latter case, the ranks are separated by a comma, with the higher priority rank listed first (e.g., S2B, S3N, S5M; S1B, S3N; SHN, S4S5B).

**Other Qualifier**

- ?** Inexact or Uncertain: Denotes inexact or uncertain numeric rank. (The ? qualifies the character immediately preceding it in the SRANK. The ? is not used in combination with the range ranks).

\* The term occurrences refers specifically to Element Occurrences.