



AZFO eBird Gaps Project

The Five eBird Gap Areas

The five targeted eBird Gaps areas are described below with links to maps for each. The gap area maps show all available eBird reports (red dots) and the shared eGap project checklists (gold triangles), which are periodically updated. To download copies of any of the five maps onto a mobile device, please go to your App Store or Play Store and download the [Avenza app](#) for either iPhone or Android systems. Read the [instructions](#) on downloading and using the Avenza maps specific to the AZFO eBird Gaps project. State Trust lands require a recreation permit, which is available for individuals, families, small and large groups. The individual permit is currently \$15 per year and the family permit (two adults, two children per family) is \$20 per year, with an additional \$1 processing fee for both types of permits. Permits can be purchased online on its [permits page](#).

AVRA VALLEY

[AREA MAP](#)

West of Tucson, this area is located between the western unit of Saguaro National Park in the Tucson Mountains, and Ironwood Forest National Monument in the Silverbell, Waterman, and Roskrige mountains. Avra Valley is experiencing suburban and rural development, which is removing and fragmenting desert-scrub habitat and species that depend on it. In addition, part of the proposed Interstate-11 route will go through Avra Valley. This area can be accessed from several exits off of Interstate-10 from Marana and west Tucson. The Friends of Ironwood Forest's [website](#) provides directions for some different access routes. Do not trespass on Tohono O'odham tribal lands to the west.

CACTUS FOREST

[AREA MAP](#)

This area in central Pinal County includes extensive upland Sonoran desertscrub east of Florence and Coolidge, which contains extensive stands of saguaro cactus. To the south it consists of a higher elevation section dominated by semidesert grassland with scattered velvet mesquite, soap tree yucca, and palo verde. Washes are lined with netleaf hackberry, desert willow, and western soapberry. Ponds with intermittent water are scattered throughout both parts of the area. Many of the accessible areas are on State Trust lands, so a permit is needed. Simply driving on roads through State Trust land does not require a permit, but you need one if you stop your vehicle, as the permit includes birding, photography, and sightseeing.

CHAVEZ PASS

[AREA MAP](#)

Chavez Pass and Anderson Mesa southeast of Flagstaff contain a wide diversity of vegetation, including grassland; pinyon-juniper savanna and woodlands; ponderosa pine forest; and pockets of mixed conifer forest with fir. Dozens of ephemeral lakes scattered across the high plateau provide critical stopovers for migrating birds. The Anderson Mesa Important Bird Area is located here and is globally recognized for its critical habitat for many migrating species, particularly Pinyon Jay. The Anderson Mesa has been more heavily birded, but the Chavez Pass farther south hasn't had much coverage. The range of several species more predominant farther south, such as that of the Montezuma Quail, extend into this area. The main access to the Chavez Pass area from the west and south is Forest Road 3, more commonly referred to as Lake Mary Road, which runs from Flagstaff to Highway 87 at Clint's Well. At the southern end of the

area, Highway 87 passes through Payson and eventually ends in Winslow. Access is also possible from the northeast via Interstate 40. The Meteor Crater road can be followed from I-40 to Chavez Pass. Note that most of this route is a dirt road through remote country. The Coconino National Forest map can be downloaded from Avenza and paper versions are available for purchase from the Forest Supervisor's office in Flagstaff, as well as from outdoor stores such as REI.

HASSAYAMPA PLAIN

[AREA MAP](#)

This dry floodplain is created by the Hassayampa River as it flows south to its confluence with the Gila River south of I-10. This area's focus is between the White Tank and Belmont Mountains, and south of the Vulture Mountains. The area is known to have high densities of Bendire's Thrasher and includes a small, remnant population of LeConte's Thrashers, both species of conservation concern. Other at-risk species include Elf and Burrowing Owls and Gilded Flickers. Much of the desert between the Hassayampa River and the White Tank Mountains is slated for urban development in the near future, and the proposed Interstate 11 corridor may go through part of the area. The land on the Hassayampa Plain is a patchwork of BLM, State Trust (permit required), and private lands. Some of the private land has public throughways, including roads below transmission lines. The Belmont Mountains in the western part of the area can be accessed on numbered BLM roads; contact the [BLM Hassayampa Field Office](#) regarding maps for numbered routes.

SANTA MARIA MOUNTAINS

[AREA MAP](#)

This low mountain range northwest of Prescott is the most underbirded of the five gap areas. It contains a mix of vegetation types, including chaparral, pinyon-juniper woodland, ponderosa pine forest, and riparian woodland. Two designated Wilderness Areas (Juniper Mesa and Apache Creek) within the Prescott National Forest are part of the area. Springs dot the area, which attract birds when there is adequate winter and summer precipitation. Birders have provided some recent coverage along Walnut Creek and Camp Wood road, but most of the area has not been birded. The main access routes are via Williamson Valley Road into Walnut Creek Road, and Camp Wood Road, which are all maintained dirt roads. Some side roads may be rougher, but you can explore the area by parking off to the side and walking along the forest roads or on national forest trails. There are parcels of private property and State Trust Land here, so respect property boundaries.