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## **BIRDING: SOMETHING TO ‘SING’ ABOUT IN COCHISE COUNTY**

**Cochise County, Arizona**—With some of the most diverse landscape in Arizona, Cochise County is home to more than 500 species of birds. It’s no surprise that the county was named the American Birding Association’s “Birdiest Inland County in the United States” in 2003. Cochise County sings praises of its feathered friends with events, activities and organizations that cater to birding enthusiasts.

To fully explore this beautiful landscape, birding enthusiasts have a new tool with the 2006 **Southeastern Arizona Birding Trail** map and guide. It showcases the county’s birding hot spots and includes valuable information on each site. Birders can find more information on the map and guide at <http://www.seazbirdingtrail.com/>.

Cochise County hosts the **Southwest Wings Birding and Nature Festival** every August. With birding and nature workshops, tours and programs, the annual event explores the lives of winged creatures and nature’s influence upon them.

Birders who want an up-close experience can watch **Hummingbird Banding at Ramsey Canyon Preserve** from April through September. For a small fee, visitors can witness the extraordinary process as The Nature Conservancy’s researchers weigh, feed and band these tiny creatures. Located in the “Hummingbird Capital of the United States,” Sierra Vista, the Preserve offers guided walking tours and is a bird-watcher’s haven. In addition, birders of all levels are welcomed at **Bird Walks** each Wednesday morning at the **San Pedro River Inn** in Hereford, and at the **San Pedro House** located at the San Pedro trailhead, eight miles east of Sierra Vista along Highway 90.

The **San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area** is a nationally known birding destination and a hiking hotspot. Trails include the San Pedro House Interpretive Loop, an easy 1.5-mile route taking hikers past ponds, historical attractions and an animal habitat. Visitors can pick up an interpretive trail guide at the trailhead. Numbered markers are along the trail to coincide with the guide, explaining the area and the historical interest. The San Pedro River Trail complex, a long-distance trail of nearly 30 miles, includes its own easy, moderate and strenuous trails through river passes and animal habitats. Trail information is available at the San Pedro House.

Each year in January, Willcox, famous for wintering sandhill cranes, hosts **Wings Over Willcox**, an event for birders who follow the birds’ migratory paths. The events allow participants to view the birds in their element.

Founded in 1996 to provide education, research and eco-tourism opportunities, the **Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory (SABO)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of southeastern Arizona’s bird population, their habitats and the diversity of species. SABO offers educational and recreational opportunities with workshops and tours. Other birding organizations, the **Huachuca Chapter of the Audubon Society** and the **Friends of the San Pedro**, sponsor walks, tours and educational programs for enthusiasts.

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Birding in Cochise County  
2 – 2 – 2 – 2

In addition to Cochise County's events and organizations, bird lovers of all ages can marvel at these fine feathered friends at other locations throughout Cochise County. These parks, canyons and preserves are listed below.

**Other Cochise County Birding Sites**

- AEPCO Crane Viewing Station, near Willcox
- Ash, Carr and Miller Canyons, south of Sierra Vista
- Cave Creek and Portal, in the Chiricahua Mountains
- Chiricahua National Monument
- Cochise Lakes, near Willcox
- Coronado National Memorial, south of Sierra Vista
- Environmental Operations Park, Sierra Vista
- Holy Trinity Monastery Bird Sanctuary, south of Benson
- Muleshoe Ranch Preserve, Willcox
- San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, near Douglas
- San Pedro Riparian National Conservancy Area, 40 miles through Cochise County
- Waterfowl Observation Pond, Benson
- Whitewater Draw State Wildlife Refuge, between Bisbee and Elfrida
- Willcox Playa, Willcox

*Located in southeastern Arizona, Cochise County is one of the most culturally, historically and geographically diverse areas in the American Southwest. Its legendary communities—Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Tombstone, Sierra Vista and Willcox—were strategically located less than a day's journey by stagecoach and are now just a short drive from one another.*

*For more information about Cochise County, contact the Cochise County Tourism Council at 1-800-862-5273 or visit their website at [www.explorecochise.com](http://www.explorecochise.com).*

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