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SITE PROFILE

Name: Bear Canyon

State: US-MT

Counties: Carbon

Site Status: Recognized

Site Description:

The IBA is centered around the lower and middle reaches of Bear Canyon (T8S, R26E, sects. 34 & 35; T9S, R26E, sects. 3 & 4), which sits less than 10 km from the Wyoming border in the foothills of the Pryor Mountains. This area is driest in Montana and supports the state's only stands of Utah juniper. The scenery and habitats are spectacular and make for a unique Montana setting reminiscent of the Desert Southwest.

Ornithological Summary:

Bear Canyon supports breeding populations of more than a dozen species on the Montana Priority Bird Species List. It also has the highest known number of nesting Blue-gray Gnatcatchers among the handful of foothill canyons in the area that constitute the entire range of the species in Montana. The riparian corridor is home to a rich diversity of Neotropical migrants, and the adjacent uplands are inhabited by Common Poorwills, Loggerhead Shrikes, Sage Thrashers, Green-tailed Towhees, Pinyon Jays, and the occasional broods of Greater Sage-Grouse.

Conservation Issues:

Cattle grazing has affected the understory of the cottonwood gallery forest in some places, and offroad vehicles have resulted in increased erosion of the slopes adjacent to the canyon bottom. Owners of a limestone quarry on private land 6 km from the IBA would like to expand their operation onto federal lands, posing a potential threat to the site.



Catche-Lower Will
AR. Photo by D.

National Audubon Society 2004. The Important Bird Areas Historical Results.
Available at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba> 12.2004

*"IBAs have the unique
power to unite people,
communities, and
organizations in proactive
bird conservation, one
place at a time"*

- Frank Gill, Senior
Ornithologist, National
Audubon Society



Washington-Pike Grove Hills IBA
NV. Photo by Sam McEwan

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