

# Conservation Action Plan | 2015-2025

# Mexican Highlands



## The SJV and Conservation Planning

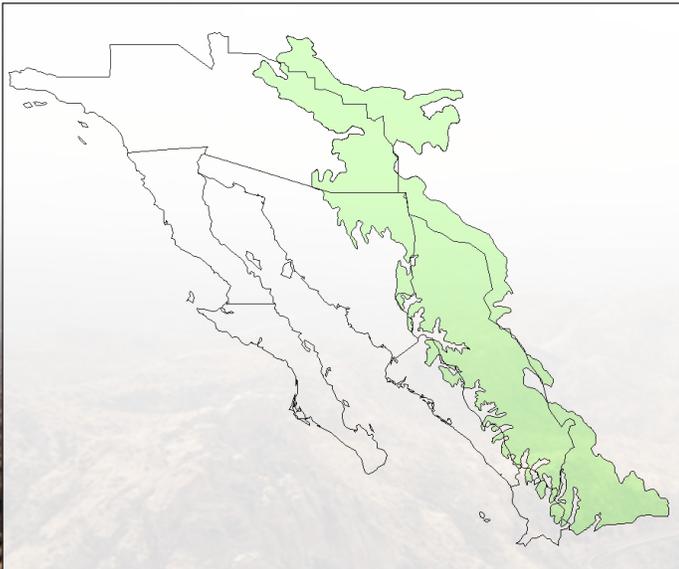
The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) is a partnership of diverse organizations and individuals working to conserve the unique birds and habitats of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. We bring together partners from both sides of the border to integrate the goals and objectives of existing bird conservation plans into a single, strategic effort that addresses the needs of our area. To learn more about our conservation planning process, visit <http://sonoranjv.org/OpenStandards>.

## Conservation Vision

Our long-term vision is a healthy, vibrant landscape for the unique birds, habitats, and people of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico.

## The Mexican Highlands

This region includes the characteristic “Sky Islands,” with high mountain forests interspersed with semi-desert grasslands. This is where the Rocky Mountains intersect the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts meet.



The Mexican Highlands includes Bird Conservation Region 34

## What We Want to Conserve

Our top conservation priorities in the Mexican Highlands include riparian habitat, cienegas and springs, semi-desert grasslands, mesquite bosques, pine-oak and mixed conifer forests. Priority birds include “Western” Yellow Billed Cuckoo, “Mexican” Spotted Owl, Golden Eagle, Red-faced Warbler, Tufted Jay, Bell’s Vireo, Montezuma Quail, and Thick-billed Parrot.



Red-faced Warbler | Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren/Creative Commons

## Conservation Targets

These are species, communities, or ecological systems that represent and encompass the biodiversity found in the Mexican Highlands.

Conservation Target	Current Condition
Riparian/birds	Poor
Cienegas and springs/birds	Poor
Semidesert grasslands/birds	Poor
Mesquite bosque/birds	Fair
Pine-oak forest/birds	Fair
Conifer forests/birds	Fair

## Goals for Mexican Highlands

- Restored riparian habitat
- Improved grazing management
- Maintained or increased groundwater levels
- Reduced mesquite and shrub encroachment on grasslands
- Grassland fire management implemented
- Protected mesquite bosque
- Healthy forest conditions maintained or restored
- Protected old-growth forests

## Conservation Challenges

Conservation challenges are primarily human activities that immediately affect what we are trying to conserve. The following are the most serious and in need of immediate action.

Challenge	Priority
Climate change	Very High
Unsustainable water use	Very High
Invasive plants	High
Unsustainable grazing	High



Montezuma Quail | Dominic Sherony/Creative Commons

## Priority Conservation Strategies

Over the next ten years the SJV partnership will:

- Restore bunchgrasses at cienegas and in riparian areas
- Create demonstration projects for best grazing practices
- Exclude livestock from sensitive riparian areas
- Develop and implement fire management plans to restore natural fire regimes, especially in grasslands
- Work with private landowners and ranchers to improve grazing management
- Support partner biologists to work with agencies, ranchers, and land managers
- Conduct outreach and education to increase support for grassland conservation
- Develop habitat-specific best management practices manuals



Golden Eagle | Tony Hisgett/Creative Commons



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