

## IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS IN CALIFORNIA

### Shoshone-Tecopa Area

**State:** US-CA

**Area (Ha):** 1,333

**Status:** Recognized

**Elevation-Min (m):** 413

**Priority** State

**Elevation-Max (m):** 506

**County:** Inyo

#### Site Summary

This habitat gem is associated with the Amargosa River in the northeastern Mojave, less than 20 miles from the Nevada border. Located about halfway between Baker, on I-15, and the headquarters of Death Valley National Park, it is passed by hundreds of thousands of tourists each year, but remains nearly totally undeveloped for birding. One notable exception is China Ranch, which has been eager to spur ecotourism in the region. The vegetation consists of desert riparian thickets (dominated by willows and mesquite), with small areas of wetland and alkali marsh (esp. Grimshaw Lake, just north of Tecopa). Ownership is complex, mainly a combination of small ranches and BLM lands. Main areas for birds include Grimshaw Lake/Tecopa Hot Springs Co. Park area north of Tecopa, and China Ranch, a 218-acre ranch with lush riparian woodland. Several extensive riparian thickets (willows) associated with the Amargosa River are northeast of Shoshone, and mesquite thickets are found just northwest of Shoshone and at Resting Springs in Chicago Valley east of Tecopa.

#### Ornithological Significance

This area boasts an exceptionally rich avifauna compared with the rest of the Mojave Desert, owing both the abundance of year-round water as well as to its low level of habitat disturbance. China Ranch, only recently opened to birders, has been found to support a tiny population of breeding Yellow-billed Cuckoo, one of only a handful left in California. Other specialties reaching the northern terminus of the ranges in the state at China Ranch include Vermilion and Brown-crested flycatchers and Crissal Thrasher. Bell's Vireo has been found summering within the IBA, at China Ranch and near Shoshone, though their racial affiliation is not known at this time. Grimshaw Lake and associated alkali wetlands support breeding Least Bittern, Northern Harrier and Snowy Plover, otherwise highly localized in the north Mojave. Several endemic non-bird taxa are found here, including the Amargosa Vole (*Microtus californicus scirpensis*).

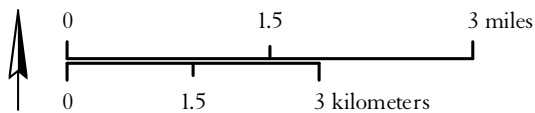
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#### Conservation Issues

Major conservation concerns in this area include the invasion of exotic plants (esp. tamarisk) into desert riparian systems and unauthorized use by OHVs. Fortunately, some of the best habitat in the IBA occurs within China Ranch, which, though private, is committed to managing its resources to attract birders. Still, aside from the areas mentioned, large stretches of the Amargosa River have exceptional potential for providing riparian bird habitat if restored.

# Shoshone-Tecopa Area Important Bird Area



## Legend

-  Neighboring Important Bird Areas
-  Shoshone-Tecopa Area

Projection and Datum: California Teale Albers NAD83  
Date: December 2008