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Whipple Mountains

Endangered Desert Legacy



Location: The Whipple Mountains area is located in the Mojave Desert, in San Bernardino County, northwest of the towns of Earp and Parker. The area is north of Hwy 62, south of the Chemehuevi Reservation, east of Hwy 95, and west of Parker Dam. This area, which generally lies to the west of the existing Whipple Mountains Wilderness area, is threatened by renewable energy development.

Management Agency: Bureau of Land Management, Needles Office

Description: The Whipple Mountains are the dominant landform within this area. A low angle fault separates the pale green formations of the western side, from the brick-red, steeply carved volcanics of the eastern side. Landforms range from valley floors and washes to steep-walled canyons, domed peaks, natural bridges, and eroded spires. Elevations range from about 800 feet to 4,131 feet at Whipple Peak, the highest peak in the range.

Wildlife and Plants: This area is home for several endangered and/or threatened species, including the Gila woodpecker, bald eagle, Yuma clapper rail, gilded flicker, western yellow-billed cuckoo, elf owl, Arizona bell's vireo, desert tortoise, and California black rail (photo above). Many other wildlife species inhabit this area including the protected bighorn sheep, the Colorado Valley woodrat, vermilion flycatcher, California leaf-nose bat, Yuma myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, western mastiff bat, yellow-breasted chat, pallid bat, Colorado River cotton rat, American badger, brown-crested flycatcher, Crissal thrasher, yellow-breasted chat, northern cardinal, cave myotis, white desert snail, loggerhead shrike, Bendire's thrasher, black-tailed jackrabbit, coyote, kangaroo rat, mule deer, quail, roadrunner, wild burro, and several species of rattlesnakes and lizards. The Whipple Mountains provide superior nesting and foraging habitat for several raptors including the prairie falcon, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, and Cooper's hawk.

The area has many types of vegetation, including palo verde, iron wood, smoke tree, bitter hymenoxys, glandular ditaxis, Aven Nelson's phacelia, creosote bush scrub, Darlington's blazing star, bare-stem larkspur, desert beardtongue, small-flowered androstephium, desert pincushion, Emory's crucifixion-thorn, Abrams' spurge, wand-like fleabane daisy (photo above), Cove's cassia, Arizona pholistoma, bare-stem larkspur, spear-leaf matelea, Kofa barberry, spiny-hair blazing star, and many types of cactus, including Wiggins' cholla, saguaro, foxtail, prickly pear, and Arizona fishhook.

Activities: Visitors to this area include nature enthusiasts, geology enthusiasts, bird watchers, campers, hikers, equestrians, photographers, and hunters. Spring rains and fall monsoons bring out wildflower viewer.

