



## Arizona's Urban Hangout for Birders: Gilbert's Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch

### For immediate release

GILBERT, Ariz. -- With more than 300 bird species spotted within its borders, the 110-acre Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch in Gilbert is a bird lover's paradise. As a matter of fact, this gem has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society.

The Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch is a thoughtfully designed urban greenspace that started as a sustainability project of sorts. In 1986, the Town of Gilbert committed to reusing all of its wastewater. A little over a decade later, the preserve opened to the public, becoming one of the primary uses of Gilbert's treated effluent water. Since then, the park's seven ponds have received millions of gallons of reclaimed water and as an added bonus, they have welcomed hundreds of thousands of eye-catching birds.

As the wettest area for miles, the Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch is home to quite a few shorebirds and waterfowl. The seven ponds and one lake make this preserve the ideal home for these water-loving birds. As you weave between the ponds on the 4.5 miles of gravel trails, keep your eyes peeled for ducks, geese, swans, sandpipers, plovers, and so much more.

### CALLING ALL ORNITHOPHILES

While the shorebirds and waterfowl are part of the fun, there are many other types of birds that have settled down in this natural area. Plus, since the preserve is along a few North American bird migration routes, migrating birds make this spot their temporary home as well. Find hawks soaring through the sky, finches munching on seeds, hummingbirds flitting about, ospreys building their nests, and woodpeckers doing what they do best.

Visitors looking to bird spot are welcome to join the Desert Rivers Audubon Society's free guided bird walks. Every third Saturday at 8 a.m. from October to March, this bird-watching group meets up at the Dragon Ramada for a stroll around the preserve. With their help – and a provided pair of binoculars – you'll be able to see and identify dozens of beautiful birds.

If a few hours at the Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch aren't enough time for you, why not book yourself a stay at one of the three overnight campsites? Then, you can listen to chirps, whistles, tweets, and trills of your new bird friends all night long.

*Excerpt from the 2024 Discover Gilbert Guide. For full feature story written by Sarah Etinas, visit this link: <https://www.discovergilbert.com/online-guide/birding-bonanza-in-gilbert-arizona/>*

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