

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ABPAE53070

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Pachyramphus aglaiae*
COMMON NAME: Rose-throated Becard; Xantus' Becard.
SYNONYMS: *Platypsaris aglaiae*; *Platypsaris albiventris*
FAMILY: Tyrannidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Lafresnaye, Rev. Zool., 2, 1839, p. 98.

TYPE LOCALITY: Mexico = Jalapa, Veracruz.

TYPE SPECIMEN: *Pachyramphus aglaiae albiventris*: USNM 029402 & 030126 (cotypes), J. Xantus, January 1863, Plains of Colima, Colima, Mexico. Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York 8:475 (not earlier than May 13), 1867.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: The Rose-throated Becard belongs to a large and varied family of tropical American Birds, allied to the tyrant flycatchers. This is the northernmost species, in turn reaching its northern limit in southern Arizona. It was previously placed in the genus *Platypsaris*. (Phillips et al. 1964).

DESCRIPTION: A big-headed, thick-billed bird somewhat resembling a flycatcher. The male is dark gray above, pale to dusky below, with a blackish cap and cheeks and a rose-colored throat. Females are brown above, with a dark cap and light buffy collar around neck. Underparts are washed with buff. Stocky built bird averaging 5.5 - 7.25 inches (14-18.4 cm). Phillips (1949), states the "the large head and bill, short neck, and chunky body give it some resemblance to a small tanager; but the dark head, whitish throat, and shorter narrower tail are markedly different, and it perches in the erect attitude of a flycatcher." Immature male shows partially pink throat; acquires full adult plumage after second summer (National Geographic Society 1999).

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: The Rose-throated Becard is unlikely to be confused with any other species within its limited United States range. The large head and bill, short neck, and chunky body give it some resemblance to a small tanager; but the dark head, whitish throat, and shorter narrower tail are markedly different, and it perches in the erect attitude of a flycatcher (Phillips 1949). Immature Scissor-tailed Flycatcher similar to females and immatures, but has pinkish wash on sides; black tail has white outer feathers (Farrand, Jr. 1988).

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color drawing (Peterson 1961: plate 42)

Color photos (Farrand, Jr., 1988: p. 408)

Color drawing (National Geographic Society, 1999: p. 303)

TOTAL RANGE: Breeds in southeast Arizona, southern Texas (rare visitor along Rio Grande), south through Mexico to Costa Rica. Winters from northern Mexico south through breeding range.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Recently found breeding along Sonoita and Arivaca creeks, Sycamore Canyon (Atascosa Mountains), and Patagonia. Historically nested in Guadalupe Canyon (east of Douglas) and near Tucson. A report from the Chiricahua Mountains lacks valid basis. One record from the Huachuca Mountains, June 20, 1888 (Price MCZ).

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: A diurnal bird with a mournful descending whistle (*keer*). Other calls include a high-pitched *chrrr-chrrr-chrrr-quit-quit-quit*, from an excited male (Phillips 1949); thin, mournful *seeoo*, sometimes preceded by chatter (National Geographic Society 1999). They are very quiet and deliberate, sitting silently upright and remaining nearly motionless for long periods of time (Phillips 1949). They usually perch near tree trunks, while foraging in dense cover, moving slowly about in search of insects (Farrand, Jr. 1988).

REPRODUCTION: Breeds May to September. In courtship, male spreads and displays white epaulets (Farrand, Jr. 1988). The nest is an immense bushel-basket of strips of cottonwood bark swinging from the tip of a slender branch, with a low entrance; Monson (1972) reports entrance near top. Nest is normally built entirely by the female, with encouragement from the male. The small nest cavity is lined with lichen, bark, vine, pine needles, spider web, and feathers (Ehrlich et al., 1988). In Arizona, nests are generally built in sycamore trees, 9-18 m above ground. Dimensions vary considerably, ranging from 12-30 inches high (long) and from 10-12 inches in diameter, with the nest cup is located well inside the structure (Phillips 1949). Clutch size 2-6. Eggs are white, cinnamon, buff, spotted with brown, occasionally concentrated at large end. Female incubates eggs, however, young are tended by both parents.

FOOD HABITS: Feeds on insects and fruits.

HABITAT: Breeds in sycamore riparian habitats in extreme southcentral Arizona (AGFD 1996 in prep). For entire range, can be found in open forest, woodland, scrubby areas, open areas with scattered trees, plantations and mangroves, mostly in semi-arid regions but also less commonly in humid areas (Tropical and Subtropical zones).

ELEVATION: In Arizona, ranges from 3,550 - 4,030 ft (1083 - 1229 m) (AGFD, HDMS 2001). The June 20, 1888 collection in the Huachuca Mountains occurred at 7,000 ft (2135 m) (Phillips 1949).

PLANT COMMUNITY: In nonforest, habitats found in Sonoran Desert Scrub and Desert Riparian Deciduous Woodlands. In marshes of Sonoran Desert Scrub of open to dense vegetation of shrubs, low trees, and succulents, dominated by paloverde (*Cercidium microphyllum*), prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp.), and giant saguaro (*Cereus giganteus*). Also found in Desert Riparian Deciduous Woodland of marsh-woodlands, especially of cottonwoods, that occur where desert streams provide sufficient moisture for a narrow band of deciduous trees and shrubs along the margins. (USDA 1991 *in* BISON 2000).

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None
STATE STATUS: WC (WSCA, AGFD in prep)
[Candidate, TNW, AGFD 1988]
OTHER STATUS: Texas State Threatened

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: **Threats** include: disturbance by birdwatchers (i.e. use of tape-playback during breeding season); degradation and loss of native riparian habitat through overgrazing, urban development, and groundwater depletion. **Management needs:** reduce riparian grazing to maintain and enhance sycamore regeneration; reduce groundwater withdrawal to maintain perennial stream flow; reduce tape playback disturbance by birdwatchers.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS:

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: USFS - Coronado National Forest; USFWS - Buenos Aires NWR; State Land Department; City of Patagonia; TNC - Patagonia-Sonoita Creek; Private.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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- Phillips, A., J. Marshall, and G. Monson. 1964. The Birds of Arizona. Third Printing 1978. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson. p. 76.
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MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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