



# Sonoran Desert Military Ranges Conservation Partnership Team Joins with Sonoran Joint Venture

Project # 09-459

## Background:

On January 6, 2009, the Sonoran Desert Military Ranges Conservation Partnership Team joined formally with the Sonoran Joint Venture to work collaboratively on international conservation of migratory birds in southern Arizona and northwestern Mexico. This marks a first for Department of Defense (DoD) and the military services to join formally with an international bird conservation joint venture under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This Sonoran military conservation partnership team is operating under the banner of the DoD SAR – AZ/NM Military Ranges project funded by the DoD Legacy Program. This action by the team is part of the overall effort of the project to support regional military installation military mission and conservation programs at multiple military installations on the Sonoran desert landscape.



Sonoran Military Ranges Conservation Partnership Team meeting with Sonoran Joint Venture at MCAS Yuma, AZ January 2009

## Objective:

The overall purpose of the project is to provide support to the military mission, conservation programs and Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP)s for Barry M. Goldwater Range, Yuma Proving Ground, MCAS Yuma, Luke AFB, Davis-Monthan AFB (about 3.5 million acres of military lands on the Sonoran desert landscape). The team recognized the value of partnering with the Sonoran Joint Venture in further protecting military readiness at these key installations near the international border with Mexico. The team's future objective is to engage a Sonoran desert landscape level partnership with several entities. This would fulfill an earlier DoD Legacy project to develop a Sonoran desert framework for landscape level efforts.

## Summary of Approach:

The DoD SAR – AZ/NM Military Ranges project, in phase II, is focused on supporting four permanent military / FWS / State conservation partnership teams, including the Sonoran Desert Military Ranges team. The approach includes team support, lessons learned from other DoD regional conservation approaches, focusing on key conservation issues and solutions, exploring and engaging future collaborative conservation projects, supporting multiple INRMPs, engaging the new Western Regional Partnership, and presenting briefings and overviews at DoD and other entity conferences, workshops and training courses. A key part of the Sonoran team's approach includes future engaging of interested parties in a Sonoran desert landscape level partnership. Implementing the formal partnership with the Sonoran Joint Venture is an early step in exploring that landscape level partnership.

## Benefit:

Engaging formally with the Sonoran Joint Venture assures even more protection of military readiness for key military ranges such as BMGR, as the team determines more information about bird resources across 3.5 million acres of military lands. As military mission changes occur, the team is vital in providing information on natural resources including sensitive bird species that may affect future military readiness needs.

## Accomplishments:

The team and the Sonoran Joint Ventures are a stepping stone toward bird conservation and management of these resources spread across the Sonoran desert landscape with other federal and state land managing agencies, Tribes, private landowners, and Mexico. This team is one of four under the DoD Legacy project that is using shared science, field projects, collaborative ecological approaches, and outreach to support multiple military readiness, multiple military installations, and INRMPs.

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