

Our Mission:

To create healthy and resilient communities, Ironwood Tree Experience makes it possible for young people to engage with the natural world and be stewards of the environment.

Sonoran Joint Venture 2019-2022 Report



Youth Engagement in Bird Conservation is made possible by:



We acknowledge that these programs were held on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Tohono O'odham Peoples. Through experiences that connect youth with the desert community, Ironwood Tree Experience honors the indigenous presence and stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

In 2019, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Sonoran Joint Venture entered into a cooperative agreement with Youth Outdoor Experience, dba Ironwood Tree Experience (ITE) to lead a partnership program engaging youth, ages 14-20, in bird observations, identification, and conservation.

From 2019-2022, this program impacted over 300 youth and adults by helping them gain awareness of bird habitats and conservation in Southern Arizona and to become better stewards of the environment.

This report highlights youths' engagement in bird conservation in ITE's Field Studies for Schools, Youth Action Community, and Community Events.

PARTNER PROGRAM IN REVIEW

After receiving this grant in October 2019, ITE immediately joined the global community in confronting the realities and challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. Thanks to the trust and flexibility of SJV and USFWS, and the resiliency and efforts of the ITE staff, **our team was able to engage 327 youth and family members, and 19 teachers in bird conservation activities.**

Through this partnership, our team creatively adapted to a rapidly changing social and economic landscape to connect youth with the beauty and inspiration of birds.

A big thank you goes to the SJV team - Emily Clark, Adam Hannuksela, and Jennie Duberstein for their continued support and leadership in engaging youth in bird observations, identification, and conservation. **THANK YOU!**

FIELD STUDIES FOR SCHOOLS

Field Studies for Schools (FSS) provides youth and teachers with environmental education experiences to understand natural science concepts, foster class camaraderie, and provide outdoor experiences that incentivize learning.



PABLO BRIDING ON THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER

197 Students
7 Tucson Schools
19 Teachers
76 Engagement Hours



CIENEGA CREEK NATURAL PRESERVE

FSS COVID-Responsive Programs



ITE LIVE WITH INTERN JULIA

In response to COVID-19, ITE adopted cutting edge mobile live streaming technology and created ITE LIVE as part of our SJV-USFWS FSS program to provide an accessible way for public schools youth to engage with the outdoors during the height of the pandemic.

To support teacher engagement during this challenging time, we offered **paid Professional Development** FSS to 11 local teachers. Outdoors and at a distance, they developed birding skills to incorporate nature-based and bird-focused curriculum into their classrooms.

YOUTH ACTION COMMUNITY

Birdwatching Excursions



ARROYO CHICO BIRDING

130 Participants
11 Outdoor Excursions
51 Engagement Hours



ART & BIRDWATCHING AT SWEETWATER



ITE YOUTH AT URBAN RESTORATION SITE

The Youth Action Community (YAC) invites young people to connect with nature, meet friends, share stories, and contribute to their community. Youth who have participated in previous ITE programs automatically join the network through fun, free, activities ranging from workshops to backcountry

The cooperative agreement allowed ITE to provide youth with monthly YAC outdoor activities that focus on bird habitat conservation, observation, and identification. Youth utilized watercolor art kits, binoculars, field journals, and group activities to enhance each outdoor birdwatching excursion. Highlights included downtown, urban bird-watching, campout in Temporal Gulch, and family art and nature walks.

YAC COVID-Responsive Programs

In the summer of 2020 in response to COVID-19 ITE created the WWW (World Wild Web) programs over Zoom as part of the SJV-USFWS partnership. to address the need for ITE youth to connect with the community at the height of the pandemic.

To expand engagement opportunities, Creativity on the Fly took flight by inviting community members, ages 12-20, to paint, write, draw, and document the intersections of humans and birds.



WORLD WILD WEB (WWW) IN ACTION

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Family Birdwatching & Nature Day April 2022

In response to youth requests for more community events where they could bring their siblings, friends, and/or parents, we held a Family Birdwatching and Nature Walk day at Sweetwater Wetlands.

ITE Field Instructor Rebecca Perez and Youth Development Manager Kristen Sawyer facilitated activities around identifying local plants and birds and using watercolor to capture their experience.

This event connected to our end of season Creativity on the Fly showcase where 30 community members and youth gathered for a night of poetry, art, and photography connected to birds.



OSCAR & HIS DAD AT SWEETWATER

Some of the things I've learned are how to put up a tent, and how to be more social active with other people than I usually was. I learned about birds. My dad and I came to a birding community event. My personal favorite bird is the osprey. Birds are descendants of dinosaurs. I learned about home, and how we're all different but kind of connected in a weird way, like nature.

- Oscar Delgado

Creativity on the Fly: Youth Gallery May 2022



GALLERY WALK AT HISTORIC Y



YOUTH WINNERS AND SJV-ITE TEAM

10 youth were inspired to submit creative expressions that reflected upon birds in their lives. As part of the inaugural Creativity on the Fly contest YAC leaders, Julia Ortiz-Tzul and Audrey Bellows, also volunteered extra hours to set up, recruit and participate in the gallery.

Reflecting on the themes of nesting, migration, and kinship, youth wrote poems, made pencil sketches, a digital art piece, paintings and a mixed media collage.

Creativity on the Fly participants were:
Anand Karra, Anthonello Mendoza-Villela, Jesus Mendoza-Villela, Jay Cruz, Angela Marcos, Michaelle Vega, Julia Tzul-Ortiz & Jasper Konrad, Rosa Delgado and Audrey Bellows.