

West Nueces River

The West Nueces River rises five miles north of US Hwy 377, and ten miles west of Rocksprings in Edwards County. It flows southeast to its confluence with the Nueces River in Uvalde County, ten miles northwest of Uvalde. The ecologically significant stream segment on West Nueces River is within the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. It begins at the Kinney/Edwards County line downstream to the Kinney/Uvalde County line (Fig. 21). The ecological significance of this segment is based upon the following criteria:

1. Biological function – The aquatic and riparian habitats (Fig. 25) associated with the stream support an exceptionally diverse assemblage of invertebrates, fish, birds, and plants characteristic of the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. Bald cypress, sycamore, pecan, and willows dominate the riparian gallery forests. Canyon slopes are dominated by plateau live oak and Ashe juniper. These woodlands provide important nesting, migration, and wintering habitat for a variety of birds.
2. Hydrologic function – Near the midpoint of this segment are Schwandner and Silver Lake Springs, about 16 miles northwest of Laguna in Uvalde County. These springs issue from the Edwards and associated limestones of the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) Aquifer². This segment crosses the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone for its entire length. The fringing riparian habitats of the river function to improve the quality of runoff and groundwater discharge into the river, attenuate peak flood flows, and to some extent, stabilize base flows.
3. Riparian conservation area – None identified.
4. High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value – No information.
5. Threatened or endangered species/unique communities – The following rare species associated with aquatic or riparian habitats occur in or along this segment: the Common black-hawk (St.T), Golden-cheeked warbler (Fed.E, St.E), Black-capped Vireo (Fed.E, St.E), the Interior least tern (Fed.E, St.E); and Indigo snake (St.T). Texas snowbells (Fed.E, St.E) occur at the upstream end of the segment near the Edwards County line¹⁵. The Tobusch fishhook cactus (Fed.E, St.E) may occur in riparian gravel deposits.



Figure 25. The West Nueces River at RR 334 in northeastern Kinney County (11/20/00).