



Pitahaya

The official newspaper of
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

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Why a Pitahaya?

“Pitahaya dulce” (*pi-TEYE-yah dull-say*) is the Spanish name for the fruit of the Organ Pipe Cactus. It is small and spiny and can be painful to harvest, but the flesh of the fruit is sweet and life-sustaining. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument is like a Pitahaya. Once you prepare yourself and see through the thorns and harsh exterior of this place, you will find sweet rewards, traditional uses and even a few seeds of change.

As you pass through the Sonoran desert in your air-conditioned car, you may not see more than the thorns. This is a harsh place. Temperatures often soar above 106 degrees during the day. Almost all of the plants have some form of self-defense, be it from thorns, or spines, or absence of leaves. The animals may seem to be missing all together and those you might see are often considered dangerous including scorpions, Gila monsters and rattlesnakes. The pieces of this ecological puzzle have adapted to the hostility and could be considered hostile themselves.

However, if you stop to look, *really* look, it is amazing what can be found in the details of this place. If you pay attention, you may notice the colors reflected from the Ajo Mountains as the sun sets away from them, the delicate flutter of a poppy blossom in the breeze, the smell of creosote oil after a rain, or the dips and trills of a migrating bird’s song. You may find fascination in the farming habits of the world’s largest ant or you might just enjoy the warmth winter here has to offer. Whether you drive, camp, hike, or simply sit, the sweet and subtle rewards of the Sonoran Desert will become available to you. In fact, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument has been set aside by the United States National Park Service and the world community of the United Nations as the best place to taste the opportunities of the Sonoran Desert. All it takes is a little time and patience.

Unfortunately, in addition to the natural wonders and hazards, there are illegal entrants and smugglers crossing, the US / Mexican border daily. For this reason, we recommend not approaching or stopping for anyone along the roadside or in the backcountry. Instead, please report anyone in need of assistance to a Park Ranger or the Border Patrol.

Keep in mind there is a third set of people here too. Pitahaya is a traditional food and before boundaries bisected culture, people migrated through this area searching for sustenance. Today, people still walk the paths looking for a new hope.



Left: the beautiful blossoms of the Organ Pipe Cactus, our name-sake, open at night and only for one night.

If you visit in the hottest part of the summer and go for a walk in the early morning, you will see blossoms. You might be the only person in the world to see that particular flower.

Right: Pitahaya dulce, the fruit of the Organ Pipe Cactus grows and ripens at the base of the flower. It is a sweet, pulpy, messy fruit. Once it has burst open, like the one in the picture, birds, bats and other wildlife eat the fruit and disperse the tiny seeds.



They are desperate for a better way of life for themselves and their families and are also suffering the dangers attempting to get to their own life-sustaining fruit, “El Norte.”

Because of human impacts, seeds of change are emerging. You might notice new construction, a greater presence of trained law enforcement personnel and possibly some travel restrictions. As we adapt to new challenges set before us, please remember that the changes are attempting to reduce the unnatural hazards to the desert environment and to you. We appreciate your support in this change.

If nothing else, remember this, the desert does not perform according to a schedule. If you don’t slow down and approach this place on the desert’s own terms, you could miss the subtle flavor of this place entirely. It requires the patience of a saguaro and the caution of a kit fox but the rewards are well worth enduring the hazards.

We hope that you will find a few seeds and juicy bits planted in this edition of the Pitahaya that will assist you in enjoying this harsh desert we call home, sweet home.

2 Plan your Visit

Are you just passing through or are you camping with us for a while? Either way use this article to make the best use of your time inside your Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

3 Hiking in ORPI

Where to go, which to choose? Use our quick and easy hiking guide to the most popular trails. For more information on these trails, or for information on trails that are not listed, visit the Kris Eggle Visitor Center, we’d love to help you out.

4 The Resource

So, what is the difference between a Saguaro and an Organ Pipe Cactus? For the answer to this question, and to learn about a few endangered species that call our desert home, turn to the resource pages, found in the center of the newspaper.

Superintendent’s Welcome

Welcome to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. No matter how short or how long your stay, this place offers you the opportunity to discover this unique desert. Take the time to discover the spirit and secrets of the park, they are astounding.

I hope you will take advantage of our exhibits, interpretive programs and learn about the fascinating way that plants and animals have adapted to living in the Sonoran desert.

America’s national parks are about caring for the land, the wildlife, and our spirit as a people. Our national parks serve as shining examples of America’s foresight and deep love for country and a generosity of spirit that is evidenced by the preservation of so many extraordinary treasures for all people to enjoy now and throughout the future. The national parks provide places to discover the meaning of our spirit, our country and our world through preservation of nature and cultural traditions.

Camping, hiking, photography, wildlife observation, birding, exploring – the list of ways to enjoy and understand Organ Pipe Cactus’s natural beauty and history is unlimited. Join a park ranger on one of the many activities offered daily or explore and discover the park on your own.

Experience your America, make Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument your own special place and have a safe and memorable visit.

Kathy Billings
Superintendent



Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Who was Kris Eggle?

Who was Kris Eggle and why is it an honor for us to have a Visitor Center in his name?

Kristopher William Eggle was a very good man and a Law Enforcement Park Ranger from Cadillac, MI. He was an Eagle Scout, a National Honor Society Student, and valedictorian of his graduating class at Cadillac High School in 1991. He was a member of the cross-country and track teams and he won numerous awards at the local and state level. After high school, he ran for the University of Michigan cross-country team while earning his degree in Wildlife Biology.

While Kris was a model of achievement and competence, he was the first to pass the recognition onto others. He approached his entire life with a kind of contagious enthusiasm that could only inspire everyone who knew him. He also baked some amazing cookies, constantly giving of himself without asking for anything in return.

In 1995 Kris began his career with the National Park Service at Great Smoky



Mountains National Park tracking wild boar and bears. Later he served as an NPS Law Enforcement Ranger at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and Canyonlands National Park before arriving at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in 2000.

He was elected president of his class at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center where he graduated in June of 2002 at the top of his class. He was awarded the FLETC Director's Award for outstanding achievement and completed the 1.5 mile run in 7:09, only six seconds off the all time FLETC record.

medical care to the sick and injured, battled blazes in our nation's wilderness, searched for lost people and provided assistance to anyone in need.

In the wake of 9/11, Kris protected his country by intercepting thousands of pounds of illegal drugs, and guarding a 30-mile stretch of the nation's southern boundary.

Kris Eggle was shot and killed in the line of duty at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument on August 9, 2002, while pursuing members of a drug cartel who fled into the United States after committing a string of violent crimes in Mexico.

He was 28 years old.

"Kris died serving his country and his death has great value and meaning. But the life of Kris Eggle, even more than his death, continues to set the standard."

-Fellow Organ Pipe Cactus Ranger

Kris took pride in his daily work. As a National Park Ranger, Kris enforced Federal and State Laws while at the same time performing as an Emergency Medical Technician, Wildland and Structural Fire Fighter, and Search and Rescue Team member. He arrested violators, rendered

On July 29, 2003 President George W. Bush signed a bill renaming our Visitor Center as the "Kris Eggle Visitor Center." It honors our friend who loved this place enough to die for it.

Now that you are here, what should you do?

Planning your visit

Many people base the time of their visit on the season, the temperature, and blooming wildflowers or cacti. Your time, interests and abilities will further determine how you experience the monument. Temperature and wildflower charts are included on the reverse. The following are only suggestions. If you are interested in Ranger Programs, check at the Visitor Center for today's Program Schedule.

just passing through

Welcome to the Kris Eggle Visitor Center! Combine at least two of these activities:

- Watch our 15 minute informative slide presentation to see spectacular photos of the Monument.
- Walk leisurely on our 1/10 mile accessible nature trail.
- Stroll through the Visitor Center to learn what makes this monument so special.
- Drive the two-way section of the North Puerto Blanco Scenic Drive

A few hours

Do some of the above, then:

- Walk the 1.2 mile Desert View Nature Trail. Learn more about the desert plants and the people who lived in this area.

Or...

- Tour the 21 mile Ajo Mountain Scenic Loop. Drive through impressive stands of organ pipe, saguaro and other cacti. Cruise near tall cliffs and marvel at impressive views from volcanic mountainsides.

Most of a day

Either of the above, plus:

- Hike in Arch Canyon, up to Bull Pasture, or to Victoria Mine. Other hikes are available too, check out the trail guide on the opposite page.

Or...

- Drive to Alamo Canyon. Behind the restroom is the start to a trail up the canyon. Find evidence of human life, present, past and prehistoric! Then drop into the wash, pick your direction, and explore to your heart's content.

A couple of days

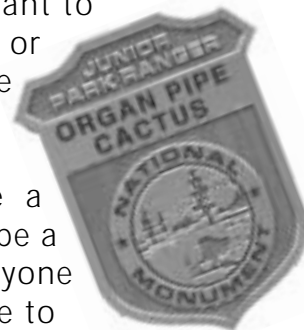
Camp with us! What could be better than waking up to bird song, or eating dinner by the light on the Ajo Mountains! There are 208 sites available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Twin Peaks Campground. Or head to the Visitor Center and register for one of our primitive sites in

Alamo Canyon. Backcountry permits are also available at the Visitor Center. Be sure to check out a combination of the hikes and drives mentioned above.

This is a place that gives up its secrets slowly, so a patient visit with time on your side is the best way to get to know Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

Are we there yet?

Kids, are you bored? Have you been riding in the car way too long? Do you need to stretch your legs and bend your brain a bit? Do you want to beat your sister at desert bingo or impress your mom with some cactus facts?



If the answer is "yes," I have a solution and it is FREE! You can be a Junior Ranger! But, not just anyone can be a Junior Ranger. You have to be a kid who is willing to look a little bit closer at the desert around you.

To become a Junior Ranger, convince your parents to stop by the Kris Eggle Visitor Center and ask for a FREE Junior Ranger booklet. Inside the booklet you will find some fun games, art projects, and a few brain benders to help you learn about the Sonoran Desert and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.



Once you have your booklet, go out and start exploring. After you have finished your activities, bring it back to the Visitor Center and have someone check your work. If it all looks good, you are awarded a certificate and your own badge. It is THAT easy!

It is a whole bunch of fun. So, stop by the Visitor Center, pick up your booklet and start exploring today, before it gets too late!

Leave No Trace: Tips for hiking in the desert

The Sonoran Desert...empty, wild and beautiful, as enticing as a new book we pick up and think we are the first readers. Yet, evidence of previous use is on every page, just as past and present human use is visible all around us in the desert. Extreme heat and aridity have preserved everything from ancient Hohokam cooking pots to discarded soda bottles. We are challenged to leave the book in a pristine condition; we are equally challenged to leave the desert unmarked by our presence.

Plan Ahead and Prepare. Learn about area geography and ecology before you leave home. Learn about Monument regulations. Most importantly, learn about your special area of interest, be it wildlife, hiking or photographic opportunities, etc.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces. When on trails, walk single file. When hiking cross-country, scatter out. One set of footprints will not impact as severely as will those traveling single file. Try to walk on a hard surface such as rock or desert pavement.

Dispose of Wastes Properly. The motto here is "Pack it in—Pack it out". Soda cans and water bottles can be crushed to reduce space. Carry a trash bag. Add all crumbs, cores and other "micro-garbage" to your trash bag. When nature calls, dig a hole 4 to 6 inches deep, away from the trail. Remember to take your used paper with you. In desert environments, bits of food and paper do not decompose, they are more likely to be preserved as artifacts of your presence!

Leave What You Find. Think of the scenery as pages in an open book. Every saguaro cactus rib, rock, and flower is part of a page. Leave it be so others will be able to read the same story. Sketch the flower and take notes to identify it later. Better yet, why not carry a wildflower identification field guide with you? Please do not "re-arrange" the scenery for a photo. Every pictograph and artifact is protected by law. Picking them up and setting them back in place may in some way change their meaning. Touching them will leave behind damaging skin oils which will bake on rather than wash away.

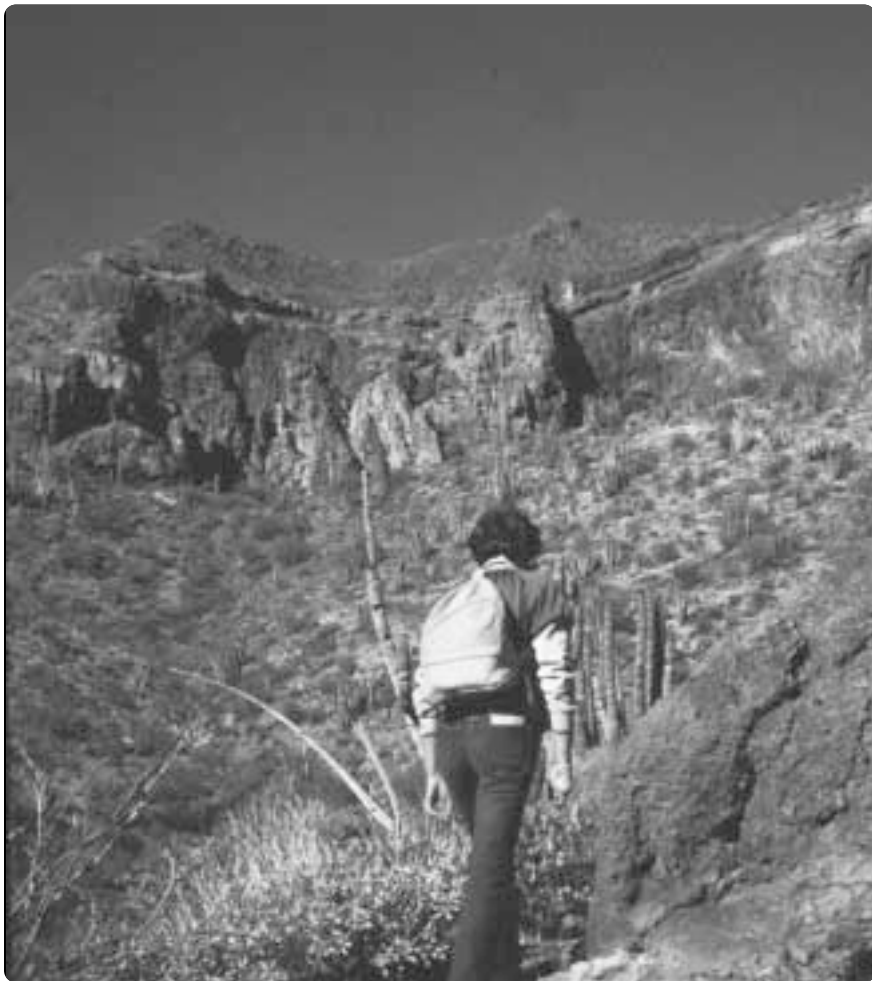
Remember, everything here is protected for you by law and nothing may be disturbed or "collected".

Campfires. All campfires are prohibited outside of developed campgrounds.

Respect wildlife. Enjoy it from a respectful distance. Remain quiet and minimize your movements. Allow the animal to act as if you were not present.

Be considerate of other visitors. Please respect others who want read the pages of this pristine desert adventure book for the first time. You would not want loud noises, messy campsites, trailside trash or other evidence of their presence. Neither do they.

These rules are easy and grounded in respect. Just remember to *Leave No Trace*.



Take a hike in Bull Pasture. Just be sure to *Leave No Trace*

Trails inside Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

Trail Name	Distance	Time (approx.)
Visitor Center Nature Trail Easy - A trail guide is available for this ADA Accessible stroll through the Sonoran Desert as it loops around the Visitor Center	0.10mi / 0.16km Round-trip	15 minutes
Desert View Loop Easy - Leaving from the Group Campground, this trail leads you on a trip through native vegetation and tells a story of how people use the desert to make a living.	1.2mi / 1.9km Round-trip	45 minutes
Campground Perimeter Trail Easy - Loops around the Twin Peaks Campground. Pets are welcome on a leash	1.0 mile / 1.6 km Round-trip	30 minutes
Palo Verde Trail Easy - Trail Connects the Visitor Center with Twin Peaks Campground. Pets are welcome on a leash.	1.3 mi / 2.1km One-way	45 minutes
Victoria Mine Trail Moderate - Trailhead is on the south-side of the Twin Peaks Campground. This trail leads you to one of the oldest historical sites in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.	4.5 mi / 7.2km Round-trip	2.5 hours
Red Tanks Tinaja Trail Moderate - Trailhead is located along the North Puerto Blanco Drive.	1.2 mi / 1.9km Round-trip	1 hour
Arch Canyon Moderate - The trail is only leads up the canyon towards a pair of natural arches in the volcanic rock. At the end of the maintained trail, a strenuous, non-maintained route leads up to the arches and beyond. Be cautious of loose rock if you choose to follow this route.	1.5 mil / 2.1km roundtrip (3.2 mi / 5.2 km Round-trip, including the additional route)	1.5 hours 3 hours (1300 ft elevation change)
Estes Canyon / Bull Pasture Strenuous - A favorite among hikers here. This combination of two trails leads you up to an amazing vista, jumbled geology and wonderful flowers. The pasture was used by supporters of Pancho Villa as a hide-out!	4.0 mi / 6.4 km Round-trip	3+ hours (800+ ft elevation change)

This is not a complete listing of the trails. For more information on hiking in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, stop by the Visitor Center or consider purchasing the "Explorer's Guide to Walks, Routes and the Backcountry at Organ Pipe Cactus N.M."

How do you say that word?

Ajo: AH-ho. In Spanish language it means garlic. A word similar sounding word in Tohono O'odham language refers to a copper colored pigment, perhaps a result of the copper found in the nearby hills.

Bajada: ba-HAH-dah. The rocky slopes of a mountain range. Many diverse species take advantage of the bajadas well drained, gravelly soil. It is a good place to look for wildlife too.

Cholla: CHOY-uh. A group of cacti known for having painful spines and easily detachable, jointed branches. Sometimes called a "jumping cactus."

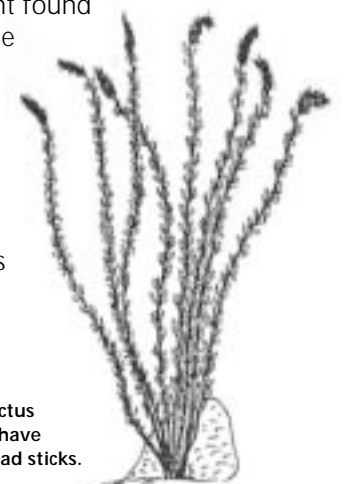
Gila: HEE-lah. As in Gila monster, Gila woodpecker and Gila river.

Javelina: HAV-ah-LEE-na. A North American peccary. Javelinas look like pigs, but they aren't. Pigs evolved in Eurasia over thousands of years. Javalinas evolved in North America, so they are not even closely related to pigs.

Ocotillo: OH-koh-TEE-yo. A very thorny plant found around here. Often mistaken for a cactus, the ocotillo has the ability to sprout leaves within 48 hours of rain. It will hold the leaves until the soil dries out and then drop the leaves, leaving them looking like a bunch of dead, thorny sticks.

Saguaro: sa-WA-roh. Arizona's tallest cactus and major indicator species for the Sonoran Desert. Turn to page 4 for more information.

Right: Ocotillo plants can be found all over Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. If it has rained recently, they might have leaves. Otherwise, an ocotillo will look like a group of dead sticks.



Cactus: Designed for Survival

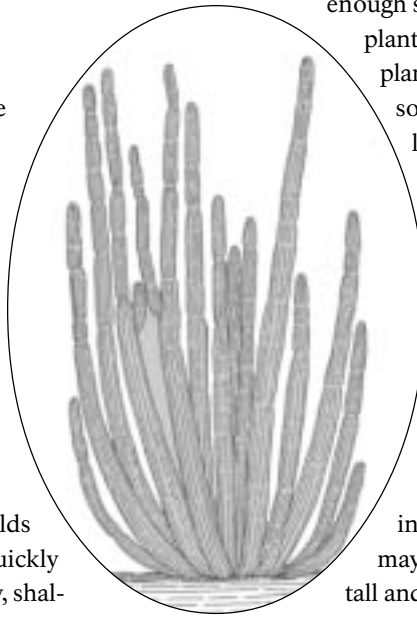
Columnar cacti, such as organ pipe and saguaro, are marvels of adaptation in this hot, dry land. Using other plants, storing water, choosing its living space carefully, reinforcing its body with shade and strength and perfect flower timing all have a hand in these cacti's survival.

Each cactus begins life as a tiny seed, usually under the shaded protection of a palo verde or ironwood tree. These trees act as nurses for the delicate young plants. Deep in the leaf litter, the seedlings are protected from temperature extremes, sunburn and predation by hungry birds and mammals. The tiny plants also receive more moisture and other nutrients from their nitrogen-fixing guardians.

Columnar cacti are Mother Nature's water storage tanks. Inside is a pulpy, spongy, water-filled tissue. The saguaro may store so much water that it can survive up to two years without a single drop of rain. Without rain, the flesh literally shrinks and the accordion-like pleats and folds in the cactus skin become deep. When rain falls, it runs quickly through the well-drained and often rocky soil. The thirsty, shallow cactus roots readily soak it up and those pleats expand, rounding out the stem.

cooler winter months.

A thick, waxy outer skin layer is another cactus adaptation for survival. It aids in moisture retention. Spines, which are really highly modified leaves, provide enough shade to keep the skin cool. Just like trees, bushes and other green plants, the cacti carry on photosynthesis during the day. Unlike most other plants, cacti open up and "breathe" at night, releasing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide. Doing this in the cool of the night further limits moisture loss.



Organ Pipe Cactus

- Most branches come from the base of the plant
- Reach about 15 feet, shorter than the saguaro cactus
- Blooms at night, flowers close in the morning
- Branches are more slender than the saguaro
- This is as far north as they grow, and can be found on south-facing hills

Columnar cacti grow slowly. Organ pipe may grow only two to three inches per year, a saguaro even slower. At the age of 10 years the saguaro may be only an inch tall. A saguaro blooms first when it is about six feet tall and won't produce its first branch until it is nearly 90 years old.

(Over near Tucson, it is a bit wetter and saguaros can branch at a young 60 years of age). Although we don't have records as good for the organ pipe cactus, we do know it can produce its first blossom at about eight feet tall. Multiply that eight feet by two inches per year and it might be about 48 years old. Unlike counting rings in trees, there is no way to tell the age of a cactus except with historic old photographs.

Most cactus bloom in May. Both organ pipe and saguaro cacti bloom at night. The sweet, musky scent of these flowers attract the night flying, nectar drinking Lesser Long-nosed bat, the only known pollinator of organ pipe cactus. Organ pipe cactus blossoms close in the morning, but saguaro blossoms remain open until late afternoon, giving white-wing doves, other birds and a variety of insects a chance to drink and pollinate their flowers.

Fruits of both cacti mature in late June, July and August when temperatures are the hottest. Saguaro pods burst open with such display that the red pulp is often mistaken for flowers. Seed pods of both cacti are full of red, sugary pulp and black seeds. These sweets are highly desired food. Some birds can't wait, and peck open the ripe pod before it bursts of its own accord. Then the feast begins: birds, bats and a variety of insects come to eat the delicious pulp. When the seed pod falls to the ground, many small mammals come to the dinner table. All of these creatures help spread the seeds in their droppings, giving hope that new plants will grow. Amazingly, the cacti have timed their seeds to be spread right about the time that summer monsoon rains start. Talk about perfect timing. Even so, if one seed out of a thousand takes root and grows, consider it lucky.

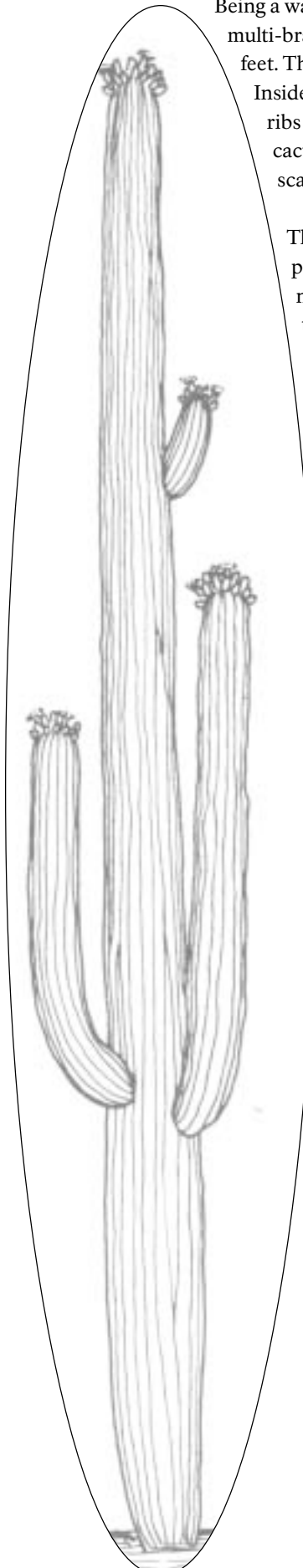
A design for survival does not guarantee a long life, but it certainly helps. Using good timing and tricks built into each cactus, Mother Nature has given these giants an edge. Organ pipe cacti can live 150 years, while records show saguaro cacti older than 200 years. Now if they could only tell stories...

Being a water tower does have its limits. The slender, multi-branched organ pipe reaches heights of only 15 feet. The more robust saguaro grows as tall as 50 feet. Inside the heavy, giant saguaro is a series of woody ribs that hold the plant upright. The organ pipe cactus is similarly constructed, only on a smaller scale.

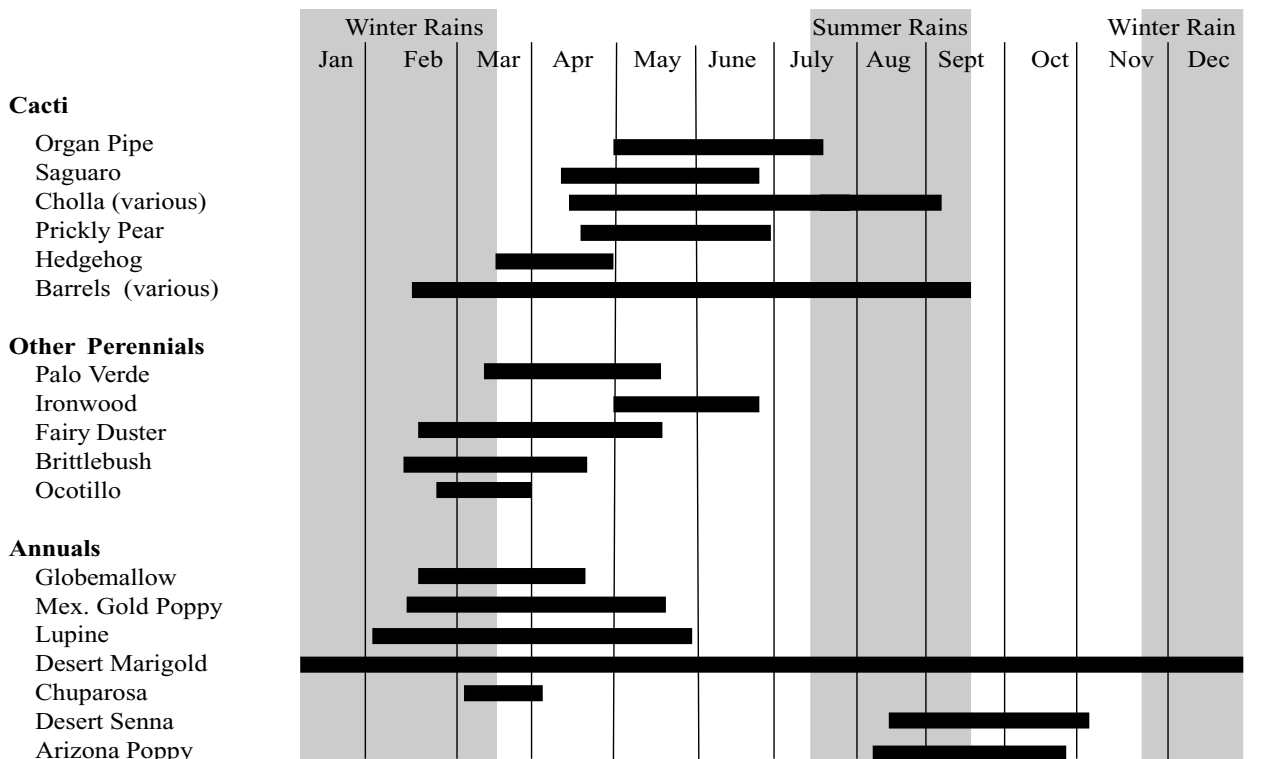
These cacti are very frost-sensitive. Prolonged periods of sub-freezing temperatures can permanently disfigure the cacti; this limits their range to areas of little or no frost. Organ pipe cacti are more frost-sensitive than saguaro, and more limited as to where they grow. Most organ pipe cactus in the U.S. grow within 80 miles of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and are usually found on sunny, south facing slopes of hillsides, trying to eke out as much warmth as the sun can provide during the

Saguaro Cactus

- Up to 50 feet tall
- Dominant on Landscape
- Can live over 200 years
- Arms usually branch from top half



When does the desert bloom?

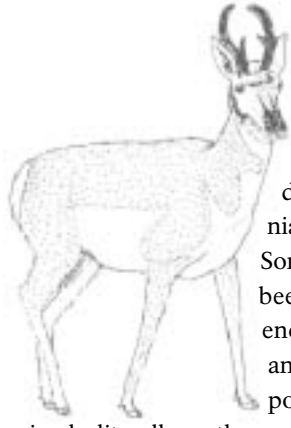


Note: the blooming season for all annuals and many perennials depends upon the timing and amount of rainfall.

Two animals you may not see...

SONORAN PRONGHORN (*Antilocapra americana sonoriensis*)

Endangered



“Oh, give me a home, where the buffalo roam...”

Okay, so you won't find buffalo here, but the deer and a very few antelope do play! Historically, Sonoran pronghorn were found over a wide area of open desert in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California, and the northern part of the Mexican state of Sonora. Today, the population of Sonoran pronghorn has been drastically reduced due to loss of habitat, human encroachment, illegal immigration through the desert, and drought. These stresses have reduced the U.S. population of Sonoran pronghorn down to only 20 to 30 animals, literally on the verge of extinction. These few remaining animals are found only in Organ Pipe Cactus NM, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Bureau of Land Management lands, and the Barry M. Goldwater Bombing Range, with a small population persisting Mexico.

Sonoran pronghorn move over wide ranges and are well-adapted to their environment. They usually live in broad, flat, open valleys changing locations to find better conditions. Using radio-tracking, we know that pronghorn can move 50 or more miles from week to week, in response to local rains. We also know that they migrate with the seasons, using the wide-open valley floors in the cooler winter months and moving up the hill slopes toward mountains or into thicker desert scrub during the hot summer months. As their range has become restricted by highways, fences, and developments, pronghorn are losing the ability to move freely in search of better life.

The National Park Service is working to conserve and recover the Sonoran pronghorn in a number of ways. We are founding members of the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Team, joining other agencies and organizations in efforts to conserve the species. The NPS also invests time and money into management and research projects, such as aerial surveys, radio-tracking, habitat analysis and installing emergency water sources in times of extreme drought. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument closes some backcountry roads and backcountry areas during the mating and fawning seasons to reduce the potential for disturbance. We appreciate our visitors' cooperation with these closures; it is one thing we can do to help this beautiful animal, on the edge of extinction, survive.

CACTUS FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium brasilianum cactorum*)

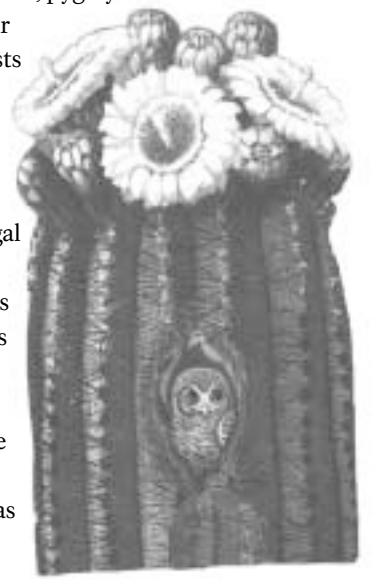
Endangered

Hoo can eat its own weight at breakfast? Hoo is a teeny-tiny traveler from Mexico? The cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl, that's hoo! This pygmy owl is a small tropical owl that lives south of us. Southern Arizona and south Texas are as far north as this cute little bird lives. The population in south Texas is pretty stable and not considered endangered, but the petite population of pygmy-owls in southern Arizona is endangered.

The pygmy-owl is a diurnal owl, meaning it sleeps at night, and is most active early morning and evening hours. This little bird uses a lot of energy and feeds on a wide variety of reptiles, mammals, and birds, including some prey that weigh as much as the pygmy-owl itself!

Historically, pygmy-owls were common in the wet river-bottoms, like those found along the Gila and Salt Rivers in southern Arizona. These river-bottom woodlands have been virtually eliminated as a result of woodcutting, water diversion, water impoundment, groundwater depletion, urbanization, and other wide-scale human modifications to natural rivers. Currently, the pygmy-owl persists in relatively dense and diverse desert scrub among desert trees like ironwood, mesquite, and palo verde. In Organ Pipe Cactus NM, pygmy-owls are found along large desert washes, and also near the top of bajadas (ba-HA-das). This owl nests in saguaro cactus using abandoned woodpecker holes.

Even though the land and the bird are both protected, pygmy-owls are threatened by illegal immigration and smuggling as well as pressures for regional development. In other areas of southern Arizona, the pygmy owl continues to lose its remaining habitat due to urban expansion and other developments, particularly around the city of Tucson. At Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument we take these threats very seriously and are doing as much as we can to keep this teeny piece of the great desert ecology healthy.



When is a bat more like an organic gardener?

When it is a Lesser long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris curasoae*) spending time in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. These special bats are not only vegetarians, but also gardeners and mothers.

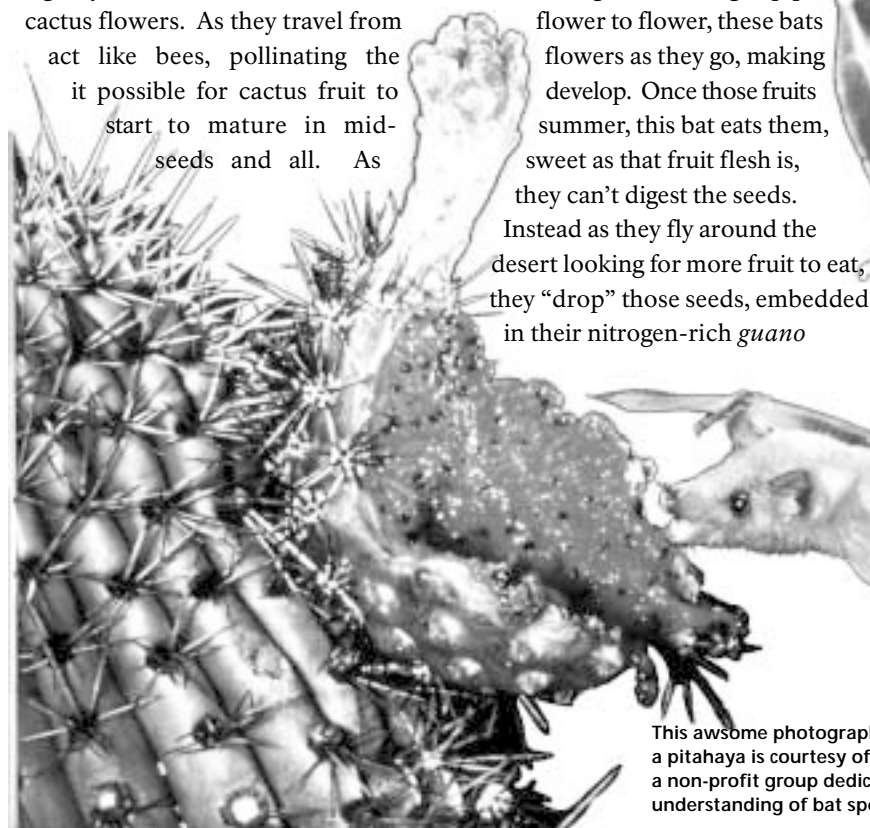
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument contains the largest known colony of lesser long-nosed bats in the United States. This vegetarian bat eats fruit, drinks nectar and migrates into Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument during the summer. Around mid-April into September, this bat flies to us from Southern Mexico and Central America. (And you thought you came a long way.) While here, this bat feeds on the nectar of saguaro and organ pipe cactus flowers. As they travel from flower to flower, these bats act like bees, pollinating the flowers as they go, making it possible for cactus fruit to develop. Once those fruits start to mature in mid-summer, this bat eats them, sweet as that fruit flesh is, seeds and all. As they can't digest the seeds, instead as they fly around the desert looking for more fruit to eat, they "drop" those seeds, embedded in their nitrogen-rich guano

(GWAN-oh) or excrement, all over the desert. So, just like any good gardener, they are planting cactus seeds complete with fertilizer in between meals. As the cactus fruit supply is exhausted, these bats gradually leave us in search of new food, usually heading back south by early fall.

The really cool thing about the bats that come visit us every year is that they are all female, and all *pregnant*. (Makes that trip from Central America sound a lot longer, doesn't it!) We estimate there are about 16,000 to 21,000 adult females that arrive in the early summer. They give birth to their young here and raise them on the abundant food provided by the large cacti. As the young bats grow, the colony swells to 30,000 or more and they all live together inside an old, abandoned mine, which is extremely hazardous and unsafe for human entry. Basically, the perfect vacation home if you were a bat.

Bats are very sensitive to human intrusion into their roosts and people are often the largest threat to the population. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument works to reduce this threat. Simply being here to protect the cacti and to conserve the habitat helps. However, evidence of human intrusion into roosts tells us that there is still some risk. Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, our neighbor to the northwest, had a smaller roosting site of this bat which was abandoned after illegal immigrants and/or smugglers used the mine as a hideout.

We are constantly monitoring our primary roosting sites to ensure human activities are not affecting our colony and we'd like to be able to say that our population here is safe, but...



This awesome photograph of a Lesser long nosed bat eating a pitahaya is courtesy of BCI, Bat Conservation International, a non-profit group dedicated to education and to a better understanding of bat species and their habitat.

Season of Tradition

15th ANNUAL TOHONO O'ODHAM 'SEASON OF TRADITION' CELEBRATION

They call themselves O'odham. The word translates as "People", but the meaning is much more complex than that. It means Those Who Emerged from the Earth; it means sand; or dry earth; endowed with human quality. No one knows whether the O'odham carry the heritage of the Hohokam within them-not even the People themselves completely agree. But oral history is strong and should not be disputed, for after all, everything is connected to the past. Thousands of clues of ancient human activity in the southwestern United States have survived to the present because of a combination of factors. Often left in localities uninviting to modern



development, covered deeply in soil and rocks, and residing in a dry climate, the remains have had nature itself as a prime preserver.

Credit for the preservation of many of these unique areas goes to President Theodore Roosevelt's administration, a farsighted federal government. Since 1916 the National Park Service has been given this specific responsibility. Documenting the annals of man in prehistoric and early historic times is important; unfortunately there are thousands of ruins not included within the national parks.

Remains of the Hohokam of the Arizona deserts are present in three monuments, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument being one. The Papaguería area encompassed within Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument was a prehistoric crossroads for trade and communication routes coming into the desert from all directions. Especially worthy of mention is the large community documented initially in 1929. Estimated to extend over some two hundred acres it contained a ballcourt and numerous pithouse and activity clusters.

The Tohono O'odham remain close to their roots while most of us have departed from ours. Formerly known as "Papago", the Tohono O'odham Nation is the second largest reservation in the United States, spanning about three million acres. The Tohono O'odham were one of the last remaining indigenous people to be officially recognized as a tribe and designated a sovereign nation.

In living with the desert, the Tohono O'odham adapted to its seasons, its aridity, and its heat. Ruth Underhill, a pioneer anthropologist, said that three things distinguished the Tohono O'odham: they never raise their voices; their movements are deliberate; and they are always laughing. It is the patient movement that makes them Desert People. Called "Himdag" in the O'odham tongue (a loose translation means 'The Way'); it encompasses all things that make up the traditional O'odham way of life. Himdag is practical things like food, clothing, language and stories; even morality is included in 'The Way'. For lack of a better description it is everything that makes a person O'odham.

Today, the "Himdag" is being challenged by television, fast food, fashion marketing, and the general American lifestyles that very often conflict with traditional ways. Many O'odham people are worried that their



traditions, language and songs will be lost when elders pass on. Unfortunately much has already been lost, as with many tribes. Sadly, conflicts arise if attempts to study and record traditions are done by those who are not of that heritage. Animosity and mistrust are fueled when songs, ceremonies, artifacts and images such as the "man in the maze" are sold off the reservation without respect for where they come from and what they mean. Many speak of the O'odham as if they were a dead culture or as items to be viewed in a museum.

The "Himdag" is a living tradition and there is still much to be learned and gained. Many people still practice 'The Way', speaking the language, singing the old songs, and telling the stories. Sharing the "Himdag" with the public through demonstrations, art, poems, stories, and songs afford an opportunity for learning about the "Himdag".

For these past 14 years Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument has been fortunate enough to honor the Tohono O'odham people and their traditions in a day-long annual celebration. This year the celebration will continue

throughout the entire month of March (because one day is simply not enough). Each weekend during the month of March, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument will host various demonstrators who will talk about their language, make baskets, create pottery, tell stories, and share their rich culture and traditions. There will be displays on dry land farming which demonstrate how an O'odham farmer can grow acres of squash with only six inches of rain a year; another may explain how native plants are used for food and medicine. Exceptionally beautiful horsehair baskets (which are unique to the O'odham people) will take form as visitors look on, being encouraged to ask questions.

The celebration is a vessel meant to provide an appreciation and understanding of this beautiful culture. For as our understanding of others deepens, so does our understanding of ourselves. There is truth in ancient wisdom. Additional information regarding the celebration please call or stop by the Kris Eggle Visitor Center at (520) 387-6849, or write to us at 10 Organ Pipe Drive, Ajo, AZ 85324

Tohono O'odham Pottery

A recent revival in O'odham pottery has spotlighted the village of Hickiwan in the Tohono O'odham Nation. The Angea family as well as another artisan, Billy Manuel, use clays collected near the village and shape them into plates, bowls, pots, and decorative items. The artwork is polished with a round stone then painted with a mixture of red clay and water. The pottery is placed in a container, such as an old wash tub, and a fire built around the container. After the item cools, black paint made from mesquite bark is applied. The firing is repeated and then the artwork is complete.



The Hickiwan pots are based on ancestral designs, but lately a degree of fame has surrounded the "Friendship Pots" that Rupert Angea originally conceived. Modeled after the traditional village round dance, the Friendship Pot depicts a group of dancers holding hands. The design has been incorporated by a number of other artisans in the area. Billy Manuel's friendship dancers have hats. Other members of the Angea family paint faces on the dancers. Every artist has his or her trademark and usually will sign the pot.

The Angea family has demonstrated their craft at the Monument's O'odham Days Celebration for many years now. They create art and answer any questions visitors may have. Please come join us this year March 20, 2004 or check out their craftsmanship in the bookstore which is open all year round.

VIPs are priceless



Campground volunteers from 2003. During the busy winter months at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the volunteers single handedly run our 208 site campground. We couldn't do it without them!

As you visit Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument you may see some Very Important People who are Volunteers In Parks. These VIPs have value beyond measure to this important piece of your public land. They are a diverse group and can consist of students, retirees, youth groups, school groups and other good people from all over the world who believe in this place and want to lend a hand.

VIPs work mostly in the winter months here, while we are the busiest. You'll see them in the Kris Eggle Visitor Center, out on the trails, teaching visitors about the natural and cultural history of this place, helping keep your park clean, digging up exotic plant species threatening to take over the sensitive desert ecology, running our campground and so much more. Some of our volunteers live in Ajo, but most spend the winter living here in the park and put in 32-40 hours each week for three months at a time.

Just about every National Park site uses VIPs all over the country and most volunteers are folks who visit a park and fall in love with it. If you are finding that you are falling in love with Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (and we can't say that we blame you) and would like to help us out, stop in at the Visitor

Center and request a VIP packet. Ask for Andy while you are there and if she is available let her explain some of the finer points of becoming a Volunteer In Park.

Information about volunteering in your National Park System is also available on Parknet, the official web guide to the National Park Service. You can type the following address into your web browser: <http://www.nps.gov/volunteer/index.htm>. Each park also has information on how to volunteer on their specific websites as well.

Remember the reason volunteers do not get paid is not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless!



VIPs help give programs too! Here is a familiar face you may see this season describing the unique movements of life in the desert.



Join Western National Parks Association and Support Your National Parks!

Western National Parks Association's mission is to support the educational and scientific activities of the National Park Service. A non profit organization authorized by Congress, we operate bookstores and produce educational material for sixty-three parks in eleven western states. Proceeds from the sale of those materials are returned to the parks. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument recently used these funds in many ways, including:

- √ Conversion of the Monument's slide collection into digital format
- √ Support for O'odham Day 2003, a celebration of Tohono O'odham culture
- √ Salaries for Student Conservation Alliance interns

Your membership in Western National Parks Association allows us to continue supporting the National Park Service. WNPA members receive the following benefits:

- √ 15% discount on purchases (20% for ages 62 and over) in our bookstores across the West (discount also honored by other associations including Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, and dozens more). Discounts also available at our online bookstore at www.wnpa.org. *
- √ WNPA Annual Report
- √ WNPA Product Catalog

** Purchases of American Indian craft items are not eligible for membership discount*

Annual Membership Levels

- Individual - \$25.00 Senior (62 and older) - \$25.00 Family (2 cards) - \$45.00

Two-Year Membership Levels

- Individual - \$45.00 Senior (62 and older) - \$45.00 Family (2 cards) - \$80.00

Name _____ Date _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Complete this form and return it to cashier with payment. Or, mail to WNPA, 12880 N. Vistoso Village Dr., Tucson, AZ 85737.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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