

A Dose of Desert Joy: a sprinkling of positive news for you

"Carolyn Campbell" [admin@sonorandesert.org]

Sent: Apr 10, 6:41 pm

To: "Pamela Grow"



Dear Pamela,

Since we are all at home more these days and life feels very uncertain and scary, we want to inject a little dose of joy into your week. We've created a new email series, *A Dose of Desert Joy*, to bring you positive thoughts, articles, and photos, all with a theme of celebrating our beautiful Sonoran Desert home.

If you come across anything you think others would like to see or read, please let us know! Email us anytime at admin@sonorandesert.org and we'll try to include your submission in our next email!

We hope you and your loved ones are managing okay, staying active and healthy, and finding the support you need, both for your physical and mental health. **We are here for you if you need anything, even just a friendly voice or email.**



'Tis the Season for Baby Owls

The [Backyard Wildlife of the Southwest group](#) on Facebook is a delight these days. The goal of this group is to "celebrate and learn about local wildlife" and it is full of a wide range of photos and videos of Southwest wildlife, from footage from backyard wildlife cameras to professional photographs.

Something especially fun we saw recently? [Video footage of a great-horned owl mama and her babies nestled in the arms of a towering saguaro cactus.](#) Turn the sound on at the beginning to also hear the backdrop of coyotes howling. Simply stunning.



Coalition for
Sonoran Desert
Protection

Friends of the Desert

Issue 57 Spring 2020

A Strong Voice for the People and Wildlife of the Sonoran Desert

Photo: David Hinojosa

New Project Collecting Data on Rincon-Santa Rita-Whetstone Mountains Wildlife Linkage

Thanks to your support, new data will hopefully lead to more wildlife fencing and a safer roadway

The sandy soil of Cienega Creek is damp at the water's edge, juniper and saguaro make unlikely neighbors, and the sun dapples through the leafy sycamore and cottonwood tree canopy. This is not only a steady source of water in the Sonoran Desert's Pimería Alta, but also an important wildlife pathway connecting the Rincon, Santa Rita, and Whetstone Mountains, and the traditional territory of the Tohono O'odham, Hohokam, and Sobaipuri. Cienega Creek Natural Preserve and Davidson Canyon are vital lifelines for common low desert species, as well as higher elevation dwellers like turkey, white-nose coati, opossum, white tail deer, and black bear.

Thanks to you, we now have 45 wildlife cameras deployed at nine culverts and bridges on I-10 located between Vail and Benson.

Dividing this refuge is Interstate 10, which animals must regularly navigate. Thanks to funding from the Arizona Game and Fish Heritage Fund, we now have 45 wildlife cameras deployed at nine culverts and bridges on I-10 located between Vail and Benson. Early in the project, we've already collected thousands of photos including mule deer, white-tail deer, coyotes, bobcats, and hooded skunks. With this data we will be calculating passage rates to understand which animals use these culverts and how often, or if they approach but turn away.

continued inside



(Left) CSDP Conservation Science Director Jessica Moreno and volunteer Althea Weeks at a wildlife camera set up in the new I-10 project area. (Right) The Rincon Mountains loom over I-10 and a series of de facto wildlife underpasses being studied as part of our new I-10 project. Thanks for supporting connected Sonoran Desert wildlife linkages!

4 pages of good news in our latest Friends of the Desert newsletter

Some of you may have already seen this arrive in your mailbox but if you haven't, or want to share it with friends, our latest [*Friends of the Desert newsletter*](#) is 4 pages of good news about Sonoran Desert protection and conservation.

Articles include:

- A positive update on our new work collecting data on the Rincon-Santa Rita-Whetstones wildlife linkage along I-10 East. This data is being used to support a proposal for additional wildlife fencing and improvements to culverts along this stretch of highway.
- Impact briefs on projects such as the proposed Rosemont Mine and Interstate 11.
- Successful community organizing to protect the Tortolita Preserve.
- And more!

Thank you for supporting and being a part of these projects!



New wildlife cameras capturing spectacular photos

Thanks to a new partnership with volunteer, welder, and ecology student Raynor Vandeven, there are now wildlife cameras out in the field with professional photography equipment capturing images of Sonoran Desert wildlife.

We recently received the first successful photos - can you see the reclusive wildlife in the photo above?



“Even in the waiting, I hope we can remember we are free to see the small things as miraculous things. None of us are alone here. We are connected in more ways than we know.” —Morgan Harper Nichols

Above photo of bobcats playing by long-time volunteer Terry Minks.



Fun Fact about heart-shaped prickly pear pads...

Did you know that anytime you see heart shaped prickly pear pads, they were most likely made by packrats (white throated woodrats) or jackrabbits? They climb up and chew a bite out of the pad, and the cactus grows back creating a heart shape. Have you seen many of these out on your desert adventures?

Above photo courtesy Sarah Wolfe-Unsplash.

The latest wildlife camera photos, featuring Sonoran Desert bunnies!

Our fleet of wildlife cameras continues to stay busy taking beautiful photos of Sonoran Desert wildlife in our threatened wildlife linkages. **A big thank you to all our amazing Desert Monitors and Desert Identifiers that are so instrumental to this program! We miss seeing you!**

All photos below were taken by our OWL camera, monitored by Doug Vollgraff and Lisa Caprina. Thank you Doug and Lisa!





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