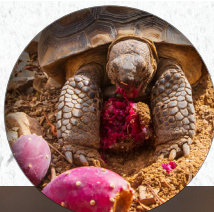
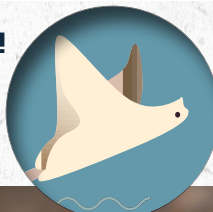




**MEET THE
NEW
DIRECTOR!**
page 4



**TAKE A CLASS!
TAKE A TRIP!**
page 5



**COOL SUMMER
NIGHTS!**
page 8



**ARTS
UPDATE**
page 9

Desert Museum Discovery

SUMMER 2025

SAVING SPECIES:

THE DESERT MUSEUM JOINS A RATTLESNAKE RECOVERY PROGRAM

By Tom Weaver – Curator of Herpetology,
Ichthyology, and Invertebrate Zoology

In a bold move to save one of the United States' rarest rattlesnakes, three zoos have teamed up on a conservation program that starts in the mountains and, surprisingly, relies on centipedes.

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Los Angeles Zoo, and San Antonio Zoo have partnered to join Phase I of The Rattlesnake Conservancy's Project Obscurus, a groundbreaking international effort to help save the federally threatened New Mexico ridge-nosed

rattlesnake (*Crotalus willardi obscurus*). As part of the project, the three zoos are launching a head-start breeding program designed to strengthen and diversify the species' genetics with the ultimate goal of releasing healthy offspring back into their native habitat.

continued on page 2...

SAVING SPECIES:

In August 2024, more than 40 conservation experts gathered in Sierra San Luis, Mexico, to complete Phase I of Project Obscurus. This phase involved the collection of wild New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnakes to establish the initial breeding populations at the three zoos. Each zoo collected 10 snakes, which have since been transported to their facilities to serve as the founding animals for the recovery effort. All activities were carried out under the proper permits in both the U.S. and Mexico, laying a strong foundation for the long-term success of the program.

Happily, all three zoos have already recorded successful births! This species doesn't lay eggs, rather, they have live young. The babies are about the size of a pencil, weighing nine grams. In total, 20 babies have been born since 2024. Once these young snakes mature, they will be candidates for release back into the wild.

The New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnake is a small (up to 66 cm in length) montane pit viper species that is usually pale gray to gray-brown and does not have prominent facial markings. It gets its name from the characteristic long triangular head with a sharp, up-turned edge along its upper snout. The back is marked with pale crossbars lined with darker coloration along the front and back edges. Native to northwest Mexico, the species' historical range includes Arizona and New Mexico. Despite their shy nature and habit of avoiding humans, their numbers have drastically declined in recent decades. Thus, this species is classified as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are one of only two federally protected species of rattlesnake in the U.S.

At the Museum, a dedicated behind-the-scenes space is reserved for Project Obscurus. With nine adult rattlesnakes and six babies, the zookeepers stay busy ensuring all

are well-fed and healthy. One challenge they faced was discovering the baby rattlesnakes' preferred food. Through research and staff expertise, they learned that this species has a strong preference for centipedes!

Throughout the fall, the Desert Museum team worked hard to find enough centipedes to feed the young snakes. Eventually, they successfully transitioned the babies to eating mice by first scenting the rodents with centipede odor. This creative solution highlights the care and problem-solving that happens every day behind-the-scenes to support animal wellbeing.

Led by the Rattlesnake Conservancy, Phase I was made possible by volunteers, researchers, international partners, and a supportive landowner. Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game & Fish Department, and the U.S. Forest Service – Coronado National Forest, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), USGS San Diego Field Station, USGS Fort Collins Science Center, San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, partnering researchers from the Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes and the IUCN Viper Specialist Group, animal care teams from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Los Angeles Zoo, and San Antonio Zoo, Avian and Exotic Animal Clinic, Natura Prima, Chiricahua Desert Museum, Rattlesnake Solutions, and many other volunteers.

CATALYSTS FOR CONSERVATION: How Zookeepers Shape the Future of Wildlife

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum has a long-standing history of collaborating with federal, state, and academic partners on conservation projects. It is recognized as a valuable resource for regional efforts focused on studying and managing local wildlife.



This project wouldn't be possible without the Recovery Challenge Grant awarded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to The Rattlesnake Conservancy, our volunteers, researchers, international partners, and the support of an incredible landowner who saved this project. Thank you to everyone involved!



The Herpetology, Ichthyology, and Invertebrate Zoology (HIIZ) Department is actively involved in various aspects of conservation and research. Through its work with different projects and species under human care, the department has gained deeper insights into animal wellbeing and how institutions can better support the future management of wild populations.

However, bringing animals to a zoo or museum as part of conservation or preservation efforts is not a comprehensive solution for ensuring their survival in the wild. Protecting their natural habitats remains essential, particularly from ongoing threats such as habitat loss, climate change, and diminishing water resources. The Museum's efforts serve as a catalyst toward the broader goal of ensuring that wild populations not only survive but thrive in the future.



The Museum's zookeepers take a unique and hands-on approach to animal care. By observing species in their natural habitats, they gain valuable first-hand insights into the behavior and ecology of various species. These observations are then applied to the management of animal populations at the Museum.

Understanding the full picture of a species—its habitat, diet, mating behaviors, and more—is essential to help save animals from extinction. Although often behind-the-scenes, this vital work plays a critical role in advancing the Museum's mission and in protecting species like the New Mexican ridge-nosed rattlesnake. 🌿

CURRENT CONSERVATION PROJECTS THAT ARE MANAGED BY HIIZ:

TERRESTRIAL

- San Esteban chuckwalla
- Mexican gartersnake
- Chiricahua leopard frog
- Tarahumara frog
- Desert Tortoise Adoption Program
- Rio Sonoyta mud turtle
- New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnake

AQUATICS

- Rio Sonoyta pupfish
- Rio Sonoyta longfin dace
- Gila topminnow
- Sonora chub
- Yaqui chub
- Sabino Canyon Fire Rescue Project
- Rucker/Turkey Creek Fire Rescue Project



“...this species is classified as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are one of only two federally protected species of rattlesnake in the U.S.”

MEET THE MUSEUM'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HOLLIE COLAHAN!

What drew you to the world of zoos and wildlife conservation?

Ever since I was a child, I've always loved animals and the outdoors. As an undergrad I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian but started volunteering at the Sunset Zoo in Manhattan, Kansas and found this whole other career path that included working with animals, education, and conservation. And I wasn't very good at chemistry, which would have hindered my vet school application!



What's your favorite Desert Museum exhibit and why does it resonate with you?

What I love about the Desert Museum is the diversity of exhibits—so I don't have a favorite! Because I started my career as a zookeeper, animals will always be close to my heart, but I really love strolling through the gardens and the galleries, chatting with volunteers out on grounds, or just appreciating the desert landscape and native wildlife.

THIS OR THAT?

Sunrise hikes or sunset picnics

Birdwatching or stargazing

Mountain biking or **desert walking**

Taco shop or southwest BBQ

Wildflower season or **monsoon rains** "I can't wait to experience a desert thunderstorm!"

Street murals or fine arts galleries

Desert photography or desert sketching

Coyote howls or **owl calls**

Podcasts or playlists "Both--podcasts for walking and driving and music for everything else!"

What's a hobby or interest you have outside the Museum world?

Baseball! I have great memories of going to Royals games with my dad and coming to Arizona to see spring training games with my mom and brother. My wife and I love watching games on TV and meeting up with our friends at different ballparks around the country. I love the stats, the physics, the stadium architecture, and pace of play that lets you enjoy a snack and have a conversation while you watch the game. It leaves plenty of time to debate the pitch clock and the designated hitter (if you know, you know!).

What's one thing you hope to accomplish in your time here at the Desert Museum?

The most important thing I can do is help make sure that we continue to meet our mission and that goal shows up in a lot of different ways. I'll continue getting to know our programs, collections and people, so I can be sure they have the support they need to succeed. That support includes fostering an inclusive culture—one where our staff and volunteers can thrive, and our guests feel genuinely welcome.

We must also be thoughtful stewards of our resources. It's important that we make smart decisions about how we use our time and money, so our work stays sustainable. Finally, we have to be an authentic partner that is seen not only as worthy of support, but also as a valuable resource within our community.

Welcome Hollie!



Take a class! Take a trip!

Adult Classes & Trips with the Desert Museum!

For more details and to register for classes and trips: 520-883-3025 or desertmuseum.org/adultclasses. Prices are 10% more for non-members.



SAGUARO FRUIT HARVEST JUNE 22 OR 26

High summer is the beginning of the O'odham calendar, as this is the time that the saguaro fruit ripens. Spend the morning gathering fruit in the traditional manner, using a harvesting pole made from the ribs of the giant cactus, and explore the saguaro's cultural and ecological importance. **\$75**



PRICKLY PEAR HARVEST AUGUST 21

August is the season that the beautiful red fruit of the prickly pear cactus ripens. This plant is ubiquitous and edible! Learn how to collect and process the fruit, as well as how it can be used in different dishes. You will also prepare the tender green pad for "hopalitos". **\$65**

BIODIVERSITY & ANIMAL BEHAVIOR OF THE CHIRICAHUA MOUNTAINS SEPTEMBER 8 - 14

This workshop introduces the flora and fauna of the biggest sky island of southeastern Arizona. Students partake in several studies of insects, reptiles, and birds, with a keen eye for behaviors. Lodging is at The Southwestern Research Station, part of the American Museum of Natural History, nestled in the pine-oak woodlands of Cave Creek, Arizona. **\$1350**

VALLE GUADALUPE: EXPLORING BAJA'S HINTERLANDS OCTOBER 26 - 31

Baja's culinary mecca offers quintessential wineries and world-class farm-to-table restaurants set in a backdrop of olive orchards, vineyards, and expansive ranch lands. Distinctively significant is the Indigenous community of San Antonio Necua, connecting early Spanish and Russian settlers to the valley. A luxury ed-venture with hotel accommodations overlooking the Pacific. **\$3025**

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE SONORAN DESERT OCTOBER 18 AND 19

Dive into the desert and become an expert on the plants, animals, and landscapes of this unique region! This two-day educational experience covers desert ecology, climate, mammals, birds, reptiles, botany, and geology. We will take a plant hike, go behind-the-scenes at the Museum, and have the opportunity to meet live animals! **\$140**

RIO SONORA HERITAGE TOUR DECEMBER 3 - 7

This agrarian region is still very much as it was a hundred years ago, with farmers and ranchers thriving in the fertile Río Sonora Valley. Spend five adventurous days visiting small towns and villages, where mission culture mingles with Indigenous identity. We'll experience quality time with local friends who will share their passion for living a simpler life. **\$1600**



DONOR RECOGNITION

December 5, 2024 – March 31, 2025



The 501(c)(3) nonprofit
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
relies on support from generous
donors like you.

Visit desertmuseum.org/
donate to give today!

MAJOR DONORS +\$10,000

Paul and Alice Baker
Priscilla & Michael Baldwin Foundation
Carl and Mary Ann Berg Charitable Remainder Trust
Bureau of Land Management – Phoenix
Lee Compton
Peter B Dodge and Camille Marker-Dodge Revocable Trust
Lee and Maria Friedlander Family Foundation
Robert and Ruth Goodrich
Irma-Louise Hendricks Trust
The Institute of Museum and Library Services
The Mahoney Group
John and Beverly Manfredonia
Vera E Milz Charitable Remainder Trust
Lindsey Quesinberry and Nancy Bower
George Radda
Pam and David Rossetter
Peter and Nancy Salter Family Foundation
Peter and Nancy Salter
Desert Ron Sassano
Estate of Peter L Sheldon
Sarah and David Smallhouse
UFCW Local 99R
Peter and Mary Sue Waser

IN HONOR OF

In honor of Dolores
Phyllis Witt

In honor of Hadi
Laura and Robert McFarland

In honor of Carl Baldwin
Anonymous

In honor of Priscilla and Michael Baldwin
Elaine and David Mongeau

In honor of Peter Bengtson
Matthew Bengtson



Thank you for being
a desert hero!

ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM

In honor of Bill Burnett
Jill Burnett

In honor of Orrora Brewer
Roberta Ezell

In honor of Carrie Brown
Curmudgeon Group

In honor of Kary Ciolli
Dawn Stewart

In honor of Teresa Cohn
Anonymous

In honor of Jan Donnelly
Roberta and William Saunders

In honor of Judith Effken
Paul and Anne-Marie Laseter

In honor of Kevin Elfering
Karla Petersen

In honor of Evan Emery
Curmudgeon Group

In honor of Charles Erickson
Anonymous

In honor of Dottie and Willis Fagg
Andrew Fagg

In honor of Judith Francis
Roberta and William Saunders

In honor of Mikhail Gladchenko
Curmudgeon Group

In honor of Marla Hanno
Karla Petersen

In honor of Clare Hanson
Sally Cass

In honor of Matthew and Maureen Hanson
Sally Cass

In honor of Keith and Sheri Harris
Dean Harris

In honor of Craig Ivanyi
Priscilla and Michael Baldwin
Dr. William and Darcy Shaw
Anonymous
Barbara Bickel

Hollie Colahan and Sharon Joseph
Trisha and John Tubbs
Steve and Rachel Delaney
Diane Frisch

Richard Medland and Patricia Engels
Monday Docents
Tuesday Docents
Thursday Docents

In honor of Abi Kalish
Aletha and David Kalish

In honor of Allan and Debby Kover
Steven Kover

In honor of Norma Lackow
Fionta Incorporated

In honor of Peggy Larson
Kathleen Bethel

In honor of J.C. and Keith Martin
Jay Caldwell

In honor of Ann and Steve McQueen
Sally Cass

In honor of Mike and Martha Mount
Elizabeth Lord

In honor of Mirtha Nebeker
Robert Bruno

In honor of Margie Nichols
Nancy Musgrave

In honor of Lynne Ralston
Judith Fox

In honor of Marjorie Reveal
Jeffrey Reveal

In honor of Peter Ronstadt
Joshua Lipay
Jeannine and Chris Leverenz
Linda Ronstadt
Larsen and Roxanne Stansfield

In honor of Marty Ryan
Corinne Ryan

In honor of Kyria Sabin
Colleen and Christopher Mathis

In honor of Susan Small
Marilyn Richardson

In honor of Ann Snider-Duerr
Deborah Brown-Ridley

In honor of Sarah Stewart
Malcolm Cohen

In honor of Steve Suffecool
Anonymous

In honor of Michael Swift
Samuel Swift

In honor of Amanda Timmerman
Anonymous

In honor of Daniel Trocola
Anonymous

In honor of Phillip Tucker
Eliot Tucker

In honor of Janet Varney
Julian Melson

In honor of Donald Walsh
Eileen Sharitz

In honor of Dolli and Nacho Wilkinson
Erin Zacholl

IN MEMORY OF
In memory of Elizabeth Arnold
Rev. Talitha Arnold

In memory of Hector Atondo
Chris Begole

In memory of Loyd Bell
Caroline Amos

In memory of William Bickel
Joanne and Charles Curtis

In memory of Jeanne Broome
Donna Bernazzoli

In memory of Wynne Carruth
Joe and Susan Ellington

In memory of Diane Chronowski
Camille Short

In memory of Geraldine Dennison
Arthur Dennison

In memory of Dora Romo
Andrew and Nancy Romero

In memory of Ellayne Elias
The Cerrati Family Charitable Fund
Marie Drouin
Frances Maxime

In memory of Joann Estes (mom)
Peggy Jo Wahlke

In memory of Lyle Frohberg
John and Margaret Blount

In memory of David Hamilton
Anonymous

In memory of Schuyler Haskell
Haskell Fund

In memory of Mary Haskell-Walker
Haskell Fund

In memory of Jan Jager
Donna and Charles Shaw

In memory of Patrick Kean Jr.
Denise Grandon-Keane

In memory of Norma Lackow
Adele Rothstein and Robin Figelman
Allan Gordon
Susan and Charles Bush

In memory of Cindy McClymonds
Jean Brown

In memory of Shirley Murphy
Karen Mader
Neil Doughty

In memory of Weston Ochse
Yvonne Ochse

In memory of Lillian Owens
Linda and James Erickson

In memory of Richard and
MaryLou Palmer
Anonymous

In memory of Robert Phillips
Camille Short

In memory of Peter Ronstadt
Alice and Paul Baker
Molly Singerling
Jeannine and Chris Leverenz
Blain Aymond

In memory of Gail Schuessler
Anonymous

In memory of Jane Schurz
John and Edna Blake

In memory of AnnMarie Sentman
Anonymous

In memory of Bernard Seraphin
Dr. Supapan Seraphin

In memory of Susan Small
Wednesday Docents
Janice Crebbs
Gayle and Bill Hartmann
Marilyn Richardson

In memory of Luke Smith
Nancy Smith

In memory of Clarissa Smith
Nancy Smith

In memory of Ben Smith
Nancy Smith

In memory of Laurie Stoebe
Joanne Jensen

In memory of Donald Walsh
Kurt Shutes

In memory of Sally Wegner
Holly and Graydon Eliot

In memory of Louis Wolfson
Syd Arkowitz

In memory of Bill and Beth Woodin
Haskell Fund

*The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is
thankful to these donors, and many more,
who give generously each year to support
the mission of this organization.*

Thank you.

DON'T MISS! COOL SUMMER NIGHTS

Saturdays: June - August
open til 10:00 p.m.

WEEKLY THEMES

- June 21: Desert Dwellers
- June 28: All About Art
- July 5: The Magic of Monsoons
- July 12: Radical Reptiles
- July 19: Rocks and Stars
- July 26: Taste the Desert
- August 2: Insectopia
- August 9: Singing with Saguaros
- August: 16: Bat Night
- August 23: Teacher Appreciation Night
- August 30: Desert Trails

scan for more info!



Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
2021 N Kinney Rd., Tucson, AZ 85743-9719
Phone (520) 883-2702 • Fax (520) 883-2500
www.desertmuseum.org

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is a non-profit organization. No part of this newsletter may be used without permission. All rights reserved. ©2025

Editor: Catherine Bartlett,
Associate Director for Education (CESD)
Design & Layout: Nancy Serensky,
Graphic Design Manager

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum recognizes that it resides within the ancestral homelands of the Tohono O'odham and the multi-millennial presence of the Pascua Yaqui. We honor these tribal nations, and commit to equal-partner relationships as we unite to inspire all people to live in harmony with the Sonoran Desert region.

DESERT TEXTURES <<<

Ana Laura Gonzalez, Dan Weisz

Baldwin Gallery

May 24 - August 17, 2025

Daily 10:00 a.m. - 4:00p.m. and open until
9:00 p.m. on Saturday nights

Desert Textures presents the photographic work of **Dan Weisz** and **Ana Laura Gonzalez**, exploring the distinctive landscapes and elements of the Sonoran Desert. Dan Weisz, a Tucson native, draws from his long-standing familiarity with the region. His photographs document the interplay of light, color, and form within the desert's ecosystem, as well as its cultural significance. Through his work, Weisz examines the relationship between natural and human elements in the Sonoran landscape. Ana Laura Gonzalez, a photographer with over 30 years of experience, combines digital techniques with historic processes like hand-colored cyanotypes and Van Dyke printing. Her work explores the patterns and textures of the natural world, with a renewed focus on the American Southwest, presenting subjects such as desert flora and architectural elements with a distinctive, tactile quality.



DESERT MUSEUM ARTS UPDATE

www.desertmuseumarts.com



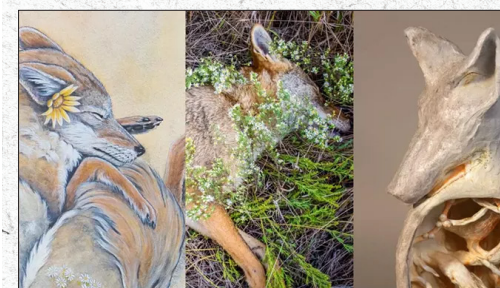
KINDRED SPIRITS

Rachel Ivanyi, Hannah Salyer,
Amanda Stronza

Ironwood Gallery

April 26 - July 18, 2025

Daily 10:00 a.m. - 4:00p.m. and open
until 9:00 p.m. on Saturday nights



KINDRED SPIRITS

HONORING ANIMALS IN DEATH

Rachel Ivanyi • Amanda Stronza • Hannah Salyer

April 26 - July 13, 2025
Ironwood Gallery, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

Kindred Spirits: Honoring Animals in Death is a journey into seeing and honoring animals in death, tending to them with love, and recognizing them as kin. Through photographs, paintings, writing, sculpture and installation, Amanda Stronza, Rachel Ivanyi, and Hannah Salyer find beauty in stillness and create art from loss. All who share in the circles of life, death, and renewal are invited to join in showing respect, and finding connection and catharsis.

ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM ART & PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES



>>> SUMMER CLASSES 2025!

Enjoy the desert view from our cool classrooms at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

We offer individual classes as well as a certificate of completion program in nature art. The unique backdrop of the Museum becomes your classroom, while you have the option of drawing birds, reptiles, mammals, insects, and desert botanicals. You can also participate in a wide variety of classes and workshops including oil painting, nature journaling, mixed media, and photography. **NEW Class! In Concrete Carving (July 18-20th), create your own concrete sculpture or planter- no power tools needed. Sculpt, carve, and take home your art. Join us!**