Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Junior Ranger Guide

Hi! My name is: _____

Date: _____

What is a Junior Ranger?

Junior Rangers are important to the National Park Service. Junior Rangers who visit national park sites help the Park Rangers keep it clean and safe for people, plants, and wildlife. Junior Rangers also learn about the plants, animals and history of the parks they visit.

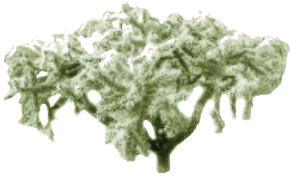
Becoming a Junior Ranger

Follow the instructions below to make new discoveries and become a Junior Ranger!

- ***Read pages 3 and 4***
- ***Do any 4 activities in the guide according to the suggested age chart below.***
- ***When you finish, give your guide to one of the rangers in the Kris Eggle Visitor Center. They will give you the Junior Ranger badge, patch, and certificate that you've earned.***
- ***The activities are rated from rough to roughest, the more you do, the wiser Junior Ranger you will be!***
- ***There will be a picture on the corner or each page to represent the level of the activity.***

Rough activities =

Suggested ages 5 - 7



A cholla

Rougher activities =

Suggested ages 8 - 9

A saguaro

Roughest activities =

Suggested ages 10 - 12

An organ pipe

Discover Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

At first glance Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, may appear to be empty terrain. But with a little patience you will discover that its washes and mountains are teeming with wildlife and unusual plants. The scenery is cast in varying shades of green. High in the mountains large mesquite and cedar trees grow in sheltered areas. Lower on the slopes and in the basins saguaro cactus thrive alongside organ pipe, prickly pear and cholla cacti.

Set aside in 1937 to protect the northernmost habitat of the organ pipe cactus, the monument also protects habitat for the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, lesser long nosed bat and Sonoran Desert pupfish. More common species include Sonoran Desert tortoise, collared peccary (javelina), kit fox, deer, bobcat and cougar.

A healthy population of reptiles like rattlesnakes, Gila monsters and lizards may be found among the rocks and shrubs. During spring and autumn migrations, a myriad of bird species passes through Organ Pipe Cactus, transforming the monument into a birder's paradise.

Rainfall, more than time of year, determines the seasons at Organ Pipe Cactus and makes the Sonoran Desert one of the greenest and most diverse deserts in the world. The Sonoran Desert has five seasons instead of four - summer drought, summer monsoon, fall, winter, and spring. Two rainy seasons - summer monsoon and winter - help many plants survive.

With over 90% of its area designated as wilderness, the monument offers many opportunities to observe nature in an unfettered state. From the high points classic "basin and range" geology is easily seen.

As an International Biosphere Reserve, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument along with the related reserves of Pinacate and Alta Golfo in Mexico, serves as a benchmark for monitoring and understanding change in the Sonoran Desert and showcases one of the world's most unique and recognizable landscapes.

A common saying about the Sonoran Desert is that patience is rewarded. The Tohono O'odham, Native Americans who have lived on this land for many centuries, are a very patient people. They have learned the ways of the desert and survive by living within its essence. Today the Tohono O'odham live in communities next to the monument and still return to participate in ancient ceremonies and to gather traditional foods.

Crystal clear night skies can be mesmerizing. So many stars are visible that it may be difficult to focus on any single one or even pick out a constellation. After a blazing orange sunset, they appear one by one, then suddenly seem to explode into view almost like magic. With nights like those at Organ Pipe Cactus, is it any wonder why many of our ancient myths were first imagined in the heavens?

When a breeze blows through an organ pipe cactus, the needles hum and the pitch changes in tune with the speed of the air. As the wind plays across the desert, an evening concert of quiet sounds evokes a peaceful symphony.

There is no better place on Earth than Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument to see and feel life at the edges and by doing so, perhaps learn a little more about ourselves.

Safety First!

Take 5 Hints From the Desert...

1. **Saguaro cactus have shallow roots to drink as much rain water as possible. You don't have roots, so you need to drink more often, even when you're not thirsty! Carry plenty of drinking water on short and long hikes and on car rides. (Drink a gallon of water per day when in the desert.)**

2. **Creosote plants protect themselves with a wax-like coating on their green leaves. You need to apply your own coating: sun-screen and a hat!**

3. **How would you like a nice plate of grass, leaves, cactus, grubs, beetles, and deer fur to eat? Animal food is not good for you, and people food is not good for them! Do not feed the animals.**

4. **Animals use the trail too. Please watch your step! Look out for cactus too. Give them plenty of room because they "bite" more often than insects! If a cactus gets stuck on you, use tweezers or a comb to get if off.**

5. **Quail stay in groups for protection. If you get lost from your group, stay in one spot and wait for help.**

Junior Ranger Safety Quiz

Circle the correct answer to each question.

1. When should you drink water when you are in the desert?
   - A. Only when hiking
   - B. Often when hiking or driving
   - C. Only when you are thirsty

2. Is it OK to feed the wildlife?
   - A. Yes
   - B. No, it is never OK to feed wildlife
3. What should you do if a cholla cactus piece gets stuck on you?
   - A. Pull it off with your fingers
   - B. Use a friend's glove to rub it off
   - C. Use a comb to flick it off
4. If you accidently get separated from your group, you should:
   - A. Stay where you are and wait for help
   - B. Try to find your way back to the trailhead

Secret Junior Ranger Message:

Unscramble the words to reveal the secret message. Write your answer on the lines.

"keaT nitoghn tbu pticesur,

_____

vLeae gthinon tub ntstofipor,

_____

Klil hgnoint ubt meti."

_____

Get a Feel For It!

Visit the Touch Table in the Kris Eggle Visitor Center.

Naturalists record everything about plants and animals they find. This helps them learn about and remember the plants and animals. They record things like how something feels, how it smells, and what it looks like.

Feel the items on the touch table. Pick 3 that interest you and record:

A. How they feel:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. What they look like:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. What you think it is:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now read the card with the matching number that is on the item.

What is the item?

1. _____

2. _____

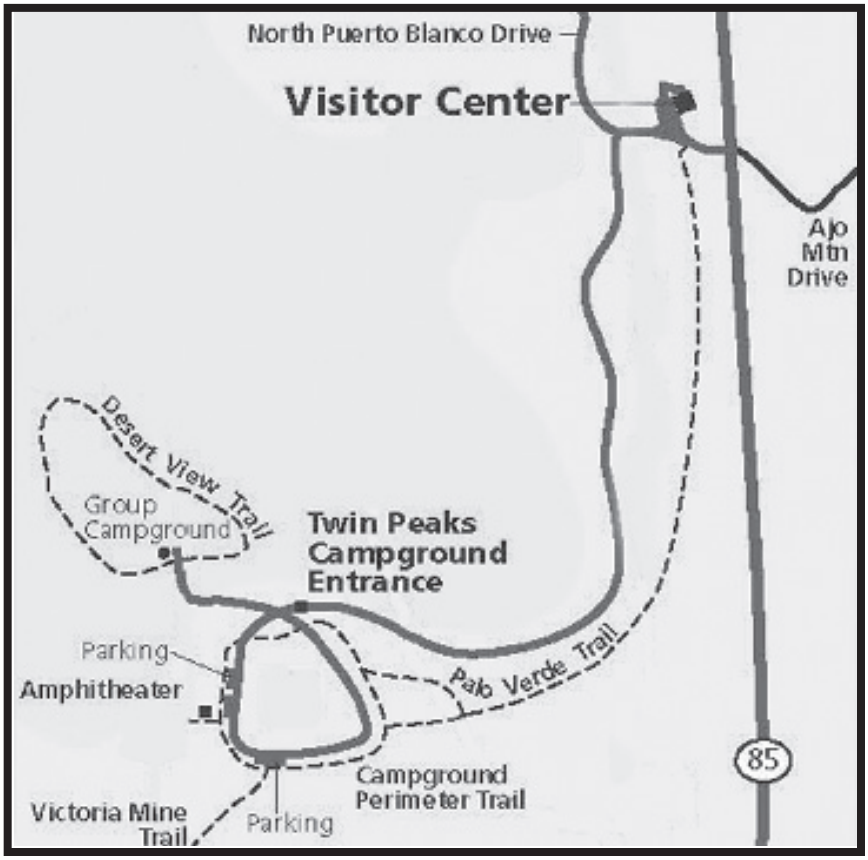
3. _____

Were you right? _____

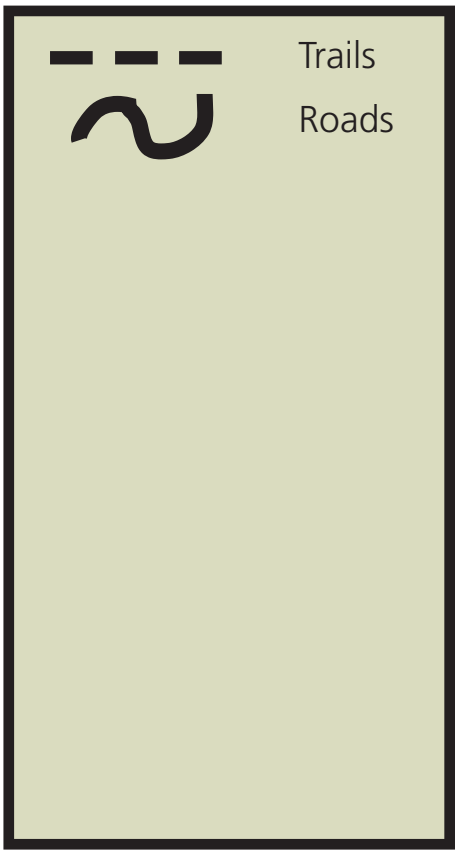
If you want to learn more feel all of the items and read all of the cards...

Take a Hike!

At the Kris Eggle Visitor Center ask about the hikes at the monument. Pick a hike to go on with an adult. As you hike, stop at landmarks and map out your trail route below (drink some water too). Include landmarks (buildings, intersections, fascinating cacti, or other plants, wildlife, etc.) so you can use this map to find your trail in the future. Create your own Legend (symbols).



Legend



During your hike, stop in a quiet area and stand very still for 3 minutes. Answer the following:

A. Name 3 things you hear:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. Name 3 things you see:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. Name something you smell:

1. _____

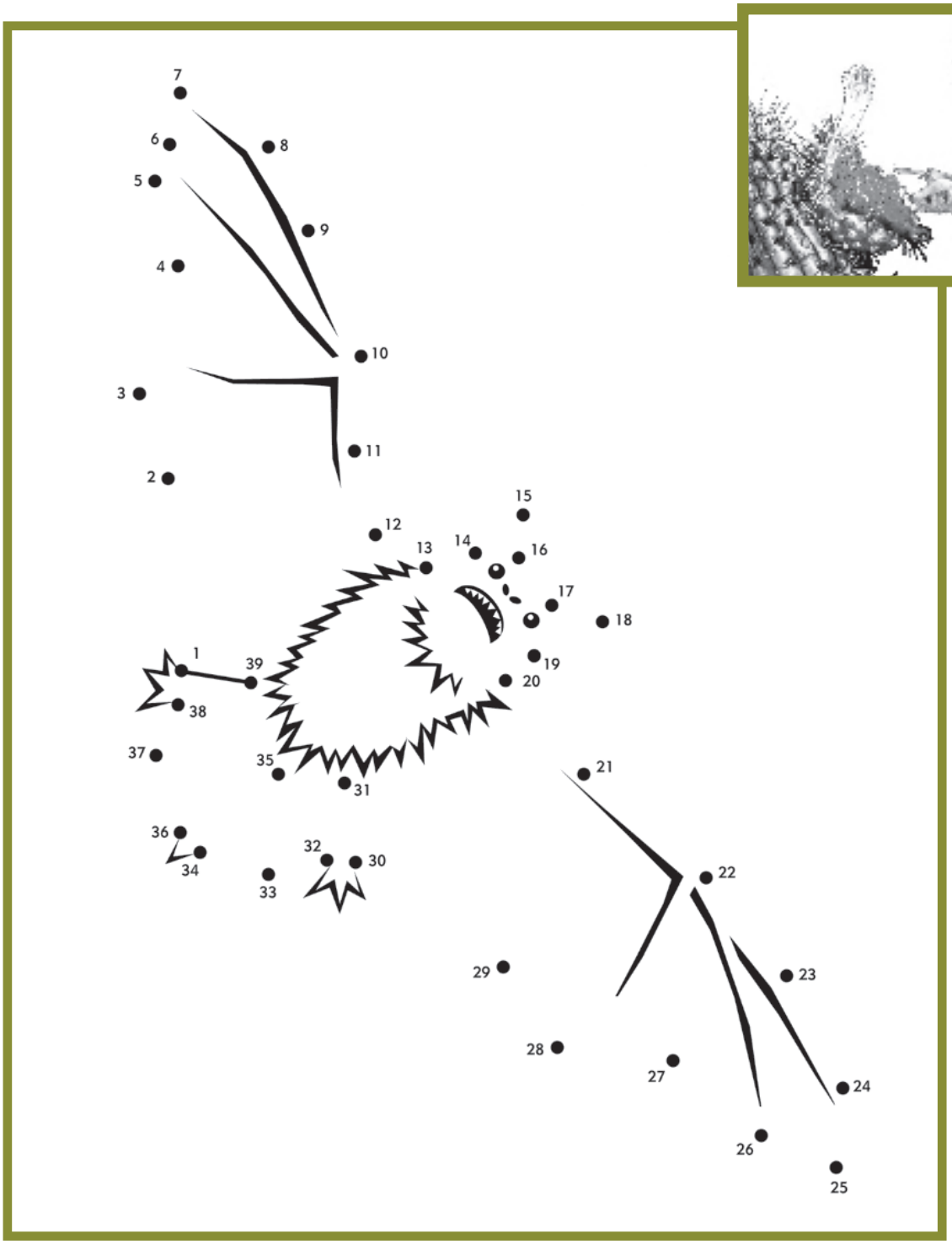
D. What was the most interesting thing you saw on your hike?_____

E. How is this place different from where you live? **My home in _____ has _____ but does not have _____ , like the desert.**

Connect the Dots

The lesser long-nosed bat is an endangered species that feeds on the pollen (a powder found in flowers) and fruit of the organ pipe cactus. The bat spreads the seeds from the organ pipe fruit and flowers so new plants can grow. The cactus and the bat need each other to survive. Below is a real picture of the lesser long-nosed bat.

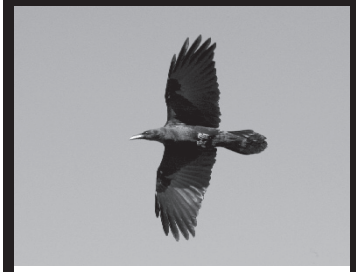
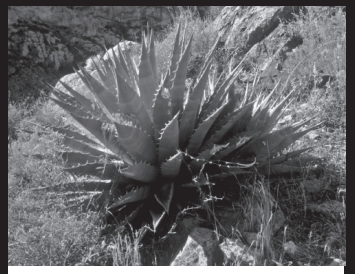
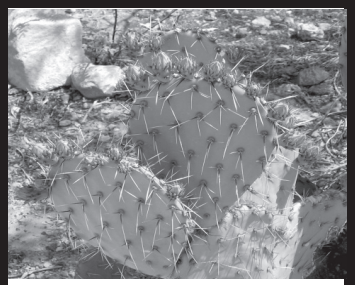
Connect the dots below to finish the picture of the bat. You may color the picture too.



Bingo

Sometimes you have to scout around for signs of animal life in the desert. Sometimes you have to sit quietly and wait for an animal to come out of hiding. And sometimes you just have to look extra carefully to see something you may have missed.

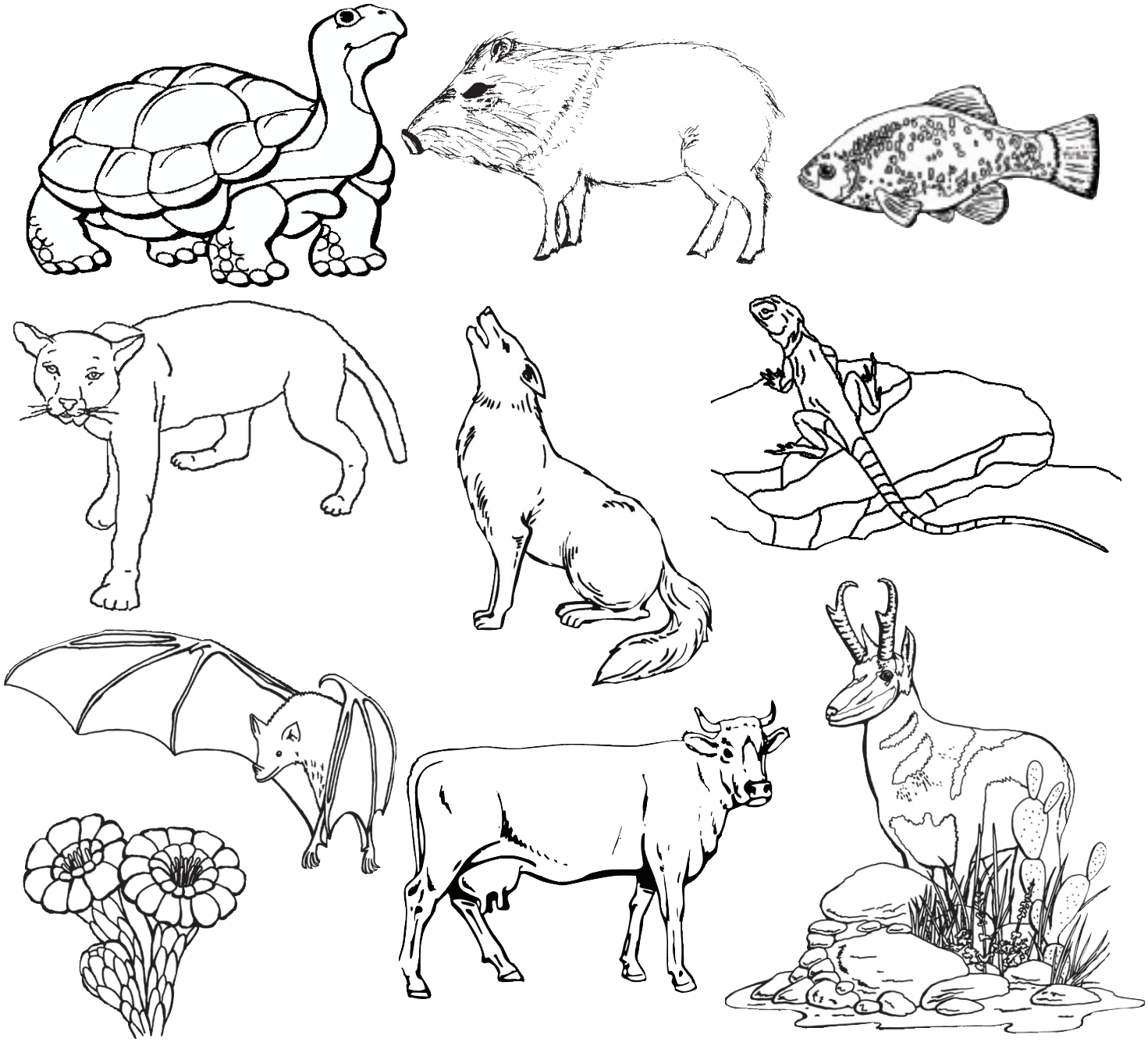
***As you travel through Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument keep an eye out for any of the items below. Make an* X *through any you see. Get 4 in a row up, down, across, or diagonally and you have* BINGO!**

Organ Pipe Cactus	Feather	Cholla	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NPS Arrowhead
Lizard	Animal Hole	Nurse Tree	Cactus Skeleton
 Raven	Nest in a saguaro	Saguaro	 Agave
Butterfly	Rabbit	Ajo Mountain Arch	 Prickly Pear Cactus

Look for Rare Animals

While in the desert you might get the pleasure of seeing some rare animals. Pupfish, lesser long-nosed bat, and the Sonoran pronghorn are endangered species that can be found in the monument. An endangered species is an animal or plant that could become extinct (never to be seen again). The desert tortoise, which also lives in the monument, is threatened. This means it is possible that it may become endangered in the future.

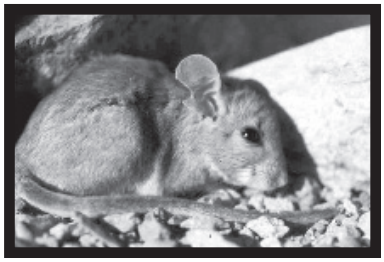
Circle the pictures of the endangered or threatened animals that are found at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

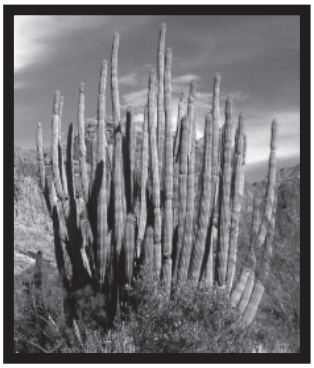


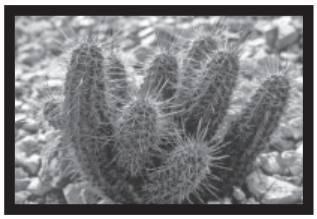
Be an Explorer

Many explorers kept journals with notes on what they saw, heard, and how places made them feel. Some of their journals were made into famous books!

Take a hike on the Kris Eggle Visitor Center Nature Trail. Circle things you see along the way.







Stop when you get to the organ pipe cactus that has a sign.

Listen, what do you hear? _____

_____

What do you see? _____

_____

How does this spot make you feel? _____

_____

If your nature journal is published what will the title be? _____

_____

Who am I?

Can you solve the riddles? Write the name of the animal to solve the riddle.

Bobcat

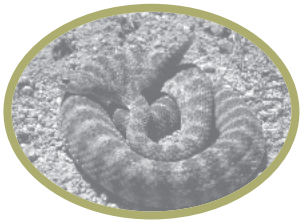
1. I build a football sized nest in cholla cactus.
2. My song sounds like an old car just starting up.
3. I am the state bird of Arizona.

I am a: _____

Lizard

1. I am an omnivore; I eat meat and vegetables.
2. I live in underground dens or between roots of large trees. I can live in almost any state.
3. You can hear my friends and me howling at night.

I am a: _____



Rattlesnake

1. I am a reptile who runs very fast.
2. I eat insects.
3. My tracks in the sand would tell you that I have long tail.

I am a: _____

Quail

1. I am not seen very often because I am shy.
2. My coat is reddish brown with black stripes and spots.
3. I am a small-sized cat with a short tail and pointed ears.

I am a: _____

Javelina

1. I have 4 toes on my front feet and 3 on my back.
2. I eat cactus pads, spines and all!
3. Many people mistake me for a pig,

I am a: _____

Rabbit

1. I have 4 toes on each foot, 2 point forward and 2 point backward.
2. I like to be around other families of my species.
3. I have a beautiful black topknot on my head.

I am a: _____

Cactus Wren

1. If you're smart, you'll never stick your hand beneath a rock or ledge in these parts. That is where I often sleep on hot days.
2. I can swallow my meals whole.
3. I make a warning sound with my tail.

I am a: _____

Coyote

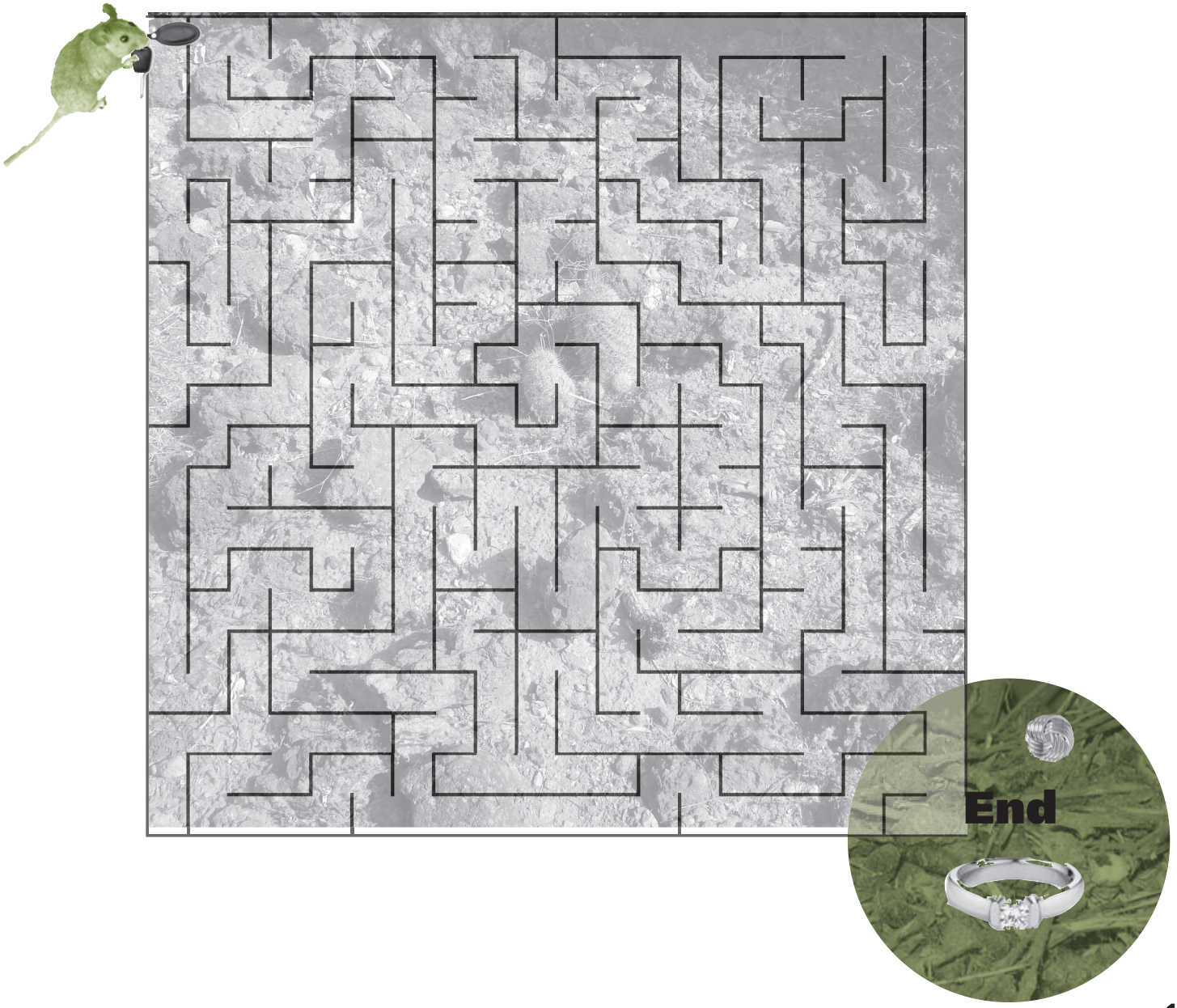
1. During the heat of the day I stay in an underground burrow.
2. I come out in early morning and late afternoon hours to nibble on plants.
3. My long ears are not just for listening; they also help me stay cool.

I am a: _____

One Man's Trash is Another Rat's Treasure

Packrats (white throated woodrats) often build their nest or middens in prickly pear patches or caves. Middens can be huge, weighing more than a ton, because packrats are never finished building. Packrats especially like shiny objects like rings, keys, coins, etc. People have lost keys, jewelry, and even gold nuggets to packrats! Because packrats' middens can preserve (keep in good condition) materials, they provide scientists with records up to 40,000 years into the past.

Can you help the packrat (white throated woodrat) find his way through his tunnels to put his new treasure (a set of someone's car keys) in a safe place?



Know What You're Talking About

Review the words in the table below. Can you find the words on the left in the wordsearch below? *Hint: the words can go up, down, across, diagonal, or backwards.*

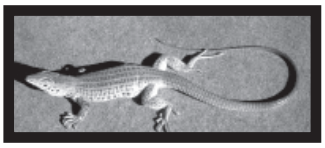
Word	Pronunciation	Definition
Agave	ah-GAH-vee	Also known as the century plant
Ajo	AH-ho	The name of a town and mountain range
Arroyo	ah-ROY-yo	A dry stream bed
Bajada	bah-HAH-dah	The slope formed from eroding mountains
Cholla	CHOY-yah	Spiny, shrubby, or treelike cacti
Creosote	KREE-oh-sote	Evergreen bush that smells like desert rain
Gila Monster	HEE-lah monster	One of two poisonous lizards found in North America
Javelina	hah-vay-LEE-nah	Collared Peccary often mistaken as a pig
Jojoba	ho-HO-bah	A shrub with waxy leaves used in soaps
Metate	mah-TAH-tay	The bottom stone used when grinding foods
Ocotillo	o-ko-TEE-yo	A shrub with many thorny branches
Palo Verde	pal-o-VER-day	Tree with all green trunk, branches, and limbs
Saguaro	sah-WAH-ro	A very tall and big cactus that looks like a post, some have arms
Tohono O'odham	Toh-HO-noh aw-TAHM	The Native American people of the area
Tinaja	tee-NAH-hah	Eroded rocks that could hold water, like a water tank

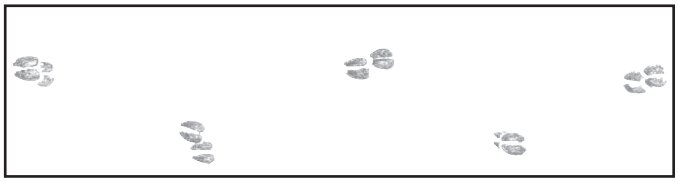
O C O E O C H O M P R W B D E P Q E D A
L J H Q D R U T B E Y K X A T J O C U B
L A L O S R A T O H O N O O O D H A M O
I O R Q L V E U L I W O J A S F M J W J
T Q M R M L A V G Q G R B E O A N A C O
O C L S O E A D O A S J A V E L I N A J
C P K Y W Y T O A L S V P A R Y T I C D
O B R U C V O A Q J A G O G C T Y T K F
W S Q Y I J L T T X A P N A I N I P D S
G I L A M O N S T E R B S X F E Z J Y M

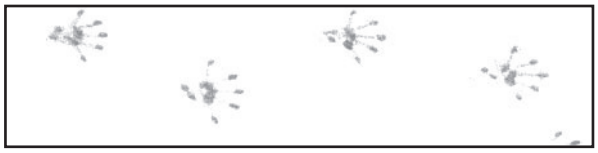
"Leave Nothing But Footprints..."

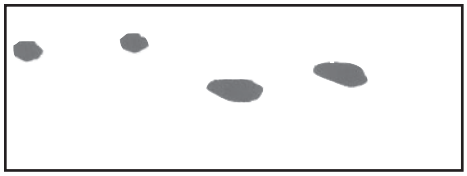
Many people on hikes want to see animals. Most animals are shy and do not want to be seen. People use animal tracks they see to try to find animals. Be careful though, some animals may be out hunting or be frightened by your presence if you surprise them.

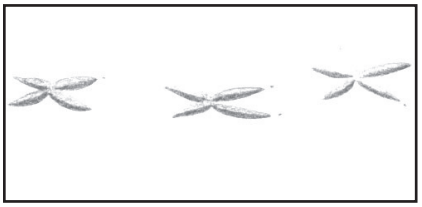
Draw a line from the animal to the tracks it makes.









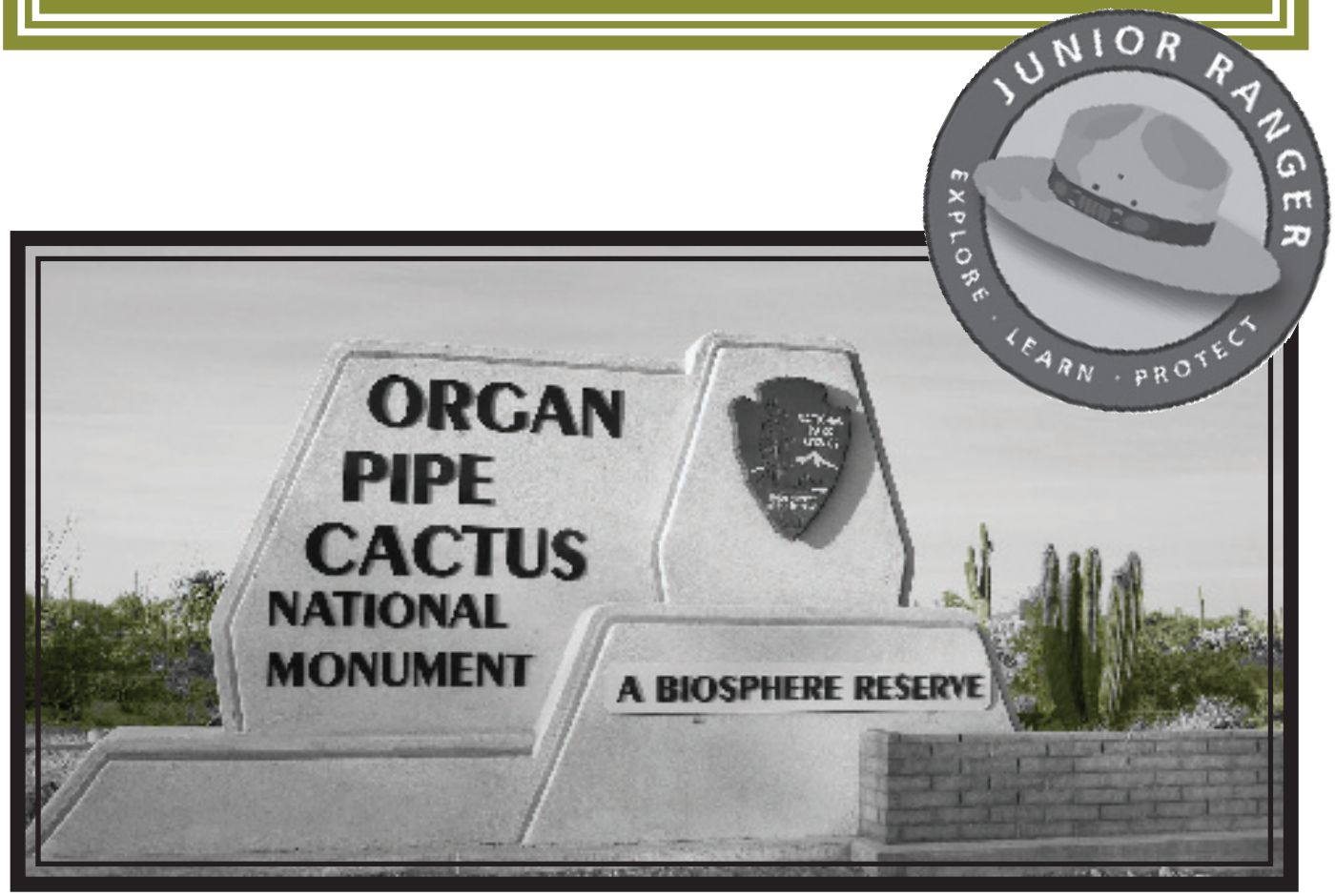


Journal

Use this space to write your thoughts about Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Write about what you remember most from your visit. Write any stories you have while you visited the monument. You can write a poem, a song, or even a short story or essay.

When you get home, read your notes. They will remind you about your explorations at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

Junior Ranger Pledge

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument's Junior Ranger Pledge:

As a Junior Ranger, I will continue to learn all I can about Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and America's National Parks; and I will help in any way I can to preserve them for the future.