

Results of 2020 Saguaro Census on Plot 38, Tucson Mountains

Adventure Scientists, February 10th-12th, 2020



We brought our first group of week-long Adventure Scientists to Plot 38, located just east of the Wild Dog Trail and just north of the Bajada Wash Trail in the park's west district. It took us three days, from February 10th-12th (with a rain delay) to finish the plot. This is an amazing feat considering how densely populated the plot is with saguaros. By the end of day one the group had measured more than 1,000 cacti and were quickly considered experts at spotting small saguaros.

This plot is drastically different from how it looked in 1990. In those days it had 745 saguaros (pretty dense). The last three times this plot has been surveyed, in 2010, 2016, and this year in 2020, we have measured 1820, 1750, and 1746 saguaros respectively. That's a lot of saguaros (roughly 1 saguaro every 5m²)! This year we measured close to 990 saguaros under 1 m tall (including our under 10 cm saguaros). This category has dropped since the 2010 Census. We know this change is likely due to two things: saguaros growing and graduating to the next height class and the hard freeze the park experienced in 2011, which killed young saguaros.

Saguaro Plot #38

