

## Results of 2020 Saguaro Census on Plot 41B, Rincon Mountains

Homeschool Group, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020



A small but hard-working group of home-schooled students and their families helped us out on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and completed the first half of Plot 41B (we completed the plot with a different group a few weeks later). This is a very interesting plot because it was established in 1941 – almost 80 years ago! It has been surveyed only a few times since then, but there have been dramatic changes in the saguaro population.

The number of saguaros on the plot is nearly the same in 2020 as it was in 1941 – we counted about 250 cacti, only a few less than in 1941. But during the decades between 1941 and 1975, the number plunged to only about 40. Most of the older, taller saguaros died off, and very few young saguaros replaced them. This began to change, however, and by the time the plot was re-surveyed in 2000 many young saguaros had started to grow – these are the saguaros that appear on the left side of the chart below. We believe that these changes are related to a number of factors, including a tremendous re-growth in the number of paloverde and mesquite “nurse trees” after the 1940s. Previously, many trees were cut down for fuel wood. As the trees returned, more young saguaros survived under their protection.

Plot #41B

