



# Saguaro National Park (West) Naturalist Program Schedule

Programs meet at the Red Hills Visitor Center, 2700 N. Kinney Road, and last 30 to 45 minutes, unless noted otherwise. All programs are subject to change. Call the visitor center at (520) 733-5158 for updates the day of the program. See [www.nps.gov/sagu](http://www.nps.gov/sagu) for other programs.

**December 21** 2:00 p.m. **Wasson Peak** *Moonlight Hike: 7 hours, 8 miles roundtrip*

This hike climbs 1,700 feet to the highest point in the Tucson Mountains. Enjoy a 360-degree view of the sunset before descending by the light of the moon. The hike is at an easy-to-moderate pace but is considered difficult due to elevation gain and hiking after dark. *Ages 12 and older. **Reservations required; 733-5158***

**December 22** 4:00 p.m. **Twilight Glow to Moon Shadows** *Moonlight Hike: 2 ½ hours, 2 ½ miles*

This walk bridges sunset into moonlight, letting hikers experience the desert in both the glow of twilight and the light of the waxing moon. It ascends a hill with a gentle, packed slope, and then changes trails to descend a sandy wash. The hike is completed with a return on a dirt road. *Ages 10 and older. **Reservations required: 733-5158.***

**December 23** 3:15 p.m. **Sunset Hike** *Moonlight Hike: 3 ½ hours, 3 ½ miles*

Discussions of water, geology, and plants will be highlights of mini-talks along this route, which gains 700 feet (with some switchbacks near the top) before reaching a ridgeline for sunset. The descent is by the light of the moon. *Ages 10 and older. **Reservations required; 733-5158***

**December 24** 5:00 p.m. **Moonrise Holiday Program** *1½ hours*

Bring family and holiday guests to a festive holiday party for all. Guitar and Native American flute music plus free coffee/cocoa, cookies, and candy will help visitors start Christmas Eve with flair. Popular guitarist and singer-songwriter Mark William and flautist Robert Hval will perform on the patio for the program, usually held the night of the full moon but offered a day early in December because the park will be closed Christmas Day. The Red Hills Visitor Center and Book Store will remain open for last-minute shopping and as a warming center during the program, which will end at approximately 6:30 p.m. Bring a folding chair and blankets or coats and hear music as the moon rises over the mountains. *Wheelchair accessible. **No reservations necessary.***

**December 7, 14** 10:45 a.m. **Thirsty Mammals** *Walk: 1 hour, ¾ mile*

Sonoran Desert mammals are seldom seen, but they are present in great diversity and numbers. Where are they? How do they survive in the desert climate? Come along to learn the answers.

**December 5, 12, 19, 26** 9:45 a.m. **The Plants Tell All** *Walk: 2 hours, 1½ miles*

Plants are the foundation of the web of life. Join a park naturalist to learn the secrets of what ties the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert together. Plant survival, insects and spiders, birds and mammals -- nothing is off limits for discussion on this discovery trek through the desert. For this moderate walk, closed-toed shoes, a hat, and water are required.

**December 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31** 11:15 a.m. **Play Sonoran Desert Bingo!** *Game: 1 hour*

Learn about the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert while enjoying a rousing version of Bingo! Get five in a row – down, across, or diagonally – and win a non-monetary prize. First come, first served. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 3, 4, 7, 12, 14, 18, 19, 28** 10:15 a.m. **Spiny, Shady, and COOL!** *Walk: 30 minutes, 100 yards*

Come for a short walk and discover the great variety of cacti that inhabit this unique and fascinating desert.

**December 5, 20** 10:15 a.m. **A Hohokam Woman's Day** *Walk: 30 minutes, 100 yards*

Join us as we try to help a Hohokam woman get through the trials and tribulations she may have experienced back in A.D. 400. We will look at desert plants and how she may have used them for medicinal solutions and foods for her family. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 1, 15, 29** 3:15 p.m. **How Do They Do It?** *Walk: 15 minutes, 100 yards*

Discover how the plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert have adapted to the harsh conditions of this unique environment. (This program also is offered in Spanish at 12:15 p.m. Dec. 1, 15). *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 1, 15** 12:15 p.m. **¿Como Pueden Sobrevivir?** *Walk: 15 minutes, 100 yards*  
(Spanish version of "How Do They Do It?")

Charla en Español donde discutiremos como las plantas y animales del desierto Sonorense se han adaptado a través de los años para poder sobrevivir y florecer en nuestro único y duro ambiente. (This program also is offered in English at 3:15 p.m. Dec. 1, 15, 29.) *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 12, 26** 2:15 p.m. **The CCC in the Tucson Mountains** *Talk: 45 minutes*

The Civilian Conservation Corps was launched in the midst of The Great Depression as an employment program to take young men off the streets and give them jobs restoring the country's depleted soil and forest resources. Much of this involved building the infrastructures of public facilities in the Tucson area, including many of the stone structures and trails at Saguaro National Park and Tucson Mountain Park. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 2, 16, 30** 10:15 a.m. **Sonoran Secrets to Desert Survival** *Walk: 60 minutes, 250 yards*

Stroll the Cactus Garden and identify the most common hazards hidden in the desert, uncover survival strategies of native plants and animals, and acquire practical tips to ensure your safety. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 9, 23** 10:15 a.m. **Mountain Lions: Beyond the Myth** *Talk: 45 minutes*

Envision a puma stalking its prey, then uncover the true nature of this elusive but essential predator. Misunderstood, maligned, and nearly eradicated by settlers, the mountain lion remains threatened by human encroachment.

**December 8, 22 3:15 p.m. Whales in the Desert Talk: 45 minutes**

Learn about the unique connection between whales and the Sonoran Desert. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 29, 2:15 p.m. Neighborhood Characters Walk: 30 minutes, 100 yards**

On an easy walk in the Cactus Garden you will meet desert plants that might remind you of people you may know, including "Bill Gates." *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 10, 17, 24, 31 10:15 a.m. Living With Giants Talk: 45 minutes**

The saguaro celebrates events and faces challenges throughout its life. A biologist explains how it provides shelter and substance for wildlife; when it flowers; its growth patterns; and how it fights for survival against drought, lightning, frost, and other dangers. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 4, 11, 18, 2:15 p.m. Lizards are Hot, Lizards are Cool Talk: 30 minutes**

Lizards are small denizens of the desert that are a critical component of our desert community. Find out what it means when they do pushups or exhibit other odd behaviors. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 27, 28, 31 3:15 p.m. Javelina: Our Desert Neighbors Talk: 30 minutes**

Sometimes referred to as the "desert pig," the javelina is not a pig at all. Learn about this intriguing creature and how it survives in this arid environment. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**(This program also will be given in Spanish at 12:15 p.m. Dec. 5 )**

**December 5 12:15 a.m. Jabalíes, Nuestros Vecinos Del Desierto Talk: 30 minutes**

**(Spanish version of Javelina: Our Desert Neighbors)**

Usted está invitado a acompañar a un naturalista del parque durante su presentación "Jabalíes, Nuestros Vecinos del Desierto." A veces referido como el cerdo del desierto, averigüe por qué el jabalí no es un cerdo. Descubra la historia natural de este fascinante animal y cómo se las arregla para sobrevivir en este ambiente árido. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**(This program also will be given in English at 3:15 p.m. Dec 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 27, 28, 31)**

**December 8, 22 11:15 a.m. Life Cycle of the Saguaro: Seed to Giant Walk: 45 minutes, 100 yards**

Hear some astonishing reasons about why so few Saguaro seeds make it to fruition.

**December 14, 28 11:15 a.m. Coyotes: God's Dog Talk: 30-45 minutes**

You never know who or what you'll meet in the desert, including coyotes. Learn fact, myth, and fiction about these interesting desert inhabitants. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 9, 23, 30 11:15 a.m. Synergy in the Desert: The Sonoran Habitat Talk and Walk: 45 minutes**

For all of life, "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" is true. The iconic Saguaro is the focal point for a discussion of how the parts of the Sonoran Desert work together to create a rich living desert that is unique in the world.

**December 6, 7, 13, 20, 27 2:15 p.m. Homesteading Adventures Talk: 30 minutes**

The Hispanic women from homesteading families in the Tucson area left records of their adventures, and a ranger reads some of these fascinating first-person accounts. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 6, 13, 20, 27 10:15 a.m. Desert Jigsaw Puzzle 45 minutes, 100 yards**

Also **Dec. 5, 10, 17, 19, 24, 31 2:15 p.m.** When competition and cooperation vie for attention in the Sonoran Desert, the result is an intricate, wondrous jigsaw puzzle of plants and animals. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 5, 19, 26 3:15 p.m. Snakes Talk: 30 minutes**

Explore the life and lore, myths and misunderstandings about one of the desert Southwest's most intriguing icons: the rattlesnake. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 9, 16, 23, 30 1:15 p.m. Against All Odds Talk: 30 minutes**

A saguaro might produce 40 million seeds in its lifetime, but only one or two seedlings will survive into maturity. Discover how the "deck is stacked" against their survival and what conditions are needed for growth into the majestic icon of the desert. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 7, 21 11:15 a.m. Desert "Pigs" Talk: 40 minutes**

As the book title says, "Don't Call Me Pig"; but there is a resemblance between pigs and peccaries, also called javelinas. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**December 16 2:15 p.m. Kangaroo Rat: Super-Survivor Talk: 30 minutes**

Learn about the remarkable behavioral and physical adaptations these rodents possess that allow them to survive harsh desert environments