



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. Ranger and naturalist programs are listed here by categories: Daytime Indoor or Patio Programs at the Visitor Center, Daytime Hikes and Short Walks, Evening and Nighttime Programs and Hikes, and Programs Offered in both English and Spanish. Program listings may also be found at www.nps.gov/sagu.

SPECIAL FREE EVENT: CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION March 6!

March 6 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Centennial Celebration!

Join us to celebrate the 100th birthday year of the National Park Service and the long history of Tucson's backyard national park. Activities are free of charge and include games such as Sonoran Desert Bingo, a craft corner for children (10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.), a book signing by illustrator Sylvia Long, special presentations from biologists about our namesake species, presentations about park history and also about the Civilian Conservation Corps, and a fabulous mariachi concert by the Mariachi Aztlan de Pueblo High School (11:20 a.m.-12:30 p.m.). Food service will be for sale by vendors. Theater and patio presentations are wheelchair accessible. (*Please note: the parks' regular 15-minute video will not be shown that day due to special presentations in the theater.*)

Daytime Indoor or Patio Programs at the Visitor Center

March 5, 12, 19, 26 2:15 p.m. The CCC in the Tucson Mountains Talk: 45 minutes

The Civilian Conservation Corps (1933-1943) was launched in the midst of The Great Depression to give young men 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.*

March 5, 12, 19, 26 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. *Wheelchair accessible.*

March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 3:15 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.*

March 13, 20, 27 2:15 p.m. A Desert Trio: Snakes, Tortoises, and Monsters Talk: 30 minutes

Snakes, desert tortoises, and gila monsters -- oh, my! This desert trio couldn't be more different, but yet they have a few things in common, such as being fascinating but misunderstood. Come learn about their communication skills, special adaptations, and defense systems. A bit of folk lore is also shared. *Wheelchair accessible.*

March 7, 14, 21, 28 11:15 a.m. Rattlers! Talk: 40 minutes

Explore the life and lore, myths and misunderstandings concerning one of the desert Southwest's most intriguing icons. Don't worry: Live snakes won't be in attendance. *Wheelchair accessible.*

March 8, 22, 29 3:15 p.m. Whales in the Desert Talk: 45 minutes

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

March 2, 16, 30 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. *Wheelchair accessible.*

March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 11:15 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.*

March 4, 11, 18, 25 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.*

March 1, 15 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.

March 1, 15 10:15 a.m. Adaptations: Recipe for Survival Easy 100-yard walk: 30 minutes

Take a walk in our Cactus Garden Walk to discover some physical and behavioral adaptations of desert plants.

March 9, 16, 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.

March 14, 28 2:15 p.m. Homesteading Adventures Talk: 30 minutes

March 12, 19 3:15 p.m. 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.*

March 7, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31 3:15 p.m. Javelinas: 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.

March 5, 26)

Daytime Hikes And Short Walks

March 9, 23 2:15 p.m. **Kangaroo Rat: Super Survivor** Walk: 45 minutes

Learn about the remarkable behavioral and physical adaptations these rodents possess that allow them to survive harsh desert environments. Find out how the rodents escape predators, evade heat, and endure aridity while you search for burrows, runways and tracks of this nocturnal animal. The easy hike is on level ground but closed-toed shoes are required. Bring water and a hat.

March 12, 26 9:45 a.m. **Bird Walk** 30 minutes plus optional additional 30 minutes, ½ mile

Join us for a 30-minute walk in the sandy wash behind the Visitor Center to see what birds live among the cacti and shrubs. Learn how they find food, water and shelter. Participants interested in more will drive 2 miles to Sus Picnic area with its rocky canyon and hills for another 30-minute walk to see what wrens, hawks and other birds live there. The walk is on sand and dirt roads and is scheduled for the second and fourth Saturday mornings of March and April. No reservations required. All ages.

March 5, 19 9:45 a.m. **The Plants Tell All** Hike: 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.

March 9, 23 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.*

March 13, 20 11:15 a.m. **Desert Jigsaw Puzzle** Walk: 45 minutes, 100 yards

March 3, 10, 17 2:15 p.m.; **March 5** 3:15 p.m.; **March 19** 1:15 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.*

March 3, 7, 11, 17, 21, 24, 25, 31 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.

March 1, 15 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 March 1, 15 at 12:15 p.m.) *Wheelchair accessible.*

March 19, 28 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.*

Evening and Nighttime Programs and Hikes

March 19 3:00 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**

March 20 5:00 p.m. **Twilight Glow to Moon Shadows** Moonlight Hike: 3 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.**

March 21 4:15 p.m. **Sunset Hike** Moonlight Hike: 4 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**

March 22 5:00 p.m. **Moonlight Reflections** Moonlight hike: 2 1/2 hours, 2 miles

The shortest and easiest of the winter monthly moon hikes covers 2 miles in 2 1/2 hours. Imagine yourself living in olden times as you cross a flat terrain, follow a sandy wash that has been nature's highway for centuries, then climb a terraced hillside full of plants adapted to a rocky hillside. After a stop to rest and view the sunset, you will descend and complete your journey on a dirt road in the moonlight. *Ages 10 and older.* **Reservations required: 733-5158.**

March 23 7:30 p.m. **Moonrise Over The Mountains** Patio program: 45 minutes

Popular guitarist and singer-songwriter Mark William and Native American flute player Robert Hval will play music on the patio as visitors watch the full moon rise over the mountains. Bring a folding chair and blankets or coats. *All ages.* *Wheelchair accessible.* **No reservations necessary.**

Spanish Language Programs

March 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 *Wheelchair accessible.*

March 5, 26 12:15 p.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.*