

The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

is dedicated to assist in maintaining the wonderful character of the Park and to support improvements and educational activities through fund raising.

The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park Newsletter is published four times a year and is viewable on the website. Distribution of the newsletter continues to be made at the Park and selected sites in North Scottsdale.

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 organization operating under the rules of the IRS. Tax deductible contributions supporting the Friends mission may be mailed to the address below or made through the website.

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park • PMB 288,
8711 E Pinnacle Peak Road • Scottsdale, AZ 85255
www.pinnaclepeakpark.com

Friends Adopt Two Streets in Scottsdale

Under the City of Scottsdale's Adopt-a-Road Program, The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park has adopted two streets in north Scottsdale. Marilyn Schrab provided the leadership for the first successful campaign in mid-March when about a dozen volunteers helped beautify Scottsdale. Coffee and goodies were provided by Starbucks at La Mirada.



Marilyn Schrab

The streets include North Pima Road from Pinnacle Peak Road to Happy Valley Road, and Pinnacle Peak Parkway, north of Alma School Road to the Park entrance.

The next campaign is being planned for October. Watch for announcements at the Park as well as on the website – www.pinnaclepeakpark.com

This Newsletter is published by the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park. We welcome participation in the form of story ideas, letters and comments.

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GAMBEL'S QUAIL TIDBITS

By Diane McCoy-Berney

shows interest in a female (hen) by nudging and prodding her. Courtship displays include head bobbing. This activity shows off his top knot; the feathered plume on top a red capped crown that is so obvious to human observers. Sometimes, the cock engages in "tidbitting", the process of offering food to a hen.

Time to Nest

Some of us may have seen a quail's nest in a flower pot or planter. In the natural Sonoran Desert however, she will scrape a slight indentation into the soil beneath a dense shrub and line it with natural material. Sometimes the hen chooses a protected rock crevice. Some sites are better concealed from raptors, reptiles and small mammal predators than others.

The hen may lay an egg every one or two days. Some nests contain few eggs while others may have as many as 20 eggs; possibly a result of more than one hen laying eggs in the same nest! All the while, the cock stands guard on high alert for danger. Once egg laying is complete, the hen incubates the eggs. If she falls prey, the cock will take over the incubation, thus enabling species survival!

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It is rare indeed to find a Sonoran Desert motorist who has not had cause to brake for a family of Gambel's quail running across a street. The quails' strong legs carry them to safety most times, even though the act of flying would decrease their risk. The fact is Gambel's quail prefer to run. The evolutionary result of this behavior is smaller, rounded wings that are used to take flight only in necessity. Even then, take-off is explosive and flight is low and of short duration.

Gambel's quail, are beautiful birds. By human standards, the plumage of an adult male makes him look like he is ready for a wedding: complete with hat and top knot, coat and tails, and a white shirt and a black buckle. The female also has a "feather plume", but she is less colorful, as is the case with most avian species. Newly hatched chicks are about one inch tall and covered in downy feathers.

The endearing, Gambel's quail is primarily a ground dwelling bird belonging in the family of New World Quail. Life spans vary, but some may live up to eight years.

Nature's Balance

Studies show that the amount of winter rainfall and resulting fresh green plant growth is directly related to quail mating, clutch size and offspring. Green plants are loaded with vitamin A. Quail obtain vitamin A from consuming fresh green plant life. Vitamin A is essential in the annual cycle of reproductive organ development of both sexes, leading to larger clutch size.

But what happens in drought years when fresh plant life is minimal? The diet would then consist of dry plant material yielding high levels of the trace mineral selenium. Such a diet, studies suggest, result in spontaneous abortion and diminished egg laying. Diet then, is a significant reason why we see fewer quail chicks during dry years.

Pairing Up

Those large gregarious quail coveys that are seen in winter start to form smaller groups as early as February. A male (cock)



PHOTO: CLAYTON ESTERSON

The Eggs

The oval-shaped quail eggs are about an inch long and are off-white with brown markings. Egg yolks are larger in precocial species in order to nourish a developing chick; a chick that is capable of leaving the nest within a few hours after hatching. Egg whites supply important minerals and moisture that keep the developing embryo from drying out during brooding. The actual incubation period lasts between 21 and 24 days. Toward the end of incubation, the egg shell begins to thin as the result of the embryo absorbing shell lime.

As hatching time nears, the chicks begin to peck and peep inside the egg. This serves as a stimulus for a synchronized hatch of nest siblings; usually within several hours. Hatching requires a great deal of energy; the chick must be able to peck holes in the egg's shell (a process called "pipping") while in a very cramped position. It uses an "egg tooth" to do so. The egg



tooth is a sharp point on the end of the chick's bill. Chicks peck a series of holes that form a straight-looking crack from which they emerge.

Ready, Set, Run!

Gambel's quail chicks must be ready for the world. Within hours of hatching and drying, parents coax their tiny chicks from the nest using their own special language.

The precocial chicks hatch with downy feathers and opened eyes. They are ready to run and imitate their parents as they look for food. At this early stage of growth and development they are confined to the ground and their diet includes protein-rich insects. They must also have an accessible water source and plant cover. At around three months, they are adult-size. In fall and winter, families of Gambel's quail are united and create large coveys, soon to begin a new spring cycle of pairing, nesting and hatching!

Special Note: For questions and assistance regarding abandoned or injured baby quail (or if all eggs don't hatch) please call Jeani Garrett of Arizona Covey (602) 996-1934. You have a chance at saving a life!

Sightings What to watch for

Probably the most important event that is greatly anticipated is the summer rains. Clouds will build and sometimes the rain will fall, but more importantly watch out for lightning. The rains can trigger a second wildflower bloom and breeding season for some mammals. Hummingbirds, building reserves for migration, and butterflies will be taking advantage of the flowers. Cactus fruits are ripening that birds, insects and some mammals will feed on. Early morning and evening will be your best bet for viewing wildlife. □

Early Inhabitants

By Matt Lucky



Archaeologists say the Hohokam lived in areas near the park. The Hohokam are known for the irrigation canals they created for farming. Although no canals were found near the park, pit houses, trash mounds, jars, bowls, grinding stones, and jewelry have been found near the park.

A pit house started with a hole in the ground about two feet deep and as big around as the builder wanted with most about ten to twelve feet across. Posts were set in the ground around the edges with a few in the middle. Brush from creosote bushes was piled up around the posts and over the top. When finished, the pit house was about four feet above ground. Sometimes the brush was plastered over with mud.

The Hohokam people disappeared leaving no evidence of what had caused their disappearance around 1400 AD. The name Hohokam translates as "vanished," as the civilization mysteriously disappeared without a trace. □

VOLUNTEER

Mark Johnston



Mark Johnston was the 2007 Volunteer of the Year at the Park. Despite his busy work schedule and the amount of business traveling he does, he still finds time to hike the trail and during the cooler months of the year he provides our Astronomy programs which are a must see. In addition, he also helps us with our Full Moon hikes adding interesting Moon facts to the tour. Mark has volunteered at the park for 5 years.

His interest in astronomy began when his father surprised Mark with a small telescope for Christmas when he was 11. The family had preplanned a trip to Florida leaving that afternoon, so he had to wait 10 days to try it out. Mark said "it drove me crazy with anticipation". When he set it up the first night he had no idea what was up, and by random chance stumbled across Saturn – a perfect view of the planet nestled in the ring system. He was hooked. Since then he's owned 6 telescopes, and has 2 now, one of which doubles as a terrific nature telescope.

He says there is always something new you can learn, and he enjoys sharing the hobby with others through informal educational programs and viewing sessions. Advances in technology have put the hobby in reach of everyone. Mark said "When you begin to understand how insignificant the Earth is in the grand scheme of the universe, it really puts any personal problems you have in perspective! I'm also exceptionally lucky to have a wife who is happy to come out and support me with my astronomy talks."

He does a lot of nature photography and has contributed many pictures to the park. The love of hiking, nature, photography, and helping people is what makes Mark one of the most valued volunteers here at the park. "Where else can you combine all that, get a great workout AND a tax deduction for the mileage?" Mark commented.

BE A VOLUNTEER



Temperatures tend to limit programs and events during the summer. Starting in late August we will be accepting applications for our Fall Volunteer Training Program that will start in late September. If you enjoy the trail and want to give something back this is a great opportunity. Volunteers can rove the trail, answer questions about the wildlife and plants, provide minor first aid, do research, give interpretive tours, trail maintenance and / or a variety of other interesting duties. The volunteer training is about 30 hours and covers all of the above subjects and much more. Please stop by and talk to the staff about the program and pick up an application. Become a city park volunteer.

Special thanks

and recognition for the many contributors to The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park (FOPPP) who support this volunteer organization with their time and generous donations.
2008

Saguaro (Benefactor) \$500+	Lisa Joseph
Shirley Michels	Robyn Lamont
Ocotillo (Patron) \$200-499	Michael J. White
Gerald Kirke, Jr.	Other
Compass Barrel (Family) \$75-199	John Davis
Carolyn Craig	Cindy Estes
Anthony J. Farrugia	Don Feeley
Horace H. Holcomb III	Eric Gantenbein
Dick Luther	M/M Jeffery Kerner
M/M Michael Morris	M/M John Little
Kim Ohlinger	M/M Maurice Lucky
Jolene Raub	M/M Robert Odem
Jack W. Sights	Charles J. Rupprecht
John Thomas	In-Kind Contribution
M/M Ed Welch	Starbuck's at La Mirada
Teddy Bear Cholla (Individual) \$50	Pintura Fine Arts, Scottsdale
Janet Aganad	Sassi Restaurant, Scottsdale