

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2021 Volume 36

Are Bats Good? You Bat-ter Believe It!

By Yvonne Massman and Challie Facemire

Bats have a (undeserved) bad reputation! Some people have even referred to them as flying rats! Unfair! They are amazing little mammals with adorably weird faces. They are the only mammal that can fly, and they use



Photo by Geoff Gallice

echolocation to find food and navigate. There are at least 1,300 species of bats in the world. The smallest of these is the Kitti's hog-nosed bat (*Craseonycteris thonglongyai*), and one

of the biggest (a megabat) is the golden-crowned flying fox (*Acerodon jubatus*).

At Pinnacle Peak Park the most common type of bat is the Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) but there are other bats that may roost in the park and definitely roost nearby. In the summer of 2019 these bats were detected at the nearby McDowell Sonoran Preserve:

- Western mastiff bat: *Eurmops perotis*
- Big/Pocketed free-tailed bat: *Nyctinomops* sp.
- Mexican free-tailed bat: *Tadarida brasiliensis*
- Pallid Bat: *Antrozous pallidus*
- Townsend's big-eared bat: *Corynorhinus townsendii*
- Western red bat: *Lasiurus blossevillii*
- Silver-haired bat: *Lasionycteris noctivagans*
- Western yellow bat: *Lasiurus xanthinus*
- California myotis: *Myotis californicus*
- Western small-footed myotis: *Myotis ciliolabrum*
- Cave myotis: *Myotis velifer*
- Canyon bat: *Parastrellus hesperus*

You should make the time to look all of these up! They are super cute!

Bats are amazing mammals. One of the unique features of bats is that they use echolocation when searching for food in the night. They make a high-

pitched sound and are able to tell where objects are from that sound bouncing off of the objects and back to the bat. A bat's face is specifically shaped like a satellite dish to make it easier for them to track the returning sounds.

Bats like to live in different places. The Pallid bat has three different places they like to hang out. In the day they like to be in a warm and vertical place, like on shutters or in attics. At night they like a much more open roost so they can hear what is going on. Near plants is exceptionally inviting. When they are hibernating in the winter, caves or the cracks in rocks are the desired location which makes Pinnacle Peak prime real estate.

Different bats also have different diets. Some eat fruit, some eat insects, others eat blood. The Pallid bat eats all sorts of insects, including scorpions. They sometimes eat lizards and rodents. Pallid bats are unique among bats in that they like to catch their prey on the ground instead of in the air. However, this also makes them very vulnerable to attack from predators like foxes, snakes, coyotes, cats, and other animals. To remain safe, they will strike upon their prey as quickly as possible, then take their meal somewhere safe to eat it. Kind of like bat "take-out."

The most likely time to see bats active is at dusk and throughout the night. They are nocturnal animals which means that they are busy when it's dark. Unfortunately, they can get sick, and are susceptible to rabies. If you see a bat out in the day do not touch it, but report its closest PK number location to park staff or a volunteer immediately. Bats that are out in the day are usually sick, and they might bite.

Just like all the native animals that call the park home, bats are an important part of the ecosystem for insect control and pollination. Thank you little flying bundles of fur!



Photo by Connor Long

Some Say Habitat, We Say Home

By Enzo Bonnette

Turns out Animals and Humans aren't that different. In fact, humans are animals! And believe it or not there's a lot that we share with our animal counterparts.

When a human sets out to look for a home, we get lost amongst amenities but if you were to strip the luxury of extra bathrooms, and walk-in closets you'd be left with several principles that coincide with what some TV networks would consider "house hunting". Prime location, safe and secure neighborhood, and for those planning to raise a family, a good school district. It also turns out that animals look for these same criteria when searching for their homes.

Below are two animals and how they utilize the above-mentioned criteria when searching for their own piece de resistance amongst the Peak.

Deer searching for prime real estate- Some would argue that the most crucial attribute to consider when house hunting is a prime location. Us humans love the idea of being close to our favorite restaurants, shopping centers, and parks. The Mule Deer couldn't agree more! The Mule Deer is the biggest animal here on the Peak that can be seen on a semi regular basis. For such big and vulnerable animals, it is crucial to locate prime real estate to bed down during hottest parts of the day. They will seek out high ground that provides cover from all angles which also provides them with the advantage of thermals and prevailing winds that would carry the scents of their surroundings to them. Since most deer will continuously bed in and around the same area during certain months it is crucial to find a location with ideal access routes to food and water. A good

example of this at Pinnacle Peak Park would be the area between PK28 and Y-CRACK climbing area. These corridors allow wildlife access through the park undetected from the surrounding golf courses to anywhere on the Peak.



Photo by Enzo Bonnette

Packrats installing security systems- These rodents are small, but by no means inferior. In a world where four-legged critters don't have access to Ring Doorbells and wall mounted security cameras they must rely on other methods of protection. One way they utilize the environment is by constructing their homes called Middens underneath and around dense and spiny trees and cacti to deter predators. A tool they will utilize to create a safer and more secure household is the Teddy Bear Cholla ball. These intimidating pieces of cactus will be dragged and strategically dropped around packrat middens in order to deter any nearby predators looking for a snack.

Believe it or not Humans utilize this very same technique when designing, constructing, and landscaping. Don't believe me? Next time you're at Scottsdale Road and North Kierland Boulevard facing East, look around and you can see cactus and prickly plants being utilized to not only illuminate the landscape by bringing a taste of the Sonoran Desert into an urban setting but also deterring pedestrians from crossing the street in dangerous areas and keeping them directed on walking paths!

If you Chew Gum, Please Chew Responsibly

By Theresa Abernathy and Tom Eye



Image: Hummingbird, unable to fly, stuck in littered chewing gum.

Many people who would never litter don't think twice about spitting out their chewing gum in nature.

However, this is littering. It can be harmful to the environment and to wildlife. Here are some not so fun facts about chewing gum:

- Most chewing gum has synthetic plastic as a base, made from petroleum and oil-based materials. It is not biodegradable and could take hundreds of years to decompose.
- Chewing gum is the second largest litter problem worldwide, following cigarette butts. Up to 90% of chewing gum is not properly disposed.
- Littered chewing gum can embed in fur or feathers, inhibiting movement of wildlife. Birds

and other wildlife may mistake gum for food.

They could choke or it could get stuck in their digestive system leading to death.

The staff and volunteers at Pinnacle Peak Park are dedicated to keeping the park clean and protecting the environment and wildlife. We continually clean up gum litter on and near the hiking trail. Please help by disposing of your gum properly and educating children that spitting out their gum in nature is littering and harmful to the environment and wildlife.

SOURCES:

1. Get-Green-Now.com; article "Environmental Impact of Chewing Gum"
2. "Here's What Makes Littering Bad for the Environment..." <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/why-littering-is-bad-for-the-environment>

Meet Tom Eye

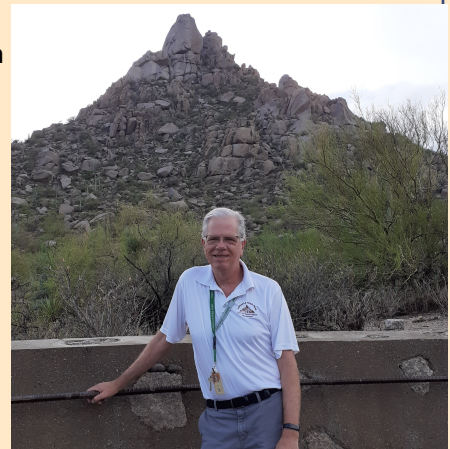
By Lisa Levey

If you have ever hiked Pinnacle Peak on a Sunday evening, you have probably met Tom Eye closing the trail for the night. He volunteers so frequently he has nearly 1,700 volunteer hours at the Park!

Tom and his wife Maureen moved to North Scottsdale from the Boston area in 2012, shortly after Tom retired. He started hiking at Pinnacle Peak Park several times a week and in the Fall of 2012 saw the sign for volunteer training and immediately signed up. "I had a long list of things I wanted to do during retirement, including volunteering, supporting my new community, learning about the desert, meeting new people, and getting into better physical shape. Being a volunteer at Pinnacle Peak Park checked off all those boxes." He found the volunteer training to be very helpful, covering desert plants, animals, geology, local history, and basic first aid. "We lived all over the country, but never in the Southwest with its unique and fragile desert environment. The volunteer training was so comprehensive and was a great start in learning about our new home." Tom got into the routine of volunteering on Tuesday morning, every Sunday for the closing sweep, and whenever extra help is needed. "Volunteering here is really a pleasure. You get to meet people from all over the country and throughout the world, answer questions, enjoy the natural beauty and views, get a workout, and assist hikers when they need help or first aid. The Park staff are truly dedicated, friendly, and amazing to work with."

In 2016, there was an opening for Treasurer on the board of the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park (FOPPP), a non-profit organization that supports Park activities, and Tom applied. "I thought it would be interesting to join the FOPPP board, to learn new skills and further support the Park. Being Treasurer means getting involved in almost every aspect of the Friend's work on behalf of the Park. All the Friend's board members are volunteers, and all are dedicated to maintaining Pinnacle Peak Park and making it an even more special place."

As you can see, Tom has been an asset to Pinnacle Peak Park through his volunteer work as well as his tenure as the Friend's Treasurer. We are grateful to have such a dedicated, hardworking contributor. Thank you Tom!



Tom Eye

Park Improvements Supported By the Friends of PPP

By Rick McNerney



Photo by Leona Weinstein

Over the last several years, the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park (FOPPP) have been involved in numerous projects designed to make visits to the park more enjoyable and informative. The planning, cost, and labor for these improvements has been underwritten through the FOPPP's fund-raising activities and generous public donations.

Some of the recently completed projects include:

*Purchase of a tracked, walk behind gas powered trail machine affectionately named the "Beast", which allows the transport of heavy construction materials up and down the trail.

*Installation of epoxy flooring in the Park's office, allowing for a cleaner work environment for staff and volunteers.

*Purchase of a high-volume water chiller and bottle filler.

*Installation of drainage holes at Grandview and Owl's Rest to eliminate standing water after storm events.

*Purchase and installation of trail benches, geology signs, ¼ mile signposts, wildlife information signs, and kiosks at the trailhead and end of trail.

*Purchase of 10 skull re-creations of indigenous fauna for hands-on educational programs.

*Purchase and installation of drop-down screen with an accompanying projector unit for visitor educational programs in the park's Ramada.

*Purchase and installation of native mesquite trees to create future shade at the Jomax Gate bench.

It is through your continued support of the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park that make these Park improvements possible. Thank you!

Pinnacle Peak Park Scheduled Activities:

Fri., 10/01/21	7-9PM - Astronomy Talk	Fri., 11/26/21	6-8PM - Astronomy Talk
Sat., 10/02/21	10AM-12PM - Southwest Wildlife	Thu., 12/30/21	6:15-8:15PM - Astronomy Talk
Sat., 10/16/21	10AM-12PM - Liberty Wildlife	Sat. 01/22/22	6:30-8:30PM - Astronomy Talk
Wed., 10/20/21	6-7PM - Full Moon Hike	Sat. 03/19/22	10AM-12PM - Wild at Heart
Sat., 10/30/21	10AM-12PM - Wild at Heart	Sat. 03/26/22	10AM-12PM - Liberty Wildlife
Sat., 10/30/21	6-8PM - Astronomy Talk	Sat. 04/02/22	10AM-12PM - Southwest Wildlife
Fri., 11/06/21	5:45-6:45PM - Sunset Hike	Sat 04/16/22	10AM-12PM - Phoenix Herpetological
Fri., 11/19/21	5:30-7:30PM - Full Moon Hike		

** Call the Pinnacle Peak Park main number at (480) 312-0990 or stop by the the park office to make reservations for the Astronomy Talk, Full Moon Hike, and Sunsite Hike. Registration begins one week prior to the activity, and registration for the astronomy talks beginst two weeks prior to the activity. Registration is limited to 4 people per activity.*

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

PMB 288
8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85255
www.foppp.com
info@foppp.org

Board Members

Lisa Levey, President	Eric Repec
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Tom Eye, Treasurer	Ex Officio:
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Paul Diefenderfer	Yvonne Massman

Editor/Designer: Challie Facemire

Contributors: Yvonne Massman, Challie Facemire,
Enzo Bonnette, Theresa Abernathy,
Tom Eye, Lisa Levey, and Rick McNerney