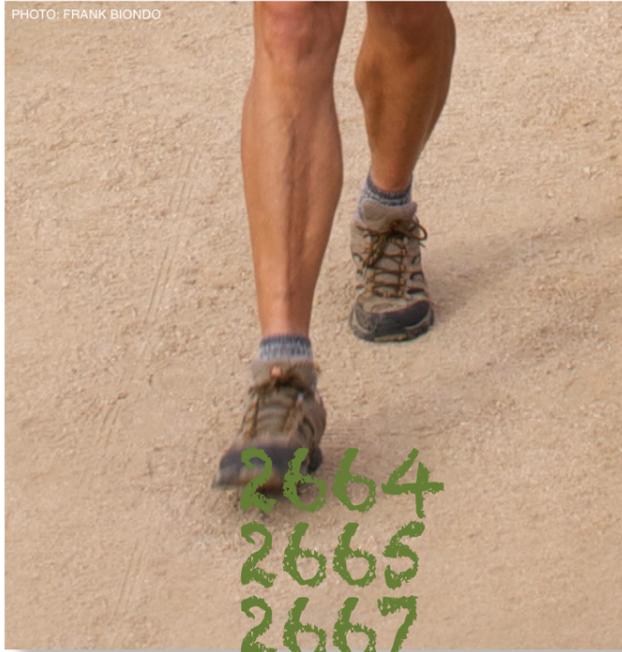


PHOTO: FRANK BIONDO



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VERDIN *desert bird*

By Joy Dingley

The cold rain is sleeting down and the backyard is nearly devoid of the usual birds; underneath a hummingbird feeder, one bird is busy still, hanging upside down searching for the tiny insects that the nectar attracts. Cold and wet though it is, the Verdin – desert bird through and through – isn't going to let a winter storm interrupt its busy schedule.

Busy is an apt adjective for this bird. You'll see them flitting quickly from one twig to another in their constant search for food. Primarily gray and only 4.5-inches long, you may find it difficult to get a good look at them without binoculars. Every now and then, one will stop at the top of a twig and have a look around. The heads of the adults show greenish yellow, and if you look carefully, you may see the tiny patch of chestnut on the shoulder. Juveniles, confusingly, are gray all over.

Verdins are as vocal as they are active. Their call is a sharp, repeated chip, which sounds somehow annoyed, as if they were scolding you. Their song has a completely different tone; three clear notes that sound to my ears like the phrase "Hi Sweetie."

A range map for this bird shows them as specialists of the Southwestern deserts, and associated with Mesquite trees. Their nests are round balls with a small hole in the side, often built at the end of a Mesquite or Palo Verde branch.

If you see a small gray bird flitting around your yard, pause to see if you are in the company of a Verdin. If you are lucky, he'll pause in his day to perch on a twig and look back at you.



Go green—sign up
to receive the
newsletter and
event announcements
by email at
www.PinnaclePeakPark.com

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 fundraising.

Tax deductible contributions to support the Friends mission may be mailed or made through the website

This Newsletter is published by the
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PMB 288 • 8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255

Send feedback and inputs to: Editor@MattLucky.com

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Telephone: 480-312-0990



PHOTO: FRANK BIONDO

2,669

CONSECUTIVE DAYS OF HIKING!

Many of you may recognize Eric Jones. He is a regular hiker at Pinnacle Peak Park, and we mean REGULAR as far as hiking goes! Beginning more than eight years ago on his birthday, November 23, Eric began hiking a minimum of three miles a day.

While not every one of his hikes has been at Pinnacle Peak – he has hiked in Canada, Mexico and many other states – Eric estimates at least 20 percent of his hiking takes place at the Park. It’s no wonder the trail crew of volunteers works so hard every Monday morning; he is wearing the trail out!

On March 15, 2011, with his support crew (wife, Janet) waiting at the trailhead, Eric hit a milestone (or should we say “miles stone?”) at Pinnacle Peak Park. His hike that day logged him in at 12,450.775 miles, or half the distance around the earth at the equator. Aside from the impressive distance, Eric accomplished 2,669 consecutive days of hiking!

Eric’s averages between four to seven miles each day, and has not let reaching his impressive goal stop him. He began the next half of his journey “around the world” at Pinnacle Peak Park the very next day!

Is this what all retired bankers from Ohio do?

By Yvonne Massman

Park Events



PHOTO: FRANK BIONDO

Wildlife Programs:

- Herpetological Society – Feb. 25 @ 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Liberty Wildlife – March 11 @ 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
- Herpetological Society – March 24 @ 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
- Southwest Wildlife – April 21 @ 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Astronomy Talks:

- January 21 @ 6:00 p.m.
- February 17 @ 6:30 p.m.
- March 16 @ 7:00 p.m.
- April 21 @ 7:30 p.m.

Full Moon Hikes:

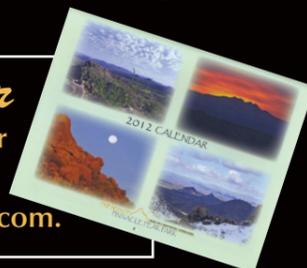
- February 7 @ 6:15 p.m.
- March 7 @ 6:30 p.m.
- April 4 @ 7:00 p.m.

10th Anniversary

Pinnacle Peak Park will celebrate its 10th anniversary the weekend of April 20 – 22, with various events and activities. Updated information of activities can be found on the website, or by contacting the Park Office at 480-312-0990.

Guided interpretive hikes are offered every day, except Mondays and Holidays, starting at 10:00 a.m. at the trailhead. No reservations are required, but check in at the Park Office to register. For more information about Pinnacle Peak Park, visit us online at pinnaclepeakpark.com or call 480-312-0990.

Order your 2012 Park Calendar online at pinnaclepeakpark.com.



The showpiece of Scottsdale’s Pinnacle Peak Park is a strikingly sculptured, towering rock formation. Many people suppose it to be a remnant of an ancient volcano, but it is not.

The rock it is made of – granite – has simply weathered into the shape you see, and it was once buried deeply in the Earth’s crust. How deep? Probably several miles, at least. That granite cooled down from a molten state almost a billion and a half years ago, when it lay underneath a completely different landscape than that of today. The proof of its origin is in the large crystals to be seen in the rock. Crystals have internal molecular structure, and are not necessarily colorless and sparkly!

Most of the granite is a mineral called feldspar, and it forms the small tan or cream-colored angular shapes you see up close. Over a vast stretch of time, the granite was exposed by erosion. Cracks that had formed in it – many of which are nearly vertical – allowed for advanced weathering; the shape of Pinnacle Peak you see now is just a result of that process. Other granite in the area also has the same general blocky appearance. Some of it even forms giant, leaning boulders of rubble on the hillsides, differing from that nice, spire-like mountain you see.

Shapes in the world around us are not always what they appear to be! Learn more at gemland.com/pinnaclepeak.htm.

By Richard Allen



PHOTO: FRANK BIONDO

GEOLOGY of PINNACLE PEAK

Please help support the Friends mission

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Contribution Category (circle one) Jojoba \$40 • Teddy Bear \$50 • Compass Barrel \$75 • Ocotillo \$200-499 • Saguaro \$500+

My check payable to Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park for \$ _____ is enclosed.

You may contribute using Friends website www.pinnaclepeakpark.com, or by mailing your check to:

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