

Canyon



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Current Answers to Common Questions from Visitors to Sabino Canyon

Flora and Fauna— (Adapted in part from the Southern Arizona Nature Almanac). Rather than being a month of dramatic change, September brings a “restlessness” to Sabino Canyon. Days continue to be sunny and hot, but as the monsoon rains (erratic as they were) end and as the breeding of animals and the growth of plants wanes, preparations begin for migrations and the coming of fall drought and winter cold. Especially in early September, only a trace of coolness may tempt us in the early morning, but the hot sun remains very much a fixture later in the day. In the canyon and elsewhere in the area, two “favorite fliers” are tanking up for migrations southward. Bat and hummingbird numbers increase as fliers that spent the summer further north are stopping off for re-fueling. Broad-billed and rufous hummingbirds are sure visitors, some of which stay-on for the winter. Nectar-feeding bats in September are said to be mostly females with new juvenile offspring who are heading for Mexico to join the previously departed males. Of course, the insect-eating bats, who have helped manage the insect population throughout the summer, are also preparing to leave. Day-by-day, as October approaches, fall begins to work its way down into the Canyon. Summer’s creeks cease to flow and leaves dry out and rustle in fitful breezes, bringing a hint of fall.

Weather— Average September temperatures are 94 degrees maximum, 67 degrees minimum. Precipitation averages 1.34 inches. July and August had the second highest temperatures on record, and in September hot and dry is the typical trend. Days of 100 degrees are rarer, but can still occur. In the desert, summer is still very much with us! Except for a rain of 2 inches in August, the summer monsoon was very meager, and the yearly rainfall is less than 40% of last year.

Sabino Creek— Despite rainfall totals that are far below average, Sabino Creek is flowing surprisingly well, at (reportedly) 33.2 cubic feet per second (cfs) and four times the normal flow. Better monsoon rains in the mountains may be the reason why.

Trail Information—All trails are open in the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area and nearby foothills. The Canyon Road is open to all authorized traffic (e.g. bicycles, walkers, shuttles) to its end at mile point 3.8 at Stop 9. The Shuttle provides service to Stop 9, departing every hour from 9:00 to 4:30 every day. The cost is \$8 for adults for the 50-minute circuit. The Bear Canyon shuttle is running hourly from 9:00 to 4:00 every day for \$3.

Repairs and renovations—At Stops 3 and 5, removal of existing walls and replanting will take place on National Public Lands Day, September 24. A forest thinning project is being completed on Mt. Lemmon across from the Palisades Visitor Center, at Spencer Canyon , and at Mt. Bieglow.

Wildlife Sightings—Josh Taiz, Forest Service District Wildlife Biologist, reports that mountain lion sightings were at a low level during the summer. A deer carcass discovered in the Canyon was from an assault by a lion, but most lion activity was higher in the mountains.

Website—SCVP now has our own website: www.scvptucson.org

The Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists website – www.scvntucson.org - has some information and links that may be helpful to patrol members. Further information on Sabino Creek hydrology and temperature can be found at sahra.arizona.edu/sabinocanyon

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