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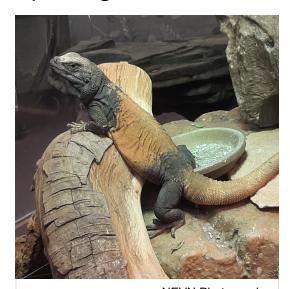
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Valley hikers, bikers can see strange creatures while exploring the desert

Cameron Langston



NEVN Photography (https://nevalleynews.org/staff_name/nevnphotography/)

a three-year old chuckwalla lizard at CNUW at SCC

(https://nevalleynews.org/staff_name/cameron-langston/), Reporter January 7, 2023

Arizona hosts some of the most unusual creatures in the U.S. and many can be seen by hikers and bikers using the numerous desert trails surrounding Phoenix.

A number of interesting creatures can be observed from the Brown's Ranch trail, and others, at Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve

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Valley hikers, bikers can see strangecreatures while exploring the desettoring-(https://nevalleynews.org/17308/news/walle hikers-bikers-can-see-strange-creatureswhile-exploring-the-desert/)

Arizona hosts some of the most unusual creatures in the U.S. and many can be seen by hikers and bikers ... (https://twitter using the numerous desert trails surrounding trails and trails are not trails and trails and trails are numerous desert trails are numerous deser

Barrett Jackson, MAG Auctions, others; an

offer car collectors a variety of options during Scottsdale Auction Week creatures (https://nevalleynews.org/17301/news/barre jackson-mag-auction-company-othersoffer-car-collectors-a-variety-of-options with the control of the during-scottsdale-auction-week/) For more than five decades, Valley car enthusias

have anticipated their opportunity to browse the offerings and perhaps even purchase one of the many unique automobiles offered at the annual Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale car auction.

Rebuilding and reinforcing a franchise alleyne the Arizona Coyotes and the Buffallorsbikers-can-Sabres

(https://nevalleynews.org/17268/sports/rebi and-reinforcing-a-franchise-the-arized haes covotes-and-the-buffalo-sabres/) exploring-The Arizona Coyotes matched up with a simitary sitting foe Saturday night—the Buffalo Sabres desertif? both franchises in rebuilding mode.

A Valley tradition: ZooLights presents several new experiences in 2022/23 (https://nevalleynews.org/17265/news/avalley-tradition-zoolights-presentsseveral-new-experiences-in-2022-23/)

(https://www.wgradedowellesonoran.org/). The 30,500-acre preserve is 4-Down Territory Ep 22-12 The considered the largest urban parkery the kerrs can see strange. Great Strange while

(https://nevaileynews.org/17260/audio/4^{2-rg)} down-territory-ep-22-12-the-bowlnanza-show/)

This week the gang's all here to wrap up the college football season with our "Bowlnanza Show".

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Preserve Director, Kroy Ekblaw talked to Northeast Valley News about some of the wildlife that resides within the preserve.

"There have been numerous sightings at Brown's Ranch of the common-side blotched lizard, regal horned lizard, Gila monster, and the Sonoran Desert tortoise," Ekblaw said.

According to Ekblaw, Gila monster sightings are actually quite rare since Arizona's largest lizard spends most of its time underground.

Even though Gila monsters (https://www.britannica.com/animal/Gilamonster) are one of only two kinds of venomous lizards in North America and should be considered dangerous, they move quite slowly (1.5 mph max.) and rarely bite humans.

The desert tortoise

(https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/nongamemanagement/tortoise/) is another unique resident found near the Brown's Ranch trail. They spend most of their time in shelters, venturing out to eat and breed. You are most likely to see them during the monsoon season and they can live 50 to 80 years.

The regal horned lizard is a common prey animal of coyotes. What this flat, stubby-legged lizard lacks in speed and elusiveness, it makes up for with a bizarre defense mechanism.

When attacked, it has the ability to squirt blood from its eyes. (https://www.odditycentral.com/animals/this-lizard-shoots-blood-out-of-its-eyes-to-keep-predators-at-bay.html)

The lizard aims for the eyes and mouth of whatever is trying to eat it.

The blood spray can cause burning of the eyes and leave a foul taste in the mouth of potential predators.

Darrell Woolf curates the live animal exhibit at Scottsdale Community College and weighed in on his choice for curious Arizona critter during an interview at the school's Center for Urban and Native Wildlife.

Woolf told Northeast Valley News that Arizona's second largest lizard, the chuckwalla (https://www.britannica.com/animal/chuckwalla), has a unique way of communicating.

"They kinda show themselves off on top of boulders...they're funny because they'll bob their heads at each other, trying to set out territory or attract females," Woolf said. "It's a very noticeable behavior, so that's a great thing to see on a hike."

According to Woolf, chuckwallas also have a unique way of defending

themselves/byelvedgingetheir body deep in a rock crevice and inflating ta lungs, making it difficult falley hikers, bikers can see strange creatures while place.

Woolf recommends the second edition of A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona (https://www.mesacc.edu/news/pressrelease/mcc-life-sciences-professor-co-authors-book-arizonaamphibians-and-reptiles) to outdoor enthusiasts seeking to positively identify the fascinating creatures they'll find while exploring the desert terrain. The book was co-written by Mesa Community College professor Dr. Andrew Holycross.



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