



## DESERT ANIMALS

We live in the Sonoran Desert and there are many wild animals in the area and in our communities. It really is quite a treat to live in an environment that supports a wide diversity of wild life, but we all have to be aware of our wildlife friends and their behavior.

We have both venomous and non-venomous snakes in the area. It is fairly common to see snakes in the spring and autumn in our community. It is not safe, however, to kill any of these snakes. You may actually put yourself in danger of a snake bite if try to kill a rattlesnake. Besides, snakes were actually in this environment first and they can be beneficial. For example, snakes help keep the rodent population down and they will not hurt you if you leave them alone.

If you do get bitten by a snake call 9-1-1 and try to identify the snake and its markings. If you would like the snake removed from your property because it's venomous (or if you're not sure), call 9-1-1. Residents in the Drexel Heights Fire District will have firefighters dispatched who will safely remove the snake from your property. The snakes are not destroyed; they are re-released into a similar habitat region that is safe for them

Gila Monsters is one very special lizard and is the only lizard that you should be wary of in Arizona. This beautiful animal is protected in Arizona and it is illegal to disturb it. If you come across one, admire it and leave it alone. It is relatively slow moving and will not harm you if you keep your distance.

Coyotes are another regular visitor in our desert environment. They are wild and should be admired from a distance. Typically they will keep their distance from humans and they don't represent any danger to us. However, they do present a danger to house pets. Be careful not to let your pets stray too far from your residence.

Javelina's look like wild pigs and they usually travel in a herd. Like all wild animals you should not feed them as this will only encourage them to come back and less able to cope in the wild. Javalinas can be aggressive when they encounter humans especially when in the presence of a juvenile Javalina. They have very poor eyesight and rely on their sense of smell. If you encounter a Javalina, the best course of action is to stand still until they pass.

Mountain Lions and Bobcats are also indigenous to the area. Mountain Lions are a top predator and caution needs to be maintained as they are dangerous to humans. If you see a Mountain Lion in the area report it to Arizona Game & Fish. Bobcats are more common and present a danger to house pets but not generally to humans.