

# WELLSPRING NEWS

## Summer 2021

Published by the Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. (FOAC)

Tucson, Arizona

### From the President

Dear Friends of Agua Caliente Park,

We are excited to be coming out of the isolation of the pandemic and to see education programs returning to the park. If you are interested in volunteering at the park for education or other activities, please look for the section in this newsletter that explains more about volunteering training dates. We really appreciate the continued support of our community to help support this park.

The county has recently completed some repairs to the main gate, parking lot, and walking pathways. Plans for enhancement of Pond 2, including a nature and birding trail, continue through the review process. We are pleased to support the county's plans for this work and grateful to be able to do this through your donations. This coming fiscal year (Oct 1, 2021 – Sept 30, 2022) we will be supporting some renovations in the Ranch house and continuing to support the County's excellent education program. Specifically, the board of FOAC recently approved a budget for fiscal year 2022 of \$29,950 to be spent in the following ways:

- i. Park Expenses. \$14,600: \$12,600 for Nature Trail if not accomplished in this fiscal year (FY21), Ranch House storage shelf (\$100), Ranch House Welcome Center for chairs, couch, etc. where Audubon shop used to be (\$1,400), and the new Park Ambassador Program (\$500).
- ii. Lecture Series and school program materials (\$3,550).
- iii. Viewing Guides/Bird Lists and support for the *Living River of Words: Youth Poetry and Art Contest*. (\$3,000).
- iv. We are very excited about a new scholarship program that we will try this year. We have committed (\$5,000) to award to college bound Seniors from the two Tanque Verde Valley high schools, Sabino High School and Tanque Verde High School. We will announce more details regarding this program in the fall.

Also, be on the look out for a celebration we hope to have in October 2021 to commemorate the work that was completed for Pond 1 and the bridge. We'll let you know the details as we get closer to October, and look forward to seeing you there!

**Pam Rossetter**  
**FOAC President**

## Nature Corner: Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

Have you ever seen a bobcat? If so, lucky you! They are very secretive. Bobcats are quite active in April and May when they are busy seeking a mate. They share territory that overlaps with other bobcats.

Bobcats weigh about 15-30 lbs. and they stand about 2 feet high. They are tawny brown in summer and light gray in the winter. Their long fur along the jowls tapers to a point at the cheeks. Their ears are triangular, tipped with short black hair and a prominent white spot on the back. A short stubby tail with a black tip helps differentiate them from sightings of domestic or feral felines or even mountain lions. Their underside is white.

These cats can live 10-15 years. Males are larger than the females. They like to live among rocky breaks, canyons, hollow logs, protected thickets and like to cool off in protected patios. Being cats, bobcats are carnivores and will eat rabbits, mice, birds, rats, snakes, and lizards. You might be able to see where they have been by looking for characteristic scratch marks, as they use scratching trees and posts leaving claw marks 2-3 feet up. They also mark them with urine.

Females breed after two years and usually give birth to one to three kittens. Kittens are born with fur and spots and their eyes open in 10 days. When mom goes out to hunt for food, babies cry out for her at night. She weans them at eight weeks and they then begin hunting with mom. At seven months, she leaves



Bobcat at Agua Caliente Park

Photo courtesy of FotoFauna

them so she can mate again.

There is a lot of interest right now among wildlife biologists in the status of bobcats living along the Urban/Wildlands interface in Tucson. One ongoing study conducted by the Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center is seeking photos of bobcats from people around Tucson. They are interested in the behavior of bobcats and in the attitudes that people in and around Tucson have to bobcats. To answer their survey questions, see interesting information from their study, and to upload bobcat pictures you have taken of bobcats in your area, visit this site <https://bobcatsintucson.net>.

Another group conducting surveys of bobcats and other wildlife in the area is Sky Island Alliance. You can visit <https://skyislandalliance.org/our-work/wildlife-program/sky-island-fotofauna> to learn how to participate in FotoFauna (FOAC is a partner in this project) and to learn

more about wildlife in the Sky Islands that we are a part of.

**Judy Gray**  
Naturalist

### Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. Board of Directors

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Org

## Lizards of Agua Caliente Park

The summer heat is on, and as many animals hide from the heat, most lizards come out. There are whiptails, zebra tails, spiny, horned, ornate, side-blotches, and even Gila monsters as long as it's not too hot. These lizards vary in their lifestyles and sensitivity to temperatures; but as ectotherms, most are restricted by cold temperatures and active when it is warm to downright hot.

Gila monsters remain underground for most of the year, coming out a few hours a day from April through November to feast on eggs of birds and reptiles, lizards, nesting birds, mammals, and sometimes carrion. They prefer temperatures around 85° F, avoiding extremes by hiding underground. Like humans, they tend to avoid extreme heat.



**Gila Monster**

Photo courtesy of Doug Seigel



**Zebra-tailed Lizard**

Photo courtesy of Doris Evans

Zebra-tailed and greater earless lizards prefer it hot, with body temperatures between 100-109° F. When other lizards are hiding from the heat, they are out looking for ground arthropods to eat and avoiding predators such as roadrunners. They maintain their body temperatures by moving in and out of the shade, and changing their body posture.



**Regal Horned Lizard**

Photo courtesy of Doris Evans

Regal horned lizards feed on ground arthropods, but their preferred food around here are harvester ants. Since ants are small and nutrient poor (being mostly comprised of indigestible chitin), horned lizards need to eat a lot of them! They have much larger stomachs than other lizards which helps them digest hundreds of ants per day. Horned lizards try to keep their body temperature around 100° F, important for digestion. If threatened by predators, they may squirt foul-tasting blood from their eyes a distance of up to 3.5 feet!

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Common side-blotched lizards prefer temperatures around 98° F. They also feed on ground-dwelling arthropods, mostly in the mornings, retreating to the shade when it gets too hot. Males come in three varieties, 1) the blue-throated “regular macho types” that keep a small territory with one female, 2) the orange-throated “muy macho types” that keep harems and steal females from the blue-throated males, and 3) the yellow-throated mild-mannered “sneakers”, that look like females, therefore deceiving the orange and blue types and sneak mating with the females. Check out this great PBS video to learn more:



**Common Side-blotched Lizard** Photo courtesy of Doris Evans

<https://bit.ly/2TNekSc>

Sonoran spotted and tiger whiptails roam through the leaf-litter looking for arthropods to eat. They prefer mid-temperatures, keeping to the shade and active in the mornings when the days get too hot. The Sonoran spotted is one of our parthenogenetic lizard species made up of all females. They simply lay eggs, typically in July, that are their clones. The tiger whiptails have both sexes and are active from March through October.



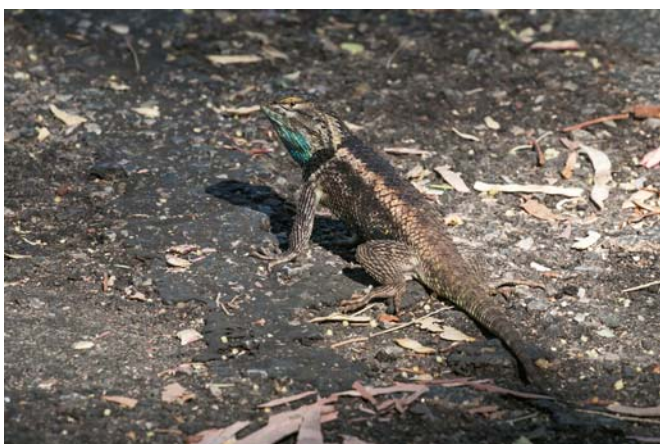
**Sonoran Spotted Whiptail** Photo courtesy of Doris Evans

Ornate tree lizards, or lagartija de árbol norteña in México, hint at the preferred life above ground, especially trees, where they spend most of their time hunting for small arthropods, setting up territories and looking for mates. Males are highly territorial often seen doing push-ups and showing their blue bellies as a display. They are widespread and active most of the year when warm enough, but keep close to trees, walls, fences and other vertical structures, which they can climb. They sometimes fall prey to the desert spiny lizards.



**Ornate Tree Lizard** Photo courtesy of Bill Kaufman

Desert and Clark’s spiny lizards are stocky hunters of arthropods. They can be found both on the ground and on tree branches. They are active from spring to fall. When threatened, they prefer running up a tree branch as an escape route, but will also hide using packrat dens or crevices along rocks. The desert spiny will sometimes hunt smaller lizards.



**Desert Spiny Lizard** Photo courtesy of Bill Kaufman

Pima County staff are leading lizard walks at Agua Caliente Park on July 2, July 24, August 14, and August 28. All programs are from 7:30-9:00 a.m. To register, visit <https://apm.activecommunities.com/nrpr>.

**Axhel Muñoz, Pima County NRPR**

## Volunteer Opportunities

The Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation (NRPR) Environmental Education team will be leading training sessions for the following volunteer positions:

**Greeters** welcome visitors, direct visitors to tour or program staging areas, answer other general questions, distribute bird lists and brochures.

**Ranch House Docents** greet visitors and lead informal tours of the Agua Caliente Historic Ranch House interpreting the historic buildings, cultural history, and natural resources at Agua Caliente Park through time.

**Tour Guides** lead formal, scheduled Historical Tours of the Park for the general public, organized groups, and special events.

**Park Ambassadors** interact with visitors, provide information, directions, and advise visitors of rules and procedures. Ambassadors act as additional eyes for NRPR, reporting issues and may clean up trash, remove invasive species, or assist with minor trail maintenance.

Interested individuals should submit a volunteer application. Click on the application link or copy and paste this URL in your browser [https://bit.ly/EE\\_VolunteerApp](https://bit.ly/EE_VolunteerApp). Please indicate that you are an FOAC member in the “How did you hear about this volunteer opportunity?” comment section.

## Electronic Newsletter

Sending the newsletter electronically saves *FOAC* postage and you receive it in color. If you did not receive an electronic version and would like to be placed on the electronic distribution, please send an email to:

[info@friendsofaguacaliente.org](mailto:info@friendsofaguacaliente.org).

We do not release our database to anyone.

## Membership

Join Friends of Agua Caliente! Thank you to all of our loyal supporters. If you have not yet renewed, please consider supporting FOAC. Our ability to support the Park with funding and items they cannot normally purchase is tremendous and we owe it all to you.

As of July 1, 2021, we have 324 supporters for the 2020-21 year and through your generosity, we have raised \$30,268 this fiscal year.

FOAC is a 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit and donations are tax deductible.

Membership is based on:

Individual \$15

Family \$25

Organization \$50

Donation (any amount appreciated)

Please send name, address, and email along with a check to Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc., PO Box 32005, Tucson, AZ 85751-2005. You can also securely support FOAC with PayPal or Credit Card from our website.

Your dedication to the Park and FOAC is greatly appreciated. We cannot do what we do without you!

**Jim Knoll**  
**Membership**

## FOAC Scholarship

At the May 2021 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to offer up to \$5,000 in scholarships to one or more graduating seniors to attend any community or state college. Students graduating from Tanque Verde High School and Sabino High School will be able to apply this fall (September/October) and awards will be announced by May 2022. Further information will be available in the coming months. For additional information, you can email FOAC at [scholarship@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org](mailto:scholarship@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org)

## **Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.**

P.O. Box 32005

Tucson, AZ 85751-2005

### **Social Media**

If you want to get a glimpse of some amazing wildlife that call the Southwest home, Agua Caliente Park is a great place to visit.

Visit our Facebook page and website to see photos of some of the Park visitors. We encourage you to share your photos of Agua Caliente Park and stories about your fun experiences with us via Facebook Messenger or send an e-mail to [tinabaker@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org](mailto:tinabaker@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org) and we will share your photos to our Facebook page or website. To find us on Facebook, search “Friends of Agua Caliente Tucson” within Facebook or access us from our website.

We also have videos of the Park and events on YouTube. Subscribe for updates on new videos and events.

Our YouTube Channel can be accessed from our website or search “Friends of Agua Caliente” from within YouTube. The website can be accessed at <https://friendsofaguacaliente.org/>

Along with the key history of FOAC & Agua Caliente Park, the website includes information regarding significant issues affecting the Park, and links to other websites.

**Tina Baker**  
**Social Media**