

Copper Queen Library will offer game cams to track wildlife

May 15, 2024

By Shar Porier



Black bears, Gould turkeys, cougars and javalinas may be found in the hills and valleys of the Mule Mountains at different times of the year. To track the mystery animals who frequent backyards, Copper Queen Library has partnered with the Sky Island Alliance to help with their effort to catalogue the critters – photos by Sky Island Alliance

BISBEE — Ever wonder who or what roams your yard at night? A new partnership with Sky Island Alliance means Copper Queen Library patrons will be able to help track wildlife with an outdoor game camera.

On Tuesday, May 22, at 5:30 p.m., patrons can learn about the SIA community science initiative called FotoFauna and add Bisbee to the list of communities with a growing network of wildlife cameras. They will be able to observe the occurrence and seasonal movements of species in the Sky Islands of the U.S.

Eamon Harrity, SIA Wildlife program manager and data analyst, will lead the discussion on how to borrow and use cameras from the library and how the new data will help protect wildlife of the borderlands.

Called FotoFauna kits, patrons can check out one of the kits for one month and the photos will provide important information in this citizen science project. Participants will receive a camera kit with instructions on where and how to set up the camera. When the time is up, people then submit an online monthly checklist of the species observed and return the camera to the library.

The library has many books for adults and families to learn more about the beautiful wildlife that call Bisbee home, whether temporary or permanent. From javalina to Gila monsters, these animals play crucial roles in maintaining the ecological balance of unique desert climate, Harrity said.

“FotoFauna harnesses the power of volunteer–operated wildlife cameras throughout the Sky Island region,” according to Harrity.

By combining the data received on a species' presence or absence, SIA will be able to measure:

- The seasonal changes in wildlife movement for migratory species, like the elf owl, turkey vulture and gray hawk.
- The success of urban-adapted species that live near human development, like coyote, bobcat, greater roadrunner, cottontail species and striped skunk.
- The landscape accessible to wide–ranging species that require connected Sky Island habitats, like mountain lions, black bears, pronghorns, mule deer and white–tailed deer.
- The persistence of species unique to the Sky Island region, including the antelope jackrabbit, Gould’s turkey and Gila monster.
- The northern range limit of subtropical species, including the white-nosed coati, North Mexican Virginia opossum, javelina, hooded skunk and hog-nosed skunk.
- The presence of species that need undeveloped open space to thrive, including the ringtail, American badger and Western spotted skunk.

The library has also built up a collection of books on Arizona’s desert wildlife to help with identification of the various species, their environments and the role they play in the mountainside and valley habitats.

For information, call the library at 520-432–4232.