



Hassayampa River Preserve, Wickenburg, AZ

**SEASONAL NATURE GUIDE**

**AUGUST**

**SEPTEMBER**

**OCTOBER**

**NOVEMBER**

**DECEMBER**

**PLANTS**

- **Blooms:** sacred datura, desert & tree tobaccos (both can bloom year-round in warm years), yerba mansa
- **Fruit:** figs, cacti
- Garden blooms again after monsoons & cooldowns

- Blooms: cowpen daisy, datura, tobaccos, seepwillow, desert broom
- Fruit: figs, CA fan palm fruit forms & starts to ripen by end of month
- Wet monsoons & tropical moisture '2<sup>nd</sup> spring'

- Blooms: lingering flowers through early fall
- Fruit: CA fan palm fruit ripens, hackberries
- Fall color: willows & mulberries at peak Oct-Nov
- Tropical moisture can cause '2<sup>nd</sup> spring' growth

- Blooms: lingering flowers from Sep, elderberries after wet seasons, seepwillow
- Fruit: palms, figs, elderberries (wet seasons)
- Fall color: peak for willows, mulberries, figs, cottonwoods (early)

- Blooms: tree tobacco, seepwillow
- Fruit: palms, figs, elderberries, mistletoe
- Fall color: cottonwoods usually peak late Nov-early Dec, sometimes late Dec
- Most plants bare

**ANIMALS**

- Most birds are done nesting by late Aug-early Sep \*Yellow-billed cuckoo, white-winged dove, Lucy's warbler, most flycatchers leave by end of month
- Fall bird migration heats up (hummingbirds, songbirds, shorebirds)
- More hatches of insects
- Tarantulas wandering
- Reptile babies

- Peak fall migration for vultures, hawks, insectivores; vermilion flycatchers leave mid-month
- Animal activity less restricted by heat
- More hatches of insects after wet monsoons, tropical moisture
- Reptiles & amphibians still common, young around

- Fall bird migration continues (waterfowl, late insectivores, sparrows, & blackbirds arrive)
- Rare eastern songbirds late Sep-early Nov
- Birds & mammals feeding on palm fruit (ringtails, etc)
- Reptiles & insects still common until cold snaps
- Late season dragonflies, butterflies

- Birds & mammals feeding on palm fruit (bluebirds, waxwings, ringtails, raccoons, foxes, skunks)
- Rare thrushes & northern finches possible during irruption years
- Fewer reptiles & insects with cooler weather
- Small winter population of monarch butterflies arrives
- Mud turtles at springs

- Pocket gophers actively digging after wet weather in late fall/early winter
- Bluebirds & waxwings feed on early mistletoe fruit
- Birds & mammals still feeding on palm fruit
- Insectivorous birds linger until leaves drop
- Deer, javelinas, foxes, coyotes, bobcat seen
- Insects rare

**WEATHER**

- Low temps: 60-80s
- High temps: 90-110s
- Extreme heat in hottest years, humid along the river
- Monsoon storms continue, irregular rain

- Low temps: 50-70s
- High temps: 80-100s
- Lingering summer heat gradually cools down
- Monsoons end, occasional tropical moisture

- Low temps: 40-60s
- High temps: 70-90s
- Can still be warm or hot, but usually cooling down
- Occasional tropical rains, storms from the north

- Low temps: 30-40s
- High temps: 60-80s
- Pleasant weather with cooldowns
- Irregular rain from the north, snow in mountains

- Low temps: 20-30s
- High temps: 50-70s
- Dec-Jan coldest season, Palm Lake can freeze during 'Arctic blasts'
- Possible rain, rare snow



**Catclaw Acacia**



**Blue Palo Verde**



**Yerba Mansa**



**Sacred Datura**



**Tree Tobacco**



Hassayampa River Preserve  
49614 U.S. Hwy. 60 89  
Wickenburg, AZ 85390  
Phone: (602) 506-2930 ext. 9  
maricopa.gov/parks

**JANUARY****FEBRUARY****MARCH****APRIL****MAY****JUNE****JULY****PLANTS**

- Leaf sprout: elderberry, cottonwood (early) & willow (early)
- Most trees leafless by now
- Fruit: mistletoe, CA fan palms (lingering)
- Flowers rare
- Duckweed along the river

- Leaf sprout & flowering: cottonwoods, yerba mansa, willows (early)
- Full foliage on elderberries
- Green understory with grasses & early wildflowers (wet winters)

- Leaf sprout & flowering: willows, yerba mansa, elderberries (flowering), mesquites (early)
- Fruit/seed release: cottonwood 'fluff'
- Native wildflowers begin blooming in the garden

- Leaf sprout & flowering: mesquites, elderberries (flowering), paloverdes, acacias, cacti, ocotillos, yerba mansa, wildflowers
- Fruit/seed release: willow 'fluff' (early)
- Garden blooms at the peak

- Blooms: saguaro and other cacti, ironwood, mesquites, paloverdes, acacias, desert willow, yerba mansa
- Fruit/seed release: willow 'fluff', elderberries, mulberries
- Grass and forbs dried out

- Blooms: desert willow, CA fan palms, mesquites (late)
- Fruit/seed release: saguaro, mesquites, paloverdes, acacias
- Understory plants dry
- Drought stress leaf drop on cottonwood, elderberry

- Blooms: CA fan palms (continued), queen of the night cactus (late Jul-early Aug), sacred datura, yerba mansa
- Fruit: mesquites, paloverdes, acacias, cacti, figs

**ANIMALS**

- Pocket gophers active after rains (herons and bobcats hunt them too!)
- Birds and mammals feed on lingering palm fruit & new mistletoe berries
- Insects scarce
- Woodpeckers territorial
- Leopard frogs start mating
- Anna's hummingbird usually only winter

- Early butterflies, mayflies, bees, tree crickets, & other insects
- Breeding season begins for hummingbirds, woodpeckers, thrashers, gnatcatchers, phainopeplas, sparrows
- Phainopeplas, bluebirds, & waxwings still eating mistletoe fruit

- Return of hawks, vultures, hummingbirds, vermilion flycatcher, Bell's vireo, Lucy's and yellow warblers.
- Hummingbirds, raptors, waterfowl, hawks, woodpeckers, verdins, wrens, sparrows nesting
- More insects emerging
- Early reptiles active (lizards, snakes, turtles)

- Return of lesser nighthawk, summer tanager, yellow-breasted chat, hooded oriole
- Bird migration, nesting heats up; bats return
- Lizards and snakes emerge, Apr-May best time to see Gilbert's skink
- Butterflies, dragonflies, bees, tarantula hawk wasps

- Return of white-winged doves, SW willow and brown-crested flycatchers, tropical kingbird
- Peak songbird migration (check mulberry fruit for rarities!)
- More baby birds, insects emerging
- The best time to see reptiles before the summer heat comes

- Yellow-billed Cuckoos last of breeders to return
- Hawks and many songbirds have fledglings. Some songbirds doing 2<sup>nd</sup> nesting attempts
- Animals active when cooler, desert species coming down to the river
- Cicadas, giant mesquite bugs, fig-eater beetles

- Cicadas, fall webworms
- Yellow-billed cuckoos nest
- Baby lizards and birds everywhere
- Monsoon toad species breed in puddles
- 1<sup>st</sup> southbound/fall migrant birds (hummingbirds, songbirds)
- Later season dragonflies emerge with monsoons
- Animals still avoiding heat

**WEATHER**

- Low temperatures (°F): 20-30s
- High temps: 50-70s
- Rain and rare snow in wet years
- Palm Lake frozen during extreme cold snaps

- Low temps: 20-40s
- High temps: 50-70s
- Occasional cold fronts with drizzling, steady rains. \*Late winter rains & the late summer monsoons are the 2 main wet seasons

- Low temps: 30-50s
- High temps: 60-80s
- Rain and snow in headwaters may cause flooding in wet years
- Generally pleasant weather from Mar-Apr

- Low temps: 50-60s
- High temps: 70-80s
- Occasional rain continues
- Side channels of the river dry up by end of the month, but the lake at the highest level
- Generally nice weather

- Low temps: 60-70s
- High temps: 80-100s
- Warm, dry weather
- Rare rainfall
- River and Palm Lake water levels start to drop

- Low temps: 70-80s
- High temps: 90-110s
- Hot, dry weather arrives
- Rare rainfall from early monsoon storms
- Water levels drop more

- Low temps: 70-80s
- High temps: 90-110s
- Hottest part of the year in the desert (June-August)
- Irregular monsoon storms
- Lightning and flashfloods

**Fremont Cottonwood****Goodding's Willow****Velvet Mesquite****Mexican Elderberry****White Mulberry****Seepwillow****Graythorn**