



Photos: Wikimedia commons



Bronzed Tiger Beetle *Cicindela repanda*

Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center • Rio Grande Nature Center State Park
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As summer sets in at the park, temperatures rise and visitor visitation generally falls. Anyone who is familiar with the park knows our busiest time is during the school year when we accommodate daily school groups. This summer, however, we do offer programming for the community. Nature Discovery camp runs through June and Saturday morning at the park (drop-in program for families starting at 10:30 a.m.) runs through the rest of the summer until the school year begins again and continues for everyone throughout the year. We also have monthly speaker programs in the Education Building and a Star Party scheduled for July 18. Check rgnc.org for details.

I want to take a moment to welcome new permanent Education Ranger Olivia Martinez and new Seasonal Ranger Amelia Barrow to the team. They both have been doing great things so far in helping with our education programs and summer camp. Olivia comes from Nature Niños non-profit where she served as Education Coordinator and Amelia is currently in school obtaining her teaching credentials. Please give them a warm welcome when you see them at the park.

Greta Roskom, 2025-2026 President of the Friends

School is out for the summer and kids are visiting the Rio Grande Nature Center from all over the state! Our Nature Discovery camp continues through the end of June. Junior naturalists, ages 5-10, are learning about plants and pollinators, birds, mammals, and even the aquatic life found in our riparian ecosystems.

We also have training coming up for adult park volunteers. If you are interested and not yet signed up, please apply soon to secure your spot. Training dates will be July 11 and 12. Also on those days, the Albuquerque Water Authority will be hosting the Rio Rally scavenger hunt for kids, sponsored by the Authority. Check online for locations.

As always, our Spring Garden Festival was enjoyed by hundreds of people. Thanks to all the musicians, exhibitors, artisans, speakers, and park volunteers who made it a great event. Look for the spring festival once again, in 2027.

It's dry and hot outside but our Visitor Center remains comfortable and engaging year-round. When you visit, be sure to check out the new and improved Discovery Room, especially the new tile-rubbing table.



Bosque Tracks

Published quarterly by the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park



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Nature Center hours: Open daily
 Gates 8-4, Building 9-4
 Closed

Thanksgiving, Christmas,
 and New Year's Day

Nature Shop 10-2 (M-Th),
 10-4 (F-Su)

Masks encouraged inside,
 social distancing outside

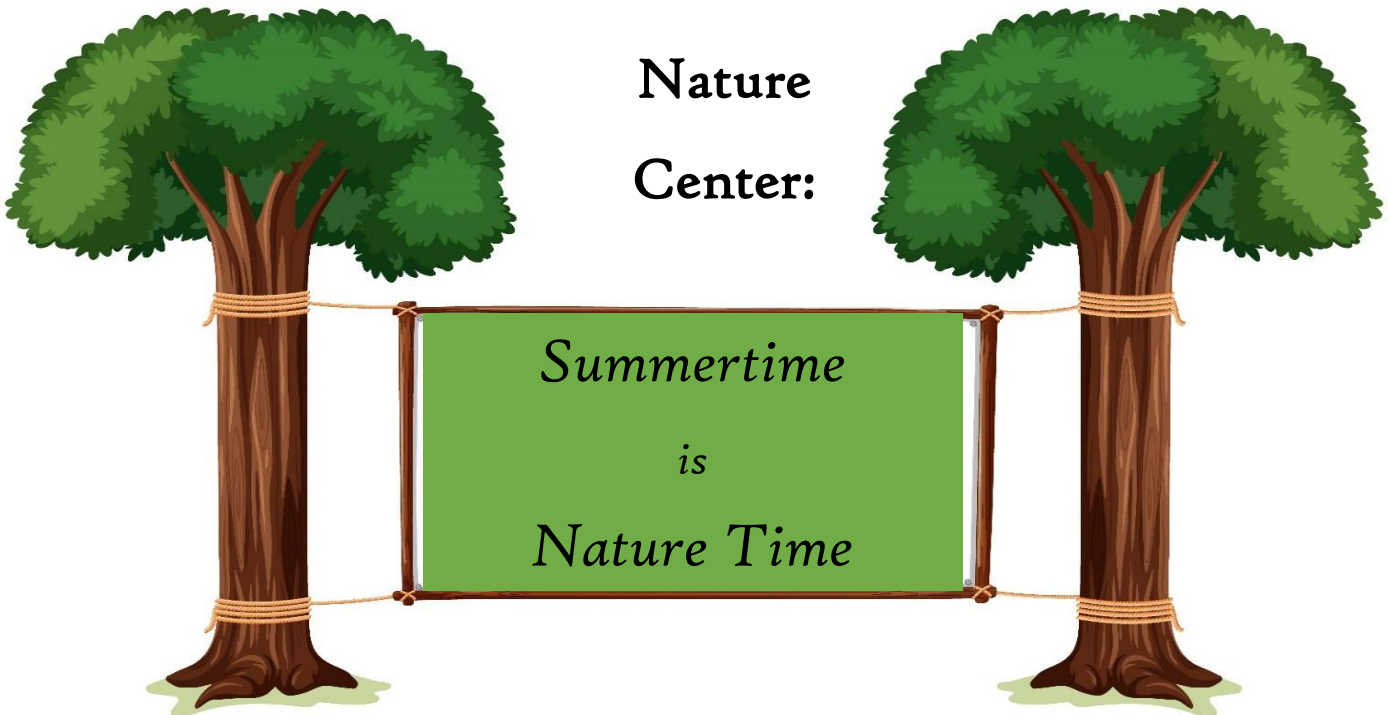
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 Free. Non-member day use: \$5/vehicle,
 \$15/bus, \$50 bus.

Cover: Big-eyed, sharp-toothed, and long-legged, the bosque's bronzed tiger beetle reaches high population numbers in summertime, displaying the electric sparkle of their iridescent wings, running through sandy soil and along ditch banks. Active day and night, these beetle speedsters single out moving targets even in total darkness. Dug into a burrow with heads out, they scan for prey, seizing the unwary.

At The Rio Grande

Nature Center:



Storytelling Under the Cottonwood

Children ages 5-10 with their adult companion join ECO Storyteller and Master Naturalist Dianne Rossback for a nature story in the Outdoor Classroom near the Native Plants Garden. Join her there on the third Saturday of every month at 10:30 a.m. Here's the upcoming schedule:

July 18: A challenge and comfort story, *The Cracked Pot's Gift*

August 15: About tracks in the bosque, *The Travelers and Stone Soup*

September 19: *Traveling Tales, Lon Po Po, and A Wolf Tale* by Edward Young

Guided Walks

Search for birds or amble down bosque trails to the river.

Guided bird walks every Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 a.m.



Guided nature walks the second Saturday of the month at 10:30 a.m.

No registration required!

Nature Art in the Park

Settle into the scenery with your supplies (or borrow some from us), then sketch, draw, and paint. Come the first and fourth Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.



New Mexico has lost one of its very own.

Not seen since 2022, scientists fear that the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly, a subspecies of the *Anicia* checkerspot group once common in the mountains of Lincoln County, is gone. If so, it's a victim of global warming, cattle grazing, and invasive plants, all crowding out the butterfly's food plant, beardtongue. Known to be in decline for several decades, the butterfly was finally listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2023 though little recovery work followed. New Mexico's Wildlife Conservation Act did not recognize it. The butterfly joins a sad list of others: in the last 20 years, the U.S. has lost 22% of its butterflies, revealed by a groundbreaking study last year.

Born at the Albuquerque BioPark in 2022, the checkerspot was the last surviving caterpillar of four wild butterflies tended carefully for three years, in hopes that it would transform into a chrysalis and then an adult. It died in May.

Dr. Quin Baine, the invertebrate special survival specialist in charge of its care will soon join a team once again looking again for the checkerspot in the Sacramento Mountains. "There's a chance," she said.

New York Times 05/21/2026



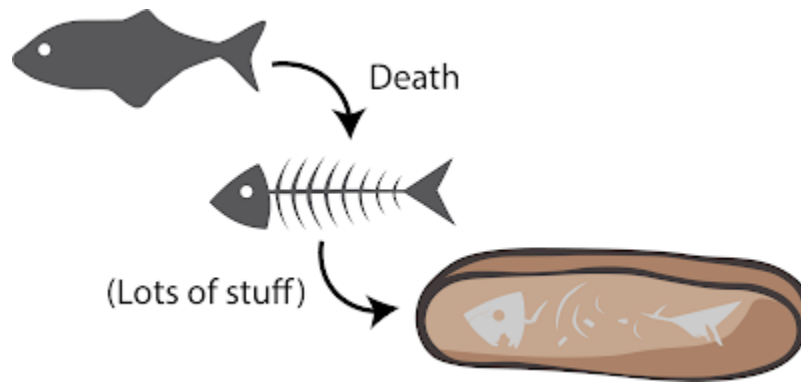


Putting the Dead to Work



Dr. Felisha Smith, Biology Department, University of New Mexico

It's not everyone who enjoys studying smelly, slowly decomposing mammals. But, to Dr. Kay Behrensmeyer, watching the gradual disintegration of a wildebeest up close is fascinating. In fact, she has been going to east Arica for more than 40 years to do just that. Kay is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy, a subdiscipline within paleontology that seeks to understand the biases in the formation and preservation of fossils, which influence our interpretation of the geological record.



Going from a live fish to a fossil involves a lot of steps. The study of these steps is part of taphonomy.

Although dying is inevitable, becoming a fossil is not. Actually, it's pretty hard. To become a fossil, you have to be buried by sediments fairly rapidly or you decompose and/or are eaten by hungry opportunistic scavengers... or get destroyed by physical processes. Moreover, you also have to be made out of the right stuff — generally that means hard parts that can be preserved in the first place. And you have to manage to die in just the perfect site with a high rate of sedimentation. Moreover, even if you do somehow manage to become a fossil, the probability that you actually get found at some point by an intrepid paleontologist is like winning the lottery. Over time, most fossils are reworked or destroyed by geological forces. Many are buried under sediments and never exposed, or more recently, they are crushed by overzealous tractor operators at construction sites. And then, of course, even if you survive all that and are exposed, somebody needs to come along and find you. Not an easy path to immortality. The study of all of these biases or 'laws of burial' is called taphonomy.

Remarkably — despite the strong gender bias that persists in paleontology — many of the pioneers in modern taphonomy are women. Of these, Dr. Kay Behrensmeyer, who is the curator of vertebrate paleontology in the Department of Paleobiology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, has had a profound influence on our understanding of the taphonomy of vertebrate fossils; in particular, on how sedimentary processes influence the destruction or preservation of bones. Her influence is clear in her remarkable scholarly record of publication and mentorship (she has an H-index of 72 and more than 20,000 citations!). Indeed, *Discover Magazine* named Kay as one of the 50 most important women scientists in 2002.

Kay is known for her work in sedimentary taphonomy - understanding the biases and process of how bones are transported in river systems, become buried and fossilized. As she said in a recent acceptance speech for a prestigious award, she grew up beside the Mississippi river in western Illinois and thus, both modern and ancient rivers have very much shaped her professional life.

Kay's work on taphonomy began as a graduate student at Harvard. Among other projects, she had the opportunity to work with Richard Leakey in Africa and became interested in the paleoecological context of human evolution. One of her highly cited experiments is a long-term study of modern vertebrate remains in Amboseli National Park in Kenya, which she began with a colleague in 1975. Over the years, they have watched animals disintegrate; the carcasses and bones of animals in the park are surveyed every 5–10 years, along with a census of the live animals. The Amboseli Bone Taphonomy Project has addressed the issue of just how well mammal death assemblages reflect the abundance and composition of the living population. Are the same species present in the same abundance? In the course of this now 40-year study, they defined weathering stages and determined how long it took a bone to reach each stage of decomposition. As Kay said in a recent interview, "There's so much focus now on recycling and trying to make it happen, but nature's been making it happen forever."

At Amboseli, Kay and her colleagues documented a shift in the composition and preservation of bones from the 1970s to the 2000s. Interestingly, this mirrored a shift from predation to scavenging activities by the carnivores in the park. As lions decreased in abundance and hyenas began to become more dominant, there were fewer bones in the environment and the ones left were larger. No longer was there an abundance of large and small bones, nor did the site support the same diversity of predators. The 'survivability' of a bone was influenced not just by its size and structure, but also by its density and grease content. Thus, the carnivores on the landscape significantly influenced what fossils were likely to form.

So, the next time you encounter a dead animal on a hike or nature walk, consider what information it can provide as it slowly disintegrates into the environment. After all, the dead have much to tell us.

Numbers going down ...



Numbers going up ...



Wikimedia commons photos



Photo: Mason

The Beginning Comes After the End:

Notes on a World of Change

By Rebecca Solnit

Reviewed by Ruth Salvaggio

Most of us think of time in terms of linear movement — from day to day, year to year, stretching across centuries and millennia. And we think of how time passes in terms of a beginning, middle, and end. Not so for author and journalist Rebecca Solnit, who suggests that time unfolds as and within a “mosaic of changes.” She asks us to consider that our world may not be moving toward an end (due to such events as global warming, nuclear warfare, or some dreaded apocalypse) but instead is at the cusp of transformations unfolding within an ongoing “mosaic of change.” Our present moment might only be a temporary reaction to the remarkable changes that

shaped the U.S. in the 1960’s — racial and gender equality, social and economic justice, and most important, an awareness of the need to change, indeed to heal, our human relationship with our environment.

Beginnings and endings can be confusing. While we are moving toward such beginnings, she suggests, we are also turning back to the past — to a time before colonial expansion, extraction economies, and the grossly uneven distribution of wealth. And we are beginning to embrace worldviews of interconnection and interdependence. While living in an extractive economy of capitalist accumulation, for instance, our world has been increasingly turning to non-profit behaviors: “volunteerism, activism, charitable donations, environmental stewardship, interspecies relations, and much more.”

Beginnings can be contagious, spreading out well past their points of initiation. Among the many individuals that Solnit cites in her book, two receive special attention — Rachel Carson and Martin Luther King — as figures who initiate changes with consequences well beyond their initial ideas and writings, changes that continue to permeate our worlds which, at times, seem to be coming to an end. When Carson turned away from her more lyrical books describing the beauty of the natural world and published *Silent Spring* on the dangers of DDT and pesticides, she likely had no idea that she was initiating the beginning of the entire environmental movement that has morphed and grown well beyond that publication. At almost the same time that Carson wrote her book, King was writing his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” It ignited not only the movement for racial justice, but civil rights across the spectrum — including the vast expanse of women’s rights, the recognition and rights of indigenous cultures across the world, the rights of animals, the rights of rivers and indeed the entire natural world.

These kinds of “beginnings” extend well beyond certain bodies and subjects, and permeate changing world views: for example, from the assumption that humans “triumph over nature” toward a worldview of coexisting with natural phenomena of all kinds. Solnit cites the Native American scientist and writer Robin Wall Kimmerer when she notes that “Indigenous languages” challenge the fundamental tenets of Western thinking” by favoring the action of verbs to the static quality of nouns. Land and water are referred to as “revered living beings” that speak to us, instead of as natural resources to be exploited. While the destruction of Native cultures in North America seems to mark an ending, followed by the advancement of western European conquest some five hundred years later, we can now comprehend how our embrace of worldviews of interconnection and interdependence are signaling the end of that colonial conquest and all its trappings — from cultural genocide to the extinction of species.

So where are we now? At the beginning of an end, or maybe at the beginning that comes after an end? Clearly Solnit wants the latter. But she has also invested in re-conceptualizing time itself as a “mosaic of changes” that continue to sprout and readjust, from the smallest of lifeforms to the most expansive of universes. In doing so, she is among the many contemporary writers who have turned toward ecology, biodiversity, and the dynamics of interdependence to understand both how we humans interact with each other and how we interact with the vast non-human world. We can go it alone, youngsters in a vast non-human world that predates us by millions of years. Or we can step into that world of change and interchange that tugs at firm beginnings and endings — even and especially when they serve as titles for books that are ultimately all about a World of Change.

Spring Garden Festival

May 9-10, 2026



Skeleton Crew Brew



Crow Show



Pop guide



Bill Dory, Birder



Just for You

Photos: Mason



A Digger's Gig

--Jean Mason

High summer in central New Mexico sends waves of heat shimmering across a stretch of mesa grassland and desert scrub. Fingering through parched yellow stems bent to the ground, a streak of light illuminates a tickle, sparking the sensitive nose hairs of a hulking, grizzle-furred, leg-muscled, 16-pound form on the march. Ears tightly tuned to tiny motions underground, an American badger, normally a night prowler, is out and bristling with energy, bushy tail erect. Mesa-colored and camouflaged in her brown-grey coat, she makes measured but determined progress cross-country.

She's riveted to her goal: the burrow of a ground squirrel.

Digging her way to the front, she's all business, fortification planned ahead. Front legs drawn in for power, she gathers earth with two-inch claws, shoveling and strengthening a dirt pile at the entrance, blocking easy exit. Next, she moves inside, thanks to her cone-shaped head, eyes protected by a membrane from flying dirt, and loose skin that bunches and stretches with each step. Bonanza! A nest of young squirrels is her reward.

A Digger Different

Badgers: they're common burrowers in the old and new world but rarely seen. Numbering 16 species worldwide, all badgers share similar shapes, habits, and facial markings* but are not unified taxonomically as descendants from a common ancestor. Instead, they trace genetically distinct lines: some belong with weasels and otters in the *Mustelidae* family while others line up with skunks in the *Mephitidae* group.

Found from central Canada south to Baja California and central Mexico, and from the Pacific to the Great Lakes, the American badger, *Taxidea taxus* occupies its own subfamily *taxidiinae*, at the most basic level of the mustelids; it is the one and only badger in the new world with no living mustelid relative. *T. taxus* has, however, devolved into four subspecies with *T. taxus berlandieri* the only digger in New Mexico.

Records from the New Department of Game and Fish from 1980 to 2020 show that badgers have excavated burrow homes in every county of the state at elevations up to 12,000 feet and, at times, near or above treeline. Smaller in size than their neighbors living farther north, males check in at 26 inches and five pounds with females slightly smaller.

American badgers rank among others in badgerdom as the schwarzeneggers of digging power: they possess the short, well-muscled forelimbs and expanded elbow extensors capable of delivering impressive force and power. Considered bad-tempered, give-no-quarter opponents, badgers wear striking head colors, black with white slashes reaching the midline, warning predators to expect total war.

*"badger" is derived from the similarity of these stripes to the badges on the shields of medieval knights.



Pick and Choose Digs

Independent loners, *T. taxus* seems wide open about habitat choice across their new world range. They will set up shop in deciduous forests, among conifers or redwood stands, and across alpine tundra; shrublands of sage, creosote, and mesquite suit them along with deserts, brushy marshes, parklands and farms. Still, for these opportunistic predators, habitat choice likely will give way to the abundance of burrowing rodents or other prey in a given area, along with friable, well-drained, diggable soil. Pocket gophers, large and plump, are their number one choice of prey with grasslands their favorite home ground.

In New Mexico, badgers have quarried into the pinon-juniper foothills, around lava fields, in stretches of abundant big sagebrush, and at White Sands Missile Range National

Monument on dune outcrops. Colfax County's Vermejo Park Ranch is a favorite for its numerous prairie dog colonies, as is the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. As loners, badgers avoid others for territorial spacing, a practice that permits overlapping home ranges. Fights are frequent with wounds seen on both males and females. Urine, feces, and abdominal gland secretions will mark den entrances, lasting longer under shade. Communicating intent, badgers growl, grunt, and hiss.

Like never-satisfied plutocrats looking for new and different homes, badgers like to create new burrow holes for themselves, often for short periods; they will enlarge old ones created by prairie dogs or kangaroo rats. Their natal and overwintering burrows may be several feet long with side channels and pocketed walls; they often will have fan-shaped, three-foot soil mounds at the entrance. Many animals use abandoned badger burrows including snakes, lizards, rabbits, burrowing owls, tiger salamanders, foxes, rodents and insects – often to their sorrow should a badger return to an old home and find it re-occupied.

For a hard-working carnivore, food is long and varied, numbering 41 species of mammals alone; two-thirds of these are underground burrowers. An adult badger requires two ground squirrels per day and more when raising cubs. These calculating hunters are known to plan above-ground attacks by exploiting cover; they will pre-judge angles and distances of escape routes that prey might take. Badgers have trapped skunks in dens and even coyote pups; they eat insects including cicadas, ground nesting birds, lizards, snakes, amphibians, and fish. Exploring greenery, badgers will go for corn, peas, and mushrooms. Come winter in northern latitudes when rodents are protected beneath frozen ground, badgers remain in dens, reducing their activity and relying solely on fat reserves.

The Company They Keep

Tough as they are, badgers are known for one unusual association, also seen in New Mexico: they join with coyotes on the hunt. Since coyotes also hunt and kill badgers, explaining this “cooperation” has proven difficult. Hunting styles may provide a clue.

In one Wyoming refuge area occupied by coyotes, badgers, and ground squirrels, the two carnivores – one a sleek and fast ground hunter, the other a slower excavator – have been seen in mock pursuits, playing, and scrambling around a known squirrel site. Working together, both hunters may benefit. Spotting a big coyote, a zip-fast rodent will vanish into its hole, thereby inviting the badger to dig it out. But a rodent spotting the slower badger, the rodent might rush out and run, allowing the coyote to score a hit. Tallying up overall coyote prey captures, study numbers show that coyotes paired with badgers caught more squirrels than loners did. As for badger twosome wins, they spent less time burrow-searching than single animals did.

Is coyote/badger association equally beneficial to both carnivores?

Coupling up

Promiscuous breeders, badgers in New Mexico typically conceive in late July and August; in the north of their range, the fertilized egg implants in the uterine wall until January. A short gestation of five weeks follows, with birth in March or April. Females raise the young, born furred, blind, and helpless; she feeds them solid food before they are completely weaned. Cubs remain with her for up to twelve weeks and families break up in August. Badgers may live up to 14 years but few live longer than five. In addition to coyotes, juveniles are likely prey for bobcats, bears, grey wolves and cougars; predation by golden eagles has been recorded in New Mexico.

The Here and Now

Size of the American badger population is unknown but may be several hundred thousand, based on harvest numbers and local data. The IUCN's Red List has rates the carnivore “of least concern,” due to its large range. It notes that populations have likely declined due to loss of native prairie and of the carnivore's prairie dog and ground squirrel prey. Humans, however, are the number one enemy of American badgers through vehicle collisions, farmer/rancher conflicts, and as fur trappers. (In the past, the animal's fur was used for paint and shaving brushes; today, it's for clothing.) The value of rodent control provided by badgers is unknown and uncalculated although badgers provide a unique contribution to wildlife in the state and nation.

Badgers in New Mexico are listed as “protected furbearers”; hunting and trapping are regulated by the state in areas where they can be taken from November to March. The population in the state had only an unsubstantiated estimate of 25,000 in 2006, likely a great overestimate. The New Mexico Department of Wildlife has now installed sent posts with automatic cameras to gather data, important information needed on this nocturnal, den-living native animal.

Sources: Jean-Luc Cartron and Jennifer Frey, eds. *Wild Carnivores of New Mexico 2003*; Wikipedia.org/American Badgers; Ronald Nowak, *Walker's Mammals of the World, 1983*.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo



Caterpillars in Albuquerque

Butterfly host plants used by caterpillars in Albuquerque numbered among the 336 individual plants tested by scientists for the Xerces Society and the University of Nevada, Reno for pesticide contamination. Samples were also collected for plants in Sacramento, California with total results published in *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry* in September 2025.

An average of three pesticides, and up to 18, were found in each plant tested, likely an underestimation of the true risk of contamination. In Albuquerque, the herbicide atrazine was found in 70 samples. Notably, two pesticides, the insecticide chlorantraniliprole and the fungicide azoxystrobin, were found in 71 samples at concentrations exceeding levels known to kill or negatively impact butterflies including reduced wing size, impacting the ability to migrate. The findings add to the alarm about long-term butterfly declines.

Wings, fall 2025

Evolution Quick Step

Two decades ago, forest-dwelling dark-eyed juncos became urban colonizers at the University of California, Los Angeles. Settling in, they changed their natural woodland diet from seeds and insects to the student fare of cookies, pizza, and bread; chicks of these immigrants had beaks that were shorter and stubbier than forest cohorts. Change came again when the pandemic arrived, sharply limiting human activity on campus in 2021 and 2022. After a brief time lapse, junco chicks began appearing with the longer, slimmer beaks recognized in forest cohorts. Once venues reopened on college grounds, junco chicks showed their adaptive evolutionary talent yet again, with urban-style stubby beaks, ready for pizza. Dr. Ellie Diamant, ecologist and author of the junco study published by *Proceedings in the National Academy of Sciences*. suggests that birds retaining traditional beak genetics would have been better able to adapt to a sudden lack of human food by choosing seeds and insects, thus surviving to reproduce. Still, the availability of human food may be an important factor in long, changing story of evolution.



New York Times, December 2025

Monarch Wingtotes



Some monarch butterflies, weighing 600 mg, travel from as far as Ontario to their overwintering forests in central Mexico. Now, some 400 of them will add 60 mg. extra on the trip, carrying a tiny solar-powered radio tag made by Cellular Tracking Technologies. Following the insects, scientists will learn about life cycles, butterfly use of pollinator gardens, and perhaps discover new winter monarch hideaways. They may learn more about the butterfly's navigational talent to reorient itself when blown off course, then change to correct direction, and how it deploys a special violet light compass on cloudy days to detect the angle of the Earth's magnetic field when the sun is unavailable to help.

New York Times Nov. 11, 2025

Fighting Death With Beetle Spit

Like a nocturnal undertaker, the American burying beetle *Nicophorus americanus* preserves carrion with oral and anal secretions, then takes it underground for meals later. For two decades, researchers have investigated how these beetles preserve meat at room temperature, seeking to harness their antibacterial, antifungal, and food preparation properties for human use. Now, the scientists with the National Geographic Society's Photo Ark project have found that the beetles are resistant to neonicotinoids; after nearing death, many revived completely within 24 hours. The team suggests that exposure to carrion bacteria and fungi has toughened the beetles, providing them with protection. Could the beetles' secretions lead to new and useful antibiotics?



National Geographic, May 2025

Loners: My food, my space, My style

Words read in all

directions. Solution, p. 12.

--Jean Mason

1. Blue **w**__: giants swim alone but will feed in groups.
2. Aye-aye: Madagascar's **l**__uses finger as **t**__ to fish out insects.
3. **M**__ lemur: world's smallest primate, rodent-sized, hunts at night.
4. Solitary sand**p**__migrates alone, nests high in trees.
5. Hawaiian **m**__: loner pinniped seeks **e**__ beach for territory.
6. Solitary nightjars eat **m**__s.
7. **M**__: one deep tunnel for each tiny-eyed mammal.
8. **H**__badger: teeth crush **b**__.
9. **R**__: horned African is loner
10. Ring**t**__: ghostly mouser.
11. **Ante**__: big snout, 2' tongue.
12. Gila **m**__: colors warn of **v**__.
13. **O**__: eight arms make prey capture handy.
14. **T**__: Asian cat night hunter.
15. Cane **t**__ loner: toxin in **s**__.
16. lion**f**__: spines are toxic.
17. **M**__: largest **d**__ eats roots.
18. **S**__: venom in arachnid stinger.
19. **L**__: Arctic divers fish 250' deep.
20. Hermit **t**__: forest floor is bird home.
21. Leopard **s**__: hunts on pack ice.
22. Red, or lesser, **p**__: nocturnal tree climbers.
23. **S**__: loner has warning **f**__ colors, nasty potent spray.
24. Solitary **b**__: insect is burrow maker, pollinator.
25. **O**__: primate fur orange-r__, rests alone in forest canopy.
26. Sea **t**__: group migration, single life alone.
27. **G**__ fox: tree-climbing **c**__ night hunts alone.
28. **A**__: hard-skinned night hunter, **f**__ powered for digging.
29. **D**__: stingless insect excavates burrow for pollen, nectar.
30. **S**__: great-toothed fish scents prey 2 miles away.
31. Aussie duck-billed **p**__ has venom in ankle spurs.
32. **P**__ bear: Arctic swimmer and solitary seal hunter.
33. African **l**__: cats **s**__-mark land, haul kill up tree.
34. **S**__: hidden from foe in tree, can **r**__ long sleep, 15 hours/**d**__.
35. **K**__: Aussie big **f**__ of eucalyptus, eats and sleeps there.
36. Tasmanian **d**__: nocturnal loners snarl at intruders.
37. **R**__: loner omnivore night hunter, clever manipulating with front paws.

38. **H**__: Crustacean scavenges shells and wears them as homes.
39. Saltwater **c**__: territorial loner, stays underwater two hours, is ambush predator
40. **K**__: lone hunter sights prey from perch, dives deep.



41. **G**__ panda: loner eats only bamboo but has **g**__of a carnivore.
42. Green **h**__: Secretive hunter "baits" for fish tossing stick from overlook.
43. European **b**__: camouflaged wader hides in tall reeds.
44. **P**__mantis catches flying insects with powerful **l**__.
45. Wandering **a**__: solitary in nearly endless **f**__.
46. **A**__: insect very social, will **d**__ if all alone .
47. Great **h**__ owl: Solitary night hunter. Sleeps by day.
48. Desert **t**__: lives alone in baking **h**__ land.
49. Loner porcupine has **q**__-armed coat for protection.
50. Asian **s**__ leopard searches alone for prey from rocky 15,000 foot cliffs.
51. **C**__: desert 4-legged reptile lives in rocks, creosote bushes; threatened, inflates to entrench self.

Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center
2901 Candelaria NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107

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 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
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I am renewing my membership
 I am a new member
 I do not need a parking permit
 Please send information about volunteering
 Enclosed is my check
 Please charge my Visa MasterCard
 Card # _____
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Rev. 03/2025

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From *Loners*, p. 11.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. whales | 18. Scorpion | 35. Koala, fan |
| 2. lemur, tool | 19. Loons | 36. devils |
| 3. Mouse | 20. thrush | 37. Raccoon |
| 4. piper | 21. seal | 38. Hermit toad |
| 5. monk seal | 22. panda | 39. crocodile |
| 6. moth | 23. Skunk, fur | 40. Kingfisher |
| 7. Mole | 24. bee | 41. Giant, gut |
| 8. Honey, bone | 25. Orange, red | 42. heron |
| 9. Rhino | 26. turtles | 43. bittern |
| 10. tail | 27. Grey, canid | 44. Praying, legs |
| 11. eater | 28. Armadillo, feet | 45. albatross, flight |
| 12. monster, venom | 29. Digger bee | 46. Ant, die |
| 13. Octopus | 30. Shark | 47. horned |
| 14. Tiger | 31. platypus | 48. tortoise, hot |
| 15. toad, skin | 32. Polar | 49. quill |
| 16. fish | 33. leopards, scent | 50. snow |
| 17. Moose, deer | 34. Sloth, risk, day | 51. Chuckwalla
lizard |

***Guided Bird and
 Nature Walks***

*Bird walks every Saturday and Sunday
 at 8:30 a.m.*

*Nature walks 2nd Saturday of the month
 at 10:30 a.m.*

*Pre-registration not
 required.*



*The mission of the Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center is to support the Rio Grande Nature Center State
 Park's mission: To preserve and protect the Rio Grande bosque, educate the public about Rio Grande
 ecosystems, and foster positive human interactions with those ecosystems.*