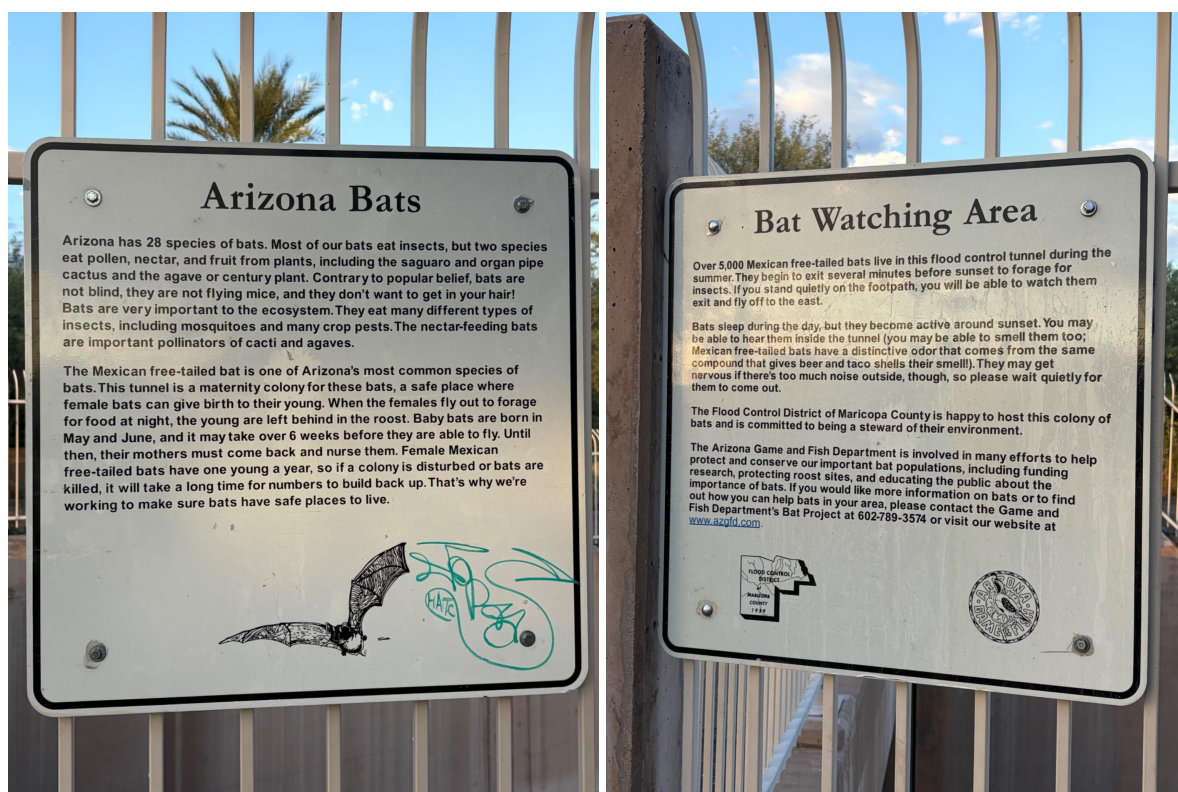


Southern Arizona October 8-10 2025

I'm going to preface this post by saying this trip was not wildlife-focused (I had other business). I did squeeze in a decent bit of birding and picked up a few interesting mammal species. I am heading back to AZ later this month to observe some bird species (particularly hummingbirds), and I should manage to see some interesting mammals (assuming my plans and luck work out).

Day 1

On the first day (October 8th), I only partook in one mammal-related excursion. I went to the Phoenix Bat Cave, which is a massive man-made flood control tunnel and had a wonderful experience. I was told the bats would start exiting the tunnel right around sunset, so I waited by the tunnel and got some bird lifers around the area before it was time. I wasn't the only one waiting by the tunnel. There were some other people, some even doing yoga while they waited. It seemed that the bats were quite popular among local AZ residents! Once it was nearing sunset, I waited intently off to the side of the tunnel to try to get a good view through the metal bars protecting the bats' resting place. At first, only a couple of bats flew out. They flew out quite quickly, and I barely noticed they were bats at first. My brief misconception was rapidly corrected as the bats began to fly out by tens, then eventually by hundreds! All in all, thousands of bats flew out of the tunnel at incredible speeds.



These are a couple of signs put up on the metal railing around the tunnel.



Mexican Free-tailed bat *Tadarida brasiliensis*



A lovely sunset by the tunnel.

This was my first time observing bats in the wild, aside from a single dead bat I saw many years ago. It was an enamoring event for me that made the whole trip worthwhile (though I bet most of you have observed much rarer bats, at much more interesting locations before). I never had much interest in bats before watching them emerge firsthand. I've been reading a lot on the Chiroptera lately, and they are diverse and fascinating. I'm excited to observe more in the future.

Day 2

On the second day (October 9th), I took a brief walk around a trail called the Wild Burro Trailhead (Marana, AZ) in the evening. I observed two mammal species. I saw numerous Collared Peccaries and a couple of Desert Cottontails.



Collared Peccary *Pecari tajacu*



Collared Peccary *Pecari tajacu* with a baby!



Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*

Day 3

On the last day of the trip that I saw any mammals on (It was slightly longer, but I didn't observe any mammals after day 3), I saw a couple of really good mammals. In the early morning, I took a drive down to Paton Center for Hummingbirds. I walked around the property over the course of a few hours and observed two mammal species.

While walking along a short trail for birding, I had a good encounter with a new species of deer, the Coues Deer.



Coues Deer *Odocoileus virginianus* ssp. *couesi*

I saw two Arizona Gray Squirrels running up a tree. I managed to get a photo of one of them, despite the area being super shaded and my camera aperture being too high.



Arizona Gray Squirrel *Sciurus arizonensis*

A bit later in the morning, I went down to Madera Canyon. It was a very pretty drive, and I saw great views while hiking. It wasn't the best for birds; I only saw a few species, but I did encounter another Coues Deer (multiple in one day!). The encounter was great, and the deer let me get incredibly close (at least compared to my local mule deer encounters at home). I got some solid photos!



Coues Deer *Odocoileus virginianus* ssp. *couesi*

I also have this slightly less pretty image from the same hike. I forget if it was the same deer or if it was a different one. Either way, I thought I'd include it.



Coues Deer *Odocoileus virginianus* ssp. *couesi*

The End

Thanks for reading! I know this is a very brief report compared to most on this site, but I thought I'd throw it together. Let me know if you have any questions.