


A DAY IN MAY



ALAMO, NEW MEXICO

2013/2014 Fifth Grade Class



The Fifth Grade Class of 2013/2014 researched the living things in the Alamo Desert. Students learned how plants, birds, animals, and insects adapt to their desert environment.

In order for living things to survive in the Alamo Desert, they have to be able to reproduce. They also have to have water, shelter, and food. Living things can adapt to the desert by their physical structures (fur, claws, etc.). If they don't adapt, they will become extinct. They also need each other. So, if mice become scarce, then ravens will be affected. If one whole species dies, the food chain will fall apart. Animals are predators or prey, or they are both. Living things are producers, consumers, or decomposers.



5:00 a.m.



During the cool flaming Cheetos sky, the rock squirrel is looking for food to feed her small babies in her comfortable den. The squirrel munches on a prickly pear and a barrel cactus tearing the juicy parts.

The rock squirrel, also called diurnal for being active in the daytime, lives in colonies for protection from snakes, bobcats, and eagles. The squirrel burrows underground safe from weather and predators. Her burrow keeps her babies safe and warm. They hibernate during the cold winter, and poke their noses out in the spring.—Shanoah

N



6:00 a.m.



The morning sun is peeking above the horizon, as the roadrunner begins to run. He dashes back and forth in the desert. The roadrunner catches the lizard and he gobbles it. The roadrunner also eats snakes, scorpions, and spiders.

The males will attract females with a whirring call. The female lays eggs in a piñon tree and the male keeps them warm until they hatch. She sprints after any predator that will harm her family.— Armein



7:00 a.m.



The hummingbird perches on a twig with his small talons gripping the twig. He takes off flying in a backward position fighting the cold harsh morning breeze. The hummingbird is an animal that is smaller than your hand, three to seven centimeters long. To escape its predators, it dives straight down about sixty miles per hour. The hummingbird is a lightweight, so it can outfly a blue jay, a raven, and a hawk. A male hummingbird impresses a female hummingbird by showing off his flying skills. A hummingbird can fly in three different positions—forward, backward, and hovering. The female lays her eggs in her cozy nest in early morning spring.

A hummingbird needs to eat a lot of nectar before going to sleep. The hummingbird looks lifeless as he sleeps gently and peacefully in his nest. His deep sleep is called torpor. Hummingbirds also need to eat when they wake up or they will starve. Weak hummingbirds are known not to survive torpor.—Fred



8:00 a.m.



A jackrabbit leaps to find food as the sun rises. The jackrabbit feeds on fresh grass, herbs, shrubs, and cacti from morning to early evening. It uses its ears to listen for dangers and help it stay cool. The scarlet orange of the sky brightly shines on the ground, as the jackrabbit gallops fast. The jackrabbit uses its hind legs as an alarm signal if there is a bobcat, cougar, coyote, hawk, or snake. The jackrabbit survives in the desert by always staying in a safe environment, spending most of its day resting in a shallow hollow under bushes. The female jackrabbit has her babies after finding a warm place in a fur lined depression called a form among grasses or low shrubs. The jackrabbit are Leporids and belong to the genus Lepus. They used to be called the “Jackass Rabbit”. –Nika



9:00 A.M.



As the sun with lemon streaks is peaking over the bluebird, she is walking on a branch and eating juniper berries. She also roosts on fences so she can eat insects. She confuses the coyote by walking back and forth to keep from being eaten. The bluebird collects twigs for the nest and lays four to six eggs in a hole in a tree. The female builds the nest when she lay her eggs and she still uses the same nest year after year. In the Navajo belief, the bluebird is in the Second World and suggest to Changing Woman how the Dine should receive the horse, according to the *Legend of the Horse*.

—Louwanda

N



10:00 a.m.



The brown wolf spider is scurrying to get a cricket as the sun is peeking out. The wolf spider eats insects, ants, and even other spiders. His brownish color camouflages him in the dirt.

Wolf spiders live on the ground and line their dens with silk. They wrap their eggs in silk, too. The female guards the eggs until they hatch. The young spiders stay with mom for a few day before they go on their own. The wolf spider could grow up to twenty-five millimeters long, almost as big as a tarantula. They hibernate during the cold winters. You can see their eyes watching you at night.—Lacey

N



11:00 a.m.



During the breezy cool morning, the beautiful black widow is peeking at a bee. She is hungry. She has not eaten in seven months. She traps crickets, ants, and bees when they touch her web. She wraps them in a silken blanket. Her venom is fifteen times stronger than a rattlesnake's. Later, she will suck out the bugs' insides. She crawls to her web in the bushes and bears approximately 300 eggs at once. The black widow will protect her babies by sometimes killing the father.—Carolyn



12:00 p.m.



The sun reflects the water as the tarantula hawk wasp, the deadliest of insects, slurps up nectar. The tarantula hawk wasp may be small, but its one-third of an inch stinger is painful. On one clear day the tarantula hawk wasp searches for nectar flying flower to flower, breathing with his spiracles.

The tarantula hawk wasp is the tarantula's worst enemy because the tarantula always loses a fight with the female wasp, who has the venom in her stinger. The hawk wasp drags the tarantula to its burrow and lays its eggs on the spider. Then, the eggs hatch and the babies feed on the tarantula. The tarantula hawk wasp swiftly flies to her underground burrow to hide from the roadrunner. It lives in the Chihuahuan Desert because it's warmer, surfacing in June.—Robert



1:00 p.m.

A cactus wren, wearing a robber mask, flits around from cactus to cactus under a somber afternoon sky. The wren is spying on a stink bug on a warm day. She carries the bug back to her nest where there are three to four white eggs with brown spots on them.

The father builds two nests from grass and feathers. One for staying in and one for roosting in. He sets it safely in the cholla cactus. The nest is built in the cactus to protect it from coyotes.—Relena

N



2:00 p.m.



In the quiet hot desert the prickly pear cactus blooms in the steamy afternoon. The wind blows and the seeds scatter across the desert. The prickly pear looks shriveled and dry during the hot summer days. The cactus soaks up the sun and stows water in his roots and pads waiting for it to rain. When the rains comes the pads fill and swell. The Native Americans eat the cactus called nopales. The red juicy fruit is called a tuna. The fruit is made into delicious jellies and juice.—Chynoa



3:00 p.m.



The strawberry hedgehog cactus is relaxing in the Chihuahuan Desert under an ocean water sky. The puny cactus is about an inch and a half tall and has three inch spines to protect it from becoming an animal's dinner. A mouse hides under it for shade. The strawberry cactus is reaching up to the sun to get strength.—Darla

N



4:00 p.m.



During the early evening the cholla cactus gazes at the afternoon sun. The cholla cactus is found in the hot steamy Chihuahuan Desert. With the sky so smooth like a yogurt, it begins to bloom. It opens its small roots to get its water and food from the ground. It is known as a reproducer. When a mountain lion comes, the fifteen foot cholla is a standing statue. When the cholla dies under a baby blue windy sky, the seeds blow away and regrow and start the cycle over again.—Alanis

N



5:00 p.m.

The creamy sky hides the sun as a small predator slithers through the desert. The diamondback rattler vibrates the end of his tail, showing aggressive behavior. The rattler has heat senses behind the nostril to warn him if a hawk is flying above him ready to attack. The rattler heat senses distinguish the temperature of this hot day. The rattler plays dead when he sees one of his predators or if something scares him. The diamondback would rather run away and disappear. He likes vanishing into other animals' holes, but he prefers the rabbit's hole.

As he grows, he sheds and adds a new button to his tail. He changes his fangs regularly, too. The diamondbacks mate in the spring and the mom has live babies, about ten to fifteen. The rattler eats rats, mice, squirrels, and rabbits.—Tarah



5:30 p.m.



The sharp-eyed hawk is scavenging for food before a calming sunset. The sun is slowly going down, and the hawk is spying on the rabbit. The hawk catches birds and other small mammals by its sharp claws. The hawk spreads his wings, ten to fourteen inches across, and flies after his prey. Its beak can rip a rabbit into pieces. The hawk lays four to five white and brown eggs high in the tree.—Hunter

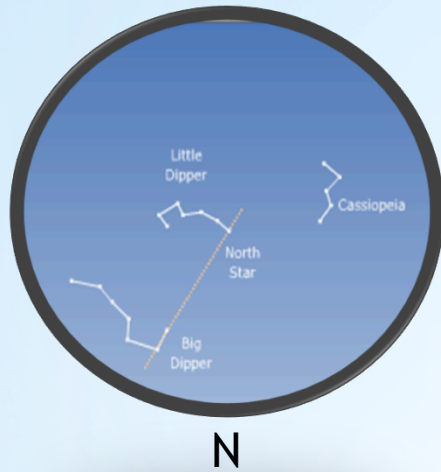
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6:00 p.m.



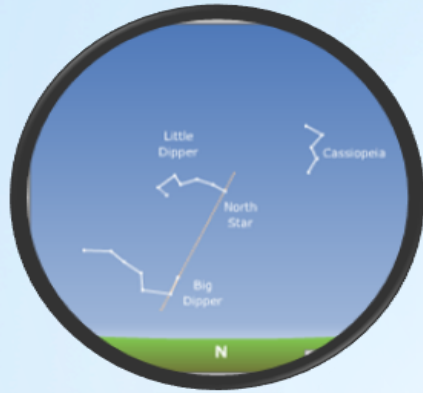
A barrel cactus soaks the hot flaming sun of the evening skies. It can find water under its roots when it needs to. When it rains the barrel cactus soaks the water with its roots underneath the ground. Inside, its trunk saves water for when it needs a drink. The accordion shape helps its precious moisture to stay alive inside. It has red and hot pink flowers on top like a fluffy hat. This species of cactus gets its name from its unique round shape. Most members of this genus have prominent ribs fiercely armed with heavy spines. The Indians picked and stored the cactus for winter.—Jaylynn



7:00 p.m.



As the sun vanishes out the coral sky, the eight legged hairy spider hurries out of his burrow to get its dinner. The spider senses the flies landing on the silk web covering its burrow. It seizes lizards, mice, birds, and other small prey to consume. Then, the tarantula turns his prey into liquid. The female creates a web pouch and hundreds of babies hatch in six to seven weeks. The spiderlings leave to begin the cycle over again.—Anderson

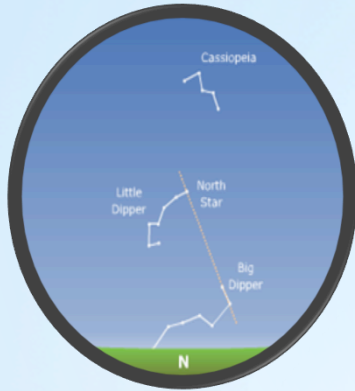


N

7:30 p.m.



On a breezy night the sun disappears then leaves the starry night. The baccata yucca is shutting its petals for the night. In the Chihuahua Desert the yucca sinks its tap root deep into the soil to consume the left over water. The stoma breathes the oxygen through blade-like leaves. Seeds, black like coal, with slim wings get carried across the desert. The yucca's abundant banana fruits get gobbled up by smallish fruit flies.—Kenyon



N

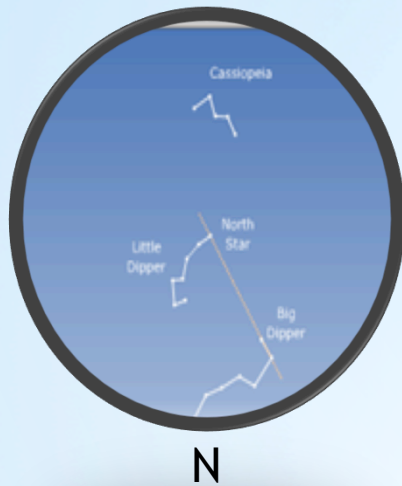
11:00 p.m.



The bobcat is an invisible stalker as the moon glitters over the horizon, as the sun has been eliminated, and the stars spread across the sky. The bobcat starts to hunt and becomes furious, running thirty miles an hour, as fast as a cheetah. When the bobcat finds its prey, it starts to become silent as a Ninja. Then it catches the prey and tears it open like it has starved for ages. It uses razor sharp claws and teeth to help devour its prey. The bobcat uses its sharp claws and tail for climbing trees.

When a human spots the bobcat, it can vanish in a tree, camouflaged by its brownish-red or grey spots. It is rarely seen in the wild. Bobcats also change their fur coats in two different seasons, one in the winter and the other in the summer.

During the spring, the female discovers a safe place in a tree or bush to have her two or three kittens. The babies are born with their eyes closed and open them in about ten days, then learn to hunt.—Miguel



11:30 P.M.



The cougar hunts its prey under a purplish sky. He snatches a mouse to eat. He stalks a large elk chasing him down and kills him. His sharp carnivore teeth tear and slice the meat. After he's done, he buries the prey. The female cougar discovers a den and has one to six babies any time of the year.—Elnathan



12:00 a.m.



Under a somber sky glides the only flying mammal. Bats soar high with their soft wings in the scary sky. They dive for bugs and use their echolocation. All bats have big ears. The bats finds abundant food during the spring. They reproduce by having babies three or four times a year. Bats have to stay in cooler places. They roost in caves or under bridges. Mexican free tailed bats live in groups called colonies. They hibernate in the winter.—McKea



2:00 a.m.



During the silent night, an animal like a skinny wolf is sneaking around. It is looking for its prey in the nightfall. The coyote is hunting at night for insects, mesquite beans, and rabbits. The coyote will eat what is available. When the coyote looks at the sky he sees stars streak. As the cloudy moon blurs behind the sky, the coyote sounds like a siren howling at the bright moon. When the coyote stops howling everything turns all dark and calm, while the crickets start singing. The coyote walks on the ground to make him think that he is on a sandy beach.

The coyote is very dangerous. It is also known as the jackal bush wolf. The coyote reproduces in the summer and only has two babies. The coyote babies are born in April or May and when the baby coyote grows up it starts hunting for insects.—Kennette



N

3:00 a.m.



The bark scorpion, the Spanish call it alarcon, is scavenging for food under the purplish sky. Some of the animals hide on a full moon while the dangerous scorpion hunts for a spider, centipede, or other scorpion feeling the vibrations from a foot away. Under a monotone sky, the two to three inch scorpion creeps up on its prey then strikes with his stinger. The venom goes into its prey. When it hunts, it watches out for bats, centipedes, birds, tarantulas, lizards, and owls to keep from becoming their dinner. The scorpion lives up to two to six years and it may be found on your ceiling or in trees or under rocks. It hibernates in the winter. It has live babies and the babies will squirm up on the mother's back for safety. If the moon was an ultraviolet light on top of the scorpion, it would turn greenish color. Duran



Authors and Artists

Back Row (Left to Right): Hunter , Elnathan , Kennette , Nika , Anderson , Shanoah
Middle Row: Carolyn , Louwanda , Armein , Duran , Miguel , Robert , Kenyon , Relena , Jaylynn
Sitting:, Mckea , Darla , Lacey , Alanis , Fred , Absent: Chynoa , Tarah ,