

## **DESERT LOOP TRAIL**

This ½ mile long trail winds through the desert and features large, natural exhibits for groups of javelinas and coyotes, as well as a lizard enclosure. The javelina and coyote enclosures are made with a wire mesh called Invisinet™ specially formulated by the Desert Museum. The fine wire mesh is virtually invisible, giving the feel of walking through open desert. When you see the animals, it is as if you are encountering them in the wild!

Tell the children: *Now we are in a patch of real Sonoran Desert.*

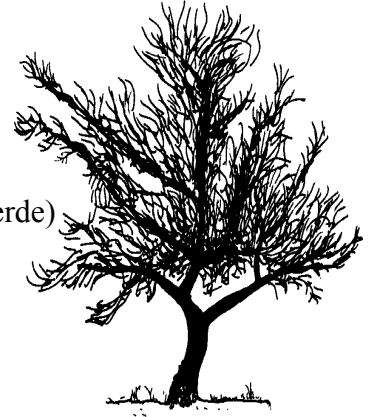
Ask: *What are the trees like here?*

Possible answers:

- small leaves
- not very tall
- thin trunks
- spread out
- green bark (palo verde)

Ask: *Where do these desert plants get their water?*

- from rain and water runoff



## **LIZARD ENCLOSURE**

The lizard enclosure contains a variety of lizards. See how many the children can find. On warm days they may be basking on rocks. If it is too hot or too cold, lizards may be out of sight. They go underground, in rock cracks, or under bushes for protection from heat and cold. If they are not visible, ask the children where they might be and why.

## **JAVELINAS**

Look for javelinas where you see signs for “Javvy Hot Spots.” Ask the students questions on the flip-up signs, and pose the following questions as well.

Ask: *What senses do you think are most important to javelinas?*

Answers:

- smell
- hearing
- sight

Javelinas’ sense of smell is better than their eyesight. They identify members of their herd, predators, and other animals with their sense of smell. They keep a keen ear for these animals, too.

Ask: *Are javelinas meat eaters or plant eaters?*

Answer:

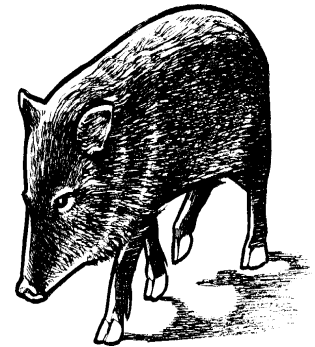
- plant eaters

Ask: *What do they like to eat?*

Possible answers:

- beans
- seeds
- roots
- cacti
- fruits

Javelinas’ favorite food is prickly pear cactus! They grind up the spines between their molars. Look for the sign “Something to Chew On” by the drinking fountain. Move the jaw to see how they crush cactus spines.



## **COYOTES**

Read the flip-up signs here as well, especially the one that asks “What do coyotes eat?”:

Ask: *How do coyotes beat the heat?*

Possible answers:

- rest in the shade in the daytime
- hunt in the morning, evening, and night
- go in their dens

