The most abundant deer in Arizona is the Rocky Mountain Mule Deer. In August and September the buck’s antlers grow under a layer of skin called velvet. The velvet supplies blood to the growing antlers, which are soft. Typical mule deer antler configuration has each side branching equally/unevenly into two main beams and each may fork into two tines.

In September and October a hormonal change stops the process, and the antlers harden to a bone-like consistency. As the velvet dries, the buck removes it through vigorous rubbing on small trees and shrubs, which also hardens the antlers. Note the two bucks at the right have pigtail velvet hanging from their antlers.

The mule deer’s breeding season begins in October with the peak occurring in mid to late November. This is also referred to as the “rut”, a time when the buck’s neck swells and he fights other bucks for dominance.

These mature bucks, which have 10 total points (including brow tines that exceed one inch), will soon be challenging each other and vying the attention of the Does. The Mule Deer are protected by the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Hunting Regulations from firearm and bow hunting within The Ranch for the 2015-16 Season only.
The **Mule Deer Does** have reared their fawns with care and attention and may soon become impregnated again.

Here seven fawns, accompanied by their mothers, feed on the natural grasses and shrubs of the forest.

Three to four months have now passed since their births, and the fawns loose their spots. Mule Deer hair is shed twice a year, producing a fine textured reddish-brown coat for summer and a coarser buff/gray coat for winter.

The **Mule Deer Fawns** are still curious and inquisitive. By mid-November the fawns can be differentiated by sex with the young males growing pedicels (small fuzzy knobs) or nubs under the skin on their heads (two right - 2014 photos).
The **Collard Peccary** or **Javelina** young are precocial, following the mother after birth and weaned at six weeks. **Photos:** Bobcats' visits on October 3 and 7 and on October 25 a mother **Raccoon** and two juveniles enjoy a bath.

**Coyotes** on the west yard point are perhaps looking for birds or mammals, and a night camera visit to the water feature.

**Sagebrush Lizard** and **Madrean Alligator Lizard** are present around the house.

One **Gopher Snake** winds its way into and out of the garage and another goes into some yard plants.

**The Arizona Black Rattlesnake** visits the yard and preys on amphibians, reptiles, birds and their eggs, and mammals.
Chipmunks, Squirrels and Cottontail Rabbits visit the yard regularly for seed and water.

A Squirrel gets a drink, while another greedy squirrel fills its mouth with seeds.

Mule Deer Buck's head in a seed bucket, Doe and Fawn, Doe 'Flop Ear' and Fawn, and six young Mule Deer Fawns.

Rainbow over Prescott, rainbow over houses in The Ranch, and rainbow glow over Glassford Hill.

The Pipevine Swallowtail Butterflies, with tail parts missing, are black with iridescent blue.
Arizona Sister Butterfly, and Two-tailed Swallowtail, underside and upperside, that has its tails eaten, perhaps by birds.

Painted Lady Butterflies, Sunrise Skipper, and Dusky Wing Skipper

Monsoonal winds blow the clouds around and make for beautiful Sunsets.

September 28 Full Moon Rising in the East, and Moon Set West over Thumb Butte on the morning of October 27, 2015.
Three Western Bluebirds have a drink, while the three Bushtits fly sprightly through the trees.

Blue tailed female Indigo Bunting with fine breast streaks and a Lazuli Bunting with missing tail feathers.

Mountain Chickadees, Eurasian Doves, and Inca Dove (locally rare for the Prescott area).

Mourning Doves with soft, drawn-out calls sound like laments.

Male and female Red-shafted Northern Flickers eat mainly ants and beetles.
Cassin’s and House Finches appear with the males having a rosy-tinged appearance.

House Finches are normal, leucistic - head feathers pigment lacking, with disfigured head and beak injury.

Two adult Western Lesser Goldfinches (middle - with some Texas traits), and an irregular Lawrence’s Goldfinch (right).

Flashy black, white and cinnamon male Black-headed Grosbeaks are more flamboyant than the females.

A female Cooper’s Hawk (left) shares our yard with her two juvenile offspring (right).
The skillful-flying juvenile **Cooper’s Hawks** tear through our tree canopies in high speed pursuit of other birds.

With their iridescent emerald feathers and sparkling rose-pink throats, the **Anna’s Hummingbirds** are like flying jewels.

The **Rufous Hummingbirds** glow like bright orange coals (above and below left).

A strip of iridescent purple bordering the black chin of the male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** is visible when hit by light.

**Hummingbirds** can be entrancing birds to observe by appearance/behavior, but are often hard to specifically identify.
The **Western Scrub Jay** has a knack at prying open pine cones for nuts.

The **Oregon, Pink-sided, and Gray-headed Dark-eyed Juncos** invade the yard in mid-October.

Intense bundles of energy, the **Red-breasted** and **White-breasted Nuthatches** are tiny, agile and active birds.

A sociable bird with a mellow coo, the **Band-tailed Pigeons** form large flocks in mountain forests where they feeds on seeds and fruits, but also enjoy cleaning up the seeds at the Tinneys' feeders.
The **Common Ravens** are among the smartest of all birds, and gains a reputation for solving complicated problems.

The **Greater Roadrunner** (left) may hold its lean frame nearly parallel to the ground and rudders with its long tail.

As the **Lesser Goldfinch** leave, the **Pine Siskins** take over the Thistle Feeder (center - right).

A **Black-chinned Sparrow** (left) forages inconspicuously on the ground in brushy areas east of our house.

The **Chipping Sparrow** (center/right) looks clean and crisp, with frosty underparts, pale face, black line through the eye topped off with a bright rusty crown.

Sparrow markings are sometimes hard to identify. The smart black-and-white head, pale beak, and crisp gray breast combine for a dashing look, make the **White-crowned Sparrow** one of the surest sparrow identifications (right).
A **Western Tanager** hits a window; a **Hepatic Tanager** and **Green-tailed Towhee** enjoy drinks from the water feature.

**Spotted Towhee** in bath, towhee with beak area disease (center) and Leucism (partial pigment loss – right).

**Canyon Towhee**, **Cassin’s Vireo**, **Audubon’s Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **Townsend’s Warbler**.

**Acorn Woodpeckers** have been scarce this fall, but the **Hairy Woodpeckers** do visit the seed blocks.

The **Ladder-backed Woodpeckers** drink from the ant motes, fountain, and water pans.

"**Animals have hearts to feel, eyes that see, and families to care for, just like you and me.**" - Anthony Douglas Williams