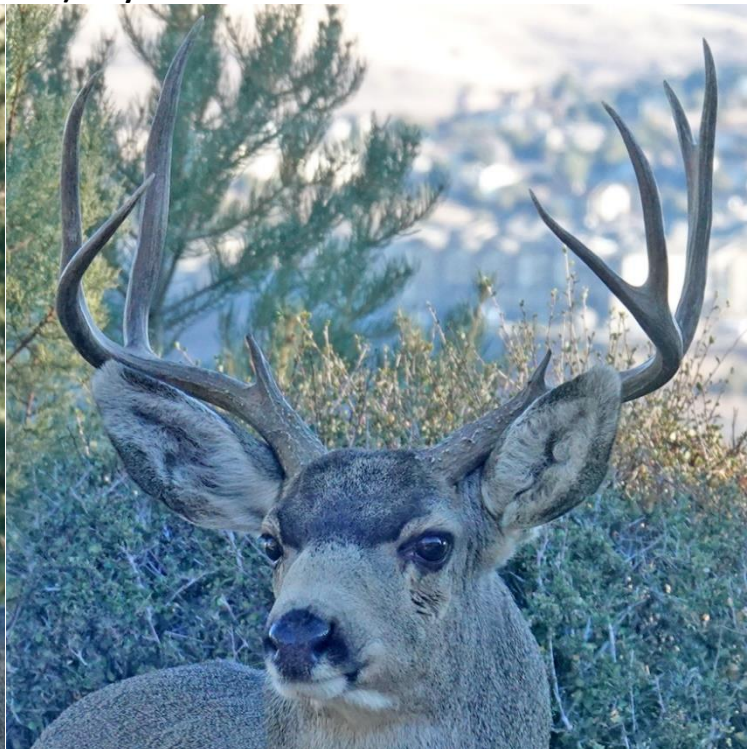
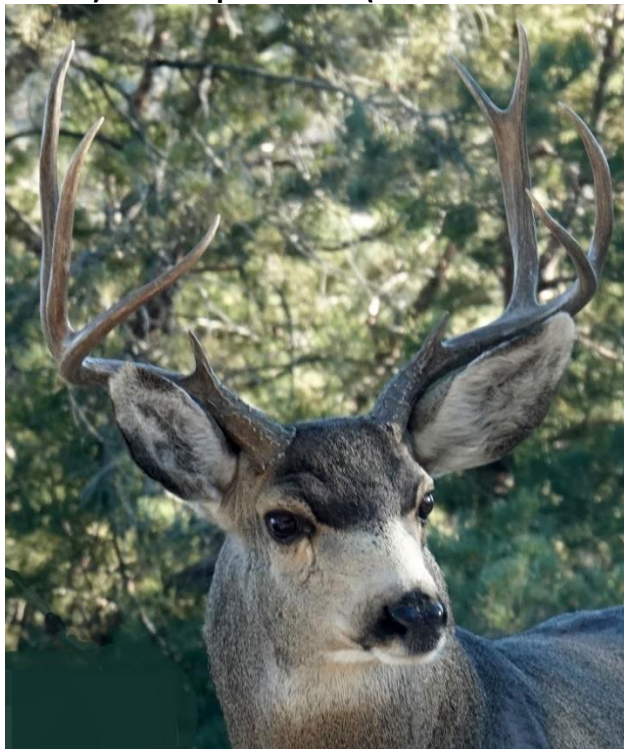


Nature at the Tinneys Nov 2020 - Jan 2021

(Photos and Story by Bob and Maxine Tinney, The Ranch in Prescott, AZ)



In Memory of two beautiful Ranch Mule Deer bucks! An 8-point buck (above last seen Nov. 13) and a 7-point buck (below last seen Dec. 13) may have met their fate to other realms or hunters.



The Rut: In mule deer, the hormone melatonin is produced by the pineal gland in response to the onset of darkness. When it reaches a certain level in the blood it induces estrus in does. A mule deer doe will come into estrus and will remain in heat for approximately 24 hours, during which she will accept breeding. If a doe is not bred, she will typically cycle back into heat in approximately 21-30 days.



For a **6-point Mule Deer Buck** (this page), a decrease in daylight produces melatonin, which in turn increases testosterone production. Simply put, decreasing daylight causes hormonal changes that triggers “the rut.”



By late November early December in the Prescott area, **does are coming into estrus**, and bucks’ testosterone levels peak. Prior to and during estrus, mule deer does produce pheromones. **Lip curling** (above) allows a buck to determine if a doe is entering estrus. The buck traps scent from a doe's urine in its nose and mouth, and then **lip-curls**. This allows the buck's scent-analyzing device in the roof of its mouth to pinpoint the doe's status.



A buck may trail a doe in estrus for up to 72 hours, only moving when she moves. A mule deer buck with high testosterone level can be observed strutting around, with a one-track mind (or other parts, right above), and reproduction is a powerful instinct.



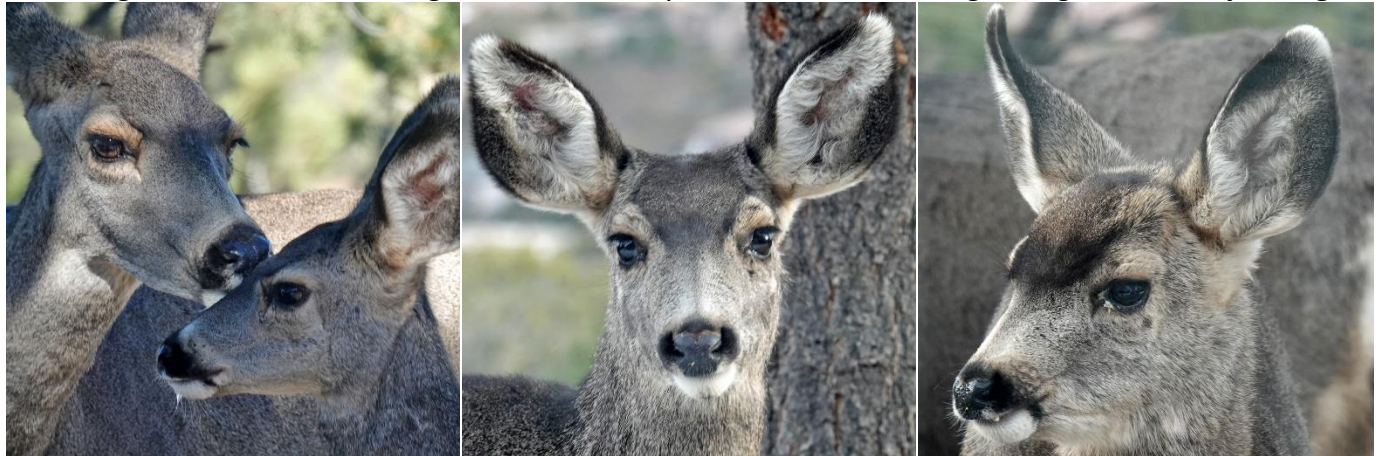
Some **4-point Mule Deer** may also spar and participate in the Rut and are now shedding their antlers.



Yearling Bucks will usually sport **3-points**, not uncommon left) or **two-points** (center) or a **spike** (right).



Although the **Mule Deer Does** go into estrus, they still look out for their growing **fawns and yearlings**.



The first year for the fawns is the most critical and dangerous due to starvation and predation.



The Snowstorm: During the **January 25-26** snowstorm of 18-20-inches in Prescott, the winds were extremely strong from Governor’s Canyon to the SW of our home, which blew the snow into 3-4-foot drifts (above) in the driveway and around the north side of our home. (shown above and below).



The **Mule Deer** try to maneuver thru the snow (note height of snow behind the deer below right).



This is a difficult, resilient time for the all of the Mule Deer, especially the yearlings.



Night Animals Visit the Tinneys' Yard



The bandit-masked **Raccoons** rarely visit during the day as they are nocturnal creatures.



When the snow is on the ground the **Gray Fox** visits the patio looking for nibbles of bird seed.



The omnivorous **Striped Skunk** rarely secrete musk except if wishing to deter other animals.



The night camera catches a couple of savvy and clever **Coyotes** visiting the water feature.



Javelina visit day and night and breed year-round with one having a small red baby (center).



The **Abert's Squirrel** has tassel or tufted-ears, gray on the head and sides, reddish on the back, and a bushy tail with white fur on the underside. They are active in the day, sleep in their nests at night.



Chipmunks are small striped rodents which love the bird seeds on rocks and stumps.



Small **Mice** with pink tails, feet and noses are caught in live-traps and released in the National Forest.



Adult with reddish-banded chest and red eyes and two possible immature **Cooper's Hawks** with brown-streaked underparts and yellow eyes tear through tree canopies at high speeds scaring and grabbing smaller birds . They also enjoy unfrozen, open-water baths.



The plump, black-faced male and gray-faced female crested **Gambel's Quail** are short-legged, ground feeders gathering food from the seed blocks and in the snow-covered ground.



The **Mourning Doves** have black spots on the wing coverts and peach-colored breast with a long tail, pink legs, and a blueish eye ring.



During the cold days the white-collar **Band-tailed Pigeons** vie for the seed blocks.



The **Greater Roadrunner** is revered for its courage, strength, speed, and endurance and for their distinctive X-shaped footprints with two toes pointing forward and two pointing backwards.



The lovely **Acorn Woodpeckers** spend considerable time on feeders since insects are hard to find.



The males with a red patch on the head and females **Hairy Woodpeckers** have chisel-like bills.



A **Red-naped Sapsucker** is industrious by drilling tree holes and lapping up sugary sap.



Northern Flickers are large, brown woodpeckers with a gentle expression and handsome black-scalloped plumage. The favorite place for the female and red-malar male **Red-shafted Northern Flickers** is on the cages enjoying suet. Orangey-red feathers are shown in flight (below).



Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays are dusty blue birds set off by gray-brown and white and always finding food.





The **Bridled Titmouse** is grayish overall with black stripes on crest, eye, throat, and cheeks.



The **Juniper Titmouse** is plain gray with a prominent black eye and tufted crest.



The **Mountain Chickadees** have a black cap and bib joining a black postocular stripe and distinctive white eyebrows and cheeks.



The tiny **Bushtits** have long-tails and short bills with gray crowns and brownish cheeks.



The barrel-chested **Red-breasted Nuthatches** with blue-gray backs and rust below have sharp bills.



The **White-breasted Nuthatches** with dark gray above and black cap have white cheeks and rusty rear.



The **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** are olive overall with white eye ring and male has a red crown when excited.



The **American Robins** are popular birds for their warm orange breast and cheery song.



The **Crissal Thrasher** visits the snow with its long, down-curved bill, its long tail, and its reddish undertail.



The **Phainopepla** is a brilliant sight in flight. This female is ashy-gray and slender, with an elegant crest.



The **Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler** has yellow throat, rump, and patches on the side.



The long-tailed **Spotted Towhees** have a thick bill and brown/black hood, rufous sides and white belly.



The snows made it hard for the **Spotted Towhees** to find food, and the Tinneys try to open patio areas on the first day, and then Bob proceeded to try to open most of the feeder for bird access.



The **Rufous-crowned Sparrows** enjoy a baking summer day, but what about a snowy 42 degree High!?!?



A scruffy, gray **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** looks very disheveled and seems to have lost its rufous head feathers.



The **White-crowned Sparrow** is noted for its long tail, white and black crown and orange beak.



Of the birds classified as perching birds or "songbirds," the **Common Raven** is the largest, the size of a hawk.



The **Oregon Dark-eyed Juncos** have a dark black/brown hood with light-brown back, buffy sides and white belly.



The **Pink-Sided Dark-eyed Juncos** have a slate-gray head, brown back, and pinkish brown sides.



The **Grey-Headed Dark-eyed Juncos** have a gray-head and dark reddish-brown back and light bills.



This lovely **Dark-eyed Junco** has lovely light brown/tan/pink on the hood and sides.



The crisp-brown streaked females and rosy-red male **Cassin's Finches** enjoy baths and sunflower seeds.



The male **House Finches** with orangey-red head and drab females are small-bodied with curved culmen and somewhat long, flat heads.



The **Pine Siskins** have sharp pointed bills are brown and steaky with subtle yellow wing edgings.



The **Lesser Goldfinch** females have olive-yellow backs and underparts with black wings marked with white, while the males look similar but with black caps (center).

