

Desert Mine Creatures

by Dave Thorpe

While exploring mines in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona, we regularly encounter living creatures. The most common is the rattlesnake which loves to hide out in mine entrances. Frequently, they fall into shallow shafts and give us quite a surprise as Steve Smith discovered on rappel in the Harcuvar Mountains last spring. We have seen desert tortoises, ring-tail cats, and a rare snake known as the Rosy Boa. Among the creatures found in the so-called twilight zone (the dimly lit entrance of the mine), this is the first time we have encountered an amphibian

While exploring the Cleator area, Steve Chilcoat found what appeared to be toads at the entrance of an adit. After consulting with Daren Riedle at the Arizona Game & Fish department, they were identified as Canyon Treefrogs. They are more commonly found clinging to rocks than trees with their suction-cup fingertips.



