

Lizards of Sabino Canyon

Bajada

Tiger Whiptail Like all whiptails has particularly long tail. Stays close to the ground and is almost constantly moving with jerky motions. Is heavily spotted with black spots coalescing in front which makes it appear darker on the front end.

Zebra-tailed Lizard Very pale and skinny with zebra striped tail which it may curl over its back and wave around. Likes open areas where it can quickly run away. Aside from the bajada it can be found in sand below the dam. It has two side bars near the front legs: "Fast Forward". Where they occur together below the dam, the Greater Earless Lizard has side bars near the hind near the groin area.

Gila Monster Unmistakable, our largest lizard with orange (or pink) and black patterning. Do not pet!

Western Banded Gecko Will not see unless you are out at night or turning over a lot of rocks

Long-nosed Leopard Lizard Large dark spotted (thus the "leopard" name) sandy-colored lizard. Probably extirpated in Sabino.

Regal Horned Lizard Only horned lizard in Sabino. Usually hangs around near ant trails. Cryptically colored and may not move even if close.

Desert Spiny Lizard A fairly large lizard. Males usually pale (except early in AM when appearing dark) with dark throat wedge which almost makes a complete band (thus sometimes mistaken for a "collared" lizard. Females are darker with patterned dorsal. Has keeled scales and thus appears "spiny". Will sit on rocks and do front leg "push-ups"

Side-blotched Lizard Our most cold tolerant lizard and can be found out in the early AM or in winter on a sunny day. First to hide when it becomes too warm. Males may have small turquoise dorsal spots. Females are more patterned usually with some dorsal stripes. Both sexes usually have a dark spot (side-blotch) behind the forelegs, but maybe hard to see.

Foothills and Upper Sabino

Giant Spotted Whiptail Large, heavy bodied with pale spots on dark background. Tail orange. Young individuals are the size of Sonoran Spotted Whiptail, which they resemble, but the orange tail is diagnostic.

Sonoran Spotted Whiptail Long tail, in constant motion with jerky walk. Smallest whiptail with pale dorsal stripes and pale dots between stripes (which may be hard to see). All are female. Impossible to separate from the Gila Spotted Whiptail (which may not occur in Sabino) except in the hand.

Greater Earless Lizard Resembles Zebra-tail, but found in different more rocky habitat where they may sit out in the open. Can also wave tail which has zebra stripes on the underside. Breeding males are unmistakable with green and turquoise body with orange spots. Females generally brown dorsally with few scattered marking. Both have side bars nearer GRoin area (GReater= GRoin). Gravid females have lots of orange around head. Our common most commonly seen lizard in area around the dam.

Eastern Collared Lizard Another unmistakable large lizard with a long tail. Males yellow-green with double dark collar. Females tan with light spots. Will sit up on a rocky vantage point looking for other lizards as prey. Best found along Esperero Trail above Cactus Group Area and down Rattlesnake to the wash.

Great Plains Skink This smooth scaled and shiny lizard , which hides under rocks and thick vegetation is rarely found

Clark's Spiny Lizard This spiny lizard is smaller than the Desert Spiny Lizard and spends much of its time in trees especially in the riparian areas. Males can have turquoise scales at breeding times. If it can be seen well the bands on the forelegs are diagnostic.

Ornate Tree Lizard This small lizard is common in trees in the riparian area. Gray with dark dorsal blotches or partial crossbars. Upper lip is white. Our only lizard which does push-up with all four legs.

References

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