

# Early spring disrupts desert's timing

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Evidently, Mother Nature has almost forgotten about winter and is just as indecisive as to when spring should make its normal March 20 debut.

For a winter month, this past January has had the distinction of being the warmest on record. Daytime temperatures averaged 10 to 12 degrees above normal; nighttime lows also were abnormally warm. It also was the driest January since 1976.

Then, during the first weeks of February, winter again asserted itself with cooler, closer to the norm day and nighttime temperatures and the appearance of a storm that produced approximately 1.5 inches of rainfall.

Again, in late February, dominant high pressure systems allowed the clear, sunny days that steadily pushed the mercury up into the high 80s and low 90s during the first week of March.

The effect of these early and unseasonably warm both high and low temperatures in combination

with adequate moisture, has been to broadcast the signals which activate the "wake-up-grow and reproduce", timing of the desert's plants and animals prematurely.

Consequently, the familiar flora

and fauna changes denoting spring are now advanced at least two to three and in some exceptions up to four weeks.

Unfortunately, spring's early arrival doesn't guarantee that there will be a longer spring or a spectacularly bountiful wildflower display. The green and growth could fizzle and dry up rapidly should temperatures remain elevated and precipitation scanty.

It is believed that at least a half



## a desert place

Natural beauty  
through preservation  
Presented by:  
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE of the  
Cave Creek Improvement Association

A spring event that doesn't fluxuate with the weather is Arizona

Game and Fish Department.

Until the Wildlife Contribution Fund was started, the financial burden of managing all the state's wildlife had fallen on sportsmen whose hunting and fishing license fees contributed to the major portion of the department's revenue.

Since less than 100 of the approximate 800 vertebrate species inhabiting Arizona were game species, it was logical that the percentage of revenue spent for non-game interests and management were limited.

Now, donations to the Wildlife Contribution Fund help to insure that the non-game species receive a fair share of attention towards management, protection and study of the specific species and their habitat requirements for survival.

Therefore, if you are interested and concerned about the preservation, quality, and diversity of Arizona's wildlife, make a point of contributing by checking it off on your state income tax before April 15.