

Let's go Wildlife Watching By Joe Miele

I recently took a drive over to the Aguirre Springs National Recreation Area, which is nestled up against the eastern slope of the Organ Mountains, just east of Las Cruces, New Mexico. I went during the height of the summer when high temperatures limit the number of campers and day hikers. There is an abundance of wildlife in this area, and even the more popular trails are, at this time of year, frequented by jackrabbits and coyotes. On this day, I saw a coyote trot across an access road (western coyotes are smaller than their eastern cousins), and a rattlesnake sunning herself on a boulder, which would have made a great picnic table had the snake not found it first. Instead, I took a break under a nearby tree and watched a few jackrabbits and lizards scamper by. Signs along the Baylor Pass trail warn visitors not to venture off the well-maintained trails for the sake of safety and avoiding habitat degradation. If you find yourself in southern New Mexico, I recommend heading over to the Organ Mountains for a fantastic day of camping, hiking, and wildlife watching.



Joe Miele is a nature-lover who lives in New Mexico