

Chiricahua National Monument

In the southeast corner of Arizona, volcanic peaks tower above the surrounding desert grasslands. The Apaches called this isolated mountain range “the land of standing-up rocks.” Today scientists consider the Chiricahua Mountains a “sky island” of immense biological diversity. This wonderland of rocks presents visitors with great opportunities for photography, hiking, camping, wildlife-watching, picnicking and climbing. Visitors can also learn about earlier peoples who have called this area home – the Chiricahua Apaches, Buffalo Soldiers, and a few hardy families of Swedish immigrants.

The Chiricahua National Monument protects about 12,000 acres (49 square kilometers) of steep, forested valleys, craggy spires, and balanced rocks. You can meander along an eight-mile paved scenic drive or hike some of the 18 miles (29 kilometers) of trails to get a closer look at startling volcanic rock formations and a great variety of wildlife species. A strenuous hike will take you through shady canyons into the Heart of Rocks which afford awe-inspiring views.

Four different ecological regions intersect here in southeast Arizona, making the Chiricahua Mountains unusually diverse in plants and animals. And to many, this means great birdwatching! Bird watchers from all over the world converge here to see hummingbirds, painted redstarts, trogons, orioles, warblers and more. In addition to birds, wildlife watchers can find javelina, deer, mountain lions, coatimundi, salamanders and snakes. In all, there are 71 species of mammals, 46 species of reptiles, 8 amphibians, 171 species of birds, and hundreds of insect species that regularly occur at Chiricahua National Monument.

Long before modern tourists began to appreciate the Chiricahuas, these mountains provided a refuge for Native Americans. Famous chiefs Cochise and Geronimo took one of their

final stands in these mountains during the 1860’s and 1870’s against the famed Buffalo Soldiers. Descendents of the Chiricahua Apache tribe still live in the surrounding lands. Visitors can tour a picturesque pioneer homestead, the Faraway Ranch, to learn about the Swedish immigrant family that was one of the first to settle in the area after the Apache tribe was defeated.

For more information on the park, please visit www.nps.gov/chira.

The National Park Service conserves this “sky island” of biodiversity and scenic wonders for the benefit of humans and wildlife, today and into the future.

Source(s):

<http://www.nps.gov/chir/index.htm>

<http://www.desertusa.com/chi/index.html>

www.discoverseaz.com/Attractions/ChirNatM.html

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