

# Love animals but not the work of having a pet? Try these Arizona wildlife live cams

Weldon B. Johnson, The Republic | [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com) Published 5:06 p.m. MT Dec. 6, 2017



(Photo: Tom Baugh/AP)

A lot of people like pets but, let's face it, taking care of animals isn't for everyone.

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If you fit that description, the Arizona Game and Fish Department might be able to help.

## Wings Over Willcox

The department has three [wildlife Webcams](#)

(<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/>) where anyone can enjoy the main benefit of animal ownership: watching them do stuff.

You don't have to worry about cleaning cages or tanks. You don't have to get someone to feed your pet when you go out of town. You don't have to explain to the kids what happened when a pet is no more.

You may have to have a discussion about the circle of life, though. These are actual wild animals.

## Cranes and falcons



Sandhill cranes are shown in this undated photo. Game and Fish offers a book and website encouraging Arizona residents and visitors to seek out watchable wildlife. (Photo: Photo by Arizona Game and Fish )

Bird lovers have a couple of choices, though one isn't active at the moment.

The [peregrine falcon cam](https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/peregrine/) (<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/peregrine/>) is focused on a nesting box that no birds found desirable this year, so check back next season.

But there is action on the [sandhill crane cam](https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/sandhillcrane/) (<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/sandhillcrane/>) focused on a wetland near Willcox in southern Arizona where the long-legged, long-necked migratory birds spend the winter. Sandhill cranes are one of two species of cranes in North America. They're not endangered like the slightly more well-known whooping crane.

Greater sandhill cranes, one of three subspecies of sandhill cranes that winter in Arizona, can stand almost 4 feet tall when they stretch their necks. Lesser sandhill cranes top out at about 3 feet.

You won't see the birds at all times, though, because they roost here but feed elsewhere. The best times to see the cranes are during the first hour of daylight, before they take off to feed, and at around noon when they return to the roost for the day. [The cranes are usually in Arizona from November through February](https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/sandhillcrane/) ([/story/travel/arizona/2016/11/10/sandhill-cranes-webcam-willcox-arizona/93592756/](https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/sandhillcrane/)).

## Virtual fish tank



Ayer Lake at Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park is home to the endangered desert pupfish and the Gila topminnow. (Photo: Roger Naylor)

Fish fans can watch the [desert pupfish cam](https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/pupfish/) (<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/pupfish/>), which is operated in partnership with Mesa Community College. The cam is focused on a pond in the Cienega habitat at the school's Red Mountain Campus.

The pupfish are about 2 inches long when mature.

The two remaining species of pupfish in Arizona — desert and Quitobaquito — are endangered. The pond is part of conservation efforts to breed the fish in captivity so they can be reintroduced into their historic habitats.

Unfortunately, the Monkey Springs pupfish species didn't survive the introduction of large-mouth bass into its southern Arizona habitat.

There is no best time to look in on the pupfish, and the spring breeding season is particularly good. The males transform into a metallic blue color with yellow tails. (Both males and females are normally gray.) The males then aggressively defend their spawning territories in hopes of breeding.

When the young fish hatch they hide out in dense vegetation until they grow large enough to avoid being eaten by their parents or other fish.

### Last Chance

That's when that circle of life discussion might become a **New Year Sale Ends 1/3 \$9<sup>99</sup> / Month**

If you want to do more for the cranes, falcons and pupfish than just spy on them, consider getting involved with the Game and Fish department's **Support Wildlife program** (<https://www.azgfd.com/isupportwildlife/>).

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