



ARIZONA-SONORA  
DESERT  
MUSEUM

## Media Release

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## **New Desert Museum Exhibit Features Sonoran Desert Gems**

**Tucson, AZ** (May 24, 2013) While Tucson hosts the annual Gem and Mineral show in February, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum kicks off the summer season with a gem-studded exhibit with a twist. *Diamonds of the Desert*, an entirely new exhibit in celebration of the Museum's 60<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee, pairs diamond-backed rattlesnakes with diamond gemstones.

“Although diamond gemstones are not native to this region, diamond-back rattlesnakes are, so the Museum created a unique exhibit featuring this rare and beautiful collection,” states Stephane Poulin, the Museum's General Curator. “We welcome Sheffield's Diamonds as our exhibit partner. They shared our vision of how stunning this exhibit could be.”

The exhibit premieres on Saturday evening, June 1, when the Desert Museum kicks off its *Cool Summer Nights* programming. Each Saturday night, June through August, the Museum is open until 10 PM with different themes and activities each week, many designed especially for families.

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The exhibit showcases rattlesnakes with rare genetic color or pattern mutations. These snakes are rarely found in the wild. Their unique appearance makes them stand out from their environment thus making them more noticeable to their natural predators and prey. In addition to the rare-colored snakes from the Southwest, the exhibit will feature the only other type of diamond-backed rattlesnake found in the world -- the Eastern Diamond-backed rattlesnake -- which is the largest species of rattlesnakes in the United States.

There is no additional charge to visit the new exhibit as it is free with Museum admission. And there's no charge for the scenic drive through Gates Pass and Tucson Mountain Park either.

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The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is one of the nation's leading outdoor, living museums, featuring more than 230 animals and 1,200 varieties of desert plants. Its purpose is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the bi-national, Sonoran Desert region. The museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road, in Tucson Mountain Park adjacent to Saguaro National Park (West). It is open daily year round with operating hours varying by season. Call (520) 883-2702 or visit [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org) for more information.