

# ANIMAL MATCH-UP

Draw a line to match each desert animal with its super sense! What sense helps each animal survive in the desert? Use facts in this newsletter if you need help.

**Kangaroo rat**



**Black-tailed jackrabbit**



**Gila monster**



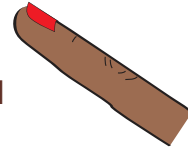
**Snake**



**Coyote**



**TOUCH**



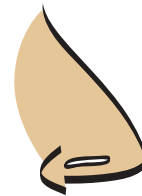
**HEARING**



**SIGHT**



**SMELL**



**TASTE**



## BONUS

Which animal do you think is the toughest desert survivor? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Free school tours:** The Springs Preserve offers free, interactive tours for school groups year-round. Teachers, please call **822-7744** for details.

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Desert Discovery is a publication of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. Learn more about water and your desert environment at our Web sites.



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### Learn more

**Read:** "My Five Senses" by Aliki. Learn more about how you use your own senses.

"The Magic School Bus: All Dried Up" by Joanna Cole. Mrs. Frizzle's class learns about desert animals.

**Log on:** [desertmuseum.org/kids/oz/](http://desertmuseum.org/kids/oz/) Compare animals from different deserts and find fun animal facts.

# SUPER SENSES!

Let's learn how desert animals use their senses of touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing.



© Photo courtesy of Scott Page

## FUN FACT OUR STATE ANIMAL

Did you know that the **bighorn sheep** is the official state animal of Nevada? The bighorn uses senses like keen eyesight and the touch of its special, padded hooves to climb rocky cliffs. It needs to drink water about every 3 days in summer. Children who live in Boulder City, Nevada, may see bighorn sheep nearby in mountains and even at their city parks!

## TOUCH

The **Gila (HEE-lah) monster** is a large and heavy lizard. But its claws give it a good sense of touch. It uses its claws to dig burrows and to dig out other animals' eggs to eat.



© Photo courtesy of Sandy Redding

A **tarantula** can feel the ground **vibrate** (shake) when an animal is near. This spider can kick its back legs to release tiny hairs with sharp barbs. The hairs hurt an attacker, such as a skunk, and make it go away.

## TASTE

We can't taste something until it touches our lips or tongue. But a **Gila monster** uses its tongue to **detect** (find) smells in the air. Its tongue helps it to hunt. A **snake** is different: Its tongue has no taste buds! Instead, a snake has two pits on the roof of its mouth. The pits detect smells and tastes, then send signals to the snake's brain. Do you use the taste buds on your tongue to taste things, or do you use the roof of your mouth?

## SIGHT

You might wish you could see as well as a **black-tailed jackrabbit**. It has a flat head with large eyes that are high and placed toward the side to help it see almost 360 degrees (a full circle) around. Sharp eyes help jackrabbits spot predators and stay safe.



© Photo courtesy of Jim Scully

**GILA MONSTERS HAVE SENSITIVE CLAWS.**



© Photo courtesy of Kevin Reilly, M.D.

**SNAKES HAVE NO TASTE BUDS.**



**JACKRABBITS HAVE LARGE EYES.**

## SMELL

A **kangaroo rat** has a special nose that does more than smell. Its nose has tiny bones inside it called **turbinals**. These bones help kangaroo rats recycle 88 percent of the water from the moist, wet air they breathe out of their lungs. Kangaroo rats use their noses to help them live with very little water!



You have these tiny bones in your nose, too. But the kangaroo rat has the most "water smart" nose of all. Its nose helps it survive in the dry desert.



© Photo courtesy of Dave Stiles

**COYOTES SING A WAKE-UP SONG...AT NIGHT!**

## HEARING

Do you ever sing a good-morning song? **Coyotes** do! Coyotes usually hunt as night falls so they sing a wake-up song then as they prepare to hunt. They also sing to keep track of their family and even for fun. Do you think coyotes like to hear each other sing and howl?