

Sonoran Desert Help Contents

HELP

[Finding Your Way Around](#)
[Desktop Buttons](#)
[Equipment](#)
[The Field Center](#)

If you are unfamiliar with the Windows Help system and would like an introduction to it, click the line below with your mouse.

[Help on using Help](#)

Finding Your Way Around

The Sonoran Desert

The best way to experience the Sonoran Desert is to get out there. Within the desert, there are many areas, each with different plants and animals. There are many ways to move around the desert and these are outlined in the following sections. Remember that very little in the natural world stays the same. In the Sonoran Desert, as in real life, the desert is constantly changing. The places you visit - whether a desert location or the Field Center noticeboard - will rarely be the same on your next visit. Just because you have seen something in a location once doesn't mean that it will still be there the next time! You will need to visit each location many times before you have seen everything there is to see. And this includes the Field Center Lobby, whose noticeboards are updated every day with news of special events and unusual sightings in the desert.

Changing Locations within the Desert

Within the desert, there are various trekking locations called sectors. These sectors are defined in terms of their compass location from the Gila Field Center and can be reached using the Treks and Trails button or the Map described below. Within each sector, there are several different trekking locations (called 'stations') and these can be reached using the Vehicle and the Day/Night button, described below.

Treks & Trails

Clicking on this button brings up a large picture map of the trekking sectors and the Gila Field Center. All the pictures are navigation buttons. To move to any sector or station, simply click on a picture. Treks & Trails is also available when you visit the desert at night, although it will be different.

Map

The map is present in the top right hand corner of the screen. It is only available when the tutor is present. It provides you with a quick way of changing sectors, but doesn't show you the individual stations within any of the sectors. Clicking on the red spot in the centre of the map will take you back to the Field Center.

Vehicle Button

Use the Vehicle Button to move between the various stations within a given sector by clicking on the arrows at either end of the jeep. The vehicle button is only available at the start of each station or trek, and cannot be used to move within a station. Stations within a sector are arranged as a circuit. You can move round the circuit either clockwise or anti-clockwise, and so will eventually return to where you started.

Day/Night Button

This button allows you to choose whether you want to visit the desert in the daytime or at night. During a day time trek, this button will carry a moon symbol. Clicking it will turn your day time trek into a night time trek in the same sector. At night, the moon button will become a 'sun' button, enabling you to return to day time trekking whenever you want to.

Night treks can also be selected from the noticeboard in the Field Center lobby. From here you will be taken outside the Field Center and allowed to choose one of the available night treks from the night time Treks & Trails map. You can change sectors during a night trek by using the Map or the Treks and Trails map, as before.

Moving around a Station in a Sector

Animals are difficult to find in the Sonoran Desert. Some of them will be visible (though remember some are very small) but others will be hidden, so you will have to go looking for them. Use your mouse to explore the landscape. Move the cursor around the screen until you see it change as it passes over a 'hot-spot'. It can change in any of the following ways:

- (a) to an arrow pointing left, right, forward or backwards, and diagonally;
- (b) to a magnifying glass;

(c) to a pointing finger.

Cursor Arrows

When navigating with arrows, click on a arrow pointing in the opposite direction to return the way you have come. So if you have reached a screen by turning to the *left* from the previous screen, you can return to it by turning to the *right*. If you have moved into the screen by clicking a forwards pointing arrow, you can move back again by using a reverse (or outwards) pointing arrow.

Magnifying Glass

This provides you with a closer look at something you have found. A click with a magnifying glass will display additional information, usually as a close-up picture, but sometimes as an animal sound or a bit of commentary from your Guide.

Pointing Finger

This enables you to touch or manipulate things in the desert world. This can be useful if you want to turn over a stone. It can also be risky if you try to touch a dangerous animal. The animal may simply run away, or you could conceivably get bitten! If you think it might be silly to touch something, try looking around with your cursor for another option - eg an 'approach' arrow between you and the animal rather than a 'touch' finger!

Pop-ups

Clicking a hot-spot will usually produce some sort of change, whether it moves you through the landscape in the direction shown or allows you to look closer at something. If the cursor is a magnifying glass, a picture or movie will pop-up. If after this the cursor remains a magnifying glass, it means there may be another pop-up within that pop-up. In addition, a movie pop-up may contain a small sound icon in the bottom left-hand corner of the pop-up screen: clicking on this when the movie has ended will display additional information.

Pop-ups can be closed either by clicking off the pop-up onto the main window below, OR by selecting 'Close' from the pop-up window menu (accessed by clicking on the top left hand corner of the title bar).

Your Guide within the Desert

You will be accompanied on most of your treks by an experienced Guide, who appears as a black figure in the bottom right-hand corner of the main desert screen. Your guide will talk to you about the desert and its inhabitants. He will also prompt you with questions and things to think about - without necessarily giving you the answers straight away. You can usually persuade him to give you the answers using the Guide Menu.

Click on the Guide to get the Guide menu. Then select an option from the list. The Guide Menu will change from sector to sector, and sometimes within sectors. If you do not catch what the Guide says when you arrive somewhere new, select 'Say it again?' from the Guide menu.

Desktop Buttons

On the desktop (the green area surrounding the main desert window), you will find a series of buttons. These are:

Treks and Trails

This button can be used to change your location within the desert. See [Finding Your Way Around](#).

History

Gives a screen-by-screen list of all the locations you have visited. You can re-visit them by double clicking on a given location. To remind you of special places, you can lay down Trailmarks (which are like bookmarks in a book). To lay a trailmark, select a location and click 'Add'. Your selection will appear in the Trailmark window below.

Back

Returns you to the starting screen of the station you are in.

Help

Enables you to :

- get information about all the main system functions and facilities
- reveal and hide hot-spots
- reveal and hide audio commentary in text form
- access Sonoran Desert Credits
- get to know the system by going on a brief Guided Tour

Quit

Takes you out of the desert and closes down the application.

Equipment

No-one should go out into the desert without appropriate equipment. You will be told what is essential in one of the briefing sessions. In addition, you will carry with you a rucksack containing further equipment which will help you to identify the animals and plants you see and to keep a record of your visit. These items of equipment are listed below.

Using your Rucksack

Click the Rucksack to open it and see the equipment inside. Click on any of the pieces of equipment within the rucksack to place it on the desktop. Once on the desktop, the equipment can be used by double-clicking on it. A single click will show the name of the equipment.

To return equipment to the rucksack click on the image in the rucksack again, or select 'Close' from the pop-up window menu. Unlike other pop-ups, equipment windows cannot be closed by clicking on the desktop.

Camera

Double-clicking on the camera icon will take a picture of the scene or pop-up displayed. This photo will automatically be stored in your photo-album. It can be viewed either by opening the photo-album from the desktop (when out in the field), or in the Media Lab at the Field Center. If the photo-album is open, a photo can also be taken by clicking the album's own camera icon.

Photo Album

The Photo Album (or Scrapbook) contains all the photos you have taken whilst using Sonoran Desert. You can inspect the photos you have taken by double-clicking on the photo album icon, providing it is out on the desktop. Photos can also be viewed in the Media Lab of the Field Center.

You can add notes of your own to the photos you have taken. To do this, double-click on a photo. An enlarged photo appears with a text box attached, into which you can type any notes you want to make. If you want to export your photos to another application (e.g. to your own wordprocessor or graphics package), you can do so by selecting the photo of interest with a single click on the mouse and copying it to the clipboard using the keyboard buttons Ctrl+C. You will then be able to paste it into another application using Ctrl+V.

To remove a photo from the album completely, simply select it with a single click on the mouse, and press Delete on your keyboard.

Checklist

All good field naturalists carry with them a list of the species they are likely to see in the habitats they are visiting. Your checklist contains information about each of the animal and plant species you are likely to meet, as well as information about the animal and plant families to which they belong. Go to the Glossary in the Field Center to look up any words you don't understand. Open the Checklist by double-clicking on the checklist icon. A maximise / minimise button on the top right of the header bar allows you to enlarge / shrink the checklist as required.

Several checklists are available. These are listed in the checklist menu and can be opened by using the mouse to click on and hold down the checklist button present in the top left hand corner of the window. Select the list you want to use and then release your mouse button. The Birds checklist is automatically selected when you first open your checklist.

Each entry in your Checklist has a check box and a page icon beside it. Click the page icon find out further information about the species. Click the other box to add a 'cross' to it, which indicates that you have seen that species in the desert. Your Checklist will also be available in the Field Center's Media Lab.

One of the 'checklists' is a colour guide to help you identify the main plants you see. Select the colour closest to a flower and make a note of the species listed for that colour. Then check each species against the descriptions provided in the Plant checklist to see which one best fits the flower you have found.

Notebook

If you are a serious desert adventurer, you will want a notebook handy to record all the exciting experiences you have. Double-clicking the notebook icon will open *Windows Write* (or *Window 95 WordPad*). You can type into this as well as save and print your notes in the usual way. Audio text (when commentary is visible) can be exported in *Write* by selecting the text using the mouse and then using CTL-C to copy, and CTL-V to paste selected text.

Remember that *Write* or *WordPad* will not accept very large graphics files, so you will have to use another wordprocessor or graphics application if you want to export the largest photos in your album.

Portable Satellite link

The Portable Satellite link will allow you to link up with the Rocky Mountain Ecology Institute and access information about several topics that are not immediately available in the desert itself. Double-click on the satellite to link up your portable computer with the satellite. When using the satellite link, a menu with various topics will appear. Select the topic you want to know more about by clicking on it. At the bottom of the screen, there are two coloured keys. The YELLOW (right) key on the portable's keyboard will turn pages and return you to the main menu once you have finished, whilst the RED key will disconnect you from the satellite link.

Calculator

This can be used to help you with any calculations you might need to make while on your hikes. Double click on the calculator to open and use.

The Field Center

The Gila Field Center is where you'll be based during your desert visit. It contains three main rooms of interest:

The Lobby

The Lobby is where the main noticeboard can be found. It lists all the events occurring in and around the Field Center. It changes frequently, so keep a regular eye on it! You can get to the lobby by entering the front door of the Field Center, which is located on the right of the building. You can get to the rest of the Field Center (Conference Room, Media Lab and Library) from the lobby.

The noticeboard also lists **Briefing** and **Training** sessions. To select a Training or Briefing session, click on the entry on the notice board. Briefing sessions are provided in the Conference Room of the Field Center, and can also be accessed by clicking on the Conference room doorway. Training sessions are provided in an area of the desert close to the Field Center and can be accessed by clicking on the Training button on the first screen, or from within this Help system.

The Conference Room

The Conference Room is where you will be welcomed by the Center's Director and provided with a variety of briefing sessions and quizzes about desert life. It is also where (on at least one of the days of your visit) you will be able to listen to a music recital by the Arizonian musician who wrote our title music! You can leave the Conference room at any time through the door to the right.

Media Lab and Library

The Media Lab and Library is where you can do some quiet study using the Field Center's own library of **text**, **sound**, **movies** and **photographs**. Once you have entered the Media Lab you will be able to access all these resources by using the equipment (Satellite Link, Picture Viewer, Audio Viewer and Movie Viewer) found here.

The **Library** is on the far left of the lab. Approach it and you will find a number of resources labelled in the bookshelf: the same **checklist** you have been carrying around the desert; your **photo album**, complete with all the pictures you have taken; your **notebook**, with all the notes you have made during your excursions into the desert, which you can add to now; a **glossary** of technical terms in which you can look up words you don't understand; and a **bibliography** of useful books about the desert.

The **Audio Viewer** is on the left as you enter the Media Lab. It allows you to look through the desert commentary (as text rather than sound) and search for key-words or subjects.

The **Movie Viewer**, located through the door on the left, allows you to scan the library of video clips available.

The **Picture Viewer** contains photographs of all plants and animals found in the Sonoran Desert.

The **Satellite link**, similar to that found in the rucksack, is located through the door on the right

