

ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM



The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is extremely pleased to announce that **Sergio Avila-Villegas** will be joining its staff as a Conservation Scientist. Sergio holds Master's degree in Arid Lands Management from University of Baja California and a B.S. in Biology from University of Aguascalientes. He has worked in northwest Mexico and southwest United States on wildlife research and conservation since 1997. His work was shaped by his first real-world conservation experience, living with the Tarahumara Indians in the Copper Canyon of Chihuahua, where he learned about the connections between humans, wildlife and conservation. As a biologist in Mexico and the U.S., Sergio studied pumas, cactus-ferruginous pygmy owls, California sea lions, Santa Catalina rattlesnakes, river otters, jaguars and ocelots. Sergio recently completed a decade of work at Sky Island Alliance. He initiated their work in northern Mexico, taking the lead on cross-border connectivity, biodiversity assessments, wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration and private land conservation, while working with local communities to improve education, volunteer and training opportunities. Through his work with landowners, scientists, students, and decision-makers, he sought to foster and share stories of conservation and restoration successes in northern Mexico. During this next phase of his career at the Desert Museum, Sergio will continue cross-border conservation collaborations, building on his work on conserving habitat for big cats (bobcat, ocelot, mountain lion and jaguar) and control of invasive species (primarily buffelgrass). He will also be involved in exhibit planning, research mentoring for teens and other citizen scientists and development of new public programs. Sergio lives in Tucson with his wife Jenny, and their four children: one dog and three cats.