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## **Tucson Schools Join *Biodiversity PEEK*, a Global Citizen Science Initiative**

*Tucson Kids Learn Science, Technology, Art, Engineering, and Math in One Integrated Program*

The Tucson-based, international organization [The Biodiversity Group](http://TheBiodiversityGroup.org) is bringing their STEM educational program, *Biodiversity PEEK* (Photography Engaging and Empowering Kids), to United States schools in southern Arizona. [Biodiversity PEEK](http://BiodiversityPEEK.org) uses nature photography to engage students with their own backyard wildlife to photographically collect and share valuable scientific data as well as artistically inspiring images. The program has been running for over five years in Ecuador, Vietnam, the Caribbean, and more. Tucson Unified School District's Matthew Morondos at [Borton Magnet School](http://BortonMagnetSchool.org) is working with The Biodiversity Group this fall to enrich his students' study of what living things need to survive and thrive. Marana Unified School District's [Picture Rocks Intermediate](http://PictureRocksIntermediate.org) 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, Janie Schembri and Nicole Tracy, have also had their students exploring outside near school. The students aim to provide the greater scientific community with new information on the variety, abundance, and overall health of their local plants and animals. In the process, students are discovering the interconnectedness of life in the Sonoran Desert ecosystem, and developing ideas to help enrich and protect it.



For example, Borton School kids are concerned over the number of killed and uneaten songbirds they continue to find on their precious 2.5 acre desert oasis in the middle of town, and are investigating possible causes and solutions. Picture Rocks students are working to collaborate with Saguaro National Park to design a loop trail through their nearby finger of the park so that more students, residents, and visitors can better appreciate the protected area while ensuring that the plants and animals there are not disturbed. And, some of the Tucson area students will be exhibiting their images alongside kids' photographs from Ecuador during this August at the main branch of the Tucson Pima Public Library.

*The Biodiversity Group's* educational director, Jo Bowman, says "This is STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design, and Math) learning at its best because the kids are doing real science work in a place that is important to them and because they can use information they gather to make informed decisions and take real action." She is pleased over the students' enthusiasm and curiosity, and is using the experiences at our local schools to create a fun, inquiry-based K-8 [science curriculum resource](#) for teachers around the country. Anyone can join a Biodiversity PEEK project themselves and see what students have shared on *The Biodiversity Group* website: [www.biodiversitygroup.org/peek](http://www.biodiversitygroup.org/peek).



*The Biodiversity Group's mission is to achieve conservation by bringing together a local and international network of citizens, scientists, educators and photographers to gather and share data and images of overlooked species in underserved places.*

### Links

[Available Images & Video](#) | [Release pdf](#) | [TBG Home Page](#) | [Biodiversity PEEK Page](#) | [Other TBG Releases](#)

