

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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SECTION E

NEW AND NOTABLE

Anne Stephenson/Special for The Republic



'Look Who Lives in the Desert'

Brooke Bessesen
(Arizona Highways, \$16.95)

Geckos store fat and water in their tails. We didn't know that. They can also release their tails, when caught by them, and run away, although we are grateful that Bessesen doesn't go into detail on exactly how they do it. A kangaroo rat can leap up to six feet, and never drinks water. Female tarantulas live 20 to 30 years, and male cactus wrens build the nests and help care for the children. And those little roadrunners you see sprinting maniacally across the blacktop are capable of catching and eating rattlesnakes for dinner. Its publisher says this book is aimed at kids aged 3 to 9, but we had a surprisingly good time with it ourselves. Bessesen, a television producer who has also worked at the Phoenix Zoo, has put lots of effort into her first book — for the younger kids, she has written a rhyme about each animal, for the older kids she adds a list of interesting facts and for everyone she has created some wildly colorful and inventive (if not entirely realistic) illustrations. She'll appear next Saturday at the Phoenix Zoo at 10 a.m.