

Cicadas will soon descend on Las Vegas—but not the ones you think

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[Apache cicada](#). Credit: VJAnderson. Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons Attribution-[Share Alike 4.0 International license](#).

Every year, when spring bleeds into summer, the desert heat awakes a chorus of Las Vegas singers that rival any residency you'll find on the Strip—cicadas.

But these critters are not the ones you've probably been hearing about.

This year has recently been dubbed the year of "cicada-geddon" as two broods of cicadas emerge from their growing periods underground, which were each 13 and 17 years long. Those won't go west of Oklahoma, though, according to scientists.

Instead, sometime starting in May or June, the Mojave Desert will be abuzz with male Apache cicadas, vibrating a membrane in their abdomen called a "tymbal" to attract a female mate.

They're not dangerous. However, for many a Las Vegan, they can prove to be pesky.

"We get calls when they're singing so loud and probably a third to a half of the Vegas population is trying to sleep during the day," said Jeff Knight, Nevada's state entomologist.

Apache cicadas, about 2 inches long, are one of almost two dozen species of cicadas in Nevada, Knight said. They're the only ones that reside in the urban center of Las Vegas.

These big-eyed creatures spend most of their lives underground. Once they hatch from eggs planted in trees, they burrow in the earth until they see the light again as adults and shed their exoskeletons.

Their habitat includes northern Mexico, Arizona, Southern Utah and, of course, Southern Nevada.

Cicadas (pronounced suh-kay-duhs) are a constant in Las Vegas each summer, Knight said, and some years can bring them out more in full force. Scientists don't really know why numbers vary every year, and the state doesn't keep track of population numbers, he said.

By and large, Apache [cicadas](#) don't disturb their surrounding environment except for females that can damage twigs or branches on trees to lay their eggs.

"They're a bit of a nuisance, especially if one takes off from a bush next to people and startles them," Knight said. "They don't carry disease, and they don't bite."

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