



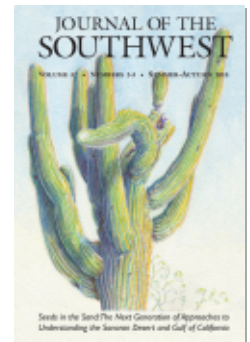
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After the Crossing: Afterlives of Found Objects in the Sonoran Desert Borderlands

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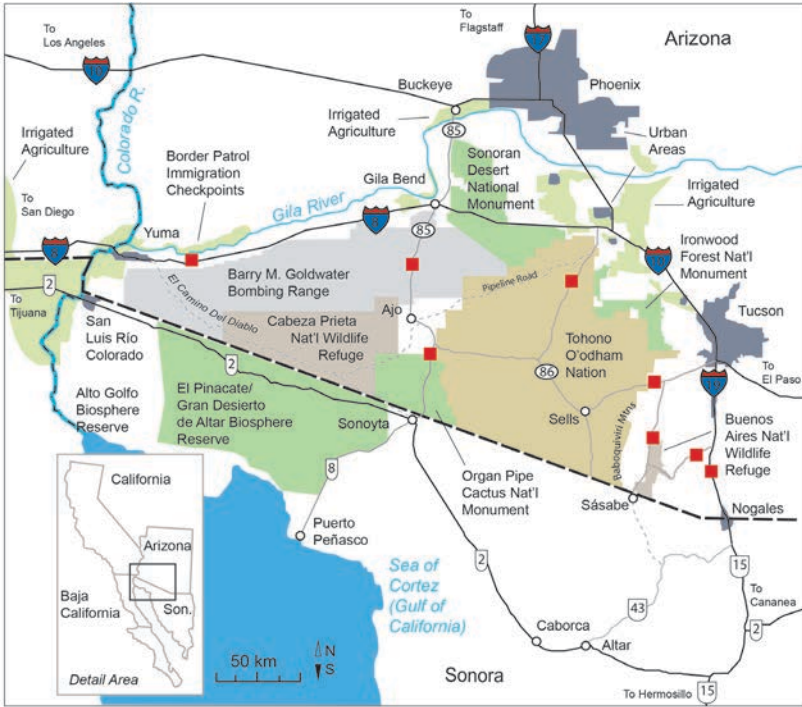
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After the Crossing

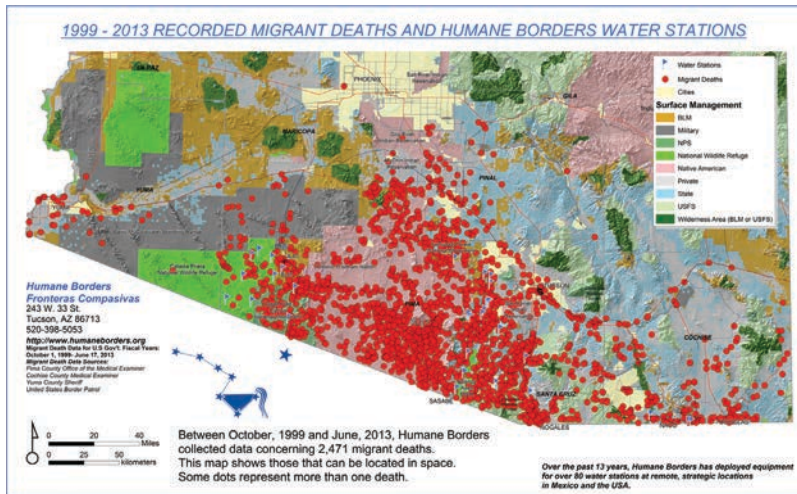
Afterlives of Found Objects in the Sonoran Desert Borderlands

SCOTT WARREN, KEVIN E. MCHUGH, AND JASON ROEHNER





The Sonoran Desert borderlands. Map by authors.



Migrant deaths in southern Arizona. Source: Humane Borders. Used with permission.

Along remote trails in the Sonoran Desert there are objects left by border crossers: water bottles, textile shoe coverings, clothing, hats, backpacks, bedding, phone cards, medicines, palliatives. Beginning in the 1990s the United States hardened the Mexico border in cities and nearby environs, diverting undocumented migrants and smugglers into remote, rugged, and sparsely populated areas.

Migrants and smugglers now travel great distances on foot from the Mexico border to Interstates 8 and 10 in Arizona (see borderlands map), jettisoning belongings as they go. New surveillance towers, forward operating bases, fences, and walls cast a long shadow on the land while the Border Patrol pursues migrants and smugglers across the region's patchwork of indigenous and conservation spaces.

At least 2,471 deaths from thirst and exposure have been documented, but it is understood that there are more human remains that will never be found (see Humane Borders map of migrant deaths).

The desert is neither the beginning nor the end of the struggle. Families mourn the loss of loved ones, deportees consider a second crossing, and those that make it find themselves on the margins of society as undocumented persons throughout the United States.

We invite the reader to participate for a time in the unsettled afterlives of these objects found in the Sonoran Desert Borderlands.



Backpack repaired with twine.



Phone card, "he who hits one, hits us all."



Sahuaro drinking water.



Sun purified water.



Insulated jug with rope and blanket.



Insulated jug with twine and branch.



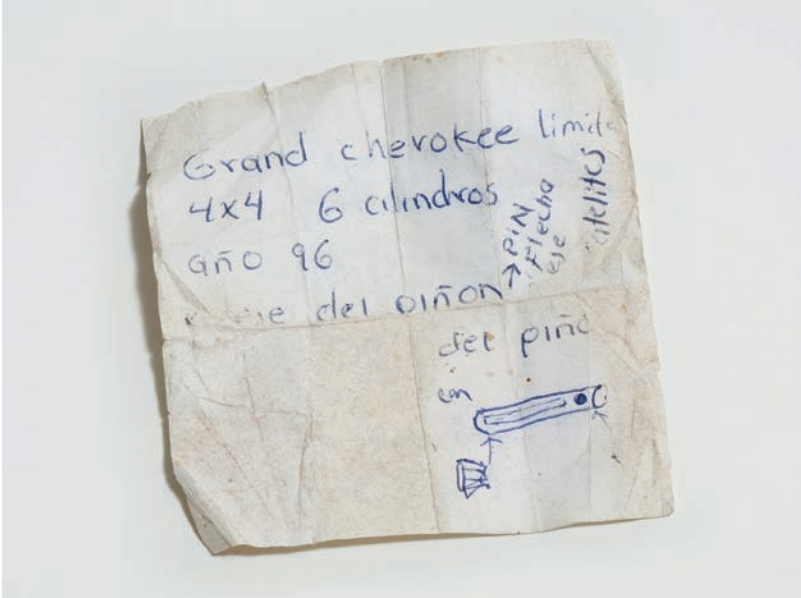
Bordado 1 (*hand-embroidered cloth*).



Bus ticket.



Bordado 2 (*hand-embroidered cloth*).



Vehicle description.



Bordado 3 (*hand-embroidered cloth*).



"Know your rights."



Crutch.



Touch-up kit.



Small socks with hearts.



Toothpaste.



Moccasin (carpet and twine).



Denim jacket.