Abstract
Big Bend National Park, the United States’ twenty-seventh national park, was established by Congress on June 12, 1944, setting aside 708,221 acres of desert and mountain terrain to protect for future generations (Jameson 1996). Selected for its dramatic scenery, geologic features, and unique plant and animal communities, it also provides the best example of Chihuahuan Desert ecology in the United States (Maxwell 1968, Wauer 1973). Although the Chihuahuan Desert is the largest of the three creosotebush dominated deserts in North America, it is also the least understood (Brown 1994). Entomologists estimate over 5,000 species of insects occur within Big Bend National Park. Yet only about 4,000 have been identified, and only a handful of the many orders have been studied with any thoroughness (Van Pelt 1995, Wauer 1973). The first large, general study of insects in Big Bend National Park was made by R. H. Baker in 1937 as a background study for the proposed national park. Subsequent studies have been confined mostly to specific orders, families, or genera with the exception of Van Pelt's 1995 annotated inventory of insects in the park (Van Pelt 1995). However, this work is based on secondary sources and has no insect descriptions or photographs. In fact, with the exception of Roland Wauer's recent Butterflies of West Texas Parks and Preserves, there have been no field guides on the insects of Big Bend National Park (Wauer 2002). The purpose of the present study is to provide an easy-to-use field guide for the layperson as an aid in identifying commonly encountered insects in the park. It focuses on some of the higher-profile, "charismatic," or easily noticed insects that a casual visitor stopping at highly frequented areas within the park is likely to see. In addition to aiding in insect identification, this guide is intended to be educational in providing information on insect distribution, habitat, and behavior. In helping people become more familiar with the world of desert invertebrates, I hope that this guide will foster a broader ecological understanding of desert environments and ultimately encourage conservation of our natural resources.
Dramatic afternoon lighting storms with high winds are common and come on quickly. Heavy downpours may result in flash floods. Winter days may be sunny and warm, but nights tend to be cold. All insects are arthropods, animals that lack backbones and have jointed legs and external skeletons, or exoskeletons. Arthropods include a diversity of creatures including cockroaches, millipedes, tarantulas, and lobsters. Over 3,600 species of insects have been found in Big Bend National Park, including a new species of beetle recently discovered in the Chisos Mountains. Observing insects opens a whole new world of dimensions, color, form, activity, and beauty. You'll find insects in flowers, wood, earth, fabric, hair, blood, flesh, water, and dung. It is common to find the white, dried-out remains of their exoskeleton while hiking through the desert. In late spring and early summer, tarantula hawks fly low over the ground, searching for tarantulas. Big Bend National Park is an American national park located in West Texas, bordering Mexico. The park has national significance as the largest protected area of Chihuahuan Desert topography and ecology in the United States. The park protects more than 1,200 species of plants, more than 450 species of birds, 56 species of reptiles, and 75 species of mammals.[1]. Geological features in the park include sea fossils and dinosaur bones, as well as volcanic dikes. PBS Show October 18-24, 2015 | #2401. TOP 15. Things to Do in Big Bend National Park, Texas. Big Bend National Park: This Video Could Save Your Life! most incredible hike ever! - Big Bend Travel Vlog. Keywords: Big Bend National Park, holotypes, paratypes, allotypes, types, primary types, insects. Introduction. Big Bend National Park is a large area of over 800,000 acres, the centerpiece of which is the Chisos Mountains, described as an island in the Chihuahuan Desert. Habitats range from the high Chisos Mountains, characterized by Ponderosa Pine (Pinus ponderosa), Arizona Cypress (Cupressus arizonica) and Douglas Fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii), through oak. Big Bend National Park was established in 1944, and researchers have visited the Big Bend area and made collections of plants and animals since the 1800’s. Over the years, species previously unknown from the Park have been collected there, and many of these have been new to science. Big Bend National Park in Texas highlights the incredible desert flora and fauna but the real star of the show may be the night time views! Add to that, 67 species of amphibians and reptiles, 40 species of fish, and 3,600 species of insects. Seventy-five species of mammals, including mountain lions, deer, Mexican black bear, and javalina roam the wilderness. Classic Adventures. Lost Mine Trail, Big Bend National Park, Texas. Adam Baker. Big Bend proudly boasts the largest swath of roadless public lands in Texas, and contains over 150 miles of trails crisscrossing the landscape. Live like a Big Bend National Park local whenever, wherever. Outdoor destinations + local stories & exclusive outdoor events. Email Address.