



THE VALLEY FEVER

July 2017



Fall 2017 Tracking Workshop

Mammal Tracking Practice and Advancing Skills Weekend at River Ridge Ranch near Springville, CA, November 10-12, 2017. Jim Lowery and Mary Brooks of Earth Skills will lead this workshop that will review basic track identification, after which students will focus on abundant field practice, track and sign interpretation, and examination of habitat use. Experienced and novice trackers are welcome. More information to come!

Champions for Wildlife Award

To recognize and honor significant contributions and steadfast dedication of our members to wildlife conservation in the San Joaquin Valley, we developed the Champions for Wildlife award to commemorate deserving or otherwise dedicated members of the SJV Chapter. As we all know, the SJV has experienced precipitous declines in natural habitats, native species, ecological connectivity, and ecosystem health. Because of that, we recognize that a number of individuals, many of whom are members of this Chapter, are essential to the management and protection of the often small, remnant "islands" of natural lands that remain. Their contributions to science and understanding of SJV ecology are highly valuable and deserve recognition, and this award is but an attempt to shine some light on the people who work every day to save, preserve, or otherwise protect our native species and lands. The first recipient of this award was Erin Tennant, Environmental Scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Erin was recognized for her outstanding dedication as a longtime active member of the SJV Chapter board, including her consistent involvement in planning, organizing, and implementing various events and workshops including the biannual blunt-nosed leopard lizard ecology and survey techniques workshop, and for her im-

portant role as a research biologist in the SJV where she studies many of our iconic protected species. She was presented with the award by then-president Kris Robison at our last Chapter board meeting on February 9th, 2017, which coincided with the Western Section annual conference in Reno, NV. If you would like to nominate someone to receive this award, please send nominations to Kris Robison:

kristofer.robison@gmail.com



Kris Robison (left) and Erin Tennant (right) during the award presentation, Reno, NV. Photo by Ryan Lopez.

Rare Plant Field Trip Summary—Carrizo Plain National Monument

Kris Robison, Past-President; kristofer.robison@gmail.com

On March 23rd, 2017, the day after the Natural Communities Conference, the SJV Chapter hosted a rare plant field trip co-led by botany experts Chris Winchell and Ellen Cypher. We spent the day touring the northern portion of the Carrizo Plain National Monument, where participants had the unique opportunity to observe incredible wildflower blooms, full of beautiful rare plants like *Layia heterotricha*, *Cau-*

lantbus lemmonii, *Lasthenia ferrisiae*, *Monolopia congdonii*, *Eschscholzia rhombipetala*, and many others. We were about one week before "peak bloom", but the experience left us all in awe with fields of psychedelic-orange-sherbet, yellow mountain sides, and a purple sea of *Phacelia*! Soda Lake was full of water, too, which is a rare sight in and of itself. It was an absolutely incredible day, and we sincerely thank Ellen and Chris for their generosity in leading this awesome trip!



Highlights of the Carrizo Plain National Monument rare wildflower field trip, March 23, 2017. Photos courtesy Kris Robison.

CALM Donation for San Joaquin kit fox Recovery

Kacy O'Malley, Chapter President; kacyomalley@chevron.com

When you grow up in Bakersfield, you have a connection with the San Joaquin kit fox. As children, my brothers and I would always be on the lookout for the elusive kit fox as we rode in our parent's car at dusk and in the evenings, hoping to get a glimpse of a fox crossing a road or pups in an empty lot downtown with their parents on the watch close by. In the summer, I looked forward to our family night outings to the 99 Drive-in Theater to see movies, eat popcorn, and bon bons, but really I looked forward to seeing a kit fox. As my brothers and I would play on the swings while watching the cartoons that preceded the main feature, we were waiting for the foxes to come out. That's when you could see them close up, actual wild animals that lived in our neighborhoods.

Anyone who hears about the sarcoptic mange epidemic that has impacted our local urban fox population can understand the importance of protecting this endangered species from mange; however, for those of us that have grown up with foxes, this is personal. During our Natural Community Conference we decided, really at the last minute, to have a silent auction

and to donate all proceeds to the California Living Museum (CALM). CALM, along with the Endangered Species Recovery Program (ESRP), is on the front line in the battle to protect our local fox population from mange. As a result, we raised over \$1,700! In addition, Chap-



Kacy O'Malley with the kit fox ambassador at the CALM facility. Photo courtesy Kacy O'Malley.



Donation presented to CALM by the San Joaquin Valley Chapter by The Wildlife Society. Photo courtesy Kacy O'Malley.

ter Board member Skip Moss started a GoFundMe account to raise even more money. I am incredibly proud of our Chapter's support and generosity.

On May 5th, 2017, I had the honor of presenting the donation to CALM's staff and touring their facility.

Sharon Adams, Animal Keeper II at CALM, showed me the cages where birds are housed and the facility where they are treating foxes for mange. It's impressive how many animals CALM treats and rehabilitates in such close quarters; this money will definitely go to good use. The highlight of the visit was holding their newest CALM ambassador, a young fox that was orphaned as a result of the mange epidemic. This fox will remain at CALM and is currently being socialized with people.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for their help in making this happen, especially everyone who participated in the silent auction. More importantly, I would like to thank the ESRP and CALM staff for their continued efforts and dedication in the fight to control mange in the Bakersfield area!



Screen shot of the Go Fund Me page. Visit the link below to make a donation.

<https://www.gofundme.com/savethekitfox>



Photo courtesy © Rick Derevan.

San Joaquin River Camera Trap Study

Petros Chrysafis, CSU, Fresno Student Representative, petroschrysafis@gmail.com

My Masters research is focused on how mammals use the riparian habitat along the San Joaquin River. Working with several stakeholders I have gained access to various sites alongside the river. Camera traps are then deployed alongside the river on different vegetation gradients to observe which species of mammals use different vegetation sites to get water access. The research will continue for a year to gather full seasonal data so we can see whether there may be any seasonal variation.

Due to the nature of the San Joaquin River sites, I have access to areas that are preserved and areas that are developed so another factor we are observing is

whether there will be a difference in species found in developed sites as opposed to undeveloped sites. Furthermore, we are looking to study whether species found on all sites use vegetation cover differently in preserved or developed areas. This will give us an interesting perspective into the ecology and behavior of the mammal species along the San Joaquin river.

With the support of the San Joaquin Valley chapter we obtained access to more sites and also purchased more cameras to cover these sites. We now have six active sites that are monitored every two weeks. So far, we have captured pictures of coyotes, mule deer, bobcats, racoons, opossums, squirrels, and beavers.



Sample results from the San Joaquin River mammal camera trap survey. **A:** Coyote (*Canis latrans*), **B:** Beaver (*Castor canadensis*), **C:** Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), **D:** Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and **E:** Coyote. Photos courtesy Petros Chrysafis.

Herpetofauna Inventory on a Small Mammal Trapping Grid

Howard O. Clark, Jr., CWB®, Website Coordinator and Newsletter Editor; howard.clark.jr@gmail.com

On occasion I head off to the Mojave Desert to conduct trapping surveys for small desert mammals. The most common target species is the Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), which is a species listed as “Threatened” by the State of California. The Mojave Desert is a focus for energy groups to build wind and solar farms. Crisscrossing the desert landscape is also transmission line infrastructure to distribute the green energy to other parts of the state.

Trapping surveys for the Mohave ground squirrel consist of setting up a grid of 100 traps, either in a 10 × 10 or 4 × 25 configuration, depending on the layout of the proposed project. The traps are separated by 35 meters (covering approx. 30 acres) and each trap requires a cardboard shade structure, as the trapping occurs during the day since the squirrels are diurnal. Although catching a

rare squirrel is a delightful highlight, one activity I enjoy as well is searching for reptiles on the grid. It is thrilling to wonder what new species will be encountered each day. Herpetofauna biodiversity in the Mojave Desert can be high, and it is common to encounter several species over the duration of the survey (which is typically 3 sessions spread out between March to July).

Here I provide photo documentation of the various reptiles I encountered during my survey. Other biologists also conducted surveys in the area and species they detected that I didn’t include the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Common Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus collaris*), and the Southwestern Speckled Rattlesnake (*Crotalus pyrrhus*). On several occasions I observed the Tiger Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*) and the Long-nosed Leopard Lizard (*Gambelia wislizenii*), but was unable to photograph them. All photos by Howard Clark, San Bernardino County, CA.



Common Chuckwalla (*Sauromalus ater*)



Yellow-backed Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus uniformis*)



Desert Iguana (*Dipsosaurus dorsalis*)



Desert Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*)



Common Side-blotched Lizard (*Uta stansburiana*)



Zebra-tailed Lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*)



Red Racer (*Coluber flagellum piceus*)



Mohave Rattlesnake (*Crotalus scutulatus*)



Sidewinder (*Crotalus cerastes*)

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Various versions of our new 50th Anniversary logo—design by Robin Phanco.

The Goals of the Society and the San Joaquin Valley Chapter

- Develop and maintain professional standards for wildlife research and management.
- Enhance knowledge and technical capabilities of wildlife managers.
- Advance professional stewardship of wildlife resources and their habitats.
- Advocate the use of sound biological information for wildlife policy decisions.
- Increase public awareness and appreciation of the wildlife profession.

