

Fabulous



Feline Follies

**Welcome to the 22nd Annual
Fabulous Feline Follies
2011**

"Desert Dwellers"

Hosted by the Exotic Feline Breeding
Compound's Feline Conservation Center
Rosamond, California



Welcome! Our mission of feline conservation and public education would not be possible without your support.

This year we are celebrating “Desert Dwellers”. Surrounded by our little oasis in Rosamond you might forget you are actually in a desert. The Mojave Desert occupies a significant portion of Southern California and parts of Utah, Nevada, and Arizona. Named after the Mohave Native Americans it occupies roughly 54,000 square miles. The Mojave Desert receives less than 6 inches of rain a year and is generally between 3,000 and 6,000 feet in elevation. The Mojave Desert contains the Mojave National Preserve, Joshua Tree National Park, and the lowest-hottest place in North America: Death Valley.



The Mojave Desert is bound in part on the western end by the Tehachapi, San Gabriel, and San Bernardino mountain ranges. The mountain boundaries are quite distinct since they have been created by the two largest faults in California: the San Andreas and the Garlock. Its northern and eastern boundaries are less distinct.

Joshua trees, the largest of the yuccas, grow only in the Mojave Desert; their mature height can vary from 15-40 feet high with a diameter of 1-3 feet. Joshua trees and most other yuccas rely on the female Pronuba Moth (aka Yucca moth) for pollination as no other animal visiting the flowers carries pollen from one flower to another. The Yucca moth has evolved special organs to collect and distribute the pollen onto the surface of the flower. She then lays her eggs in the flowers’ ovaries and when the larvae hatch they feed

on the yucca seeds. Without this association, the Joshua tree could not reproduce, nor could the moth.

Many animals are desert specialists, found nowhere else. Others, such as the bobcat, can adapt to a variety of habitats. The most desert-adapted feline is the sand cat of northern Africa, which can survive without drinking water at all.

Ocelots and jaguars are both found in the Sonoran desert of northern Mexico and the southern U.S., as well as in the rainforests of South America.

Tonight’s presentation and program will tell you more about the fascinating world of the desert.



Program of Events

5:30 PM Cocktail Reception, Animal Visitors courtesy of Conservation Ambassadors. View our cats and enjoy close encounters with a wide variety of visiting educational animals. Bid on silent auction items, purchase raffle tickets (\$5 each, 5 for \$20)

6:15-6:45 PM Dinner (buffet style). Emcee will call table numbers

7:00 PM Door prizes awarded

7:15 PM Sponsor presentations and raffle drawing

7:30 PM Silent auction closes. After the silent auction closes we will sort the bid pads and distribute them to your tables. Please make sure your table number is included with your bids

7:35 PM Live Auction

8:00 PM Misty Hailstone presentation “The Desert Around Us”

Our emcee is Eric Barkalow

Live auction features Stan Ulvin of Sierra Towing

Gift shop open all evening. Please pay for silent auction purchases by 9 pm.



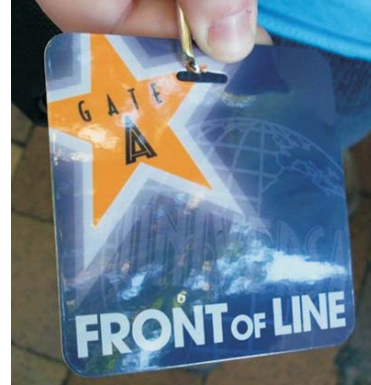
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Live Auction Items

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Overnight stay at Safari West
in Santa Rosa, California with
dinner for two and private
tour.



ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING
by renowned artist Chris Hoy
of our Jaguar, Cisco.

To be revealed at the auction

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BRONZE - Donations of \$200

Larry Purcell - Sav-on Fence - *Lancaster, CA*
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Souvenir Glass Jaguar Cooler drinks

Purchase your favorite cocktail, for an extra \$5 take home a limited edition Follies glass as a souvenir, featuring jaguar Cisco!



Auction and Raffle Donors

Chris Hoy, NBC/Universal, Safari West, Sandy Masek, Heather Lara, Scott & Nicole Pearson, Nancy Vandermey & Eric Barkalow, Pam Rose & Gene Bowan, Camille & Jerry Gadwood, DeAnna Scott, Candy Martinez (Stuffe & Nonsense), Raychelle Haney, Irene & Cherylrenee Rendes, Alan Mootnick (Gibbon Conservation Center), Betty Platero, Jorge & Jenny Kauffman, Yvonne King, Mariah Orsburn, Donna S. Cohen, Leslie Simmons, Lori Hands, Dale Rieth, Danny Jacobs - Antelope Valley Fair, Howard & Wanda Laire, Warner Brothers Studio, Shannon Hair Salon, The Huntington Library, Katz Kreations Photography, Trina Ray, Dreamworks Animation, Debbie Clark for "Dancing With the Stars & America's Got Talent", Sony Pictures, La Beth Thompson, Don Patterson.



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Keep up to date on our new arrivals, births, and construction projects on our web site,
www.wildcatzoo.org

Not receiving our quarterly newsletters? Become a member today! Admission to our facility and select other zoos nationwide included, as well as a 10% discount in our gift shop.

Our speaker tonight is Misty Hailstone



Misty holds a B.S. in Wildlife Management and Zoology from Humboldt State University. She is currently working with a private environmental and engineering consultant group, CH2M Hill, at Edwards Air Force Base as part of the Natural Resources group of the Environmental Management Directorate. She has been volunteering with the EFBC-FCC since

2005. Tonight she will be talking about the threats facing the Mojave Desert and what can be done to help save this fragile ecosystem and the creatures that live there.

Desert factoids:

- Many desert animals, like the black-tailed jackrabbit and kit foxes, have long limbs and appendages that are densely lined with vessels, allowing the air to cool their blood as it circulates close to the surface.
- Animals in drier regions tend to have larger kidneys to conserve water as the larger the kidney the better it is at filtering for more water retention. This makes some animal's urine almost completely solid!
- Most desert animals have thick light colored skin that minimizes water loss and reflects the sun.
- Creosote bush goes through several forms during its life. It begins as a single-stemmed plant and may live in this form for 50-200 years. Gradually, as the shrub ages, the center stem dies out leaving dead branches in the center of the plant while the edges continue to grow outward as the center dies and fills with sand. After hundreds (and thousands) of years, the edges of the growing plant will form a ring of small creosote bushes with a radius of several meters. From estimates of the rate the radius of rings increases, scientists are able to age creosote rings. Many are thought to be thousands of years old, with the oldest being over 11,000 years in age!

Desert Dwellers

Bobcat - *Lynx rufus*

One of the most recognizable carnivores in California, and the most common wildcat in North America, is the bobcat, distinguished by the tufts on its ears and the shortness of its tail.

Bobcats range throughout most of the western United States. While still seen in the eastern



U.S. their numbers are shrinking. They can utilize most any habitat but their optimal habitat consists of brushy stages of low and mid-elevation conifer, oak, riparian, and pinyon-juniper forests and all stages of chaparral. Bobcats are generally crepuscular and nocturnal but may occasionally be active diurnally. As carnivores, prey consists mostly of lagomorphs (rabbits), rodents, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and in some cases deer (usually fawns); however, they have been recorded to eat a substantial amount of vegetation, mostly fruit and grass. They have been known to take down prey 10 times their own weight! Bobcats hunt by stealth, and can deliver a death blow with a pounce that can cover up to 10 feet. Densities and home ranges vary with habitat quality. Bobcats generally avoid contact through scent marking, and intraspecific fighting is rare. Bobcats are one of the few wildcats that are

still fairly successful in the wild with a population estimated at 725,000-1,020,000.

Mohave Ground Squirrel - *Spermophilus mohavensis*

This ground squirrel is native to the Mojave Desert. It is listed as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act and is currently being petitioned to be on the Federal ESA. To deal with the extreme weather in the Mojave Desert, they are only above ground for a few short months. Depending on environmental conditions, they will emerge from aestivation in March-June and then go back underground in July or August. In this short period of time,

they must mate, reproduce, and cache enough vegetation to survive on for the rest of the year. Mohave ground squirrels have the ability to get all their water needs from the food they eat but will drink free-standing water if it is available.

Numbers have been closely coupled with climatic conditions. Mohave ground squirrels will not reproduce in low rainfall years (less than 3 inches of rain). In fact several dry years in a row have extirpated some local populations. However, the population will increase steadily once the rains return and dispersing young can re-colonize areas where squirrels have been extirpated.



Southern Desert Horned Lizard – *Phrynosoma platyrhinos calidiarum*

Restricted to the Mojave and Colorado deserts in sandy areas, this species is a medium-sized flat bodied lizard with a wide oval-shaped body and scattered enlarged pointed scales on the upper body and tail and horns which extend from the back of its head. Color varies matching the local soil and rocks. Males are smaller than females. Desert horned lizards are adapted to hot and barren habitats by remaining underground during hot or cold weather, but can be active on the surface any time of year. They are an ant specialist but will occasionally eat other invertebrates or plant material. When threatened, it is capable of running away quickly for short distances – generally to get to a bush or rodent burrow to escape – or it shuffles sideways to bury itself partly in the sand. Its main defense is remaining motionless using its cryptic coloring to blend into its environment, which is



enhanced behaviorally by crouching down low to prevent shadows that could make it easier to see, and sitting still to avoid detection. When grabbed, it will inflate with air, hiss, threaten to bite, and move the head from side to side to jab with its horns.

Mojave Green Rattlesnake – *Crotalus scutulatus*

Widely distributed throughout the Mojave and extreme northern Colorado Deserts, the Mojave Green Rattlesnake is one of the most deadly snakes in the United States. In general, it is active from April to September. Unlike most rattlesnakes, the Mojave rattlesnake hibernates alone during the winter or with just one or two others. This snake is viviparous, or gives birth to live young. Like all rattlesnakes, it has pit organs for “seeing” at night or when there is insufficient light. The pit organs appear as holes located between each eye and the mouth and sense heat (infrared radiation). This rattlesnake is aggressive, fairly large bodied (though typically only 2-4 feet long), and has complex venom composed of hemolytic and neurotoxic elements which break down blood and paralyze nerves. Although very common and potentially deadly, only a few deaths are attributed to this snake each year.



Common Raven – *Corvus corax*

The raven is the largest passerine (perching) bird in North America. Ravens are incredibly intelligent birds that have coexisted with people for centuries, following their wagons, sleds, and hunting parties in hopes of a quick meal. Being subsidized by people is increasing their numbers beyond natural capacity. This threatens some vulnerable species such as desert tortoises, marbled murrelets, and least terns. Ravens have also caused power outages by contaminating insulators on power lines, peeled radar absorbent materials off buildings at the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, pecked holes in airplane wings, and opened campers' tents. They will eat almost anything, and while mostly known as



scavengers they are also effective hunters. While mated pairs are territorial, young males can form large groups. It is believed that ravens mate for life. With the ability to have multiple clutches in a single season, with 3-7 eggs in a clutch, these birds have the ability to expand exponentially as long as conditions are favorable.

Burrowing Owl – *Athene cunicularia*

As the name suggests, this owl nests in burrows on the ground rather than nesting in trees. They will often line their burrows with a wide variety of materials, some of which are left at the entrance to the burrow. The most common material is mammal dung. At one time it was thought that that the dung helped to mask the scent of the juvenile owls but researchers now believe that the dung helps to control the microclimate inside the burrow and attract insects that the owls will eat. Burrowing owls were once common residents in suitable habitats throughout California but their numbers have been noted as declining since the 1940s. It is now listed as a species of concern in California and as a Bird of Conservation Concern by the federal government. This owl stands only between 7.5 - 10 inches tall and averages about 6 ounces. Unlike most owls where the females are larger than the males, the sexes of the burrowing owl are about the same size. This owl can hunt at night or during the day. It will switch from eating insects during the



day to eating mammals at night. To deal with hot temperatures in the desert, they will perch in open sunlight in early morning, and move to the shade of a burrow when it's hot. Burrowing owls make a tremulous chuckling or chattering call and they will also bob their heads to express excitement or distress. When threatened, young owlets will emit a noise that sounds just like a rattlesnake.



Desert Flora and Fauna, half taken at EFBC/FCC in Rosamond, half near Zzyzx, California

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Tables, chairs, etc from A-1 rentals



Information from:

California Department of Fish and Game. <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cwhr/cawildlife.aspx>

National Geographic. <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/>

Defenders of Wildlife. http://www.defenders.org/wildlife_and_habitat/wildlife/

Mohave Ground Squirrel. Tortoise Tracks. 19:2. 1999. <http://www.tortoise-tracks.org/denizens/mgs.html>

Southern Desert Horned Lizard. <http://www.californiaherps.com/lizards/pages/p.p.calidiarum.html>

Horned Lizards. Desert USA. http://www.desertusa.com/april96/du_hliz.html

Pima Community College Desert Ecology http://wc.pima.edu/Bfiero/tucsonecology/animals/rept_mora.htm

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>

Burrowing Owl Conservation Network. <http://burrowingowlconservation.org/facts.html>

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