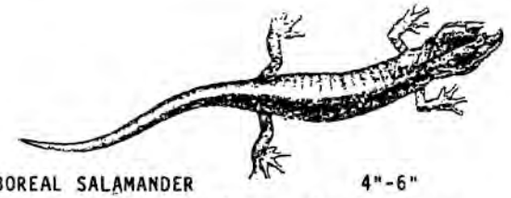
SILVERY LEGLESS LIZARD 6"-8"

Looks like a snake but is actually a lizard! It is about the size of a thin pencil, with silvery skin and dark lines. The legless lizard burrows in loose soil or sand in moist areas, feeding on ground dwelling insects and worms.



ARBOREAL SALAMANDER 4"-6"

Salamanders, lacking lungs, absorb oxygen through their moist skin and the lining of the throat and mouth. Arboreals have a dark brown body with yellow spots and are found under moist debris in the oak stands of El Moro Canyon, where they often nest in trees.

PACIFIC TREE FROG 2"

Look and listen for the Pacific tree frog near the stream bed in El Moro Canyon. The skin of this tree frog is smooth, brown to green, and it has a black stripe from the nose to behind the eye. Their expanded toe tips enable them to climb smooth surfaces such as tree trunks and rocks.

REFERENCES

Brown, Vinson and G. Lawrence. 1965. The Californian Wildlife Region. Naturegraph.

Stebbins, Robert C. 1956. A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians. Houghton Mifflin.

Thanks to:

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Crystal Cove Inventory of Features

Illustrations from The Californian Wildlife Region, Naturegraph.

This brochure prepared by Mike R. Eaton, Ranger I, Crystal Cove State Park

NOTES

Crystal Cove State Park
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Laguna Beach, CA 92651
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REPTILES	RIPARIAN/OAK WOODLAND	COASTAL SAGE SCRUB	COASTAL TERRACE
SNAKES			
RATTLESNAKES			
Red diamond	*	O	*
Southern Pacific	O	O	*
COLUBRIDS			
San Diego gopher snake	O	O	*
California kingsnake	O	O	*
California striped racer		O	*
Coachwhip	*	*	
California black headed snake	*	*	*
Ringneck snake	O	O	*
San Diego night snake	*	*	*
Two stripe garter snake			*
BOAS			
Coastal rosy boa	*	*	
LIZARDS			
IGUANIDS			
Western fence lizard	O	O	O
Side-blotched lizard	O	*	
San Diego horned lizard	*	O	
SKINKS & WHIPTAILS			
Western skink			*
Orange-throated whiptail	O		
Coastal whiptail	*		
LEGLESS LIZARDS			
Silvery legless lizard	*	*	
ALLIGATOR LIZARDS			
San Diego alligator lizard	*	O	O
AMPHIBIANS			
SALAMANDERS			
Monterey salamander			*
Garden slender salamander			*
TOADS			
California toad			*
Western spade-foot toad			*
TREE FROGS			
Pacific tree frog			*
TRUE FROGS			
Bullfrog			*

O=observed
*=possible

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK

CRYSTAL COVE ALLIANCE

Published by
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#5 Crystal Cove
Newport Coast, CA 92657
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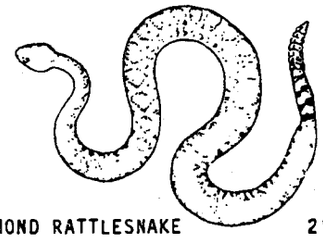
REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK

RATTLESNAKE! Does the word conjure up visions of walking through knee-high brush and suddenly hearing the chilling rattle of a snake? Many people harbor an ancient fear of reptiles and amphibians, regarding them as slimy, ugly creatures. Yet there is beauty and purpose to be appreciated in reptiles, from the intricate patterns of a snake's scales, to the rich red color of a red diamond, to the role reptiles play in the park's ecology. Combining the roles of predator and prey, snakes and lizards help to control the populations of insects and rodents, and themselves become prey for roadrunners and hawks.

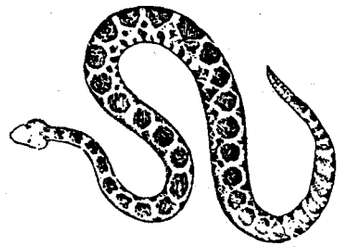
These cold blooded animals are wonders of adaptation. The coastal sage scrub favors animals with low metabolic rates. Reptile scales offer protection against both predators and drying out. Amphibians, found in moist areas of the park, breathe through their smooth, moist skin.

To determine if a snake is a venomous species, look at the head and the tail. Our local venomous snakes have a rattle. The red diamond rattlesnake has bold black and white rings around the last few inches of its tail. Even if you do not see the rattle, the black and white rings are a clear warning.

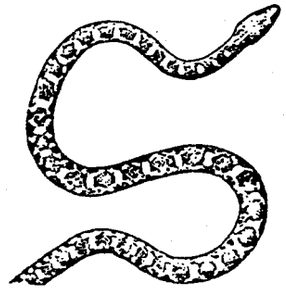
These and other secrets of survival are yours to discover. Use this pamphlet to help you identify the animals you see during your visit to Crystal Cove State Park and its different environments. Do not disturb the creatures you find here - observe, learn about them and appreciate their role in the ecology of the park. To learn more, see the selected references on the back page.



RED DIAMOND RATTLESNAKE 2'-5'
This colorful rattlesnake prefers rocky, shrubby hillsides and is seen less often than the Southern Pacific. This thick-bodied snake has a distinctive pink to reddish colored body with black and white rings near the tail. The red diamond's venom is less toxic than most rattlesnakes, but it delivers a larger dose. Be alert! Give rattlesnakes distance and respect.



SOUTHERN PACIFIC RATTLESNAKE 2'-5'
The Southern Pacific rattlesnake inhabits the coastal terrace as well as the rocky areas of Moro Canyon. It is our most commonly seen rattlesnake. This snake's color varies from brown to almost black. It is active day and night, becoming nocturnal in hot weather, and feeds on rodents and rabbits.



GOPHER SNAKE 2'-4'
This common snake is beneficial in helping to control populations of rodents. As the name suggests, the gopher snake enters the burrows of rodents in search of prey, which it kills by constriction. With a yellowish body and brown to black blotches on the back and sides, the gopher snake is sometimes mistaken for a rattler. Lack of both the black and white bands near the tail, as well as no rattles, helps to identify the gopher snake as non-venomous.

CALIFORNIA KING SNAKE 2'-4'
The "King" of Snakes? Maybe, as along with prey such as birds and lizards, king snakes hunt and eat rattlesnakes. This beautiful snake is easily identified by bands of yellowish white and brown and black. King snakes are often found in rocky areas. Usually active during the day or at dusk, they become nocturnal during the hottest months.

WESTERN FENCE LIZARD 5"-6"
Western fence lizards, as you might guess, enjoy sitting on fence posts to sun themselves. They are also common on tree trunks and rocks. These lizards are grey-brown in color with blue blotches on the throat and belly. Watch for them to do "push-ups" as they display this color in order to defend their territories.

SIDE-BLOTCHED LIZARD 4"-5½"
Look for the dark blue spot behind the front legs that gives this lizard its name. The body ranges from silver-grey to brown. The side-blotched lizard, like most lizards, stalks and eats insects.

SAN DIEGO HORNED LIZARD 3½"-4½'
This easily identified but uncommon lizard has a distinctive set of horns on the back of the neck and numerous spines on the back and sides of a yellowish or reddish-grey body. This lizard eats insects, especially ants. And, yes, a horned lizard will "shoot" blood from its eyes when disturbed. If you spot one of these rare lizards, do not pick it up! Report your observation to the ranger on duty.