FIELD OBSERVATIONS
By Mary Wilson
May 15, 2016

Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve

Filaree and Burrowing Owls

Thanks to motion cameras, research of the burrowing owls are letting us see what their daily days and nights are like. While looking through the photos taken there have also been some findings about the areas around the habitats. In the photos below an owl was present but the plants around the habitats made a dramatic change. The top photo was taken at 12:13 p.m. on February 28th and you can see a burrowing owl looking at the plants, perhaps for an insect. The photo on the bottom was taken at 8:19 a.m. on February 29th. There was approximately 15 hours between the two photos and the filaree went from just a few plants with flowers to an explosion of blossoms. Nature is amazing!
New Burrowing Owl Fledglings at the Reserve

From February to approximately April/May the adult burrowing owls have met, had a courtship, went about setting up their nest, the female has laid her eggs and she incubates them for 28 to 30 days. While she attends to the eggs the male will bring her food and stands watch outside the habitat. Once the fledglings hatch it takes about 5 days for them to open their eyes and they will stand and emerge from the burrow about the 12th day.

![Adult Burrowing Owls setting up a nest February 14, 2016 at 10:49 a.m.](image)

![May 11, 2016 at 9:40 a.m. Two fledglings at burrow with adult standing watch in the background.](image)
Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland

Ripley had a nice variety of flowers this year such as: filaree, sun cups, tidy tips, mustard, comet blazing stars, linear-leafed goldenbush, silver puffs, blue dick, blue sage, yellow pincushions, goldfields, fiddleneck, chia, beavertail cacti, desert dandelions, com-bur, wholly Eriophyllum, cotton thorn, parish larkspur, scarlet bugler and bladder pod. The male Juniper trees had a very good year producing their cones and the female trees are loaded with berries. The Joshua trees had a pretty good year of blossoming.

Cheese bush still has blossoms

Mormon Tea
(aka: Indian Tea, Mexican Tea, Squaw Tea)

Male plant with catkins
Starts producing catkins around April

Female plant with seeds
Seeds start to mature in May or June
OTHER WILDFLOWER SIGHTINGS

As you drive the 14 Freeway you can see the Yucca blooming along the hillsides. Actually they are in many areas of the valley. This is a woody perennial and the plant dies after flowering. They have a reciprocal relationship with the Yucca Moth to produce their seeds, however, they can also produce a new plant from the stolens (roots).

Yucca

(AKA: Lord’s Candle, Our Lord’s Candlestick, Whipple Yucca, Quixote Plant and Quiote)

Yucca whipplei*

*Name change—May 21, 2014 TJMI name Yucca whipplei changed to TJM2 name Hesperoyucca whipple. (University & Jepson Herbaria)

Also in bloom now are the Prince’s Plume. These plants are found along the San Andreas fault line in the Leona Valley. I found a fairly nice showing on Mt. Emma Road.

Prince’s Plume

(AKA: Desert Plume)

Stanleya pinnata