FIELD OBSERVATIONS  
By Mary Wilson  
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LOOK WHAT IS AT THE POPPY RESERVE!

As I was doing burrowing owl research I used my binoculars to check out the next habitat and there was something looking back at me. It had pointed ears, a pointed nose and when it trotted off there was that bushy tail with black on the tip. I’m thinking it looks like a kit fox but I had never seen one at the reserve. I contacted Carrie Bemis, Environmental Scientist, and told her of the sighting and that there was a motion camera at that habitat and wondered if she had a photos of a kit fox. Sure enough she did, see below.

The kit fox has a body length of 12 to 20 inches and the tail length of approximately 12 inches. Fully grown they will stand about 1 foot high. They weigh up to 7 pounds. Their gray to sandy coloring helps them blend into the desert landscape. The large ears are acute sensors of danger and are believed to help them release excessive heat. They have fur on their paw pads for traction in the desert sands and protection from the hot surface and they can run up to 25 miles an hour. They are omnivores and feed on insects, small mammals, such as rodents, rabbits, ground squirrels, birds (burrowing owls included), lizards, snakes and berries.

They pair off in October or early November for mating then create large dens where they live together. The young are born in March or April of the following year. They can have from 3 to 14 young at a time. The female remains inside the den with the offspring once they are born. Her body produces milk that they feed from. The male will go and get food for her so that she can tend to the young.

They are the smallest species of fox to be found in America.
BURROWING OWLS
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WATCH ME!

This is how you do wing practice.

Watch me pounce!

This is how you take a dirt bath.

Is this the right way to flap my wings?

You are doing just fine.
The Lone Pine Canyon Road is a backway into Wrightwood. I took Highway 138 and there was quite a bit of damage as you got close to the turnoff. There was a lot of fire damage along the road and went up Swarthout Canyon Road also. I take Lone Pine Canyon Road in the spring for the wildflowers but this area has very nice stands of the Lord’s Candles.

I checked my speedometer from the end of the burn area and clocked one mile before the fire would have reached oak and pine trees. Another mile up and it would have destroyed homes. There were home made signs on posts and fences stating, “Thank You”. Our firefighters and other crews are the best!