



BODY LENGTH: 2.25-3.5"
EGG-BEARING: 3-14;
Hatch: Apr.-Jul.

Western Fence Lizard

Sceloporus occidentalis

This common lizard spends much of its time on fences and fence posts, scouting for food and watching for potential predators in the vicinity. Their nickname "blue-belly" comes from the colorful markings along their abdomen.

Males have another small blue patch on their throats. The males bob their heads and do push-ups to show off their colorful patches to impress and attract any nearby females, and to intimidate any rival males in the vicinity.

As an effective defense mechanism, a fence lizard's tail will detach while it runs for safety. Fortunately, the tail will regrow within several weeks without any ill effects.

An interesting fact about these lizards is that a protein in their blood was recently discovered which has been proven to kill the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.



BODY LENGTH: 2.75-7"
EGG-BEARING: 6-12;
Hatch: May-Jul.

Southern Alligator Lizard

Elgaria multicarinata

Secretive by nature, Southern Alligator Lizards seek cover from their enemies and from excessive heat in dense vegetation and within rocky crevices.

Alligator Lizards have strong jaws and can deliver a nasty bite. Although they aren't venomous, it is best to resist the urge to pick one up.



BODY LENGTH: 12-18"
EGG-BEARING: 4-16;
Hatch: Jul.-Aug.

Sharp-Tailed Snake

Contia tenuis

This small secretive little snake is most active during the rainy season. Preferring cooler temperatures and wetter conditions than most snakes, sharp-tails can be found underneath logs and among twigs, roots, and leaves that are moistened by rain or near seasonal streams.

When juveniles hatch they are about three inches long, and are often mistaken for worms. They are a reddish color with lines along their sides. Adults can be reddish-brown or gray on top and gray on the belly.

The most distinguishing feature of this snake is the sharp spine-like scale at the tip of its tail. It is thought that it may be used as a brace when the snake is wrestling with slugs, its favorite prey item.

What To Do in Snake Country

- Be aware of your surroundings. Scan the area ahead of you as you hike.
- Look carefully around and under logs before sitting down.
- Avoid placing your hands and feet where you cannot see clearly. Use extra caution when walking through tall grass.
- Avoid climbing and scrambling over rocks and boulders.
- Scan the area around picnic tables and barbecues before using them.
- Do not move or harass any snake or reptile.
- Give wild animals plenty of room and leave them alone.
- Keep your pets leashed at all times to prevent them from being bitten.

For any questions or concerns, please contact the Rangers at (925) 960-2400.



Livermore Area
Recreation & Park District
An independent special district
within the County of Alameda, CA 94550

REPTILES

Reptiles first appeared 340 million years ago, evolving from amphibians. Today there are approximately 6,000 different kinds of reptiles worldwide, and there are a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and behaviors.

Reptiles are known as "cold-blooded" and like to bask lazily on rocks, or stretched out in the sand or grass so that they can bring their body temperature up and get moving. Look for these fascinating creatures as you hike.



BODY LENGTH: 3.5-7"
EGG-BEARING: 3-11;
Hatch: Apr.-Aug.

Western Pond Turtle

Clemmys marmorata

Turtles have dry, scaly skin and their body temperature is regulated by their physical activity and behaviors. Instead of teeth they have a hard beak, and their ribs are expanded into a protective shell. This distinctive shell is where they withdraw their legs and head to avoid danger.

Pond turtles are only semi-aquatic, so they spend plenty of time on land, too, crawling through muddy banks and eating watercress, cattails, and other aquatic vegetation nearby. You can see them basking on logs in and near ponds and creeks.

The very first turtles appeared on earth about 200 million years ago - before dinosaurs!



Western Rattlesnake

Crotalus viridis

BODY LENGTH: 35-65"
LIVE-BEARING: 4-12;
Aug.-Oct.

- Triangular head, wider than neck
- Blunt tail tip, usually with a rattle
- Thick, heavy round body
- Small scales on snout

Western Rattlesnakes are sit-and-wait hunters. An adult will curl up on rocks for hours, totally camouflaged. This venomous snake will wait for a small mammal, a bird, a lizard, an amphibian, an insect, or even a small snake to come close enough for it to detect, either with its eyes or with the heat-sensing pits on the sides of its face. Then it will strike, but only if the creature is small enough to eat.

Rattlesnakes are selective about their strikes, and will only bite for food or defense, conserving their energy and their venom. They may coiled themselves for a strike, and will usually vibrate their "rattle" tails as an advance warning before striking. They also flick their forked tongues to smell if the target is food or foe. Rattlesnakes definitely prefer to retreat if possible from any source of danger.

There are many kinds of rattlesnakes found in the western states, and they all have the distinctive broad triangular head with a pair of heat-detecting pits, venom-delivering fangs, a dark and light mottled pattern on their skins, and button-like rattles at the end of their tails.

Pacific Gopher Snake

Pituophis catenifer

BODY LENGTH: 30-110"
EGG-BEARING: 3-24;
Hatch: Jun.-Aug.

- Head same width as neck
- Tail tapers to fine point
- Body is slender
- Large scales on snout

Sometimes mistaken for a rattlesnake, this constrictor is very well-camouflaged. When disturbed, the Pacific Gopher Snake will vibrate its rattle-less tail, and if it is crawling through dry leaves it may sound very similar to a rattlesnake.

A gopher snake has a mottled, blotchy pattern on its skin, quite similar to a rattler. But it has no pits on its face, and it has a more streamlined shape to its head. Typically, it is much longer than rattlers, and often lighter in coloration.

You can find Pacific Gopher Snakes in grasslands, woodlands and open brushlands. Their diet includes moles, gophers, and other rodents, rabbits, birds and their nestlings and eggs, and occasionally lizards and large insects. They kill by winding their bodies around the prey and constricting, preventing the prey from breathing.

Gopher snakes are non-venomous so they pose no threat to large mammals, like casual hikers and their canines.

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BODY LENGTH: 38-55"
LIVE-BEARING: 3-18
Late May-Nov.

Common Garter Snake

Thamnophis sirtalis

These long, ribbon-like garter snakes are found in many environments but like to stay near water, whether in grasslands, wooded areas, chaparral, or scrublands. When frightened, they often slip into ditches, ponds, or arroyos to hide.

Favorite foods of the Common Garter Snake include small fish, frogs, tadpoles, salamanders, amphibians and their larvae, earthworms, slugs, leeches, small reptiles and their eggs, and sometimes baby mice.

BODY LENGTH: 36-65"
EGG-BEARING: 6-12;
Hatch: May-Aug.



California Kingsnake

Lampropeltis getulus californiae

Distinctive rings of cream color alternating with larger, darker ones of dark brown or black are the identifiers of Kingsnakes. They typically live in forests, woodlands, river bottoms, farmland, prairie, and deserts. They are most active in the morning and late afternoon. Gentle by nature, kingsnakes only hiss and vibrate their tails when they are disturbed.

Kingsnakes' diets include other snakes, including rattlesnakes, lizards, small turtles, frogs, birds, eggs, reptiles, and small mammals. They are not venomous, killing their prey by constriction.