



# ANIMALS IN THE GARDEN



Explore the Garden and learn about the animals who live here!

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**Desert Cottontail**  
(*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

Desert cottontails may seem helpless, but they have many ways of escaping predators. When danger is near, they lift their tails to show the bright white underside, and this alerts other rabbits so they can run or hide. Cottontails can even swim to get away! *For you: Pay attention to your surroundings while visiting the Garden to spot these rabbits. Can you count how many you see during your visit?*



**Coyote** (*Canis latrans*)

Coyotes are a keystone species that holds our ecosystem together by keeping prey populations down and spreading seeds through their scat! Did you know coyotes are omnivores, meaning they eat plants and animals? Coyote scat looks like dog scat that usually contains fur or lots of berries and seeds! *For you: Can you spot any coyote scat along the Garden trails? Check out our blog how to identify it!*



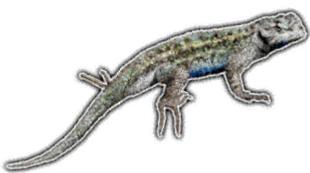
**Anna's Hummingbird**  
(*Calypte anna*)

Anna's hummingbird is the most common hummingbird species on the peninsula. Males are colorful and females are more grey or brown. Did you know that hummingbirds do not suck nectar with their beak? Instead, they have long forked tongues they use to drink flower nectar (kind of like a cat drinking water!). Hummingbirds can lick 15 times per second! *For you: How many times can you stick your tongue in and out in one second?*



**Virginia Opossum**  
(*Didelphis virginiana*)

Opossums are beneficial animals as they keep termites and ticks from taking over. In fact, they are so efficient at eating ticks that they have drastically slowed the spread of Lyme Disease in areas with high opossum populations. The mighty opossum is also immune to the venom of snakes, bees and scorpions! Did you know that they cannot control when they play dead? It is an involuntary reaction to stress and fear. They even emit an involuntary odor when playing dead that makes predators think they are no good to eat! *For you: How long can you play dead like a opossum without laughing or smiling?*



**Western Fence Lizard**  
(*Sceloporus occidentalis*)

Western fence lizards (or blue-bellied lizards) are found all over the Garden and are very common throughout the western United States and northern Mexico. Their blue bellies are brighter on males and are used to attract females! Like opossums, these lizards slow the spread of Lyme Disease! Ticks that drink the blood from these special lizards ingest a protein that kills the disease causing bacteria! *For you: Try to spot things in the Garden that are as bright and colorful as the belly of a western fence lizard!*



Striped Skunk  
(*Mephitis mephitis*)

The skunk has the most famous animal-defense in the world: stench! In fact, the scientific Latin term for them is "mephitis" meaning "noxious vapor." Before they spray, however, they give many warning signs. The white stripes on their backs are actually a warning to predators. Skunks will hiss, stomp their feet, and even do handstands while shaking their tails as a warning. If that still doesn't work, they will spray a 10-foot stream of sulfuric juices that are very smelly and burn the eyes of the offender! *For you: Stomp your feet or hiss like a skunk warning a predator to get away!*



Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

The dark fur around a raccoon's eyes does more than just make them look like little bandits. The black absorbs light making it easier for them to see at night when they look for food. Raccoons don't wash their food like some believe. They actually use touch to "see" objects better. Water increases a raccoon's ability to feel things with their hands. Two-thirds of the information they get from their senses comes from touch, so it may be more important than hearing, smell, and sight! *For you: Touch the bark of a tree, how much detail do you feel? Close your eyes and touch again, can you feel more?*

## Corvid Corner

Corvids are the SMARTEST BIRDS IN THE WORLD, and we are lucky enough to have three species common to Southern California: the American Crow, the Common Raven, and the California Scrub Jay!



Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ✦ They remember different human faces!
- ✦ They recognize themselves in a mirror!
- ✦ They make and use tools to gather food!
- ✦ They adopt others whose parents have died or if they were abandoned!
- ✦ Corvids have the same amount of neurons in the forebrain as primates (like you!), making them highly intelligent birds!
- ✦ They mourn their dead and have been observed holding funerals!



American Crow  
(*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)



California Scrub Jay  
(*Aphelocoma californica*)