

FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson
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Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park

The Lake Hughes Fire burned into Ripley on the west side. If you take 205th St. West (dirt road) off of Lancaster Road and cross over the aqueduct you will see a lot of burn damage.



The good news is the east side of Ripley State Park was spared. The ramada with picnic tables and the two trails are still available for hiking.



There was a fire on the west side of Ripley State Park in the same general area in August of 2010. I was doing research then and this became a project to see how the Joshua trees and other plants survived after the fire. Joshua trees are very flammable and trees with burn damage can die within five years. If the top portion is damaged, it might grow back from its root crown. As you can see from the photos below, all the Joshua trees that were burned died. The tree on the left of the photos was not severely burned.



August 11, 2010



April 11, 2011

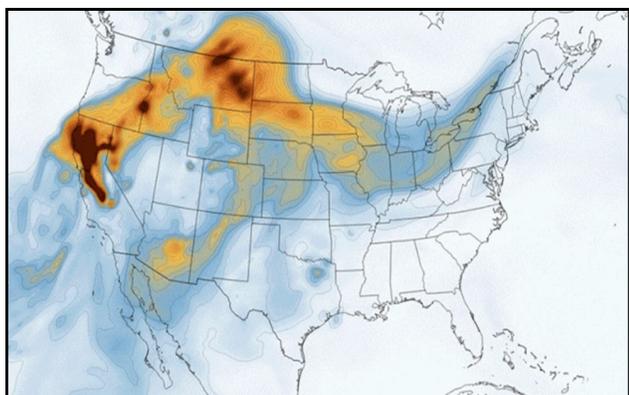


March 6, 2015



September 6, 2020

Smoke from California Burns reach Missouri. My sister lives in Missouri and heard on the news that the haze people were seeing was smoke from the California fires. She went outside and took a photo to share. Map shows fire and smoke areas.





CALIFORNIA SCRUB JAY

Aphelocoma Californica

The California scrub jay is native to western North America. It is non-migratory and can be found in urban areas, where it can become tame and will come to bird feeders.

It is a medium-sized bird, approximately 11-12 inches (including the tail), with a 15 inch wing-

span, weighs about 2.8 oz. and can live up to 9 years. It can have a blue head, wings, and tail with a gray-brown back, grayish underparts, white eyebrows and the throat is whitish with a blue necklace.

They will have one mate but will seek a new mate if their previous one is lost. Nesting occurs between March and July. The females construct the nest with assistance from the male. The nest is basket-shaped and made of twigs, dry grasses and moss; and the interior is lined with rootlets, fine fibers, feather down and mammal hair. It takes about 10 days to complete a nest.

The female lays one egg up to as many as six and they vary in color from pale green to pale greyish white, with olive-colored or reddish-brown spots. The female incubates the eggs for 15-17 days. The hatchlings are blind and naked. Both parents feed and protect them. The fledglings leave the nest when they are about 17-19 days old but will remain with their parents for about five months.

Their diet varies by season. During the spring and summer they will consume fruits, insects, spiders, snails, rodents, reptiles, frogs, and eggs of smaller song birds. In the winter they will consume berries, nuts, grains, and seeds. They will also eat fruit and vegetables growing in backyards and have been known to be hand-fed by humans. They store food in scattered caches within their territories. They rely on highly accurate and complex memories to recover hidden caches. They have a mischievous streak and will steal acorns from woodpeckers and other jays. When they go to hide their own acorns, they check first to see that no other jays are watching. The food-caching behavior of these intelligent birds reveals they plan ahead for time when food isn't readily available. They may also hoard and bury brightly colored objects found in their environment.

They have a cooperative relationship with large mammals. Mule deer have been observed allowing scrub jays to hop over their bodies and heads as they search and feed on parasites, such as ticks. The deer would stand still and hold up their ears to provide easy access to the jays.

These birds have been observed to be mourning a loss of a flock member. They would loudly screech near a dead jay for as long as 30 minutes and remain close to the body for a day or two.

It has been suggested that scrub-jays are among the most intelligent of animals. These birds are also the only non-primate or non-dolphin shown to plan ahead for the future (known as metacognition), which was previously thought of as a uniquely human trait.

NATIONAL BLUEBIRD OF HAPPINESS DAY

September 24, 2020



Mountain Blue Bird



Western Blue Bird



Eastern Blue Bird

The bluebird is native to North America, and has become a worldwide symbol of love and happiness. The iconic 'bluebird of happiness' can be traced back to at least 1908, when it appeared in a Nobel Prize-winning play, 'The Blue Bird.'

Bluebirds are found throughout North America including the Eastern, Western and Mountain Bluebirds. All bluebirds are cavity nesters and will use an artificial nest box. Habitat and nest cavities had been disappearing for many years, but bluebirds have made an incredible come back due to thousands of bluebird nest boxes being installed across the country.

- If this bird appears in your life, it will remind you of all the beauty of the nature around you. One should enjoy the nature and all beautiful things you have in your life.
- When your heart is aching the bluebird can help soothe and calm it.
- It will help you relax and be happy.
- It is also a symbol of prosperity and wealth that will be in your future.
- They will also insure good health and the health of your loved ones.
- Seeing this bird will be a symbol of something good that is about to come into your life.
- It is associated with spring, love and joy.
- If you are going through a dark time, bluebirds remind us that things will be brighter, just hold on and get through this day. It will bring you happiness and contentment.
- If a bluebird appears to you it may be bringing signs of loved ones from heaven above.
- A dead bluebird should not scare you because it has nothing to do with death. It only means that you will lose your innocence and you will become old with the time, which represents a normal life process.
- If you dream of a bluebird it may be sending you a sign that you are making the right choice in life.

Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly

birds fly over the rainbow

why then oh why can't I?

