

FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson
September 13, 2017

The common sunflower is having a nice year. There is a field of common sunflowers at 185th St. West and Lancaster Road. Also at Munz Ranch Road prior to Poppy Field Ranch.



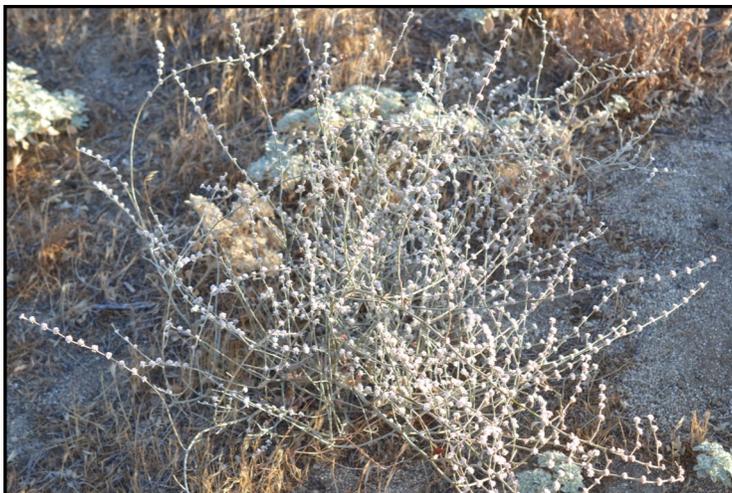
Common Sunflower field at 185th Street West & Lancaster Rd.



Common Sunflower with bee.

Poppy Reserve

Still a nice showing of turkey mullein and there are still some that are domed, some are flat topped and some are now turning the ivory color ending their season.. The sandaster is in bloom and has buds, the first flowers that are a light pink, the mature flowers that are purple, and some seeds. The ragweed is starting to form the male flowers. The vinegar weed and longstem buckwheat still have flowers.



Longstem buckwheat



Longstem buckwheat flower



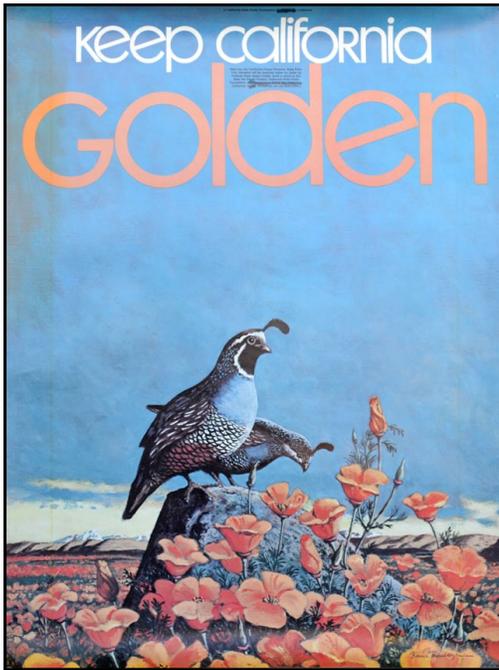
Variegated Meadowhawk (male). I took this photo at the Poppy Reserve but observed them along Lancaster Road and at Ripley. They are migrating. They are mostly a western to midwestern species. Individuals appear in the north in spring before local emergence and breed during summer. Massive emergence in late summer, with large southbound migrations in western mountains and along Pacific Northwest coast. Southern populations presumably breed during winter. They like to perch, eat small insects, and are approximately 1 ½ inches in length and have a wingspread of 2 ¼ inches.



View at Ripley on the Nature Trail of the California buckwheat

Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park

The California buckwheat has gone to the rust color. There are still some autumn vinegarweed in bloom and sandasters. The male cones on the Juniper trees are just starting to turn brown. No female receptors as yet.



In 1972, the copy of the poster at the left was a sales promotion by the California State Parks Foundation. It depicted the state's flower, the California Poppy and the state's bird the California Valley Quail. The original painting (without verbiage) was presented to Governor Ronald Regan and was hung in the Governor's office.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL

Callipepla californica

By Mary Wilson

The California quail was established as the state bird in 1932. It is also known as the California valley quail and valley quail. It is a small ground-dwelling bird and they have a curving head plume that looks like a single feather, but it is actually a cluster of six overlapping feathers. The plume is black in males and brown in females. Males have a dark brown cap and a black face with a brown back, a gray-blue chest and a light brown belly. Females and immature birds are mainly gray-brown with a light-colored belly.

It is a fairly sociable bird and they will gather in small flocks known as covey's. One of the daily communal activities is a dust bath and a group of quail will select an area where the ground is newly turned or soft and will burrow downward into the soil up to two inches. They can be found in chaparral, woodland edges, coastal scrub, semi-desert situations, pinyon-juniper woods, grasslands and coastal sage scrub. They spend most of their time on the ground, walking and scratching in search of food. They are mainly a seedeater but also will eat leaves, flowers, catkins, grain, manzanita, berries, acorns and invertebrates such as caterpillars, beetles, mites, millipedes, and snails. They have a variety of vocalizations such as calls or "pips" for contact and warning calls but are mostly known for their "Chi-ca-go" call.

During breeding season, males call loudly to advertise territory. In courtship, male postures with wings drooped, tail spread and bobs his head. Nest site is usually on the ground, under a shrub or brush pile or other cover. The typical nest is a shallow depression, lined with grass and leaves. The female may lay from 10 to 16 eggs that are dull white to pale buff, with brown spots. Some nests can contain as many as 28 eggs. These large clutches may be the result of females laying eggs in nests other than their own, a behavior known as "egg-dumping." Two females sometimes lay eggs in the same nest. Incubation is by female only and takes about 18 to 23 days. Sometimes families group together, into multi family "communal broods" which include at least two females, multiple males and many offspring. Downy young can walk, follow parents, and peck at the ground a day after hatching. Both parents tend to the young.

"Although they are not considered an endangered species, these are popular game birds and between 800,000 and 1.2 million are shot each year in California alone" (www.allaboutbirds.org).



SOME NIGHT TIME VISITORS AT BURROWING OWL HABITATS

Unlike most owls, burrowing owls are often active during the day, although they tend to avoid the midday heat. Like many other kinds of owls, though, burrowing owls do most of their hunting from dusk until dawn, when they can use their night vision and hearing to their advantage.



Burrowing Owl Family



Jackrabbit



Kit Fox



Badger



Kangaroo Rat



Burrowing owl and a kangaroo rat. In an “eat or be eaten” environment if you visit at night by a habitat you could end up being a meal.