

FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson
December 30, 2017

Poppy Reserve

The temperatures have reached 26° at night at the reserve so many of the plants are done for this season. Unfortunately there has only been 0.02-inch of rain that fell on November 11th of this year—certainly not enough to germinate any new plant life. Maybe we will have a “March Miracle” like we had in 1991 when it did not rain until March and resulted in a great poppy year.

JOSHUA TREE GROWTH



The Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center was opened in 1982—the Joshua tree was planted around this time.



The photo of the Joshua tree was taken in 2017



Joshua tree west of Visitor Center 2017

Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland

The California buckwheat is still having a nice showing of their rust colored clusters of seed pods. There were a couple of Joshua trees that fell along the Rare Juniper Trail.



NEWS FROM THE PAST

The following article was applied to mat board. It was written by Milt Stark. Unfortunately there is no name or date of the newspaper but was probably either the Ledger Gazette or the Antelope Valley Press. Milt had his own style of writing and I hope you enjoy the article as much as I did.



Goldfields in Mint Canyon

Wildflowers

Mint Canyon has its goldfields

By MILT STARK

Goldfields

Lasthenia chrysotoma

Sunflower family

The common name for these tiny daisy-like golden flowers is especially apt. Crowding together over vast areas, they give the appearance of a carpet of gold. Rarely growing more than six inches high, it is not uncommon to find six to eight hundred flowers per square foot.

The botanical name given by botanist Dr. Phillip A. Munz has an interesting literal translation. "Yellow mouthed Greek girl who attended the lectures of Plato in the garb of a man." We wonder if women's lib is looking for an official flower.

Presently, acres of these brilliant flowers may be seen from the Antelope Valley Freeway on the hills of the Mint Canyon area, particularly north of Ave Q and west of the freeway. They are widespread over the western end of the Mojave Desert extending up into Central California. In the Poppy Park, they undoubtedly outnumber the poppy, and along with the poppy, create a most spectacular sight.



BIRD FACTS

If you leave town during winter, the birds that rely on the food from your feeders will die.

Some birds will eat only 25% of their daily winter food from feeders. They find the other 75% in the wild. With so many people with bird feeders, the birds in your yard will simply fly to a nearby neighbor to get their food until you return home.

Birds will freeze to death when temperatures get well below 0°.

Birds are well equipped to survive the coldest of temperatures. They store fat during the short days of winter to keep themselves warm during the long nights. During those freezing nights, they fluff their feathers to trap heat and slow their metabolism to conserve energy.



Horned Lark with fluffed feathers

Peanut butter will get stuck in birds' throats and they will choke.

Not true. Peanut butter is a very nourishing food for birds, especially in winter when the production of fat is important to their survival.

If you have warm water in a birdbath when the temperature is below freezing, birds will bathe in it and freeze to death from wet feathers.

Birds will drink from a heated birdbath, but if the temperature is well below freezing, they will not bathe in it and get their feathers wet.

BURROWING OWLS

Meet one of the families of seven new fledglings born in 2017. They are adorable but a lot of work for the parents.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

