



Livermore Area
Recreation & Park District
An independent special district

VALLEY WILDS

August 2010

4444 East Avenue, Livermore, CA 94550-5053 (925)960-2400

Vol. XXI, No. VIII

Interpretive programs at Sycamore Grove Park, Veterans Park, Ravenswood Historic Site and Brushy Peak Regional Preserve

California Sister

by Naturalist Sharon Peterson

The rains that continued late into the spring this year are beginning to become a distant memory replaced by the dry, warm and even scorching hot days of summer. As the earth has dried, the spring wildflower displays have faded leaving only a few hardy plants still in bloom. You might expect these blossoms to be the only bright spots of color left in the landscape, but they are not. You can also spy small creatures decorated with brilliant hues floating and fluttering on the breezes - often landing on the summer flowers to sip nectar.

One of these dainty flyers is the California sister *Adelpha bredowii californica* which has dark wings, each with a band of white markings and an orange spot near the tip of the forewing. You might see one stopping at the flowers of a California buckeye, thistle, or coyote bush to feed. But this insect does not limit its diet to sweet-smelling flora. It will also dine on sap, dung, or the carcass of a dead animal. The larvae (caterpillars) of this butterfly are much more particular than adults about what they eat; they munch on the leaves of live oak trees.

The bright orange on the tips of the California sister's wings are more than decoration. They appear to act as a warning to predators. A study (by Prudic, Shapiro and Clayton published in 2001) indicated that scrub jays found this species of butterfly unappetizing. The birds apparently hesitated before eating them and then, "...exhibited feather ruffling

and bill wiping after consuming *A. bredowii*..."

This was not the jays' normal reaction after a tasty meal. Imagine tasting something you don't like. Since you don't have a bill or feathers, you probably swallow quickly, make a face, reach for something better tasting to wash it down, and never choose that food on the menu again. Being dropped from the predator menu is good news for a prey species such as the California sister. But tasting bad is an effective defense only if predators can recognize and avoid an item the next time it is available. This is where having a distinctive, bright marking (such as orange spots) comes in handy. A jay that has eaten one California sister can easily recognize the next one it sees and is unlikely to eat it.

So if you were a butterfly birds found delicious, wouldn't it be clever to disguise yourself as one that tastes bad? This is what evolution appears to have done for the Lorquin's admiral. In the 2001 study jays found this butterfly delicious, but they resemble the California sister so closely that the birds had trouble telling the two species apart. (We humans can tell by looking at the orange spots which reach all the way

to the wing tips on the Lorquin's).

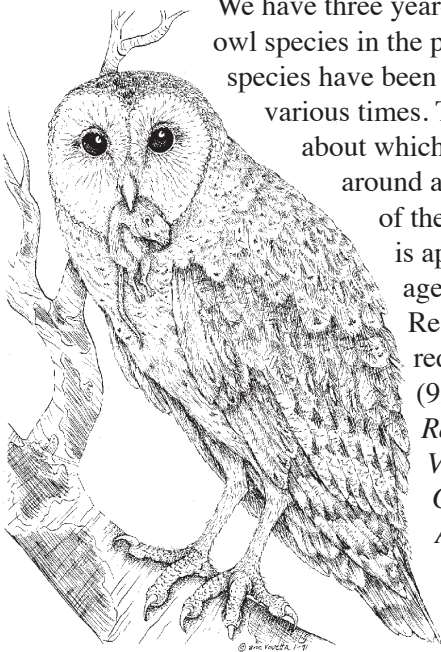
These are only two of the beautiful butterflies you might see on your next visit to a Bay Area open space park or even in your own back yard. Some are not as showy as the California sister, but if you take a closer look, you will discover that each of them has a unique beauty and its own story of survival.



August Programs

In Search of Owls

Sunday, August 1 7:00 p.m.



We have three year-round resident owl species in the park. Other species have been seen or heard at various times. Tonight we'll talk about which owls might be around and go in search of them. This program is appropriate for ages 8 and up. Reservations are required by calling (925)960-2400.
*Ranger Patti Cole
Veterans Park
Group Picnic
Area*

Dark Sky, Bright Stars

Wednesday, August 4 8:30 p.m.

The skies will be dark for a hike into the park for an evening of astronomical adventure! We may be able to see some early Perseid meteors in addition to the normal summer cast of constellations. We will be going for a moderate length walk out into the park to escape some of the city lights. Temperatures drop as the night goes on so please bring extra warm layers.
*Ranger Glen Florey Sycamore Grove Park
Wetmore Road Entrance*

About the programs...

Unless otherwise noted, weekend programs are 1-2 hours in length.

A donation of \$2 is requested.

A \$5 parking fee is charged at Sycamore Grove and Veterans Park. Annual passes are also available and provide a substantial savings for repeat park visitors.

Hide and Seek

Saturday, August 7 7:00 p.m.

Hide and seek – for predators and prey it's a serious game. An animal that's not good enough at hiding may become someone's dinner. A critter that isn't good at finding may go hungry. Camouflage is a key to success in this game. Join us as we test your eyes and discover what it takes for something to blend into the background so well that it is almost seems invisible. You'll have a chance to create a camouflaged creature, and take a short walk to see if we can spot what's hiding in the park.

*Naturalist Sharon Peterson Sycamore Grove
Wetmore Road Entrance*

Family Bike Ride

Wednesday, August 11 6:30 p.m.

This evening we'll ride through the park along the paved trail. The ride will be tailored to families with younger children; however, everyone is welcome to join in. We'll pace the ride to accommodate the group. Remember, everyone under 18 is required to wear a properly-fitting bike helmet. Bring your bike, drinking water, and a snack.

*Ranger Patti Cole Sycamore Grove Park
Wetmore Road Entrance*

Livermore Underground

Sunday, August 15 2:00 p.m.

Life underground has its advantages and disadvantages. Join us today to learn about some of the creatures that choose to live beneath the earth's surface, either full or part time. You may be surprised at who lives there.

Ranger Dawn Soles Veterans Park

Contact Information

For more information on the parks, ranger-led programs or other LARPD programs or facilities check our website or call one of the numbers below.

www.larpd.dst.ca.us

Telephone numbers

Ranger Office (925) 960-2400
LARPD Office (925) 373-5700

More August Programs

Hot August Nights

Wednesday, August 18 7:00 p.m.

The sights, sounds, smells and colors of Sycamore Grove change subtly as the heat of day transforms into the cool of the evening. Join us on this relaxed evening stroll through a naturally beautiful section of the park, and watch as the park sheds the light of day for the mystery of night.

Ranger Pat Sotelo

*Sycamore Grove Park
Nature Area Entrance*

Cool Summer Birds

Saturday, August 21 8:00 a.m.

Join us for a look at the cool summer birds of Veterans Park. Our summer residents have been here for the duration, and this relaxed birdwalk will focus on these birds before the call of autumn lures many of them away on their annual migrations. Don't forget your binoculars and field guides; we'll have a few to lend. Beginners are encouraged to attend.

Ranger Pat Sotelo

Veterans Park

*Apples, Cider,
Games
and Family Fun!*



©DG 1990

Appfest 2010

Saturday, August 28 2:00 p.m.

Join us at Ravenswood Historic Site for some old-fashioned fun as we explore and taste our way through the antique apple orchard. We'll make cider, eat lots of apples and play some old time games. You will also have an opportunity to tour the buildings of the historic estate with a Ravenswood docent. Good for all ages.

*Ranger "Apple" Amy Ravenswood Historic Site
and Staff 2647 Arroyo Road*

Special Programs

Preregistration is required. You may register on-line at larpd.dst.ca.us or by phone at (925) 373-5707, or in person at 4444 East Avenue. **Since these are group tours, there will be no refunds**

Perseid Meteor Family Campout

**Thursday-Friday, August 12-13
8:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m.**

The moon will be setting at a great time this year to give us a clear view of the Perseid meteor shower. We'll set up camp and spend time around the campfire then set off into the park to enjoy the wonders of the Perseid meteor shower and a warm snack. When you grow tired/cold, we'll drive you back to the camp for the night. No tents please. Fee: \$18



Nature Camp

Tadpole Camp, Ages 4 - 6

A few spaces remain in August for the youngest age group of this popular camp. Sign up now! All other sessions have already filled. Campers will use their five senses to learn about the plants and animals of Veterans Park. Activities will include exploration, crafts and games. Camp meets from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Fee: \$132.

Park News

Closing times

As the days begin to get shorter, closing time in the park will start to be earlier. We have been closing at 8:00 p.m., but beginning August that will change to 8:15. By the end of the month the parks will close at 7:45. Check the kiosk window when you enter the park to find the current closing time.

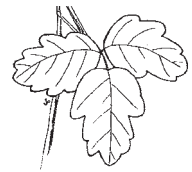
Parking fee reminder

On July 1 the daily parking fee changed from \$4 to \$5. Remember to bring one or five dollar bills, or coins for the fee machines. They do not make change or accept credit or debit cards.

Tree and Shrub Word Search

With the heat of summer the wildlife is seeking shade and can be hard to spot. Most of our grasses are brown, and the flowers have stopped blooming. What is there to see in the parks? The things that are the most obvious and over-looked of course - Our TREES and SHRUBS! There are 50 different species of trees or shrubs that can be found in Sycamore Grove and Veterans Park listed below. Those marked with an * symbol are not native to our area. Words can be found forward, backward, diagonally, up and down - any direction at all. Enjoy!!

Aleppo Pine	Blue Gum*	Ceanothus	English Walnut*	Mulefat	Sandbar Willow*	Western Sycamore
Almond*	Blue Oak	Coast Live Oak	European Olive*	Pepper Tree*	Silver Dollar Gum*	White Alder
Arroyo Willow	Blue Elderberry	Coffeeberry	Fan Palm*	Poison Oak	Snowberry	
Bay Laurel	Bricklebush	Cottonwood	Gooseberry	Pyracantha*	Sticky Monkey	
Blackberry	Buckbrush	Coulter Pine	Gray Pine	Redberry	Flower Toyon	
Black Mulberry*	Buckeye	Coyote Bush	Interior Live Oak	Redbud	Tree of Heaven*	
Black Sage	California Fuschia	Crab Apple*	Juniper	Red Willow	Umbrella Tree*	
Black Walnut	California Sage	Date Palm*	Mountain Mahogany	Redwood	Valley Oak	



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