



# Sycamore Sage

## The President's Message

The Preserve may be closed during and after heavy rains. For your safety, please observe all closure notices.

### Hours:

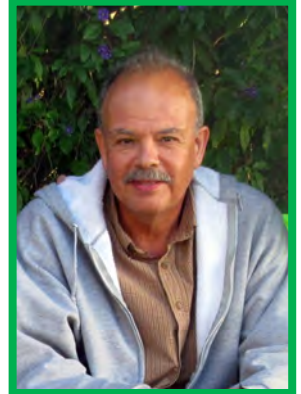
November-March: 8am-5p.m

March-November 8am-7pm

For more information, call the Visitor Center at 858-513-4737

### Wildlife Tracking at Sycamore Canyon Preserve

Each quarter the San Diego Tracking Team (SDTT) conducts a survey, known as a transect, at several monitoring sites, collecting data about local wildlife. At each transect they record what evidence, including tracks, scat, plant browse, dust baths, nests, dens, fur, hair, owl pellets or feathers that were found.



**Robert Laudy**

Trained volunteers monitor more than 20 locations throughout San Diego County, including Peñasquitos Canyon, Mission Trails, Iron Mountain, Coyote Canyon, Ocotillo Wells, Rose Canyon and Sycamore Canyon. The database goes way back to 1996 and the County, the City of San Diego, SDSU, State and Federal wildlife agencies have used this data for comprehensive wildlife studies.



Friends Secretary, Phoenix Von Hendy is the long-time, skilled leader for Sycamore

Canyon Preserve transect. Board member Maureen Abare-Laudy and I have been involved in this and several other transects for quite a while now. Each tracking event is a great learning experience and lots of fun. You never know exactly what evidence you will find – bobcat, coyote, roadrunner, raccoon, opossum, kit fox or even mountain lion.

If you are interested in learning more about the wildlife that is so plentiful in San Diego County, check out the SDTT website <https://www.sdtt.org/> or check them out on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/SanDiegoTrackingTeam/>

Cheers, *Robert*

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#### Newsletter & Webpage

Rita Lee

# Questions About Butterflies

By Rita Lee



## Where do Butterflies Go When it Rains

The answer? Butterflies are small and fragile creatures. When rain threatens, butterflies seek shelter, as a single raindrop can be catastrophic. The average monarch butterfly weighs in at around 500 milligrams. The average raindrop weighs around 70 milligrams. Scientific American suggested that the impact of a raindrop on a butterfly would be similar to a human being hit with a water balloon with twice the mass of a bowling ball.



Butterflies look for shelter from rain when the skies start to grow dark. They cling to the undersides of leaves, climb deep into tall grasses, or tuck themselves into cracks of rocks or trees. This is also how they protect themselves from strong winds. Their feet are capable of a surprisingly strong grip, and as long as they stay still in their sheltered spot, they're likely to ride out the storm just fine.

You can help pollinators during stormy weather by making sure your garden has places for butterflies to go when it rains. Trees (dead or alive), tall grasses, and even rock piles provide great places for butterflies to hide during bad weather. Butterflies also use these shelters to roost at night, when they rest.



## Do Butterflies Sleep?

A butterfly doesn't sleep in the same way a human sleeps. In fact, if a butterfly were to go into a deep sleep, it would be putting itself in danger of being eaten by a predator. So, instead of sleeping, a butterfly becomes inactive. Scientists call it going into a state of quiescence; a state of temporary inactivity wherein a butterfly is getting the rest it needs while avoiding the dangers of going into a deep sleep.



## Where do Butterflies Sleep?



When these fluttering creatures disappear at night, do you ever wonder where they go to sleep?

Butterflies can sleep in many places. Some of these insects crawl into a crevice between rocks while others sleep in a dense bush or even in a hanging plant on the porch of a home.

The main thing a butterfly looks for when it wants to go to sleep is protection from predators that may pass by at night. They also want shelter from any rain that may fall during the night.

They typically hide among foliage or hang upside down from leaves or twigs in trees and shrubs. At night, they drowse in evergreen and broad-leaved trees and shrubs, fallen leaves, pieces of bark, or in a rock crevice or brush pile where there are many nooks and crannies.



## What Position Does a Butterfly Sleep In?

Generally, butterflies rest by hanging upside down from a twig or stem. If they are inside a thick

bush, they may simply fold their wings and become very still. This hanging requires minimal energy, as their tarsi (aka 'claws') can grasp onto the leaf with little effort, opposed to standing right side up.

When morning comes, butterflies spread their wings to warm them in the sunlight. Once this insect's body temperature goes up, the butterfly can move around during the day.



## What Are Some Misconceptions About Butterflies?

Monarch butterflies migrate to the warmer climate of Mexico in the wintertime. There is a common misconception regarding a monarch butterfly's trip to Mexico. Though one generation of monarch butterflies travels down to Mexico for the winter, it's another generation that returns to the temperate climate in the spring. Five generations of monarch butterflies are involved in this migration pattern.



Another misconception about butterflies is they have eyelids that close in order to get rest. In truth, butterflies don't have eyelids.

Some people think butterflies only sleep at night. This is incorrect. A butterfly may rest during the day for various reasons.

Butterflies are great motion detectors and can be surprisingly fast fliers. They will inevitably fly if you or a predator approach. Your slightest movement and even your shadow can trigger flight. The only hope for a photo is to approach very slowly and steadily with no jerky movements.

## How to Create a DIY Butterfly Puddler

Most of us see backyard butterflies fluttering in bright sunny gardens but, occasionally, you'll find groups in unexpected places like a patch of mud, sandy riverbank or a DIY puddle station, which is called a butterfly puddler. Butterflies need sweet nectar from gardens to give them energy, but they also need the nutrients from these soggy areas.

In the heat of the day, water can help a butterfly cool off. Although Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) butterflies are usually not known for puddling during periods of drought, low humidity, and high temperatures, Monarchs are frequently found by creeks and streams seeking moisture.

Help butterflies, especially during dry weather, with a DIY backyard butterfly puddler spot.

1. Use a shallow dish or container at least 12 to 18 inches wide and fill with sand or coarse dirt. Add a few flat rocks to provide perching spots.
2. Pour enough water in the container to moisten the dirt or sand. Do not overfill, as butterflies cannot land on open water.
3. Keep the soil moist during the heat of the day, when butterflies are more likely to visit.





# Tips for Hikers

By Rita Lee

Take the time to enjoy your outdoor experience. Binoculars will help you observe the plants and animals as you walk quietly along the trails. A camera will preserve memories of your visit.

Carry water. Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch can be very hot and dry, and there is no water available on the trails. For a full day's hike in moderate temperatures, you might need at least one gallon of water.

If you are planning a longer hike, carry light trail snacks. They will help maintain your energy level.

Wear suitable clothing and footgear. Sturdy shoes and a hat are indispensable, and sunglasses, sunscreen, and insect repellent are highly recommended.

Carry a cell phone. Tell a friend or family member about your hiking plans. Be specific about your route and what time you should return. Hike with a companion.

Stay on the trails. The natural resources of Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch are fragile. Their survival and your safety depend on correct trail etiquette. Don't cut switchbacks—proper trail maintenance depends on proper trail use.

Carry a first aid kit. It can make the difference between an enjoyable hike and a potentially serious situation. Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch are wilderness areas. Poison oak, bees, ticks and rattlesnakes occur here naturally.



## The Goodan Family Visits the Ranch

By Carol Crafts

On Sunday, June 3rd the Goodan Family visited the old Goodan Ranch with Carol Crafts and Terry Callan. Pictured, but not in order, are Bill and Beth Goodan, Katie Barclay, (Grandchildren), Conner Barclay, Hunter Robertson, (Great Grandchildren) and Hugh McManigal



# Ranger's Report



Park staff continue to plant trees and native shrubs throughout the Preserve.

We will be hosting Night Hikes on 6/18, 7/16, and 8/13.

Staff and volunteers continue their trail maintenance and vegetation management efforts, and the Preserve is looking great.

We have begun to rehab many areas impacted by unauthorized use.

County General Services is performing repairs to the interior and exterior of the Visitor Center. This includes interior drywall repair and exterior railing paint.

Staff met with the curator of the Barona Cultural Museum to discuss option for a Native American display in the Visitor Center.

Park Ranger Travis Payne donated a beautiful "Welcome to Goodan Ranch" sign currently displayed outside our front doors.

We will be hosting a wedding in our amphitheater in June and hope to promote the site as a great wedding option in the area. Additionally, staff will be making improvements to the amphitheater area to make it more accessible to physically challenged guests.

The Goodan Ranch Policy Committee Meeting was held on 5/9. Park Ranger gave a tour of the property to new staff from Santee and Poway.

Staff is working with California Fish and Wildlife to repair multiple wildlife drinkers in Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch.

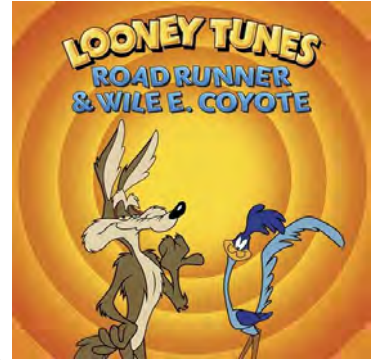
**Thank you for all of your support!**



# R is for Roadrunner

By Rita Lee

By far, the most famous bird in the southwest is the Greater Roadrunner. It appeared in our childhood cartoons as the fast running bird that outpaces Wile E. Coyote. Even before the cartoon appearance, the Roadrunner has had a place in folklore. The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico drew the footprint of the roadrunner in front of their tepees to mislead evil spirits. The folklore in parts of Mexico is that the Roadrunner brings babies just as the stork supposedly brings babies in the US, and some Anglo frontier people believed Roadrunners led lost people to trails.



Indeed the Roadrunner is a unique bird. From a distance, it is a large bird with a brown, white and buff-streaked breast with a long tail. If you get close enough, you will see that the bird's facial colors are a bright red and blue. This cuckoo relative is also an expressive bird with a crest of feathers that it often raises when on alert for danger. The roadrunner often raises and slowly lowers its long tail while standing upright and observing the world around it, but when running, it extends its neck and tail and orients its body parallel to the ground.

Roadrunners can fly, but prefer to walk and run on the ground often at speeds over 35 miles per hour when chasing fast moving prey. Like other Cuckoos, they have curiously shaped feet. With two toes pointed forward and two pointed backward, it is impossible to tell from its tracks which way the bird is going. The shape of the feet and the long tail provides stability while running. Most of these birds are around 2 feet long, and weigh about 10 ounces.



Roadrunners also have some unique adaptations for living in the heat of the southwestern United States. When they first wake up after a chilly night, they spread their wings, exposing a patch of black skin that readily absorbs the sun's warming rays. Then after a morning meal, they hide out in shrub thickets to escape the blistering heat of midday. Roadrunners also have special glands that excrete excess salt from their blood, making them less dependent on finding sources of freshwater to drink.

Although it usually feeds on mice, small birds, lizards and insects, Roadrunners also enjoy

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feasting on rattlesnakes. Thanks to its quick speed, the thin bird can swiftly dig its beak into the rattlesnake before the snake can retaliate with its venomous bite. It is amazing to watch. ([See it here on YouTube.](#)) With the snake secured on its beak, the roadrunner promptly begins whipping its head around, bashing the snake to the ground in a circular motion. The Roadrunner does this until the snake loses consciousness or even dies from the sheer impact. The bashing also softens the snake up so it can be swallowed. The conquering Roadrunner then starts to gulp its victim down whole. The snake's long length means it usually cannot be eaten all at once.

Often you will see a Roadrunner with the partially eaten rattler dangling from its mouth. The bird progressively consumes the snake inch by inch as the snake slowly digests it in his stomach.

--- Caution to bird lovers....while Roadrunners prefer open space, they have found the snails, lizards, insects and small birds in local gardens hard to resist. If your hummingbird feeder is lower to the ground, they will leap up to eat those tasty hummingbirds. ---

The mating ritual of a Roadrunner is fascinating to watch. Roadrunners mate for life but each spring renew their courtship with dancing, calls, chases, and sharing food. During courtship, the male roadrunner often brings choice morsels, perhaps a lizard or a mouse, to the female as an inducement for mating. He withholds the food, dancing around her while she begs, until after the mating is done.

Males bring nesting materials such as twigs, leaves, grass, snakeskin, and bits of dung to their partners, and the female will build the broad platform nest.



Roadrunners nest are often on a platform nest composed of sticks place in a low tree, bush, or cactus. The female lays white eggs that require the incubation and the sun's heat to hatch successfully. Both parents sit on the nest, but the males incubate the nests at night. Once the white eggs hatch, one parent always stays with the nest for the first few weeks. After that, the hatchlings leave the nest and forage with their parents for a few days until the little ones leave for good.

Young roadrunners can run and begin catching their own prey when they are three weeks old, but they will not be sexually mature until they are 2 to 3 years old. The average lifespan of a roadrunner is 7 to 8 years.



**Friends of Goodan Ranch  
&**

**Sycamore Canyon Open Space**

Webpage—GoodanRanch.org

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The Sycamore Sage

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