

Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park

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OC parks

Welcome to OCParks



Creature Feature That Wily Coyote: Friend or Foe

If you traverse over any of the trails of Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park, you may see coyotes or evidence of their presence. This highly intelligent cousin of the domestic dog, is well-adapted to survive and thrive in the urban and wilderness landscapes of Orange County.

They are generally active throughout the day, with activity peaking at dawn and dusk. They may also be active at night, especially in cities where they feel safer after dark.

Maybe you have heard their bone-chilling howls that seem to make the night less inviting. The coyote is the most vocal of the canids in So Cal and is sometimes referred to as the “song dog.” The most common call is a long, mournful high-pitched howl ending in a series of sharp yips and yaps. If you

haven't heard coyotes howling, check out the youtube.com video of a trail camera capturing [coyotes howling](#) at night.

“More people are killed by errant golf balls and flying champagne corks each year than are bitten by coyotes”

Although coyotes are adapted to living near people, they are shy, secretive creatures and prefer to avoid confrontations with people.

That’s why even though there may be coyotes in our park, or even in your neighborhood, you may never see one in person. In fact, coyote attacks on people are extremely rare. According to the [Humane Society of the United States](#) “more people are killed by errant golf balls and flying champagne corks each year than are bitten by coyotes.”

Ecological Role

Coyotes play a crucial role in keeping nature’s balance in our wildlands, parks, and surrounding neighborhoods.

“Mesocarnivores such as skunks, raccoons, foxes, snakes and feral cats can have a destructive impact on bird populations by raiding nests, etc.,” states [coyoteproject.org](#). Coyotes limit mesocarnivore populations largely through

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Photo credit: California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

The coyote’s resourcefulness makes it a remarkably successful species.

The Mystery, History and Magnificence of Borrego Canyon Trail

Borrego Canyon trail is one of Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park’s most popular trails among walkers, hikers and mountain bikers. And, it is no wonder with its expansive oak canopy, interspersed sunshine, easy to traverse footpath and green and golden palette of native plants punctuated by a rainbow of spring wildflowers.

Although coast live oak and sycamore trees provide shade along much of Borrego Canyon Trail, they thin out if you continue up Red Rock Canyon, Mustard Road or Cattle Pond Loop trails. Therefore, we recommend wearing a hat and sunscreen. Just one more tip, pick up a Whiting Ranch trails map at the trail head.

About 1.3 miles from Borrego Canyon’s Portola Parkway trailhead, you will come to a sign board. This is where Borrego Canyon Trail ends and Mustard Trail begins. Follow Mustard Trail, to the right, but keep your eyes peeled to the left for the Red Rock Canyon Trail sign. Bikes are not allowed on Red Rock Canyon Trail.

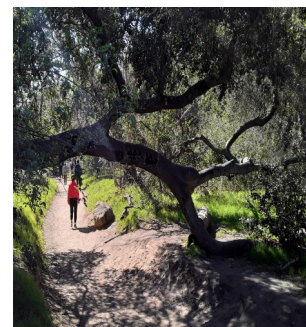


Photo © by Alesia Walther

Majestic, century-old oaks trees are abundant along Borrego Canyon Trail.

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Borrego -- continued from front page

A one-mile round-trip trek from Borrego Canyon Trail, Red Rock Canyon Trail has a moderate elevation gain, and depending on one's fitness, may be somewhat difficult.

The trail is also uneven, rocky and unstable in places. Good hiking or athletic footwear is highly advised. Hiking poles are helpful, not for going up to the red rock formation overlook, but for coming back down.



Highlighting the end of Red Rock Canyon Trail are massive, magnificent and awe-inspiring sandstone cliffs. Visitors are often slack-jawed by these ancient rock formations created millions of years ago when Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park was a swampy sea-marsh where ancient streams met ancient oceans.

The striking rust-hued geological formations consist of dramatically exposed and layered sandstone cliffs dating back to when Orange County's climate was "warm and humid and temperate and subtropical forests were widespread." -- Britannica.com

These sandstone layers harbor an array of mysterious fossils of microscopic ocean invertebrates and mammals such as whales and dolphins. In fact, Orange County is a hotbed of prehistoric fossil finds, including evidence that mammoths,

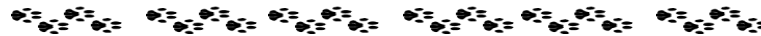


Ralph B. Clark Regional Park's interpretive center contains a paleontology museum that provides an educational view of prehistoric Orange County.

bison, camels and rhinoceroses once roamed the area.

Learn more about Orange County's paleontology history at Ralph B. Clark Regional Park's Interpretive Center, 8800 Rosecrans Ave, Buena Park, CA 90621.

The Interpretive Center offers a paleontology museum that provides an educational view of prehistoric Orange County through exhibits, programs and guided tours.*



Wildlife through the lens of Whiting Ranch trail cameras



Whitetail Deer



Woodpecker



Bobcat



Racoon



Coyote

Coyote -- continued from front page

competitive exclusion, thereby having a positive impact on ground-nesting birds and songbird diversity and abundance.”

As scavengers, they provide another ecological service by helping to clean up carrion; other creatures killed by cars, die natural deaths, or carrion left behind by other predators. In short, coyotes are our friends if we manage our coyote versus human interactions.

The Trickster God

The coyote is a well-known figure in [myths and legends](#) of indigenous peoples of North America. It’s mythical popularity may be because coyotes are tricky, cunning opportunists which allows them to survive where other species are experiencing declines.

Physical Description

The coyote looks a lot like a lean German Shepard with colors ranging from gray to dark brown. It has sharp pointed ears, a sharp pointed

nose, a long bushy tail and a keen sense of sight, smell and hearing. It weighs 15-50 pounds.

Diet

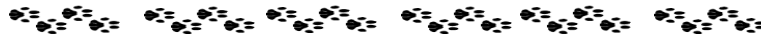
Coyotes are omnivorous animals that eat a variety of food resources, including rodents, rabbits, ground squirrels, insects, reptiles, carrion and wild fruits and berries. In urban areas, coyotes are known to eat yard fruit, human garbage, pet food and pray upon small dogs and cats.



Photo courtesy of Urban Coyote, Chicago, Ill.

To reduce coyote visits to your home, yard or neighborhood, see below, *Tips for discouraging coyote visits.*

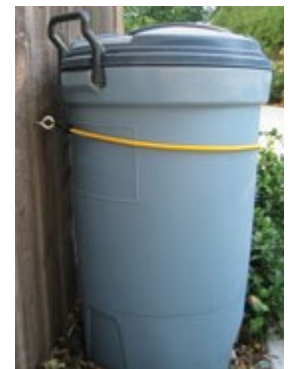
For more info on coyotes go to: coyoteproject.org or urbancoyoteresearch.com *



Tips for discouraging coyote visits

According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, efforts to control or reduce coyote numbers are largely unsuccessful. Therefore, follow these tips to discourage coyotes from becoming a neighborhood nuisance.

- Do not feed coyotes or other wild animals. When coyotes begin associating humans with food, they lose their natural fear and may become dangerous.
- Eliminate water sources that attract rodents, birds and snakes that coyotes feed upon.
- Make bird feeders inaccessible to coyotes as a food source. Rodents and birds attracted by bird feeders will also attract coyotes looking for easy prey.
- Limit disposal of edible garbage in compost piles or other outside areas. This will attract coyotes.
- Secure trash containers, or use trashcans with lids that clamp down tightly or use bungee cords to secure garbage cans. Better yet, keep containers inside a closed garage or shed.
- Place trash cans out on pickup day, not the night before. Coyotes scavenge garbage.
- Do not leave barbeque grills outside and uncovered. Food smells from the grill will attract coyotes.
- Feed pets indoors. Pet food attracts coyotes and other wild animals to this food source.
- Clear brush and high weeds from around your property. These areas provide cover for coyote prey such as small mammals and birds.
- Install a fence around your yard to deter coyotes. The fence should be a minimum of 6-feet high and should extend into the ground a minimum of 6 inches to prevent coyotes from digging under it.
- Do not leave small children alone outside in areas where coyotes are known to roam.
- Do not allow pets to run free, especially at night. Coyotes may prey upon small pets like rabbits, cats, and small dogs.
- Harassing coyotes by rock throwing, shouting, and making loud noises can be effective deterrents. Use caution in close confrontations, especially when a coyote shows aggression toward either you or your pet.*



Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park

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Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park encompasses thousands of acres of scenic and ancient rock formations and forested canyons, grassy meadows, rolling hills, all laced with meandering creeks and trails.



We are on the Web:

<http://www.ocparks.com/parks/whiting>

Whether dreaming of a leisurely walk or a heart-pumping workout, Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park has a an adventurous trail for you. It's the ideal place for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, photographers, bird watchers and anyone else who just want to refresh their soul.



Borrego Canyon Trail is an easy 2.6 mile roundtrip walk or ride shaded by century old oak trees.



Whiting Ranch offers mountain bike riders an array of trails from easy 1.1 mile Edison Road to the grinding 1.2 mile Dreaded Hill Road.

Hikers/walkers are allowed on all trails. Horses and bikes are allowed on all trails except Raptor Road. Walkers have the right away, followed by horses and mountain bikes last.

Whiting Ranch Wilderness Park's Trail distance and difficulty rating



• Billy Goat Trail	.9	Difficult	• Raptor Road	.4	Easy
• Borrego Canyon Trail	1.3	Easy	<i>Hiking Only</i>		
• Cactus Hill	.6	Moderate	• Red Rock Canyon	.5	Easy
• Cattle Pond Loop	.2	Moderate	• Sage Scrub	.4	Moderate
• Concourse Road	.4	Moderate	• Santiago Ranch Road	.6	Moderate
• Coyote Bush Road	.8	Moderate	• Serrano Road	.9	Easy
• Dreaded Hill Road	1.2	Difficult	• Sleepy Hollow Trail	.4	Moderate
• Edison Road	1.1	Easy	• Vista Lookout Road	.3	Moderate
• Live Oak Trail	.5	Easy	• Vulture View Road	.5	Easy
• Line Shack Road	.8	Moderate	• Water Tank Road	.8	Moderate
• Mustard Road	2.8	Difficult	• Whiting Road	.8	Moderate
			• Whiting Spur Road	.3	Moderate