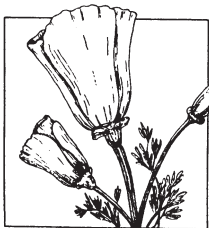


Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve

The Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve is a cooperative management project of The Nature Conservancy, the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The Nature Conservancy purchased the original 3,100-acre portion of the Reserve in 1984. In April of 1991, 3,825 additional acres were purchased by the County of Riverside, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, the Metropolitan Water District and the California Nature Conservancy. This precedent-setting cooperative action ensured the protection of the existing reserve area and set aside significant areas of habitat for numerous endangered, threatened, and rare species of native California wildlife. The purchase followed a year of negotiations and was made possible through the involvement of numerous individuals, agencies, and organizations, most particularly the private citizens' group Preserve Our Plateau.

What's Here?



Poppy

Located at the southern end of the Santa Ana Mountains, the Santa Rosa Plateau's rolling topography ranges to over 2,000 feet in elevation. Several basalt-capped mesas are scattered along the southern and eastern edges of the Plateau. On the level tops of these mesas are found some of Southern California's last **vernal pools**, seasonal ponds which support fairy shrimp, wintering waterfowl, acres of spring wildflowers, and several species of endangered plants.

Creekbeds throughout the Reserve contain deep holes called tenajas (*ten-ah-hahs*) which hold water throughout the rainless summer months, providing an important water source for wildlife.

These riparian wetland areas support such species as sycamore and willow trees, California treefrogs, and Southwestern pond turtles.



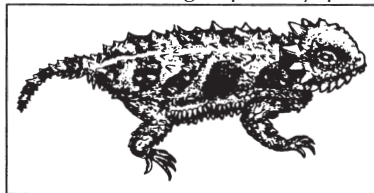
Great-horned Owl Chick

Oak woodlands support large numbers of bird species including band-tailed pigeons, acorn woodpeckers, great-horned owls and red-shouldered hawks. Coast live oaks retain

their leaves throughout the year while the endangered Engelmann oak is semi-deciduous, losing leaves during times of drought and before flowering in the spring.

Native grasslands once covered much of Californian. Our approximately 3,000 acres of rolling grassland is widely regarded as the finest remaining **bunchgrass** prairie in the state. We have undertaken an intensive program of management for the recovery of the native grassland, including carefully conducted prescribed fires and the removal of non-native species. These actions will encourage such native bunchgrass species as purple needlegrass, malpais blue grass, and deergrass. The grasslands are home to American badger, grasshopper sparrow, white-tailed kite and many species of native wildflowers.

Patches of **coastal sage scrub**, dominated by California sagebrush, black sage, prickly pear cactus, and California buckwheat, provide habitat for a number of rare species including San Diego horned lizard, California gnatcatcher, and cactus wren.



Horned Lizard

Large areas of **chaparral** cover the eastern and southern slopes of the Plateau. This community of dense brush land is dominated by chamise, scrub oak, and ceonothus and provides habitat for many species including California thrasher, wrentit, and brush rabbit.

Other animals which make their homes on the

Reserve include the southern pacific rattlesnake, California quail, ground squirrel, coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, and golden eagle.

Access

Visitors are welcome on the reserve; however, human use is restricted to only those activities which are compatible with the complex natural communities. We ask that you respect our rules and minimize human impact by staying on the marked trails.

Guided tours, led by trained docents, are available to schools and other groups by advance arrangement. Demand is high, especially during the spring, and groups are encouraged to book tours early. Call the following phone number for tour information.

Safety

Mountain lions travel through the Reserve. Please keep children close at all times, and runners are advised to always stay with a partner.

Three different species of **rattlesnakes** – southern pacific, red-diamond and speckled – reside on the Reserve. Please watch where you step, do not put hands where you cannot see, and never pick up any snake.

Poison oak is a common plant of the Plateau. Stay on trail to avoid this skin irritant, and become familiar with its appearance. Remember: "Leaves of three, let it be."

On multi-use trails, hikers must give **right-of-way** to bikes and horses, while bikes must yield to all horses.

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SANTA ROSA PLATEAU ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

