

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Eco-tourism in the Golden State:**

## **Tons of Blubber, Critters and Crawlers, Natural Wonders, World's Tallest Trees, Tule Elk, Fun Trails and more**

### ***Find it all in California State Parks***

We've got Buffleheads, tule elk and Ringnecks. Go a little farther and we can show you the best views of the Los Angeles area or gray foxes and opossums. At another location, we've got elephant seals that grow to 5,000 pounds and you will need to respect their space or find out how fast tons of blubber can move. We've got trees taller than large skyscrapers and still here and doing well after a thousand years and more. We've got really fast moving water and huge waterfalls and granite ledges that also demand respect. And how about the 100,000 butterflies found in another of our State parks?

If anything on this laundry list of critters, crawlers, flyers, plants and places sounds like a good adventure, then we have a destination that will widen the eyes of your family and create the memories of a remarkable adventure into the outback of California.

You can call it eco-tourism, if you want. We have just been calling it fun for the last hundred years or so.

California State Parks are home to the best of the state's natural wonders. For eco-tourists, there's no better way to discover the wildlife, trees, flowers, waterfalls, caverns - and more - that make the golden state a top destination.

Here's just a sample of what you can find in California State Parks:

### **Bird Watching at Sunset State Beach**

**Sunset State Beach** (SANTA CRUZ COUNTY), 16 miles south of Santa Cruz on Highway 1 via San Andreas Road, is a great place for bird watching, including the California

Thrasher and Snowy Plover. Lawrence's Goldfinch is often seen in the campground and House Wrens are in the park in late fall and winter. Along the coast in summer and fall you can see groups of Bottlenose Dolphins from the shore. The park phone number is (831) 763-7062 and the park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=544](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=544)

### **Elephant Seals at Año Nuevo State Reserve**

**Año Nuevo State Reserve** (SAN MATEO COUNTY), 55 miles south of San Francisco and the Golden Gate, is home to elephant seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals that come ashore to rest, mate, and give birth in the sand dunes or on the beaches and offshore islands. The park is the site of the largest mainland breeding colony in the world for the northern elephant seal. The males battle for mates on the beaches and the females give birth to their pups on the dunes. During the breeding season, December 15 through March 31, daily access to the Reserve is available only via guided walks. Advance reservations are recommended for walks. For reservations call (800) 444-7275. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=523](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=523)

### **A reclaimed natural oasis in the city at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook**

**Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook** (LOS ANGELES COUNTY), just eight miles from Los Angeles International Airport in Culver City and close to Hollywood and Downtown Los Angeles, is a soon-to-be-open 50-acre park where visitors can experience 360 degree views of the entire L.A. basin and the Pacific Ocean. A state of the art visitor center sits perched upon a 500-foot hill with exhibits on the natural and cultural history of the area. Winding trails give nature lovers a chance to explore a rehabilitated coastal sage scrub plant community and see wildlife such as birds, gray foxes, opossums, skunks and other small mammals. Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook is adjacent to Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, with a total of 387 acres of parkland to enjoy. The park phone number is (310) 558-4566. The webpage is currently under construction. The park is scheduled to open in late April 2009.

### **Bird Watching at Los Encinos State Historic Park**

**Los Encinos State Historic Park** (LOS ANGELES COUNTY), less than a mile from the 101 Ventura Freeway and surrounded by the city, is a natural spring-filled pond which,

especially in the winter, attracts several types of ducks including Buffleheads, Mallards, Woodducks, Ringnecks, and Hooded Mergansers. In this quiet, historic park, birders and photographers have unusually close access to their subjects. Visitors are encouraged to bring along a picnic, tour the park's historic structures, and enjoy the beauty and peace in the midst of the city. The park phone number is (818) 784-4849. The park web page is:

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=619](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=619)

### **Tule Elk at Tule Elk State Natural Reserve**

**Tule Elk State Natural Reserve** (KERN COUNTY), north of Gorman, south of Buttonwillow, west of I-5 via the Stockdale Highway, protects a herd of tule elk, once in danger of extinction. In the 1880s, vast herds of tule elk were greatly reduced by hunting and loss of habitat. The elk are most active from late summer through early autumn. Visitors are encouraged to bring binoculars for better viewing. The park has picnic areas and interpretive exhibits. The park phone number is (661) 942-0662. The park web page is

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=584](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=584)

### **Redwoods at Calaveras Big Trees State Park**

**Calaveras Big Trees State Park** (CALAVERAS COUNTY), four miles northeast of Arnold on Highway 4, features two giant groves of some of the oldest living redwood trees in California. The trees can reach a height of 325 feet and a diameter of 33 feet. They are a surviving species from a time when dinosaurs roamed, and birds, mammals and flowering plants began to appear. Some of these trees are thought to be as much as 2,000 years old. The park phone number is (209) 795-2334 and the park web page is

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=551](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=551)

### **River walk at South Yuba River State Park**

**River walk at South Yuba River State Park** (NEVADA COUNTY), eight miles north west of Nevada City on Highway 49, features many scenic vistas, including fast-moving water pouring over massive granite ledges in the spring and warm slow moving emerald swimming holes during the late summer. Hikers have a choice of easy trails (Independence Trail) to more

strenuous ones throughout the park. The park phone number is (530) 432-2546. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=496](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=496)

### **Whale Watching at MacKerricher State Park**

**MacKerricher State Park** (MENDOCINO COUNTY) features whale watching at Laguna Point on the Mendocino Coast, three miles north of Fort Bragg. For more information, call: (707) 964-9112 or (707) 937-5804. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=436](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=436)

### **Tidepooling at Crystal Cove State Park**

**Crystal Cove State Park** (ORANGE COUNTY), off Highway 1 between Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach, is a great place for visitors to explore tidepools. The park has 3.5 miles of beach and undeveloped woodland, which is popular for hiking and horseback riding. The offshore waters are designated as an underwater park. Crystal Cove is used by mountain bikers inland and scuba and skin divers underwater. The beach is popular with swimmers and surfers. The park phone number is (949) 494-3539. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=644](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=644)

### **Wild flowers at Los Angeles State Historic Park**

**Los Angeles State Historic Park** (Los Angeles County), located next the intersection of the 110 and 5 freeways just north of the 101 freeway, is the front porch of downtown Los Angeles, offers a variety of California's native flora. Just east of Chinatown, visitors will find 32 acres of open space, dotted with Bush Sunflowers, Tidy Tips and the state flower - the California Poppy. Following springs showers, Arroyo Lupine, White Yarrow, Red Buds and Blue Dicks begin to blossom. The park phone number is (323) 441-8819, email at [tcarroll@parks.ca.gov](mailto:tcarroll@parks.ca.gov), and online at [www.parks.ca.gov/lashp](http://www.parks.ca.gov/lashp).

### **Mitchell Caverns at Providence Mountains State Recreation Area**

**Providence Mountains State Recreation Area** (SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY), 40 miles west of Needles off I-40 on Essex Road, includes Mitchell Caverns Natural Preserve. El Pakiva and Tecopa Caverns are filled with intricate limestone formations and can be visited by

taking cavern tours, which are offered daily year-round. The park has dramatic views of the surrounding Mojave Desert. The park phone number is (760) 928-2586. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=615](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=615)

### **Monarch Butterflies at Natural Bridges State Park**

**Natural Bridges State Park** (SANTA CRUZ COUNTY), on West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz, is temporary home for over 100,000 Monarch butterflies each winter. From mid-October through the end of February, the Monarchs form a "city in the trees." The areas mild ocean air and eucalyptus grove provide a safe roost until spring. The park phone number is (831) 423-4609. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=541](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=541)

### **Waterfall at McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park**

**McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park** (SHASTA COUNTY), 11 miles northeast of Burney on Highway 89, has the beautiful 129-foot Burney Falls. Burney Creek originates from the park's underground springs and flows to Lake Britton, getting larger along the way to the majestic falls. The park phone number is (530) 335-2777. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=455](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=455)

### **Azaleas in Azalea State Nature Reserve**

**Azalea State Nature Reserve** (HUMBOLDT COUNTY), five miles north of Arcata, is a reserve for western azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*). Each spring, the pink and white azalea blossoms scent the air. Visitors should plan to visit in April and May when azaleas are in bloom. There is a picnic area available. The park phone number is (707) 677-3132. The park web page is:

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=420](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=420)

### **Poppies in the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve State Natural Reserve**

**Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve State Natural Reserve** (LOS ANGELES COUNTY), 20 miles east of Lancaster, features California's official flower – the California Poppy. Each spring, the reserve comes alive with the seasonal surprises of the Mojave Desert Grassland habitat. The duration and intensity of colors and scents vary from year to year,

depending on winter rain. The park phone number is (661) 724-1180. The park web page is: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=627](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=627)

### **Rare Pine Trees at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve**

**Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve** (SAN DIEGO COUNTY), one mile south of Del Mar, is the home of the nation's rarest pine tree - *Pinus torreyana*. Once the trees covered a large area. Now they only grow in the reserve and on Santa Rosa Island off the coast near Santa Barbara. The park preserves not only the trees, but also the last salt marshes and waterfowl refuges in Southern California. The park phone number is (858) 755-2063. The park web page is: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=657](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=657)

### **The view at Mount Diablo State Park**

**Mount Diablo State Park** (CONTRA COSTA COUNTY), five miles east of I-60 in Danville on Diablo Road is known for its spectacular view. On a clear day 35 of California's 58 counties can be seen. Visitors with binoculars can see Half Dome in Yosemite. Other sites from the summit include the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Farallon Islands. The park phone number is (925) 837-2525. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=517](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=517)

### **Hiking and Botany Exploration at Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park**

**Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park** (LOS ANGELES COUNTY), just south of the 118 Ronald Reagan Freeway and west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, has rugged mountains with great hiking trails surrounded by city life. With moderate inclines, these sometimes rocky and uneven trails allow visitors to take in great views of the San Fernando Valley. During the spring, visitors can observe beautiful wildflowers including fields of mustard, unusual red sticky monkey flowers, Santa Susana tarweed, California poppies, and the rare chocolate lily. Many visitors enjoy horseback riding and mountain biking on the trails, where allowed. Trail access is located at the 10200 block of Larwin Avenue south of Devonshire Street. City street parking only at this time. The park phone number is (818) 784-4849, and additional information can be found on the website at [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=611](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=611).

For more information about California State Parks visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

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