

# Saddleback Butte State Park



**JUNIOR RANGER™**

Adventure Guide  
California State Parks

For Ages 7-12 years



## Saddleback Butte State Park Junior Ranger Adventure Guide



This publication is available in large print format. To receive a large print copy, call California State Parks at (800) 777-0369.

If you have completed this *Adventure Guide* but are no longer at the park, you may mail it in to receive your Junior Ranger badge and stamped log book:

Mojave Sector Interpreter, 15701 East Avenue M, Lancaster CA 93535.

For more information about the Junior Ranger Program, call (916) 654-2249 or write to California State Parks, Junior Ranger Program, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento CA 94296-0001.

[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

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# Become a Junior Ranger!

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Your Name

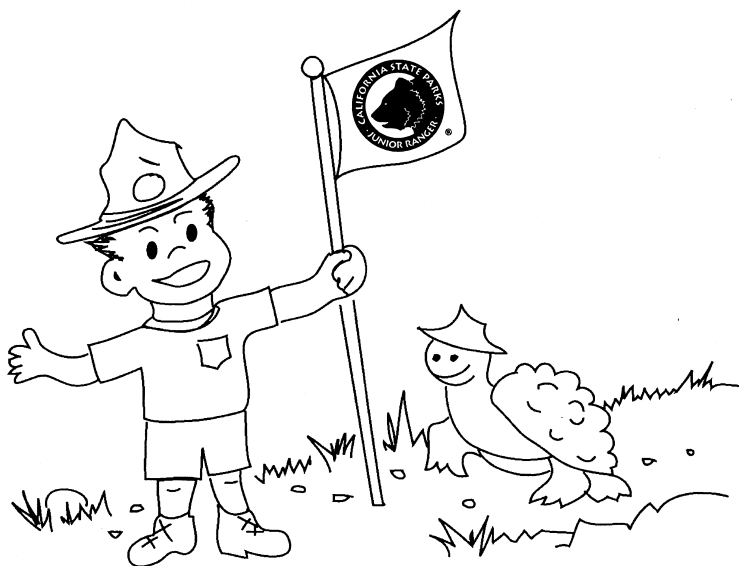
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Date

Earn your Junior Ranger award by completing the activities in this book as you explore the park. Bring your completed *Adventure Guide* to the visitor center or camp host when you are finished for your official Junior Ranger badge. Once you have taken the Junior Ranger pledge, you can help hundreds of rangers who protect and care for our California state parks.

Find answers to the questions in this booklet by touring the visitors center, attending a program, reading park information or exploring the park with your family. Park rangers, volunteer camp hosts and other park staff will be happy to help you discover the park!

Take the Junior Ranger Challenge and begin your adventure today!



## The Strange-Looking Joshua Tree

Joshua trees aren't actually trees, but tall plants with spiky leaves that grow in the Mojave Desert. They are *evergreen*, which means that they don't lose their leaves in the winter.

Joshua trees seedlings can grow up to three inches a year but later slow down to only about one and a half inches a year.<sup>1</sup> Growth and blooms depend on rain. Joshuas are made up of thousands of small fibers, not like regular wood, so there are no growth rings to count to tell the age. But from studying them, scientists think they can live 150 years or more!<sup>2</sup>

Early Mormon pioneers who travelled through the southwest called them Joshua trees after the prophet Joshua in the Bible, because the branches looked like his arms held up in prayer.



Long before the Mormons came west, the local Native Americans wove colorful symbolic designs into their baskets using the reddish-brown roots gently harvested from Joshua trees. Native Americans also ground the seeds into flour, and ate the flower petals.<sup>3</sup> Imagine roasting one of the big flower buds over a fire instead of your yummy marshmallows!

### Activity

Draw an interesting Joshua tree that you saw.

1. Keith, Sandra L (1982). "A tree named Joshua". *American Forests* 88 (7): 40-42
2. Cornett, James (1999). "The Joshua Tree". Nature Trails Press
3. Zigmund, Maurice (1981). "Kawaiisu Ethnobotany". University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.

The yucca moth is a good friend to the Joshua tree because it helps to spread pollen from one flower to another. The pollen is too sticky for wind to spread it from flower to flower but the yucca moth does that as it lays its eggs in the flower. When the moth eggs hatch and begin to grow, the larvae eat just a few of the pollinated seeds. The remaining seeds will eventually fall to the ground to grow into seedlings. New Joshua trees can also sprout up from the roots of a "mother" plant.

More than 25 kinds of birds nest in Joshua trees. Some birds, including ladder-backed woodpeckers, find that dead but standing Joshua trees are an easy place to create a nest cavity. Dead Joshuas that have fallen to the ground are the favorite home of the little yucca night lizard. It hides in the bark, eating ants, termites and other bugs that it finds there. The desert wood rat or "packrat" builds its home around the base of old Joshua trees, especially among fallen branches.



*Joshua Tree Bloom*



*Yucca Moth (Pronuba Moth)*



*Wood Rat Nest at Saddleback*

**Activity:**

1. If you happened to see a wood rat nest, what was it made out of?

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2. As you explored the park today, how many 'baby' Joshua trees did you see? (ones that haven't bloomed yet - they are growing straight, with no branches)

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3. Did you see any birds or lizards or insects in the Joshua trees? Tell what you saw.

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Red Tailed Hawk

Gopher Snake

Mojave Green  
Rattlesnake

Coyote

California Quail

Roadrunner

Desert Tortoise

Black Tailed  
Jackrabbit

**The  
Animals  
of  
Saddleback  
Butte  
State Park**

Match the animal  
to its name by  
drawing a line to  
the correct photo.



# The Park

Did you know that only special places are chosen to be state parks? If you live in California, you are a part owner of this park. Find out what makes this place special!!

What is the name of the park you are visiting?

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List two things that make this park special.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

How did this park get its name?

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Has the name always been the same? (hint: look at the plaque on the big rock by the visitors center) \_\_\_\_\_ What was its first name? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like the most about this park?

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# Activity Page

Choose any **TWO** of the following four activities and check them off when completed:

1. Go on a trail. Describe the trail.

I chose the \_\_\_\_\_ trail.

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2. Explore the park with your family or friends for at least one hour.

Write down where you went and what you did.

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3. Go to the visitors center and look at the exhibits. Write what you saw and what you liked the best.

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4. Go to the visitors center or see the camp host to participate in a Litter-Getter activity.





# Rangers are people who love nature.

## Are you a nature-lover?

When you explore the outdoor environment of the park:

Describe one smell: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe two sounds: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Signs & Symbols Match

Rangers use these signs and symbols to help people find their way and stay safe in the park. Do you know what these signs mean? Take the challenge!!

Draw a line to connect the sign or symbol with its description.

Campground

Horse Trail

Restrooms

Dogs Allowed on a Leash

Group Camping

Ranger Station

Handicapped Accessible

Campfire Center

Drinking Water

Campfires





Activity:


Circle the signs you saw during your park visit.


# Nature and Ecology

Be a wildlife detective. As you walk down a path or trail, look and listen for signs of wildlife. Check off the clues if you find them.

Animal tunnel 

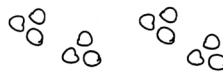
Spider web 

Insect buzzing 

Bird singing or calling 

Bird tracks 

Bird feathers 

Animal track 

## ACTIVITY:

Draw a picture of an insect you found in the park.



Saddleback Butte State Park Visitors Center

# Junior Ranger Word Match

(Optional for Ages 7–10)

Read the words and definitions below. Write the letter to match the words with the correct definition.

\_\_\_ Habitat

A. Changes that help plants and animals better survive their environment.

\_\_\_ Ecology

B. Variety in nature or culture.

\_\_\_ Adaptation

C. A record of the past.

\_\_\_ Diversity

D. When a group of people share language, music, type of food, and a special way of doing things.

\_\_\_ Culture

E. The study of the relationship between living things and their environment.

\_\_\_ History

F. The arrangement of food, water, shelter, and space suitable to a plant's or animal's needs.

\_\_\_ Nocturnal

G. Animals that are most active during the night, usually staying in burrows during the day to stay out of the heat.



# Before the Journey Home

Did you have fun at this park? Why?

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Name one thing you can do at home to help protect state parks.

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Name one thing you did while you were at the park to leave it better than you found it.

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Why do you think parks are important?

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Name one thing that you discovered at the park.

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# Becoming a Junior Ranger

Through this Adventure Guide you've learned what it means to be a Junior Ranger for the California State Parks. If you would like to join us and become a Junior Ranger yourself, read the pledge below and sign your name.

## Junior Ranger Promise

I, \_\_\_\_\_, promise to:  
Treat the Earth and all living things with care and respect.  
Be careful of what I do and how it affects others.  
Learn about the importance of nature and our heritage.

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(Sign here to become an official State Park Junior Ranger)



If you keep this promise, your actions will  
show others that you care about parks.

# Congratulations!

Once you have finished all the questions and activities in this Adventure Guide, you are a Junior Ranger!

Bring your completed Adventure Guide to the visitor center or camp host to get your California State Parks Junior Ranger badge. Happy Trails!

To learn more about Saddleback Butte State Park and other cool California State Parks, go to [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).



## Congratulations!



\_\_\_\_\_

your name here

has completed the Junior Ranger Adventure Guide at

\_\_\_\_\_

name of park

and is now an official Junior Ranger for California State Parks  
and has pledged to be a friend to nature and a keeper of history.

\_\_\_\_\_

staff signature

\_\_\_\_\_

date