

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, visit kids.parks.ca.gov or call (916) 654-2249.

www.parks.ca.gov

Become a Junior Ranger!

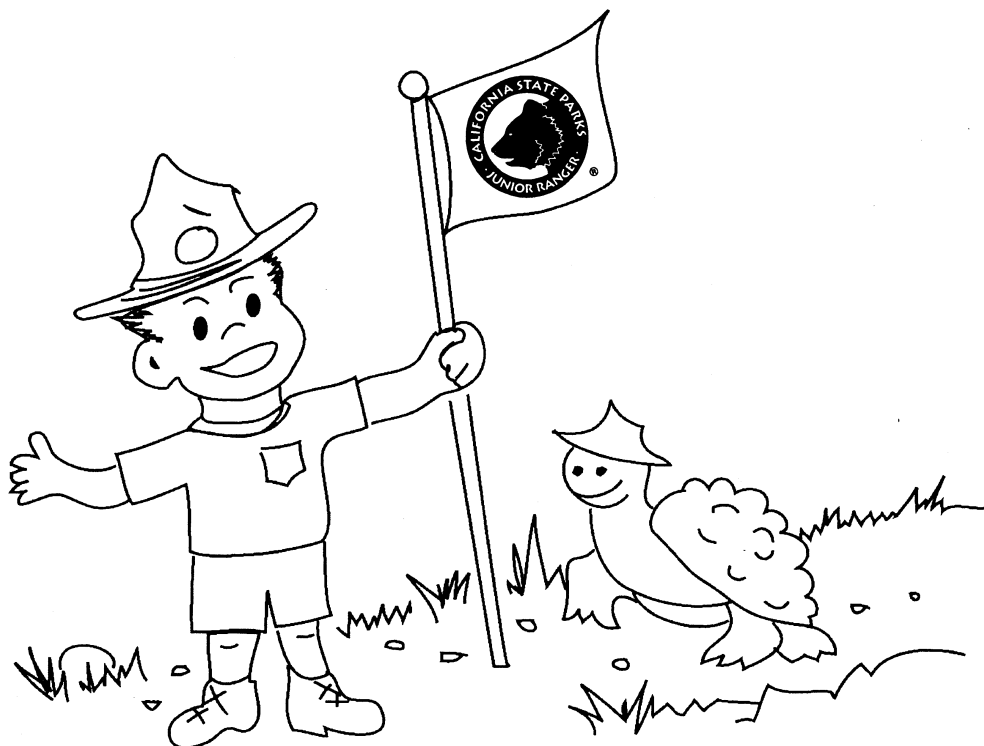
Your Name

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 (weekends Sept-May) or the camp host when you are finished, to get 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 the answers to the questions in this booklet by touring the visitor 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 Saddleback Butte State Park!

Take the Junior Ranger Challenge and begin your adventure today!



The Strange-Looking Joshua Tree

Joshua trees aren't actually trees at all; they're just very tall plants. They have spiky leaves, and only grow in the Mojave Desert area. They are *evergreen*, which means that they don't lose their leaves in the winter.

Joshua tree seedlings can grow up to three inches per year, but later slow down to only about one and a half inches per year.¹ Growth rate and blooms depend on rain. Joshuas have plant fibers inside, not wood, so there are no annual growth rings to count to tell the age. But from studying them, scientists think they can live 150 years or more!²

Early Mormon pioneers who travelled through the southwest named the Joshua trees after the Biblical prophet Joshua, 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. They also ground the seeds into flour, and ate the flower petals.³ 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 flower to flower as it lays its eggs. When the moth's eggs hatch and begin to grow, the larvae eat a few of those pollinated seeds, but the remaining seeds 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, like ladder-backed woodpeckers, find dead standing Joshua trees are an easy place to create a nest cavity.

Dead Joshua trees that have fallen to the ground are a favorite home for the little yucca night lizard. It hides in the bark and eats 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.

Activity:

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

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

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



Joshua Tree Bloom



Photo: © Jeremy Yoder

Yucca Moth (Pronuba Moth)



Wood Rat Nest at Saddleback

Red Tailed Hawk

Gopher Snake

Mojave Green
Rattlesnake

Coyote

California Quail

Roadrunner

Desert Tortoise

Black Tailed
Jackrabbit

**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?

List two things that make this park special.

1. _____

2. _____

How did this park get its name?

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?



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.

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

Write down where you went and what you did.

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

4. Go to the visitor 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 

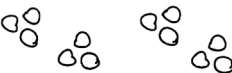
Bird singing or calling 

Spider web 

Bird tracks 

Insect buzzing 

Bird feathers 

Animal track 

ACTIVITY:

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



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 in 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?

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

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

Why do you think parks are important?

Name one thing that you discovered at the park.

Becoming a Junior Ranger

Through this Adventure Guide you've learned what it means to be a Junior Ranger for 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.

(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.



Congratulations!



your name here

has completed the Junior Ranger Adventure Guide at

Saddleback Butte State 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