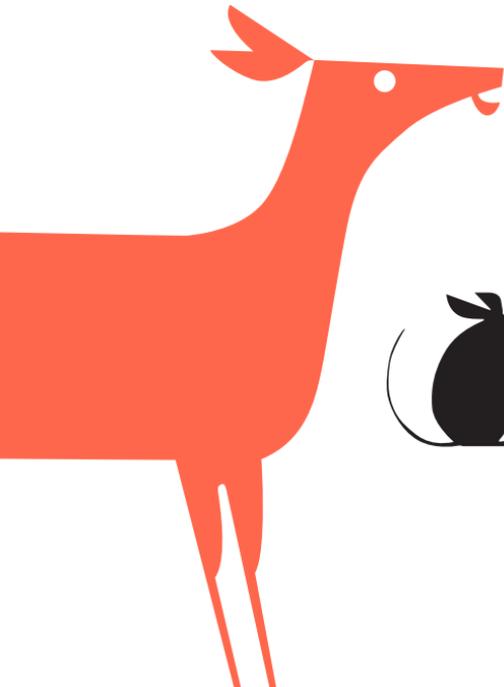




SANTA MONICA  
MOUNTAINS  
A NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

# Junior Ranger

Activity Book



# Welcome to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Here you can explore the trails, observe wildlife, swim, bike, ride horses, and much more!

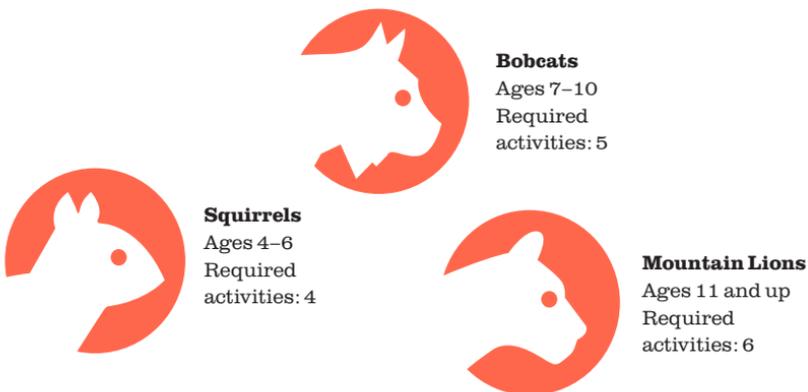
## **What is a Junior Ranger?**

Junior Rangers are important young people who help preserve the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area for future generations. Junior Rangers take the time to explore and protect the area, as well as to learn about other national, state, and local parks.

## How to become a Santa Monica Mountains Junior Ranger

1. Complete at least 4 to 6 activities in this booklet depending on your age group (see below).
2. Interview a park ranger or other staff member by calling or emailing the Santa Monica Mountains Interagency Visitor Center (see activity called “Interview a Ranger” on page 15). Call 805-370-2301 or email SAMO\_interpretation@nps.gov and say you would like to interview a park ranger.
3. When you have completed these requirements, mail this book to the Santa Monica Mountains Interagency Visitor Center. A park ranger will check your booklet and mail it back to you with your Junior Ranger badge and certificate.

## Find the activities for your age group by looking for the following symbols on the top of each page



Junior Ranger Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# When exploring the outdoors with family or friends, it's always a good idea to be prepared.

## **Safety message**

It is important to carry plenty of water, wear a hat, and use sunscreen during your visit to the Santa Monica Mountains. Don't "T.R.I.P." This acronym stands for Ticks, Rattlesnakes, Insects, and Poison Oak. Watch out for these while hiking and always stay on the trails.

## **Bonus**

Can you think of anything else that would be useful to take with you?

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## **2. What is a Mediterranean climate?**

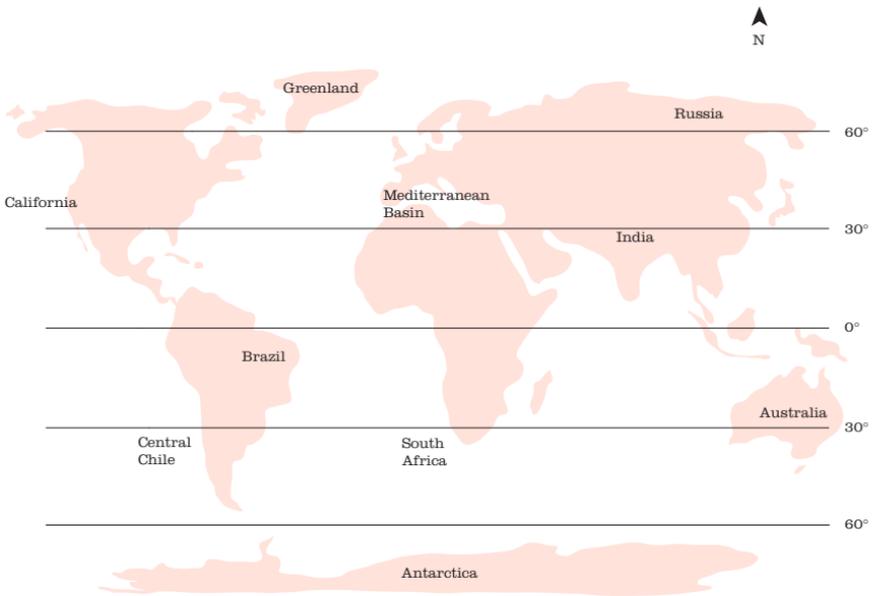
Some places have large amounts of rainfall and other places get less than one inch of rain per year. Some places are hot all year and other places are frozen all year. A Mediterranean climate has hot dry summers and mild wet winters.

Climate is the usual weather conditions of an area.

**Did you know?**

There are only five places in the world where a Mediterranean climate exists.

The Mediterranean climate exists on the western side of continents between 30° and 40° north and south of the equator. Look at the map of the world and, for each area named, decide if it has a Mediterranean climate.



<b>Greenland</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>California</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>Brazil</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>Central Chile</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>Antarctica</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No

<b>Mediterranean Basin</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>South Africa</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>Russia</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>India</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
<b>Australia</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No



### 3. Explore your neighborhood!

There are many trails to discover in the Santa Monica Mountains. Pick a walk that you want to go on in your neighborhood and, using your senses, look for the tracks of different animals, listen for the sounds of birds, and smell the different plants. As you go along, fill in the boxes below. Make sure to always stay on the trail or sidewalk!

While you are on your walk, try to find what is written in boxes below. Three in a row and you have a Bingo!

Animal Track 	Lizard 	Acorn 
Mule Deer 	Squirrel 	Poison Oak 
Sycamore Leaf 	Sage 	Hawk 

**Did you know?**  
Hawks are monogamous animals, which means that one couple will mate for a lifetime.

Draw something  
you saw that  
moves:

Draw something you saw when you looked  
up:

Draw something you saw that grows out of the ground:

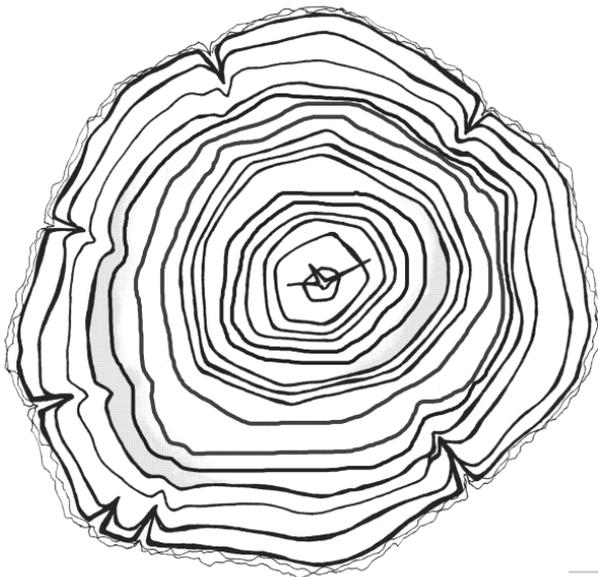
Draw a picture of your favorite part of the walk:



#### 4. How old is this tree?

Just like you grow taller every year, a tree grows thicker every year (and taller too!). When you look at a cross section of the trunk of a tree, you can see that it has many rings. Each ring shows how much the tree grew in one year.

Look at this tree trunk. Can you tell how old it is?





## 5. Searching for life

Search below for the names of animals and plants that you can find and other activities that you can do here in the Santa Monica Mountains—see if you can find some words that aren't even listed below!

B S Y X C H W N D Y C S  
O W Y I D M I I J O D N  
B O N C H I S K Y Z R O  
C U D D A C V O E M A I  
A L G K O M T M Y G Z T  
T O W V R E O A B G I A  
S A E N S Y I R U E L R  
H R J Z E G Y H E L C E  
M O U N T A I N S I U N  
X M Q L E Z H C T O V E  
K A O C V L M G H N G G  
S W R R V S V I S S R O

### Word list

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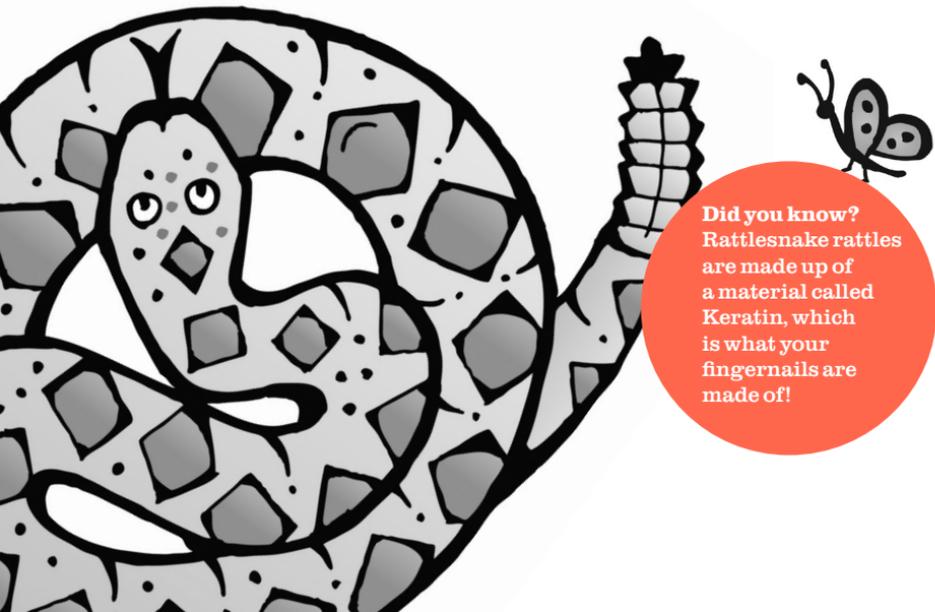
Bobcat  
Coyote  
Discover  
Hawk  
Hike  
Lion  
Lizard  
Mountains  
Oak  
Sycamore



## 6. The Wilderness Delights menu

All the animals here in the mountains need to eat, just like you! They all eat different things—some are carnivores and only eat other animals, some are herbivores and only eat plants, and yet others eat anything they can find. Based on what you know about these animals, match them with the menu item they would most likely choose to eat for dinner at the Wilderness Delights restaurant.

(One has been done for you!)



**Did you know?**  
Rattlesnake rattles are made up of a material called Keratin, which is what your fingernails are made of!

**Sofia Squirrel**

A woody tree-bark salad laden with blackberries and a garnish of leaves

**Bobby Blue Heron**

A healthy variety of seeds and nuts topped with acorns

**Charlie Coyote**

Flies sprinkled with dried beetles and a side of crunchy grasshoppers

**Lizzie Lizard**

A fulfilling meal of rabbit

**Benjamin Butterfly**

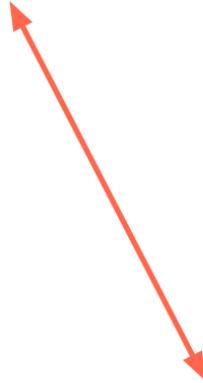
Frog legs and fresh fish fillet served with a tasty side of snake

**Diego Deer**

A whole mouse ready to eat in one bite

**Riley Rattlesnake**

Delicious flower nectar





## 7. What is an invasive plant?

Fill in the blanks using the word list below and learn about the difference between native and invasive plants.



**Did you know?**  
Yellow starthistle, a native of the Mediterranean region, arrived in this country in 1869 as a contaminant in alfalfa seeds.

Many \_\_\_\_\_ that grow in the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ today did not live here before.

The plants that originated here are called native plants, because this has been their \_\_\_\_\_ for generations. In some areas, they can no longer \_\_\_\_\_ because invasive plants have taken over. What are invasive plants? Where did they come from? Why are they here?

These plants were brought to the Santa Monica Mountains by people who \_\_\_\_\_ from other \_\_\_\_\_. The plants came along in boats and ships, attached to the \_\_\_\_\_ of animals or stuck to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the people. Once they were here, the plants made a home for themselves in the Santa Monica Mountains by \_\_\_\_\_ the homes of native plants that already lived here. That is why we call them invasive plants. They are using up the \_\_\_\_\_ that are needed by the native plants and animals to thrive.

### **Word list**

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Plants	Grow	Resources	Shoes
Places	Home	Santa Monica	Traveled
Fur	Invading	Mountains	



## **8. Interview a ranger**

Our park is special because we have a lot of different rangers from different agencies, like the National Park Service, California State Parks, and the Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority. They guide people like you on hikes, walks, and other adventures. They know many things about the park, so they can answer all sorts of questions.

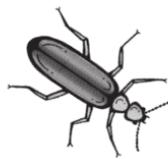
Rangers are a very important part of the national parks.





**Did you know?**  
Park rangers care for and protect more than 400 national parks and other areas across the United States!

It is time for  
you to meet  
a ranger!  
Introduce  
yourself and  
ask them the  
following  
questions:





**What's your name?**

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**Which agency do you work for?**

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**How did you become a ranger?**

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**What's your favorite part about being a ranger?**

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**What is the best thing you have experienced as a ranger?**

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**Make up your own question!**

Question:

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Answer:

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## 9. Getting to know your park

Fill in the crossword puzzle by finding out all the different places and things that you can find in the Santa Monica Mountains.

### Across

3. Something you can look at to find out where you are and where you want to go

6. A flow of water that starts high up and falls over rocks to the ground

7. This sometimes creates beautiful colors in the sky when it starts getting dark

8. What you can see in the night sky

### Down

1. Someone you can talk to when you need information about the park

2. A path you can follow when you go hiking

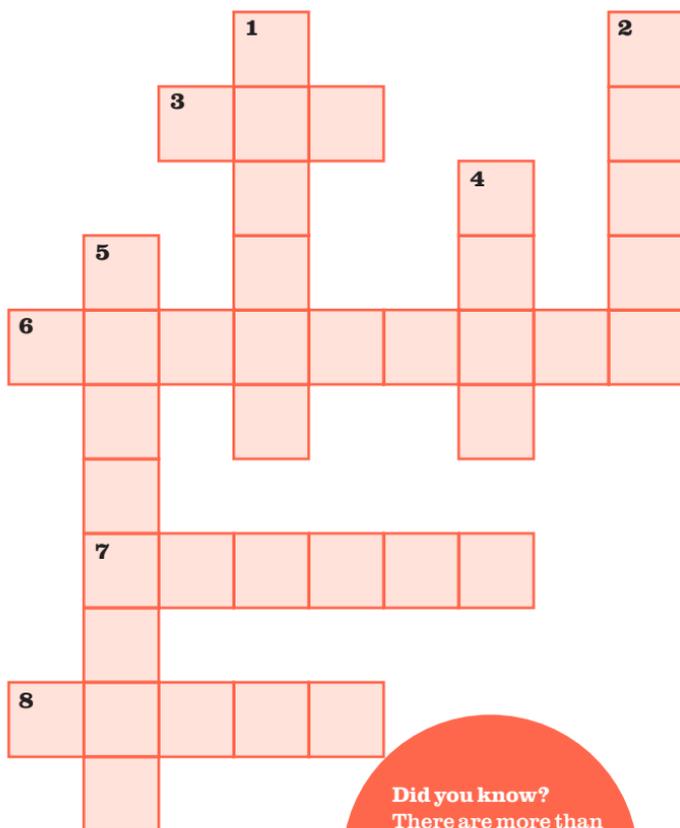
4. The top of a mountain

5. A place where you can spend the night in a tent

### Word List

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Trail  
Peak  
Stars  
Sunset  
Campsite  
Map  
Waterfall  
Ranger



**Did you know?**  
There are more than  
500 miles of trails  
in Santa Monica  
Mountains National  
Recreation Area!



## **10. How are you helping the world?**

As a Junior Ranger, it is one of your goals to protect the valuable resources of the world. Answer these questions and see if you can find ways to become even better at helping to preserve the world's resources.



**Did you know?**  
In 2009, Americans produced enough trash to circle the Earth 24 times!

**Do you...**

...turn off the water when you brush your teeth?  Yes  No

...drink water from reusable water bottles instead of disposable bottles?  Yes  No

...have a rain barrel under your roof gutters to collect rainwater?  Yes  No

...take quick shower/baths?  Yes  No

...turn off the lights when you leave the room?  Yes  No

...finish all the food on your plate?  Yes  No

...recycle paper?  Yes  No

...recycle plastic?  Yes  No

...have a compost pile at home so you can make your own fertile soil?  Yes  No

...pick up trash when you see it in the trails?  Yes  No

...ride your bike instead of riding in the car?  Yes  No

If you answered yes to at least five of these questions, then you are doing a great job helping the world! Keep it up and let other people know how they can help preserve our world's resources.

If you did not answer yes to at least five questions, that's okay. Try to change some of your habits so that you can reach your goal of being able to say yes to five of these questions.

Bonus: Can you think of any other ways to protect our natural resources?

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## 11. Experience your America

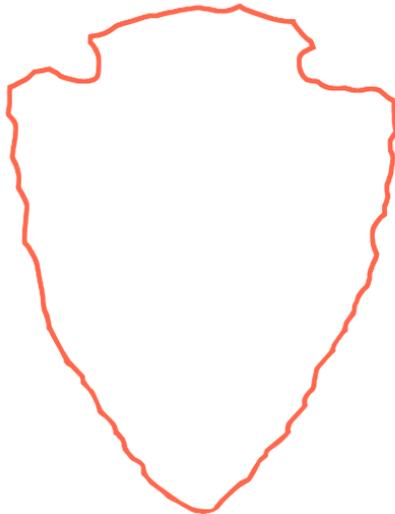
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area became part of the National Park System in 1978. The values of all national parks are represented in the symbol of the National Park Service.

The symbol is in the shape of an arrowhead, and you have probably seen it many times in this park and in other national parks you have been to. The arrowhead represents history, culture, and archeology. Inside the arrowhead, you can see a sequoia tree and a bison, which represent nature. The mountains and water represent land, water resources, and recreation. All of these things are protected in national parks.

We are also lucky here in the Santa Monica Mountains to work closely with two other agencies: California State Parks and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. Together we can protect even more land and resources!

**Create your own symbol using the arrowhead here to represent what you value in your national parks.**

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What do national parks mean to you?

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What is your favorite part of being able to enjoy  
the national parks around you?

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# Junior Ranger Pledge

As a Santa Monica Mountains Junior Ranger, I promise to help protect the Santa Monica Mountains, to share what I have learned with others, and to continue exploring the wonders of my national parks, so that they will be preserved for all future generations.

**This certifies that:**

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\_\_\_\_\_ is officially a Santa Monica Mountains  
Junior Ranger

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\_\_\_\_\_ Ranger Signature

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\_\_\_\_\_ Date





Santa Monica Mountains Interagency Visitor Center  
26876 Mulholland Highway  
Calabasas, CA 91302

Visitor Center Phone Number  
805-370-2301

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## Western National Parks Association



This publication was produced by Western National Parks Association, a nonprofit education partner of the National Park Service. WNPA supports parks across the West, developing educational products, programs, and services that enrich the visitor experience. Since 1938, WNPA has worked to connect new generations to parks in meaningful ways, all with one simple goal: create advocates who want to preserve and protect these special places for everyone, for all time.

[wnpa.org](http://wnpa.org)