

## FIELD OBSERVATIONS

By Mary Wilson  
February 20, 2016

### Poppy Reserve

About a mile before you get to the reserve entrance (heading west) I spotted 5 poppy plants in bloom.

The filaree is in bloom and is the predominant flower. Also in bloom are slender keel fruit, goldfields, mustard, fiddleneck, and the speckled milkvetch (loco weed) has green leaves but no buds as yet. The Joshua tree to the west of the visitor center has three buds. Grasses are up around 10 inches and are going to seed. There were a couple of poppies in bloom in front and west of the visitor center.

On the Tehachapi Vista Point Trail just prior to the grape soda lupine I spotted 5 poppies starting to bloom. The grape soda lupine plants are looking healthy but not buds yet.

Met a couple who had just walked the Poppy Trail North Loop on the west side and they stated they did not find any poppies in bloom.

Poppy Trail South Loop – found the tiny forget-me-nots, filaree and did find a few poppies in bloom.

Poppy plants are still forming their rosettes and there must have been more germination after the January rain as some of the rosettes are only 1-inch across and the ones from the October rain are 3 to 4-inches across. The larger rosettes have one to two buds forming in the center of the rosette.

Lizards and Darkling beetles are out. Spotted ravens, horned larks and heard meadow larks.



fiddleneck



slender keel fruit



filaree



goldfields



poppy

## Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland

The male Juniper trees have dropped most of the cones from the previous year. They have not started producing cones for this year. The female trees are still covered with gray berries.

If you take the Rare Juniper Trail when you come to the end of the trail look for two pink surveyor's flags. This is marked for a future trail sign. Turn right at the flags onto the dirt road and head west. This will get you back to the picnic area and entrance to the park.

Joshua trees are starting to produce buds thanks to the symbiotic relationship with the female pronuba moth. The female yucca moth has evolved special organs to collect and distribute the pollen onto the surface of the Joshua tree flower. She lays her eggs in the flowers' ovaries, and when the larvae hatch, they feed on the yucca seeds. Without the moth's pollination, the Joshua tree could not reproduce and the moth larvae would have no seeds to eat.



Joshua tree bud