

FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson
January 13, 2019

A special thank you to Jeff Olesh of the Transition Habitat Conservancy for introducing me to Dan Potter and his wonderful photographs. Dan is retired from a 35 year career with Honeywell Aerospace, with 25 of those years being spent right here in the AV. He is a hobbyist who enjoys photography and the outdoors so this new sport of Camera Trapping appeals to him. He builds many of his own cameras to capture high resolution images of the wildlife. These photos are from the Portal Ridge area.



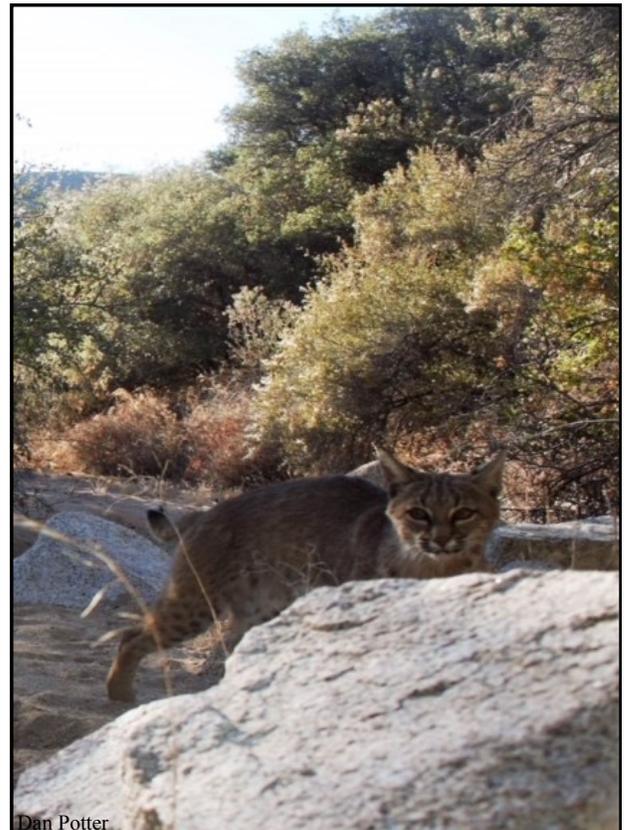
Horned Owl



Two Mountain Lions



Bobcat Kittens



Thank you Dan for sharing your photographs.

Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve

I found poppies that were with the cotyledons, cotyledons with true leaves, and some were one inch across and two inches across. These have germinated from different rainfalls. This is good as it could extend the flowering time.



Poppy with cotyledons & true leaves

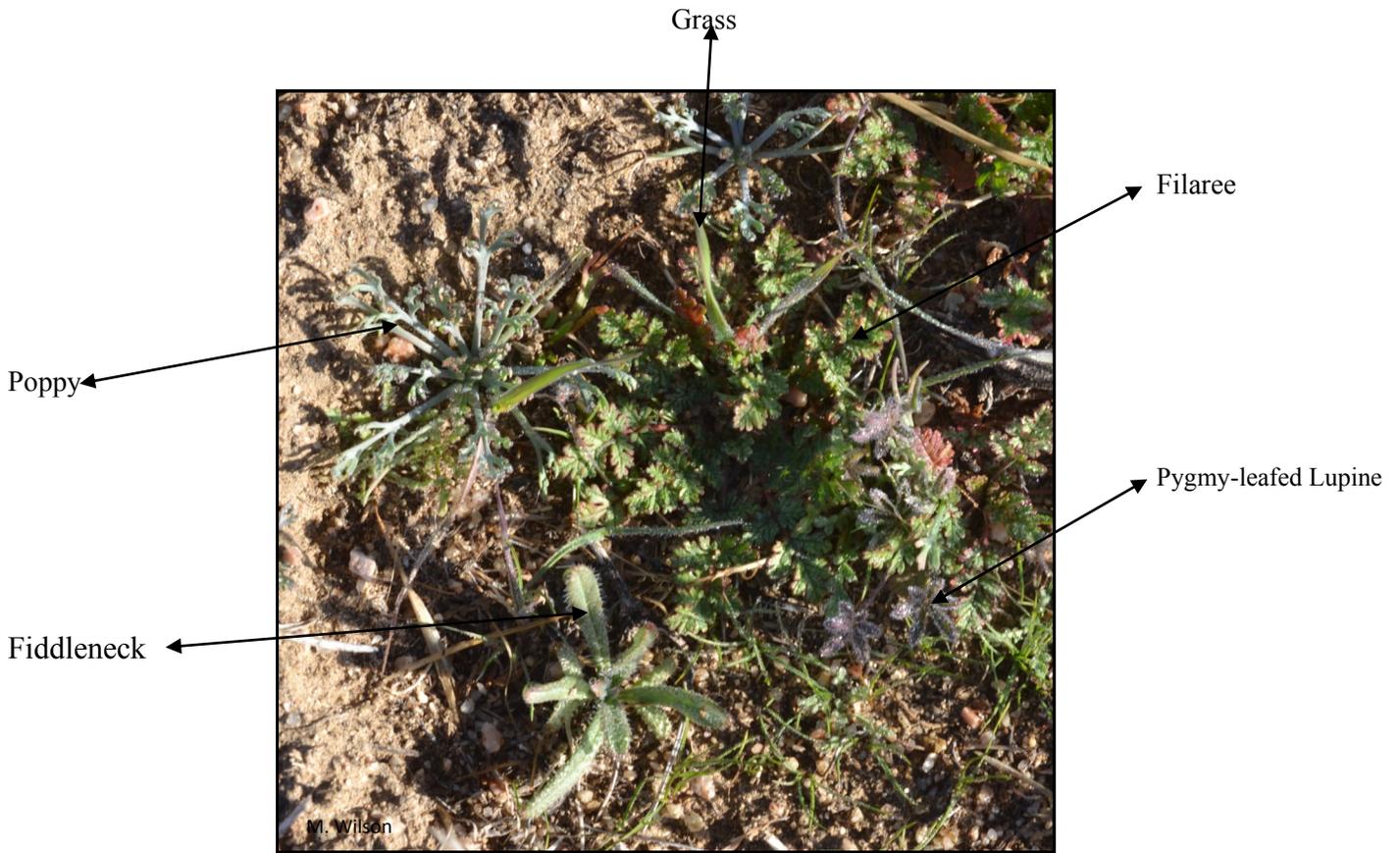


Poppy plant at one-inch

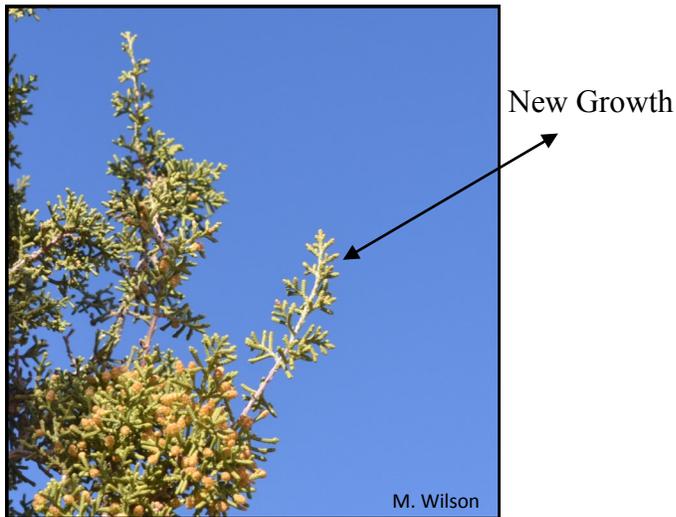


Poppy plant at two-inches

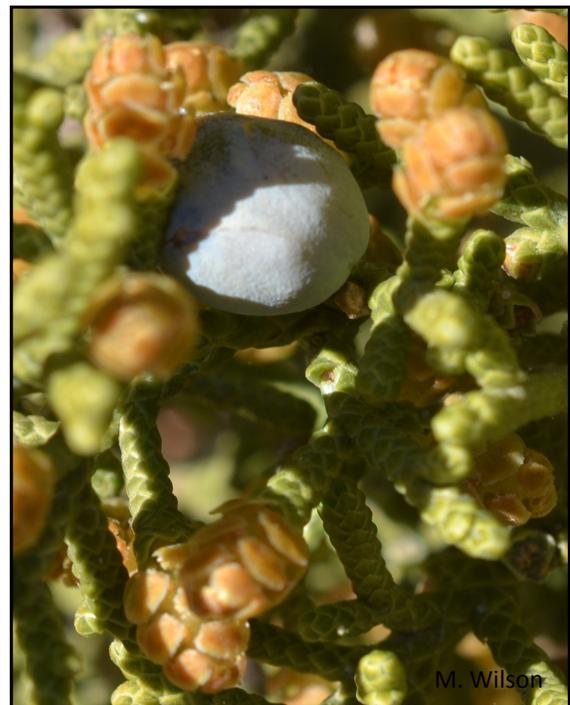
There are grasses up to 1-1/2", filaree, fiddleneck, pygmy-leafed lupine, and poppies coming up. Am also seeing the cotyledons of what could be goldfields – they are still very small so will have to keep a watch on these.



Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park



Both the male and female Juniper trees are sprouting new growth. The female trees have the berries and they are the gray color and are still ripening.



The male Juniper trees are forming their approximately 1/4-inch cones. The male tree to the south of the ramada has started producing berries along with the cones. I counted 44 berries on this tree. The photo on the right shows the male cones with a female berry. About 2% of these trees have been known to change the sex of either female to male or male to female.

BURROWING OWLS

Burrowing owls take dust baths and preen their plumage to keep their feathers in the best condition. Keeping their plumage clean helps them use less energy in flight and removes parasites and lice that can destroy feathers or carry disease. They will also remove the tough sheaths from newly molted feathers which helps get the feathers into the proper position so they can be useful right away. Creating a healthier appearance will also help attract a mate. There is a bonding between the male and female during the courtship ritual that involves mutual preening and this is a form of communication between them.



Dust baths for these owls helps keep the plumage clean and flexible for more aerodynamic flight and efficient insulation. Dry skin and other debris can also be removed with excess dust, and regular dusting may help smother or minimize lice, feather mites and other parasites.



While preening, the birds remove dust, dirt and parasites from their feathers and align the feathers in the optimum position relative to adjacent feathers and body shape. The owls (and most other birds) will preen several times a day to keep themselves healthy.