Our Role

The core mission of the National Park Service is to protect and preserve natural resources, processes, systems, and values of the parks they manage. Our philosophy is to protect, and restore when necessary, native ecosystems and let natural processes play out. Park Rangers and Volunteers document their observations of flora and fauna. Scientists conduct research to try to understand the status and trends of the species and systems they protect. This information is vital to advising park management and philosophy.

Cabrillo National Monument
Herpetology Guide

Name: ____________________________________________

Contact the park for more information: (http://www.nps.gov/cabr)
Western Side-blotched Lizard
(*Uta stansburiana elegans*): A common lizard that eats small invertebrates. Similar looking to the Great Basin Fence Lizard, adults are smaller, and have a gular fold.

Great Basin Fence Lizard
(*Sceloporus occidentalis longipes*): A common lizard that eats small invertebrates. This particular species might be a huge benefit to humans because of a suspected protein in its blood that kills the bacterium in ticks that causes Lyme disease.

California Striped Racer
(*Coluber lateralis lateralis*): A long, thin snake that is mostly black with a single yellow stripe on each side. This snake relies on its large eyes and excellent vision to locate prey. One of its strategies is to climb into a shrub and elevate its head to survey the area for prey – sometimes referred to as “pecoping.” And it’s called a racer because this snake is very fast!

San Diego Ring-necked Snake
(*Diadophis punctatus similis*): A small, thin snake that has a dull, gray to black back, and very bright yellow to orange neck. It is rear fanged and venomous (not harmful to humans). When threatened, it will coil its tail and expose the bright underside.

Belding’s Orange-throated Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra beldingi*): A species of special concern but does very well at Cabrillo National Monument. Because of habitat fragmentation and habitat loss, this species now only inhabits approximately 25% of its historic range. It eats small invertebrates and is common at the park. Look for a lizard with a bright orange throat and a long tail.

San Diego Alligator Lizard
(*Elgaria multicarinata webbii*): A somewhat common and very large lizard with short limbs and a long tail. The alligator lizard can be mistaken for a snake at times because of its long tail and snake-like locomotion. This species will eat small invertebrates, small lizards and small mammals. It will sometimes feed on bird eggs and young birds.

S. California Legless Lizard
(*Anniella stebbinsi*): Not a snake! It’s a legless lizard because it has eyelids and can drop its tail to help it escape a predator. This species spends a lot of its time underground, so it can be difficult to find. It feeds on insects in larvae form, beetles, termites, and spiders.

Garden Slender Salamander
(*Batrachoseps major major*): This species of salamander does not breathe through a lung; rather they respire through their skin and mouth tissues. They must live in damp environments and they will only move about on land during wet weather – usually the winter months. Upon inspection, the garden slender salamander looks more like a small, slimy worm. It is about 2-3 inches long with very short limbs.