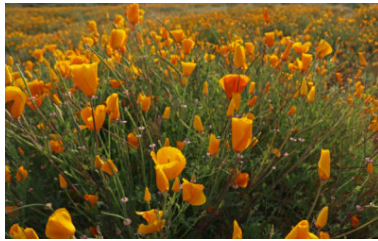




BALK NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BALK BIOLOGICAL

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!



Spring is the time for nesting birds, sprouting annual plants, and light showers. Wildlife is increasingly on the move (make sure to look under your vehicle for desert tortoises before you pull away!), with everyone out looking for mates. Balk biologists are on the job performing nesting bird surveys and focused wildlife surveys for species such as Quino checkerspot butterfly, coastal California gnatcatcher, burrowing owl, arroyo toad, desert tortoise, and Mojave ground squirrel, to name a few.

Although this year's rainfall is not breaking any records, it is still a good time check out local vernal pools after a small storm. Vernal pools differ from puddles because they are underlain by an impermeable layer, often clay (called hardpan) which prevents water from draining into the soil.

The trapped water provides more time for aquatic species to set up shop and can give way to higher biodiversity and even fairy shrimp! This spring, Balk Biological is performing biological monitoring at a vernal pool mitigation site. Shelley collects field data including vernal pool depth and percent fullness. Some pools contain western spadefoot toad tadpoles, while others contain fairy shrimp. Although these vernal pools are not open to the public, the vernal pools at Santa Rosa Plateau in southwestern Riverside County are! See their website for more information on how to plan your visit to our local vernal pools.

Check Out the Santa Rosa Plateau Website [HERE!](#)

HELLO FROM SOME OF OUR TEAM



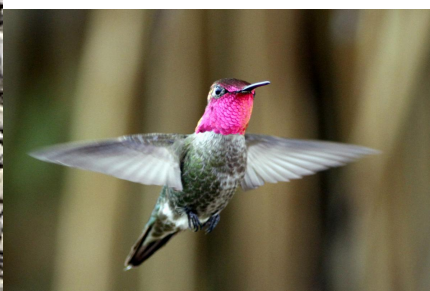
Spring in the Desert

Balk biologists are often in the field even when they are off the job. Brynne recently took a family camping trip to Agua Caliente County Park. The trip was a major success, as she spotted her first bighorn sheep!



Shelley often spends the Easter holiday in the desert with family and friends. Many Easters have been spent at the Edmund C. Jaeger Nature Sanctuary in Riverside, CA. This year Shelley and her family will be spending the weekend at Anza Borrego State Park.

RECENT BLOG POSTS:



March:
The Sound of Silence



February:
What Is This?!



January:
Tijuana River Valley of the Dolls

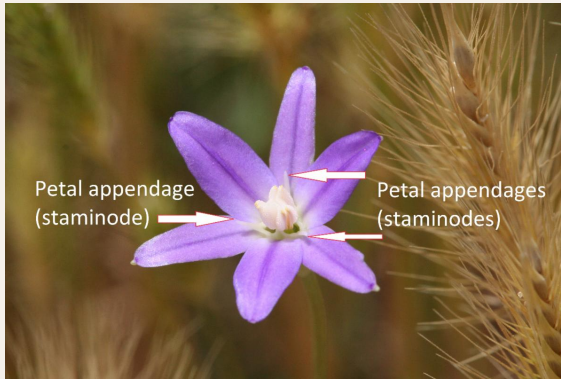
RARE PLANT CORNER

Upcoming Holidays

April 22 Earth Day

May 21 Talk Like Yoda Day

July 3 International Plastic
Bay Free Day



Spring is the time to survey for thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), a federally-listed threatened and state-listed endangered plant species. The plant occurs in the coastal plains and foothills areas of western Riverside, Orange, and northern San Diego Counties, with a few outliers occurring in the southern foothills of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains.

This perennial, bulb-bearing, herbaceous species often occurs on clay soils in a variety of vegetation communities, including grasslands, coastal sage scrub, cismontane woodlands, chaparral, playas, and around vernal pools. It has grass-like leaves and purple flowers with a narrow, triangular-shaped appendage (“staminode”) at the base of three of the petals (technically not petals but instead “perianth lobes”). Its close relative, Orcutt’s brodiaea (California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1), also co-occurs with the thread-leaved brodiaea in much of its range but does not have the petal appendages.

Where to Find Us

April 13: Emerging Trends in Rapid Assessments for Wetlands Restoration Lunch-and-Learn webinar through Wildnote

April 30: California High Speed Rail webinar through Construction Management Association of America San Diego Chapter

June (Actual date TBD): Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) virtual book club discussion (2nd quarter book: American War by Omar El Akkad)



Balk Biological, Inc.

Phone 760-672-4559
Email mbalk@balkbiological.com
Website <http://www.balkbiological.com/>

Connect with us

