

BEquinox Desert Critter Guide

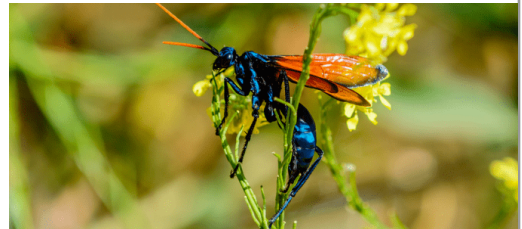
- Most desert critters are crepuscular or nocturnal, active when the temperatures are moderate and everyone else is out and about (thinkpotential meals and/or mating opportunities).
- The last thing any animal wants to do is touch a human, because we are gigantic and icky and it usually does not end well for the critter. The best safety advice is to be aware of what is crawling around, treat them with respect, give them room and hopefully both of you come out unscathed. Do not try to catch anything!
- When the night time activities are over most crawly things try and find a nice place to hide from the heat of the day, often under rocks, bushes tents, chairs, in shoes, etc. (Just like you). NEVER put your hand where you can't see, always check for animals, shake tarps, lift things carefully.
- Seraphim Ranch is alive with critters, and they are looking for food, make sure your snacks are secure at all times and coolers are closed, all we need is a bunch of drunk Kangaroo Rats raving in our camp.

Harvester ants are very common in the desert, these large mostly happy ants have a powerful sting and can sting multiple times, their bite is also painful. Watch where you set up a tent or where you are standing. They will not go out of their way to sting, they do not understand sarcasm, so watch it.



Bees, just like at home leave them alone and they should leave you alone. If you have allergies and get stung -GET HELP IMMEDIATELY.

Wasps, not too common but could fly in, their sting is burning, localized, creating a lump. Keep food (especially meat) and sweet things secured. There is a large desert wasp called a tarantula hawk, see picture, they are beautiful but harmless unless you really bother them.



Tarantulas - Scary as heck - but not dangerous. They are very unlikely to bite and even if they do the venom is not very dangerous. Tarantulas do have urticating hairs that they can flick off their butts and they are like little splinters, irritating but not deadly. They roam around very confidently and will do everything they can to avoid you.

Black widow spiders - You really have to TRY to get bit by one. They like dark undisturbed areas, under rocks, logs or in your burner gear from last year. A surprising number of bites occur on the stomach, lifting something heavy and smooshing the spider against your own belly. BE CAREFUL.





Scorpions and Centipedes are very common in the desert, but being nocturnal, fast and camouflaged they are not commonly seen. However they do phosphoresce and can be found using black light. There are no deadly scorpions in California but the sting of the locals is very painful. In the morning they will try and find a snugly spot to sleep for the day, shoes, gloves etc. so check them! If you get stung it is going to hurt alot, for a while, I speak from experience.

Rattlesnakes There is NO Rattlesnake season - anytime it is warm enough (over 65 and below 100) you may see snakes. Rattlesnakes will hardly ever be seen in the bright sun on a hot summer day, too hot. And if it is too cool they will also stay hidden. Rattlesnakes are ecto-thermatic, relying on external sources for body temperature regulation.

Most bites are on the hand because the human was trying to catch or kill them, so don't do that. The Mojave Green (top photo) is uncommon in this area, it's venom would affect both your cardio and neurological system, not only will it kill you it would hurt the whole time you are dying. The Pacific Rattler bite would make you real sick for a while. Either way this would be an emergency GET HELP immediately!



Deer Mice - Mickey and friends are not usually dangerous, no stinger, no fangs and usually no knife. But they can carry a disease called Haunta Virus. In order to contract Haunta Virus you would need to inhale dust from their dry feces or urine. So to avoid the Virus resist the temptation to snort mouse poop. If you do find a pile of pee/poop you can spray it with water and some bleach soap and that will keep the disease from getting into the air.

BEquinox will have trained staff to handle any of these critters or give you advice on them. If you get stung, bit or mistakingly snort mouse poop - alert a Ranger and let help come to you, moving would disperse the venom through your body faster. If you need to know the definition of crepuscular or urticating please contact a dictionary. BE safe!