



MileMarker Newsletter ----- Volume 1 ----- Issue 10 ----- October 2009 ----- www.OC-Hiking.com

Hiking & Trail Running 101: There's actually hiking in Laguna Beach?



To the untrained eye El Moro looks like a friendly set of rolling hills, but don't let El Moro fool you. Many of her super-wide "fire trails" accommodate professional football and basketball players in training, cross-country teams and marathon and triathlon greats. There are also many trails that accommodate beginner hikers and children as well. The park is a mass of long, steep inclines and rollercoaster hills with names such as "Elevator" (one you definitely want to struggle up instead of down) and "Poles" (a 400-foot vertical hill that some people take to crawling up with absolutely no fear of recrimination). El Moro also throws down single-track careening challenges to professional BMXers and the internationally known "Radicals" (aka: RADS), a mountain bike racing fraternity based in Laguna Beach. Regular sightings may include: People, rabbits, slow-moving mountain bikers struggling uphill, hurtling (but ever-polite) bikers coming down a steep hill, rattlesnakes, red fox, mule deer, and coyotes.

Submitted by: Diane Armitage, OCHC Member, from www.HotSpotsInLagunaBeach.com

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REI SPECIAL FOR OCHC MEMBERS ONLY!

Learning to backpack for the first time? OC Hiking Club Members receive 25% off the cost of first time equipment rental at REI.

*Members must provide a printout of the OC Hiking Club event posting at the time of rental.

Avoid Encounters of Venomous Kind

-Suki Reed for the OC Register.
Photo by Dick Shaughnessey

The good news about rattlesnakes in Orange County is that they don't want to see you just as much as you don't want to see them.

The Southern California rattlesnakes fit the culture; they are laid-back and prefer to chill in the sun.



They will not seek you out and chase you down. Instead, they generally prefer to retreat. If a snake is encountered on the trail, here are some tips to keep safe and allow the snake to slither away.

Hiking safety and rattlesnakes

Don't hike alone: Never hike alone, any emergency in the outdoors will require help.

Identification: Rattlesnakes are usually brown, tan or reddish with a distinctive pattern on their backs and a rattle at the tip of their tails. However, the rattle can be missing, so give all snakes a wide berth.

When a snake is coiled and ready to strike, it will vibrate the tail and make the signature warning sound. More commonly, these snakes are uncoiled and silent. Average length can be 2.5 to 3.5 feet and larger. The babies are born (not hatched) and might be as small as a few inches.

Keep your distance: Rattlesnakes use their strike to catch prey, but if frightened, they will strike as a defensive measure. A rattlesnake can strike 1.5 times its body length even when uncoiled.

Almost all snake bites are due to human interference — because people want a closer look. Statistics show that men are the most likely to incur a snake bite, because they often try to catch the snake. Picking up a rattlesnake is an exceptionally bad idea. (Guys, are you listening?)

Keep your eyes open: You are walking in their living room, so keep your eyes on the trail in front of you and don't stray into the brush or vegetation. Stay away from vegetation on the side of the trail where a snake might be sleeping (you wouldn't like it if someone stepped on you while you were asleep).

If you see a snake, quickly move away and give it a wide berth of 10 feet or more.

Warmth is Required: Rattlesnakes are cold blooded and rely on the warmth of the sun to keep warm. Thus, you will not see them on cold days. However, you may find them in sunny patches; sunning themselves on a rock or trail. Their preferred outdoor temperature is between 70 and 90 degrees.

Time of day: They feed on small mammals, birds and lizards and the preferred feeding times are morning, evening and nighttime if it's warm enough. Rattlesnakes do us a service by keeping the rodent population down.

Stay away from the babies: Baby snakes are small and cute, but they cannot control their venom sacks, so one bite can deliver a lethal dose to the victim.

Baby rattlers are seen in the springtime and are small enough to hide under a leaf the size of your hand.

The odds of being bitten by a snake while in the outdoors are close to zero if you are alert to where you are walking and if you leave them alone. However, some people risk being bitten by taking a closer look, taking pictures, or even deliberately provoking the snake.

If you are bitten by a snake, the venom toxicity is high and can be lethal; immediate attention from a medical professional is required. Both dogs and people are susceptible to snake bites, so keep Fido on a leash in wildlife areas. It also is wise to know which hospitals and veterinarians stock antivenom in your area.

For more information on rattle snakes please go to: oc-hiking.com/hikesafe_california_poisonous_snakes



Hike Organizer of the Month -Mitch-



Mitch is a veteran hiker and backpacker who enjoys introducing people to the local wilderness and backcountry he's enjoyed for decades. A native to Orange County, Mitch left the country several times with stints in San Francisco and London, but the weather and allure of Orange County's beauty continue to bring him back. He has been backpacking since the mid '70's. As a teen, Mitch did 7 days in SEKI; another 4-day hike there ten years later; and more recently 3-day hikes. Between '89 and '91 Mitch patrolled the San Geronio Wilderness as a volunteer ranger for the US Forest Service. He also did a limited amount of backpacking during the 90's as well as car-camping in the desert. He's fully geared up for backpacking and enjoys hiking and camping in the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains as well as the desert and sometimes the Sierra. He enjoys local day hikes for conditioning.

Check out all of Mitch's hikes at: <http://www.meetup.com/oc-hiking-com/calendar>

HIKE ORGANIZERS WANTED

Would you like to share the outdoors with others? We are accepting applications for:

1. Dog Walks
2. Out of town hikes
3. Beginning to moderate hikes

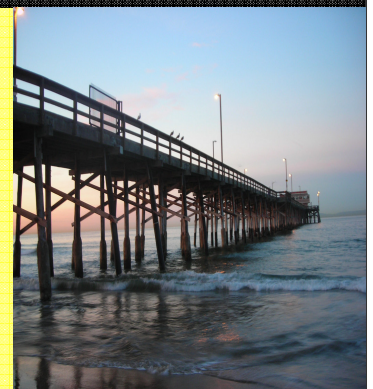
Please click on the link below, fill out the Hike Organizer Application and email to:
Newsletter@OC-Hiking.com

<http://www.oc-hiking.com/volunteers.htm>

Suki Reed in the OC Register!

Suki Reed, President of OC Hiking Club, is a writer for the Orange County Register. Past articles include topics such as hiking for stress relief, camera tips, and favorite local hiking spots. Look for her articles on the back page of the Outdoor Section every Monday. Past articles can be found at:

<http://www.ocregister.com/fi/search/?q=suki+reed>



A HUGE THANK YOU TO HIKE ORGANIZER OF THE MONTH, MITCH, FOR SETTING UP & HOSTING OCHC EDUCATIONAL EVENTS THIS YEAR JANUARY THROUGH OCTOBER. MITCH, YOUR DEDICATION IS MUCH APPRECIATED!!



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West Rim Trail
Zion National Park, UT - 9/26/09
Photo by Laurie Ann Sutherland



Sometimes the Best Shot is the One You Didn't Get!

Submitted by: Ernie Slone, OCHC Member

A trip to Australia was filled with adventures, including a memorable morning hike in Daintree, the world's oldest rainforest. A guide had cautioned that pythons, some over 20 feet, had recently popped out of toilets along the trail. This of course was in my thoughts as I stopped at a men's room.

Suddenly a cry went up: SNAKE! SNAKE! I looked down but the snakes were coiled on a beam above. Their heads were turned away so I moved close snapping away and making clucking sounds. Then a voice at the door insisted, "Please step away." Reluctantly I retreated. "You are lucky," the ranger said. "Those are venomous Night Tiger Snakes, which are 'ready strikers.' If you had gotten them to turn, they are extremely aggressive and would have hit before you could flinch." Sometimes the best shot is the one you didn't get.



HALLOWEEN HIKE- BEAR CANYON LOOP TO SITTON PEAK - MORGAN TRAIL



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Suki Reed, President

Newsletter@OC-Hiking.com

Fire, red, summer is dead, yet shall it return.
Clear and bright in the night, Burn, fire, burn !
Fire Spark, when nights are dark, makes our winter's mirth.
Red leaves fall, earth takes all, brings them to rebirth.
Fire fair, earth and air, and the heaven's rain,
And blessed be, and so may we, At Hallows tide again.
Dance the ring, luck to bring, when the year is a turning.
Chant the ryme at Hallows time, when the fire is burning.

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