



Call of the Canyon

Spring Calendar of Events

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MARCH 30, 2017

Sunset Hike

Explore the twilight sights and sounds of the canyon during a 1.5-mile, roundtrip hike.

Fri. 3/31, 7:15-8:45 pm

Fri. 4/14, 7:30-9:00 pm

Morning Sketchwalk

Admire the morning glow of the canyon and enjoy the magic of sketching nature on this short stroll.

Sat. 4/1, 8:30-10:00 am

Sat. 6/3, 8:30-10:00 am

Moonlit Hike

Join park staff for a moonlit, two-mile round trip hike. Enjoy the opportunity to see the canyon by moon-glow.

Fri. 4/7, 8:00-9:30 pm

Sat. 4/8, 8:00-9:30 pm

Ride with a Ranger

Join a ranger for an 8-mile bike ride along West Canyon Road. Along the way, participants will discuss many interesting natural features and gain a deeper understanding of Snow Canyon State Park.

Sat. 4/22, 10:00-11:30 am

Cinder Cone Hike

Learn about volcanoes and the volcanic activity responsible for the lava flows in the park. Hike to the top of the Snow Canyon cinder cone during this 1.5-mile, round trip hike.

Sat. 4/29, 9:30-11:00 am

Moonlit Hike

Join park staff for a moonlit, two-mile round trip hike. Enjoy the opportunity to see the canyon by moon-glow.

Fri. 5/5, 8:30-9:00 pm

Sat. 5/6, 8:30-9:00 pm

Desert Reptile Awareness

Are you aware that Southern Utah has the greatest number of reptiles in the state because it is in a transition zone between the Mojave Desert, Great Basin Desert, and the Colorado Plateau? Join **Ann McLuckie**, Wildlife Biologist, and learn more about their unique desert adaptations during an evening presentation. Next day, join

us on a morning hike and look for signs of reptiles!

Fri. 5/12, 7:00-8:30 pm-

Presentation

Sat. 5/13, 10:00-11:30 am-

Hike

Scorpion Search

Have you ever wanted to see a scorpion up close?

Join us to learn more about these amazing creatures and search for resident scorpions!

Fri. 5/19, 8:45-10:00 pm

Raven Intelligence

Did you know Ravens are one of the most intelligent birds worldwide? Come and learn more about the remarkable feats of this feathered Einstein

Sat. 5/27, 1:00-2:00 pm

*All listed events are free and open to the public. Space is limited; registration required. **Program registration is held two days preceding the scheduled event.***

Register by phone or in person. For more information or to register for a program contact park staff at (435) 628-2255.

Johnson Canyon ranger-guided hikes offered twice weekly.

Program times vary—please call (435) 628-2255 for current weekly schedule.

Snow Canyon State Park

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Utah State Parks:

Providing opportunities to enhance the quality of life by preserving natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.



Desert Horned Lizard

(above) hiding in grass.

~ Photograph by Ron Olroyd

Hidden in Plain Sight

While taking a short stroll, I stopped to admire a cheery desert marigold blooming by the trail. As I stepped away to continue my walk, something caught my eye and drew me back. A second glance revealed a barely perceptible, beautifully camouflaged moth resting in the center of the bloom. My admiration then shifted from the beauty of the blossom to how clever the moth's colorations were suited to its flower sanctuary. Meet *Schinia miniana*, a.k.a. the Desert Marigold moth. The ability to resemble its background certainly affords this little moth protection from predators seeking an easy meal!



Another occasion, I noticed a fat little caterpillar had fallen from a cottonwood branch onto a picnic table. After returning it to the tree, I momentarily turned away and was surprised when I looked back to find it had disappeared! Where could it have gone so fast? Closer investigation revealed that it had quickly positioned itself parallel to the markings of the bark, becoming almost invisible. Can you find him in this photo (below)?



Consider that a mother bird must find hundreds of caterpillars in just a few days to feed her young and that she becomes very good at hunting them—so over time this has made caterpillars equally good at looking like their background, a state known as **crypsis**. Insects that resemble a decayed leaf, or the bark they are resting on are more difficult to locate than insects that contrast with their background. Shaped like twigs, walking sticks and inch worms are great examples of this.

Many reptiles also employ this brilliant skill of hiding right before your eyes. A master of near-invisibility is the desert horned lizard. Their pattern of coloration varies geographically to match the substrate and their spines obscure their body outlines, making them difficult to see. A desert tortoise's shell is colored similar to the rocks in its environment. Consider how many rocks and stones you have hiked past that may have actually been a tortoise?

The adaptation to be hidden in plain sight is a true marvel of evolutionary design. Next time you are strolling on the trail or relaxing in the shade at a picnic area, remember to take a second glance around for who might be hiding right before your eyes!

~by Jenny Dawn Stucki,
Snow Canyon State Park Naturalist