

Critter Capers

June 2024



ON THE COVER:

The Matilija poppy, also known as the “fried-egg plant”, is a California native with large flowers that resemble a sunny side up egg. They bloom beautifully at CALM in May and June.

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A Message from the Director

Summer is officially here, and with it comes the start of those blazing temperatures! Every summer, we get the question, “How do the animals stay cool?”

Our staff diligently provides a myriad of ways to ensure that every paw, hoof, slithery tail, wing, and webbed foot is minimally impacted by the weather. Our habitats are fitted with misting systems that spray cool mist continuously to bring the temperatures down.

Animals are given frozen water bottles and many frozen treats to help bring internal temperatures down throughout the day. Our enclosures are all designed to provide many shaded areas as well. Some animals are even brought indoors to keep them safe from extreme heat.

Of course, we care about the animals, but one question that gets overlooked each summer is, “How can people stay cool when visiting CALM?”

We like to remind all guests to stay hydrated and bring a lot of water to help reduce the risk of heat-related issues. We also have water bottle refill stations and

water fountains throughout the zoo. Of course, you can also purchase hydrating drinks in our gift store. Bring an umbrella for all of the guests in your party. UV rays and heat are drastically reduced when under constant shade cover. CALM also has misting systems and ample shaded areas for our guests throughout the zoo. The last piece of advice is to come early!

Like us, our animals do not like being out in the heat and are much less active as the temperatures climb. To allow guests to get the most out of their experience and to beat the heat, CALM will be shifting to Summer Hours, effective June 11 to August 6. CALM will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday through Sunday during the summer. We hope this allows guests to experience CALM’s early mornings and stay cool this season!

Thank you in advance for supporting CALM this summer, and we hope to see you bright and early!

Meg Maitland
CALM Director



Local ag students came to help shear CALM's sheep this spring. From left to right: Knox Battistoni, Ren Sawyer, Aubrey Battistoni, Loren Battistoni, Macen Sawyer, and Quinn Battistoni.

Springtime Sheep Shearing

Our domestic sheep are ready for the summer! We have four different breeds of sheep out here at CALM.

Our desert painted sheep, Clover, is a hair sheep. That means that she sheds her hair and we don't usually need to shear her. Our Jacob's sheep, Ivy, and our babydoll sheep, Delta and Charlie, are wool sheep and do need to be sheared regularly. Our dorper, Echo, is a hair/wool breed so it varies how much each individual needs to be sheared or will just shed on their own.

Most wool grows continuously, and without

shearing, would lead to overgrowth and health issues. Not to mention, a very hot sheep in the summer heat! Our sheep keep their wool and hair in the winter as this will help them stay warm in the colder months.

In the spring, as the weather warms, we shear our wool sheep and potentially the dorper if she needs it. This helps them stay cool and helps them stay clean. Shearing also helps prevent parasite diseases and illnesses from ticks, lice, mites, and flies.

Our wild sheep, the desert bighorn sheep, do not need to be shorn. These sheep shed their

hair coats out seasonally. They have thicker coats in the winter for added warmth, and then blow coat as the weather warms. Hair sheds regularly, like it does from humans, dogs, and cats. But blowing coat refers to big blowouts of hair that come out in clumps off the bighorn sheep and various other animals seasonally, such as springtime (your dog may blow coat as well depending on the breed).

When we do shear the wool sheep, we repurpose it for the other animals in our care. We wash and dry it, and then store it for keepers to use throughout the year.

We often use it enrichment for other animals. Enrichment is an important part of animal care and is valuable for their physical and behavioral health. We offer items, scents, activities, and other stimuli to each animal that is relevant to their species and individual needs. Enrichment will stimulate natural behaviors, such as a forage box for skunks, or a peg board for snakes to climb around on. Many of our animals enjoy the scent and feel of wool and we will provide the clean wool to them to rub on, lay on, or generally play with for enrichment.

Next time you are out at CALM, stop on by the farm and see our freshly shorn sheep.

We want to extend our sincere appreciation to Loren Battistoni and her children Aubrey, Quinn and Knox and Ren Sawyer and her daughter, Macen Sawyer for helping us!

Sharon Adams

Curator of Animals



Pictured is Animal Keeper Chris, learning from the experts on how to properly shear Charlie.



Pictured is Chris putting his new skills to work on Delta.



CCCR Spotlight: Get to Know Jim Varley

Since retiring from his position as a Division Administrator at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools in 2011, Jim Varley has since dedicated much of his time to volunteering – especially among his favorite Central California Children’s Railroad crew.

“I started volunteering at CALM a couple years before I retired, around 2009,” said Varley. “I came out on weekends, for my weekend engineering but now I do a lot more. Basically, if it doesn’t involve power tools or require any skill, I’m your man.”

As time went on, Jim’s responsibilities evolved. Despite humbly claiming to be a “no skill volunteer,” his contributions tell a different story.

“I work with duties as assigned, such as helping with the trees, controlling weeds, and clearing debris,” he explained. He also spends significant time on the tractor, maintaining the west side of the wall by the sawmill.

When asked about his favorite task as a volunteer, Jim’s enthusiasm was palpable. He cherishes the camaraderie

among volunteers and the interactions with the guests.

“The people that come out here are good, and this is a good group of volunteers to work with,” he noted. “They’re very knowledgeable and I have learned so much during my time here.”

According to Randy Grueber, head CCCR volunteer, described Varley as a giver.

“He gives his time and brings gift packs to everyone during Christmas. He’s like a pineapple—prickly on the outside sometimes, but very sweet on the inside,” said Grueber.

While he continues to volunteer at CCCR, Varley couldn’t let go of KCSOS and continues to contribute as a management consultant for KCSOS. He remains grateful for the opportunities to learn and grow alongside his colleagues and volunteers.





JULY 7

Doors Open: 8:00 AM

Bear Presentation: 8:30 AM

DONATE TO OUR CAMPAIGN

Help us raise \$2,000. This year, we plan to use donated funds to help build a viewing platform for the bear habitat.

DONATE

EXCLUSIVE MERCH

You can support this campaign by purchasing exclusive merch. A portion of the proceeds from each shirt purchased will go toward the further enrichment of Cinnamon and Louie's habitat.

BUY MERCH

BEHIND THE SCENES EXPERIENCE

Enter for an opportunity to go behind the scenes with our bears. All you need to do is fill out the form and pledge to donate \$500 (if you are selected). Funds go toward the purchase of giant bacon strip enrichment toys for our bears!

ENTER RAFFLE





Being a CALM member comes with perks:

- 10% discount on merchandise and party rentals
- A list of reciprocal zoos and museums - this means you can get free or discounted admission to dozens of other zoos and museums in California!
- Discount on special fundraising events
- Bring a friend for FREE on the first Sunday of each month



Hours

Tuesday-Sunday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Closed on Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Admission

Adults: \$10 | Seniors (60+): \$7
Children (3-12): \$6 | Children 2 and under: FREE

Members: FREE
US Veterans and Active Duty: FREE with ID

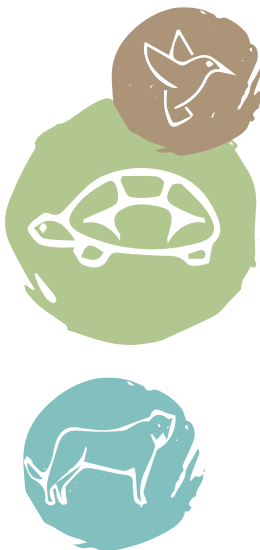
Weekend Opportunities



Central California Children's Railroad
Cost: \$2 for unlimited rides
(volunteer availability dependent)



California Coast Room
Operating hours: Saturdays/Sundays 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (volunteer availability dependent)



DONATE TODAY!



Commemorative Opportunities

DONOR WALK BRONZE PLAQUE



CALIFORNIA COAST ROOM ENGRAVED ACRYLIC PLAQUE



For more information, please reach out to
Jordan Reed at joreed@kern.org



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Did you know you can come to CALM for free? During the first weekend of every month, Bank of America cardholders are given free admission to our zoo. Just bring your BofA card and a valid ID to receive one free admission to CALM.



Find us on social media!

Our handle for Facebook is @calmzoo and Instagram is @visitcalmzoo.