

## **Spring Courses – 2008 Desert Studies Center**

### **Flowering Plants of the East Mojave Desert**

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: April 11, 12, 13, 2008 beginning at 8 P.M. and ending at 3 P.M.

INSTRUCTOR: Alan Romspert

The east Mojave Desert is an amazing area of sand dunes, volcanic cinder cones and flows, dry lakes, marshes, seeps and rocky mountain slopes and bajadas feeding sandy washes. This wide diversity of landforms engenders a diverse number of plant communities with their associated unique floras. In the spring, a large component of these floras are the annual wildflowers spaced among the various perennial plants. This course, in searching out the different plant communities, will take the class to many of these spectacular areas in the east Mojave.

### **Bird Life of the Eastern Mojave**

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: April 11, 12, 13, 2008 beginning at 7 P.M. and ending at 3 P.M.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Greg Pregill

The eastern Mojave Desert is very rich in bird species, with more than 200 having been recorded at the Desert Studies Center alone. On Saturday we will visit the oasis of Saratoga Springs in the southern extreme of Death Valley, where numerous migrant and nesting species of waterfowl and marsh birds will be observed. Casual hikes around the Desert Studies Center will afford further opportunities to observe birds during early morning hours and at dusk. Conditions are usually quite pleasant this time of year and many desert animals are active. Therefore, natural history encounters can be expected with other vertebrates such as mammals and reptiles.

### **Southwestern Desert Bats**

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: May 9, 10, 11, 2008 beginning at 6:00 P.M. on Friday and ending at 3:00 P.M. on Sunday

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Patricia Brown-Berry

Bats are important components of the desert ecosystem yet because of their nocturnal nature they are usually difficult to observe. This course will introduce the participants to the world of bats and to some of the techniques used by scientists to study these amazing mammals. Nightly field work will allow participants to use ultrasonic bat detectors and night vision equipment and to observe the mist-netting of wild bats (unless it's windy). Diurnal lectures and videos will supplement the field experiences.

## **Reptiles & Snakes of the East Mojave**

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: May 23, 24, 25, 2008 beginning Friday at 7:30 P.M. and ending at 3:00 P.M. on Sunday

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. William Presch

Lizards and snakes are among the most interesting and diverse but least known of the vertebrates that inhabit the desert southwest. These animals are easily studied and provide us with insights into many of the important characteristics which make existence in the harsh desert environment possible. This weekend we will examine and identify reptiles beginning with a short identification and natural history presentation in the laboratory Friday night before venturing into the habitats preferred by snakes and lizards on Saturday and Sunday.