



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

SNAKES OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: PAISLEY RAMSTEAD

APRIL 5TH, 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This is an introductory classroom-based course about all things snakes, with a short and easy field excursion to learn how to identify the kinds of places snakes like to hang out (and maybe spot one too!) We'll discuss the species of snakes commonly (or less commonly) seen in Joshua Tree National Park, how to differentiate between venomous and nonvenomous snakes locally, and how to safely and responsibly view and interact with wild snakes. This course is open to all ages and is family-friendly!

PROGRAM AGENDA

We will start out by discussing the different snakes found throughout the park. After we've become familiar with species we might see here in the park (and at home), we will take a beginner-friendly nature walk in the area around the nature center to discuss habitat and how to spot snakes while hiking. We'll be outside for about an hour, and will close out the day with a recap activity, Q&A, and the opportunity to meet Paisley's pet California kingsnake—a harmless species that can be found in JTNP & throughout California.

MEETING LOCATION

[Black Rock Nature Center](#), 9800 Black Rock Canyon Rd, Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

REQUIRED PREPARATION*

Waiver: All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle): For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass you may use that at the entrance!

ACTIVITY LEVEL

LEISURELY The majority of the class involves no physical activity. There will be a short walk immediately around Black Rock Nature Center, no longer than 1-1.5 miles with little to no elevation gain. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation

WHAT TO BRING

The essentials for all field courses:

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field (please leave no trace)
- Close-toed athletic shoes or hiking boots; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day

Required for this course:

- None

Recommended for this course (but not required):

- Notebook and pencil are always good to have
- None

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Paisley Ramstead is a lifelong resident of the Coachella Valley and an avid desert naturalist with a strong interest in conservation. Paisley has worked various conservation and field biology roles in recent years, though most recognize her from

her volunteer community outreach work to help her neighbors feel more comfortable around and better identify local reptiles!

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

There is no cell service in the park! Please allow ample time to arrive at the meeting location; park entrances may be very busy on weekends (see FAQs). Please make sure you check weather conditions and dress accordingly.



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FAQ+₋

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. ***There is no cell service in the park***, please plan accordingly.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities (unless noted in the activity description). If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

