

How come at day time we never see any of the animals. Are most of them nocturnal?

You have pretty much answered your own question.

Many of the animals that live in Palo Alto open space areas are nocturnal. Some are also diurnal and/or crepuscular.

Nocturnal (coming out at night) animals are usually not seen very often by humans. They are adapted to the dark and have much better night vision than we do. Most nocturnal animals can see just fine in light where we would need a flashlight to see just a little way in front of us. Nocturnal animals also tend to have a really keen sense of hearing. Being able to see and hear us (as well as predators) lets them avoid danger. Examples of nocturnal animals are possums, skunks, bats and night hunting birds (like the Whip-poor-will).

Crepuscular (coming out at twilight) animals are very similar to night animals and often are the same. The most commonly seen crepuscular animals in the park are bats which can often be seen in the early evening flying along the edges of Boronda Lake catching bugs for dinner. Crepuscular animals include deer, mountain lions and bobcats, coyotes, bats and swallows.

Diurnal animals (coming out during the day) are often very secretive because they know predators can see well, and also smell and hear well, so hiding is the easiest way to not get caught. Daytime animals include reptiles, turkeys, rabbits and hares, most hawks and raptors and many predators.

Most animals are also afraid of humans. We are bigger than many animals, very often we are louder than many animals and we travel in larger groups than many animals. Frequently an animal will see, or hear, us long before we know they are there and will hide or run away.

It has also been very hot the last couple of weeks and most animals are smart enough to try and stay cool by staying in shaded areas, where we can't see them easily, and come out in early evening or at night.

The best times to see animals are early in the mornings before it has gotten warm and in the early evenings when it has started to cool off. Deer will often be on our turf areas getting a yummy breakfast, or dinner, of lawn grass; many animals will stop by the lake or a creek and have drink of water.