

What types of lizards can you find on the walk?

There are several common lizards that may be found on walks in Foothills Park.

The Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), sometimes called a Swift because of its speed or blue belly because of blue underbelly, is the most common lizard in this area. On hot days you will often see it sitting on a fence, a pile of rocks, just hanging out by the side of a trail, while doing “push-ups.” The push-up serve two purposes on is to prove to other males that they are strong and should not be bothered; the other is attract potential mates.

Alligator Lizards (*Gerrhonotus sp.*) are also fairly common although they are seen much less often because they tend to be more secretive and stay in concealed areas like underbrush. They may be often heard running through leaf litter as they chase smaller reptiles and insects. When picked up, or otherwise threatened, one of their defense methods is smear excrement on their captor, you may also get bitten for your effort.

The Western Skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*) is easily distinguished from other lizards in the area by its bright blue to gray tail (when grabbed this lizard can drop its tail for a predator to have leaving the rest of the lizard free to run away). Skinks are another shy lizard and are not often seen but may be heard as they hunt.

The Western Whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris*) is not common in Foothills Park. If you are lucky enough to see one, you will probably get a glimpse of its tail (held upright as it runs) when it flees from you. They can reach 10 inches long with the tail being up to two-thirds the body length.

The Coast Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), or Horned Toad, is rare in Foothills park. Many of the scales on this lizard have developed into points (horns) making it easy to distinguish from the other lizards (which are mostly smooth). When the Horned Lizard is disturbed, it can secrete blood out of its eyes!

Enjoy your walk through Foothills park; please remember that we are in a nature preserve, leave things as you find them. Take only pictures and leave behind only foot prints.

Adapted from Foothills nature Note “Lizards of Foothills Park.”