

Our Arroyo Ecosystem



Coast Horned Lizard

Phrynosoma blainvillii

This is a flat-bodied, oval-shaped lizard that has scattered pointed scales covering its upper body and a crown of horns on its head. The two center horns are the largest.

When threatened, it can run short distances and hide, or remain motionless, allowing its cryptic coloring to help it avoid detection. It can also inflate itself with air, making it hard to swallow, and will hiss with a threatening display. If grabbed it can bite and move its head from side to side to jab its would-be predator. It's also able to spray blood from the corners of its eyes. This has been known to deter coyotes and foxes, and possibly other predators.

The coast horned lizard is active during the daytime during warm weather. When it is cold or extremely hot, it retreats underground. Its diet consists mostly of ants, especially harvester ants, as well as other invertebrates.

Visit www.californiaherps.com for more information on this and other reptiles and amphibians.

