

# EXPLORATIONS

From the notebooks of our Naturalist Educators

Do you want to share a story from your field trip? Email me at [brittany@tmparks-foundation.org](mailto:brittany@tmparks-foundation.org) - You could be featured in the next monthly version of the newsletter!

## APRIL IS BUG-TASTIC!

The past two weeks were spent with one of my favorite age groups--2nd grade! Students at Nancy Gomes Elementary learned all about insect characteristics, where to find them, and how to study them! They got to meet Gerald, our resident Madagascar Hissing Cockroach, and practiced being entomologists on a biodiversity survey at their neighborhood park. A highlight for me was finding rabbitbrush galls and IDing carpenter ants!

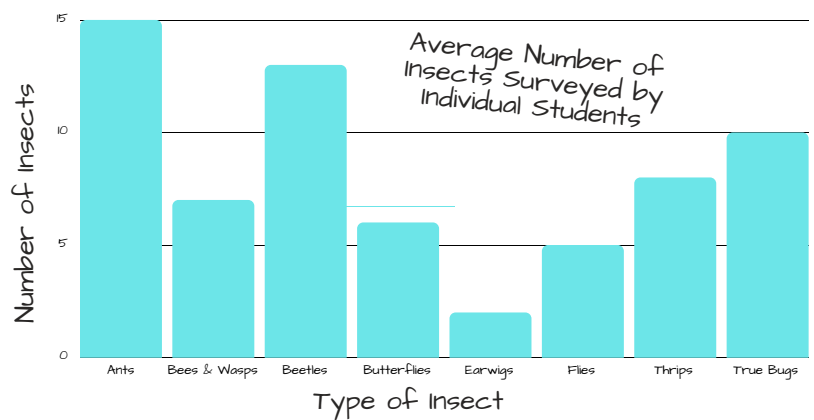
♡ Brittany



## STUDENT QUESTION OF THE WEEK!

Why do all insects have to have 6 legs and 3 body parts?

We put animals into groups based on their similarities. This is called classification. All animals within groups (like mammals or insects) are related! Try this: Think of a mammal and an insect. Now try to list the physical similarities between them. Chances are the list won't be very long! Try again with 2 insects. I bet your list will be longer.



Teachers! Do you want to continue this module and practice stewardship in your classroom? Here's a great extension you could do with your class. [Make a Native Bee Hotel](#) <---click!

## BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS!!!

I had so much fun birding with the 4th graders at Dodson Elementary this week! We spent our first day discussing unique bird adaptations and learning how to I.D. individual bird species.

A highlight for me was watching my group I.D. an American Coot from a distance, based off of their head-bobbing behavior. I love when our Introductory lesson translates to the field!

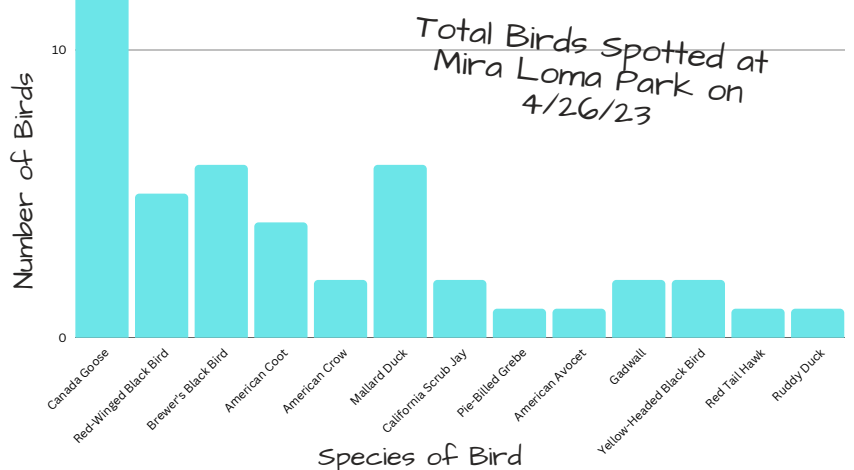
To the students at Dodson: Birding is one of my favorite hobbies and I hope its one of yours, too. ♡ Brittany, 4/27/23



## STUDENT QUESTION OF THE WEEK!

Are American Coots ducks?

While they do resemble a duck, American Coots are actually a member of the Rallidae family. In fact, they are more closely related to cranes than ducks! One dead giveaway that they're not a duck is their feet! Next time you see a coot, be sure to observe their silly-looking toes. You'll notice they're not like ducks at all! Can you think of other ways coots are different than ducks?



Click these links to see cool crow behavior!  
[Cool Video 1](#), [Cool Video 2](#), [Cool Video 3](#)

## COOL KID OF THE MONTH!



The photo features Educator Brittany (left) and our Cool Kid of the Month, Talon (right). It captures a moment during our trout release day with NDOW during our Spring Break Camp. Brittany nominated Talon as our Cool Kid of the Month because of his kindness and continuous acts of stewardship. Talon made camp days even more fun for both the educators and our campers! Way to go, Talon! Keep up the great attitude!