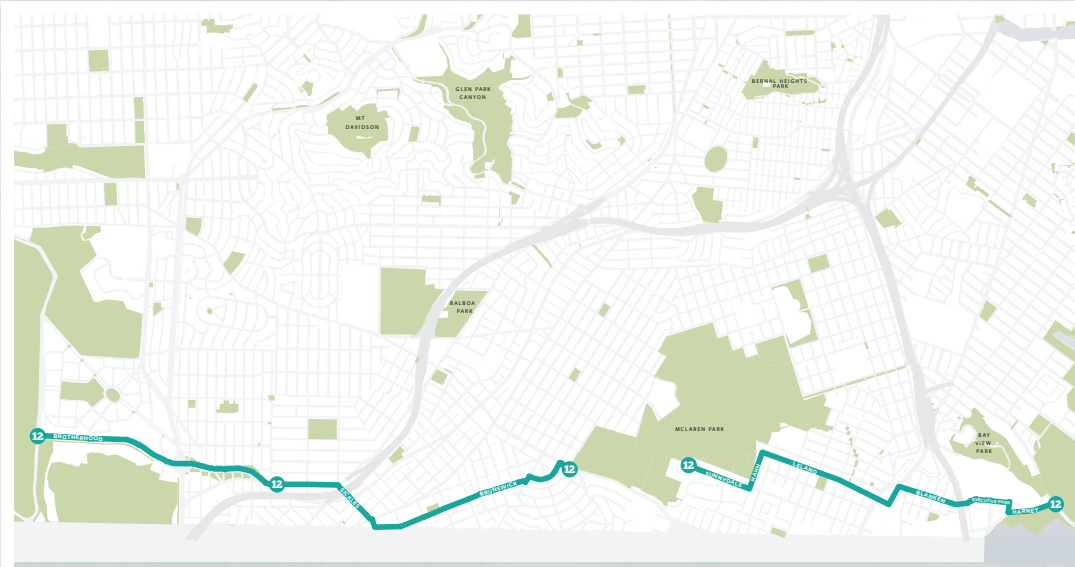


LAKE MERCED TO CANDLESTICK

SPECIES: WESTERN FENCE LIZARD



ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » Lake Merced, Park Merced, Brotherhood Way Open Space, Lincoln Park, Longfellow Elementary School, McLaren Park, Crocker Amazon Playground, Visitacion Valley Greenway, Candlestick Point State Recreation Area



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

WESTERN FENCE LIZARD – *Sceloporus occidentalis*

Showoff!

The showy “blue belly” Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) males do “push-ups” flashing their blue bellies to attract females. We also owe them thanks, as they are partly responsible for the low occurrence of Lyme disease on the West Coast! Ticks that adhere to the lizard’s skin ingest a protein in the lizard’s blood which kills the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. Western Fence Lizards need sparsely planted, open, sunny areas surrounded by rock walls or posts to perfect their mating display. Their favorite foods include beetles, flies, caterpillars, ants, other insects, and spiders.

RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

KEY HABITAT FEATURES

Found in grassland, broken chaparral, sagebrush, woodland, coniferous forest, and farmland. Need open ground and have trouble when there are too many weeds. Vertical components, such as rocks, walls, fences and ledges are important!

DIET

Eats beetles, flies, caterpillars, ants, other insects, and spiders

ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

Coyote Bush – *Baccharis pilularis*, Coyote Mint – *Monardella villosa*, Hooker’s Evening Primrose – *Oenothera elata ssp. hookeri*, California Wild Grape – *Vitis californica* ‘Roger’s Red’

NESTING INFORMATION

Eggs are usually laid in damp, friable, well-aerated soil, in pits dug by the female.