

Our Arroyo Ecosystem



Ringtail *Bassariscus astutus*

Ringtail Cats, or Miner's Cats, are not related to the cat family but are actually members of the raccoon family, Procyoridae. Prospectors used ringtails to help control rodents in mines. They are also sometimes called civet cats because of the odor they emit when they feel threatened.

Ringtails are great climbers and are extremely nimble. They can reverse their direction by performing a cartwheel using their tail, and can rotate their hind feet 180 degrees, allowing them to make rapid headfirst vertical descents along cliffs and ledges.

In California, Ringtails make their homes in various riparian habitats – they're usually found within 0.6 miles from permanent water – and in brush stands of most forest and shrub habitats in low to middle elevations. They are mostly solitary, except during mating season, and are nocturnal. For the most part they're carnivorous, eating mainly rodents and rabbits, also birds, eggs, reptiles, invertebrates, some carrion, and fruits and nuts.

For more information, visit <http://www.arkive.org/ringtail/bassariscus-astutus/>
Also, http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Bassariscus_astutus/



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