



particles and sands from the alluvial fans south of the Indio Hills into the ever-changing sand dunes.

Wildlife in the Coachella Valley Preserve is varied and abundant. About 180 animal species inhabit the Preserve, including a large population of resident and migratory birds. There are five rare animals occurring in the Valley. One species, the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard is a threatened species inhabiting the blow-sand fields.

The Coachella Valley contains several unique and rare habitat types. One of these, palm oasis woodland, is found in numerous groves within the Preserve and is sustained primarily by water made available through faulting and fracturing of underlying bedrock material. Water flowing underground from a higher elevation is stopped by an intersecting fault block and rises to ground level, creating a unique aquatic environment.

Another type of habitat located in this preserve, blowsand fields, is created by a combination of surface water and wind transport processes. The sand fields are dependent upon the periodic flooding that funnels sand originating in the northern half of the watershed through Thousand Palms Canyon. Sandy wash, rocky slopes, alluvial plains, and other habitats are also protected in the Coachella Valley Preserve.

### **Willow Hole Preserve**

Located north of Cathedral City at the west end of the Indio Hills, the Willow Hole Preserve provides critical blowsand habitat for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard and other sensitive species. Other biological resource values include mesquite hummocks and a fan palm oasis.

### **Whitewater River Floodplain Preserve**

The Whitewater River Floodplain Preserve is located south of Interstate 10 and east of Indian Avenue, and consists of 1,230 acres of Bureau of Land Management and Coachella Valley Water District land. One of the primary purposes of the preserve is to protect and enhance the habitat of the endangered Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard.

### **Peninsular Ranges**



*San Jacinto Mountains*

Composed mainly of the San Jacinto Mountains and Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument, this system of bold, high mountains runs north to northwest and includes the 8,716-foot-high Toro Peak in the Santa Rosa Mountains, and 10,831-foot San Jacinto Peak in the San Jacinto Mountains. The Peninsular Ranges act as an effective barrier to the eastward moving storms and cooler air masses of the southern California coastal area.

The lower elevations of the Peninsular Ranges, including canyon bottoms, alluvial fans, and mountain slopes, serve as habitat for the endangered Bighorn Sheep. Within this narrow band of habitat, Bighorn Sheep need to be able to move daily, seasonally, and annually to make use of the sparse and sometimes