



NEWS



News Headlines 06/06/2019

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'Merits some investigation': Weather service says massive ladybug swarm spotted. One expert is skeptical

Joseph Hong, Palm Springs Desert Sun

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PALM SPRINGS, Calif. – The radar footage showed a green mass, spanning more than 60 miles, and moving.

In a Twitter post, the San Diego office of the National Weather Service referred to it as a "cloud" or "bloom" of ladybugs.

And while the weather service's tweet has prompted several news reports about the swarm of ladybugs, one local scientist is skeptical.

James Cornett, senior scientist with James W. Cornett Ecological Consultants, said a swarm of that size and density would have darkened the skies over the region.

"There would have been unbelievable numbers of telephone calls to the police," Cornett said. "It merits some investigation."

According to Mark Moede, a weather service meteorologist, the agency attributed the radar readings to the insects after a weather spotter in Wrightwood, a town in the San Bernardino mountains, reported a high number of ladybugs in the area.

"Our weather spotter said that this happens often," Moede said. "He said there were ladybugs everywhere."

Casey Oswant, another weather service meteorologist in the San Diego office, said the weather on Tuesday could not have accounted for the radar readings.

"If you look at the satellite for that area, there weren't a lot of clouds," Oswant said. "This radar return was much larger than what those clouds could've been producing."

Oswant said she was not able to verify where the ladybugs came from or where they were heading. However, they were off the radar's perimeters before noon Wednesday.

Cornett, a scientist who has authored books on desert ecology, remained skeptical that a migrating swarm of ladybugs could cover an expanse larger than Hesperia, a city in the alleged swarm's path.

"Ladybugs do gather in large numbers during the winter and the fall," Cornett said. "But we're talking about thousands of individuals not tens of millions."

Cal Fire-San Bernardino County Fire Department received no reports of a ladybug swarm, said spokeswoman Tracy Watts.

The size of the green area shown on the radar reading is more than 60 miles long, expanding from Riverside to Barstow, and appears to cover more than a 1,000 square miles.

Cornett also said it's very strange for ladybugs to be moving south this time of year. He said ladybugs would be moving north to find more food.

Additionally, he said, ladybugs and other beetles would not fly high enough to be spotted on radar because their wings are too heavy. Moede was unable to comment on what elevations can be detected by the radar.

Cornett said ladybugs are also not known to migrate across great distances, as shown in the weather service's post.

"I'm not the last word on ladybugs, but it sounds so unusual to me," he said. "The world must be coming to an end."

<https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/nation/2019/06/06/national-weather-services-radar-spots-swarm-ladybugs/1364925001/>

Local woman honored for heroic efforts after collision

Jenna Hunt, Hi-Desert Star

Posted: June 5, 2019



Cleo Ross, left, is honored at the Town Council meeting Tuesday for her bravery after a traffic collision. Supervisor Dawn Rowe, presented Ross with a county proclamation.

YUCCA VALLEY — The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department gave special recognition to Yucca Valley resident Cleo Ross during Tuesday's Town Council meeting.

Ross encountered a head-on traffic collision near Avalon Avenue March 22. A man and a 4-year-old child were injured, said Councilman Rick Denison, a retired firefighter. Smoke was pouring out of the vehicles and Ross jumped to render emergency assistance without hesitation.

"She helped get the child from the accident," Denison said. "This was not a safe incident. It was a very bad accident."

Ross comforted the child until emergency crews arrived on the scene.

"It is nothing short of heroic," Denison said. "I truly appreciate you."

Denison added how vital and important it is to have "citizens who step up."

County Supervisor Dawn Rowe helped with the award presentation and thanked Ross for her bravery.

Mayor Robert Lombardo honored Ross at the close of the meeting.

"Cleo Ross just exemplifies the type of person who lives in our community," Lombardo said in his final comments.

Rowe gives report on county

Rowe is a former Yucca Valley Town Council member and mayor who worked as the field representative for Congressman Paul Cook, R-Yucca Valley. She is now supervisor for the county's 3rd District, which includes the Morongo Basin.

"She has come full circle," said Lombardo. "She was sitting where I am."

Rowe told the council she and her fellow supervisors are working hard to draw up regulations for short-term vacation rentals in the Morongo Basin. She estimated there are about 1,000 unregulated vacation rentals in the local county areas.

"Short term rentals are a unique challenge to the Morongo Basin," Rowe said. "Our law enforcement is spread thin. We're busy working on it."

http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_3e76fd18-87db-11e9-9a08-97c59207c950.html