

## Lizard Head 06E- Star Emblem Peak

Lat/Lon 34.6991507,-119.4787342  
UTM 11S 272962E 3842478N

Elevation: 5320'+

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Lizard Head on [Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: Santa Barbara County, about 21 miles north-northwest of Ojai, 170 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Cuyama Peak (LO)

Land Manager: Los Padres National Forest, Mount Pinos Ranger District (661) 245-3731

**USE AT YOUR OWN RISK. CONDITIONS MAY CHANGE, AND UNEXPECTED HAZARDS MAY BE PRESENT.**

### About the peak

Lizard Head is a challenging and very enjoyable hike that offers a variety of scenery and views of wild mountains and canyons. The ridge and summit resemble one of the prevalent life forms in this area: the Small-scaled Tree Lizard (*Urosaurus microscutatus*).

Starting with a rough dirt road drive to the trailhead, route 1 follows Tinta creek east through a pretty canyon before continuing up steeply to gain an undulating and at times seemingly endless ridge to the peak. Route 2 follows Rancho Nuevo Creek from the east. Route 3 follows the Tinta Trail northwest along Tinta Creek to join Route 1. Route 4 is a variation of Route 1 that crosses various bumps and benchmarks.

Lizard Head has 4 official HPS routes:

## Lizard Head Route 1- Via Upper Tinta Campground

Distance: 11 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 1, strenuous

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Adventure Pass may be required

Gain: 2200

Time: 7 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Moderate

Road type: Dirt

### Driving directions:

- Drive north on I-5 past the Grapevine to the SR 166 off-ramp. Turn left (west).
- Head west 36.5 miles, passing through Maricopa, to the junction with SR 33 south. (There is a junction with SR 33 north in Maricopa that you will pass in Maricopa.) Turn left (south).
- Go 2.7 miles to Foothill Road on the right. This intersection may also be reached by traveling north from Ojai or from Lockwood Valley. Set odometer here, and turn right (west) onto Foothill Road.
- Go 2.1 miles, then turn left onto Santa Barbara Canyon Road (9N11).
- At 5.0 miles, turn right at an intersection just past a ranch house.
- At 9.3 miles, fork with Santa Barbara Ranch visible ahead. Go right and cross a creek. The pavement ends.
- At 12.5 miles, turn left at Dry Canyon Road.
- At 18.0 miles an obscure gated road/trail on the right. Park here.

### Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (4600'), hike down the right fork of the road past the barrier about 1 1/4 miles to Upper Tinta Campground (4500').
- The Upper Tinta Campground is not shown on the Topo map and is no longer maintained. The site is reached by a faint use trail that turns south from the main trail into a grove of trees, along the creek bed.
- From here, hike southwest up a firebreak along the low ridge to the left (east) of the campground. (Don't start up the inviting firebreak on the right!)
- Continue up the firebreak across the bump at 5300' (visible from the campground) and up to the main (east-west) ridge at 5600'+.
- Turn right (west) and go about 500 feet to the ridge running south. From here, Lizard Head is visible as the 6th bump along this ridge.
- Follow the firebreak along this ridge, going first south, then southeast.
- At the bump just southeast of elevation 5562', there is a wide, bare spot (former heliport). The firebreak ends here.
- Continue along the ridge another mile to the summit, which is a large sloping rock outcrop.

**Additional Route notes:**

## Lizard Head Route 2- Upper Rancho Nuevo Creek

Distance: 16 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 1, very strenuous

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Adventure Pass may be required

Gain: 2600

Time: 10 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Moderate

Road type: High-clearance

### Driving directions:

- Drive north on I-5 past Gorman to the Frazier Park exit. Turn left (west).
- Drive west 7 miles to Lake of the Woods junction. Turn left (south) toward Lockwood Valley.
- Drive 27 miles to the end of Lockwood Valley road at SR 33.
- Drive north 2.1 miles to Rancho Nuevo Camp Road (7N04) on the left (west side of SR 33). High clearance vehicle is required to cross Cuyama River. Note your odometer and go as follows:
  - At 0.8 mile, fork. Go left.
  - At 1.5 miles, Rancho Nuevo Campground. Park here.
  - Note: Ordinary vehicles should park near the gate (just west of SR 33). Parking Here adds about 3 miles round trip and 1.5 hours to the hike. If the gate is locked, this implies that there is high water in Rancho Nuevo Creek and that the hike would be much more difficult.

### Hiking directions:

- From the campground (elevation 3520') hike west up trail 24W03 about 5.5 miles to Upper Rancho Nuevo Campsite at 4040', which is at the end of the trail and is marked by a fire ring.
- From the camp, continue up the canyon about 1.4 miles around three oxbow bends, the first on the north side, the second on the south side, and the third on the north side. Beware of the side canyon that comes in from the south between the second and third oxbow bends: it is easy to mistake it for the main canyon which goes southwest here.
- Continue up the main canyon to the broad flat at 4200' elevation on the north side of the creek, SSE of bump 4772'.
- From here ascend the ridge on the west side of the flat area. Then hike north up the ridge over bump 4772', passing a saddle at about 4700'. Continue north along this steep ridge to its end at elev. 5280+.
- Continue northwest ¼ mile to the summit, the bare summit block.

### Additional Route notes:

Note: Route 2 description is based on a trip just after the 2007 Zaca fire, when hiking conditions were excellent. The dominant vegetation along the Rancho Nuevo trail is wild roses

which, if high and thick, can make hiking miserable. The climb along the ridge is apt to be very brushy when the brush grows back after the fire.

## Lizard Head Route 3- From Tinta Campground

Distance: 20 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 2, strenuous

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Adventure Pass maAdventure Pass may be required be requiredes

Gain: 2700

Time: 8 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Moderate

Road type: Dirt

### Driving directions:

- Drive north on I-5 to the Frazier Park exit (about 45 miles from Sylmar).
- Drive west on the Frazier Mtn. Park Road for 7 miles to Lake of the Woods.
- Turn Left onto the Lockwood Valley Road.
- Drive on this road for 27 miles until one meets SR-33.
- Turn right and proceed 2.0 miles to a dirt road on the left marked by a sign indicating "Dick Smith Wilderness Access".
- Turn left & reset odometer.
- After about 0.2 mile, road crosses the Cuyama River (which could be flooded, high-clearance vehicles could be required).
- After 0.8 mile, turn Right at junction of 7N04 and 7N04A.
- At 2.6 miles, Tinta Campground. Park here. Ample parking.

### Hiking directions:

- From the campground (3650'), hike west & northwest up a Forest Service trail for 3.5 miles to the junction with the Brubaker Canyon Road at 4199'. This trail is a designated OHV motorcycle trail (Route 101), shown on USFS maps as 24W02.
- Continue to the west another 2 miles to Upper Tinta Campgroup (4500'). The Upper Tinta Campground is on the left and about 50 yards from the trail.
- From the Upper Tinta Campground, continue up to Lizard Head following the Lizard Head Route 1 directions.

### Additional Route notes:

## Lizard Head Route 4

Distance: 12.5 miles round trip cross country      Gain: 3300  
Time: 7 hours round trip  
Difficulty rating: Class 1, strenuous      Navigation difficulty: Moderate  
Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)      Road type: Dirt  
Adventure Pass may be required

### Driving directions:

- Drive north on I-5 past the Grapevine to the SR 166 off-ramp. Turn left (west).
- Head west 36.5 miles, passing through Maricopa, to the junction with SR 33 south. (There is a junction with SR 33 north in Maricopa that you will pass.) Turn left (south).
- Go 2.7 miles to Foothill Road on the right. This intersection may also be reached by traveling north from Ojai or from Lockwood Valley.
- Set odometer here, and turn right (west) onto Foothill Road.
- Go 2.1 miles, then turn left onto Santa Barbara Canyon Road (9N11).
- At 5.0 miles, turn right at an intersection just past a ranch house.
- At 9.3 miles, fork with Santa Barbara Ranch visible ahead. Go right and cross a creek. This is the "Reyes Ranch Gate." The pavement ends. The gate is subject to seasonal closures.
- At 12.5 miles, turn left at Dry Canyon Road (sometimes called West Dry Canyon).
- At 18.0 miles, just where the road switches back to the left (up to Cuyama LO), there is a gated trail on the right, marked "Tinta Trailhead." Park here. This is the same parking area as Route 1.

### Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (4600'), hike down the Tinta Trail past the barrier about 1/3 mile. You will cross the creek once; back into the creek for a short distance and across; back into the creek again and across; then two direct crossings. After the second direct crossing, you will be headed south (the right side of the creek) and then west directly toward the ridge up to Peak 5840.
- There is a large boulder (approximately 2 feet in diameter), and perhaps a cairn if not removed by hunters, just to the right after a small side stream enters on the right.
- Follow the use trail up the ridge, steep at first, and then connecting to an old road bed up to Peak 5840.
- After reaching Peak 5840, backtrack about 100 yards and head southeast on the ridge past Tinta Benchmark and Peak 5621 to the ridge coming up from Upper Tinta Campground. This is the intersection with Route 1, at approximately 4.5 miles, and it is the high point of Route 1.
- Continue, following Route 1 to Lizard Head, and return the way you came.

**Additional Route notes:**

Note: As an alternate on the return, follow Route 1 down to Upper Tinta Campground. This makes a nice loop trail and saves some distance and elevation gain by not revisiting Peak 5840.