Species on the **American** River **Parkway**

Habitat along the American River Parkway represents both natural and altered landscape. After the discovery of gold, portions of the river were dredged by the large gold mining companies, leaving behind large piles of cobbles and excavated areas. The slow process of natural reclamation has returned some areas to a semi-natural state while the most severely altered areas can still be seen today.

River

The American River is a large riverine system which carries water from the Sierra Nevada and eventually flows into the Sacramento River and ultimately San Francisco Bay. Most of the riverine habitat is fast moving, open water without any vegetation. A variety of fish including several native species (salmon, steelhead, Sacramento pikeminnows, Sacramento sucker) and several introduced species (American shad, striped bass) can be found within the American River. Predators, such as great blue heron and river otter, are sometimes seen on the river. Other common species seen on the river are beaver, muskrat and western pond turtle.

Open Water

In addition to the river itself. there are pockets of water where old channels of the river have been cut off or dredger mining activities have left deep depressions. These backwater areas typically contain large open water areas with a fringe of emergent marsh plants such as cattails and rushes. The calm waters provide excellent habitat for ducks such as cinnamon teal, American wigeon and mallard.



the river. These islands generally support riparian scrub and riparian forest habitats. They are unique in that they provide isolated habitat with less potential for attack from ground-based predators (like feral cats) or from human disturbance. These wooded islands serve as nesting habitat for a variety of birds.

Marsh Emergent marsh

habitat is found in still or slow-moving, shallow water located along the edges of the river and on the Mallard banks of open water areas. These marshes are dominated by aquatic vegetation such as cattail, tule, soft rush and blue vervain. Birds such as green heron and great egret feed on western toad, pacific chorus frog, bullfrog and other

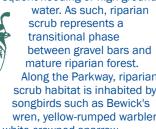
inhabitants of this densely vegetated,

Riparian Scrub

shallow-water habitat.

Riparian scrub habitat is typically dominated by thick clumps of willow and Pacific blackberry. Unlike Chorus mature riparian forest, riparian scrub

lacks an overstory of taller trees. Riparian scrub forms along the edges of the river, along the edges of emergent marsh habitat, and other areas subject to frequent flooding or high ground



scrub represents a transitional phase between gravel bars and mature riparian forest. Along the Parkway, riparian scrub habitat is inhabited by songbirds such as Bewick's wren, yellow-rumped warbler and white-crowned sparrow.

Mule Deer

Riparian Forest A common habitat type located along the American River Parkway is riparian forest. Riparian habitat consists of a complex multi-layered canopy of tall and

medium sized trees. Occasional shrubs are found beneath the tree canopy and annual grasses and forbs form the lowermost vegetation layer. The tree

canopy is usually dominated by cottonwood, valley oak and willow, with occasional white alder, box elder and Oregon rose, blackberry and elderberry

Riparian forest is some of the most species-rich habitat along the Parkway. The various layers may Several islands occur within the active channel of be winter or summer home to birds such as northern flicker,

> white-breasted nuthatch. jay, American robin, northern oriole.

wood duck and a variety of warbler

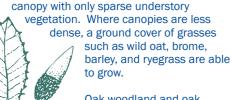
species. On the forest floor dusky-footed woodrat, raccoon and skunk make their homes. Riparian habitat along streams and rivers provide essential wildlife corridors throughout California. Larger mammals such as mule deer use riparian habitats such as those in the Parkway to move between the Central Valley and the adjacent Sierra Nevada mountains.

Dredger Tailing Vegetation

Gold mining activities in the early part of the 20th century left behind large piles of cobbles, some of which remain visible today. These tailings are sparsely vegetated with patches of riparian vegetation found in "dredger hollows," the depressions between mounds of cobble. Within the hollows, species such as cottonwood and willow are able to tap groundwater and prosper. Shrubs such as coyote bush, coffeeberry and elderberry are scattered, with sparse annual grasses, over the old dredge piles. Animal species found within the more densely vegetated dredger tailing habitat are similar to those found in the riparian forest. The sparser areas are home to western fence lizard, alligator lizard, and western

Oak Woodland and Oak

Oak woodland habitat consists of stands of valley and interior live oak. Oak woodlands along the American River can have a dense, interlocking



Oak woodland and oak savanna are home to a variety of bird species such

as the wild turkey, California quail, titmouse, scrub jay, rufous-sided towhee, acorn woodpecker, as well as larger

predators like the great horned owl. Oaks within the woodland and savanna provide excellent nesting and roosting sites for large birds of prey such as red-tailed hawk which forage on small mammals. Mammals such ash. Understory species as western gray squirrel, striped skunk and mule include wild grape, wild deer can also be found within these habitats

along the American River Parkway.

Grassland

Most open areas within the Parkway support a variety of non-native grasses such as wild oats, brome, barley, and ryegrass. Other non-native weedy species include filaree, wild geranium, mustard, and wild radish. A variety of native plants also occur in open areas larkspur and yarrow.

including California poppy, vetch, tidy tips,



The grasses usually stand 6-36 inches tall, providing food and protection for small mammals such as deer mice, California vole,

Poppy

broad-footed mole and black-tailed jackrabbit. Grassland predators include gopher snake, red-tailed hawk, Coyote

Chinook Salmon Chinook salmon are hatched here on the

white-tailed kite and covote.

American River but only spend a portion of their life in the river. As they mature they travel out the ocean where they feed and live, returning only to spawn. The largest of the salmon species, Chinook salmon average about 30 pounds but can get to over 100 pounds. Keep an eye out in fall when the bulk of Chinook return to the river



Great Blue Heron The Great blue heron lives on the American River Parkway year-round. The birds hunt fish during the day in the marsh areas and along

the shores of the river. Great blue herons build their nests high in the trees in groups called a heronry (similar to a

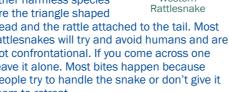
Great Blue Heron Valley oaks are actually wasp galls. rookery). They stand approximately four feet tall with a wingspan of six feet and are quite impressive when seen taking flight.



the otter population across the U.S. and 19th century. They still face

habitat and sensitivity to pollution. While most people see otters swimming around on the river they are quite adept at moving on land as well. An otter can run up to 15 mph on land.

Rattlesnakes are the only dangerous reptile on the parkway. A few differences between a rattlesnake and other harmless species are the triangle shaped



Poison Oak



Poison oak will give most people a rash if they touch it. Many people are taught to recognize poison oak by its bright red leaves of three but these leaves are only red for part of the year. They can be a glossy bright green in spring. oak provides a nutritious

snack for wildlife and nesting habitat for birds.

Vallev Oak

Valley oaks are one of the iconic features of the Sacramento area. They can reach 100 feet high and have huge spreading limbs. The complex structure is one reason Valley Oaks support a wide diversity of wildlife from raptors and songbirds to small mammals. The round brown "apples" seen on

River Otter

The American River is one of the few places that host a sizable population of River otters. Much of disappeared because

of hunting in the 18th

challenges today because of loss of

Rattlesnake

head and the rattle attached to the tail. Most rattlesnakes will try and avoid humans and are not confrontational. If you come across one leave it alone. Most bites happen because people try to handle the snake or don't give it room to retreat.



- Howe Ave. river access
- Watt Ave. river access
- River Bend Park
- Sunrise river access

- traffic is responsible for yielding to slower and oncoming traffic.
- Riders under 18 must wear a helmet.
- · Bicyclists must yield to pedestrians and equestrians.

- side of the bicycle path.
- Pedestrians must yield to equestrians.

Parkway History The Nisenan people inhabited the Sacramento

The American River Parkway is a 4,800-acre

ecosystem, rich in wildlife and natural beauty.

Park at the confluence of the Sacramento and

American Rivers to the Nimbus Fish Hatchery.

surrounding urban and suburban communities.

The American River Parkway Foundation

round volunteer opportunities.

promotes the conservation and recreational

use of this incredible civic amenity, as well as

supports environmental education and year-

This land is a natural and recreational asset to its

The Parkway stretches 23 miles from Discovery

Valley and foothills for thousands of years. The land provided food and material to sustain them and build their round houses. Nisenan villages dotted the fertile floodplain, part of which is now the Parkway, where they fished, hunted, and gathered food. This richness was impressive to Jedediah Smith when he first camped along the Lower American River in 1827.

In 1839, John Sutter arrived in Alta California, Mexico to establish a colony he called New Helvetia. Sutter contracted with James Marshall to obtain lumber from Marshall's sawmill in Coloma in order to develop the area in his vision. While Sutter's Fort was built near what is now 16th Street, Sacramento, his plan to build housing and a wharf was thwarted by the Gold Rush and the influx of large populations coming to the West.

As the population of Sacramento grew and experienced the river's periodic flooding, levees were built which began to narrow the floodplain.

With the completion of the Folsom Dam in 1955, land on both the north and south sides of the river was developed for residential and commercial use.

Fortunately for the Sacramento area, and because of people like William Pond, once director of the County Department of Parks, the American River Parkway Plan was incorporated in the County's 1962 General Plan and land acquisition began for the Parkway. Now urbanized along its entire length through Sacramento County the American River Parkway is 4,800 acres of natural environment that inhabits wildlife and provides outdoor experiences for millions of residents and visitors. Sacramento County Regional Parks owns the land that makes up the Parkway from Discovery Park to Nimbus Dam.

The American River is recognized for its unique qualities by designation as a California Wild and Scenic River (1972) and a National Wild and Scenic River (1980). The Lower American River features migration and spawning of Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and other fish species. The river is also home to a wide-range of bird species that include double-crested cormorants red-shouldered hawks, and acorn woodpeckers

provide natural open space and recreational opportunities for an urban population, as well as habitat for the flora and fauna native to the region. It provides critical habitat to several endangered species and is the longest linear. uninterrupted park in the country. The Parkway is considered a recreational civic amenity and public health asset, always rich with its unique land, wildlife, and endless outdoor opportunities.

The American River Parkway is designed to

American River Parkway Foundation

The mission of the American River Parkway Foundation is to support the preservation and enjoyment of the American River Parkway by fostering environmental education, stewardship and volunteer opportunities. For more information or to volunteer please

> 5700 Arden Way Carmichael, CA 95608 (916) 486-2773 www.arpf.org

contact the American River Parkway Foundation.



VOLUNTEER CENTER

Parkway Foundation Programs:

- Campfire Outdoor Educational Site: Located in River Bend Park this site is an amazing resource for youth and adults to experience outdoor education.
- Invasive Plant Management: Each year the Parkway Foundation staff and volunteers remove tens of thousands of invasive plants from the Parkway, which can inhibit wildlife habitat, crowd out native plant species, and/ or deplete soil moisture.
- Clean-ups: The Parkway Foundation removes tens of thousands of pounds of trash and debris from the Parkway every year. Clean-ups are organized throughout the year with two large, multi-site clean-ups occurring in April and September.
- Pups in the Park: The Parkway Foundation raises funds to purchase "mutt mitts" for the dispensers located throughout the Parkway.
- Trail Maintenance: The Parkway Foundation helps maintain the equestrian/hiking trail that runs the length of the 23 mile Parkway.
- Financial and Mile Stewards: A wide range of businesses and organizations adopt a mile of the Parkway and provide financial or volunteer support to remove trash and debris from the

Parkway Safety

 Kids under the age of 13 are required by law to wear a life vest when in the American River within Sacramento County. It is also encouraged that adults wear a life vest as well. Kids life vests can be borrowed at stations in the locations below:

Print • Copy • Mail • Fulfillment

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(9T6) 188-5113

Solution Arden Way

American River Parkway Foundation

MOITAGNUOT YAWARA TOUNDATION

AMERICAN

- Discovery Park (2 sites)
- Paradise Beach

- Ancil Hoffman Park

- Ride on the right and pass on the left. Faster nersonnel.
- · Use hand signals to indicate if turning or stopping.
- · Be courteous and predictable.
- Pedestrians, joggers, and walkers use the left shoulder of the trail facing bicycle traffic.
- · If no shoulder exists walk or run close to the left

- Let others know if your horse is safe to pass. Avoid areas on the trail that are soft or muddy in
- order to avoid deep hoof ruts.

 Dogs and other pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet.

Parkway.

· Glass beverage containers are prohibited on the

- Note the mile marker on the bike trail or

(916) 875-PARK (7275)



Discovery Park

- Boat ramp

Dial 911

Developed Recreational Areas

- Archery
- Horseshoe pits
- or w/ BBQs & hot coal pits Pet owners are required to pick up after their pets Restrooms

- In Case of Emergency
- equestrian/hiking trail to inform emergency

Park Rangers can be reached at:



hese areas feature a range of amenities for users to enjoy. The recreational areas below are listed on the map.

River Bend Park

- · Equestrian staging area
- Picnic areas · Picnic areas for reservations

- **Paradise Beach**
- Picnic areas · Sandy beach
- · Walk-in access, no parking fees Howe Ave. River Access (off La Riviera Dr.)
- Boat ramp (small watercraft) Picnic areas
- Restrooms Watt Ave. River Access (off La Riviera Dr.)
- Boat ramp (small watercraft) Picnic areas Restrooms
- William B. Pond Recreation Area ARPF Office
- Equestrian staging area Fishing Pond · Picnic areas • Picnic areas for reservations w/ BBQs

Restrooms

- Campfire Outdoor Educational Site Equestrian staging area
- Horseshoe nit Picnic areas

Restrooms **Ancil Hoffman Park**

Golf course

Picnic areas

- Effie Yeaw Nature Center • Equestrian staging area
- Picnic areas Restrooms **Rossmoor Bar**

San Juan Rapids

- Sacramento Bar Hiking trails Picnic areas
- Restrooms Sunrise Blvd. River Access

Lower Sunrise (west side area

• Equestrian staging area Horseshoe pit Picnic areas Restrooms

Upper Sunrise (east side area) Boat ramp (small watercraft)

Picnic areas

Sailor Bar (off Illinois Ave.) Boat ramp (small watercraft)

 Equestrian staging area Hiking trails Picnic areas Restrooms

THE AMERICAN RIVER **PARKWAY** AMERICAN 5.00 - Proceeds to benefit the American River Parkway

Illustrations by Bjorn Gregersen, Ann Ranlett, and Jo Smith

