

Rangeland Facts



- Ranchers own or manage more than 34 million acres of rangeland in California. (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Forest and Range Assessment 2003)
- Almost all of our surface water crosses the state's millions of acres of rangeland. (University of California)
- Over two-thirds of species federally listed as "endangered" or "threatened" utilize habitat provided by private rangelands. (Precious Heritage Report 2000)
- U.S. grazing lands, including managed pasturelands, have the potential to remove an additional 198 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere per year for 30 years (Follett et al. 2001). This would offset 3.3 percent of U.S. CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels (EIA 2008) and help protect rangeland soil quality for the future.
- Around 90 percent of the species listed in the inventory of Rare and Endangered Species in California inhabit California's grassland ecosystems. (Skinner and Pavlik 2004 - Barry, Larson and George, 2006)
- Research has demonstrated that the abundance of western fence lizards and western skinks is significantly greater in grazed grasslands. (David Riensche 2005)
- The population of rare Sonoma Spine Flower dramatically declines after the removal of livestock grazing. (Liam and Sherman 1992)
- Grazing is an important disturbance in vernal pool grasslands. Grazed vernal pools have longer water pool periods, thus allowing species to complete their lifecycles. (Jaymee Marty, The Nature Conservancy 2005)
- Research has demonstrated a strong, positive association between grazed grasslands and healthy ecosystems for burrowing rodents and California Tiger Salamanders. (Joe DiDonato, East Bay Regional Park District 2005)
- It has been demonstrated that managed grazing can improve habitat for threatened and endangered species such as the Bay Checkerspot Butterfly, considered an umbrella species for grassland ecosystems (Murphy and Weiss, 1988).
- California's rangelands support more bird species of conservation concern than any other habitat. Each winter, Central Valley grasslands provide crucial habitat for the highest concentrations and diversity of hawks found anywhere in North America. (Ed Pandolfino, Sierra Foothills Audubon Society 2008)
- Livestock stock water ponds on ranchlands provide up to 50% of the remaining habitat for the threatened California Tiger Salamander (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 2006).
- Most small vertebrates that are federally or state protected in the San Joaquin Valley of California benefit or are not harmed by livestock grazing. Species include the Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard, San Joaquin Antelope Squirrels and Giant Kangaroo Rats. (Germano, Rathburn and Saslaw 2006)