

Freshwater Marsh

Description: Freshwater marshes include a diverse assortment of wetlands in California. One of the best examples of freshwater marsh in our area is the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta.



Interesting Facts

- Freshwater marshes are dominated by emergent perennial plants, such as rushes, bulrushes (tules), sedges, cattails, willows and floating plants.
- The water level in the delta marshes rise and fall, twice daily, with the tides, a difference of 2 to 5 feet.

Why is this community important?

- The Delta freshwater marsh provided critical staging areas for some of the most threatened native resident and migratory fishes, such as salmon, smelt, steelhead, and green sturgeon, in California.
- Freshwater marshes are valuable nesting, feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl, such as ducks, geese, swans, and, Sandhill cranes, and herons.
- Wetlands are able to store water and reduce flooding.
- Freshwater marsh plants protect levees from erosion (and flooding of Delta islands) in the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta by calming wave forces.
- Marsh plants improve water quality by trapping sediments in the water.

Conservation Status and Threats: Intensive agricultural development, levee construction, and water diversions have reduced freshwater marshes to less than 6 percent of their original extent in California. Although it has been heavily impacted by levee construction and urban water demands, the Delta wetland region remains a very important area for wildlife. Who would have thought? - waves from speedboats also threaten this habitat by eroding soils.