

# Vernal Pool Grasslands

**Description:** a vernal pool is a temporary wetland (generally in grassland or prairie) that fills with water during the rainy season and dries down in the spring. It remains dry for six to eight months awaiting the next winter rains.



## Interesting Facts

- The plants and animals are adapted to survive these annual extremes of winter floods and summer drought.
- From November through March, aquatic life races against the clock (and their predators) to grow up, mate and lay eggs before the pools dry up.
- In April, vernal pool flowers create colorful concentric rings, patches, and ribbons of yellow, white, pink, and purple.
- During the hot, dry summer months vernal pools appear brown and barren among the grasslands, however their sun-baked bottoms hold the eggs, cysts and seeds to restart the cycle during the next winter rains.

## Why is this community important?

- Over 200 plant species grow in vernal pool, and half of these are rarely found outside this unique habitat.
- A given pool typically supports only 15 to 20 species, in an unpredictable array of combinations. In that way vernal pools are a lot like snowflakes – botanically speaking, no two are alike.

**Conservation Status and Threats:** Approximately 90 percent of California's vernal pools have been destroyed. In the Sacramento Valley, the small amount of remaining habitat is being further damaged or lost due to impacts of urban growth and vineyard expansion.