

WILDLIFE

California State University-Chico Research Foundation. Butte Creek Watershed Existing Conditions Report. California State University-Chico: April 2000.²⁹

The whole of the Butte Creek watershed rather than the area contained within the Cherokee watershed is described in this report. Oak woodlands of the canyon section of the Butte Creek watershed are described as critical habitat for the conservation of many mammals and bird species. Deer are reliant on food supplied by the blue oak/pine woodlands for food during the winter. In the winter, deer browse from black oak, blue oak, scrub oak, buck brush, and deer brush, with acorns contributing to 11% of the total diet by volume. Other animals such as woodpeckers, California quail, scrub jays, band-tailed doves, black bears, western gray squirrels, and wild turkeys also rely on acorns for food. Very little data regarding the status or occurrence of wildlife species in the canyon section is available, although special status species such as California red-legged frogs, mountain yellow-legged frogs, foothill yellow-legged frogs, western spade foot toad, and whip snake may occur. Avian Species of Special Concern may include golden eagle, sharp-shinned hawk, California spotted owl, and Cooper's hawk. Golden eagles and American peregrine falcons have been observed during the winter.

Sierra newts and Pacific tree frogs breed in shallows and streamside pools, while other amphibians such as the California slender salamander, breed and find refuge in moist terrestrial habitats beneath fallen logs and other debris, rocks, and rodent burrows.

The dense understory of the lower canyons provides habitat for such species as ash-throated flycatcher, swallows, bushtits, titmouse, lesser goldfinch, and black phoebe. Riparian forests of the valley support 67 species of birds, including both open-nesting and cavity-nesting birds. Rice fields in the valley area provide critical habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, herons, egrets, and sand hill cranes.

Vernal pools in the valley provide habitat for several Species of Special Concern including western spade foot toad, Conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and vernal pool fairy shrimp. Avian Species of Special Concern include double-crested cormorant, black tern, least bittern, California gull, golden eagle, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, northern harrier, merlin, prairie falcon, long-eared owl, loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, and tri-colored blackbird.

California Department of Fish and Game. Summary of Sensitive, State-Threatened or Endangered Species Near or Within the Cherokee Watershed. California Department of Fish and Game: March 2005.⁵⁰

Information for preparing a general report about the wildlife in the Cherokee Watershed was provided. The list only consists of data that was reported to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). According to CDFG estimates up to 70% of California's threatened and endangered species occur on private land, which has never been surveyed.

Some of the sensitive species within the Cherokee Watershed are the California black rail, California tiger salamander, Swainson's hawk, bald eagle, bank swallow, giant garter snake, greater sandhill crane, spring-run Chinook salmon, fairy shrimp, tadpole shrimp and the western yellow-billed cuckoo.

Species of Special Concern supported in the Cherokee Watershed include: Western burrowing owl, Western pond turtle, Western spadefoot toad, bald eagle, Ferruginous hawk, Northern shrike, Horned lark, and numerous other migratory raptors and songbirds. The Black-shouldered Kite is a Fully Protected species that is known to breed, nest and forage in the Cherokee Watershed.

Miller, Michael. The Butte College Wildlife Refuge. Butte College Facilities and Management. Oroville: June 1991.²⁷

Each of the major habitats found on the Butte College campus is suitable or optimum habitat for specific species of amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals, which are noted. Those species, which have been observed in the wildlife habit, are identified. The wildlife refuge supports two herds of resident deer and is visited by other deer as part of their migratory pattern.