

## Negro Bar Day Use Renovation Project

California State Parks has a major renovation project underway that will improve recreation facilities at the Negro Bar unit of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. The renovation project will include:

New interpretive panels that highlight the area's historic, natural and cultural resources.

- ADA accessible walkways to the swim beach.
- New stairway access to the beach.
- A new restroom facility.
- A new paddle sport concession facility and Junior Lifeguard facility.
- Improved picnic facilities with picnic tables, shade ramadas, barbecues, trash cans, and additional group picnic sites.
- Converting an existing gravel area into additional paved parking.

The renovation project is expected to last through October 2020 and will impact access to the swim beach area and day-use parking facilities in the western portion of the park. The launch ramp, main parking area, horse assembly area, group campground facilities and trail access to the American River Bike Trail will not be affected.

*See Map on Page 3*



Cranes at sunset on The Delta

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## Actions Needed to Protect Water Quality and Increase Supply

BY STEPHEN GREEN

Earlier this year, the Trump Administration rolled back endangered species protections in The Delta so that more water could be shipped south. The chief beneficiaries would be San Joaquin Valley farmers – and most notably the Westlands Water District on the lower west side of the valley. Trump's Interior Secretary, David Bernhardt, had Westlands as client when he previously worked as a Washington lobbyist.

State officials immediately protested, claiming the rollback went too far and was not scientifically justified. The state

sued to preserve existing species protections as did environmental and fishing groups.

They argued that excessive pumping of Delta water has altered The Delta's environment, allowed saltwater intrusion and is causing extinction of Delta Smelt, Longfin Smelt and both winter-run and spring-run Chinook Salmon.

Then on March 30, state officials released their own revised rules for the export of Delta water under the California Endangered Species Act.

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**Big Day of Giving**  
MAY 7

Big Day of Giving is on.  
**And we're in.**

**Acts of generosity strengthen us. Lift our neighbors. Sustain our community.**

During Big Day of Giving, our region will rally around the nonprofits that make the capital area our home—and that can use our support, now more than ever. On Thursday, May 7, visit [www.bigdayofgiving.org](http://www.bigdayofgiving.org) and give to Save the American River Association in support of our mission to protect and enhance the wildlife habitat, fishery, and recreational resources of the American River Parkway. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference for us, and every gift has the chance to help us win additional prizes!

## Water Quality

*Continued from Page 1*

The new state rules angered both water agencies and environmental and fishing groups.

“We’re pretty disappointed by this result,” said Jeffrey Knightlinger, general manager for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. “We don’t think it’s based on sound science and it’s going to be hard for us just to let it go.”

Jon Rosenfield, senior scientist for San Francisco Baykeeper, said the Newsom Administration seems to be saying: “We don’t have to protect our endangered species, we don’t have to protect water quality in The Delta or the San Francisco Bay estuary fisheries, we just have to be better than Trump.”

As of this writing, lawsuits are being prepared to challenge the state’s new regulations.

At a time when state and federal officials are dealing with an unprecedented global pandemic, California’s water wars will be getting little attention in the coming months. But once we emerge from this crisis, California water policies will again be in the forefront.

George Miller represented the East Bay in the House of Representatives from 1975 to 2015. He authored the watershed Central Valley Project Improvement Act and was in the middle of the water wars throughout his political career. Miller recently outlined four areas where California should take actions to ensure the future of our water supply and quality.

**FIRST:** California can require all major cities to recycle wastewater. Orange County is a world leader in recycling. But Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles and San Diego have done little to drought

*Gov. Newsom can lay out a new vision for managing water in the Golden State to serve people and nature,” Miller added. “As Yogi Berra once said – ‘If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else.’”*

**GEORGE MILLER**  
**FORMER UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE**

-proof California’s water supply. Cities need to establish recycling goals and receive financial support from the state. And as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 recession, developing new water supplies produces jobs.

**SECOND:** Climate change will bring more droughts and flooding in California. Central Valley communities will be particularly vulnerable to floods. But there is consensus on how to reduce the flood threat – restoring flood plains. Giving rivers more room to handle high flows will save lives. It also will recharge groundwater, restore fertile habitat for juvenile fish and give communities more parks and recreational opportunities. And restoration of flood plains also will generate jobs.

**THIRD:** Farmers in parts of the western San Joaquin Valley have made what Miller calls “a dangerous gamble” by planting thirsty permanent crops on salty soils with unreliable groundwater. There is wide agreement that balancing

groundwater use will require a reduction in irrigated acreage. The state should invest in solar farms on this troubled land. Solar farms do what all farms do – turn land and sunlight into valuable products. Large scale solar products are not “land retirements.” They would help farmers grow another crop – electrons – while reducing demand for Bay-Delta and groundwater supplies.

**FOURTH:** The governor should direct the state Water Resources Control Board to set strong flow standards for the Bay/Delta ecosystem, protecting fisheries and the largest estuary on the West Coast. Then he must ensure that the Central Valley Project, which is run by a Trump appointee, obeys those standards.

Miller asked that those ideas be incorporated into new water plans. “Gov. Newsom can lay out a new vision for managing water in the Golden State to serve people and nature,” Miller added. “As Yogi Berra once said – ‘If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else.’”

Other water advocates add that utilities are losing vast amounts of revenue in the COVID-19 recession as more and more households are facing financial hardship. Many utilities may not be able to recoup unpaid bills, which will then be passed on later as higher rates to customers. Utilities also face a large loss of revenue from a decrease in industrial and business water usage. The state should urge members of Congress to include grant money for utilities in the next coronavirus economic stimulus package. ■



## Legislation Would Ban Highly Toxic Rat Poisons

Legislation to ban the use of destructive rat poisons has been introduced in the California Legislature.

“After many years of studying the impacts (of toxic chemicals in the in the rodenticides), we know that these poisons pose a serious threat to our public health and wildlife,” said the bill’s author, Assembly Member Richard Bloom, D-Santa Monica. “Earlier efforts to limit their use have done little to stem the threat, so our

only recourse is an immediate ban.”

The bill, AB 1788, would ban the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides in California and the use of first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (developed in the 1940s and 50s) on state-owned property.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that they receive reports that an average of 17,000 Americans who are exposed to rodenticides yearly. Eight-five percent of those exposures, or approximately

15,000, infect children less than six years of age. The majority of those children are living in poverty.

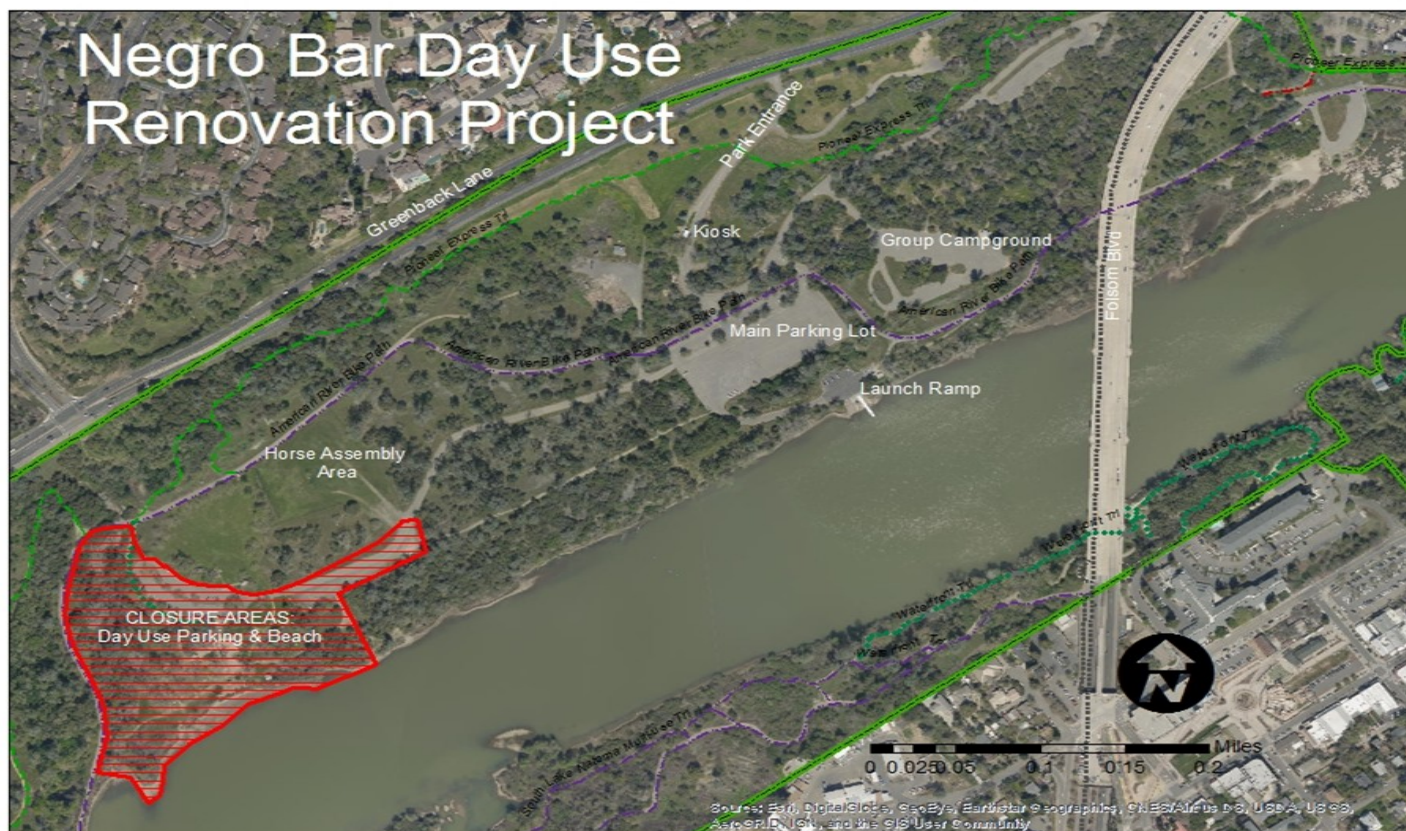
Consumption of the rat poisons causes animals to slowly bleed out and die in a span of several days. When a rodent dies from the poisons, their remains are usually scavenged by a predator species. Once the rodenticide concentration reached a lethal threshold in the predator, it is slowly killed.

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*State scientists have identified rodenticides in 38 species including Mountain Lions, Bobcats, Cooper’s Hawks, Northern Spotted Owls, Turkey Vultures, San Joaquin Kit Foxes and Pacific Fishers.*

## Negro Bar Renovation Project

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## Native Plants Benefit Birds

The National Audubon Society wants you to know that native plants can help birds as the world warms around them. Native plant gardens provide birds with food, shelter and nesting sites that are superior to those found in gardens with non-native species. Native plants and trees also are natural sponges for greenhouse gases.

On the Audubon Society website, the Society has identified native plant species that are beneficial to birds in zip codes around the nation. A feature on the website allows you to enter your zip code to get the information.

In the Fair Oaks zip code, adjacent to the American River Parkway, for example, 16 native plants were identified as important resources for birds. They included Coyotebrush (*Baccharis pilularis*), Deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*), and California Figwort (*Scrophularia californica*).

You can visit the Audubon website at: [www.audubon.org/native-plants](http://www.audubon.org/native-plants)



© Robert Perry  
Coyotebrush (*Baccharis pilularis*)



California Figwort (*Scrophularia californica*).



Deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)

*Native plant gardens provide birds with food, shelter and nesting sites that are superior to those found in gardens with non-native species.*



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SARA appreciates the support of our generous members. Without your support, SARA would not be able to continue our role as *Guardians of the American River and Parkway since 1961*. New and renewing members are listed in *RiverWatch* according to their preference (indicated on the SARA membership/renewal form).

## In Memoriam

Save the American River Association has received a donation honoring the memory of the following friend:

### BURT HODGES

Save the American River Association frequently receives donations in memory of lost loved ones, many of whom were users and supporters of the American River Parkway. Some donors give names. Others prefer to remain anonymous. SARA notifies family members when donations are made.

The money is used to further SARA's advocacy work on behalf of the Parkway. Contributions may be made by check or online via SARA's website.

SARA also has a Legacy program. For information on the program, please call the SARA office (916) 936-4555.



## Rat Poisons Legislation

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State scientists have identified rodenticides in 38 species including Mountain Lions, Bobcats, Cooper's Hawks, Northern Spotted Owls, Turkey Vultures, San Joaquin Kit Foxes and Pacific Fishers. In addition to poisoning these species, studies have found that the poisons can affect genes that regulate immunity systems of these wildlife.

Rat poisons are used extensively on illegal marijuana grows. When it rains, the rodenticides can be washed into creeks and rivers where they are eaten by aquatic species.

California residents are urged to call or write their legislators and ask them

to vote "Yes" on AB 1788. Here are some quick facts that can be cited when arguing for a "Yes" vote:

- Rodenticides are indiscriminate killers that attract and kill all kinds of animals, not just rats and mice.
- An average of 17,000 Americans are exposed to rodenticides each year – and 85 percent of those are children less than six years of age.
- Poisons in rodenticides are persistent and bioaccumulative. They remain in the victim's bloodstream and accumulate in the liver.
- Non-target predators such as foxes, coyotes, owls and hawks, and scavengers such as vultures, raccoons and opossums, suffer lethal and sub-lethal poisoning when they feed on poisoned rodents.
- Dogs, cats and other pets are harmed when they eat baits and poisoned rodents. A study found there were 50,696 dog poisonings in the United States in 2014 due to rodenticides. ■



## Canada Lynx has been Spotted on the Parkway

A Canada Lynx has been sighted in Fair Oaks by people whose homes are adjacent to the American River Parkway.

Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) are not native to this area. They are found in northern states, Canada and Alaska. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service classifies them as endangered in the United States, but was able to reintroduce them in Colorado a decade ago.

How the lynx got to Fair Oaks is not known. It is unlikely that it migrated here. One theory is that was captured when it was young and brought to the Sacramento area to be a pet. But once it matured it had no interest in being a pet and was released.

California law prohibits the introduction of non-native species in the state.

Lynx are related to Bobcats which are native to the area. They are carnivores and prey on small-to-medium sized animals and birds, including loose pets.

There probably will be more sightings of the lynx in other areas adjacent to the Parkway. ■



A Canada Lynx was spotted on the deck of a Fair Oaks home where it was stalking a squirrel.

## Support County Parks — Buy An Annual Pass

The Pass pays for itself in 10 visits and all funds go directly towards maintaining and operating the 15,000-acre system. For as little as \$50 per year, you can have unlimited access and parking in the parks.

Pass holders receive free daily entry into Regional Parks and annual passes are valid for one year from date of purchase.

### Pass Fees Are Based On Use:

Vehicle:	\$50
Vehicle + Trailer or oversized vehicle (over 22 feet):	\$100
Vehicle + Horse trailer:	\$75
Vehicle and small watercraft:	\$80
Parks supporter pass*	\$50

*\* This pass is for those who want to support Parks but do not drive to Parks facilities*

### Where to Purchase Your Parks Pass

- Online through the American River Parkway Foundation Web site [arpf.org/visit](http://arpf.org/visit)
- At REI stores in Sacramento, Roseville and Folsom
- Patriot Cycles in Fair Oaks
- Effie Yeaw Nature Center at Ancil Hoffman Park
- Regional Park offices and park kiosks
- American River Parkway Foundation office at the William B. Pond Recreation Area ■

## Invasive Starlings May Number 200 Million

On March 6, 1890, Eugene Schieffelin released 80 European Starlings in New York City's Central Park. Today, European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) are one of the most abundant birds in North America. Cornell University ornithologists report that flocks of Starlings are seen from Alaska to Mexico and in Puerto Rico — and they may number 200 million.

Schieffelin was a pharmacist and president of the American Acclimatization Society. The society, founded in 1871, had an ill-conceived mission to introduce European flora and fauna into North America which could become economically “useful or interesting.” Schieffelin also was a fan of Shakespeare and hoped to introduce the 45-plus bird species mentioned in Shakespeare's plays into the United States. But most of the introduced species, such as the Skylark and Nightingale, couldn't adapt to North America the way the Starlings have.

But Starlings are an invasive species that can cause harm. Starlings tend to nest in cavities and can push out other native cavity nesters like bluebirds, owls and woodpeckers. Some Starlings will lay an egg in another bird's nest. Large flocks strip the grains off farmer's fields and raid storage sheds. Their waste can spread invasive seeds, transmit disease and corrode surfaces. That's why some birders call them “trash birds.”

Starlings have excellent vision and strong yellow beaks. That makes them proficient exterminators of pestilent insects, grubs and worms. They look similar to blackbirds, have a short, square tail, and their wings are pointed and triangular. In adulthood, they tend to be eight-and-one-half inches in length.

Their plumage is a glossy black with green, purple, blue or bronze iridescence. In the fall, Starling may have a spotty appearance after molting, but the spots on their wing tips wear away by spring. They can have one or two clutches a year with four-to-six eggs per clutch. Eggs are incubated for approximately 12 days before hatching and nestlings can fledge in about three weeks. The oldest recorded Starling in North America was a male at least 15 years and three months old when it died in Tennessee in 1972. It had been banded in 1958.

Their songs include gurgles, squeaks, warbles, chirps and twitters. But they also can mimic the songs of up to 20 other birds.

In late May 1784, Mozart was in

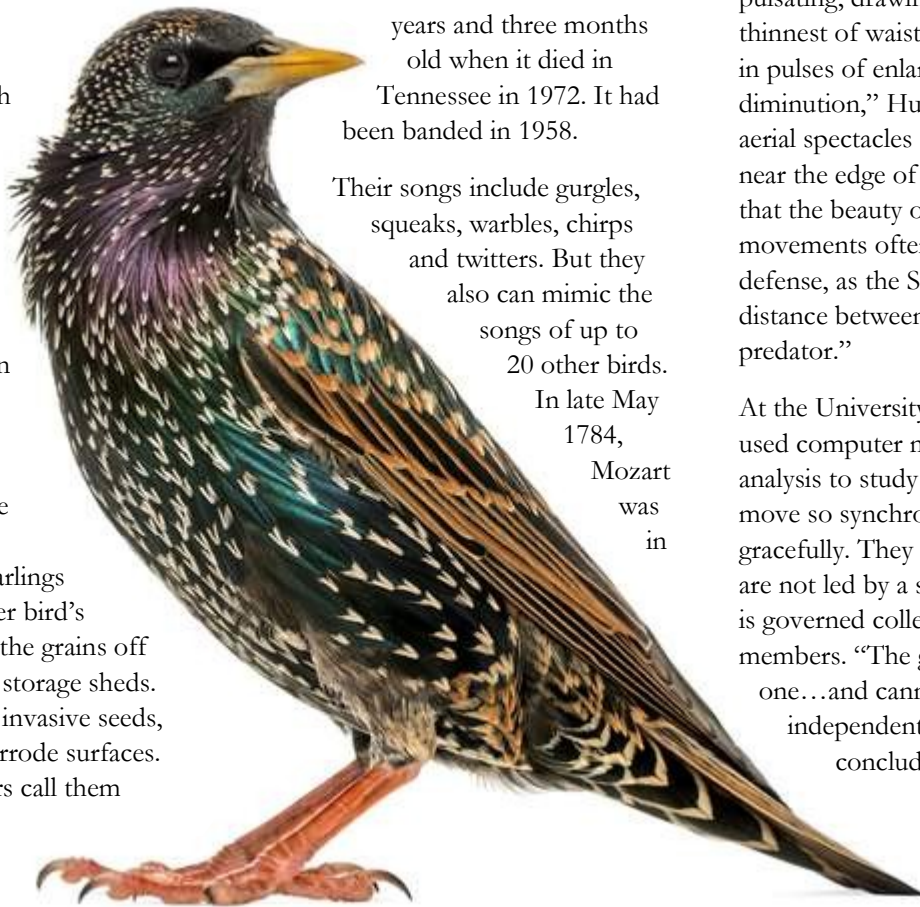
a Viennese shop when he heard a starling singing a motif strikingly similar to the allegro movement of his Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major. Mozart bought the bird which became a much-loved pet. When it died three years later, Mozart held an elaborate funeral procession and buried the bird in his yard. At the graveside, Mozart delivered a poem:

A little fool lies here  
Whom I hold dear  
A Starling in the prime  
Of his brief time

Grainger Hunt, a senior scientist at the Peregrine Fund, has said that he marvels at the way thousands of Starlings gather in flocks called murmurations.

They are “a dazzling cloud, swirling, pulsating, drawing together to the thinnest of waists, then wildly twisting in pulses of enlargement and diminution,” Hunt wrote. “These aerial spectacles are caused by a falcon near the edge of the flock. It turns out that the beauty of a murmuration's movements often arises purely out of defense, as the Starlings strive to put distance between themselves and the predator.”

At the University of Rome, scientists used computer modeling and video analysis to study how the Starlings move so synchronously, swiftly and gracefully. They found that the flocks are not led by a single bird. The flock is governed collectively by all the flock members. “The group responds as one...and cannot be divided into independent subparts,” they concluded. ■





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