



VERNAL POOL STUDY

What is it?

This study is a coordinated monitoring effort between the Central Valley Water Board SWAMP and Department of Fish and Game, Central Region (DFG). The purpose of the study is to collect data on water quality and physical pool characteristics to assess the health of vernal pools in the alkali sink habitat (seasonally flooded areas with saline soils that support plants adapted to survive in these conditions) of DFG Ecological Reserves. SWAMP is collecting water quality data including pH, dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity, temperature, nitrate, nitrite, calcium, potassium, magnesium, sodium, chloride, bicarbonate, and total dissolved solids. DFG is using the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) for wetlands to assess the physical condition of the pools. Vernal pools were sampled during the summer of 2010 and 2011.



Why is it important?

The DFG Ecological Reserves protect remnants of alkali sink wetland habitat. This habitat supports federally protected and sensitive macroinvertebrates (animals with no backbone—often insect larvae—large enough to be seen by the naked eye) and amphibian species. There has never before been a comprehensive assessment of the habitat in the Ecological Reserves.

How will this information be used?

The information collected from this study will assist in the conservation of vernal pools and species that rely on them. Results will be used to begin to identify the presence, range, and status of populations of federally protected and sensitive species found on the reserves. In addition, the data gathered may be used to examine the robustness of using the CRAM to assess vernal pools.

For more information: contact Bethany Soto