

## An Introduction to:



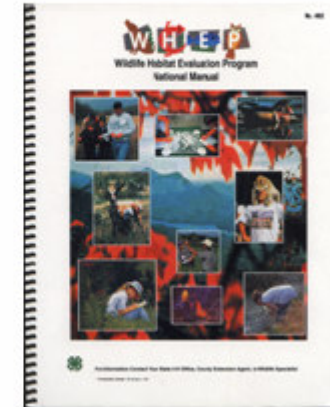
### Advisory Group

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Introduction to California 4-H WHEP. Cal-WHEP is designed for enthusiastic adults and youth that have shown an interest in learning about California's wildlife and habitats and how to manage them. This brief presentation will provide you with a bit of the history of WHEP and particularly the history of California WHEP.

## The National Beginning

- Began in the late 1980's in the Southeastern United States as a Wildlife Judging Project.
- Expanded nationally in 1990 and a national WHEP manual was developed. Manual was updated in 2001.
- Focus is an annual contest that is held in different parts of the country.
- Each state can send a team of 4 youth (ages 14-19).



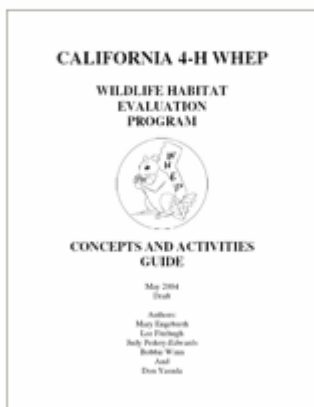
The Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program began in the 1980's as a wildlife judging project. It started in the southeast and was focused primarily on habitat management for game species.

Over the years, interest in the project grew and it expanded to other areas until finally in 1990 it was recognized as a national program. To support the program, a manual was developed and it underwent an update in 2001. This is the current national WHEP manual.

With its roots as a wildlife judging project, the national WHEP program is focused on an annual contest that is held in different parts of the country. Each participating state can send a team of up to 4 youth. The 2005 contest was held in Little Rock, Arkansas and was won by the Georgia team. There were 84 participants from 19 states. The 2006 contest will be held in July in Wisconsin.

## The Birth of Cal-WHEP

- Group attended a national training program in 1999.
- Formed an advisory group to adapt the national program to California in 2000.
  - Focus on CA's diverse habitats and wildlife species.
  - Emphasis on teaching wildlife concepts through hands-on activities.
- Developed a draft manual in 2000 with a substantial update in 2004.



## Cal-WHEP Goals and Objectives

### Program Goal

The Goal of California 4-H WHEP is to help participants develop an awareness of, and concern about, the environment, and its associated problems, and who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.

### Program Objectives

- To explore wildlife management practices through experiential application
- To initiate the development of life skills in order to promote beneficial wildlife and environmental practices
- To develop active leaders who model positive environmental behavior

So how did Cal-WHEP come to be? The state 4-H office sponsored a group of Youth Advisors and Wildlife Project volunteers to attend a national training program in 1999. Upon their return, this group agreed that WHEP could fill a useful niche in the California 4-H program. An Advisory Group was formed in 2000 to develop the Cal-WHEP material and to provide training. The Advisory Group determined that to be successful, Cal-WHEP had to showcase the diversity of California's wildlife habitats and species and should focus on teaching wildlife concepts rather than on practicing for the national contest. With the strong environmental educational background of the Advisory Group members, a draft manual was prepared in 2000 and a substantial update occurred in 2004. The manual focuses on teaching wildlife concepts through hands-on activities. In developing the manual, the Advisory Group incorporated other excellent programs already in existence such as Project Wild and Project Learning Tree.

As you can see, the goals of Cal-WHEP are lofty. You will also notice that the goal is proactive and action oriented. The Advisory Group did not want to just develop informational material about California's wildlife.

To accomplish these goals, the Advisory Group set objectives:

- To explore wildlife management practices through experiential application;
- To focus on developing life skills that will help promote beneficial wildlife and environmental practices; and
- Ultimately, to provide a forum to prepare youth to become active leaders in their community who model positive environmental behavior.

## So What Makes CA Special?



So what makes California so special? I'm sure each of you can list several reasons. But here are some of the things that the Advisory Group considered.

## National WHEP

Only 6 Habitat Regions in CA!



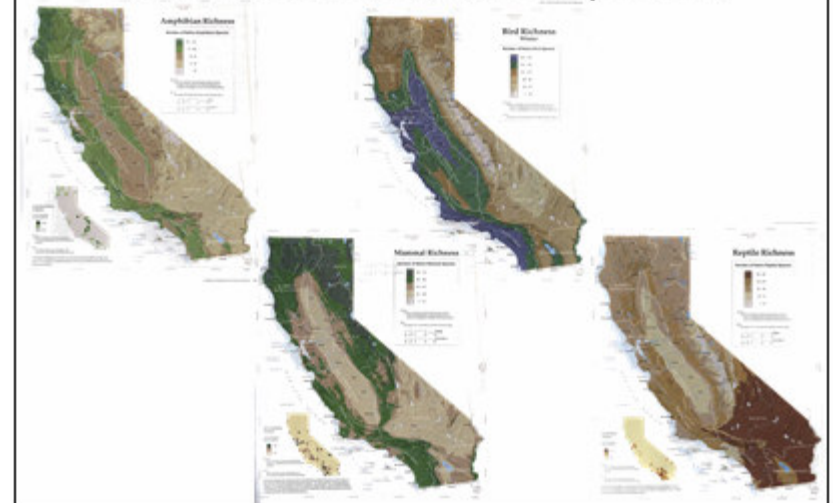
Here's the map of how the National WHEP manual addresses California. There are only 6 identified habitat regions in the state.

## California's Diverse Habitats



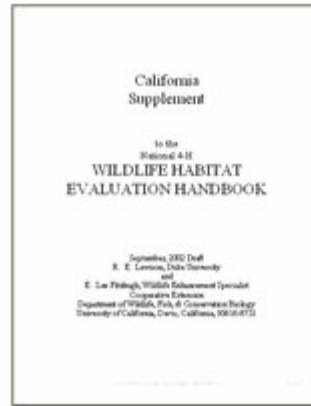
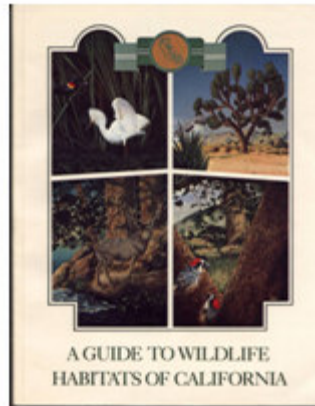
Compare this to the diversity of habitats that is shown in this map produced by the California Department of Fish and Game.

## California's Diverse Species

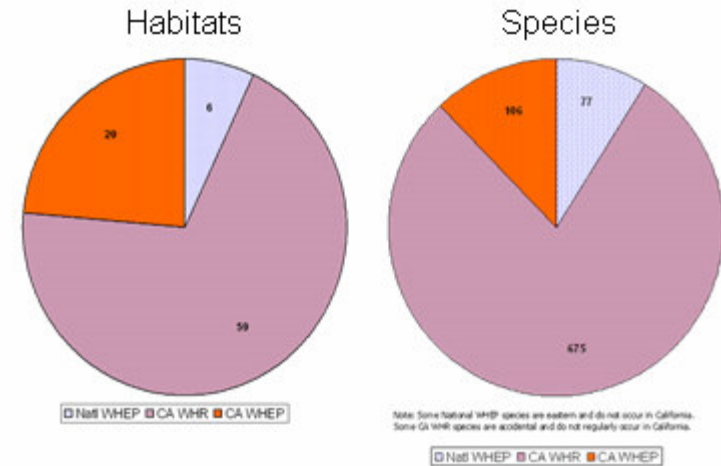


And these maps display the diversity of wildlife species with the darker colors being areas with higher diversity.

## CA Wildlife Habitats



## CA WHEP Habitats and Species



The California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System (also called CWHR) provides the background on the diverse habitats in the state. This product was developed by all of the major wildlife management agencies in the state, such as the California Department of Fish and Game, the US Forest Service, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Cal-WHEP Advisory Group used this information to develop the California Supplement to the National WHEP manual.

Or displayed another way, these charts show the difference in number of habitats and species between the National WHEP manual, the Cal-WHEP manual, and the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System. You can see that Cal-WHEP provides more details than National WHEP but less than the state CWHR system.

## Lots of People !



And of course, one of the main reasons that California requires special considerations regarding wildlife and their habitats is our large population. There are few places in the state where wildlife and humans don't influence each other.

## Wildlife Concepts

- **Habitat**
- **Species**
- **Food Web**
- **Aquatic Ecosystems**
- **Migration**
- **Carrying Capacity**
- **Succession**
- **Vertical Structure**
- **Arrangement and Fragmentation**
- **Species Richness and Biodiversity**
- **Wildlife Management**

Managing wildlife and their habitats is complex. Cal-WHEP simplifies teaching and learning about wildlife by focusing on 11 key wildlife concepts. They are somewhat hierarchical in that the foundation block is habitat and each concept builds to the final concept which is the management of wildlife species and their habitats.

## Making Learning Fun

- Hands-on Activities
- Mix of Indoor and Outdoor activities
- Adaptations for different age groups



## Training the Trainers

- First statewide training held in 2001 (Sly Park)
- Additional statewide trainings in 2002 (Camp Lodestar), 2004 (Yosemite Bug), and 2006 (Camp Ocean Pines).



Remember that one of the Goals of Cal-WHEP is to use experiential learning techniques. One of the best ways to learn is by doing, so lesson plans have been developed to guide participants to learn while doing fun games and activities. Cal-WHEP provides for a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities making it ideal for both urban and rural settings.

Since this program was primarily developed for 4-H youth, it was designed to provide age appropriate activities for different age groups, from the youngest primary youth to the senior youth. But, we've found that these materials are also appropriate for adults! Cal-WHEP isn't limited to just 4-H since managing wildlife issues depends upon understanding and action from entire communities.

By becoming active with Cal-WHEP, you will join an elite group of individuals who have been trained in the use of the Cal-WHEP material and in Project Wild and Project Learning Tree. We are slowly moving throughout the state to provide this wonderful opportunity to a variety of individuals who can help further Cal-WHEP's Goals and Objectives.