

Help Save California's Native Wildlife and Plant Species When Filing Your Taxes

March 28, 2022



Would you like to help the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recover and rehabilitate animals after they've been injured or orphaned by wildfires? What about supporting CDFW's research into why the California sea otter population is unable to flourish in its native coastal waters? Or how drought and climate change affect California's native plants and wildlife?

You can have a positive impact on these key issues affecting California's native species when you donate to CDFW's tax check-off funds on your California State Income Tax Form 540.

By donating even a few dollars to the Rare and Endangered Species Preservation Voluntary Tax Contribution Program (line 403 on Tax Form 540), the California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund (line 410) and the Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund (line 439) you will help conserve and protect our state's most at-risk species.

Donations to the Rare and Endangered Species Preservation Voluntary Tax Contribution Program (line 403) have helped fund work benefiting California's imperiled plants, wildlife and fish since 1983. Recent recovery actions supported by the program include projects to save the Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom plant species and the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. Funds also helped the Southern Sierra Nevada fisher, a small, carnivorous mammal in the mustelid family (commonly called weasel), from extinction. These are just three of the more than 1,000 native animal and 5,000 native plant species threatened by habitat loss and climate change in California. Of these, at least one-third of plants and two-thirds of animals are endemic species that occur nowhere else in the world. More than 300 are designated by the state as rare, threatened or endangered. Loss of habitat, water management conflicts, invasive species and overarching effects of climate change are the greatest threats to their long-term survival.

Contributions to the California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund (line 410) are split between CDFW and the State Coastal Conservancy to benefit Southern sea otters. Southern sea otters are the smallest of all marine mammals and once lived in nearshore waters along California's entire coast. They play an important role in supporting the nearshore marine ecosystem through helping to maintain healthy kelp forests and sea grasses. Since 1995, the California sea otter population has fluctuated between 2,000 and 3,000, as their numbers have been slow to rebound due to a variety of factors including pollution, boat strikes and parasites from terrestrial animals. CDFW uses its portion of tax donations to fund research on causes of sea otter mortality. The Coastal Conservancy uses its portion for grants to support research and facilitate sea otter population recovery.

Donations to the Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund (line 439) help support the care provided by permitted wildlife rehabilitation facilities to California's injured, sick and orphaned native wildlife. CDFW uses donations to provide funds directly to wildlife rehabilitators statewide through a competitive grant program. Grant awards are used to support activities that include, but are not limited to, innovation in animal care during rehabilitation, veterinarian treatment, dietary and behavioral enrichment, facility operations, post-release monitoring, and conservation education for the public and local communities. Permitted wildlife rehabilitators are important non-profit partners that strive to provide highly specialized, quality care to wildlife for the purpose of their return to the wild. They often struggle to operate during difficult economic times. Donations to this fund will help California's native wildlife in need now more than ever!

The California state tax deadline for filing your 2021 taxes with the Franchise Tax Board is April 18, 2022. If someone else prepares your state tax return, let them know you want to donate to the Rare and Endangered Species Preservation Voluntary Tax Contribution Program (line 403 on tax form 540), the California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund (line 410) and/or the Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund (Line 439). If you use tax preparation software, go to the contributions section on Form 540 near the end of your tax return and make a voluntary contribution. Contributions must be \$1 or more, in whole dollar amounts. These contributions help CDFW acquire federal matching funds for research, surveys and monitoring projects. They also help support the recovery and rehabilitation of injured,

sick or orphaned wildlife and conservation education. Thank you for helping us save our most vulnerable plant and wildlife species.