

Spring Tales

Newsletter

Dry Times in California

Rennett Stowe / CC BY-SA 2.0



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America's Top Dog

The Labrador Retriever has been rated the most popular dog in America for 24 years in a row. For good reason! Labs are fairly easy to train, and they make good hunting dogs as well as loyal family companions.

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Where Are They Now?



At first, the **Arctic tundra** may look like one long, empty field, but to waterfowl it is paradise. Starting in early April, millions of ducks, geese and swans make the journey north to raise their young in Arctic breeding grounds in Alaska and Canada.



The **prairie potholes region** is a patchwork of wetlands and gently-rolling hills stretching all the way from South Dakota to southern Canada. These shallow pools provide critical habitat for breeding waterfowl and are especially important to blue- and green-winged teals.

The Thirsty State



The number of breeding waterfowl decreased by 12% in 2014.



Over 200,000 acres of rice fields host migrating waterfowl in wintertime.



Hunters repair and build guzzlers for deer and other animals in the Mojave Desert.



Sierra Nevada peaks held the least amount of snow in 75 years.



Water levels at major reservoirs were 64% lower than usual in July 2015.

Lack of rainfall and unusually-high temperatures have caused a serious drought that is affecting all parts of California. As the environment changes, humans and wildlife are transforming how they live, which is leading people to come up with ways to use water better. In the Central Valley, rice farmers flood their fields in time for waterfowl migration, and in southern California, local hunters repair rainwater collection tanks called “guzzlers” for thirsty animals in the desert.

The Big 10

Every year, waterfowl biologists come together to count all of the individuals of the ten most common duck species in North America. It is part of a project that checks if the number of individuals of a particular species is increasing or decreasing. The results of the count tell scientists how healthy duck populations around the country are. To count every single duck is no small task. First, two teams of people are assigned to a single area. Then, one team counts birds from an airplane (flying at an altitude of 150 feet) while another team counts from the ground, making sure the other team did not miss any ducks and that their final numbers match up. The final counts from the survey tell us which species populations are stable and help set bag limits for the next year.



Can you name the top 10 waterfowl? Place the name of the bird species in the box next to the numbered picture. Answers are below.

Answers to the Big 10: 1) Mallard, 2) Gadwall, 3) American Wigeon, 4) Green-winged Teal, 5) Blue-winged Teal, 6) Northern Shoveler, 7) Northern Pintail, 8) Redhead, 9) Canvasback, 10) Scaup

Water Savers

When it does rain, it is always a great idea to save water for later in times of drought. Even better, whether there is drought or not, it is always a great idea to conserve or save water. It is never good to waste precious natural resources like the water every living thing shares on our planet. Here are some ways to save and collect water. Take Action! Be a Water Saver! Record the things that you do and see how it helps.



Rain Barrel/ TVAkids.com

1. Take shorter showers. Soap up with the water off.
2. Never let water just run out of the faucet. Turn it off! Or collect it in a pitcher or bucket and use it in your yard.
3. Build a rain barrel to collect rain water for later use.
Check out <http://www.tvakids.com/rainbarrel.htm>
4. Put drought tolerant plants in your yard. (Plants that need little water to survive.)

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Sabreana Britt, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 Ext. 102 or sbritt@calwaterfowl.org

For more information and our calendar of events go to www.calwaterfowl.org