



The Wildlife Project

Wildlife Research • Ecological Investigations • Consulting

Pond Turtle Nesting in California

Field Workshop 2026

OVERVIEW

This lecture/field-based workshop will take place June 17 (lecture) and one of three field days (June 18, 19, 20) in 2026. We will be working on Moorhen Marsh, a part of the Mt. View Sanitary District's water treatment facility in Martinez, California. It is a functional waste-water treatment plant, and access is subject to change based on site conditions. The site has salt marsh harvest mouse, California black rail, Ridgway rail, and northwestern and southwestern pond turtle, among other species. This workshop is designed to introduce you to the breeding behavior of pond turtles in central California, expose you to breeding habitat, and to allow you to assist with conducting a pond turtle nest survey in habitat where turtles make lots of nests.

The lecture portion of the workshop will provide detailed information on upland habitat use (specific to nesting), timing of the year when turtles are using the uplands, habitats and areas used for nesting, and methods to avoid nests. Ample time will be provided for questions and discussion about this enigmatic and cryptic behavior. The field portion of this workshop will highlight the specific techniques used to survey for turtles, conduct nesting surveys, document nest predation, and assess habitat used by turtles for nesting. We will walk an area occupied and used for nesting by pond turtles during the peak of their nesting season.

The lecture portion will be provided on Zoom through a link that will be provided. The lecture will run for approximately 3 hours, depending upon the number of questions or length of discussion. The field portion will be set at Moorhen Marsh, Martinez, California, and will begin at 3 PM and end at 7:30 PM—prime turtle nesting time in this area.

INSTRUCTORS

Instructor **Jeff Alvarez** has held permits for and conducted research on both southwestern and northwestern pond turtles from the Oregon border south into northern Baja California. Jeff has authored or co-authored 14 published manuscripts on turtle behavior, morphology, nesting, and survey techniques. He currently has research projects that are active in Contra Costa and Sacramento Counties, and the San Pedro Martír (Baja California Norte). The workshop will be restricted to 12 participants per field session to provide close interaction in the field.



FIELD EQUIPMENT

As with turtle surveys, your specific equipment is up to you. We highly recommend a good pair of binoculars, hiking boots, hat, sunglasses, and patience. You should provide your own water and bring a dinner for yourself, which we'll eat during our break. Bug spray is helpful at this site.

LECTURE PORTION

If you plan to attend this workshop there will only be a single offering for the lecture portion. Although it may be recorded, it will not be made widely available.

Check with your own company about safety requirements. Each participant will be required to sign a waiver holding the instructors and the site harmless, in case of injury.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Fill out all sections of the registration form. Complete a separate form for each registrant.

PAYMENT:

Make checks payable to “**The Wildlife Project**”, or fill out credit card information on the registration form. Only VISA or MasterCard credit is accepted. We accept Zelle—See QR code, or, add the following number as a recipient (209-815-5660). If you need to use Venmo, PayPal, or other methods, please email us to make arrangements. No cryptocurrency payments are accepted.

Registration and payment must be submitted at the time of registration, to avoid being removed from the workshop list.

Email or snail-mail registration form with your payment to:

Email: Workshops@TheWildlifeProject.com

Mailing address:

The Wildlife Project Workshops – Bullfrog
PO Box 188888
Sacramento, CA 95818



Confirmation: Confirmation of registration will be sent within two weeks via email or regular mail. The confirmation letter will indicate which time slot you may have received. A follow-up email will include reading materials, meeting locations of field trips, and suggestions about field gear.

Workshop Questions: For questions on registration email: Workshops@TheWildlifeProject.com

