

Habitat Classification Rules
California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
 California Department of Fish and Game
 California Interagency Wildlife Task Group
 April, 2005

Structure

Composition

Geographic Region

Tree-Dominated

≥ 10% total cover by live vegetation in an overstory position; not a desert habitat (per those listed below)

Hardwood

≥ 50% relative overstory cover by hardwoods and < 25% relative overstory cover by conifers

Hardwood-Conifer

≥ 50% relative overstory cover by hardwoods and ≥ 25% relative overstory cover by conifers

MHC, BOP

(Rule exception: Stands dominated by foothill pine crosswalk into BOP.)

Conifer

> 50% relative overstory cover by conifers

Hardwood Defined by Species

ASP, EUC, BOW, VOW

Single Species Conifer

50% relative conifer cover by a single conifer species, regardless of the number of conifer species in the overstory

(Note: If dominant conifer species does not have its own CWHR type, see Mixed Conifer below. Rule exception: Stands dominated by Western Hemlock, Grand Fir, and Sitka Spruce crosswalk into RDW.)

RFR, LPN, WFR, DFR, JPN, RDW, JUN

Mixed Conifer

≤ 50% relative conifer cover by a single conifer species with ≥ 5% cover by at least one other conifer species
 or
 > 50% relative conifer cover by a single conifer species that does not have its own CWHR type

CPC, PJN

Hardwood Defined by Region - Upland

Generally, in non-coastal regions and dominated by montane hardwoods, with or without oaks, or in coastal regions with canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*), California black oak (*Q. kelloggii*) or Oregon white oak (*Q. garryana*) as the dominant oak. **MHW**

Generally, in coastal regions with coast live oak (*Q. agrifolia*) or Englemann oak (*Q. engelmannii*) as the dominant oak. **COW**

Hardwood Defined by Region - Riparian

Generally, in montane regions, often intergrading with wet meadows, or in coastal and foothill regions along steep-gradient streams with black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) or bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) dominating the overstory. May also be dominated by willows (*Salix* spp.) or alders (*Alnus* spp.) **MRI**

Generally, in valley and foothill regions along low-gradient streams with Fremont cottonwood (*P. fremontii*), California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) or Valley Oak (*Q. lobata*) dominating the overstory. May also be dominated by willows (*Salix* spp.) or alders (*Alnus* spp.) **VRI**

(Note: If habitat is dominated by desert species or is in South-eastern Great Basin, Mojave, Sonoran or Colorado deserts, even if dominated by P. fremontii, see DRI under "Desert Tree/Shrub".)

Single Species Conifer Defined by Region

On the west side of the Sierra Nevada. **PPN**

In the Southern Cascades, Modoc Plateau and east side of the Sierra Nevada on coarse well-drained basaltic soils. **EPN**

Mixed Conifer Defined by Region

In the Klamath Mountains, on mid-elevation slopes. **KMC**

In all other mountain ranges, on mid-elevation slopes. **SMC**

In all mountain ranges at high elevations; characterized by open canopy and trees of low to medium stature. **SCN**

Structure

Geographic Region

Shrub-Dominated

10% total cover by shrub species and < 10% cover by tree species; not a desert habitat (per those listed below)

Generally, only at the highest elevations in California, above 7,500 feet. **ADS**

Generally, in mountainous terrain, from mid-to-high elevations (3,000 – 10,000 feet). **MCP**

Generally, below 5000 feet in mountain ranges throughout California, except in deserts. **MCH, CRC**

With a few exceptions, east of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada crests. **LSG, BBR, SGB**

In coastal regions throughout the length of California. **CSC**

Desert

≥ 2% total cover by desert species and < 10% total cover by other tree or shrub species

Desert Tree/Shrub

Desert Tree (size classes based on diameter above bulge) – POS, JST
Desert Tree/Shrub (size classes based on height) -- DRI, DSW

Desert Shrub

Size classes based on % decadence as with other shrub –dominated habitats)

Generally, in low-elevation deserts, often with creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*) as the dominant shrub or in eastern portions of Central California Coast Ranges, often with California Ephedra (*Ephedra californica*) or buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.) as the dominant shrub. **DSC**

Generally, in low-elevation deserts with an overstory of succulents. **DSS**

In the Mojave Desert and portions of the Colorado Desert, Great Basin, and southern San Joaquin Valley, dominated by various species of shrubby saltbushes. **ASC**

Herbaceous-Dominated

≥ 2% total cover by herbaceous species and < 10% total cover by tree or shrub species

Generally, statewide. **AGS, PGS, PAS, FEW**

Limited to montane or northwestern regions. **WTM**

Limited to tidally-influenced portion of coastal regions. **SEW**

Aquatic

≥ 98% total cover by open water and ≤ 2% total cover by vegetation in the continually-exposed shore zone

Freshwater - RIV, LAC

Marine - EST, MAR

Agricultural/Developed

≥ 2% total cover by non-wildland vegetation grown for food, fiber, or landscaping and does not meet criteria for any wildland habitat

Woody Agricultural - DOR, EOR, VIN

Herbaceous Agricultural - DGR, IGR, IRF, IRH, RIC

Developed - URB

Barren

< 2% total cover by any vegetation

BAR