

# TREES OF LIFE

## California's Oak Woodlands



Oak woodlands are a vital part of California's environment. These impressive trees, with their sturdy trunks and gnarled branches, furnish shelter, food and protection for a wide variety of animals and insects. Their branches hold birds' nests; trunk hollows provide dens; dead leaves and twigs are perfect for insects and amphibians; and the oak's root system is home to burrowing rodents, insects and worms.

Unfortunately, California's oak trees are not reproducing well. The decline in survival rate of seedlings is due to a variety of reasons, including cattle grazing, fire suppression, the spread of non-native plants and animals, and changes in soil moisture and climate. Because oak woodlands in California have declined as agriculture and development have increased, the resources they provide—which are necessary for wildlife to thrive in these areas—are now seriously threatened.

