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Mammals on Sacramento levees - habitat associations and burrowing potential

ABSTRACT

Several small to medium sized mammals in northern California live on or near levees, including jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, voles, several carnivores, muskrats, beavers, gophers, and ground squirrels. Of these, voles, badgers, muskrats, beavers, gophers, and ground squirrels have potential for significant soil displacement through digging and burrowing.

Removal of shrubs and trees along levees will have differing effects on resident mammals, especially those with potential for soil disturbance. Conversion of woody vegetation to more open, grassy habitats should increase the abundance of voles, gophers, ground squirrels, and possibly badgers, have no effect on muskrats, and have an uncertain effect on beavers. Hence, removal of trees and shrubs from levees should lead to an increase in several of the more important soil-excavating mammals.

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