

2025 REGIONAL PLAN Policies and Programs

Habitat



Our home has many rare and unique animals and plants found nowhere else in the world! With such a wide variety of topography, geological conditions, and a moderate climate, it's no wonder the San Diego region was identified as a global biodiversity hotspot.

But despite this potential for so many types of flora and fauna, as our cities expand and become more urban, this has significantly impacted the local environment: our region currently has the highest number of endangered species in the continental United States.

So, our habitat conservation planning program aims to counteract this trend by protecting and preserving native species and the region's wealth of open spaces for future generations. To ensure a resilient future and to adapt to climate change, the San Diego region must work together to proactively conserve our native habitats.

Our vision for habitat conservation is to: **Protect, Connect** and **Respect**.



Protect existing native species through the strategic acquisition, management, and monitoring of critical habitat areas identified in regional habitat conservation plans.



Connect habitat areas through wildlife corridors and linkages, as well as connecting people to local species and natural habitats.



Respect native species and habitat. Balance the demands for recreation opportunities while protecting natural landscapes. Encourage respect for natural lands through increased public outreach and education of San Diego's unique biodiversity.

How is SANDAG conserving habitats in our region?

Over the last three decades¹, our region has been identifying and conserving lands to protect rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats while still making space for future population growth. Because habitats often cross city and County boundaries, we provide a space for local, state and federal agencies to work together to develop regional solutions for habitat conservation.

Our TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) has helped acquire and restore more than 9,215 acres of native habitats within the region. This is part of larger efforts by regional partners that have secured over 90,000 acres of habitat. We also established the **San Diego Management and Monitoring Program** which coordinates science-based biological management and monitoring of lands in San Diego.

¹ Starting in the 1990s, federal, state, and local governments came together to proactively identify an interconnected open space system to protect hundreds of sensitive species and their habitats.

Policy and Program Connections



Climate



Housing & Land Use



What else has SANDAG been working on and what are we considering next?

- Collaborated with regional partners to acquire 9,215 acres of habitat
- Contributed \$59 million for regional habitat management and monitoring
- Awarded 136 land-management grants, totaling \$18.8 million, to partners in the San Diego region to promote efforts to protect, restore, and manage habitats for rare and endangered species
- Established the **San Diego Management and Monitoring Program** which integrates science into the management and monitoring of open space
- Completed the **State of the Preserve Report** and **Metrics Dashboard** that details the health of the regional preserve
- Working with local cities and the County to carry out regional habitat conservation plans
- Collaborated with the San Diego Natural History Museum to complete the **San Diego Collaboration for Conservation: Sustaining the Region's Legacy of Biodiversity Conservation Report**. The report identifies the challenges and opportunities related to habitat management and monitoring, ecosystem benefits and economic resilience, education and public awareness, equitable access to natural spaces, and research and policy.
- Future activities include working with the EMP's Regional Habitat Conservation Taskforce and stakeholders around the region to update the habitat conservation assessment previously completed in 2011. The updated assessment will identify the gaps in funding, specifically for regional acquisition, management, and monitoring, in order to implement our Regional Habitat Conservation Vision and fulfill the commitments made in our habitat conservation plans.



Learn More

Visit SANDAG.org/habitatconservation for more information.

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