



USDA Forest Service Stanislaus NF California Facts

State capital: Sacramento

State population: 37,679,000 (approaching 40 million). That's more than the population of Canada. One out of eight U.S. residents lives in California. Three of the top ten most populous cities in the nation are in California: Los Angeles, San Diego and San Jose.

California is the third largest state at around 159,000 square miles. Only Texas and Alaska are larger.

California has the largest economy in the union. If California were a nation, economically it would rank seventh largest in the world.

The name California comes from a mythical Spanish island ruled by a queen named Calafia. The island was featured in a Spanish romance written in 1510. Spanish explorers originally thought that California was an island. In 1542 Spanish explorer, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, sailed into San Diego Bay. The first Spanish mission was established in San Diego in 1769. California became a United States territory in 1847 when Mexico surrendered it to John C. Fremont.

January 24, 1848, gold was discovered by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in El Dorado County, setting off the Gold Rush. When word got out, California's population jumped from 14,000 to 250,000 in four years.

September 9, 1850, California became the 31st state in the union.

California borders states Arizona, Nevada and Oregon. It borders the nation of Mexico to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

RANDOM SAMPLING OF INTERESTING CALIFORNIA FACTS

There are about 500,000 detectable seismic tremors (earthquakes) in California annually. Most are undetectable by humans and most do no damage.

California produces 90 percent of all wine in the United States. It also raises the most turkeys than any other state.

The Inyo National Forest is home to the oldest living species, the bristle cone pine. Some of the trees are over 4,600 years old.

The highest point in the continental U.S. (Mt. Whitney, elevation 4,494 feet) and the lowest point (Bad Water, Death Valley 282 feet below sea level) are within 100 miles of each other. The best view in the United States is from the summit of Mount Diablo in Mt. Diablo State Park, located

near the San Francisco bay area in Contra Costa County. Though only 3,849 feet in elevation, more of the earth's surface can be seen from there than from any other peak in the world except for Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa.

A small herd of American Bison roam freely on Catalina Island. The herd has grown from the 14 original bison that were brought to the island in 1924 to film the silent movie "The Vanishing American". These extras were left behind and the herd is managed to stay between 150 and 200 today.

California has the largest Native American population in the U.S. today. Originally 20 distinct language groups were represented in California which exhibited more numerous linguistic extremes than all the languages of Europe. Most are close to extinction today.

In 2011, the national White House Christmas tree came from the Stanislaus National Forest.

California symbols:

State motto: Eureka! This Greek work means "I found it!" and refers to the discovery of gold in 1849. It was officially adopted in 1963.

State nickname: The Golden State - 1968

State animal: The Grizzly bear (*Ursus californicus*). Though the last one reportedly was shot in Tulare County in 1922, this extinct subspecies was adopted as our symbol in 1958 and is featured on California's flag.

State bird: California Valley Quail (*Callipepla californica*) 1931

State colors: Blue and Gold - 1951

State flower: California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) 1903

State fish: Marine: Garibaldi (*Hypsypops rubicundus*) 2002

Freshwater: Golden Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss aguabonita*) 1947

State fossil: Sabre tooth cat (*Smilodon californicus*) 1973

State gem: Benitoite – 1985 State rock: Serpentine - 1965

State grass: Purple needlegrass (*nassella pulchra*) - 2004

State insect: Dogface butterfly (*Colias Eurydice*) - 1972

State marine mammal: California Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) – 1975

State marine reptile: Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) - 2012

State mineral: Gold – 1965

State reptile: California desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*) - 1972

State soil: San Joaquin – 1997

State song: "I Love You, California" – 1988

State towns: Gold Rush town: Bodie – 2002 Silver Rush town: Calico – 2005

State tree: Coast Redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and Sequoia (*Sequoia sempervirens*) – 1937. Sequoia National Forest contains the largest (by volume) living tree (General Sherman). Its trunk is 102 feet around. It is believed to be between 2,000 and 2,700 years old. The coast redwoods are the tallest living things in the world.