

**OUR MISSION** at the Rotary Nature Center is to bring people & nature together at Lake Merritt, Oakland, and beyond.

## **Book a program today!**

Cost for one-hour programs at the Rotary Nature Center = \$60

- At your location: Add \$10
- Non-Oakland groups: Add \$10

Please request your date at least two weeks in advance.

Interpretive program brochure created by Constance Taylor, Rotary Nature Center Naturalist & Program Manager.

Last edited April 2016.

## **About Lake Merritt & the Rotary Nature Center**

Welcome to Lake Merritt, the oldest wildlife refuge in the nation!

In 1870, Mayor Samuel Merritt passed a law that protected the birds and other wildlife in this beautiful tidal estuary, making it the very first wildlife refuge in the United States. This area was also registered as a National Landmark in 1963

The lake itself is a natural body of water; it's thought to have formed at the end of the last Ice Age, about 10,000 years ago!

The lake has been heavily modified by humans, but it remains a functional ecosystem to this day. It's actually not a lake but a tidal estuary, meaning that the water is protected from the full force of the sea, and where fresh water from the hills and saltwater from the bay meet. The water in Lake Merritt is called "brackish", a mix of fresh and salt water.

The Rotary Nature Center at Lake Merritt was built in 1953 with funds donated by the Rotary Club. It was built to house the City of Oakland's naturalist programs, and to be a place where Oakland's citizens could learn about the history & ecology of Lake Merritt, and how to be friends to all the species that live in the nation's oldest wildlife refuge.



## **Interpretive Programs at the Nation's Oldest Wildlife Refuge!**

Choose from our selection of great programs for school groups & tour groups!

We offer programs that work for you. All classes are tailored to the age, physical requirements, and other needs of your group. Most programs can be done off-site.

For school groups, all programs align with Next Generation Science Standards.

## **Rotary Nature Center at Lake Merritt**

**(510) 238-3739**

**[oaklandnature@gmail.com](mailto:oaklandnature@gmail.com)**

**600 Bellevue Ave, Oakland CA 94610**

Ask about our programs at Joaquin Miller Park & other Oakland open spaces!

### Lake Merritt Animal & History Tour

Offers a little bit of everything! Learn about the history of Lake Merritt, and walk outside to learn about the birds.



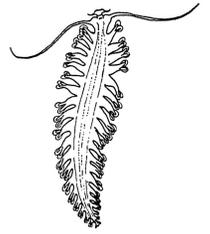
### Meet the Naturehood!

Nature is all around us! Learn how to identify native plants and animals. May include edible and useful plants, animal behavior, and native ecology.



### Life Beneath the Surface

What the heck lives in Lake Merritt?! See & learn about the hundreds of different species of fish & invertebrates that live in our urban estuary.



### History of Lake Merritt

Learn how Lake Merritt became America's oldest wildlife refuge, it's transformation over the years, & the wildlife that calls it home.



### California Water

Understand the importance of water as a natural resource and how the geography of California influences water in the state through the past, present and future.



### Trees of Lake Merritt

Trees from all over the world grow at Lake Merritt! Learn about some of the species, where they're from, and how they got to Oakland.



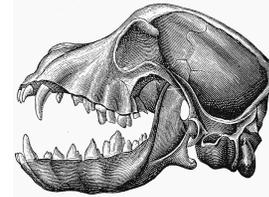
### Birds of the Bay

Learn about the Pacific Flyway and many of the different birds in and around Lake Merritt. Species focus varies throughout the year.



### Skull Detectives

Learn about the skulls of different animals, and how each skull can tell you a story about the evolution and lifestyle of the animal.



### City Wildlife

There is wildlife in abundance all around us and many species thrive within city limits. Learn where they take shelter, what they eat and what they need to survive. Key themes of adaptation and migration.



### Plants & Pollinators

Learn about this important relationship that helps keep us alive! Take a walk around the pollinator gardens and learn how you can help pollinators thrive in the city.



### California Desert Tortoise

What's the difference between a turtle and a tortoise? What's so special about the California desert tortoise? This program includes a visit with some of our live animals including Anthony, the CA desert tortoise that lives at the Rotary Nature Center!

