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Local & State

Stories from The Mercury News

Published Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2001, in the San Jose Mercury News

California briefs

LOS ANGELES

Nature survey details corridors for wildlife

A team of scientists has identified more than 300 natural pathways throughout California thought to be vital to the survival of dozens of wildlife species.

The survey of wildlife corridors is a key step in an ambitious process that ultimately could lead to preserving or restoring many of the pathways. Scientists hope to forge a network of such links to allow animals to move back and forth across parks, wildlife preserves and other wild lands in the nation's most populous state.

Many of the links would function as land bridges across developed areas.

Without prompt action, many links will be severed, turning wildlife refuges and other chunks of wilderness into fragmented islands in a sea of development, predicts a report released Monday by five public agencies and non-profit groups.

Island habitats long have been known as hotbeds of extinction where wildlife are highly susceptible to inbreeding and disease.

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The danger looms large in California, which has more federally endangered and threatened species than any other state but Hawaii, the report said.



Judge rejects law that bars solicitation

A federal judge, acting in a legal squabble that has endured for 27 years, has thrown out a city ordinance that bars charities from soliciting donations at Los Angeles International Airport.

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U.S. District Judge Consuelo B. Marshall, in a written opinion made public Monday, said the sweeping ordinance violates the California Constitution, which, she noted, is more protective of free speech than the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

In her 10-page opinion, Marshall observed that two groups challenging the city in federal court were not seeking permission to solicit passengers at ticket counters, check-in lines, baggage claim areas or arrival and departure gates. Instead, she said, they were asking for the right to operate in general circulation areas near commercial concessions.

RENO

Agency to sell cattle seized in grazing case

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management insisted Monday that confiscated cattle would be sold as scheduled despite an ownership dispute and the auctioneer's demand for a court order.

About 230 head of cattle have been penned at Snow's Livestock Auction in Fallon, Nev., since the Bureau of Land Management impounded them late last month.

The BLM served notices last week on ranchers Ben Colvin and Jack Vogt that their cattle would be sold today unless they paid tens of thousands of dollars in fees and fines for illegal grazing.

SACRAMENTO

Riordan's bike tour makes stop in capital

Former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan rolled into the capital Monday -- the latest stop on a statewide tour to size up his chances of winning the Republican nomination for governor.

Donned in full bicycling regalia, the lawyer and venture capitalist spoke to about a dozen journalists, dodging substantive questions as he went.

Riordan, recently forced from his mayoral post by term limits, has been toying for weeks with the idea of running for governor. President Bush and other prominent Republicans have encouraged him to enter the race.

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