

**Big Break Regional Shoreline** is on the northwest shoreline of the City of Oakley in Contra Costa County. The 1999 purchase of the 668-acre Lauritzen Property almost doubled the acreage of Big Break Regional Shoreline and added a unique and valuable habitat area for several endangered fish and bird species. This purchase was partially funded by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation through the Lauritzen Resource Enhancement Project.

### Project History

The Big Break Regional Shoreline Resource Enhancement Project is

the result of a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation project at the Contra Costa Canal, where the Bureau is constructing fish screening facilities to prevent fish from being drawn into the canal. The construction will disturb approximately 30 acres of wetlands. To compensate for some of this damage, the Bureau contributed \$50,000 towards the acquisition of the Lauritzen parcel, to help protect its wetlands.



*Big Break Regional Park channels provide habitat for fish and wildlife.*



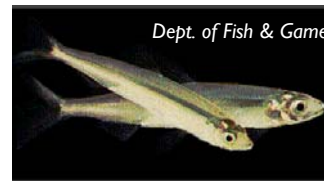
*Sunken ships create artificial islands and reefs – unique habitat for fish, birds, and wetland plants.*



*Big Break was formerly an island, breached by Delta flood waters in the 1920's.*

### Habitat Value

The Lauritzen parcel was part of a larger farmed island that was breached by Delta flood waters in the 1920's. The area has since evolved into 40 acres of filled marshlands and 628 acres of wetlands or submerged lands. The Lauritzen property



*Endangered Delta Smelt.*

contains excellent habitat for many threatened or endangered species. The endangered Delta smelt, Sacramento

splittail, green sturgeon, and salmonids make use of aquatic habitats and emergent tule marsh wetlands present on the parcel. The banks of Dutch Slough and tidal freshwater wetlands also provide habitat for several special-status plants. Several wood and metal ships have been sunk on the property over a 50-year period, creating unusual artificial reef and island-type habitats for fish, birds and wetland plants. The high habitat value makes the parcel an important addition to the Big Break Regional Shoreline.

#### Quick Facts

Action: Land acquisition  
Acres: 30  
Funding: \$50,000  
Provided by: United States Bureau of Reclamation  
Purchased: 1999  
Target habitats: tidal marsh  
Target species: delta smelt, black rail