



# AB 1850 – Recognizing the Banana Slug as the Official State Slug

*With coauthors: Assemblymembers Addis, Berman, Hart, Jim Patterson, Ting, Waldron, and Wood, and Senators Becker, Laird, and Wilk.*

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## BACKGROUND

California is categorized as its own Floristic Province, due to the number of endemic plant species present in the state. Banana slugs (*Ariolimax*) are an example of the rapid evolution that has made California extremely biologically diverse.

Banana slugs contribute to the ecological health of their environment through their role as detritivores, especially through their role in cleaning up detritus, distributing seeds and spores, acting as pollinators, and eating poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) and death angel mushrooms (*Amanita ocreata*).

Furthermore, banana slugs have a symbiotic relationship with the Coast Redwood (*Sequoia Sempervirens*), a California state tree, whereby they do not eat the seedlings of the tree, but eat the plants that would compete with the seedlings for light, water, and nutrients. In turn, the Coast Redwood provides the banana slug with the cool, moist habitat they need to thrive.

Banana slugs have been found throughout California but are predominately found in the state’s majestic redwood forests. However, the range of the banana slug ranges from Del Norte County all the way down to San Diego County. The banana slug has also been identified in Yosemite National Park, another icon of California.

Banana slugs belong to the *Ariolimax* genus, which includes (*Ariolimax dolichophallus*,

*Ariolimax californicus*, *Ariolimax columbianus*, *Ariolimax stramineus*, *Ariolimax buttoni*, *Ariolimax brachyphallus*).

## PROBLEM

The banana slug is an iconic symbol of California’s famed temperate rainforest. Due to its appearance and name, the banana slug is popular among children and adults in California.

Despite the cultural fascination with the banana slug, there is a dearth of academic research into this mollusk which can shed light on the evolutionary history of the state.

## SOLUTION

This bill designates the banana slug as the official state slug of California in order to promote appreciation, education, and research of banana slugs in the state.

## CONTACT

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Picture: Charmaine Mills