

## Legend Of The Fish-Women (Mermaids) – Miwok

Long ago when the Ah-wah-nee-chees were a young nation the Merced River was the home of the Fish-women (Mermaids). These were beautiful creatures, having the tails of fish and the upper bodies of women. They could not leave the water, but would often sit on the rocks in the shallows, or around the edges of the deep pools, combing their long black hair, and chanting luring songs to the warriors of Ah-wah-nee. But, charming as they were, the warriors would have nothing to do with them. One day while two braves were fishing in the deep pools of the river, with a net made of milkweed thread, the net became tangled with the rocks on the bottom of the pool. One of the braves dived down to loosen it, and the Fish-women, darting out from their hiding places under the rocks, tied the threads of the net to his toes and held him under the water until he was drowned. Then they carried the brave away to their land beneath the river, and neither he nor the Fish-women have ever been seen since.