

► The Sacramento Valley & Waterfowl



California's **Sacramento Valley** is the single most important wintering area for waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway with 4-5 million waterfowl migrating to the region every fall from as far away as Alaska, Canada, and Siberia. The Sacramento Valley's world-renowned mosaic of natural resources, including farms, wildlife refuges and managed wetlands, cities and rural communities, and meandering rivers work together in concert to support and feed waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and other species.

As the map on the reverse side shows, diverse land types such as refuges, rice-lands, private wetlands, and other farms sustain birds with food and shelter through winter and into spring, acting as surrogate wetlands to defray the loss of 95% of the historic wetland areas in the state.

Each year, between 500,000 and 600,000 acres of rice are planted in the Sacramento Valley, providing habitat for more than 230 species, including many birds. In a typical fall and winter, around 250,000 to 350,000 acres of this rice land is flooded, providing significant and essential habitat for Pacific Flyway waterbirds and nearly 60 percent of waterfowl food resources in the Sacramento Valley. In addition, more than 40,000 acres of privately managed wetlands and 27,000 acres within the National Wildlife Refuges and State Wildlife Areas also make substantial contributions to the Pacific Flyway habitat in the region.

All of this habitat is reliant upon the ability of Sacramento Valley water districts and companies to divert and deliver surface water resources year-round in accordance with their contracts and water rights. According to the **Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV)**, the combined winter water needs of flooded rice and wetlands in the Sacramento Valley is almost 1.1 million acre-feet per year.*

Currently, the region is experiencing a tenuous balance, providing just enough food for the waterfowl and other birds traveling to the Sacramento Valley in the winter months. Redirecting water to other areas would result in less acres of habitat by shifting the balance, leaving the birds without adequate food (visit duwestblog.org/newwaterera/energetics for more information).

Thanks to the sum of its parts, the Sacramento Valley is an ecological success story where limited water resources serve the mosaic of land to create a modern habitat combination that works for both humans and birds.

**This includes more than 250,000 acre-feet in additional water needed to reach CVJV water supply goals for refuges and privately managed wetlands*



Wetland Areas and Rice Fields in the Sacramento Valley of California

