



Save California's Last Wetlands



California's natural legacy is under threat

Great strides have been made to safeguard and restore California's last remaining wetlands. Today, that progress is at risk.

A century ago, 4 million acres of California wetlands supported millions of migratory waterbirds. Ducks, geese, terns, cranes, and shorebirds depended on great expanses of wetlands in the Central Valley for water, food and habitat during their long journeys along the Pacific Flyway. Since then, over 90% of California's wetlands have disappeared, and by the 1980s Central Valley bird populations had plummeted to less than 15% of their historic numbers.

Today, thousands of acres of California wetlands have been protected and restored through collaborative efforts. A complex of remnant wetlands on public and private refuges and wildlife-compatible crops in California's Central Valley and Klamath Basin now support over 6 million wintering waterfowl and serve as critical stopovers for hundreds of thousands of migrating shorebirds. Listed species like the giant garter snake thrive. Young salmon fry can grow and prosper. Thousands of people, including school children, visit these lands every year, support a multi-billion-dollar hunting industry, contribute millions of dollars to state and local economies, and create local jobs.

But every year, wetlands need water.

Congress took action over 20 years ago to protect remaining wetlands. The Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) mandated that key wetland locations receive vital water allocations. Despite significant progress, those promises have remained unfulfilled, even in plentiful water years. Competition for water, political pressure, rising water costs and years of drought have jeopardized two decades of investments in environmental restoration and recovery. As a result, migratory birds are finding fewer places to rest, feed, and raise their young. Overcrowding is leading to avian disease. California's citizens are losing recreational opportunities and a vital part of their natural heritage. Local businesses are suffering.

It is our responsibility to protect California's remaining wetlands and the millions of migrating birds and the human benefits they support. Refuge water needs account for no more than 8% of average Central Valley Project (CVP) deliveries—far less is delivered in drought periods. **A very small percentage of the overall water supply is all that is needed to preserve these wetlands and provide a critical backstop for habitat loss in droughts.**

Sustain our foundational wetlands

Deliver water every year to Central Valley refuges and private wetlands

- **Water Acquisitions:** Provide funding to consistently deliver sufficient water supplies to Central Valley refuges.
- **Infrastructure improvements:** Complete conveyances that augment or make more efficient use of available wetland water.

Provide reliable long-term funding

- **Central Valley Project Restoration Fund:** Maintain mitigation payments to the CVP Restoration Fund by water and power users who continue to benefit from the CVP.
- **New funding sources:** Develop supplemental funding sources and innovative policies to keep pace with increasing costs of acquiring and conveying water to our remaining wetlands.

Seize opportunities to create multiple benefits

- **Multi-benefit projects:** Prioritize funding for urban and agricultural water projects that also create wetland benefits.
- **Innovative water exchanges:** Capitalize on timing differences, optimize existing conveyance capacity, and offset peak water demand schedules—a win-win for both refuges and agriculture.
- **Intelligent water management:** Coordinate water storage, reservoir releases, and stormwater flows to flexibly and optimally meet the time-sensitive needs of fish, birds and agriculture across the Central Valley.
- **Mitigated transfers:** Ensure wildlife benefits from water transfers, exchanges, and new conveyances. Ensure all seasonal wetlands lost through water transfer programs are fully mitigated and include water necessary to support mitigation.



With adequate water supplies, refuges and managed wetlands provide multiple benefits

- Provide over 175,000 acres of quality, wetland habitat to support waterfowl and millions of migrating shorebirds
- Serve as a laboratory for wetland management, water use efficiency, and wildlife-friendly mosquito abatement techniques
- Host thousands of hunters, bird watchers, and other recreationists every year, generating millions of dollars for state and local economies and creating thousands of local jobs
- Provide habitat for wetland-dependent federally-listed species, thus contributing to recovery and reducing regulatory pressure on private landowners
- Provide wetland habitat for at-risk species at critical times when flooded agriculture or private lands cannot, especially during drought periods
- Serve as mitigation for huge western water and land development projects that led to large-scale wetland loss
- Fulfill California's and country's international obligation to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Optimize systemwide water management and efficiency through joint projects with urban and agricultural contractors



The Central Valley Joint Venture is one of 18 Joint Venture partnerships in the United States, established under International Migratory Bird Plans. It is a coalition of over 21 California and federal agencies, private conservation organizations and one corporation.

Joint Venture Management Board

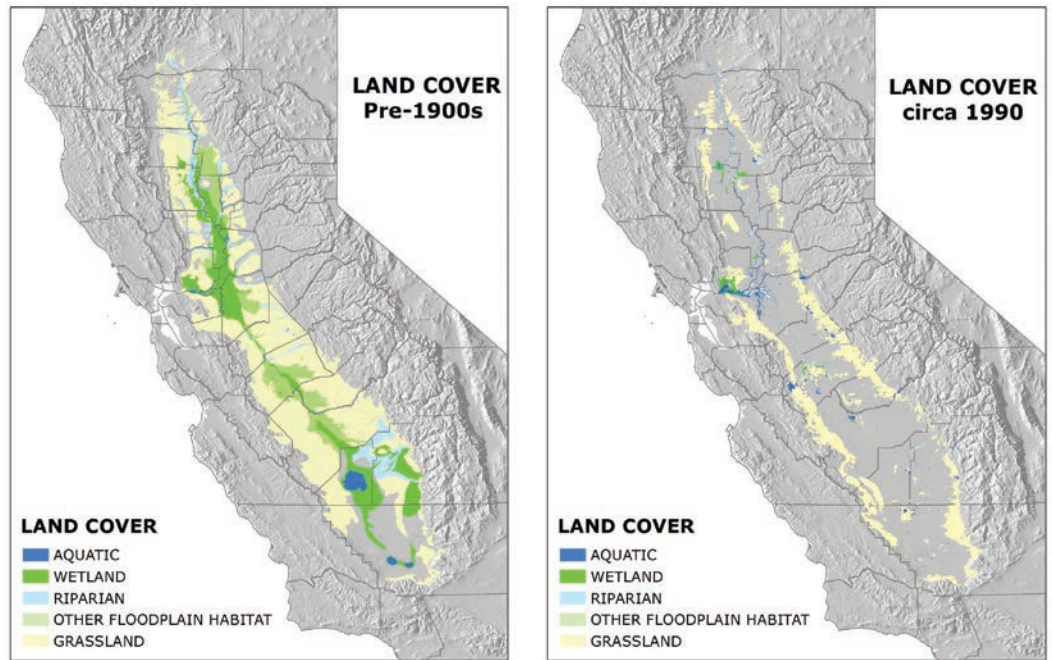
- Audubon California
- California Waterfowl Association
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Ducks Unlimited
- Point Blue Conservation Science
- River Partners
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land

Participating Organization

- Grassland Water District



Critical Central Valley refuges and easement lands



Disappearance of Central Valley wetlands © Central Valley Historic Mapping Project, California State University, Chico, Geographic Information Center, 2003

The mission of the Central Valley Joint Venture is to work collaboratively through diverse partnerships to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, and riparian songbirds, in accordance with conservation actions identified in its Implementation Plan.

For more information, contact Michael Dunphy, CVJV Coordinator, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, (916) 414-6459, Michael_Dunphy@fws.gov.

Visit the Central Valley Joint Venture at www.cvjv.org