

Critical Conservation Areas

California Bay-Delta

Expansion of Waterbird Habitat Enhancement Programs on Central Valley Agricultural Lands

Lead partner: California Rice Commission

The current sequence of events for rice production creates a situation where birds are frequently left with abrupt changes in habitat availability. The proposal extends the “watering” season of flooded rice fields beyond just the production phase and adds shallow water habitat in the winter/spring and fall months. This proposal will expand the Waterbird Habitat Enhancement Program (WHEP) by enhancing the wildlife value of acres of rice and the long term sustainability of rice agriculture. A new WHEP component will address the needs of upland-nesting bird species on targeted acres. Ultimately, the partners have a goal for past participants to transition to CSP, with acres enrolled in the rice field management portion and enrolled in the upland portion by 2019.

Protection, Restoration, and Enhancement of Tricolored Blackbird Habitat on Agricultural Lands

Lead partner: Audubon California

The Tricolored Blackbird, once was abundant in California with a population in the millions, now has an estimated 145,000 birds remaining statewide, and many predict that it is heading toward extinction. This proposal is a partnership between the dairy industry and conservation groups to address the factors that challenge California dairy farmers and threaten Tricolored Blackbirds, with the goal of finding a sustainable solution for management of colonies on farms and saving the Tricolored Blackbird from extinction. In addition to using working lands and easement programs to protect and increase habitat, the proposal includes an industry-led promotional campaign highlighting farmers’ role in saving the species and the formation of a working group with industry partners to develop, vet, and pilot potential long-term solutions that could substitute for federally funded harvest management practices.