



## Introduction and General Description

Since 1990, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in California has been restoring and enhancing wetlands, riparian areas, native uplands, instream habitats, and other habitats on private lands to benefit migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, salmon and steelhead, and other terrestrial and aquatic life. The program provides financial and technical assistance to conservation minded farmers, ranchers, and other rural landowners throughout the state to benefit fish and wildlife on their land.

### California Activities

- Wetland restoration & enhancement (plugging ditches, building levees, installation of water control structures, etc.)
- Upland restoration
- Restoration, enhancement, protection of habitat for migratory birds (wood duck boxes)
- In-stream restoration
- Stream bank stabilization and restoration
- Restoration of riparian and flood plain areas
- Restoration of fish habitat
- Restoration, enhancement,

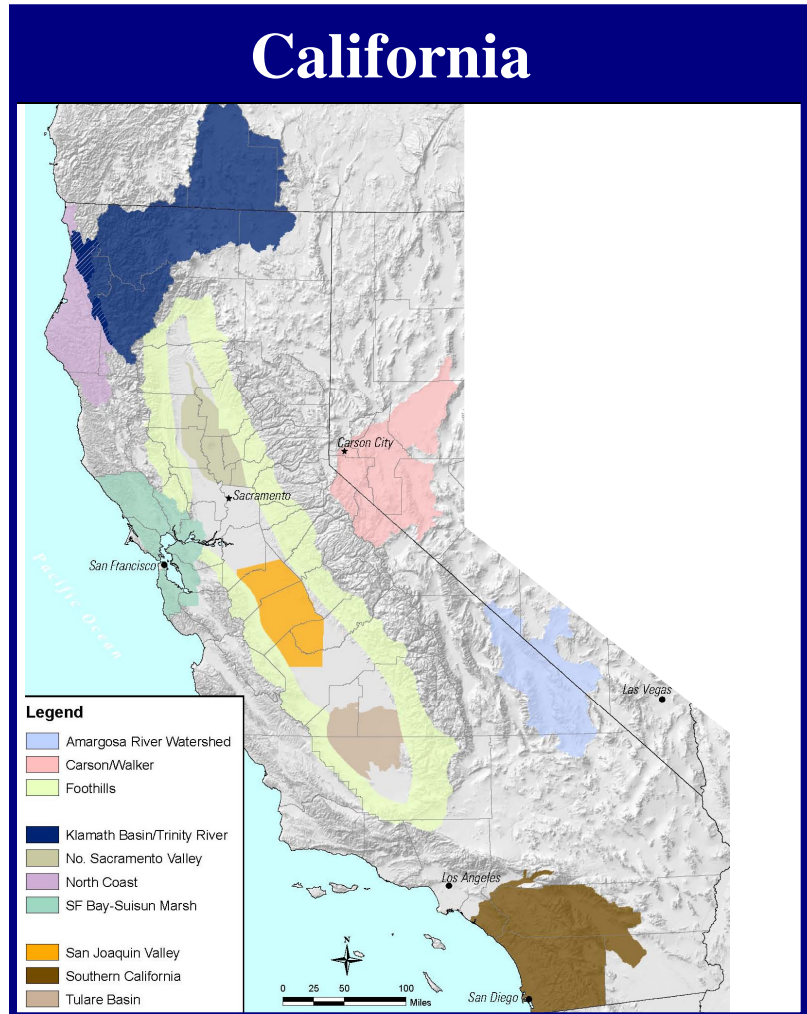
- protection of habitat for threatened, endangered, or rare species
- Schoolyard Habitats

### Habitats of Special Concern

**Wetlands** - California has lost over 90% of its historic wetlands. The Partners program is focusing its efforts on restoring wetlands in the Central Valley where vast numbers of migratory waterfowl breed and overwinter. Partners Program representatives work with

landowners to restore and enhance thousands of acres of wetlands each year for the benefit of migratory birds.

**Riparian Areas** - Over 95% of the historic streamside trees, shrubs, and ground vegetation has been lost in California from urbanization, agricultural conversion, vegetation clearing for flood control, livestock grazing, and invasion of nonnative plant species. Through the Partners program the Fish and Wildlife Service promotes landowners to restore miles of riparian habitat each year on private lands for the



Partners Program California Initiative Areas

benefit of migratory songbirds, waterfowl, salmon and steelhead, amphibians, and other fish and wildlife.

**Native Uplands** - Of the native habitats in California, native uplands have experienced the greatest percentage decline. It is estimated that 99 % of the historic native grasslands have been lost or have become dominated by nonnative plants. Grassland songbirds, reptiles, insects, and other animals are often unable to find the variety of food and cover they need among nonnative plants which has contributed to wildlife population declines. Many native plant species are on the decline because they cannot compete with nonnative plants for water and sunlight.



**Grazing is an important component in conserving California's unique vernal pools and endangered vernal pool species.**

**Threatened and Endangered Species** - With 288 species in California listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act many California Partners projects restore habitat for one or more Federal & state-listed species. The Partners program actively reaches out to farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners to restore and improve habitat for listed species on their land. Landowners are coming

forward with a willingness to provide habitat for rare species through the Partners program. The following threatened and endangered species have directly benefitted from habitats restored or enhanced through the Partners program in California:

**Threatened Species**

- Alameda whipsnake
- Aleutian Canada goose
- California coastal gnatcatcher
- California red-legged frog
- Coho salmon
- Giant garter snake
- Monterey spineflower
- Morro Manzanita
- Northern Spotted Owl
- Santa Cruz tarplant
- Southern sea otter
- Spring run-Chinook Salmon
- Northern California Steelhead
- Western snowy plover
- Valley elderberry longhorn beetle

**Endangered Species**

- California freshwater shrimp
- California tiger salamander
- El Segundo blue butterfly
- Least Bell's vireo
- Light-footed clapper rail
- Lost River sucker
- Monterey gilia
- Morro Bay kangaroo rat
- Morro Bay shoulderband snail
- Otay tarplant
- Palos Verdes blue butterfly
- Quino checkerspot butterfly
- San Francisco garter snake
- San Joaquin kit fox
- Santa Cruz long-toed salamander
- Shasta crayfish
- Shortnose sucker
- Smith's blue butterfly
- Southwestern willow flycatcher
- Southwestern arroyo toad
- Winter-run-Chinook Salmon
- Yuma clapper rail

Habitat loss and fragmentation is often the primary threat to many at-risk species. Thus, with its emphasis on habitat restoration, the Partners program also plays an important role in conserving **Candidate Species**. The program, in cooperation with private landowners, is working to restore habitats for several Candidate species in hopes that these partnerships will remove the need to list these species under the Endangered Species Act.



**Yellow-billed cuckoo, Candidate species**

**Threats**

It is expected that California will experience the greatest population growth of any state over the next 50 years. Competition for water will put tremendous pressure on wetland, riparian, and instream habitats - both in terms of habitat loss and degradation of the quality of water available for fish and wildlife. Increasing land values and the high cost of water will be incentives for agricultural producers and other rural landowners to sell their land for development. This will result in significant

losses in the amount and quality of habitats for fish and wildlife.

Invasions of exotic plants and animals will reduce the diversity of habitats causing native species to be less competitive. This will lead to increased threatened and endangered species listings and fewer opportunities to recover listed species.

## Conservation Strategies

**Wetlands** - Restoration of wetlands in the Central Valley will be one of the most effective way of conserving a fish and wildlife species in California. Wetlands provide important habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and threatened and endangered species.



Rice fields are leveled for crop production



Once restored, former rice fields provide ideal habitat for many important migratory waterfowl.

Wetland restoration involves

the use of earthmoving equipment to restore historic topography that has been leveled for agriculture. To mimic historic water flows water control and delivery structures are placed around the restored wetland. Hydrophytic vegetation is often planted to produce immediate wetland benefits.

**Riparian Areas** - Most migratory songbirds use riparian areas to meet some or all of their habitat needs, with some species including the yellow warbler and willow flycatcher being completely dependent on riparian habitats. Riparian areas also support many other common and declining species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Populations of many species of songbird are in decline in the west. Partners for Fish and Wildlife is working with ranchers and others to exclude livestock from creeks, replant native riparian trees, shrubs, and other plants, and to restore and stabilize eroding channels and streambanks.

**Native Uplands** - The value of native uplands (lands supporting primarily native grasses and forbs) as habitat for wildlife is receiving increased attention. Native grasslands and other uplands provide important habitat for songbirds, foraging raptors, nesting waterfowl, endangered mammals such as the giant kangaroo rat and San Joaquin kit fox, a variety of reptiles, and more. Each year there is more and more interest from landowners to restore native uplands, and we expect an increasing percentage of

## 5-year Targets (2007-2011)

- 24,535 acres of wetland
- 5,590 acres of uplands
- 129 miles of instream and riparian habitat
- 660 riparian acres

- totals do not reflect additional efforts in the Klamath & Trinity Basins

Partners projects to concentrate on uplands in years to come. Native upland restoration is accomplished using the same equipment a farmer would use to plant cereal grains, and ongoing weed control is a critical part of all upland restorations.

**Invasive Species** - Yellow starthistle, giant reed, salt cedar, perennial pepperweed, and many other aggressive nonnative plants have invaded natural areas and have become the dominant plant in many wetland, riparian, and upland areas. These plants crowd out native species and displace native plants that provide food and cover for wildlife. In recent years the Service has put increased emphasis on efforts to control exotic pests, and the Partners program is increasing its efforts correspondingly. The Partners program has begun to target particularly aggressive species that degrade and dominate important fish and wildlife wetland and riparian habitats, species such as perennial pepperweed and giant reed.

## Partners

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### Federal Partners

Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
Farm Service Agency  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Bureau of Land Management  
AmeriCorps  
National Guard  
Redwood National Park

### State Government Partners

California Wildlife  
Conservation Board  
California Department of Fish  
and Game  
Butte College  
California Conservation Corps  
California Department of  
Forestry  
DQ University  
University of California

### Local Government Partners

Yolo County Resource  
Conservation  
District (RCD)  
Marin/S. Sonoma RCDs  
Sonoma Fish/Wildlife  
Advisory Board  
South Bay Union Elementary  
Tulelake Schools  
Vina RCD  
City of Winters  
City of Woodlake

### Private Organizations

Ducks Unlimited  
The Nature Conservancy  
California Waterfowl  
Association  
National Audubon Society  
Sonoma Land Trust  
Arcata Redwood Company  
Boy Scouts of America  
Chico State University  
Foundation  
Pheasants Forever  
Putah Creek Council  
The Shrimp Club of Brookside  
School  
Trout Unlimited

## Contact

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