

US Fish & Wildlife Service FieldNotes

WETLANDS:California Projects Receive \$3 Million North American Wetlands Conservation Act Awards

Region 0, September 26, 2007

Mallard ducks are just one of the many species that will benefit from projects funded in California. - Photo Credit: n/a

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission this month approved grant requests through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act's program (NAWCA). The Commission's approval of \$3 million will support 3 projects in California. Partners in these projects will contribute an additional \$11.97 million in matching funds to help conserve more than 17,400 acres of habitat. The grants are financed by annual Congressional appropriations; fines, penalties and forfeitures under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; interest accrued to the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act; and excise taxes paid on small engine fuels through the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Fund. These projects support the objectives of the Sonoran and Central Valley joint ventures. Joint Ventures are partnerships established under the Waterfowl Management Plan. They bring together conservation organizations, public agencies, private landowners, and others interested in the conservation of bird habitat. There are 17 joint ventures across the U.S.

Imperial Valley Wetlands Project, Phase I

This project is located in Imperial and Riverside counties, California. Partners include: The California Waterfowl Association, California Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Fish and Game, and many private landowners.

Each year the Salton Sea, Imperial Valley, and lower Colorado River region supports millions of birds of more than 400 species. Biologists estimate that more than half of Pacific Flyway migratory birds visit the region and its marshes each year. This project will develop needed infrastructure to improve water delivery and management. Overall, the partners will protect and restore 2,400 acres of marshy wetlands and associated uplands. The habitat improvements will benefit nearly 40 different waterfowl species such as cackling goose, greater and lesser scaup, Pacific greater white-fronted goose, and many other waterfowl, as well as wildlife species in the area

North San Joaquin Valley Wetland Habitat, Phase III

This project is located in Merced and Fresno counties, California. Partners include: The California Waterfowl Association, the San Joaquin River Conservancy, Grassland Water District, U.S. Department of Transportation, California Wildlife Conservation Board, Department of Fish and Game, and many private landowners.

The northern San Joaquin Valley supports about a million and a half waterfowl and 250,000 shorebirds during peak periods in winter and spring. These birds largely concentrate in the Grassland Ecological Area (GEA), the largest contiguous wetland complex in California. Along the San Joaquin River, the partners will acquire 341 acres and restore 473 acres of marshy forested wetland and upland habitats. Within the GEA, partners will enhance more than 10,600 acres areas primarily owned or protected by easements held by the Service or the state. The project will improve wintering and migratory stopover habitat for waterfowl species and state or federally listed endangered species. The project will also improve land and water management, resulting in higher quality habitat for waterfowl and waterbirds.

Yolo and Delta Basins Wetlands Restoration and Enhancement Project II

This project is located in Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Yolo counties, California. Partners include: Ducks Unlimited, Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Fish & Game, California Bay-Delta Authority, Sacramento Tree Foundation, Syngenta Crop Protection, San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The project area is located in California's Central Valley, one of the most biologically significant areas of the Pacific Flyway. Flood control, agriculture, urban development, and invasive plant establishment have altered and reduced the region's wetland communities. This project will build on the acquisition, restoration, and enhancement efforts initiated in an earlier phase. This new phase will increase protected and restored acreage and will improve the diversity of the wetlands. Partners will acquire, enhance or restore 3,584 acres, including 1,500+ acres of marshy wetlands and more than 1,600 acres of wetland-associated uplands, grasslands, and wildlife-friendly agricultural lands. Former agricultural fields will be restored into wetlands, or associated grasslands. Waterfowl such as

the Tule Greater White-fronted goose, cackling Canada goose, northern pintail, mallard, will benefit, as will many other waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds.

Refuge Acquisitions

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission also approved the acquisition of a permanent easement of 255 acres in the Grasslands Wildlife Management Area in Merced, California. The easement will promote and enhance wintering waterfowl habitat for a number of waterfowl species. The fund receives revenue from Duck Stamp sales, import duties on firearms and ammunition, and right-of-way payments to the refuge system

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