

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY LANDSCAPES

California's San Joaquin Valley is rich with birds, plants, animals, fish and insects. Its rivers, streams and wildlife sanctuaries host millions of waterfowl, Tule elk, turtles, cranes, deer and many other species that call the San Joaquin Valley home. California's productive farmland and important wildlife areas both need reliable water supplies.



Photo by Gary Kramer

Federal, state and private lands together make up the largest freshwater wetland in California, and the second largest in the contiguous United States. Working together, these refuges and private lands with conservation easements preserve this thriving habitat.

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/san_joaquin_river/ | https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/San_Luis_NWRC_General_Brochure.pdf



Photo by Gary Kramer

The San Joaquin Valley lies in the center of the Pacific Flyway, a major migratory route for birds and waterfowl, hosting dozens of species on habitat that serves up to a million birds each year. Partnerships between conservation groups and local landowners help protect almost 75,000 tri-colored blackbirds.

<http://www.audubon.org/whats-at-stake#farmland-conservation>

Within this area lies the largest contiguous block of riparian woodland in the San Joaquin Valley, hosting a rich botanical assortment of grasses and shrubs. Over ½ million willows, oak and cottonwood trees have been planted, along with blackberry and rose within the area's 2,200 acres of river floodplain. These riparian corridors provide refuge for many species including the San Joaquin kit fox, minks, garter snakes and endangered brush rabbits. Previously struggling for water, this habitat now benefits from efforts by farmers to capture water that would otherwise evaporate from Los Banos Creek Reservoir.

https://www.fws.gov/Refuge/San_Joaquin_River/wildlife_and_habitat/index.html



Photo by Gary Kramer



ON THE FARM, EVERY DAY IS EARTH DAY

There are exciting and innovative projects underway to help restore and protect significant portions of California's native landscape. Together, our rivers, streams and land support a vast population of plants and wildlife. The Central Valley Project plays an important role in delivering reliable refuge water

supplies. These ecosystems are undergoing positive change thanks to the efforts of farmers and the conservation community. Here are just a few examples of the innovative approaches farmers are bringing to preserve the land, water and surrounding wildlife habitat with which they've been entrusted.

GRASSLAND BYPASS PROJECT IMPROVES QUALITY OF LOCAL HABITAT AND WILDLIFE

The Grassland Bypass Project protects sensitive wetland areas by redirecting and recycling water with high levels of naturally occurring minerals. With support from organizations like the Environmental Defense Fund, a project was launched that removed significant amounts of salt, selenium and boron through water conservation, which was then reused on salt tolerant crops. The project earned the praise of the Environmental Protection Agency, which called it a "success story."



Photo by Gary Kramer



PARTNERSHIP WILL HELP RETAIN WILDLIFE REFUGE WATER

An infrastructure investment by San Luis Water District will help retain water that is currently lost from critical San Joaquin Valley wetlands and create an additional 5,000 acres of habitat, equivalent to 58 Disneylands. Conserved water will benefit waterfowl, shorebirds, minks, river otters, and the endangered Giant garter snake and the Western pond turtle, and provide additional supplies to the water district and the farmers it serves.

FARMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS AGREE ON INNOVATIVE WATER RECYCLING PROJECT

Thanks to this project, wildlife refuges will now have a dependable water supply. The refuges contain critical habitat for waterfowl along the Pacific flyway, as well as other mammals, birds, and reptiles. Supported by the Defenders of Wildlife, Audubon Society and the California Waterfowl Association, a partnership between local water districts is recycling water to feed the refuges, provide water supply to area farmers who invested in the project as well as reduce groundwater pumping and reliance on Delta water.

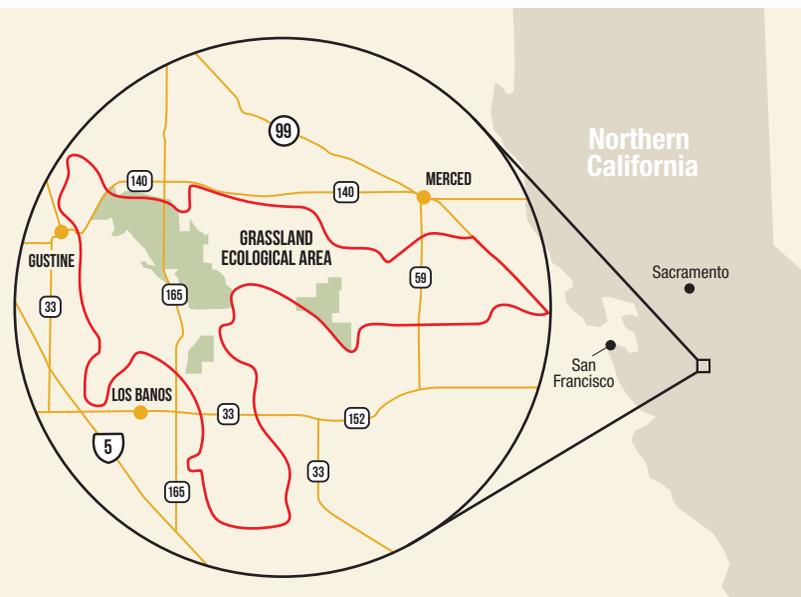


Photo by Gary Kramer



FLEXIBILITY IN REGULATIONS MADE WILDLIFE HABITAT BETTER

Along Los Banos Creek flood management operations were delivering water to wetlands when they needed it the least and starving them when they needed it the most. The Central California Irrigation District, San Luis Water District and Grassland Water District formed a partnership to simplify those regulations and divert flood waters off Los Banos Creek to a place where they could be managed and delivered to both farms and wildlife refuges on a schedule that works for both. Water that was previously lost completely, or flooding wetlands at the very time managers were trying to drain the marsh to start the wildlife refuge growing season, is now providing a more consistent supply to farms and wildlife refuges.

Learn more at <http://www.sldmwa.org/environment>