



California Drought Statement (June 2023)

After three years of drought and a historic 2022 season cut planted rice acres to the lowest in decades, an estimated 450,000 acres of rice will be planted in Northern California's Sacramento Valley for the 2023 season.

"This is great for every person, business and the communities [connected to planted rice fields](#) in the Sacramento Valley, but it is especially important for wildlife with every acre of rice planted this year bringing back critical habitat for 230 species that rely on rice fields for food, a safe space to rest, nest and raise their young. The green rice fields you'll see in the valley this year provides much more than a barren landscape," said President & CEO of the California Rice Commission Tim Johnson.

Even with a more typical start to the season, [delayed drought](#) continues to take a toll on [mills, dryers, storage facilities, trucking operations](#) and many other small businesses.

"Drought is not and will not be over until harvest for the people and businesses that rely on the prior year's crop output, they're all still living in drought until the fall," said Johnson.

According to a report by the University of California, Davis titled 'Continued Drought in 2022 Ravages California's Sacramento Valley Economy' rice mills, dryers and suppliers faced the harshest impacts totaling more than \$703 million in lost economic activity. The report further estimated drought caused 5,300 lost rice related jobs.

More rice acres planted in the region this season will bring a boost to jobs, local farming communities and economies as well as bring back the [vital habitat wildlife depends on](#) year round.

Planted rice fields in the Sacramento Valley are unique

Water in the field mimics [historic wetlands for 230 wildlife species](#). These same fields are vital to the millions of ducks and geese traveling the Pacific Flyway stopping to winter in the Sacramento Valley, are internationally recognized as an integral stop for migrating shorebirds, and early indications from a multi-year [collaborative pilot project](#) led by a team of UC Davis scientists shows planted rice fields may be the key to helping boost the state's [dwindling salmon population](#).