



California Rice Harvest (Sept 2023)

California rice harvest brings economic, environmental and ecosystem boost to the Sacramento Valley with more than half a million acres of rice currently being harvested for the 2023 season.

“Every acre of rice that is planted in the spring and harvested in the fall continues to benefit many all throughout the year. Harvest is a culmination of long hours and hard work by the many people who are an important part of the rice workforce, from the farm, to the mills, drying and storage facilities, trucking companies and the many other connected businesses needed to get rice from the field to your table,” said President & CEO of the California Rice Commission Tim Johnson.

The more than 500,000 harvested rice acres across the region this season will not only bring an economic boost to businesses and local farming communities, but it also brings environmental and ecosystem benefits by bringing back the vital wildlife habitat that significantly aids in sustaining current wildlife populations in the region year round.

“This rice harvest is especially important for wildlife, with every planted and harvested rice acre doubling as invaluable habitat for [230 different wildlife species](#) that rely on rice fields for food, a safe space to rest, nest and raise their young here in the Sacramento Valley all throughout the year,” said Johnson.

Harvest, habitat, food for waterfowl and fish

Once harvested, many rice fields will next be used as habitat by millions of waterfowl that innately travel the ancient Pacific Flyway migratory route to the Sacramento Valley. For two decades now, the Sacramento Valley has been designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site of International Importance, with rice fields being recognized for their critical importance to shorebird populations along the Pacific Flyway. Rice fields provide more than 60% of the fall and winter diet for the upward of 10 million ducks and geese that transcend on the valley every year. 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](#), with rice fields creating nutrient-rich food for baby salmon.