



Statement

Planted rice fields across Northern California benefit fish, birds, Sacramento Valley communities and California's ecosystem well into 2025.

An industry estimate of 460,000 acres of rice has been planted in Northern California's Sacramento Valley for the 2024 season.

Every acre of planted rice is especially important for wildlife, with [230 different wildlife species](#) including millions of waterbirds and threatened species such as the Greater Sandhill Crane, Tricolored Blackbird, Giant Garter Snake, and Western Pond Turtle relying on rice fields for food, a safe space to rest, nest and raise their young.

“Scientists are increasingly recognizing the ways in which California's rice fields can mimic important habitats and ecological processes for all kinds of species. Rice fields support food webs, critical habitat, and migratory pathways for all sorts of aquatic and terrestrial creatures which are endemic to California, including juvenile Chinook salmon. Rice is extremely important for our struggling biodiversity going forward.”

- Andrew Rypel, UC Davis professor, Department of Wildlife, Fish and Conservation Biology

“Rice fields pull double duty. They grow food for people in the spring and summer and then do it again, producing [abundant food web resources for waterbirds, salmon and other fish](#) when they are re-flooded in the fall and winter and managed as surrogate wetland habitat.”

- Jacob Katz, senior scientist for California Trout

“The Sacramento Valley is home to one of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl in the world and is designated as a site of international importance for helping to sustain bird populations. Planted rice fields are pivotal in protecting the [millions of ducks, geese and shorebirds](#) that visit the valley annually, by providing essential food and habitat resources.”

- Jeff McCreary, Ducks Unlimited

“Planted rice fields in the Sacramento Valley are a prime example of supporting biodiversity and the overall ecosystem. The fields are inherently multi-beneficial, with [40% of the water used](#) to grow amazing quality rice and producing food for 230 species of fish, birds and other wildlife; while the rest of the water flows to help irrigate neighboring farms and wildlife refuges, or returning downstream to the river.”

- David Guy, Northern California Water Association

“This 2024 rice season is essential in helping to sustain bird populations, strengthen imperiled fish populations and protect other vulnerable wildlife species in the Sacramento Valley by ensuring vital food and habitat resources for wildlife well into 2025.”

- Tim Johnson, President & CEO of the California Rice Commission

[Did you know?](#) California specializes in growing America's sushi rice

Read- [Environmental Benefits of California Rice](#)

Watch- [Ricelands: Cultivating California's Environmental Crop](#)

CA Rice in the [News](#)