

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

BirdReturns pays farmers and wetland managers in the Central Valley to create temporary “pop-up” habitat when and where birds need it most.

Since 2014, BirdReturns has partnered with over 200 growers and wetland managers in the Central Valley, resulting in over 200,000 acres of temporary wetland habitat and more than \$6 million in direct payments to participants.



CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY

California's Central Valley is the heart of the Pacific Flyway, a migratory pathway traveled by millions of birds each year. The Valley was once rich with wetlands, now over 95% are gone and the birds that depend on them are in trouble.

North America has lost an estimated 17 million shorebirds in the last 50 years. As indicator species, their decline signals deeper ecosystem stress.

READY TO GET INVOLVED?

If you manage lands in the Central Valley and want to get involved, scan the QR code below. Be part of a win-win for people and birds.

LEARN MORE & APPLY
VISIT BIRDRETURNS.ORG



"Anytime you can find some money that can help you stretch your dollars to do more for habitat and wildlife; that's kind of a no-brainer. Without wildlife and without wild things, so too we will go. There's no question about it."

- PETER OTTESEN,
WETLAND MANAGER



Dowitchers © Ryan McLaughlin

GET PAID TO CREATE HABITAT

Bring the Water,
Build the Habitat,
Boost the Flyway



The Nature
Conservancy

Audubon

Point Blue
Conservation
Science



BIRDRETURNS.ORG

American Avocet © Briana Magner



Some **WATERFOWL** species are in the Central Valley year-round. They usually have abundant habitat in winter, but species that breed in the Valley need more upland cover and flooded areas during the summer to raise their chicks.



Some **SHOREBIRD** species stay in the Central Valley year-round, while others migrate thousands of miles to breed elsewhere. They especially need habitat in April and late summer, when large numbers migrate through the Valley and there is not enough flooded habitat for foraging.



SANDHILL CRANES arrive in the Central Valley in October. They need habitat for foraging and roosting until March, when they migrate north for breeding and raising chicks through the summer.

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL

AUG

SEPT

OCT

NOV

DEC

JAN

FEB

MAR

Spring
Wetlands

Summer Wetlands (Semi-Permanent)

Summer Wetlands (Permanent)

Fall Wetlands

Late Summer Farmlands

Sandhill Cranes



Programs:

Habitat Focus:

Enrollment
Requirement:

Practice:

WETLANDS

Locations:

Sacramento Valley,
Delta, Suisun Marsh,
San Joaquin Valley,
Tulare

Spring
Wetlands

Spring flooded habitat for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.

1-week minimum enrollment (April)

Conduct a gradual drawdown to reach 50% mudflats.

Summer
Wetlands

Nesting and brood-rearing habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl.

Fully flooded from April—mid July (semi-permanent) or October (permanent)

Flood up wetlands in the spring and maintain habitat through the summer. Note: The summer program does not interact with the hunting season.

Fall Wetlands

Early flooded habitat for migrating shorebirds, early arrival waterfowl, and molting waterfowl.

Selected start date in August or September until the start of waterfowl season.

Gradually flood-up seasonal wetlands and maintain water into the start of the hunting season.

FARMLANDS

Locations:

Sacramento Valley,
Delta

Late Summer
Farmlands

Suitable habitat throughout the shoulder season for migrating shorebirds on agricultural fields.

5-week minimum enrollment

Provide shallow-flooded or mudflat habitat (up to 4") for migrating shorebirds.

Sandhill Cranes

Roosting and foraging habitat on agricultural fields for migrating sandhill cranes and shorebirds.

8-week minimum enrollment

Provide either flooded roost habitat for resting and/or dry forage habitat for feeding.