



## Enhancing Shorebird Habitat on Agricultural Lands

Partnering with the NRCS, PRBO helped more than 70 rice farmers secure \$2.7 million in new Farm Bill funding. Our goal is to increase shallow-water habitat and food for shorebirds, using practices developed by PRBO and partners on over 27,500 acres of rice lands in California's Sacramento Valley.

*Next Steps: Provide on-site assistance to rice growers; assess outcomes for migratory birds and refine practices as needed.*

### **Sustaining Agricultural Habitats for Migratory Birds Under Climate Change Program Summary**

Together with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Audubon California and The Nature Conservancy, PRBO helped implement the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative to provide much needed shallow water habitats for migrating waterbirds on rice fields in Glenn and Colusa counties in the Sacramento Valley.

The rice farmers will be flooding their fields earlier or maintaining water on their fields longer in the season—and at the 2-6 inch depth needed by the birds at critical points in the season. They will also flatten the sloped levees between their fields to providing a better nesting surface and shoulders, better accommodating the birds' nesting and resting needs. Some farmers will also provide artificial nesting structures.

We will now measure bird response to the new activities undertaken by the rice farmers. Using information collected along the way, these practices could be used as a template throughout the Sacramento Valley as well as other rice growing regions nationwide. Implemented more broadly, they could fulfill 100% of the Central Valley Joint Ventures' 5-year objectives for bird-friendly rice, making a significant contribution to sustaining migratory wetland bird populations along the Pacific Flyway.

PRBO is collaborating with USGS to develop landscape change scenarios based upon future water availability as well as precipitation and temperature patterns. We are assessing impacts of these changes on waterfowl, shorebirds, and other waterbirds in the Central Valley.

PRBO is also working with the Environmental Defense Fund and the California Rice Commission to implement a first-of-its-kind greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction demonstration initiative with rice producers. We will field-test a subset of GHG-reducing practices and produce user-friendly technology that combines performance- and practice-based approaches to help producers access carbon markets. These pilots, along with assessments of economic and environmental impacts, will provide the potential for replication

across the nation's rice-producing regions. Findings will help guide innovative market-based approaches for private lands conservation programs through NRCS.

<b>Total Project Budget:</b>	\$350,000
<b>Remaining Funding Need:</b>	\$75,000