

# **Annual Report**

## **California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation**



*September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019*



## Chairman's Message

Dear Foundation Supporters,

I am pleased to report that the California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation ("Foundation") continued and expanded its work to preserve the Pacific Flyway by putting your generous sponsorships and donations to work creating quality habitat in the Sacramento Valley. We not only continued our targeted investments into bird habitat but we also invested into exciting new efforts to use rice fields to help struggling salmon populations.

Notable developments over the last year include being awarded a generous grant from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation that has now engaged us on a major new project to develop critical information about how we may someday be able to raise baby salmon on winter-flooded rice fields. It is amazing to contemplate that, through the development of specific management practices, young salmon may someday be able to access their historic floodplain again. This could be a game changer and the work of this Foundation, in coordination with the California Rice Commission, UC Davis and California Trout, is making important strides towards this goal. I am already excited about my opportunity to write next year's Chairman's Message to report on all that we will learn from our upcoming two seasons of field work finishing up early in early-2020. So please stay tuned!

Our ongoing investments into our core mission of providing food and habitat for millions of migrating waterbirds in the Sacramento Valley continued with our cooperative efforts with The Nature Conservancy. Together, we placed more high-quality habitat for shorebirds on the landscape in Fall 2018 using donations from you. These investments expanded habitat for at least ten species of shorebirds which have scarce habitat options during their migration this time of year, while also providing habitat for many other waterbird species as well. Survey data documented that over 56,000 birds utilized this important habitat.

Thank you for your help in enabling us to expand the breadth of our wildlife conservation programs in the Sacramento Valley region to support the diverse populations of waterbirds and other wildlife. Together, we will invest intelligently and leverage your generous donations on collaborative projects with key agencies and other partners for an even greater beneficial impact on biodiversity here in our backyard.

Thank you again!



Paul Buttner  
Chairman

# Annual Report

## California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation

*September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019*

The California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation (“Foundation”) was created in 2015 for the purpose of receiving tax-deductible donor funds to implement activities that



Juvenile salmon placed into special study enclosures

create and promote real habitat projects on the ground in and around California ricelands. Over the past four years, we have utilized annual donations that were pre-determined as qualifying matching funds for a California Rice Commission (CRC) grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the NRCS’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) as well as additional funds from annual fundraising activities of the Foundation.

The Foundation uses its funds to invest in our mission to enhance the ecological value of California rice fields to help sustain millions of waterbirds and other wildlife in the Pacific Flyway for future generations. To date, we have invested over 90 percent of our donors’ contributions directly into projects in the field.

### Major Activities

This period included the following major activities:

- 1) Substantially increased our funding and portfolio of work by receiving a major grant to help fund a salmon recovery pilot project.
- 2) Invested donor dollars into high-quality shorebird projects.
- 3) Continued our efforts to pursue additional donations (beyond RCPP pledges).

### *New Efforts on Salmon Recovery*

In FY 2018-19, we deployed about half of a generous \$100,000 grant from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation that assisted us in securing a \$1.4 million project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) into an innovative salmon habitat pilot project with UC Davis and our conservation partners. This work included preparing a field site for the later introduction of 30,000 juvenile salmon from the Feather River Hatchery into a specially-prepared, winter-flooded



Acoustic tag placed into juvenile salmon before release



rice field. This work was documented on a dedicated website ([www.salmon.calrice.org](http://www.salmon.calrice.org)), also linked to our Foundation website ([www.CalRiceWaterbirds.org](http://www.CalRiceWaterbirds.org)), providing interesting photos, blogs, podcasts and video clips of our significant work in rice fields which expanded in the following fiscal year and will be discussed in greater detail in our next annual report.

### *Habitat Enhancement Project Investments*

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we leveraged our efforts with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to run a unique program called BirdReturns and invested over \$60,000 in fall of 2018 to create an additional 1,500 acres of quality habitat for shorebirds. The effort funded contracts with rice farmers for shallow flooding and waterbird-friendly management practices in September and early-October, a time of year when the majority of fields in rice country are still in production and quality open, shallow water habitat is extremely scarce on the landscape. Growers were required to manage post-harvest vegetation and straw to unique specifications to achieve minimal standing stubble and matted vegetation to provide ideal foraging habitat for shorebirds.



Long-billed Dowitcher



Greg Golet, TNC, surveying a habitat project site

Target species include but not limited to, long-billed dowitcher, least sandpiper, dunlin, greater yellowlegs, curlew, plover, black-necked stilts, white-faced ibis, and American avocet. Many other waterbird species also benefit from this habitat such as greater and lesser sandhill crane and numerous goose and duck species.

This habitat partnership between TNC and the California rice industry has been in place since 2014. In the Fall of 2018, TNC staff conducted a total of 230 surveys on the Foundation-funded BirdReturns project. During these surveys, over 56,300 birds were counted. This consisted of approximately 16,100 shorebirds, 14,500 waterfowl, 25,600 other waterbirds, and 35 corvids and hawks were documented to have utilized our project fields. A more detailed description of this collaborative work with The Nature Conservancy can be reviewed at <http://bit.ly/38tzEyy>.



## Scenes from the Foundation's Salmon Project





## Scenes from the Foundation's Waterbird Habitat Projects



### *Collection of Multi-Year Pledges*

The Foundation implemented its annual invoicing process to collect the re-occurring original pledges to match the RCPP funding from NRCS. Our collection of those dollars resulted in \$34,200 of donations provided to the Foundation to support next fiscal year's habitat investments.

### *Pursuing Additional Donations*

On an increasing scale, the Foundation continued its additional fundraising activities to generate donations beyond the RCPP pledges. This included a year-end fundraising outreach campaign using Twitter and a joint fundraising letter produced and distributed by the Foundation and CRC.

Our extra fundraising efforts (beyond the RCPP pledges) resulted in \$72,566 of additional donations to the Foundation to support next fiscal year's habitat investments.



# California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation

## Supporters

2018/19

### Stakeholders (\$50,000+)

SD Bechtel, Jr. Foundation

### Visionaries (\$5,000+)

American Commodity Company

Farmers' Rice Cooperative

Mary's Gone Crackers

Montna Farms

Rominger Rice

The Eddie Williamson Family Foundation

### Leaders (\$2,500+)

Paul and Sandi Bonderson, Jr.

Robbins Rice Company

Sun Valley Rice Company

### Champions (\$1,000+)

Central Valley Bird Club

Conaway Preservation Group LLC

Roberta Firoved

Kal Ag

John Salmonson

Sean V. Doherty Farms

### Advocates (\$500+)

Paul Buttner

DePue Warehouse Company

Don McCormick Fund

Eric Paulsen

R. Gorrill Ranch Enterprises

Josh and Kathryn Sheppard

### Builders (Up to \$499)

Patricia Bacchetti

Thomas Belza

Susan Bennett

Laura Blickle

Margaret Buss

Linda Cutler

Mildred Day

Kim DeVincenzi

Felicita Fields

Michael Flaningam

G&L Farms

Allegra Hakim

Mary Hanson

Meghan Hertel

Mahlon Hile

Angela Jackson

L&M Rice Farm

Diane Luke

E N Morello Farms

Ellen Martin

Kailey McCarthy

Patricia McDaniels

Jim & Leslie Morris

David Oshima

Amy Rogers

Rita Rourke

Kathy Shimata

Taresh Farms

Michael Taylor

William Wallace



## Summary of the Foundation's Financial Statement

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 112,225	\$ 75,022
Prepaid expenses and other assets	\$ 702	
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 112,927</u>	<u>\$ 75,022</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	<u>\$ 112,927</u>	<u>\$ 75,022</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>\$ 112,927</u>	<u>\$ 75,022</u>

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b><u>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</u></b>		
Contributions	\$ 174,937	\$ 54,730
Pledges	34,200	37,200
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<u>209,137</u>	<u>91,930</u>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>		
Program expense	117,857	
Management and general	23,639	25,478
Fundraising	29,736	12,596
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>171,232</u>	<u>38,074</u>
<b>Changes in Net Assets</b>	<u>37,905</u>	<u>53,856</u>
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of year</b>	<u>75,022</u>	<u>21,166</u>
<b>Net Assets - Ending of year</b>	<u>\$ 112,927</u>	<u>\$ 75,022</u>



California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation  
1231 I Street, Suite 205  
Sacramento, California 95814  
(916) 387-2264

*Enhancing the ecological value of California rice fields to help  
sustain the millions of waterbirds and other wildlife in the  
Pacific Flyway for future generations*

**CalRiceWaterbirds.org**

California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization  
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