



Yolo HCP/NCCP Species and Habitat Conservation



Background

The Yolo Habitat Conservancy has prepared the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (Yolo HCP/NCCP). The Yolo HCP/NCCP is a countywide conservation plan to provide Endangered Species Act permits and associated mitigation for infrastructure (e.g. roads and bridges) and development activities (e.g. agricultural facilities, housing, and commercial buildings) identified for construction over the next 50 years in Yolo County.

The Yolo HCP/NCCP will coordinate mitigation to maximize benefits to species, as well as conserve habitat above and beyond required mitigation for 12 identified species. The plan strikes a sensible balance between natural resource conservation and economic growth in the region.

Conservation Strategy

The Yolo HCP/NCCP contains specific and measurable biological goals and objectives, as well as conservation measures that will mitigate the impacts of covered activities and provide for the conservation of covered species. The specific elements of the Yolo HCP/NCCP conservation strategy include:

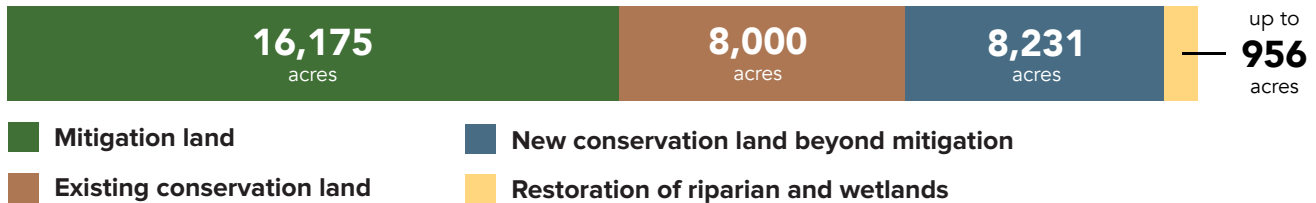
- Conserve, restore, and provide for the management of representative natural and semi-natural Communities
- Establish reserves that provide for the conservation of covered species within the Yolo HCP/NCCP geographic area and linkages to adjacent habitat outside the Plan Area
- Protect and maintain habitat areas large enough to support sustainable populations of covered species
- Incorporate in the reserve system a range of environmental gradients and high habitat diversity to provide for shifting species distributions in response to changing circumstances (e.g., in response to climate change)
- Sustain the effective movement and genetic interchange of organisms between habitat areas in a manner that maintains the ecological integrity of the reserve system



Land Conservation Commitments

33,362

total acres of conservation commitments



In addition to strengthening local control over land use and species protection, the Yolo HCP/NCCP will provide a more efficient process for protecting natural resources by creating a new reserve system that will be larger in scale, more ecologically valuable, and easier to manage than the individual mitigation sites. As an NCCP, the Yolo HCP/NCCP also provides for conservation beyond mitigation requirements.

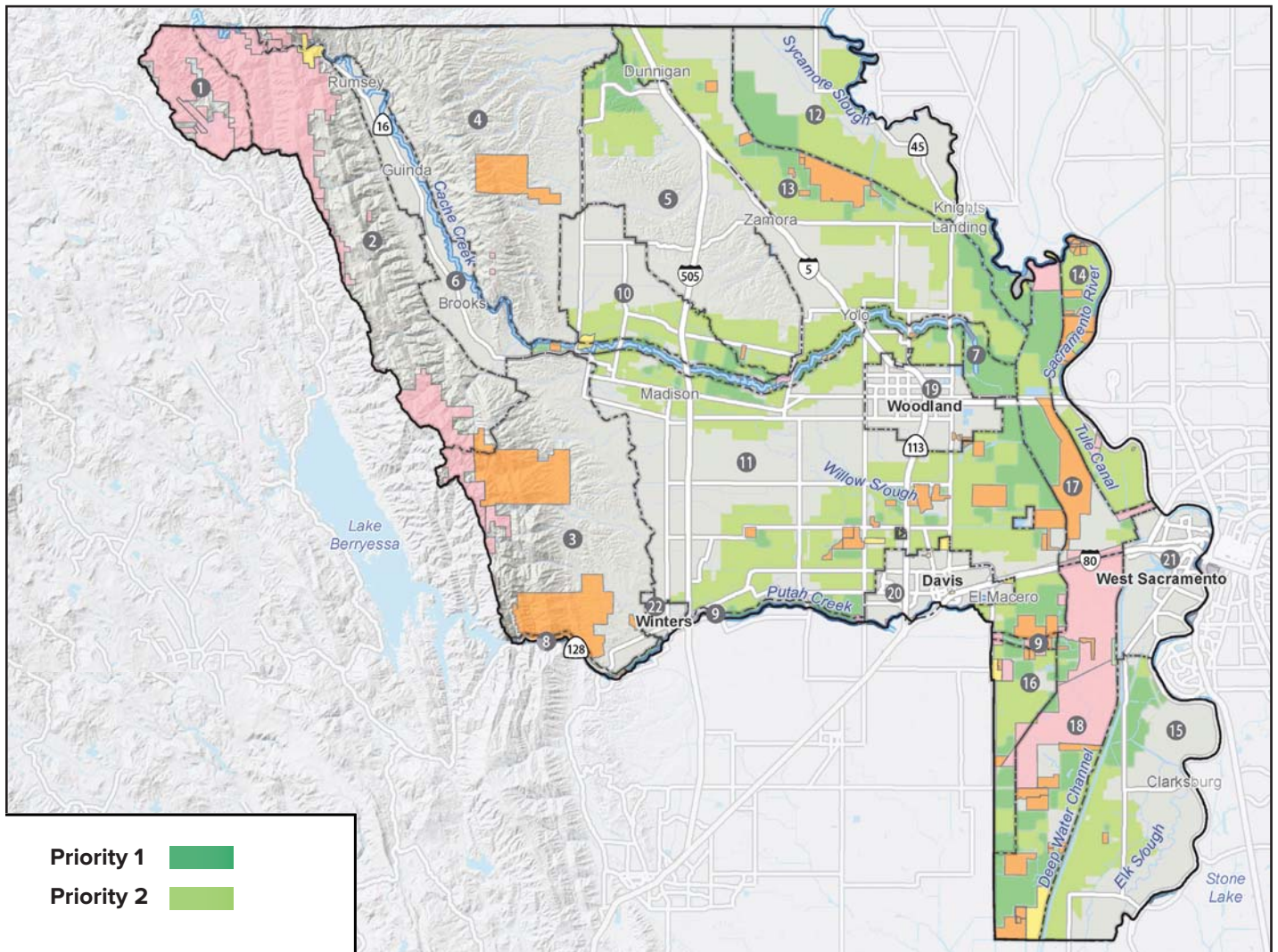
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Conservation Measures

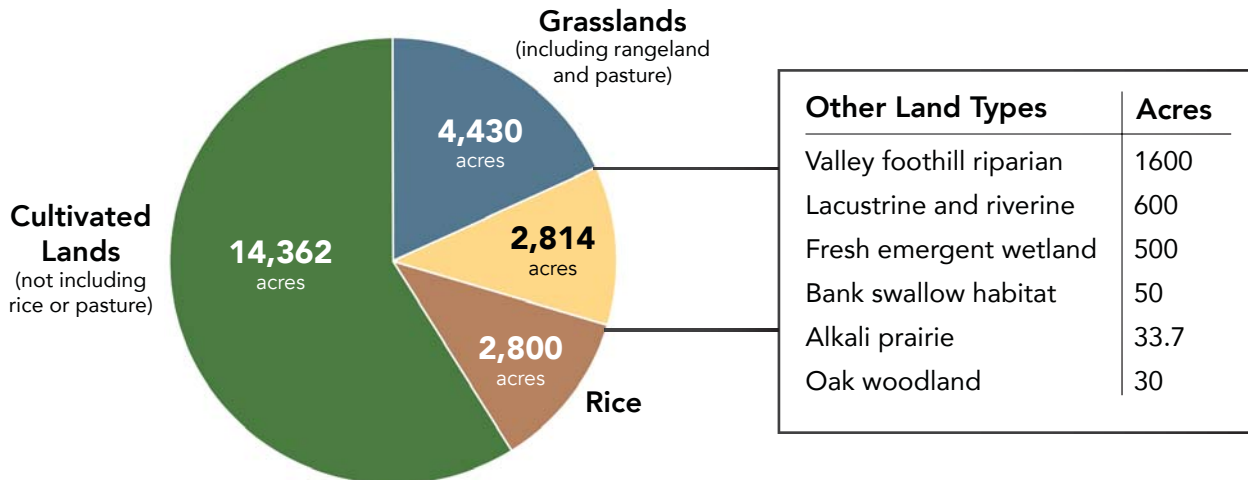
The Yolo HCP/NCCP conservation strategy is designed to streamline compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other applicable environmental regulations. The conservation strategy provides for the conservation of the covered species and incidentally provides for habitat needs of non-covered native species associated with each of the natural communities. Section 6.4 includes three broad categories of conservation measures:

- 1. Establish Reserve System** (Section 6.4.1) describes the Yolo HCP/NCCP's commitments for land acquisition and enrollment to establish the reserve system. It includes acreage commitments for natural communities and species habitat, describes land protection mechanisms and enrollment requirements, and provides guidelines and commitments for identifying lands to acquire.
- 2. Restore Natural Communities** (Section 6.4.2) describes the Yolo HCP/NCCP's commitments for natural community and species habitat restoration. It defines restoration, specifies restoration commitments, and provides restoration criteria and techniques.
- 3. Manage and Enhance the Reserve System** (Section 6.4.3) describes the Yolo HCP/NCCP's commitments for natural community and species habitat management and enhancement. It defines management and enhancement, describes the requirements for preparing reserve management plans, and describes management and enhancement actions at the landscape, natural community, and species levels.

Priority Acquisition Areas



New Conservation By Land Type



Reserve System Assembly

The Conservancy and its implementation partners will assemble the Yolo HCP/NCCP reserve system during the permit term. Efforts to conserve lands in the Plan Area will emphasize areas with the greatest overall value to covered species and natural communities. To learn more about the reserve system, see chapter 6.4.1.4 Reserve System Assembly.

Covered Species

Yolo County supports a wide array of species, from specialized plants and animals that only occur in the alkali pools and vernal pools of the Central Valley floor to migratory birds that fly thousands of miles to nest in Yolo County and elsewhere in the Central Valley. While the Yolo HCP/NCCP and Local Conservation Plan will facilitate conservation benefits for many of these species, the Yolo HCP/NCCP focuses on the 12 species described below due to their rarity and current conservation status.

Palmate-bracked bird's beak



The palmate-bracted bird's-beak is actually a plant! The whole plant stands less than 1 foot tall and is covered in short hairs that excrete salt crystals. Bees help the bird's-beak transfer pollen between its male and female reproductive systems to produce seeds.

Giant garter snakes



Giant garter snakes are often found in rice fields, where they can find small fish, tadpoles and frogs to eat. Female garter snakes grow to be a foot longer and are three times heavier than male snakes. Garter snakes are not dangerous to humans.

Valley elderberry longhorn beetle



The valley elderberry longhorn beetle lays between 8-20 eggs per year in bark crevices on the elderberry tree. The larvae feed on stems and branches of the tree for 1-2 years while maturing. They then chew a circular hole where they emerge as an adult beetle.

Swainson's Hawk



The Swainson's hawk arrives to the Central Valley from its winter home in Central Mexico around March each year. Breeding mother hawks sometimes travel up to 18 miles from their nests to forage for food. The Swainson's hawk often will hunt behind tractors to find exposed small rodents.

California tiger salamanders



Tiger salamanders breed in ponds and spend most of their adult lives on land, but underground. “Tiger” comes from the white or yellow bars on their skin. Instead of drinking water, these salamanders absorb water through their skin while lying in puddles or on top of rocks covered in dew.

White-tailed kite



The white-tailed kite has a distinctive white underside with a gray back and red eyes. The kite often nests near other kites and raptors such as the Swainson’s hawk. White-tailed kites are often found in areas with high populations of meadow voles and other prey.

Western pond turtle



Western pond turtles eat algae, plants, crustaceans and insects. They are found in slow moving streams, ponds, and other natural and man-made water bodies. They favor habitats with logs and rocks where they can bask in the sun.

Western burrowing owl



Burrowing owls do not make their own burrows. They instead choose burrows from other species, most commonly ground squirrels. Burrowing owls often adopt burrows in and adjacent to disturbed areas such as roads.

Western yellow-billed cuckoo



The western yellow-billed cuckoo migrates north from South America to California around May each year. They breed in June and July. Male and female parents share incubating and brooding duties and deliver food to their young.

Bank swallow



The bank swallow is a small gray and white bird that breeds in burrows on vertical banks near bodies of water. These birds typically nest in colonies and dig their own nesting burrows that can be up to five feet long.

Least Bell’s vireo



The least Bell’s vireo is a small bird that relies on willow-dominated riparian areas for its primary nesting and foraging habitat. They migrate from Baja California to Northern California around April and return to Baja California in late summer or early fall each year.

Tricolored blackbird



The tricolored blackbird is almost entirely black, except for a bright red shoulder patch with a white border, explaining its name. While the red-winged blackbird can be found all over the continent, nearly all tricolored blackbirds are found in California.

