

DRAFT
Delta Waterfowl Habitat Management

Description

Conversion of seasonal wetlands to agricultural and other uses in the Delta region have reduced available habitat for migrating waterfowl. Delta waterfowl habitat management consists of activities that would create new habitats for waterfowl and improve the productivity of existing habitats through alterations to land use management practices on wildlife management areas and areas in agricultural production.

This category includes the following actions:

- manage crops for waterfowl food crops,
- improve management of public waterfowl areas,
- time mowing to avoid hatching gamebirds,
- implement terrestrial predator control programs, and
- increase sources and availability of wildlife forage.

Purpose

The Delta serves as an important component of the Pacific Flyway for wintering waterfowl. Its importance can be measured both in terms of the number of species and the abundance of each species that uses the Delta. These species include white fronted geese, snow geese, mallards, northern pintails, and American widgeons. Management actions for waterfowl species are intended to improve habitat conditions and populations of these wildlife. Management would identify factors that limit the distribution and abundance of these species and improve habitat conditions through actions that address these limiting factors. The end result would be an increase in the variety, abundance, and distribution of waterfowl species.

Constraints

Management actions to increase available forage and improve winter habitat conditions for waterfowl could require that private landowners modify agricultural practices, possibly resulting in a reduction in annual productivity on croplands. Such changes in agricultural practices may require land purchases or conservation easements for implementation.

Linkage to Other CALFED Action Categories

Restoration of Delta wetland habitat and management of adjacent agricultural land for waterfowl forage would provide additional benefits for waterfowl species. Waterfowl management actions could be coupled with the construction of floodways and meander belts to provide similar benefits. Restoration of tidal wetlands would provide benefits for waterfowl and for native and other important fish species.