



2026 rice harvest delivers wildlife, environmental and economic benefits to the Sacramento Valley

California rice growers are currently harvesting an estimated 475,000 acres of rice across the Sacramento Valley for the 2026 season.

“Every acre we harvest this fall goes right back to work as wildlife habitat this winter,” said Eric Holst, president and CEO of the California Rice Commission.

The 2026 harvest reflects the acreage benchmark that UC Davis and Point Blue Conservation Science have identified in the [Rice Footprint report](#) as necessary to sustain habitat for 230 wildlife species connected to rice fields.

“Harvest is a team effort across Northern California – growers, mills, dryers and the truckers who help get rice from the field to your table,” Holst said.

Once harvest is complete, winter-flooded rice fields will provide essential habitat for millions of ducks, geese, shorebirds, bald eagles and threatened species like the Greater Sandhill Crane. These rice fields will also double as surrogate wetlands, creating critical habitat for juvenile salmon.

California’s rice harvest also contributes \$5 billion in economic activity by supporting more than 25,000 rice-related jobs in the Sacramento Valley.

[Did you know?](#) California specializes in growing America’s sushi rice
Learn how rice fields help fish: [Salmon Project](#) & [CalTrout’s Fish Food Program](#)