

Riparian Habitat Joint Venture

Announcements

New California Riparian Habitat Restoration Guide Now Available

This handbook demonstrates how to approach riparian restoration design from an ecological perspective specific to the project location, and describes the existing ecological conditions and physical processes at the watershed level that must be considered when developing an accurate, site-specific restoration plan. Sign-up at our website and receive the password to download it for free.

Riparian Conference Proceedings Available for download

The Proceedings from the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture Conference: Integrating Riparian Habitat Conservation & Flood Management in California (December 4-6, 2007; the Radisson Hotel, in Sacramento, California) are now available. Please visit

<http://www.prbo.org/calpif/rhjvconference/proceedings/> to download the proceedings (free).

Introduction

California Partners in Flight (CalPIF) initiated the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (RHJV) project in 1994. To date, eighteen federal, state and private organizations have signed the landmark Cooperative Agreement to protect and enhance habitats for native landbirds throughout California. The RHJV, modeled after the successful Joint Venture projects of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, reinforces other collaborative efforts currently underway which protect biodiversity and enhance natural resources as well as the human element they support.

Riparian habitats were a clear first priority for a CalPIF Joint Venture because they have the highest diversity and productivity of landbirds of any terrestrial habitat type in the western United States. Deciduous riparian forests, comprised mostly of willow, alder, cottonwood and dense undergrowth bordering streams and lakes, have largely been lost to stream channelization, development, logging, grazing and water diversion throughout the west. Only 5% to 10% of California's original (pre-European contact) riparian habitat exists today and much of the remaining habitat is in a degraded condition.

What is Riparian Habitat?



Riparian habitats are those plant communities supporting woody vegetation found along rivers, creeks and streams. Riparian habitat can range from a dense thicket of shrubs to a closed canopy of large mature trees covered by vines. Riparian systems are one of our most important and most neglected, renewable natural resources. While small in total area when compared to California's size, they are of special value as wildlife habitat. Over 135 species of California birds such as the Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Red-shouldered Hawk either completely depend upon riparian habitats or use them preferentially at some stage of their life history. Riparian habitat provides food, nesting habitat, cover, and migration corridors. Another 90 species of mammals, reptiles, invertebrates and amphibians such as California red-legged frog, Valley elderberry longhorn beetle and riparian brush rabbit depend on California's riparian habitats. Riparian habitat also provides riverbank protection, erosion control and improved water quality, as well as numerous recreational and aesthetic values.

RHJV Goals and Objectives

The vision of the RHJV is to restore, enhance, and protect a network of functioning riparian habitat across California to support the long-term viability of landbirds and other species. A wide variety of other species of plants and animals will benefit through the protection of forests along our rivers, streams and lakes. The RHJV mission is to provide leadership and guidance to promote the effective conservation and restoration of riparian habitats in California through the following goals:

1. Identify and develop technical information based on sound science for a strategic approach to conserving and restoring riparian areas in California.
2. Promote and support riparian conservation on the ground by providing guidance, technical assistance and a forum for collaboration.
3. Develop and influence riparian policies through outreach and education.

Riparian Bird Conservation Plan

download the plan (4489 kb pdf)

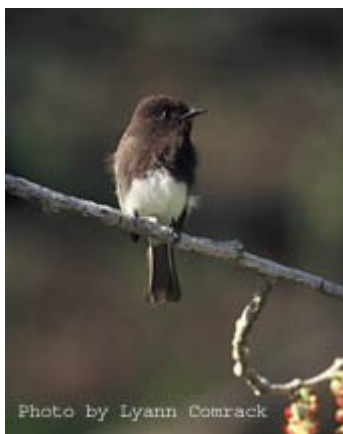


A major achievement of the RHJV partnership is the development of a statewide Riparian Bird Conservation Plan (Conservation Plan) based on current, scientifically valid data and the collective expertise of the state's top ornithologists. This plan is the guidance document for RHJV riparian conservation and action. The Conservation Plan is based on fourteen riparian-associated bird species selected to serve as indicators of a range of natural riparian habitat conditions. It synthesizes and summarizes current scientific knowledge on the requirements of the fourteen focal species. It also provides recommendations for habitat protection, restoration, management, monitoring, and policy to ensure the long-term persistence of birds and other wildlife dependent on riparian ecosystems. The Conservation Plan is a living document which will be improved and updated as new information becomes available from the field and implemented through bioregional working groups.

Other major efforts are underway to describe characteristics of riparian habitat needed to maintain healthy populations of these species; to identify sites (RHJV Flagship Projects, Portfolio Sites and new restoration projects) throughout the state key to maintaining healthy bird populations and serve as "source population" areas; to develop educational and outreach materials for distribution at our projects and to train a cadre of volunteers to monitor these sites to determine their long-term health and viability.

Find out more about the plan here.

RHJV Partners



Partner agencies and organizations of the RHJV include:

- National Audubon Society
- PRBO Conservation Science
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- River Partners

- Trust for Public Land
- The Resources Agency
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- California State Lands Commission
- California Department of Water Resources
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- National Park Service
- U.S. Geological Service

The RHJV Management Board consists of designees from the six conservation organizations; agencies serve as ex officio advisory members to the Board.

RHJV Plans and Objectives

The RHJV Strategic Plan articulates the vision, mission, and goals of the joint venture. It provides a framework for understanding the long-term goals of the RHJV, and direction for the annual Operating Plan. Currently we are working on developing quantitative habitat objectives and priorities to include in the Strategic Plan. The Operating Plan details the actions the RHJV will undertake annually in order to move toward achieving the vision, mission, and goals of the RHJV Strategic Plan. In addition, the Operating Plan identifies measures of success for each task identified for the current year and documents achievements. This Plan is updated annually.

Through board meetings, workshops, presentations and networking the RHJV provides a forum where members, as well as other organizations, can develop new collaborative opportunities for planning, funding and implementing riparian conservation projects. The collective knowledge of our member organizations allows us to take a unified approach to developing effective standards and guidelines to achieve more successful riparian conservation across the state. This can include common definitions and management practices, integrating RHJV information (i.e. the Riparian Bird Conservation Plan) into the plans of other management organizations, and providing technical assistance to improve riparian restoration planning and implementation.

An important objective of the RHJV is to develop a statewide map of riparian habitat. We have developed a framework for defining and mapping riparian habitat across California. In 2005/2006 it is being tested in a pilot mapping project to determine its applicability to creating the statewide map of riparian habitat. Work on the complete statewide map is expected to begin in 2007.



Available through the RHJV

- Riparian Bird Conservation Plan Version 2.0 (2004)
- Faber, P.M. (ed.) 2003 California Riparian Systems: Processes and Floodplains Management, Ecology, and Restoration (2001 Riparian Habitat and Floodplains Conference Proceedings)
- 2004 RHJV Strategic Plan
- 2005/2006 RHJV Operating Plan

Contact Information

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