



California Department of Fish and Game



Organization Overview

The Department of Fish and Game supports California Partners in Flight programs by collaborating with federal, state, and private conservation partners for taxa inventory and habitat management and restoration projects throughout California. The following examples illustrate projects designed to support CalPIF and establish baseline distribution information for key CalPIF taxa.

Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) Distribution and Habitat associations.

As part of the support for California Partners in Flight and in response to reports of sharp population declines, the Department organized a series of volunteer surveys designed to locate and count nesting Tricolored Blackbirds. The Department provided partial funding for a Principal Investigator and organized experienced volunteers to visit historic nesting colonies, document nesting status and colony size, and, in some cases, determine reproductive success. During 1996, 1997, and 1999, surveys covered the entire state but focused primarily on the Central Valley, southern coast, and the western desert regions.



Photo by James Gallagher, Sea and Sage Audubon

Beginning in 2001, PRBO and the USFWS began supporting the survey efforts as part of their on-going contribution to CalPIF programs. The Department continues to support survey efforts by participating on the Tricolored Blackbird Working Group and hosting an interactive map site where visitors can perform complex queries of the data or download it for use with other data and information. The map site is available as part of the Biogeographical Information and Observation System, (BIOS) at <http://bios.dfg.ca.gov/>.

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*) Distribution and Habitat associations.

Using the survey model developed as part of the Tricolored Blackbird effort, the Department organized surveys for wintering Mountain Plover designed to improve understanding of distribution and wintering habitat associations. This project also employed highly skilled volunteers from state and federal agencies and the public. Data gathered as part of this effort helped refine distribution and provided information that could be directly incorporated into the CalPIF Grasslands Conservation Plan.

Data collected during surveys conducted in 1998 and 1999, and analyzed with data collected by the National Audubon Society in 1994, point to a decline in California wintering use. Recent project-specific surveys resulted in detections in the Imperial Valley where a majority of the wintering population may now reside. Although the FWS declined to list this species when petitioned in 2001, clear declines over historic population levels are irrefutable. The CalPIF Grassland Bird Conservation Plan identifies actions that could result in improved habitat conditions for the species in California.

The results of these surveys, and summaries of results from previous surveys, are available through the CDFG Species Conservation and Recovery Program (formerly the Bird and Mammal Conservation Program) on-line library at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hcpb/info/bm_intro.shtml.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Lyann Comrack
CDFG Sensitive Species Monitoring Program
4949 Viewridge Ave
San Diego, CA 92123
858 467-4208
LComrack@dfg.ca.gov