



NRCS Assistance that positively affects Neotropical Migratory Birds in California



Project Summary

While there are few projects specifically targeted at Neotropical migratory bird conservation, NRCS in California has nonetheless positively impacted them in Fiscal Year 2004. With a Field Staff of nearly 200 Conservationists located in 51 Field Offices, NRCS California provided natural resources technical and financial assistance to all 58 counties on virtually all working land types found in the state. What follows is *a summary* of FY2004 activity that provided habitat benefits to an array of fish and wildlife including most bird groups:

- **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP):** 47 million dollars that funded over 2000 contracts that will treat 445,000 acres of private crop, range, grass, pasture, and forest lands.
- **Wetland Reserve Program (WRP):** 16 million dollars were dedicated to secure easements and agreements that will restore nearly 9,000 acres of diverse wetlands in California. With the inclusion of projects projected to be funded next fiscal year, NRCS in California will surpass 100,000 acres that have been restored in California since the inception of WRP in 1992.
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP):** 1.5 million dollars were awarded for 31 contracts on nearly 2,500 acres that included exclusion fencing along riparian corridors, eradication of exotic plants, riparian habitat restoration, and management of Rare and Declining Habitats, along with several salmonid habitat projects that will focus on stream side habitat restoration.
- **Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP):** 1.6 million dollars were awarded for rental and easement contracts on 6200 acres of grass and shrub lands in California. The land enrolled in the program was subject to threats of imminent development prior to enrolling in the program.

In keeping with NRCS philosophy to encourage working land managers to manage holistically, we work with an array of fish and wildlife interests, in addition to Partners in Flight. NRCS Biologists are trained to work with NRCS field conservationists and engineers as well as our partners, to encourage consideration and inclusion of life history and habitat requirements of aquatic species, pollinators, herptofauna, and all groups of birds and mammals, with some special emphasis on bats. Some *specific examples of conservation applied* to the land reported through NRCS programs in FY2004 include:

- 4 miles of hedgerows;
- 2 miles of shelterbelts;
- 35,000 acres of pest management (weed control, reduction of pesticides, IPM);
- 128 acres of riparian forest buffers;
- 1,600 acres of stream habitat improvement;
- 3332 acres of forest stand improvement;
- 200,000 acres of prescribed grazing;
- 129 miles of fence;
- 1,800 acres of use exclusion;
- 18,000 acres of wildlife habitat management



Photo by Eric Preston

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