

Spring Tales Newsletter

California Rice Land



Written by
Rebecca Stark,
Intern,
Sacramento
State University

Despite the loss of natural wetland habitat, many species have found a home in rice fields. Flooding the rice fields after harvesting the rice benefits both wildlife and farmers.

Table of Contents
Page 2: Article: Surrogate Wetlands
Page 3: Activity: Coloring species in rice fields
Page 4: Activity: The right tools for the job

Meet the youth hunting photo contest winners



3rd place winner

Amanda Carroll, 14 years old and Taylor Sides, 14 years old in blind while hunting ducks at Closed Zone Farm youth hunt.



Runner up

Maddox Martinez, 11 years old hunting ducks at the Grizzly Ranch CWA youth waterfowl hunt.

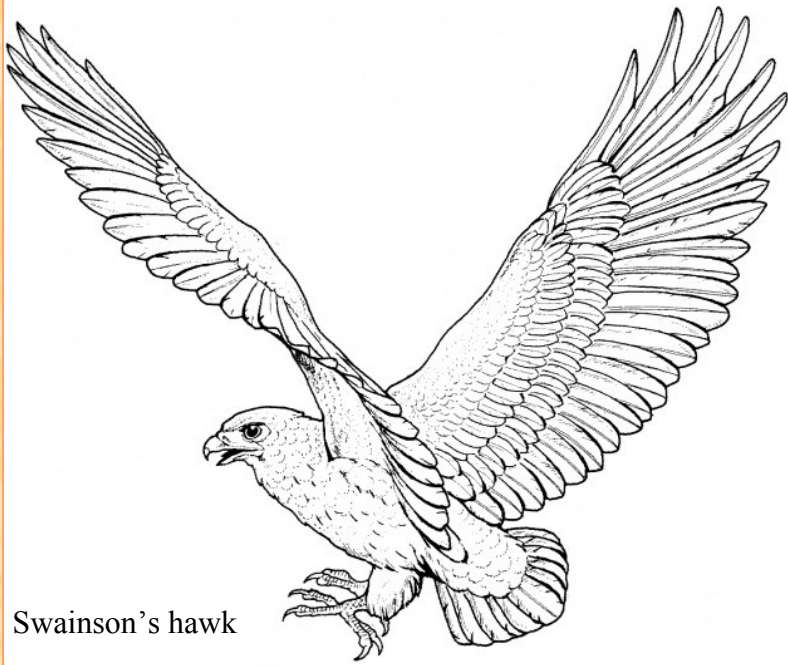
Surrogate Wetlands

Following the widespread loss of natural wetlands across the southern and western United States, many waterfowl now rely heavily on flooded rice fields for habitat during their winter migration. Each year, approximately 500,000 acres of land, mainly in the Sacramento Valley, are planted in rice. That is about half the size of the state of Rhode Island. In total, many of these fields are flooded for up to eight months of the year, during which time the rice fields become temporary wetlands with enormous significance to bird populations wintering and breeding in the Central Valley of California. For the farmers, flooding the fields helps to control weeds and prevents erosion, which lessens the amount of chemicals the farmer uses and saves soil.

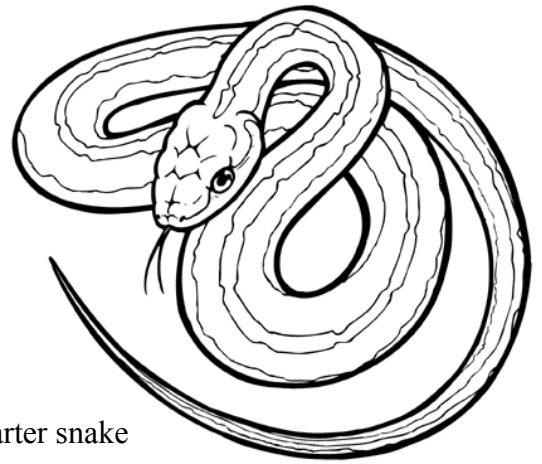


More than 1 billion birds fly south each and winter along the Pacific Flyway, a major migratory path following coastal estuaries and inland wetlands. About 4 million waterfowl settle down in California's Central Valley from November through February, attracted to flooded rice fields and carefully managed wildlife refuges that mimic this disappearing natural wetland habitat. Researchers have documented that at least 150 species of birds, 28 species of mammals, and 24 species of reptiles are known to live in flooded rice fields. After the rice fields are harvested, there is still grains leftover. This leftover rice grain, as well as other valuable food in rice fields allow waterfowl to gather more than 50% of their diet from rice farms.

Color these species which are all found in rice fields!



Swainson's hawk



Garter snake



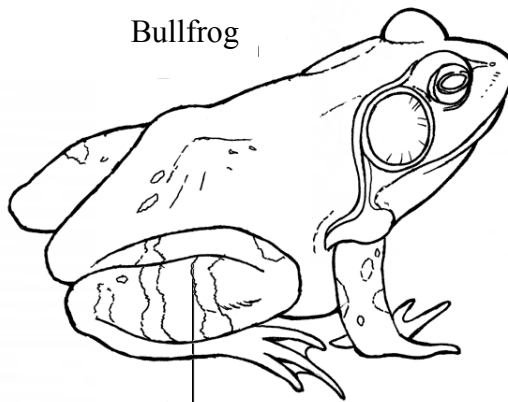
Killdeer



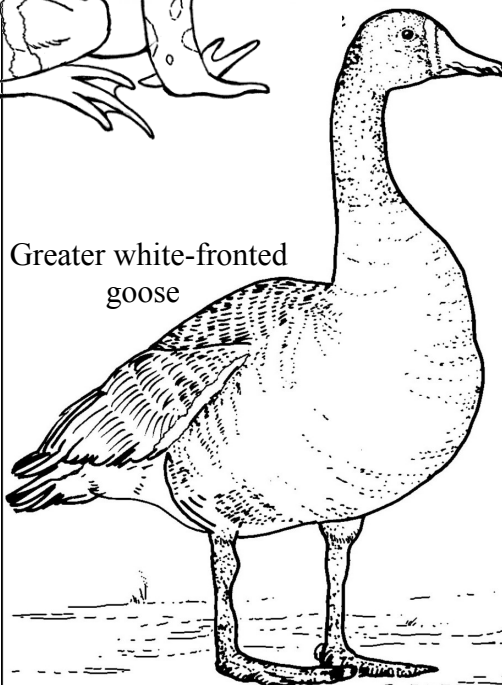
Sandhill Crane



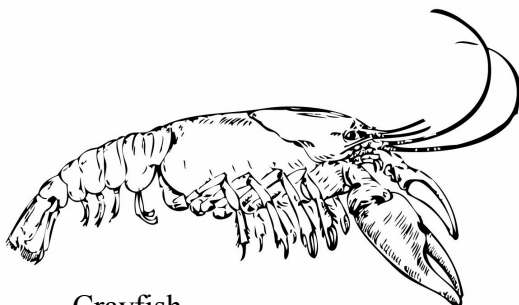
Mallard



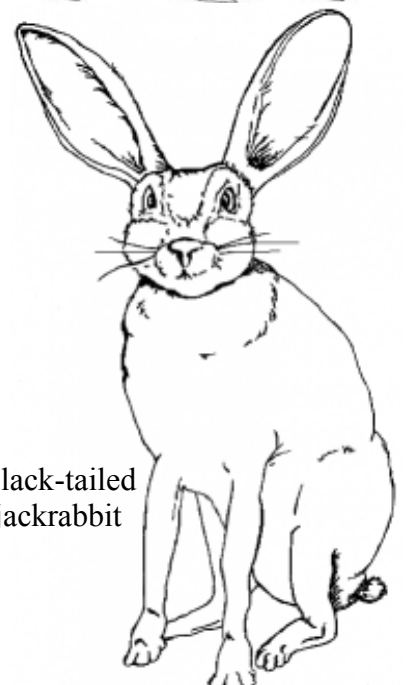
Bullfrog



Greater white-fronted
goose



Crayfish



Black-tailed
jackrabbit

The Right Tools for the Job

Feet

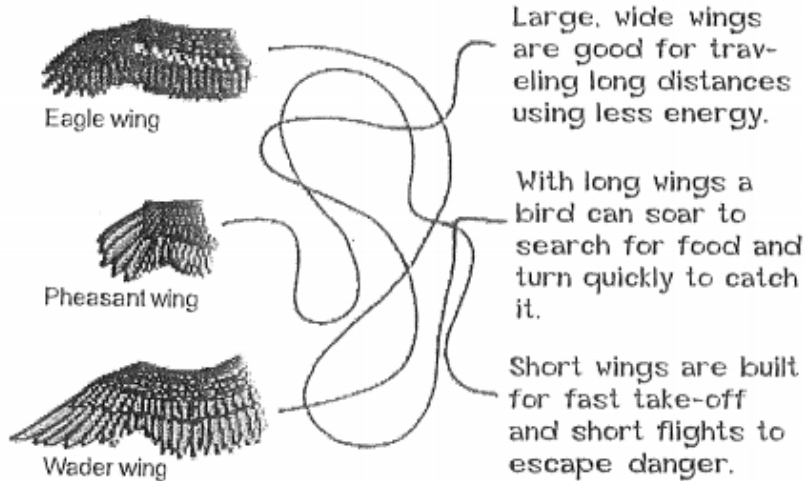
Bird feet match their lifestyle and habitat. For example, eagles have sharp nails and grasping feet useful for hunting. Study the differently shaped feet below and write their uses on the lines.



Perching on small branches
Grabbing animals
Swimming
Walking in mud

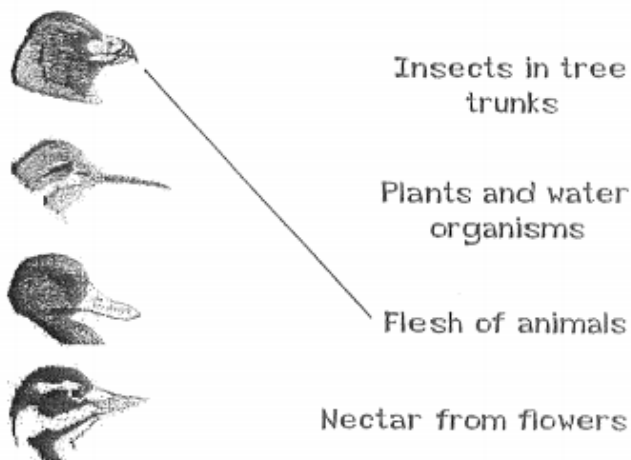
Wings

Some birds fly long distances and others only fly a few yards at a time. This means birds need different shaped wings. Follow the path of each wing to learn about its flight patterns.



Beaks

The shape of a bird's beak tells us what it eats. A sharp curved beak is used to rip flesh of animals. Draw a line to the type of food each bird eats.



Drawings by Jessica Lemer

ANSWERS: Feet 1. Grabbing animals 2. Swimming 3. Walking in mud 4. Perching on small branches Beaks Top: Nectar from flowers Middle: Plants and water organisms Bottom: Insects in tree trunks

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Sabreena Britt, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 Ext. 102 or sbritt@calwaterfowl.org

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