California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Region 4 Type A Wildlife Area Public Outreach Meeting
September 2, 2022 Microsoft Teams Meeting 4pm-6pm

4:00  Introductions and Meeting Parameters (Sean Allen, Senior Fish & Wildlife Habitat Supervisor CDFW)

4:10  CVPIA Refuge Water Supply Update (Ric Ortega General Manager, Grassland Water District)

4:20  An Overview by USFWS of the Federal Hunt programs on San Luis NWR and Merced NWR
(Sean Brophy, Deputy Project Leader San Luis NWRC and Jack Sparks, Outdoor Recreation Planner, San Luis NWRC)

4:50  Presentation by DFW Staff on Central Region’s Wetland Habitat Conditions and Anticipated Acreage for Public Use
   Mendota WA- Steve Brueggemann, Senior Fish & Wildlife Habitat Supervisor CDFW
   Los Banos WA- Sean Allen, Senior Fish & Wildlife Habitat Supervisor, CDFW
   North Grasslands- Pat Cotta, Wildlife Habitat Supervisor I, CDFW

5:20  *Break

5:30  Public Comments, Recommendations, and Panel Discussion
   (CDFW, and USFWS Staff)

5:55  Wrap up (Sean Allen, Senior Fish & Wildlife Habitat Supervisor CDFW)

6:00 Adjourn

If we cannot answer all questions during the time allotted, please email them to:
Sean.Allen@wildlife.ca.gov and they will be routed to appropriate staff for answers.
San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Manager Update
Sean Brophy, Deputy Project Leader, San Luis NWRC
Acting Easement Manager, Grasslands Wildlife Management Area
Acting Refuge Manager, San Luis NWR

Photo Credit: Gary Zahm
75% Level 2 CVPIA water supply announced in spring across all units. Full Level 2 is the bare minimum supply- actual cut closer to a 40% reduction.

West Bear Creek likely to be left dry until significant rain events occur. WBC and San Luis River Zone levels also low, no flows in San Joaquin River and Bypass.

We plan to use Lift 5/6 (repaired by DU) when water levels in Salt Slough allow effective pumping.
Water supply not expected for East Bear Creek until November, takes about five weeks to flood up unit. EBC opener likely to be delayed due to not receiving any supply in October.

Drought funding to run wells requested but not received for San Luis NWR.
Supply currently capped at 75% of Level 2 Water supply, using both surface and wells.

Request submitted for funding and authorization to pump to both full Level 2 and full Level 4 using well field. No indication yet on if this will be approved and funded. I’m fighting hard on this front.

Still awaiting completion of third repair to well P-17.
Irrigations reduced by ~50%, focused on highest productivity wetlands and those within 2 years of rehabilitation. Insufficient supply to effectively irrigate East Bear Creek.

FWS staff have completely repaired water delivery system in Freitas Unit and rehabilitated most wetlands in the Freitas Unit thanks to GAOA funding and Strike Force Crew. 2.8 miles of ditch cleaning, 12 water control structures replaced in three months.

Water maps will be posted to refuge website between October 10 and 20. No discing in hunt units this year.

Managed sanctuary and hunt units will be mowed to improve bird use, foraging conditions and remove invasive vegetation.
Improvements made to East Bear Creek Unit including new levees and pond alignments; updated map will be posted prior to opening of unit.

Continued wetland improvements to Blue Goose Blind 8 pond, Kesterson ponds around Blinds 1, 3, 3A, 3B, 4 and 5. Be aware of new swales.

Continued ditch cleaning and structure replacement in A Canal will help improve water efficiency in San Luis Free Roam hunt area.
A Canal/Lift 6 Intersection
-San Luis Unit Free Roam-
Merced NWR Refuge Manager Gabriel Sandoval started August 2022.

- Irrigated about 80% of units, habitat conditions look good across Hunt Area and Main Sanctuary.

- CWA NAWCA proposal submitted for Mariposa Unit 2023.

- DU project completed last year and this spring will hopefully again allow flood up of Lone Tree A late season. Two DU projects funded for next year.

- Many young trees removed by Levee District in Lone Tree Bypass zones C, D, E for flood protection, careful attention given to not significantly alter off channel ponds.
Bottom line up front

* We will have hunt opportunities starting on opening day; opportunity should increase throughout the season.

* Local weather will impact how much riparian water I can use, receiving drought utilities funding will impact how much groundwater I can use.

* I will be extremely conservative on reservation projections.

* West Bear Creek Unit is bearing the brunt of this drought.

* San Luis Unit and Blue Goose Unit should be fairly normal, north end of free roam may still be dry late October/early November.

* Blinds 1-5 at Kesterson may not receive water until late in the year, or not at all. Blinds 18-22 may open late.

* I will do whatever I can to support our Big Six public uses including hunting, but ultimately the wildlife resource needs come first and foremost in decision making.
ALL standup blinds at Kesterson now replaced with new blinds fabricated by refuge staff.
Blind 28 at Kesterson Unit moved. Was lowest average and least used blind on Kesterson. -New blind path leads from Lot 5. Blind location 520 yards from Blind 29, 430 yards from Closed Zone.
Summer 2023

* Replacement of all pit blinds San Luis Unit Free Roam and Kesterson Spaced Blind Area!
* Will include new lids, new stools and dog boxes for all blinds.
* Will be either 2 hunter or 3 hunter pits, no more single pits
https://www.fws.gov/refuge/san-luis/san-luis-nwr-hunt-program

Our website has all the information you might need

- Quotas
- Maps
- Unit specific information
- Draw locations and times
- Rules and regulations
- Freitas Hunt Unit Boundary GPS points etc.
You can contact me at:
Sean_Brophy@fws.gov
(209) 826-3508 x124 (office)
(209) 587-0369 (cell)
2021-22 Waterfowl Season
San Luis NWR – **5,569 (8,165)** hunter-visits – **1.79 (1.55)** average harvest
Merced NWR – **1,012 (1,022)** hunter-visits – **2.86 (2.36)** average harvest

Previous 5-Year Running Average (2016-17 to 2020-21)
San Luis NWR – 7,074 avg hunter-visits per season – 1.82 average harvest
Merced NWR – 964 avg hunter-visits per season – 2.59 average harvest

( ) = 2020-21 season
Predicted Hunter Slots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Percentage Open</th>
<th># Hunter Slots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>60% open</td>
<td>54 of 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>75% open</td>
<td>67 of 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>85% open</td>
<td>76 of 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>90% open</td>
<td>81 of 90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moffitt ponds 2, 3, 6 at north end of free roam area expected to remain dry through November, as well as potentially other wetlands in the free roam area.

We might have to reduce the morning River Zone quotas depending on water levels in the SJR.
# Hunt Opportunities

**Blue Goose Unit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Predicted 2022-23</th>
<th># Blinds 2022-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>9 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>9 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>9 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>9 of 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are anticipating all BG blinds open on October 22.
Hunt Opportunities
Kesterson Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th># Blinds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>56% open</td>
<td>19 of 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>62% open</td>
<td>21 of 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>76% open</td>
<td>26 of 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>76% open</td>
<td>26 of 34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blind Forecast

Blinds not specifically listed below are anticipated to open October 22

Hopeful for October 22, but potentially delayed: **23, 24, 27, ADA2**

Delayed until November: **18, 19, 20, 21, 22**

Anticipated dry/closed all season, or open very late: **1, 3, 3A, 3B, 4, 5**
Hunt Opportunities
West Bear Creek Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Predicted 2022-23</th>
<th># Hunter Slots 2022-23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>closed*</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>0 of 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>0 of 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>~16% open</td>
<td>~6 of 36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WBC is bearing the brunt of the drought. Most of WBC, including the sanctuary and hunt area is expected to be dry until significant rain events occur. Fiddleneck Lake and Pintail Flat expected to remain dry.

*The normal opening for the WBC Unit occurs the 3rd Saturday in November.
Hunt Opportunities
East Bear Creek Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted 2022-23</th>
<th># Hunter Slots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>closed*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*EBC opener likely to be delayed due to not receiving sufficient water in October.*

*The normal opening for the EBC Unit occurs the 3rd Saturday in November.*
Hunt Opportunities
N. and S. Freitas Units
Unmanaged Waterways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Predicted 2022-23</th>
<th># Boats (regulated days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>85-100%</td>
<td>25-30 (15 boats North / 10 South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>85-100%</td>
<td>25-30 (15 boats North / 10 South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>85-100%</td>
<td>25-30 (15 boats North / 10 South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>85-100%</td>
<td>25-30 (15 boats North / 10 South)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quotas might need to be adjusted depending on water levels and hyacinth issues – might see a quota reduction again for South Freitas.

Hyacinth Update: Merced County treats hyacinth from within the channel where they are able; USFWS uses mechanical methods from the bank to remove hyacinth where we are able. The north side hunt boundary looks mostly open; south side has some clogs that are currently difficult to treat due to low water level.
Hunt Opportunities  
Merced NWR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>% Open</th>
<th># Blinds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>19 of 19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>21 of 21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>21 of 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>100% open</td>
<td>21 of 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Goose Pits open 3rd Sat in Nov

This quota forecast represents the best-case scenario at the moment. Mariposa wetlands remain uncertain, but hopeful.
Hunt Opportunities
Lonetree Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Predicted 2022-23</th>
<th># Hunter Slots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>closed*</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Change: Zones A & B will open, even if dry.

As in previous years, bypass hunt zones will open if sufficient water in the bypass channel.

* The normal opening for the Lonetree Unit occurs the 3rd Saturday in November.
Kern NWR Update

Due to the drought that is affecting all of California and the limited water allocation, Kern NWR will have reduced flooded habitat and reduced hunting opportunities, similar to last year. Kern NWR was allocated 11,664 acre-feet of water, roughly 47% of its full level allocation.

The opener is proposed to be on November 19th, with a projected quota of 20-30 hunters on the opener.

Kern staff was able to conduct great habitat management in the areas that will be flooded. Disced the AP2 and Blind 8 units to encourage swamp timothy, and were also able to disc Unit 1 to create more open water habitat.

Working with CWA to replace water control structures and enhance water conveyance in some units.
Kern NWR Update continued

Kern NWR website looks different, as all USFWS websites have switched to a new platform. Due to current refuge staffing/budget constraints, Kern currently does not have the local capacity to update and edit their refuge website. Our RO staff might be able to post hunt results on the Kern website in a limited capacity; however, California Department of Fish and Wildlife posts results for each Type A state-operated waterfowl hunt area on their website (wildlife.ca.gov).

Lastly, Miguel wanted to thank you for your continued support of Kern — “I know having a delayed hunt and limited hunting opportunity isn't ideal, but we are doing the best we can given the situation. Hopefully, we have a better snowpack this winter, increasing our water allocation for next year. We hope to see you in November hunting your National Wildlife Refuge.”

For Kern NWR questions, contact: Miguel Jimenez – Miguel_Jimenez@fws.gov
Thank you!

www.fws.gov/refuge/san-luis

Jack Sparks
Outdoor Recreation Planner
209/826-3508 x121 or 209/587-0516 cell
jack_sparks@fws.gov
~70% Water supply leading to more staged or late flooding. Why? To save water and provide improved conditions for waterfowl late into the winter. Also, increased acres planted to barley in the Fall of 2021 will be flooded after mid-December to reduce risk of botulism.
Previous satellite imagery shows areas within the Fresno Slough/Mendota Pool in bright red 8/29/2022 which are predominately water hyacinth with a mix of additional aquatic plants.
Hyacinth has completely impacted the ability to launch boats from north of the MWA bridge. Trailer mounted boats will not be allowed to launch in Fresno Slough again this year. Hand launched boats can be used at Lots 4 & 5.
Subsidence has affected the ability to drain both Res #3 service area and the southeast portion of Res #1 service area.
Field 9 Drain effects 80% of water on westside of wildlife area by either cutting off access to water or limiting the ability to drain irrigations.
Safflower planted in typical areas. Received less irrigation but did make seed.
Additional info from 2022 public hunt meeting can be found by visiting the Los Banos WA page.
• FISH AND GAME CODE

• DIVISION 2. DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME [700 - 1940]

• CHAPTER 7.5. Native Species Conservation and Enhancement [1750 - 1772]

• ARTICLE 2.5. Bird Habitat Conservation [1758- 1758.]

• 1758.

The department shall annually provide an opportunity for licensed hunters to comment and make recommendations on the public hunting programs, including anticipated habitat conditions in the hunting areas on Type A and Type B Wildlife Areas, as defined under the commission’s regulations, through public meetings or other public outreach. In complying with this section, the department may hold regional meetings on its hunting programs for several different wildlife areas.

• (Added by Stats. 2013, Ch. 387, Sec. 2. Effective January 1, 2014.)
LOS BANOS WILDLIFE AREA COMPLEX

Sean Allen
Manager, LBWAC

Los Banos Wildlife Area
Mud Slough Unit
Volta Wildlife Area
Little Panoche Reservoir Wildlife Area
Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area
San Luis Reservoir Wildlife Area
O’Neill Forebay Wildlife Area
GENERAL COMMENTS

- Water supply is 60% to 70% of a normal year for State wildlife areas in the San Joaquin Valley. These numbers reflect the 75% allocation of our Level 2 supply along with the loss of a good portion of Level 4 water that would usually be made available like last year.

- Appropriative water pumping rights were curtailed. We used our riparian rights for summer irrigations instead so far. Same as we did last year and we were able to conserve some of our surface supply. Our water district partners also helped this year by coordinating irrigations and blending well and surface water to a great advantage for the Grasslands.

- Deep wells were used for some summer irrigations and will also be used to augment some surface supplies for fall flood-up. This may allow the State to reallocate surface supply to other areas. *(Deep wells cannot generate enough water to fully flood and maintain wetlands by themselves and water quality can also be an issue)*

- Last winter a combined 2,500 acre-feet of water from all State wildlife areas was conserved from our 2021-22 water allotment. By anticipating the need to carry this water over and pulling down ponds we knew needed rehabilitation, we were able to conserve water to carry over to water year 2022-23. This water was vital to being able to do spring irrigations again. If we have another dry year it will be difficult to imagine being able to carryover water again.

- A lack of foraging habitat for early migrating waterfowl and the depletion of late season forage may be two significant effects of the current drought. Significant by-products of those conditions may lead to waterfowl disease: Avian Botulism (late summer) and Fowl Cholera (mid winter). Additionally, Avian Influenza may also affect waterfowl and water bird populations.
Once again, we would like to thank all our hunters for your diligence last year during the Covid-19 pandemic. You were very understanding and adaptable during the season and we appreciated your patience! I would also like to thank our staff for their willingness to run these areas at some risk to their health and that of their families. We are fortunate to have people so dedicated to public service.

PR Funding was cut this year 8.9 million dollars and back filed with Fire Resiliency Funding. Additionally, there is a 21.4% overhead rate further diminishing O&E funds for the Central Regions staffed lands. We hope the realignment of the programs receiving PR Funding will help wildlife area budgets moving forward. Just like operation in the private sector increased fuel costs, parts and a lack of people willing to work continue to cut into our productivity.
## LOS BANOS WA HUNTER QUOTAS 2022/2023

**QUOTAS ARE OUR BEST ESTIMATE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Acres Flooded</th>
<th>2022-23 Hunter Quota</th>
<th>2021-22 Hunter Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Day</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>2115</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>2190</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES
PUMPING IRRIGATION WATER FROM 17C TO 19A
Los Banos Wildlife Area
2022 Dove Hunt Map

VEHICLES ARE LIMITED TO PUBLIC ACCESS ROADS. VEHICLES NOT PERMITTED ELSEWHERE ON AREA. SECTION 550 (b) (2) & (3)

ZONE 1, ZONE 2, & ZONE 3 RESTRICTED TO SPECIAL PERMITS UNTIL 12:00 NOON SEPT. 1 ONLY
VOLTA WA HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES 2022/2023

• Wetland acreage should be 85% of a normal year and flooded similar to the previous year.

• Project to improve drainage in Field 11 was accomplished this year. High ground was used to refurbish the levees against Pond 10 and the swale was connected to the 13 ditch to improve water delivery and drainage.

• Water was started on August 11 to the westside and eastside wetlands and an early footprint is getting very good bird use.

• Our two new repogle flumes continue to pose challenges. Since they were installed, we have needed to make repairs on the westside pipeline that delivers water to the flume and the amount of water delivered has been difficult to quantify. We are working to resolve this issue with the Bureau of Reclamation, San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority and the contractor. Accurate measurements ensure we can maximize our water supply and the net result is more water for Volta wetlands.
VOLTA WA HUNTER QUOTAS
2022/2023
QUOTAS ARE OUR BEST ESTIMATE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Acres Flooded</th>
<th>2022-23 Hunter Quota</th>
<th>2021-22 Hunter Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Day</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>2163</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>2306</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>2306</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MUD SLOUGH UNIT
LOS BANOS WA HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES 2022/2023

• Units 3B, 4B, 5A&B received spring irrigations.

• Some spot discing and mowing occurred in all fields.

• Area will not be available on opening day. Scheduled to open last Saturday in November.

• The area should be completely flooded by early December and all blinds should be available.
Mud Slough Unit 2022 Flood-up Schedule
Los Banos Wildlife Area

Flood Date

- September 15 - 30 (acres 60)
- November 1 - 15 (acres 70)
- October 1 - 15 (acres 47)
- November 20 - December 10 (acres 56)
- Not Flooded (acres 117)
## CWA BANDING TOTALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location Name</th>
<th>Mallards</th>
<th>Total Ducks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lone Tree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field 26A Los Banos WA</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Packing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NORTH GRASSLANDS WILDLIFE AREA COMPLEX

Pat Cotta
Assistant Manager
NGWAC

Salt Slough Unit
Gadwall Unit
China Island Unit
SALT SLOUGH UNIT
NORTH GRASSLANDS WA
HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES
2022/2023

• Staff irrigated 500 acres of watergrass.

• Zone 13 - Blinds will be closed for the season due to the pond’s poor water retention and the drought. If hydrology changes mid season, Zone 13 may be flooded on a limited basis.

• Staff re-seeded watergrass in ponds 33 and 46. These ponds may be difficult to wade in due to the heavy disking.

• Most of our summer irrigations and brood water was lifted from Salt Slough utilizing our Riparian Water rights and conserving our Level 2 surface water supply for fall and winter flooding.

• 30 acres of safflower and 70 acres of winter wheat was planted and irrigated to maturity. Staff is completing mowing.
Salt Slough Unit 2022 Flood-up Schedule
North Grasslands Wildlife Area

Flood Date
- August 1 - 31 (115 acres)
- September 1 - 30 (229 acres)
- October 1 - 31 (333 acres)
- November 1 - 30 (45 acres)
- December 1 - 31 (226 acres)
- Not Flooded (54 acres)
- Permanent (21 acres)
## Salt Slough Unit
### North Grasslands WA
#### Hunter Quotas 2022-23

**Quotas are our best estimate and subject to change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>2022-23 Hunter Quota</th>
<th>2021-22 Hunter Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Day</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>40 + ADA Blind</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>40 + ADA Blind</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>50 + ADA Blind</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>50 + ADA Blind</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SALT SLOUGH FIELD 27
WATERGRASS
SALT SLOUGH FIELD 29
WATERGRASS
SALT SLOUGH FIELD 33
REHABILITATION (BEFORE)
SALT SLOUGH FIELD 33
REHABILITATION (AFTER)
• 180 acres of watergrass was irrigated to maturity.

• Waterfowl opening weekend hunter quota is expected to be 10 on the flood plain only. Managed wetlands will not be huntable until November. Quota will increase as more wetlands are flooded. Maximum quota will be up to 40 hunters including upland game hunter when the season opens.

• 25 acres of safflower was planted and irrigated to maturity. 25 acres of volunteer wheat was irrigated to maturity resulting in good seed production. An additional 30 acres of newly planted wheat was irrigated to maturity resulting in good seed production.

• Ponds 17, 18, and 23B will not flooded this year. These ponds are too close to the San Joaquin River and have sand laden subsurface channel that do not allow these ponds to retain water efficiently. Water will be put out onto the flood plain in lieu of flooding these cells.
China Island Unit 2022 Flood-up Schedule
North Grasslands Wildlife Area

Flood Date

- November 1 - 30 (268 acres)
- December 1 - 31 (213 acres)
- Not Flooded (180 acres)
- Permanent (17 acres)
# CHINA ISLAND UNIT
## NORTH GRASSLANDS WA
### HUNTER QUOTAS 2022/2023

**Quotas are our best estimate and subject to change.**

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<th>Acres Flooded</th>
<th>2022-23 Hunter Quota</th>
<th>2021-22 Hunter Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Day</td>
<td>Mud Slough San Joaquin River</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>40 includes Upland Hunters</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHINA ISLAND F10
WATERGRASS
GADWALL UNIT
NORTH GRASSLANDS WA
HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES
2022/2023

• Gadwall Unit (North Grasslands Wildlife Area) is scheduled to open for waterfowl hunting on November 26, 2022. The unit is on the end of the delivery system that services multiple private clubs that will be flooding after opening weekend. The unit is expected to receive water starting in late October and should have most of the hunt area flooded for the delayed opener on November 26.

• 280 acres of swamp timothy was irrigated in the hunt area.

• Gadwall Zone F will open with the Gadwall Unit on November 26th.

• ADA Blind will be fully operational on November 26 out of Lot D in Field 3. A new concrete walkway was poured and will take up to 3 hunters to a above ground blind.
Gadwall Unit 2022 Flood-up Schedule
North Grasslands Wildlife Area

Flood Date
- October 20 - November 2 (124 acres)
- November 5 - 13 (152 acres)
- November 14 - 25 (339 acres)
- November 10 - 30 (249 acres)

- If water is available (184 acres)
- Not Flooded (227 acres)
- Permanent (8 acres)
# GADWALL UNIT
## NORTH GRASSLANDS WA
### HUNTER QUOTAS 2022/2023

*Quotas are our best estimate and subject to change*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Acres Flooded In Hunt Area</th>
<th>2022-23 Hunter Quota</th>
<th>2021-22 Hunter Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Day November 26th</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>27 + 2 ADA Blinds</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>27 + 2 ADA Blinds</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>27 + 2 ADA Blinds</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POSSIBILITY OF WATERFOWL DISEASE FROM AVIAN INFLUENZA

- Primarily a disease of domestic birds (chickens and turkeys)
- Has been detected in wild birds in 13 counties in California (in case someone asks: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Mendocino, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Yolo) as well as in domestic birds (Butte, Contra Costa, Sacramento, Fresno, and Tuolumne)
- The CDC states that the risk to the general public is low, however there may be increased risk from job-related or recreational exposure
- Dogs may also be at risk of exposure
- Do not handle sick or dead birds, but report them to the check station or to the CDFW online reporting form (https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Monitoring/Mortality-Report)
- When handling game birds, hunters should take the following precautions:
  - Field dress and prepare game in a well-ventilated area
  - Wear rubber or disposable gloves when cleaning birds
  - Wash hands with soap and water before eating, drinking, or smoking if you have been handling birds
  - Thoroughly clean knives, equipment, and surfaces used to dress game
  - Cook game to an internal temperature of 165°F before consuming
POSSIBILITY OF WATERFOWL DISEASE FROM AVIAN INFLUENZA

In addition to the mortality sampling being conducted (samples from sick or dead birds), USDA will be conducting hunter-harvest sampling in California during waterfowl season (to detect presence of the virus in birds that may not get sick). We don’t yet know specifics such as dates or locations of the sampling.

For More Information visit the sites listed below:


- [https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Monitoring/Mortality-Report](https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Monitoring/Mortality-Report) (mortality reporting form the public can use)

- [https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=200657&inline](https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=200657&inline) (informational flyer with FAQs and additional links about AI from Wildlife Health Lab)
BE OUR EYES
WHILE YOU ARE IN THE FIELD

- Report any dead or sick waterfowl in a group of 5 or more. Call our office LBWA (209) 826-0463; Mendota (559) 655-4645 or report your observations to check station staff as soon as possible.

- If you believe you have encountered a Nutria, please call the Nutria Hotline (866) 440-9530 or email: invasives@wildlife.ca.gov
THANKS

• To the US Fish and Wildlife San Luis Complex for participating

• Special thanks to Grassland Water District for their tireless efforts in securing water supplies for and advocating for the wetlands of the Central Valley and specifically the Grasslands Ecological Area.

• To you, our Public for participating in this online information exchange
Some people in this chat are outside your org. It's possible they have message-related policies that will apply to the chat. Learn more

- Eric Everhart (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Chuck Seaton (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Aaron (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Sparks, Lara@Wildlife  9/2 3:56 PM
Please mute your mic when you join. You can type your questions into the chat and we will try to answer them as we can.

- Taylor, Kevin was invited to the meeting.
- Gordon (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Ken (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Greg Schwabenland was invited to the meeting.
- Scott Capra was invited to the meeting.
- Chuck S (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Erik Knorr was invited to the meeting.
- Koehn, Chad A was invited to the meeting.
- Erik Alcantar was invited to the meeting.
- Ken Johnson (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Ric Ortega was invited to the meeting.
- Basilio Amaro (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Andrew (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Warren (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Trent (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Trent (Guest) left the chat.
- Mark Hennelly was invited to the meeting.
- Chuck Seaton (Guest) left the chat.
- Ana Schaefer (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
- Matt Kaminski was invited to the meeting.

3 or more chat members are out of office and may not respond
Type a new message
Taylor, Kevin  9/2 4:13 PM
Previous meeting you spoke about work being done to raise Los Vaqueros and San Luis Reservoir Dam Levels. Any progress on that?

mark perry-tapia (Guest) left the chat.
Don (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Scott Vix (Guest)  9/2 4:15 PM
Can you expand on what it'll take for the Sac valley to up their water?

ID: 269 673 881 935 (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

dcroll (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
mark perry-tapia (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Ric Ortega (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
Ric Ortega (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
Ric Ortega left the chat.

Mark (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Dummer, Ashley@Waterboards was invited to the meeting.

Todd Chapman left the chat.
Duck Hunter (Guest) left the chat.
Duck Hunter (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Taylor, Kevin  9/2 4:36 PM
Sean mentioned no discing this year? Was this Complex wide or was it just on one area? Any specific reason for this? Dickenson 3 and 5 were severely overgrown last season on the SL Free Roam Unit which takes quite a bit of huntable acreage.
Some people in this chat are outside your org. It's possible they have message-related policies that will apply to the chat. Learn more

9/2 4:37 PM
Thanks Kevin. Once Jack is done I will see if Sean can address that.

Ken (Guest) left the chat.

Aaron (Guest) 9/2 4:41 PM
Will you provide the link to that website?

Sandie (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
Don (Guest) left the chat.

Sparks, Jack (External) 9/2 4:42 PM
San Luis NWR website: www.fws.gov/refuge/san-luis

9/2 4:42 PM
Aaron we will post it in a moment.

Sparks, Lara@Wildlife 9/2 4:42 PM
The presentations will be posted on the Los Banos Wildlife Area website: Los Banos Wildlife Area (ca.gov)

3 or more chat members are out of office and may not respond

Type a new message
Some people in this chat are outside your org. It’s possible they have message-related policies that will apply to the chat. Learn more

Aaron (Guest)  9/2 4:54 PM
Mendota hunter quota?

Sebastian Garcia (Guest)  9/2 4:54 PM
Any plans to flood the east side of the refuge? last year flooded really late..

Trent (Guest)  9/2 4:54 PM
Hunter quota for opening day at mendota?

Rick Schussel (Guest)  9/2 4:55 PM
what does Mendota think will be there opener quota?

Warren (Guest)  9/2 4:56 PM
will a flood map be published?

Joething (Guest)  9/2 5:00 PM
Why not just delay the whole entire duck season until Dec 1st as a result of the water shortage

Did LBWA remove the tree in front of blind 10? 

Ken (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
Trent (Guest) left the chat.
Scott Capra left the chat.
Scott Capra was invited to the meeting.
IDt 269 673 881 933 (Guest) left the chat.

Taylor, Kevin  9/2 5:12 PM
Do you think a new pump will be needed to compensate for the repogie flume water flow issue?

Sebastian Garcia (Guest) left the chat.
Dummer, Ashley/Waterboards  9/2 5:16 PM
are you planting pheasants this year?

Scott Vix (Guest)  9/2 5:17 PM
Good to hear you Pat!!

Efrain (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Sparks, Lara/Wildlife  9/2 5:18 PM Edited
Taylor, Kevin  9/2/2022, 5:12 PM
Do you think a new pump will be needed to compensate for the repogle flume water flow issue?

We are working with DU to do a project replacing the existing westside poured in place pipeline. Additionally add another pump and recess the pump station away from the Wasteway.

Cook, William/Wildlife  9/2 5:19 PM
Thank you for all the work you folks accomplish !

Sparks, Lara/Wildlife  9/2 5:20 PM
Dummer, Ashley/Waterboards  9/2/2022, 5:16 PM
are you planting pheasants this year?

Yes, we plan to plant pheasants the day before Thanksgiving and the Sat-Sun after. Barring any avian influenza issues with domestic pheasant production.

Basilio Amaro (Guest)  9/2 5:21 PM
Seeing more and more guys trying to monetize their hunting by posting Youtube videos from refuges statewide. The issue of course is that when they are successful, it drives more hunters into specific areas, where conflicts can, and have happened.

I'd hate to see areas turn from free roam into blinds in an effort to limit conflicts, just because some guys are trying to scratch out dollars/gear from social media, and end up making things worse for everyone in free roam.
Some people in this chat are outside your org. It’s possible they have message-related policies that will apply to the chat. Learn more

Basilio Amaro (Guest) 9/2 5:21 PM
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I’d hate to see areas turn from free roam into blinds in an effort to limit conflicts, just because some guys are trying to scratch out dollars/gear from social media, and end up making things worse for everyone in free roam.

While refuges don’t allow folks to guiding for profit, it seems that those guys are effectively doing virtual guiding, and in the process negatively impacting hunt areas.

Is it possible for Managers to at least ask those who seem to run youtube channels, to limit their exciting fun fun most incredible hunts ever captured in amazing, incredibly awesome videos, to blinds only? I doubt it would impact their merch sales negatively.

Sparks, Lara@Wildlife 9/2 5:21 PM

Why not just delay the whole entire duck season until Dec 1st as a result of the water shortage

This is a Pacific Flyway Council and Fish & Game Commission decision.

Basilio Amaro (Guest) 9/2/2022, 5:21 PM
Seeing more and more guys trying to monetize their hunting by posting Youtube videos from refuges statewide. The issue of course ...

We can address this during the panel discussion.

Taylor, Kevin 9/2 5:23 PM
Thank you Lara!

Aaron (Guest) left the chat.
RO (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
Chuck S (Guest) left the chat.
RO (Guest) was invited to the meeting.
Chuck S (Guest) left the chat.

Droll (Guest) 9/2 5:32 PM
Very good presentation Pat

Greg Schwabenland left the chat.
Erik Alcantar left the chat.

BO
Olson, Brian@Wildlife 9/2 5:36 PM
Nice job!

Duck Hunter (Guest) left the chat.
Duck Hunter (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

Taylor, Kevin 9/2 5:37 PM
Good job by all presenters! Tip my hat to the hard working staff on these refuges who continue to manage through difficult circumstance. We are also in very good hands with Ric Ortega who continues to do great things getting water to these places. Thank you.

SV
Scott Vix (Guest) 9/2 5:36 PM
Second Kevin's comment

MP
mark perry-tapia (Guest) 9/2 5:38 PM
I know Kevin has had this question in the past but have moved forward possibly opening up snow bird to goose hunting?

Warren (Guest) left the chat.

Matt Kaminski 9/2 5:38 PM
Great presentations! If interested in what Ducks Unlimited is doing on public and private lands in the San Joaquin Valley, feel free to shoot me. Matt Kaminski, at mkaminski@ducks.org or call me anytime at 209-270-0132.
Some people in this chat are outside your org. It's possible they have message-related policies that will apply to the chat. Learn more

tree to shoot me. Matt Kaminiski at mkaminski@ducks.org or call me anytime at 503-270-1152.

Brophy, Sean (External) 9/2 5:41 PM
mark perry-tapia (Guest) 9/2/2022, 5:38 PM
I know Kevin has had this question in the past but have moved forward possibly opening up snow bird to goose hunting?

Jack Sparks will reply

Duck Hunter (Guest) left the chat.

Basilio Amaro (Guest) 9/2 5:41 PM
Is it possible for e-bikes/scooters to be used by the disabled to get handicapped blinds? Thanks for all the work put in this year!

mark perry-tapia (Guest) 9/2 5:43 PM
Thank you for the answer

Basilio Amaro (Guest) 9/2 5:43 PM
Thanks for the answer. Great stuff.

Brophy, Sean (External) 9/2 5:43 PM
mark perry-tapia (Guest) 9/2/2022, 5:43 PM
Thank you for the answer

Keep an eye on our website for both when the CCP draft is published for comment and when public meetings are announced.

Scott Vix (Guest) 9/2 5:45 PM
With the needed work on the hunt areas, such as dickenson 3-5, and resource shortages that the service faces every year...why were the old club blinds on the Luib free roam areas bought...and replaced?
Sparks, Lara@Wildlife  9/2 5:47 PM
Brophy, Sean: Questions - Will Zones C, D and E on Lonetree going to be open if dry.

Scott Vix (Guest)  9/2 5:47 PM
thank you

Sparks, Lara@Wildlife  9/2 5:48 PM
Brophy, Sean: 2nd Question - Can you expand the check in time at Merced for the Lonetree unit to 2 pm to accommodate for the distance from the parking lot and check station?

Rick Schussel (Guest)  9/2 5:50 PM
thanks all!!

Rick Schussel (Guest) left the chat.

Ken (Guest) left the chat.

Basilio Amaro (Guest)  9/2 5:52 PM
If we’re stuck with an idea after thinking about the presentation, should we just ping the managers?

dcroll (Guest) left the chat.

Sparks, Lara@Wildlife  9/2 5:53 PM
If you have any other questions after the meeting, you can email them to Sean.Allen@wildlife.ca.gov. Sean can forward them on to the appropriate staff.

Basilio Amaro (Guest)  9/2 5:53 PM
Thank you!

Kohl, Jeffrey@Wildlife left the chat.
Sparks, Lara@Wildlife  9/2 5:47 PM
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R S
Rick Schussel (Guest)  9/2 5:50 PM
thanks all!

Rick Schussel (Guest) left the chat.

Ken (Guest) left the chat.

BA
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Thank you!

Kohl, Jeffrey@Wildlife left the chat.

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Converse, Karen@Wildlife 9/2 5:54 PM
Karen Converse CDFW Wildlife Area Coordinator. karen.converse@wildlife.ca.gov 916-801-4292

John (Guest) left the chat.

mark perry-tapia (Guest) 9/2 5:55 PM
Thank you guys so much for awesome presentation. Much respect for what you guys do in the off season

Basilio Amaro (Guest) 9/2 5:56 PM
Great presentations. thank you!

Sandie (Guest) left the chat.

Koehr, Chad A 9/2 5:56 PM
Thank you all!

Converse, Karen@Wildlife 9/2 5:56 PM
Thank you for great presentations!!

Mark Hennelly 9/2 5:57 PM
Thanks for all the great presentations and info! Nice job.

mark perry-tapia (Guest) 9/2 5:57 PM
Cheers

Andrew (Guest) left the chat.

mark perry-tapia (Guest) left the chat.

Dummer, Ashley@Waterboards 9/2 5:57 PM
thank you
Hi Sean, I was hoping you could pass this along to the USFWS staff who can hopefully discuss this at the online meeting. Thanks.

Hello, I am hoping you could address a few things concerning the Lone Tree Unit of Merced NWR. As most of us know the populations of geese using the grasslands seems to be increasing nearly every year and there is a limited amount of public ground that it is feasible to pursue them. I noticed that last year that the Lone Tree Unit had a few geese using units A and B and although unit A eventually opened because it was able to receive some water unit B was never opened up to hunting. In the past I know the USFWS policy has been to allow hunting in units once a pre determined amount of water has been applied to the unit, but in this particular case waterfowl hunters would still have a opportunity to hunt geese in the open fields of units A and B even without water. Notices for changed policies and regulations are routinely posted at the check stations throughout the year and it seems that a simple print-out posted at the Merced check station explaining that Lone Tree Units A and B are open to hunting but lack water would be very feasible and inform those hunters who are not interested in this type of waterfowl hunting. This would help provide more hunter opportunity in established hunt units that are regularly a struggle to get water into. I understand that Lone Tree usually opens later in the season, and would understand if that practice continued, especially with units A and B, as the habits of geese lead them to use open fields later in the year. In my opinion seems reasonable to have units A and B open to hunting with or without water by mid December at the latest. While unit A was open and unit B remained closed late last year I did notice that cattle were being run in unit B and was wondering if that had something to do with not opening up unit B to allow hunting? As a established hunt zone I feel that hunting opportunities should take precedent. Speaking for myself I would like to see the maximum amount of hunter opportunity across the valley, especially in this scenario. As a hunter its up to me to pay attention to water, habitat conditions and all the other variables that we encounter in order to have a successful day in the field, but I along with the other hunters at least need the opportunity to try our luck. I appreciate all the time and effort that is put into these hunt programs every year by staff, and the opportunity to have this sort of input and discussion. Thank you for addressing these concerns.