

## Bucks for Ducks 2016

**Y**olo Basin Foundation (YBF) will hold its 25th annual *Bucks for Ducks* benefit on Friday, October 21st at the UC Davis ARC Pavilion from 5:30 to 9:00 pm. The evening includes both live and silent auctions, raffle prizes, a Buckhorn catered meal, local wine and beer and, returning for another year, Joe Gates, our ever popular auctioneer.

This year's grand raffle prize is an entertaining and informational birding tour for two on the Delta with Dolphin Charters. Our live auction will highlight some past favorites including a kayak tour of Elkhorn Slough for two, a Lewis Kemper original photograph, and a fun getaway in Healdsburg where you'll stay at the popular Two Thirty-Five Luxury Suites. There will also be some new additions to the auction: a breathtaking 48" x 54" oil painting of the flooded Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area entitled "Winter Light" by Joseph Bellacera and a handmade 1930's Navajo rug. We will again showcase the wonderful talents of local photographers and artists in our silent auction.



Joseph Bellacera with *Winter Light*, which will be auctioned at Bucks for Ducks

### Honored Guests

This year we are honored to announce that the City of Sacramento Mayor-Elect, and former California State Senate President pro Tem, Darrell Steinberg, will be our keynote speaker. Mayor-Elect Steinberg has a deep



**Bucks for Ducks**  
to benefit yolo basin foundation

October 21, 2016 • 5:30 - 9:00pm  
ARC Pavilion, UC Davis

understanding of the importance of the Yolo Bypass, including the issues of flood control, water management, agricultural productivity, and environmental sustainability. As a champion for children's issues, including education and behavioral health, he understands the significant role of Yolo Basin Foundation and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area in providing environmental science education to the youth of our region. We are also pleased to announce that we will be honoring outgoing state Senator Lois Wolk, who is one of Yolo Basin Foundation's founding board members and a long-time supporter and ally. We are delighted to have both Mayor-Elect Steinberg and Senator Wolk join us!

### Lewis Kemper, photographer

The man behind the lens of this year's stunning poster and invitation photograph is Lewis Kemper. This image of the umbrella barn at the Tule Ranch will be offered in the live auction. Lewis is a widely recognized photographer, writer, and instructor, lecturing and teaching throughout the United States.

He is also the husband of our very own Education Coordinator, Heidi Satter.

Lewis has been photographing the natural beauty of North America and its parklands for over 30 years. His work has been exhibited and published in magazines and books worldwide. Lewis' publications include *Ancient Ancestors of the Southwest*, *Photographing Yosemite Digital Field Guide*, and SNAPP Guide to *Photographing Yosemite*. His work has been included in publications for The Sierra Club, The National Geographic Society, and Insight Guides. He is currently a contributing editor to *Outdoor Photographer* magazine. His latest work is a multi-media presentation entitled *My Stretch of the River: A Photographer's Journal* with over 300 images taken during a year of paddling his kayak along the American River.

We can't thank Lewis enough for his continued support of Yolo Basin Foundation, and we are honored to share his talents with our *Bucks for Ducks* supporters. We encourage you to explore more of his incredible photography at [www.lewisemper.com](http://www.lewisemper.com).

## Thanks to our Volunteers!

Volunteer Hours for  
Aug. 1, 2015 – July 31, 2016

5,782 hours, which represents a  
5% increase over last year

Administration	353
Training, Field Trips, and Ongoing Education	432
Bat Talk and Walks	651
Bucks for Ducks	461
CA Duck Days	363
Discover the Flyway School Program	3,302
Nature Bowl	51
Public Tours	42
Summer Education Programs	46
Other	81

Using the Independent Sector's "value of a volunteer hour" estimate of \$27.59, our volunteers contributed more than \$160,000 worth of their time to our programs. From the Yolo Basin Foundation staff, board of directors, and supporters: Thank You!

## Statistics for the 2015-2016 Discover the Flyway School Year

Category	Detail	Numbers
Who Served	Classes	153
	Schools	58
	School Districts	16
	Counties	5
Field Trips/ Training / Volunteer Time	Teaching Days (one or more field trip/day)	129
	Teacher Training Workshops	2
	Docent Training Workshops	5
	Docent Volunteer Hours	3,302
	Staff hours on Docent Trainings	180
	Total Number of Participants	4,789
Number of People	Students	3,715
	Percentage from Title 1 schools	36%
	Teachers	160
	Attending Workshops	39
	Parents accompanying classes	841
	Docent Volunteers	70
	Interns	3
	Number of Buses	45
Mini-Grants for Buses	Number of Classes	55
	Number of Students benefiting from buses	1,327

## Our Sponsors

We are incredibly grateful for the support of our 2016 Discover the Flyway program sponsors. Our donors' generosity has made it possible for thousands of local students to visit the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area and develop an understanding and appreciation for the natural world. Each year close to 4,000 students visit the Wildlife Area on a Discover the Flyway field trip, and one-third of these students come from underserved schools that don't have available funding for field trips. In an effort to share the wonders of the wetlands with all children, Yolo Basin Foundation offers bus mini-grants to in-need classrooms. It is a wonderful opportunity to inspire students, introduce them to the natural world, and engage them in hands-on science education. Many students experience nature for the first time on a Discover the Flyway field trip. And our grantors and donors make this possible!

- Arata Brothers Trust
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Central Valley Joint Venture
- City of Davis
- ERM Foundation
- First Northern Bank
- Kinder Morgan Foundation
- Monsanto Community Fund
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company
- Strong Foundation for Environmental Values
- Sutter Health Foundation
- Teichert Foundation
- UC Davis
- Umpqua Bank Charitable Foundation
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Walmart Foundation
- Wallis Foundation
- West Sacramento Foundation



Discover the Flyway students enjoy dipping for invertebrates with Education Associate John McDermott.

# Rice Harvest Provides a Bird Buffet!

by Corky Quirk, Program Coordinator



Early fall marks the time of year when the harvesters are in the fields gathering the wild rice that has been growing all summer. This is a wonderful opportunity to watch the birds as they congregate to take advantage of the newly-exposed food. Rice fields provide an abundance of dining options. Some birds, like the various species of blackbirds, eat rice and seed left behind after harvest, as well as protein-rich invertebrates such as crayfish, insects, worms and snails. About 2,000 acres of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area were planted in rice this year. As these fields are cut, the abundance of food available calls to the birds.

Highlighted are a few species that seem to know when the farm equipment enters the fields.

White-faced Ibis, *Plegadis chihi*, with its iridescent feathers, long legs and thick decurved bill, forages in shallow water for aquatic and moist-soil insects, crustaceans and earthworms. As the wild rice is cut and the fields open to mud with rice stubble, the birds fly behind the harvesters taking advantage of the suddenly-exposed invertebrates. The ibis population dropped dangerously low in the 1940's through the 1980's but have made a tremendous comeback. The use of DDT played a large role in their demise and rice fields a large role in their recovery. Rice managed for wildlife habitat provides the main food source for the White-faced Ibis in the Central Valley.

The Great Egret, *Ardea alba*, is abundant in the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, but the

species was decimated by market hunting for plumes around the turn of the 20th century. Migratory Bird Treaty Act protections enacted in 1913 enabled the populations to rebound. These tall, completely white-feathered birds are amazing hunters. Standing completely still they pose for the strike. Their prey includes voles, fish, crayfish, insects, crustaceans, snails, amphibians, reptiles, and also larger prey such as birds and small mammals. They are mainly around the edges of the rice in the summer, but as soon as the harvester opens the view, Great Egrets congregate in large flocks with other wading birds where there are abundant sources of food.

Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*, a smaller white egret with bright yellow feet, is also regularly seen at the Wildlife Area. They too were almost wiped out by the plume trade, but have thankfully also made a comeback. They can be seen behind the harvester with the ibises and Great Egrets, jockeying for position in the search for prey.

The Swainson's Hawk, *Buteo swainsoni*, a large hawk with narrow, pointed wings, spends its summers in the region, where it can often be seen in or over agricultural fields. Swainson's Hawks in California mainly eat voles, but also consume other small mammals, birds and insects. Although the flooded rice in the Wildlife Area doesn't provide for this hawk's needs, disked and fallow rice fields as well as rice field berms are important foraging

areas. When Swainson's Hawks circle in the sky, there is often a tractor below turning up the next meal.

Rice farmer, Jack DeWit, grows wild and white rice in the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. He began growing wild rice here in 1998. He enjoys the birds and says, "It's good to see a healthy resurgence of the White-faced Ibis after years of decline. Harvesting the wild rice removes six feet of cover, which has been the refuge for the fish, frogs, crayfish and other aquatic species that the birds love—with the cover removed, the birds have a banquet." But, Jack notes, "With the good, also comes the bad—the ibis, along with other birds, raccoons, and otters—can be in conflict with wild rice production, damaging the crop prior to harvest. As the ibis forage they walk on the unharvested rice, pushing it down into the water and we can't recover it. Fortunately the egrets don't seem to go into the standing wild rice as often and therefore are not as much of a problem."

Rice harvest marks the transition to fall at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, but it's really just the beginning of the annual rice and wildlife story. Next, the harvested fields will be reflooded to aid in rice stubble decomposition, and these manmade wetlands will provide the basis for the successful overwintering of thousands upon thousands of waterfowl that will soon begin to arrive along the Pacific Flyway. 🌱

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