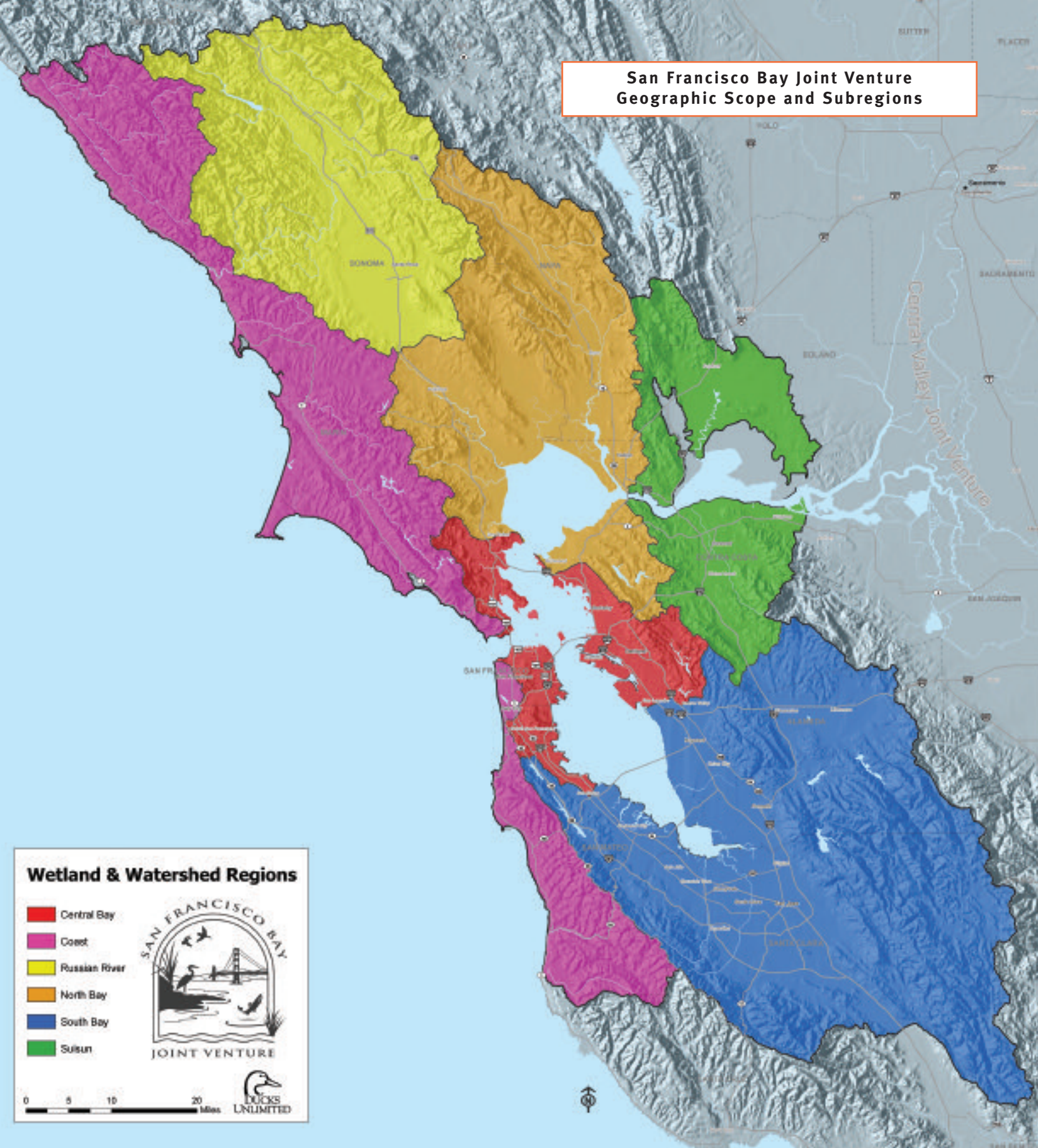


**San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Geographic Scope and Subregions**



Produced for SFBJV by Ducks Unlimited, Western Regional Office, Rancho Cordova, CA 916-852-2000
UPDATED 2003

The San Francisco Bay Joint Venture is a partnership of twenty-seven public agencies, environmental organizations, the business community, local governments, and landowners working cooperatively to protect, restore, increase, and enhance wetlands and riparian habitat in the San Francisco Bay Watersheds. We bring an ecosystem and collaborative approach to developing and promoting wetland and riparian habitat projects throughout the Bay Area.

The Joint Venture Management Board

Nonprofit and Private Organizations

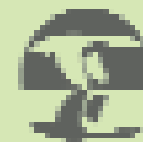
- Bay Area Audubon Council
- Bay Area Open Space Council
- Bay Planning Coalition
- Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge
- Ducks Unlimited
- National Audubon Society
- P G & E Corporation
- PRBO Conservation Science
- Save the Bay
- Sierra Club
- The Bay Institute
- Urban Creeks Council

Public Agencies

- Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- California State Coastal Conservancy
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Resources Agency
- Coastal Region, Mosquito and Vector Control District
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- San Francisco Estuary Project
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Conservation Board

Copies of this document can be ordered through:

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or downloaded from the SF Bay Joint Venture website:
www.sfbayjv.org



An Implementation Strategy for the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture

RESTORING THE ESTUARY

Executive Summary

A Strategic Vision for the Restoration of Wetlands and Wildlife in the SF Bay Area

Design: Linda Larsen Design, Marin County Photos: Cover—Shorebirds: Joe DiDonato; Hamilton Mudflat: California State Coastal Conservancy; Harbor Seals; courtesy of National Audubon Society; Sanderlings: Joe DiDonato; American Avocet: Skyhammer Graphics; San Francisquito Creek: Friends of San Francisquito Creek Watershed Council; Mallards: © Buck Lovell - Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge Complex; Forsters Tern: Rob Holt; SFBJV Partner Restoration: Sandy Scoggin.

RESTORING THE ESTUARY

Executive Summary

An Estuary of International Significance

The San Francisco Bay Estuary is the nation's second largest and perhaps the most biologically significant estuary on the Pacific Coast. It has also suffered the most extensive degradation of any estuary in the nation. Many years of filling, pollution, and alien species invasions have taken a great toll on the ecosystem. Despite these losses, however—or perhaps because of them—the San Francisco Bay Estuary is now a major center for a vibrant habitat restoration movement. Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made to protect what remains and to begin restoring as much as possible of what was lost.

Restoration work on the Bay Estuary is being undertaken by many diverse entities, including public agencies, conservation groups, landowners, corporate interests, local businesses, and citizen volunteers in the nine Bay counties. Working through a variety of partnerships, they have protected and enhanced thousands of acres of wetland and stream habitat.

In 1995, however, it became clear to those involved that this movement's growth was being impeded by a lack of continuity, coordination, and common vision. In response, the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV) was formed. The SFBJV is a partnership, one of 14 habitat joint ventures in the United States, each bringing together public and private agencies, conservation groups, development interests, and others seeking to collaborate in restoring wetlands and wildlife habitat within its geographic region.

The recent pace of wetland renewal in the San Francisco Bay Estuary is a testament to the power of the emerging partnerships. Between the inception of the Joint Venture in 1996 and the adoption of this Implementation strategy in 2001, Joint Venture partners had completed 22 wetland protection, restoration, or enhancement projects involving over 11,100 acres, with another 31,400 acres in progress.

San Francisco Estuary Wetlands Today

The Bay Estuary's ecological value lies mainly in the wetlands along its edge, and in the riparian habitats of streams and rivers feeding into it. These habitats are essential to the health of the myriad fish and wildlife populations of the region. Millions of shorebirds and waterfowl stop by during their annual migrations between Alaska and South America. Many overwinter here. San Francisco Bay is the only site along the Pacific Flyway where close to a million shorebirds have been counted in a single day. It hosts more shorebirds than all other coastal California estuaries combined. Up to half the populations of migrating West Coast waterfowl, particularly canvasback and sea ducks, winter in the Bay Estuary. The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network has designated the San Francisco Bay Estuary as a site of "Hemispheric Importance" (its highest ranking), and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan has listed it as one of 34 waterfowl habitats of major concern in North America.

Nevertheless, these wetlands are but a remnant of what existed a century ago: some 200,000 acres of tidal marshes, 100,000 acres of seasonal wetlands, vernal pools, creeks, and streams. More than 80 percent of these habitats have been lost, and much of what is left has been damaged. As a result, populations of waterfowl, shorebirds, and fish have been so stressed that 48 species are either listed under the federal Endangered Species Act or are candidates for listing. Development pressures threaten all the lands along the Bay, including wetlands, and—just as importantly—former wetlands that could be restored. Existing wetlands are jeopardized by development impacts, including a decline in water quality caused by water diversions, polluted stormwater runoff, and the loss of adjacent uplands to development. These are problems of urban growth shared by the nation's other major estuaries from Seattle to Boston.

The implications of these trends have prompted a number of organizations to form partnerships to work toward reversing the tide of wetland losses. Many of these organizations are now working in association with the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

The Emergence of Partnerships for Wetlands and Wildlife

The San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, like the other joint ventures, is an outgrowth of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), an international agreement signed in 1986 by the United States and Canada and later joined by Mexico, in response to a decline in waterfowl populations during the preceding decades. Habitat joint ventures were to be formed as vehicles for accomplishing the Plan's major goal: to "maintain and enhance the habitat values of areas identified as internationally significant to waterfowl." As of early 2000, a total of 14 such collaborations had been formed in North America, 11 in the United States and three in Canada, bringing together the fiscal resources and management capabilities of a spectrum of agencies and organizations.

Like the others, the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture provides a framework for sharing skills, funding, and information. Using an integrated and non-regulatory approach, it has been working through its partners to complete on-the-ground habitat projects that benefit wildlife populations by leveraging resources, developing new funding sources, and creating project-specific partnerships.

The partners of the SFBJV recognize that wetlands and riparian habitats are vital not only to wildlife, but also to flood control and water storage and quality improvements. They buffer the impact of floodwaters, cleanse pollutants from runoff, and help to recharge overdrawn water supplies. The diversity of project partnerships being created within the SFBJV suggests a growing awareness that wetlands also provide economic and other benefits, including open space and recreational opportunities. In short, wetlands help to sustain a higher quality of life for residents in the densely populated San Francisco Bay Area.

Understanding the current and potential importance of the Bay's wetlands, the 27 organizations and agencies on the SFBJV Board have agreed to pursue this primary goal: "To protect, restore, increase, and enhance all types of wetlands, riparian habitat, and associated uplands throughout the San Francisco Bay region for all types of wildlife." Within the context of this goal, restoration is viewed as the conversion of one habitat type to another (e.g., diked baylands to tidal wetlands), while enhancement is seen as an improvement in the functioning and biological diversity of an existing habitat.

To implement the Board's primary goal, SFBJV partners have defined several objectives:

- **Secure, restore, and improve wetlands, riparian habitat, and associated uplands by applying incentives and using non-regulatory techniques**
- **Strengthen and promote new sources of funding for such efforts**
- **Improve habitat management on public and private lands through cooperative agreements and incentives**
- **Support the monitoring and evaluation of habitat restoration projects and research to improve future restoration projects**

A Blueprint for Action

The Joint Venture has adopted an Implementation Strategy to help SFBJV partners fulfill their shared habitat objectives by building on what has been accomplished and planning for the future. This Strategy is based on an ecosystem perspective that considers the biological requirements of wetlands, along with issues of public health and safety. It establishes region-wide habitat goals and subregional objectives for the restoration of the Bay Estuary using three broad categories: bay habitats, seasonal wetlands, and creeks and lakes.

Over the next two decades partners plan to protect 63,000 acres, restore 37,000 acres, and enhance another 35,000 acres of Bay habitats that include tidal flats, marshes, and lagoons. They will also work to secure habitat values of adjoining seasonal wetlands, with protection and restoration/enhancement goals of 37,000 acres and 30,000 acres respectively. In addition, Joint Venture partners intend to protect 4,000 acres of riparian corridors and restore and enhance over 1,000 miles of creeks, as shown in the table below.

The SFBJV's goals offer an ambitious but well-researched and achievable vision for the restoration of the Estuary. Partners will work only with willing landowners in the pursuit of these goals and objectives, with a focus on conservation easements as a major land protection tool.

The foundation and primary framework for the SFBJV's habitat goals is the Baylands Ecosystem

Habitat Goals (1999), commonly referred to as the Habitat Goals, a scientifically-based, ecosystem-management plan for restoring the SF Bay Estuary. This document grew out of the San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands and Ecosystem Goals Project, a visionary effort established in 1995. Its intent was to map and document the changes that have occurred in the Bay's wetlands over the past two centuries and to develop a clear statement about the potential for future restoration based on sound science.

To help the SFBJV's partners accomplish this vision for wetlands, acreage objectives were developed for each of the geographic sub regions: North Bay, Suisun, Central Bay, South Bay and the San Francisco/San Mateo Coast. Strategies to accomplish these objectives for each sub region recognize their organizational partners and the unique qualities of each area. To further respect regional differences, watershed working groups within each sub region have been or will be established to inform Joint Venture activities with local knowledge and carry out responsive recommendations.

The objectives of *Restoring the Estuary* include:

- Improve management of bay habitats, seasonal wetlands, creeks, lakes, and associated uplands on both public and private lands
- Support monitoring and evaluation of restoration projects, as well as pertinent research studies, to measure success and improve the results of future restoration/enhancement projects
- Strengthen existing and promote new funding sources for wetlands acquisition, restoration, enhancement and management programs
- Encourage programmatic connections between the Joint Venture's goals and other regional initiatives that have the potential for positive effects on watershed and wetland management and restoration. These linkages include:

- 1) coordination among multiple conservation programs;
- 2) watershed management, planning and implementation,
- 3) clean water and non-point source pollution programs; and
- 4) pursuit of military base closure opportunities for wetland enhancement and restoration

- Develop an inclusive, collaborative and broad-based public outreach program to communicate the vision of *Restoring the Estuary*
- Develop watershed-based partnerships to evaluate and implement recommendations contained in the Habitat Goals
- Promote and assist local organizations in developing and implementing habitat restoration projects
- Implement all of the acreage goals in the Habitat Goals within thirty years. [The SFBJV goals presented below represent 75 percent of the "milestones" in the Habitat Goals.]

Conclusion

The Implementation Strategy presents a dramatic vision of more than doubling the existing tidal wetlands and more than tripling riparian habitats that ring the Bay through restoration and enhancement. By attaining this vision, the partners of the SFBJV will not only renew the health of the Estuary, but will also help sustain and reinvigorate the economic and social health of the communities that share this special place.

The intent is to achieve this vision in the first two decades of the new millennium. To be attained, that vision must become a collective vision. This will come through the momentum of widening partnerships that encompass the many diverse interests surrounding the wetlands of the San Francisco Bay. Fundamentally, this Strategy calls for learning to work together to enhance our relationship with the regional commons that the Estuary represents.

Habitat Goals for the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture

Habitat Goal Categories	SFBJV Habitats Tracked Habitats	SFBJV Tracked Habitat Goals (acres)			SFBJV Habitat Goals Categories (acres) ¹		
		Acquire ²	Restore ²	Enhance	Acquire ³	Restore	Enhance
Bay Habitats	Tidal Marshes	43,000	32,000	20,000	63,000	37,000	35,000
	Tidal Flats	12,000	4,000	6,000			
	Lagoons	1,500	50	1,500			
	Beaches	113	60	35			
	Salt Ponds	6,000	1,000	7,500			
Seasonal Wetlands	Diked Wetlands	16,000	6,000	12,000	37,000	7,000	23,000
	Moist Grasslands	21,000	1,000	11,500			
Creeks and Lakes	Lakes	3,000	1,000	6,000	7,000	5,000	22,000
	Creeks & riparian zones	4,000	4,000	16,000			

Notes: ¹ Numbers are to the nearest thousand. ² Numbers are double counted in instances where restoration takes place on acquired land. ³ SFBJV is a nonregulatory entity, and thus acquisition goals reflect working cooperatively with a willing seller.

