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Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From:
Department of Fish and Wildlife
1010 Riverside Pkwy
West Sacramento, CA 95605

Project Title: California Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program

Project Applicant: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Project Location: Statewide – County: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba

Project Description: The California Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program (Project) incentivizes rice growers to flood harvested fields in the winter to benefit migrating and wintering waterbird. In partnership with the California Rice Commission, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will oversee the administration of funds and implementation of the Project. Winter-flooding of harvest rice fields in the Central Valley provides approximately 75% of the energetic needs of dabbling ducks and a significant portion of the energetic needs of migrating shorebirds. Not only do these practices provide waterbird habitat, but they are also beneficial for landowners and improve California's climate resiliency by recharging groundwater, allowing flexibility during drought scenarios, reducing flood risk, decomposing rice straw, and improving recreation benefits for rural communities.

Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Public Agency Carrying out Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Exempt Status:

☒ Categorical Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, sections 15307, and 15308, Class 7, and 8

Reasons why project is exempt: See attachment.

CDFW Contact Person: Kelsey Navarre, Research and Education Coordinator, Wetland Conservation Program, 916-617-0265

Signature: DocuSigned by: Scott Gardner 7543E85CBE88445... Date: 9/15/2026

Scott Gardner, Wildlife Branch Chief

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant. Date Received for filing at OPR: