



# HABITAT

## The Central Valley is Raptor Rich!

Geography, climate, and land use make the Central Valley of California an ideal location for Swainson's hawks and other raptors to nest and breed during summer months. Each winter, large numbers of other hawk species migrate to the Central Valley. Of an estimated 2,100 nesting pairs, Sacramento, Yolo, San Joaquin and Solano counties have the highest Swainson's hawk nesting density in the state.



### HIGH QUALITY NESTING AND FORAGING HABITAT



Swainson's hawks need tall, mature trees near good foraging habitat for nesting. They primarily use cottonwoods, oaks, sycamores, and willows, and will also use eucalyptus, pines and locusts

### ABUNDANT PREY

Swainson's hawks eat a variety of prey, including insects, small rodents, snakes and small birds, but their main prey is the California meadow vole



### The Role of Agriculture

Alfalfa, low stature crops, and irrigated pasture provide the foraging habitat near nesting territories where hawks hunt prey to feed their young. Other crops provide foraging opportunities when fields are being disked, watered, and harvested



Photo by R. Sewell



Tomatoes



Alfalfa



Crop harvest



Irrigated crops