

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT VOLUNTARY LOCAL PROGRAM
AND
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

This notice is to advise that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has prepared a Voluntary Local Program for the project identified below. As mandated by the California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 786.3, subdivision (d)(1), the minimum public review period for the Voluntary Local Program is thirty (30) days. A hard copy of the Voluntary Local Program is available for review at CDFW's Central Region office, 1234 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710 or CDFW can provide a pdf file of the Voluntary Local Program by email upon request to R4CESA@wildlife.ca.gov.

Voluntary Local Program Title: Tricolored Blackbird Voluntary Local Program (VLP)

Project Location: The VLP covers eight counties (Stanislaus, San Benito, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern) and comprises approximately 2,973,920 acres planted in grain crops associated with ranches and farms likely to provide nesting and foraging habitat for the State candidate for listing endangered tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*).

Project Description: The VLP conveys authorization for take of tricolored blackbird, a species listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA)(Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), incidental to farmers' and ranchers' voluntary participation in the VLP. Participation in the VLP by farmers and ranchers in whose grain crops tricolored blackbirds nest provides the farmers and ranchers with access to technical assistance to implement colony protection management practices. Tricolored blackbirds nest in large colonies on approximately seven to ten dairies annually in the San Joaquin Valley. Additional colonies are found on a few farms growing grain crops in or near the Central Valley regularly. The VLP will provide take authorization to these farmers and ranchers who enroll and implement management practices to delay harvest and allow tricolored blackbird colonies to complete their nesting and fledging cycle. CDFW deemed the VLP complete on February 8, 2019, and must take final action on it within 75 days.

Public Comment: CDFW seeks written comments from the public regarding the VLP and will be accepting written correspondence delivered to CDFW during the 30-day public review period that begins on February 22, 2019 and ends on March 25, 2019. Please send your comment/response to:

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710
R4CESA@wildlife.ca.gov

For additional information or questions regarding the VLP please contact:

Annee Ferranti
Environmental Program Manager
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Conservation Program
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 243-4005 Ext. 141
Annee.Ferranti@wildlife.ca.gov