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Sommario/riassunto	This is the first comprehensive environmental history of California's Great Central Valley, where extensive freshwater and tidal wetlands once provided critical habitat for tens of millions of migratory waterfowl. Weaving together ecology, grassroots politics, and public policy, Philip Garone tells how California's wetlands were nearly obliterated by vast irrigation and reclamation projects, but have been brought back from the brink of total destruction by the organized efforts of duck hunters, whistle-blowing scientists, and a broad coalition of conservationists. Garone examines the many demands that have been made on the Valley's natural resources, especially by large-scale agriculture, and traces the unforeseen ecological consequences of our unrestrained manipulation of nature. He also investigates changing public and scientific attitudes that are now ushering in an era of unprecedented protection for wildlife and wetlands in California and the nation.