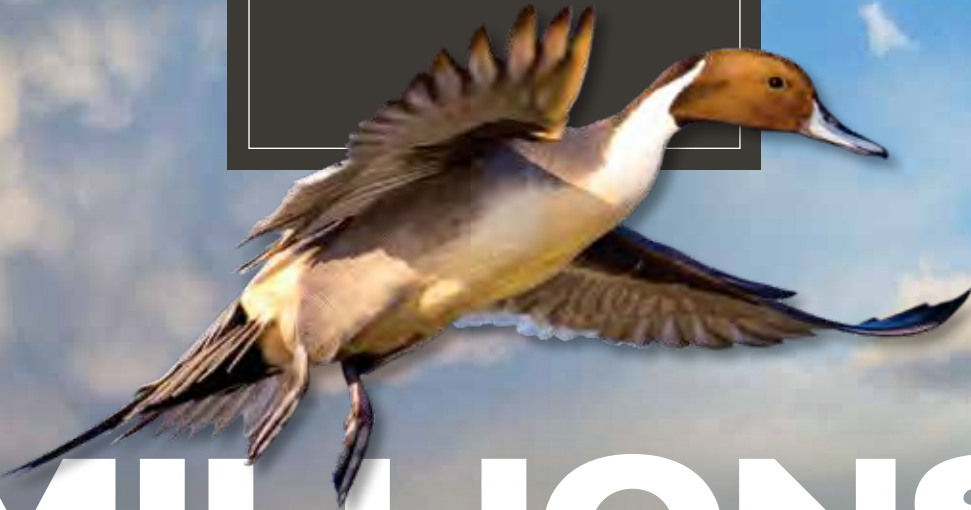


**DUCKS** UNLIMITED  
ANNUAL REPORT **2024**



**MILLIONS**  
*of reasons to be*  
**THANKFUL**







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# MILLIONS of Reasons to Celebrate FY24

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), Ducks Unlimited (DU) delivered a year of unprecedented milestones reflecting our recognized position as the leader in North American wetlands conservation. We capitalized on generational support from private and public partners to improve wetlands from coast to coast, from the top of the Prairie Pothole Region to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico.

The exclamation point was the announcement that DU had delivered over 1 million acres of conservation for the first time in a single fiscal year. This staggering total reflects

on-the-ground habitat improvement in marshes, grasslands and coastal areas crucial to waterfowl throughout their annual cycle.

Those 1 million acres produce cleaner water and reduce flooding risks for people. Those 1 million acres include more public land for hunters. Those 1 million acres improve biodiversity for all species that rely on wetlands.

And above all, those 1 million acres represent an organization leveraging unparalleled grassroots support to deliver bigger and stronger conservation partnerships.

## THE PEOPLE

FY24 was another record-setting example of how 678,000 members and over one million supporters continued saving the wetlands and waterfowl we are passionate about. DU volunteers continued their tireless devotion to our mission. In 2024, 30,000 volunteers hosted more than 629,000 attendees at 5,200 events, and event income generated \$99.5 million.

Ducks Unlimited's staff has grown to meet the immediate opportunities to deliver priority habitats across North America. Our experts in the field now include agronomists,

water scientists, agriculture experts and sustainability scientists. New staff in development and event fundraising are uncovering new sources of revenue while our policy teams continue to protect our landscapes in state capitals and Washington, D.C.

Leading this organization are true conservation champions of the Board of Directors for Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust.

## THE FUNDING

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In FY24, Ducks Unlimited generated impressive revenues of \$333 million. FY24 habitat delivery revenue from government grants and partnerships was an impressive \$177 million, \$17 million above budget.

We are efficient, with 83 percent of our expenditures going toward our habitat delivery and conservation education mission.

Ducks Unlimited made great progress on our most ambitious comprehensive campaign in history, *Conservation for a Continent*, which will raise \$3 billion by 2026 to provide cleaner water for communities, waterfowl and wildlife. One of the largest fundraising efforts launched in North America devoted to landscape conservation and the future of our outdoor heritage, the campaign surpassed the \$2 billion mark with two years remaining.

DU's longtime corporate partner, Cox Enterprises, is

steering our campaign progress. Cox has committed \$100 million to support conservation in honor of Jim Kennedy, who is DU's most prominent supporter, chairman emeritus of Cox Enterprises and chairman of the James M. Cox Foundation. This generous commitment will advance Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust conservation in North America's prairie region.

Major gift commitments from individuals, foundations and corporations totaled a whopping \$164.8 million, including \$100 million from Cox Enterprises. This represents the largest commitment ever recorded for Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust.

While the Cox partnership will generate cash in successive years, FY24 major gift cash exceeded \$52.3 million. New planned giving commitments surpassed \$34.8 million, while estate maturities amounted to \$7.6 million in cash.

## THE IMPACT

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This annual report contains numerous examples of why Ducks Unlimited is thankful for a successful FY24. It includes much more information about DU's conservation and sustainability efforts across North America and the passionate and dedicated members, volunteers and supporters, like you, who drive our daily mission.

It tells the story of Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC), a vital component in the continental conservation of North American wetlands. In 2024, the organization celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding in March 1974. In August, over 150 DUMAC supporters gathered at the Pueblo Bonito Pacifica resort in Cabo San Lucas to recognize DUMAC's success in conserving more than 2.1 million acres of waterfowl habitat, and those supporters raised an additional \$1 million for future projects.

The report also shows how Ducks Unlimited Canada made strides to protect and improve breeding landscapes, which were even more crucial during recent episodes of drought.

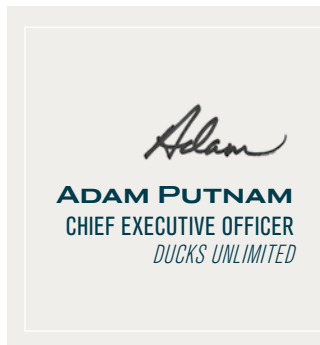
You'll learn how our youth and education programs are planting the seeds of wetlands conservation support and how our marketing and communications teams are educating entirely new audiences about the benefits of DU's mission. FY24 gave us a million reasons to be proud of our incredible achievements across the country. Our volunteers, staff and partners are why Ducks Unlimited will continue to break new ground in wetlands and waterfowl conservation.

Thanks a million!



*Bob*

**BOB SPOERL**  
PRESIDENT  
DUCKS UNLIMITED

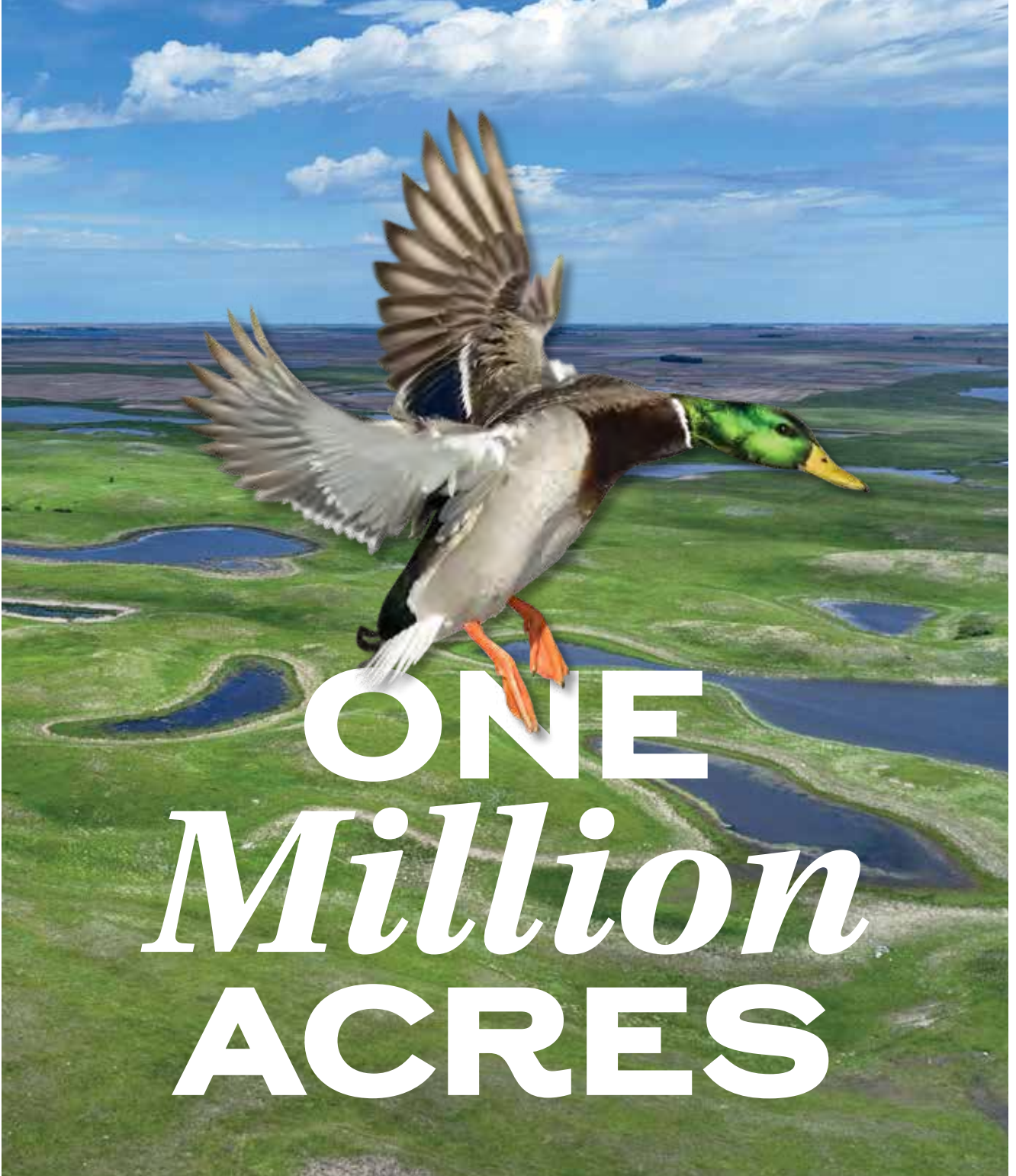


*Adam*

**ADAM PUTNAM**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
DUCKS UNLIMITED







**ONE**  
*Million*  
**ACRES**

Ducks Unlimited, Partners Surpass Conservation Milestone



**F**or the first time in its 87-year history, Ducks Unlimited delivered one million acres of conservation across the United States in one year, thanks to more than a million supporters and partners, including private landowners, hunters, corporations, major donors and state and federal agencies.

This achievement reflects a national surge in public and private interest in restoring and protecting wetlands and other important habitats.

One million acres is the approximate size of Rhode Island. Included within those million acres are long-term and permanent projects, such as conservation restorations and easements; short-term or annual efforts, such as agricultural cover crop programs; and new and revisited project sites.

DU's leaders announced this historic milestone during Ducks Unlimited's 87th National Convention in San Diego, California. Since its founding, Ducks Unlimited has restored or protected more than 18 million acres across North America.

The million-acre total encompasses projects across all four migratory flyways, including Ducks Unlimited's priority breeding and wintering landscapes. Highlights in FY24 include:

- Working with landowners and grazing operations in the Prairie Pothole Region to improve nesting habitat
- Rebuilding marshes along the Gulf Coast
- Restoring and reconnecting habitats in the Klamath Basin in California and Oregon
- Improving nesting and migration habitat in the Great Lakes while improving water quality for millions of residents
- Growing DU's Great Salt Lake Initiative
- Improving black duck habitat in the North Atlantic region
- Expanding agriculture partnerships and programs

"One million acres of tangible conservation in one year is an achievement that's nearly 90 years in the making," said DU CEO Adam Putnam. "This is a testament to the hard work of our dedicated staff and volunteers following years of exponential conservation growth. We don't just advocate for wetlands—our mission moves dirt. Ducks see it. Communities see it. Partners see it. Each acre represents in-the-field success. Combined with our most ambitious comprehensive campaign in history, *Conservation for a Continent*, DU members and supporters are more motivated than ever to impact the wetlands and waterfowl we love."

The international fundraising campaign, *Conservation for a Continent. Our Wetlands. Our Legacy.* aims to raise \$3 billion by 2026 to provide cleaner water for communities and wildlife.

Every volunteer, contributor and partner fuels the campaign and DU's growing conservation impact. Cox Enterprises' \$100 million gift to support conservation in honor of Jim Kennedy, chairman emeritus of Cox Enterprises and chairman of the James M. Cox Foundation, will help support protection and restoration efforts in North America's Prairie Pothole Region.

Ducks Unlimited is now the world's largest and most effective private waterfowl and wetlands conservation organization.

"Wetlands provide many services to our communities, including flood storage, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, enhanced fish habitat and more," said DU Chief Conservation Officer Dr. Karen Waldrop. "But we can't do this alone. The unprecedented success during FY24 is because of DU's industry-leading partnerships with state and federal agencies, private corporations, farmers and individual donors."





*Thanks to a generous contribution from Cox Enterprises, Ducks Unlimited will be able to safeguard some of the most waterfowl-dense landscapes in the Prairie Pothole Region.*

## Cox Enterprises Commits \$100 Million to Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust

**A**t Ducks Unlimited's 87th annual National Convention in San Diego, California, longtime corporate partner Cox Enterprises announced that it will establish a fund to support conservation in honor of Jim Kennedy, chairman emeritus of Cox Enterprises and chairman of the James M. Cox Foundation. The \$100 million gift will go directly toward Ducks Unlimited's land trust, Wetlands America Trust, to help conserve North America's prairie region. The announcement was made by Alex Taylor, chairman and CEO of Cox Enterprises.

The prairies are a lush and productive ecosystem of wetlands and grasslands and a critical breeding ground for millions of ducks and geese. Conservation efforts in this region help hundreds of plant and animal species and improve people's quality of life by increasing water quality and availability.

"It has always been important to me to leave the world better than I found it, and I was so honored when Alex proposed the idea of creating this fund," said Kennedy. "Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust are great partners to conserve and restore our prairies for future generations."





Jim Kennedy has volunteered with Ducks Unlimited for over 50 years, has served on its board of directors and was Wetlands America Trust’s founding president. Before the 2024 gift, Kennedy, the foundation and other Cox-related funders had donated nearly \$100 million to Ducks Unlimited. He was recently awarded the Ducks Unlimited Conservation Achievement Award for accomplishments that have made exceptional contributions to conservation in North America.

“Jim’s passion for wildlife and wetland conservation is

one of his many legacies. It is important to me, our family, and our company that Jim be recognized for his dedication to the environment,” said Taylor. “We thought there was no better way to honor him than by creating a fund committed to serving an organization and cause so near to his heart.”

“Jim Kennedy has always been an amazing partner in conservation. Cox and Ducks Unlimited have supported critical conservation efforts across North America. With the support from this newly established fund, Ducks Unlimited and Wetlands America Trust can accelerate this significant work to conserve this essential landscape,” said Adam Putnam, CEO of Ducks Unlimited.

Cox Enterprises is dedicated to empowering people to build a better future for the next generation. Cox is a leader in the broadband, automotive and media industries and a leading investment platform with strategic positions in emerging technologies driving the future of agriculture, renewable energy, health care and public sector software. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Cox is a global company with \$23 billion in annual revenues and a proud 125-year history. To learn more about Cox and its commitment to its people, planet and communities, visit [coxenterprises.com](http://coxenterprises.com).



*Cox Enterprises CEO Alex Taylor (foreground) participated in a duck nesting survey last spring to better understand the relationship between native grasslands and waterfowl reproduction success.*


### ANNUAL CONSERVATION PROGRESS AND HABITAT ACRES GOALS

2022 RESULT	2023 RESULT	2024 GOAL	2024 RESULT
575,647 ACRES	640,688 ACRES	750,000 ACRES	1,081,227 ACRES

### COLLECTIVE CONSERVATION RESULTS

7.8 MILLION	18.2 MILLION
U.S. acres conserved since 1984	North American acres conserved* since 1937

*\*The cumulative number of restored, protected and managed acres under DUI, DUC, and DUMAC since 1937.*



In FY24, Ducks Unlimited completed 346 projects in the Great Plains that helped protect, enhance or restore 283,889 acres in seven states while much of the region struggled with drought conditions.

## GREAT PLAINS REGION



### Virtually Invisible: Using New Technology to Manage Healthy Prairie

**M**anagement of the vital grassland landscapes in the Great Plains often includes partnerships with ranchers. Cattle grazing is a common practice to reduce excessive litter buildup, stimulate new grass growth and suppress invasive cool-season grasses, preparing the landscape for a new influx of grasses and forbs.

Grazing animals, like cattle, are the gardeners of prairie ecosystems. Each step that a cow takes increases the odds that seeds from the previous year will be pressed into the soil and hoof-sized depressions across the landscape will hold water when it rains. The inevitable natural flow of fertilizer (manure and urine) provides nutrients for the seeds to grow.

That's why wildlife managers and biologists are working with livestock producers to bring diversity back to the grasslands with rotational grazing techniques. Cross-fencing allows a small portion of grassland to support grazing activity while the remainder of the property rests and builds root structures. Over time, the outcome is a diverse landscape with variable stages of growth and recovery. Installing water sources gives land managers an enhanced ability to manage specific areas and reduce activity around natural water sources.

Kevin Thompson, a North Dakota rancher, partnered with Ducks Unlimited and other organizations to enhance





grazing infrastructure on the Stewart Lake National Wildlife Refuge and his adjacent private land. The project established a water well, solar system, rotational grazing system and water tanks, setting the stage for enhanced grassland management. Thompson has already seen a significant reduction in the time his cattle spend at natural water sources.

“This has been and will continue to be an exciting project to enhance our grasslands,” he said.

Thompson is now making his cross-fencing invisible. Virtual livestock collars, native grass seed and boundary fencing provided the opportunity to implement virtual fence technology through Corral Technologies’ virtual fence collar system. The collars operate based on animal behavioral responses to sound and sensation to establish a range of deterrence. Virtual fence boundaries are created on a phone or computer, allowing livestock to be kept in or out of a specified area without physically moving fences. Frequent updates to collared livestock’s location, notifica-

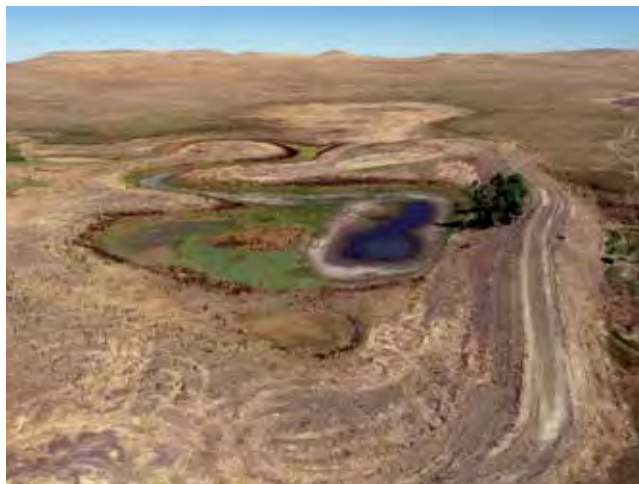


*Virtual livestock collars allow ranchers to improve grazing practices without relocating a fence.*

tions when cattle are outside a perimeter, grazing heat maps to correlate vegetative response to grazing pressure and the technological appeal to the next generation of ranchers are just some of the opportunities inherent in the technology.

“This project would not have been possible without the vision and focus of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Northern Great Plains Joint Venture, Audubon Great Plains and the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund all cooperating,” Thompson said.

## Perkins County Dam Improves Water Access



*A water-control structure on a ranch in Perkins County, South Dakota, helped create nine acres of wetlands on a 30-acre impoundment.*

**D**U and South Dakota landowner Phil Jerde of the Great Plains Buffalo Ranch worked together to create a 30-acre impoundment on his property in Perkins County. Installing a new water-control structure in an existing breached secondary dam paved the way for water level management on nine acres of an upstream portion of the 30-acre impoundment.



“The location of this impoundment is ideal. The surrounding landscape has a limited number of suitable wetlands during the waterfowl breeding season. With 30 acres of dependable wetland habitat in the area, waterfowl and other birds will have access to additional reliable wetland habitat where they can thrive,” said Randy Meidinger, DU’s South Dakota regional biologist.



The wetland will provide over a mile and a half of undisturbed shallow wetland and shoreline habitat suitable for some wetland bird species. It will also provide deeper wetland zones used as breeding, feeding and migration habitat for other bird species.

According to Meidinger, implementing a grazing system like the one employed by the Jerdes means many of the grassland acres are left undisturbed for all but a few days

during the year, and over half the grassland acres of the operation are undisturbed throughout the entire waterfowl nesting season.

“By strategically utilizing a sound rotational grazing strategy, the Jerde family is improving grassland habitat that will benefit soil health and grassland vigor while enhancing available nesting cover for breeding grassland birds and waterfowl,” Meidinger said.

## DU Revitalizes Yampa River Wildlife Area



*DU restored 74 acres of irrigated meadows and associated uplands along Colorado's Yampa River.*

**A**t Colorado's Yampa River State Wildlife Area (SWA), Ducks Unlimited worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to repair degraded infrastructure and restore the water management capabilities necessary to support productive waterfowl habitat. Managers can now seasonally add or remove water from the wetland impoundments on the SWA according to habitat needs.

The SWA provides public access to the Yampa River through the summer months. Observers can see significant populations of bobolinks and sandhill cranes. Waterfowl hunters also use the area in the region. The restorations will

enhance the river's overall value and support the wildlife prized by the people of Colorado.

The SWA project also aligns with the habitat goals outlined in DU's Peaks to Prairies conservation initiative. Major donors like Bob and Kitty Wilson and Dr. Alan Reishus contributed to this initiative to help ensure DU could complete the project.

Seven wetland impoundments, irrigated meadows and associated uplands were restored, totaling 74 acres of wildlife habitat. DU and partners are planning additional wetland restorations on the property in the coming years.





Ducks Unlimited's Great Lakes/Atlantic Region completed 302 projects and 525,939 acres of conservation in FY24.

## GREAT LAKES/ATLANTIC REGION



DAVIDSTIMAC.COM

### Black Duck and Mallard Telemetry Project Explores Population Declines

**A** new study will examine post-hatch success of mallards and black ducks in the Atlantic Flyway, which is critical to the future management of these species.

Black duck populations were once on the brink of extinction, dropping by more than 50 percent from the 1950s to the 1980s. While the breeding population has stabilized, black ducks remain below North American Waterfowl Management Plan goals. Meanwhile, breeding mallards in the Atlantic Flyway have declined 1.1 percent yearly since 1998

and 39 percent in the northeast U.S. between 1998 and 2023. Waterfowl professionals have proposed several explanations for mallard and black duck declines, including hybridization between the two closely related species, wetland loss and the degradation of breeding, staging and wintering areas, among other factors.

DU aims to better understand black duck and mallard ecology during the breeding period by partnering with the State University of New York-Brockport, Pennsylvania Game Commission, University of Saskatchewan, New York State





RYAN CAMPBELL

*DU will use GPS telemetry units to track black ducks (above) and mallards.*

Department of Environmental Conservation, Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control and 16 other state, provincial and federal agencies.

This new study uses GPS telemetry units to track bird locations and identify which females have successful nests. Then, researchers use unmanned aerial drones to identify brood-rearing behavior among black ducks and mallards in eastern North America.

“Waterfowl brood ecology can be difficult to study, but substantial evidence suggests that nest success and brood survival greatly influence population trajectories,” said Dr. John Coluccy, DU director of conservation science and planning.

The work leverages two large-scale telemetry studies to mark 1,700 hen mallards and black ducks with GPS units by 2025. Researchers have developed a methodology using location and accelerometer data collected by the telemetry units to identify incubating hens. Once the ducklings hatch, Abbey Butler, a graduate student from SUNY-Brockport, and numerous other drone operators in eastern North America will use GPS locations and drones to monitor and count a subset of broods at least three times during the brood-rearing period.

Ultimately, the work will help prioritize critical brood-rearing areas for wetland conservation throughout these species’ breeding ranges in North America.

“From monitoring a subsample of known brood-rearing hens, we will be able to use location and accelerometer data to develop a reliable brood-rearing classification signature and apply that to our entire sample of marked hens,” Butler said. “This is a critical first step in allowing us to determine environmental, habitat and landscape variables that best explain mallard and black duck reproduction.”

## Missouri Ranchers Restore Thousands of Acres of Native Grasslands

**B**uilding from an established partnership, which has collectively restored, enhanced and protected over 100,000 acres of wetlands on public and private lands across the state, Ducks Unlimited and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) are collaborating to support Missouri’s Native Forages Initiative (NFI).

NFI is a program for producers who want to manage soil moisture so that their farms are less susceptible to drought by converting non-native forages (row crops) to native forages for haying or grazing. These on-farm practices reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon. Other benefits include improved water quality, quantity, community resilience, biodiversity and public recreation. DU and MDC are attempting to increase the scale and scope of the NFI program through site visits, education and targeted outreach. So far, more than 1,200 acres have been impacted.

Through this unique opportunity, producers and land-owners can receive technical and financial assistance to establish native forages by either renovating existing non-native forage for haying or grazing or converting cropland to native forage for haying or grazing. Native grasses can increase daily weight gain for livestock during the summer months, improve conception rates and are resilient to drought.

“The Native Forages Initiative in Missouri helps put more native grasses on the landscape as a major part of the forage base for livestock producers,” said Ryan Diener, DU grassland and grazing program coordinator. “Native grasses and broad-leaves can play a pivotal role in helping livestock operations remain profitable by providing high-quality forage during the summer months, when traditional cool season pastures and hay fields have drastically reduced production due to heat and drought stress.”







*The Missouri easement program encourages producers to convert cropland to native grasslands and wetlands.*

Native grasses also improve soil health and water quality while slowing erosion. Their deep roots and stiff upright growth keep soil from washing away and increase water infiltration, reducing the amount of nutrient runoff into rivers, streams and wetlands. Native grasslands retain more moisture in the soil, making them more drought resistant. Carbon sequestration and lower greenhouse gas emissions are another benefit of native grasses.

“Producers don’t have to supplement the diet of their livestock if there are more native grasses on their ranch, which makes for a more profitable and healthy cattle operation,” Diener said. “Some people may not realize this, but cattle are closely tied to waterfowl. Without healthy grasslands for cattle to feed on, ducks and geese would have fewer habitats to nest and find refuge in.”



### **KRIS AND DAN SCHULZ**

Kris and Dan Schulz are Benefactor Roll of Honor Major Sponsors, Grand Slam Heritage Sponsors, President’s Council members and 30-year DU volunteers.

Kris and Dan are committed to leaving the world better than they found it.

“We’re in this for wetlands, wildlife, wild spaces, clean air and water,” Dan said.

In 2020, Dan received the Russ Bengel Award, DU Michigan’s highest honor.

Kris and Dan are enjoying their retirement by attending to their small conservation easement, spending time with family and contributing to community and environmental organizations.

In FY24, Ducks Unlimited completed 565 projects in the Southern Region, which helped protect, enhance and conserve 227,467 acres across 13 states.

## SOUTHERN REGION



### Protecting Critical Habitat and Slowing Coastal Erosion in Texas

**D**ucks Unlimited worked with conservation partners including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Texas General Land Office through the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response program to help install three segments of breakwater along the East Bay shoreline of the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Chambers County, Texas.

Coastal erosion seriously threatens beach and bay shorelines, natural resources, coastal communities and public and private property in Texas. This project included installing over 16,400 linear feet of breakwater to prevent further shoreline erosion. Based on data from 1930 to 2022 by the Bureau of Economic Geology, the shoreline along the refuge experienced an average loss of about four feet per year.

The Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1963 to provide wintering and migration habitat for ducks and geese. The USFWS manages the coastal marsh for migratory and resident waterfowl, shorebirds and other wildlife species. One of three refuges in the Texas Chenier Plain National Wildlife Refuge Complex, it is a designated Globally Important Bird Area, Monarch Waystation and Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Site of International Importance. A popular spot for outdoor recreation, the refuge offers visitors ample hunting, fresh and saltwater fishing and boating opportunities in addition to wildlife viewing, accessible via the area's numerous walking trails and the 2.64-mile auto tour loop.







*Newly installed breakwater at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge.*

## Expanding DU's Impact in Arkansas and Tennessee

**D**U's Southern Region expanded its impact during FY24 by adding a satellite office in Jonesboro, Arkansas. This new facility will house biologists, engineers and USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership team members and serve as the hub for all things DU in the area, including Tennessee conservation programs. Jonesboro is in the Delta—the heart of rice and duck country. Many of DU's state, federal and corporate partners also have headquarters in Jonesboro, allowing DU to build on successes and better plan for future growth of its conservation and agriculture programs.

Having an office in the country's top rice-producing state will allow partnership staff to have a strong presence in the community and better serve producers. The partnership, which recently celebrated a decade of serving the rice-producing community, is working to conserve three of the nation's most important natural resources: working rice lands, water and wildlife. Along with its partners, USA Rice, the California Rice Commission and Delta Wildlife, DU has worked on over 1,000 rice farms spanning 825,000 acres.



### LIVE WILDLY

In 2022, Ducks Unlimited received a pledge of multi-year support for Florida conservation programs from the Live Wildly Foundation.

The Live Wildly Foundation advances conservation in Florida by creating diverse coalitions, fostering collaboration and empowering stakeholders. In partnership with the Bellini Better World Foundation, Live Wildly strives for a harmonious and sustainable future where economic prosperity coexists with a thriving and resilient ecological landscape.

The foundation's support has allowed for the expansion of the conservation team on the ground through the addition of a full-time manager of conservation programs and accelerated the pace of restoration work throughout Florida.



Volunteers from Apache gather to help plant the newly installed terraces.

## Spotlighting Coastal Protections

The Apache Falgout Canal Marsh Terrace Project, completed in Spring 2024, is a significant restoration effort to improve the ecological health of Louisiana’s Gulf Coast. The newly constructed terraces will foster the growth of submerged aquatic vegetation, providing essential habitat and food sources for local fish and wildlife and enhancing the marsh’s overall biodiversity.

Contractor Onshore Materials LLC completed the project by constructing 114,773 linear feet of earthen terraces. After construction, these terraces were strategically planted with *Spartina alterniflora* to stabilize the soil and promote plant growth. Additionally, community volunteers contributed to the restoration by planting *Paspalum vaginatum* and *Schoenoplectus californicus* on select terraces, further diversifying the vegetative cover.

A critical part of the project involved updating the water management system. Two 48-inch aluminum water-control structures were installed to replace an aging structure. These new controls are designed to regulate water levels and salinity more efficiently within the unit, creating optimal conditions for the marsh ecosystem.

About 2,200 linear feet of levee were refurbished, including lifting and patching degraded sections. This enhancement will further aid in managing water levels and salinity, ensuring long-term sustainability for the marsh environment.

Grants from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund supported the project. Project partners included DU, Apache Louisiana Minerals, NAWCA, Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District, Dularge Hunting Club, Restore or Retreat, Lafourche-Terrebonne Soil and Water Conservation District, NFWF, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and other Gulf Coast Initiative Sponsors.



### TOM AND ELIZABETH JERNIGAN

Tom and his wife, Elizabeth, are Gold Legacy Sponsors and have been members of DU’s President’s Council since 2010. They reside in Birmingham, Alabama, but Tom is often found at their Sugar Foot Farm in Marion, Alabama.

Tom has served as the Advisory Senior Vice President and chair of the Corporate Relations Committee under the past two DU presidents and is serving a third term.

He enjoys devoting time to his family and particularly loves introducing hunting and fishing to the next generation.





Ducks Unlimited's Western Region completed 31 projects in seven states during FY24, restoring, enhancing and conserving 43,932 acres.

## WESTERN REGION



### DU Makes Strides in Restoration Work on the Great Salt Lake and its Most Important Tributary

In 2022, Utah's Great Salt Lake dropped to its lowest level in nearly two centuries. In some areas, this North American gem reached salinity levels that threatened the survival of essential food sources for migratory birds.

Since then, Ducks Unlimited's committed team has made great strides in conserving the Great Salt Lake's natural beauty for generations to come, and their success is gaining momentum.

Conservation staff repaired degraded and outdated levees at the Ogden Bay Waterfowl Management Area, benefiting

2,255 acres of emergent wetlands. At the Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area, DU is replacing the primary water conveyance systems that feed water into an 18,000-acre migratory bird refuge.

Most recently, DU was awarded a \$5 million contract to restore a 65-mile stretch of the Lower Bear River, the lake's most significant tributary.

Annually, the Lower Bear River, along with the Great Salt Lake and its wetlands, supports 3 to 4 million waterfowl and 5 million shorebirds, making it one of North America's





*Paul and Barb Brewer and their dog, Wildrose  
Flooded Timber.*

### **PAUL AND BARB BREWER**

Ducks Unlimited Sponsors in Perpetuity Paul and Barb Brewer, from Lake Oswego, Oregon, recently deepened their commitment to waterfowl conservation through a Feather Society commitment and increased their involvement in DU's policy and advocacy initiatives.

The Brewers' passion for wetlands and waterfowl stems from a shared love of conservation and the outdoors, as well as a deep understanding of the importance of these ecosystems for wildlife and people. Paul has become increasingly active in DU's policy efforts, advocating for protecting wetlands, waterfowl and access to public lands.

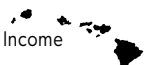
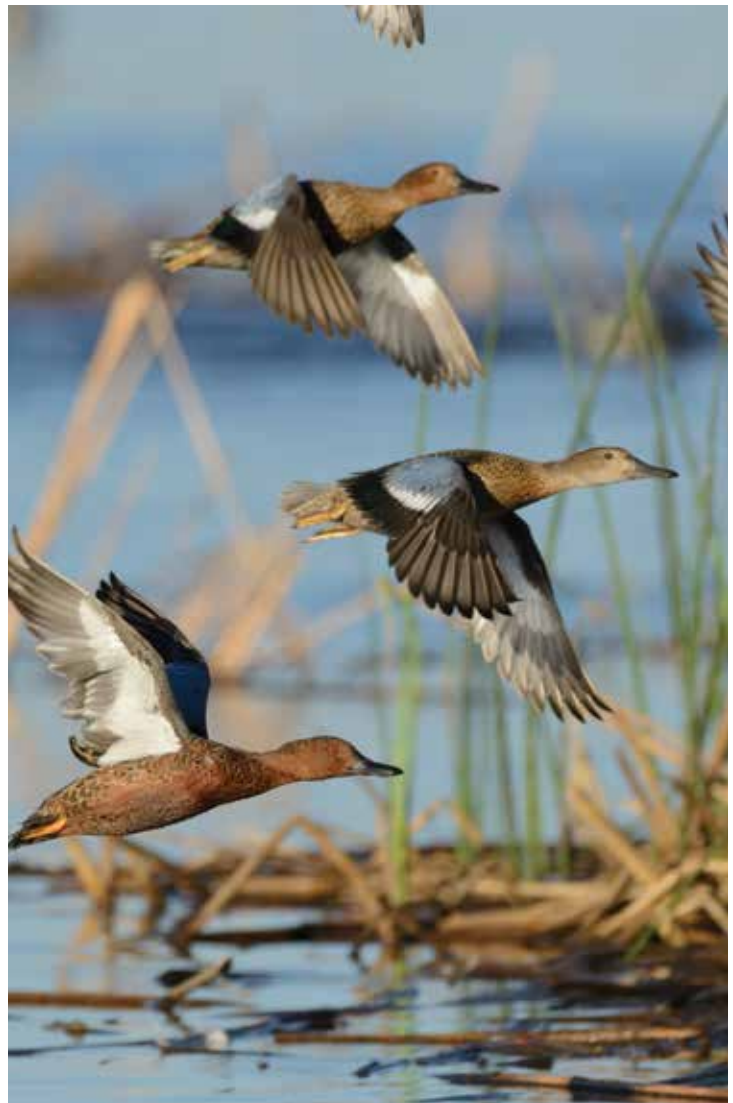
"Attending the Ducks Unlimited D.C. Fly-in for the past two years was a transformative experience. Having the opportunity to speak directly with lawmakers about the importance of wetlands conservation and the impact of policies on waterfowl was empowering," Paul said. "It solidified my belief that our voices, as DU supporters, can make a real difference in protecting the habitats and wildlife we cherish."

most important wetland complexes. This multi-year endeavor will focus on restoring key habitats that are important for migrating and breeding waterfowl and other species of aquatic birds and wildlife. More than 300 species of birds rely on the Great Salt Lake for breeding and nesting habitat.

The work will occur between Cutler Dam and the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. In addition to restoration projects, the project scope will include a comprehensive assessment of stream-bank conditions and riparian habitats.

This \$5 million Lower Bear River contract follows a \$3 million North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, DU's largest federal grant for restoration work in the state. This grant leverages investments from diverse partnerships to conserve the Great Salt Lake and its wetlands.

The federal grant will enhance 7,349 acres of wetlands. Most of the work will be on public lands that are among the most visited in the state.







*Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in the Klamath Basin brimmed with water and birds after important water deliveries in spring and late summer. DU collaborates with the Klamath watershed community to bring multi-beneficial solutions to the refuges.*

## Birds Return to Klamath Basin Refuges After Water Deliveries, Restoration Projects

**T**wo years ago, the Klamath Basin national wildlife refuges (NWR) were drying up. These wetland landscapes, which are some of the most important stops on the Pacific Flyway for migrating waterfowl, were in serious trouble.

Once a haven for millions of migrating waterfowl, Tule Lake NWR ran dry for the first time in recorded history. Lower Klamath NWR was not much better, and water levels there fell to some of their lowest recorded levels.

Restoring the refuges to their peak condition is a top priority for Ducks Unlimited, as is doing so in a way that provides multiple benefits for waterfowl as well as fish, farms and other wildlife.

In March, DU collaborated with the Tulelake Irrigation District to activate the D-Plant pumping station in the Klamath Basin. D-Plant pumped much-needed water from Tule Lake into the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge for the first time in four years.

Historically, 80 percent of the water that reaches the Lower Klamath came through D-Plant, making it the most important water source for the nation's first wildlife refuge for waterfowl.

"The water delivery in March created the best spring habitat conditions the refuges had seen in nearly a decade," said

DU's Western Region Director of Operations Jeff McCreary. "And the birds responded."

By May, more than 100,000 waterfowl had flocked to the refuges.

"We learned this year that the effects of rehydrating our dry refuges are textbook wetland ecology," McCreary said. "Build it, and they will come. We also learned that wetlands provide multiple benefits but need our careful attention. They need water, and the whole Klamath Basin community must make that possible."

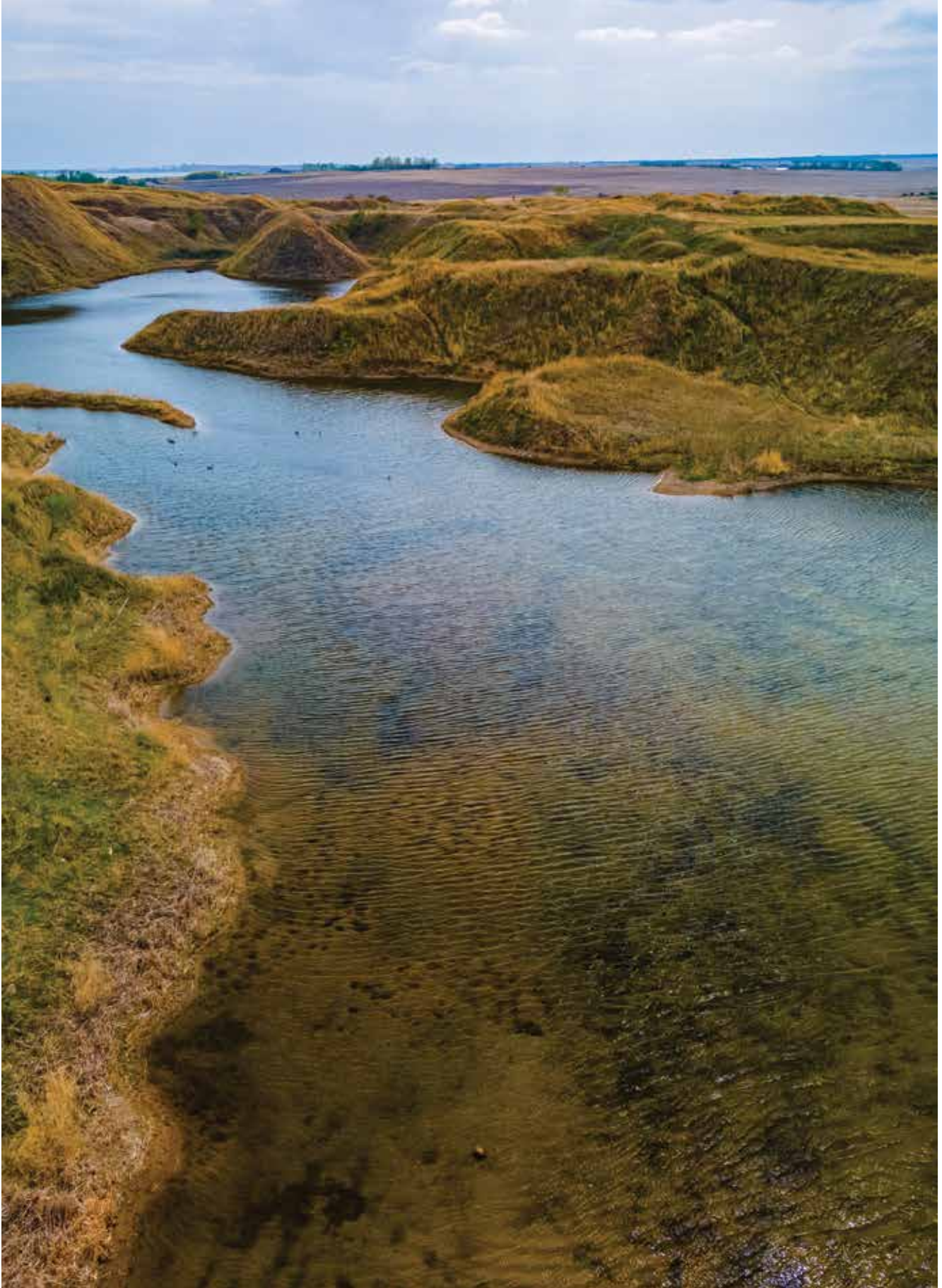
The broader Klamath watershed community quickly increased water allocation to the refuges, which slowed disease progression for countless birds and revitalized habitat for nesting hens and their broods.

Pumps engineered and built by DU staff were instrumental in recirculating water in the Lower Klamath NWR, capitalizing on these inflows to keep the basin's wetlands healthy and productive.

DU is putting new water-management pumps on the ground at Tule Lake and Lower Klamath NWRs, collaborating with partners to increase the potential of Tule Lake to support waterfowl, farms and fish, improving the water management options at Lower Klamath to have the maximum possible benefit.









## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### Doug Frey and His Family Are Elite DU Conservation Pioneers

Only 57 major companies and individuals have obtained the esteemed level of Conservation Pioneer since 1937. In 2024, Doug and Allison Frey proudly joined this elite group, demonstrating their conservation commitment.

The Frey family has been unwavering in their dedication to Ducks Unlimited from the beginning. Doug has served on the DU board of directors as advisory senior vice president for Development, was the founding senior vice president of the Sustainability Committee, and has served on the Wetlands America Trust board, contributing to substantial advancements in recent years.

The Freys have a wealth of experience in the conservation field, and as Grand Slam Benefactor Major Sponsors, they can fully appreciate the impact their contributions have made for wildlife and people. Their core values of integrity, habitat stewardship and loyalty are instilled in their

children, and they cherish this legacy. For many years, Doug has championed Ducks Unlimited's expertise as a leader in wetlands and water conservation.

Some of the Freys' most recent efforts to support DU's conservation mission involved facilitating two \$1 million match campaigns.

"We have always believed in leading by example," said Doug. "What better example to set than investing in conservation."

Doug and Allison committed \$500,000 toward the match challenge. Within five days, DU's Finance Committee and the Development team secured another \$500,000 to make up the \$1 million matched by donors, generating \$2 million for DU's conservation mission. Doug and Allison requested that this effort focus exclusively on unrestricted major gifts for Ducks Unlimited Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada and Ducks Unlimited de México.



Left to right: DU Past President Doug Schoenrock, Austin Frey, Allison Frey and Doug Frey.





DU Oyster Roast at the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE), Charleston, South Carolina.

## Event Fundraising Continues Positive Growth Trend

**D**U's Event Fundraising Team recorded its highest revenue-producing year for the third straight year in FY24. More than 30,000 local chapter volunteers raised \$99.5 million net dollars through 5,200 events held during the fiscal year.

"We experienced an overall net growth of almost \$8 million in FY24," said DU National Director of Event Fundraising Tim Fehringer. "To experience that type of growth on top of two prior record-breaking years is a testament to the dedication and passion of our volunteers and field staff. The need for DU's conservation work is greater than ever. This team knows that and strives to provide more yearly funding to grow the organization's impact."

An across-the-board effort was required to achieve these results, with all eight management regions showing growth over the prior 12 months.

A significant factor in the financial success was an increase in overall events held in FY24, a growth of more than 600 fundraising events, bringing 36,000 more attendees through DU's doors.

DU Chief Event Fundraising Officer David Schuessler spoke about the expansion.

"We hit another gear concerning our online fundraising efforts and secondary event occurrences last year," Schuessler said. "An underlying driver of DU's decades-old event fundraising operation is the entrepreneurial nature of our volunteers and staff, and we now host everything from bingo events to fishing tournaments in communities across the country. These creative endeavors are great for DU and can serve as a blueprint for other like-minded organizations to follow as they strive to achieve their goals."



### ERIC AND MATTIE WHITNEY

Eric and Mattie Whitney are Gold Benefactor Sponsors and passionate volunteers who have supported Ducks Unlimited for nearly 30 years. Eric, an attorney and partner at Arnold and Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, is an avid shooter and current area chair of the New York City Chapter. Mattie launched her own company, The Care and Feeding of Divas, following a successful television career as a lifestyle reporter and writer.

"Mattie and I have very much enjoyed supporting DU, including having Evenings of Conservation at our home. In addition to fundraising for the ducks, we've made many new friends through our involvement."

The Whitneys' continued commitment to conservation benefits wetlands, waterfowl, other wildlife and people and ensures future generations can enjoy our most important resources.





## National Convention Highlights

Last May, Ducks Unlimited traveled to sunny San Diego for DU's 87th National Convention. With hundreds of DU members, volunteers and supporters in attendance, the momentum from the public launch of DU's most ambitious capital campaign in history, *Conservation for a Continent*, carried over into several major announcements that set DU apart in the conservation world.

One of the biggest announcements in DU's 87-year history was made on the flight deck of the USS *Midway*, where volunteers and supporters gathered for a reception and presentation. Jim Kennedy, chairman emeritus of Cox Enterprises and chairman of the James M. Cox Foundation, announced a \$100 million gift from Cox Enterprises to help conserve North America's prairie region. This is the largest single donation in the history of Ducks Unlimited and will have a tremendous impact on its ability to conserve and restore one of the most important ecosystems on the planet.

While on the deck of the *Midway*, DU presented Jim Kennedy and Cox Enterprises with the Corporate Conservation Achievement Award for their years of unmatched dedication and passion for conservation and environmental stewardship.

When the Friday business session kicked off, the crowd in attendance witnessed history again. Past Chairman of the Board Doug Schoenrock announced that, for the first time, Ducks Unlimited had delivered 1 million acres of conservation across North America in a single year. This achievement is the first of its kind in on-the-ground conservation. It reflects the national surge in public and private interest to restore and protect wetlands—and it is a recognition of the immense value wetlands provide to waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

Soon after, Chuck Smith became DU's new chairman of the board, and Bob Spoerl officially became the 47th president of Ducks Unlimited. Spoerl delivered inspiring remarks highlighting the unprecedented success and growth that has defined DU in recent years, and then he presented his vision for a new and innovative path for the future.

The Friday business session was capped off by keynote speaker and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Joey Jones, who delivered an emotional and gripping account of his tragic experience of stepping on an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan, which resulted in serious injuries, including



CEO Adam Putnam presents Jim Kennedy and Cox Enterprises with the DU Corporate Conservation Achievement Award.

the loss of both of his legs. Jones recounted his experiences in the outdoors and how hunting has provided a way for him and his friends to deal with trauma.

The business sessions were again packed with engaging content from a host of presenters. Chief Event Fundraising Officer David Schuessler moderated a panel discussion on the history, growth and impact of DU's Third Term event and how investment in college students has benefited DU and the students. DU Director of Conservation Planning Dr. Mark Petrie provided a comprehensive update on the

Pacific Flyway. DU Senior Waterfowl Scientist Dr. Mike Brasher updated the audience on the status of the pintail and other waterfowl population trends.

Following dozens of thoughtful and engaging presentations, CEO Adam Putnam delivered closing remarks and enthusiastically reaffirmed DU's commitment to pushing the boundaries of what we once thought was possible in conservation, and then he set the stage for even bigger accomplishments on the horizon.



*The DU Third Term panel featuring David Schuessler, Will Burden, Cam Boland, Jimbo Robinson and Brian Garrels.*

## DU TV

As America's longest-running waterfowl series, *Ducks Unlimited Television (DU TV)* continues to bring viewers the best in North American waterfowl hunting adventures and wetlands conservation education. The 2024 season was the show's 27th, a significant milestone in outdoor television programming. *DU TV* hosts Fred Zink, Doug Larsen, Betsy Newbill and Colin Mulligan are dynamic personalities who keep the audience entertained and informed about Ducks Unlimited's mission. Filming locations in 2024 included Texas, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Nebraska and others across North America. In 2023, *DU TV* reached over 2 million homes, making it one of the most popular outdoor television programs. New episodes air weekly from July through September exclusively on the Sportsman Channel. Classic episodes are available at any time on YouTube or [MyOutdoorTV.com](https://www.MyOutdoorTV.com).



*Former DU TV host Jared Brown (left) hunted with current host Fred Zink during the 2024 season.*





## DU Nation

**D**U Nation's motto is "Take it Outside," and that's what we do on every action-packed episode. Ducks Unlimited members live outdoors, and *DU Nation* cameras capture it all. Fishing, hunting, falconry, kayaking and photography are examples of *DU Nation's* outdoor lifestyle adventures. *DU Nation* has even gone behind the scenes of waterfowl taxidermy, from step-by-step bird mounting procedures to storage tips for keeping your prized trophy fresh and looking good for years. So far, over 70 films have been produced, which have received over 4 million views. *DU Nation* is exclusively available on the Ducks Unlimited YouTube channel, with over 60,000 subscribers.



*DU Nation covers a broad range of outdoor adventures.*

## Campus Waterfowl Boasts 280,000 Followers in FY24



*Ferris State University hunters.*

**C**ampus Waterfowl, founded in 2014, continues to thrive as the largest digital community for collegiate waterfowl hunters and researchers. This year, we've strengthened our mission to empower the next generation of collegiate waterfowlers and conservationists, helping to ensure a vibrant future for the outdoor community.

Our reach has grown significantly, with about 280,000 followers across social media platforms. This diverse

audience underscores the collegiate demographic's importance to the outdoor industry's future.

Our flagship initiative, the Collegiate Waterfowl Tour, provided an immersive look into the lives of collegiate hunters across all four flyways. This YouTube series featured visits to colleges like California State University-Chico, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Texas Tech University, showcasing regional hunting traditions and fostering a sense of community among collegiate waterfowlers.

The Sugar Foot Preserve Retreat was another highlight. It brought 20 student volunteers from seven DU chapters together with Ducks Unlimited volunteers and staff for a weekend of hunting, camaraderie and celebration. The event featured teal and dove hunting and was capped off with a performance by Nashville recording artist Jake Matthew.

This year's major milestone was the Collegiate Waterfowl National Championship, in which 64 of the top waterfowl colleges competed for national recognition. This tournament celebrated the skills and dedication of collegiate waterfowlers while fostering a competitive spirit.

Our content has grown substantially, with over 3.7 million impressions and 2.2 million views across social media. The Campus Waterfowl Podcast also gained traction, with over 1,900 audio plays and 5,350 video views.

Looking ahead, Campus Waterfowl is committed to fostering conservation efforts and promoting the waterfowl hunting lifestyle, building on our successes and engaging our community in the coming year.



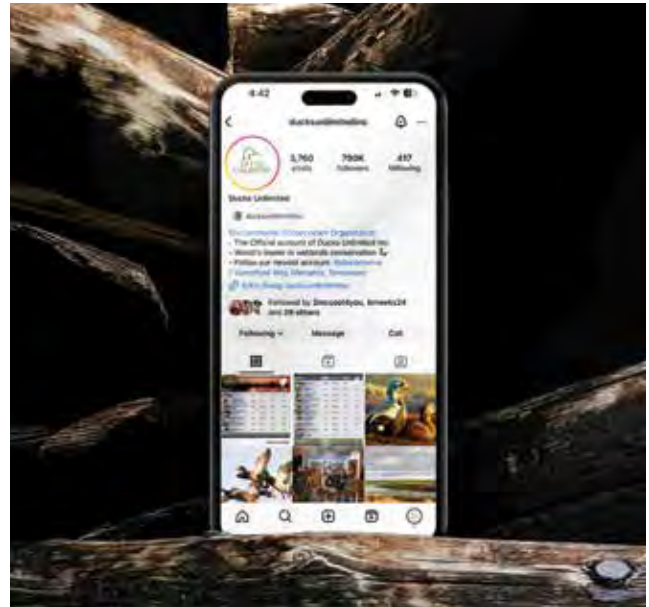
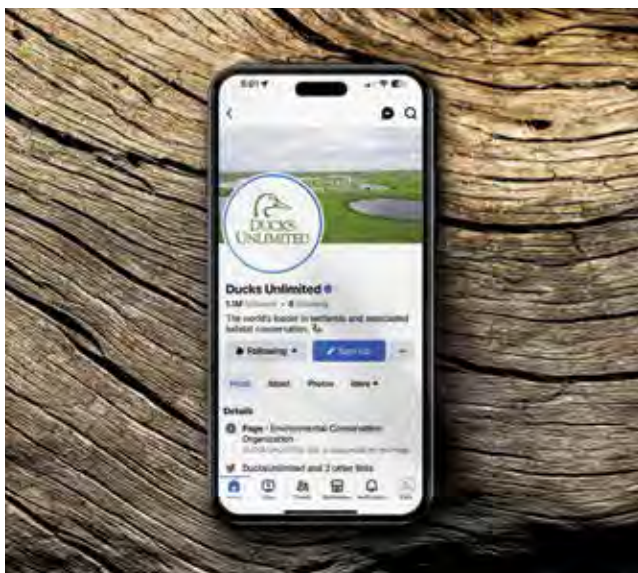
## DU Social Media

**D**ucks Unlimited’s social media presence is constructed around the digital capabilities to inform, entertain and educate the organization’s supporters. Each unique platform serves as a brand touchpoint for a different audience based on how they react, engage and support the organization’s goal of raising funds for our wetlands conservation mission.

DU’s social platforms are short-term touchpoints to motivate supporters to become members, volunteers and donors.

### PRIORITIES

- Engage, inform, entertain and grow the broad audience of DU supporters within each platform by representing waterfowl, waterfowl hunting and conservation/science-based messaging with quality content created by editorial staff.
- Maintain the organization’s credibility and voice through social media to support fundraising strategies created by the Digital Media and Marketing Team.
- Drive targeted and high-volume traffic to *ducks.org* by utilizing quality content and editorial strategies to support advertising/fundraising initiatives, plans and goals.
- Maintain DU’s reputation as the leading voice for waterfowl hunting, waterfowl and conservation across all platforms and seek new opportunities to grow and build within new platforms.



### PLATFORMS

#### Facebook

- DU’s largest platform—1,159,485 followers (+3,683 over FY23). It remains the best platform for generating impressions, engagement and link clicks. During FY24, Facebook generated 60,816,800 impressions and 1,226,392 engagements (paid and organic combined).

#### Instagram

- DU’s top platform for maintaining DU’s brand—788,746 followers (+12,446 over FY23). In FY24, Instagram had 32,976,127 impressions and 1,017,003 engagements.

#### LinkedIn

- DU’s best platform for official organizational messaging and promoting conservation partnerships—58,316 followers (+8,494 over FY23). LinkedIn generated 1,491,792 impressions and 82,911 engagements during FY24.

#### X (Formerly Twitter)

- Remains DU’s top platform for organizational information, key stakeholder engagement, and opinion elites—121,095 followers (+404 from FY23).

#### TikTok

- DU’s top growth platform in FY24 with 102,100 followers (+7,586 over FY23). Users engage with the platform passively. It is also used to help support branding efforts on other platforms.





## ADDITIONAL BRAND AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY PLATFORMS

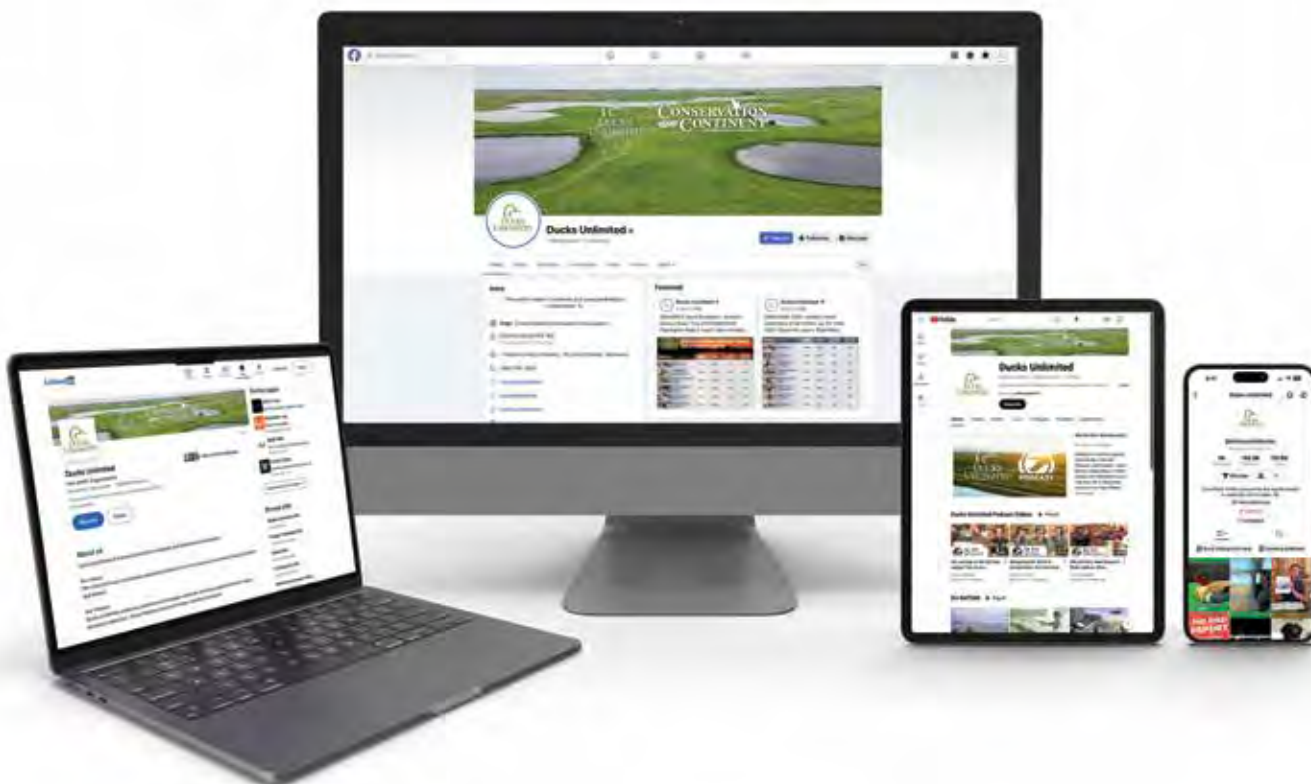
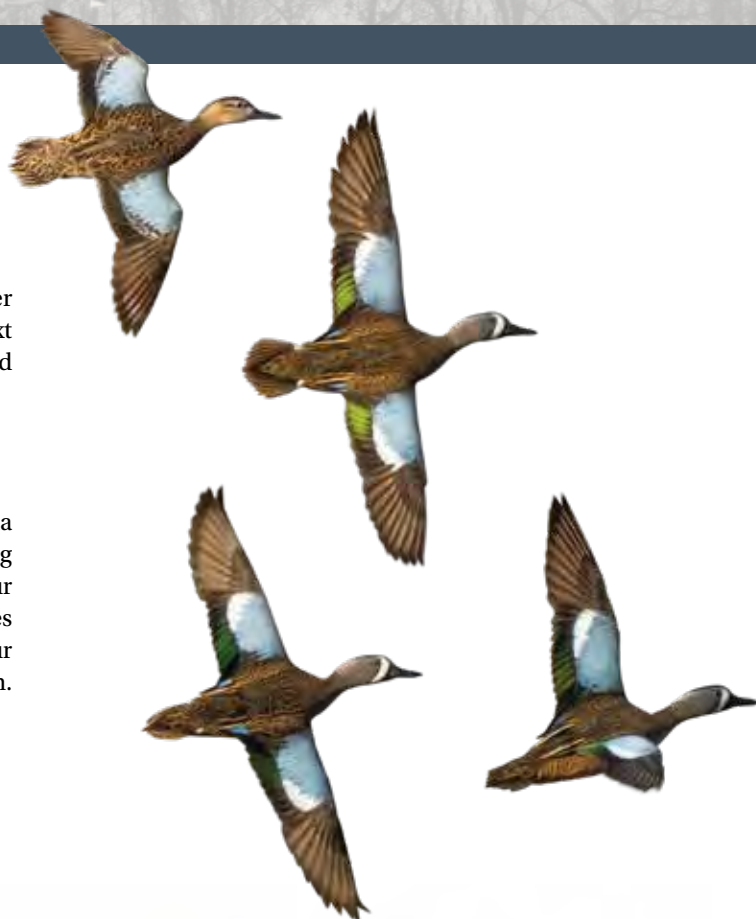
### Threads

- DU's newest platform has 54,600 followers (+44,400 over FY23). Built by Instagram, Threads is similar to X for text updates and joining conversations. This platform is linked to DU's Instagram account.

### Ducks Unlimited Conservation

We are pleased to announce the launch of new social media accounts dedicated to informing, educating and promoting Ducks Unlimited's science and sustainability initiatives to our members and a broader audience. With over 18 million acres conserved, these platforms will offer an in-depth look at our on-the-ground conservation work and DU's science mission.

- @DucksUnlimitedConservation—Facebook
- @DUConserve—Instagram
- @DUConserve—X





## SUSTAINABILITY



### Ducks Unlimited's State of Sustainability

**F**or 87 years and counting, Ducks Unlimited has dedicated our research and expertise toward solving the conservation challenges of tomorrow. While our collective journey toward sustainability is complex, we are leading the charge by using science as our guide and relying on the support of our partners to progress forward. We are active in every state in the United States, working locally to conserve wetlands, grasslands and forests.

“With 40 percent of the world’s plants and animals living or breeding in wetlands, we are striving to advance new opportunities and methods to help protect, enhance and restore some of the most important habitats in the world,” said DU Senior Advisory Vice President for Sustainability Teresa Keating.



### FY24 Science Sustainability Highlights

**I**n the spring of 2024, the U.S. Forest Service funded the largest climate investment in history (\$145 million) to connect forest landowners with emerging climate markets as part of the Investing in America agenda. This investment included \$10 million awarded to DU’s Flyway Forests program, which seeks to restore bottomland hardwood forests and wildlife habitat on private lands in the lower Mississippi River Valley, tributaries and adjacent counties. The award will support the program’s dual objectives of increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration across the region. Reforestation and wetland restoration are crucial to protecting clean air and water and supporting rural communities.

DU and the University of Georgia’s Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems established a fellowship in 2022 to advance research on natural and climate-resilient infrastructure methods and engineering practices to help guide the future of conservation efforts.

Since the program’s collaborative inception, the fellows have achieved much. Natural infrastructure fellows Madlyn Carpenter and Stevens Charles, along with Professor Dr. Rhett Jackson, attended DU’s 87th National Convention, where they stepped on the main stage to participate in a Q&A panel during the business session. The program recently celebrated a milestone, proudly announcing its first fellowship graduate,





## 2024 ECOSYSTEM SERVICES



SEDIMENT REDUCTION	PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION	NITROGEN REDUCTION
206,348 metric tons of sediment = approx. one foot of topsoil across 112 acres	57,472 kg of phosphorus = fertilize 2,223 acres of soybeans/year	1,116,023 kg of nitrogen = fertilize 16,403 acres of corn/year
BENEFITS: enhances water quality, reduces sediment pollution, improves water flow in rivers and streams	BENEFITS: enhances water quality, decreases algae blooms and algal toxins	BENEFITS: enhances water quality, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, provides healthier habitat for aquatic wildlife
CARBON SEQUESTRATION	AVOIDED EMISSIONS	WATER STORAGE
161,177 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e = emissions from 38,375 U.S. passenger vehicles/year	372,337 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e = emissions from 88,652 U.S. passenger vehicles/year	31,931 acre-feet = 15,765 Olympic-sized swimming pools
BENEFITS: reduces greenhouse gases, improves soil health	BENEFITS: reduces greenhouse gases	BENEFITS: reduces stormwater and irrigation runoff, reduces the risk of flooding, increases water quantity

Outcomes are an annual estimate and calculated primarily for restoration and protection of grassland, forest and wetland projects.

Madlyn Carpenter of Lincoln, Nebraska. Madlyn will return to her home state to join an engineering consulting firm as a water resources engineer specializing in natural infrastructure projects.

As sustainability issues continue to be high-priority drivers of change in the agriculture industry, DU partnered with Trust In Beef to help empower beef producers on their sustainable farming journey. Trust In Beef, Farm Journal's sustainable ranching division specializing in climate-based agriculture, provides technical resources and support to help beef producers understand, value and implement conservation practices on their lands. At DU, we focus on sustainable and science-driven agriculture solutions that build long-term land resilience. Partnering with Trust In Beef will help cement our value as we grow our tools and resources to assist farmers and ranchers.



### PHILLIPS 66

For over a decade, Phillips 66 has proudly partnered with DU to support over 30 impactful conservation projects nationwide, contributing upwards of \$4 million toward conservation efforts. Their generous contributions have helped protect and restore more than 35,000 acres of wetlands in the U.S. Through this collaboration, their investments have played a crucial role in restoring vital habitats, improving water quality, promoting biodiversity and creating recreational opportunities that connect communities with nature.

In FY24, Phillips 66 renewed its commitment to advancing wetland conservation efforts with a \$650,000 grant to support DU projects in Texas, Louisiana, Colorado and Illinois. Throughout our partnership, Phillips 66 has supported 14 different projects in Texas alone, helping to enhance some of the Lone Star State's best public lands for waterfowl while providing critical coastal resilience, clean water and other benefits to citizens. DU was proud to recognize Phillips 66 with the 2024 Conservation Stewardship Award at the DU Houston Legacy Gala last spring.



Each year, Ducks Unlimited's public policy team works hard to advocate for conservation priorities. This important work occurs in Washington, D.C., and state capitals nationwide.

## PUBLIC POLICY



### D.C. Fly-in

**M**ore than 80 Ducks Unlimited advocates, including state chairs, state policy chairs, senior volunteers and staff, gathered in our nation's capital for the 2024 Washington, D.C. Fly-in to meet with 51 members of Congress and others, and advocate for legislation to protect and restore wetlands and other waterfowl habitat.

This year, DU was proud to welcome 11 college students from across the country to experience all that our nation's capital had to offer—meeting with members of Congress and attending events alongside DU staff and volunteers.



*College students from across the U.S. attended the D.C. Fly-in.*







*Dinner guests included members of Congress, Biden Administration officials, DU leaders and more.*

## Capitol Hill Dinner and Auction

**D**ucks Unlimited hosted the annual Capitol Hill Dinner and Auction in Washington, D.C. With a fantastic turnout of more than 720 guests, including Biden Administration officials, congressional staff, House Speaker Mike Johnson, DU leadership and 70 bipartisan members of Congress, wetlands conservation was once again the focus of government leaders from across the United States.

## Conservation Legislation

**D**ue to countless interactions throughout the year by DU's Public Policy team and volunteers, conservation remains a primary bipartisan focus in a divided Congress. U.S. Sens. Martin Heinrich (New Mexico) and John Kennedy (Louisiana) led a bipartisan group of lawmakers in introducing legislation to reauthorize the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), one of DU's highest priority programs.

The investment in NAWCA remains strong. This year, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved \$84.3 million in new NAWCA grants, which will be matched by more than \$139.8 million in partner funds.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate passed America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act, led by Sen. Shelley Capito (West Virginia) and Sen. Tom Carper (Delaware). The legislation includes reauthorization for several important conservation programs, including NAWCA. Reps. Mike Thompson (California), Rob Wittman (Virginia), Debbie Dingell (Michigan) and Jen Kiggans (Virginia) introduced the legislation in the House, and further action is expected later in Congress.

The Duck Stamp Modernization Act became law last year and has already been implemented. Thanks to the new

law, hunters, stamp collectors and outdoor enthusiasts can purchase an electronic stamp via smartphone while still receiving a paper stamp in the mail. Electronic stamps are also valid for the entire season.

Rep. Bruce Westerman (Arkansas), chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, joined the Ducks Unlimited podcast with DU Senior Waterfowl Scientist Dr. Mike Brasher and DU CEO Adam Putnam to discuss all things conservation in Congress, including the importance of passing a Farm Bill.



*House Speaker Mike Johnson spoke at the annual DU Capitol Hill Dinner and Auction.*

## Farm Bill

**D**ucks Unlimited has continued to pressure Congress to pass a Farm Bill alongside many of our partners in conservation and agriculture. DU CEO Adam Putnam authored an opinion piece in *Agri-Pulse* outlining why Ducks Unlimited supports the House Farm Bill's voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs.

As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's ongoing investment in climate-smart agriculture, DU was selected to deliver four Regional Conservation Partnership Program grants totaling nearly \$52 million for agricultural

conservation efforts for farmers and ranchers in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin and South Dakota.

Continuing the theme of important funding for conservation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation announced grants to support coastal resilience projects. DU was awarded \$15 million from this grant program for projects in Louisiana and Connecticut.

DU's policy success isn't limited to Washington, D.C. For a more comprehensive look at the last year of DU policy, including the latest from all four regions, visit [ducks.org](https://ducks.org).





## Ducks Unlimited de México Celebrates 50th Anniversary and 2.1 Million Acres Conserved

### DUCKS UNLIMITED DE MÉXICO



In FY24, Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC), a vital component in the conservation of North America's wetlands, celebrated the 50th anniversary of its March 1974 founding.



*In August, over 150 DUMAC supporters gathered in Cabo San Lucas to celebrate the organization's 50th anniversary and raised an additional \$1 million for future projects.*

The third component of the wetlands conservation trifecta, which includes Ducks Unlimited Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada, DUMAC was established out of concern for the state of migratory bird wintering habitat.

DUMAC's science-driven mission to restore and protect Mexico's waterfowl habitat has resulted in landscape-level achievements, conserving more than 2.1 million acres of wetlands, including beautiful mangroves, since 1974.

In 2023 alone, DUMAC's staff and volunteers conserved 22,170 acres of freshwater wetlands and protected 25,319 acres of seagrass habitats.

"Our focus continues to be on both traditional and non-traditional methods of conservation," said former DUMAC President Bill Ansell. "Like our Ducks Unlimited sister organizations to the north, we are reclaiming thousands of acres of natural habitat lost to human development and climate change. Through agreements with state and federal governments, we are protecting and preserving much of the natural landscapes and marshes that still exist."





DUMAC organized an August celebration event in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, to celebrate its conservation achievements. Over 150 supporters gathered at the Pueblo Bonito Pacifica resort to recognize DUMAC's success, and they raised an additional \$1 million for future projects.

DUMAC staff also provided a morning-long conservation session to show attendees why conservation in Mexico is important to DU's shared continental mission



*DUMAC will continue to take a scientific approach to ensuring that waterfowl have the resources needed in important wintering areas.*

and how DUMAC achieves an incredible 95 percent efficiency rating in its work.

Eduardo Carrera, DUMAC's executive director and chief executive officer, said, "I am overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone who made this great success possible. I am deeply grateful for the support of all who attended our 50th anniversary celebration and everyone who makes DUMAC's success possible."

## Wildlife and People

**D**UMAC's work to restore and protect wetlands focuses on four priority regions that are home to 84 percent of the migratory and resident waterfowl in Mexico. Carrera said this conservation benefits more than wildlife.

"Clean water is crucial to waterfowl and residents," he said. "We've installed infrastructure, including treatment plants and on-site village dry toilet systems, to manage domestic wastewater for 5,596 people. This reduces the strain on our wetlands, allowing them to filter water more easily for animals and villagers."

## Science Driven

**A**n innovative tool in DUMAC's conservation effort is training others to improve habitats. The international RESERVA program, established in 1989, is an intensive training course in natural resources management and conservation. RESERVA aims to improve the professional capabilities of those responsible for managing and conserving natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"So far, we're proud to have trained nearly 700 professionals from 220 organizations from 22 countries," Carrera said.

From the Gulf of Mexico through the Northern Highlands and to the North Pacific, DUMAC takes a scientific approach to habitat protection and restoration. Keeping these wintering grounds productive ensures waterfowl and migratory birds have the resources to migrate north each spring for breeding.



*In the last 35 years, DUMAC's RESERVA program has trained nearly 700 conservation professionals from 220 organizations in 22 countries.*



### ROB AND TAMMY SPRINGER

Rob Springer and his wife, Tammy, are Diamond Legacy and Grand Slam Legacy Sponsors and have been members of DU's President's Council since 2021.

An active volunteer, Rob serves on the Wetlands America Trust board, DU Development Committee and as a committee member of his hometown Mulberry-Bartow Chapter in Florida.

In addition to supporting Ducks Unlimited, Rob has served in leadership positions with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the National Wild Turkey Federation. He is an avid hunter and enjoys spending time with family and friends in the field.



# Ducks Unlimited Canada Scales Conservation Delivery and Fundraising Efforts in Another Milestone Year

## DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA



*A wetland in Canada's boreal region.*

KEN SANDILANDS

**D**ucks Unlimited Canada (DUC) had another strong year on the landscape, surpassing their conserved acre goal by 24 percent and their influenced acre goal by 41 percent. Moving into yet another ambitious year of wetland habitat conservation and restoration, DUC is thrilled to have had a strong revenue performance to fund this critical work.

With two years remaining on the seven-year *Conservation*

*for a Continent* campaign, DUC has already achieved 88 percent of its \$750 million pledge. With support from a strong community, DUC recently experienced its highest-grossing fundraising year, exceeding its revenue target by over 35 percent across development, events, planned giving and grassroots. A strong investment performance on strategic and operational reserves also supported an exceptional fiscal year.





## Influencing 21.2 Million Acres in the Boreal

Approximately 85 percent of Canada's wetlands are in the Boreal Forest, a vast region that supports up to 40 percent of North America's breeding ducks in some years. This is why DUC worked on developing and implementing the Manitoba government's expansion of its Boreal Wetlands Conservation Codes of Practice. In early 2024, Manitoba extended the scope of the lands under the Codes to include upland areas near the province's boreal wetlands. This resulted in the conservation of an additional 21.2 million acres of wetland-supporting habitat in Manitoba's boreal region.



Studying Canada's boreal region from a bird's-eye view.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA



Outreach includes critter dipping with the next generations of conservation leaders.

## Growing A Connected Community of Support

Ducks Unlimited Canada is investing in education and community outreach to grow support for their mission now and with future generations. Last year, DUC reached new heights with media coverage and social media engagement.

In March 2024, Manitoba, which is home to DUC's Oak Hammock Marsh headquarters, was tickled green when the province's legislature commemorated DUC by proclaiming March 17 as Ducks Unlimited Canada Day every year hereafter. Under Bill 244, it was decreed that the day "gives Manitobans an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the role of Ducks Unlimited Canada in conserving, restoring and managing wetlands and grasslands for the benefit of waterfowl and other wildlife and its connection with Manitoba."



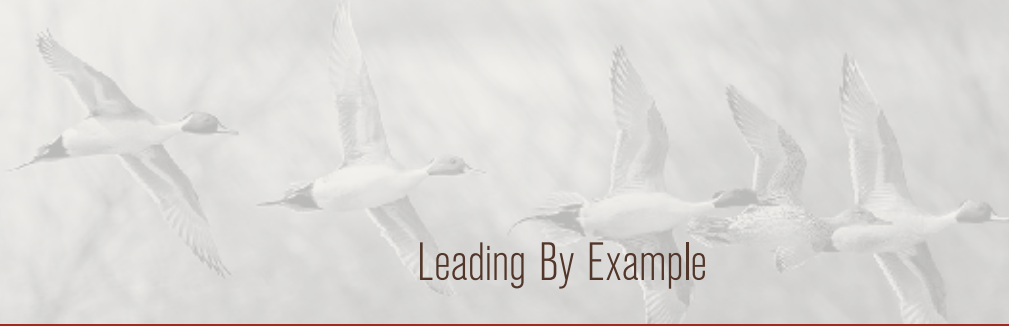
### JIM AND MARCY CALAWAY

A conservation legend not only in the Midwest but across the entire DU organization for 30 years, Jim Calaway has been instrumental in growing the Lake Forest, Illinois, area into one of DU's largest communities of wetlands champions in North America. The Calaways have significantly invested in landscapes across the continent, including the prairies, Canada and Mexico. Jim has also been influential in nurturing new relationships in DU and Wetlands America Trust over the past few decades.

Jim and his wife, Marcy, are DU Benefactors, Grand Slam Life Sponsors and members of the President's Council. They continue to support DU's efforts to conserve wetland habitat across North America.

Left to right: DU CEO Adam Putnam, Marcy Calaway, Jim Calaway and DU President Bob Spoerl.





Leading By Example

**WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST**





The officers and trustees of DU's land trust and foundation, Wetlands America Trust (WAT), lead by example with their philanthropic vision and generosity. The trustees have committed over \$300 million to the *Conservation for a Continent* campaign. Over the past three decades, this is the fourth campaign in which WAT trustees have provided foundational gifts that have been critical to each campaign's success.

In addition to their philanthropy, trustees are engaged in DU's public policy efforts, provide leadership for the organization's branding efforts and share their business acumen. Several trustees serve as directors on the Ducks Unlimited board and are members of standing and national advisory committees.



Left to right: WAT Chairman Steve Maritz, Director John Tomke and Executive Secretary Dan Thiel.

This past year, trustees met in the Central Valley of California, one of DU's highest-priority conservation areas, and visited several DU projects.

Trustees conducted the Spring board meeting in Washington, D.C., and met with several Members of Congress and agency partners. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson welcomed trustees and guests to DU's annual Capitol Hill Dinner and Auction.

WAT trustees are proud of the continued impact of the publication *Wetlands America*. The fifth issue is currently in production.

Wetlands America Trust is one of the nation's largest accredited land trusts. WAT trustees are business leaders, conservationists and experts who hold the fiduciary responsibility for DU's endowment and land holdings. Holding conservation easements on more than 400,000 acres, Wetlands America Trust has flourished due to the efforts of the trustees to leverage their influence and connections to build an impactful, actionable and sustainable approach to wetlands conservation.



## KEURIG DR PEPPER

Keurig Dr Pepper (KDP) is one of DU's newest Major Sponsors in the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex. KDP approved a \$150,000 grant for the upcoming Wildcat Marsh Project at the Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area, owned and operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

"Keurig Dr Pepper is excited to partner with Ducks Unlimited on the Wildcat Marsh project. This project will provide excellent waterfowl habitat and help improve water quality in the Trinity River basin," said Ryan Spicer, director of sustainability, environmental impact at Keurig Dr Pepper.

The new Wildcat Marsh is a 111-acre moist soil unit that will provide excellent migrating and wintering waterfowl habitat and improve water quality in the Trinity River. Water is the primary ingredient in KDP beverages, so this project aligned with KDP's sustainability goals and is close to their headquarters in Frisco, Texas.





## YOUTH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS



### DU's TRAP Program

**T**he DU TRAP (Team Resource Assistance Program) supported 260 shooting sports teams in its third full year. Varsity and college teams from 39 states use the program, averaging more than \$6,500 in net proceeds to support their efforts. DU TRAP leverages DU's corporate partnerships and logistical networks to

offer shooting sports teams a turnkey fundraising solution, allowing coaches to focus on coaching rather than fundraising. By harnessing DU's purchasing power and fundraising expertise, DU TRAP supports the growth of youth shooting sports as part of R3 (Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation) engagement.

### Ducks Unlimited Scholarship Program

**S**ince 2018, DU has awarded 427 scholarships, totaling \$325,000, to provide financial support for incoming college freshmen. These highly competitive scholarships are awarded based on a student's educational achievements, personal endeavors and volunteer history with DU.

Nicholas Leon of Coral Gables, Florida, was the 2024 Susie Konkel Ducks Unlimited National Scholarship recipient. Nicholas will continue his education at Dartmouth College, where he plans to use his experience as a DU Varsity volunteer to help establish a collegiate chapter on campus.



*Left to right: Derek Leon, Susie Konkel, Nicholas Leon and Alina Leon at DU's 2024 National Convention in San Diego, California.*



## 2023 Third Term

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**T**he 10th annual collegiate leadership summit, Third Term, presented by Axalta, took place July 28-29, 2023, in Memphis, Tennessee. Over 300 college volunteers from 77 chapters gathered for a weekend of conservation education, breakout sessions and networking. This event allowed students to connect with fellow volunteers from across the country while gaining a deeper understanding of DU's operations on a national level.

The event culminated in the Saturday night awards

banquet, presented by Winnebago Industries. This evening allowed DU staff to recognize and thank the college volunteers and their respective chapters for their dedication and passion for DU's mission. The highlight of the banquet was the presentation of the Third Term awards for the top collegiate fundraising chapters nationwide. Various chapters were called to the stage, receiving applause and cheers from their peers to recognize their outstanding efforts.



*The 2023 Third Term at DU National Headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee.*

## DU Ecology Conservation and Management Certification

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**T**he Ducks Unlimited Ecology Conservation and Management Certification, launched in October 2019 and hosted on the iCEV platform, saw exponential growth in FY24. The number of students who earned this certificate increased by 58 percent from the previous fiscal year, totaling over 11,000 across 45 states.

This certification prepares individuals for careers in natural resources management, equipping the next generation with ecology, wildlife and habitat conservation

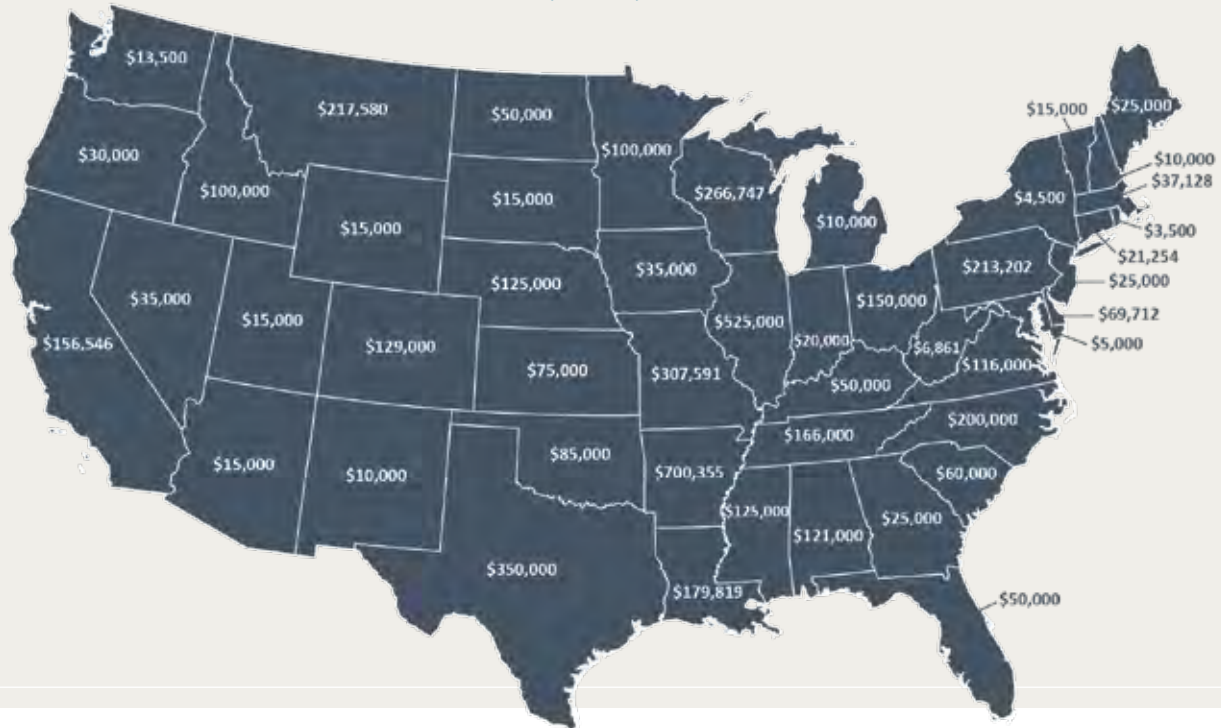
knowledge. The exam consists of 100 questions assessing skills in ecological principles, species identification and conservation management.

iCEV provides secure testing, regulates the environment and collaborates with academic institutions and workforce associations to offer certification options for career advancement. It also verifies certifications for employers and offers optional study materials.



## STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS

**TOTAL FOR 2024: \$5,080,295 FROM 48 STATES**



## A Record Year for State Wildlife Agency Funding for Canadian Habitat Projects

Partnerships drive Ducks Unlimited's conservation mission across the continent, turning contributions from events, major gifts and other fundraising sources into something much bigger. Without partnerships, Ducks Unlimited's impact on the landscape would significantly diminish. A prime example of an effective partnership is the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Fall Flights Program to conserve habitat on the Canadian breeding grounds.

Two events helped drive continental support for the breeding grounds: the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), adopted in 1986, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), signed in 1989 in support of NAWMP. Recognizing the need for non-federal match funding with NAWCA, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies established the Fall Flights Program for state wildlife agencies to support projects in Canada. In response, Ducks Unlimited committed to

matching every dollar contributed by state agencies with one dollar from its fundraising efforts. In the past three decades, NAWCA has funded almost 3,400 projects totaling \$2.15 billion in grants in all 50 states and areas of Canada and Mexico. More than 6,900 partners, including non-governmental organizations, state agencies, private landowners and industry, have contributed another \$4.3 billion to impact over 32 million acres of habitat.

DU hit another milestone in FY24. All states in the Lower 48 once again contributed to Fall Flights for a record \$5 million to Canadian projects, which was matched by Ducks Unlimited and Ducks Unlimited Canada and leveraged to secure NAWCA grants. Over its 59-year history, Ducks Unlimited's state, federal and international partnerships have enabled state wildlife agencies to contribute more than \$121 million to help conserve over 9.2 million acres of habitat across Canada.



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## Team DU Continues Breaking Financial Records in FY24

In FY24, Team DU generated impressive operational revenue of \$332.8 million, spurred on by continued growth in funding from government grants and partnerships. FY24 habitat delivery revenue from these sources and the value of donated conservation easements was a record-breaking \$179.9 million.

Philanthropic support from individual donors, foundations and the event system had another stellar year, generating \$135.9 million towards DU's wetland and waterfowl mission. \$63.1 million was raised through the event system, where 30,000 Ducks Unlimited volunteers hosted more

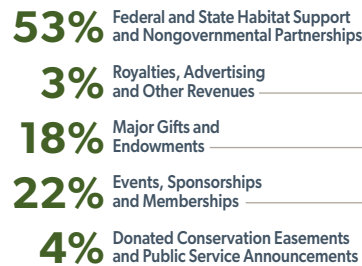
than 629,000 attendees at 5,200 events in FY24. Major gift philanthropy ended the fiscal year with over \$200 million of commitments, including the generous \$100 million pledge from Cox Enterprises to accelerate wetland and grassland conservation in the U.S. and Canadian prairies.

Each year, Ducks Unlimited promises to spend at least 80 percent of all funds raised on our conservation mission. We met that goal again in FY24, with 83 percent of our expenditures going toward our habitat delivery and conservation education mission.

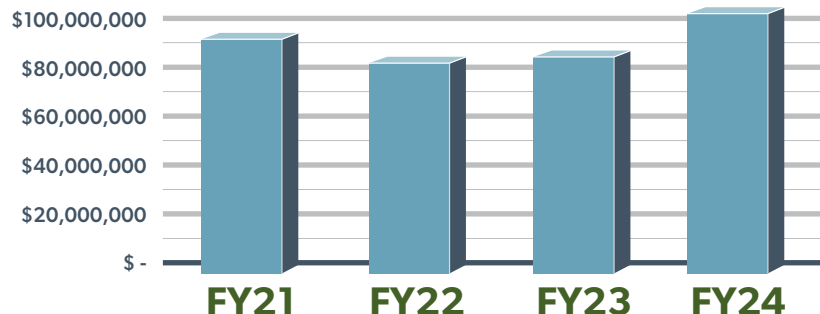
### WHERE YOUR DOLLAR GOES



### SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE



### TOTAL ENDOWMENTS



Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and Affiliates

## Consolidated Balance Sheets

**JUNE 30, 2024 AND 2023**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 22,924,139	39,118,813
Restricted cash	17,345,006	14,667,120
Investments	110,666,880	98,153,377
Events receivable, net	—	158,380
Pledges receivable, net	202,354,198	96,435,881
Habitat receivables	62,095,598	47,559,728
Magazine and other receivables	5,199,607	9,225,682
Prepaid expenses	6,533,037	5,571,157
Event merchandise inventory	9,548,145	7,803,956
Trade lands	10,258,500	9,611,500
Land held for conservation purposes	98,451,147	89,927,524
Land, buildings, and equipment, net	10,963,967	10,534,596
Right of use assets, net	8,067,751	8,384,249
Other assets	1,350,989	1,332,988
Total assets	<u>\$ 565,758,964</u>	<u>438,484,951</u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 17,750,044	19,430,440
Accrued postretirement benefits	676,598	1,051,996
Compensation and related accruals	13,132,732	12,503,988
Deferred compensation accruals	1,010,339	1,066,629
Deferred revenue	46,344,830	42,126,237
Land financing	7,463,000	520,750
Lease liabilities	7,695,131	8,250,253
Notes payable	1,000,000	—
Other liabilities	2,917,481	2,507,802
Total liabilities	<u>97,990,155</u>	<u>87,458,095</u>
Net assets:		
Without donor restrictions	130,178,311	120,539,148
With donor restrictions	337,590,498	230,487,708
Total net assets	<u>467,768,809</u>	<u>351,026,856</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 565,758,964</u>	<u>438,484,951</u>





## Consolidated Statements of Support and Revenues Without Donor Restrictions and Expenses

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 AND 2023

	2024	2023
Operational revenue:		
Philanthropic financial sources:		
Net proceeds from events	\$ 63,129,608	59,252,363
Direct marketing	11,531,232	12,309,036
Unrestricted major gift	11,628,501	9,423,966
Restricted major gift released	45,787,253	46,827,631
Planned gift maturities	1,500,000	1,250,000
Licensing and sponsorships	2,368,315	2,262,776
Total philanthropic revenue	135,944,909	131,325,772
Governmental reimbursements	140,911,142	135,798,248
Non-governmental funding	35,429,896	19,304,943
Donated conservation easements	3,559,000	9,471,250
Total habitat delivery revenue	179,900,038	164,574,441
Advertising	2,124,092	2,529,187
Donated educational programming	9,050,490	14,703,242
Interest income	1,288,093	746,211
Spend from investments	4,123,278	4,546,629
Other revenue	324,519	72,526
Total other operational support and revenue	16,910,472	22,597,795
Total operational revenue	332,755,419	318,498,008
Operating expense:		
U.S. habitat delivery	211,984,631	188,160,599
Support for Canadian programs	13,127,182	16,250,564
Support for Mexican programs	1,421,930	1,302,814
Donated conservation easements	3,559,000	9,471,250
Total habitat conservation	230,092,743	215,185,227
Government relations	5,067,727	4,613,183
Communications & publications	12,004,963	12,495,578
Donated educational programming	9,050,490	14,703,242
Education delivery	14,936,760	12,033,969
Membership services	5,115,047	3,487,964
Total conservation education	46,174,987	47,333,936
Total program	276,267,730	262,519,163
Event fundraising	16,031,385	14,708,185
Direct marketing	10,983,863	10,290,019
Development & advertising	19,228,303	15,993,758
Total fundraising	46,243,551	40,991,962
Corporate services & administration	8,287,099	8,741,858
Non-recurring Information Technology	657,401	1,143,869
Total central support	8,944,500	9,885,727
Total operating expense	331,455,781	313,396,852
Operating surplus	1,299,638	5,101,156
Nonoperational:		
Habitat revolving fund activity	836,489	1,135,011
Other non-operational activity	129,580	—
Board-directed endowments	7,232,762	2,416,694
Net periodic benefit cost other than service cost	—	(2,480,524)
Non-operating surplus	8,198,831	1,071,181
Operating & non-operating surplus	\$ 9,498,469	6,172,337

Leading companies and brands recognize Ducks Unlimited as the world leader in waterfowl and wetlands conservation and the premier partner for reaching a dedicated, conservation-minded audience. With 87 years of conservation achievements, over one million supporters and a robust brand promotional strategy, DU is the unrivaled choice for sustainability-focused companies.

## CORPORATE PARTNER PROGRAM

**C**orporate America understands the vital importance of wetlands to wildlife and people, and it knows that supporting DU's mission is essential. Through DU's Corporate Partner Program, our corporate sponsors, product licensees, promotional partners and retailers contribute to wetlands conservation and help share DU's mission with millions of people.

Since its inception in 1985, DU's Corporate Partner Program has generated more than \$100 million in unrestricted conservation funds and resources directed to

where ducks and wetlands need them most. Our generous corporate partners also play a critical role in DU's success by underwriting events, donating products for fundraising and investing advertising dollars in DU media channels.



### DU'S CORPORATE PARTNERS

Academy Sports + Outdoors  
 AES  
 Aiko Brands  
 ALPS OutdoorZ  
 American Luxury Coach  
 Anheuser-Busch  
 Bass Pro Shops, Cabelas®  
 BUSCH Beer  
 BUSCH Light  
 Carolina Hosiery  
 Checks Unlimited  
 CigarClub  
 Desperate Enterprises  
 Dos Primos Tequila  
 Drake Waterfowl Systems

Federal Ammunition  
 FedEx  
 First National Bank of Omaha  
 GUNNER  
 Higdon Outdoors  
 iCEV  
 Itasca Footwear and Apparel  
 Luxco  
 Mack's Prairie Wings  
 Mossy Oak  
 Mud River Dog Products  
 New World Graphics  
 Outdoor Cap  
 PURINA Pro Plan  
 Radians Outdoors

Rico Industries  
 Signature Products Group  
 SportDOG Brand  
 Stone Canyon Homes  
 Streamlight  
 The McGee Group  
 United Country Real Estate  
 VISA  
 W.R. Case and Sons  
 War Eagle Boats  
 Winchester Ammunition  
 Yamaha  
 YETI





## CORPORATE PARTNER PROFILES

**A**t Ducks Unlimited, our corporate partners are the cornerstone of our mission to protect and restore North America's wetlands. From brand associations to offering DU-licensed products, we are not just boosting DU brand visibility, we are empowering our partners to take an active, pivotal role in shaping the future of conservation.

### ALPS OUTDOORZ

In January, we welcomed long-time supporter ALPS OutdoorZ as our newest Corporate Partner. At the 2024 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, ALPS OutdoorZ unveiled an impressive line of co-branded, officially licensed waterfowling gear and accessories. This collection includes blind bags, backpacks, briefcases, duffle bags, dry bags, game totes, shell belts, wader bags and more. Each item includes the iconic DU duck head, embodying functionality and conservation spirit.

"We're excited to welcome ALPS OutdoorZ to DU's Corporate Partner Program," said Jim Alexander, DU's managing director of corporate relations. "ALPS has been a tremendous supporter of DU through various other initiatives, and it's always inspiring to see companies deepen their commitment to conservation. ALPS OutdoorZ, a family-owned business, takes immense pride in product quality and customer service."

Founded in 1993 by Dennis Brune, ALPS OutdoorZ has built a strong reputation for innovation and dedication to customer satisfaction. Brune, alongside his wife, LaRayne, and their three adult children, Brian, Adam and



Sarah, continues to lead the company with a commitment to providing field-tested products and exceptional service.

"ALPS OutdoorZ is excited to expand our partnership with Ducks Unlimited through our new line of licensed gear," Brune said. "Combining our innovative waterfowl gear designs with the iconic Ducks Unlimited brand is a perfect fit for waterfowlers seeking high-quality gear while supporting conservation."

For more information about ALPS OutdoorZ and their products, visit [alpsoutdoorz.com](http://alpsoutdoorz.com).

### YETI

Since 2018, YETI has proudly partnered with Ducks Unlimited, demonstrating its dedication to conservation, wetland habitats and the outdoorsmen and women who rely on its products. Founded in 2006 in Austin, Texas, YETI has established itself as a leading premium outdoor brand.

DU is thrilled to announce that during FY24, YETI renewed its status as a Proud Partner of DU with a new five-year commitment. This partnership extension guarantees \$1 million in revenue for Ducks Unlimited, including \$200,000 in

annual guaranteed cash to support various initiatives across the organization, like brand sponsorship, advertising in DU media, event support and philanthropy.

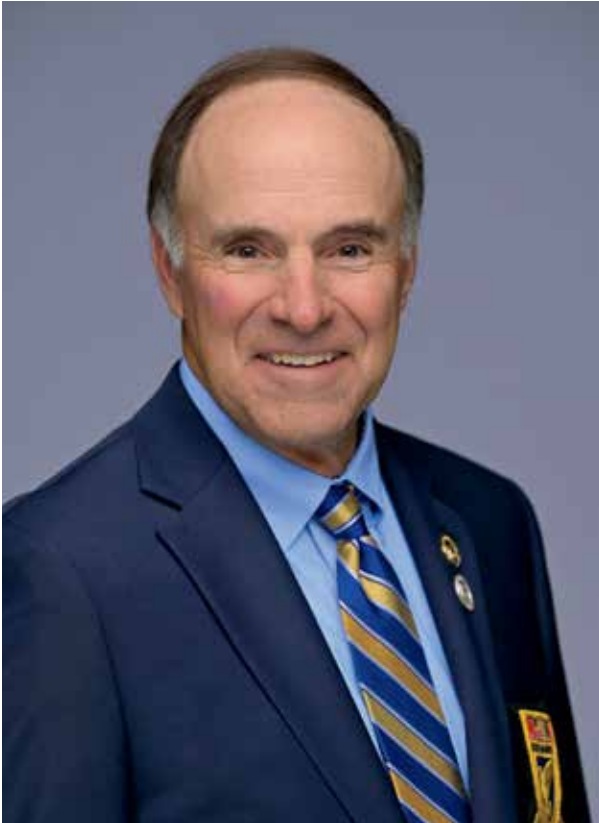
"We could not be happier with YETI continuing their corporate support of DU," said Jim Alexander, Ducks Unlimited managing director of corporate relations.

"This new five-year commitment speaks volumes and proves that they truly care about conserving, protecting and restoring wetlands across North America."





## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL



I am pleased to announce that the President's Council had another remarkable year in FY24, closing 2023 with 604 committed members.

The Ducks Unlimited President's Council represents one of the most generous and influential groups in conservation. Your collective contributions exceeded \$26 million toward our mission last year. With your continued dedication, we are confident that our *Conservation for a Continent* campaign will achieve its ambitious \$3 billion goal, enabling us to protect and restore vital habitats across North America. We are immensely grateful for your unwavering support.

Your commitment to our mission has allowed Ducks Unlimited to conserve over 18 million acres of habitat since our founding in 1937. Thanks to your generosity, we delivered a record-breaking one million acres of conservation in FY24 alone.

Thank you for all you have done and the continued impact you will make in helping Ducks Unlimited conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl, other wildlife and people for generations to come.

**BOB SPOERL**  
PRESIDENT, DUCKS UNLIMITED INC.



### RICH AND JOYCE JOHNSON

Ducks Unlimited's President's Council was formed in 2004, and Rich and Joyce Johnson have been proud members every year since its inception. Remarkably, their generosity and support of the program extend to and through the next generation, as they recently enrolled their grandsons, Caden and Callum Lowe, as 2024 President's Council members.

In over 40 years of service and commitment to Ducks Unlimited in Richmond, Virginia, and at the national board of directors level, Rich and Joyce have become DU Gold Legacy Sponsors and Diamond members of DU's Feather Society.

*Left to right: DU CEO Adam Putnam, Joyce Johnson, Rich Johnson and DU President Bob Spoerl.*









*Honoring Ducks Unlimited's*  
**MAJOR SPONSORS,  
VOLUNTEERS  
AND CHAPTERS**

Major sponsors and volunteers significantly impact wetlands and waterfowl conservation by supporting Ducks Unlimited's mission. These passionate conservationists lead the effort to secure our continent's wetlands and other habitats to make our vision of skies filled with waterfowl a reality.

The donors listed on the following pages represent those who made a gift in FY24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) or have given at least \$1 million to Ducks Unlimited in their lifetime. Thanks to the leadership of over 30,000 volunteers, the states and chapters listed represent those that performed at the highest level in FY24. Also listed are those volunteers who have given the organization 25 years or more of dedicated service.

For more information about being included in next year's annual report, contact Jenna Evans at (901) 758-3871 or email [jevans@ducks.org](mailto:jevans@ducks.org).



Celebrating 87 Years of Generosity and Commitment.  
Thanks a Million!

**MAJOR SPONSORS | VOLUNTEERS | CHAPTERS**

**T**ogether, we achieve more, and this year was no exception! FY24 was full of conservation milestones that you and our many members, sponsors, volunteers and partners made possible.

Your ongoing commitment helped DU surpass 18 million acres of wetlands and associated habitats conserved across North America since 1937. Your continued dedication pushed us to deliver 1 million acres of conservation in a single year—a first in our organization’s history! Your passionate support moved the needle to over \$2 billion raised toward our \$3 billion *Conservation for a Continent* campaign.

On the following pages, we are pleased to recognize our Major Sponsors, Feather Society members and Volunteers—key leaders whose unwavering dedication ensures our mission will continue for generations.

Representing you as the Senior Advisory Vice Presidents for Development, Membership, Events and Volunteer Management is an honor. We will continue to work alongside you to fill our skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.

We hope you celebrate all you have accomplished for wetlands, waterfowl, other wildlife and people. We cannot thank you enough for all you do.



*Robert M. Bengé*

Mike Bengé

ADVISORY SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
OF DEVELOPMENT



*Rob Gokey*

Rob Gokey

ADVISORY SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
OF MEMBERSHIP



*Tammi Kircher*

Tammi Kircher

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR  
EVENT MANAGEMENT



# STATE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

State Excellence Awards are based on growth versus the prior calendar year in three categories: volunteers, event attendance and event income. Using growth in event income as a base qualifier, a Bronze Award is given for growth over the prior year in one category. A Silver Award is given for growth over the previous year in

two categories. A Gold Award is given for growth over the prior year in all three categories. States with three years in a row at the Gold level are awarded Platinum status. States with five consecutive years at the Gold level are awarded Diamond status.

## Platinum

Idaho

## Gold

Arizona  
California  
Missouri  
Nebraska

Nevada  
New Mexico  
North Carolina  
North Dakota

Oklahoma  
Oregon  
Tennessee  
Texas

Virginia  
West Virginia  
Wisconsin  
Wyoming

## Silver

Alaska  
Arkansas  
Colorado  
Connecticut

Georgia  
Indiana  
Kansas  
Kentucky

Louisiana  
Massachusetts  
Michigan  
Minnesota

New Jersey  
Ohio  
Vermont

## Bronze

Illinois  
South Carolina

## Top Ten Traditional Events Income

1. East Cooper, SC, Annual Oyster Roast
2. Ellis County, TX, Dinner
3. Charlotte, NC, Sponsor Gala
4. 11th Annual Blackhawk, CA, Diamond Gala
5. 18th Annual Appoquinimink, DE, Spring Fling
6. Rice Belt Dinner, El Campo, TX
7. Kenosha, WI, ULIN Event
8. North Carolina State University Banquet
9. Denver, CO, Sponsor Gala
10. Reno, NV, Dinner

## Top Ten All-Income Events

1. Lake Forest, IL, Area Banquet
2. 11th Annual Blackhawk, CA, Diamond Gala
3. Houston, TX, Evening of Conservation
4. Kenosha, WI, ULIN Event
5. Denver, CO, Sponsor Gala
6. East Cooper, SC, Annual Oyster Roast
7. Baton Rouge, LA, Sponsor Banquet
8. Houston, TX, Legacy Gala
9. Lafayette, LA, Sponsor Banquet
10. Seattle, WA, Dinner





# UNIVERSITY ALL-AMERICAN CHAPTERS

## National Champion

### North Carolina State University



These collegiate champions exceeded \$25,000 in funds raised in a calendar year through the following streams:

- Event income from all events (minimum \$5,000 in event income to qualify)
- Chapter silent bid auction income
- Donor-directed major gifts



## Gold All-American \$75,000+

Texas A&M University  
Auburn University  
California State University–Chico  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
University of Mississippi  
East Carolina University

Louisiana State University  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
University of Alabama  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
University of Virginia  
University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

## Silver All-American \$50,000–\$74,999

Bemidji State University  
Colorado State University  
Texas A&M University–Kingsville

Texas Tech University  
University of Minnesota

## Bronze All-American \$25,000–\$49,999

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
Appalachian State University  
Mississippi State University  
Coastal Carolina University  
University of North Georgia–Dahlonega  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Ferris State University  
Kansas State University  
McNeese State University  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Oklahoma State University

Southeastern Louisiana University  
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
University of Arkansas  
University of Tennessee  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
University of Wisconsin–Whitewater  
Virginia Military Institute  
University of Idaho  
Virginia Tech University  
Wake Forest University



## VARSITY ALL-STAR CHAPTERS



These high school chapters exceeded \$10,000 in funds raised in a calendar year through the following revenue streams:

- Event income from all events (minimum \$2,500 in event income to qualify)
- Chapter silent bid auction income
- Donor-directed major gifts

### National Champion

**Jackson Academy, MS**



### Gold All-Star Chapters \$30,000+

Broughton High School, NC  
 Christian Brothers High School, TN  
 Collegiate School, VA  
 Jackson Preparatory High School, MS

Leon County High Schools, FL  
 Memphis University School, TN  
 Pacelli High School, GA  
 Belen Jesuit Preparatory School, FL

### Silver All-Star Chapters \$20,000–\$29,999

South Texas Area, TX  
 Charlotte Youth for Conservation, NC  
 First Preparatory Christian Academy, GA  
 Honeoye High School, NY

Springfield High School, LA  
 St. Agnes Academy, TN  
 St. Christopher's School, VA

### Bronze All-Star Chapters \$10,000–\$19,999

Canandaigua Academy, NY

Lowry High School, NV

Northshore High School Panthers, LA





# GREENWING HONOR ROLL EVENTS



The Greenwing Honor Roll comprises the 11 largest youth events in the country based on equal rating of membership and event income from their Greenwing events.

## Honor Roll Events

1. The Jackie Bartels' Kids Conservation Fest, LA
2. The Chattanooga Area Greenwing Day, TN
3. The Wilson County Greenwing Day, NC
4. The Dyersburg Greenwing Day, TN
5. The Northeast Illinois Greenwing Day, IL
6. The Villages Greenwing Day, FL
7. The Greater Kansas City Greenwing Day, MO
8. The Clinton-Sampson County Greenwing Day, NC
9. The Decatur Greenwing Day, AL
10. The South Mississippi Greenwing Day, MS
11. The Southern Minnesota Greenwing Day, MN



*The Jackie Bartels' Kids Conservation Fest in Louisiana was the largest DU Greenwing event in FY24.*





**DUCKS.ORG**

ONE WATERFOWL WAY | MEMPHIS, TN 38120





**DUCKS  
UNLIMITED**

**DUCKS.ORG**

ONE WATERFOWL WAY | MEMPHIS, TN 38120