



DUCKS  
UNLIMITED

**2023 YEAR IN REVIEW**







## MISSION

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit people and other wildlife.

*"We are making a difference and having fun doing it. And that difference, over the last 86 years, continues to be based on science and sustainability."* Adam Putnam, Ducks Unlimited CEO

## VISION

The vision of Ducks Unlimited is wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.

*"We protect wetlands. We partner with farmers, ranchers and landowners. We do this because it works, and it works at a continental scale."* Chuck Smith, Ducks Unlimited President



**Chuck Smith**  
President  
Ducks Unlimited

**Adam Putnam**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ducks Unlimited



## **AIMS TO SECURE SUPPORT, DONATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS TOTALING AT LEAST \$3 BILLION BY 2026.**

Conservation for a Continent. Our Wetlands. Our Legacy. was first celebrated at our 86th Annual National Convention in Las Vegas. The campaign, one of the largest ever launched in North America devoted to landscape conservation and the future of our outdoor heritage, will fund ambitious projects to build back nature in all 50 states, Canada and Mexico. The goal is to secure support, donations and commitments totaling at least \$3 billion by 2026.

Team DU is on track to conserve 1 million acres annually in the United States alone by 2028. “Conservation for a Continent is more than a statement,” said Ducks Unlimited President Chuck Smith. “It’s a promise to improve wetlands across North America on a scale large enough to improve quality of life for waterfowl, people and other wildlife.”

The campaign is built on five priorities guided by science and vital to the survival of wetlands, waterfowl, communities and ecosystems that rely on those resources:

**Breeding Landscape Conservation**—Supports DU initiatives to protect and restore threatened breeding habitat across the continent, a key conservation priority for Ducks Unlimited.

**Migration and Wintering Landscape Conservation**—Will support efforts to protect and restore wintering and staging habitat along North America’s coasts and the central and southern United States.

**Conservation Research and Education**—DU is the world’s leading science-based nonprofit organization dedicated to wetlands and waterfowl. This campaign will support the science needed to inform our conservation efforts on the most critical landscapes to wildlife and people.

**Wetlands Forever**—This priority focuses on funding programs to encourage volunteerism and mission-focused projects where the need is greatest.

**Conservation Legacy**—This component focuses on growing DU’s endowment to ensure a strong organization sustaining critical conservation work for decades.

Conservation for a Continent builds on the success of our previous fundraising campaigns: the \$2.34 billion Rescue Our Wetlands campaign, which concluded in 2018, and the \$1.88 billion Wetlands for Tomorrow campaign, which ended in 2010.



# OUR DUCKS UNLIMITED STATES

Our volunteers and members are our backbone and without them we could not continue our work for waterfowl conservation year in and year out.

## MEMBERS, SPONSORS, & MAJOR DONORS

0-5,000

5,000-10,000

10,000-20,000

20,000-30,000

30,000-55,000

ALABAMA 8,472

ALASKA 4,247

ARIZONA 3,869

ARKANSAS 28,563

CALIFORNIA 27,552

COLORADO 9,729

CONNECTICUT 2,491

DELAWARE 6,020

FLORIDA 17,649

GEORGIA 17,593

HAWAII 339

IDAHO 7,780

ILLINOIS 25,387

INDIANA 16,612

IOWA 14,393

KANSAS 15,105

KENTUCKY 5,505

LOUISIANA 16,788

MAINE 2,122

MARYLAND 15,478

MASSACHUSETTS 4,563

MICHIGAN 28,521

MINNESOTA 48,899

MISSISSIPPI 9,575

MISSOURI 17,204

MONTANA 7,447

NEBRASKA 12,664

NEVADA 4,915

NEW HAMPSHIRE 1,634

NEW JERSEY 4,741

NEW MEXICO 1,404

NEW YORK 18,666

NORTH CAROLINA 26,600

NORTH DAKOTA 4,196

OHIO 17,053

OKLAHOMA 7,810

OREGON 6,726

PENNSYLVANIA 15,662

RHODE ISLAND 682

SOUTH CAROLINA 15,322

SOUTH DAKOTA 5,985

TENNESSEE 13,066

TEXAS 52,228

UTAH 4,511

VERMONT 1,275

VIRGINIA 15,498

WASHINGTON 9,685

WEST VIRGINIA 1,596

WISCONSIN 36,346

WYOMING 3,839



## 2023: BY THE NUMBERS

Over the past 86 years, Ducks Unlimited's volunteers, members and supporters have conserved more than 16 million acres of wetlands and waterfowl habitat. And we have worked with our partners to protect 1 billion acres of Canadian Boreal Forest. Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) was another example of how 684,000 members and over 1 million supporters continue to save the wetlands and waterfowl we love.

FY23 NATIONWIDE CONSERVATION RESULTS		ANNUAL CONSERVATION PROGRESS AND PLANNING HABITAT ACRES DELIVERED			
<b>1,030</b>	HABITAT PROJECTS	2023 GOAL	2023 RESULT	2022 RESULT	2021 RESULT
<b>640,688</b>	ACRES DELIVERED	520,000	640,688	575,647	565,485
<b>7.3 Million</b>	U.S. ACRES CONSERVED SINCE 1984	HABITAT PROJECT	DELIVERED	CONSERVED	
<b>16.2 Million</b>	NORTH AMERICA ACRES CONSERVED SINCE 1937	A parcel of land that Ducks Unlimited is responsible for protecting, managing or restoring.	The total number of completed habitat accomplishments in a fiscal year measured in acres.	The cumulative number of restored, protected and managed acres under DUI, DUC, and DUMAC since 1937.	

**\$318.5 MILLION**

Revenue Generated

**84%**

Of Expenditures Went To Habitat  
And Conservation

**\$91.7 MILLION**

Event Income

**30,000 VOLUNTEERS**  
**560,000+ ATTENDEES**  
**4,555 EVENTS**

**\$155 MILLION**

Record-Breaking Habitat Funds  
From Government Grants  
And Partnerships

**\$54.4 MILLION**

Major Gift Commitments

**\$54.6 MILLION**

Major Gift Cash

**+\$29 MILLION**

Planned Giving Commitments

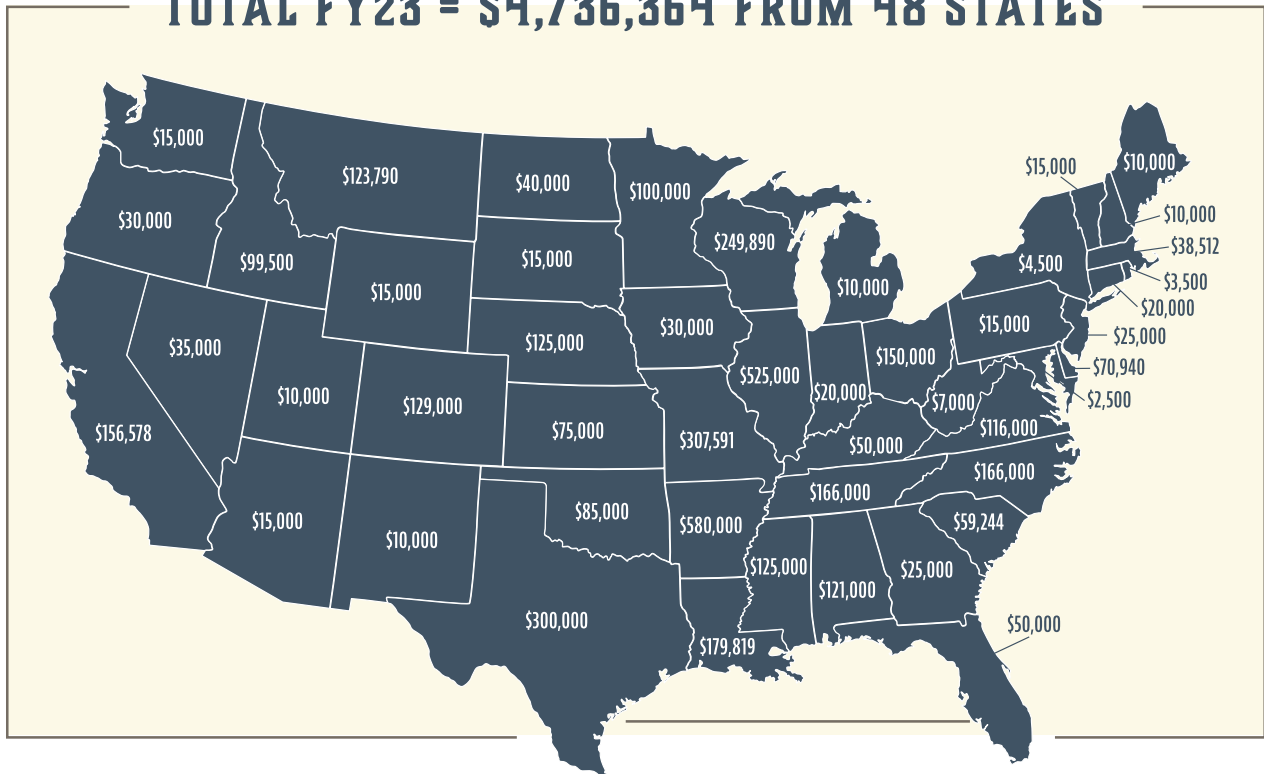


## STATE & FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS

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.

We hit a milestone in 2023. All states in the Lower 48 will contribute to Fall Flights for the first time in program history. These states will contribute \$4.7 million to Canadian projects, which get matched by Ducks Unlimited and leveraged to secure North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants. The results are incredible—\$18.8 million—and when you factor in the U.S.–Canadian exchange rate, that adds up to nearly \$25 million of conservation funding hitting the ground in Canada.

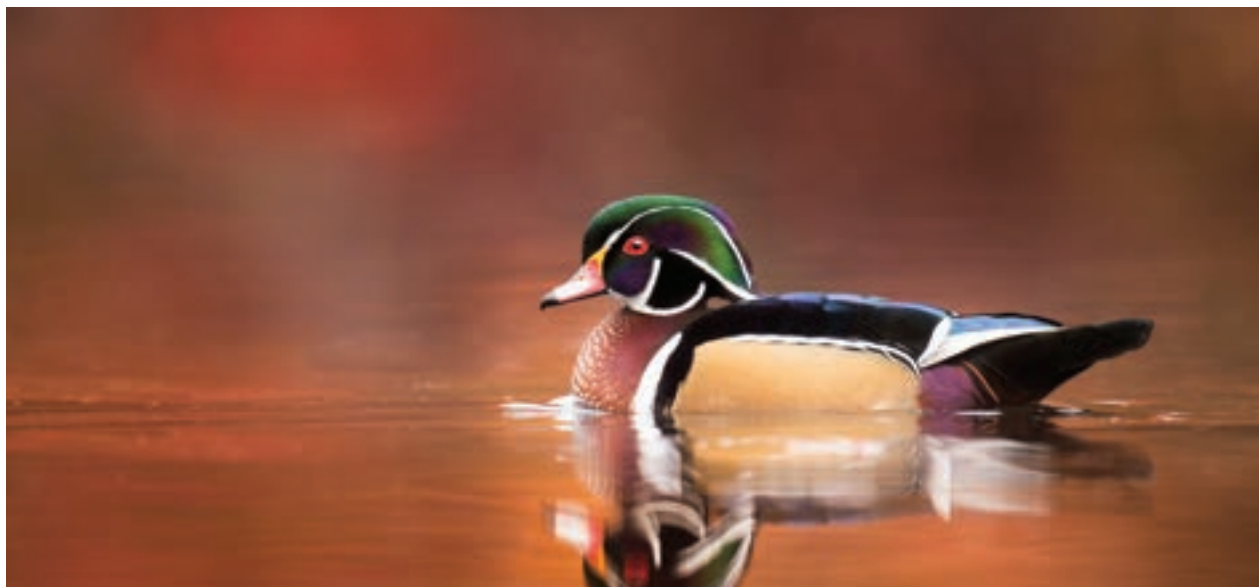
### TOTAL FY23 = \$4,736,364 FROM 48 STATES



## REGIONAL CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

### GREAT LAKES & ATLANTIC REGION

*Ducks Unlimited's Great Lakes/Atlantic Region completed 265 projects and impacted 137,312 acres in FY23. More than 1,000 active conservation projects across 21 states.*



#### **USDA's \$35 Million Conservation Grant Impacting 240,000 Acres**

For the first time in its 86-year history, Ducks Unlimited partnered with the National Pork Board, Nestlé and other organizations to provide on-farm, climate-smart solutions to farmers in Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri. DU will help administer the funding provided by a \$35 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working with producers to deliver on-site technical support.

The program, which will improve soil conditions, limit nutrient runoff and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is expected to positively impact 240,000 acres across the three states.

This suite of agricultural services ensures that fewer sediments and nutrients leave the field and enter waterways used by waterfowl, other wildlife and people.





## SOUTHERN REGION

*Ducks Unlimited's Southern Region delivered 187 projects, impacting more than 73,286 acres in FY23.*



### Richland Creek WMA Enhancements

Corporate and conservation partners are coming together to enhance wetlands in Texas's Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to improve wildlife habitat and water resources in the Trinity River Basin.

Working with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Ducks Unlimited constructed 206 acres of new wetlands in the WMA. Water from the Trinity River will flood the wetland complex during the winter to provide habitat for various bird species, and in the spring, water from the wetlands will flow back into the river. The design of the wetlands should reduce sediment, nitrogen and phosphorous levels in the water, which will help improve water quality overall in the Trinity River by reconditioning more than 200 million gallons of water annually.

PepsiCo is on board, too.

"As one of the world's largest food and beverage companies, we recognize that PepsiCo not only has an opportunity, but a responsibility to use our scale and reach to ensure a more sustainable future," said Tim Carey, vice president of sustainability at PepsiCo Beverages North America.

The Texas Water Action Collaborative partners, Facebook (Meta), Bonneville Environmental Foundation and a private family foundation also support the project.



## GREAT PLAINS REGION

*In FY23, DU completed 290 projects on the Great Plains and helped conserve 353,357 acres in seven states—areas with recreational benefits like kayaking, hiking, biking and wildlife watching.*



### **Improving Water Quality and Enhancing Wetlands in Jackson, Wyoming**

Late last July, Ducks Unlimited staff joined the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, representatives from Jackson, Wyoming, and a congregation of supporters, donors, and partners to dedicate a wetlands enhancement project that not only restored and created new public wetlands but also improved the water quality flowing from the town's wastewater treatment facility, and into the area's free-flowing rivers.

One of the project's key features was the installation of small levees and modernized water-control structures that improved water management and fish passage. The result allows managers to control the inflow and outflow of water from the entire wildlife habitat area, provide better recreational opportunities for hikers, bikers, waterfowlers and bird watchers and provide more habitat for migratory species like swans, which frequent the site.

While the project required a fundraising effort that generated just over \$1.5 million, migratory birds and other wildlife are already exploring the new landscape, and the activity is expected to intensify in the coming years.



## WESTERN REGION

*Ducks Unlimited's Western Region completed 54 conservation projects and impacted 14,584 acres in FY23.*

*There are more than 460 active conservation projects across nine states.*



### **One of California's Most Popular Wildlife Areas Benefits from Massive DU Project**

The more than 100,000 birders and hunters who visit the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area each year will continue to enjoy the area's spectacular sights in perpetuity, thanks to a \$52 million Ducks Unlimited infrastructure project completed in 2023.

Ducks Unlimited oversaw design, environmental compliance and construction of 5 1/2 miles of upgrades to the canals that ship water from the Thermalito Afterbay reservoir north of Gray Lodge to the 9,100-acre wildlife area north of Sacramento.

The project also replaced four county road bridges, seven large water-control structures, three farm bridges and 45 structures that move water into farm fields.

Ducks Unlimited's primary partner on the project was the Biggs West Gridley Water District. Other Gray Lodge Water Supply Improvement Project partners included the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Gray Lodge isn't just critical to waterfowl. The wildlife area also provides habitat for dozens of other species, including the giant garter snake, which is protected under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts.

The project complements a decade of projects when Ducks Unlimited overhauled much of the water-delivery system inside the wildlife area.

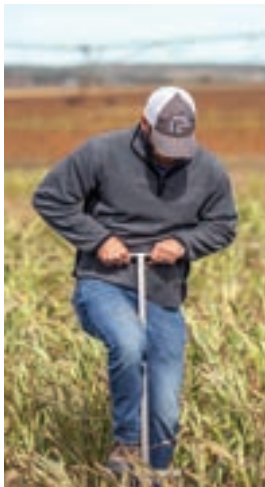




## 2023 NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### DUCKS UNLIMITED PARK, WEST MEMPHIS, ARKANSAS

Ducks Unlimited Park, accessed from Downtown Memphis via Big River Crossing, comprises 1,500 acres of land and features a seven-mile paved trail loop and a half-mile out-and-back trail with stunning views of the Mississippi River, Memphis skyline and West Memphis agriculture. Ducks Unlimited Park also connects to the Big River Levee Trail System, which includes more than 110 miles of riverside trails atop the Mississippi River's levee system.



### USDA'S CLIMATE-SMART COMMODITIES PROGRAM

Ducks Unlimited, along with partnering organizations such as USA Rice, National Pork Board and Trust in Food, was awarded three USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities grants totaling \$155 million. In the fall of 2022, the USDA announced that it would be investing \$3.1 billion in 141 projects through this effort to expand climate-smart commodities and provide direct and meaningful benefits to agriculture production. These projects will provide technical and financial assistance to underserved producers to implement climate-smart production practices on a voluntary basis on working lands, as well as pilot innovative and cost-effective methods for quantification, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gas benefits.



## DU'S 86TH NATIONAL CONVENTION WINS BIG IN LAS VEGAS

Ducks Unlimited's 86th National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, was a tremendous success. With nearly 1,000 DU members, supporters and conservation enthusiasts in attendance, the energy on stage and in the audience was high and attendees witnessed DU launch its most ambitious capital campaign ever—Conservation for a Continent.

The main event of the Friday business session was the fireside chat between DU CEO Adam Putnam, Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris and legendary music icons Garth Brooks and Huey Lewis. The group discussed their shared passions for hunting and conservation, memorable moments on tour and everything in between. Attendees also were the first to learn of a brand-new partnership between DU and Garth Brooks.



## OUR REACH



### DU TV AND DU NATION

Ducks Unlimited Television entered the 2023 filming season with one goal: to continue providing outstanding waterfowl hunting entertainment while maintaining solid audience education for DU's waterfowl and wetlands conservation mission.



New in 2023 for Ducks Unlimited is DU Nation. This series covers waterfowl hunting adventures and encompasses the outdoor lifestyle DU members from all walks of life enjoy.

The Washington Post



### DU PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

364 million impressions the past two years.

yahoo!news

### NATIONAL MEDIA PICK-UPS

Through DU's extensive national network of media connections, we are able to cast a wider net and generate more coverage in order to share our impressive conservation and sustainability work to the masses.



### DU MAGAZINE

595,999 average distribution



### DU PODCAST

2.9M total downloads

### SOCIAL MEDIA



1,155,802  
FOLLOWERS



776,300  
FOLLOWERS



120,691  
FOLLOWERS





## POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

### CAPITOL HILL DINNER AND AUCTION, FLY-IN

In FY23, more than 700 guests attended DU's annual Capitol Hill Dinner and Auction in Washington, D.C. Ducks Unlimited state chairs, state policy chairs, senior volunteers and members of the DU Board of Directors gathered in D.C. for the annual Fly-In to meet with members of Congress and advocate for legislation to protect and restore wetlands and migratory bird habitat. As a result of the strong relationships with influential lawmakers forged by DU staff and volunteers, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) received record funding—\$50 million—in legislation to fund the federal government passed by Congress.



*More than 60 bipartisan members of the House and Senate were in attendance for DU's Capitol Hill Dinner in Washington, D.C.*

### RICE STEWARDSHIP PARTNERSHIP

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership will receive \$80 million in funding through its Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities program—the largest single grant in Ducks Unlimited's history. DU was also a major partner in Climate-Smart grants with Trust In Food (\$40 million), the National Pork Board (\$20 million) and Whitaker Grain (\$4.9 million).





With an astounding 40 percent of the world's plants and animals living or breeding in wetlands, Ducks Unlimited is advancing new opportunities and methods to help protect, enhance and restore some of the most critical habitats in the world. As we continue to develop, implement and deliver environmentally impactful programs and practices, we are conserving landscapes that help people as much as wildlife. We drive sustainable and science-driven solutions that build resilience to create positive change to better our communities and planet.

## 2023 SUSTAINABILITY/ECOSYSTEM DELIVERIES

### Sediment Reduction

**197,610.98 metric tons of sediment = approx. one foot of topsoil across 107 acres**

BENEFITS: enhances water quality, reduces sediment pollution, improves water flow in rivers and streams

### Phosphorus Reduction

**117,451.56 kg of phosphorus = 4,707 acres of soybeans per year**

BENEFITS: enhances water quality, decreases algae blooms and algal toxins

### Nitrogen Reduction

**1,387,306.17 kg of nitrogen = 20,390 acres of corn per year**

BENEFITS: enhances water quality, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, provides healthier habitat for aquatic wildlife

### Carbon Sequestration

**16,228.10 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e = 3,614 U.S. passenger vehicles per year**

BENEFITS: reduces greenhouse gasses, improves soil health

### Avoided Emissions

**72, 813.81 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e = 16,217 U.S. passenger vehicles per year**

BENEFITS: enhances water quality, reduces sediment pollution, improves water flow in rivers and streams

### Water Storage

**38,436.16 acre-feet = 18,976 Olympic-sized swimming pools**

BENEFITS: reduces stormwater and irrigation runoff, reduces the risk of flooding, increases water quantity







## Wetlands America Trust

### WETLANDS AMERICA TRUST

As has been a tradition since DU's first continental campaign, Habitat 2000, Wetlands America Trust (WAT) is stepping forward with the launch of the new campaign, Conservation for a Continent.

The \$3 billion continental undertaking marks the fourth time WAT trustees have played a key role in the leadership phase of DU's ambitious comprehensive effort to secure a record amount of funding for the organization's highest conservation priorities.

In addition to efforts to support and help provide leadership for Conservation for a Continent, WAT is pleased to have produced its third edition of Wetlands America magazine. This innovative publication showcases DU conservation priorities throughout North America.

Trustees conducted their 2023 spring board meeting in Washington, D.C., and met with several members of Congress and agency partners. WAT trustees play a key role in DU's policy efforts.



## DUCKS UNLIMITED NORTH AMERICA



### DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA (DUC)

DUC Marked its 85th anniversary with several history-making conservation achievements including landmark habitat gains and major investments in wetland research. Over the past year, DUC conserved more than 187,000 acres of essential waterfowl habitats bringing its total cumulative conservation footprint to 9.1 million acres since its inception.

#### Highlights:

- DUC achieved a major milestone by mapping 25 percent of the Boreal Forest, identifying and classifying a total of 363 million acres which will help for future conservation activities throughout the region.
- More than \$20 million was mobilized for wetland science through DUC's participation in three unique research projects funded by the Government of Canada's Climate Action and Awareness Fund.



### DUCKS UNLIMITED DE MÉXICO

In the spring of 1974, Ducks Unlimited of Mexico (DUMAC) began work on its first project after many well-intentioned people in the region voiced their concerns about the conservation of wintering habitats for migratory waterfowl. A significant number of wetland conservation and restoration projects, in addition to research projects and educational and technical assistance programs, have been undertaken in the organization's nearly 50 years of operation.

#### Highlights:

- DUMAC signed a collaboration agreement with the Ministry of Environmental and Territorial Development, the Intermunicipal Environment Board and the Municipality of Atoyac in 2023 to address water efficiency, water quality and harmful threats to wetland basins in Mexico's Sayula Lagoon.
- Through wetland restoration efforts, soil health programs and waterfowl and shorebird monitoring, Sayula Lagoon is one of the most essential waterfowl sanctuaries in Mexico's Central Region.



## OUR PARTNERS

### CORPORATIONS INVESTING IN CONSERVATION

Ducks Unlimited relies on corporate partners to strengthen and expand the efforts of DU's conservation mission. Other innovative and conservation-minded organizations are investing to help protect, enhance and restore critical and threatened lands and habitats by supporting our work of replenishing groundwater, sequestering carbon and advancing biodiversity on the landscape.

ConocoPhillips Company	Chevrolet Motor Division	Nestle Purina PetCare	Walmart
Energy Transfer	Chevron U.S.A.	Company	Columbia Sportswear
Academy Sports and	CN	Pacific Gas & Electric	Company
Outdoors	Coca-Cola	Company	Apex Clean Energy, Inc.
Agrium U.S., Inc.	Dow Chemical Company	PepsiCo	Microsoft Corporation
Anheuser-Busch InBev	Duke Energy Corporation	Phillips 66	NextEra Energy Resources
Axalta Coating Systems	ExxonMobil Foundation	The Mosaic Company	
Bass Pro Shops	First Horizon	Shell Oil Company	
Cargill	Flint Hills Resources	Stoneco of Michigan	

### CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Through DU's Corporate Proud Partner Program, corporate sponsors, product licensees, promotional partners and retailers impact wetlands conservation and share DU's mission with millions. Since its launch in 1985, DU's Corporate Proud Partner Program has generated more than \$100 million in unrestricted funds for conservation—dollars that can be used where ducks need it most.

Academy Sports + Outdoors	Drake Waterfowl Systems	Rico Industries
AES Outdoors	Federal Premium Ammunition	Signature Products Group
American Luxury Coach	FedEx	Smathers and Branson
Anheuser-Busch	First National Bank of Omaha	SportDOG Brand
Artisans Apparel	General Tire	Star Fish Vision
Bass Pro Shops   Cabela's	GUNNER	Stone Canyon Homes
Busch Beer	Higdon Outdoors	The McGee Group
Busch Light	Itasca Footwear and Apparel	United Country Real Estate
C.C. Filson Co.	Mack's Prairie Wings	VISA
Carolina Hosiery	Mossy Oak	W.R. Case and Sons Cutlery
Checks Unlimited	Mud River Dog Products	War Eagle Boats
CigarClub	New World Graphics	Winchester Ammunition
Daviess County Bourbon	Outdoor Cap Company	Yamaha
Desperate Enterprises	Purina Pro Plan	YETI
Direct Checks	Pyramex	





## YOUTH & EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### THIRD TERM

The tenth annual collegiate leadership summit, Third Term, took place July 29-30, 2023 in Memphis. Over 300 college volunteers from 71 chapters traveled to Memphis for a weekend of conservation education, break-out sessions and networking allowing students to meet and greet fellow volunteers from across the country while learning more about DU's operations from a national perspective.

### DUCKS UNLIMITED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

DU awarded 62 scholarships to graduating high school seniors from across the country. FY23 marks the sixth consecutive year for the program, which has seen much success since its inaugural year in 2018. This highly competitive scholarship is based on the student's educational achievements, personal endeavors and volunteer history with DU. For 2023, the \$10,000 National Scholarship winner was Emma Cornelison, from Salisbury, North Carolina.



**110 CHAPTERS**



**34 CHAPTERS**





**SUPPORT OUR WETLANDS**







