



Ducks Unlimited's Klamath Basin Strategy

January 2024

Our Vision:

A Klamath Basin capable of supporting thriving waterfowl populations, productive farmland, abundant fisheries, and the cultural values of each.

The Klamath Basin is one of the most important wetland systems in North America. Approximately 80 percent, or 5 million, of the Pacific flyway's waterfowl use it and the larger landscape for all life history stages. Tule Lake and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuges are key wetlands that anchor the Basin.

In the Klamath Basin the Bureau of Reclamation manages a water delivery system expected to serve competing hydrologic needs of Threatened and Endangered fish, traditional cultural values, a federal irrigation project, and National Wildlife Refuges all within a changing climate. Historically, this vast wetland-dominated landscape was hydrologically complex and connected. Construction of dams and the irrigation Project highly altered important surface- and ground-water interactions. Today, the two National Wildlife Refuges are largely dry, water quality is poor, and listed fish near extinction thereby driving water allocation decisions. Therefore, the logical first step for the Refuges to receive reliable water supplies is for them to become critical for listed fish recovery by using water management strategies and wetland improvements that help recovery as well as provide multi-beneficial solutions for waterfowl and farms. This is the only viable long-term solution and Ducks Unlimited's priority.

To that end, Ducks Unlimited is working to develop and implement both short- and long-term collaborative, wetland-based solutions focused on fish recovery by re-establishing and mimicking historical hydrologic functions within a future where currently competing resources are brought into sustainable, complementary balance. This strategy requires collaboration between all interests using innovative and solution orientated thinking with a watershed and ecosystem perspective.

Our Goals:

- Create long-term, durable, multi-beneficial solutions that integrate Refuge wetlands into water management actions that work to recover endangered fish populations.
- Establish Ducks Unlimited as a trustworthy and reliable wetland conservation partner.

Our Objectives:

- Develop and utilize the Lost River-Tule Lake NWR and Klamath River- Lower Klamath NWR systems as collaborative, multi-beneficial, wetland-based models of success that inform Basin-wide solutions.
 - Build strong relationships with Refuges, Tribes, Irrigators, and other interests.
 - Understand perspectives, goals, needs, and challenges
 - Develop collaboration opportunities, then implement them
 - Build a common vision of a future in which multi-beneficial wetlands are integral components.
 - Wetlands that support waterfowl
 - Wetlands that support fish
 - Wetlands that support farms
 - Wetlands that support people
 - Develop the scientific foundation for integrating wetlands into multi-beneficial solutions.
 - Implement collaborative science as tools to build partnerships and understanding
 - Bring knowledge of waterfowl-based wetland science to the fisheries community
 - Implement projects that demonstrate how wetlands provide multiple benefits.
 - Upper Lake, Lower and Tule Lake, floodplain restoration, wetland management