

## Ducks Unlimited Report

Roger Pederson presented a brief report on the status of waterfowl in North America in 2001, the importance of the US Farm Bill conservation programs, and the State grant program for Canada. The May survey results are in and in general, waterfowl populations are in good shape. Only three duck species have continental populations below the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) goals and only two of those, pintails and lesser scaup, are seriously below the NAWMP goals. Duck populations are in good shape now because of the Farmbill and favorable weather. Wetlands have been protected in large parts of the US portion of the Prairie Pothole Region by the Farm Bill's Swampbuster provisions, the Farm Bill's Conservation Reserve Program has put 7 to 9 million acres of dense nesting cover in the Prairie Pothole Region, and we have had an unprecedented wet period in the Northern Great Plains that began in the summer of 1993 and continues through this summer. While we can't control the weather, we can control what goes into the Farm Bill, and all of us need to become actively involved in the next few months. The House Ag Committee has their version of the Farm Bill written, and it can be improved significantly. But, it is going to take all us working together to make it happen. Please check DU's website and click on the "Take Action" button to help in the Farm Bill effort.

While we can count our blessings relative to waterfowl breeding habitat on this side of the border, conditions are not so favorable in Canada. In Canada, there are no equivalents of Swampbuster or the Clean Water Act (federal legislation that has protected wetlands in the Northern Great Plains) or federal programs such as Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges, or State conservation lands such as Wildlife Management Areas. Consequently, drainage and conversion of native prairie to cropland in prairie Canada have proceeded at accelerated rates when compared to the US prairies. In Canada, the major organization holding the line for waterfowl habitat is DU Canada. They are to waterfowl habitat up there what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to waterfowl habitat in the United States. DU Canada has become THE wetlands expert in Canada and is looked to for resolution of many natural resource conflicts involving water and wetlands. DU Canada has conserved millions of acres of waterfowl habitat with its projects but the real significance of the importance of the organization goes beyond the projects. That significance is related to DU Canada maintaining a high profile presence on the Canadian Prairies since 1937 and presenting a reasoned approach to wetland conservation all these years. In many areas, DU Canada has contacted every landowner in a several mile radius of their offices in their promotion of sound conservation.

A significant contribution to DU Canada's program has been State grants. Starting with the State of Ohio's contribution to Canada in 1965, the thirteen States represented by this Association have contributed almost 18 million dollars to prairie Canada. Illinois leads the group in reaching DU's Platinum contribution level by contributing almost 6 million dollars. Four States have reached DU's Gold contribution level with Wisconsin providing almost 3 million dollars, Missouri providing 2.5 million dollars, Ohio giving 1.8 million dollars, and Indiana supporting Canada with funds totaling 1.1 million dollars. Five states (Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska) have achieved DU's Silver contribution level (>\$500,000). Although not large in total contribution, I am especially proud of contributions from waterfowl production states such as North and South Dakota. Of the thirteen states represented in this Association, only Michigan has not responded with any kind of financial contribution for NAWMP habitat work in Canada. A significant aspect to this program is that any State contribution is matched several times. For example, last year's North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska contributions (in total \$45,000 US) were combined into a single proposal. Their funds are first matched by DU Inc., so the total then became \$90,000. This amount was matched by North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds (total now \$180,000 US). Throw in some Canadian match and the Canadian exchange rate and the total program delivered in Canada exceeds a quarter of a million dollars. That means a real difference for waterfowl in prairie Canada!

In closing, Ducks Unlimited appreciates all the hard work the States have done for waterfowl through the years. We were proud to sponsor the riverboat cruise as a small gesture of our appreciation.

We know we can count on your continued support in the future and please accept our sincerest thanks for all you have done on the waterfowl resource's behalf.

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