



FOCUSED ON THE *future*

Ducks Unlimited Canada continues its conservation journey of making positive impacts on the landscape while advancing research and sharing knowledge.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

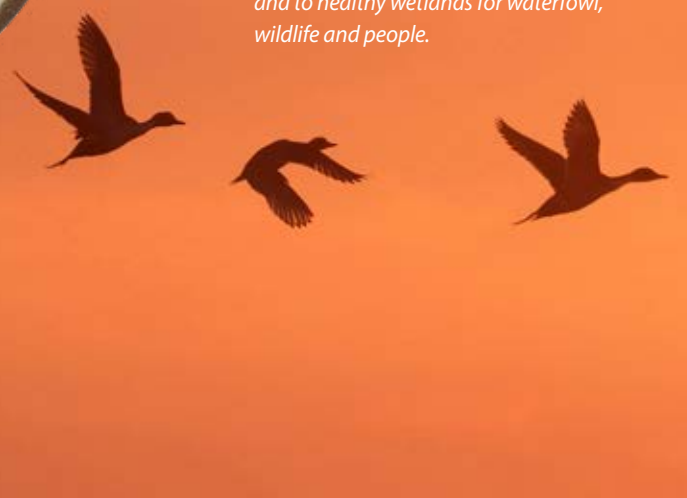


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We acknowledge the deep and abiding connection that Indigenous Peoples have to the lands, waters and wildlife of their traditional territory. We are grateful to be welcomed here and as we work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians, we will strive to build respectful relationships with our Indigenous partners rooted in our shared commitment to nature, to clean water and to healthy wetlands for waterfowl, wildlife and people.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is more than the sum of our mission to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for the benefit of North America’s waterfowl, wildlife and people. Our exceptional people and decades of applied research has a collective, positive impact on the landscapes and for communities.

Our annual report offers a glimpse into the work we’ve undertaken during the recent past. It shares information and stories about the achievements and partnerships that define our mission and success. And, hopefully, it serves to inspire and inform what’s next for DUC.

In 2038, DUC’s journey will reach the century mark – 100 years since a handful of dedicated and passionate hunters stepped into Big Grass Marsh and hammered into the ground the first stakes of Duck Factory #1 in western Manitoba.

Since those first, muddy steps, DUC’s footprints can now be found across Canada. We have grown and evolved to meet the ongoing and ever-changing challenges facing wetlands and the wildlife and communities that count on them.

Our footprints are accompanied by those who walk with us, including partners, landowners, volunteers and donors, who help DUC conserve, restore and manage wetland habitats using sound science and sage Indigenous knowledge. Together, we achieved much and surpassed many goals in the past year.

A standout achievement in the 2024 fiscal year was driven by the increased support of our generous donors and sponsors, making it one of our most successful fundraising years in recent memory. From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, we exceeded our \$10 million major gift goal, raising over \$17 million.

It was also one of our most impactful years delivering conservation, science, education and capital initiatives. DUC has had significant influence on the development and implementation of 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 its province’s boreal wetlands. This resulted in the conservation of an additional 21.2 million acres (8.6 million hectares) of wetland supporting habitat in Manitoba’s boreal region.

Finally, we would like to salute our dedicated and passionate staff whom we appreciate each day of the year, and we extend our deepest thanks to all for helping DUC be named a Canadian Nonprofit Employer of Choice for a second consecutive year.

We are focused on the future, and invite you to engage with Ducks Unlimited Canada by looking beyond this document to [explore the ever-expanding, rich and interactive world that is Ducks Unlimited Canada’s website](#) – a wonder-filled online ecosystem teeming with the newest stories and research from Canada’s largest land conservancy.



NATIONAL CONSERVATION RESULTS

(As of March 31, 2024)

Since Ducks Unlimited Canada’s inception, we have protected and restored more than 9.2 million acres, influenced more than 244 million acres, and enhanced 492,695 acres. **As of April 2024, DUC is the steward of more than 6.2 million acres across 13,575 habitat projects.**

ANNUAL CONSERVATION PROGRESS AND PLANNING	2025 GOALS	2024 GOALS	2024 RESULTS	2023 RESULTS
HABITAT ACRES CONSERVED <small>(INCLUDES ACRES RESTORED)</small>	110,638 <small>43,590</small>	134,389 <small>60,988</small>	166,495 <small>46,769</small>	187,252 <small>46,419</small>
HABITAT ACRES ENHANCED	385,175	241,825	405,400	352,045
HABITAT ACRES INFLUENCED	10,256,397	15,233,215	21,454,159	1,700,000

HABITAT PROJECT

A parcel of land that DUC is responsible for protecting and managing.

CONSERVED ACRES

Areas DUC has directly impacted through habitat programs that extend for 10 years or more. Examples include land purchases, management agreements and conservation easements.

RESTORED ACRES

Areas previously lost or degraded, returned to a more natural state by DUC conservation work.

ENHANCED ACRES

Areas DUC is directly impacting through habitat programs that extend for fewer than 10 years. Examples include invasive species work, nest box activities and winter wheat seeding.

INFLUENCED ACRES

Areas DUC is impacting through partnerships and advocacy work not tied to a length of time. Examples include sustainable land-use actions and wetland policies.



Our long-term vision: Ducks Unlimited Canada is working to reach its goal of having conserved and restored 10.2 million acres by its 100th year of operating in 2038.



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS



WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

For thousands of years, Indigenous Peoples have been the stewards of the lands and waters of what is now Canada. Today, across the country, Indigenous Peoples are leading some of the most important and significant nature conservation initiatives ever. Ducks Unlimited Canada is honoured to be a partner in some of these efforts and to support Indigenous Peoples as they realize their conservation vision. From contributions of technical support to facilitating Indigenous stewardship and cultural experiences on the land, Ducks Unlimited Canada strives to provide resources and capacity that can enable Indigenous people and communities to achieve their conservation goals. We have much to learn and we are committed to working closely with Indigenous partners in the spirit of collaboration and reconciliation.

The Greatest Lakes

The five Great Lakes and the mighty St. Lawrence River play a crucial role in daily life for many North Americans, providing freshwater resources that underpin the prosperity and natural beauty of the region. With millions of people drawn to the area, community growth brings environmental challenges that must be continually addressed to maintain the health of these inland seas and their vast watersheds.

On both sides of the border, Ducks Unlimited teams are conserving and restoring wetland and grassland habitats. Our focus has always been to conserve habitats for waterfowl, however we all know that's only one part of the value of wetland conservation and that helping protect wetlands and adjacent natural habitats means those ecosystems will help protect us in return.

Learn about the Great Lakes, their influence on surrounding regions and the DUC conservation projects in these areas. [Visit our website for additional information including an interactive map, quizzes and more.](#)



FORCES OF NATURE VS NATURE FORCE

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is strengthened by the many partnerships that support our mission. One of our most significant partnerships is with Nature Force, a growing collective of Canada's largest insurance companies seeking to mitigate flood risk in urban communities. Over the last year, Nature Force has grown to 17 insurance companies who've joined forces with DUC to focus on a future that supports flood mitigation strategies using nature to help confront the increasing risks and consequences of flooding.

Conservation Award of Distinction

In February 2024, Tina Osen, president of HUB International Canada, was honoured for her work to create Nature Force when she was conferred DUC's Conservation Award of Distinction. This award celebrates exceptional contributions to conservation efforts, recognizing leadership in supporting DUC's mission.



International partnerships

Because we know that everything we do to help ducks helps people, too, the International Conservation Plan (ICP) takes its cues from birds. Ducks Unlimited organizations in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico developed the ICP by looking beyond borders and working to identify the best actions we can take

to ensure waterfowl have what they need to thrive in their habitats in the long run. The goals of the ICP are to have the greatest positive impact on North America's waterfowl and connect people across the continent who enjoy the significant and wide-ranging benefits of healthy wetlands.

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

RIDE TO THE LAKE

Ride to the Lake is an annual fundraising event that Ducks Unlimited Canada president, Pat O'Connor, helped establish in collaboration with Winnipeg-based DUC board member Kevin McFadden.

The 220-kilometre ride was created to raise awareness and funds for DUC and our wetland conservation work at the height of summer – when many people are enjoying their vacations in popular cottage country areas between Manitoba's capital and Lake of the Woods in northwestern Ontario.

The event has become one of DUC's most successful events, raising over \$1 million in funds since riders first put their mettle to pedals in 2016.



[The biggest news in terms of progress of goals](#) and campaigns is the achievement of DUC's pledge to raise \$750 million for North American habitat conservation efforts by 2027. As of 2024, DUC has raised 88 per cent of that pledge with two years remaining in the campaign. With a shared focus on the future, DUC, along with our colleague organizations in the U.S. (Ducks Unlimited Inc.) and Mexico (DUMAC), are closer than ever to realizing a goal of raising a ground-breaking \$3 billion for our mission.

Canoeing for conservation

Before Roger d'Eschambault, DUC's 45th president, wrapped his term and became DUC's board chair in 2024, [he embarked on a quest to raise funds and awareness for wetlands.](#)

In the fall of 2023, Roger canoed various wetlands and waterways of Manitoba—exploring the very places where DUC began—to learn about DUC conservation work.

A special stop on his journey was Big Grass Marsh, site of DUC's first-ever wetland restoration project in 1938 and considered by many to be the birth-place of wetland conservation in North America. Over the course of his journey, Roger also connected with people and places throughout the Lake Winnipeg watershed, visiting iconic projects and hearing the stories of dedicated people along the way.



DUCK AND RUN: THE RACE TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE WETLANDS

In October 2023, DUC and event sponsor Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's Canada invited people of all ages from across the country to participate in the [Duck and Run](#), a fun run to support nature conservation. Hundreds of runners, walkers, rollers and waddlers from across the country helped raise funds and awareness to support DUC's wetland conservation efforts by participating in various in-person or virtual Duck and Run events to complete one-kilometre, five-kilometre or 10,000-step challenges.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The success of DUC lays firmly on a strong foundation of teamwork within a community of supporters, members, partners and staff. Over the past year, the DUC community worked hard to organize more than 200 events and activities such as the increasingly popular and successful Duck and Run, as well as volunteer-led dinners and raffles across the country. Sold out event after sold out event consistently showcased the vital role a strong community of supporters plays in driving our conservation efforts. Thanks to supporters and members, DUC surpassed all areas of fundraising — development, events, merchandise, planned giving and grassroots — by more than 35 per cent.

Celebrating our volunteers

Across this country, thousands of people are drawn to work together by a passion to help conserve our wetlands for future generations. They choose to champion DUC's focus on the future of wetland conservation to protect our water and, in turn, the waterfowl, wildlife and communities that depend on them. **Our Ducks Unlimited Canada volunteers are heroes and a united force for nature.**



DUC named a non-profit employer of choice, again

Thanks to our invaluable employees' feedback, in February 2024 DUC was named a Canadian Nonprofit Employer of Choice (NEOC) award recipient for the second year in a row.

The NEOC award is a result of an assessment of DUC's people leadership, workplace satisfaction, employee engagement, social responsibility, governance and transparency, and is a national recognition program aimed at identifying, celebrating and promoting the best employers in the Canadian non-profit industry.

Our focus on the future has always been rooted in our focus on our people. As one of the largest and longest-standing conservation organizations in North America with more than 400 employees across Canada, the award recognizes DUC's focus on balancing the needs of its employees with the demands of achieving its vision of healthy wetlands and clean water for waterfowl, wildlife and people.

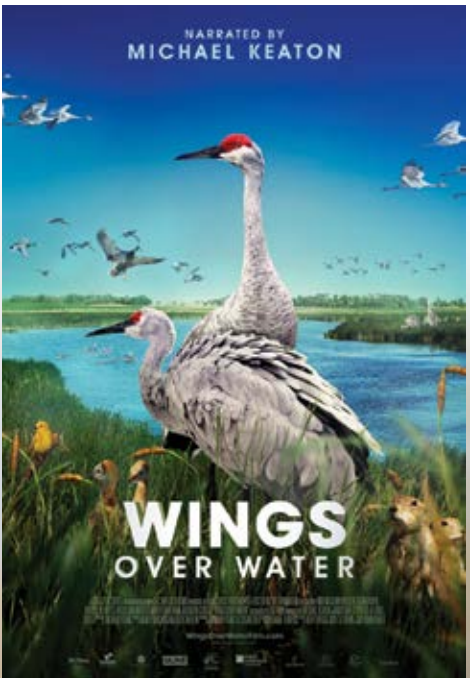
WINGS OVER WATER TAKES TO THE SKY AND SCREEN

Narrated by award-winning actor Michael Keaton, and featuring breathtaking 3D images and cinematography, the documentary film *Wings Over Water*, produced with support from Ducks Unlimited, follows the migratory journeys of three bird species as they make remarkable and harrowing flights to North America's prairie wetlands to raise their young.

The 45-minute film was filmed throughout North America's Prairie Pothole Region, a unique natural habitat stretching across a huge swath of connected rivers, lakes and wetlands in three Canadian provinces and five U.S. states. The documentary of great relevance and rare beauty reminds us of the urgent and permanent need to conserve our most precious species and habitats.

In November 2023, the documentary saw its Montreal premiere with special guests, including The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and Antoine Tardif, mayor of Victoriaville, Que., and first vice-president of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités.

From Earth Day (April 22) to May 31, 2024, *Wings Over Water* screened at 75 theatres across Canada, piquing the interest of nature lovers and science enthusiasts of all ages. Proceeds from ticket sales went to support conservation efforts across the country.



The future was here

In June 2023, we invited 10 of our friends, including Water Grandmother, the federal minister of the environment, CEOs and DUC research chairs and leaders, to share their thoughts and visions on 10 facets of conservation in Canada.

Turning our sights on 2038 and Ducks Unlimited Canada's centennial year, we asked them to help us look back, share perspectives, and envision the future of conservation in Canada. They expressed hope for a greener economy, spoke to how nature-based solutions help farmers, and expressed the belief that "only when we understand something can we truly value it", a sentiment that couldn't be truer than when referring to biodiversity conservation.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

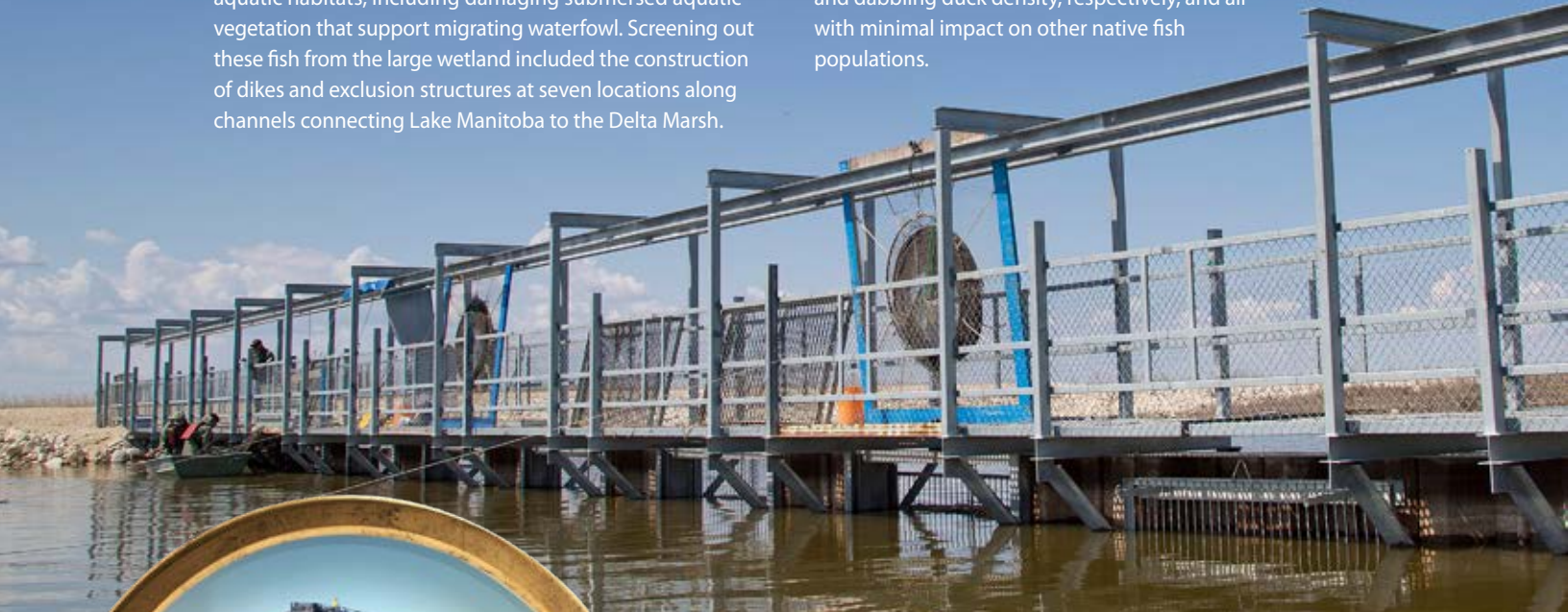
CARP DIEM: SOLVING A CHALLENGE BY CONSTRUCTING A SOLUTION

Screening out an invasive fish to help restore a large freshwater coastal wetland ecosystem was a challenge Ducks Unlimited Canada took on in 2012. At that time, in collaboration with many partners, DUC researchers launched a long-term, massive project to curb access of large common carp to Delta Marsh, Manitoba, with the goal of restoring the wetland to its historical conditions and its ability to host large numbers of migrating waterfowl each fall.

These common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) have destructive feeding and spawning behaviors that can negatively impact aquatic habitats, including damaging submersed aquatic vegetation that support migrating waterfowl. Screening out these fish from the large wetland included the construction of dikes and exclusion structures at seven locations along channels connecting Lake Manitoba to the Delta Marsh.

At over 44,000 acres (or ~18,000 hectares), the size of Delta Marsh made this carp exclusion project the largest of its kind in North America.

In the years that followed, studies found that deploying screens in the spring and removing them mid-summer (when the carp's spawning season is over), helped return Delta Marsh to its healthy aquatic habitat state thanks to improved water clarity and a doubling the amount of submersed aquatic vegetation. As a result, Delta Marsh welcomed a 339 per cent and nearly 400 per cent increase in diving and dabbling duck density, respectively, and all with minimal impact on other native fish populations.



Understanding the nature of businesses

DUC's [Conservation PRO](#) initiative is how Canadian businesses and municipalities put more than 86 years of habitat expertise to work for them. By offering practical, science-based, environmentally sustainable landscape solutions that address water quality and land management challenges in urban, developed, and remote locations across Canada, Conservation PRO helps companies invest in nature-based solutions that support sustainable conservation.

Visit our website to learn more about how you, your community or business can focus on the future by incorporating natural habitats into working landscapes, rehabilitating project sites, providing regulatory offsets, and meeting environmental regulations.

AGRICULTURE

Our agriculture team works year round to understand the paths landowners, producers and ranchers want to take with their properties, crops and livestock. We listen to their needs and goals, and help them find the right solutions.

LEADERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

In November 2023, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) [proudly announced a new partnership](#) with Farm Credit Canada's Sustainability Incentive Program. The joint venture offers an additional incentive for producers in DUC's Marginal Areas Program to recognize and reward them for their commitment to agricultural sustainability.

This incentive program complements DUC's Marginal Areas Program on the Prairies — an initiative that targets unproductive areas due to poor drainage, soil conditions, periodic flooding, inaccessibility, or salinity.

Producers who participating in the Marginal Areas Program in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are incentivized to convert unproductive cropland into a more biodiverse state by planting perennial forage.



Using ART to support producers in Saskatchewan

DUC's team in Saskatchewan developed a new tool to provide ranchers with a bird's eye view of their land using satellite imagery. The [Agriculture Resource Tool](#), or ART, has an industry reputation as a valuable land management tool. Maps are tailored to the needs of each participating rancher and can range from basic to a more detailed product with fence lines, water for livestock and gates indicated. These handy references are being used to plan rotational grazing, communicate with cooperators and land managers, and plot out future developments.





SCIENCE

Ducks Unlimited Canada's focus on the future includes using credible, results-oriented research to help guide, evaluate and adapt our decisions to apply the right conservation programs to the right places.

CONSERVATION'S LONG GAME

Focusing on the biodiversity crisis and taking the steps to help reverse biodiversity decline will take big-picture science that can guide habitat conservation. The level of biodiversity loss in wetlands and related habitats is happening on a large enough scale that addressing it can seem hopeless. Fortunately, Canada is at the heart of finding solutions and DUC is at the table with information and tools based on our 86 year-long journey of learning, conservation and restoration work experience in wetlands, grasslands and forests across the country.

Several studies are underway at DUC's Institute for Wetland & Waterfowl Research (IWWR) that promise greater understanding of how biodiversity responds to wetland restoration. Research scientists James Paterson and Matt Dyson are conducting a multi-year biodiversity study in Prairie Canada. The field project began at 60 wetlands — 45 restored wetlands and 15 natural wetlands — with camera traps and microphones installed to track the wildlife action all spring and summer.

Paterson is also part of the team developing the Prairie Biodiversity Mapping and Assessment Tool, a support system to identify where conservation investments will make the largest impact. The tool identifies biodiversity hotspots and predicts how habitat change affects biodiversity. Supported by RBC Tech for Nature and funding through a continental partnership known as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the team has been finalizing the Prairie project while preparing for the next phase in Eastern Canada. [Read more about this and other projects on our website.](#)



SYMPOSIUM SHOWCASES CANADIAN SCIENTISTS' SOARING SCIENCE

Eleven scientists and conservationists from Ducks Unlimited Canada, including four from DUC's Institute for Wetland & Waterfowl Research (IWWR), [participated in the 9th North American Duck Symposium](#) (DUCKS9) in Portland, Oregon, in February 2024. The theme of the event was *Embracing New Frontiers in Waterfowl Ecology and Management*.

The conference was an opportunity for DUC to present new and published research to academics, government and non-governmental biologists, consultants and professionals from around the world. From IWWR, attendees learned about projects such as *Linear Feature Effects on Settling and Productivity of Ducks in the Western Boreal Forest* and *Ducks and Submersed Aquatic Vegetation Respond Positively After Invasive Carp Exclusion*.

DUC staff also supported international collaborations, including presentations with colleagues from the United States' Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and scientific research posters. Staff also explored presentations from a selection of international waterfowl experts and established connections for future cross-collaboration.

International knowledge-sharing opportunities like DUCKS9 allow DUC to integrate global innovations and best practices in wetland management and conservation into local planning and operations, while also demonstrating and contributing DUC's expertise on the world stage. Learnings from events like DUCKS9 and IWWR's ongoing research are continually advancing wetland conservation across the organization and beyond.



DUC RESEARCH SCIENTIST MATT DYSON (ABOVE) LED TWO PRESENTATIONS AT THE 2024 SYMPOSIUM: "LINEAR FEATURE EFFECTS ON SETTLING AND PRODUCTIVITY OF DUCKS IN THE WESTERN BOREAL FOREST" AND "WATERFOWL SURVEY DESIGN AND SPECIES-HABITAT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RING OF FIRE REGION OF ONTARIO."

IWWR celebrates 800th scientific publication

Since 1991, DUC's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research (IWWR) has deftly navigated shifts in ecological questions, methodologies and paradigms in response to the changing world around us. This past year saw IWWR celebrate an accomplishment three decades in the making when it reached (and surpassed!) the remarkable milestone of its 800th scientific publication. This exciting achievement was the result of IWWR's longstanding and ongoing commitment to scholarship and strategic foresight in environmental sciences.



EDUCATION

As the leader in wetland and biodiversity education, we have always been focused on offering learning opportunities and experiences for budding conservationists of ages, whether online or at their neighbourhood wetland.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA IN THE CLASSROOM

From leading-edge distance learning opportunities to field trips, marsh walks and critter dipping, Ducks Unlimited Canada's (DUC) education team offers teachers and students [several interactive and hands-on activities](#) to learn everything there is to know about wetlands and the wildlife that live in them. During our 2024 fiscal year (ending March 31, 2024), DUC welcomed 19,750 students of all ages and classrooms to these virtual education opportunities.



Wetland Centres of Excellence

Campus Clubs

Imagine a place where like-minded university and college students connect to take a hands-on approach to learning from experts and taking action for the environment.

[DUC Campus Clubs](#) unite students who share a passion for nature, conservation and community. Each club is powered by student initiative — shaping programs, projects and events that address the unique needs of their region. In exchange, DUC offers funding, support and guidance to nurture conservation action, meaningful engagement and collaboration within their communities.

Youth Advisory Council

DUC's [Youth Advisory Council](#) is a group of young Canadians passionate about wetland and biodiversity conservation. The Council provides DUC with unique perspectives on conservation issues they care about, and a vision of the future of conservation organizations. The Council also provides recommendations regarding issues and initiatives based on the key theme of the current Youth Advisory Council term.

Wetlands are a critical nature-based solution to climate change and the key to ensuring a healthier future for our youth. We believe that engaging with students and youth is the best way to change the world. That's why DUC established its award-winning education programs offered through our [Wetland Centres of Excellence](#) — to encourage young minds to explore and protect our favourite biodiversity hotspots: wetlands.

Last year, more than 7,300 students were involved in activities such as tree planting, water quality testing, nest box building and more. Through the program, students learn what it means to be active, environmentally responsible citizens.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

ACRES
CONSERVED

1,188

INCLUDES 1,188
RESTORED ACRES

APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024

COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

294

VOLUNTEERS WHO RAISE
FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR
WETLAND CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION
PARTNERS

1,092

LANDOWNERS WHO
PROTECT VITAL HABITAT
ON THEIR PROPERTY

SIX MILE SLOUGH: A WETLAND RESTORATION SUCCESS

The Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA), 17,300 acres (7,000 hectares) of rich wetland habitat, lies nestled between the Selkirk and Purcell mountain ranges near Creston, B.C. This vital ecological zone encompasses nearly 20 per cent of the Kootenay River floodplain, serving as a top B.C. breeding ground for waterfowl. Mallards, wood ducks and gadwalls are among the duck species breeding here, alongside significant populations of Canada geese. Thousands of pairs of ducks breed on the complex in any given year, and many more stop here during migration.

In 2023, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), in partnership with the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Authority, restored **Six Mile Slough**, a crucial landscape in the CVWMA. Six Mile Slough, which includes 3,114 acres (1,260 hectares) of wetlands, is a designated Ramsar Site and Important Bird Area, as well as an Important Amphibian and Reptile Area.

To address challenges associated with aging infrastructure, DUC removed six water control structures and breached internal dikes to create larger wetland compartments which are more efficient to operate. New water control structures for supply from the Kootenay River were installed to improve and give the oppor-

tunity to supplement the marshes during dry periods, ensuring the slough can continue to support a diverse array of wildlife.

The agreement between DUC and Creston Valley Wildlife Management Authority underscores our commitment to wetland conservation, with the Management Authority providing support through funding from the Columbia Basin Trust and essential permits, ensuring that all ecological and cultural considerations were met.

The CVWMA is a biodiversity hotspot, home to a myriad of species like the northern leopard frog (classified as Endangered under Canada's Species At Risk Act) and the Forster's tern, a priority species in Environment and Climate Change Canada's Northern Rockies Bird Conservation Region. The CVWMA is also a critical stopover for thousands of migratory birds, second only to the south coast in terms of migration use, with aerial surveys recording up to 50,000 water birds in a single day.

By reestablishing water flow and improving habitat conditions, this project helps ensure the continued survival of many species and maintains the ecological integrity of this internationally recognized wetland.

ALBERTA

ACRES
CONSERVED

27,463

INCLUDES 7,408
RESTORED ACRES

APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024

COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

594

VOLUNTEERS WHO RAISE
FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR
WETLAND CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION
PARTNERS

5,121

LANDOWNERS WHO
PROTECT VITAL HABITAT
ON THEIR PROPERTY

MAINTAINING THE MAGIC OF WILD SPACES AND WIDE-OPEN SPACES

We work with agricultural landowners by implementing conservation easements to help protect the natural values of their land. A conservation easement is a tool in provincial or territorial legislation that allows a landowner to dedicate some or all of their property to conservation. DUC provides payment to landowners to use this tool to advance the conservation of wetlands and associated habitats on private lands.

The **George & Reimer conservation easement** is located in the Kenilworth Priority Landscape, and features a standard no-break-no-drain easement to perpetually secure and protect 91 acres (37 hectares) of intact wetlands and native parkland habitat.

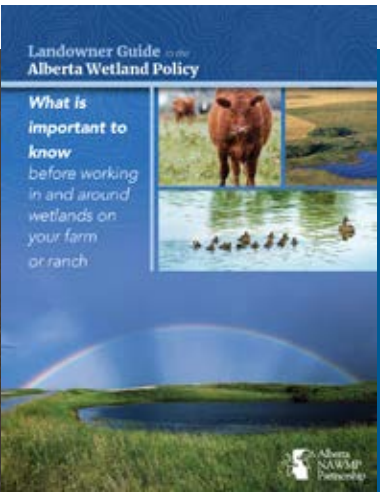
Located 13 kilometres southeast of Kitscoty in a landscape of abundant and diverse wetlands – reflected in an estimated breeding waterfowl

density of 51-60 duck pairs per square mile – the George & Reimer conservation easement is situated in a landscape experiencing rapidly expanding cereal and oilseed cropping operations.

The **Russell Baird conservation easement** is located in the Sullivan Lake Priority Landscape. Through a conservation easement on the property, DUC will perpetually secure and protect 462 acres (187 hectares) of wetland and upland habitat. The project will also include the installation of three ditch plugs that will restore three wetland basins.

The Russell Baird conservation easement is eight kilometres southwest of Endiang, in an area that is particularly productive for northern pintail, as reflected in an estimated density of 10-12 breeding pairs per square mile.

The securement of these habitats by DUC will help eliminate the risk of habitat loss and further landscape fragmentation.



Landowner Guide to the Alberta Wetland Policy

In 2022, DUC and the Alberta-North American Waterfowl Management Plan (AB-NAWMP) united to establish the first-ever *Landowner Guide to the Alberta Wetland Policy*. This guide has helped farmers and ranchers with wetlands on their properties, as well as those who work with them, understand their rights and responsibilities when operating in and around wetlands. The guide also identifies various resources and programs that can benefit their respective work.

Over the past year, the guide has seen a significant uptake, which has resulted in the development of a *Municipal Wetland Guide*, to be released in 2025. DUC and AB-NAWMP are putting together this new resource to help guide municipalities and their partners.

SASKATCHEWAN

ACRES
CONSERVED

97,866

INCLUDES 23,010
RESTORED ACRES

APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024

COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

532

VOLUNTEERS WHO RAISE
FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR
WETLAND CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION
PARTNERS

7,246

LANDOWNERS WHO
PROTECT VITAL HABITAT
ON THEIR PROPERTY

LEADING-EDGE RESEARCH AT TOUCHWOOD HILLS CONSERVATION RANCH

The future of collaboration and innovation looks bright at DUC's **Touchwood Hills Conservation Ranch** (THCR) where, for almost a decade, it has been the site of applied research of equal impact and relevance to both ranching and conservation communities.

THCR is a 6,500-acre (2,630-hectare) working ranch located among the rolling, pothole-rich landscape of Saskatchewan's Touchwood Hills, roughly 90 minutes northeast of Regina. The region is well-suited to a range of activities and land uses, including cattle ranching, and home to diverse waterfowl and wildlife.

The vision originally laid out for THCR was to serve as a site of discovery, allowing cross-sector partners to research agricultural practices and identify mutually beneficial solutions for farming and conservation. Initiatives currently underway demonstrate the application and promise of leading-edge technologies in livestock ranching; these include virtual fencing, forage seeding

and vegetation control using unmanned aerial vehicles, and alternative pasture management approaches like adaptive multi-paddock grazing to optimize forage productivity, carbon storage and biodiversity measures.

THCR's success to date stems largely from applying the on-the-ground knowledge and involvement of area ranching families, as well as invaluable partnerships with the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association, Living Lab Central Prairies, Birds Canada, Canadian universities, and others.

Roughly one decade later, this working ranch that brings producers, academics, non-government organizations, and the agri-food sector together illustrates that diverse partnerships can provide answers, today, that promise to sustain farming and wildlife communities in the future.



MANITOBA

ACRES
CONSERVED

23,872

INCLUDES 12,123
RESTORED ACRES

APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024

COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

460

VOLUNTEERS WHO RAISE
FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR
WETLAND CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION
PARTNERS

2,803

LANDOWNERS WHO
PROTECT VITAL HABITAT
ON THEIR PROPERTY

RESTORING AND RETAINING HISTORIC WETLANDS

Many of Canada's diverse landscapes, as well as the countless wildlife species connected to them, face the increasing frequency and challenges of drought. DUC and our partners are up to the challenge of finding ways to build back the resilience these lands once had, ensuring they not only survive but thrive for generations to come.

In February 2024, DUC staff completed a three-month rebuild of the Proven Lake wetland project. Proven Lake represents over 4,800 acres (1,942 hectares) of wetland habitat, mainly located within a Wildlife Management Area south of Manitoba's Riding Mountain National Park. DUC has been involved with Proven Lake since 1947, and our recent work included replacing and improving upon water control infrastructure at two locations, including the main control structure which now features a fish passage to increase spawning potential.



Ducks Unlimited Canada Day in Manitoba

Ducks Unlimited Canada was tickled green when we learned the Manitoba legislature commemorated DUC by making March 17 the province's annual "**Ducks Unlimited Canada Day**" every year henceforth. 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."

ONTARIO

ACRES
CONSERVED

7,391

INCLUDES 1,160
RESTORED ACRES

APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024

COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

492

VOLUNTEERS WHO RAISE
FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR
WETLAND CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION
PARTNERS

4,014

LANDOWNERS WHO
PROTECT VITAL HABITAT
ON THEIR PROPERTY

USING NATURE TO ADDRESS INVASIVE SPECIES

Wetlands are vulnerable to non-native wildlife species, or “invasive species.” Introduced to a new environment, invasive species spread unabated due to the lack of natural controls, such as insects or animals that might consume them for food.

One such invasive plant, *Phragmites*, thrives in Ontario. Unlike the native species of this reed, the invasive form develops into dense thickets that crowd out native plant and animal life. The dense stands block views, fill in access points for swimming and boating, and disrupt water flow in shallow channels and ditches. Waterfronts, beaches and connecting waterways are degraded, diminishing their value for wildlife and people.

As *Phragmites* spreads too rapidly for traditional methods like physical removal and herbicides to keep pace, an integrated management approach is essential.

Development of a biocontrol for invasive *Phragmites* is a collective effort that began over 20 years ago with the search for a candidate biological control agent in Europe, the home of invasive *Phragmites*. Ducks Unlimited Canada is proud to be working with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the University of Toronto and international partner Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International in Switzerland on a research and development partnership to implement biological control as an additional tool in an integrated management strategy against invasive *Phragmites*, helping protect Canada’s natural spaces and infrastructure from the most disruptive invasive plant in our modern history.

This partnership produced a promising new tool to help address invasive *Phragmites*: two small but mighty stem-boring moths – *Archanara neurica* and *Lenisa geminipuncta* – were selected due to their ability to target the invasive species of the *Phragmites*, while remaining safe to other native plants. The results have been encouraging as we look to the future of facing this invasive plant.



QUEBEC

ACRES
CONSERVED

4,826

INCLUDES 574
RESTORED ACRES

APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024

CONSERVATION
PARTNERS

358

LANDOWNERS WHO
PROTECT VITAL HABITAT
ON THEIR PROPERTY

NEW FISH PASS FOR RIVIÈRE AUX PINS’ MIGRATING FISH

In Boucherville, Ducks Unlimited Canada is taking on a major challenge: upgrading the fish pass at the Rivière aux Pins dam to enable fish to reach their wetland spawning ground..

This \$1.1-million project is being undertaken thanks to a number of financial partners, including the Ministère de l’Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec, the Fondation de la faune du Québec, the Ville de Boucherville, TC Energy and DUC’s American financial partners Fall Flights, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Rivière aux Pins spawning ground is one of the most important in the St. Lawrence River floodplain between Montreal and Lake Saint-Pierre. The warm-water fish that inhabit the river, such as yellow perch and northern pike, swim upstream of the dam each spring to lay their eggs in a flooded meadow.

The structure is comprised of 24 weirs forming a continuous staircase that fish can use to negotiate the height difference between themselves and the spawning ground upstream.



ATLANTIC CANADA

	NEW BRUNSWICK	NOVA SCOTIA	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR
ACRES CONSERVED	2,244	1,340	252	53
INCLUDES ACRES RESTORED (APR 1, 2023 – MAR 31, 2024)	1,069	230	7	
COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS	190	149	52	271
VOLUNTEERS WHO RAISE FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION				
CONSERVATION PARTNERS	654	666	582	26
LANDOWNERS WHO PROTECT VITAL HABITAT ON THEIR PROPERTY				

NOVA SCOTIA

WHERE DO ALL THE EIDERS GO?

It was a big year for common eider research with Ducks Unlimited Canada’s (DUC) Sea Duck Joint Venture partners. Together we captured and tagged common eiders on Nova Scotia’s Eastern Shore Islands to help track changes in their migratory patterns, from Massachusetts to Labrador, as the ocean warms. In 2023 DUC supported a videographer, to gather footage and help us share the story of this cross-border collaborative project.



NEW BRUNSWICK

A commitment to sustainability and accessibility

The Ducks Unlimited Conservation Centre in Fredericton, N.B., has been a hub for nature-based education since 1996, and now it’s an accessible one. In 2023 we made a \$335,000 investment – with the support of Infrastructure Canada and NB Power – installing an elevator and ramps at the building’s front and back entrances. As part of DUC’s commitment to sustainability, we also installed a geothermal furnace to reduce the Centre’s carbon footprint.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

SMALL MARSHES HAVE BIG IMPACTS

Our small marsh program continues to have a big impact on the landscape in P.E.I., where we completed segments of Rustaret Marsh, named after a heritage livestock farm in Shamrock. Here, landowners were looking to create and restore wetlands on the property to both enhance biodiversity and create watering ponds to feed through solar-powered pumps into different pastures. Rustaret Farm is now home to six DUC small marsh projects and is a great example of how this program can improve both wildlife habitat and agricultural productivity.



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

St. John’s partnership helps community and North America’s smallest dabbler

In 2023, DUC acquired a 12-acre (4.8-hectare) wetland in St. John’s, thanks to a land donation by Brian Noseworthy and funding support from the Natural Heritage Conservation Plan. The marsh, located just off Empire Avenue, is a community gem in part of the city under residential development pressure, connected to the popular Mundy Pond recreation area, and used by green-winged teal, the smallest dabbling duck in North America.



BOREAL REGION

Canada’s boreal region and wetlands help mitigate climate change and provide crucial nesting and brooding habitat for millions of waterfowl each year. Eighty-five per cent of the nation’s wetlands are in the boreal and up to 40 per cent of North America’s waterfowl breed there.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TAKES NEXT STEP FOR INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION IN ONE OF THE LARGEST AND LAST INTACT WATERSHEDS IN NORTH AMERICA

In January 2024, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) staff celebrated alongside the signatories and supporters of a memorandum of understanding to formally work together on a feasibility assessment to establish an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area in the Seal River Watershed. They included The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, The Honourable Tracy Schmidt, The Honourable Jamie Moses, Stephanie Thorassie, Chief Jason Bussidor, Chief Simon Denecheze, Chief Michael Sewap, Chief Shirley Ducharme and Premier Wab Kinew. DUC’s boreal operations team has been partnering with the Watershed Alliance for several years, serving as advisors to

the Executive, chairing the Government and Industry Relations Committee, and contributing geospatial, science and other products towards the shared goal of establishing an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) within the watershed. At 12.355 million acres (5 million hectares), it is one of the largest remaining ecologically intact watersheds in the world and would be the largest IPCA in Canada, thanks to Manitoba’s vision and effort. The signing of this MOU is a significant milestone towards that goal, and DUC is a proud partner of this huge conservation step forward.

Influencing 21 million acres

In early 2024, the Manitoba government doubled-down on its boreal conservation efforts by applying the 2020 Boreal Wetlands Conservation Codes of Practice (Codes) to upland areas near its province’s boreal wetlands. The expansion of the Codes resulted in the conservation of an additional 21.2 million acres (8.6 million hectares) of wetland supporting habitat in Manitoba’s boreal region. This builds on the 33 million acres (13.4 million hectares) of wetland waterfowl habitat already conserved through the government’s application of the Codes in 2020 to all industrial development within and near Manitoba’s boreal wetlands. Ducks Unlimited Canada has had significant influence on the development and implementation of the Codes, and we will continue to collaborate with the Government of Manitoba in the establishment of provincially significant peatland areas, which, when designated by the government, provides for the permanent protection of those habitats.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & LEADERSHIP

Our leadership team hails from across North America. Joined by thousands of invaluable volunteers, donors and partners, Ducks Unlimited Canada’s (DUC) journey continues to be a rewarding trek, walked and climbed by hundreds of staff and by members of our Board of Directors. We are guided by an elected board, made up of professionals and philanthropists dedicated to sharing their broad range of expertise to our organization and working with our passionate and talented CEO and DUC staff to fulfil our mission and plan for the future of wetland conservation. [Meet the members of DUC’s Board of Directors and leadership team:](#)

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Looking back on our 2023-2024 fiscal year, I hope you are as inspired as I am. Quite simply, we’ve had an unprecedented year — in more ways than one.

From a financial perspective, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has almost doubled our revenue streams over the past four years, with 2024 being our strongest year ever. In fact, our revenue grew an impressive 8 per cent over last year’s highwater mark, exceeding our expectations and allowing us to do more for Canadian conservation than ever before. We also benefited from strong markets and were able to direct \$20 million of investment income to reserves for future conservation efforts. Financially, I feel confident in saying that we ended the fiscal year in a position of strength.

From a community engagement perspective, I’m pleased to say the number of community supporters for DUC has also grown. Thanks to strong support from our members and volunteers, we are particularly proud of the fact we were able to exceed our fundraising target. We recognize that we owe much of our success to the trust our funders have placed in us. I believe we’ve earned their trust with over 90 per cent of our revenues directed to conservation activities, earning us an “A” rating from Charity Intelligence — again.

I’m also proud of our investment in people and the conservation leaders of tomorrow. We are a major training ground for future environmental biologists and environmental scientists in Canada, training more than 50 students last year.

Never in DUC’s history have we conserved and influenced more acres and deployed more people working toward critical conservation efforts. Perhaps the biggest testament to our efforts is the results from our most recent duck population survey — for the first time since 2015, waterfowl populations are increasing!

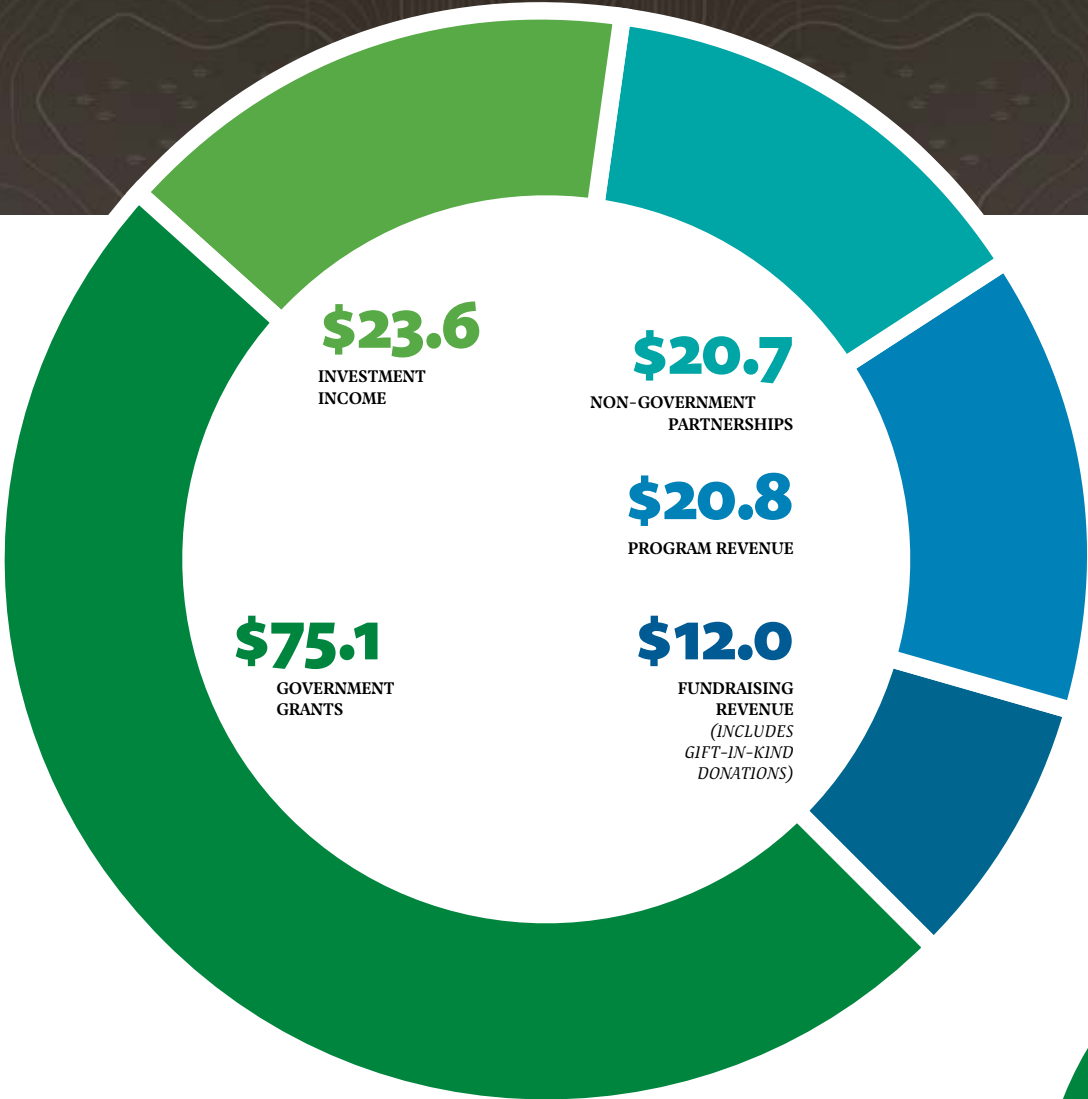
Above all else, I want our supporters and funders to know their investments in DUC are making a real difference in the environment around us; you have truly allowed us to provide better outcomes than ever before in wetland conservation, biodiversity and sustainability.

We know our work is critical and has positive impacts to all Canadians. As incoming CFO, and a key steward of DUC’s financial resources, I am committed to maintaining a culture of strong financial management while also focusing on building resilience into our organization and enabling our teams to grow our conservation efforts. While we have made big strides, there is much work left to do, and we remain committed to improving conservation outcomes across Canada and North America.

We can best sum up the year by saying that we’re flying fast and our flock is growing. Thank you to our funders for being the wind beneath our wings!



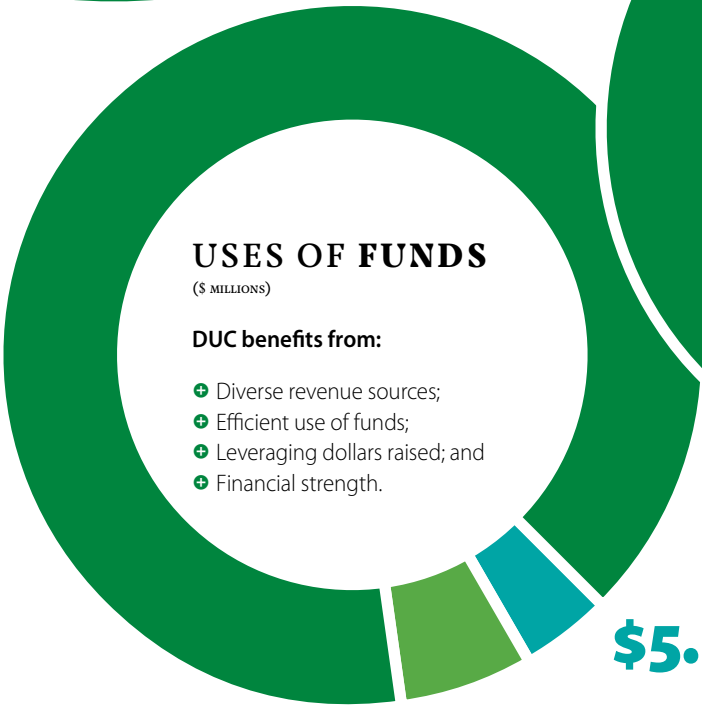
SALLY GUARINO
– CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



SOURCES OF REVENUE (\$ MILLIONS)

Ducks Unlimited Canada generates revenue from five primary sources:

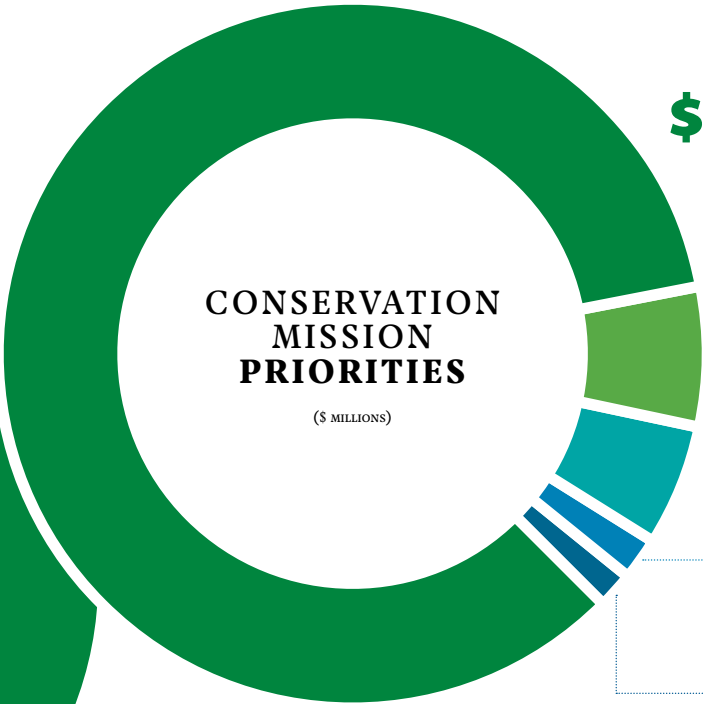
- + Grants from a variety of government sources including federal (both Canada and U.S.), provincial, state and municipal, and from other non-government organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Inc. in the U.S.
- + Fundraising income, which includes philanthropic giving and grassroots fundraising.
- + Funding from non-government partnerships, including foundations.
- + Program and other revenue, including fee-for-service revenue and ancillary revenues from the management of owned conservation lands.
- + Investment income from short and long-term investments.



USES OF FUNDS (\$ MILLIONS)

DUC benefits from:

- + Diverse revenue sources;
- + Efficient use of funds;
- + Leveraging dollars raised; and
- + Financial strength.



CONSERVATION MISSION PRIORITIES (\$ MILLIONS)

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA CONDENSED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS) | AS AT MARCH 31, 2024

Assets	2024	2023
Current assets		
Cash	\$21,141	\$20,582
Short-term investments	\$15,035	\$9,493
Other current assets	\$33,729	\$31,470
	\$69,905	\$61,545
Investments	\$174,796	\$171,271
Land held for resale	\$14,376	\$15,960
Property, plant and equipment, net	\$12,545	\$7,515
Conservation lands	\$222,519	\$206,947
	\$494,141	\$463,238
Liabilities and net assets		
Accounts payable and current portion of borrowings	\$25,340	\$28,253
Current portion of deferred contributions and unearned revenue	\$22,777	\$23,612
Accrued pension and other post-employment benefits	\$11,766	\$19,103
Non-current deferred contributions and unearned revenue	\$5,923	\$5,517
	\$65,896	\$76,485
Net assets to support conservation activities:		
Internally restricted	\$184,870	\$161,785
Invested in land held for resale, property, plant and equipment and conservation lands	\$231,115	\$212,718
Unrestricted	\$12,260	\$12,250
	\$428,245	\$386,753
	\$494,141	\$463,238

These condensed financial statements do not contain all of the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the Company's financial position, results of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows, reference should be made to the complete financial statements of Ducks Unlimited Canada as at and for the years ended March 31, 2024 and March 31, 2023, on which PwC expressed an opinion without reservation in their report dated June 27, 2024. Visit ducks.ca/annualreport.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA CONDENSED STATEMENTS OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

(IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS) | FOR THE YEARS ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

Revenue	2024	2023
Fundraising revenue	\$12,031	\$24,982
Non-government partnerships	\$20,679	\$24,402
Grant revenue	\$75,056	\$70,592
Program and other	\$20,783	\$19,416
Investment income	\$23,646	\$1,775
	\$152,215	\$141,167

Expenses	2024	2023
Conservation program	\$105,200	\$117,904
Fundraising	\$5,567	\$5,320
Administration	\$8,478	\$7,398
	\$119,245	\$130,622
Surplus (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year	\$32,970	\$10,545
Transfers from unrestricted net assets	(\$32,960)	(\$10,535)
Change in unrestricted net assets	\$10	\$10
Opening balance unrestricted net assets	\$12,250	\$12,240
Closing balance unrestricted net assets	\$12,260	\$12,250

WE STRIVE FOR ETHICAL AND TRANSPARENT STEWARDSHIP OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS. [VISIT OUR ANNUAL REPORT ONLINE FOR MORE INFORMATION.](#)



HONOUR ROLL

We are extremely grateful for the support of our conservation community and the many ways they are powering our efforts to deliver collaborative, innovative solutions that benefit both people and nature. Our Honour Roll highlights some special groups of donors, including President’s Council and Feather Society members – generous conservation leaders who are leaving a lasting legacy.

PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL

We are honoured to have a committed group of individuals and family foundations who contribute \$10,000 or more annually to Ducks Unlimited Canada who are known as President’s Council members. The following donors are being recognized for their support in the 2023 or 2024 calendar years.

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Ray Maher and Wendy Benyk
Brian Lea

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Bryan and Tiffany Wiesner
Rita M. Willits



FEATHER SOCIETY

The Feather Society recognizes donors who declare their intention to include Ducks Unlimited Canada in their estate plans. We thank all those who also wish to remain anonymous.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Estate of Malcolm Stark

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Dwight Brainerd
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Estate of James Richardson Fish
Estate of Walter Fryers
Estate of William Harrington
Estate of Walter Jenkins
Estate of Elizabeth Maud Johnson
Estate of Gladys Blanche Lembicz

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Estate of Ronald Lyle Sears
Estate of Herbert Stauffer
Estate of Barbara Dale Smith
Estate of Shirley Ann Walkey

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