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HabitatMatters

2026 Canadian NAWMP Report



"Evening Reflections – Northern Shoveler"
from the 2026 Canadian Wildlife
Habitat Conservation Stamp series.

Artist: Joseph Koensgen

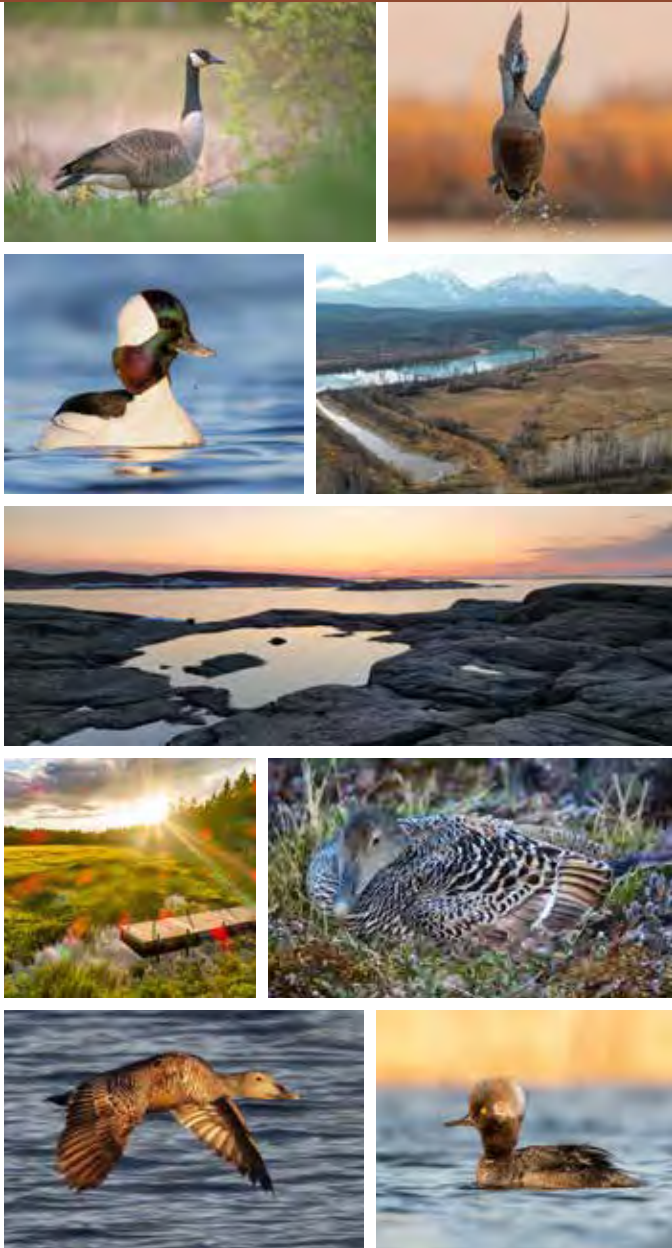


North American Waterfowl
Management Plan

Plan nord-américain de
gestion de la sauvagine

Plan de Manejo de Aves
Acuáticas Norteamérica

Table of Contents



1 About the NAWMP

2 National Overview

2 Accomplishments

3 Expenditures and Contributions

4 Local to Continental: 40 Years of Connecting for Conservation

7 Habitat Joint Ventures

8 Prairie Habitat Joint Venture

13 Eastern Habitat Joint Venture

19 Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture

24 Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture

29 Species Joint Ventures

30 Black Duck Joint Venture

32 Sea Duck Joint Venture

34 Arctic Goose Joint Venture

36 Partners

We acknowledge that the lands on which the North American Waterfowl Management Plan is implemented in Canada are the traditional, treaty and unceded territories of First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation. It is with respect and gratitude that we acknowledge these peoples, their stewardship and their deep connections to where we live, work and gather.



About the NAWMP

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) is an international partnership to restore, conserve and protect waterfowl populations and associated habitats through management decisions based on strong biological foundations. The ultimate goal is to achieve abundant and resilient waterfowl populations and sustainable landscapes. The NAWMP engages the community of users and supporters committed to conserving and valuing waterfowl and wetlands.

In 1986, the Canadian and U.S. governments signed this partnership agreement, laying the foundation for international co-operation in the recovery of declining waterfowl populations. Mexico became a signatory to the NAWMP with its update in 1994. As a result, the NAWMP partnership extends across North America, working at international, national and regional levels on a variety of waterfowl, habitat management and people issues.

Since the NAWMP's creation, its partners have worked to conserve and restore wetlands, associated uplands and other key habitats for waterfowl across Canada, the United States and Mexico. The partners have had wide-ranging influence: shaping land-use and public policies, integrating science and monitoring systems into planning, and delivering habitat programs. The results of these efforts are notable. Many waterfowl populations have increased substantially since 1986, and NAWMP partners continue to collaborate with other bird conservation initiatives.

Common eiders.

Jaden Barney

In Canada, NAWMP partner activities are directed by public-private Joint Venture partnerships, which focus on areas or species of concern identified in the NAWMP. Each Joint Venture includes a range of partners, from federal, provincial/territorial and local governments to conservation organizations. Strategic and Implementation Plans, developed based on the NAWMP's goals as well as on pressures specific to the Joint Ventures, form the basis of each Joint Venture's programs and individual projects.

Terminology used in this report

Securement

The protection of wetland and/or upland habitat through land title transfer or legally binding agreements (minimum 10 years) with a landowner.

Influence

Direct actions taken by landowners, land managers or conservation agencies that protect or enhance wetland or associated upland habitats without legal or binding agreements. These direct actions result in land-use changes.

Enhancement

Actions carried out on wetland and/or upland habitats to increase their carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

Management

Activities conducted on secured wetland and/or upland habitats to maintain their carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.



Canada geese.

Jean-Maxime Pelletier

Accomplishments (1986–2026)

24.3 million

acres of habitat secured
(9.8 million hectares)

.....
Involves the protection of habitat through land title transfer or legally binding agreements (minimum 10 years) with landowners.

254.1 million

acres of habitat influenced
(102.8 million hectares)

.....
Involves direct actions that protect or enhance habitat without legal or binding agreements. These actions result in land-use change.

4.3 million

acres of habitat enhanced
(1.8 million hectares)

.....
Involves actions that increase habitat carrying capacity for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Accomplishments (2025–2026)

59.9 thousand

acres of habitat secured
(24.2 thousand hectares)

6.4 million

acres of habitat influenced
(2.6 million hectares)

256.2 thousand

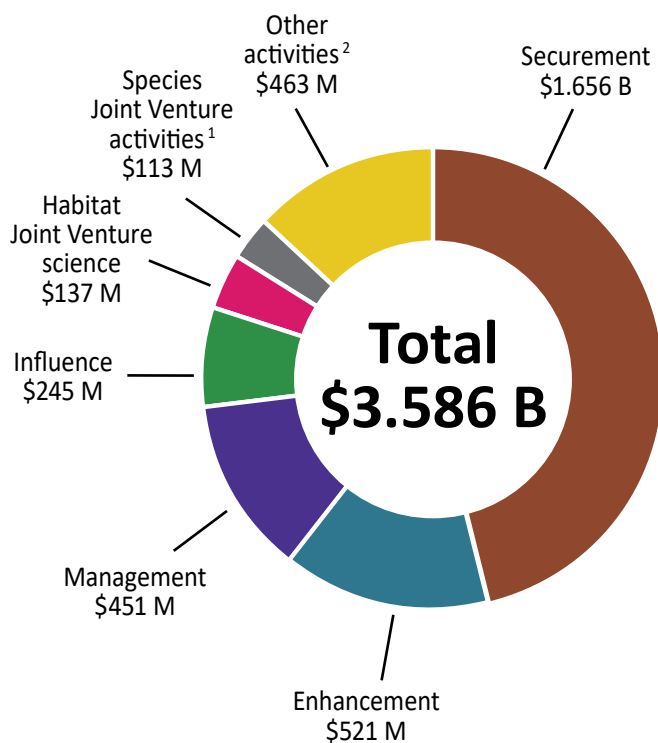
acres of habitat enhanced
(103.7 thousand hectares)

Note: Managed acres are no longer reported in *Habitat Matters* to avoid redundant data, as all managed acres occur on secured land.

1986–2026 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2026, time frame. 2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

Expenditures

By activity, 1986–2026 (CAD)



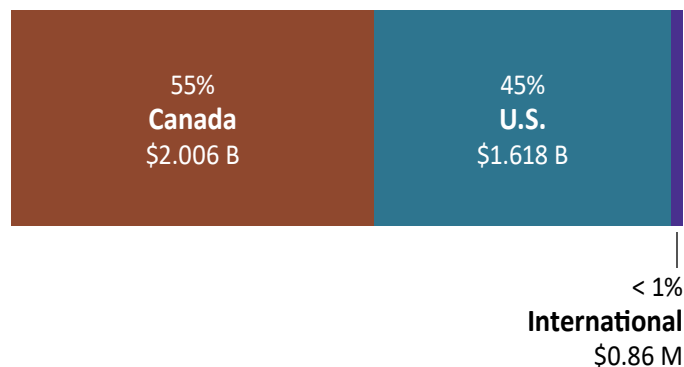
- 1 Banding, survey, research, observation and management.
- 2 Coordination, communication, policy, crop damage and compensatory mitigation.

The successful implementation of Canada's NAWMP program has been, and continues to be, enabled by the support of partners in both Canada and the United States, including federal, provincial/territorial and state governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals. In particular, funding received under the United States' *North American Wetlands Conservation Act*—alongside matching funds—remains integral to the success and longevity of the Canadian program.

Contributions

Funding by all partners to the NAWMP in Canada, 1986–2026 (CAD)

Composition of total contributions (Total \$3.624 B)



Composition of Canadian contributions (Total \$2.006 B)



Composition of U.S. contributions (Total \$1.618 B)



1986–2026 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2026, time frame.



Local to Continental: 40 Years of Connecting for Conservation

Trumpeter swans.

Jaden Barney

Over the past 40 years, these partnerships have expanded and evolved, strengthening conservation efforts across regions and helping to sustain waterfowl populations.

For four decades, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) has demonstrated that effective conservation depends on connection—linking habitats across vast landscapes and bringing diverse partners together around a shared vision. The NAWMP’s 40th anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on how locally driven conservation and habitat restoration efforts, supported by coordinated action, have contributed to significant conservation outcomes across North America.

From its inception in 1986, the NAWMP recognized that waterfowl conservation could not succeed through isolated projects or individual organizations alone. Success would depend on connecting local actions to continental goals through collaborative, landscape-scale approaches. Over the past 40 years, these partnerships have expanded and evolved, strengthening conservation efforts across regions and helping to sustain waterfowl populations.

The NAWMP has also recognized that effective waterfowl conservation depends on the protection and restoration of wetland ecosystems. These landscapes provide critical habitat for a wide range of species, including fish, amphibians, insects, mammals and countless plant communities. They also generate important ecological, social and economic benefits, including improved water quality, flood regulation, carbon storage, and cultural and recreational values. Given the interconnected nature of wetlands and migratory bird populations across North America, achieving meaningful conservation outcomes requires sustained co-operation among partners at local, regional, national and international levels. The NAWMP’s success shows that local restoration or stewardship efforts contribute to big-picture conservation outcomes.

At the heart of this success is collaboration. For 40 years, the NAWMP has brought together Indigenous Peoples, governments, conservation organizations, researchers, communities, hunters and landowners to work toward shared conservation goals. These partnerships support the sharing of knowledge systems, including Indigenous Knowledge, and help ensure that conservation actions are informed by those most closely connected to the land. Today that collaborative approach is more important than ever, and the NAWMP continues to welcome new partners. Habitat loss, climate change and decline in global biodiversity are placing increasing pressure on ecosystems. By working across jurisdictions and disciplines, NAWMP partners are well positioned to respond to changing environmental conditions while conserving the ecosystems that support both wildlife and people.

This year's *Habitat Matters* highlights projects across the country where partnerships are in action:

- In the Kootenay region of British Columbia, The Nature Trust of British Columbia joined forces with the Youth Climate Corps (YCC) East Kootenay group to plant native trees and shrubs at the Big Ranch Conservation Complex on the Elk River and the Cherry Creek Conservation Area on the Kootenay River. The YCC gives young people under age 30 a chance to contribute to long-term environmental and social well-being in communities across British Columbia.
- On the prairies, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Manitoba Habitat Conservancy work with agricultural producers, communities, Indigenous Peoples, industry, government and other conservation organizations, using conservation agreements, stewardship investment and forage-based conservation to protect endangered grasslands and wetlands.
- In eastern Canada and the northeastern United States, staff and volunteers from 12 state agencies and the Canadian Wildlife Service spanning five provinces deployed tracking devices on 1,000 American black duck hens to increase knowledge of black ducks on a continental scale.

The past 40 years show that conservation is most effective when it connects people, places and knowledge across scales. By continuing to build on this foundation, the NAWMP supports not only waterfowl but also the broader web of life that depends on healthy wetlands, ensuring lasting benefits for biodiversity and for future generations.

A long-term partnership

One of the NAWMP's long-term partners is Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC). Since 1985, WHC has provided over CA\$66 million for more than 1,740 habitat conservation, conservation networking and research projects across Canada. Money for these grants comes from the sale of the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp (the Stamp). Each year, WHC invites Canadian wildlife artists to participate in a national wildlife art competition. A panel selects one artwork featuring a waterfowl or migratory gamebird in its habitat as the Stamp image. Hunters buy the Stamp to validate their migratory gamebird hunting permit. Collectors and other conservationists also purchase the Stamp and associated lithographic prints to support WHC. In the 2026–2027 grant year, WHC will continue its contribution by supporting partners in seeing another 30 conservation projects completed across Canada. WHC will support Canadian Habitat Joint Ventures as they strive to achieve NAWMP goals and objectives.

To learn more about Wildlife Habitat Canada, the Stamp or WHC grant programs, please visit www.whc.org. This program is offered with the financial support of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Red-necked grebes.

Jaden Barney





Blue-winged teal.

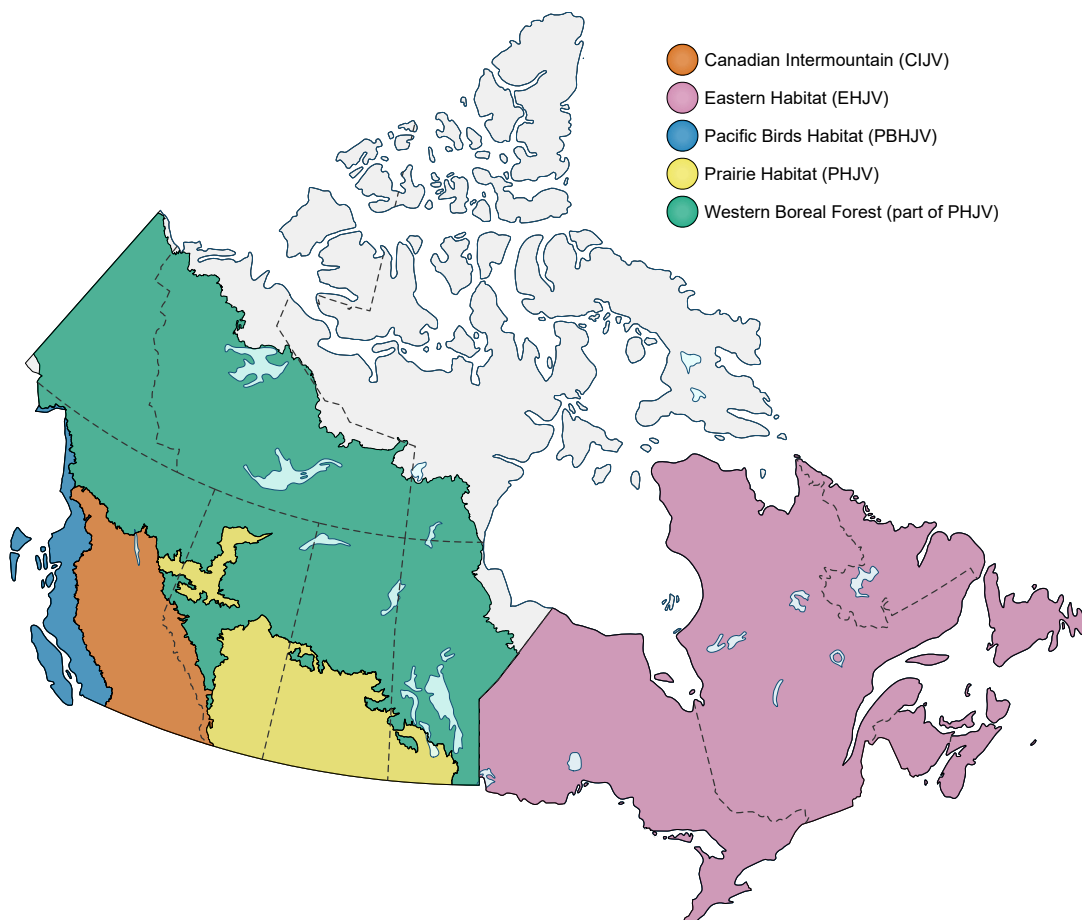
Jaden Barney

Habitat Joint Ventures

Eider breeding island in Kinngait, Nunavut.

Grant Gilchrist

The Canadian Habitat Joint Ventures integrate planning, science, governance, partnerships and management to achieve the NAWMP goals in Canada through a programmatic approach. A science-based Implementation Plan is created to address local, regional and continental goals. Joint Venture partners actively research, monitor and evaluate waterfowl populations and deliver habitat conservation programs at a regional level.



Prairie Habitat Joint Venture

A rainbow in the wilderness.
Rémi Torrenta, Birds Canada



phjv.ca

For thousands of years, the grasslands have provided sustenance for both wildlife and humans.

The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) delivery area covers two distinct biomes in Western Canada—the Prairie Parklands and the Western Boreal Forest (WBF)—and supports approximately 50% of North American breeding waterfowl. One of the continent’s first priority landscapes under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the PHJV Prairie Parklands encompasses 158.4 million acres (64.1 million hectares) of prairie and aspen parklands in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Peace Parkland Region of British Columbia. The WBF, which covers parts of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon and Northwest Territories, has been acknowledged under the NAWMP as second only to the Prairie Pothole Region for numbers of breeding waterfowl. The PHJV contains a range of wetland types, from small potholes to marshes and bog systems.

Together, the Prairie Parklands and WBF regions of Canada provide habitat for most North American duck species. They also provide habitat for hundreds of priority species identified in the Bird Conservation Region plans. The Prairie Parklands and WBF Implementation Plans highlight linkages between habitats and species.

Prairie grasslands, and the wetlands they contain, support numerous waterfowl species, including cinnamon teal, blue-winged teal, northern pintail and redhead. These areas provide critical habitat for breeding and nesting, and also serve as important stopover points for migratory birds. Prairie wetlands filter water, mitigate the effects of flooding and drought by storing and releasing water, and sequester carbon, helping to protect against the effects of a changing climate.

For thousands of years, the grasslands have provided sustenance for both wildlife and humans. These relationships have ongoing ecological, cultural and economic significance. Protecting the mixed-grass prairie, one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world, is therefore crucial—and has ripple effects for wildlife across North America.

Much of Canada's remaining grassland landscape is owned or managed by livestock producers. Grazing is a key component of maintaining the health of these grasslands as it creates a mosaic of habitats for a variety of plants and animals. Across the prairies, PHJV partners like Manitoba Habitat Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada work with landowners to fulfill NAWMP objectives.

A conservation agreement helps support a Manitoba family's farming dream

The town of Virden, in Manitoba's southwest corner, is in a transition area from mixed-grass prairie in the west to moist tall-grass prairie in the east. It is also home to the highest density of species listed under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in Manitoba, including the endangered burrowing owl, red-headed woodpecker and chestnut-collared longspur; the threatened ferruginous hawk, least bittern, loggerhead shrike and Sprague's pipit; and the Baird's sparrow, common nighthawk, short-eared owl and yellow rail, all of special concern under SARA. These species are threatened by ongoing loss and deterioration of native habitats. Many are at the eastern and/or northern boundaries of their habitat ranges, so shifts in weather and climate can also represent a significant threat.

In 2024, landowners Kirk and Jerri-Lynn Thompson signed a conservation agreement with Manitoba Habitat Conservancy (MHC) to protect 918 acres (371.5 hectares) of farmland near Virden, Manitoba. Spread across six quarter sections, the land includes wetlands, woodlands and mixed-grass prairie. All of these habitats provide valuable ecosystem services, including filtering water and protecting the soil, which in turn support sustainable farming.

Kirk Thompson noted that it can be challenging for young families to purchase land, especially when competing against investor groups. He credits MHC's support for helping make their farming dreams possible while also allowing them to conserve the land. The conservation agreement allows for carefully managed livestock grazing to sustain ecological integrity indefinitely. "It just made sense for Jerri-Lynn and me," Thompson said. "We are on the same page with the Conservancy. Maintaining healthy grasslands with managed grazing improves cattle performance and it is great for wildlife. It's a win-win."

MHC Director of Conservation Carol Graham agreed: "These grasslands are in a targeted landscape in southwestern Manitoba, identified as a biodiversity hotspot. Ten wildlife and bird species at risk have been identified in the proximity of the Thompson property. The key to maintaining healthy grasslands for wildlife is managed grazing in partnership with local cattle producers like the Thompsons."



Kirk and Jerri-Lynn Thompson
with their two daughters.

Manitoba Habitat Conservancy

The conservation agreement allows for carefully managed livestock grazing to sustain ecological integrity indefinitely.

Across the Prairies, the Nature Conservancy of Canada has partnered with agricultural producers through its Stewardship Investment Program to deliver nearly 1,000 projects.

Conserving habitat in Manitoba for 40 years

The NAWMP, the PHJV and MHC are all celebrating 40 years of conservation in 2026. MHC has been a dedicated partner of the PHJV and has supported NAWMP delivery on key objectives by developing and implementing programs that strengthen waterfowl populations and conserve the habitats needed to sustain them. MHC works closely with landowners to make meaningful conservation impacts on private land across the province—more than 231,500 acres (93,685 hectares) since 1986, including wetlands, grasslands and other important natural landscapes.

Much of this work is done through conservation agreements: registered easements on the land title that remain in place if ownership of the land changes. MHC was the first organization in Manitoba to complete a conservation agreement and is the largest holder of conservation agreements in the province.

Grasslands stewardship on the prairies

Across the prairies, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has partnered with agricultural producers through its Stewardship Investment Program. The program has delivered nearly 1,000 projects, benefiting ranching operations on more than 800,000 acres (323,750 hectares) of prairie grasslands.

NCC develops stewardship objectives and practices that consider the conservation of waterfowl, grassland birds and their habitats as key priorities. Working with landowners, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, industry, government, conservation organizations, ranchers and grazing groups as grassland stewards supports the People objective of the NAWMP, connecting communities and the benefits of conservation for both biodiversity and agricultural productivity.

Marsh Ranch.

Nature Conservancy of Canada



In addition to project stewardship, NCC helps landowners with the grant-writing process and provides technical and logistical expertise to complete the application. According to Jeremy Hogan, NCC's Director of Prairie Grassland Conservation, "We really are just here to start the conversation and talk about what would be effective stewardship of these grasslands."

Past projects have included remote water systems, range health assessments, species surveys, weed control and workshops aimed at improving grassland stewardship. Some of these projects involve conservation agreements for ranches in the Porcupine Hills

region of southern Alberta; community pastures, such as the Val Marie Pasture in Saskatchewan, which includes over 50 ranchers and 100,000 acres (40,470 hectares); and various community pastures in Manitoba, which are managed by the Association of Manitoba Community Pastures and span over 300,000 acres (121,405 hectares)

of land. “It’s a win-win opportunity for producers and conservation organizations,” Hogan said. “We need to protect [prairie grasslands], and that’s going to take everybody.”

Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative

NCC’s Stewardship Investment Program is supported by the Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative, which aims to celebrate, steward and protect the unique and threatened ecosystem values of prairie grasslands. The Weston Family Foundation generously made a significant multi-year commitment to support both this program and a carbon sequestration project. NCC and partners have invested \$8 million on projects with ranchers, community pastures and grazing co-operatives. These investments help protect prairie grasslands while supporting agricultural livelihoods and rural economies, demonstrating how conservation and working landscapes can thrive together.

From Prairie CARE to today’s forage program

As the NAWMP celebrates 40 years of conservation, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) reflects on its own history as a long-term NAWMP delivery partner, helping achieve continental goals through local action. In the PHJV, key successes have included the use of forage-based systems and the development of partnerships with agricultural producers.

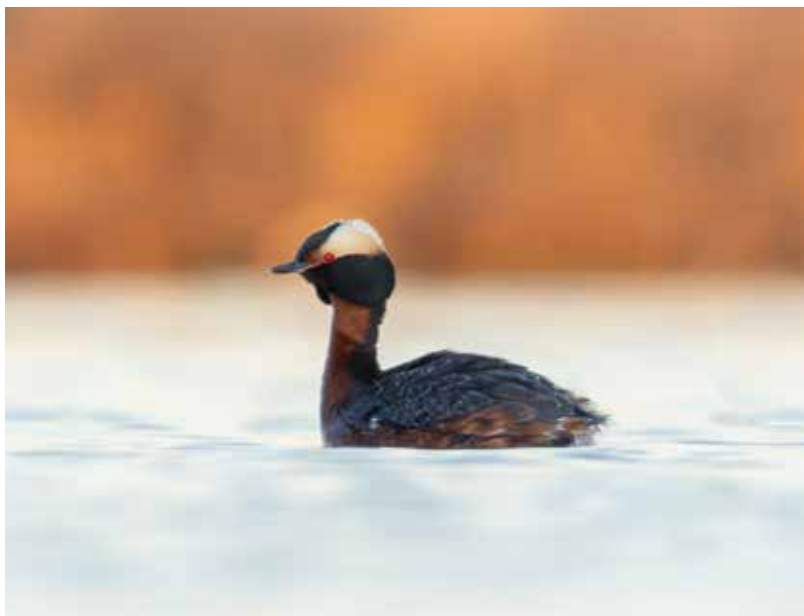
DUC has long recognized the prairie provinces as major breeding grounds for North America’s waterfowl population. In the 1990s, DUC initiated Prairie CARE (Conservation of Agriculture, Resources and Environment) in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service, provincial governments and producers.

The focus of CARE was to establish, restore and protect nesting cover in areas with strong potential to support waterfowl, generally areas with a relatively high number of wetlands. Cultivated acres were converted to perennial cover through purchase and lease agreements with landowners. Agricultural use, primarily haying, was allowed when consistent with management objectives. Other initiatives included implementing grazing systems and winter cereal and forage production programs, as well as delivering agricultural extension programs for landowners.

Prairie CARE was a significant step in developing DUC’s partnership and delivery framework. It helped define the “working landscape” model, in which lands used for activities such as farming, ranching and forestry are managed for ecological benefit. The program also helped operationalize the NAWMP’s integrated approach to conservation by demonstrating how waterfowl population objectives could be achieved through habitat conservation on productive agricultural lands. By restoring and maintaining perennial cover in priority breeding landscapes, the program contributed

DUC has long recognized the prairie provinces as major breeding grounds for North America’s waterfowl population.

Horned grebe.
Jaden Barney



to improved nesting success and helped support continental waterfowl population goals.

Equally important, Prairie CARE strengthened the People component of the NAWMP by building enduring relationships with agricultural producers, governments and conservation partners. The collaborative, voluntary stewardship model developed through the program established the foundation for many of the partnerships and delivery approaches that continue to support habitat, waterfowl and communities across the PHJV today. Prairie CARE helped influence the management of thousands of acres of prairie farmland and increased available nesting cover for waterfowl including mallards, blue-winged teal and gadwall.

DUC's current forage program emphasizes the benefits of perennial forage for habitat, soil, water and agricultural production. The program is characterized by large-scale, producer-led conservation on working lands, with a focus on marginal cropland where forage is both economically and ecologically viable. In the last five years alone, more than 170,000 acres (68,800 hectares) have been converted to forage through DUC farm programs. Ecological benefits include increased habitat and biodiversity; improved soil health; reduced erosion, runoff and nutrient loss; and enhanced wetland–grassland function. Agricultural benefits include improved forage productivity and grazing flexibility, viable use of marginal lands and increased resilience to climate extremes. Social benefits include meaningful engagement with producers, increased adoption of forage best management practices and increased capacity for extension activities.

Cattle grazing at sunset.

Dani O'Brien



Conservation success on a continental scale depends on sustained, locally grounded, multi-level partnerships, reflecting the NAWMP's model. Producers and landowners are the central actors in today's forage program, with voluntary adoption at its core. Through the program's history, thousands of producers have been engaged, as well as numerous producer organizations. Supply chain partners also have an important role in supporting sustainable sourcing and landscape outcomes, with involvement from companies such as Cargill, McDonald's, Nutrien and Loblaw Companies Ltd. Governments, non-profits and Indigenous communities are important partners in collaborative stewardship, land management and NAWMP alignment. Conservation-focused partnerships have expanded to engage the entire value chain, linking local land decisions to continental outcomes.

For more information, please contact Mara Erickson, Prairie Habitat Joint Venture Coordinator, mara.erickson@ec.gc.ca.

Prairie Parklands Contributions (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)
Total	\$51,607,921	\$1,848,676,751

Accomplishments (acres)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)
Secured	46,220	8,831,386
Influenced	95,063	7,798,130
Enhanced	243,316	3,177,825

Secured and enhanced acres are not additive.

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

1986–2026 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

Western Boreal Forest Contributions (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)
Total	\$1,873,586	\$201,557,719

Accomplishments (acres)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)
Secured	–	12,091,184
Influenced	6,101,432	161,061,540
Enhanced	–	107

Secured and enhanced acres are not additive.

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

1986–2026 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

Eastern Habitat Joint Venture

Hughes Brook in Newfoundland and Labrador.

H.S. Lindner



ehjv.ca
ehjv.ca/fr

Each site tells a story,
building public awareness
about wetlands.

The Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) covers 780 million acres (316 million hectares) spanning the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The EHJV supports 30% of Canada's wetlands, including more than 120 million acres (49 million hectares) of freshwater and tidal wetlands. Important habitats include coastal bays and salt marshes, lakeshore marshes, floodplain wetlands and boreal forest wetlands. The EHJV has six priority waterfowl species—American black duck, mallard, wood duck, common goldeneye, Barrow's goldeneye and common eider (subspecies *dresseri*)—as well as 16 non-waterfowl priority bird species, including water birds, shorebirds and landbirds. The habitat within the EHJV supports 95% of the continental population of American black duck and 80% of the common eider *dresseri* subspecies.

Treasured Wetlands in Atlantic Canada

Broadening support for wetland and waterfowl conservation is one of the three fundamental goals under the NAWMP. But catching the public's attention is not always easy.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) manages more than 52,000 acres (21,000 hectares) of wetlands across Atlantic Canada. These wetlands are always working hard in the background, buffering high tides, protecting against storms that cause erosion and, of course, providing habitat for migrating and breeding waterfowl. People may not know about these valuable services, and few have visited these special spots, but a newly expanded DUC program aims to change this.

DUC's Treasured Wetlands program (www.ducks.ca/treasured-wetlands), established in 2018, highlights the unique wetlands of two Atlantic provinces, with nine Treasured Wetlands in New Brunswick and 21 in Nova Scotia. Each site tells a story, building public awareness about wetlands through on-site engagement, videos, drone footage, photography and personal testimonials. Public awareness, in turn, leads to support for conservation efforts and informs wetland policy.



New Brunswick

Wetlands across New Brunswick reflect the province's incredible geography and ecology, from coastal salt marshes to boreal aquatic beds. Three recently added Treasured Wetlands are:

Belle-Baie (Beresford) Salt Marsh

Along the Baie des Chaleurs in northern New Brunswick is Belle-Baie Salt Marsh. From its promenade and interpretive trail, visitors see waterfowl, such as Canada goose, wood duck, American black duck and green-winged teal, as well as songbirds and the rare Maritime ringlet butterfly, which is found in only a handful of salt marshes in New Brunswick and Quebec. Its rarity highlights the importance of these unique ecosystems for wildlife beyond waterfowl.

Top left: Belle-Baie (Beresford) Salt Marsh in New Brunswick.

Top right: Étang Boucher in New Brunswick.

Bottom: Miramichi Nature Park Marsh in New Brunswick.

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Étang Boucher

Just four minutes from the Maine border, Étang Boucher (Boucher Pond), hidden among the trees in an Edmundston neighbourhood, is a compact but rich hub of biodiversity. Visitors can spot mallard, ring-necked duck and hooded merganser. It is also an excellent example of how wetlands help in urban settings by absorbing rainfall, filtering the water and protecting nearby homes from flooding, then releasing water during dry spells. Étang Boucher is an aquatic bed, a less common type of wetland, in which plants grow on or below the water surface for most of the growing season.

Miramichi Nature Park Marsh

In Miramichi in northeastern New Brunswick, a wetland born from highway construction has grown into a community treasure, filtering runoff and protecting nearby subdivisions. Nest boxes installed and maintained by Nature Miramichi, the local naturalists' club, help support cavity-nesting birds. Species such as blue-winged teal, northern shoveler, gadwall, American wigeon and tree swallow return each spring, turning the marsh into a spectacular celebration of life and a haven for ornithologists.



Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia's wetlands blend natural richness with cultural and historical layers. Three recently added Treasured Wetlands are:

Pu'tlaqne'katik floodplain

Near Kejimikujik National Park in western Nova Scotia, the Pu'tlaqne'katik floodplain is lined with ancient-looking red maples. Each spring and fall the river floods. Its nutrient-rich waters nourish meadow soils and provide habitat for rare species such as barn swallow, monarch butterfly, Blanding's turtle and eastern ribbon snake.

St. Andrew's Marsh

At St. Andrew's Marsh, tucked inside Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, restored cattail marshlands shimmer bright green in spring and gold in fall. Restored in the 1980s by DUC and the Government of Nova Scotia, the site now anchors education and interpretation at the park's Wetland Centre. The marsh is home to wood duck, northern pintail, green-winged teal, bald eagle and hundreds of other species, such as spring peeper frogs, turtles and dragonflies.

Otter Ponds Demonstration Forest

Otter Ponds Demonstration Forest in central Nova Scotia is home to ponds and wetland complexes, and shows how healthy wetlands and sustainable forestry can thrive together. To foster connection with and gather data on this special landscape, DUC and demonstration forest staff have hosted birding workshops, Wetland Education Field Days and a bioblitz—a citizen science initiative to identify and record as many species as possible within a limited time frame.

Treasured partners

Treasured Wetlands partners and financial supporters include the Government of New Brunswick through the Environmental Trust Fund, the Government of Nova



Top left: Pu'tlaqne'katik floodplain in Nova Scotia.

Top right: St. Andrew's Marsh in Nova Scotia.

Bottom: Otter Ponds Demonstration Forest in Nova Scotia.

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Scotia through the Habitat Conservation Fund, the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund and Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Site partners include the Shubenacadie Canal Commission, the Municipality of East Hants, the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, the Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council, Otter Ponds Demonstration Forest, and local conservation groups, stewards and community members.

Municipal habitat conservation in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

Wetlands located near cities and towns are often most at risk of development. However, they also have an advantage that can lead to their conservation. People nearby who value wetlands as habitat for waterfowl, cherished spots for recreation and providers of ecosystem services will stand up to protect them.

The Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM) works in close partnership with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to identify important wildlife habitat within municipal planning boundaries. Municipalities then sign Habitat Conservation Agreements with the provincial government, publicly committing to the conservation of these habitats.

In 2025, continuing decades of work to conserve wetland habitats, SAM and the Province signed new agreements with Hughes Brook and Carbonear, and an expanded agreement with the Town of Bauline, adding new areas to an existing agreement signed in 2015. Collectively, the agreements conserve an additional 3,027 acres (1,225 hectares) of wetland and upland habitat. Hughes Brook and Carbonear now join Bauline and communities across the province in SAM, where municipal councillors and involved citizens share best practices to conserve their wetlands and encourage their residents to get involved in habitat conservation. These local actions contribute to the joint commitment to sustain the continental waterfowl populations that we all share.

The Stewardship Association of Municipalities works in close partnership with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to identify important wildlife habitat within municipal planning boundaries.



Hughes Brook in Newfoundland and Labrador.

H.S. Lindner

Hughes Brook is a small community just inland from the Bay of Islands, on the west coast of the Island of Newfoundland. The conservation area encompasses 175 acres (71 hectares) of ecologically important habitat within the Hughes Brook waterway and its riparian buffers, as well as nearby associated wetlands. The area is home to diverse populations of waterfowl, including American black duck, along with other birds and mammals. At-risk bird species found in the area include rusty blackbird and olive-sided flycatcher, both listed under the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Newfoundland and Labrador Endangered Species Act*.

Carbonear, on the Avalon Peninsula in eastern Newfoundland, is among the oldest European settlements in North America, with a long history tied to fishing

and shipbuilding. Three conservation areas have been established in Carbonear, totalling 2,200 acres (890 hectares). One of them encompasses much of the town's water supply area. Most of the Island Pond Brook Conservation Area falls within 20- or 100-year flood extents. It strengthens protection for this sensitive natural area and supports flood-resilient planning. Waterfowl nesting in the area include Canada goose, American black duck, green-winged teal and ring-necked duck. Other waterfowl, such as northern pintail and mallard, winter here.

Bauline, not far from the provincial capital of St. John's, has a unique coastal habitat with steep coastlines, rock cliffs and nearly 3.75 miles (6 kilometres) of shoreline. The initial 2015 habitat conservation agreement included approximately 185 acres (75 hectares) across four conservation areas. The expanded 2025 agreement adds three new conservation areas, bringing the total to 837 acres (339 hectares). One of the new conservation areas is the shoreline itself. This supports the continued preservation of the coastal region, which falls within the Coastal Newfoundland NAWMP Priority Area, and includes portions of the popular East Coast Trail for hiking. Most of the conservation areas in Bauline are freshwater wetlands, which contain ideal feeding, nesting and staging habitat for waterfowl, including ring-necked duck, American black duck and common goldeneye.

Island Pond Brook in the Town of Carbonear, Newfoundland and Labrador.
Stewardship Association of Municipalities



Church Pond in the Town of Bauline, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Jamie Seigner

Walking the wetlands in Maskinongé, Québec

People love nature, but wetlands aren't always the easiest places to explore if you're not wearing chest waders. Providing new and safe ways to access and appreciate the wetlands and waterfowl contributes to the NAWMP goal of growing the number of people who "enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation."

In June 2025, DUC Québec opened the Sentier des migrants, the Migratory Bird Trail, a 1.37-mile (2.2-kilometre) walking trail in Maskinongé, near Lac Saint-Pierre, southwest of the City of Trois-Rivières. The area is renowned for its exceptional biodiversity, and visitors to Maskinongé have spotted more than 20 species of waterfowl here, including wood duck, redhead, common goldeneye, and greater and lesser scaup. The trail, built on a dike bordering a marsh developed by DUC and local partners, was designed to both respect the environment and offer safe access for all, including families and people with reduced mobility. To enhance the experience for visitors, the path features interpretive panels to inspire discovery and contemplation.

Caroline Proulx, former Minister of Tourism and Minister Responsible for the Lanaudière Region, described the project as "a great example of how environmental education and accessibility can come together. It not only raises awareness

People love nature, but wetlands aren't always the easiest places to explore if you're not wearing chest waders.



Sentier des migrants, the Migratory Bird Trail, in Maskinongé, Québec.
Mélanie Jean

of biodiversity but also fosters an understanding among our younger generations of the importance of preserving nature.” Mélanie Deslongchamps, DUC’s Manager of Provincial Operations for Québec, said, “The inauguration of this walking trail represents much more than a simple development project. It is an opportunity for us to bring the community closer to nature and to strengthen our mission to protect wetlands. This trail is an invitation to discover and understand these vital ecosystems and to actively participate in their conservation for our collective future.”

The project was financially supported by ministère de l’Éducation du Québec, the Fondation de la faune du Québec through the Programme Hydro-Québec pour la mise en valeur des milieux naturels; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act; and numerous U.S. states through the Fall Flights program. Local partners QuébecOiseaux and the Société d’Ornithologie de Lanaudière have helped showcase the ornithological richness of the site and enhance the experience for birdwatchers.

For more information, please contact Laura King, Eastern Habitat Joint Venture Coordinator, laura.king@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)*
Total	\$28,100,536	\$948,783,377

Accomplishments (acres)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)*
Secured	12,155	2,824,297
Influenced	119,458	78,510,621
Enhanced	1,112	721,392

Secured and enhanced acres are not additive.

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

1986–2026 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

* Includes first-step projects completed from 1986 to 1988, before the formal recognition of the EHJV in 1989.

Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture

A brushwood and timber pile dam stands in the foreground of this aerial view of the intertidal foreshore of Tilbury Island in Delta, BC, the site of the Process-based Marsh Establishment Pilot Project.

*Fernando Lessa / Fernando Lessa
Photography and Storytelling*



pacificbirds.org

The Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture (PBHJV) is an international Joint Venture that includes portions of British Columbia (BC), Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California and Hawaii. The BC coastline has over 440 estuaries, which are a focus of many PBHJV programs because of their food-rich tidal wetlands and adjacent floodplains. Near urbanized areas, floodplains have often been highly modified and converted to intensive non-forage agricultural crops, resulting in the loss of considerable natural habitat and food supply for wildlife. Throughout the PBHJV, 40 species of ducks, swans and geese occur regularly at various stages of their life cycles, and an estimated 1 million waterfowl winter along the BC coast. The Fraser River Delta in southern British Columbia is the only Canadian Important Bird and Biodiversity Area designated as “in danger” by BirdLife International. This delta supports the highest density of wintering waterfowl in Canada. Key species in the BC portion of the Joint Venture include the Wrangel Island snow goose (nearly half the population), the Pacific Coast trumpeter swan (half the population), American wigeon, cackling goose and western high Arctic brant.

Pacific coast resilience

Along British Columbia’s south coast, healthy wetlands and estuaries are multi-functional. They serve as critical infrastructure, buffering communities from storm surges, flooding and sea-level rise. They also support hundreds of thousands of migratory ducks, geese and other birds each year on their journey through the Pacific Flyway.

These vital ecosystems are under constant pressure. Historic river training, which involves artificially straightening and narrowing waterways, along with ongoing dredging have cut off the natural sediment supply that once sustained marshes, leaving them increasingly vulnerable to erosion and submergence. At the same time, an average 3.9 to 5.2 million cubic yards (3 to 4 million cubic metres) of sediment are dredged from the Fraser River annually to maintain navigation channels. More



Top: Mounds of reclaimed sediment on Sturgeon Bank.

Middle: This living dike in Boundary Bay is an example of nature-based infrastructure created from reclaimed sediment.

Bottom: A brushwood dam on the coast of Tilbury Island slows water flow and traps sediment, allowing for accumulation and growth.

Jamie Gauk, Ducks Unlimited Canada

than half of that sediment is transported offshore, forever lost from the system.

These stressors are being noticed. Forward-thinking biologists and conservation specialists at Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) are working with numerous collaborators and funders to address the challenges, with several promising solutions. These regional efforts directly advance NAWMP goals by restoring the ecological integrity of the Fraser River Delta and sustaining abundant waterfowl populations through strategic, landscape-level habitat conservation.

Sturgeon Bank Sediment Enhancement Pilot Project

Sturgeon Bank, on the shores of Richmond, is one of the Fraser River Delta's most important—and most threatened—coastal ecosystems. Since the 1980s, the marshes at Sturgeon Bank have retreated dramatically, stripped of the sediment they once relied on to grow and adapt. The Sturgeon Bank Sediment Enhancement Pilot Project aims to restore tidal marsh in an innovative and sustainable way. The project takes reclaimed dredged sediment and places it strategically along the fore-shore to rebuild marsh elevation, supporting habitat for migratory birds and restoring ecological function.

By fall 2025, the pilot project had reintroduced 35,000 cubic yards (27,000 cubic metres) of sediment to the local ecosystem. Scientists have observed the emergence of new patches of microphytobenthos (benthic microalgae), photosynthetic organisms that stabilize sediment and support food webs, as a sign of the return to more positive ecological conditions.

Sustainable Ecosystem Enhancement with Dredged Sediments

The Sustainable Ecosystem Enhancement with Dredged Sediments (SEEDS) initiative, a collaboration with the University of British Columbia (UBC) Coastal Adaptation Lab, is the next chapter of the Sturgeon Bank Sediment Enhancement Pilot Project. SEEDS brings together First Nations, municipalities, regulators, conservation groups, scientists

and engineers to gather knowledge and identify opportunities for beneficial sediment reuse. This could include restoring eroding marshes, supporting living dike or hybrid infrastructure designs, and piloting nature-based flood protection. The goal is a co-developed, community-informed road map that aligns research, policy and design.

Process-based Marsh Establishment Pilot Project

Simultaneously, the Process-based Marsh Establishment Pilot Project (ProMEPP) is strengthening our understanding of how the river can heal itself, using simple, low-cost methods to promote marsh growth by working with the river, not against it. Field crews are testing nature-based solutions, such as planting native species and installing brushwood or timber pile dams, to see whether they can accelerate existing processes to collect and retain sediment, helping build up tidal flats and marshes. The project is being co-led by Daniel Stewart, a UBC PhD student.

From isolated interventions to integrated systems

Nature and human communities are interconnected, and our conservation efforts should also be interconnected. The projects described here are part of an intentional shift from isolated interventions to integrated systems, and their value is being recognized. In June 2025, the Sturgeon Bank Sediment Enhancement Pilot Project received the Environmental Managers Association of British Columbia's Remediation and Restoration Award, in recognition of its role in advancing local nature-based coastal resilience and innovative sediment reuse. Eric Balke, DUC's senior restoration biologist and the lead for these projects, was honoured with the inaugural PBHJV Conservationist Award for his leadership in coastal restoration and collaboration. Both SEEDS and ProMEPP contribute to ongoing knowledge gathering, building a collection of scalable, evidence-based approaches that support birds, communities and climate adaptation, all at the same time.

These projects have received funding from the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (Government of British Columbia and Fisheries and Oceans Canada), the Marine Environmental Observation, Prediction and Response Network (Government of Canada), the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, the Nature Force and the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.

Nature and human communities are interconnected, and our conservation efforts should also be interconnected.

Hamilton Marsh acquisition

In 2025–2026, The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC) supported the acquisition of Hamilton Marsh by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). Conservation groups had been working to secure the property for more than two decades.

The area is south of Qualicum Beach and is part of the French Creek watershed and the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region, one of 19 UNESCO-designated biosphere regions in Canada. It is also located within a regionally significant wetland area identified by the PBHJV. The marsh itself covers approximately 89 acres (36 hectares) at the north end of the property. It is surrounded by an additional 800 acres (324 hectares) of land, including mature forest within the Coastal Douglas-fir moist maritime subzone.

Hamilton Marsh is home to several wetland habitats and is a vital brood marsh for waterfowl, including mallard and wood duck. Some other bird species found here are the American bittern (on British Columbia's Blue List as special concern), the western screech owl (listed as threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*), the northern pygmy owl, the band-tailed pigeon and the great blue heron. The marsh also serves as a sanctuary for more than 30 species of dragonfly; a variety of amphibians; the common water shrew (on British Columbia's Red List as threatened or endangered); and larger mammals such as the Roosevelt elk, black bear and grey wolf. By securing this diverse, high-quality wetland habitat, the acquisition directly advances one of the NAWMP's core goals: to sustain robust waterfowl populations across the Pacific Flyway.

Hamilton Marsh.

*Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere
Region Research Institute
and Arrowsmith Media*





Hamilton Marsh and the surrounding forest.

*Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region
Research Institute and Arrowsmith Media*

According to NCC, eastern Vancouver Island is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the province.

Eastern Vancouver Island, where Hamilton Marsh is located, has been designated one of nine “eco-crisis regions” in Canada by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). According to NCC, eastern Vancouver Island is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the province. In the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region, only about 3% of the land is protected. Much of the private land is owned by resource companies. The Hamilton Wetlands and Forest Preservation Society worked for years to educate the community about the ecological values of the marsh and advocate for its full protection.

Mosaic Forest Management, the previous owner of the land, lowered its asking price for the Hamilton Marsh property in February 2026 to support efforts to protect the site. The RDN paid most of the purchase price. Other government funding came from the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada. NTBC committed *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* funding and money pledged to NTBC by the Sitka Foundation. Contributions to the purchase also came from the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region, the Nanaimo and Area Land Trust, the Hamilton Wetlands and Forest Preservation Society, and DUC’s Oceanside Chapter.

RDN Board Chair Stuart McLean described the project as “an outstanding example of what can be accomplished when government, not-for-profit organizations and the community unite for a shared vision.” He commended those involved for their work in “protecting a vital natural legacy for current and future generations.”

eBird conservation tool

A new interactive web application lets users see predicted bird distribution patterns in the PBHJV and the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CIJV) regions. There are two user-friendly dashboards: one that covers PBHJV territory in both Canada and the United States (conservationtools.shinyapps.io/birdsconservationtoolpacificbirds_vf/); the other for PBHJV-BC and CIJV (conservationdecisiontools.shinyapps.io/birdsconservationtool_jv_vf/).

The application displays maps of species occurrence and relative abundance, with predicted values derived from modelled estimates based on eBird citizen-science data. Estimates can be generated for species richness, mean relative abundance and percent of population, filtered by species priority and season.

The tool was developed to support science-based conservation decision-making within the PBHJV, with a variety of uses:

- Joint Venture partners can prioritize areas with high avian diversity for habitat protection, restoration and stewardship activities.
- Land-use planners can access information to minimize impacts on bird biodiversity.
- Conservationists can identify coastal wetland species that are a high priority for conservation action based on the *Coastal Wetlands Strategic Plan*.
- Researchers can use the spatial layers to design monitoring programs in key areas.
- The public can engage with the interactive dashboard to understand bird distribution and diversity across the PBHJV and CIJV.

This platform exemplifies an innovative approach to delivering NAWMP goals on the ground, providing partners with cutting-edge tools needed to protect vital flyway habitats.

The tool was developed by Jenny Muñoz, Science Coordinator for PBHJV–Canada and CIJV.

For more information, please contact Andrew Huang, Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture Coordinator, (604) 350-1913, andrew.huang@ec.gc.ca.

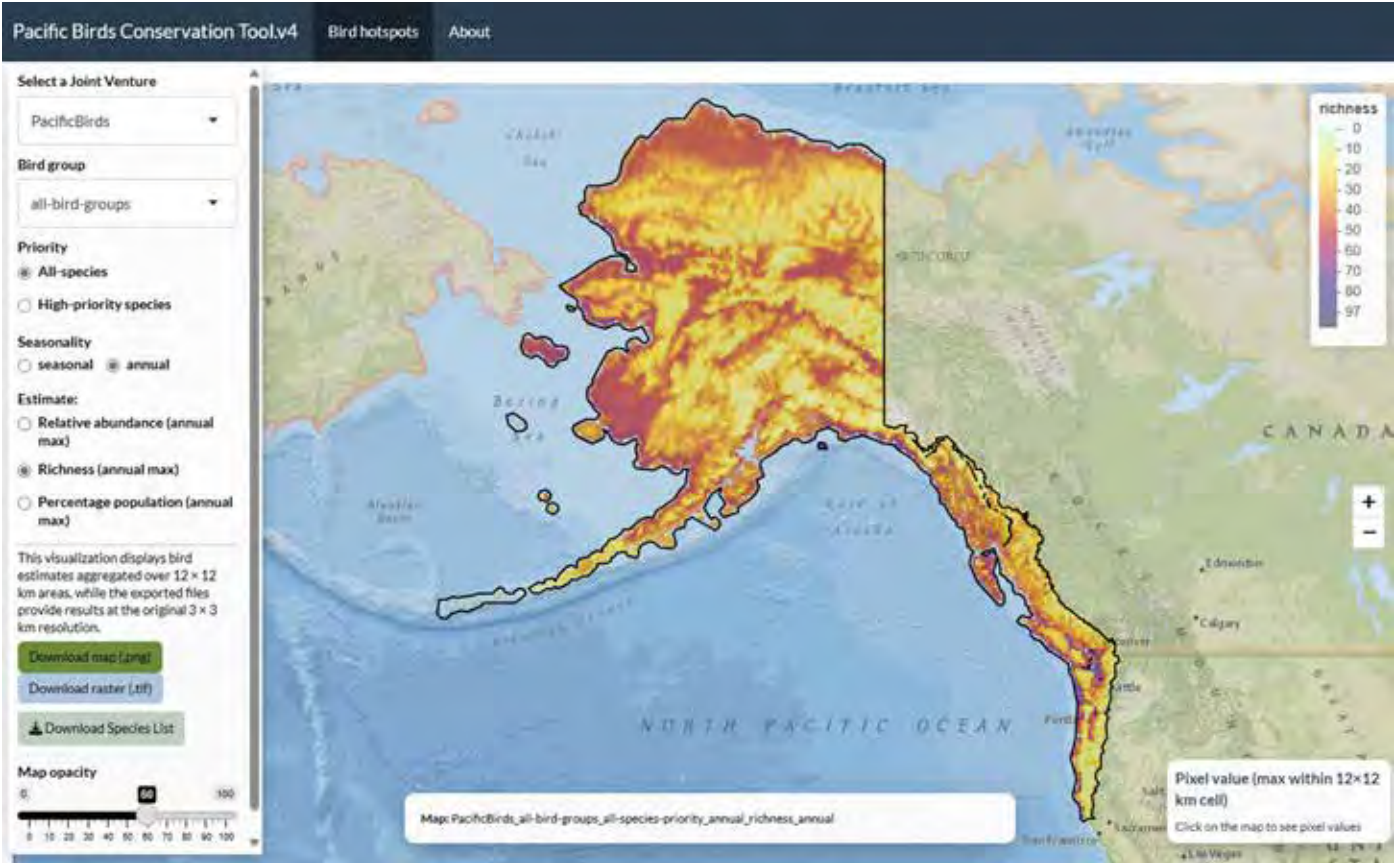
Contributions (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1991–2026)
Total	\$19,921,160	\$339,160,576

Accomplishments (acres)

	2025–2026	Total (1991–2026)
Secured	1,018	144,776
Influenced	50,196	6,698,944
Enhanced	10,936	216,790

Secured and enhanced acres are not additive.
 2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.
 1991–2026 consists of the January 1, 1991, to March 31, 2026, time frame.



Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture

Moberly Marsh floodplain.
Ducks Unlimited Canada



cijv.ca

The diversity of trees and shrubs planted will provide a range of browse and forage sources for a variety of wildlife.

With an area of 123.5 million acres (50 million hectares), the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CIJV) covers portions of British Columbia (BC) and Alberta. The CIJV encompasses a diverse landscape of grasslands, dry and moist coniferous forests, riparian areas and wetlands, alpine tundra and even a pocket desert, with 24 breeding waterfowl species. The Joint Venture's estimated 1.45 million birds represent 70% of British Columbia's and roughly 4% of Canada's breeding waterfowl population. The CIJV supports roughly one-quarter of the world's breeding population of Barrow's goldeneye, along with significant breeding populations of mallard, hooded merganser and ruddy duck.

Wetland planting at the Big Ranch Conservation Complex and Cherry Creek Conservation Area

In October 2025, staff from The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC) joined forces with the members of the Youth Climate Corps (YCC) East Kootenay group. Since 2020 the YCC program has given young people (under age 30) paid, community-based contracts where they learn to work together on projects that contribute to long-term environmental and social well-being in communities across British Columbia. YCC started through Wildsight but has grown into a province-wide program: Youth Climate Corps BC. Wildsight continues to run the YCC crews in the West and East Kootenays.

NTBC partnered with YCC East Kootenay to plant native trees and shrubs on two sites: the Big Ranch Conservation Complex and the Cherry Creek Conservation Area. The Big Ranch Conservation Complex is a 1,150-acre (465.5-hectare) area located north of Sparwood along the Elk River, within the Montane Spruce biogeoclimatic zone. The Cherry Creek Conservation Area is a 1,770-acre (716.5-hectare) area located along the Kootenay River, within the Interior Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone and the Pacific Flyway. It is part of the Bummers Flats Conservation Complex, which totals 4,930 acres (1,995 hectares), including conservation areas managed by NTBC,

Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Province of British Columbia. Both Big Ranch and Cherry Creek contain forest, grassland, wetland and riparian ecosystems and are of high importance as wildlife habitat.

Before they were protected by NTBC, both areas had long histories of agricultural use, including hay production and livestock grazing, which impacted their landscapes. To support agricultural activities, farmers had constructed small dams and smoothed the land into hayfields, among other modifications. Native vegetation was also removed.

Previous conservation work focused on site restoration and enhancement. At Big Ranch, this included removing dams and restoring an incised channel to a wet meadow, which allowed water to pass through the site more gradually. This was part of an enhancement project led by the Sparwood District Fish and Wildlife Association, in a partnership with NTBC and the Province of British Columbia. At Cherry Creek, a three-year project was undertaken to restore and enhance the wetlands, extend the hydroperiod (the duration and seasonality in which a wetland holds flowing or ponded water) and emulate the original wetland complex. Some initial planting had taken place, but there were significant areas where planting was not done or was unsuccessful.

Because of considerable wildlife use on both sites, especially by elk and other ungulates, temporary fencing was installed adjacent to restored wetland basins to restrict browse pressure on planted trees and shrubs. NTBC identified the need for revegetation in five exclosures at Big Ranch, totalling approximately 600 square yards (500 square metres), and five at Cherry Creek, totalling approximately 3,800 square yards (2,500 square metres). Within these exclosures, 205 native trees and shrubs were planted, 110 at Big Ranch and 95 at Cherry Creek. At Cherry Creek, dense invasive reed canary grass needed to be cut back before planting to give the nursery stock a chance to establish itself.

The diversity of trees and shrubs planted will provide a range of browse and forage sources for a variety of wildlife, as well as habitat and shade from the varied vertical structures of the plants. The benefits will increase as the plants establish themselves and the exclosures are removed. The NTBC field crew routinely visits both sites to monitor the plants and exclosures. They also continue to clear reed canary grass at Cherry Creek to promote access to sunlight and water resources as the planted vegetation establishes.

Cherry Creek is a popular spot for local birders and is an eBird Hotspot. In May 2026, six months after the plantings, citizen science birders reported observations of 60 different bird species, including Canada goose, trumpeter swan, northern

Big Ranch Conservation Complex
wetlands and exclosures.
The Nature Trust of British Columbia

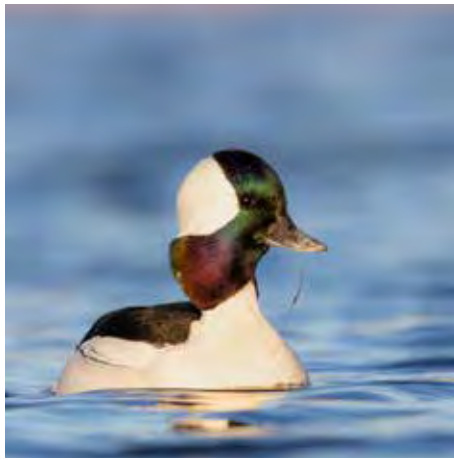


Cherry Creek Conservation Area
exclosures before planting.
The Nature Trust of British Columbia



Trumpeter swan, bufflehead and mallard have been observed at Cherry Creek, a popular spot for local birders and an eBird Hotspot.

Jaden Barney



shoveler, gadwall, bufflehead and mallard. A trail camera installed at the Big Ranch Conservation Complex has recorded a diversity of bird species, along with shots of grizzly bear, black bear, American badger, Rocky Mountain elk, white-tailed and mule deer, wolf, coyote and skunk.

NTBC is committed to conserving both of these conservation areas in perpetuity, maintaining and enhancing their ecological values. The partnership with YCC supported young people who in the YCC BC annual report reported increased community connection and confidence. By connecting the community to hands-on stewardship, this project directly advances the NAWMP's goal of engaging communities to ensure the long-term protection of vital flyway habitats.

Reconnecting floodplains at Moberly Marsh to strengthen habitat and resilience

Moberly Marsh supports a diverse mix of marsh, swamp and shallow open water habitats.

Wetlands and floodplains in British Columbia's interior provide critical habitat for migratory birds, while also supporting water storage, flood mitigation and overall watershed health. Approximately 9 miles (15 kilometres) north of Golden, BC, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and BC Parks are restoring these functions at scale at Moberly Marsh, one of the most significant wetland restoration efforts in the region. The project aims to reconnect a 667-acre (270-hectare) wetland complex within Burges James Gadsden Provincial Park and adjacent lands along the Columbia River. The project involves removing end-of-life infrastructure and strategically opening dikes to improve waterfowl habitat.

Phase 1, completed in December 2025, reconnected 141 acres (57 hectares) of floodplain habitat by constructing three dike openings along 0.93 miles (1.5 kilometres) of diked land. These openings, each 230 to 330 feet (70 to 100 metres) wide, allow Columbia River water to inundate the floodplain when the river is high, re-establishing natural flood cycles and restoring a self-sustaining marsh that is no longer reliant on engineered structures and electrical pumping. In May 2026, high river flows during spring freshet moved through the openings and filled the floodplain as planned.

The marsh is used by many bird, mammal and amphibian species. Wildlife monitoring has documented cougar, black and grizzly bear, elk, deer, songbirds, migratory and breeding waterfowl, and amphibians, including Columbia spotted frog and wood

frog. Monitoring has documented a number of at-risk bird species, including great blue heron, common nighthawk, black tern and bank swallow.

Moberly Marsh supports a diverse mix of marsh, swamp and shallow open water habitats. By restoring the natural hydrology in this floodplain, the project will improve habitat for a diversity of amphibians, marsh birds, waterfowl and songbirds. This will also enhance climate resilience by slowing and storing water during high water flows. This dual benefit is a clear example of the NAWMP's emphasis on restoring healthy wetland ecosystems to simultaneously support robust waterfowl populations and provide critical climate solutions for society.

The next phase of the project, expected to take place in fall 2026, aims to directly improve migratory waterfowl habitat for mallard, American wigeon, green-winged teal, ring-necked duck and northern pintail. This work demonstrates how large-scale floodplain restoration can deliver lasting ecological and watershed benefits.

Financial support for the project came from both sides of the border. Funding was provided by the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the BC Parks Licence Plate Program, the Province of British Columbia's Watershed Security Fund and Fall Flights, a program of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The Columbia Basin Trust is helping fund restoration of lands outside the provincial park. DUC and BC Parks also gratefully acknowledge support for the project by ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation and Shuswap Band.

Osoyoos Oxbows wetland restoration

The Osoyoos Oxbows are a serpentine network of wetlands scattered along a stretch of the South Okanagan Valley near Oliver, BC, the largest wetland and wet meadow habitat remaining in the South Okanagan. The area has been recognized as an Important Bird Area by Birds Canada and Nature Canada for the diversity of bird species that rely on its lands for breeding, nesting and hunting and as a critical migration stopover.

The Osoyoos Oxbows Conservation Area protects a portion of these important wetlands, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has been working for several years to restore 6.7 acres (2.7 hectares) of riparian habitat. Following a significant focus on replanting native vegetation, NCC has now moved into a phase of maintaining and monitoring the restoration area to support the growth of the nearly 1,200 riparian and dryland shrubs and willow stakes that were planted during active restoration years. Maintenance involves irrigating previous plantings throughout the growing season to support their success; adding protective cages, matting and vole protectors around plantings to prevent browse and other damage by rodents and ungulates; removing protections once plants are established, to ensure continued growth; and mechanically removing competitive invasive vegetation.



Top: The floodplain adjacent to the Columbia River before construction, with no dike breaches, in May 2024.

Bottom: The same vantage point in early June 2026 after the Columbia River flowed into the newly connected habitat through the breach in the dike.

Cirque Ecological

The Osoyoos Oxbows have been recognized as an Important Bird Area by Birds Canada and Nature Canada for the diversity of bird species that rely on its lands for breeding, nesting and hunting.



The Osoyoos Oxbows, the South Okanagan Wildlife Management Area and the Okanagan River
Tim Feeney, Nature Conservancy of Canada



Successful goldenrod plantings on the restored section, which outcompeted non-native vegetation.

Nature Conservancy of Canada

The Osoyoos Oxbows are home to rare and important habitat and wildlife. Restoration projects like this one create valuable space for a diversity of waterfowl, such as mallard, wood duck and hooded merganser. Several at-risk species also inhabit the property, including yellow-breasted chat, long-billed curlew, bobolink, Great Basin spadefoot toad and tiger salamander.

Restoration work over the last year was supported by funding from the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act*, which enabled NCC to continue maintenance throughout the area. In 2026, NCC will complete tarping of several hoary cress infestations to help control this species in areas where herbicide use is not appropriate. This is one of many efforts to eliminate invasive plants throughout the site. NCC will monitor and maintain the site for years to come, ensuring this critical Pacific Flyway habitat continues to advance the NAWMP's long-term conservation goals.

For more information, please contact Andrew Huang, Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture Coordinator, (604) 350-1913, andrew.huang@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (2003–2026)
Total	\$6,808,958	\$147,771,588

Accomplishments (acres)

	2025–2026	Total (2003–2026)
Secured	511	378,915
Influenced	–	50,865
Enhanced	875	209,188

Secured and enhanced acres are not additive.

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

2003–2026 consists of the January 1, 2003, to March 31, 2026, time frame.



Species Joint Ventures

Hooded merganser.
Jaden Barney

Species Joint Ventures are international in scope, spanning North America and including circumpolar countries. These Joint Ventures focus on critical science needs to inform the management of over 20 species (50+ populations) and their related habitats. Additionally, research directed through the Species Joint Ventures addresses questions for other bird species that share the habitats.



Black Duck Joint Venture

Black duck with solar-powered tracking device.

Ryan Campbell / Ryan Campbell Photos



blackduckjv.org

The Black Duck Joint Venture (BDJV) includes the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and 14 eastern U.S. states. The American black duck (*Anas rubripes*; hereafter black duck) can be found in saltwater marshes, brackish and freshwater impoundments, riverine and estuarine marshes, swamps, shallow lakes and wetlands throughout the boreal landscape. Black ducks are mostly found in the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyways.

The black duck is highly valued by hunters and is a flagship species for Atlantic marshes. Populations declined by 50% between the 1950s and 1980s, and although populations have since stabilized in the Atlantic Flyway, they have yet to recover to historic levels. Supporting research that can provide the necessary answers for black duck populations to recover and thrive is a priority of the BDJV and the NAWMP.

The causes of the decline have not been identified, but one main hypothesis is that productivity may be limiting population growth. Understanding the factors affecting reproductive success could help determine what management strategies would lead to black duck population increase. However, more than half of the black duck population breeds in the northeastern boreal forest of Canada, an area that is difficult to access. To start addressing this knowledge gap, the BDJV funded a large-scale study that uses solar-powered tracking devices to collect location data every hour and behavioural data every 10 minutes. The data are then transmitted via cell towers to computers. Without being physically in the field, researchers know where the birds go, what habitats they use and how they are behaving (e.g., resting, feeding or flying).

From 2021 to 2026, researchers oversaw the deployment of devices on 1,000 black duck hens. This was only possible through the collaborative efforts of staff and volunteers from 12 state agencies and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) spanning five provinces. These partners all worked at a local scale to contribute to black duck conservation at the continental scale.

The first step in identifying factors that affect reproductive success is knowing whether a hen has successfully bred. Ilsa Griebel, a University of Saskatchewan PhD student, developed a method that used data collected by the tracking devices to remotely classify when a hen is laying eggs, incubating or rearing a brood. To obtain evidence of these behaviours, researchers used on-the-ground and drone surveys to confirm the presence of nests and broods (described in the 2025 issue of *Habitat Matters*). The final models had classification accuracies greater than 94% and identified over 600 nests.

Thanks to additional funding from the BDJV, Érika da Rocha, a post-doctoral fellow also at University of Saskatchewan, examined the prospecting period. This is the time immediately after spring migration when a hen arrives on the breeding grounds, before she begins nesting. Approximately 66% of black duck hens showed prospecting behaviour after their migration, exploring different areas before settling at a location for the breeding season. Hens spent more time prospecting larger areas when fewer wetlands were available, suggesting that it may be more difficult to find a suitable nesting location in areas with fewer wetlands. Second-year hens, in their first breeding season, were more likely to prospect, especially when they arrived early on the breeding grounds. Second-year hens also prospected larger areas than older hens in their second or later breeding season. These differences are likely a result of younger hens having less experience, forcing them to explore more potential nesting sites than the older, more experienced birds. Finally, hens that invested more time in

prospecting were more likely to attempt to nest than those that didn't prospect, suggesting that this exploration is a vital part of their decision-making process.

In future analyses, Griebel will examine how reproductive success is affected by wetland/habitat use, behaviour and energy expenditure throughout the full annual cycle. Da Rocha will be linking this individual-level model to a black duck population-level model. Together, these results will help determine whether conditions on the wintering or breeding grounds or during migration are limiting productivity. A better understanding of how and where productivity is limited will help inform conservation and management efforts.

For more information, please contact Laura King, Black Duck Joint Venture Coordinator, laura.king@ec.gc.ca.

Expenditures (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)
Banding	\$606,382	\$10,987,510
Research	\$56,376	\$2,252,340
Surveys	\$1,007,384	\$12,367,772
Conservation planning	\$48,908	\$609,550
Communication and education	\$2,268	\$84,964
Total	\$1,721,318	\$26,302,136

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.
1986–2026 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2026, time frame.



Ilsa Griebel with a black duck.
Mathieu Tétreault



Érika da Rocha and black duck with solar-powered tracking device.
Cassidy Waldrep



Sea Duck Joint Venture

Female common eider in flight.
Grant Gilchrist



seaduckjv.org

The Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) encompasses all of Canada and the United States. It focuses on coastal waters for migrating and wintering sea ducks and on boreal forest and tundra for nesting sea ducks. North American sea ducks include 22 recognized populations among 15 species (tribe Mergini): common eider, king eider, spectacled eider, Steller's eider, black scoter, white-winged scoter, surf scoter, Barrow's goldeneye, common goldeneye, bufflehead, long-tailed duck, harlequin duck, common merganser, red-breasted merganser and hooded merganser. As a group and depending on the season, sea ducks use all four flyways.

The southern coast of Baffin Island, Nunavut, is internationally recognized as a key breeding habitat for common eiders (*Somateria mollissima*), but this region is under increasing pressure. Climate change is altering local ice dynamics and prey availability, and there is more frequent nest predation by polar bears. Eiders are at risk from diseases such as avian cholera and influenza. They also face growing risk from marine shipping and regularly show up as fisheries by-catch in Greenland, one of their wintering areas. The SDJV is leading a collaborative project to survey summer nesting colonies and understand how they are impacted by these factors.

Researchers have periodically surveyed eider nesting colonies on small offshore islands along Baffin Island since the 1950s, providing data to help develop harvest regulations and other management actions. The research team is repeating these surveys to understand how the density and distribution of common eiders in the region are changing. The project will measure nest predation by polar bears on each offshore nesting island, detect and estimate the extent and timing of eider mortality caused by disease and explore what impact these changes have on the local Inuit eider harvest.

Research in northern Canada is logistically complex and expensive. Migratory Bird Joint Ventures facilitate an extensive network of partnerships, which are crucial to funding surveys and to conducting work on the ground. The eider project was initiated in 2024 under Canada's Oceans Protection Plan, and the SDJV contributed funding through its request for proposals and a student fellowship award. Other

supporters include Environment and Climate Change Canada’s (ECCC) Wildlife Research Division, Nunavut Wildlife Research Trust, the Community of Kinngait and the Aiviq Hunters and Trappers Association.

Conducting research in close partnership with Indigenous communities is essential to understanding how climate change affects eider populations and subsistence activities. Researchers are conducting interviews with Kinngait residents at the same time as the surveys. Community members have shared their Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit Traditional Ecological Knowledge) about the historical size and locations of eider colonies. They also describe how polar bears are swimming to offshore nesting islands earlier—while eiders are still incubating their eggs—because sea ice is breaking up sooner. These interviews show the consequences of climate change for local people who depend on eider hunting, egg harvesting and down collecting.

Based on the surveys conducted in 2024 and 2025, the researchers are already producing integrated datasets and maps of eider distribution. The data suggest that polar bears are using more offshore nesting islands as food sources, and that these islands supported fewer total eider nests than in the past. However, there was no evidence of avian disease or mortality. Surveys will continue in summer 2026.

After the study is completed, the results will be shared with local, territorial, federal and international partners—respectively, the Community of Kinngait, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, ECCC and the Greenland Institute of Nature. These results could be used to update harvest regulations in Greenland and in Newfoundland and Labrador. Through this project, the SDJV is filling knowledge gaps while fostering the local- and continental-scale partnerships that are vital to bird conservation in an era of global environmental change.

For more information, please contact Margaret Campbell, Sea Duck Joint Venture Coordinator, (867) 334-5379, margaret.campbell@ec.gc.ca.

Expenditures (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1998–2026)
Banding	–	\$695,345
Research	\$318,791	\$15,283,320
Surveys	–	\$3,630,006
Conservation planning	–	\$1,040,515
Communication and education	\$269,280	\$538,784
Total	\$588,071	\$21,187,970

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, time frame.
1998–2026 consists of the January 1, 1998, to March 31, 2026, time frame.

Female common eider on a nest.
Grant Gilchrist



Eider survey locations based out of Kinngait (formerly Cape Dorset), Nunavut, in 2024 (red dots) and 2025 (black dots).
Scott Gilliland





Rob Bruce with a catch of midcontinent lesser snow geese, near Ferguson Lake on Victoria Island, 2025.

Frank Baldwin



www.agjv.ca
www.pcoa.ca
www.ganso
delartico.com

The Arctic Goose Joint Venture (AGJV) covers 924 million acres (374 million hectares) spanning Canada, the United States and other circumpolar countries. It focuses on 24 populations among seven species: greater white-fronted, emperor, snow, Ross's, brant, cackling and Canada geese. Arctic geese use all four North American flyways as well as the Western Atlantic Flyway of Europe and the East Asian–Australasian Flyway. Since inception, the scope of the AGJV has aligned with the NAWMP Waterfowl Habitat Areas of Geographic Concern, and the AGJV supports work in all the important arctic and subarctic areas identified for the NAWMP.

When the AGJV was established in 1986, researchers had limited understanding of the nesting distribution and breeding abundance of goose populations. In fact, many populations were named according to wintering distribution (e.g., Tall Grass Prairie Population), which was derived mainly from band recovery data. If breeding surveys did exist, the information was an index of abundance rather than an estimate, because surveyed areas represented some unknown portion of the breeding range. Challenges associated with a full understanding of breeding abundance remain, including the expansive nesting distribution of species across their northern range; the cost and complicated logistics of arctic/sub-arctic field work; and issues associated with detection, survey coverage, sampling and species identification.

Starting in the early 2000s, conservation planning objectives for most goose populations shifted to gaining an improved understanding of breeding population distribution and abundance. At that time, wintering ground surveys were commonly used for management purposes, even though the challenges of detection, distribution and mixing of species limited the usefulness of counts. The first ideas for improvement focused on establishing a rotating set of aerial surveys across the Arctic. Between 2005 and 2011, a pilot program of aerial surveys was implemented in the central and western Canadian Arctic. This work provided important baseline density estimates for a variety of arctic-nesting waterfowl.

At the same time, other researchers were refining methods to indirectly estimate abundance using existing long-term data sources. This approach is termed the

Lincoln Estimator, in recognition of ornithologist Frederick Lincoln, who first described the method in 1930. It is now the primary method used to monitor some arctic-nesting goose populations. The method uses band recovery data and harvest estimates from annual harvest surveys in Canada and the United States to estimate age-specific annual abundance. The first contemporary explanation of the approach for waterfowl was published in the 2009 textbook *Modeling Demographic Processes in Marked Populations* by now-retired Environment and Climate Change Canada research scientist Ray Alisauskas and co-authors. Essentially, an estimate of population size in a given year is equal to the estimated annual harvest divided by the probability that a bird alive in a given year is harvested in that year (harvest probability). Estimates reflect the time at marking (e.g., late summer population size for arctic-nesting geese).

The Lincoln Estimator requires that certain assumptions be satisfied. Over the last decade, the AGJV has prioritized funding of research that investigates the sensitivity of estimates to potential bias in data components, as well as incorporation of new statistical methods to enable estimation in years with low banding samples, or if banding does not occur, as happened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every summer, tens of thousands of arctic geese across northern Canada and Alaska are banded with unique aluminum leg

bands. Thousands of these bands are subsequently recovered by hunters and reported to the Bird Banding Lab. While these data are widely recognized as essential for understanding current harvest levels, their importance for estimating abundance without the expenses, constraints or assumptions imposed by aerial surveys is under-appreciated. Lincoln estimates have become a cornerstone of arctic goose population management. Continued investments in their refinement have led to their use in monitoring other populations of waterfowl. In this way, the impacts of AGJV research extend well beyond the conservation of arctic-nesting geese.

For more information, please contact Mara Erickson, Arctic Goose Joint Venture Coordinator, mara.erickson@ec.gc.ca.

Expenditures (CAD)

	2025–2026	Total (1986–2026)
Banding	\$399,389	\$21,017,977
Research	\$2,192,243	\$33,008,041
Surveys	\$169,675	\$12,222,684
Collar observations	–	\$1,324,185
Management	–	\$272,992
Conservation planning	\$33,080	\$1,033,938
Communication and education	–	\$51,882
Total	\$2,794,387	\$68,931,699

2025–2026 consists of the April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, time frame.
1986–2025 consists of the January 1, 1986, to March 31, 2025, time frame.

Tim Verbiwski with a catch of midcontinent cackling and white-fronted geese, near Ferguson Lake on Victoria Island, 2024.
Frank Baldwin





Partners

Thank you to all of our partners
who contributed financially in 2025–2026:

Red-necked grebes.
Jaden Barney

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Age of Union
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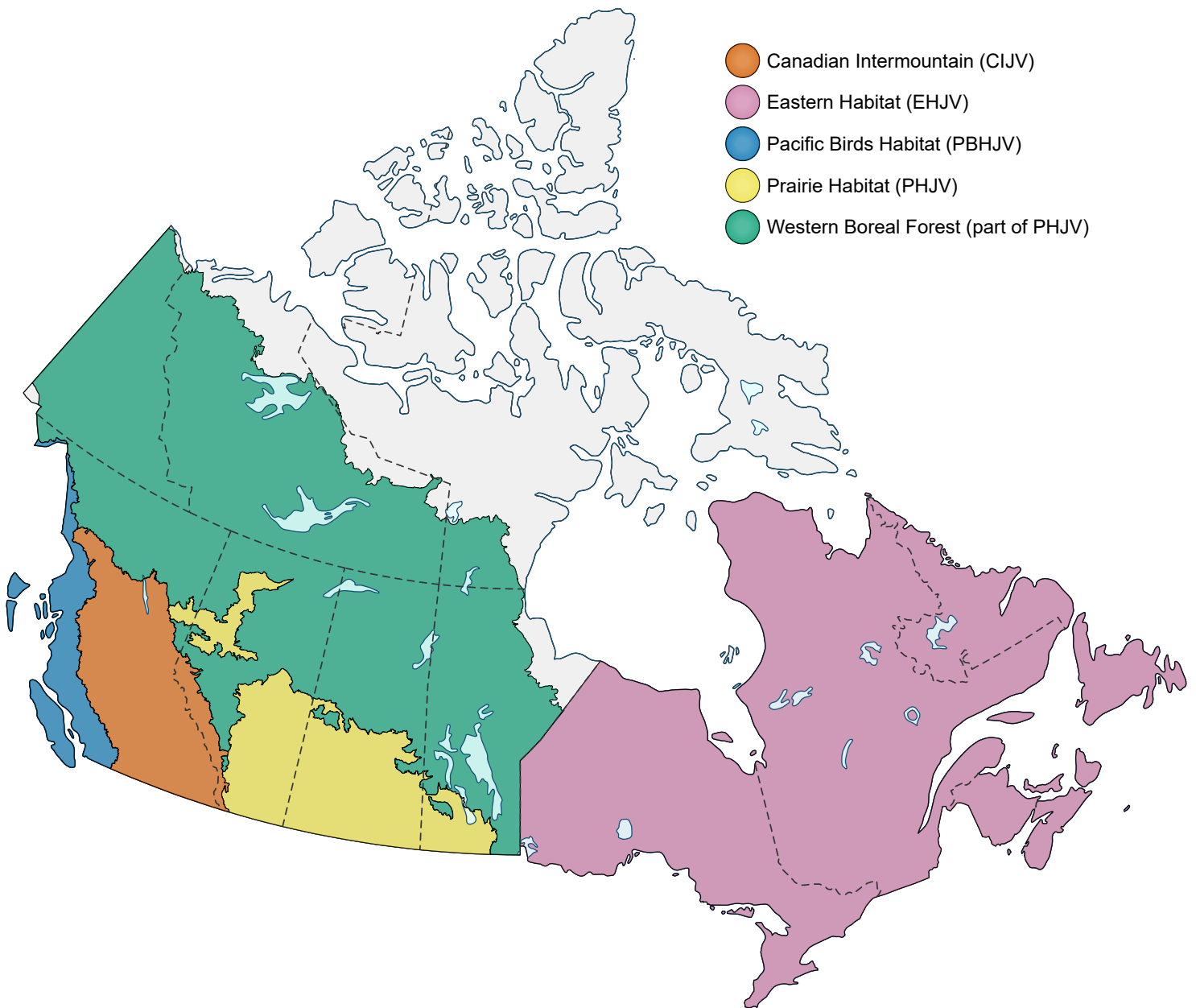
Red-breasted mergansers.

Jaden Barney



Habitat Matters

2026 Canadian NAWMP Report



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North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants in Canada

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Map of Bird Conservation Regions

nabci-us.org/resources/bird-conservation-regions