

ILLINOIS



2019 STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

ANDERSON LAKE STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA *Fulton and Schuyler Counties*

Ducks Unlimited and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources are enhancing the Carlson Unit at Anderson Lake SFWA. The Carlson Unit is a 240-acre managed impoundment immediately adjacent to the Illinois River managed to provide waterfowl habitat and waterfowl hunting opportunity. Changes in Illinois River hydrology and flooding intensity have reduced the management capability and quality. Ducks Unlimited and the IDNR will install a new armored emergency spillway and other upgrades that offer relief to existing infrastructure to withstand further changes to river flow. The improved management capability will increase the IDNR's ability to provide migration, wintering and breeding habitat for a variety of waterfowl species and increase waterfowl hunter and wildlife viewer access and success.



JENKINS MARSH *Woodford County*

Ducks Unlimited has sold the Jenkins Marsh project site to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for inclusion into the Woodford State Fish and Wildlife Area. Ducks Unlimited in 2010 purchased the 247-acre property and restored a portion of the former agriculture field back to wetland habitat. The habitat is beneficial for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds and a variety of wetland-dependent wildlife including about 21 critical wildlife species. The inclusion into Woodford SFWA increases public acreage available for recreational access. Funds generated from the sale of the property will be reinvested into additional wetland habitat conservation projects within the middle Illinois River Valley area.



HORSESHOE LAKE *Madison County*

Ducks Unlimited will use a \$200,000 commitment from Phillips 66, a longtime Ducks Unlimited supporter, to enhance and restore up to 250 acres of wetland habitat at Horseshoe Lake State Park. The 3,000-acre state park near St. Louis is managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The park is crucial to residents of both Illinois and Missouri and supports recreational activities such as boating, hiking, hunting, fishing, camping and bird watching. Horseshoe Lake is located in DU's Confluence Priority Area, a region which can hold more than 2,000,000 ducks and geese during fall migration. Projects are expected to be complete in 2020.



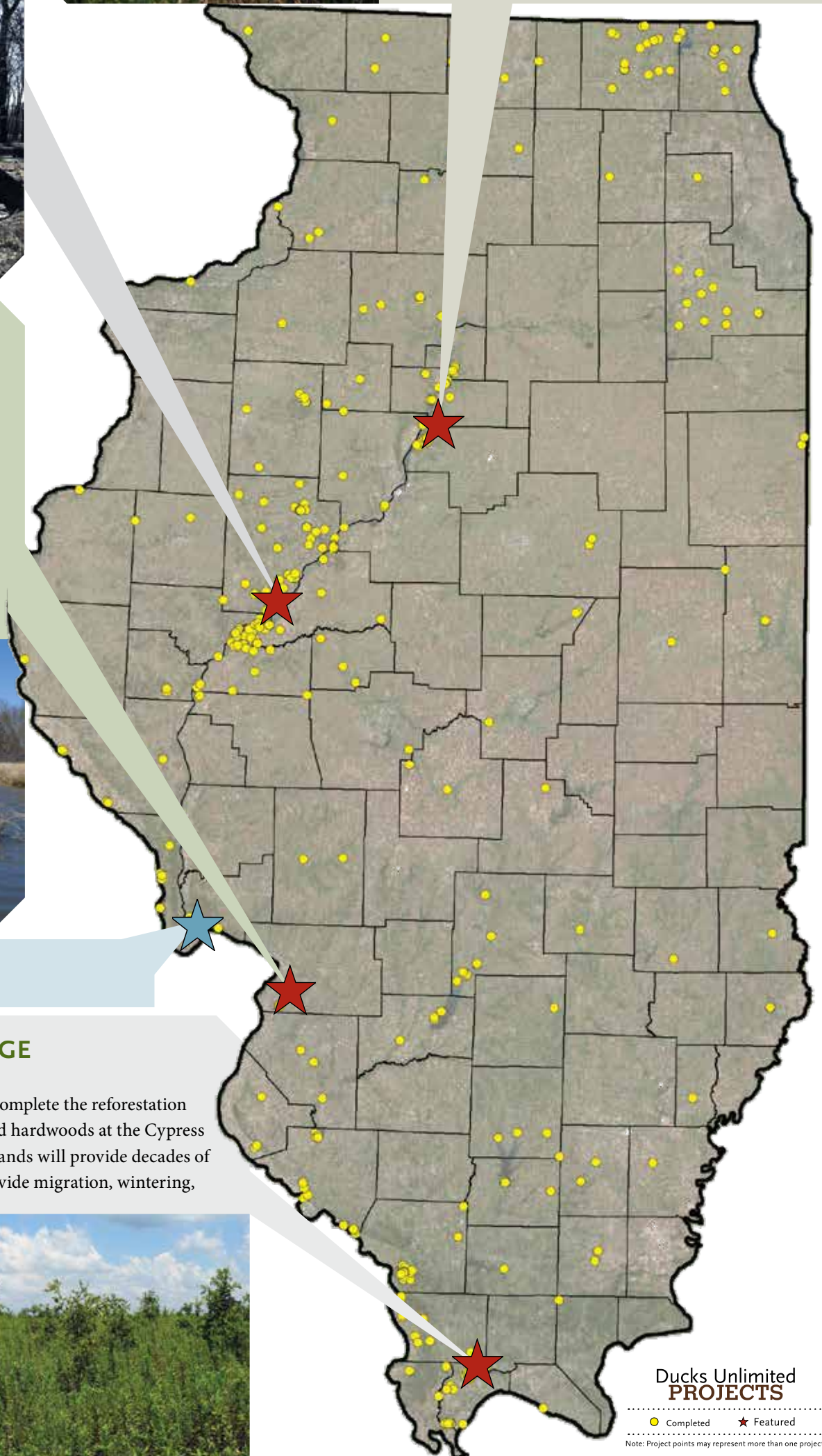
CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge (see back page for full article)

CYPRESS CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Union, Alexander, and Pulaski Counties

Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2019 will complete the reforestation of 610 acres of former or current agricultural fields back to bottomland hardwoods at the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. The restoration of these forested wetlands will provide decades of habitat benefits to numerous species of wildlife. The wetlands will provide migration, wintering, breeding and brood-rearing habitat for many species of waterfowl. The project will lead to enhanced water quality, and more public recreational opportunity, targeting hunting, bird watching and wildlife photography. Funding provided by North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants and a Wildlife Conservation Society Climate Adaptation Fund grant.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

● Completed ★ Featured
Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

★ **Conservation Spotlight:**
TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Like a bustling rest area on a major interstate highway, the Confluence Region of the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois Rivers is one of North America's busiest corridors for migrating ducks.

Ducks Unlimited has numerous projects in motion to improve the wetlands in this expansive duck resting area. In southwestern Illinois at the aptly named Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge, Ducks Unlimited is restoring about 500 acres of moist soil and hemi-marsh wetlands.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) established the refuge more than 60 years ago as a migratory bird refuge. Today its 9,000 acres of floodplain habitat is at the meeting of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. The refuge is surrounded by more than 20,000 acres of floodplain wetlands managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. In 2017, waterfowl numbers on the refuge peaked at more than 300,000 ducks.

Ducks Unlimited and the USFWS will restore and enhance unused agricultural fields at Two Rivers by installing berms, water-management structures and pumps to allow refuge staff to mimic historic natural flooding. This will create moist-soil habitat at the preferred water depths of a foot or less for foraging waterfowl and shorebirds.

"As Ducks Unlimited looks to expand our conservation efforts northward along the Mississippi over the next few years, this Two Rivers project in the heart of our Confluence Priority Area is the perfect stepping-off point to expand our Upper Mississippi conservation program," said Michael Sertle, Ducks Unlimited regional biologist in Illinois.

Aside from providing broad biological dinner plates for foraging waterfowl, the wetlands in the Confluence Region are critical for holding rainwater and preventing flooding. A lack of confluence wetlands made flooding disasters like those of 1993 much worse. During that historic flood, more than 1,000 flood protection levees failed, 70,000 buildings were damaged and 50 people lost their lives.

The Two Rivers project is expected to be complete in 2020.



LOOKING AHEAD

Northern Illinois

- Ducks Unlimited will be completing the 161-acre Friends of Hackmatack small NAWCA grant.
- Ducks Unlimited will transfer the 34-acre Kennedy Tract to the McHenry County Conservation District to be included into the Monastery Marsh Complex.
- Partnership opportunities are being explored with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Pheasants Forever and others to complete grassland and wetland restorations across northern Illinois to promote breeding habitat and improved water quality.

Central Illinois

- Ducks Unlimited will continue coordination with the IDNR, USFWS and other conservation partners to provide restoration and enhancement assistance to important public and private waterfowl management areas in the Illinois River Valley and numerous lakes/reservoirs.
- Ducks Unlimited and its partners have recently submitted a \$1 million NAWCA proposal to restore and enhance about 13,000 acres of wetlands within the valley area, including projects at five different IDNR State Fish and Wildlife Areas.
- Ducks Unlimited also will explore public and private wetland conservation opportunities along and up the Upper Mississippi River.

Southern Illinois

- Ducks Unlimited will coordinate with public land partners at the IDNR, USFWS, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to protect, restore and enhance important bottomland wetland ecosystems, including the completion of the 130-acre HayGlade MSU/Greentree 28 Unit and 107-acre Big Muddy Unit projects.
- Within the next year, Ducks Unlimited will transfer the 57-acre Brooks Tract to the USFS for inclusion into the Big Muddy Bottoms wetland complex.
- Ducks Unlimited will partner with the IDNR using NAWCA funds to complete its first Johnson County project, restoring the 80-acre Owens Tract
- Ducks Unlimited will also begin a ten-year effort to assist the IDNR with infrastructure upgrades at Carlyle Lake SFWA.



ILLINOIS BY THE NUMBERS

2018

- 7 projects
- 315 acres conserved
- \$388,401 invested

HISTORICAL

- 490 projects
- 63,119 acres conserved
- \$22.6 million invested

For more information visit www.ducks.org/illinois



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For more information visit us online at www.ducks.org/illinois

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



GREAT LAKES & ATLANTIC REGION

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