

# New England

## 2021 CONSERVATION REPORT



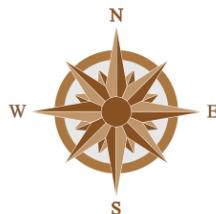
### ▲ PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT HISTORIC FORESTED WETLAND

*Strafford County, New Hampshire*

Ducks Unlimited and several partners are protecting a historic slice of New Hampshire for wildlife and local residents. Thanks to donations from Friends of New Hampshire, DU is helping the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire share the cost of protecting a 400-acre parcel known as the Leighton Forest Protection Project. The parcel is in Strafford and Barrington, northwest of the Stonehouse Forest. DU, the land trust and other partners including the New Hampshire Game and Fish Department will protect this important property which contains healthy forests, wetlands and several cold-water streams. The Leighton Forest provides a host of important wildlife habitat and supports historical forested wetlands that are over 700 years old. The site provides essential breeding, nesting and migratory habitat for a diversity of birds. “Anyone that has stepped on this property appreciates the need to protect this special place for wildlife and people,” said Duane Hyde, Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire land conservation director. “The diverse partnership of organizations we are working with, including Ducks Unlimited, reinforce what a special place this is.” This project is expected to be completed this summer.



Photos: Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire



#### Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

● Completed ★ Featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



Photo: Scott Heron/Flickr

### ◆ CONNECTICUT PROJECTS TO RESTORE AND PROTECT VALUABLE LAND

Ducks Unlimited is partnering with Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., Connecticut Delta Waterfowl and the Connecticut Waterfowler’s Association on two vital conservation efforts. The partners will enhance the 185-acre Hammock River Marsh Wildlife Area (1) near Clinton. The enhancement will restore the integrity of the marsh by installing a self-regulating tide gate to reduce spring tidal impacts and enhance high marsh habitat. The second effort, the Sheets Protection Project (2), will protect 87 acres from development near Stonington, adjacent to the 26,400-acre Pachaug State Forest. The parcel will protect inland wetlands and buffer upland habitat and will benefit American Woodcock and many migrating songbirds. Both sites represent some of the Atlantic Flyway’s most important wetland habitats for migratory birds. DU and our partners applied for a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant in fall 2020 and funding is anticipated in 2021.

### ★ COASTAL BIRD SANCTUARY GETS INSPECTED

*Narragansett, Rhode Island*

Ducks Unlimited has partnered with Rhode Island Department of Environment and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture to submit a Wildlife Action Plan Grant to advance restoration at Galilee Marsh. Part of the restoration will evaluate tidal gates and hydrological conditions. Galilee, home to Galilee Bird Sanctuary, is a 100-acre tidal wetland complex composed of tidal creek, high salt marsh and low salt marsh habitat. The habitat management will also benefit numerous species of greatest conservation need, such as American black duck and saltmarsh sparrow.

**Conservation Spotlight:**  
**COASTAL MAINE IMPROVEMENTS ON TRACK**

**D**ucks Unlimited is helping advance a widespread conservation effort in Maine, at the top of the United States' portion of the Atlantic Flyway.

Maine's ecosystem is considered one of the world's most biologically productive environments, renowned for its pristine habitat and 2,000 species of plants and animals. The state has the largest undeveloped block of forest and wetland habitat east of the Mississippi River. More than 25% of Maine's total area are wetlands, totaling two million acres. Its coast is crucial for many high priority species, including the common eider, American black duck and eastern harlequin duck.

The Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) is leading several programs that will enhance or protect more than 91,000 acres in the state, and Ducks Unlimited is helping on two coastal projects. "Ducks Unlimited has been an important partner for MCHT over the years and we are grateful that they are working with us on this important effort to bring federal wetlands dollars into the state," said Betsy Ham, director of land protection for Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

**Pond Cove Island**

Through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, the trust, DU and other partners are buying Pond Cove Island and transferring it to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The island will be included in the nearby Roque Bluffs State Park. Pond Cove Island features 37 acres of intertidal wetlands and is located just 1,500 feet offshore from the state park. The property is in national priority areas for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds and landbirds and it will be open for kayakers and boaters to birdwatch, picnic, hike, hunt and fish. Camping will be allowed at designated campsites.



*Pond Cove Island*



*Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge*

**Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge**

DU is partnering with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the refuge to restore 320 acres of coastal marshes. This refuge was founded in 1966 to protect salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds. Ducks Unlimited and partners will restore the tidal marsh habitat by reducing marsh sinkage caused by waterlogging and elevational gain through the restoration of a proper balance of flood and ebb flows on the marsh.

The refuge is important for black ducks and also breeding Saltmarsh and Nelson's Sparrows. Rachel Carson NWR has been monitoring Saltmarsh Sparrows at this site since 2000 and has detected a significant decline in breeding birds, likely as a result of decreased nesting success due to nest flooding. "Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge is eager to once again partner with DU to improve wildlife habitat and community resilience while providing a space for outdoor recreation," said Bri Benvenuti, Rachel Carson NWR wildlife technician.

Support for both projects also comes from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Davis Conservation Foundation. The projects sit in the Atlantic Flyway, one of the four major migratory routes for North American birds. Healthy wetland spots such as these are vital resting and feeding areas for birds during long journeys. Ducks Unlimited has restored, protected or enhanced more than 16,000 acres in Maine alone over the last 30 years.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**Massachusetts**

Ducks Unlimited is part of a new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to protect retiring cranberry farmland from development and implement wetland restoration actions on these lands. Over the next five years, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife will advance an RCPP effort to protect 1,800 acres and restore about 900 wetland acres across 20 sites. The RCPP projects will improve fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality and provide long-term resiliency in a critical coastal marsh system.

**Connecticut**

DU's engineering team is helping the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection restore coastal wetland systems at Sluice Creek and Leetes Island in New Haven County. DU providing design and hydrological modelling to evaluate the restoration options. Once feasibility studies and conceptual designs are approved, DU and our partners will obtain permits and deliver the work. The timeline is expected to be two to four years.



*Sluice Creek*

***New England by the Numbers***

Historical conservation totals for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island:

- **OVER 40,000 ACRES CONSERVED**
- **\$9 MILLION INVESTED**

For more information in your state visit [www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org)



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

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