



The MI Marsh Chatter



Michigan Ducks Unlimited



Volume 3, Issue 2

2nd Quarter, 2017

A Word from our Chairman

Dale Borske: 2017 - 2018 State Chairman



It looks like spring may be arriving soon. We have quite a few geese and ducks out front now and I hear the lovely spring call of the redwing blackbird.

That is the first sound of spring to me.

Speaking of spring our spring events are off to an amazing start. I have already heard quite a few are sold out before the event and the attendees are spending more money and having a great time. There is a lot of excitement in Michigan this year.

We just finished off one of our best attended and informative Leadership Conferences in years. It was great to see so many new faces and they really recharged some of our older batteries. I am hoping that we get a turnout like that at our State Convention. We had a great time last year and Dave Perry is planning another fun and exciting event this year. There is information on that further in the newsletter.

Also we are making plans for those that are going to the National Convention in San Antonio this year. If you are attending please contact me so we can get you listed in our Michigan group.

The 2017 Calendar is in full swing now and we are already planning for the 2018 edition. That has been a huge success here in Michigan. If you want a calendar or your chapter wants to par-

ticipate in the program selling these contact your RD. We could use a couple more chapters involved in sales this year.

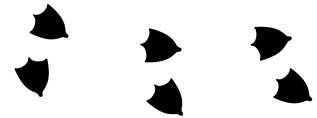
We are in the heart of the banquet season and so far the events have been well attended and the guests are having a great time. I hope to attend as many around the state as possible this year.

Our Volunteer Recruitment team is having success signing up new volunteers at many of the events and we are getting some new faces with great ideas for our local chapters. We cannot say enough how important it is to have new volunteers on your committee. If you are interested in joining this group please contact Dave Bowers at dtbowers53@gmail.com. We would love to have you aboard.

Please consider getting a DU license plate for your vehicle. We need to sell 500 plates this year to keep this important program going due to a change in the law last year. More on this in the newsletter below.

I hope you all have a great spring and summer and see you at Convention in August.

Dale



Inside this issue:

STATE CONVENTION	2
LEAVING A LEGACY AND GLRI INTRO	3
GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE	4-5
NEWS, EVENTS, AND HAPPENINGS FROM AROUND THE STATE	6-7
WATERFOWL FEATHERS BY DAVE BRAKHAGE	8-9
MICHIGAN DU LICENSE PLATE—GOT YOURS?	10
DU CONTRIBUTOR & WATERFOWL WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER LAURIE DIRKX	11
MARSH CHATTER NEEDS YOU	12

Save The Date!
August 24th thru August 27th
2017



Boyne Highlands
Resort
Harbor Springs, MI

MICHIGAN DUCKS UNLIMITED STATE CONVENTION

Join us in celebrating Ducks Unlimited's 80 Years of Conservation!

Have Fun! Meet Friends! Make Contacts!

The 80th Anniversary Celebration

Major Donor Reception before dinner with conservation message and updates.

Plated dinner with a full venue of 80 Anniversary awards and honors for the volunteers of Michigan Ducks Unlimited.

Guest speakers to be announced at a later date.

Check the website, www.ducks.org/michigan/state-convention-info, for updates.

See You There!



Questions?
Dave Perry
State Convention Chair
734-755-8388
dperry@friendly4d.com



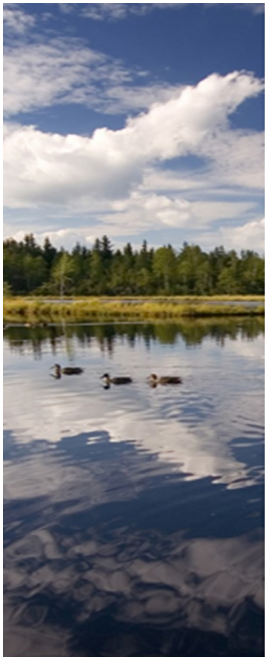
The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and DU

(see related article pages 4 and 5)

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was launched in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world. Building upon strategic recommendations to improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem presented in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy of 2005, former President Obama's FY 2010 budget invested \$475 million into the GLRI. Funding decreased to \$300 million in FY 2011 and has continued at that amount through FY 2017. The GLRI represents a collaborative effort on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and 19 other federal agencies to address the most significant environmental concerns of the Great Lakes. The GLRI focuses on cleaning up Great Lakes Areas of Concern, preventing and controlling invasive species, reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful/nuisance algal blooms, and restoring habitat to protect native species. To date, the GLRI has been funded in excess of \$1.6B and has resulted in 3,086 projects resulting in the cleanup of Areas of Concern, improved invasive species control and management, reductions in nonpoint source pollution, restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, and implementation of goal- and results-based accountability measures. Since the GLRI was implemented, DU has worked with over 80 partners to secure 64 grants totaling \$31.3M that resulted in the conservation of nearly 18,000 acres (primarily Great Lakes coastal wetlands). DU's policy efforts have contributed to GLRI authorization and robust appropriations. The GLRI Action Plan II summarizes the actions that DU and our partners will implement through FY 2019.



**FEATHER
SOCIETY**



Four Ways to Leave a Legacy

You can leave a conservation legacy for the Ducks. All planned gifts are meaningful and in most cases do not involve any upfront costs, yet do so much for the future of DU's habitat restoration and conservation efforts. Here are four simple ways to join:

- Make a bequest to DU in your will or trust. Find out how easy it is to put wildlife in your plans.
- Realize the value of your individual retirement account (IRA) or 401k by naming DU a partial beneficiary.
- Consider naming DU as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or open a new policy in DU's name with all premium payments to DU and leverage a bigger gift.
- Build your gift by using real estate, stocks or personal property.

For more information contact Sarah McCallum, Director of Gift Planning at (734) 623-2031 or smccallum@ducks.org. Or visit www.ducksgift.org.



Great Lakes Initiative

Conserving and restoring the Great Lakes



Cool water, coastal wetlands, and an appreciation for the outdoors define Ducks Unlimited's Great Lakes Initiative area. The coastline of the five Great Lakes exceeds 10,000 miles and encircles approximately 20 percent of the world's fresh water. Glaciers created a diversity of wetlands, shallow lakes, coastal estuaries, and river flowages. Through the Great Lakes Initiative, DU will address all of these habitat types and provide abundant resources for continentally significant numbers of breeding, migrating, and wintering waterfowl.

It's up to those in the Great Lakes states to support solutions for excessive inputs into wetlands, lakes, streams, and rivers resulting in substantial water quality issues. In addition, invasive species have degraded remaining habitat and new exotics threaten the region each year. More recently, declining lake levels are cause for considerable concern. Lower waterfowl and hunter numbers are the inevitable result of changes in Great Lakes habitat conditions. In Michigan, breeding mallard numbers have dropped 50 percent. Recent research suggests that mallard population growth is largely limited by brood survival, so the primary emphasis of breeding conservation programs has been on restoring complexes of wetlands with a mosaic of open-water and emergent vegetation on public and private lands.

An estimated 60 percent of historic wetlands have been lost in the Great Lakes Initiative area, and continued loss is estimated at 1 percent annually. The majority of that loss has occurred in key waterfowl landscapes and exceeds 90 percent in some areas. Loss of native prairie grasslands has been extreme, also exceeding 90 percent. Help curb and reverse this loss of critical wetlands and grasslands in the Great Lakes with your gift to DU's Great Lakes Initiative today.

Resources Beyond Waterfowl

The Great Lakes Initiative area is home to far more than just waterfowl and wetlands. The region holds vast human, political, and philanthropic capital, accounting for 29 percent of the U.S. population and 31 percent of Ducks Unlimited members nationwide. The waterfowling tradition is strong within the region, which is home to nearly 30 percent of America's active waterfowl hunters, as well as a quarter of DU's mission-critical Major Sponsors.

The residents of this region have an incredible sense of connection to their home—to the Great Lakes themselves, the associated wetlands and wildlife habitat, and to the sense of community that ties them all together. Your generous gift to DU's Great Lakes Initiative is critical to ensuring a bright future for this great landscape, for waterfowl, outdoorsmen and women, and all of the generations yet to come.

The residents of this region have an incredible sense of connection to their home—to the Great Lakes themselves, the associated wetlands and wildlife habitat, and to the sense of community that ties them all together. Your generous gift to DU's Great Lakes Initiative is critical to ensuring a bright future for this great landscape, for waterfowl, outdoorsmen and women, and all of the generations yet to come.

The residents of this region have an incredible sense of connection to their home—to the Great Lakes themselves, the associated wetlands and wildlife habitat, and to the sense of community that ties them all together. Your generous gift to DU's Great Lakes Initiative is critical to ensuring a bright future for this great landscape, for waterfowl, outdoorsmen and women, and all of the generations yet to come.

DU's Five-Year Plan for the Great Lakes

Ducks Unlimited is seeking to raise \$6.9 million in philanthropic funds from generous donors like you to achieve our conservation goals in the Great Lakes Initiative area. Funding derived from the Great Lakes Initiative enables Ducks Unlimited to conduct important science, public policy, and outreach efforts, as well as conserving the breeding habitats important to waterfowl utilizing this landscape. DU's research and evaluation efforts are the foundation upon which our direct conservation programs and our policy and outreach work are based.

The focus of DU's Great Lakes Initiative is to maximize benefits for continental waterfowl by restoring, enhancing, and protecting wetland complexes that include large marshes and shallow lakes on public and private lands throughout the watershed. These wetlands provide critical feeding and resting areas for waterfowl during spring and fall migration, as well as habitat for a number of waterfowl species that breed within the region. This initiative also recognizes that public policy impacts waterfowl as surely as weather does, and we must put forth a dedicated effort, including strong relationships with elected officials, to ensure success for DU policy efforts regionally and nationally.

Great Lakes Initiative at Glance

Five-Year Goals (FY 2012-16)

Habitat Delivery: 35,000 acres

Public Revenue: \$42.6 million

Philanthropic Revenue: \$6.9 million

Total Revenue Goal: \$49.5 million

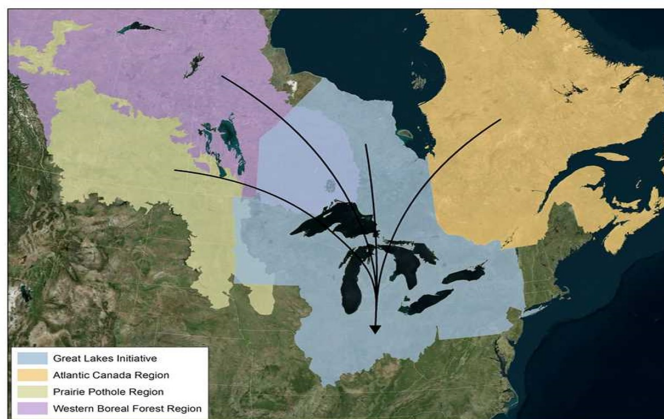
Initiative States and Provinces:

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Ontario

Conservation Focus:

Maximize benefits for migrating and breeding waterfowl by restoring, enhancing, and protecting wetland and grassland complexes that include coastal and riparian marshes and small interior wetlands on public and private lands throughout the Great Lakes watershed.

Cross-border Conservation



Migratory waterfowl are a shared continental resource and know no borders. Thus, DU must work across North America to ensure a bright future for waterfowl and the people who enjoy them. By contributing to DU's Great Lakes Initiative, you will be supporting critical waterfowl habitat conservation in the Great Lakes Initiative area, as well as priority breeding grounds in the Prairie Pothole Region, Western Boreal Forest, and Atlantic Canada, where the vast majority of waterfowl are produced prior to making their way south each fall.

The Great Lakes Need You Now

[Your gift](#) to Ducks Unlimited is invaluable, and it is truly the greatest contribution you can make to secure the future of wetlands and waterfowl. Every dollar you give to Ducks Unlimited is leveraged multiple times to create a conservation impact far beyond your initial gift. In addition, we invest at least 80 cents of every dollar received in our conservation mission. Start making a difference right now for waterfowl, outdoorsmen, and future generations of wildlife and people by making your gift to DU's Great Lakes Initiative. [Help conserve](#) more than 35,000 acres of key habitats in the Great Lakes watershed with your gift today. Don't wait.

2017 State Sponsor Print

by **Kathy Krupa**
State Art Chair



The printing of the sponsor print for 2017 went off without a hitch. I hope you enjoy the image by Paul Makuchal.



In March I will begin the campaign for 2018 with a postcard mailing to approximately 280 artists and periodic blasts on several duck art pages found on Facebook.

I have already received 6 requests for rules and several inquiries as to our breeds for 2018. They are Northern Shoveler or Red Breasted Merganser.

Our breed selection follows the Federal Duck Stamp program so that non-first place entries into their program can submit to our contest. I have found it challenging to get this little known fact out in the duck art community. So, please share!

You may cast your vote for the 2018 winner at the State Convention in August on Saturday night and the winner will be announced during the evening awards banquet.

Public Policy Activities

by **Steve Wyckoff**
State Public Policy
Chair



Michigan Ducks Unlimited staff and volunteers attended a Michigan Sportsmen's Caucus briefing and a welcome back reception for new and existing lawmakers in Lansing. DU gave a presentation on conservation funding and established contacts with newly elected officials.

Staff attending from the GLARO office in Ann Arbor were Gildo Tori, Doug Gorby, and Kyle Rorah. Volunteers attending were Steve Wyckoff and Dave Bowers.

Kyle Rorah, Steve Wyckoff and Dave Bowers also attended the Michigan Sportsmen's Caucus breakfasts on February 9th and March 9th in the Senate Office building, downtown Lansing.

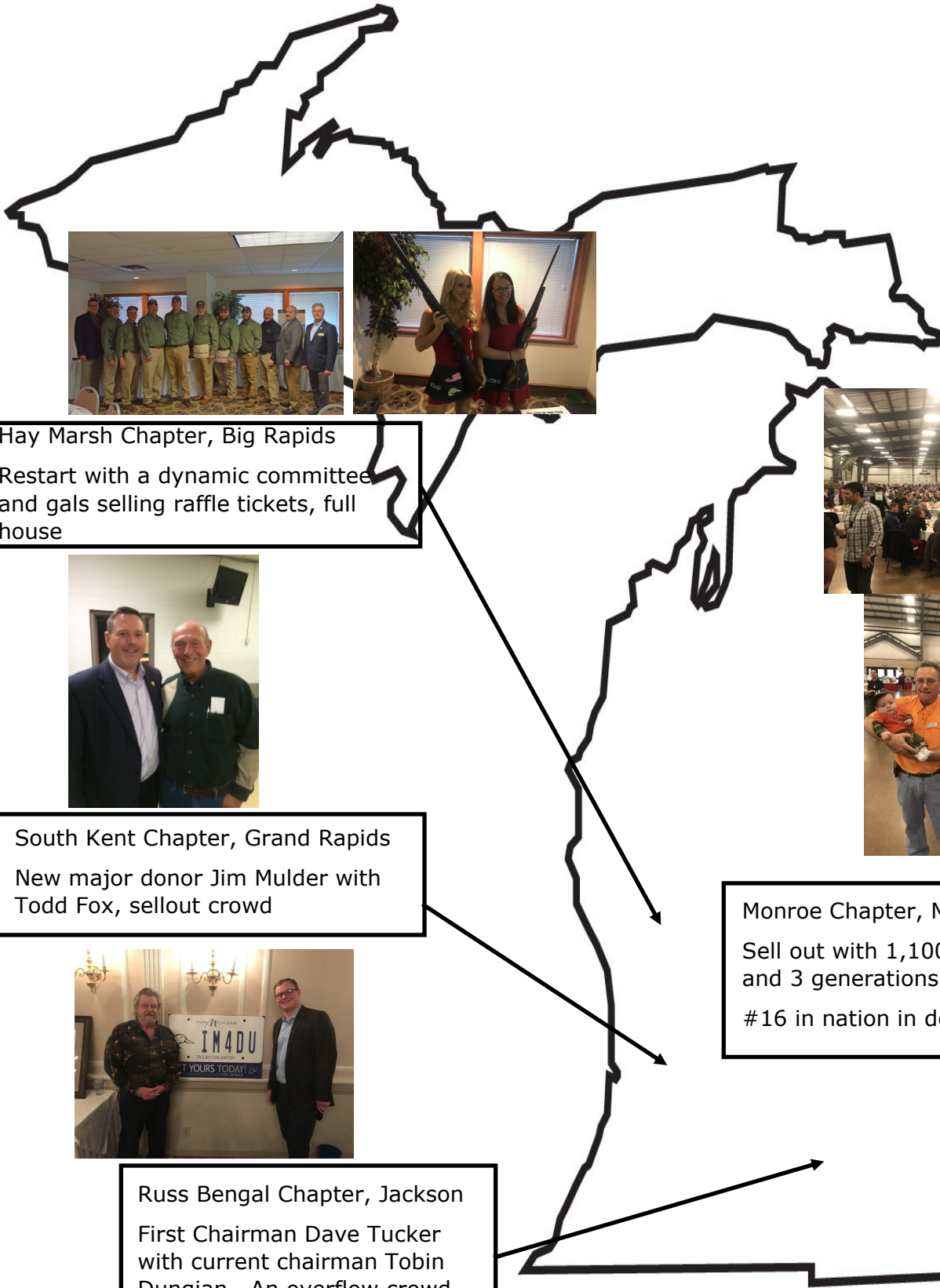


Kyle Rorah giving new legislatures a presentation on DU and conservation funding



Photo © David Bowers

News, events, and happenings from around the state



Hay Marsh Chapter, Big Rapids
Restart with a dynamic committee and gals selling raffle tickets, full house



South Kent Chapter, Grand Rapids
New major donor Jim Mulder with Todd Fox, sellout crowd



Monroe Chapter, Monroe
Sell out with 1,100 people in attendance and 3 generations of DU volunteers
#16 in nation in dollars raised



Russ Bengal Chapter, Jackson
First Chairman Dave Tucker with current chairman Tobin Dungian. An overflow crowd

Waterfowl Feathers

Ducks and geese rely on their remarkable plumage for many things, but especially to keep warm



Photo © Jerehmy Griffiths

By David Brakhage

When you are out hunting or watching ducks, the coloration of the birds' feathers is one of the first things you notice. Each species has its own distinctive plumage, which is invaluable when trying to identify birds in the field. A drake [pintail's](#) long twin tail feathers, white underparts, and soft brown topside can be easily distinguished from a male [wood duck's](#) squared-off tail feathers and multicolored plumage.

Feathers are indeed among the defining characteristics of waterfowl and other birds. Birds, in fact, are the only animals that have feathers. And while feathers have many specialized functions, their most important jobs are to protect birds from the elements and to enable flight. In bitter cold, wintry conditions feathers are a duck's first line of defense.

Waterfowl have three types of feathers: contour, flight, and down. Contour feathers collectively serve as a protective outer shell. Each feather is composed of a central shaft with a continuous series of paired vanes that line up on opposite sides of the shaft. Tightly interlocking barbules line the edge of each vane and hold them together like Velcro. They overlap one another much like shingles on a roof, forming an almost impenetrable barrier to wind and moisture. Feathers are also held in place by specialized muscles just under the skin. Using these muscles waterfowl can fluff up their feathers and move them back into position at will.

Located on a bird's wings and tail, flight feathers are a variation of contour feathers that are designed to withstand the stress and strain of flight. Because they must support a bird's weight in flight, they are connected directly to ligaments or bone for greater structural integrity. Unlike body feathers, flight feathers have vanes of unequal width and are always narrower on their leading edge. This characteristic, which is especially obvious in primary flight feathers, helps provide lift and forward propulsion in flight.

Down feathers serve as an inner layer of insulation that traps warm air against a bird's body. They have a short shaft and no interlocking barbules, giving them a light, fluffy appearance. Before the advent of modern synthetic insulation, duck and goose down was widely used by people to line blankets, clothing, and sleeping bags. Even today, the warmth-to-weight ratio of eider down is still unsurpassed when dry.

Counting Feathers

Have you ever wondered just how many feathers are on a duck, goose, or swan? While the absolute number of feathers on waterfowl is unknown, reports in scientific literature indicate the number varies by species. Researchers counted 14,914 feathers on a pintail, 11,903 on a [mallard](#), and 25,216 on a [tundra swan](#).

Interestingly, smaller birds often have more feathers than do larger ones. Swans are a notable exception because of their long necks, which are covered with a large number of small feathers. Roughly 80 percent of the feathers on a tundra swan are found on the bird's head and neck.

Female waterfowl also use down to line their nests and keep their eggs warm. During the egg-laying process, hens pull more and more down from their body, creating a bare patch on their abdomen. This "brood patch" allows females to more efficiently transfer heat from their bodies to the eggs. When hens leave the nest for brief periods during incubation, they pull a layer of down over their eggs with their bills to protect them and keep them warm while they are away.

Feathers are a marvel of natural engineering, but they require constant care and must be replaced periodically to maintain peak performance. Waterfowl spend a couple hours each day just caring for their feathers. An oil gland at the base of the tail secretes a preening fluid that keeps feathers soft and pliable, which in turn prevents them from breaking, keeps them waterproof, and enhances their aerodynamics. Waterfowl use their bills to distribute this fluid throughout their feathers while preening. Ducks and geese also use their bills to realign their feathers and reconnect any Velcro-like barbules that have become separated.

But even with regular preening and other care, feathers break and wear out. Any feather that is pulled out or lost completely is replaced right away; broken and worn feathers aren't replaced until the birds molt. Molting, the natural process in which birds routinely replace some or all of their feathers, varies in timing and frequency among waterfowl species. All ducks and geese undergo a simultaneous wing molt, when flight feathers are replaced. During this period waterfowl are completely flightless—usually for a month or so—until new flight feathers grow in.

Ducks replace their contour feathers at least twice a year. During winter and spring many male ducks have gaudy breeding plumage, which serves to attract prospective mates. Shortly after the breeding season, however, males undergo a body molt, replacing their showy "alternate" plumage with drab "basic" or "eclipse" plumage. These henlike feathers help conceal drakes while they are flightless during the wing molt. But as soon as drakes can fly again in late summer, they begin a second molt and gradually develop their breeding plumage as fall progresses.

Female ducks molt as well, but differences between their basic and alternate plumage are far more subtle. Hens molt into their basic plumage just before nesting and keep this plumage until after the wing molt and brood-rearing activities are complete. Geese typically undergo just one complete molt a year, which has a much less noticeable effect on the birds' appearance.

Everyone who enjoys viewing ducks appreciates their colorful and in many cases iridescent plumage. Hunters have the privilege of examining these remarkable feathers in hand. The next time you bag a duck or goose, take a few minutes to explore the bird's many different kinds of feathers—and their colors and patterns. You'll once again be reminded of the wonders of nature.

A Kaleidoscope of Color

The plumage of ducks, especially that of drakes of certain species, displays stunning color and iridescence. A drake mallard's green head and its bright blue wing markings are prime examples. Why are some waterfowl feathers iridescent while others are not? The colors we see in the plumage of waterfowl are produced in two ways: chemically and structurally.

Chemical coloration is produced by pigments that either absorb or reflect wavelengths of light. White feathers, for example, have little or no pigment, so all wavelengths are reflected. In contrast, black feathers contain the dark pigment melanin, which absorbs light.

Iridescence is a structural phenomenon associated with the barbules on feather vanes. Iridescent feathers have numerous, overlapping barbules that reflect and absorb light in varying amounts. The result is a lustrous shine that changes color depending on the intensity of the sun and the angle at which the feathers are observed.

David Brakhage is director of conservation programs at DU's Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Conservation intern Elizabeth St. James provided research assistance for this article.

View more waterfowl feather photos in our [Feather Details](#) slideshow.

Michigan DU license plate

- Ducks Unlimited receives monies directly from plate sales for habitat projects in Michigan
 - \$25 from each new plate
 - \$10 from each renewal
- Sales through 12/31/2016
 - 2,068 new plates
 - 306 renewals
- Revenues to date
 - \$54,760!



- Recently passed HB 5447 impacts specialty license plates
 - Requires that 500 plates be sold each year for the next 2 years
 - And 500 sold every two years thereafter
 - Does not include renewals
- Great source of revenue for habitat conservation

**Get your license plate today
for all your vehicles**





Laurie Dirx resides in the northeast near Rochester, NY - three miles south of the shore of Lake Ontario. Living on 7 acres, she is outdoors more often than not. Her front acreage is pasture for her horse, while trails through the woods eventually leads to flooded timber. Having picked up a camera in 2010, Laurie has enjoyed being published locally and nationally for varying conservation entities. Ducks Unlimited has utilized her images in recent years, including a wood duck for their calendar, and second place in their annual photo competition for the waterfowl category. In 2016, her local chapter of DU featured photographic art for auction on three of her prints. Laurie's most recent published work is featured in the 2017 April/May issue of the New York State Conservationist, on the Eastern Bluebird. Besides photography, Laurie finds herself in the Adirondack Mountains as often as able to summit new peaks and paddle new waters.

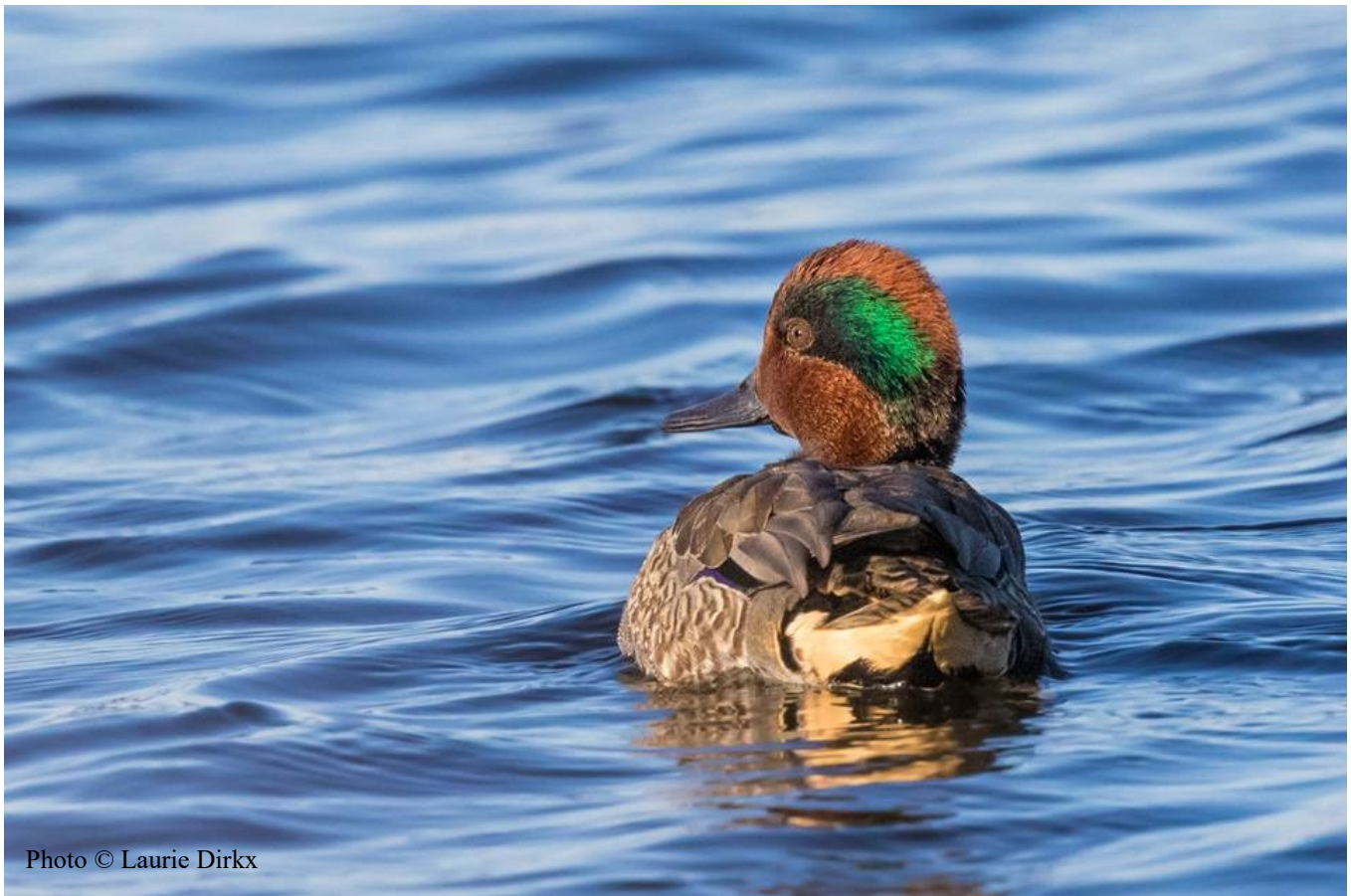


Photo © Laurie Dirx

Editor's note: Besides being an outstanding and highly regarded photographer, Laurie is a great mentor with a passion for DU conservation and waterfowl. She graciously allowed the use of one of her outstanding photos for the newsletter. Be sure to visit her website at www.LaurieDirkx.com where her work is posted and for sale. More photos to be shared in future editions.

State Chairman - Dale Borske
State Secretary— Max Lehman
State Treasurer— Jim Toth

cruiseplanner1@chartermi.net
max_lehman@big-1-lumber.com
jaegermeisterjt@gmail.com

989-876-7341
989-620-6791
989-620-6791



Marsh Chatter Needs You!

Marsh Chatter is a quarterly newsletter put out by the volunteer group of Michigan Ducks Unlimited to help keep our members and volunteers up on the latest happenings around the State. To make sure we have the latest information, we need YOU! Please submit articles about events and happenings in your area to the newsletter editor Dave Bowers. We will include all appropriate articles depending on space constraints.

Articles should be 175 words or less. Longer articles may be submitted but may be edited or omitted due to space constraints. Feel free to include pictures. All articles need to be in to Dave no later than the middle of the month prior to the beginning of the quarter. March for April publication, June for July publication, September for October publication and December for January publication.



Photo © David Bowers

Send articles or photos (with people identified) to Dave Bowers at dtbowers53@gmail.com. I can also be reached by cell phone at 517-974-3351

Photo of lab belonging to Amy Trotter

Deputy Director of Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)

Many Thanks to ITC for their 2014, 2015 and 2016 Michigan State Convention Sponsorship! Their support helps us continue the DU Mission through our volunteers!

