

GREAT LAKES/ATLANTIC REGION

LIVING LAKES INITIATIVE

★ **HAMDEN SLOUGH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

In the spring 2021, Ducks Unlimited helped the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) enhance 200 acres of wetland habitat on the Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), located near Audubon, MN. DU engineers designed and oversaw the rebuild of a berm, and the construction of four variable-crest water level control structures to enhance five large wetland basins on the property. These structures will help the USFWS better manage water levels to improve wetland habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. One basin will have the capacity to hold more water, thereby allowing it to resist hybrid cattail better. Funding was provided through a state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams

Outdoor Heritage Council, a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, and private philanthropic donations from DU Living Lakes Initiative Major Sponsors, including the Dallas & Louise Anderson Foundation.



★ **WARD LAKE ENHANCED AND WETLANDS RESTORED**

In 2019, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) legally designated Ward Lake, located in Sibley County, as Minnesota's 60th Wildlife Management Lake. DU enhanced the 216-acre shallow lake by replacing a failed water-level control structure on the lake's outlet, which Minnesota DNR will use to manage water levels to improve duck brood-rearing and migration habitat. In 2021, DU restored five drained prairie pothole wetlands totaling 20 acres on Ward Lake Wildlife Management Area to restore duck breeding habitat. This work was funded through a 2017 state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, foundation and corporate partners and DU Living Lakes Initiative Major Sponsors.

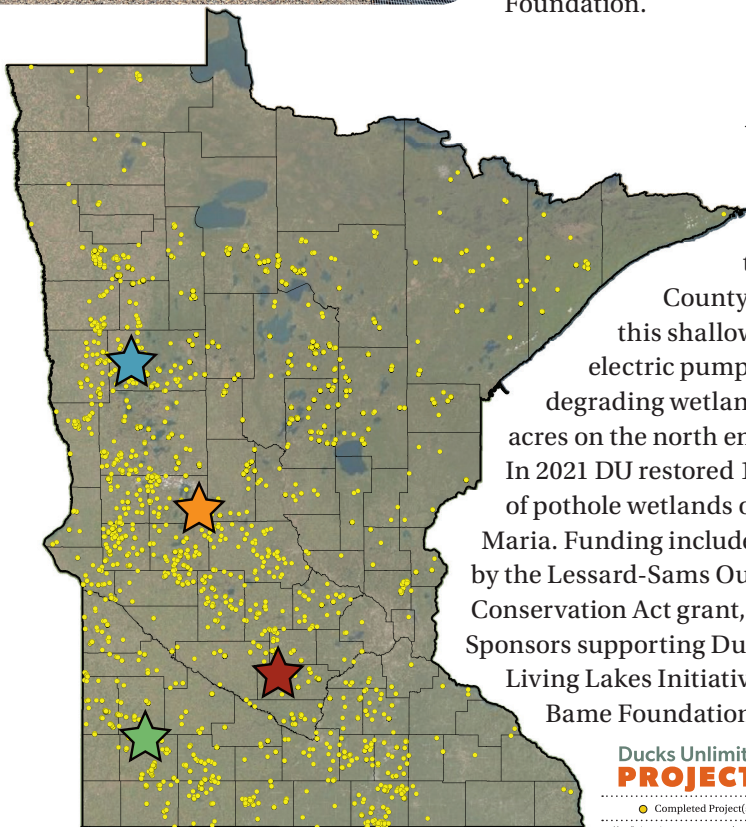
★ **LAKE MARIA**

Ducks Unlimited engineered and installed a new electric pump system and water level control weir structure and upgraded the existing electric fish barrier on the outlet of 425-acre Lake Maria north of Slayton in Murray County in 2021. DU previously helped the Minnesota DNR enhance this shallow lake in 2005; however, safety and efficacy upgrades to the electric pump were required to more effectively keep invasive carp from degrading wetland habitat. To help buffer the lake, DU also purchased 136 acres on the north end of Lake Maria as an addition to the Lake Maria state WMA. In 2021 DU restored 108 acres of uplands to native prairie plants and eight acres of pothole wetlands on the parcel to provide duck breeding habitat around Lake Maria. Funding included a state Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriation recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, and private Major Sponsors supporting Ducks Unlimited's Living Lakes Initiative, including the Bame Foundation.

Ducks Unlimited  
**PROJECTS**

● Completed Project(s)

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



## ★ **ORANGE WPA WETLANDS RESTORED & ENHANCED**

**D**ucks Unlimited biologists and engineers collaborated in 2021 to collectively restore and enhance 186 acres of wetland habitat on 431-acre Orange Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) and adjacent private land in Douglas County east of Alexandria, MN. DU engineers designed and managed construction of two variable-crest water level control structures to restore 130 acres of wetlands in 16 basins on the WPA, which was previously drained for agricultural use. These water control structures will allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to better manage the wetland habitat for migratory birds. This project was over a decade in the making, with many of the wetlands extending onto private property that required easements from adjacent private landowners to permit wetland restorations.



Additionally, DU and USFWS biologists worked together to enhance an additional 56 wetland acres in 32 small pothole basins on Orange WPA in fall 2021. Wetland habitat was enhanced through the scraping of accumulated sediment, the building of ditch plugs across the outlets of drained wetlands, and the removal of drain tile. Woody vegetation was removed from upland habitat to make the area more attractive to upland-nesting ducks and other migratory birds. These smaller temporary and seasonal wetland basins will complement the larger restorations done on the WPA to provide ducks with more optimal habitat they need for breeding, brood-rearing, and migration.

This work was funded by a state appropriation from Minnesota's Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, and contributions from private Major Sponsors supporting Ducks Unlimited's Living Lakes Initiative.

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### **Minnesota by the Numbers**

**2021**

- 30 projects
- 23,277 acres conserved



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

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT US ONLINE AT [WWW.DUCKS.ORG/MINNESOTA](http://WWW.DUCKS.ORG/MINNESOTA)



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