

NEW JERSEY & PENNSYLVANIA

2019 CONSERVATION REPORT



PRESQUE ISLE INVASIVES FIGHT CONTINUES

Erie County, PA

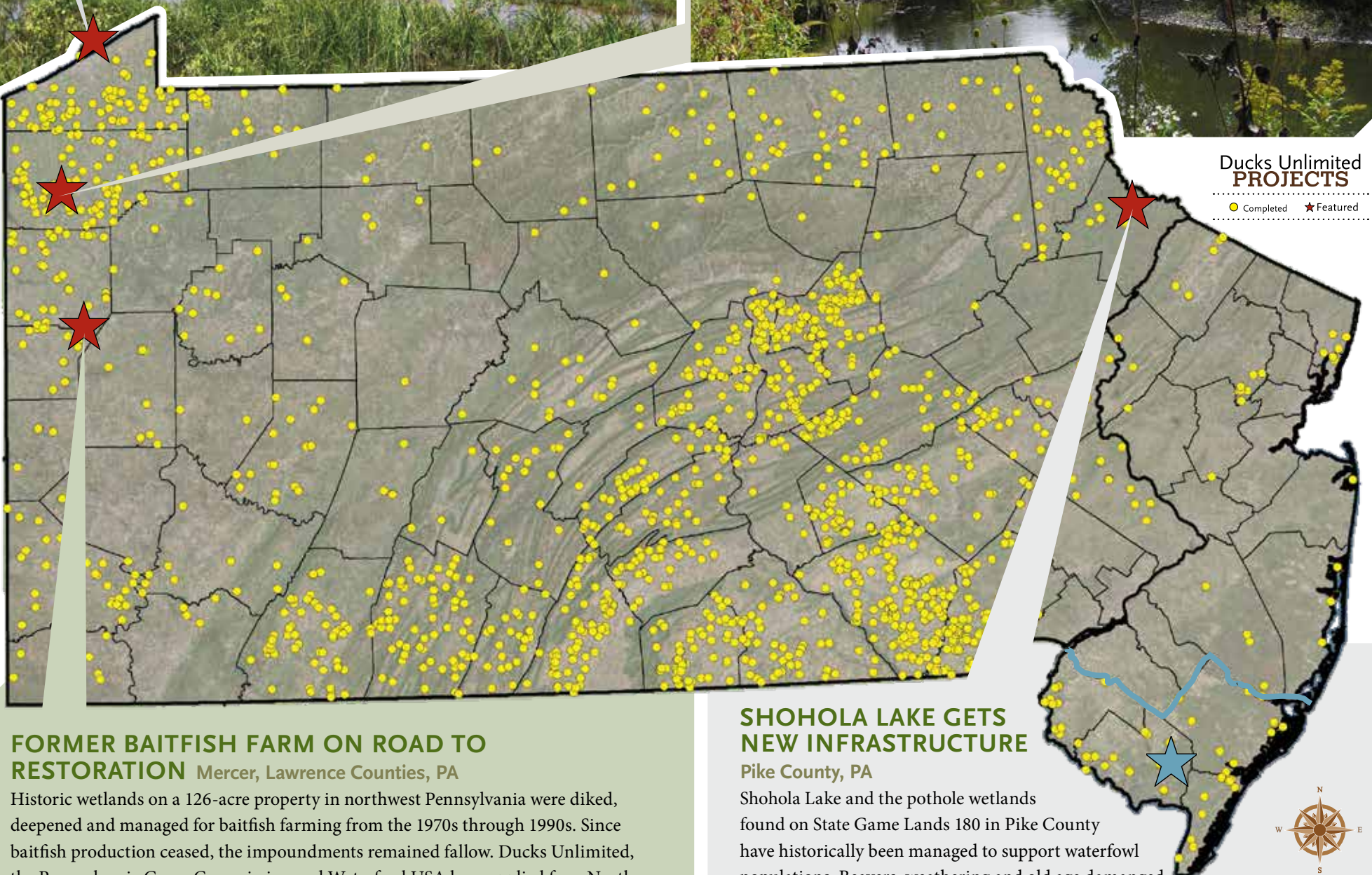
Ducks Unlimited and its partners are returning to Presque Isle State Park to continue fighting invasive plant species at the 3,200-acre park in northwest Pennsylvania. More than 800 acres of coastal wetland habitat will be targeted over the next three years, as the partnership seeks to eradicate phragmites, narrow-leaved cattail and hybrid cattail. This follows the first two phases of invasive removal, which saw 1,200 acres of coastal marsh enhanced. Presque Isle is an important stopover for waterfowl and waterbirds in northwest Pennsylvania, and phragmites alone can limit the growth of 80 rare coastal plants in the park. All phases were funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Federation Sustain Our Great Lakes grant. Partners include Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Regional Science Consortium, Erie Bird Observatory, California University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University, and Environment Erie.



FRENCH CREEK PROTECTED LANDS TO GROW

Crawford, Erie Counties, PA

A consortium of partners has submitted a North American Wetlands Conservation Act proposal to acquire and permanently protect 207 acres of wetlands and 154 acres of associated upland habitat in the French Creek Watershed. If successful, the two parcels will benefit migrating ducks and other wetland-dependent wildlife. French Creek is one of the most ecologically significant waterways in Pennsylvania. It contains more species of fish and freshwater mussels than any other comparably-sized stream in the Commonwealth and across the northeastern United States. Partners include Ducks Unlimited, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Richard King Mellon Foundation and Northwest Pennsylvania Duck Hunters Association.



FORMER BAITFISH FARM ON ROAD TO RESTORATION

Mercer, Lawrence Counties, PA

Historic wetlands on a 126-acre property in northwest Pennsylvania were diked, deepened and managed for baitfish farming from the 1970s through 1990s. Since baitfish production ceased, the impoundments remained fallow. Ducks Unlimited, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Waterfowl USA have applied for a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant to acquire and permanently protect the land by adding it to the 1,438-acre State Game Lands 151. Once acquired, partners will seek funds to restore the functions and values these degraded wetlands once provided and increase diversity of wetland dependent wildlife.



SHOHOLA LAKE GETS NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

Pike County, PA

Shohola Lake and the pothole wetlands found on State Game Lands 180 in Pike County have historically been managed to support waterfowl populations. Beavers, weathering and old age damaged infrastructure at a four-acre impoundment preventing managers from properly raising and lowering water levels. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited partnered with the Pennsylvania Game Commission to enhance 19 acres of prime wetland and grassland habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl by replacing water-control structures, pipes and levees.





Conservation Spotlight: ANOTHER 1,700 ACRES OF COASTAL NEW JERSEY TO BE IMPROVED

After conserving more than 7,600 acres of coastal wetlands, Ducks Unlimited and several partners aren't slowing down on protecting bird habitat along the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Coast of New Jersey.

The third phase of the Southeast New Jersey Coastal Initiative, a \$4 million effort to protect or enhance an additional 1,772 acres, is rolling along.

The initiative was established in 2013 to protect, restore and enhance critical coastal wetland habitat. New Jersey's tidal marshes support 60 percent of American Black Ducks and half of the Atlantic Brant wintering populations in the Atlantic Flyway. They also support more than one-third of the regional breeding population for many other species of greatest conservation need.

Jim Feaga, Ducks Unlimited regional biologist in New Jersey, said these coastal habitats are sandwiched by threats on two fronts. "Much of New Jersey is heavily urbanized. It's the most densely populated state and nearly 40 percent of its historic wetlands have been lost," he said.

Off shore, rising sea levels mean increased damage to coastal habitats from extreme weather events, which will affect natural resources for generations.

Much of the third phase of the project includes acquiring intact wetlands systems and marsh migration areas, protecting them from future development in Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties.

The wetlands will become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, State Wildlife Management Areas or various state and nonprofit preserves that will be open to public access. Opportunities for the public include outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching and research.

Brian Braudis is refuge manager at Cape May and Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuges for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He said the people go where the birds are, and the Southeast New Jersey Coastal Initiative brings people to these refuges.

"Cape May is a big birding hot spot. Whether you're hunting, hiking or bird watching, everything is centered around birds. The restoration of these habitats will make sure the birds are here."

The project is funded by a \$1 million North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant and \$3 million in match by Ducks Unlimited, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, The Nature Conservancy, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, New Jersey Natural Lands Trust, New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee, South Jersey Land and Water Trust and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



NJ/PA BY THE NUMBERS

2018

- 10 projects
- 3,540 acres conserved
- \$1.53 million invested
- 258 projects
- 47,096 acres conserved
- \$20.8 million invested

Learn more at www.ducks.org/new-jersey
and www.ducks.org/pennsylvania

HISTORICAL

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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.**



**GREAT LAKES &
ATLANTIC REGION**

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