

New Jersey and Pennsylvania

2021 CONSERVATION REPORT



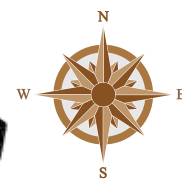
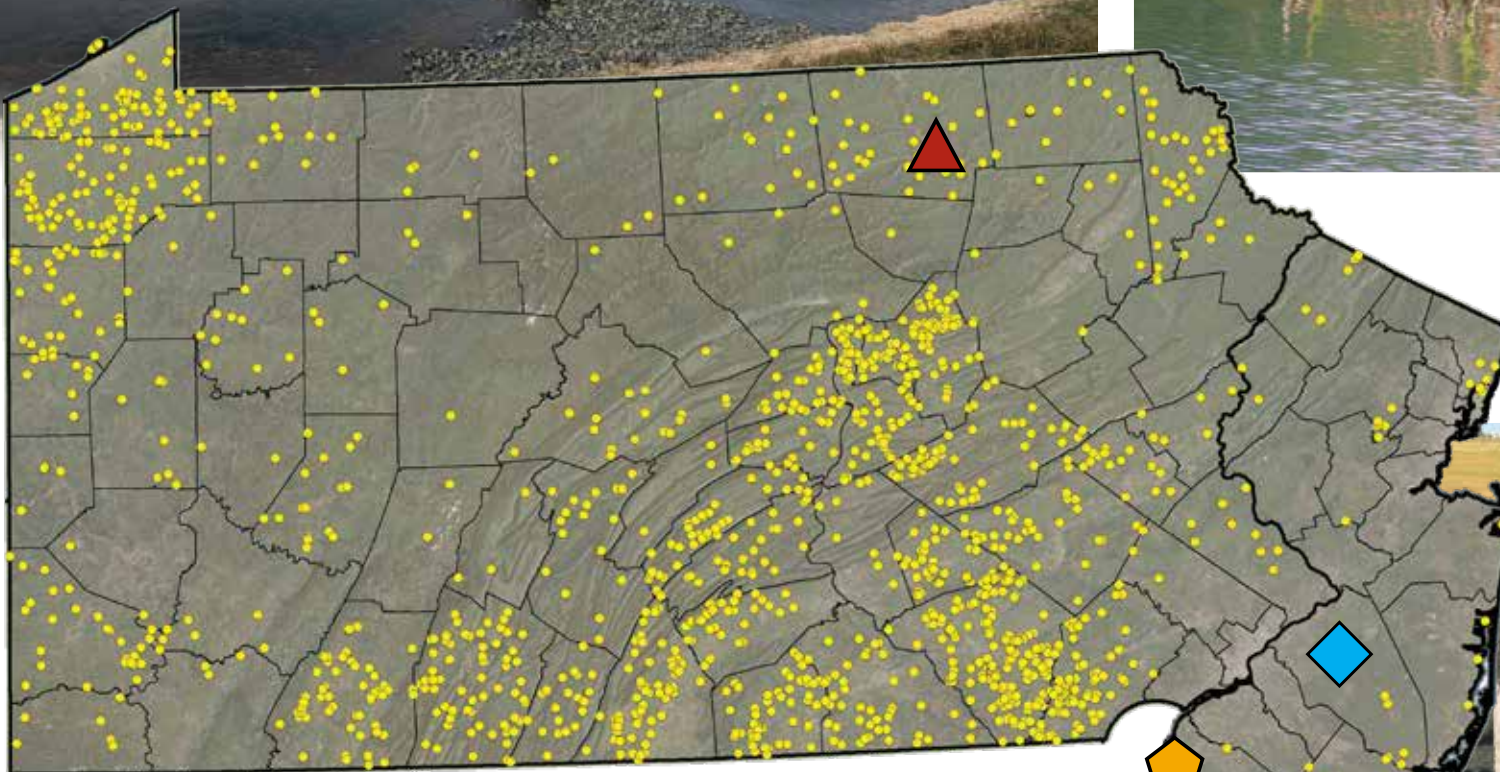
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC LANDS GET A BOOST *Bradford County, Pennsylvania*

Ducks Unlimited and Cargill Corp. are covering new ground in their innovative, hands-on conservation partnership in the north Atlantic Region. Ducks Unlimited used Cargill funding to enhance Shepherds Pond Waterfowl Management Area, a 38-acre site part of State Games Land (SGL) 250 in Bradford County. The enhancement will improve waterfowl nesting, brood-rearing and migratory habitat. Shepherds Pond has been overrun with invasive species. The Cargill funding enables DU to help the Pennsylvania Game Commission replace a failing water-control structure. The property is popular for sportsmen and women and is an important public access location, with 98% of SGL 250 one mile or less from a public access point. The land is popular for hunters seeking deer, turkey, ruffed grouse and other game.






FORMER CRANBERRY FARM GETS NEW LIFE *Burlington County, New Jersey*

A nearly 500-acre stretch of crucial birding habitat in central New Jersey is in process of being acquired, protected and eventually restored to prime wetland habitat. New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, the Open Space Institute, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, will purchase 186 acres of former cranberry farm property along the south branch Rancocas Creek. The landowner is exiting the cranberry industry and wants the land permanently preserved. DU and NJCF will explore future restoration efforts on site. If approved, a second NAWCA proposal submitted by project partners last year would protect an additional 303 acres of neighboring property. The overall property includes several miles of streams. It's breeding habitat for American black duck, mallard and northern pintail, and other priority species that use this area include American wigeon, wood duck, ring-necked duck, common and hooded mergansers and blue-winged teal.



Ducks Unlimited PROJECTS

 Completed   Featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.

SUPAWNA MEADOWS NWR SHOWS IMPACT OF SEA LEVEL RISE *Salem County, New Jersey*

Ducks Unlimited is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and several partners, utilizing a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund grant, to help restore 430 acres of tidal marsh at Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware Bay. The refuge's 2,200-acre tidal marsh is threatened by human development, which is negatively impacting natural water flow. A hurricane in the 1930s breached a historic dike used to prevent erosion, flooding the marsh and changing vegetation. The project is an opportunity to regain some of the historic degradation of Delaware Estuary coastal wetlands caused by climate change and sea level rise. Tidal wetlands provide fish and wildlife habitat, natural water quality improvement, flood storage and shoreline erosion projection. These 430 acres are former agriculture land, being returned to natural habitat. The project design plans and permitting is expected to be completed in 2021. Project partners will then seek additional funding for construction.



REEDS BEACH IMPROVEMENTS HELP TIDAL MARSH *Cape May County, New Jersey*

Ducks Unlimited in 2020 helped the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) improve 60 acres of tidal marsh at Reeds Beach in Cape May National Wildlife Refuge along the Delaware Bay. The refuge's 100-acre tidal marsh unit is threatened by the effects of sea level rise, severe storms and man-made modifications to the hydrology of the marsh. DU and USFWS improved tidal water flow and flushing of the marsh by improving more than 9,000 feet of tidal ditches. This habitat restoration will improve vegetation health and provide enhanced habitat for wildlife including American black ducks, saltmarsh sparrows, fish and shellfish. Funding was provided in part by the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



EXPANSIVE CONSERVATION EFFORT TO LAUNCH ACROSS NORTHERN PENNSYLVANIA

Ducks Unlimited and several partners have received initial approval on a \$1 million North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant to protect, enhance or restore 1,675 acres of endangered wetland habitat across northern Pennsylvania. This is the first \$1 million NAWCA grant for the state, and the largest single grant for DU in Pennsylvania.

The state has already lost more than half of its historic wetland resources since the late 1700s. This project would conserve high-quality nesting, stopover and wintering habitat across northern Pennsylvania.

Wetlands across northern Pennsylvania are dispersed and often small but play an incredible role in sustaining the biodiversity of the state. They support a migratory pathway for every migratory waterfowl found away from the Atlantic Coast.

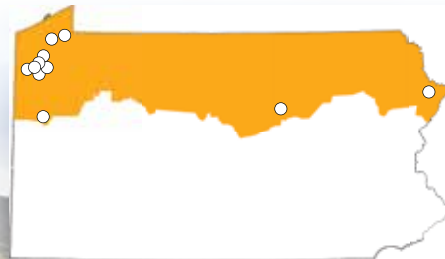
The conservation efforts spread across 12 sites are possible because of \$2.1 million in matching funds from numerous partners: Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennvest, Lycoming County, S. Kent Rockwell Foundation, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, French Creek Valley Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“Constant threats of development, runoff, climate change and habitat loss place a significant burden of importance to wetlands and buffering upland habitats in the state,” said Jim Feaga, DU regional biologist in Pennsylvania. “Once habitats are affected by these threats, it is usually too expensive to restore sites, and lands that are developed are unlikely to provide future habitat for wildlife. That’s why it’s crucial we save them while we can.”

This program would add to the 30,000 acres of conservation already achieved by Ducks Unlimited and partners in Pennsylvania.

In addition to directly providing habitat for waterfowl, the work will improve storm water retention, flood abatement and ground water refilling. The projects also will increase recreational opportunities that will bring along jobs associated with ecotourism and habitat conservation. All the properties offer myriad of outdoor recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, biking, and birdwatching. This proposal will provide ample recreation opportunities and hopefully increase the numbers of hunters and outdoors enthusiasts in the state.

Final approval of the grant is expected in spring 2021.



Grant project area
Project location



DU JOINS EASTERN MALLARD TRACKING STUDY

Ducks Unlimited is joining several partners to further study the decline in recent years of the eastern mallard population. During the mid-1990s, eastern mallard breeding populations peaked at approximately 1.4 million breeding birds followed by a steady decline of approximately 1% annually to 1.05 million in 2019.

Although the overall trend is worrisome to managers, the greater concern is that the sub-population of breeding mallards in the northeastern US has declined by an estimated 36% over the past 20 years, while the sub-population in eastern Canada has remained relatively stable.



Scientists and managers have posed a variety of explanations as to why eastern mallards have been declining. But to manage the population more effectively, scientists need more reliable estimates of productivity and seasonal survival.

The collaborative project will tag 150 female mallards in eastern Canada and 450 adult females in the U.S. portion of the eastern mallard range with Global Positioning System transmitters to better understand demographic rates, migration chronology, and habitat usage differences between the two sub-populations throughout the annual cycle.

In addition to the benefits of this project for mallard management, the project may also have implications for American black duck management. The timing of this project will coincide with a similar large-scale marking effort of American black ducks in eastern North America.

The \$1 million project is in planning phases in 2021, with plans to track birds in early 2022.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Complete enhancement of 180 acres at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. (Philadelphia County, Penn.)
- Submit \$1 million NAWCA grant for 1,200-acre project in Long Island and New York City area. (Bronx, Kings, Queens, Richmond, Suffolk Counties)
- Complete construction on Pennsylvania State Game Lands 151, SGL 284, and Pymatunuing Education Wetland (Lawrence, Mercer and Crawford Counties, Penn.)
- Complete survey, designs and permitting for 126-acre Hohmann Tract project on Pennsylvania State Game Lands 151 (Mercer County)

By the Numbers

2020	HISTORICAL
• 300 acres	• 48,336 acres
• 4 projects	• 3,116 projects
• \$775,145 invested	• \$22,389,549 invested

For more information in your state visit www.ducks.org

New Jersey/Pennsylvania Conservation Staff



◀ **JIM FEAGA**, Regional Biologist
Contact: jfeaga@ducks.org • 717.965.3144

Tamara Jameson, Regional Engineer
Gregg Bachman, Senior Engineering Tech
Jeff Duncan, Senior Engineering Tech
Jade Phillips, Senior Engineering Tech

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 IN YOUR STATE VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.DUCKS.ORG



GREAT LAKES & ATLANTIC REGION

7322 Newman Blvd., Building 1, Dexter, MI 48130
Phone number: 734.623.2000