Ducks Unlimited Turns 70

In 2007, Ducks Unlimited celebrates seven decades of conserving North America’s wetlands and waterfowl

By Bill Nichol

This is a big year for DU. On top of its usual conservation work, field research, and fund-raising events, Ducks Unlimited commemorates its 70th anniversary in 2007. For DU and its supporters—especially its incredibly dedicated and hardworking volunteers—reaching this milestone is a source of pride and cause for celebration. This is especially true considering that war, recession, and periods of continental drought did not always make the road to 70 a smooth one. Yet, through good times and bad, Ducks Unlimited has endured and remains focused on a single mission: to conserve North America’s waterfowl populations and the habitats they depend on.

In addition to being long-lived, this mission has become widespread. During the past seven decades, DU has expanded its conservation work from Canada into the United States and Mexico and grown its membership to a current total of 800,000 throughout North America. As member numbers have increased over the years so have the number of acres conserved. On the eve of 2007, DU has conserved, enhanced, or restored more than 11.6 million acres of critical waterfowl habitat in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

In light of these long-term successes, this 70th anniversary is an appropriate occasion to recognize DU’s people and partners and recount the organization’s history and benchmark achievements.

The Birth of Ducks Unlimited

At the time of Ducks Unlimited’s founding, North America’s waterfowl were in desperate need of help. In the 1930s, several years of inadequate rainfall parched the potholes of the Great Plains states and Prairie Canada. Such an extended drought reduced these key breeding habitats to dusty basins and depressed duck and goose populations to new lows.

National Headquarters, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
One Waterfowl Way
Memphis, Tennessee 38120

Continued on page 6...
Ducks Benefit From Big Jump In Winter Wheat Plantings

Ducks Unlimited (DU) winter cereal program had a productive year in 2006. Northern Plains producers substantially increased their winter wheat plantings for the 2007 crop. The National Agricultural Statistics Service reported that North Dakota producers increased winter wheat plantings this fall by 85 percent from 200,000 acres last year to 370,000 acres this year and South Dakota producers were up 31 percent to 1.9 million acres.

According to DU Agronomist Blake Vander Vorst, the increase is likely due to the good results producers saw with winter wheat in 2006. “Producers in 2006 experienced very good yields with winter wheat because it matured early and was able to avoid the brunt of the moisture and temperature stress that affected many crops,” Vander Vorst said. The price of winter wheat has also increased to profitable levels this fall. In addition, adequate rainfall in August and September contributed to better than average seeding conditions.

Since winter cereals are less disruptive to spring waterfowl nesting, DU’s winter cereals program offers agricultural producers incentives and training to plant winter cereals and conducts production research and demonstration trials.

Winter wheat also provides a safe nesting environment for upland birds such as ducks and pheasants in a cropland setting. Nest search data from DU Canada shows that fall-seeded winter cereals hatch 18 times more pintail nests than spring seeded cereals and 35 times more hatched nests when considering all duck species. It is great to have a crop that is a win-win for agriculture, conservation and wildlife.
Who Lives in the Duck Factory?
Blue-winged teal (Anas discors)

Average Length: Male 16”, Female 14”
Average Weight: M 1.0 lbs., F 0.8 lbs.
Description: Male blue-winged teal have a slate gray head and neck, a black edged white crescent in front of the eyes and a blackish crown. The breast and sides are tan with dark brown speckles and there is a white spot on the side of the rump. Most of the upper wing coverts are blue-gray, the secondaries form an iridescent green speculum, and the underwing is whitish.

The bill is black and the legs and feet are yellowish to orange. The male has a thin whistled tsee tsee uttered both in flight and when on water.

Female blue-winged teal have a brownish-gray head with a darker crown and eye-stripe. The breast and sides are brown, the upper parts are olive brown, and the upper wing coverts are bluish, but less vibrant than the drake.

The bill is gray-black and the legs are dull yellow-brown. The female has a high-pitched squeak

Breeding: Blue-winged teal breed primarily in the northern prairies and parklands of central North America. Their relative abundance generally increases from west to east and north to south within the prairie pothole region. Nesting habitat includes wetland areas within grasslands, such as shallow marshes, sloughs, flooded ditches, and temporary ponds. Females change breeding sites from year to year in response to changing wetland conditions and lay an average of 10 eggs

Migrating and Wintering: Blue-winged teal are generally the first ducks south in the fall and the last north in the spring. They migrate from the prairie pothole region to wintering areas in Florida, the Caribbean Islands, the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana, Mexico, and Central and South America. Wintering habitats are diverse, including mangrove swamps, fresh and brackish estuaries, and shallow wetlands. In the USA, the highest winter densities occur in southern Texas and peninsular Florida. Blue-winged teal are common in winter from Central America, the Caribbean and South America south to Peru and northeastern Brazil. They also stay regularly in small numbers in the Galapagos Islands, and are vagrants to Chile, southeastern Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. (Scott and Carbonell, 1986)

Population: The 2001 breeding population survey for blue-winged teal was 5.8 million birds. This is a 23% decrease from last year’s record estimate of 7.4 million, but above the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) goal of 4.7 million. Blue-winged teal have the highest annual mortality rate (reaching 65%) of all the dabbling ducks, possibly as a result of hunting and long over-ocean migration

Food habits: Blue-winged teal dabble to feed on vegetative parts of aquatic plants (algae, duckweeds, pondweeds, etc.), seeds (sedges, pondweeds, grasses, etc.), and large amounts of aquatic invertebrates found in shallowly flooded wetlands.

Photo By: Joe Fladeland
State Chairman’s Message

By Herb Dittus

Greetings to all DU members across North Dakota. As we start the 2007 season, we can hope for continued prosperity and good health for everyone. For the ducks, let’s hope for plenty of snow or rain to refill the dried up potholes across most of the state.

Reflecting back, 2006 was a good year for our family. After raising two sons, getting a grandson a year ago, we finally have a girl in the family. Granddaughter Adison was born in March. Living in the same town, you can bet grandpa will have a new hunting and fishing buddy in a few years.

2006 was a good year for Ducks Unlimited in North Dakota too. With the effort of all of the volunteers across the state, DU went well over the $420,000 mark in grassroots income.

The sad part about leaving the old year is that it means the end of another hunting season. Every hunting season is good. This last season was no exception. My son Myles and I did not draw any big game licenses in either North Dakota, or Montana, so we had to settle on hunting pheasants and geese in our area. Despite the drought, pheasants were plentiful, and as always, large numbers of geese showed up in November and December.

In addition to Myles and Chessie “Riley”, and friend Joe Mitzel, I had the opportunity to hunt geese with some great people with ties to Ducks Unlimited. A DU Senior Vice President from Missouri and his friend, former State Chairman of New Mexico, came to Beulah to hunt pheasant and geese. Probably the hunt I will most remember was on the last day of dark goose season in December with ND Regional Director Jeff Essler, Joe Mitzel, and a high school student Joe Fladeland with his trailer full of Avery decoys and blinds. That young man showed us old guys a few new things, especially how those fully flocked goose decoys and good calling does fool geese.

Watching the large migration of ducks and geese crossing our state and seeing the dried potholes, good calling does fool geese. should remind us all of the efforts Ducks Unlimited does to restore and manage the wetlands to best benefit all forms of wildlife. For the small amount of money it takes to become a DU member, every hunter should easily have ties to DU.

As we start the new year, DU is halfway through another fiscal year of fundraising activities at the local chapters. The good news is we are at least $30,000 ahead of last years pace. This is ND’s third year of consecutive significant growth. The better news is, in addition to the regular scheduled spring banquets, we have some new banquets coming up in Kulm and Garrison. All indications and predictions are that DU will have a significantly greater year then last year when ND took home two bronze awards for our grassroots effort. Thank you all for making this happen.

Speaking of new events, by the time this paper gets into circulation, the 70th birthday party hosted by the Steele Committee was held on the 26th of January. Thank you Steele for hosting the party.

A date to put on your calendar for another great DU event is May 18 and 19, in Jamestown for the Coors sponsored 70/70 party. You can enter a raffle at a DU event in ND and win to qualify for one of the 70 big prizes that will be drawn at that event, but anyone can and should attend the function. Betty and I plan to attend on Saturday so I can give my farewell address, ending my two year term as State Chairman. It has been enjoyable serving in the capacity as your state chairman. I did not visit nearly as many chapter banquets as I had planned on. Those chapter committee members I did meet were very dedicated to DU and I wish them great success in their future events.

I will miss the Sunday function as we will leave that day for the National Ducks Unlimited Convention in Anchorage, Alaska. A number of North Dakotans are planning to attend this event. National Conventions are a first class, fun, and exciting from start to finish. I encourage every DU member to attend one in the future.

In closing, Ducks Unlimited in North Dakota is moving forward. Our grassroots income is rising and hopefully it will reach the $600,000 level in the near future. Our state structure has made some progress but we need to fill the heart of NDDU by stepping up to help the conservation effort even more. Under the leadership of the incoming state chairman, Charlie Franzen, the effort to improve the organizational structure will continue. I thank you all for your continued support of this great organization.
For many, Ducks Unlimited is just about ducks. However since the work of Ducks Unlimited doesn’t focus on ducks but rather focuses on habitat, DU’s efforts benefit a multitude of species of plants and animals. The DU biologists know that the prairie habitats, where DU does a lot of its work, is critical to the survival of many species of plants and animals and they pay attention to this in all that they do. This habitat based approach is why DU is appealing to so many supporters and volunteers.

DU is about a lot more than just ducks. If you want proof, just look at the results of the research that DU is conducting on various locations in the Dakota prairies. DU’s research teams monitor specific tracts of grasslands throughout the course of the duck nesting season in search of information helpful to the decision making process that guides DU’s habitat conservation programs. Each year the research turns out information regarding the importance of the prairie ecosystem to a multitude of species.

DU’s research teams are comprised of students from across the continent who have signed on as summer interns with Ducks Unlimited. These researchers literally live on the prairies, spending the entire day engaged in activities that will provide vital information on the nesting story of waterfowl.

The prairies are complex communities of life, co-existing in a myriad of interactions that benefit all. To think that DU’s work focuses only on the success of duck populations is to think that support of DU is only for the duck hunter. DU is for anyone that cares about the future of a healthy prairie and all that live there, including the human species.

Findings of the research team can be found by visiting www.ducks.org, clicking on Where We Work under the Conservation section and then clicking on Prairie Pothole Region from the map that shows up. Once on the Great Plains Regional Office home page look for the Research link on the left side of the screen.

Did You Know?

Want to help the ducks while shopping online?

Go to www.ourgvmall.com/ducks

Order everyday items from nationwide retailers and every purchase you make gets a little more for conservation!
Ducks Unlimited Turns 70  Continued from front cover…

During the same period, printing magnate and avid waterfowler Joseph P. Knapp started the More Game Birds in America Foundation. This organization sought to conserve struggling game bird populations by using science-based game management. In 1935, the foundation initiated the International Wild Duck Census. The first of its kind, the 1935 census was an extensive survey of waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada and the United States. The survey yielded information about the status of waterfowl populations and what geographic areas were most critical for the birds’ survival.

Based on this research, the foundation determined that the majority of North America’s waterfowl are produced in Canada. Foundation members then announced their plans to conserve waterfowl and waterfowl habitat: “There is no escaping the logical conclusion that unless prompt action is taken to preserve Canadian breeding grounds the future of wildfowling in the United States hangs in precarious balance. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the foundation during the past year has begun work on development of a plan for preservation and restoration of Canadian breeding grounds. Ducks Unlimited will be the name of the new foundation.”

Ducks Unlimited was incorporated in Washington, D.C., on January 29, 1937, and More Game Birds founders John A. Hartwell and Arthur M. Bartley became its first president and executive officer, respectively.

Despite its fledgling status, DU soon began significant conservation work. In the spring of 1938, DU engineers broke ground on the first DU habitat project. Using horses, mules, and steam engines, the engineers worked late into the fall to construct two gated dams to impound and regulate water on Big Grass Marsh near Winnipeg, Manitoba. That year DU also completed five other projects on Canadian breeding grounds that encompassed more than 150,000 acres.

DU Takes Flight: 1940s through 1970s

The momentum DU gained during its early years was jeopardized when Canada, and later the United States, entered World War II. Yet, despite wartime shortages on manpower, machinery, and materials, DU Canada completed 103 projects by 1943, conserving more than 1 million acres of wetlands and nesting habitat.

The end of the war ushered in an extended era of prosperity and growth for the United States, Ducks Unlimited, and waterfowl. In 1948, the prairies had the wettest spring in 50 years. This rejuvenation was the beginning of a decade-long trend of wet weather that propelled waterfowl populations to levels not seen since the 1920s. With this duck population boom came a heightened interest in waterfowling and conservation. This new interest became clear in 1956 when the sale of federal duck stamps reached an all-time high of 2,369,940 and when DU for the first time raised more than $500,000 in one year.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of transition and growth at DU. In 1965, DU relocated its national headquarters from New York City to Chicago, and Dale E. Whitesell began his 18-year tenure as Ducks Unlimited’s executive vice president. The same year, DU also held its first membership banquets. In 1974, DU established Ducks Unlimited de Mexico in the interest of conserving important wintering habitat for a variety of waterfowl.

DU’s grassroots events system experienced exponential growth during the 1970s. At the beginning of the decade, DU had 50,000 members. By 1979, DU membership had reached 250,000—representing a fivefold increase in a span of 10 years. Such phenomenal growth would not have been possible without the hard work of DU’s dedicated volunteers, who remain the backbone of the organization’s leadership and fund-raising efforts.

Expanding Conservation: 1980s to the Present

During the 1980s, drought once again depressed waterfowl populations to historic lows. In response to this recurring threat, Ducks Unlimited joined a consortium of private organizations and government agencies to draft the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in 1986.

The plan calls for the partners to pool resources in...
order to restore waterfowl numbers to the benchmark levels of the 1970s. Another positive development for waterfowl was the introduction of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the 1986 Farm Bill. CRP—which provides financial incentives to farmers to retire marginal cropland for 10 or more years—has proved to be one of the most beneficial federal programs in history.

Amid this policy work, DU founded its first regional office in Bismarck, North Dakota, in 1984. Three years later, DU's board members selected Matthew B. Connolly Jr. to succeed Dale Whitesell as executive vice president. During this period, DU's growing impact on regional and national conservation programs led to the establishment of the Western Regional Office in Sacramento, California, in 1987 and a Government Affairs Office in Washington, D.C., in 1989.

DU ended the decade with a pair of major accomplishments. First, the organization's cumulative fund-raising surpassed the $500 million mark. On a broader note, DU helped pass the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) through Congress. To date, NAWCA has supplied federal matching grants for nearly 1,600 projects on wetlands and associated uplands throughout North America.

During the 1990s, DU and the ducks climbed to new heights. This progress started in 1990 with the establishment of the Southern Regional Office in Jackson, Mississippi, and continued two years later when DU relocated its national headquarters to Memphis. In 1991, DU introduced a new way to secure waterfowl habitats through its conservation easement program. The program allows landowners to maintain ownership of their property while placing its habitat under permanent protection from development. This innovation was followed in 1994 by the announcement of DU’s first Intercontinental Conservation Plan. Based on scientific research and sound policy, the plan broadened and integrated local and regional conservation goals into a more comprehensive vision for the whole continent.

Beginning in 1995, duck numbers made substantial leaps, peaking in the fall of 1999 when an estimated 105 million ducks migrated south. DU was also on the move in the late 1990s. During these years, DU’s Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office was established in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the Habitat 2000 campaign strove to reach new levels in cumulative dollars raised, members recruited, and acres conserved. At the end of the decade, Matt Connolly retired and was succeeded by current Executive Vice President D.A. (Don) Young.

DU entered the new millennium on several high notes. In 2001, the Habitat 2000 campaign exceeded each of its goals by surpassing $900 million in funds raised, reaching 757,000 in membership, and conserving more than 9.6 million total acres. Only a year later, Ducks Unlimited conserved its 10 millionth acre.

After passing this milestone, DU confronted the damage Hurricanes Katrina and Rita inflicted on Gulf Coast wetlands in 2005. In response to this unprecedented disaster, Ducks Unlimited pledged $15 million to wetlands restoration efforts in Louisiana.

Most recently, DU launched the Wetlands For Tomorrow campaign in May 2006. This comprehensive campaign seeks to raise $1.7 billion over seven years and focuses on strategic initiatives to save today’s most vulnerable and valuable waterfowl habitats.

In spirit, these goals hark back to those established by Joseph Knapp and his DU cofounders more than 70 years ago. DU Chief Biologist Dr. Bruce Batt agrees, explaining that DU’s perspective, not its mission, has changed over the years. “When DU started out, we were essentially an engineering organization,” Batt says. “We were very localized and focused on wetlands alone. Today, science and research have guided us to take a more comprehensive approach to waterfowl conservation that focuses on whole landscapes. The new approach includes working with farmers on agricultural practices and with lawmakers on forming public policies.”

This combination of tradition and innovation makes DU’s 70th anniversary a good time to look forward as well as back. “Ducks Unlimited’s history is something all DU supporters can take pride in,” notes DU Executive Vice President Don Young. “DU people should not only draw strength and inspiration from our 70 years of extraordinary conservation work, but also stay committed to take on the conservation challenges of today and tomorrow.”
Hunters Asked to Participate in Survey

North Dakota hunters receiving harvest questionnaires are encouraged to complete the surveys and return them to the state Game and Fish Department.

Because of recent expanded hunting opportunities, such as spring light goose seasons and multiple deer tags, hunters are more likely to receive harvest questionnaires for more than one season, said Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird biologist. “We understand that some hunters may receive several surveys in a given year, but we still need folks to fill out and return all questionnaires that are sent to them,” he said.

Small game and waterfowl questionnaires are being mailed to randomly selected North Dakota hunters, said Jerry Gulke, Game and Fish Department data processing coordinator. “Hunters can return the form, or fill it out online at the web address printed on the survey form,” he added. “It only takes a minute and doesn’t cost anything to be completed.”

The survey is used to estimate the number of hunters, amount of hunting activity, and the size of the harvest for a variety of small game and waterfowl species. It is important hunters complete and promptly return the survey, Gulke said, even if they did not hunt or were unsuccessful. “The more surveys we have returned, the better our estimates become, which translates into better management,” he said.

Surveys that are mailed to hunters should not be confused with the Harvest Information Program registration that is required for migratory game bird hunters, Szymanski said. HIP registration is a federal survey and does not provide the more detailed information that is needed from questionnaires that are mailed to hunters.

North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists completed avian influenza testing in wild birds this past fall as part of a nationwide surveillance program designed to provide early detection of highly pathogenic strains in North America. Biologists sampled 941 birds in 35 North Dakota counties from late July through early November. As expected, none of the birds tested positive for highly pathogenic strains, said Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird biologist. Likewise, ongoing surveillance in other states and countries has not detected highly pathogenic avian influenza in North America.

There are 144 strains of avian influenza designated as either highly pathogenic or low pathogenic. The strains scientists were looking to uncover in 2006 were highly pathogenic H5 or H7 strains. “Different strains of avian influenza actually are fairly common in wild birds, especially waterfowl,” Szymanski said. “Just like in people, birds carry various influenza viruses, and they always will.”

There is no conclusive evidence that wild birds can move the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus over great distances. However, Alaska is thought to be the most likely migratory pathway for entry into the United States if infected wild birds can move the virus from continents where H5N1 occurs. Therefore, the department focused sampling on species that were likely to have Alaskan or Siberian connections, and species most likely to mix with them. Species of primary sampling focus were tundra swans, lesser sandhill cranes, pintails, and several species of shorebirds. Other birds sampled were mallards, wigeon, gadwall, green-winged teal, shoveler and scaup.

“Hunters were very cooperative in letting department biologists sample their birds,” Szymanski said. “We also thank swan hunters for calling biologists to schedule sampling, and also for those who stopped at designated offices to have their birds sampled.”

Szymanski said the agency really only fell short of the testing quota on one species – swans – but were also a couple of samples short for cranes. However, given the difficulty in getting samples for these species, and that a strong cold front pushed most birds out of the state by Halloween, the program was deemed successful.

Although highly pathogenic avian influenza hasn’t been found in North America, hunters should always follow common sense guidelines when handling wild game:

- Do not harvest or handle game that appears to be sick.
- Do not eat or drink while cleaning game.
- Wash hands and utensils thoroughly.
- Cook game to a minimum of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Wear rubber or latex gloves when cleaning game.
Duck hunters love getting a banded duck. Shouts of joy and playful claims of “That’s my duck” come from every hunter in the duck blind once a banded duck is downed. Duck hunters proudly display their “jewelry” from duck call lanyards that become duck band necklaces. Ducks Unlimited’s recent research work at its Goebel Ranch complex in the Prairie Pothole Region of South Dakota is helping provide thousands of banded ducks for hunters this season.

Waterfowl hunters, of course, understand the value of data biologists get from duck band reports from hunters lucky enough to kill a banded duck.

This data provides key migration, habitat and age information for individual duck species.

During August and September of 2006, DU biologists banded 4,033 ducks on the ranch. The total included 2,684 blue-winged teals, 720 mallards and 123 pintails among other species. This was the fifth year of duck banding on Goebel Ranch, and it was a record year (by more than 1,500 ducks). The only duck species not to set new records were mallards and lesser scaup. When the number of ducks banded at Goebel Ranch this year is added to two North Dakota locations where DU crews worked, more than 10,000 ducks were banded this year.

Banding ducks on Goebel Ranch and the reported band data helps DU estimate duck species recruitment and survival, as well as learn more about the birds and the habitats they use. A recent analysis of duck band information from ducks banded at Goebel Ranch tells how important these ducks are to Mississippi and Central flyway duck hunters. In five years, hunters in 26 states, one Canadian province and five Central and South American countries took 469 ducks banded on Goebel Ranch.

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<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
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<td>Mallard</td>
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<td>Greenwing Teal</td>
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Species breakdown of ducks banded in 2006 at Goebel (% of total)

Recoveries of Ducks Banded at Ducks Unlimited’s Goebel Ranch, South Dakota
We are proud to announce the 19th Annual Kenmare GooseFest

KENMARE, THE “SNOW GOOSE CAPITAL OF NORTH DAKOTA”, IS THE HUNTING HAVEN OF THE NORTH WITH SNOW GOOSE COUNTS BEING OVER 400,000 BIRDS AT TIMES. CANADA HONKERS ARE BECOMING MORE PREVALENT WITH MANY 12 TO 16 POUNDERS BEING BAGGED.

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thedahlins@hotmail.com

Visit us on-line for the 19th Annual GooseFest Schedule
WWW.KENMAREND.COM

There will be an action packed and time for much fun and learning for all who attend any or all of the activities.

You may participate in any or all activities of the weekend by selecting what you would like to attend and paying the respective fees.
The organizers are finalizing activities now, so you can download the finished schedule and registration form that includes fees at nd.ducks.org in March 2007.

Schedule

Friday May 18th
9:30 AM Fun Trap Shoot held at the Buffalo City Gun Club
1:30 PM NDDU State Council Meeting and Jamestown CVB hosted social at the Gladstone Inn
5:30 PM Coors 70 Prizes for 70 Winners Event at the Gladstone Inn Includes Raffles, Live Auction and Prize Give-Away
10:00 PM “Goose Pit” Social follows the Coors Party

Saturday May 19th
8:00 AM Tour to Woodworth Research Site
1:00 PM NDDU “Goose Pit” and 70th Anniversary social
5:30 PM NDDU Convention Banquet at the Gladstone Inn. “Goose Pit” social follows.

Sunday May 20th
12:30 PM ND Ducks Unlimited Sporting Clays Fun Shoot Held at Capital City Sporting Clays NW of Menoken
Research Field
Season 2007 Approaching

By Dr. Scott Stephens
Director of Conservation Services
Great Plains Regional Office

Although the snow and cold, blustery wind make it hard to think about spring, the researchers at the Great Plains office in Bismarck are already preparing for the research activities that will take place this spring and summer. In order to ensure the effectiveness of DU’s conservation programs on the ground, the response of the birds to the habitat and environmental conditions must be monitored. Thus, once again this spring small crews of 3 – 6 research technicians will strike out across North and South Dakota to locate and monitor nests, capture, mark and band nesting female ducks and band newly hatched ducklings. To date, we have monitored nearly 13,000 duck nests, color-marked nearly 200 adult female ducks and put plasticine leg bands on nearly 2,000 ducklings.

The results of our research to date continue to reinforce the importance of maintaining landscapes dominated by grassland across the Dakotas. Fortunately, many grassland-dominated areas remain where the ducks can achieve high nesting success. However, many challenges exist to maintaining those critical duck production areas. Conversion of native prairie to cropland continues and those pressures will only increase with high crop prices and demand for corn to fuel ethanol plants. Additionally, many CRP acres will expire and demand for cropland threatens maintenance of these fields of restored grassland. We will need everyone’s help in meeting those challenges and maintaining the habitat that is currently out there and has demonstrated its ability to produce ducks, in North Dakota, for thousands of years.

Con Hillman DU Service Tribute

Con Hillman retired in November 2005 following 25 years of service to DU. There are few in ND that don’t know Con as the duck guy or Mr. DU. And rightfully so. Con was instrumental in the grassroots fundraising in ND.

The event was orchestrated by long time friend and volunteer, Wick Corwin of Fargo. He was honored by many family members, friends and from volunteers across the country on September 7th in Bismarck. This event raised nearly $250,000 in pledges and fundraising that night. Quite befitting of a man that worked so hard for the ducks. The money raised from this event is earmarked for the “Grasslands for Tomorrow” initiative right here in the Prairie Pothole Region. A DU project will be dedicated in Hillman’s name in the spring of 2007 at the Edwards Waterfowl Production Area in Cavalier County. The donors names will be inscribed on a brass plaque and placed on a cairn on that site.

It’s not too late to get your name on the plaque, if you are interested in making a donation or pledge please contact Dave Afton at the Great Plains Regional Office in Bismarck at 701-355-3500.
It’s a great way to have fun, meet new people and support your conservation work. There are numerous volunteer opportunities available at DU. DU volunteers work on our more than 4,000 annual fund-raising events across the country. Join the team of nearly 40,000 DU volunteers and help conserve our precious wetlands.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Ducks Unlimited. These dedicated people manage and coordinate our fund-raising events, such as annual local dinner banquets, golf tournaments, a variety of sporting events and sealed bid auctions. You can also volunteer to assist youth members by organizing a Greenwing event. Contact any one of these people so you can join a team in your area now!

David Heringer
ND DU Recruitment Chairman
5225 Apple Creek Drive
Bismarck ND 58504
5225apple@bis.midco.net
701-751-7154

Jeff Essler
ND DU Regional Director
5556 Falconer Drive
Bismarck ND 58504
jessler@ducks.org
701-224-8270

Or clip and mail in this form to:
Jeff Essler
Regional Director
5556 Falconer Drive
Bismarck ND 58504
jessler@ducks.org
701-224-8270
## ND DU Event Calendar

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*All dates and sites are subject to change. Check nd.ducks.org to see most current information.*
We're looking for people that are proud to show support of waterfowl and the hunting heritage. If you are interested in getting a Ducks Unlimited license plate for your North Dakota car or truck, simply fill out the form and mail it to:

Paul Myerchin
Bormann and Myerchin, LLP
418 E Broadway Ave, Ste 240
Bismarck, ND 58501

We'll mail an official sign up form to you. The fee for the Ducks Unlimited plate is $25, of which $15 of the fee goes directly to conservation programs in North Dakota.

Name _________________________________________
Business Name __________________________________
Address ________________________________________
Address ________________________________________
City________________ State ______ Zip ___________
(Do not send money with this form)

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(Do not send money with this form)
DU volunteers are a breed apart

When waterfowl is in your heart, you become a DU member.
When it’s in your soul, you become a DU volunteer.

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