S.D. Ducks Unlimited Celebrates Silver Anniversary

By John Pollmann

A wind-whipped grassy hillside in McPherson County was the site of a dedication ceremony last weekend for a project celebrating the 75th anniversary of Ducks Unlimited in South Dakota. Volunteers and major donors from across the state gathered at the Goebel Ranch north of Ipswich to unveil a commemorative cairn, which overlooks a vast stretch of native prairie and wetlands on the ranch protected from conversion with the purchase of a conservation easement.

An upstart Ducks Unlimited gained its first members from South Dakota in 1938, just a year after the wetlands conservation organization began its work to stem a tide of habitat loss. The project on the Goebel Ranch marks the silver anniversary of that first commitment by South Dakotans to support the DU mission — a fitting location, according to Randy Meidinger, manager of conservation programs and land management in the state.

“The Goebel Ranch exemplifies Ducks Unlimited’s work for habitat conservation,” said Meidinger, who has guided management on the ranch since 2002. “From wetland and grassland restoration and protection to providing access for hunters, the work that we have done here embodies the spirit of the organization and its volunteers.” Since being purchased by DU in

Continued on Page 2
2000, the Goebel Ranch has also been the subject of extensive scientific research, Meidinger added—a central tenet to the organization’s mission to target habitat protection in those places most critical to the lifecycle of waterfowl. Studies on the ranch have helped develop rotational grazing schedules that maximize the potential of both cattle and duck production on working lands, while extensive banding of ducks on the ranch has helped identify the vital connection between South Dakota’s grasslands and wetlands and continental duck production.

“Ducks banded on the ranch have been recovered from all four flyways, in more than 30 states, four Canadian provinces, the Caribbean, Central and South America,” Meidinger said. “The data produced from our banding efforts paints a pretty clear picture on how important this place and the remaining grasslands and wetlands in the Dakotas are on an international level.”

Those supporters on hand at the dedication ceremony banded roughly 50 ducks—primarily blue-winged teal and pintails with a few redhead, mallards and even a green-winged teal in the mix—adding to the more than 25,000 ducks that have been banded on the Goebel Ranch.

Among those tending to a newly banded duck was Jeff Heidelbauer, state chairman for South Dakota Ducks Unlimited.

“I fell in love with this place the first time I came up here for a visit,” Heidelbauer said. “To see a working ranch where cattle and producer and waterfowl and other wildlife don’t just coexist but thrive—the land is thriving—it truly is a remarkable place.”

Heidelbauer joined the others standing in a line along the shore of a large wetland to release the banded ducks en masse—a great photo opportunity, sure, but more so a poignant gesture of just what the organization has come to represent in the state.

South Dakota Ducks Unlimited celebrated its 75th anniversary with a dedication ceremony last weekend at the Goebel Ranch, the organization’s flagship property near Ipswich. Supporters and major donors capped the day by banding ducks on one of the wetlands that dot the property. Photo courtesy of John Pollmann

Silver Anniversary

Continued from Page 1
The beginning of a new fiscal year for Ducks Unlimited brought about a significant change to the regional director position for South Dakota. Beginning July 1, Don Thorpe began handling the bulk of the responsibilities in the state with Robert Hathaway picking up the balance in the Black Hills area.

Saying goodbye to South Dakota—but not to Ducks Unlimited—is Brad Jensen, who previously worked with chapters primarily in the northeast part of the state. Brad will now shift his focus from his recent work in Watertown, Big Stone, Kranzburg and Clear Lake to chapters in western Minnesota, where he has also been working for the past several years. Brad will continue to live in Watertown, however, so he doesn’t have to worry about buying a non-resident license for his favorite fishing holes and waterfowl hotspots.

Brad started as a regional director in North Dakota 17 years ago after being an active volunteer in Aberdeen. His many accomplishments for South Dakota include starting new chapters in Eureka, Kingsbury County, Lake City, Big Stone, Kranzburg, Milbank, Mina and at South Dakota State University. Always one to be creative and embrace new ideas and concepts when fundraising for the ducks, Brad was responsible for organizing the first Waterfowl Hunters Party in the country, the first Sportsman’s Night Out in South Dakota and the first ever Gun Bash last spring in Watertown, which was a huge success. In addition, under Brad’s guidance the Watertown Committee twice achieved Top 20 status in the Region, which was a first for any South Dakota chapter. He has also followed up his work with Ducks Unlimited with his own financial contributions and has attained the level of Life Sponsor in Perpetuity.

His achievements have also been recognized by Ducks Unlimited with the Grand Slam Award the past 2 years for growth in income, total volunteers, total event attendance and new events. He also was a member of the $100,000.00 Club this past year—an honor reserved for those regional directors who saw an increase of $100,000.00 or more over the previous year in funds raised. This is money that ultimately benefits habitat projects across North America.

Brad most definitely has the gift for building relationships with people, which allowed him to nurture new contacts into long-term friendships. This gift served him well as he started new chapters, built up existing committees and ultimately led to successful events. His sense of humor kept things fun, and the occasional “Volunteer Appreciation” party was always a good time.

While we will miss seeing and working with him on a regular basis, South Dakota Ducks Unlimited wishes Brad Jensen well in his redefined role. As our resident “FOG” within the ranks of Ducks Unlimited, we will also miss his leadership and experience. We look forward to his eventual retirement and the move back to the ranks of a DU Volunteer.

**Regional Director Changes**

Brad Jensen Says goodbye to his Regional Director duties

Brad as a Greenwing

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Great weather, excellent fishing and spirited camaraderie once again dominated the agenda this year during the third Life Sponsor Rendezvous. Attendees at this year’s event, which was held June 26-28 at Spring Creek Lodge near the waters of Lake Oahe north of Pierre, included major Ducks Unlimited donors and candidates from South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota and Wyoming.

A beautiful view of the Lake Oahe reservoir served as the backdrop for a fine evening meal – and a cold libation or two - at the lodge the first evening, after which event organizer John Cooper assigned fishermen to their boat captains and explained the rules for the fishing competition starting the next morning. As usual, Coop did an exceptional job of organizing and facilitating the rendezvous again this year.

Anticipation ran high at the boat launch the next morning, as everyone was excited to get on the water and try their luck with the walleyes, smallmouth bass and northern pike. A liberal application of sunscreen was very necessary as the weather was perfect for a day on the water and try their luck with walleyes, smallmouth bass and northern pike. A liberal application of sunscreen was very necessary as the weather was perfect for a day on the water and try their luck with walleyes, smallmouth bass and northern pike.

At the end of the afternoon everyone headed in to clean fish. We handed over some of our fillets to the lodge kitchen for dinner that night and prepared the rest to go home for future enjoyment. At 6:30 pm everyone assembled in the lodge for a social hour and a brief program. Jim Ringelman made his last, official conservation presentation as a Ducks Unlimited scientist before retiring. It was a very important and timely topic concerning public policy and the Prairie Pothole Region. Following Jim’s presentation, Adam DeHaan, DU Director of Development, discussed the significance of being a Ducks Unlimited Major Donor.

After Adam’s presentation, I had the privilege of assisting him in presenting a Life Sponsor plaque to John and Vera Cooper for having completed their Life Sponsor pledge. In addition, Adam and DU board member Howard Johnson presented a Diamond Life Sponsor plaque to Rebecca McGee and myself for completion of our pledge, while two new, major donor upgrade pledges were made for Diamond Life Sponsor by John and Vera Cooper and Terry and Lynda Boxdorfer.

The last order of business before dinner was to determine the winners of the fishing raffles. Anglers received one raffle ticket for each qualifying fish in two categories: a walleye over 16 inches; any northern pike or a smallmouth bass over 14 inches. The walleye raffle winner was Doug Jones, while Jim Ringelman was drawn for the bass/northern raffle. It should be mentioned that Jim’s odds were pretty good as he had 12 chances in the bass/northern raffle! The prizes for each raffle were a very nice spinning rod, reel, a spool of fire line and a couple of T-shirts, which were graciously donated by Scott Reed of Pure Fishing, Inc. After the raffle winners were announced, attendees were treated to platter after platter of fresh walleye fillets. A great time was had by all.

A significant number of the group stayed and enjoyed another great day of fishing on Friday. That evening the group was treated to another fresh walleye fry by hosts Rick and Pam Berg, Terry and Lynda Boxdorfer and Don and JoAnn Knoff. The food, cold beer and friendship were a perfect end to the event.

I think that all attendees would agree that the third Oahe Life Sponsor Rendezvous was a success. There were several first time attendees, and I am confident that if you asked them they will say that they plan to return again next year. A special thank you goes out to John Cooper and to the boat captains.

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Even now, after seventeen years of crafting duck and goose calls on his own, Todd Heidelbauer still hears the voice of his mentor and grandfather, Frank, while working on a new call in his shop.

Heidelbauer, 39, took over the call-making business from his grandfather in 1996 after failing health severely limited elder craftsman’s ability to stand and work for long hours.

“I first started helping him finish orders a few years earlier while I was a student at Augustana College,” recalls Heidelbauer, who grew up in Minnesota. “He’d do a few steps of the process, then I’d do those same steps for him. Back and forth we’d go until he knew that I had things figured out.

Anyone who knew my grandpa knows how kind he was, but at the same time he was also meticulous, a perfectionist – a great teacher.”

That attention to detail and pursuit of perfection played a big role in the elder Heidelbauer creating a reputation for crafting a line of calls that were functional, durable and realistic.

Of particular fame was the Mallard Toller – a duck call that Frank Heidelbauer first produced in 1952 and one that grandson Todd still creates today.

Very little has changed in the way a Mallard Toller is crafted, Heidelbauer says – the process, materials, and design – including the signature sounding device that threads into the barrel - have not changed. Even the tools themselves are the same as what his grandfather used over sixty years ago.

“The wood lathe and drill press that I use in the shop are actually the very ones that grandpa started using back in the 1940’s,” says Heidelbauer. “There are certain tools that attach to the lathe and the drill press which grandpa made by hand – they won’t fit on any other machine.”

Support for conservation, too, has remained an integral part of Heidelbauer’s mission and vision for the call company.

“My grandpa was very passionate about ducks and duck hunting and worked very hard to raise money and build awareness of those issues facing waterfowl in South Dakota,” says Heidelbauer. “It’s been very important to me that I continue to do the same.”

To that end, Heidelbauer donates calls or proceeds from the sale of calls to Ducks Unlimited and other organization and their efforts to protect habitat in South Dakota and across North America.

Heidelbauer says that demand for the Mallard Toller from both collectors and hunters remains high, and most of the 100 calls that he makes each year find their way into the hands of a buyer.

A special edition of calls for the 50th anniversary in 2002 was extremely popular, Heidelbauer says, and a run of calls for the 60th anniversary last year sold well, though there are still calls available for purchase.

And those calls made by Grandpa Frank still bring top dollar at auctions and sales: A 1983 version of the Mallard Toller sold at a Ducks Unlimited event in Sioux Falls this spring for $1100.

“Grandpa would have a huge smile on his face to see that his calls are still so popular and helping raise money for the ducks,” says Heidelbauer. “And I think that he would be proud to see that I’m still carrying on the tradition and doing it in a way that honors his craftsmanship and hard work.”

Carrying on that legacy for another forty years is Heidelbauer’s goal – and one that he thinks he can reach with a little help from Grandpa Frank.

“I’ll be 78 years old when the 100th anniversary comes around, and I’m hoping that I’ll still be able to do it,” says Heidelbauer. “When I’m in the shop, I feel like grandpa is still here and a part of it all, and that’s reason enough to keep going.”
As I write this the summer of 2013 has all but disappeared and what spring we had is a distant memory. Yes, winter pretty much robbed us of our typical spring weather, but when the snow and ice melted, we were blessed with excellent water levels across much of the Prairie Pothole Region in the U.S. and Canada.

Mounting losses of Conservation Reserve Program acres, conversion of native prairie to cropland and wetland drainage remain top concerns in South Dakota, and in a way the widespread wet conditions across the Prairie Pothole Region will provide somewhat of an inconvenient smokescreen to those issues facing habitat in our state.

We witnessed an excellent flight of waterfowl returning to the prairie to nest this spring, and a solid breeding effort may mean another record or near-record flight of ducks this fall. But there is no doubt that this is a critical time for grassland and wetland habitat in our state, and Ducks Unlimited is committed to helping preserve that habitat which is necessary to produce flights of ducks for generations to come.

In last spring’s issue of “Fowl Talk” I mentioned that I was planning a trip to Washington, D.C. to attend the Capitol Hill DU Banquet and do some lobbying for conservation on “The Hill”. I learned quite a bit while in our nation’s capital, had the opportunity to meet a lot of influential people within the political and conservation arena, and enjoyed watching the world of politics at work. It turned out to be a neat new experience that was immediately placed in my Ducks Unlimited memory bank.

There were over 500 people and 75 members of Congress in attendance at the lobbying event sponsored by Ducks Unlimited. I would never have guessed that there were so many groups with “conservation” in their name, but there were literally dozens of different organizations present, all taking advantage of our DU event to lobby with anyone who would listen to them talk. South Dakota’s Rep. Kristi Noem and Lynn Tjeerdsma of Senator Thune’s office were both in attendance, and I had the opportunity to visit with them both. I did not, however, win anything at the banquet, as most of the spending was way above my budget level.

The next day on “The Hill,” I paid a visit to Congresswoman Kristi Noem’s office, Senator Tim Johnson’s office and Senator John Thune’s office. Additionally, I accompanied Eric Lindstrom, DU Public Affairs Manager from the Great Plains Regional Office in Bismarck, and a representative of the honeybee industry from North Dakota, in a meeting with a representative from...
N.D. Senator Heidi Heightkamp’s office. Those issues facing wetland and grassland habitat in the Dakotas impact more than ducks, and Ducks Unlimited is taking advantage of the opportunity to partner with anyone who has a common interest to lobby for conservation in Washington. Public and private partnerships have always played a vital role in protecting habitat, and they will remain so as we work through this time of immense challenges.

I would sum up my “Hill” experience by saying that the Senate is pretty well in line with what we consider to be important for conservation, but the House is unfortunately a very different story. What I saw has pretty well played out in the months since I left Washington, D.C., with the battle for a new Farm Bill being the prime example.

The DU National Convention was in late May in Portland, Oregon, and my wife, Rebecca McGee and I joined the other South Dakotans in attendance: Rick and Pam Berg; Kevin Fuerst; Todd Heidelbauer, and Don Thorpe. One of the highlights of the convention happened away from the crowds, when Kevin, Todd, Don and I teamed up with a pair of DU supporters from Montana for a day of sturgeon fishing on the Willamette River. There are two things we will never forget about that day on the river: The first being that it rained hard all day, and the other being the eight-foot long, 450 pound sturgeon that we caught.

Portland proved to be a wonderful place to host a convention with plenty of great restaurants and shops downtown, and as usual the event was a great time to see old friends from around the country. The keynote speaker for the business meeting was the recently appointed Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Sally Jewel. Prior to her appointment, Sally was CEO for the REI sporting goods company. There had been some concern as to how well she would represent us hook-and-bullet folks, but she sold us all with her presentation. I truly believe that she is a great person for the job.

At the national convention, South Dakota was recognized as being one of the top ten states for dollars raised per capita. Proof of our commitment to conservation, this is a category where South Dakota has always shined. George Dunklin from Stuttgart, Arkansas, was elected Ducks Unlimited’s new president, while national delegates elected California’s Paul Bonderson as first vice president. Both gentlemen will hold their respective positions for two years.

In early June I was invited to participate in a “Prairie Summit” that DU organized in Bismarck, which was attended by about 80 people from all across the US and Canada. The attendees represented a large portion of those nonprofit conservation organizations that exist, plus state and federal agencies. The topic of the summit centered around the current – and somewhat unprecedented - pressures on the prairie grassland and wetland ecosystems of the northern plains and included speeches from both North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple and Dan Ashe, Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The second full day of the summit was spent on a bus touring wetland complexes as well as the Bakken oil fields. We also had a great discussion with Don and Edith Bauman, who are agricultural producers in the area we toured. The Bauman’s are very pro-conservation farmers, and their perspective on grassland conversion and wetland drainage was very encouraging. However, Don stated that if the new Farm Bill does not have a conservation compliance provision he believes there will be massive drainage of wetlands simply because the wetlands are viewed as a “nuisance” with today’s farming process. Be sure to read the Prairie Summit Summary article in this issue.

In late June, 28-30 major donors had a great time at the 3rd annual Life Sponsor Rendezvous. See the article and photos for more detail.

Early August found Kevin Fuerst and I attending the National Leadership Conference in Memphis, TN. As usual this event was a great chance to visit with old DU friends from around the country as well as make new ones. The day-and-a-half program was very informative and inspirational.

The weather on August 24 was a very hot and windy day at the Goebel Ranch, but it did not stop approximately 60 hard core Ducks Unlimited supporters from having a great time celebrating the South Dakota Ducks Unlimited 75th Anniversary Major Donor Project Dedication. Keynote speakers included Jeff Vonk, Secretary of the Game, Fish & Parks and Randy Meidinger, manager of the Goebel Ranch. A neat, prairie boulder with the cairn attached was perched on a hill top overlooking a breathtaking expanse of prairie grass and wetlands. Following the dedication ceremony the group participated in duck banding with Randy and Bruce Toay, who manage the ranch together. Everyone had a great time banding blue-winged teal, mallards, pintails, gadwall and even a few redheads. Following the banding activities, the group was treated to a great prairie barbecue courtesy of Jim Girard, Scott Meyers and Scott Longville from the Kingsbury Ducks Unlimited Chapter. The trio pulled their rib cooker all the way from DeSmet and slow cooked ribs all day for us to enjoy. Another treat was the grilled steelhead fillets that Rebecca McGee brought from Washington.

As this fall progresses I will be completing the last few months of my term as state chairman. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have traveled across South Dakota, visiting many parts of the state for the first time and making many new friends in the process. I like to think that due to the dedication of all of the state volunteers we have gained ground in making South Dakota Ducks Unlimited more effective as an organization. I sincerely hope that I am leaving my term with SDDU better than I found it. I promise that I will not disappear but will stay involved and continue to help SDDU carry on its long tradition of raising money for the ducks and helping conserve the great prairie pothole region that we are all blessed to call home. Thank you all for your friendship and support during my tenure as state chairman.
Steve Donovan New Manager of Conservation For South Dakota

Ducks Unlimited has announced that Steve Donovan will be the new manager of conservation programs for South Dakota. Donovan brings with him eight years of experience working for Ducks Unlimited in Nebraska and nine years with the wetlands conservation organization on the West Coast.

During his time in Nebraska, Donovan worked extensively with DU’s vital partner organizations, including the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET), a conservation granting organization, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. In collaboration with these and other groups, Donovan secured many North American Wetland Conservation Act grants for habitat projects along the Platte River and Rainwater Basin – prioritized areas of conservation for Ducks Unlimited. Donovan also oversaw land protection efforts through DU’s revolving habitat fund and fought to protect funding for the NET when it was threatened by the Nebraska legislature.

In handing over the duties to Donovan, former South Dakota manager of conservation Rick Warhurst will take on the primary responsibilities of managing those programs in North Dakota. A champion for Ducks Unlimited’s mission in South Dakota for more than 28 years, Warhurst was integral in developing the partnership among the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to deliver the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in the state. In 2012, DU worked on 89 WRP contracts that will restore or protect 6,081 acres of wetland habitat and 4,344 acres of adjacent upland cover in eastern South Dakota.

To date, Ducks Unlimited has completed 617 projects in South Dakota, 36 of those coming in 2012, representing over $3.3 million invested and over 22,000 acres conserved. Steve Donovan will continue to work with Ducks Unlimited’s partners to make strides in habitat conservation in South Dakota – among the most important grasslands and wetlands for waterfowl in all of North America.

Protecting the “Best of the Best” South Dakota and North Dakota grasslands and wetlands

With its collection of broad grasslands and small, shallow wetlands, the Missouri Coteau region of North Dakota and South Dakota is considered to be the “best of the best” of breeding habitat for waterfowl and other upland nesting birds. Recognizing the importance of this area for continental duck production, Ducks Unlimited has partnered with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to secure conservation easements on 1,026,339 acres of grassland and wetland habitat to date. The conservation easements have been purchased from willing landowners using funds raised by Ducks Unlimited, while the FWS monitors and enforces the terms of the easement.
Change Can Be Good

By John Pollmann

At first the silhouettes crossing above the road didn't catch my attention, but when the second wave of mallards passed over the top of my truck in the soft light of a South Dakota sunset, I knew that I had struck gold. As I came to a stop at the next intersection, I could see lines of mallards rolling out of a cornfield and falling into a low area in the adjacent section. With little light left in the sky, I made notes as to where I thought the birds were landing and raced off to find the landowner.

In the early light of the next morning, I worked my way toward the sound of hen mallards greeting the warm glow of the rising sun. Soon I could hear the ducks begin to lift from the darkness of a marsh in front of me, and I could see their soft outlines against the awakening sky. After several flocks had left, I hustled toward the marsh, but was greeted by an unexpected sight; rather than finding a cattail slough, I stared across an expanse of hay pasture that had flooded from unusually heavy fall rains. The calf-deep water was choked with short grasses that offered little cover to hide in and limited the visibility of the decoys. The situation was not what I expected, but I stuck with my plan, scattered a few decoys in the open pockets and hunkered down on my knees in some of the taller grass. It wasn't long before the first mallards began to return from the field, but instead of bowing up and funneling into the shallow wetland, the birds completely bypassed my spread of decoys. Flock after flock of birds flew directly overhead without missing a wing-beat. The birds weren't flaring off of me; they simply wanted to do something different. It was time for a change.

The Birds Know Best

There's a fine line between duck hunting and bird watching, but there are times when a hunter really needs to watch more and hunt less. When a morning's hunt isn't going as planned, turn an eye to the sky – the answer to your problem might be closer than you think. In the case of this pasture hunt, it became quite clear that I was not where the birds wanted to be. After several flocks had flown over, I quickly made my way to a hill where I could see the mallards piling into a stock pond several hundred yards away within the same pasture. As I glassed the area, I could see several mallards enjoying the morning on the water and dozens more loafing along the edge of the stock pond. There was no way that I could have known that the mallards were using a loafing area when I discovered the birds the night before, but by abandoning my plan and watching their morning activity, I had pieced together an important part of this duck hunting puzzle. With the stock pond full of content mallards and no major changes forecasted for the weather, I elected to head home, grab some gear and hunt the pond the next morning.

Have Gear, Will Follow

There are more options available today than ever before in terms of gear that help hunters adapt to changing conditions. Low-profile layout blinds – like Avery’s popular Finisher Blind – provide concealment for the hunter without disturbing the natural appearance of the area. From harvested soy bean fields to river sandbars to stock ponds surrounded by bare pasture, these low-profile blinds can help hunters reach birds in areas that would otherwise be impossible to hunt. Boats are no different; the Fatboy DP from Momarsh is one of several low-profile boats that both conceals the hunter and melts into the natural outline of the marsh. Whether in the field or on the water, the tools are available to allow the hunter to adapt to the conditions and be where the birds want to be.

Worth the Wait

The steam was still rising from my first cup of coffee the next morning when I saw the mallards returning from the field. With my head slightly lifted out of my lay-out blind, I could see the birds fly directly over the flooded pasture and begin to make their descent upon the stock pond. After one swing out in front of my decoy spread, a lone drake dropped from the group and centered on the pocket directly in front of my blind. With one shot I folded the big greenhead and barely had time to retrieve the duck before the next group of mallards emerged from the skies. Yes, change can be good.
South Dakota Ducks Unlimited members, mark your calendars!

The 2014 South Dakota Ducks Unlimited State Celebration will take place Friday thru Sunday, January 24-26, 2014 at the Watertown Event Center in Watertown, SD. The theme for the upcoming celebration is “Gateway to the Duck Factory” as a salute to the National Convention in St Louis, MO (May 28 - June 1, 2014).

We will close out the SDDU State Celebration with a brunch buffet on Sunday morning.

It is recommended that you make your hotel reservations early. Contact the Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Watertown at (605) 886-8011, and be sure to ask the for DU Convention rate.

A SDDU State Celebration registration form is available in this issue of Fowl Talk, and formal invitations will come out later this fall. But don't wait – you know this event is where you want to be!

See you in January!

2014 South Dakota Ducks Unlimited State Celebration

REGISTRATION

Name _____________________________________________________

Guest _____________________________________________________

Address __________________________________________________

City _______________________________State ______ Zip _________

Phone Number _____________________________________________

Email _____________________________________________________

Greenwings Names & Birthdates ________________________________

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<td>Youth All Days (Age 20 and under)</td>
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Pre-Convention Gun Raffle
1-$5
3-$10
8-$20

Jacuzzi Suite Raffle
1-$5
3-$10
8-$20

Duck Bucks
$75 for $100
$150 for $200
(Duck Buck Incentives TBD)

Total Registration Fee (Please check above) $ _____________

Make checks payable to South Dakota Ducks Unlimited or charge to my:

VISA    MC    AMEX    DISC (circle one)

Account # _______________________________ Exp Date _____/

Signature __________________________________________________

Send completed registration form to
Pam Berg, 108 14th Street NE, Watertown, SD 57401-3442
or sign up on our website http://www.ducks.org/south-dakota

Questions:
Pam Berg – Phone: 605-881-5614 Email: 21berg@wat.midco.net
Kevin Fuerst – Phone: 605-271-1187 Email: sdringneck@hotmail.com

Schedule of Events

Friday, January 24th
1:30 – 7:30 pm: Registration
Evening Session
Camo Party - Come dressed in your favorite hunting attire!
5:00 – 12:00am: Blind Open “The Blind”
6:00 – 10:00pm: Raffles, Games, Silent Auction
6:30 – 8:00pm: Around the World Buffet
10:00 pm: Midnight Social with Friends

Saturday, January 25th
Brunch and Morning Session
9:00 – 11:00am: Convention Registration
10:00 – 11:30am: Conservation Brunch
11:00am – 12:30pm: Conservation Update
12:30 – 1:15pm: State Awards

Sunday, January 26th
Sunday Session Brunch
9:00am – 1:30pm

The Blind
The ever popular FREE DU “BLIND” is back for another year so plan on toasting a few toadies with new and old friends.

Raffles and Duck Bucks
2014 SDDU Convention Stoeger o/u Shotgun 1of 1. Tickets available for $10 each. Can buy multiple chances!
Jacuzzi Raffle, winner receives free deluxe accommodations in one of the Ramkota’s Jacuzzi Suites. Tickets sell for $10 each.
Duck Bucks can be purchased so you can have even more FUN! $75 buys $100 in Duck Bucks. (Duck Bucks are good for most raffles and games).
Raffles are not available for with online registration
Legacy Green Wing Project Dedication

More than 100 people attended the sixth South Dakota Ducks Unlimited Green Wing Legacy Project dedication, held June 15, 2013, near Highmore. Those in attendance included Green Wing Legacy children and their parents as well as representatives from Ducks Unlimited and other state and national conservation organizations.

The project selected for the dedication was the 960-acre Todd Cowan Tract, a property purchased by Ducks Unlimited and federal partners that contains 782 acres of native prairie and 52 acres of wetland habitat. The property, which adjoins the 1,400-acre June Harter Waterfowl Production Area (WPA), is situated in the middle of the Missouri Coteau—an area considered home to some of the most productive breeding habitat remaining in North America for ducks like mallards, northern pintails, blue-winged teal, wigeon and gadwall. In addition to ducks, visitors to the area will find prairie chickens, sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants, mule deer, whitetail deer and numerous other grassland bird species on the 2,360 contiguous acres of prairie habitat.

Speakers at the dedication included Jeff Vonk, Secretary of the Game, Fish and Parks; Clark Dierks, District Manager, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Jeff Heidelbauer, State Chairman Ducks Unlimited; Todd Cowan, previous owner of the property; and Jim Faulstitch of the South Dakota Grassland Coalition. Following the ceremony, attendees were treated to a lunch on the property, which adjoins the 1,400-acre June Harter Waterfowl Production Area (WPA), situated in the middle of the Missouri Coteau—an area considered home to some of the most productive breeding habitat remaining in North America for ducks like mallards, northern pintails, blue-winged teal, wigeon and gadwall. In addition to ducks, visitors to the area will find prairie chickens, sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants, mule deer, whitetail deer and numerous other grassland bird species on the 2,360 contiguous acres of prairie habitat.

A contribution of $15 makes any child under the age of 17 a Greenwing member of Ducks Unlimited, while a child can become a Greenwing Legacy member with a one-time donation of $200. For more information on how you can help a child become a part of the Green Wing Legacy, contact state member with a one-time donation of $200. For more information on how you can help a child become a part of the Green Wing Legacy, contact state member with a one-time donation of $200. For more information on how you can help a child become a part of the Green Wing Legacy, contact state member with a one-time donation of $200.

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Words of Wisdom

By John Pollmann

Out of all the books on waterfowl hunting that line the shelves of my office, there is one in particular that I enjoy reading during the off-season more than all of the others: my own hunting journal.

Now, I'll be honest – I have long ago come to grips with the fact that I am no Gordon MacQuarrie or George “Bird” Grinnell or any one of the other classic waterfowl hunting writers, for that matter. But in terms of a quick read that is sure to transport me back in time to a morning in the marsh, I’ve found that nothing beats paging through the written recollections of my own hunts.

Fittingly, my quest to construct a personal waterfowl hunting narrative began on a trip to the traditional heart of the waterfowl world: Stuttgart, Arkansas. While walking the aisles of Mack’s Prairie Wings, I stumbled upon a leather-bound journal geared toward recording the hunting experience. After the next morning’s hunt, I jotted down a few notes, and months later, when I revisited that trip, I enjoyed reading it so much that I’ve tried my best to keep up with it in the years that have passed.

At times I probably get a little wordy, but most often I try to stick with just the basics - date, weather conditions, location or landowner’s name – often it is all the information I need to spark a memory of a day in the field.

But I’ve also noticed that by revisiting hunts, I start thinking about the nuts and bolts of what happened that day, be it shooting performance or decoy placement, and have been able to make some successful adjustments on future hunts.

Here are a few examples of entries from the past several years and what I’ve noticed:

November 2, 2004 – Mallard Field Hunt – Clear, cold and light winds from NW. Temp in the low 20’s again last night, and the birds did not put on a morning feed. Too cold? The afternoon flight, however, more than made up for a chilly morning of kicking dirt-clods…

My journal has turned out to be the perfect place to connect the dots on a few weather related patterns that tend to throw a wrench in a day’s plans. In this case, I’ve discovered that when the temperature dips into the 20’s at night and there is no threat of snow, the ducks will put on little if any feed in the morning. Playing the odds on this pattern has led to more than one late wake-up call, a leisurely breakfast, and a successful afternoon hunt.

October 25, 2002 – Hofer Waterfowl Production Area – Clear, cool, moderate winds. Hunted the same area as last weekend, but without a doubt, there are new birds that have moved in. Not much in the way of weather this past week that should have moved much around, but there was a marked increase of grey ducks and a nice pocket of mallards on the marsh…

A hunting journal is also a great place to note of “calendar birds,” or those ducks that always seem to materialize at a certain point in the fall. While a journal entry can’t completely take the place of scouting, having a record of time-proven migration patterns can point a hunter in the right direction at the right time. New birds are much more likely to respond to decoys and calling and often arrive just in time to save a hunter from a mid-season lull.

January 22, 2008 – Eastern Shore Honkers and Black Ducks – Overcast, cold, calm. Tomorrow is the first of three days on the Eastern Shore of Maryland gunning for Canada geese and waiting for a chance at a tidal marsh black duck. I’ve never seen a black duck on the wing before – hopefully I don’t miss…

While I did see several black ducks on that trip to Maryland a few years ago, I wasn’t able to add one to the game strap. But when I read those words, written by the light of an old lamp in a farmhouse near Queenstown, I am instantly back on a tidal creek, eyes straining through the brush, ever hopeful to see that unmistakable black against a blue New England sky.

Try putting a pen to paper this fall; you don’t have to be fancy – just the facts. Next off-season, you’ll be glad that you did.