Greetings!

As you will read in this summer’s member newsletter, there is much to be thankful for – banquets and activities are generating needed funds for wetland conservation, the California Conservation Agency recently awarded DU with one of the largest single-day fundraising successes in DU’s 73-year history (totaling $10.2 million in funds awarded), and the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission just approved DU’s Redwood Coast Wetlands Project North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant proposal totaling close to $1 million. Yes, we have much to be thankful for here in California. We are truly blessed!

DU’s 73rd National Convention was just held in Texas on May 26-30. Fishing and tours were plentiful, as were leadership meetings, workshops, flyway parties, and the DU Sporting EXPO. Saturday night’s annual convention reception and banquet was a fun evening for all. If you missed this year’s National Convention, mark your calendar now to attend the 2011 National Convention in Quebec, Canada. These conventions are a great way to bond with fellow DUers – party with your friends, meet new DU people, sightsee, and hear from DU National via business and leadership meetings. There is always a spectacular Saturday night banquet and live auction with unique DU merchandise that is hard to match. Quebec City is a beautiful city with much to see and do. Next year’s National Convention will be held May 25-28.

I encourage each of you to look over the summer events listed in this issue. These events are great ways to support the ducks and the great work that Ducks Unlimited is doing to conserve and restore wetlands.

In closing, I want to touch on the Gulf Coast oil spill. Costal Louisiana is one of DU’s five highest-priority habitats for conservation in North America. If this spill continues for additional weeks or months, numerous shorebirds, waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife will be at serious risk, if they aren’t already. In addition, the oil spill threatens the fishing and tourism industries that rely on the waters of the Gulf as a primary means of income. If you are interested in reading more about the oil spill and/or helping out financially, visit www.ducks.org/conservation.

If you have any feedback or thoughts to share, please contact me at drudgers@frontiernet.net. Thank you again for your DU membership and all you do for the ducks!
FORMER U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICES DIRECTOR TO LEAD DUCKS UNLIMITED

Ducks Unlimited Inc. announced that H. Dale Hall has been named the organization’s new chief executive officer. A former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2005-2009), Hall is widely respected as a visionary conservationist and one of the country’s most effective wildlife professionals.

"We are extremely pleased that Dale Hall is stepping into this key role for Ducks Unlimited," said DU President John R. Pope. "Dale is a consummate conservation leader whose energy, vision and dedication will help our organization meet the serious challenges facing North America's waterfowl. In light of increasing threats to the quantity and quality of our continent's waterfowl habitat, he is uniquely qualified to lead DU at this critical juncture."

During Hall's 31-year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), he served in numerous roles at field office, regional, and national levels. As director, he was responsible for approximately 7,500 USFWS employees working out of the national headquarters and nine regional offices. Before joining the USFWS in 1978, Hall spent four years in the U.S. Air Force, where overseas assignments took him to Italy and the Philippines, and a year managing a commercial aquaculture operation in Mississippi.

Hall holds a master's degree in fisheries science and is the author of numerous published papers on wetlands, fisheries and ecology. He has also taught courses on wetlands identification and delineation. A native of Kentucky, Hall is a lifelong outdoors enthusiast who enjoys hunting and fishing.
CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS

Santa Rosa Wine Country Banquet – March 20
By Rick McGlone, Dinner Chairman

The Santa Rosa Wine Country Banquet was held March 20th at the Friedman Center in Santa Rosa.

It was a great dinner with 135 people in attendance - including six Sponsors and 14 Greenwings. We had a great prime rib dinner served buffet style. There were complimentary wine glasses for everyone to take home. We had an exclusive pouring and Barefoot Wines at our event. You can imagine how well that was received!

Our Committee from left to right: Tyneille Smith, Nathaniel Wilson, Rian Piccolo, Norman Langham, Carol Langham, Rick McGlone, Chester Dilley, David Harrell, Bob Cook, Larry Lennox, Bill Stevens, Nancy Chapman, Crystal McGlong, Jess Hiben

One thing we did differently than in years past was to allow one of our guests, Matt Audis (center) to hold his bachelor party at our event. We set up a special table for the bachelor and his party and gave them a cold bottle of champagne and a bottle of Barefoot wine signed by the winemaker.

Everyone had a good time, and all left the hall with smiles on their faces. There were even some who came up to me after the dinner, shook my hand and said they had a great time and are already looking forward to next year’s dinner.
Wild Game Cooking Demonstration – May 1
By Ann Bakey, California State Ladies Chairman

Ladies from the DU Women for Wetlands Network put on a fabulous wild game cooking demonstration at the Viansa Winery on Saturday, May 1. More than 50 guests were treated to a culinary experience by Chef Lisa Freeman. Our group also heard from Lloyd Davis, Owner and President of Viansa Winery, and Tom Rusert from Sonoma Birding.

The event began with an informative overview of the lovely Viansa Winery and Wetland Preserve by Lloyd. Those of you who have not visited the Viansa Winery, you must stop when you next visit the wine country. The winery has a distinctive Italian atmosphere and charming Old World architecture.

Viansa’s award-winning and exclusive wines embrace Sonoma’s Italian heritage and are a delight to taste! For more information and/or directions to the Viansa Winery, visit www.viansa.com.

What a gracious donor Lloyd is! Not only did he donate the use of his grounds and his new wetland series wine for wine tasting and food pairing, he also gifted each of us with a copy of “The Winemaker’s Marsh”, which is sold in his winery’s gift shop. The book chronicles four seasons in a restored wetland with pictures and text to inspire appreciation for the beauty and complexity of our vanishing wetlands. To write the book, award-winning author Kenneth Brower, equipped with waders and binoculars, established an intimacy with the natural world of the Viansa Marsh as he explored its secret life during four seasons. Award-winning nature photographer Michael Sewell produced all of the pictures to compliment Brower’s text. The Viansa Marsh truly comes alive in this book and is well worth having in your personal book collection. Thank you Lloyd for being such a generous donor and gift giver!
Chef Lisa shared her culinary experience and gave us tips for cooking wild game. She treated us to marinated pheasant breast with fresh garlic and herbs and elk medallions with roasted shallots and balsamic reduction - two wonderful recipes. Then came the duck! Chef Lisa prepared seared mallard, pintail, and spoonbill breast cooked simply in extra virgin olive oil with salt, fresh ground pepper and Italian seasoning. Yum, yum! We also watched Chef Lisa cook a simple goose recipe. The trick to duck and goose, Chef Lisa says, is hot oil and do not over cook! Chef Lisa told us to heat the olive oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat, season the duck or goose with salt and pepper, and then place the breast in the pan and sear until browning begins. Then we are to turn the meat over and sear on the other side. The cooking process should not take longer than 5 minutes. Chef Lisa stressed to not overcook. “You definitely want the game between rare to medium rare, because the duck will continue cooking after you take it out of the pan”, she said.

Chef Lisa’s final recipe was trout with creamy dill sauce. We watched Chef Lisa prepare the fish by removing the head and tail, and slicing the fish in half. She dredged the trout filets in flour and seasoned with salt, fresh ground pepper and Italian seasoning, then cooked the filets in extra virgin olive oil over medium high heat. She told us the trick to presentation is to lay the trout in the pan flesh side down and cook until golden brown (this is the side your guests will see when you plate the trout, so cook it first, then turn over to finish the cooking process). When the fish is cooked (but still firm), we should remove it from the pan and keep it warm while we prepare the creamy dill sauce. For the sauce, Chef Lisa added white wine to the pan and let it reduce, then added lemon juice. After about one minute, she stirred in sour cream, removed the pan from the heat and stirred in butter and dill until the sauce was smooth. Delicious! Viansa’s new marsh wine series was paired with the food that Chef Lisa prepared and all who attended were treated to wine sampling which was generously donated by Lloyd. For more of Chef Lisa Freeman’s recipes, visit www.cheflisafreeman.com.

We also heard from Tom Rusert from Sonoma Birding. He shared that Sonoma Birding was founded in Sonoma Valley in 2004 as a “Citizens Science” volunteer organization. The organization sustains two annual Sonoma Valley Audubon Christmas Bird Counts for adults and children, bird camps, seasonal bird lists, a nature lecture series, classes and other bird and nature-related educational collaborations for all ages. The organization’s primary objective is to foster greater understanding of birds through "Citizen Science" activities. We learned that the "official check list" of the bird species can be seen seasonally in Sonoma Valley and Petaluma Wetlands. The beautiful birding area includes two estuaries, two mountain ranges and the Petaluma, Napa and Sonoma Wetlands.

Tom also shared that every year for more than a century “Christmas Bird Counts” have been run across America during the holiday season. Young children with their families are often not included in this important 24 hour rigorous “Citizen Science” effort, so Sonoma Birding created the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts for Kids... and families. The objective is to have fun and potentially create a “farm team” of birders and conservationists for the future of birding and encourage families to enjoy nature together. It is a wonderfully simple, healthy holiday celebration for almost any school, youth group, Audubon chapter, nature center, wildlife refuge or local community organization. For more information on Sonoma Birding, visit www.sonomabirding.org.
Placerville Banquet – May 13
By Roger Ince, District Chairman

The Placerville DU Dinner was held on May 13 at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds. The 27-member committee worked very hard to make the dinner successful. This year, more than 350 guests came together to support the ducks. Ron and Jeff Thompson, Chairman and Co-Chairman of Placerville DU, were delighted to announce that the dinner netted more than $79,000 for DU. It is their hope to keep Placerville the number one DU Dinner in California.

Committee (not in order of photo) - Ron Thompson, Jeff Thompson, Frank Leonardi, Todd Reynolds, Wayne Trumbly, Jan Hendrickson, Jerry Hansen, Sam Cooper, Jerry Garvin, George Anderson, Roger and Kathy Ince, Jim O’Brien, Mike Degroot, Matt Morgada, Danno Raffetto, Jon Grissom, Mike Erwin, Ralph Erwin, Pat Gregor, Bob Siebert, Jan Young, Pam Howard.

This year the Placerville Chapter had 24 Greenwing members in attendance and signed up another 15 new DU members. Fishing poles, BB guns, backpacks, .22 rifles and a youth model shotgun were raffled off to Greenwing members.

Pictured here is Jeff Thompson, dinner co-chairman, handing gun to lucky Greenwing winner, Grace Hendrickson.
In a special drawing, one very happy winner took home a 2009 Yamaha 550 ATV.

This year the chapter added a special gun drawing in honor of Auctioneer Gene Payne.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Attend a local event in your area and take part in the fun while supporting the mission of Ducks Unlimited! Traveling or vacationing? You can find an event on the Ducks Unlimited Website at www.ca.ducks.org

Livermore – Tri-Valley Dinner – July 24
Tri-Valley is comprised of three adjacent valleys – Amador, Livermore and San Ramon. These valleys are located on the eastern side of the San Francisco Bay Hills. The city of Livermore is the gateway to California’s oldest wine region which is framed by award-winning wineries, farm lands and ranches that mirror the valley’s western heritage. The Livermore-Tri Valley dinner will be held Saturday, July 24, at 5 PM at the Pleasanton Senior Center. For more information, contact John Faires at 925 373-3815.

Weaverville Dinner – July 24
Weaverville is an historic California gold rush town nestled at the foot of the current day Trinity Alps Wilderness Area in Trinity County. Weaverville is on the national register of historic places. A lovely range of mountains that appear green during the summer and white during the winter snow season provide the backdrop for this town. The Weaverville dinner will be held Saturday, July 24 at 5 PM at the Johnson’s Steak House. For more information, contact Dave Ruiz at 530 623-4980.

Anderson Dinner – August 7
Anderson is located in the Redding/Lake Shasta area in Northern California and offers glistening lakes, world-class rivers, scenic drives, and backcountry roads. Hidden treasures in the area include a guided cavern tour at Lake Shasta Caverns, Shasta State Historic Park with brick ruins and a museum of the gold-rush, and Turtle Bay Exploration Park. The Anderson dinner will be held Saturday, August 7 at 5:30 PM at the Gaia Hotel. For more information, contact Leonard Brumana at 530 347-6459.
**Ripon Dinner – August 14**  
The City of Ripon is a relatively small community whose quality of life shines like a small jewel in the middle of California's central San Joaquin Valley. Ripon is located along the Stanislaus River where river rafting and fishing are popular pastimes. Ripon's economy is largely agriculture based, known especially for its high almond production. This year’s dinner (rescheduled from May 15) will be held Saturday, August 14 at the Ripon Community Center. For more information, contact Tony Pinheiro at 206 605-4172.

**Sportsman’s Ridge Trap Shoot – August 28**  
The Sportsman’s Ridge Hunting Club is Southern California's finest pheasant, chukar and quail hunting club offering every level of hunter an exciting and challenging experience. The club offers picturesque views of San Jacinto and Idyllwild mountains. Hunts take place on an original ranch-style property with More than 2,000 acres of prime upland game fields. The Sportsman’s Ridge Trap Shoot will be held Saturday, August 28 at 8:30 AM at the Sportsman’s Ridge Hunt Club in the city of Aguanga. For more information, contact Derek Swindall at 949 633-8546.

**Hollister Dinner – September 9**  
Located in San Benito County in central California, Hollister is served by major California highways. The land, like the people of Hollister, has strength and charm - far enough away from crowds to offer very competitive prices for undeveloped property, yet close enough to city conveniences to share a cosmopolitan atmosphere. The Hollister dinner will be held Thursday, September 9. For more information, contact Dawan Lee at 408 644-4872.

**San Gabriel Valley Dinner – September 10**  
The San Gabriel Valley, just east of downtown Los Angeles, is comprised of small, well-favored communities in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and historic cities. The San Gabriel Valley dinner will be held Friday, September 10 at 6 PM at the Arcadia Community Center in Arcadia. For more information, contact Jack Weleba at 626 446-9246.

**Quincy Dinner – September 11**  
Nestled against the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range in Northern California, Quincy is known for it’s attractive down town buildings. This enchanting town features murals of historical times and is home to the state’s oldest county fair. The Quincy dinner will be held Saturday, September 11 at 5 PM at the Vets Hall in Quincy. For more information, contact Gary Pini at 530 283-5230.

**Blythe-Palo Verde Dinner – September 11**  
Agriculturally based and heavily impacted by tourism, Blythe is located on the California-Arizona border along the Colorado River and serves as a popular place for river recreation and "snow bird" living for everyone. The Palo Verde Valley is an indoor and outdoor recreational wonderland. The Blythe-Palo Verde dinner will be held Saturday, September 11 at 6 PM at the Colorado River Fairgrounds in Blythe. For more information, contact Danny Robinson at 760 485-0220.
Cameron Park Dinner – September 11
Cameron Park is the gateway to El Dorado County just 33 miles east of Sacramento and 72 miles west of Lake Tahoe. One unique neighborhood is the Cameron Airpark Estates. It provides an excellent opportunity for pilots to commute from home to destinations all over the country without ever leaving the plane. Wide streets double as taxiways between homes and the airstrip. The Cameron Park dinner will be held Saturday, September 11 at the Cameron Park Country Club. For more information, contact Jan Young at 503 577-5497.

San Jose Dinner – September 16
San Jose is the third-largest city in California with a population of nearly one million, yet there’s still a small town charm about this city. The town's roots go deep. Founded in 1777, it's the oldest civil settlement in California and the site of the first state capitol. The town is home to the San Jose Sharks Hockey team. The San Jose dinner will be held Thursday, September 16. For more information, contact Frank Leonardi at 916 984-3073.

Auburn Dinner – September 16
The City of Auburn is bordered by the beautiful American River Canyon and nestled in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and is located at the crossroads of I-80 and historic Hwy 49. The Auburn dinner will be held Thursday, September 16 at 5:30 PM at the Gold County Fairgrounds – Sierra building in Auburn. For more information contact John Fee at 530 878-6458.

Sacramento Pig BBQ Dinner – September 18
Sacramento is the capital of California, and the county seat of Sacramento County. It is located at the confluence of the Sacramento River and the American River in California’s expansive Central Valley. The Sacramento BBQ dinner will be held Saturday, September 18, at the McKay Ranch in Elk Grove. For more information, contact Colby Craig at 916 205-3987.

Lake Almanor Dinner – September 18
One of the largest artificial lakes in the state, Lake Almanor lays claim to approximately 28,000 acres of northeastern California. Safely snuggled between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Cascade Mountain Range, Lake Almanor offers its visitors and residents magnificent views and picturesque activities - cool waters, warm sun, great fishing, bountiful nature, snowcapped mountains, and breathtaking sunsets. The Lake Almanor dinner will be held Saturday, September 18, at the Lake Almanor Country Club. For more information, contact Toni Pleau at 530 596-4995.

Simi Valley Dinner – September 18
The city of Simi Valley has successfully blended the dynamics of a corporate business center with the warmth and comfort of a residential community. It is located in Southern California and is presently known as the home of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. The Simi Valley dinner will be held Saturday, September 18 at 5 PM at the Simi Valley Elks Lodge. For more information, contact Carol Dalton at 805 522-3394.
Modoc Dinner – September 29
Modoc is a county located in the far northeast corner of the state, bounded by the state of Oregon to the north and the state of Nevada to the east. Modoc offers beautiful scenery, varied terrain, abundant wildlife and a memorable visitor experience. The Modoc dinner will be held Wednesday, September 29 at 6 PM at the Brass Rail Basque Restaurant in Alturas. For more information, contact Jim Irvin at 530 233-2928.

DU RECEIVES MORE THAN $10 MILLION FROM CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION AGENCIES

Thanks to the support of two California conservation grants agencies and numerous partners, Ducks Unlimited can mark May 27, 2010, as one of the largest single-day fundraising successes in its 73-year history, totaling $10.2 million in funds awarded.

Dr. Rudy Rosen, director of DU’s Western Regional Office in Sacramento, Calif., expressed his excitement over the grants. ”This is another historic day in DU’s fundraising in the west, in particular given the dire state of the economy in California. Such generous and sizeable grants will go a very long way as DU works to protect, conserve and restore wildlife habitat. We are very grateful to both the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) for their support.”

At a recent meeting of the WCB - a group that administers a capital outlay program for wildlife conservation and related public recreation in the state - the WCB awarded DU approximately $9.2 million in grant funding for five restoration and conservation projects across the state. The grants break down as follows:

- $6.65 million to restore over 1,500 acres of tidal marsh on the Cullinan Ranch Unit of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge
- $1.55 million to enhance 1,680 acres of managed pond and restoring tidal marsh habitat on the Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area
- $250,000 to install water pumps that will enhance 2,414 acres of wetlands on the Los Banos Wildlife Area
- $317,000 to restore riparian habitat and replace water pumps to improve habitat in Merced County
- $30,000 for work to enhance 177 acres of seasonal wetlands in the Sutter Bypass
- $408,000 for the Moss Landing Wildlife Area to provide better public access for hunting, fishing, observation and other wildlife-oriented recreation

Also, at a meeting of the SCC - a state agency that uses entrepreneurial techniques to purchase, protect, restore and enhance coastal resources - the SCC awarded DU a $1 million grant to construct a pedestrian bridge linking the Bay Trail to Bair Island, near San Francisco.

Sam Schuchat, executive director of the SCC, expressed the agency’s expectations for the bridge project. “When the new bridge is in place, we expect Bair Island to become one of the best spots for people to observe the incredible variety of birds that can be found in San Francisco Bay,” he said.

Notably, Cullinan Ranch is also a recent recipient of more than $1.65 million through a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus grant, which is intended to restore habitat, create jobs and stimulate the economy.

Ducks Unlimited is the world’s largest non-profit organization dedicated to conserving North America’s continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 12 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.
NEW DU PROJECTS

DU Launches Redwood Coast Wetlands Project
By Jeff McCreary, DU Manager of Conservation Programs

Ducks Unlimited was recently awarded a $1 million grant from the North American Wetland Conservation Act for wetland and waterfowl conservation in northern California. The Redwood Coast Wetlands Project area includes multiple locations within Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

This is one of the most important areas for migrating and wintering migratory birds on the Pacific Coast of the conterminous United States. For some species, such as Pacific brant, there is no replacement for any habitat lost here. The 1,531 acres of habitat conserved in this project will improve winter waterfowl survivorship, support healthy body condition for migration, and help bolster and sustain waterfowl populations.

The wetlands and associated uplands benefited by the Redwood Coast Wetlands Project are particularly important to significant populations of migratory birds. Nearly the entire global population of Aleutian cackling Canada geese stage in the area and will benefit from the seasonal wetland and grassland enhancement projects. Approximately 60 per cent of the Pacific Flyway population of migrating Pacific black brant stage in the proposal area and will benefit from the invasive eelgrass eradication project.

“Behind the Redwood Curtain is an amazing, little-known area that is highly important for waterfowl,” said Jeff McCreary, the DU biologist for the region. “Humboldt and Del Norte Counties have seen many important wetland areas become degraded or lost. This project will help bring back some of what has been lost.”

Other wildlife will also benefit from the project. The second largest Pacific coast wintering concentration, or 20 per cent of the Pacific Flyway population, of marbled godwits will benefit from the estuarine tidal restoration efforts. The project will also help to recover multiple federally-threatened and endangered species including four salmonids and two plant species.

The proposed project also has multiple public benefits including increased public recreation opportunities, improved water quality, and reduced crop depredation. Current uses of tracts include waterfowl hunting, birding, ranching, wildlife habitat, and other public education and recreation.

The objectives of the Redwood Coast Wetlands Project are to: A) increase the acreage and diversity of wetland types available for migration, nesting, and wintering wetland-dependent birds; B) improve the quality of existing wetland types; and C) encourage community involvement in habitat conservation.

The specific projects funded include:

**Salt River Estuarine Wetland Project** – Estuarine vegetated wetland restoration is proposed in conjunction with the Salt River Project in the Eel River estuary. The proposed Riverside Ranch project will entail removal of perimeter levees, construction of interior pilot tidal slough channels, and construction of new flood protection levees to allow for tidal inundation of former estuarine wetlands.

**Salmon Creek Project** – The Salmon Creek Restoration project implements Phase II of this project by restoring approximately 2,600 linear-feet, or 2 acres, of riparian habitat along lower Salmon Creek on the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The project will restore channel complexity, create off-channel wetlands, and establish riparian vegetation. The project will benefit nesting wood ducks, Neotropical songbirds, such as willow flycatcher, as well as help recover four federally-listed fish species.
Lake Earl Wildlife Area Project – This project will install and replace fencing to control grazing on the California Department of Fish and Game’s Lake Earl Wildlife Area. This project will help to sustain important Aleutian cackling Canada goose foraging areas and protect sensitive wetland margins of Lake Earl by keeping cattle in managed uplands. The managed grazing on the Wildlife Area not only provides optimal goose foraging habitat, but is a recommended conservation action as part of the Aleutian Cackling Goose Agricultural Depredation Management Plan, Del Norte County.

Dwarf Eelgrass Eradication Project – Dwarf eelgrass (Zostera japonica) is beginning to colonize the Proposal Area. This expansion threatens to take over the shallow, tidal mudflats within Humboldt Bay and Eel River delta, as well as compete with the native eelgrass (Zostera marina) that Pacific black brant rely on during migration. The eelgrass project will eradicate several known infestations within Humboldt Bay and the Eel River delta. This project will implement eradication techniques developed and refined by the Humboldt Bay Cooperative Eelgrass Project to completely remove non-native eelgrass infestations.

Spartina Eradication Project – Eradication of invasive cordgrass (Spartina densiflora) is a priority action prescribed in the West Coast Governors Agreement on Ocean Health. A concerted effort is underway throughout the Pacific coast of the conterminous United States to remove invasive Spartina. The implementation of control efforts in Humboldt Bay is only beginning following extensive technique development. The proposed project on the Humboldt National Wildlife Refuge is one of the first major efforts of this kind within the proposal area.

Coastal Dune Project – Restoring beach dune ecosystems is a complicated effort, as high quality coastal dunes are a menagerie of fore-dunes, willow thickets, Sitka spruce stands, and emergent wetlands. Removal of invasive plant species on the north spit dune complex will restore dynamic dune processes that have been lost. This project will benefit a wide array of migratory songbirds, shorebirds, raptors, as well as implement actions recommended in the western snowy plover recovery plan.

Tulare Basin Wetlands Restoration, Rancho Visalia Wetland Enhancement, Kern County
By Rudy Rosen, DU Director of Operations, Western Regional Office

The Rancho Visalia Duck Club maintains approximately 120 acres of wetlands and associated habitats in the Tulare Basin which has been managed as wildlife habitat for the last 80 years, with an emphasis on providing waterfowl hunting. The purpose of this project is to enhance 120 acres of wetlands and 78 acres of associated upland habitats, and restore two acres of wetlands/associated uplands. Work will be completed using landowner contributions and grant funds obtained by DU through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant.

Natural hydrology associated with the wetlands in the project area has been lost due to water diversions for agricultural and municipal uses. The only source to flood these wetlands is groundwater. Minor earthmoving will be required to allow wetland flooding and efficient conveyance of pumped groundwater to wetlands. Additionally, the wetland habitat lacks efficient water infrastructure for optimal wetland management. Project activities include earthmoving activities to improve water management and conveyance. Wheatgrass seed will be planted on improved levee banks to help protect them from erosion and provide wildlife cover. A 1,000 foot well will be drilled to access groundwater for flooding the enhanced wetlands, and new discharge pipes, fittings, and gates will tie into existing pipelines and convey water to all wetlands associated with this project.

The project will provide critical habitat for migratory waterfowl such as northern pintail, green-winged teal, and northern shoveler. In addition, shorebirds, colonial wading birds, including sandhill cranes and listed species such as the tri-colored blackbird, could benefit from enhancement of these habitats. Habitat management recommendations will be included as part of the Site Specific Agreement developed by DU for the project. This will also spell out long-term maintenance responsibilities.
Los Patos Bravos Wetland Restoration and Enhancement, Imperial County
By Rudy Rosen, DU Director of Operations, Western Regional Office

Ducks Unlimited is working with the Los Patos Bravos Duck Club to improve wetland management and habitat diversity by removing useless levees, improving existing levees, and constructing a new water delivery ditch. Failing water control structures will be replaced with new structures for maximum water conveyance capabilities. This will increase the amount of shallow water emergent habitat while allowing club owners the ability to conserve water while maximizing the amount of habitat for waterfowl.

The area has been managed for more than 50 years to provide a wide variety of habitats for wetland-dependent wildlife such as shorebirds, wading birds, waterfowl, and non-migratory wildlife. Shorebirds, wading birds, and waterfowl will benefit from improved wetland habitats proposed through this project. Neotropical migrants and non-migratory wildlife also will benefit from this wetland restoration and enhancement. A management plan will be written by DU to ensure continued optimal habitat management practices.

Live Oak Gun Club - Wetland Water Supply Improvement for Fields 5 and 6, Sutter County
By Rudy Rosen, DU Director of Operations, Western Regional Office

Live Oak Gun Club is a 1,726-acre private duck hunting club located in the heart of the Butte Sink. The property consists of seasonal wetlands managed to provide habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl and to provide waterfowl hunting. Also present are some rice lands that are winter flooded for waterfowl. In addition, some wetland areas remain flooded through late spring and early summer to provide waterfowl brood-rearing habitat. Some year-round water is also maintained in some areas in accordance with a management agreement under the California Department of Fish and Game’s Landowner Incentive Program. Most of the property is protected through conservation easements held by either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or Natural Resources Conservation Service. The project area is located within a federally-held easement.

DU’s work will enhance 98 acres of wetlands and will consist of installing a well and pump to improve the overall water supply and provide a reliable source of water to support summer and early fall wetland habitat. This club has been used for waterfowl hunting for many years and is recognized as one of the most important privately-owned wetland areas for waterfowl in the Sacramento Valley.

Standard wetland management activities conducted on the property include mowing, discing, burning, and spraying to control undesirable vegetation; irrigating in the summer and early fall to promote vigorous vegetation growth and seed production from desirable waterfowl food plants; and planting wetland trees and shrubs. This club provides important habitat for a variety of wildlife and is extremely important for wintering waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway. Waterfowl that will benefit from this project include mallard, gadwall, northern pintail, and green-winged teal. This project will also benefit several special-status species including greater sandhill crane, white-faced ibis, and American bittern.
Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge Wetland Restoration and Enhancement, Imperial County
By Rudy Rosen, DU Director of Operations, Western Regional Office

Ducks Unlimited is working with Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge managers to restore and enhance emergent wetlands and associated uplands to benefit a variety of wildlife. Work will also give refuge managers additional tools to maximize their management capabilities while conserving water.

Habitat units on the refuge are in need of a new water control infrastructure to better maximize and conserve water. In addition, wetland topography on some units is currently inadequate to provide the diversity of shallow water habitats necessary for resident and migratory wildlife species. This project seeks to restore 60 acres of wetlands and associated uplands and enhance 345 acres of wetlands by restoring wetland topography and hydrology and improving water conveyance. New water control structures will be installed and a new levee constructed to provide additional undulating shallow water habitat.

The refuge has been managed for more than 70 years by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide a wide variety of habitats for the protection and conservation of migratory and resident species. The increased shallow water habitat and management potential will benefit waterfowl, shorebirds, colonial waterbirds, and neotropical songbirds. In addition, many species of desert wildlife will benefit from improved habitat.

STRETCHING YOUR CONSERVATION DOLLAR

Ducks Unlimited is not satisfied with ordinary rates of return. In fact, in many cases, they are not happy unless they turn one conservation dollar into six or more dollars for habitat projects. How do they consistently provide such a high rate of return? They use your contributions to leverage money from other sources. Many government agencies, private foundations and other organizations contribute money for conservation projects on a matching basis. That means every dollar they grant to groups like DU must be matched by a dollar from other sources. But DU can’t secure matching funds without your contribution to use as leverage. Funds raised at DU events, through membership fees, and royalties are DU’s principal sources of matching dollars. Invest in Ducks Unlimited today, and watch your contribution grow!
NEW COOKBOOK FROM DUCKS UNLIMITED
Taste the wild flavors from *The Hunter’s Table* with this SPECIAL OFFER from DU!

Calling all hunters! Check out the ultimate cookbook for outdoor enthusiasts. Expert chefs and Ducks Unlimited members alike share their recipes for duck, turkey, fish, deer and much more. Never before has a cookbook included such a range of cuisine that's as adventurous and exciting as hunting itself. Visit [HuntersTable.com](http://HuntersTable.com) or call 1-800-358-0560 to order your copy.

EDITORS NOTE

Whether you are a longtime DU supporter, or a first time member, the News from the Nest is YOUR California DU newsletter. For any inspiring writers and photographers, what makes the News from the Nest truly ours are stories and photos by California DU members. Please take the time and send me a story or photos of your events, members, conservation projects, Greenwing activities, trips, or whatever you feel is important to share.

It is my goal to provide articles relating to national and local conservation news, events, outdoor adventures, hunting, regulations, and much more. With your help, we can make News from the Nest a publication that we all look forward to reading.

Rich Dengler, California Ducks Unlimited Newsletter Editor  
rich.dengler@sbcglobal.net