MESSAGE FROM THE STATE CHAIRMAN
Eric Rudgers

Well folks, I am coming to the end of my two-year term as your Ducks Unlimited California State Chairman. This will be my last message to you as your state chairman.

I want to say thank you, once again, for all you do for Ducks Unlimited - the precious gift of your time, gift giving and resources.

Thank you senior volunteer board members for your insight, dedication and planning to help move DU California forward during our nation’s troubled times! I’ve enjoyed working with each of you. Thank you to all who helped make the leadership workshops informative and fun, for providing food and drinks and for securing a place to hold the workshops.

Thank you DU supporters for your contributions to the conservation of wetlands – for your attendance at DU banquets and events and for your generous giving. Ducks Unlimited is a premier conservation organization that effectively and efficiently puts habitat back on the map. They would not be able to do this without your support!

I especially want to thank our many volunteers for helping to bring our dinner events to a successful close. All too often a committee will work hard to have an event and many of our hard working volunteers go off without a simple thank you. So I am taking this opportunity to say “Thanks” to the hundreds of volunteers up and down this great state of ours for all you do to sell tickets, acquire auction items, work to set up the events and make sure those events go smoothly. Your efforts help make DU what it is today. A special thank you goes to all the spouses and significant others who help DU volunteers do their jobs.

We all should be very proud of what we have accomplished these past two years in spite of the down economy and high unemployment rate. In spite of the economy, we have had an increase in memberships and sponsorships, attendance at banquets is back up, our volunteer base has grown with many dedicated individuals volunteering for senior positions such as board members, district chairman and area chairman, and California has held steady in terms of grassroots dollars raised.
Don’t forget, conventions are approaching! It is a time for DU volunteers and members to come together and celebrate our many accomplishments.

**The DU 74th National Convention will be held in historic Quebec City, Quebec, Canada on May 25-29, 2011.** Registration check-in begins Wednesday, May 25. Tours are plentiful on Wednesday and Thursday followed by a Thursday evening welcome party. Friday and Saturday are packed full of leadership meetings, workshops and dinner with your friends. Saturday night’s annual convention reception and banquet is not to be missed! Convention registration is available on the DU website at [convention.ducks.org](http://convention.ducks.org)

**The California State Convention will be held April 15-16** at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno, Nevada. The convention is for everyone, from the newest DU Volunteer to the most seasoned drakes and hens. Come meet Dale Hall, CEO of Ducks Unlimited, as well as new and old friends. Come hear from our Pacific Flyway delegates and our ever-so-talented biologists and conservation staff. Get updates on local and regional projects, learn where your efforts are making a difference and have some fun. Online registration is available at [http://www.ducks.org/california/events](http://www.ducks.org/california/events) or you can mail in the registration form included in this publication.

California state pins are now available and can be ordered in time for trading at the National Convention (see order form at the end of this newsletter).

We are in the midst of our spring banquet season. A list of events is included in this publication. If you are traveling and want a fun-filled evening with fellow DUers, attend an event! Thanks again for all you do for Ducks Unlimited, and I hope to see you at one of the events!

In closing, keep in mind that we still have a significant amount of work ahead of us, but together, we can accomplish great things.

Please join me in welcoming Mark Low to the post of Ducks Unlimited California State Chairman. Mark will assume his new role at the California State Convention in April and will introduce his new board members. As in the past, Mark will collaboratively lay a solid foundation to ensure future California DU success. I believe California will accomplish great things!

If you have any feedback or thoughts to share, please contact me at drudgers@frontiernet.net.
YOUR CALIFORNIA
DU STATE COMMITTEE

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Vacancies
State Greenwing Chairman
State Membership Chairman
State Major Donors Chairman

WINTER LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS
By Mark Low, Assistant to the State Chairman

Our 2011 Winter Leadership Workshops were well attended and informative. We held three workshops throughout the state so volunteers would have an opportunity to meet other volunteers in their regions and discuss important DU topics.

The workshops featured discussions on leadership, commitment and DU’s mission. Senior volunteers provided insight into successful event practices and information to improve fundraising efforts.

Our first workshop took place February 5 at the Ramada Inn in Corning; our second was held February 12 at the Coyote Valley Sporting facility in Morgan Hill; and our final workshop was held at DU’s Western Regional Office in Rancho Cordova March 6.

In addition to our workshop content and discussions, Jeff McCreary, Directory of Conservation Programs at Western Regional Office, provided a conservation projects update at the Rancho Cordova workshop and touched on the Boreal Forest which produces 60 percent of all ducks wintering in California. One important take-away was the fact that protecting our nation’s waters and wetlands is critical for maintaining waterfowl populations. This alone reaffirms that the work DU is doing is vitally important to our waterfowl and hunting heritage.

To learn more about DU conservation projects in California, attend our state convention in April. I hope to see you there!
CALIFORNIA’S DUCK FACTORY

The Grasslands can annually winter more than one million waterfowl, most of which originate in Canada’s Boreal Forest. The Boreal Forest is a 700 million acre band of forested wetlands located just below the Arctic. The Boreal is a perfect duck factory with parts of this region nearly 90 percent marshland. It produces 60 percent of all ducks wintering in California, and virtually all our green winged teal, wigeon and scaup. Nevertheless, deforestation is occurring almost as fast as it is in the Amazon. This threatens waterfowl production habitat health. The stakes are high for the California duck hunter.

DU is working to conserve important wetlands to keep California’s “Duck Factory” producing waterfowl.

Want to learn more about the Boreal Forest and what DU is doing to protect it? Join us at the California State Convention in Reno April 15-16 and hear from Dr. Fritz Reid, Director of Conservation Planning at DU’s Western Regional Office.
THE GRASSLAND ECOLOGICAL AREA

The Grassland Ecological Area, lying in the heart of California's Central Valley, is a critical wintering area for numerous species of waterfowl and other migratory birds in the Pacific Flyway. It encompasses more than 179,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats, making it the largest block of contiguous wetland habitat remaining in California. Land ownership within the Grasslands Ecological Area is as diverse as the species that winter, breed and visit there. Private landowners maintain the majority of wetland habitat in the Grasslands with state and federal agencies providing stewardship over the rest.

Like virtually every other wetland within the Central Valley, the habitat values within the Grassland Ecological Area have been compromised by the needs of agriculture, the inevitable development pressures, inefficient and deteriorating water delivery systems, as well as a variety of other factors. However, unlike other wetlands, the Grasslands Ecological Area is the largest wetland complex in the state of California, making it a resource worthy of inspired collaboration and public investment.

The Grassland Ecological Area Enhancement and Restoration Project restored more than 2,000 acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands, 259 acres of associated uplands and more than 300 acres of riparian habitat, while enhancing 56,620 acres of existing wetlands, 1,527 acres of existing uplands and 23 acres of existing riparian habitat. Restoration projects consisted of restoring natural functions to habitats that had been badly degraded or destroyed. Vegetation was restored on uplands and riparian areas by planting or seeding degraded habitats and ensuring that long-term management objectives would maintain these habitats.

As most of the wetlands in the Grasslands are managed wetlands, they require efficient water conveyance systems to properly flood and maintain wetland habitat. These wetlands consist of leveed impoundments that use water control structures to convey water. Enhancement projects replaced or installed concrete water control structures that allow wetland managers to maintain optimal water elevations for waterfowl use, and excavated wetland swales that optimize flooding efficiency while diversifying the habitat.

Want to learn more about DU projects and their lifecycles? Join us in Reno April 15-16 for the California State Convention and hear from Jeff McCreary, Biologist and Director of Conservation Programs at DU's Western Regional Office.
I recently had the opportunity to visit with Doug Federighi, Tom Mackey, Byron Hisey, Dennis Campini, Dale Boust, Dave Widell, Pepper Snyder and other leaders in the Grasslands and walked away with a much better appreciation of the pain caused by the DU letter to Senator Feinstein. I had already been made aware of the process that was followed prior to sending DU’s letter regarding south of Delta pumping restrictions and Delta smelt and had concluded several mistakes were made. The opportunity to hear first-hand from the Grasslands was very impactful.

I came on board May 3, 2010, and I suppose I could just say “this happened before I got here.” But that is not what I’m going to say. I am Ducks Unlimited now, and everything about Ducks Unlimited operations stops at my desk. I believe it’s my responsibility to do what I can to heal the pain caused by the letter and to rekindle the great and long-standing partnership between DU and the Grasslands.

When the letter was being reviewed, neither the interim CEO nor the President were given the opportunity to review the draft and make corrections, or simply say the letter should not go out. Our friends at Grasslands were not consulted or asked for input on the draft, which is certainly not our normal procedure. But I believe the most significant mistake was not simply admitting we had made a mistake. I want to ensure that does not happen again.

Within the past several months, we have instituted new (and formal) guidance to ensure policy position letters are reviewed by me and the President of DU. This will give us the chance to ask the questions that should have been asked prior to sending the letter. I believe the new policy structure will help us ensure that any letter sent by DU truly represents the policy position of DU.

As we move forward, my objective is to rebuild the long-standing relationship between Grasslands and DU. You have been our friends, neighbors and partners for decades, and I want to do all I can to put this incident behind us. I spent six years of my life working directly with you on water issues in California. I know the sensitivity and unintentional consequences that can come from inadequate communication. I realize that, with any partnership, there will be times when we disagree on what course of action to take. But with agreement or disagreement, we must ensure there is clear communication and neither of us is surprised by something the other does. With Mark Biddlecomb, Fritz Reid, Chris Hildebrandt and the rest of the Western Regional Office staff fully engaged to move us all forward, I know we can do great things. Thanks for being the friends you are and for giving this old friend a chance to mend fences.
Thank you! You answered the call and stood up for waterfowl, for our waterfowling tradition, for our legacy to future generations.

During the seven-year *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, we raised an amazing **$1.88 billion**, all for the world of waterfowl and wetlands conservation. With this support from people like you, **2 million acres** have been conserved, more than 4,865 projects have been completed and our scientists have led more than 100 different research studies to understand the challenges that lie ahead.

Your investment has helped expand Ducks Unlimited’s conservation efforts in some of the following areas:

- **Protection of the Duck Factory** — Thousands of acres of seasonal wetlands and native grasslands have been protected, ensuring the future of North America’s most important waterfowl breeding area.

- **Restoration of the Gulf of Mexico** — With your help, we worked to restore and protect the marshes and bays of the Gulf of Mexico.

- **Positive public policies to benefit waterfowl prevailed** — Philanthropists like you made the call to Washington to support smart legislation for wetlands.

From the grasslands and oceans to the rivers and lakes, **you made the difference**. Thank you for answering the call. Thank you for taking a stand to protect our irreplaceable natural treasures.

You are one of a million supporters, a strong force for nature. Today our wetlands face new pressures – looming federal budget cuts that would adversely affect all of us who care about, and have funded, wetlands and waterfowl conservation. As conservationists, we will **continue to answer every call** and do the critical work that will protect our vanishing wetlands. With your steadfast support, I have every confidence we will continue to succeed.

Thank you for making *Wetlands for Tomorrow* a triumph for Ducks Unlimited!
INTERNATIONAL SPORTSMEN’S EXHIBITION  
By Frank Leonardi, DU Regional Director  

THANK YOU to everyone who worked or visited the Ducks Unlimited booth at the Sacramento International Sportsmen’s Exhibition in January. The show was a rousing success. This year featured new seminars and special events, new exhibitors and, as usual, fun for the whole family.

The Ducks Unlimited booth was small, but well visited. Hundreds of people stopped by, many renewed their DU membership and many new memberships were secured. We also recruited volunteers to restart old chapters and to start new ones.

I want to thank Jan Young, Roger and Kathy Ince, Eric and Dianne Rudgers, Jim Giampaolo, Jim Medich, Vicki English, Jon Grissom, Bill Eisley, Ann Bakey, and Rich Dengler for helping out with set-up and working the event. A special thank you goes to Bill Eisley, Volunteer, Auburn chapter! Bill has helped out for more than 10 years on the first Thursday of every show, and is responsible for bringing a touch of the outdoors to the booth with donated plants.

If you missed the show, mark your calendar now to attend in 2012. It will be held at Cal Expo, State Fairgrounds on January 19-22, 2012 (Thursday through Sunday). Working the show on behalf of Ducks Unlimited is a great way to share the DU message, advertise winter and spring events and recruit volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering your time at next year’s expo, contact me at 916 984-3073 ... we can always use the help.
CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS

Lake Tahoe – December 3
By Kathy Ince, District Chairman

The Lake Tahoe Chapter held its annual banquet on December 3, 2010, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in South Lake Tahoe. With 80 attendees, the banquet was successful in raising dollars for the ducks!

Nine members of the Placerville DU committee traveled to South Lake Tahoe to support the dinner. There were also six table sponsors who have supported the dinner over the years. Their continued support, as well as the support of the Placerville committee, was much appreciated.

Left to right: Auctioneer Matt Wolter, Greenwing Chairman Alex Barton, Brian Barton, Roger Ince, Mandy's Model Tiffany, Kit Arlin, Diane Arlin. The Arlin’s grandchildren and Kathy Ince.

As you can see from the above photo, the Greenwing chairman, Alex Barton, is a Greenwing himself. Alex has been a member of the Lake Tahoe committee for the past three years. This year Alex designed the Greenwing area and ran a contest for 14 Greenwing members to lay out how they would set up their decoy pattern. All Greenwings took home a nice raffle item.

SUPPORT DUCKS UNLIMITED
The ducks need you!
Ripon Crab Feed and Dance – January 15
By Tony Pinheiro, State Recruitment Chairman and Committee Chairman

The Ripon chapter put on its first annual Crab Feed and Dance on January 15, and it was a sell out. There were more than 175 people in attendance, which included 70 walk-ins the night of the event. What a surprise!

When you have this many walk-ins to an event, a committee has to really scramble. Our committee was no exception! We had to make more room for attendees to sit. We also had to make three separate runs to our local crab supplier and market to purchase more food.

Committee members serving guests!
Sell-out crowd!

Ripon Boy Scout Troop 414

Our committee served salad, pasta and bread and scouts from the Ripon Boy Scout Troop 414 delivered crab. The boys also helped our committee members clean up when the event was over. Thank you Ripon boy scouts!
Sacramento Valley Crab Feed – January 22
By Jan Young, District Chairman

The Sacramento Valley Chapter hosted their 6\textsuperscript{th} Annual Crab Feed at the Scottish Rite Temple in Sacramento on January 22. More than 240 people were in attendance.

Colby Craig was an excellent dinner chairman, but he did not act alone! There were a great many volunteers behind him who sold tickets and worked diligently to secure donations.

Left to right: Sam Kouri, Greg Nichols, Carl, Colby Craig (dinner chair), Vicki English, Roger, Brett, Dave Morris, Liza Morris, Jan Young and Frank Leonardi (RD). Not pictured is Jonny Shelman.

Sierra Nevada donated beer, Coke donated soft drinks and Michael David Winery donated wine. Sportsman’s Warehouse was equally as generous with their donations, along with Bass Pro Shop and Cold Steele Safes.

Chef Dan Sozzi donated his time and created a wonderful spread that included fresh crab, prawns, salad, homemade clam chowder and rolls. Chef Dan brought along a whole team of high school baseball players who helped cook, prepare and serve everyone!

This Crab Feed was a huge success due to the deep commitment of committee members. Thank you Sacramento volunteers who put on this event, and thank you to DU members who attend this event.
**UPCOMING SPRING 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](http://www.ca.ducks.org). Traveling out of state? No problem! Simply select the state that you will be visiting in the dropdown menu (on top of the California DU webpage) and that state’s upcoming events will be listed for you to browse on the state’s home page. Don’t miss an opportunity to show your support and have fun at the same time!

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<tr>
<td>Yreka</td>
<td>Friday, April 1</td>
<td>Dick Van Baren @ 530 459-1400</td>
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<td>Colfax</td>
<td>Saturday, April 2</td>
<td>Robb Rothenberger @ 530 273-8351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redding/Shasta</td>
<td>Friday, April 8</td>
<td>Bob Richardson @ 530 945-7969</td>
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<td>South Alameda</td>
<td>Saturday, April 15</td>
<td>Danny Timmons @ 510 264-9353</td>
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<td>Indian Valley</td>
<td>Friday, April 15</td>
<td>Paul Harris Jr @ 530 394-7195</td>
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<td>CA State Convention</td>
<td>Fri/Sat, April 15/16</td>
<td>Rich Dengler @ 408 737-7410</td>
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<td>Gilroy</td>
<td>Thursday, April 29</td>
<td>Doug Kalpakoff @ 408 858-1234</td>
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<td>Corning</td>
<td>Friday, April 29</td>
<td>Teal Bailey @ 530 384-1568</td>
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<td>Fort Bragg</td>
<td>Friday, April 29</td>
<td>Greg Peterson @ 707 964-4044</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Bluff</td>
<td>Thursday, May 12</td>
<td>Pat Swithenback @ 530 529-4672</td>
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<td>Crescent City</td>
<td>Friday, May 13</td>
<td>Geno Cena @ 707 464-5020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benicia/Vallejo</td>
<td>Saturday, May 21</td>
<td>John Judson @ 707-333-8678</td>
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<td>Turlock DU Shoot for Shells</td>
<td>Sunday, June 12</td>
<td>Henry Alberti @ 209 535-7613</td>
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<td>Intermountain</td>
<td>Friday, June 24</td>
<td>Craig Gideon @ 530 335-4467</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willits</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Bryan Tyler @ 707 841-746</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ukiah</td>
<td>Friday, June 24</td>
<td>Jeremy Rassi @ 707-489-8904</td>
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Ducks Unlimited Volunteers, their families and guests are invited to attend the California State Ducks Unlimited Convention **April 15-16, 2011**, at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno, Nevada. The convention is for everyone, from the newest DU Volunteer to the most seasoned drakes and hens. It also provides a great opportunity to visit three of the better-known outdoor stores - Cabela’s, Scheels and Sportsman’s Warehouse - during your stay in Reno.

Come meet Dale Hall, CEO of Ducks Unlimited, as well as new and old friends. Come hear from our Pacific Flyway delegates and our ever so talented biologist and conservation staff. Get updates on local and regional projects, learn where your efforts are making a difference and have some fun.

Speaking of fun, during Saturday’s festivities attendees will have the opportunity to experience the fun of notable DU raffles – raffles that have proven to be fun and rewarding for some of our state chapters. These raffles are free to attendees and a great way to win some nice merchandise.

Online registration is available at [http://www.ducks.org/california/events](http://www.ducks.org/california/events) or you can mail in the below Registration Form.
Join us in Reno on April 15 & 16

REGISTRANT INFORMATION

Name: _______________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________ State: _______________ Zip Code: _______________
Email Address: _________________________________________________________
Phone Number: ___________________________________________________________________________________________

Number of Registrations - $60 per person: __________________________________
Includes hosted Friday evening hospitality and welcome party, Saturday business meeting and luncheon.
Names for Badges: __________________________________________________________________________________________

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Payment Method: Check# ______  Credit Card # ______________________________

MC Visa AMEX Discover       Expiration Date:   ________________________________

Signature: ______________________________________________________________________________________________

Checks payable to Ducks Unlimited.
Mail registration form to:
Rich Dengler, 10281 Stonydale Drive, Cupertino, CA 95014-1029

Overnight hotel reservations can be made with the Peppermill for a DU group rate of $99 per night double occupancy. The block room cut-off date is March 25. To make a hotel reservation, phone the Peppermill at 1-800-282-2444 and identify yourself as part of the DU group (group code MDULC11).
DUCKS UNLIMITED BREAKFAST BUFFET

at

Cabela’s

Sunday . April 17 . 8 am

Menu

Assortment of Muffins with butter on the side

Chilled Mixed Fruit Salad

Cinnamon French Toast with hot maple syrup on the side

Southwestern Breakfast Burrito - scrambled eggs, bacon, diced potatoes with peppers and onions, and tortillas (make your own or a la carte).

Optional Wild Boar

Coffee, Orange Juice, Cranberry Juice, Soda

Price

$6.99 per person; add Wild Boar for $1 more

Space is limited so sign up now by phone or email

Phone Roger at 530-391-1718 or email kince@att.net
**CALIFORNIA DUCKS UNLIMITED 2011 STATE PIN ORDER FORM**

For questions phone 530 259-3945

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**QUANTITY OF PINS TO BE ORDERED**

*Price includes shipping*

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**ORDERING AND SHIPPING INFORMATION**

NAME ________________________________
ADDRESS ________________________________
PHONE ________________________________
EMAIL ________________________________

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**METHOD OF PAYMENT IS BY CHECK ONLY**

*Insufficient payment will result in reduced quantities shipped or the order not being processed. Please do not send cash.*

Make checks payable to DUCKS UNLIMITED.

Check No. ____________ Total Amount Included _________________

Mail order form and check to
Ducks Unlimited Pins
1111 Lassen View Drive, Lake Almanor, CA 96317
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 aspiring 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