

Michigan Waterfowl Legacy

Honor yesterday,
engage today, build
tomorrow.



Currently, in its third year, Michigan Waterfowl Legacy (MWL) is a ten year cooperative partnership to restore, conserve, and celebrate Michigan's waterfowl, wetlands, and waterfowl hunting community. Honor yesterday, engage today, build tomorrow.

What Can You Do?

Management work on critical waterfowl habitat often occurs in the summertime. Although your average waterfowl hunter or bird watcher may not have the time or expertise to affect habitat, there are conservation groups that do!

A great way to be more involved in waterfowl, wetlands, and other wildlife is to join a conservation group. Conservation groups are full of likeminded individuals invested in wildlife. Doing

research on conservation groups can help you determine which ones align with your views on wildlife and how you wish to see the group manage areas. Conservation groups are also great places to socialize with other people looking to preserve wildlife as much as you are.

To start, you can take a look at MWL's partners and see conservation groups already committed to waterfowl and wetland protection. So go out and join a local conservation group and start helping wildlife today!



Why are Wetlands Important to Waterfowl?

Wetlands are critical habitat for waterfowl because they provide food and shelter. Some of the most important wetlands for waterfowl are marshes, shallow lakes, ponds and seasonal pools. The most productive wetlands are split between open water and emergent vegetation. The emergent plants, including cattails, bulrush, and sedges, supply the cover that waterfowl need to hide from predators. Wetlands also provide shallow water essential for waterfowl to feed and raise their young.

Wetlands' food sources are used by waterfowl at varying times of the year. In spring, migrants eat aquatic insects to replenish fat reserves. These insects are attracted to wetlands with plants such as smartweed, millet, curly dock, and beggars tick which provide cover and food for them. Insects give waterfowl the extra energy to fly long distances and to start producing eggs. Other times of the year, waterfowl may enjoy eating vegetation from the wetland.

Adjacent to wetlands, upland habitats are used by waterfowl to nest and rear their young. The type of upland required is dependent on the species. Wood ducks and hooded mergansers prefer wooded upland habitat while mallards and blue-winged teal prefer grassland. These upland areas provide nest security as they are less vulnerable to predation in fields.

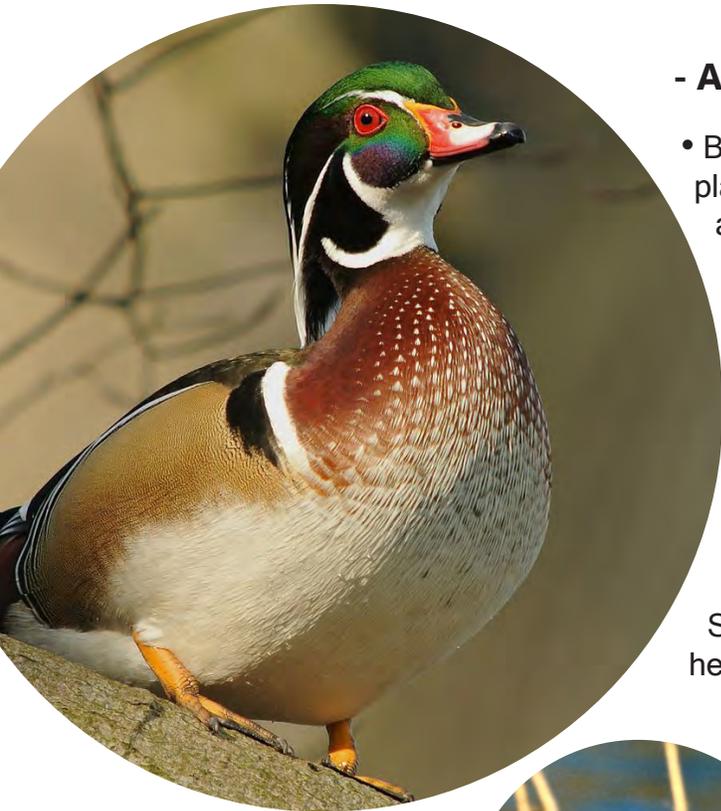
Wetlands and their surrounding uplands are crucial to the success of waterfowl each year. They provide food, shelter, and a place to rear their young. If you want to learn more about managing for wetlands on your property visit:

[Michigan Wildlife Landowners Guide](#).



Summer Recreation

Although the spring migration is over, there are still many birding opportunities to be had this summer. Summer is an excellent time to see birds in their bright breeding plumage and parents interacting with their young. Here are some tips for a fun and successful summer birding experience.



- Avoid the Heat

- Birds don't like being in the hot afternoon sun, so plan your travels accordingly. With birds being most active during the morning and evening, timing is important. And remember, staying in shaded areas will also help to keep you cool.

- Bring Proper Equipment

- While binoculars and your favorite guide book are at the top of your list, be sure to remember some summertime essentials. Always remember to bring a bottle of water; staying hydrated in the heat is very important. Sun screen and a hat are important items to help protect your skin from the sun.

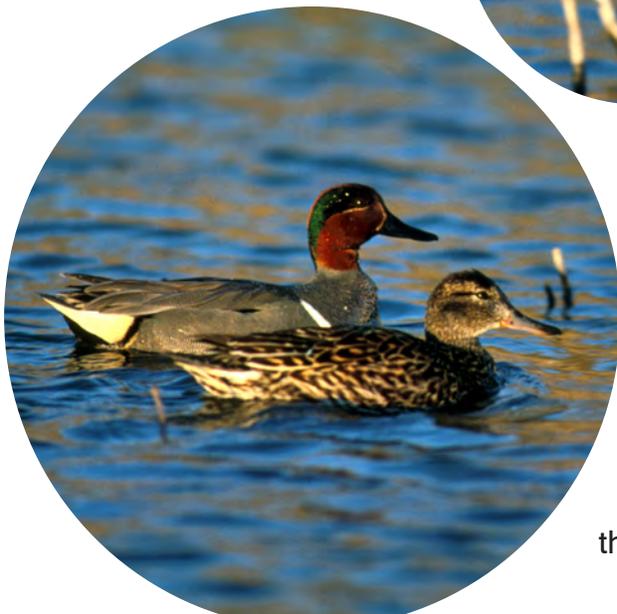
- Respect the Birds

- Even though the birds may be easier to spot in their breeding plumage, remember to respect their space. Enjoy watching the birds from a distance. Getting too close, especially to nests, may cause unnecessary stress to the birds or abandonment of nests.

- Enjoy the Water

- Lastly, to stay cool while you bird, be near water. You can kayak down your favorite river or in your favorite lake observing birds along the shore. Another option is to head to the beach and look for shorebirds as you walk in the surf.

All of these ways will help you to have an optimal birding experience and a fun day in the sun!



Events

- Saginaw Bay Waterfowl Festival - August 1st and 2nd, 2015 @ Bay City Recreation Area
- Sportsmen for Youth Day - September 12th, 2015 @ Muskegon County Fairgrounds
- National Night Out - August 4th, 2015



DNR Duck Banding Team

This summer a special team is being assembled. A team with a particular set of skills - the skills to band ducks! The duck banding team will be making its way around Southern Michigan this summer, scouting areas, setting traps, and most importantly catching and banding ducks.



The purpose of the duck banding team is to assist with reaching state-wide and regional mallard and wood duck banding quotas.

Ducks are banded to study their dispersal, migration, life-span, survival rate, reproductive success, and population growth.

All ducks banded will be identified by species, aged and sexed, banded with a USFWS leg band, and released. Bands include a set of identification numbers that tell the story of the duck. Ducks banded in Michigan may make their way to any number of places during the fall migration. Those locations can be recorded by hunters who report band ID numbers when they take a duck or other banders who may capture the duck at a later date.

The duck banding team started in mid-June. They have been helping band geese and then will start working on assembling new duck traps. They have also been scouting areas to band ducks and contacting landowners to gain permissions to set traps on private property. Towards the end of July they will begin baiting areas for ducks and in August will start banding ducks all over Southern Michigan! Be sure to keep your eyes peeled for a glimpse of this team in action!

You can also keep track of their progress with weekly updates on the [Michigan Waterfowl Legacy Facebook page](#).

