



Wildlife Division

Making Michigan Regionally Known for its Great Diversity of High Quality Waterfowl Hunting

Expanding our ability to implement our Guiding Principles and Strategies (GPS)

Why

Michigan citizens have a strong connection to their state's rich and diverse waterfowl and wetlands. Some go duck hunting every year. Others sit on their back porches and watch the annual fall waterfowl migrations. And, many citizens get clear drinking water from groundwater purified by Michigan's wetlands.

Renowned waterfowl areas like Saginaw Bay, St. Clair Flats, and the Detroit River have built and supported local economies and communities with industries such as duck decoys, boats, and hunting clubs. Michigan has a strong waterfowl hunting heritage with unique opportunities to pursue dabbling, diving and sea ducks, and Canada geese because Michigan is an important migratory waterfowl flyway that provides breeding, spring and fall migration, and wintering habitat.

Michigan regularly ranks in the top three for Canada goose harvest and hunters in the nation, and top 10 for average annual sales of Federal Duck Stamps. However, there continues to be significant threats to waterfowl habitats, which includes invasive species, climate change and declining Great Lakes water levels, and demand for food and fuel, which results in the conversion of conservation lands to agricultural. More than 50% of Michigan's historic wetland base has been lost; and, in fact, the rate of wetland loss in key waterfowl landscapes exceeds 90%. More must be done to conserve Michigan's great waterfowl heritage.

What

To protect Michigan's waterfowl and wetland resources, a new initiative – the Michigan Waterfowl Legacy (MWL) -- has been developed by a variety of partners. The Legacy's goals are to restore, conserve, and celebrate Michigan's waterfowl, wetlands, and waterfowl hunting community. Specifically by:

- Fully implementing the MWL so that Michigan is unmatched in wetland and waterfowl-related experiences
- Providing first-class waterfowl hunting, bird-watching, and other wetland-related outdoor recreation through the Explore Michigan's Wetland Wonders program
- Creating and managing high quality wetland habitat to sustain waterfowl populations
- Developing new managed waterfowl hunt areas at high quality wetland areas that are near population centers

Where

Special attention will be paid to manage waterfowl and wetland areas throughout Michigan. Specific sites include:

- Allegan
- Au Train Basin
- Crow Island
- Dollarville
- Fish Point
- Gratiot-Saginaw
- Hayward Lake
- Houghton Lake Flats
- Manistee Marsh Sloughs
- Maple River
- Munuscong Bay
- Muskegon
- Nayanquing Point
- Portage Marsh
- Pte. Mouillee
- Shiawassee River
- St. Clair Flats
- Sturgeon River
- Wigwam Bay



Additionally, a special effort will be made to increase Canada goose habitat management in the Upper Peninsula.

How

Improvements will include:

- Updating infrastructure so that management is as efficient and effective as possible. This would include repairs and replacement of water control structures and pumps for water management, which would improve reliability and lower operating costs saving sportsperson's dollars, while enhancing habitat for better quality waterfowl hunting.
- Controlling invasive species, especially phragmites.
- Intensively managing wetlands and controlling hunter numbers through a managed hunt, which would increase access and provide first-class bird-watching and other wetland-related outdoor recreation and significantly boost local ecotourism.
- Dredging and deepening access channels
- Lowering pump intakes as needed to address low Great Lakes water levels and continue to provide hunters access to historic waterfowl areas
- Installing an accessible hunting blind at the Dollarville Flooding
- Constructing a bridge and birding platform at Shiawassee River SGA to greatly improve access to the northern part of the area
- Providing better hunter access at Hayward Lake wetland complex
- Organizing Wetland Wonders events that will educate the public about wetlands and waterfowl, increase the number of hunters pursuing waterfowl, and increase the number of people participating in wetland-related outdoor recreation.

Beneficial Impacts

Additional benefits to wildlife include creation of habitat for:

- Mallard (featured species)
- Wood duck (featured species)
- Canada geese (featured species)
- Wetland mammals such as beaver, muskrat, mink, otter
- Scaup (featured species)
- All waterfowl, wetland birds, and shorebirds
- Amphibians and reptiles

Healthy wetlands provide a lengthy list of benefits to people including filtering of sediments, nutrients, and toxins from waterways, streams and rivers; flood protection; groundwater recharge; habitat for a huge diversity of wildlife; and places for outdoor exploration and recreation.

Waterfowl and wetlands figure prominently into the improvement of Michigan's economy. Nationally, sales of Duck Stamps have generated more than \$750 million, which has been used to help purchase or lease over 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat. Trip and equipment related hunting expenses generated over \$2.3 billion in total economic output in 2006 in the US. Michigan's waterfowl hunters spend about \$21.7 million per year during their hunting trips.

Improved habitat on our managed waterfowl and wetland areas will increase hunting opportunities and directly benefit the local communities. Increased hunter trips will support local businesses and restaurants. Funds will be used to repair and enhance infrastructure; upgrade and maintain equipment used for farming and other habitat management; purchase seed and herbicide; contract planting and herbicide application; and promote the areas to increase visitation. All this will directly provide thousands of employment hours.