



# STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

**UTAH**  
2013

## CONSERVATION SUMMARY

More than 4 million ducks and geese depend on Utah's Great Salt Lake and surrounding wetlands every year, making it one of the most important wetland habitats in North America. Located in northern Utah along the west side of the Wasatch Mountain Range, the Great Salt Lake supports 75 percent of Utah's wetlands, more than 400,000 acres, including public and private marshlands. Besides being a critical food source during migration, the Great Salt Lake and associated wetlands are essential breeding and nesting grounds for waterfowl such as cinnamon teal, redheads, mallards and gadwalls.

Habitat conservation on the Great Salt Lake and the wetlands that encircle it is always a challenge, and there are significant issues that threaten their health and vitality. Human use and development have an impact. Invasive species such as phragmites and fluctuations in

water supply, like upstream diversions, can play havoc on the lake's freshwater wetlands and brackish bays—Farmington Bay, Ogden Bay and Bear River Bay. These wetlands are extremely important for waterfowl and other waterbirds, so Ducks Unlimited continues to work with state and federal partners to protect the best interests of habitat, waterfowl and humans throughout this area.

DU has made great headway restoring, enhancing and protecting more than 28,000 acres in and around the Great Salt Lake in the last five years, but the work is far from finished. DU will continue to focus available resources on areas with the greatest importance to waterfowl, as well as the highest potential for restoration. In this way, DU will make sure the ducks keep flying in the marshes of the Great Salt Lake.

## UTAH SPOTLIGHT PROJECT 2013: GARY SLOT TRIBUTE

In 2012, Ducks Unlimited and partners completed the Gary Slot Tribute wetland enhancement project on the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. The refuge is an oasis for waterfowl, shorebirds and other wetland-dependent wildlife in the Great Salt Lake ecosystem. As part of Bear River Bay, the refuge is designated as a Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network site, a globally important shorebird area. The tribute wetland is located on the Christensen and Fin & Feather properties, which total approximately 950 acres and are now part of the refuge.

In spring 2010, DU conducted a topographic survey on the 950 acres. Using that survey data, a project design for wetland restoration was completed for the portion of the site to be developed as the Gary Slot Tribute Wetland, and a conceptual design was developed for the rest of the property. To create the Gary Slot unit, a new levee was constructed, swales and potholes excavated and new water control structures installed. The water conveyance system was also renovated to efficiently provide adequate water to the wetland area. When the project was completed, 187 acres had been enhanced and, in addition to waterfowl habitat, included a new area for public-access walk-in hunting, bird watching, photography and environmental education.

The project is named for Gary Slot, the longtime manager of the Bear River Duck Club. It's a fitting tribute to a man who, to this day, dedicates his life to wildlife and conservation. In 2012, DU and partners unveiled the project in a private dedication ceremony for Mr. Slot and his family.



**PARTNERS:** Bear River Duck Club, USFWS-Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, North America Wetlands Conservation Act, Utah Wetlands Foundation, Charles Victor Dover Foundation, Specialty Family Foundation and Ducks Unlimited

## TAKE THE INITIATIVE – HELP DU PRESERVE HABITAT FOR DUCKS IN THE DESERT

Water quality and quantity are chief concerns for Intermountain West and Great Basin wetlands. In Utah, DU is focused on restoring Great Salt Lake wetlands by improving thousands of acres of private and publicly managed habitats. On the Bear River, the largest freshwater component of the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, DU is partnering with the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge to develop a watershed conservation initiative that includes land protection and restoration. Continued loss of wetlands in this system will have extremely negative impacts on the Great Salt Lake's wetlands and waterfowl and the people who enjoy them, so funding this effort through *Ducks in the Desert* is critical.

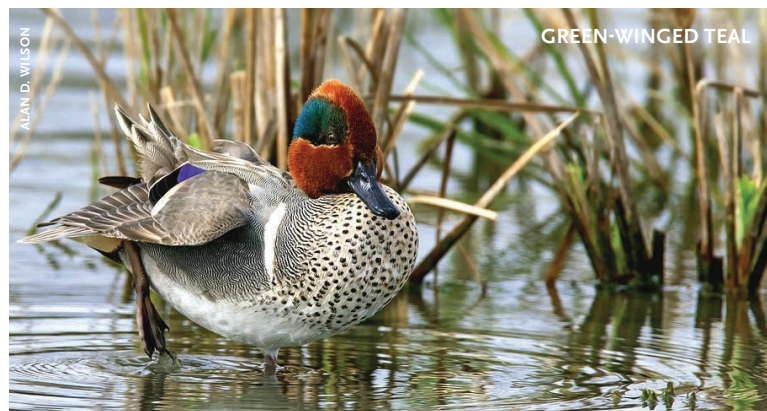
Ducks Unlimited is seeking charitable contributions of more than \$4.67 million in philanthropic funds from generous donors like you to achieve our conservation goals as part of the *Ducks in the Desert* Initiative. Your charitable support will enable Ducks Unlimited to conduct important science, public policy, and outreach efforts, as well as conserve the breeding habitats important to waterfowl that utilize desert wetlands each year. DU's research and evaluation efforts are the foundation upon which our direct conservation programs and our policy and outreach work are based.

A gift to DU's *Ducks in the Desert* Initiative will support projects close to home, but also will ensure that the remaining undisturbed breeding grounds on both sides of the border will be protected before restoration is required.

For more information on DU's new *Ducks in the Desert* Initiative, contact:

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## MAKE A DIFFERENCE! BE A LEADER! BECOME A DU VOLUNTEER!

Ducks Unlimited needs your help. The best way to promote healthy waterfowl populations is by volunteering with your local DU committee. Funds raised through local events are the foundation of the organization's conservation efforts. Your support also helps DU's policy team positively influence legislation important to waterfowl.

Visit [www.ducks.org/utah](http://www.ducks.org/utah) or contact your Regional Director **Barry Crose** at 801-309-5585/bcrose@ducks.org



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