



BARBARA MIERS



STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

CONSERVATION UPDATE

The state of Washington is home to many types of landscapes, almost all of which provide food and habitat to millions of ducks and geese each year, and Ducks Unlimited's projects in the state are designed to restore or improve degraded and compromised wetlands to provide an optimal amount of quality habitat.

Those of greatest importance for waterfowl are on Puget Sound, along the Pacific Coast, within the lower reaches of the Columbia River and in the Middle Columbia River and Channeled Scablands in the eastern part of the state.

These areas are predominately used by migrating and wintering waterfowl, often in great numbers,

but are important for breeding ducks and geese as well.

Current projects on the west side of the state include the Stillwater, Leque, and Samish Units of the Skagit and Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas. Restored wetland and riparian habitat throughout Washington will benefit waterfowl during the migration and breeding periods as well as sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse, both state threatened species. In eastern Washington, DU and Spokane County are acquiring a 60-acre tract in the Saltese Flats area. This purchase will expand the footprint of planned wetland restoration projects

within this historic 1,200-acre marsh. DU is also working with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge and Washington Audubon to initiate spring waterfowl surveys in the Channeled Scablands. These will be the first coordinated, large-scale surveys ever done for migrating waterfowl in eastern Washington during the spring period. The resulting data are expected to provide valuable information that will assist DU and our partners in prioritizing conservation efforts in this important area.

SPOTLIGHT PROJECT

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) purchased 409 acres of agricultural land adjacent to Samish Bay in western Skagit County between 1996 and 2000 and developed the Samish Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area. While the wildlife area has made great strides since acquiring land, the original management infrastructure has begun to deteriorate and water movement across the site is inefficient resulting in marginal wetland conditions.

With funding from NAWCA and a WDFW Duck Stamp grant, DU is currently working with WDFW to make improvements to over 200 acres on the Samish Unit by upgrading infrastructure and improving water delivery capabilities. The resulting project, slated for summer 2015 construction, will give WDFW managers the ability to better manage water and mimic hydrologic patterns conducive to maintaining seasonal wetlands that occurred historically on portions of this landscape. Re-establishment of seasonal wetland plant communities across 200-plus acres, augmented with cereal grains on the remaining acreage of the unit, will greatly benefit a wide diversity of waterfowl and shorebirds during migration and wintering periods. In addition, the Samish Unit has been a popular public waterfowl hunting destination in the northern Puget Sound, and as a result of the habitat gains should see higher quality waterfowl hunting opportunities.



TAKE THE INITIATIVE HELP DU CONSERVE HABITAT THROUGH THE WINGS & WETLANDS INITIATIVE

Washington's diverse habitat landscapes, from the Puget Sound, along the Pacific Coast to the lower reaches of the Columbia River and the channeled scablands are tremendously important to the waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway. These areas are predominately used by migrating and wintering waterfowl, often in great numbers, but are also important for breeding ducks and geese as well. DU's focus in western Washington is to provide wintering and migration habitat to waterfowl.

Ducks Unlimited is seeking charitable contributions of \$8.1 million for our Wings and Wetlands Initiative to achieve our conservation goals in this region. The Wings & Wetlands Initiative encompasses Oregon, Washington and Idaho and all three states enjoy a close connection with Canada that has been strengthened on the wings of waterfowl. Birds move freely across the border during spring and fall migration and during winter months, in search of an ever-shrinking food supply. Habitat loss and water use on both sides of the border mean there will be no safe havens until we conserve what remains. A gift to DU's Wings & Wetlands 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 Wings & Wetlands Initiative:

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