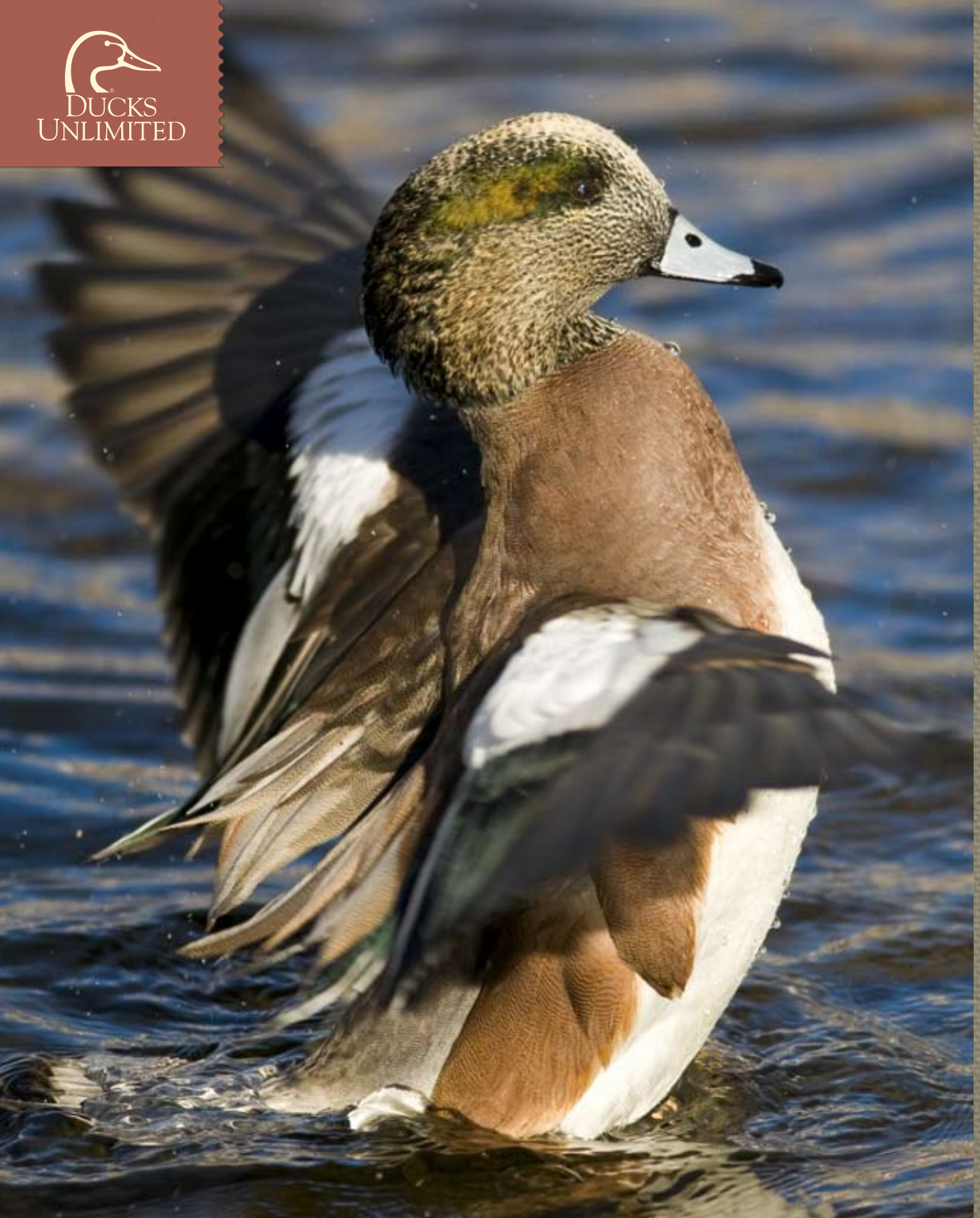


DUCKS UNLIMITED

DUCKS UNLIMITED

Texas CARE

CONSERVING AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DUCKS UNLIMITED IN TEXAS

DID YOU KNOW?

Ducks Unlimited and partners have conserved more than 180,000 acres of various wetland habitats in Texas since conservation activities began in 1988.

Texas wetlands winter approximately 10 million ducks and geese. In fact, Texas winters 90% of the Central Flyway population of ducks.

Texas wetlands host countless shorebirds and other wetland birds, recharge aquifers and store and clean storm waters and runoff.

Texas CARE partner contributions are used to deliver on-the-ground wetlands conservation and provide necessary "seed" money to leverage numerous state, federal and other partner grants and programs.

OUR MISSION

Since our inception in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 12 million acres of habitat for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife throughout North America. Ducks Unlimited (DU) is active in all 50 states, Canada and Mexico. With more than one million supporters, DU has been able to maintain focus on the Mission of conserving, restoring and managing wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

Northern pintails are abundant along the Texas Gulf Coast and in the Southern Great Plains during fall and winter. However, continental populations remain well below the long-term average. DU needs your continued support to protect and restore wetland habitats vital to pintails throughout their range.

Keith McKnight

TEXAS' CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

***Texas CARE** is a comprehensive initiative to protect and conserve important wetlands throughout the Lone Star State, with particular emphasis on Gulf Coast wetlands and prairies, Southern Great Plains playa lakes and grasslands, and the Trinity Basin and East Texas Piney Woods rivers and bottomlands.*

DID YOU KNOW?

Texas has lost 52% of its original wetlands.

Texas population growth is projected to climb from present day 21 million to 36 million by 2040; a 70% increase!

This growth in population and its associated economy puts stress on the precious water, land and other natural resources that have made the Lone Star State so prosperous.

*Partnerships formed through **Texas CARE** focus on the conservation of precious water and wetland resources for both the people and wildlife that call Texas home.*

THE NEED IN TEXAS

Wetland habitat in Texas provides waterfowl and other wildlife with critical resources including food and shelter. Over half of the endangered species within the U.S. depend on wetlands. In addition, wetlands benefit people by recharging groundwater supplies, reducing coastal storm surges, retaining floodwaters during storm events and improving water quality. But wetland habitat in Texas continues to disappear, especially along the Coast. The loss of wetlands affects fish and wildlife resources along with the ecological goods and services provided to Texans and its host of visitors.

Neil Mishler

DID YOU KNOW?

The Texas Gulf Coast winters upward of 2 to 3 million ducks and over one million geese.

The Texas Gulf Coast is directly linked to the waterfowl and shorebird breeding grounds in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) because both regions support abundant populations during crucial periods of their life cycle, and shared habitat loss is occurring at an alarming rate.

The Texas Gulf Coast and PPR are two of the most important conservation regions in North America for DU, and with your support, we can secure these linked habitats for future generations of waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

TEXAS GULF COAST

Cameron Davidson

The Gulf Coast represents one of the most rich and diverse wetland systems in North America. Abundant waterfowl include northern pintail, gadwall, green-winged teal, redhead, lesser scaup, and white-fronted geese from the Central and Mississippi Flyways. The region hosts large concentrations of colonial waterbirds and also provides critical in-transit habitat for migrating shorebirds and neotropical forest birds. The most important habitats are coastal marsh, shallow estuarine bays and lagoons, and wetlands on agricultural lands of the rice prairies. Loss and degradation of wetland habitats due to subsidence, sea-level rise, shoreline erosion, sediment deprivation, saltwater intrusion, navigation channels and associated maintenance dredging are impacting wetland wildlife. Declining rice agriculture adds to the challenge. Although these causes of loss are complex, DU is implementing direct habitat conservation, public policy and scientific research solutions to conserve the Texas Gulf Coast.

PROGRAM PROFILE: MAD ISLAND MARSH

Mad Island Marsh is part of an expansive coastal wetland system that historically stretched unbroken along the Gulf Coast of Texas. The area is composed of a great diversity of wetland types, native grasslands and plentiful freshwater which supports a great abundance of fish and wildlife. Today, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and The Nature Conservancy own and manage over 14,000 acres of this historical coastal wetland in Matagorda County. However, the integrity of the system is being challenged by erosion and saltwater intrusion caused by the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). Although important to the economy of Texas, this ship channel presents challenges to wetland protection and management. The primary need is to protect the 7 miles of eroding shoreline along the southern boundary of Mad Island (north bank of GIWW) with a "breakwater" or artificial reef project. Here, strategically placed rock will break erosive wave action and build marsh by capturing sediment and colonizing robust and hardy plants like cordgrass. Additional project activities at Mad Island will include: (a) working with adjacent private landowners to protect wetlands through donated conservation easements; (b) enhancement of Mad Island Slough, which runs through the area, by installing control structures to manage freshwater; and (c) installation of pump station at Culver Cut to supply freshwater to intensively managed areas. The total cost of this large-scale protection and restoration work is estimated at $8.0M and will require a full suite of conservation partners to accomplish.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

The Nature Conservancy

U.S. Department of Interior – Coastal Impact Assistance Program

North American Wetlands Conservation Council

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Texas R.I.C.E. (Rice Industry Coalition for the Environment)

Cooperating Private Landowners

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Playa Lakes Joint Venture

USDA Farm Services Agency

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Cooperating Private Landowners

Russell Graves

SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS

The Southern Great Plains (SGP) spans great distances across North America including most of west Texas. Native grasslands, wetlands, rivers and streams abound. The most notable and numerous wetlands in the region are “playas”, a Spanish word meaning beaches. More than 60,000 individual playa wetlands are scattered across the SGP supporting more than 200 species of birds and other wildlife. Playas are also the primary source of recharge for the Ogallala Aquifer, a 174,000 square mile groundwater formation that supplies nearly 100% of SGP agriculture and municipal water needs. Due to sedimentation and other impacts, playas are critically threatened wetlands, and more than 70% have been altered. Maintaining and increasing native prairie grasses around playas is the best way to conserve these wetlands and protect them from sediment build-up. Further, the native grass buffer is good for ground nesting birds like lesser prairie chickens, pheasants and quail.

Publicly-owned land represents a small percentage of total land across this expansive landscape, and virtually all playas are found on private agricultural lands and ranches. Therefore, working with private landowners is paramount to conserving this vital region for wildlife, water resources and the people who care for and depend on both. DU is working closely with a strong team of partners through the Playa Lakes Joint Venture to design and implement direct habitat conservation programs on private lands, expand and enhance public wetlands that serve as migration stopovers, guide public policy to conserve valuable water resources and evaluate impacts of wind and mineral energy development.

PROGRAM PROFILE: TARGETING RESTORATION OF PLAYAS AND GRASSLANDS

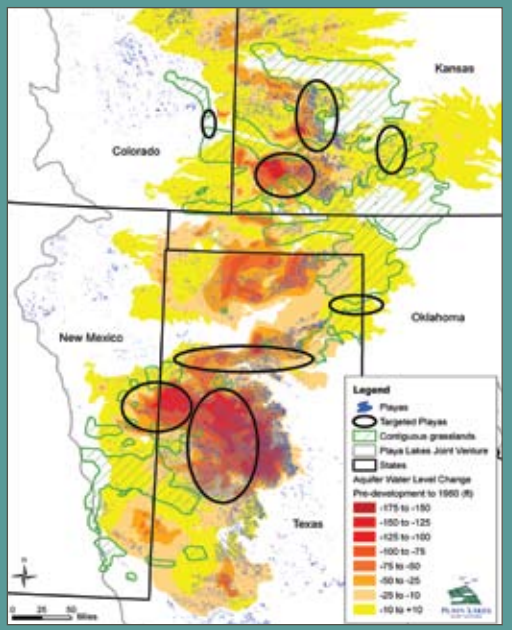
Brian Slobe

In many high priority landscapes for waterfowl and wetlands, including the PPR, Texas Gulf Coast and SGP, science and planning followed by targeted habitat conservation on private lands is of the utmost importance. For the SGP, we are entering an era where the science and planning are solid. The need is to restore grasslands that connect fragmented tracts and form larger ones and protect playas that overlay the Ogallala Aquifer. When conservation is delivered in a targeted approach, we conserve wetlands for waterfowl, grasslands for upland birds and provide recharge for depleted aquifers. To meet these needs, we must build program capacity to deliver private-lands conservation in west Texas. Program elements proposed include: (a) working closely with landowners to educate them on importance of playas and available conservation programs; (b) targeting USDA conservation programs (e.g., CRP) to connect existing grasslands and recharge aquifers; and (c) implementing a land protection option for landowners with working grasslands and ranches. Your support of DU will advance programs from science and planning to "on-the-ground" delivery.

TARGETED APPROACH

By using science to target the most important habitats, DU efficiently conserves key wetlands for waterfowl, grasslands for upland birds and recharges depleted aquifers. Mapping playas, remaining grasslands and aquifer level depletion in overlaying layers directs DU and its partners to the most vital areas for conservation.

AQUIFER WATER LEVEL CHANGE, PLAYAS AND LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN RANGE



DID YOU KNOW?

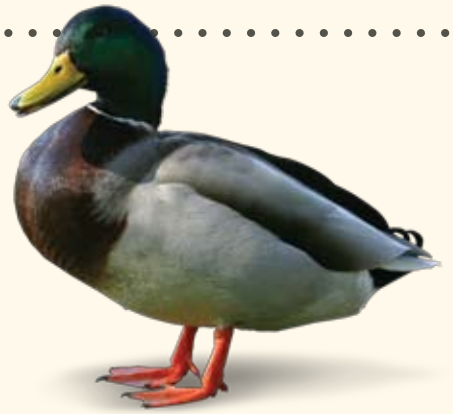
East Texas contains several entire river basins within its boundaries, such as the Trinity and Neches Rivers.

The Trinity River Basin is expansive, covering over 11 million acres in East Texas and stretching from the city of Dallas to Galveston Bay.

Only 6 of the original 16 million acres of bottomland hardwood forests in East Texas remained as of the early 1990s, making this habitat type one of the most threatened in the Lone Star State.

Keith McKnight

TRINITY BASIN AND EAST TEXAS PINEY WOODS



The Trinity Basin and East Texas Piney Woods are part of an ecological region known as the West Gulf Coastal Plain. This vast region covers more than 52 million acres across Texas and adjoining states to the north and east. Bottomland hardwood forests and associated wetlands are flooded frequently by winter and early spring rains providing home for migrating and wintering waterfowl as well as breeding wood ducks. Habitat challenges include conversion of bottomlands to cropland, pine plantations and pastures. The growing Texas population continues to need water, resulting in constructed water supply reservoirs that permanently cover forested wetlands. Also, reservoir construction on rivers often reduces seasonal flooding beneficial to waterfowl. The primary need in the Trinity Basin and Piney Woods is to protect the remaining bottomland hardwood forests. Therefore, DU programs focus on assisting state and federal wildlife agencies and other non-government conservation organizations protect remaining bottomland hardwood forests and improve water management capabilities.

PROGRAM PROFILE: GUS ENGELING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Cameron Davidson

Gus Engeling WMA lies within the Trinity Basin, near the town of Palestine in Anderson County. This 11,000-acre area hosts a great diversity of wetlands including bottomland hardwoods, meandering sloughs and bayous and sphagnum moss bogs. DU partnered with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1988 to enhance water management within these bottomlands with a series of 7 large water control structures and associated overflow spillways. In fact, this was Texas Ducks Unlimited's very first habitat project in the Lone Star State! After 20 years, these structures and spillways are in need of replacement to insure proper water management, forest longevity and health of this special bottomland area. Work is scheduled to begin in summer 2009 with an estimated cost of $400,000.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

North American Wetlands Conservation Council

Trinity Basin Conservation Foundation

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Cooperating Private Landowners

DID YOU KNOW?

The PPR supports 20-30 million breeding waterfowl and can produce 70% or more of the Continent's ducks.

The PPR is especially important to pintails, gadwalls, mallards and all species of teal that winter in Texas.

Over 225 other species of migratory birds use the PPR.

THE PRAIRIE POTHOLE REGION

ORIGINS OF TEXAS' WATERFOWL

The PPR is recognized as the most significant breeding waterfowl habitat in the world. Stretching from north-central Alberta south to Iowa, 50-90% of the wetlands in the PPR have been lost or severely degraded and grassland habitats used for nesting sites are under even greater siege. DU focuses its efforts on grassland conservation in the U.S. portion of the PPR, while wetlands conservation is most critical in Canada.

Research conducted by DU and partners tells us that there is no place on this continent where we can have a bigger impact on waterfowl populations than the prairies. The link between these areas and Texas is obvious - waterfowl that winter in the state originate on the breeding grounds located in the northern U.S. and Canada.

The most important area for Texas' waterfowl is the PPR of the U.S. and Canada as 70% of the banded waterfowl recovered in Texas originate from this area. Texas CARE will conserve vital habitat on the breeding grounds that are important to Texas.

TEXAS CARE GOAL

DU's goal is to restore and maintain sustainable wetlands within the Lone Star State and on the breeding grounds important to Texas' waterfowl. Conserving water resources is also critical to the people and wildlife in Texas. We will achieve this goal by protecting, restoring and enhancing wetlands statewide. It will take a greater financial investment, sound partnerships and effective policies to restore the wetlands and natural processes that make the Lone Star State such a wonderful place to live. The needs are urgent. Please join us today to secure a brighter tomorrow and leave a legacy for future generations.

Cameron Davidson

THE REAL CONSERVATIONISTS

Major Sponsors make an immediate and significant impact on wetlands conservation through financial support of DU's Mission and our comprehensive Wetlands for Tomorrow campaign.

Texas CARE is your state initiative, providing Major Sponsors opportunities to support wetlands conservation on the breeding grounds and throughout the Lone Star State, including the Gulf Coast wetlands and prairies, Southern Great Plains playa lakes and grasslands and the Trinity Basin and East Texas Piney Woods rivers and bottomlands.

Become a Major Sponsor today – help secure Wetlands for Tomorrow.

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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

PROUD PARTNER

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