



UNITING STATES FOR FALL FLIGHTS

2026 PROGRAM UPDATE



STATE INVESTMENTS OF \$6,060,005 SURPASS THE UNITING STATES FOR FALL FLIGHTS CAMPAIGN GOAL OF \$6 MILLION!

States Reach Investment Goal of \$6 Million for Conservation

Fall Flights ranks among conservation's greatest success stories, uniting state agencies to protect Canadian breeding grounds where 70% of our waterfowl originate. This year, U.S. partners matched the state's \$6.1 million dollar-for-dollar, and U.S. and Canadian partners matched the combined \$12.2 million, stepping up when NAWCA funds were unavailable. They stretched each dollar four times over, and five with a favorable exchange rate, reaching CAD \$31.5 million! These funds helped conserve and restore 65,000 new acres and manage 3 million existing acres.

Together, our investments build resilient landscapes and communities, while sustaining breeding grounds so future generations can enjoy the wonders of bird migrations.

31 STATES ACHIEVED CAMPAIGN MILESTONES OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

ON THE WATER: AT GOAL



Alabama	Illinois	Nevada
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Ohio
Colorado	Mississippi	Pennsylvania
Connecticut	Missouri	Tennessee
Delaware	Montana	West Virginia

TOUCHED DOWN: ACHIEVES GOAL



Florida
Georgia
Nebraska
New Jersey
North Carolina

LOCKED IN: REACHES 50% OF GOAL



Indiana
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
New Mexico
South Carolina
Texas

TAKES FLIGHT: INCREASES INVESTMENT



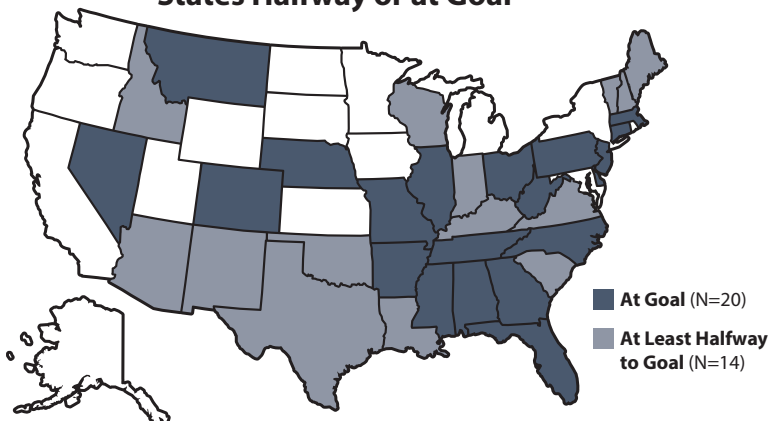
Michigan
Minnesota
Oregon
Virginia

Bolded states recently advanced to a new milestone.

Key Highlights

Thank you! This year, 48 states invested in Fall Flights. Seven states advanced to new milestones: two touched down at goal, four locked in at the 50% mark, and one took flight with an increase in its investment. We also want to recognize four states that have sustained investments above goal for years: Delaware, Illinois, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Together, these states brought the campaign in for a landing. This marks incredible progress towards achieving our long-term goal of investing \$10 million annually by 2031.

States Halfway or at Goal



WHY INVEST IN CANADIAN HABITAT

Migratory birds hatched up north contribute nearly \$38 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting over 180,000 jobs through hunting and wildlife watching.

Our investments:

- Safeguard family farms, refuges, and wild spaces for future generations
- Revitalize wetlands and associated uplands, boosting biodiversity and storing carbon
- Foster resilience in landscapes for the wildlife and communities that depend on them

Through a remarkable multiplier effect, every state dollar generates more than \$5 in on-the-ground conservation impact.

“Fall Flights is the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies’ powerful partnership program that facilitates cross-border waterfowl conservation by state fish and wildlife agencies. The states’ investments today safeguard the return of waterfowl tomorrow and ensure sustainable migrations for future generations.”

~ Paul Johansen, Chief of the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and President of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

A Continental System

Billions of birds produced and supported in Canada travel through every U.S. state, creating opportunities to experience migration close to home. These are our birds, and their journey connects us all.



Conservation Delivery – A race against time

To maintain or grow our waterfowl populations, we must conserve breeding habitats.

Here’s what’s at stake:

70%
LOST

In Southern Canada, up to 70 percent of wetlands are gone, with losses as high as 95% in densely populated areas

80 ACRES

Every day, 80 acres of wetlands in Canada vanish – equivalent to 61 football fields

74%
LOST

74% of native grasslands have been lost, and since 1970 half of Canada’s grassland birds have disappeared

Benefitting People and Nature

Investing in Canadian habitat isn’t just about sustaining harvestable waterfowl populations. It is about supporting the entire avian web—from shorebirds and raptors to songbirds—that draws a broad, passionate span of wildlife enthusiasts into the outdoors. Fall Flights investments protect multi-use ecosystems, satisfying an expanding constituency of birdwatchers and conservationists, ensuring our wild spaces remain resilient for everyone who looks to the skies. These constituents, in turn, drive our economy.

Driving a Powerful Economy

Across the United States, birdwatching supported by Canadian habitat drives nearly:



\$38 Billion

in economic activity each year



Supports over

180,000
jobs



Generates nearly

\$5 Billion
to tax revenue

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Our collective momentum is a direct reflection of a proud, 40-year legacy — the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Since 1986, the United States, Canada, and Mexico have had a shared vision: by working together across borders, we can sustain thriving populations of migratory birds for generations to come. The benefits of that commitment reach far beyond the marsh: healthy wetlands and associated uplands provide communities with clean water, flood resilience, and carbon storage. This 40-year legacy is truly worth celebrating.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Renewing wetlands across the Atlantic Flyway

Across the Atlantic Flyway, the infrastructure that makes wetlands work is aging. Dikes and water control structures built decades ago are wearing out, and with them, the ability to manage habitat through drought, storms, and rising seas.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Fish and Wildlife Program is meeting that challenge at both ends of the flyway. At home, the state is rebuilding water control structures at Manahawkin Wildlife Management Area, converting open water into resilient coastal marsh. In Canada, where New Jersey met its Fall Flights goal this year, those same dollars help Ducks Unlimited Canada replace structures and repair dikes at Quebec's Cap Tourmente marshes, keeping these wetlands working for breeding waterfowl for generations.



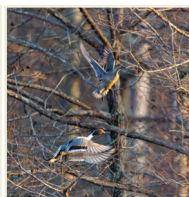
Replacing aging water control structure at Manahawkin WMA, NJ that will be resilient to climate change and sea level rise.
PHOTO CREDIT: NJDEP



Replacing aging water control structure at Petite-Ferme to preserve ecological integrity.
PHOTO CREDIT: DU CANADA



Nature's wet and dry cycles shape intact wetland basins in the Prairie Pothole Region.
PHOTO CREDIT: DU CANADA



Healthy bottomland forests will ensure future generations will continue to enjoy the magic of hunting in flooded timber.
PHOTO CREDIT: AGFC

Working with nature across the Mississippi Flyway

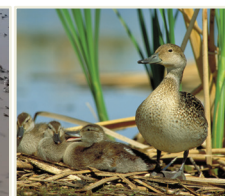
The most cost-effective conservation works with nature, not against it. Arkansas's Game and Fish Commission has boldly changed course on 50,000 acres of greentree reservoirs. For decades, they were flooded to the hunting calendar, and the red oaks began to die. Now it is restoring their natural water cycle, and the oaks are recovering. Arkansas has long met its Fall Flights goal, and its investments in the Prairie Pothole Region help keep grasslands intact and restore wetlands by breaking tile. The ducks raised there winter in Arkansas's flooded woods. At both ends of the flyway, Arkansas trusts nature's rhythm.

Supporting pintails across the Central Flyway

Pintails need quality habitat at every stage, from the Gulf Coast to the Prairie Pothole Region. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and its partners have secured commitments to shallowly flood 20,000 acres for four months and hold another 2,000 acres as sanctuary, so wintering pintails reach the breeding grounds in peak condition and nest more productively. To carry that investment north, Texas raised its Fall Flights contribution by \$75,000 to secure pairing and nesting habitat on the Canadian prairies, where those same birds raise their young. Its investment in the full annual cycle means better duck hunting at home for years to come.



Pintail that arrive on the breeding grounds in great shape are more productive.
PHOTO CREDIT: TPWD



TPWD provides pintail what they need to arrive on the breeding grounds ready to nest.
PHOTO CREDIT: DU CANADA



Sturgeon Lake, Oregon now provides habitat for salmon and waterfowl.
PHOTO CREDIT: ODFW



Opening a dike in three places allows the Columbia River to once again enter Moberly Marsh.
PHOTO CREDIT: DU CANADA

Reconnecting rivers and floodplains across the Pacific Flyway

On the lower Columbia, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and its partners reconnected Sturgeon Lake to the Columbia River at Sauvie Island, and salmon, sturgeon, waterfowl, and a multitude of other species will see improved lake conditions in the coming years. This year, the department increased its Fall Flights investment in the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture. In December 2025, Fall Flights partners, with the ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation and Shuswap Band, reconnected 141 acres of Columbia River floodplain at Moberly Marsh, British Columbia, complementing the First Nations-led Bringing the Salmon Home Initiative. From the mountains to the sea, healthy wetlands keep ducks in the air and salmon in the water.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our work is not done. To keep this momentum soaring, we must plan, strengthen our partnerships, and direct funding toward the critical Canadian breeding habitats — steadily building toward our long-term goal of \$10 million annually by 2031. By continuing to invest together, we can ensure healthy waterfowl populations, vibrant wetlands and associated upland habitats, and thriving outdoor traditions that wildlife enthusiasts will cherish for generations to come.

"Whether it's waterfowl or landbirds or shorebirds or waterbirds, they are moving from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds, and over 70 percent of the birds migrate. We have to enhance the ways to be effective for bird conservation across that whole life cycle."

~ **Tammy Vercauteren**, Executive Director, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

"Fall Flights is about connecting landscapes in Canada with those in the U.S. That's why we target state investments in provinces and regions with the strongest connections to individual states for waterfowl and other migratory birds."

~ **Pat Kehoe**, Acting CEO, Ducks Unlimited Canada



We thank the Fall Flights Advisory Committee, the Fall Flights Communications Team, Ducks Unlimited Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada, Delta Waterfowl, Manitoba Habitat Conservancy, and the 48 states that invested in Fall Flights.

For more information: fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/fallflights



**Scan QR code to
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celebration video**

Fall Flights Advisory Committee:

Fall Flights Advisory Chair	Ryan Brown (VA)
Waterfowl Working Group Chair	Shaun Oldenburger (TX)
Ducks Unlimited Inc.	Karen Waldrop, COO
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Pat Kehoe, CEO
Manitoba Habitat Conservancy & Delta Waterfowl	Stephen Carlyle, CEO, MHC
WAFWA Director	Jeb Williams (ND)
MAFWA Director	Tim McCoy (NE)
SEAFWA Director	Kyle Briggs (NC)
NEAFWA Director	Vacant
National Flyway Council	Scott Gardner (CA)
Canadian Provincial Director	Vacant
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies	Tammy Vercauteren, Executive Director
American Bird Conservancy	Shawn Graff, Vice President
Audubon	Marshal Johnson, CCO

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