



FALL FLIGHTS

2025 Program Update



UNITING STATES FOR FALL FLIGHTS

State investments of \$5.8 million generate more than \$30.1 million to conserve and restore nearly 94,000 new acres and manage an existing 2.7 million acres.

The Fall Flights Program is essential for sustaining North America's waterfowl populations. Thanks to state investments, Fall Flights supports the critical breeding habitats in Canada, where up to 70% of the continent's waterfowl are hatched.

In 2025, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) introduced the *Uniting States for Fall Flights campaign* to secure \$6 million in annual state contributions by 2026 and achieve our long-term goal of states investing \$10 million annually by 2031. Fall Flights relies on partnerships to create lasting change and to benefit future generations.

"Fall Flights is one program that all states agree on and participate in. It's a contributory program that benefits waterfowl production continent-wide. This unity is the driving force behind our success."

*~ Judy Camuso, Commissioner of the
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and
President of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies*

Exceptional Return on Investment

Migratory birds hatched up north contribute \$38 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting over 180,000 jobs through hunting and wildlife watching. The Fall Flights Program not only advances conservation goals but also safeguards wetlands and grasslands for millions of waterfowl and other migratory bird species.



Key Highlights of a Record Year

- Record state investment: \$5,788,858 (FY2025), building on lasting momentum.
- Amplified impact: Each state dollar brought in over \$5 in habitat conservation delivery through the combination of partnerships and a favorable exchange rate.
- On-the-ground results: 63,018 acres conserved, 30,978 acres restored, and 2,662,805 acres now managed for long-term resilience.
- Real-world benefits: Hunting and birdwatching create cherished memories and traditions for families and communities.
- Shared vision: Investments target areas with the greatest return for wildlife, communities and future generations.



Investing in Canada to make memories at home.

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



Conserving prime wetland habitat in eastern Canada for waterfowl and migratory birds in the Atlantic Flyway.

JACOB DEMERS, DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Since its inception nearly 40 years ago, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) has become a global conservation success story, but habitat loss remains a significant threat. Fall Flights provides states and partners a way to address these threats based on a track record of success. States leverage investments, through match by partners, and federal funding through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), to maximize conservation impact and ensure healthy fall flight numbers in the U.S.



A Bridge in Uncertain Times

As federal funding faces constraints, Fall Flights offers an avenue for continuity. It keeps collaborative conservation moving forward while reducing reliance on any single funding source.

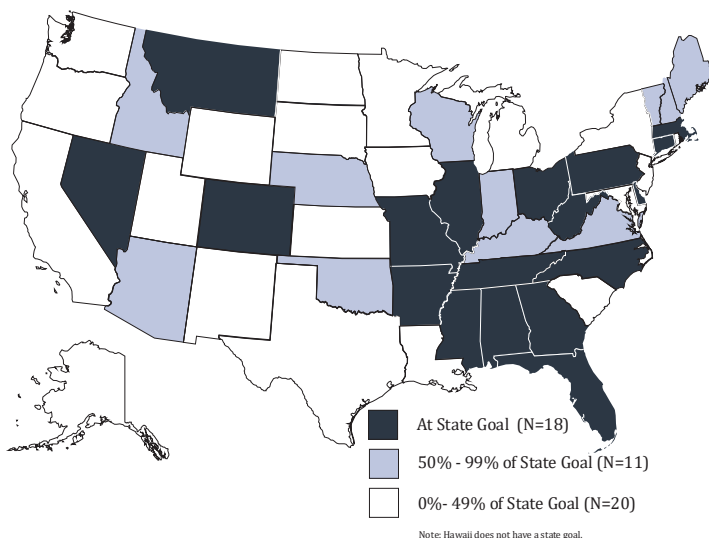


Fall Flights – a Record Year

\$5.79 million raised—thanks to widespread generosity, we are nearly to our \$6 million Uniting States for Fall Flights campaign goal.

- Fifteen states stayed on the water at their state goal.
- Three states touched down at their state goal.
- Three states joined eleven states already at 50% or more of their goal - the milestone the Fall Flights Presidential Task Force recommended states reach by 2026 to put them on pace to achieve their goal by 2031.
- Two states took flight with a significant increase in investment.

States are embracing the challenge, locally and nationally and their leadership is ensuring that conservation's future is vibrant and secure.



State Progress Toward Fall Flights Goals

"The Fall Flights effort is the most efficient and one of the most meaningful contributions that you can make to habitat that benefits waterfowl and migratory birds."

*~ Ryan Brown, Executive Director,
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
and Fall Flights Advisory Chair*

Investing in People and Nature

Our vision is simple and profound: future generations enjoying the wonder of bird migrations. By investing in Canada's most crucial habitats, we protect the breeding grounds that sustain North America's ducks and enrich landscapes for countless other species, including ourselves.

Wetlands and grasslands support clean water, flood and drought resilience, recreation and outdoor traditions passed down for generations.

During a time of changing conditions, your investments are:

- Safeguarding family farms, refuges and wild spaces for future generations
- Revitalizing wetlands, boosting biodiversity and storing carbon
- Fostering resilience in landscapes for the wildlife and communities that depend on them



Habitat investments benefit migrating birds and bird watchers. ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

“Birdwatching generates huge economic value, with nearly 100 million Americans identifying as birdwatchers. These investments don’t just help waterfowl hunters, but also local communities that benefit from ecotourism.”

*~ Julie Hill-Gabriel, Vice President,
Habitat Conservation, Audubon*

Stories from the Field

Atlantic Flyway – Wetlands Rebuilt, Migrations Revealed

Restoration and research are working together to strengthen the Atlantic Flyway. In Quebec, the Lorette River Sub-Watershed Restoration project is rebuilding wetlands and waterways to reduce flood risks and boost climate resilience. Farther south, a telemetry study using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System is monitoring birds as they pass through Virginia, revealing migration routes and stopover sites that



Conservation Easements: Keeping ducks in the air and ranchers on the land. DARWIN CHAMBERS, DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

guide conservation planning. Meanwhile, in New Brunswick, Ducks Unlimited Canada restored 79.9 acres at Ararat Marsh, reinforcing water control infrastructure and preserving a keystone habitat for waterfowl, amphibians, and native plants within the Lower Saint John River floodplain.

Midcontinent Flyways – Connecting Working Landscapes in Saskatchewan and Nebraska

Creating working lands for birds across borders is a win-win for waterfowl and ranchers. A bison rancher in Saskatchewan works with partners to conserve wetlands and grasslands, blending sustainable agriculture with habitat gains. Bird species departing this ranch may stop on working lands in the Rainwater Basin in Nebraska, thanks to a project that provided cost-share for grazing infrastructure on more than 1,000 acres. These grazed wetlands offer food for waterfowl, habitat for whooping cranes, mudflats for shorebirds and grasslands for songbirds like sparrows and meadowlarks.

“It’s essential that we have all the states participate in the Fall Flights program. The science proves that most of your ducks are coming from Canada. You are providing more opportunities for your hunters if you invest in habitat where the birds are breeding and nesting.”

~ Adam Putnam, CEO, Ducks Unlimited



A quartet of whooping cranes flies over the Platte River.

ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Pacific Flyway – Partnering for Pintails and Community Well-Being

For the first time in decades, hunters can harvest three pintails a day when populations are strong—a testament to what conservation partnerships can achieve. To ensure abundant pintail, nine Pacific and Central Flyway states are investing in wetlands and grasslands in Alberta, securing the nesting habitat that pintails and hundreds of other migratory birds depend upon.

Far to the south, pintails winter at California's Salton Sea, where shrinking waters threaten both birds and people. Thanks to the Salton Sea Conservancy, diverse partners are coming together with bold investments to restore habitat and renew hope for pintails and the communities that share their home.



Conservation of wetland and grasslands provides nesting habitat in Canada. DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA



Partners are coming together to restore habitat for pintails and hundreds of migrating species. SALTON SEA, CALIFORNIA. GETTY IMAGES

What You Can Do

We invite you to help inspire others to invest in the *Uniting States for Fall Flights campaign*. By maintaining and growing our collective investment, we can ensure thriving habitats for waterfowl, vibrant economies for people and opportunities for youth and families to experience the wonders of wild places. Thank you for making this possible, year after year.

Maintain or increase investments

- Keep growing: Sustain and elevate investments to meet targets for 2026 and 2031.
- Invest where it counts: Direct funding to the most critical habitats, multiplying impact for nature and communities, because your stewardship makes every dollar count.
- Celebrate progress and participation: Use milestones to honor your dedication and inspire action among peers.
- Strengthen partnerships: Build creative collaborations that maintain strong match ratios and adapt to an ever-changing funding climate.
- Share our story: Continue spreading the word about how your support connects conservation with healthy communities and future prosperity.

Fall Flights Advisory Committee

Advisory Comm Chair, Fall Flights Advisory Chair	Ryan Brown (VA)
Waterfowl Working Group Chair	Shaun Oldenburger (TX)
Ducks Unlimited Inc.	Karen Waldrop, CCO
Ducks Unlimited Canada	Dave Kostersky, Continental Relations and Partnerships
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	Judy Camuso (ME)
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	Marshall Johnson, CCO

Thank You

We would like to 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:

<https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/fall-flights>

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Watch our inspiring video!

