



## U.S. Department of the Interior News Release

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### **Secretary Haaland Announces Nearly \$80 Million in Funding for Wetland Conservation Projects and National Wildlife Refuges**

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland today announced that \$78 million in grants has been approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, which will provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners the ability to help conserve or restore nearly 500,000 acres of wetland and associated upland habitats for waterfowl, shorebirds and other birds across North America – including Canada and Mexico. The grants, made through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), will be matched by nearly \$125 million in partner funds.

In addition, the Commission approved \$1.8 million from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to conserve land in three national wildlife refuges for public use and hunt programs. The Commission, which is chaired by Secretary Haaland, convened today for the inaugural meeting of the Biden-Harris administration.

“It’s remarkable that the programs we are discussing were established before we appreciated what climate change was – or how threatened many bird populations are,” **said Secretary Haaland**. “Not too long ago, a study found that there are 3 billion fewer birds in North America than there were 50 years ago. This Commission’s investments are critical to keep habitats whole and connected and help birds flourish for the next hundred years and beyond.”

Wetlands provide many economic, ecological and social benefits. They are also important protections from the effects of climate change such as flooding and rising seas. NAWCA grants conserve bird populations and wetland habitat while supporting local economies and outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing and birdwatching. Partners in NAWCA projects include private landowners, states, local governments, conservation organizations, sportsmen’s groups, Tribes, land trusts, and corporations. Some of this year’s projects include:

- **Continental Marsh Enhancement in Louisiana** - \$1 million to restore and enhance habitat within the Terrebonne and Pontchartrain basins of coastal Louisiana, which will help offset dramatic coastal wetland losses.
- **Southwest Crown Wetland Conservation in Montana** - \$1 million to conserve and restore 3,879 acres on public and private lands in the Swan River watershed of

southwestern Montana. Species that will benefit include mallard, lesser scaup and northern pintail.

- **Accelerating Wetlands in PA II in Pennsylvania** - \$1 million will restore 1,078 acres of wetland and 104 acres grassland habitat in north central Pennsylvania, including tracts that provide important habitat to American black ducks.

[A complete list of the approved U.S., Canada and Mexico NAWCA projects](#) is available online.

The funding to conserve 2,052 acres for three national wildlife refuges through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund was derived primarily from the sale of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as Duck Stamps, and import duties on imported arms and ammunition. Since 1934, the Federal Duck Stamp Program has provided more than \$1.1 billion for habitat conservation in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

“These projects are a testament to the ongoing value of the Duck Stamp and funding support for the protection of wetland habitat for waterfowl and numerous others species in the National Wildlife Refuge System,” **said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Principal Deputy Director Martha Williams**. “These new areas will provide increased public opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting, fishing and wildlife observation.”

While Duck Stamps are required for waterfowl hunters as an annual license, anyone can contribute to conservation by buying them. A current Federal Duck Stamp is also a pass into any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee. Because nearly all of the proceeds are used to conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife, outdoor enthusiasts including birders and nature photographers buy Duck Stamps to help preserve some of the most diverse and important wildlife habitats in our nation.

These funds will be used to purchase waterfowl habitat at the following national wildlife refuges:

- **Currituck National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina** - \$525,000 to acquire 70 acres of wetlands and surrounding uplands that will provide habitat for waterfowl including American black ducks, wood ducks and mallards, as well as other migratory birds. The acquisition will provide road access to the northwestern portion of the refuge, simplifying access for the public and Service staff.
- **Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey** - \$94,000 to acquire 171 acres of tidal and freshwater marsh that will provide habitat for thousands of wintering waterfowl, including American black ducks, Northern pintails and mallards, as well as shorebirds and colonial-nesting wading birds.
- **Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge in Maine** - \$1,267,700 to acquire 1,811 acres of wetlands and surrounding uplands that will provide nesting habitat for waterfowl including American black ducks, wood ducks, common goldeneyes and common mergansers, as well as other migratory birds. The acquisition will secure public access to the property and 5,000 acres of adjoining refuge lands.

The [Migratory Bird Conservation Commission](#) is chaired by the Secretary of the Interior. Its members include Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack; Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan; U.S. Senators John Boozman of Arkansas and Martin Heinrich of New Mexico; and U.S. Representatives Mike Thompson of California and Robert J. Wittman of Virginia. The Commission has helped in conserving much of this nation's most important

waterfowl habitat and in establishing or enhancing many of the country's most popular destinations for waterfowl hunting and birding.

[NAWCA](#) is the only federal grant program dedicated to the conservation of wetland habitats for migratory birds. Since 1989, funding has advanced the conservation of wetland habitats and their wildlife in all 50 U.S. states, Canada and Mexico, while engaging more than 6,500 partners in over 3,100 projects. Through NAWCA, federal funds are typically leveraged at twice the legally required dollar-for-dollar non-federal match-to-grant ratio.

Additional information about North American wetlands and migratory bird conservation can be found [online](#), where waterfowl enthusiasts, biologists and agency managers can find the most up-to-date waterfowl habitat and population information.

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