2020 Duck Production
Delta’s Mission: To Produce Ducks

We proudly present Delta Waterfowl's 2020 Duck Production Report. As the Duck Hunters Organization, we are committed to enhancing duck production and putting more ducks over your decoys each fall. In this special report, we focus on the ways Delta is working to increase duck production in the parkland habitat of Canada and the prairie potholes of the northern U.S. These areas produce the ducks that you hunt.

In this report, we will share how Delta's proven duck production programs add ducks to the fall flight every year and in every flyway.

Delta Uses Science-Based Management to Produce Ducks

Delta Waterfowl continues to work through science-based, innovative programs to produce ducks. As always, Delta's duck production efforts are founded on the “Three P’s” of duck production: prairies, potholes and predators.

- **Prairies** – The expanse and condition of the breeding grounds drive duck numbers, and the prairie pothole region — which encompasses the Dakotas, eastern Montana, western Minnesota, a bit of Iowa and much of southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta — is where the majority of North America's ducks nest.

- **Potholes** – Ducks need water for nesting habitat, especially small wetlands. Protecting wetland habitat is arguably Job No. 1 for all waterfowl managers.

### INVESTMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVESTMENT</th>
<th>DUCKS PRODUCED WITH PREDATOR MANAGEMENT</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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### INVESTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVESTMENT</th>
<th>MALLARDS PRODUCED WITH HEN HOUSES OVER 10 YEARS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000</td>
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including Delta Waterfowl and an army of concerned waterfowl hunters. We must keep wetlands from being drained to create more agricultural land.

**Predators** – Numerous studies — from Delta as well as other sources — show that predators eat the overwhelming majority of duck eggs produced, year in and year out. Nest predators of all types are the biggest bottleneck to duck production, so essentially, all management to increase duck production is really about managing predation.

**Tools to Manage Predation**

Lethal predator reduction works to produce dabbling ducks. Extensive research has shown that more than 2.5 times as many ducks are produced with Predator Management than without it.

We also know that Hen Houses are very effective for increasing mallard production because they cost-effectively put nests out of reach of predators. The result: Hen Houses produce 12 times as many mallards.

Accordingly, Delta continues to implement these intensive management tools. We deploy Predator Management and Hen Houses in landscapes that maximize their efficiency and efficacy per dollar spent. We select locations with high densities of nesting ducks, and we continually search for ways to keep management costs low while putting more ducks into the fall flight.

The number of professional trappers Delta contracts each breeding season continues to expand. Delta’s Hen House program has grown dramatically, with new Hen Houses being added each year. The expansion of these programs and the dramatic results of more ducks over your decoys simply could not happen without your contributions and support.

**Delta Programs Boost Nest Success**

Ducks Need Our Help to Thrive. Let’s face it: Ducks are low on the food chain. Raccoons, skunks, red foxes, opossums, mink, snakes, crows, ravens and seemingly every other wild critter on the prairie will seek and destroy a duck nest.

Low nest success in the prairie pothole region hurts duck production. In key areas of the breeding grounds, nest success is less than 10 percent, far below the 15 to 20

90 percent of duck nests that fail are lost to predators.

**PREDATOR MANAGEMENT BOOSTS NEST SUCCESS!**
percent required to sustain duck populations and ensure strong fall flights.

Through decades of innovative and extensive research, Delta has sought and found solutions to cost-effectively produce ducks.

Delta’s proven duck production programs — Predator Management and Hen Houses — significantly boost nest success. Delta maximizes the impact of our duck production work by trapping predators and installing nest structures in areas where ducks breed in high numbers, but where nest success is low because of heavy predation and a lack of nesting cover.

Predator Management and Hen Houses are proven tools to add ducks to every fall flight. We’re fulfilling the promise of our mission as The Duck Hunters Organization to produce ducks and ensure the future of waterfowl hunting.
The Hen House Success Story

Predators target mallard nests. Although mallards are highly adaptable ducks, they're still no match for a gauntlet of predators that roam throughout their key breeding areas. Nest predation is a real problem for mallards.

Low nest success in the prairie pothole region hurts mallard production. Years of research have shown that Hen Houses are the most cost-effective tool to increase mallard production.

Delta places these nesting cylinders over water in small wetlands with limited nesting cover where predators such as red foxes, raccoons, skunks, mink, badgers, crows, ravens and other egg-eaters can easily find duck nests in sparse patches of grass.

Hen Houses provide protection from predators. Mallards using a Hen House are 12 times more likely to hatch a nest than those nesting in the grass cover. In many areas, nest success in Hen Houses is 60 to 90 percent, compared with less than 10 percent for mallards nesting in the grass.

Delta maintains more than 9,000 Hen Houses in key breeding areas of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, North

A mallard using a Delta Hen House is 12 TIMES more likely to hatch a nest than a mallard nesting in the uplands of the Canadian Parklands.
Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Colorado, and we’re continually working to expand the program to add even more mallards to every fall flight.

Hen Houses are proven tools to add mallards to every fall flight. We’re fulfilling the promise of our mission as The Duck Hunters Organization to produce ducks and ensure the future of waterfowl hunting.

**Predator Management Produces Ducks for Duck Hunters**

Predators are a problem for ducks everywhere they breed, but particularly in the prairie pothole region, where low nest success hurts duck production. In key areas of the breeding grounds, nest success is less than 10 percent, far below the 15 to 20 percent required to sustain duck populations and ensure strong fall flights.

Delta began to study Predator Management in 1994, seeking to boost duck production in areas where ducks breed in high numbers, but where nest success is low because of heavy predation and a lack of nesting cover.

Research consistently has shown that reducing predators is a very cost-effective way to boost nest success, which is the most critical component of duck production.

Delta hires professional trappers to target duck nest predators such as red foxes, skunks and raccoons in areas of high breeding duck densities where duckling production is low. Predator Management is operational in North Dakota — a key state for production of mallards, gadwalls, pintails, blue-winged teal, shovelers and other ducks. We’re working to expand the program to produce even more ducks.

In 2020, Delta operated 26 Predator Management sites, and combined with good spring water conditions in the Dakotas, duck production was excellent. Delta’s Predator Management work put tens of thousands of ducks into this year’s fall flight.

**Delta’s Innovative Research Drives Duck Production**

Predator Management and Hen Houses are cornerstone duck production programs for Delta Waterfowl, but are only a portion of the research and hands-on work we do in the effort to put more ducks over your decoys each hunting season.

The programs are as wide-ranging as they are effective. Time and again, Delta’s research establishes the cutting edge of waterfowl management in North America. These programs all seek to establish new standards in management as well as understanding of waterfowl. The bottom line is everything Delta is doing produces more ducks.

The key is research. Proper action on any of the Three P’s: Prairie, Potholes and Predators can’t happen until we have accurate understanding of how they all work together. And, that’s why your support of Delta’s efforts is so critical.

**We Need Your Help**

Quite simply, none of this happens without you! Delta needs funds to continue the organization’s important duck production programs. We hope you will consider supporting Delta’s efforts to expand our Predator Management efforts, install more Hen Houses and conserve more wetland habitat through establishment of positive agricultural policy incentives.

Pick your program and know that Delta Waterfowl is working tirelessly to increase hatch rates, as well as duckling and hen survival, to put more ducks over your decoys and to maintain healthy continental waterfowl populations. Of course, we will always be there to conserve wetlands and advocate for sustainable hunting, recruit the next generation of waterfowl hunters and to work for common-sense regulations that promote and encourage hunting.

We are The Duck Hunters Organization. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ducks and duck hunting. It’s important work, and to do it, we need your help. Thanks for your support of Delta Waterfowl.