



### HABITAT CONSERVATION

Delta Waterfowl conserves critical duck habitat through agricultural policy efforts. Our goal — which is accomplished by designing, testing and implementing programs such as Working Wetlands and GROW — is to maintain the breeding duck carrying capacity in the United States and Canada, with a vision of adding nesting cover in the Prairie Pothole Region to boost duck production. Ultimately, Delta’s habitat conservation work leads to strong, sustained fall flights of ducks.

## Delta Waterfowl Conserves Breeding Duck Habitat

Working Wetlands and GROW result in stronger fall flights for all four flyways

With your face pressed against the trunk of an oak tree. When you’re trying to become one with the bottom of a layout boat. As you try to peek through the top of your pit blind without moving even an eyelash.

In none of these moments are you likely thinking about habitat conservation formulas. Your focus is on those magnificent birds. All of your senses are concentrated on what is unfolding in front of you. The goosebumps before “TAKE ‘EM!” are the reason we hunt.

But afterward, when those beautiful

birds are in your hand, it’s important to remember ... these ducks came from somewhere, and it wasn’t from “... just over those trees.”



**70% OF NORTH AMERICA'S DUCKS ARE HATCHED IN THE PRAIRIE POTHOLE REGION**

As The Duck Hunters Organization, Delta Waterfowl is always thinking about where your ducks come from



and the “formulas” for producing more ducks for you. Among the most important are:

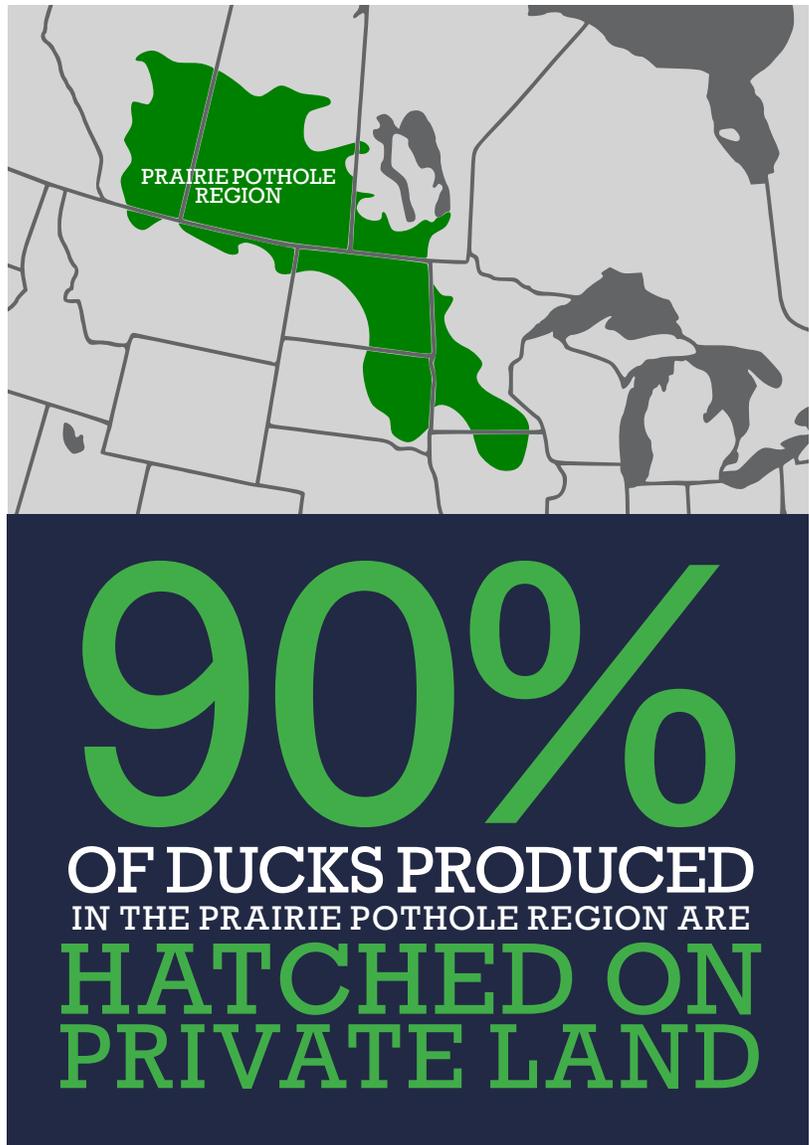
- ▶ The Prairie Pothole Region of the north central United States and south central Canada is the most productive waterfowl nesting habitat in the world. It’s estimated that **70 percent of North America’s ducks hatch there**, influencing hunting in every flyway and as far south as ducks migrate.
- ▶ In the Prairie Pothole Region, **90 percent of ducks are produced on private lands**, most of which are temporary and seasonal wetlands on working farms and ranches. That puts them at the greatest risk of being drained and destroyed.
- ▶ When it comes to habitat, 10 one-acre wetlands will **produce 10 times** the number of ducks as one 10-acre wetland.

As challenging as 2020 has been, the year marked outstanding progress for Delta’s habitat conservation programs directly seeking to maximize duck production by these formulas. The most prominent are “Working Wetlands” in the U.S. (officially launched by the NRCS as the “Prairie Pothole Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat Program”) and GROW (the “Growing Outcomes in Watersheds” program) in Manitoba, Canada.

### WORKING WETLANDS

Following Delta’s 2018 hard-earned success of its “Working Wetlands” language being included in the U.S. Farm Bill, the program became real in 2020. In April, enrollments opened in four states for the Prairie Pothole Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat Program administered by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Farmers and ranchers in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa signed up to maintain temporary and seasonal wetlands on their properties in exchange for pay-

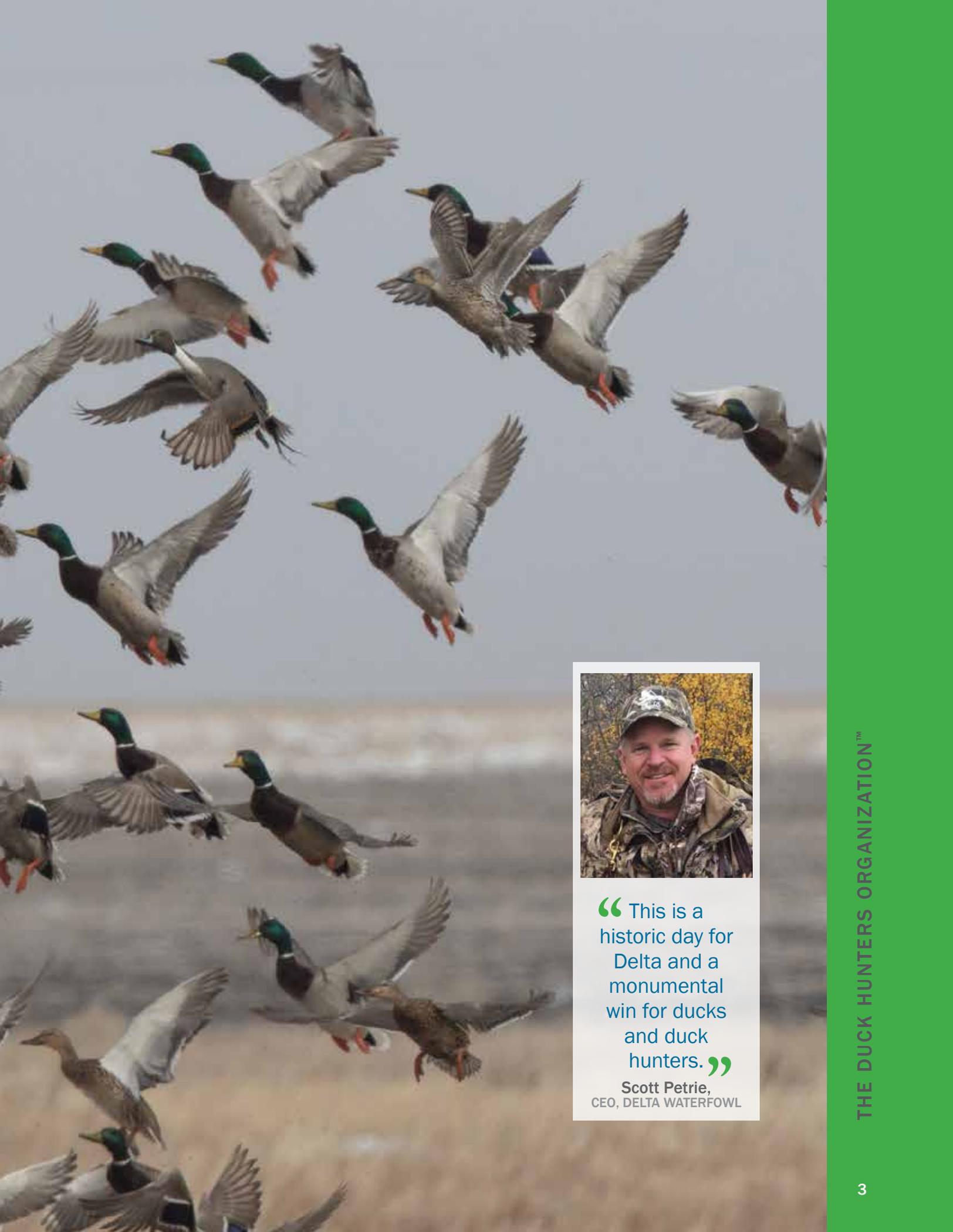


ments that fairly compensate them for profits they would have made on the additional yields had they drained and farmed that acreage. Yet, those acres remain available to them to farm or graze when conditions permit without impacting waterfowl nesting habitat.

Other federal conservation programs “punish” farmers for draining wetlands, but that’s the big difference with Delta’s Working Wetlands model. It incentivizes the cooperation of farmers and ranchers for maintaining viable, working wetlands. Under this model, farmers/ranchers, conservationists and duck hunters work together productively and enthusiastically.

Jim Teigen, a farmer and landowner near Rugby, North Dakota, began his involvement with the Delta Working Wetlands pilot program in 2015. He agrees, “I enrolled my land in Delta’s Working Wetlands because Delta believes in working with farmers — not against them — to protect waterfowl habitat.”

Popularity of the program carried over into the official NRCS rollout in a big way. First year allocations were fully subscribed in Iowa and Minnesota. And in North Dakota there were initially 30 percent more acres seeking protection than allotted for the first year. Additional funding was requested and granted so all acres offered were



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Scott Petrie,  
CEO, DELTA WATERFOWL

accepted. The initial enrollment in North Dakota alone is expected to conserve more than 30,000 individual, small, duck-producing wetlands.

Applauding the official 2020 roll out under the NRCS, Dr. Scott Petrie, Delta Waterfowl's CEO said, "This is a historic day for Delta and a monumental win for ducks and duck hunters. Working Wetlands targets small, temporary and seasonal wetlands which our earliest research tells us are most critical to duck production. I am elated that the program is a step closer to conserving breeding duck habitat on a massive scale."

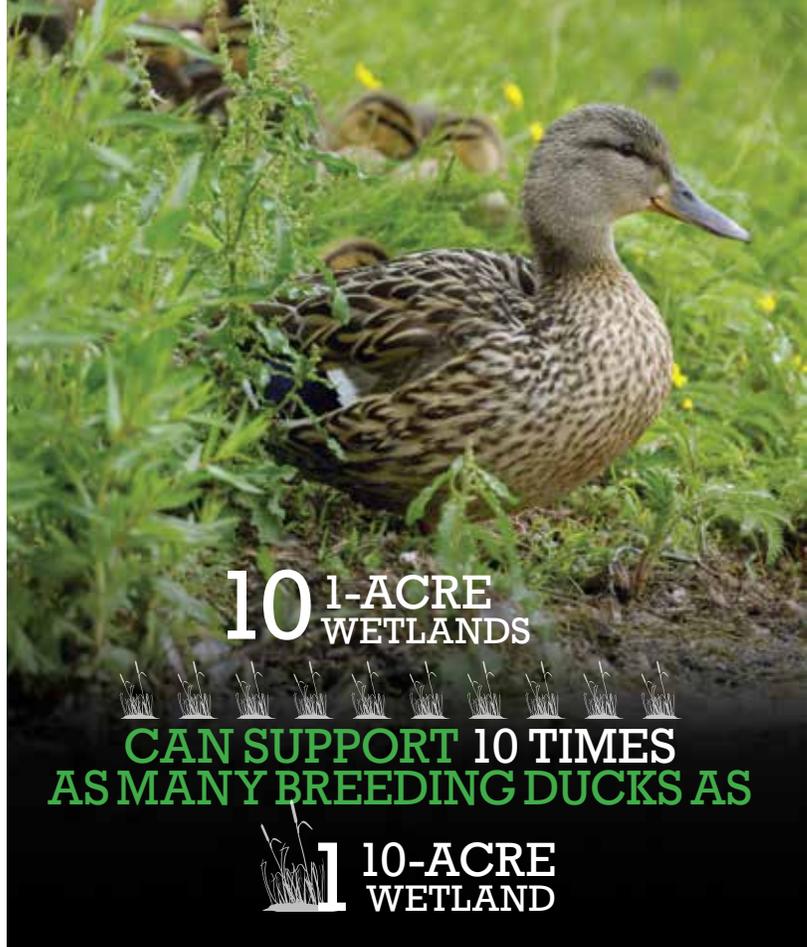
When fully implemented, the program has the potential to conserve habitat supporting the breeding efforts of 1.8 million ducks. Additionally, these important temporary and seasonal wetlands contribute major public health benefits such as flood control, reduced erosion, cleaner drinking water, improved soil quality and absorption of carbon from the atmosphere.

**GROW**

The year 2020 saw great advances for Delta Waterfowl's habitat conservation initiatives north of the border, too. The Manitoba provincial government rolled out and doubled the financial resources committed to the GROW program based on Delta's ALUS program blueprint. (ALUS stands for Alternative Land Use Services.)

Upon winning re-election, the Progressive Conservative party in Manitoba made good on its promises to create and fund new incentives to encourage landowners to conserve ephemeral and temporary wetlands throughout the province. The goal is to conserve at least 90 percent of these vital waterfowl breeding habitats in Manitoba's agricultural regions.

GROW implementation and the funding commitment of the government comes at a doubly critical time for waterfowl conservation in Canada. Recent analysis suggests the annual wetland loss across sample areas of the Canadian Prairie Pothole Region



**10 1-ACRE WETLANDS**

**CAN SUPPORT 10 TIMES AS MANY BREEDING DUCKS AS**

**1 10-ACRE WETLAND**

was 2.2 percent from 2001 to 2011. Many people fear the loss rate has even accelerated in recent years, with dramatic consequences for nesting ducks.

"This is important validation of Delta's long-standing work to find new solutions to conserve small wetlands on working farms," said Jim Fisher, senior director of Canadian conservation and hunting policy for Delta Waterfowl. "For my entire career, we

have been working to find new tools and approaches to conserve these small wetlands, from Adopt-a-Pothole to our work on Alternative Land Use Services. We have appreciated having the opportunity to demonstrate to the Manitoba government that an investment in small wetlands is good policy. Delta is grateful to see such a bold commitment to conserving incredibly important breeding duck habitat."

**Your support of The Duck Hunters Organization makes Delta's out-front leadership and vital, behind-the-scenes spadework in habitat conservation possible. And it allows you to enjoy more ducks over your decoys ... and hunting's most thrilling moments ... now and in the future.**



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