

# ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021











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#### LEADERSHIP LETTER

# A Critically Important and Productive Time for Delta Waterfowl

On the behalf of Delta's staff and board of directors, thank you for all you do to ensure that we all have abundant waterfowl and endless opportunities to pursue them.

In spite of the pandemic, Delta did not miss a beat during the past year. Delta's staff, board and volunteers took an incredibly adaptive, enthusiastic and innovative approach to the adversities

and restrictions imposed by COVID-19. We're proud to report that Delta continued to deliver all of the organization's core research projects, conservation and education programs, and also scored several policy wins for ducks and duck hunters.

Delta's staff and volunteers took pioneering approaches to major gift and event fundraising, ensuring that we could continue to deliver for ducks and duck hunters, while at the same time protecting the employment status of our talented staff. The lessons and strategies developed will make Team Delta even more resilient and productive in the coming years.

The prairie pothole region is in the second, and hopefully, final year of a fairly severe drought. We can expect that the season will not be quite as productive as recent years. However, predictions are that most hunters will have fairly good duck seasons. Drought is a natural and necessary component of the prairie cycle and it ensures the long-term productivity of the PPR, North America's most important area for breeding ducks. Hopefully the prairies will experience an excellent winter snow pack, followed by ample spring rains, once again releasing the full breeding capacity of our duck populations.

Many of you are sharing fantastic feasts resulting from successful dove and early teal hunts. Days spent in the field and marsh with family, friends and canine companions, followed by memorable meals are our reward for the incredible conservation work that our ancestors did and we all continue to



Michael H. Mooney Chairman of the Board



Dr. Scott Petrie
Chief Executive Officer

do with focused determination.

The next year promises to be very exciting for Delta. Our staff and board have embarked on a strategic planning process that will guide Delta's conservation, research, policy and education efforts over the next three years. We are strategically adding program, policy and fundraising staff to substantially increase our duck production work (Predator Management and Hen Houses). These efforts will increase nest success, as well as duckling and hen survival, putting more ducks over your decoys for years to come.

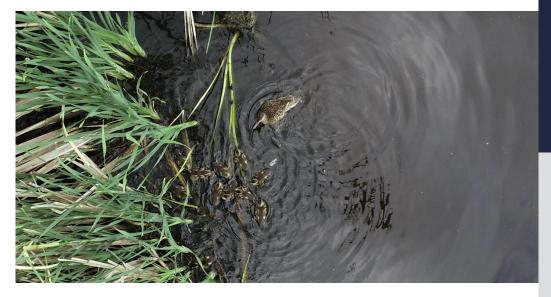
Delta staff is planning our first ever Duck Hunters Expo on July 29 to 31, 2022, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Our hunting and conservation partners are already booking vendor space for a spectacular celebration of everything ducks and duck hunting.

We are eagerly anticipating the completion of the book, "Delta Waterfowl: How The Duck Hunters Organization Shaped Waterfowl Conservation in North America." This historical coverage of Delta's incredible contributions will be a wonderful celebration of our 110-year history.

Delta Waterfowl has avoided a pessimistic response to COVID-19 and the current drought on the prairies. Instead, with your generous support and enthusiasm, The Duck Hunters Organization continued to work for ducks and duck hunters.

We wish you all a spectacular hunting season, and ask that you please introduce someone to the wonderful world of waterfowl hunting!

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS**



# Delta's Program Delivery Expands Through Innovation

Despite unprecedented times, Delta Waterfowl enjoyed another exceptional year of growth and achievement. Bolstered by broad grassroots support and generous individual donations, The Duck Hunters Organization delivered on its mission by adding substantial ducks to the fall flight, conserving breeding duck habitat in the United States and Canada, and promoting and defending waterfowl hunting with unrivaled effectiveness. Delta also conducted cutting-edge waterfowl research and education with important, real-world applications for waterfowl managers throughout North America. Additional research informed and enhanced Delta's duck production, habitat conservation and HunteR3 programs. Here are a few of Delta's key accomplishments for ducks and duck hunters in 2020-2021.

#### **Duck Production**

Delta Waterfowl's Hen House Program continues to grow, with more than 9,000 Hen Houses in key breeding areas, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, North Dakota, and Minnesota. Grants from the Manitoba Conservation Trust, the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Wildlife Habitat Canada have helped Delta expand its Hen House program and maintain and replace nesting structures. In addition, dozens of local Delta chapters throughout North America have installed Hen Houses



DELTA'S PROVEN INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS PRODUCE DUCKS.

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# CUMULATIVE LIFETIME GIVING

We sincerely appreciate the following donors who have given at least \$10,000 in support of ducks and duck hunters. We are extremely grateful to those whose names are bolded for making a significant contribution in 2020.

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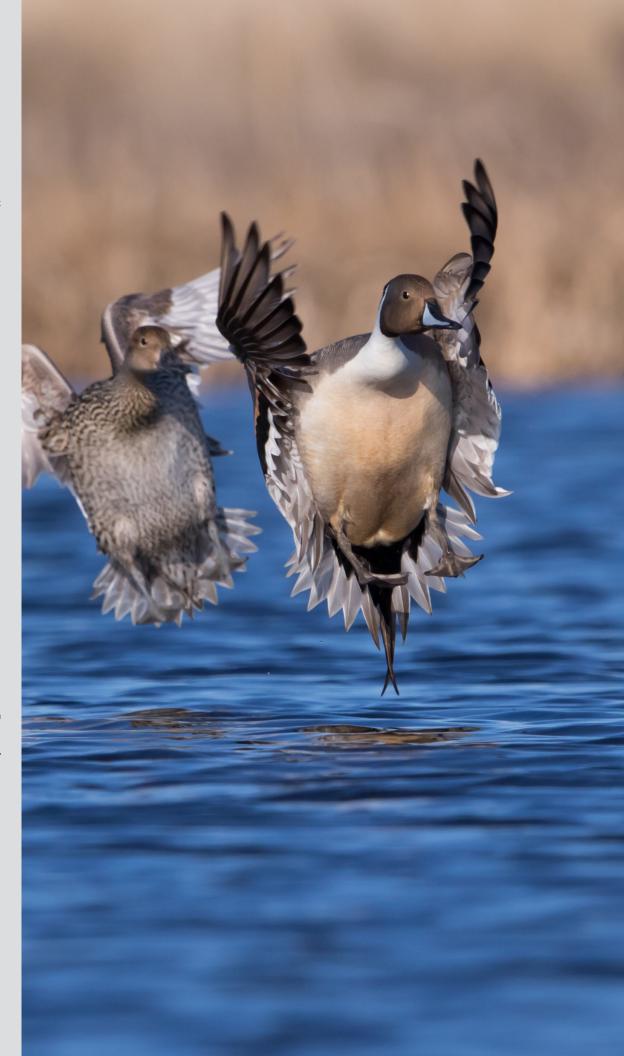
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and wood duck nest boxes to produce even more ducks.

Management in 2020-2021, with a total of 26 sites (23 in North Dakota and three in Manitoba). The Manitoba sites were trapped as part of ongoing research to study the impact of predator reduction on over-water nesting ducks such as canvasbacks, redheads and ringnecked ducks. Delta also conducted upland nesting duck research in North Dakota on several trap sites to further our understanding of the impact that different trapping techniques have on Predator Management.



DELTA CONSERVES BREEDING DUCK HABITAT TO ADD DUCKS TO EVERY FALL FLIGHT.

#### **Habitat Conservation**

■ In April 2020, the Natural Resource Conservation Service rolled out the Prairie Pothole Water Quality and Wildlife Program to make Delta's Working Wetlands a fully integrated program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Delta staff are working to realize the potential of this habitat conserva-

tion tool at landscape scales across the U.S. prairie pothole region. Manitoba's GROW, a.k.a. "Growing Outcomes for Watersheds" program also expanded substantially, with the province committing \$2.1 million for small wetland conservation — a four-fold increase from the previous year.

#### **Research and Education**

- Master's degree candidate Catrina Terry and Dr. Kevin Ringelman of Louisiana State University continued to **evaluate brood use of wetlands** in agricultural landscapes by studying drone footage of 242 prairie pothole region wetlands taken in 2019-2020. The goal is to better understand brood use in order to conserve the most important habitat for ducks. Terry has completed her M.S. and is working as a professional biologist.
- Master's student Matt Davis and Dr. Christopher Malcom of Brandon University have been studying whether focusing Predator Management on highly productive patches of grassland habitats could more efficiently boost production of dabblers, such as mallards, pintails and gadwalls. This project is taking place in North Dakota and helping to determine whether "hotspot" trapping can increase duck production in the best quality habitats.



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After several seasons of field work on nesting canvasbacks in Manitoba, Ph.D. candidate Michael Johnson, under the supervision of Dr. David Koons, Colorado State University, has been analyzing habitat variables to determine their impact on canvasback nest abundance, nest success and brood counts. This information will help waterfowl managers target where to best invest in wetland conservation programs to benefit canvasback production.



 Ascertaining duck movements during hunting seasons and migration is a Delta priority. Working with Dr. Douglas Osborne, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Master's degree candidates Daniel Odin and Starla Phelps have been studying data gathered by solar-power radio transmitters installed on mallards, green-winged teal and American wigeon. Understanding the migration and wintering ground habits of dabbling ducks in the Mississippi Flyway, as well as how

these ducks respond to hunting pressure and weather events, will help determine whether further management strategies are needed.

Banding data is an important tool used to monitor mallard and other waterfowl populations. To determine the origins of mallards taken by hunters in the East, Master's student Sam Kucia and Dr. Mike Schummer, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, are examining stable isotopes in the flight feathers of mallards shot in the Atlantic Flyway to determine where the ducks grew those feathers in the summer. Delta is undertaking this important research to inform mallard harvest regulations in the Atlantic Flyway.

#### HunteR3

Delta added Jacob Bushaw (United States) and Aaron Everingham (Canada) as R3 coordinators in 2020-2021. Bushaw has an undergraduate degree in wildlife and fisheries science from Valley City State University and a Master's in renewable natural resources from Louisiana State University. One of his primary responsibilities will be establishing and coordinating the University Hunting Program with schools in the United States.



An Ontario native, Everingham studied forestry at Sault College in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. In addition to R3 initiatives, he will be responsible for HunteR3 demonstration initiatives at The Delta Waterfowl Center in Ontario.



- Delta's groundbreaking University **Hunting Program** has extended to 36 universities during the 2021-2022 hunting season. Through traditional classroom instruction and an actual waterfowl hunt, the program teaches future wildlife management professionals about hunting's critical role in conservation. Though UHP participation was curtailed by COVID-19 restrictions last fall and winter, during the 2019-2020 season, 612 students from 24 universities participated. Delta's ultimate goal is to offer UHP at all North American universities with wildlife and conservation majors.
- One of Delta Waterfowl's largest First Hunt events, Delta Days, took place in July and was led by the Lan-

caster County Chapter in Pennsylvania, attracting more than 70 participants. Events ranged from trap shooting to decoy painting, with demonstrations from a K9 unit and a professional falconer. Although a majority of the folks attending were not waterfowl hunters, after the event several asked about how they could become more engaged with Delta and with waterfowl hunting.

- Delta's Defending the Hunt program advocacy led to two historic USFWS refuge access expansions — in both 2020 and 2021 — that significantly increased waterfowl hunting on refuges. Delta continued to represent duck hunters in an array of potential hunting bans, turning back proposed closures in Ontario, Maryland and other regions and communities.
- In July 2021, Delta Waterfowl debuted a new online course, Duck and Goose Hunting 101, to provide essential knowledge and skills for new waterfowl hunters. Delivered in partnership with Kalkomey Enterprises, the course covers when, where and how to hunt waterfowl successfully. We are excited to see this course take off and have plans to implement it in both Delta's University Hunting Program and First Hunt Program moving forward.

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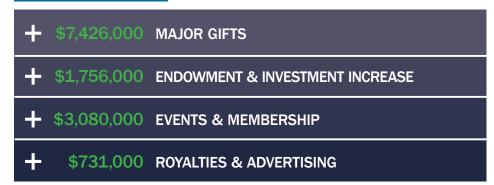
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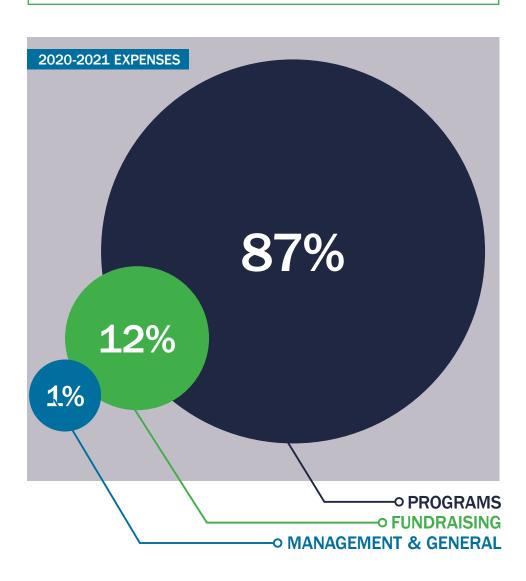
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Coleman Wortham III William M. Yandell III Organizational Partners California Department of Water Resources Good Samaritan, Inc. Illinois Department of Natural Resources Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Mack's Sport Shop LLP Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation Max McGraw Wildlife Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Mississippi State Department North Dakota Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund Province of Manitoba R.K. Mellon Family Foundation State of Wisconsin Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency USFWS Prairie Pothole Joint Venture

Wildlife Habitat Canada

#### AMBASSADORS CIRCLE

## Circle Advances Delta's Mission

The Ambassadors Circle formed in 2017 to reunite and reengage past board members, providing them a forum for ideas to advance the mission of Delta Waterfowl.

It's great to be able to continue the camaraderie that we built at the board level. Our charge is to help Delta in meaningful and impactful ways. This year we elected to support one of its longest running and most impactful programs — Predator Management. As avid waterfowlers, we're interested in seeing more ducks in the flyway — any flyway. We firmly believe that a better understanding of predator movements, habits and patterns will lead to a better understanding of their activity and, ultimately, better control of their populations.

Annual hunts have become a tradition, but because of Covid-19 we weren't able to enjoy that this past year. We're currently in the process of planning our annual hunt for later in 2021. I've enjoyed being part of this group as we continue to do meaningful and impactful things for this resource that we care so much about."

STEERING COMMITTEE

Joseph Carlson, M.D.



Rayford B. High Jr. Charles L. Hines III Gary and Scott D. Hines Blake D. Hines H. Neel Hipp Jr. Andy Hodgman Dale Hodgson Bruce Holladay Ralph J. Holsclaw Peter P. Huff Gene E. Huggs Lyle T. Huiras\* Heidi Huizenga/Huizenga Charity Fund Paul Hurtienne Robert Ingstad\* Stephen R. Intemann Investors Group Financial Services, Inc. Iowa Department of Natural Resources Irwin Belk Educational Kyle James James G. Hanes Foundation Michael J. Jeansonne Kenneth R. Jenkins John C. Jensen Jr. Samuel C. Johnson\* Keith A. Johnson Robert D. Johnson Michael E. Johnson Eric P. Johnson Eldridge R. Johnson II Kyle and Kirsten Johnstone/Kiryle Foundation David A. Jones D. Bryan Jordan James F. Justiss Jr./Justiss Michael and Donna Kanovsky/Kanovsky Family Foundation Robert R. Kaplan Thomas G. Karras The Kate Ireland Foundation\* J.P. Kaumeyer Sam and Janet Kellett/ Samuel B. Kellett Sr. Foundation William P. Kelly\* Kenneth A. Kershaw Brian and Helen R. King John and Jeanette J. Robert L. Kisch Joe Kish Bruce W. Klingman **Tucker Knight** Bruce W. Knowlan D. Dean Kumpuris Carl Kurz Jack T. Lamb Jr. Charles G. Lane Mark C. Leachman Sr.\* **Dudley Lee** Michael Leipsic Mark C. Lemp Christian A. Lie

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#### LEGACY SOCIETY

# A Lasting Legacy for Ducks, Hunting

The Delta Waterfowl Legacy Society is an exclusive group of visionary individuals who have declared their intent or made a planned gift to Delta. Their selfless generosity helps ensure a bright future for North American ducks and duck hunters for generations to come.



My wife and I first heard about Delta from friends who competed in retriever field trials as we do. Duck hunting has been a love of mine since high school days, and we had already founded our own Pleasant River Wildlife Foundation on the northeastern coast of Maine to address alarming declines in waterfowl populations in our part of the world. We were eager to learn how others were tackling waterfowl and shorebird conservation issues. Delta's reputation was of an organization committed to tackling these issues head on and of undertaking

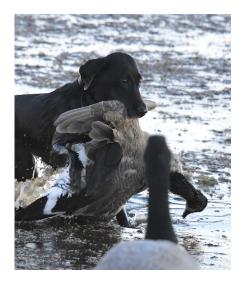
and completing solid work in the most important areas.

We took advantage of our first visit to Manitoba for the 2004 Canadian National Field Trials to visit Delta Marsh, learn more about Delta's programs and meet the key people in the organization. That visit really hooked us.

Over the ensuing years, we have spent time almost every fall with John Devney and the crew in Bismarck learning more about Delta programs that mean the most to us — sponsoring students working toward advanced degrees in wildlife management, carrying out real world research on the impacts of predation on nest success, and popularizing the exceptionally simple and low-cost innovation of Hen Houses for nesting mallards. Seeing Delta's success in having practical, science-based proposals accepted by regional farmers and legislative bodies gave us confidence that Delta warranted our long-term support.

In my career as a competitive sailboat racer — twice on the U.S. Olympic team and a proud bronze medal winner and nine America's Cup campaigns — I've learned the value of teamwork, hard work, and an obsessive eye on the prize. I also learned success may take years to achieve. That Olympic bronze came after eight years of training and competing. When we won the America's Cup back from the Aussies with a boat called "Stars & Stripes," it was my 13th year of Cup racing. In business, as head of a world-class sail making firm, and later running a high-end boat builder, I learned to be a winner, you need all of these attributes plus a relentless focus on "bang for the buck."

Delta's work exemplifies what has been



important in my career — a competitive, goal-oriented approach, cost-effective management, and understanding the need for long-term continuity in a political world that rarely looks beyond the next election. We believe that through the Delta Legacy Society, we can help strengthen the financial foundations that allow Delta to take the long-term, science-based view — and still get important things done every day!

John C. Ryan

— John K. Marshall

#### **LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS**

Brock A. Bailey James and Michelle Bates Charles H. Bell\* Grant R. Brees Anonymous\* Jeff Carlson David W. Conley Peter D. Curry\* John S. Dale Albin Dubiak Anonymous Linn A. Duesterbeck William B. Dunavant Jr.\* George C. Freeman III William R. Fry Kurt & Mary L. Glaeseman Tim Graham Paul J. Hanson Bert and Cheryl Haralson Carter Harrison\* Constance and Ross\* Hebblethwaite James C. Heinzl\*

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\*POSTHUMOUS RECOGNITION

North Heron Lake Game Producers Association

North Western Pennsylvania Duck Hunters Association Inc.

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William D. Van Dyke III\*

Mac Van Wielingen

Vince Velie Jr.

Adrian P. Villa

Dominick S. Villella

**Brad Vollrath** 

#### **EVENTS**

## Thank You Volunteers!

Delta chapters held virtual events, raffles and traditional in-person banquets during a challenging year.

Nobody would've faulted Delta's legion of committed volunteers for underperforming during the past year. However, that is not the cloth from which Delta volunteers are cut. Despite restrictions on in-person events and economic uncertainty, Delta's more than 3,800 dedicated volunteers proved once again that they are the lifeblood of The Duck Hunters Organization.

While many non-profits struggled in 2020, Delta volunteers held an impressive 302 fundraising events, launched 21 new chapters, and held four national virtual actions. These efforts helped allow Delta to

continue its waterfowl programs without interruption.

Additionally, each year Delta recognizes one of these dedicated individuals for their service. The International Volunteer of



the Year program is generously supported by Stoeger, which produces "Every Day Tough" inertia-driven shotguns.

We extend our thanks and congratulations to our Volunteers of the Year in 2020 and 2021:

#### **VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR**



2020 - Tommy Vaughn Michiana Chapter | Middlebury, Indiana



2021 - Eric Weber Kankakee Chapter | Kankakee, Illinois

# 302 TOTAL EVENTS

238 FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**64** FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**MARCH 2020** 

FEBRUARY 2021 MARCH 2021

**JUNE 2021** 







# 

# **NEW CHAPTERS**

SEK Chapter Independence, Kansas

St. Lawrence River Clayton, New York

Cypress Sloughs Henderson, Kentucky

**Ogden Bay** Ogden, Utah

Whistling Wings Chapter lowa Falls, lowa

Auburn Alabama Auburn, Alabama

Green River Chapter Columbia, Kentucky Hazel Creek Chapter Kirksville, Missouri

Cedar Valley Chapter Waverly, Iowa

Fraser Valley Outdoors Chilliwack, British Columbia

Rutherford County Chapter Nolensville, Tennessee

Three Rivers Chapter LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Montgomery River Region Montgomery, Alabama

Calm Water Fowlers Chapter Norfolk, Nebraska Eastern Washington Medical Lake, Washington

South Central MS Magee, Mississippi

**BC Waterfowl** Benzonia, Michigan

Northeast Alabama Centre, Alabama

Texoma

Durant, Oklahoma

South Central New York Greene, New York

Central IL Gunners Bath, Illinois Peter Von Gontard George W. Von Hoffmann Jr.\*

Vonoepen Plumbing Co. William and Marilyn C. Voss W.E. Weiss Foundation, Inc.

Samuel K. Wallace

Waste Management, Inc. Trey Watkins/Watkins Uiberall, PPLC

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Thomas D. Westfeldt II

The Wetlands Initiative

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Charles B. Whiteside III

Wildlife Forever

Dick Williams Jr.\*

**Raymond Williams** 

Robert Williams/The Bob Williams Foundation

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Eric S. Wilson

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David R. Wintermann\*

G. Spence Wise Jr. **Eric Wisher** 

Mark Zivot

### **BRONZE SPONSOR** \$5,000 - \$9,999

Please refer to the list online at deltawaterfowl.org/ recognition

\*POSTHUMOUS RECOGNITION

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#### **CORPORATE SPONSORS**

# Corporate Partners Support Delta Programs

Delta Waterfowl appreciates industry partners that help fund the important conservation mission of The Duck Hunters Organization.

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BENELLI
BASE CAMP LEASING
BOSS SHOTSHELLS
BROWNING
CABELA'S
CARLSON CHOKE TUBES
DAKOTA 283
DR. DUCK
EUKANUBA
EXCEL BOATS
FEDERAL PREMIUM
AMMUNITION

FLAMBEAU OUTDOORS
HUNTSTAND
LACROSSE FOOTWEAR
LEGACY SPORTS
MUD BUDDY MOTORS
POLARIS
REALTREE
REMINGTON
RIGEM' RIGHT
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SITKA
SPORTDOG BRAND
TANGLEFREE
YETI

