



Delta Waterfowl Programs Produce Ducks

Predator Management and Hen Houses add to a stronger fall flight

In the 113 years of Delta Waterfowl's existence, we've yet to meet a duck hunter who says, "We have enough ducks, we don't need any more."

Because dry conditions have lingered over large portions of the prairie pothole region for the past few years, we certainly have far fewer ducks than desired, whatever that magic number might be. While Delta Waterfowl can't make it rain, we sure can put forth our best effort to boost duck production.

It's our mission: To produce ducks and secure the future of hunting. We take the mandate in our mission seriously, because just like you, we hunt ducks too.

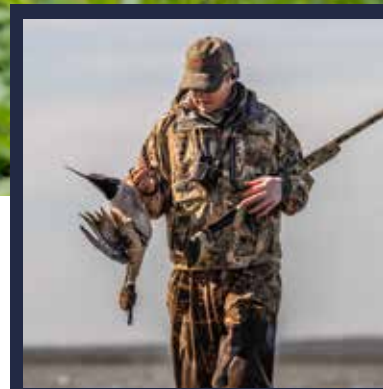
Every winter, spring, and summer, Delta's robust Duck Production programs are hard at work to put more ducks into the fall flight.



DELTA'S PROVEN INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS PRODUCE DUCKS.

Fall Flight Outlook

Breeding duck populations increased by 5% to 33.99 million, according to the 2024 Waterfowl Population Status report released on Aug. 20 by the U.S.

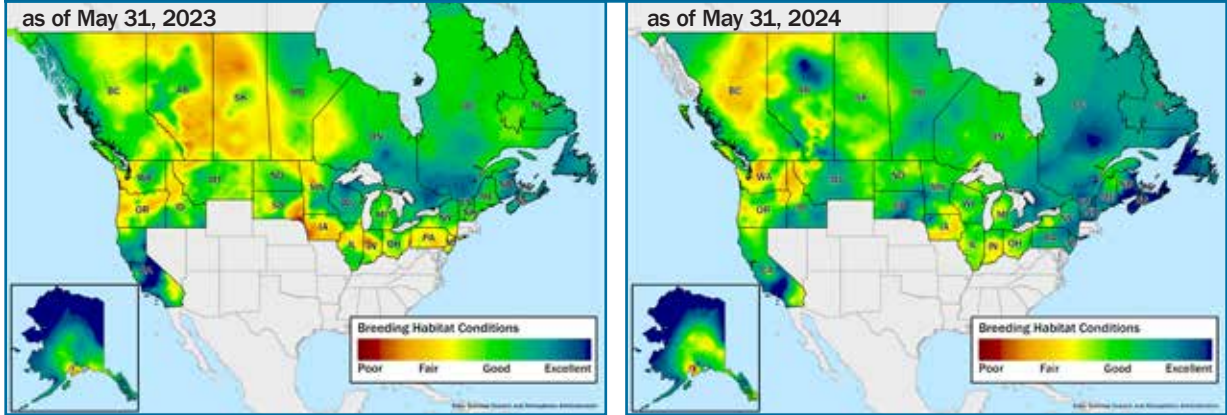


Delta Waterfowl measures success by the ability to put MORE DUCKS INTO THE FALL FLIGHT.

Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, May pond counts, a key indicator of breeding habitat conditions and potential production, also increased by 4% over the previous spring.

Mallards increased by 8%, while wigeon were up by an astounding 55%. That's the good news. The less rosy details show that nearly all of the increase in both species was attributed to regions in the far north and western portions of the Traditional Survey Area.

Waterfowl Breeding Habitat Conditions



Wetland conditions this spring were improved across much of the prairie pothole region, including key portions of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

Fewer ducks settled in the PPR, an area that spans from western Minnesota through the Dakotas and into Montana, then up through southwestern Manitoba across Saskatchewan and into Alberta. The PPR is often dubbed as “The Duck Factory” because it’s typically the best and most productive region on the continent for breeding ducks. When the PPR is wet, duck production increases.

In 2024, much of the PPR started out dry to very dry. As the survey indicated, fewer ducks settled in the PPR as a result, instead opting to go to the less-productive regions to the north and west.

Ducks that did settle in the prairies experienced improving conditions across most of the PPR as the breeding season progressed. Eastern portions of the Dakotas, and the prairies of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta all were hit with several soaking rain events in early May and into June. By June 30, wetland conditions in much of the PPR were good. Wetlands full of water help broods hide and survive, while also encouraging hens that lost their earlier nesting attempts to re-nest.

As a result, good duck production is expected from the eastern Dakotas and Manitoba this year. It certainly would have been much better had spring snow and rains arrived a few weeks earlier to encourage more ducks to settle there to breed. With improved conditions, Saskatchewan is expected to produce more ducks this year than in 2023, with weaker results from Alberta.

Delta's Duck Production

Delta Waterfowl’s program team continues to work throughout the breeding grounds to maximize duck production, primarily by strategically deploying Predator Management and Hen Houses.

Delta continues to add Hen Houses every winter, increasing the impact of the organization’s nest structure program to produce more mallards. Delta Hen House specialists installed 1,500 nest structures last winter, including 400 each in Alberta and Manitoba, 350 in Saskatchewan, 200 in South Dakota, and 150 in North Dakota. With the additions, Delta has 12,280

Hen Houses producing ducks.

Used primarily by mallards, Hen Houses are proven to increase nest success dramatically — up to 12 times higher than a hen nesting in the nearby grass. A nesting cylinder lined with flax straw mounted on a pole over a shallow semi-permanent wetland, Hen Houses keep the hen and eggs safely out of reach of most mammalian predators.

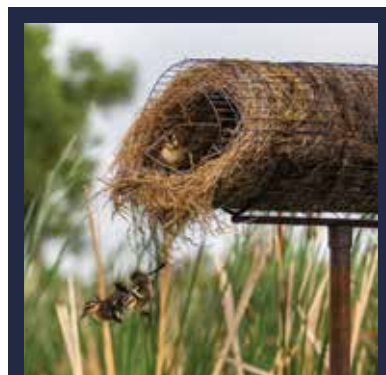
Delta program managers anticipate adding another 2,100 Hen Houses during the upcoming winter. Plans call for 850 in Saskatchewan, 500 in Manitoba, 400 in Alberta, 200 in South Dakota, and 150 in North Dakota.

When Delta’s Hen House program reaches full maturity, the long-term goal is 110,884 nesting structures, which would add 250,000 fledged mallards to every fall flight.

To increase the efficiency of Hen House delivery, Delta has set up a distribution and storage facility near Young, Saskatchewan, in the heart of the PPR. The new facility provides a central location for Hen House contractors working in the Canadian prairies and parklands to pick up materials for new installations.

Delta’s Predator Management team reached new levels in 2024. For the first nesting season ever, Delta had sites during the same year in all five primary Duck Production jurisdictions: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Delta operated on 46 trapping sites during a period from March 15 to



A mallard using a Delta Hen House is up to

12 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HATCH

a nest than a mallard nesting in the grass.

DELTA PILLAR: DUCK PRODUCTION

Nest success is the primary driver of duck populations in North America. In general, 15% to 20% of nests need to hatch just to maintain the population. In many areas of the prairie breeding grounds, nest predators such as raccoons, skunks, and a host of other mammalian predators are overly abundant. As a result, nest success is poor, often less than 5%.

Through more than three decades of innovative research, Delta Waterfowl has tested and refined solutions to cost-effectively produce ducks. Delta's proven duck production programs—Hen Houses and Predator Management—significantly boost nest success.

Delta maximizes the impact of our duck pro-

duction work by removing 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 the perfect complement to dollars spent to conserve wetlands on the breeding grounds. These Delta programs are the best available tools to restore a reasonable predator/prey balance and assist quality wetlands to increase duck production.

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





MILLION DUCK CAMPAIGN GOAL:
1,000,000
 DUCKS PRODUCED
 ANNUALLY

July 15, with a goal of boosting duck production by reducing the numbers of duck nest predators on those key acres. Trappers in the Dakotas had good access and were able to catch predators early in the nesting season, while trappers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba had to work around deeper snow when the season began. Predator numbers increased over 2023 in some areas of the PPR, leading to increased catches by Delta’s trappers.

Managing key mammalian nest predators such as raccoons and skunks in areas with high densities of breeding ducks (>60 pairs per square mile) but with a low percentage of grassland nesting cover can dramatically boost nest success. Delta’s Predator Management restores a more equitable predator/prey balance and allows ducks to successfully hatch nests and raise broods on the prairie landscape.

Undoubtedly, Delta’s Predator Management program was highly effective in 2024, and increased the number of ducks migrating south this fall.

Delta plans to add four new sites in the U.S. prairies next spring, expanding Predator Management to a record-high

50 sites in 2025. Ultimately, Delta’s goal is to operate 366 sites across the PPR and Canadian parklands to produce 750,000 ducks each year.

As part of our effort to continually make Predator Management even more impactful, outside trapping experts

toured Delta’s Manitoba trap sites this year. Trusted outside trapping experts offered tips and techniques that may increase the efficiency and efficacy of Delta’s trappers and program. Recruiting and training new trappers is key to increasing duck production as Predator Management continues to expand.

90%
 of failed duck nests
 are lost to predators



**Predator Management
 boosts nest success!**

Maximizing Impact

In 2022, Delta Waterfowl launched the Million Duck Campaign, an innovative \$250 million fundraising campaign to dramatically increase duck production in North America. When fully funded, MDC will add 1 million more ducks to the fall flight every year—forever.

We’re proud to report that Delta’s duck production programs continue to expand, delivering even greater impact year after year for North America’s duck hunters in every flyway.

Delta’s programmatic success stems from our partnership with you—our valued members, volunteers and donors. Together, we’re The Duck Hunters Organization.

Thank you for your continued support. Have a great season!