

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

MINUTES

June 06, 2013

Ronald "Ronny" Graham
CHAIRMAN

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

The following constitute minutes of the Commission Meeting
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Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
2000 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808.

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LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION
BATON ROUGE, LA
June 06, 2013

1.	Roll Call	1
2.	Approval of Minutes of May 2, 2013	1
3.	Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege	1
4.	To Hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/May	1
5.	To Hear a Presentation on the Louisiana Saltwater Series	2
6.	To Hear an Update on the 2013 Recreational Red Snapper Season	15
7.	To Hear a Report on the Status of Ship Shoal Block 26 Structures	15
8.	To Hear a Report on the Bull Redfish Kill in Breton Sound	16
9.	To Hear Final Public Comment on Notice of Intent for Black Bass Regulations for the Atchafalaya Basin, Lake Verret, Lake Palourde, Lake Fausse Point / Lake Dauterive Complex	16
10.	To Hear Final Public Comment on Notice of Intent for Boundaries for D'Arbonne Lake Crappie Regulations	20
11.	To Consider a Declaration of Emergency on Red Snapper Recreational Season Modifications	
12.	To Hear a Presentation of Ducks Unlimited Canada activities with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Funding	23
13.	To Hear a General Overview of the upcoming 2014 Turkey Regulations And Season Recommendations	33
14.	To Hear a General Overview of the upcoming 2013 Dove Season Framework	33
15.	Set October 2013 Meeting Date	34
16.	Set August 2013 Meeting Location	34
17.	Receive Public Comments	34
18.	Executive Session to Discuss Prospective Litigation relative to return of Artificial Reef Fund Monies	34
19.	Adjournment	34

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, June 06, 2013

Chairman Ronny Graham presiding

Pat Manuel
Billy Broussard
Stephen Sagrera
Ann Taylor
Dan Davis

Secretary Barham was also present

Chairman Graham called for a motion for approval of the **May 2, 2013 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Manuel. Chairman Graham called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

For the agenda item, **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege**, Secretary Barham acknowledged the Wildlife and Fisheries Office of Management and Finance employees that are retiring in June including Janice Landry, June Gillis, Gail Allato and Undersecretary Lois Azzarello. They have a combined two hundred and sixty six hours of state service.

Secretary Barham announced that Colonel Winton Vidrine was also retiring after serving forty four years with Wildlife and Fisheries. The Secretary acknowledged his enormous contributions to the department and to the state of Louisiana. It was also announced that Jeff Mayne will replace Colonel Vidrine as Colonel over the Enforcement Division. Secretary stated that Colonel Vidrine will be missed. Colonel Mayne played a video presentation commemorating Colonel Vidrine and his forty four years of service. A Plaque and Service Award was issued to Colonel Vidrine. Colonel Vidrine spoke and gave praise and thanks to the Commission, the Secretary and the employees of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Lt. Col. Joey Broussard stated, for the agenda item, **To Hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/May**, the department's planes flew a total of 67.3 aviation hours for the month. There were Fourteen (14) boating accidents reported with Eight (8) injuries and Zero (0) fatalities. Three (3) news releases were discussed. First, on April 16, a Whooping Crane was found shot to death in Red River Parish, about two miles northwest of Loggy Bayou. After a necropsy of the crane, it was determined that the bird was shot with a 6.5mm/.264 caliber projectile. LDWF's Operation Game Thief program, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation and the USFWS are offering up to \$10,000 in reward money for any information about this illegal shooting that leads to an arrest.

The second News Release stemmed from a joint investigation between the LDWF an, U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA that resulted in Nam Nguyen receiving citations for allegedly violating highly migratory species regulations. Agents seized 2,861 pounds of yellow fin tuna and a total of 623 pounds of swordfish, wahoo and escolar, pelagic long line gear and two buoys. The Third story announced that Louisiana Operation game Thief (LOGT), a Louisiana wildlife crime-stoppers program, awarded \$5,200 to diligent citizens statewide at their quarterly meeting on May 18 in Woodworth.

For the agenda item, **To Hear a Presentation on the Louisiana Saltwater Series (LASS)** was presented by Assistant Secretary Office of Fisheries, Randy Pausina.

Mr. Pausina began with a seven minute video presentation of the Louisiana Saltwater Series program followed by a slide presentation. The Louisiana Saltwater Series was developed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation to promote the conservation of Louisiana's sport fish resources. Through this catch and release saltwater fishing series, LDWF strives to enhance the resource while providing a competitive opportunity for avid fishermen and newcomers alike. Data collected from the tournament entries serve as a valuable tool for LDWF fisheries managers and biologists to understand the life history and habitat of sport fish. With low entry fees, the tournaments allow anglers to fish close to home and compete for cash prizes while simultaneously giving back to the resource through tag and release fishing.

Over \$194,000 in prize money has been awarded since the tournaments inception in 2010 and there have been over 2,485 fish tagged with 162 recaptures.

LASS was designed to be self-sufficient over time. All supplies and equipment used in support of LASS are domiciled with Wildlife and Fisheries Extension, none of which were purchased specifically for LASS. Staffers for LASS are extension employees, LDWF student workers and volunteers.

(The full text of the
Presentation is made a part of the record)

The next item, **To Hear an Update on the 2013 Recreational Red Snapper Season**, was handled by Mr. Randy Pausina, Assistant Secretary Office of Fisheries. Mr. Pausina began by stating that Department of Wildlife and Fisheries announced a change in the recreational Red Snapper season and bag limits.

State Red Snapper Season first opened March 23, 2013 on weekends only, with a recreational bag limit of three fish per person per day at a 16 inch minimum. Beginning June 1 through June 24, the state red snapper season will be open seven days a week with a daily bag limit of two fish per person at a 16 inch minimum length. On June 25, the season will revert back to weekends only through September 30. A weekend is defined as Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with the exception of Memorial Day and Labor Day, when Monday will be classified as a weekend day as well.

This past April, LDWF together with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department filed a joint lawsuit in US District Court in Texas, challenging the emergency rule enacted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that would allow the NMFS regional administration to reduce the recreational red snapper season in federal waters off the coasts of Louisiana and Texas.

A judgment was rendered in favor of Louisiana and Texas that declares the emergency rule null and void. As a result of the ruling Louisiana will add four (4) more days to the current 24 day federal season. Mr. Pausina also stated that the decision to extend Louisiana's federal red snapper season was based in large part on research conducted by LDWF biologists that proved Louisiana was landing less fish than previously accounted for by NOAA.

Mr. Pausina stated that on weekends (Friday through Sunday), an estimated four (4) sites were surveyed each day. During the 2012 federal season, June 1, 2012 through July 17, 2012, the MRIP survey encountered twenty (20) private boat trips where thirty one (31) length measurements were taken. In one weekend from May 31-June 2, 2013 in our quota monitoring survey, Mr Pausina stated that 552 anglers were surveyed and since the season began, 1913 anglers were surveyed and 767 red snapper were measured.

Mr Pausina also stated that Marine owners all strongly prefer a red snapper season that is spread out over a number of weekends over a season of equal length spread out over consecutive days

The next item, **To Hear a Report on the Status of Ship Shoal Block 26 Structures** was also handled by Mr. Randy Pausina. Mr. Pausina stated that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Apache Corporation have agreed to explore ways to preserve the fish habitat which is a popular hotspot for anglers seeking speckled trout and redfish. At the recommendation of LDWF, Apache Corporation, the owner of the platform agreed to delay the decommissioning of the structure and pay the bill for a water bottom survey to determine the extent of rock and shell pads present. Mr Pausina stated that the LDWF biologists believe the rock and shell structures still see a significant amount of production, even if the main structure were to be removed. He also stated that the Ship Shoal 26 structure will remain intact until the survey is complete.

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear a Report on the Bull Redfish Kill in Breton Sound** to be handled by Jason Adriance. Mr. Adriance began with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries was notified on May 13, 2013 of a fish kill comprised of mainly red drum in the Breton/Chandeleur Sound area. Several field investigations followed including two plane flights between May 13 and May 17. One flight estimated approximately three to four thousand dead red drums with some (less than 5%) gaff-topsail and hardhead catfish mixed in with the red drum. The fish observed in the field had been clearly dead for several days. Mr. Adriance stated that the advanced stage of decomposition of the fish did not allow for the needed fresh samples of tissue for analysis of the cause of death at the LSU Veterinary School Pathology Lab. Mr. Adriance stated that because the species composition was primarily red drum, it is puzzling; as such single species types of mortalities are more often associated with disease than other causes. The investigation is still ongoing and no known cause has been determined.

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear Final Public Comment on Notice of Intent for Black Bass Regulations for the Atchafalaya Basin, Lake Verret, Lake Palourde, Lake Fausse Point / Lake Dauterive Complex**, to be handled by Mike Wood. Mr. Wood stated this is a result of the 1992 Hurricane Andrew. He received good feedback from the public with One Hundred Seventeen (117) responses in favor and thirteen (13) opposed. He also stated the East Ascension Sportsman League was also in favor. There were no questions or comments. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Manuel. Chairman Graham called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the
Notice of Intent is made a part of the record)

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby give notice of its intent to amend rules to change recreational harvest regulations for black bass (*Micropterus spp.*) in the Atchafalaya River Basin and adjacent waters.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life

Chapter 1. Freshwater Sports and Commercial Fishing

§165. Black Bass Regulations—Atchafalaya River Basin, Lake Verret, Lake Palourde Complex

A. The daily creel limit (daily take) for black bass (*Micropterus spp.*) is 10 7 fish and the minimum total length limit is 14 inches with no minimum length limit in the area south of U.S. 190 from the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee to the intersection of LA 1 and U.S. 190 due north of Port Allen, east of the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee from U.S. 190 to U.S. 90, north of U.S. 90 from the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee to LA 20, north and west of LA 20 from U.S. 90 to LA 1 in Thibodaux, south and west of LA 1 from LA 20 to U.S. 190. This rule will expire two years from its effective date.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:6(25) (a), 325(C), 326.3.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 19:361 (March 1993), amended LR 21:960 (September 1995), LR 23:998 (August 1997), amended LR 39: .

§189. Black Bass Regulations, Lake Fausse Point/Lake Dauterive Complex

A. The harvest regulations for black bass (*Micropterus spp.*) on the Lake Fausse Point/Lake Dauterive complex located west of the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee in Iberia and St. Martin Parishes, Louisiana are as follows.

1. Size Limit— it shall be unlawful to take or possess, while on the water or while fishing in the water, black bass less than 14 inches total length no minimum length limit.

2. Daily Take—no more than 10 7 fish.

B. These regulations apply to all areas west of the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee from Highway 3083 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers locks at the Charenton Drainage and Navigation Canal, north of and including the Charenton Drainage and Navigation Canal from the Corps of Engineers locks to Highway 87, north and east of Highway 87 from the Charenton Drainage and Navigation Canal to Highway 320, east of Highway 320 from Highway 87 to Highway 86, south and east of Highway 86 from Highway 320 to Highway 345, east of Highway 345 from Highway 86 to Highway 679, east of Highway 679 from Highway 345 to Highway 3083 and south of Highway 3083 from Highway 679 to the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee. This rule will expire two years from its effective date.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:6 (25) (a), R.S. 56:325(C) and R.S. 56:326.3.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 25:1990 (October 1999), amended LR 39: .

§149. Black Bass Regulations-Daily Take and Size Limits

A. The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission establishes a statewide daily take (creel limit) of 10 fish for black bass (*Micropterus spp.*). The possession limit shall be the same as the daily take on water and twice the daily take off water.

B. In addition, the Commission establishes special size and daily take regulations for black bass on the following water bodies:

B.1. - B.5.a ...

6. Atchafalaya River Basin and adjacent waters:

a. The size and daily take for black bass in the Atchafalaya River Basin and adjacent waters are established in Sections 165 and 189 of this Chapter.

*Maximum total length - The distance in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the most posterior point of the depressed caudal fin as measured with mouth closed on a flat surface.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:6

(25)(a), R.S. 56:325(C), R.S. 56:326.3, and R.S. 56:673.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 14:364 (June 1988), amended LR 17:278 (March 1991), repromulgated LR 17:488 (May 1991), amended LR 17:1122 (November 1991), LR 20:796 (July 1994), LR 23:1168 (September 1997), LR 24:505 (March 1998), LR 26:97 (January 2000), LR 28:104 (January 2002), LR 29:373 (March 2003), LR 30:2339 (October 2004), repromulgated LR 30:2495 (November 2004), amended LR 37:2440 (August 2011), amended LR 39: .

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S. 49:973.

The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent and the final Rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statements, the filing of the Notice of Intent and final Rule and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

Interested persons may submit written comments of the Notice of Intent to Mr. Mike Wood, Director, Inland Fisheries Section, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 no later than 4:30 p.m., May 2, 2013.

In accordance with Act #1183 of the 1999 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries/Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent: This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Ronald Graham
Chairman

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear Final Public Comment on Notice of Intent for Boundaries for D'Arbonne Lake Crappie Regulations**, to also be handled by Mike Wood. There were no questions or comments. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Sagrera. Chairman Graham called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the
Notice of Intent is made a part of the record)

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby establishes the following Rule on Crappie (*Pomoxis* spp.) on Bayou D'Arbonne Lake, located in Union and Lincoln Parishes, Louisiana.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life

Chapter 1. Freshwater Sports and Commercial Fishing

§197. Crappie Regulations - Daily Take

A. - A.1.a....

B. Bayou D'Arbonne Lake (Union and Lincoln Parishes) including all areas between the Bayou D'Arbonne spillway structure and Gill's Ferry Landing on D'Arbonne Creek and Hogpen Landing on Corney Creek.

1. Daily Limit - 25 fish per person

a. on water possession - same as daily limit per person.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S.

56:325.1(c).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 30:2339 (October 2004), amended LR 38:2941(November 2012), amended LR 39: .

The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent and the final Rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statements, the filing of the Notice of Intent and final Rule and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

Interested persons may submit written comments of the Notice of Intent to Mr. Mike Wood, Director, Inland Fisheries Section, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 no later than 4:30 p.m., April 4, 2013.

In accordance with Act #1183 of the 1999 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries/Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent: This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Mr. Ronald Graham
Chairman

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Consider a Declaration of Emergency on Red Snapper Recreational Season Modifications.** Fred Whitrock, LDWF Executive Legal Counsel determined this item did not need to be presented to the Commission for consideration as Secretary Barham has the authority to make the changes.

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear a Presentation of Ducks Unlimited Canada Activities with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Funding,** to be presented by Dave Kostersky. Mr. Kostersky presented a slide show presentation. "The Saskatchewan Prairie Pothole Region", Conserving Saskatchewan's Critical Waterfowl Habitat Reporting Period April 2012 to March 2013

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has contributed to waterfowl conservation on the Canadian Prairies since 1964. This partnership with Ducks Unlimited (DU) recognized the importance of Canadian waterfowl production to the Louisiana Hunter. Over the past 49 years, LDWF has contributed in excess of \$10 million to this effort. In June 2012, LDWF agreed to provide funding in response to the critical waterfowl needs of the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of Saskatchewan. The details are outlined in the presentation provided.

(The full text of the Presentation is made part of the record)

The Saskatchewan Prairie Pothole Region

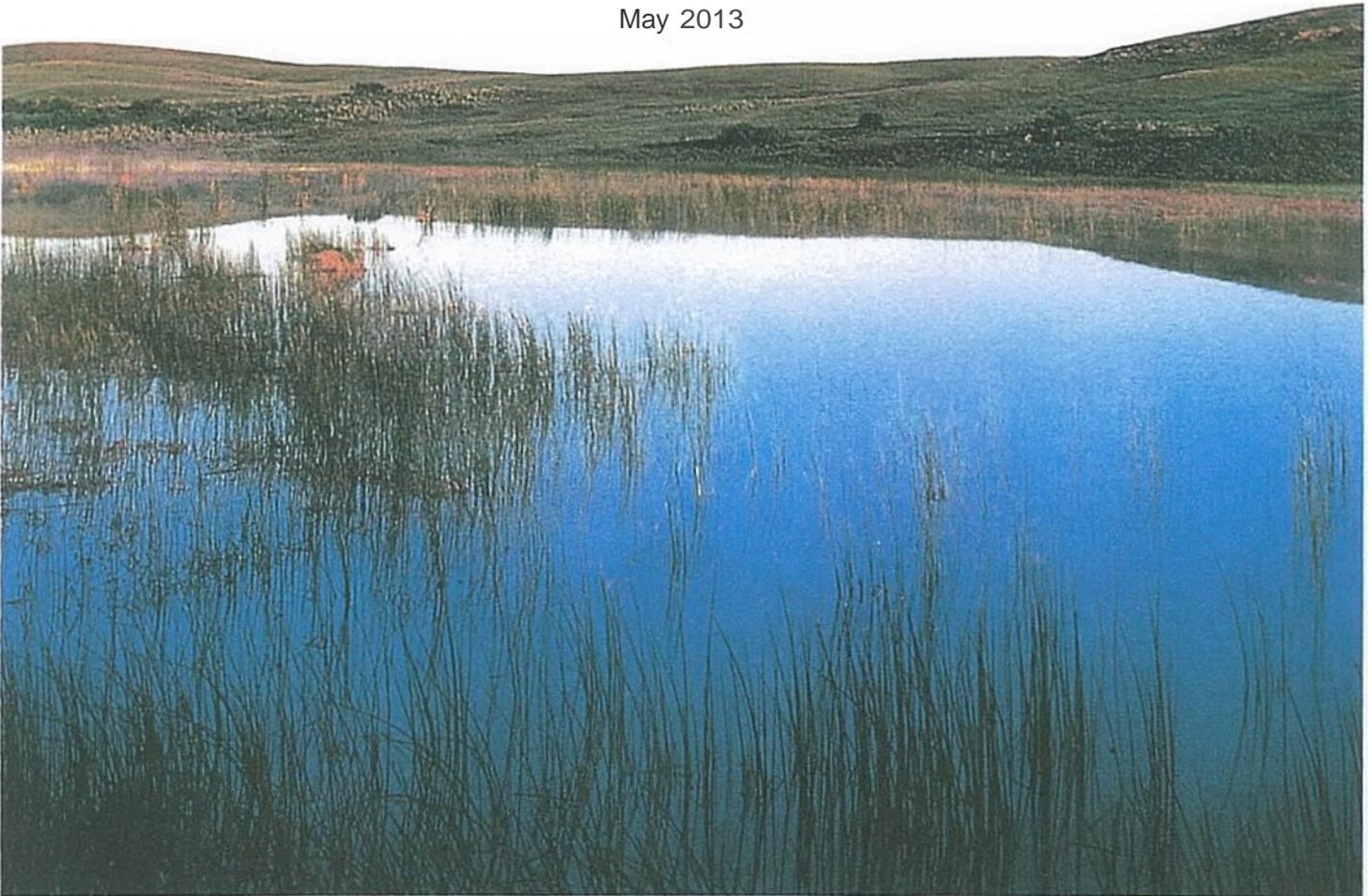
Conserving Saskatchewan's Critical Waterfowl Habitat

Reporting Period: April
2012 to March 2013

Submitted by Ducks Unlimited Canada
and Ducks Unlimited Inc.

To
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

May 2013



Overview



Ducks Unlimited (DU) is the world leader in wetland conservation. Since 1937, DU has invested over two billion dollars in waterfowl and wildlife habitat conservation in the United States, Canada and Mexico. In Canada alone, DU has completed over 9,112 habitat projects, securing 6.3 million acres and positively influencing over 96.1 million acres of habitat that benefit waterfowl, wildlife and people. Besides waterfowl, numerous species of wildlife, including many threatened or endangered species, live and flourish on DU projects.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has contributed to waterfowl conservation on the Canadian Prairies since 1964. This partnership with DU recognizes the importance of Canadian waterfowl production to the Louisiana hunter. Over the past 49 years, LDWF has contributed in excess of \$10 Million to this effort.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is a proud partner of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV), a partnership led by federal and provincial governments, DUC, Nature Conservancy of Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada, has collaborated on waterfowl conservation under NAWMP in Prairie Canada since 1986. DUC leads the delivery of conservation programs and science to support NAWMP goals on the Canadian Prairies. The success of DUC's programs in Saskatchewan, particularly in the prairie pothole-laden target areas, will be critical to support the NAWMP goal of achieving sustainable waterfowl production. The PHJV goal is to protect, restore and enhance an additional 15 million acres over the next 25 years of the NAWMP.

DUC uses the best scientific research available to direct, evaluate and modify DUC's conservation programs and practices so that DUC can most effectively meet the conservation needs of waterfowl in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR). This union of science and conservation sets DUC apart from other non-government conservation organizations in Canada.

In June 2012, Ducks Unlimited presented a funding proposal to the LDWF in response to the critical waterfowl needs of the PPR of Saskatchewan. The LDWF agreed to provide funding for FY 13–FY15. This year LDWF provided \$320,655 to support work on the breeding grounds towards DUC's conservation efforts. This report is for FY 2013 funding that would be matched by DU and this combined total matched by the North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and other partners to realize \$1,282,620 in support of conservation efforts in the priority areas and surrounding prairies and parklands of Saskatchewan. This funding will contribute significantly to the goals of the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture; however still falls short of enabling DUC and our partners to fully deliver on the science-based needs for the Saskatchewan PPR.

This report highlights DUC's habitat accomplishments within Saskatchewan (Missouri Coteau, Thickwood Hills, Allan/Dana Hills, Touchwood Hills, Upper Assiniboine, and Lightning Creek priority areas and surrounding Saskatchewan PPR) during the period of April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013.

Conserving the Prairie Landscape

Saskatchewan Priority Areas

The highest densities of breeding ducks in North America occur in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of Canada. Located within the PPR are the Prairie and Aspen Parkland Eco-regions of Saskatchewan, which are composed of a diversity of wetland and upland habitats. These habitat characteristics make this area key to waterfowl production and provide a basis to strategically deliver conservation programs. Supported by band return information, the delivery area of focus for Louisiana funding falls within the PPR of Saskatchewan and focused on the Missouri Coteau, Thickwood Hills, Allan/Dana Hills, Touchwood Hills, Upper Assiniboine and Lightning Creek priority areas (Figure 1).

Based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey data, the Saskatchewan PPR and the priority areas in particular stand out as the 'best of the best' breeding habitat in North America. However, the values of these habitats have been degraded.

Habitat and Funding Needs

The Saskatchewan PPR as part of the PHJV program delivery area holds the highest wetland densities and thus supports the highest waterfowl densities in North America. If the NAWMP is to be successful, waterfowl conservation must be successful in the PHJV and the province of Saskatchewan. Currently under average wetland conditions the PHJV attracts 3.5 M breeding ducks (5 species), a decline of nearly 700,000 ducks over the last 30 years as a result of continued habitat loss and degradation. The current habitat objectives for Saskatchewan are to restore 6 M acres of lost wetland and upland habitats and protect 2.5 M acres of existing critical waterfowl habitat. The total cost of this work is estimated at \$525 M or \$21 M per year over the second 25 years of the NAWMP. Current funding levels for habitat conservation in Saskatchewan are \$10M per year and declining, which is only 48% of the funding needs to meet the goals of the PHJV and the NAWMP. Increased financial support is critical to our success.

DUC's Science Supports LDWF Investment

Ducks Unlimited Canada has led the last 20 years of research in the Canadian PPR investigating waterfowl

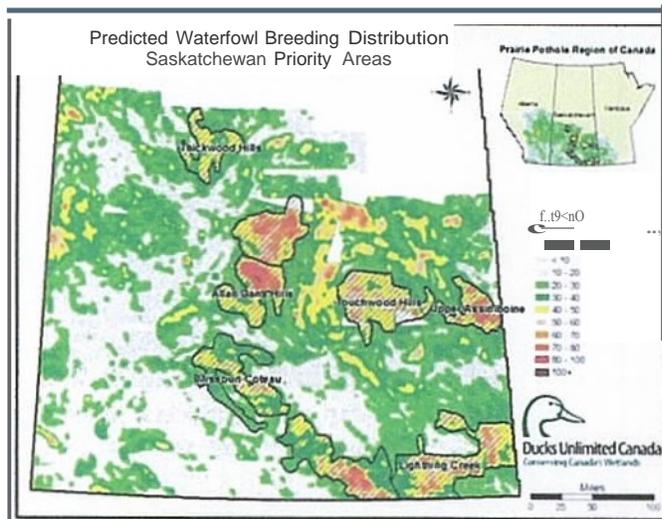


Figure 1. Breeding duck density and distribution within the PPR of Saskatchewan. Yellow and red areas represent the highest duck densities in the province. This map is based on over 50

breeding success as related to habitat conditions on the prairies. This research has covered nest searched over 350,000 acres of habitat, radio tracked 3920 mallard hens and located and determined nest fate on over 10,000 nests. This data has greatly increased our understanding of nesting duck habitat selection and success. This data supports DUG to develop strategic waterfowl habitat recovery plans that are implemented and evaluated using a Waterfowl Productivity Model which relates duck production to habitat condition.

Based on the Waterfowl Productivity Model, DUG has defined waterfowl needs for all landscapes in the Canadian Prairies and specifically, habitat actions needed to restore duck populations within the critical Saskatchewan landscapes. These needs are represented in the habitat objectives set out in the PHJV Implementation Plan.

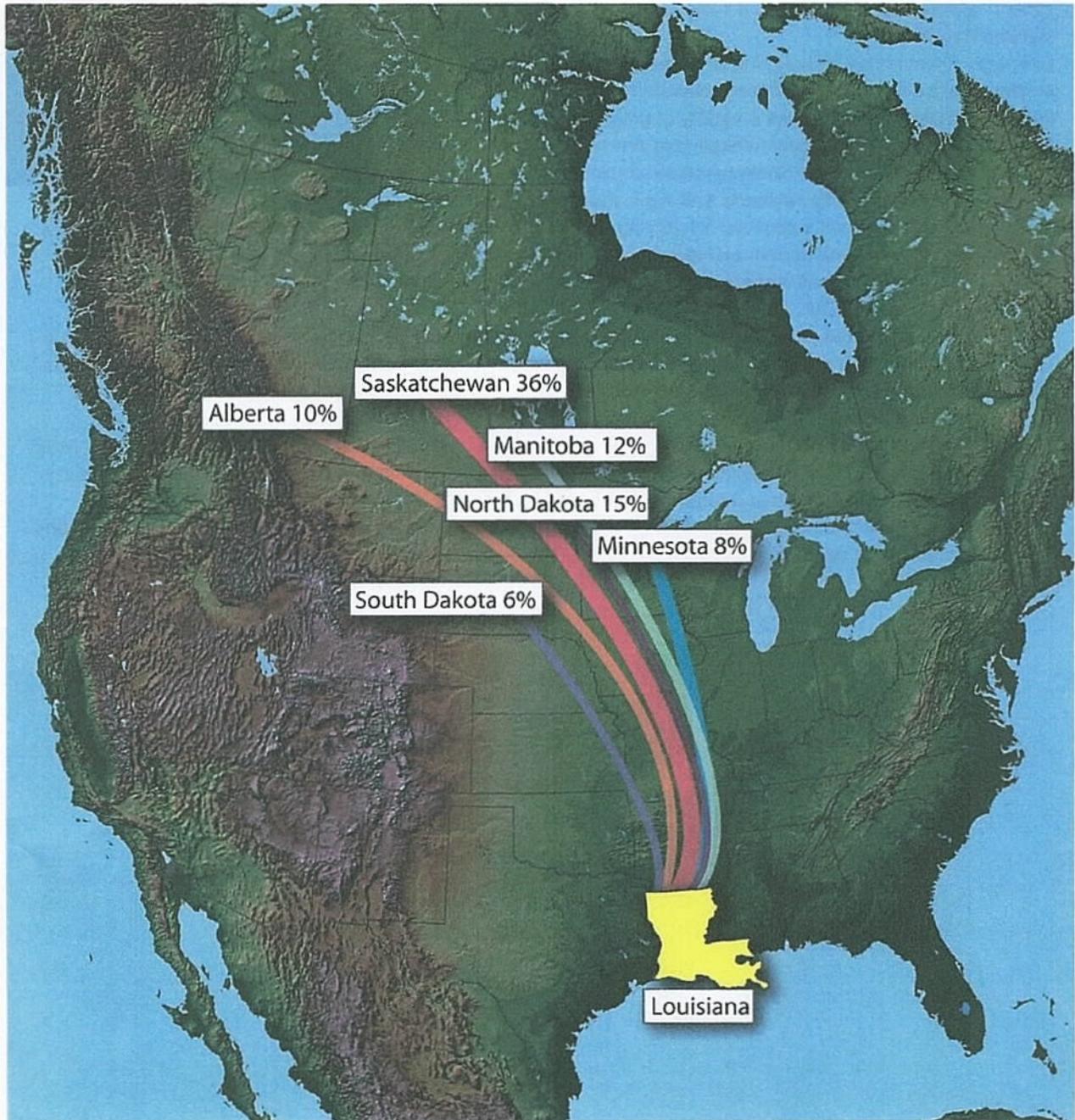
Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian government and industry partners have committed to research that tackles landscape change. Studies on wetland loss, nutrient loading, flood predicting, etc have been a focus for the past half a dozen years. This work has led to valuable science that is currently guiding changes watershed planning and habitat protection programs on the Canadian prairies.

Our 2013 Saskatchewan partnership opportunity for LDWF is to support conservation in these landscapes to sustain waterfowl populations that are vital to the Louisiana hunter.

LOUISIANA DUCKS NEED SASKATCHEWAN

Historical waterfowl band recovery data have established a clear link between waterfowl produced and banded in Saskatchewan and recovered in the Mississippi Flyway. This data further supports that the Saskatchewan PPR and the priority areas targeted by this project stand out as a primary source area of ducks harvested in Louisiana (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Origin of ducks harvested in Oklahoma from 1986-2012 Note that this data is not corrected for banding effort



Program Accomplishments

Based upon DUG's waterfowl science and assessment of the effectiveness of our conservation programs, DUC has adapted a suite of conservation initiatives to maximize waterfowl benefits. In the 2013 Saskatchewan Conservation Plan, DUC delivered against specific objectives for these habitat initiatives in Saskatchewan. See *Table 2 for specific accomplishments.*

How Your Investment Was Used

Habitat Retention

Drainage of wetlands and breaking of native grass uplands continues to be the most significant activities negatively impacting waterfowl. DUC uses a variety of program tools to protect these remaining critical habitats that are vital to the long-term productivity of the Saskatchewan landscape.



- 1) **Conservation Easements and Agreements** protect habitats on private lands through programs offering financial incentives for varying levels of protection. All conservation easements are perpetual and mostly done in partnership with provincial and federal government agencies. Conservation agreements are all a minimum of 10 years and many were secured for less than a \$25 per acre investment by DU.
- 2) **Land purchase program** is the most intensive program that DU delivers and is a very important tool to protect high risk, high valued habitats. The cost of purchasing land continues to rise so DU invests strategically to ensure the greatest waterfowl benefits are derived. DU has a 10 year allowance to purchase up to 100,000 acres of conservation habitat in Saskatchewan.
- 3) **Wetland Rebuilds** is a re-investment into existing wetland projects that have been evaluated as highly productive and successful for waterfowl. These projects have met and surpassed their original design and agreement terms and required new infrastructure and agreements to ensure their productive capacity for another 30 years. DU will renew agreements with all of the landowners on the project and construct the required physical improvements to maximize wetland productivity and waterfowl recruitment.

Program Accomplishments

Wetland Restoration

Most wetland restoration work has to occur on private lands. More than 75 years of program delivery has taught us that it takes a combination of intensive and extensive programs to successfully work with producers. DUC is currently using other programs such as land purchase to initiate efforts to restore wetlands. Goals for wetland restoration increased this year due to drying conditions resulting in an increased opportunity to complete construction on a number of basins. DUC will continue to pursue wetland restoration opportunities that come available.



Upland Restoration

Duck nest success is a major influential factor for continental waterfowl populations. Improving nest success in the priority areas and surrounding PPR will require the restoration of grass to provide secure nesting habitat. DUC focused significant efforts on restoring perennial cover in the Canadian prairies through two primary efforts:

1. **Forage conversion programs** provided incentives to landowners to convert cultivated land to perennial cover to provide waterfowl nesting benefits and support the beef industry. For the waterfowl, the increase in forage provides more nesting choices with better protection from predators.
2. **Winter wheat programs** focused on the agronomic and economic benefits of the crop to the producer. Approaches vary from supporting research to developing new varieties that are more successful in the Canadian prairies, to working more directly with the producers through incentive or extension programs. DUC's research has confirmed that there are 24 times more ducks hatched in winter wheat compared to spring wheat on a per acre basis because both nest success and density increase. This is particularly beneficial to northern pintails, a species that has experienced steady declines since the late 1970s.

Habitat Asset Management

The successful delivery of conservation programs has been occurring over the past 75 years of DU's existence. This represents a substantial investment by DU and many other partners to place a valuable network of habitat projects across Saskatchewan and the rest of the breeding grounds. In order to ensure these projects return the maximum benefit to waterfowl an annual investment of resources is required. HAM activities include annual maintenance, grassland rejuvenation, water level management and repair of damaged water level management infrastructure.

Funding and Accomplishments



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries FY 2013 contribution was \$320,655 toward the priority areas in the Saskatchewan PPR. LDWF's contribution was matched by Ducks Unlimited, NAWCA and other partner funds totaling \$1,282,620. The funding priorities of the NAWMP and Ducks Unlimited remain focused on the PPR of Canada and Canadian partners continue to grow their support with long term match at 50% of the total funds expended under the NAWMP.

Table 1. Saskatchewan Accomplishments and Costs based on funding received

Conservation Programs	Goals (Acres)	Accomplishments (acres)	Program Costs (\$)
1. Habitat Retention	1,315	3,438	\$728,889
2. Wetland Restoration	95	62	\$34,545
3. Upland Restoration	1,973	4,485	\$197,326
4. •Habitat Asset Management	106,885	179,518	\$321,860
Totals	3,383	7,985	\$1,282,620

• Habitat Asset Management acres are not incremental and are therefore not included in the total acre goals.

Securing the Legacy

The PHJV Implementation Plan and Ducks Unlimited have set habitat objectives to fully recover the Canadian Prairies and to sustain waterfowl production equivalent to the levels of the 1970s. Continued partnerships will be the key to success. DUG values its relationship with LDWF and recognizes them as a key player in supporting NAWMP conservation efforts in Canada. However, we will need increased support from all partners if the ambitious goals of NAWMP are to be met.

The waterfowl community continues to recognize habitat programs as the primary solution to waterfowl recovery. Ducks Unlimited Canada is the primary delivery agent of the NAWMP program in the PPR of Canada.

Continued action on the Canadian Prairies means that critical waterfowl habitat will be protected in the top waterfowl production area of North America. Your critical support is needed now as every year the cost of habitat conservation rises making it more difficult to achieve the goals of the NAWMP.

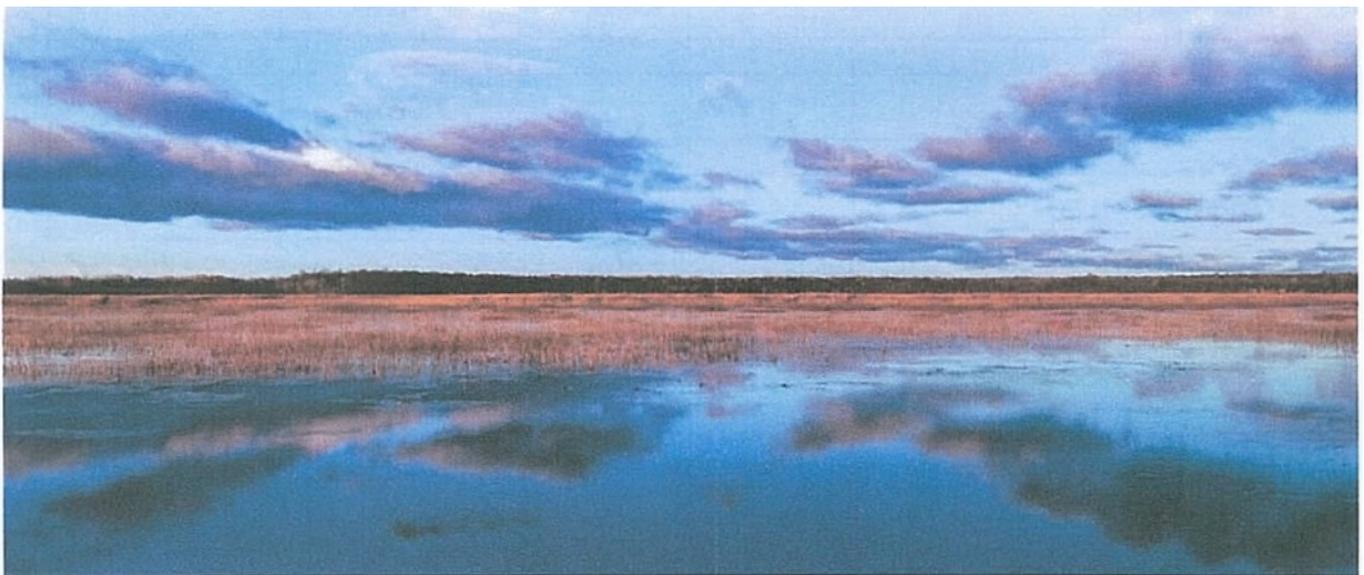
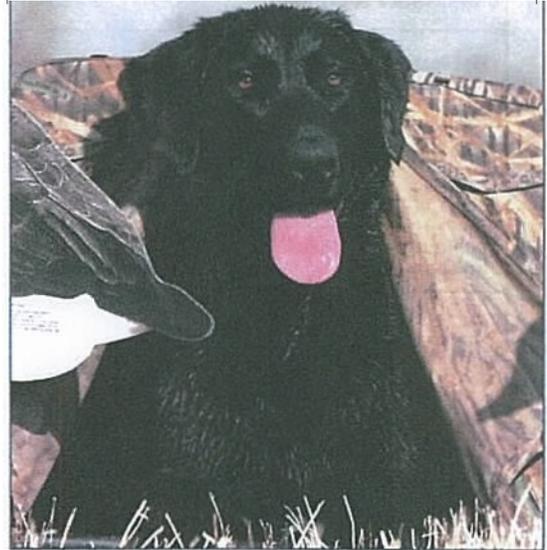


Table 2. Saskatchewan PPR Priority Area Accomplishments FY 2013

Conservation	Direct Program	Extension Programs	FY13 Total	FY13 Costs
Initiatives/ Programs	(acres) ¹	(acres) ²	(Acres)	(\$)
Habitat Retention				
Conservation Easements	576		576	\$97,102
Land Purchase	898		898	\$514,307
Lease/Conservation Agreements	1,964		1,964	\$117,480
Sub-total	3,438	0	3,438	\$728,889
Wetland Restoration				
	62	0	62	\$34,545
Upland Restoration				
Conservation Forages	1,972		1,972	\$75,643
Winter Wheat	2,513	61,249	63,762	\$75,452
Planted Cover Establishment ³			461	\$46,231
Sub-total	4,485	61,249	65,734	\$197,326
Total Acres	7,985	61,249	69,234	
Habitat Management⁴			179,518	\$321,860
Total Expenditure FY13				\$1,282,620

1. Direct programs - Programs whereby DUG directly impacts actions of producers, improves, or protects habitat.
2. Extension programs - are programs whereby DUC extends technical advice mutually beneficial to both producers and to waterfowl habitat.
3. Planted Cover - The acres in this category were previously secured and are not included in the total of habitat accomplishments.
4. Habitat Management - These acres include the existing projects requiring annual management to maintain healthy habitats. The acres in this category are not included in the total of habitat accomplishments.

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear a General Overview of the Upcoming 2014 Turkey Regulations and Season Recommendations** to be presented by Jimmy Stafford. Mr. Stafford presented the following proposed recommendations

General notification of 2014 turkey seasons:

Area A = March 22 – April 20

Area B = March 22 – April 13

Area C = March 22 – April 6

Private Lands Youth/Physically Challenged Hunt, Working with US Forest Service

March 15 – 16

Minor WMA changes

Open youth turkey hunt on Kisatchie National Forest

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear a General Overview of the Upcoming 2013 Dove Season Framework** to be also presented by Jimmy Stafford. Mr. Stafford presented the following proposed recommendations

Season dates for doves and other early season migrants are usually not presented until July as a Declaration of Emergency since the dates cannot be official until we receive the frameworks from the USFWS. This does not allow time for public comment. In order to provide time for public comment, we are announcing the dove season dates we will recommend to the LWFC provided the framework is what we expect it to be. This announcement today requires no action by this Commission – it is informational only.

The dates for dove hunting we expect to recommend are:

South Zone: September 7 – 15

October 19 – December 1

December 21 – January 6

North Zone: September 7 – 22

October 12 – November 10

December 14 – January 6

This is based on a 70 season framework that requires that the opening be no earlier than September 1 and the closing no later than January 15.

Dove season will not open Labor Day weekend in 2013 if this recommendation is adopted. This is because the Saturday of Labor Day weekend (the traditional opening day) falls on August 31st. The federal framework does not allow opening of dove season until September 1. This happens every 7 years and we work to make the public aware of this deviation from the usual season via press releases, through electronic media and other means.

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Set the October 2013 Meeting Date.**

A discussion took place and the meeting is set for October 3, 2013. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Manuel. Chairman Graham called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Set the August 2013 Meeting Location.**

A discussion took place and the meeting will take place at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Marine Research Laboratory, 195 Ludwig Annex Grand Isle, LA 70358

Chairman Graham announced the next item, **To Hear Public Comments;**

Rebecca Triche, Executive Director of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation voiced her concern over the Artificial Reef Fund Raid by the Governor. S.B. 128 will be put to the voters to protect the Fund through the Constitution. There were no other comments or questions heard.

The Commissioners went into **Executive Session to Discuss Prospective Litigation relative to return of Artificial Reef Fund Monies.** Returning from Executive Session, Chairman Graham stated that the Commission will take no action at this time.

There being no further business, Chairman Graham **Adjourned** the meeting.

Ronny Graham
Chairman