

Conservation Reserve Program

Restoring Duck Nesting Habitat

Improve Wildlife Habitat | Increase Duck Nesting Success | Enhance Recreation



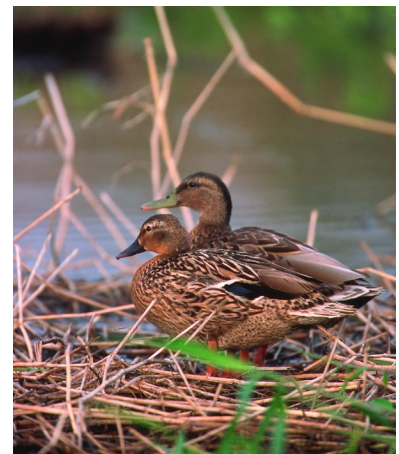
Why Choose CRP? You Benefit Land, Water, and Wildlife.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a proven land performance and management solution. Whatever the challenge—soil conservation, water quality protection, or wildlife habitat enhancement—CRP provides a range of opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and landowners.

Administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency, CRP provides financial and technical assistance to remove environmentally sensitive farmland from production and convert it to conservation cover for a 10- to 15-year contract period.

Why Preserve Duck Habitat?

Ducks play a significant ecological role, their populations and breeding success acting as indicators as overall environmental health. While duck populations have begun to recover in recent years, the continual loss of nesting habitat remains a concern for future broods. Because ducks require both water and land cover to successfully raise their young, the decrease in available wetlands threatens to undo recent progress. Through CRP, farmers and landowners can do their part to help duck populations thrive.



Photos provided by NRCS, Lynn Betts and Ron Nichols respectively



Benefits of Habitat Restoration

Wetlands and associated buffers restored through CRP increase the duck population by an estimated two million ducks annually. In addition to increased waterfowl populations, buffers around depressional wetlands provide habitat for a myriad of grassland bird, pollinator, amphibian, and reptile species.

Beyond the environmental benefits of wildlife, duck populations are also a boon to rural economies. Thriving duck habitats can provide revenue through recreational activities such as hunting and wildlife viewing.

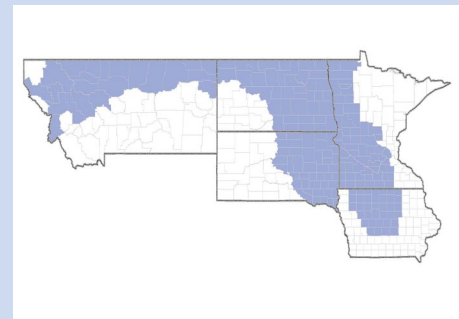
Restored wetlands also provide hydrological storage that mitigates the impacts of flooding, reducing the risk of weather-related disasters. Additional public benefits include filtered agricultural runoff, recharged ground water, and improved drinking water.

They also contribute to carbon sequestration, improving soil quality and helping to protect agriculture from environmental extremes in the long term.

The Prairie Pothole Region

The Prairie Pothole Region—encompassing parts of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota—is known as North America’s duck factory. It produces more than 50% of the continent’s upland ducks, including mallards, pintails, blue- and green-wing teals, and gadwells. It is also home to 35 different species of migrating and breeding shorebirds.

Roughly half of the original wetlands in this region have been drained for farming. Restoring it to its natural state is one of the most significant things that can be done to enhance duck populations.



For more information about FSA and its programs, visit fsa.usda.gov or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Photos provided by NRCS, Stephen Kirkpatrick, USFWS, Steve Hildebrand and Dana Dewhurst respectively