



Most waterfowl produced in North Dakota are from private lands. Cooperating landowners can enhance production with gratifying results. USFWS Photo

- Visit your local FWS Wetland or Refuge Manager to get assistance in developing a wildlife conservatin plan for your farm.
- Join a local wildlife club, or if there's not one nearby, talk to your neighbors and get one started.
- Help your youngsters participate in the Dakota Wildlife Trust's new statewide Habitat Plot Contest, or "adopt" a youngster from town to participate in the contest on your land.
- Organize a N.D. Centennial habitat project in your community.
- Contact the N.D. Game and Fish Department to see what programs they have available to assist you in developing your habitat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers you its assistance in developing wildlife habitat on your land. Limited financial assistance may be available for projects beneficial to waterfowl production. For more information contact the Wildlife Extension Biologist, ND Wetland Habitat Office, 1500 Capitol Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501, or see your local Wetland or Refuge Manager.



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Department of the Interior



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**WILDLIFE AND
AGRICULTURE**

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR WILDLIFE?

Most North Dakota farmers enjoy seeing wildlife on their land. Many landowners provide wildlife habitat at their own expense just to be able to enjoy watching or hunting wildlife on their land. Still, wildlife biologists are often asked by landowners what they can do for wildlife on their land, and whether there is any money available to offset the cost of providing food or cover.

In response to a growing interest in benefitting wildlife on private lands, the U.S. Fish and



High quality nesting cover, either native grasses or tame grass mixes, is needed by such upland nesting waterfowl species as mallards, pintails, gadwall, blue-winged teal and shovelers. USFWS Photo

Wildlife Service (FWS) has initiated a new Wildlife Extension Program. This pilot program is designed to provide educational materials, information, and limited cost-sharing on projects beneficial to wildlife on private lands. While the FWS Wildlife Extension Program is geared primarily toward the production of waterfowl, there are several things that can be done to benefit other desirable species at the same time. Some examples of what you can do for wildlife on your farm are listed in this brochure. The FWS is also interested in hearing about any additional ideas that you might have.

WETLAND HABITATS

Wetlands are one of the most critical habitats in North Dakota, to waterfowl and a wide variety of other species. There are several things you can do to enhance the wetland wildlife values on your property.

- Preserve existing wetlands. The FWS easement program can compensate landowners for doing this.
- Restore a drained wetland. If you have wetlands that have been ditched out, plug the



The prairie marsh is a vital component of successful waterfowl production. Wetlands also play a role in recharging groundwater supplies, filtering sediments and pollutants, and serving as flood-water retention basins. USFWS Photo

- ditch to regain what's been lost. Restored wetlands are eligible as erosion control cover under the USDA Conservation Reserve program. FWS cost-sharing may be available to plug drainage ditches.
- Create new wetlands. Small check dams in gradual, natural drainageways or drains can create valuable wetland habitat.
- Create openings in a cattail-choked marsh through level ditching or other mechanical means.
- Place large flax straw hay bales, or goose or mallard fiberglass nesting baskets in the

marsh. These can provide nesting areas relatively secure from predators.

- Check with FWS for more information on assisting with any of these activities.

GRASSLAND HABITATS:

Nesting cover for upland nesting birds is in short supply. Farmers have been forced to intensify their efforts to increase agricultural production, particularly during these hard times. Farming closer to marsh edges, breaking up sod



Recent droughts and intense agricultural production have caused a decline in some species of waterfowl. Scenes like this are becoming increasingly uncommon. Photo by Ed Bry

for crop production, and overgrazing pastures has occurred. Small bits and pieces of land that were previously left idle have now been put into production. The result has been a decline in the quality and quantity of wildlife habitat.

CAN YOU IMPROVE THE AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF NESTING COVER ON YOUR LAND? YOU BET!

- Enroll highly erodible land into the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program, and select a grass seeding mixture most beneficial to wildlife.

- Consider converting poor cropland to permanent cover for haying or grazing.
- Implement a grazing system that will increase beef production **and** leave enough vegetation on the land to provide nesting habitat, such as the twice-deferred grazing system.
- Leave a wider strip of cover surrounding your sloughs.
- Rotate mowing of hay fields so some cover is left on the land each year, and delay hay cutting until after the nesting season is over.
- Check with FWS to see if financial incentives are available to leave grasslands near good wetland areas idle, or leave them voluntarily.

OTHER IDEAS THAT WILL BENEFIT WILDLIFE:

- Heavy predator populations are known to have a detrimental effect on nesting attempts by upland nesting birds, such as ducks, geese, pheasants, grouse and partridge. Take up trapping or invite trappers to trap on your land to stabilize predator populations.
- Trap predators off of islands prior to and during the nesting season. (Be sure to check state trapping regulations!)
- Plant food plots near good habitat to increase winter survival of resident game. ASCS and ND Game and Fish Department cost-sharing may be available.
- Plant shrubby shelterbelts or block plantings to provide winter and escape cover, and winter food supplies for resident game. ASCS and ND Game and Fish Department cost-sharing may be available.
- Visit with your local Soil Conservation Service District Conservationist or ASCS County Office to see what wildlife projects are qualified for Federal cost-sharing.