



prairie habitat
joint venture

The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) partnership was established to deliver the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) on the Canadian prairies. NAWMP remains the PHJV's key focus today.

Originally signed in 1986, NAWMP has provided a continental response to waterfowl habitat conservation and has received strong commitments from the United States, Canada and Mexico.

North America's Prairie Pothole Region, found largely in Canada, is recognized as the most important breeding area for continental waterfowl and it is important for many other bird populations as well.

The PHJV's broad-based partnerships and conservation activities are crucial to achieving the continental NAWMP goal of restoring waterfowl populations to the levels of the 1970s.

PRIORITY GOALS

- Sustain average waterfowl populations of the 1970s.
- Stop further wetland loss.
- Stop further loss of native lands, especially native grasslands.
- Restore lost wetlands, especially small basins.
- Restore function of upland habitats in landscapes conducive for maintenance of bird populations.

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North American Waterfowl
Management Plan
Plan nord-américain de
gestion de la sauvagine
Plan de Manejo de Aves
Acuáticas de Norteamérica

PHJV Achievements

The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) has always envisioned a sustainable prairie landscape for waterfowl built with unwavering partner commitment and guided by sound science. Thanks to significant achievements, the PHJV partners and participating landowners have set the stage to realize this vision.

PHJV partners have secured/influenced 3.6 million acres under NAWMP, since 1986.

An additional 1.8 million acres of wetland habitat located within NAWMP key program areas and secured prior to 1986 are managed by PHJV partners.

PHJV partners have conserved a total of 5.4 million acres.

To date, \$641 million have been invested into the entire breadth of programming in prairie Canada. The 1989 Provincial Implementation Plans estimated an overall need of 9.8 million

acres costing approximately \$1.16 billion (1989 dollars). So far, 55% of the targeted funding has been received. See "Partners in Conservation" fact sheet.

The original numbers found in the Provincial Implementation Plans were based on an extensive modeling exercise created through the Computer Planning Tool developed by the PHJV. This tool predicted duck production benefits of specific habitat treatments and estimated costs for each target landscape.

Acreage Accomplishments

At the beginning, the PHJV partners focused on land purchase to secure "the best of the best" waterfowl habitat (wetland and uplands). Crown land (title) transfers, land donations and more recently conservation easements are additional tools used to permanently secure habitat. With over 475,000 permanently secured acres, the PHJV surpassed its original objective by 58%.

PHJV Acreage Accomplishments by Securement Type.

Permanently Secured Acres - 475,856
(fee simple acquisition, land donation, Crown land transfer, conservation easement)

Stewardship Acres - 800,808

Agreement Acres - 2,365,378
(terms – lease, cooperative land use agreement, conservation agreement)

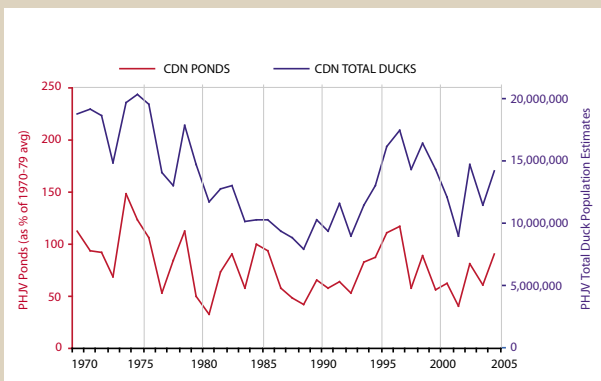
Total Acres: 3,642,042

Recorded by the Canadian NAWMP National Tracking System.



Setting the Table

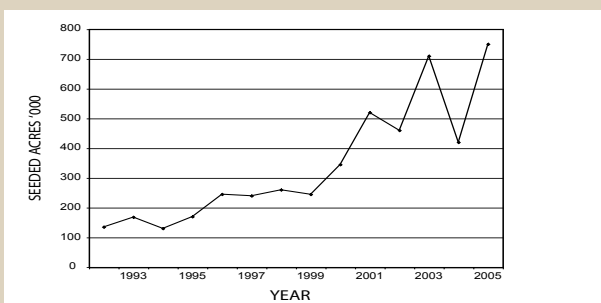
PHJV Total Pond and Duck Estimates (1970 to 2005).



U.S. Fish and Wildlife/Canadian Wildlife Service breeding duck population estimates in the Prairie Pothole Region of North America are highly correlated to the number of ponds. Since 1980, the number of ponds in the PHJV has exceeded the average level of the 1970s in only two years.

The drought of the 1980s led to a record-low duck population estimate of less than 10 million. However, despite continued below average ponds, since the 1990s, population estimates have been averaging approximately 13 million ducks in the PHJV. Precipitation is clearly a driving factor in determining numbers of ducks in Prairie Canada. PHJV programs are designed to achieve a landscape condition that "sets the table" to maximize nest success when the Prairies are wet and duck populations are high.

Winter Wheat Seeded Acreage in Prairie Canada (1992 to 2005) Source: Stats Canada.



Winter wheat seeded acreage has increased from 135,000 acres to 750,000 acres since the initiation of PHJV programs that promote suitable annual crops as waterfowl habitat. Studies showed that northern pintails can hatch up to 18 times as many nests in fall-seeded crops compared to other spring seeded cropping systems. PHJV partners have supported research that has led to the development of winter-hardy varieties adapted to prairie Canada. PHJV programs have increased the uptake of winter wheat by producers. PHJV partners will continue to encourage this growth trend.

Adaptive Management

From the outset, the PHJV adopted an adaptive management approach to continually refine programs as new knowledge was gained. This continuous improvement in program performance shows the commitment in using the best science available to guide PHJV conservation programs, and build a prairie landscape with long-term sustainability. PHJV partners have adapted some programs, re-emphasized others and developed new tools - all in response to what has been learned. By focusing more energy on changes at a landscape scale, real incremental gains in the productive capacity of the land resulted in moving the PHJV closer to its conservation vision.

PHJV partners permanently secured and manage over 475,000 acres of breeding waterfowl habitat. Within these acres there are over 1,300 PHJV properties available for public access (hunting, bird watching, etc.).

Over 1.4 million acres of modified agricultural use, including grazing systems, delayed haying and other practices, are being managed to enhance waterfowl production. See Table 1.

Over 728,000 acres of wetlands are secured and managed by PHJV partners.

Table 1. PHJV Habitat Acreage Accomplishments to March 31, 2005.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS	CURRENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS (ACRES)
INTENSIVE PROGRAMS	
Cover Plantings	195,383
No Agricultural Use	232,831
Wetland Complex	219,348
Large Marsh	509,622
TOTAL INTENSIVE	1,158,069
EXTENSIVE PROGRAMS	
Modified Agricultural Use	
Grazing Systems	1,297,010
Delayed Haying	83,272
Seed Production	952
Flushing Devices	228,588
Convert to Perennial Cover	66,961
Land Use Exchange	6,382
Stewardship	800,808
TOTAL EXTENSIVE	2,483,973
HABITAT ACRES SECURED prior to 1986	1,803,201
TOTAL ACRES UNDER PHJV	5,445,243

ievements

Additional Achievements

The innovative partnership of the PHJV is a significant achievement in itself. Over 340 partners have come together as a cohesive unit in pursuit of one common vision for conservation. This strengthened delivery partnership shows a renewed and unwavering commitment to the PHJV strategic plan and the 2004 NAWMP Update.

The 5.4 million acres affected by PHJV activities support on average at least 30 duck pairs/ mi² annually. This is a very conservative estimate calculated by the PHJV Decision Support System on seven species of ducks. Many other species of wildlife also benefit.

PHJV partner delivery staff have worked with over 17,000 landowners to achieve broad landscape change.

Future Direction

PHJV partners are on a proven path for conservation success. As waterfowl continue to face daunting pressure, the partnership is becoming more targeted in where programs are delivered, types of programs selected, and more responsive to measures of program effectiveness.

The challenges faced by the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture require the ongoing evaluation and adjustment of program delivery based on sound science, landowner interests, landscape approach and effective partnerships. A new tool, the Waterfowl Productivity Model, has been developed as a direct result. This state-of-the-art planning tool is the foundation for meeting PHJV/NAWMP goals and is used to better measure the impact of the program on duck populations and to refine program delivery. See *“Science – Key to our Future” fact sheet*.

Achieving long-term sustainability of the prairie landscape for waterfowl is the key to NAWMP success. Creativity, science, experience and the perspectives of everyone involved contribute significantly to the success of the PHJV and ultimately the NAWMP goal.



Additional Habitat Benefits

Increased Perennial Cover



Perennial cover such as tame pastures, hay crops and forage crops are important waterfowl nesting habitats. In the last 20 years, the acreage of these cover types has increased within the PHJV. **In 1986 seeded perennial land cover comprised just 8% of PHJV target areas, but by 1996, this land cover type had increased to 11% of these areas.**

Changes in agricultural policy account for this increase, which according to the Waterfowl Productivity Model should result in improved waterfowl productivity.

“Plan objectives can be achieved only through a better understanding of the habitat conditions necessary to sustain target population levels.”

- 2004 North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Update

NAWMP Definitions

In the early 1990s, definitions were developed for NAWMP program activities for the purpose of the Canadian NAWMP National Tracking System. These were approved by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council Canada.

SECUREMENT:

This activity tracks expenditures and accomplishments associated with the protection of wetland and/or upland habitat through land title transfer or binding long-term (minimum 10-year) agreements with a landowner. The sub-activities of Securement are: Acquisition and Securement Other Than Acquisition.

Acquisition:

This sub-activity of "Securement" tracks expenditures and accomplishments associated with the acquisition of land through the transfer of title. Acquisition categories include: crown land transfers, fee simple acquisition and land donation.

Crown Land Transfer: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement activities where the title of a property is transferred from one federal or provincial Crown agency to another.

Fee Simple Acquisition: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement activities where the landowner deeds all rights and responsibilities to the recipient for a sum of money.

Land Donation: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement activities where the landowner voluntarily transfers a land title to the recipient without payment. Land donations can be outright gifts, reserved life estates or land donations by device.

Securement Other Than Acquisition:

This sub-activity of "Securement" tracks expenditures and accomplishments associated with land securement methods other than acquisition, used by partners to get permission to occupy or carry out specific activities on land that is owned by someone else. In these cases, title or ownership of the land does not change hands. Categories of "Securement Other Than Acquisition" are: Conservation Agreements, Conservation Easements, Crown Designations, Lease Agreements, and Cooperative Land Use Agreement.

Conservation Agreement: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement agreements between sponsoring agencies and landowners (including federal and provincial Crown agencies) as well as land managers (including First Nations and Industry groups) where these managers can sign agreements tied to the land, for the purpose of wildlife habitat conservation. These no cost agreements (minimum 10 years) contain restrictions against the use of the land.

Conservation Easement: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with purchased or donated legally binding agreements between a landowner and a sponsoring agency that run with the deeds. Easements are negotiated and designed to benefit the designated land over a long term or in perpetuity. Restrictions pertaining to the use and development of the land are identified in the agreement.

Cooperative Land Use Agreement: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement activities where there is an agreement between the landowner and the sponsoring agency which involves some modified use of the land in a way that is compatible with waterfowl habitat management. Under this type of agreement, the landowner will receive financial compensation.

Crown Designation: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement activities where the right to manage a parcel of property is passed from one government department to another. The title of the land remains within the one government department or agency while administration and control of the land is transferred to another department or agency.

Lease Agreement: Expenditures and accomplishments associated with securement activities where there is a purchased or donated legal agreement in which the landowner gives the right to the lessee to enter their property and manage it for a specific term. The landowner transfers property rights for a fee but may specify certain terms and conditions which become part of the lease agreement. The lease can be registered against the deed to the land.

STEWARDSHIP:

Stewardship: Refers to the responsibility to manage one's land use practices and activities with proper regard to the surrounding environment and the rights of others. This activity tracks expenditures and accomplishments associated with a wide range of conservation activities that either promote or directly result in the sustainable use of land for the purpose of conserving wildlife and the habitats they depend on. Because of the absence of legal or binding land agreements of at least 10-year duration, accomplishment acres are not tracked as "Securement" acres.