2015 NY Waterfowl and Wetlands Collaborative Network

"Developing a Tradition of Collaboration"

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Executive Summary: Our goal was to develop and nurture a SUNY-based network of scientists, managers, administrators, stakeholders and educators to share information and develop action items aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of science-based conservation, restoration, and management for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife in New York and bordering jurisdictions. To this end, we held an inaugural "Waterfowl and Wetlands Network" (WWN) meeting on 28 – 29 July 2015 at the Rice Creek Field Station, Oswego, NY. Invitations were sent to colleagues with NYSDEC, USFWS, and NGOs as well as students from universities in the US and Canada. We attracted 45 attendees from NY, Ohio, VT, and Ontario (see attached Attendee List), including government, university (professors and students), and NGO affiliates. The morning of day one (see attached Agenda) included general introductions, a summary of the purpose of the SUNY 4E Network of Excellence grant, and statements of general information needs about waterfowl and wetlands conservation and management by government (state and federal) and NGOs (representation by Ducks Unlimited Inc. and Ducks Unlimited Canada). The afternoon of day one included a field trip to the Montezuma Wetlands Complex to discuss waterfowl and wetlands conservation and management challenges of the region. Day two included research talks and posters from students, professors, and wetland managers. The meeting ended with a Focus Group exercise to develop a list of information needs/action items. Attending WWN members agreed upon a list of 30 information needs that were ranked by each WWN member. WWN members were given 7 stickers

(color coded as government, academicians, NGO, or student) and asked to place them on the 3 information needs that they considered most important. Collectively, the top 4 needs included 1) training the next generation of waterfowl and wetland ecologists and scientists, 2) determine the future of American black ducks in NY, 3) how do we grow the number of waterfowl enthusiasts?, and 4) how do we balance multi-species management to ensure grant goals (i.e., NAWCA/NAWMP) are realized? (Table 1). These rankings and those by individuals groups (Tables 2 – 5), help provide guidance towards future efforts/action items by the WWN. Future collaborative efforts may include development of communication tools (e.g., email list and a common DropBox folder), inclusion of additional collaborators to diversify the WWN, development of grant proposals as per Table 1, and increased efforts focused at training young professionals in waterfowl and wetlands ecology and science.

Project Description: Waterfowl are ecologically, environmentally, culturally, and economically important. Recognition of the tangible and intangible importance of this diverse group of birds by waterfowl enthusiasts gave rise to substantial international efforts and resulted in conservation of wetlands and associated upland habitats throughout North America. In New York State, a strong conservation ethic has resulted in active conservation, restoration, and management of wetlands for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife. However, because it is such a large and diverse State it is not always clear what habitat objectives managers should strive to achieve; breeding (i.e., nest cover, brood rearing) or non-breeding (i.e., food energy, refuge, pairing habitat). In addition, balancing objectives for other wetland wildlife and restrictions of limited budgets make managing wetland habitat difficult. New York State also is culturally and economically diverse, which provides both benefits and challenges to meeting conservation goals. Thus, it is not always clear how waterfowl and wetland objectives would grow numbers of waterfowl hunters, and other conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation (*sensu* North American Waterfowl Management Plan 2012).

Waterfowl habitats in New York State are placed between critical breeding areas to the north and wintering areas to the south where hunters regularly harvest birds from the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. As such, the diversity and quantity of waterfowl and other migrant wetland birds are at least partially a result of cross-seasonal effects of habitat quality and quantity in neighboring jurisdictions. Because of this geographic location, cross-state and -country discussions and collaborations are necessary to meet conservation goals for waterfowl and other migrant wetland birds.

Prior conservation successes in New York State enable greater than 2.1 million people (# 3 in the US) to participate each year in outdoor fishing and hunting activities. Conservationists should be proud of these numbers, because they represent decades of dedication to sound fish and wildlife conservation, management and restoration initiatives that have enabled a diverse conservation ethic in the Empire State. The challenge for the future will be to maintain and grow these numbers of waterfowl hunters, other conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation.

SUNY 4E funding enabled us to host a gathering of 45 professional, accomplished habitat managers and scientists, and students to discuss our current state of knowledge, and identify information gaps thereby fostering lasting partnerships and collaborations. Our meeting had the following objectives:

1. Share information about conservation, restoration and management techniques aimed at sustaining waterfowl and wetland-dependent fish and wildlife.
2. Facilitate collaboration between scientists and managers to aid in refining science-based conservation, restoration, and management activities
3. Organize a forum to train students and enable them to advance professionally.
4. Make progress together that is not possible as individual organizations or within state or country borders.
5. Develop a framework that will make this an annual event in the State of New York.

In 2015, we met objectives 1 through 4 and are currently seeking avenues to financially support the WWN meeting as an annual or periodic event (e.g., every 2 – 3 years).

AGENDA

New York Waterfowl & Wetlands Network 2015: Developing a Tradition of Collaboration
28 – 29 JULY 2015

SUNY Oswego Rice Creek Field Station, 193 Thompson Road, Oswego, New York 13126

28 JULY

9:00-10:00 am: Arrival and Registration

10:00 – 10:15 am: Welcome and Introductions
Kamal Mohammed, Director of Rice Creek Field Station and group

10:15- 10:45 am: Developing a Tradition of Collaboration
Jacob Straub (SUNY Plattsburgh) and Michael Schummer (SUNY Oswego)

10:45 – 11:30 am: Information needs of government and non-profit conservation organizations
Heidi Kennedy, James Eckler (NYS DEC), Linda Ziemba, Paul Hess (USFWS), and Sarah Fleming (Ducks Unlimited)

11:30 am – Noon: Open discussion

Noon – 1:00 pm: Lunch served on site

1:00 – 5:00 pm: Field trip to Montezuma Wetlands Complex led by *James Eckler (NYS DEC)* and *Linda Ziemba (USFWS)*

5:00 – 6:00 pm: Social hour, walk trails at Rice Creek, ***Room check in at Sheldon Hall, Beacon Hotel***

6:00 – 7:00 pm: Dinner by *Canale's Restaurant* served on site

7:00 – 8:00 pm: Invited speaker/plenary talk
John Simpson, Director of Winous Point Marsh Conservancy

8:00 – 8:30 pm: Sora, Virginia, and King Rail trap demonstration by *John Simpson, Winous Point Marsh Conservancy* and GSM Satellite Telemetry attachment demonstration by *Matt Palumbo, Long Point Waterfowl*

8:30 – 11:00 pm: Hospitality sponsored by Duck Unlimited, Inc. and Ommegang Brewery

29 JULY

7:30 – 8:30 am: Breakfast served on site

8:30 – 8:45 am: Braddock Bay Wetland Restoration by *Doug Wilcox (SUNY Brockport)*

8:45-9:00 am: American black duck and mallard interactions in the Saranac Lake Wild Forest Area, NY by *Jake Straub (SUNY Plattsburgh)*

9:00- 9:15 am: Habitat selection and survival of female mallards in the St. Clair region during autumn and winter by *Matt Palumbo (Long Point Waterfowl and the University of Western Ontario)*

9:15-9:30 am: Criteria of natural cavities for waterfowl in northern Vermont by *John Malanchuk (SUNY Plattsburgh)*

9:30-9:45 am: A theoretical growth model for recruitment of waterfowl enthusiasts in New York by *Michael Schummer (SUNY Oswego)*

9:45-10:15 am: Break (Poster session)

10:15 – 10:30 am: Development of a Collegiate Ducks Unlimited Chapter at SUNY Cobleskill by *Michael Losito (SUNY Cobleskill)*

10:30-10:45 am: Nesting ecology of wood ducks at the SUNY Oswego, Rice Creek Field Station by *Robert Katz (SUNY Oswego)*

10:45-11:00 am: Habitat selection and survival of wood duck hens and broods at Long Point, Ontario by *Matt Dyson (Long Point Waterfowl and the University of Western Ontario)*

11:00-11:15 am: Canada goose nesting ecology and gosling survival at the SUNY Oswego, Rice Creek Field Station by *Edward Hogan and Matt Wagner (SUNY Oswego)*

11:15-11:30 am: Less water = better wetlands at Wilson Hill WMA by Mike Morgan (*NYS DEC*)

11:30 – Noon: *Open slot, break, posters*

12:00– 1:00 pm: Lunch served on site

1:00 – 3:15 pm: Focus group, closing discussion, development of 2015 action items

POSTERS – displayed in the main hallway of the Rice Creek Field Station throughout the event

Format = Authors, affiliation(s), title

Benjamin, Pelle, Schummer, and Eckler. SUNY Oswego and NYSDEC. Use of remote cameras to index Canada goose migration and daily movements in Central New York during autumn-winter

Dyson, Henry, Schummer, and Petrie. University of Western Ontario and Long Point Waterfowl. Survival and habitat selection of female wood ducks and broods at Long Point, Ontario.

De LaMater and Hammer. SUNY Plattsburgh. Vegetation characteristics of a unique floodplain forest in the northeastern US.

Farrell and Schummer. SUNY ESF. Use of capture-mark-recapture analysis to estimate abundances of wintering American black ducks and mallards at Cayuga Lake.

Schummer et al. (Waterfowl Ecology Class). SUNY Oswego. Influences of Summer and Fall vegetative communities and hydrological and soil management on Autumn seed and tuber densities in restored wetlands at Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area.

Schummer, Bickert, Robinson, Eckler, Morlock, Schapira, Cohen, and Valentino. SUNY Oswego and SUNY ESF. Using Go-Pro video cameras to estimate differential susceptibility among species-sex cohorts of ducks to capture in Montezuma Confusion Traps.

CONTACT INFORMATION -

Mike Schummer - 585-319-6763, michael.schummer@oswego.edu

Rice Creek - 315-312-6677, on the web at:

http://www.oswego.edu/academics/opportunities/rice_creek_field_station/about.html

NY Waterfowl and Wetlands Network 2015 Attendees

#	NAME	Affiliation
1	Adam Bleau	NYS DEC
2	Arliss Reed	SUNY Cobleskill
3	Bill Wolanske	NYS DEC
4	Brandeis Brown	SUNY ESF
5	Bryan Swift	NYS DEC
6	Cameron Gray	SUNY Cobleskill
7	Chad Hammer	SUNY Plattsburgh
8	Chris Delage	Ducks Unlimited Canada
9	Dan Delawyer	NY Ducks Unlimited
10	David DeLaMater	SUNY Plattsburgh
11	David Jabot	SUNY ESF
12	David Sausville	Vermont Fish and Game
13	Doug Wilcox	SUNY Brockport
14	Ed Hogan	SUNY Oswego
15	Frank Morlock	NYS DEC
16	Heidi Kennedy	NYS DEC
17	Irene Mazzochi	NYS DEC
18	Isadora Bevan	SUNY Oswego
19	Jacob Straub	SUNY Plattsburgh
20	Jim Eckler	NYS DEC
21	Joe Scoccio	SUNY Cobleskill
22	John Malanchuk	SUNY Plattsburgh
23	John O'Connor	NYS DEC
24	John Simpson	Winous Point Marsh Conservancy
25	Jonathan Cohen	SUNY ESF
26	Josh Stiller	NYS DEC
27	Justin Droke	SUNY ESF
28	Kameron Brown	SUNY Cobleskill
29	Kent Kowalski	NYS DEC
30	Linda Ziemba	Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge
31	Madeline Alfieri	SUNY Cobleskill
32	Matt Dyson	Long Point Waterfowl
33	Matt Palumbo	Long Point Waterfowl
34	Matt Wagner	SUNY Oswego
35	Melissa Hunt	SUNY Cobleskill
36	Michael Schummer	SUNY Oswego
37	Michael Valentino	SUNY Oswego and SUNY ESF
38	Mike Losito	SUNY Cobbleskill
39	Mike Morgan	NYS DEC
40	Mike Putnam	NYS DEC
41	Paul Hess	Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
42	Robert Katz	SUNY Oswego
43	Ron Zega	NY Ducks Unlimited
44	Sarah Fleming	NY Ducks Unlimited
45	Tom Bell	NYS DEC

Table 1. Ranking of priorities for all groups combined ($n = 37$; 8 absent on second day)

Attribute	TOTAL SCORE
Training the next generation of waterfowl and wetland ecologists/scientists	49.93
Future of Black Ducks in NY	48.19
How do we grow #'s of waterfowl enthusiasts?	46.83
How do we balance multi-species mgmt to ensure grant goals (i.e., NAWCA/NAWMP) are realized	44.41
Training/workshops to share information on conservation & mgmt issues	29.57
Developing a BMP document for moist soil/wetland mgmt for the NE & southern Ontario	22.80
Science-based information to support mute swan mgmt. plan	20.00
Understand influence of Lake Ontario water levels on fish and wildlife	18.66
Farming on refuges and WMAs; implications for wildlife& people (recreation/rural communities)	16.70
Focus on making permitting process easier (e.g., wetland permits)	14.29
Future of Mute & Trumpeter Swans/how do these species interact	13.18
Develop biologically-based goals for waterfowl (e.g. DEDs) for our region	8.42
Invasive species detection & control methods	7.79
Develop "thunderstorm" map of MALL X ABDU hybrids	7.62
Disturbance and recreation mgmt on refuges and WMAs	7.50
Can we produce "thunderstorm" maps of breeding waterfowl	7.36
How do we continue to fund inland projects w/ new NAWCA funding focus on coastal areas	7.14
Reduce captive mallard release	5.41
Sustain/improve precise waterbirds/marshbird surveys	5.37
Investigate technology that helps us gain useful information (e.g., drones, LiDAR)	5.37
Monitoring of restoration with well-developed final reports	3.76
How do we manage/can we manage wintering habitat in the Finger Lakes and elsewhere	2.38
Funding annual/semi-annual WWNetwork Meeting	1.19
Determine return on our investment in wetland restoration/mgmt actions	1.19
How do we influence private lands mgmt	1.19
Identify waterfowl concentration areas	0.90
Methods to educate the public "communication tools"	0.00
We know all we need to know about waterfowl	0.00
Lack of in-house (NYSDEC) engineers/disconnect between managers and operations staff	0.00
Efficiently and effectively communication of policy issues to law makers (e.g., Washington D. C.)	0.00

Table 2. Ranking of priorities by government (NYSDEC and USFWS; n = 16)

Attribute	Government
How do we balance multi-species mgmt to ensure grant goals (i.e., NAWCA/NAWMP) are realized	14.41
Developing a BMP document for moist soil/wetland mgmt for the NE & southern Ontario	13.51
Training/workshops to share information on conservation & mgmt issues	11.71
Future of Black Ducks in NY	10.81
Disturbance and recreation mgmt on refuges and WMAs	6.31
Training the next generation of waterfowl and wetland ecologists/scientists	5.41
How do we grow #'s of waterfowl enthusiasts?	5.41
Invasive species detection & control methods	5.41
Reduce captive mallard release	5.41
Can we produce "thunderstorm" maps of breeding waterfowl	4.50
Farming on refuges and WMAs; implications for wildlife& people (recreation/rural communities)	3.60
Understand influence of Lake Ontario water levels on fish and wildlife	2.70
Future of Mute & Trumpeter Swans/how do these species interact	2.70
Develop biologically-based goals for waterfowl (e.g. DEDs) for our region	2.70
Sustain/improve precise waterbirds/marshbird surveys	1.80
Investigate technology that helps us gain useful information (e.g., drones, LiDAR)	1.80
Monitoring of restoration with well-developed final reports	0.90
Identify waterfowl concentration areas	0.90
Science-based information to support mute swan mgmt. plan	0.00
Focus on making permitting process easier (e.g., wetland permits)	0.00
Develop "thunderstorm" map of MALL X ABDU hybrids	0.00
How do we continue to fund inland projects w/ new NAWCA funding focus on coastal areas	0.00
How do we manage/can we manage wintering habitat in the Finger Lakes and elsewhere	0.00
Funding annual/semi-annual WWNetwork Meeting	0.00
Determine return on our investment in wetland restoration/mgmt actions	0.00
How do we influence private lands mgmt	0.00
Methods to educate the public "communication tools"	0.00
We know all we need to know about waterfowl	0.00
Lack of in-house (NYSDEC) engineers/disconnect between managers and operations staff	0.00
Efficiently and effectively communication of policy issues to law makers (e.g., Washington D. C.)	0.00

Table 3. Ranking of priorities by NGOs (n = 4)

Attribute	NGO
How do we grow #'s of waterfowl enthusiasts?	25.00
How do we balance multi-species mgmt to ensure grant goals (i.e., NAWCA/NAWMP) are realized	21.43
Focus on making permitting process easier (e.g., wetland permits)	14.29
Training/workshops to share information on conservation & mgmt issues	10.71
Understand influence of Lake Ontario water levels on fish and wildlife	7.14
Farming on refuges and WMAs; implications for wildlife& people (recreation/rural communities)	7.14
How do we continue to fund inland projects w/ new NAWCA funding focus on coastal areas	7.14
Developing a BMP document for moist soil/wetland mgmt for the NE & southern Ontario	3.57
Sustain/improve precise waterbirds/marshbird surveys	3.57
Training the next generation of waterfowl and wetland ecologists/scientists	0.00
Future of Black Ducks in NY	0.00
Science-based information to support mute swan mgmt. plan	0.00
Future of Mute & Trumpeter Swans/how do these species interact	0.00
Develop biologically-based goals for waterfowl (e.g. DEDs) for our region	0.00
Invasive species detection & control methods	0.00
Develop "thunderstorm" map of MALL X ABDU hybrids	0.00
Disturbance and recreation mgmt on refuges and WMAs	0.00
Can we produce "thunderstorm" maps of breeding waterfowl	0.00
Reduce captive mallard release	0.00
Investigate technology that helps us gain useful information (e.g., drones, LiDAR)	0.00
Monitoring of restoration with well-developed final reports	0.00
How do we manage/can we manage wintering habitat in the Finger Lakes and elsewhere	0.00
Funding annual/semi-annual WWNetwork Meeting	0.00
Determine return on our investment in wetland restoration/mgmt actions	0.00
How do we influence private lands mgmt	0.00
Identify waterfowl concentration areas	0.00
Methods to educate the public "communication tools"	0.00
We know all we need to know about waterfowl	0.00
Lack of in-house (NYSDEC) engineers/disconnect between managers and operations staff	0.00
Efficiently and effectively communication of policy issues to law makers (e.g., Washington D. C.)	0.00

Table 4. Ranking of priorities by academicians (n = 5)

Attribute	Academics
Science-based information to support mute swan mgmt. plan	20.00
Training the next generation of waterfowl and wetland ecologists/scientists	17.14
Future of Black Ducks in NY	17.14
How do we balance multi-species mgmt to ensure grant goals (i.e., NAWCA/NAWMP) are realized	8.57
How do we grow #'s of waterfowl enthusiasts?	5.71
Developing a BMP document for moist soil/wetland mgmt for the NE & southern Ontario	5.71
Future of Mute & Trumpeter Swans/how do these species interact	5.71
Develop biologically-based goals for waterfowl (e.g. DEDs) for our region	5.71
Understand influence of Lake Ontario water levels on fish and wildlife	2.86
Develop "thunderstorm" map of MALL X ABDU hybrids	2.86
Can we produce "thunderstorm" maps of breeding waterfowl	2.86
Monitoring of restoration with well-developed final reports	2.86
Training/workshops to share information on conservation & mgmt issues	0.00
Farming on refuges and WMAs; implications for wildlife& people (recreation/rural communities)	0.00
Focus on making permitting process easier (e.g., wetland permits)	0.00
Invasive species detection & control methods	0.00
Disturbance and recreation mgmt on refuges and WMAs	0.00
How do we continue to fund inland projects w/ new NAWCA funding focus on coastal areas	0.00
Reduce captive mallard release	0.00
Sustain/improve precise waterbirds/marshbird surveys	0.00
Investigate technology that helps us gain useful information (e.g., drones, LiDAR)	0.00
How do we manage/can we manage wintering habitat in the Finger Lakes and elsewhere	0.00
Funding annual/semi-annual WWNetwork Meeting	0.00
Determine return on our investment in wetland restoration/mgmt actions	0.00
How do we influence private lands mgmt	0.00
Identify waterfowl concentration areas	0.00
Methods to educate the public "communication tools"	0.00
We know all we need to know about waterfowl	0.00
Lack of in-house (NYSDEC) engineers/disconnect between managers and operations staff	0.00
Efficiently and effectively communication of policy issues to law makers (e.g., Washington D. C.)	0.00

Table 6. Ranking of priorities by students (n = 12)

Attribute	Student
Training the next generation of waterfowl and wetland ecologists/scientists	27.38
Future of Black Ducks in NY	20.24
How do we grow #'s of waterfowl enthusiasts?	10.71
Training/workshops to share information on conservation & mgmt issues	7.14
Understand influence of Lake Ontario water levels on fish and wildlife	5.95
Farming on refuges and WMAs; implicationsfor wildlife& people (recreation/rural communities)	5.95
Future of Mute & Trumpeter Swans/how do these species interact	4.76
Develop "thunderstorm" map of MALL X ABDU hybrids	4.76
Investigate technology that helps us gain useful information (e.g., drones, LiDAR)	3.57
Invasive species detection & control methods	2.38
How do we manage/can we manage wintering habitat in the Finger Lakes and elsewhere	2.38
Disturbance and recreation mgmt on refuges and WMAs	1.19
Funding annual/semi-annual WWNetwork Meeting	1.19
Determine return on our investment in wetland restoration/mgmt actions	1.19
How do we influence private lands mgmt	1.19
How do we balance multi-species mgmt to ensure grant goals (i.e., NAWCA/NAWMP) are realized	0.00
Developing a BMP document for moist soil/wetland mgmt for the NE & southern Ontario	0.00
Science-based information to support mute swan mgmt. plan	0.00
Focus on making permitting process easier (e.g., wetland permits)	0.00
Develop biologically-based goals for waterfowl (e.g. DEDs) for our region	0.00
Can we produce "thunderstorm" maps of breeding waterfowl	0.00
How do we continue to fund inland projects w/ new NAWCA funding focus on coastal areas	0.00
Reduce captive mallard release	0.00
Sustain/improve precise waterbirds/marshbird surveys	0.00
Monitoring of restoration with well-developed final reports	0.00
Identify waterfowl concentration areas	0.00
Methods to educate the public "communication tools"	0.00
We know all we need to know about waterfowl	0.00
Lack of in-house (NYSDEC) engineers/disconnect between managers and operations staff	0.00
Efficiently and effectively communication of policy issues to law makers (e.g., Washington D. C.)	0.00