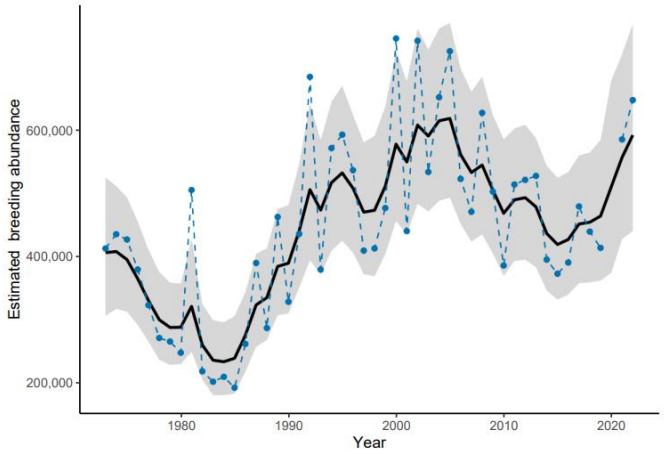
2022 Waterfowl Season Update and the Future

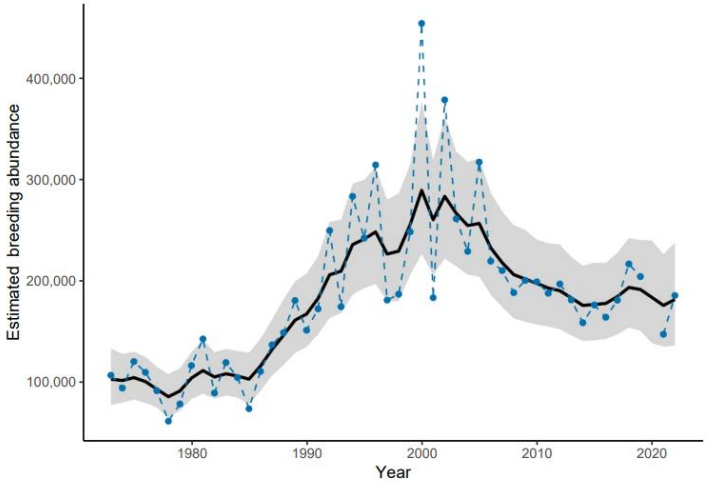
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

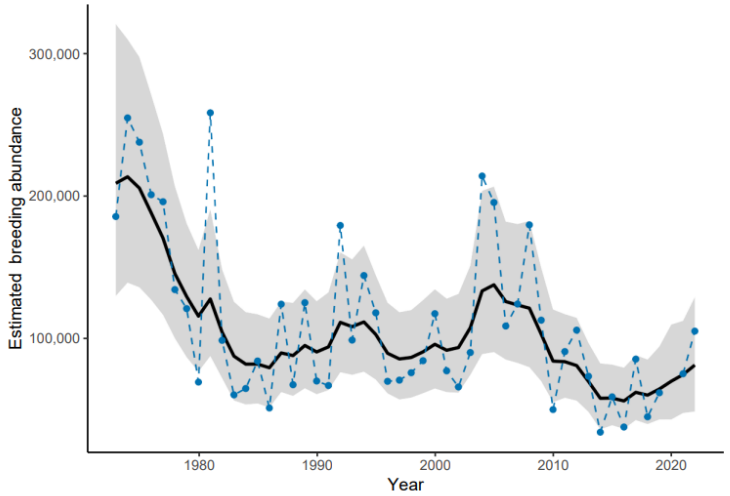
Game Bird Ecologist

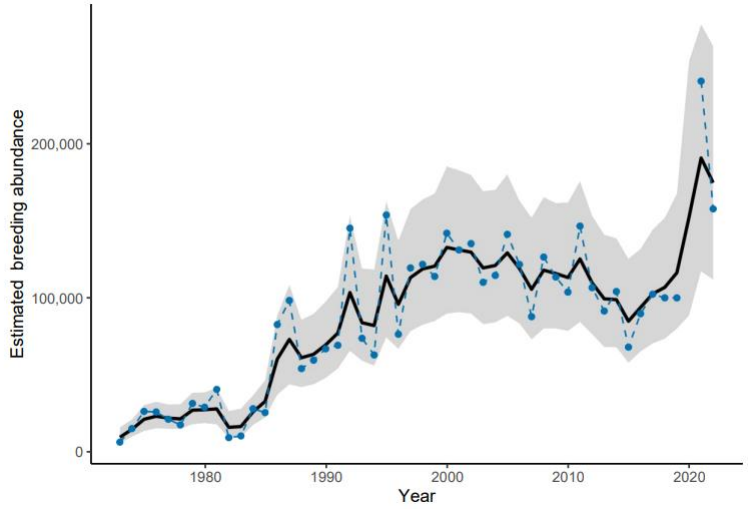
Taylor Finger

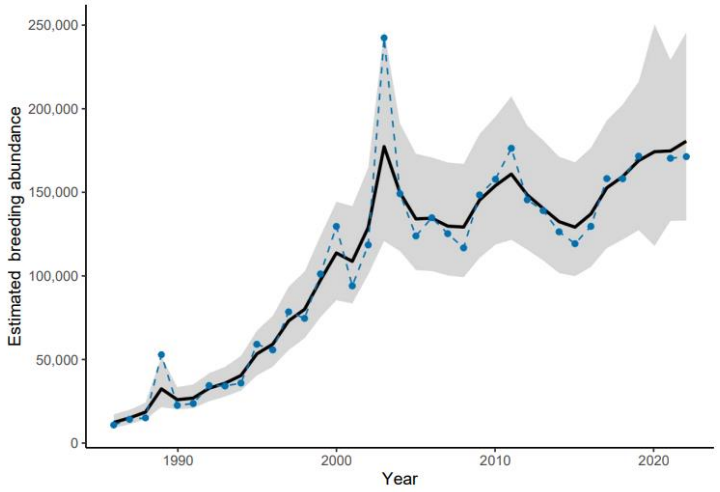
State of Wisconsin Waterfowl – Breeding Survey







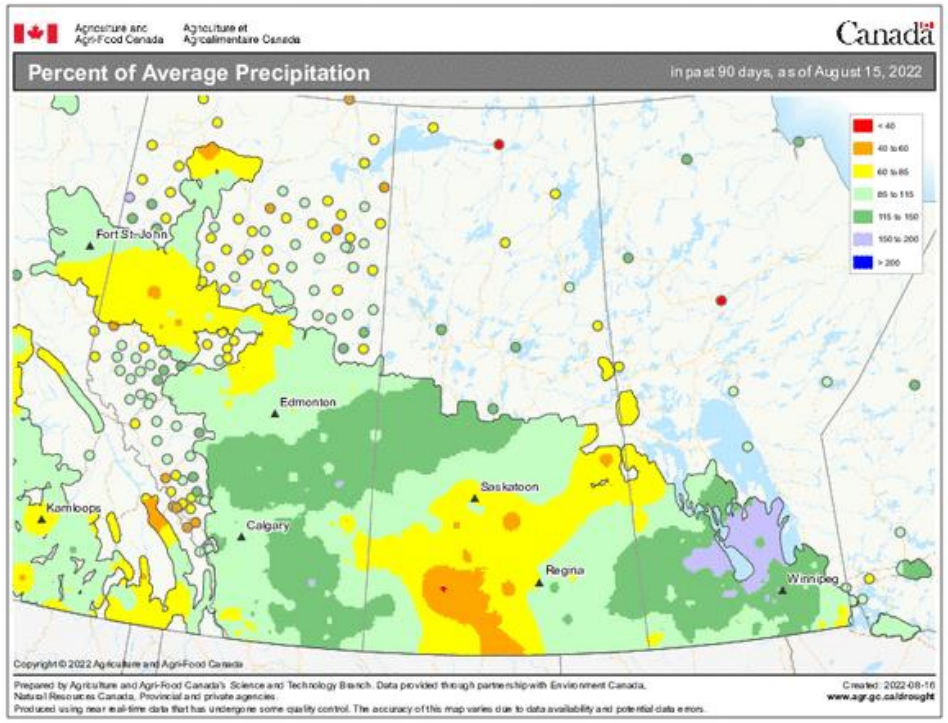


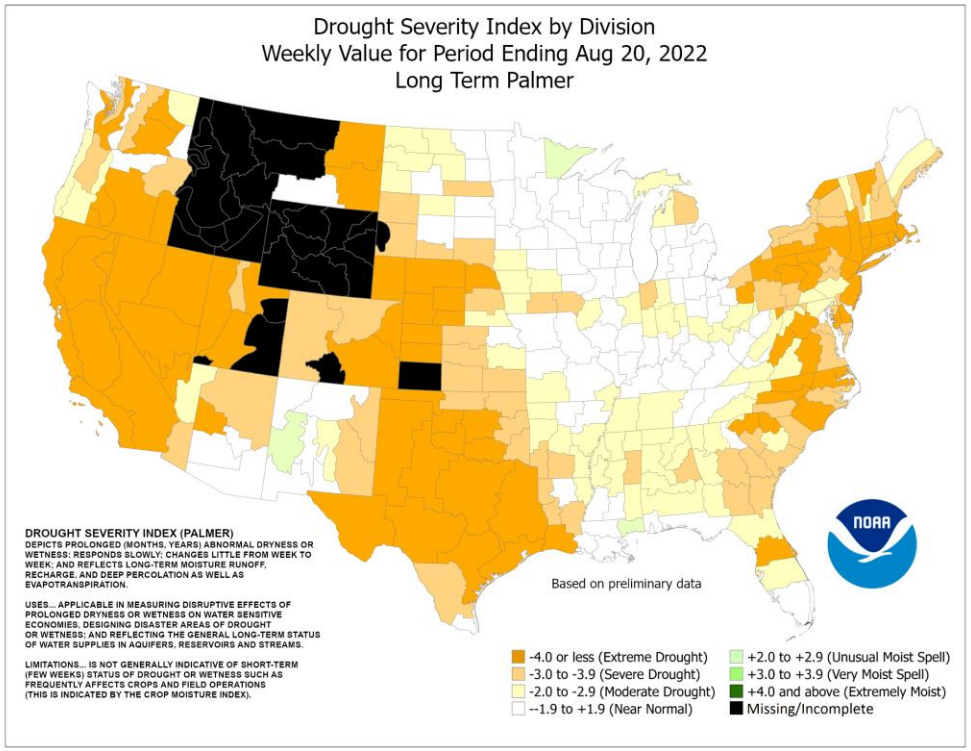


State of Wisconsin Waterfowl – Habitat Conditions

- Spring conditions – Statewide above average and Continentally near average but up significantly compared to 2020 and 2021

Current Conditions

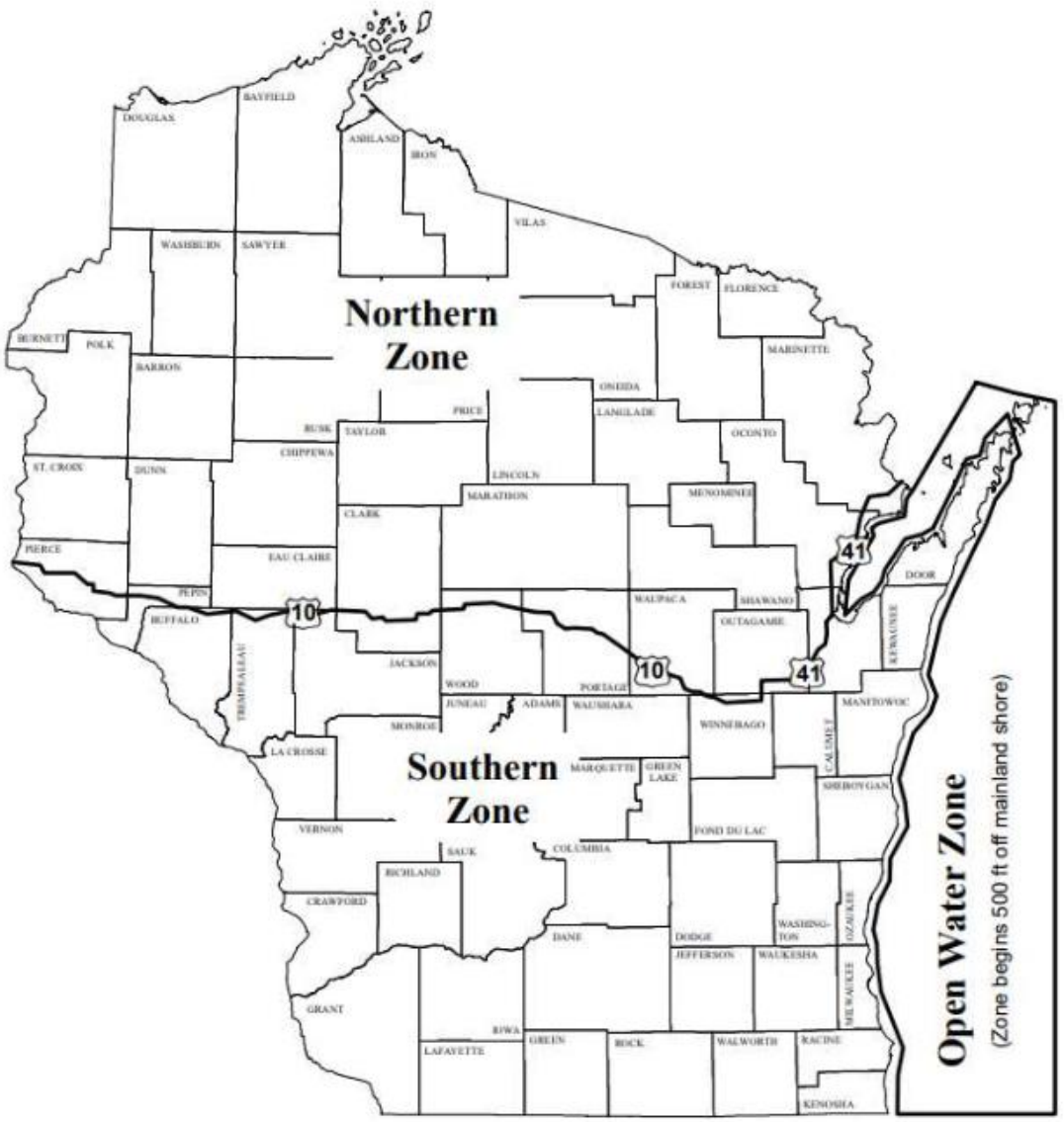




2022 Waterfowl Season

Early Seasons

- Early Teal – Sept. 1 – 9
  - 6 teal/day
- Mourning Dove – Sept. 1 – Nov. 29
  - 15 dove/day
- Early Goose – Sept. 1 – 15
  - 5 Canada Geese/day and 20 Snow Geese/day



2022 WISCONSIN HUNTING CONDITIONS

- Early Teal Season
  - Above average wet conditions much of the spring but have seen drier conditions as the summer has progressed. Variable wetland conditions across the State
- Early Goose Seasons
  - Conditions look excellent with great breeding numbers and crops slightly behind which leads to later wheat harvest which should benefit hunters
- Youth Waterfowl Season
  - Based on feedback from staff and banding we are looking at good bird numbers across most of the state.

2022 Waterfowl Season

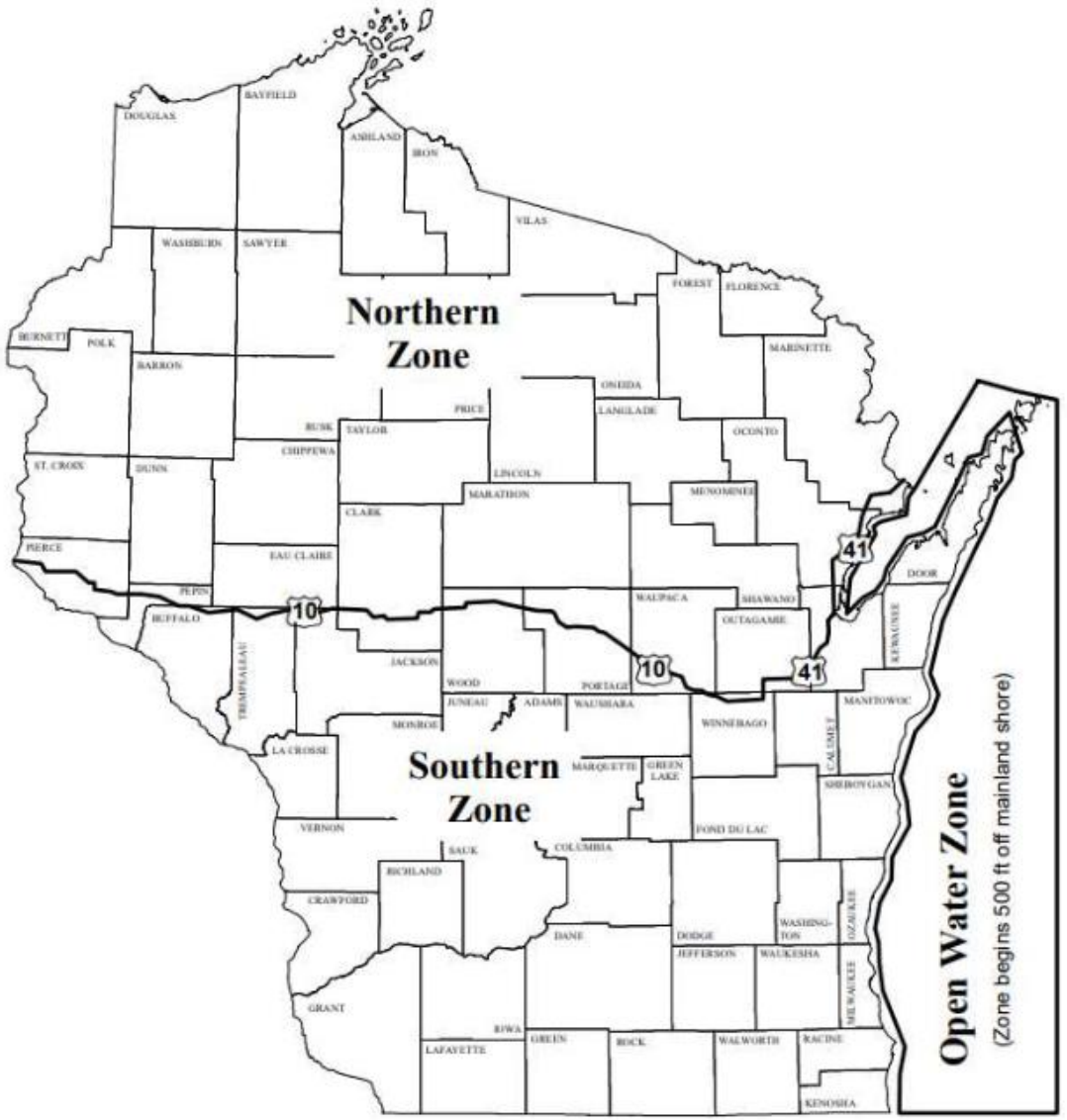
Duck Seasons

- North Zone – Opens Sept. 24th
- South Zone – Opens Oct. 1st
- Open Water Zone – Opens Oct. 15th

Goose Seasons

- Northern zone – September 16 –December 16
- Southern zone – September 16– October 9, 5-day split with duck, October 15- December 4, 13 day split after duck closes December 18- January 3.

- *Miss River subzone: Oct. 1 - Oct. 9, (5-day split with duck) and Oct. 15 – Jan 3, 2023.



2022 WISCONSIN HUNTING CONDITIONS

- Regular Goose Season
  - Similar forecast to Early Goose Seasons
  - Great local production and average to above average productions for Ontario migrants
  - Crops in excellent condition for good field hunting during regular season

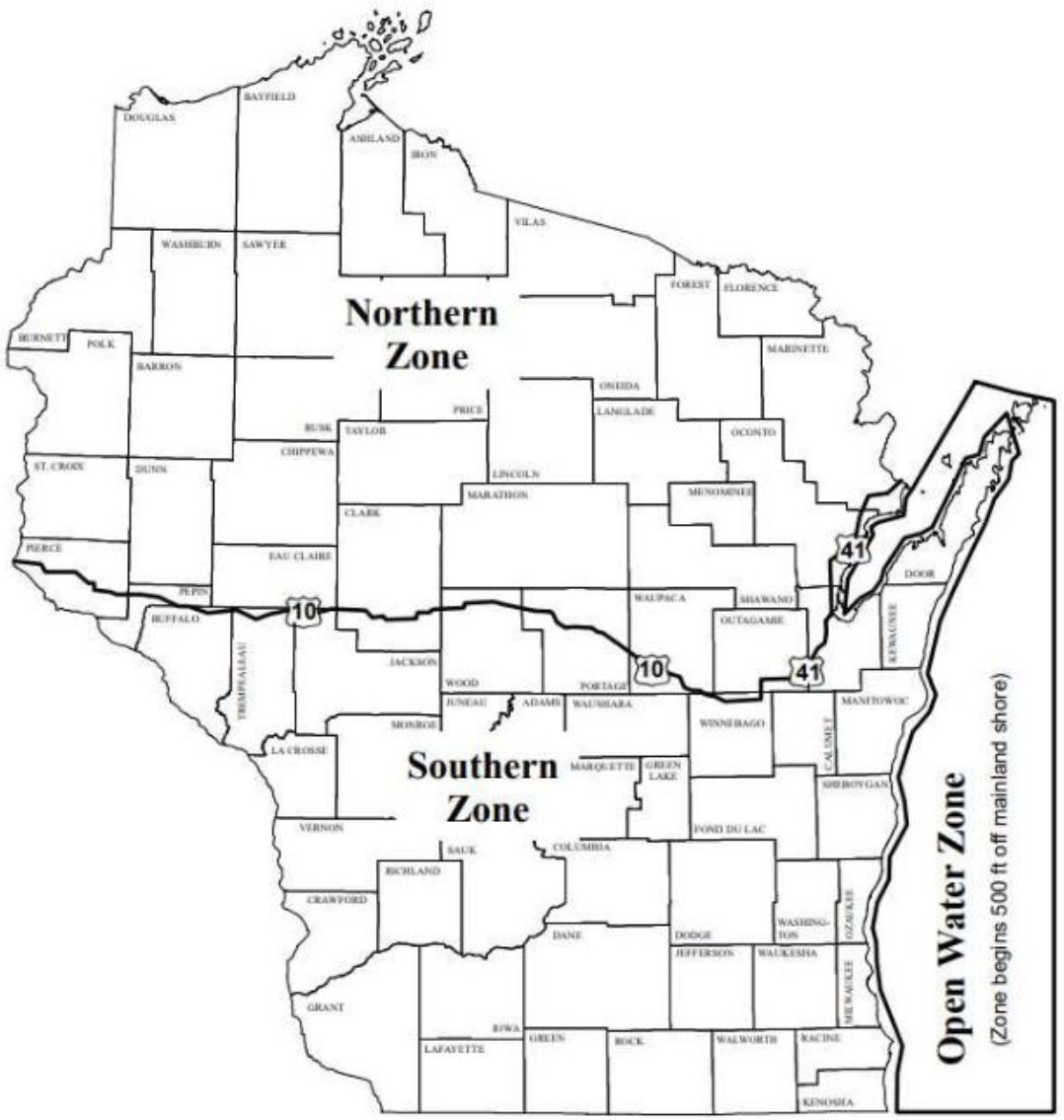
- Regular Duck Season
  - Drier conditions across much of the state results in birds being in known permanent bodies of water
  - Should see good numbers on large marsh complexes that have good water
  - Expect good conditions on Miss. River and Lake Michigan/Green Bay

2022 Waterfowl Season

Regulation update for 2022

- Open Water Zone Boundary Revised
  - Include Long Tail and Little Tail Points as part of mainland shore
  - Mainland shore includes adjacent rooted vegetation

- Open Water Hunting Distance
  - All identified inland Open Water hunting lakes will allow open water hunting within 500 feet rather than 1000 feet from shore
  - Consistent with Lake Michigan and Green Bay

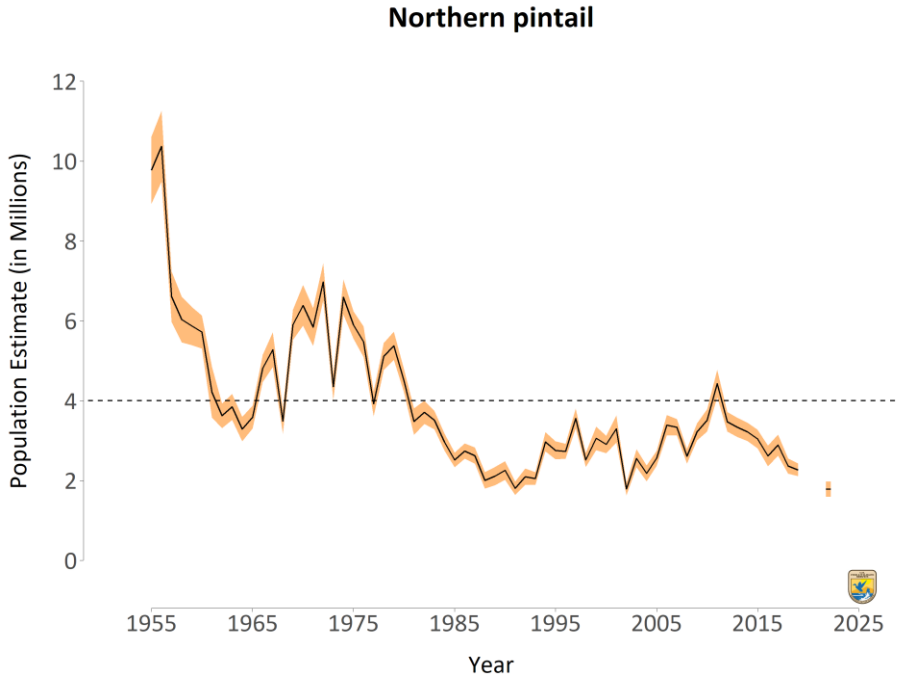


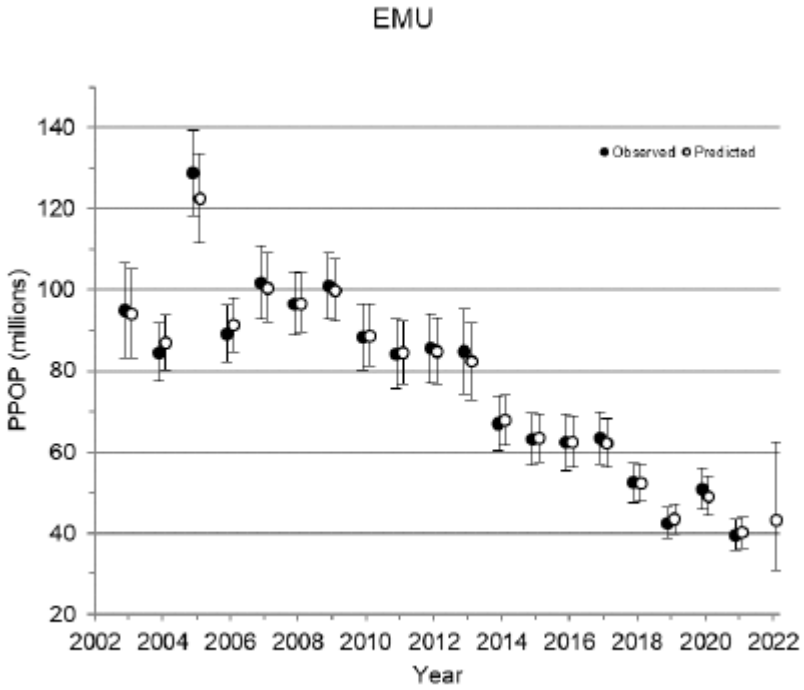
Wisconsin Waterfowl Management Plan

- Currently Developing Implementation Plan
- Progress
  - Increasing participation in waterfowl learn to hunts for professionals
  - Improving Spring Waterfowl Survey with new technology
  - Conducting comprehensive fall surveys on Green Bay
  - Expanding our outreach and education (Waterfowl Expo, LTH, etc.)
  - Numerous research projects underway
  - Working to improve Waterfowl Habitat Conservation Strategy
  - Continuing normal but essential work (spring survey, banding, waterfowl hunter survey, etc.)

Flyway Updates

- Breeding Estimates for the first time in since 2019
- Total Ducks are down but pond counts were up
- Looking at a Liberal Season package for 2023 (everything unchanged from 2022)
- Concern about Pintail and Canvasback numbers and what it means for future seasons
- USFWS evaluating monitoring efforts and what the impacts are
- Developing Interior Population Trumpeter Swan Management Plan
- Possible changes for Mourning Dove Seasons in the future





Flyway Updates

Table 4 – Optimal regulatory strategy[a] for the Mississippi and Central Flyways for the 2023 hunting season predicated on a liberal alternative selected the previous year (2022). This strategy is based on the current regulatory alternatives (including the closed-season constraint), updated mid-continent mallard model parameters, and an objective of maximizing long-term cumulative harvest. The shaded cell indicates the regulatory prescription for the 2023 hunting season.

	Ponds[c]																				
BPOP[b]	3	3.25	3.5	3.75	4	4.25	4.5	4.75	5	5.25	5.5	5.75	6	6.25	6.5	6.75	7	7.25	7.5	7.75	8
≤3	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
3.25	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	R
3.5	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
3.75	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	M	M
4	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	L	L
4.25	C	C	C	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	L
4.5	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
4.75	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
5	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
5.25	R	M	M	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
5.5	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
5.75	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
6	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
6.25	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
6.5	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
6.75	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
7	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
7.25	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
7.5	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
7.75	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
8	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
8.25	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
8.5	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
8.75	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
9	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
≥9.25	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

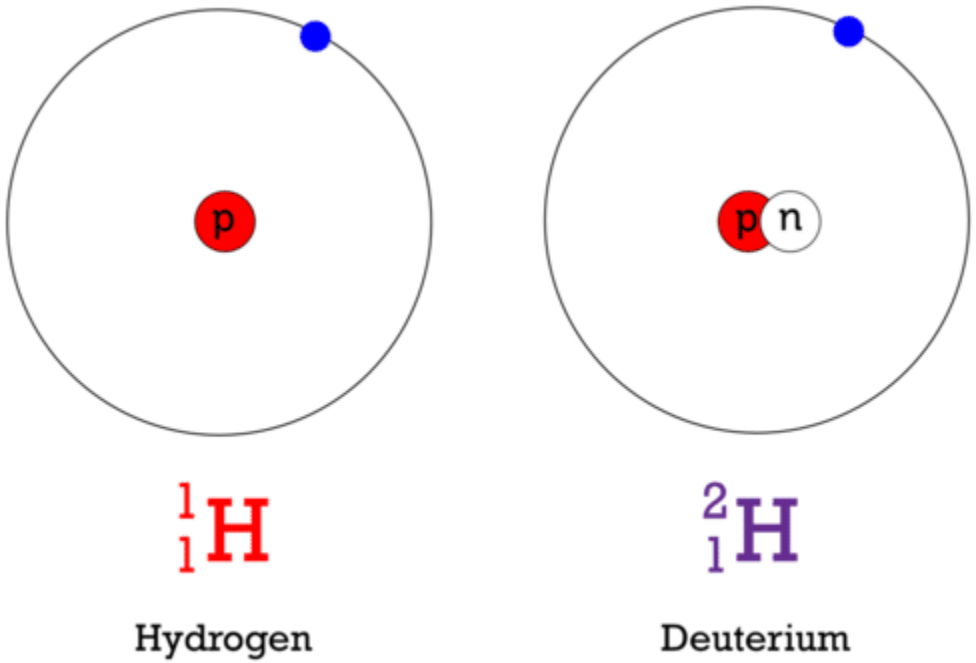
[a] C = closed season, R = restrictive, M = moderate, L = liberal

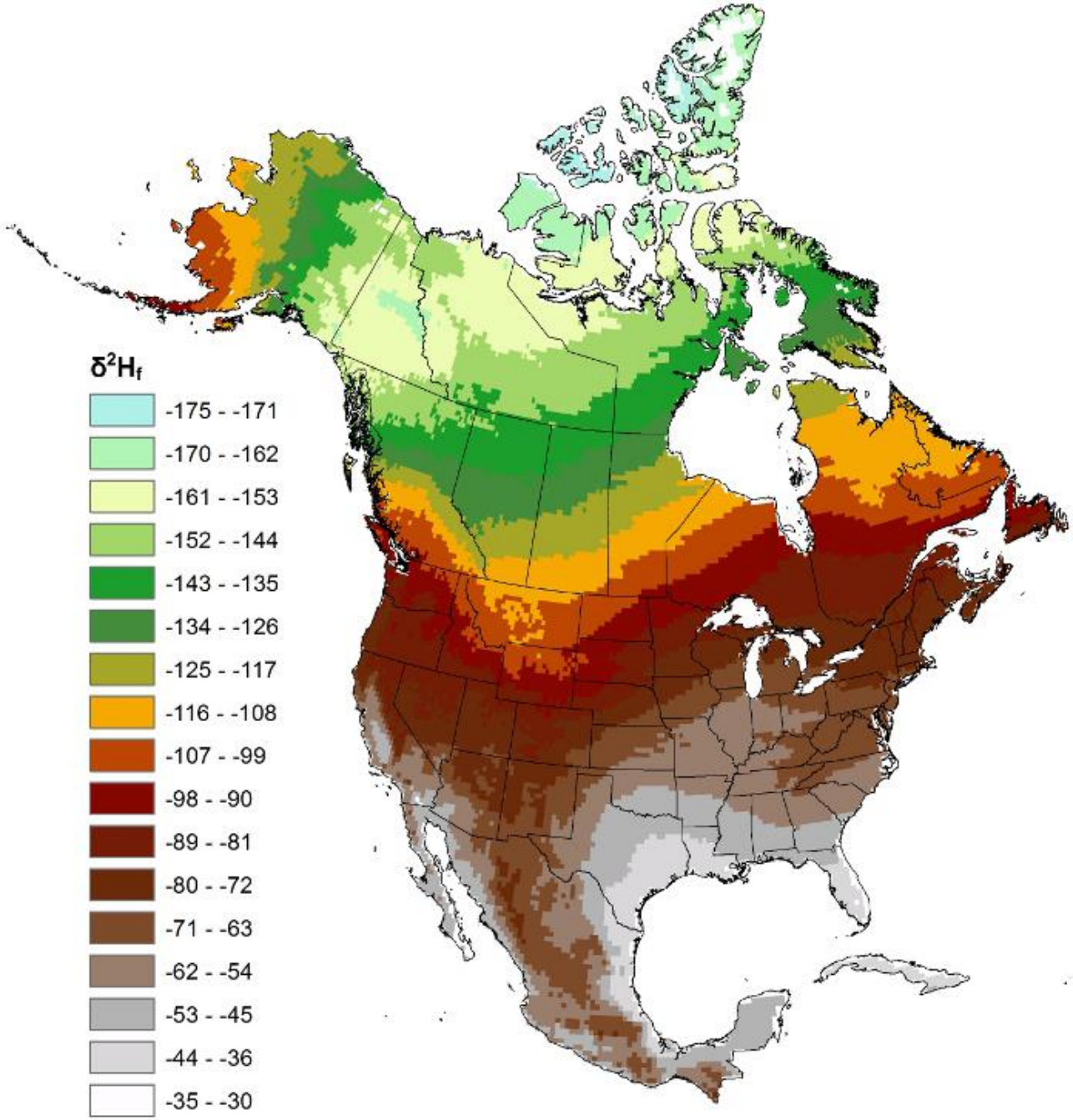
Research Program Update

- Current work
  - Focal species breeding distribution modeling
  - Harvest derivation of MALL, RNDU, and WODU
  - Mallard satellite telemetry habitat selection study
  - Flyway Trumpeter Swan Telemetry Project

- Partnership work
  - UWSP - Field based validation of Conservation Strategy
  - UWSP WODU harvest analyses and geolocator deployment
  - USGS – Green Bay aerial survey visibility correction factors

Assessing harvest derivation using isotope ecology





Joint study of MALL and RNDU feather isotopes to assess harvest derivation

- **Questions answered:** What proportion of harvest is produced in Wisconsin versus elsewhere? Is banding data sufficient to assess harvest derivations or are alternative methods (like isotopes) required?

Attention Wisconsin Waterfowl Hunters

CITIZEN SCIENCE OPPORTUNITY

- The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is currently conducting research on Ring-necked ducks harvested throughout the waterfowl season and needs your help to preserve and submit a wing from your harvested Ring-necked ducks!

- Feathers from harvested wings will be analyzed to determine likely geographic location of summer molting using isotope ecology. This analysis will help managers better understand th contribution of Wisconsin derived Ring-necked ducks to the proportion of the overall harvest. This approach to understanding harvest derivation will then be compared to band recovery data.

Figure Caption - Example of male (left) and female (center) ring-necked duck and wing (left) saved for isotopic analys

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. **Save a wing from Ring-necked ducks you harvest this fall.** Researchers are looking for Ring-necked ducks harvested across the entire span of the waterfowl season.
2. **Disconnect one wing from the body and place in an individual 1-gallon plastic freezer bag and place bag in a freezer.** Keep each wing in its own separate freezer bag.
3. **On the outside of each freezer bag, use a permanent marker to record:**
   - Date of harvest
   - County of harvest
   - Presumed sex and age if you know

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WINGS

- If you plan to participate contact Dr. Drew Fowler, Waterfowl Research Scientist, at

GREAT LAKES MALLARD MOVEMENTS, HABITAT SELECTION, SURVIVAL, AND PRODUCTIVITY

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Winous Point Marsh Conservancy

DUCKS UNLIMITED

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DNR
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DNR MICHIGAN

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER & GREAT LAKES REGION JOINT VENTURE

FRANKLIN COLLEGE
Department of Biology

Great Lakes Mallard Project Research Objectives

- Document post-breeding movements and habitat selection of mallards marked during spring (breeding birds) and another sample marked during pre-hunting season banding operations (August).

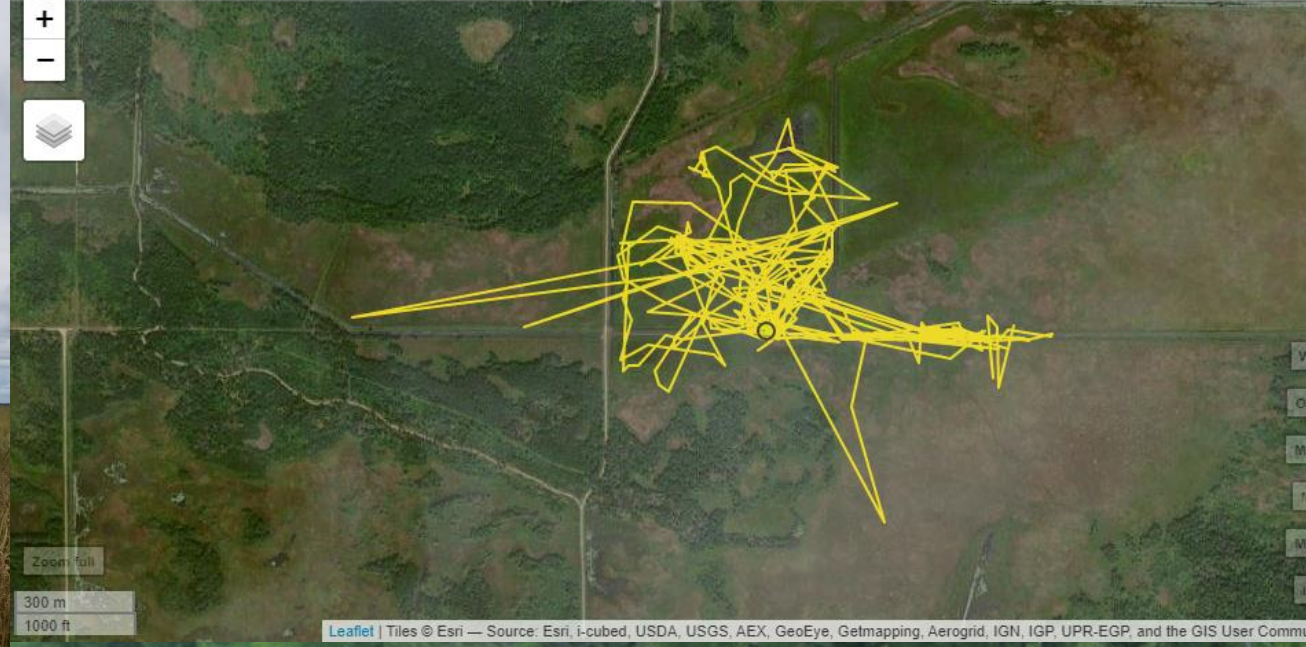
- Estimate philopatry rates of adult and hatch-year female mallards to the Great Lakes.

- Estimate survival and productivity rates of breeding female mallards in Great Lakes in relation to body condition, age, habitat use and genotype.

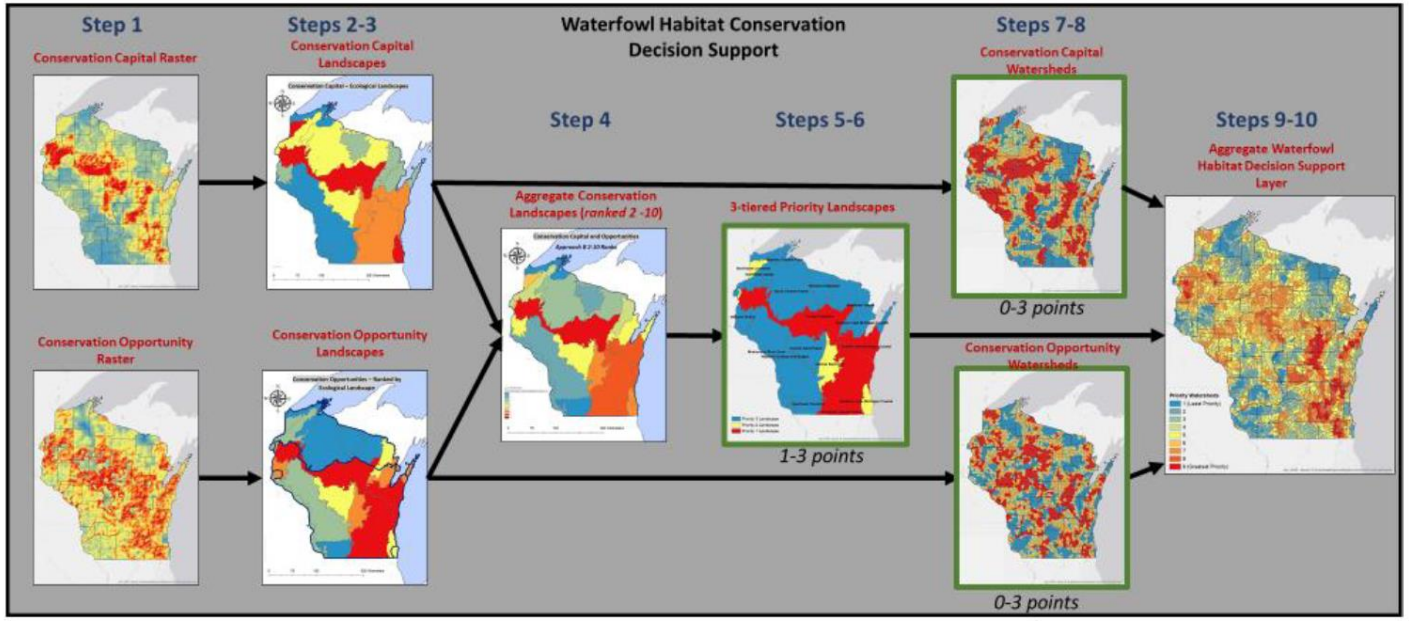
Flyway Wide Trumpeter Swan Telemetry Project

- Evaluate year-round swan movements, including determining the locations where swans spend the winter, and the timing and duration of their movements.
- Determine whether and where trumpeter swans make molt migrations.
- Evaluate year-round habitat use and selection patterns of trumpeter swans.
- Estimate annual survival rates of trumpeter swans, if sample sizes are adequate and fates (i.e., mortality events) can be determined.
- Quantify extent of gene flow among Interior Population trumpeter swans, their overall genetic diversity, and genetic differentiation from source populations.
- Evaluate the association between migratory behavior and genetic divergence of different groups of trumpeter swans.
- Quantify concentrations of lead in Interior Population trumpeter swans and assess potential sub-lethal effects of lead exposure on migration and annual movements.
- Wisconsin put out 9 swan collars and across the Midwest more than 100 were deployed


5P


Zoom full
300 m
1000 ft
Leaflet | Tiles © Esri — Source: Esri, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, UPR-EGP, and the GIS User Commu

New Project

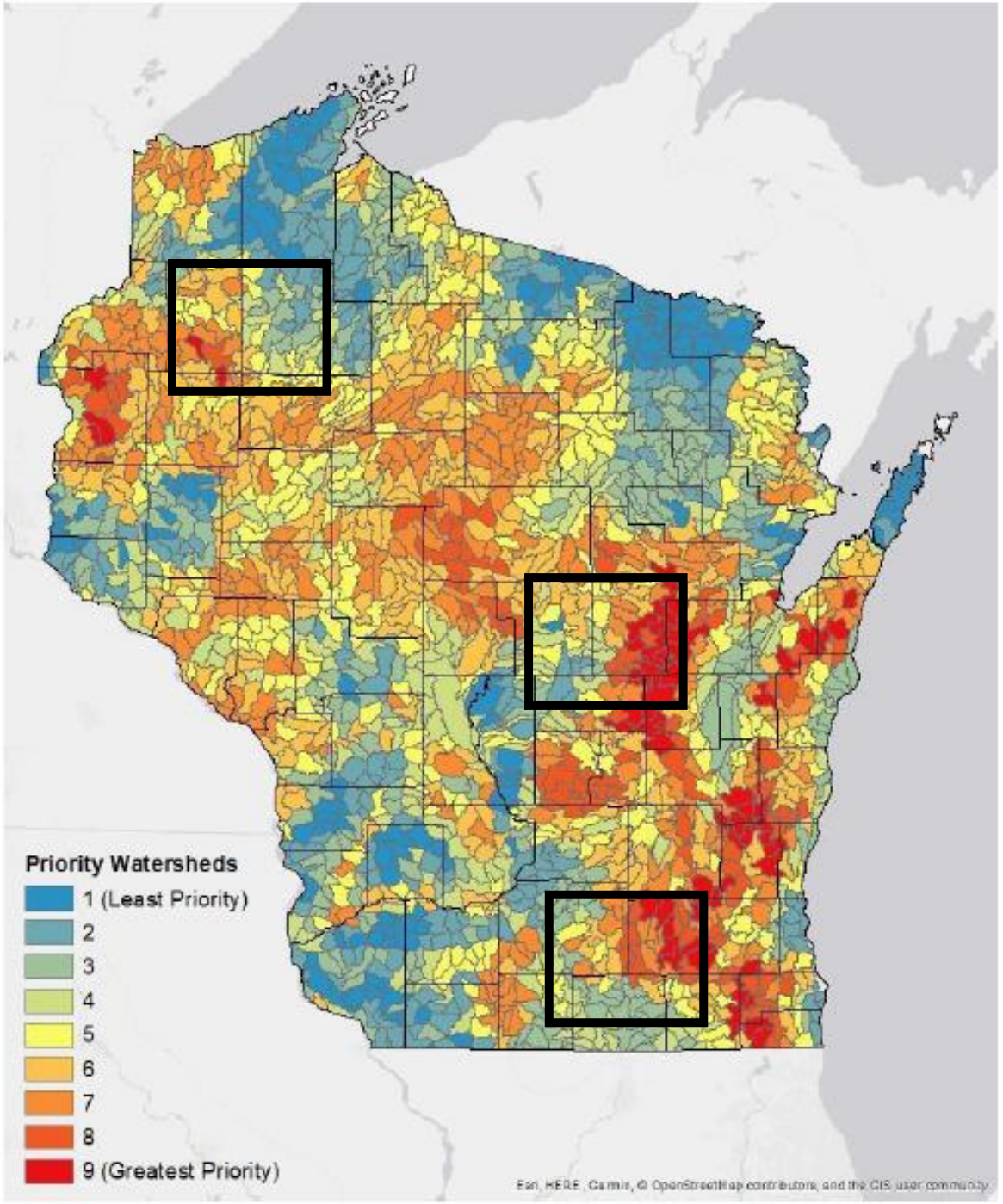


University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

- **Field Based Validation - Conservation Strategy**
  - Objectives – evaluate MALL and BWTE pair abundance, nest density, and brood occupancy / abundance across low to high priority HUC 12 watersheds
  - Graduate student to begin in spring 2022

New Projects

- **Hypothetical Illustration**
  - Study block
  - Stratified random sample to select HUCs ranked 1 -9
    - 3 HUCs of each ranking
  - Within each HUC randomly select survey sites to assess:
    - Pair abundance
    - Nest density
    - Brood abundance



Wisconsin Waterfowl Stamp

- The waterfowl stamp fee increased from $7 to $12 in July and the cost update was nearly immediate for GoWild purchases.
- The stamp fee increase is expected to provide approximately an additional $200,000 per year that will be available for in State projects. This new amount of funding will need to be planned and allocated to projects starting this biennium, FY22-23.
- Additionally, funding for Canadian projects increased as well.
- Migratory Committee allocated additional funds and were able to either fund or provide additional money for 10 more projects

Questions?