

About 2026 Minnesota Duck Summit



An expression of citizen-inspired conservation activism — which has a long history in Minnesota — the 2026 Minnesota Duck Summit has been organized by duck hunters for duck hunters and other conservationists who believe management of the state's mallards, wood ducks, teal and other waterfowl — and the habitats they require for survival — can be improved.

While acknowledging that duck management is complicated, spanning topics as diverse as federal farm programs and declining waterfowl-hunter numbers, the Summit poses three more narrowly focused questions: Are Minnesota waterfowlers and waterfowl managers doing a disservice to ducks, and to themselves, by hunting ducks in September?

Should the state's hen mallard and wood duck limits be tweaked, lowering the former from two to one, and the latter from three to two? And, in a state that spends tens of millions of dollars annually on wetland and associated upland habitat — at least some of which is in good to excellent condition — why isn't Minnesota producing, and holding during migration, more ducks? All are important questions, and the reason why the 2026 Minnesota Duck Summit is being held.

 ffgcmn.org/minnesota-duck-summit

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2026 Minnesota Duck Summit

March 27-28, 2026

Nicollet, Minnesota



Agenda – Friday, March 27

Agenda – Saturday, March 28

Location: Nicollet Public School Theater

1:00 pm - 1:10 pm

Welcome by Moderator Scott Glup, of Willmar, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, retired.

1:10 pm - 1:30 pm

Dave Zentner of Duluth and Matthew Smith of Willmar present two duck hunting and waterfowl conservation perspectives while raising important duck management and regulatory questions attendees will be polled on during the Summit, and at its end.

1:30 pm - 3 pm

Habitat and Hunting experiences in four important Minnesota waterfowl areas:

- **Greater Lake Christina area.** Greg Lillemon of Ashby and president of the Christina Ina Anka Lake Association, moderator. John Lindquist of Evansville, hunter. Nick Brown, Department of Natural Resources biologist, habitat professional.
- **Greater Swan Lake Area.** Tom Neubert of Mankato and president of the Nicollet Conservation Club, moderator. Brian Ebert of New Ulm, hunter. John Lindstrom, Ducks Unlimited, and Tori Drake, Department of Natural Resources, habitat professionals.

3 pm - 3:20 pm (Break)

3:20 pm - 5 pm

Greater Marsh Lake and Western Minnesota. Scott Glup, moderator. John Knoblauch, hunter. Nick Trauba and Curt Vacek, both of the Department of Natural Resources, and Sabin Adams, Pheasants Forever, habitat professionals.

West-Central Minnesota. Fred Bengston of St. Cloud, retired Department of Natural Resources wildlife manager, moderator. Tom Kowal, hunter. Josh Kavanagh, Department of Natural Resources, Sabin Adams, Pheasants Forever, and John Lindstrom, Ducks Unlimited, habitat professionals.

5 pm - 5:15 pm

Polling of Summit attendees.

6 pm (Dinner and social by reservation), Nicollet Conservation Club

9:00 am - 9:20 am

Welcome by Scott Glup of Willmar, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist and manager, retired; Dave Trauba, Department of Natural Resources wildlife section manager; and Will Meeks, Midwest Region Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

9:20 am - 9:30 am

Dave Zentner and Matthew Smith review Summit Day 1.

9:30 am - 10:30 am

Status of Waterfowl in Upper Midwest. Mallards and Teal, Todd Arnold, University of Minnesota Emeritus Professor and Senior Scientist, Delta Waterfowl. Wood ducks, Bruce Davis, Department of Natural Resources wetland wildlife group leader.

10:30 am - 10:50 am (Break)

10:50 am - 12:30 pm

Status of Habitat in Minnesota. Heath Hagy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat and Population Evaluation Team, Bismarck, N.D. Tom Kerr, refuge supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Dave Trauba, Department of Natural Resources wildlife section manager. John Lindstrom, Ducks Unlimited. Joe Pavelko, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

12:30 pm - 1:40 pm (Lunch, Nicollet Legion Club)

1:40 pm - 2:45 pm

Conservation issues beyond habitat affecting Minnesota duck populations. Disturbance, Bradley Cohen, Tennessee Tech University. Invasive cattails, Dan Larkin, University of Minnesota. Changes in Minnesota's Wetlands Protection Law, John Jaschke, executive director, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

2:45 pm - 3:05 pm (Break)

3:05 pm - 4:05 pm

Harvest and regulations. National Harvest Strategy, Tom Cooper, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nate Huck, waterfowl specialist, Department of Natural Resources.

4:05 pm - 5:15 pm

Dave Zentner and Matthew Smith summarize meeting and remind audience of management and harvest related questions posed at Summit's outset. Audience polling and results.