



Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

**Special
membership
offers inside!**

Celebrating our **Waterfowling Heritage**



**Hunters
& Dogs**

**Waterfowling
Heritage
Days**

**The Young
Hunter**

Get active by nature. Help save wetlands today!



A shared passion

LIKE MANY OF YOU, I CHERISH MY MEMORIES of good times spent with family and friends. And often, those great memories have resulted from days that I spent hunting with my dad, brothers, kids and close friends.

For many of our Ducks Unlimited volunteers and supporters, the love of hunting or other outdoor pursuits likely inspired them to attend a DU event where they met a circle of new friends that enjoy those same pursuits with similar passion. Couple those common interests with a shared concern for North America's wetland habitats and the hundreds of waterfowl and wildlife species these habitats support, and you get a dedicated DU volunteer.

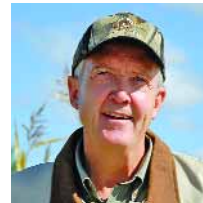
These people are the core of our important volunteer team and have been since Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) opened its doors back in 1938.

In fact, without the hunters and forward-thinking conservation plans such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, DUC would not be where we are today. And, as we move forward on the foundation of this support, our attention is always clearly focused

on our continent's waterfowl populations. At the same time, DUC's science-based conservation programs are also gathering momentum as a viable option for those people who might not hunt but certainly don't oppose it, and also value Canada's natural lands. Indeed, as we continue to expand our ranks to include this segment of Canadians, our DUC waterfowlers can be assured that our combined efforts will be stronger and our conservation effectiveness bolstered accordingly.

We are proud to celebrate and acknowledge our waterfowling roots and all we have achieved together.

Yours in conservation,



Gord Edwards
Executive vice-president,
Ducks Unlimited Canada



This moment brought to you by Ducks.

I'm getting ready for the season and I've got a bruise on my shoulder to prove it. Participation in waterfowling fuels Ducks members' passion to give something back to the resources that make their outdoor experiences so enjoyable. Join the fight against wetland loss. Purchase your \$59 membership before October 1, 2007 and receive this sports bag in addition to your regular membership benefits. Please refer to code OCSB07. Call **1.866.384.DUCK(3825)** or visit ducks.ca/Membership.



Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

Active by nature.



Hunters & Dogs

THE SPECIAL BOND THAT BINDS

By Bruce Masterman

“To arrive too early in the marsh is an adventure in pure listening; the ear roams at will among the noises of the night, without let or hindrance from hand or eye.”

So wrote Aldo Leopold, the father of modern-day conservation, in his trail-breaking 1949 book *A Sand County Almanac*.

LEOPOLD'S WORDS CLEARLY WERE LIMITED TO human—not canine—senses. In the mysterious pre-dawn world, hunting dogs become complex four-legged radar screens of olfactory and visual signals, their senses further heightened by the occasional sound of a splash, *har-onk* or *quack*. On full alert in the blind or boat, they never stop sniffing, cocking an ear to listen or trying to see through the darkness to identify all that they know, by instinct, is happening out there.

But things really get interesting for hunters and their dogs when the sun peeks over the horizon.

For my own Belle, a Lab-golden retriever cross, that's the time to get down to the business at hand. It's when the birds fly, the master shoots and sometimes there's a duck or goose to retrieve. But it's also the time when, between action, muskrats swim among our decoys, relentlessly teasing Belle by wiggling their little hairless rat tails as they approach closer and closer.

For Belle, it can be just too much. Frequently, she has watched a muskrat so intently that's she becomes a veritable mass of quivering nerves, with release coming only by jumping in the water in an attempt to catch it. These episodes always end with me yelling at her to get back in the boat or blind, and her scrambling aboard looking a little sheepish. The muskrat always escapes unscathed.

It's an indiscretion that some owners would never forgive, and would work hard to correct. I don't exactly approve, but somehow I can't get too upset when she

does it. Like any relationship, ours involves give and take. I forgive Belle's odd behavioural lapse, and she forgives me when I fail by missing a bird or choosing the wrong spot to hunt. Belle is not a perfect hunting dog, nor am I a perfect hunter.

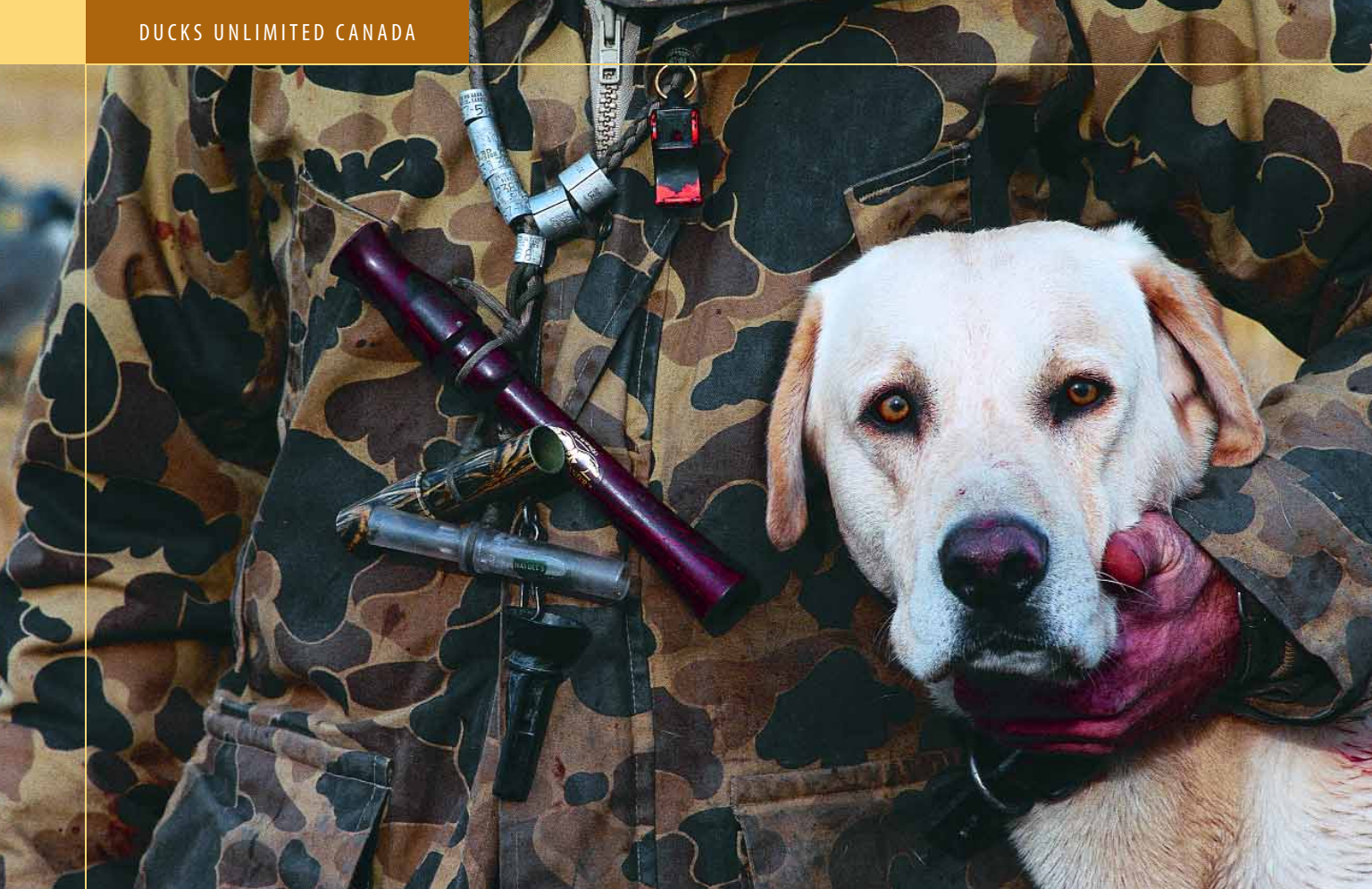
We've had almost 14 years to reach this understanding, and I don't regret a day of it. She's the best hunting dog our family has ever had.

Belle came into our life as a puppy, a product of a midnight country liaison between a purebred Golden retriever female and a big black Lab that lived down the gravel road. The couple that owned the bitch was so upset at this unplanned breeding they were giving away any puppy they could, and planned to destroy the rest.

When I went to see the litter, five puppies scurried around on the ground below. Belle was the only one that came up and nuzzled me. I was smitten, and later that afternoon she came home to meet my wife and two young daughters.

Belle is a natural hunter, not surprising considering her lineage. She was relatively easy to train to hand and whistle signals, and learned to follow my commands. When she was three months old, I was watching a hunting program on television one afternoon as Belle lay on the carpet. She was roused by the sound of an angry cock pheasant cackling as it was flushed. Tail wagging, Belle ran to the screen and pressed her nose to it, causing me to beam proudly while praising her enthusiastically.





“

For Belle, it can be just too much. Frequently, she's watched a muskrat so intently that she becomes a veritable mass of quivering nerves, with release coming only by jumping in the water in an attempt to catch it.

”

Displaying the best qualities of her parents as she developed, she took to hunting pheasant and partridge as eagerly as she did waterfowl over water and land. Belle finds wounded birds more efficiently than any dog I've ever known – pointing and flushing breed alike. Her spirit is unyielding in any weather and terrain.

We've hunted together in Montana, all over southern Alberta and, when she was 10, we flew to southern Ontario to hunt wood ducks and ruffed grouse with a friend. Last year, she made her final retrieve on her final hunt, although I didn't know at the time it would be.

We were hunting ducks one late October morning, on a spring-fed, fog-shrouded creek not far from our home. A dozen decoys floated in front of our blind in the willows, thickly coated with hoarfrost. Another half dozen standing decoys were stuck in the frozen mud along the shore.

We sat patiently for two hours, waiting for ducks to fly but they never did. I didn't really mind – at least not for myself – because we'd already had several successful outings that season. But I was hoping for a duck, for Belle's sake.

When Belle started whining, I decided we'd go for a walk, hoping to jump any ducks that might be hiding in the cattails and bulrushes along the creek. Minutes later, Belle suddenly started getting birdy, her tail wagging furiously just before plunging into the cattails. A cock pheasant exploded from the cover and presented an easy going-away shot.

The bird landed in the creek. Belle was on it instantly, hitting the water with a splash and swimming strongly until she clenched it in her jaws. Seconds later she handed the rooster to me, getting the mandatory head rub in return. It was our last bird of the season.

Four months later, the veterinarian diagnosed Belle with a heart condition. Later, she developed fluid in her lungs. Enjoy her during the summer, the vet advised, because she probably won't see much of the fall. But quietly, I wished that she'd make her 14th birthday on the first of October.

Last week, Belle collapsed during a short walk not far from our house. I carried her back to a shady and grassy knoll and laid her down. She lay flat on her side, eyes closed and chest heaving. I feared the worst.

After 15 long minutes, Belle jumped to her feet and wagged her tail. At the vet's office, she was lethargic but her eyes looked perkier. The doc prescribed new heart medication and we headed home.

Belle has been sleeping a lot since then. The other night she brought her ball to my wife and me, and dropped it for us to throw, which we did. We know Belle doesn't have many days left, and I only hope the end is painless, at least for her if not for us.

But our special relationship will never die. It will be enriched by a lifetime of memories of memorable hunts and not so memorable muskrats.

Every hunter should be so lucky. 🌟

Youth waterfowling

IN 1938, DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA (DUC) was founded by waterfowl hunters concerned about North America's waterfowl populations. In the nearly 70 years since then, waterfowlers have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars and millions of volunteer hours towards the conservation of wetlands and surrounding habitats that have benefited the environment and a wide diversity of species in Canada and across North America. Needless to say, DUC stands robustly proud of this heritage.

Federal legislation was enacted in 2000 to encourage interested youth to take up waterfowl hunting. This legislation recognized valuable contributions made by waterfowlers, but it also was generated by the concern about the decline of the number of licensed waterfowl hunters in Canada over the last 30 years. As a result of this legislation, several provinces have since designated special Waterfowling Heritage Days before the normal hunting season, that allow youth to hunt without a licence under the close supervision and mentorship of an experienced adult.



Nearly seven years later and solid on concept, challenges do remain in having these special days reach the full potential for which they were designed. It is often difficult for a boy or a girl who has taken basic hunter safety training to find a mentor and to learn the many skills required to become a waterfowler. DUC and other partner organizations have taken the Waterfowling Heritage Days a step further by helping to organize groups of volunteers to present education programs and mentored hunts for interested youth.

Such programs often take place over several days and include hands-on learning about habitat conservation, hunting ethics, firearm safety and handling as well as waterfowling skills such as decoy setting and use of retriever dogs. In many cases youth participants undertake an organized waterfowl hunt with an experienced mentor and learn how to properly clean and prepare their quarry for the end-of-hunt meal—a rich tradition for many waterfowlers.

Our hope is that over time with this program, the number of conservation-minded hunters will increase, and with it our waterfowling heritage and the support for habitat conservation programs will be sustained. 🦆

For more information on how you can be a part of a mentored waterfowl hunt, contact Rick Wishart, DUC director of education programs, at (204) 467-3254, or visit ducks.ca.



This moment brought to you by Ducks.

There's a bite in the air, the wind is blowing, and I'm ankle-deep in wetlands. And there's no place my son and I would rather be. Have your loved ones join the fight against wetland loss. Purchase a \$35 Greenwing youth gift membership before October 1, 2007 and the youth member will receive a sweatshirt* in addition to receiving the regular youth membership benefits. Please refer to code OCGW07.

Call 1.866.384.DUCK(3825) or visit ducks.ca/YouthMembership.



*Sweatshirt is only available in men's size small.


Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

Active by nature.



The Young Hunter

By Mike Anderson

Our three children have begun to share my duck hides. Although every day afield with them is precious, the day of the first duck sears itself in memory like no other – a random convergence of bird and boy, fundamental to the life paths of both. Eric, our firstborn, and I were alone on a sunny September morning, stumbling around in crotch-deep water amidst flooded willows and aspen.

WE WERE TRYING TO ATTRACT MALLARDS returning to roost from the grain fields of southern Manitoba. I had left our make-shift blind to retrieve a mallard that fell on the other side of a willow clump. It was my first season after losing Nyroca, our 15-year-old Lab, so today I was the dog.

Eric, left alone but aware of where I was, watched a lone drake bank and land at the edge of the decoys between us. Waiting until he heard me move again, Eric let the greenhead flush and swing wide of my position. I heard the duck flush, saw him top the willow, and turn hard to the north – then fold perfectly onto the water. Eric's whoop told me all I needed to know. A clean kill, a beautiful bird, the presence of a mind to wait for a safe shot – a dad could hope for nothing better.

Karl, our second son, made a very different memory on his first shooting day. We were in the same marsh. Eric was set up 150 yards away, paired with Pat Caldwell, who has graced my canoe with his carcass and too many paint-deprived decoys for 30 years. Karl and I were working out of a canoe lashed deep in the willows on a bright windy afternoon. Karl soon decided that he needed to head for shore. The nearest place with the prospect of finding a suitable fallen log was an aspen clump 300 yards south. We paddled over, slogged into the trees, and Karl settled on his log of choice.

One sound that a Manitoba hunter cannot mistake, even one with a left ear abused by too many explosions

30 inches away, is the nervous *perrk-perrk-perrk* of a ruffed grouse in a tree, craning for a better look at an intruder. Two guys in chest waders (more like one-and-a-half guys at that point) were certainly worth noting. Karl, facing away and not about to move, was urgently seeking instructions about what to do when the second and third birds materialized in the grey maze of bud-tipped branches. There was little for Karl to do but follow through with Plan A. The nearest scattergun was in the canoe, 75 mud-sucking paces back to the lake.

It might have been simply the naiveté of the ruffed grouse in September – or that what they had witnessed was too improbable for any partridge brain to twist into a danger signal – but the grouse obligingly waited for me to return with Karl's gun. So Karl's first "ducks" turned out to be a brace of ruffed grouse – the first one taken in the tree, the second stopped while leaving fast.

We skimmed by Pat and Eric's decoys on the way back toward our spread. Incredulous is a word usually reserved for the look on a young Lab's face after two shots and no splash. But the blank looks and sputterings from our partners as Karl held up his trophies were just as unbelievable.

My third "perfect" day, hopefully, will unfold with my third son, John. Fate may align his life with that of a corpulent travel-ready blue-winged teal, as it happened for me in North Dakota long ago. Or it may come on

“Eric's whoop told me all I needed to know. A clean kill, a beautiful bird, the presence of a mind to wait for a safe shot – a dad could hope for nothing better.”



the wings of a young hard-turning canvasback lured to windswept decoys, like the bird with which my old dog ended her career. But for me, the most satisfying merging of boy and bird would match John and a bluebill – a black and white bird taken from the edge of a squadron of 'bills, grey feet down over decoys on big water, just before the flock explodes all around us.

I don't hunt scaup as I used to. They were once my constant companions at dawn on Delta Marsh. Bluebills don't linger there anymore, discouraged by the lack of food that once sustained them. Even more troubling is that North America's bluebills have been declining for 20 years and we don't know what to do about it. My hope is that one day my sons and I can celebrate the bluebill's resurgence with a moment that none of us will ever forget. ✎

What makes the DUC hunter?

Kevin Harris

*DUC director, provincial chair
Saint John, New Brunswick*

"There is an appreciation of the outdoors and wildlife. There is no greater moment than early in the morning out in the marsh, when the sun rises, the fog on the marsh with the sunlight – just all your surroundings. To share that spectacular moment with another person that is enjoying it just as much as you are. That to me, is the core to all our membership. If we could put that moment in a bottle and give it to people, that would be the best thing ever."

Raynald Dancause

*DUC volunteer
Québec City, Québec*

"The DUC hunter is not a great or a special hunter because they kill a lot of birds. They are great because each time they go waterfowl hunting, they are aware of the impact they have with nature and understand the link between habitat, fauna and their own role. The DUC waterfowler is special because they do not wait for the others to take action to protect and restore habitats. They know their actions will improve the life quality of all fellow citizens. A DUC hunter is special because of the devotion to the great wilderness."

Ken Thompson

*DUC director, past DUC B.C. provincial treasurer, DUC volunteer
Langley, British Columbia*

"Hunters that are DUC supporters have a special appreciation for the outdoors. They have a desire to ensure that waterfowl habitat and all of its occupants and benefits are available for future generations to enjoy."



Saving waterfowl habitat is important to me, so I buy Ducks products.

Proceeds from Ducks merchandise support waterfowl and wetland conservation.



▲ TAN SHOOTER SHIRT

100% cotton, with button down collar, reinforced forearms and contrasting shooting pad. **C549 tan/green** (sizes S-3XL); **C550 tan/orange** (sizes M-3XL) – **\$49.95 each**



▲ DUCKS CAPS

Choose the safety and visibility of blaze orange or opt for a classic beige-navy combo. **C709 beige/navy**; **C713 blaze orange** – **\$19.95 each**



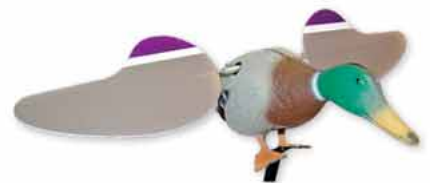
▲ CAMO MOSSY OAK SHOOTER SHIRT

100% cotton with button-down collar and one-point back yoke with crossed Canadian and American flags. Available in sizes S-3XL. **C421 black/camo**; **C422 khaki/camo** – **\$79.95 each**



▲ DUCKS T-SHIRT

Classic crew neck t-shirt, done up Ducks style! Sizes M-2XL. **C726** – **\$21.95**



▲ FLAMBEAU "SKYSCRAPER" MECHANICAL DUCK DECOY

A mechanical two-wing mallard decoy with battery, charger, two-piece ground stake assembly and plastic storage box. **C579** – **\$79.95**

Order Total	Shipping	Order Total	Shipping
up to \$25	\$4.95	\$150.01 - \$200	\$12.95
\$25.01 - \$50	\$6.95	\$200.01 - \$350	\$14.95
\$50.01 - \$100	\$8.95	\$350.01 - \$500	\$16.95
\$100.01 - \$150	\$10.95	over \$500	\$24.95

To order, visit our Online Store at ducks.ca or phone toll-free at **1.877.274.6962** (24 hrs.)



Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

Active by nature.

We attempt to ship most orders within 48 hours with delivery made to you in 7-10 working days. When placing order, have your credit card available to help process your order promptly. Sorry, we cannot accept cheques or CODs. Shipping rates will be added based on subtotal of all items (not including applicable taxes).



This moment brought to you by Ducks.

It's important to me that my children experience the waterfowling tradition I grew up with. Wetlands make waterfowling possible, but wetlands are disappearing, and once they're gone, our hunting traditions will go with them. Wetland conservation has never been more important. Keep the waterfowling tradition alive and make a tribute gift in your children's name to Ducks' Habitat Fund for Our Heritage.

Call 1.866.384.DUCK(3825) or visit ducks.ca/HabitatFund.

Make a donation of \$25 or more to the Habitat Fund for Our Heritage before October 1, 2007 and receive a FREE copy of *A Young Hunter's Guide to Waterfowling and Conservation*. Please refer to code OCHF07.



Active by nature.

Wetlands for tomorrow...today

CLEAN AIR AND WATER, ABUNDANT WILDLIFE and beautiful scenery. Just some of the many reasons why, since 1938, Ducks Unlimited Canada has been Canada's leader in conserving, restoring and managing wetland and wildlife habitats.

Despite DUC's significant conservation efforts across Canada, wetlands and their associated upland habitats continue to disappear at an alarming rate. In fact, 70 per cent of Canada's wetlands have disappeared in settled areas of Canada. We need to accelerate our funding efforts now if we are going to save our wetlands, now and for the future. That's why we've joined with Ducks Unlimited, Inc. in the United States, and Ducks Unlimited Mexico in North America's largest-ever conservation fundraising campaign, called *Wetlands for Tomorrow*.

Continently, the campaign's goal is to raise \$1.7 billion. In Canada, DUC's goal is to raise \$500 million by 2011. This funding will be invested in:

- *On-the-ground habitat conservation programs* in nine priority areas
- *Scientific research* on wetlands and waterfowl to guide our conservation programs
- *Public policy* efforts to effect positive change and bring wetland conservation to the forefront with all levels of government
- *Education* of both the public and youth to inform them of the value of wetlands and their conservation

The *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign will help bring the importance of wetland conservation to the forefront in Canada. It is a huge undertaking to raise the dollars needed to ensure that we put an end to the alarming trend of wetland loss. Ducks Unlimited Canada has nearly 70 years of experience under our belt and we're up for the challenge...but we need your help.

Saving Canada's wetlands: coast to coast to coast

DUC is working to save our wetlands for tomorrow right across Canada. The bulk of the monies we raise through the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign will be invested primarily in on-the-ground habitat conservation programs focused largely on productive, critical, yet threatened, landscapes, as well as a species-specific initiative.

All Canadians stand to benefit from these wetland conservation projects, now and for generations to come. Help save our rich natural heritage by becoming a part of this important campaign – donate today! 🦆

Visit ducks.ca to learn more about *Wetlands for Tomorrow* priorities or to make a donation.