

REVIEW

2010-2011

QUEBEC

North American Waterfowl Management Plan



Malbaie Barachois (photo: Plein Ciel)

The member partners of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) in Quebec present this review of securement, enhancement, research and evaluation activities carried out in Quebec in fiscal year 2010-2011, as well as the funds allocated to them. The many activities had a common purpose: to secure and enhance high-quality wildlife habitats, both for waterfowl and for species dependent on these habitats for their survival. These activities benefit not only waterfowl, but also amphibians, reptiles, fish, mammals and plants.

The EHJV members would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Plan collaborators for their commitment to protecting wetlands.

Securement

For several years now, habitat securement in Quebec has involved: 1) the acquisition (or donation) of property titles; and 2) the signing of conservation agreements (or easements) of a minimum duration of 10 years with property owners. These two approaches are complementary and enable the EHJV partners to work with local communities using the approach that best meets their needs.



Photo: female wood duck (DUC)



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Marguerite-D'Youville Wildlife Refuge

Saint-Bernard Island in Châteauguay is now known as the Marguerite D'Youville Wildlife Refuge. During the 245 years for which it was owned by the Grey Nun community of Montreal, its 200 hectares were exceptionally well preserved, in an area where agriculture and urban sprawl have become considerably more dense. In 2010, to ensure the long-term future and vocation of the wildlife refuge, the Grey Nuns sold the land to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and its partners, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune (MRNF) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), under the Government of Canada's Natural Areas Conservation Program.

Under an agreement signed in 1993 between the Grey Nuns and the Fondation de la Faune du Québec (FFQ), the representative for the EHJV partners at that time, DUC has carried out substantial wildlife enhancement on the island for waterfowl and fish. The enhancement and management of the site by the local group Héritage Saint-Bernard have turned it into a must-see destination for all outdoors lovers in Quebec. More than 200 bird species and many species designated as threatened or vulnerable in Quebec, including the least bittern, can be found on the island. The enhancements made by DUC can host approximately 4,000

ducks and 1,000 Canada geese during migration. The efforts of all of the partners have thus been rewarded, because the habitats are not only extremely productive and diverse in wildlife, but are also guaranteed to be secured in perpetuity. 



Marguerite-D'Youville Refuge (photo: DUC)

Malbaie barachois

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has been working to conserve sites with high ecological value in the Gaspé Peninsula for over 10 years. The Malbaie River and barachois are a high-priority area. The Malbaie barachois is a brackish estuarine lagoon formed by the mixing of freshwater from the Malbaie River and saltwater from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The barachois is separated from the ocean by a 6-km strip of sand and gravel. It is the largest natural barachois in Quebec. Efforts to date have resulted in the securement of more than 420 hectares of habitat, on 17 properties, that are of critical importance to several species at risk.

The projects carried out in this area in 2010-2011 were very successful, resulting in the securement of 327 hectares. In one

project, the NCC signed a major conservation easement on a fishing lodge, securing 14 of the 22 Atlantic salmon pools found in the private segment of the Malbaie River, on which there is no publicly managed structure to control the fishing effort.

The securement of the Malbaie River and barachois will help maintain the quality of coastal wetlands, rivers and forests and preserve the habitat of a number of threatened or vulnerable species. The wetlands are home to such bird species as Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow and the yellow rail, and short-eared owls and bald eagles are frequently observed foraging on the banks of the river. The area is also a major breeding, staging and feeding site for many migratory birds, such as American black duck, teal, common loon and wood duck. 



Malbaie Barachois (photo: Plein Ciel)

2010-2011 Wetland securement summary

Site	Area (ha)	Cost (\$)
Baie Lochaber	716	4,179,000
Refuge M. d'Youville	200	1,233,000
Rivière à l'Orme	93	6,226,000
Rivière du Sud	9.4	67,000
Rivière au Pin	*	27,500
Barachois de Malbaie	327	758,000
Total	1,345 ha	12,490,500 \$

* Area will be calculated in a future overview

Detailed mapping of wetlands in the Montreal area

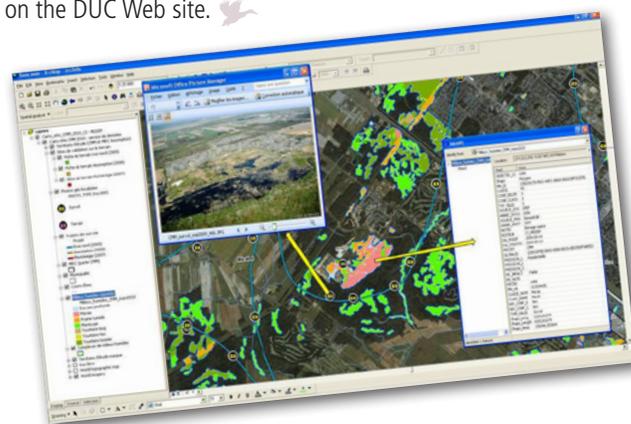
The Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC) is the most populous region in Quebec, and by all accounts, that trend will only intensify in the coming years. Wetlands in the Montreal area are therefore subject to constant disturbance. Decision making tools are urgently needed to ensure the proper planning of actions in the field, including taking fragile environments such as wetlands into account.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) therefore agreed to work together to produce detailed wetland maps for the MMC. The Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune (MRNF), Environment Canada (EC), Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) also made financial contributions to this important initiative.

Modern photo-interpretation technologies used to analyze recent, high-resolution digital aerial photos in 3D were used to identify wetlands of greater than 0.3 hectares. An inventory was then generated of 11,250 wetlands covering a total area of 20,971 hectares (including fluvial wetlands), or 4.7% of the area

of the MMC. Over 70% of the wetlands are less than 1 hectare in size; swamps are the most highly represented wetland type. Most of the marshes are found in the St. Lawrence River system, while a number of the swamps are in floodplains. In addition, several large peatland complexes were found in the northern part of the MMC.

The wetland inventory can be consulted using a series of geographic information tools and mapping products accessible to everyone and tailored to the needs of land use managers. The geographic information tools and a summary report are available on the DUC Web site.



Enhancement

Enhancement of the Grande Plée Bleue

The Grande Plée Bleue peatland is a unique ecosystem. At 1,500 hectares, it is a major component of the wetlands of the greater Lévis area. The Grande Plée Bleue peatland is home to a wide variety of habitats and close to 150 plant species associated with threatened or vulnerable species. However, it has suffered major disturbances, primarily when drainage canals were dug in the 1950s and 1960s, lowering the local ground water level and facilitating the establishment of tree species not naturally found in peatlands.

In collaboration with Université Laval, MDDEP is working in the field to remedy the disturbances and restore the peatland to its natural state. The work consists of carrying out selective tree removal and blocking certain drainage canals. The blocking will simply restore the original water level, enabling typical peatland vegetation to return. The materials (wood, stones) and machinery used on the site will be adapted to peatlands. In addition, removing trees that are not native to the peatland will limit water losses. Similar work has already been successfully performed in the Lower St. Lawrence.

MDDEP recognizes the unique ecological value of the Grande Plée Bleue and plans to grant it legal status as an ecological reserve, protecting it for future generations.



Pool (photo: MDDEP)

2010-2011 Wetland enhancement summary

Site	Area (ha)	Amount (\$)
Île Dupas	95	61,000
Sarcel	40	79,000
Commune de Baie-du-Febvre	25	65,000
Ruisseau de feu	7	408,000
Total	167 ha	613,000 \$

Partners' contributions

This table shows program accomplishments by agency responsible for program delivery. Consequently, and for a variety of reasons, it is possible that the contribution from one partner is attributed to another.

Activities	Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)	Canadian Wildlife Service	Fondation de la faune du Québec	Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune (MRNF)	Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)	Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	TOTAL (\$)
Securement	4,898,850	234,400		2,284,000	3,630,000	5 849,300	78,000	16,974,550
Enhancement	385,500			492 000	1,000	140,000		1,018,500
Site management	591,000	105,000	19,200	78 900	68,000	5,800	65,500	933,400
Stewardship	1,151,000	75,000	39,400		11,000	155,000		1,431,400
Evaluation and monitoring		405,000		50,000			65,000	520,000
Communications		10,000				5,000		15,000
Coordination	203,000	125,000	17,500	51,000	20,000	15,000	18,500	450,000
Total	7,229,350	954,400	76,100	2,955,900	3,730,000	6,170,100	227,000	21,342,850

Evaluation and monitoring

Each year, a detailed waterfowl survey is conducted during the breeding season to obtain information on breeding pair density in the St. Lawrence, Abitibi and Lake Saint-Jean lowlands. 

Multi-partner efforts

The complementary and diverse nature of the projects carried out by the EHJV partners in Quebec are key factors in their success. The knowledge gained through wetland mapping supports the selection of sites to secure and enhance for all of the partners and their collaborators in Quebec. This detailed knowledge of the land will also improve investment planning. 

Detailed wetland map, Montreal Metropolitan Community.
Source: DUC

