

# Conservation Programs & Practices for: *Wetland and Shallow Water* Wildlife Habitat

## Species of Benefit

Wildlife that benefit from wetland and shallow water habitat include:

- Waterfowl and wading birds
- Turtles
- Frogs and toads
- Dragonflies and damselflies

The purpose of habitat restoration and management is to maintain or re-establish the attractiveness and productivity of healthy wildlife systems. Effective wildlife management can add value to outdoor recreational activities and the aesthetics of your property, as well as ecological importance. Though no one acre or one area can be all things to all wildlife, through careful planning and discussion we can make the best management choices for species with declining populations.



The American Black Duck dabbles in shallow water to feed on plant material, small aquatic animals, and mollusks and crustaceans.



Spotted turtles are found in shallow wetlands including wet meadows, freshwater marshes, swamps, small ponds, ditches, woodland streams, Delmarva Bays and tidal streams.

Areas of herbaceous plants and/or shrubs that see occasional water accumulation driven by rainfall, surface runoff, groundwater, spring seeps, or tides provide habitat for water dependent wildlife such as wading birds, waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians and aquatic mammals. Habitat loss and fragmentation has caused the decline of many species, and habitat restoration is needed for many of these species to return to viable populations.

In Maryland, a variety of wetlands can be found across the state, including seepage wetlands, Delmarva Bays and depressional wetlands, wet meadows, shallow water impoundments, and tidal marsh.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to farmers to restore and manage wetland and shallow water habitat in Maryland through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

## What will EQIP pay for?

EQIP provides payments to restore and manage wetland and shallow water habitat through activities such as:

- Restoration, rehabilitation, creation, and management of shallow water nontidal and tidal wetlands for waterfowl and wading birds.
- Restoring herbaceous wetlands where degradation has resulted in conversion of the vegetative community.
- Removal and control of invasive species to maintain or facilitate establishment of native vegetative communities.

## Restoration Requirements

- All wetlands and shallow water habitats must be vegetated with native plants.
- Annual food plots are not eligible, however shallow water areas created in cropland may be managed using moist soil management techniques to control succession of woody species and encourage germination of annual wetland vegetation. Up to 30% of wetland and 80% of the shallow water area may be managed this way.
- Wetland restoration shall have natural water regimes. Shallow water areas may have water levels actively managed, but water control structures should be in the non-draining position between October 1 and April 1.
- Forested wetland habitats should not be converted to herbaceous or open water wetland habitats, except when the wetland habitat is being restored to its historic and naturally occurring condition.



## NRCS Conservation Programs for Wetland and Shallow Water Habitat

### About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with farmers, ranchers, and partners to ensure a sustainable, nutritious and abundant food supply, as well as ensure clean water and healthy soil for generations to come.

For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers and private landowners with locally-led assistance to help them implement voluntary conservation practices that protect our state's natural resources while maintaining production and economic opportunities.

Contact your local NRCS service center for more information and assistance.

Allegany: 301-777-1494  
 Anne Arundel: 410-571-6757  
 Baltimore County: 410-527-5920  
 Calvert: 410-535-1521  
 Caroline: 410-479-1202  
 Carroll: 410-848-6696  
 Cecil: 410-398-4411  
 Charles: 301-934-9588  
 Dorchester: 410-228-5640  
 Frederick: 301-695-2803  
 Garrett: 301-334-6950  
 Harford: 410-838-6181  
 Howard: 410-489-7987  
 Kent: 410-778-5353  
 Montgomery: 301-590-2855  
 Prince George's: 301-574-5162  
 Queen Anne's: 410-758-1671  
 St. Mary's: 301-475-8402  
 Somerset: 410-651-0370  
 Talbot: 410-822-1577  
 Washington: 301-797-0500  
 Wicomico: 410-546-4777  
 Worcester: 410-632-5439

#### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Farmers can apply for financial and technical assistance for over 100 conservation practices to benefit their land and operations through EQIP.

### Conservation Practices for Wetland and Shallow Water Habitat Restoration and Management

Conservation Practice:	Purpose:
Access Control	Restrict or control livestock access to wildlife habitat
Brush Management and Herbaceous Weed Control	Remove woody or herbaceous species using herbicides, mechanical methods, or grazing animals
Conservation Cover	Establish diverse native plantings of grasses, forbs, and legumes
Fence	Exclusion of livestock from wildlife habitat and sensitive areas
Firebreak	Temporary or permanent firebreak installed to conduct prescribed burn
Hedgerow	Establish linear shrubby features with or without grasses and forbs to break up fields
Prescribed Burning	Maintain early successional habitat or site preparation for tree and shrub establishment
Prescribed Grazing	Maintain early successional habitat using grazing animals
Riparian Forest or Herbaceous Buffer	Protect water quality in wetland and provide forest or herbaceous wildlife cover
Shallow Water Area Development and Management	Manage water levels for targeted wildlife species
Structure for Water Control	Install structures that allow for control or management of water levels and flows
Tree and Shrub Establishment	Establish areas of trees and shrubs
Upland and Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	Install and maintain wildlife structures, or excavate shallow pools (less than 2 feet deep), or control herbaceous or woody species that require successive yearly treatments
Wetland Creation	Excavation in upland areas to create a wetland
Wetland Restoration	Restoration of a wetland that has been degraded by filling, ditching, or land-leveling, using techniques such as fill removal, ditch plugs, and berm construction

*Helping People Help the Land*