

[strong future]



California Waterfowl Annual Report | June 1, 2019

Dan Erben with daughter Kaila at a CWA youth hunter education camp at Bird Haven Ranch. Around 400 kids and adults learned to hunt or honed their hunting skills with CWA in 2018. (Photo by Wayne Tilcock)

# [powered by *you*]

## 1 WATERFOWL

- *Banding waterfowl for research*
- *Rescuing imperiled wild duck nests*
- *Providing nest boxes for wood ducks*
- *Engaging volunteers in hands-on work*

## 2 WETLANDS

- *Restoring and renewing wintering habitat*
- *Creating new breeding habitat*
- *Managing CWA-owned wetlands*
- *Grant-writing assistance for duck clubs*

## 3 HUNTING

- *Private-land hunts for the public*
- *Veteran hunting & fishing trips*
- *Guided youth hunts*
- *Women's hunting & fishing opportunities*

## 4 EDUCATION

- *Teaching conservation in schools*
- *Leading school field trips to wetlands*
- *Providing augmented hunter education*
- *Operating mentored hunts for novices*

## 5 ADVOCACY

- *Defending hunting & hunters' gun rights*
- *Calling for optimal hunting regulations*
- *Fighting for water for managed wetlands*
- *Sponsoring conservation-friendly laws*



# [transformational]

Once an abandoned fish hatchery on the edge of the Salton Sea, Unit 413 East is now the most productive area of the Wister Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area.

California Waterfowl made it happen.

The old fish hatchery on the north end of Wister was an eyesore, its expanses of concrete and abandoned buildings attracting not waterfowl, but taggers, who visited regularly.

Refuge management wanted to restore it to marsh, but they knew it would be a massive undertaking, and the state just didn't have the resources.

This, however, is California Waterfowl's strong suit, so CWA Wetland Programs Supervisor Chadd Santerre got to work finding grant funding and developing a plan.

It was harder than anyone expected. There were 2.5 miles of pipeline to dig out, deep ponds to fill and – surprise! – asbestos to be removed from buildings. But he was able to finish the project in time for the 2016-17 season.

As with all restorations that require a lot of dirt work, 413 East was sheetwater that first season, said refuge manager Rick Francis. But the next season, timothy – a

favorite duck food – was growing a foot high there, though no one could see it because of all the salt cedar growing on the perimeter.

Wister regular Devon Vega, who helps his uncle Rick Vega run California Waterfowl's Orange Coun-

ty Dinner, discovered the unit last year. "I went scouting one day the second or third week of the season and I saw PILES of ducks in there," Vega said.

Refuge manager Francis said hunters quickly caught on. "This last season, if you didn't have a reservation, you weren't getting in there," he said.

Now, he said, this unit holds a quarter of the birds on the refuge at any given time, providing high-quality habitat and food for waterfowl – great for the hunters, and even better for the ducks.

"This is the best thing that ever happened to this place," he said. "Everything that CWA's done down here has turned into a gold mine."



## Wister matters.

- SoCal is home to 19% of all adult waterfowl hunters in California, but has far fewer refuges than the north
- Southern Californians buy 25% of all 1- and 2-day state refuge passes
- With 4,904 hunter visits in 2018-19, Wister ranked 7<sup>th</sup> among 37 Type A/B refuges

# [the good *adds up*]

## \$174 million

secured for wetlands in  
Proposition 68 in June 2018

## 8,302

ducks banded  
for research  
in 2018

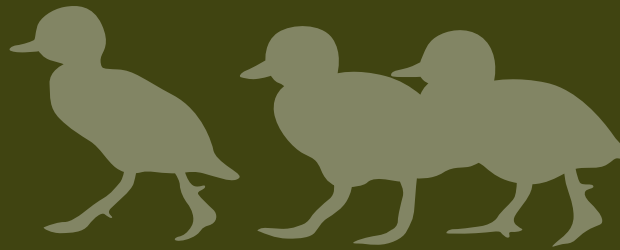


## 1,547

volunteers carried  
out our mission in  
2018-19

## 14,286

youth participated in  
field trips, presentations  
and hands-on projects  
in 2018-19

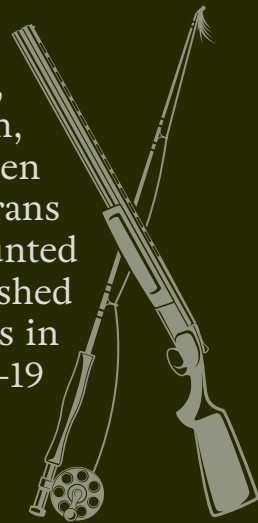


## 1,528

duck eggs rescued from farm  
fields in 2018 prior to harvest or  
field work, with farmers' help!

## 3,423

adults,  
youth,  
women  
& veterans  
hunted  
& fished  
with us in  
2018-19



## 35,293

wood ducks  
hatched in CWA  
nest boxes in 2018



## 2,179

people donated to CWA in  
2018-19 – beyond member-  
ship fees and dinners! – to  
make all this happen

## 20,737

acres of  
habitat  
restored  
or enhanced  
in 2018





# [respect for hunting]



California Waterfowl's vision is "a California with thriving waterfowl populations, vibrant wetland ecosystems and respected hunting communities."

That last part might *seem* like a pipe dream, but not to CWA's dedicated education team.

Each year, they bring up to 18 school teachers from all over California to CWA's Grizzly Ranch for our Wildlife Conservation Science Education Seminar.

The event shows teachers how to bring the outdoors into their curriculum, and certifies them in the National Archery in the Schools Program, Project WET, Project WILD and Project Learning Tree.

The teachers also come away with some shooting experience, and *lots* of exposure to hunters.

It can be life-changing. And because these teachers collectively reach thousands of students, the impact of this program ripples into their communities.



## TRANSFORMING WORLDVIEWS

**"I have always hated guns,"** one participant of the 2019 seminar told CWA Education Coordinator Molly Maupin. "My daughter's step-dad taught her how to use a shotgun anyway last year, even though I told him I was totally against it. **My family hunts and I always thought it was disgusting and unnecessary.**"

But his views started to change during the seminar. Part of it was a talk about hunting by former CWA President Bob McLandress, but it was also just being exposed for four days to instructors who were hunters.

"I feel like I have a better understanding about hunting and guns," he told Maupin. "I called my daughter's step-dad last night, and told him that I finally understood why he did what he did, and that I wanted to learn more. **This camp has totally opened up my eyes.** Thank you for educating us."

"It was truly life-changing for me," one participant said in an email to Maupin after the seminar.

"I plan to share what I learned with my students. As I mentioned, **I teach in a totally minority urban community – Watts in Los Angeles. I have already begun to set up the addition of an archery class.** So many people here are so excited by the prospect!"

"My favorite part was the hunting talk with Bob," one participant wrote in the post-seminar evaluation. "**It gave me a new perspective on what it means to hunt, how to honor the tradition of what hunting should be.** I like listening to the elders explain the reality."

# [stewardship & integrity]

## MAJOR DONORS

California Waterfowl gives special thanks to those who gave \$10,000 or more in FY2018-19\*\* to help achieve our vision of thriving waterfowl populations, vibrant wetland ecosystems & respected hunting communities.

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## HIGHLY RATED

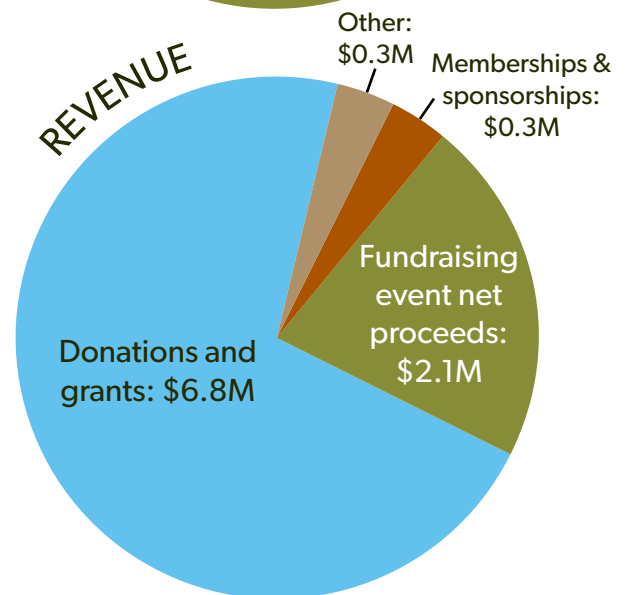
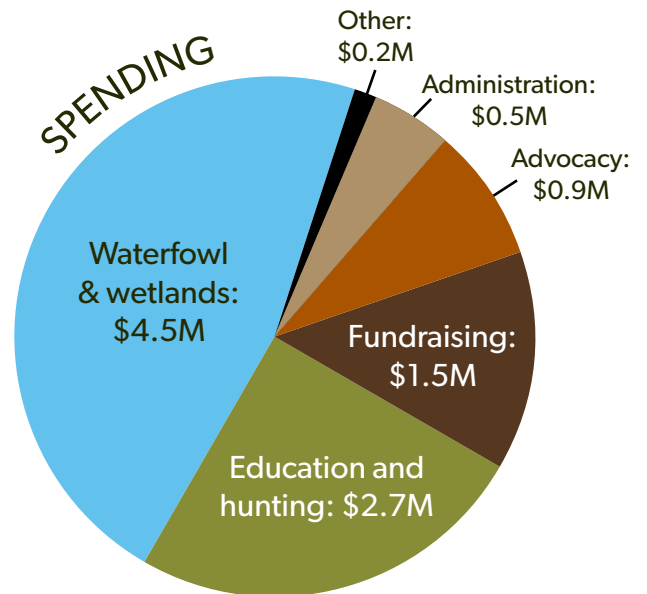
California Waterfowl has a three-star rating from Charity Navigator, and has the highest overall score (financial and accountability/transparency) among hunting and fishing conservation organizations.

## TRANSPARENCY

You can find our most recent audit reports and tax returns (Form 990) online at [calwaterfowl.org/audits-tax-returns](http://calwaterfowl.org/audits-tax-returns).

## AUDITED 2017-18 FINANCIALS

(most recent available)



\* denotes deceased | \*\*April 1, 2018, through March 31, 2019



# [responsibility]



Photo by David Stimac

About 70% of mallards, gadwall and cinnamon teal harvested in California hatched in California

The Grizzly Island Wildlife area "13 fields" are a good place for mallards to nest: There's lots of cover, and usually water nearby that's suitable for broods: rich in yummy invertebrates and relatively safe from predators.

Last spring, when one hen's clutch of nine eggs hatched, she set off with her ducklings in the direction mama ducks always go. But instead of finding safety, she found all the nearby brood water had dried up, likely to allow field work.

She and her brood walked and walked and walked, and crossed predator-infested sloughs, until

two and a half weeks later she found what she was looking for on California Waterfowl's Denverton property. But by then, only one of her ducklings was still with her.

brood hatched and tracked the critter all the way to Denverton. It was twice as long as the longest trek he had ever recorded.

Denverton's brood pond had also needed to be drained for field work last year. But CWA Regional Manager Robert Eddings had noticed a lot of ducklings there that spring, so he postponed draining to give them a fighting chance.

It's a heartwarming tale, but more importantly, it illustrates the challenges facing California's local breeding ducks – mostly mallards, gadwall and cinnamon teal. CWA is working at every level to support these populations.



We know this duckling's story because a U.S. Geological Survey researcher had attached a radio transmitter to it after the

## CALIFORNIA WATERFOWL

- Helped secure \$10 million in 2018's Prop. 68 for the Presley Program to support breeding habitat.
- Sponsored AB 2697 in 2018, creating a waterfowl & upland bird nesting habitat incentive program.
- Created or improved nearly 600 acres of breeding habitat in 2018.
- Is fighting for water for the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, a key breeding and molting area.
- Operates the Egg Salvage Program, which rescues wild duck nests from farm fields.
- Runs the California Wood Duck Program, which places thousands of nest boxes across the state.



# [this is why]

*Our mission: To grow California's waterfowl populations, wetlands and hunter-conservationist communities.*



916-648-1406 | [www.calwaterfowl.org](http://www.calwaterfowl.org)



Photo by Wayne Tilcock