



Waterfowl Production Areas

Quick Facts

- The Service's Midwest Region manages over 900 WPAs totaling almost 300,000 acres in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan.
- Wildlife comes first on all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System; but activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation are encouraged when compatible with the refuge's purpose.
- The National Wildlife Refuge System is a unique network of lands and waters set aside specifically for the conservation of fish, wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.
- Over 800,000 people visit waterfowl production areas yearly.
- Many threatened or endangered species, such as the western prairie fringed orchid, rely heavily on WPA habitat for their survival.

Current Status

Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) are public lands purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to increase the production of migratory birds, especially waterfowl. Typically 200 to 300 acres each, WPAs protect wetland and grassland habitat for ducks, geese, shorebirds and other wildlife. More than 3,000 WPA's have been established since 1958 when Congress authorized the use of Federal Duck Stamp funds for purchasing small wetlands.

Nearly 95 percent of WPAs are located in the prairie pothole region of the U.S. – North and South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota and Iowa. Prairie potholes are shallow wetlands left by retreating glaciers 12,000 years ago. Surrounded by grasses and rich with aquatic life, they are wonderlands for nesting waterfowl, earning this area the nickname “duck factory of North America.” Of this vast prairie pothole region, Minnesota and Iowa are located within the Service's Midwest Region. The Midwest Region also manages WPAs in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Throughout the last century, many wetlands were drained for agriculture. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service buys wetlands and adjacent uplands — using proceeds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps — and restores them to their former splendor as WPAs. Additional habitat on private lands is protected through a variety of conservation easements.

Habitat management activities on WPAs focus on the restoration, enhancement and maintenance of



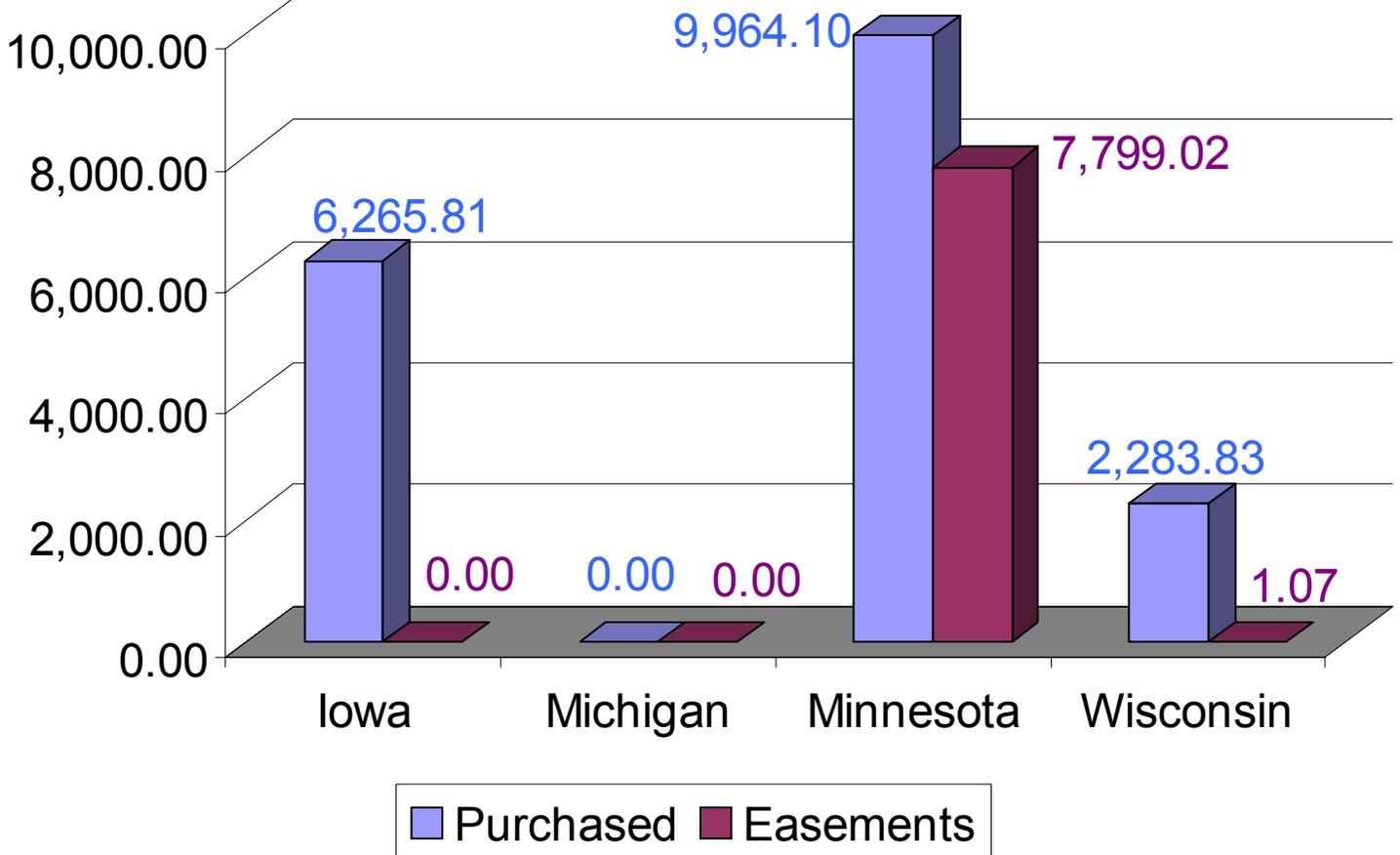
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Many partner organizations such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, cooperate with the Service to restore wetlands and grasslands on newly acquired WPAs.

Winning artists of the Federal Duck Stamp competition have also cooperated with the Service to restore habitat on WPAs. Some of these artists include Scot Storm, Joe Hautman, Bob Hautman and Jim Hautman.

wetlands and associated grasslands for the benefit of waterfowl and other migratory birds. Tools and techniques used include manipulation of water levels, seeding of upland nesting habitat, prescribed fire, waterfowl nesting structures, tree and brush removal, mowing and haying. Most WPAs are open to hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, and photography, making them precious to people as well as wildlife.

Acres of Waterfowl Production Areas Acquired in Region 3 in Last Five Years



Total Acres of Waterfowl Production Areas Acquired in Region 3

