



## **Educating Natural Resource Leaders in Central and South America**

*The 46<sup>th</sup> class of natural resource managers recently graduated from Ducks Unlimited de México's acclaimed RESERVA course*



*The graduating class of DUMAC's advanced training in natural resource management at the John E. Walker Research and Training Center at Celestun, Mexico*

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CELESTUN, Yucatan, MX – Jan. 10, 2017 – A group of 14 natural resource professionals from Mexico and 12 other Latin American countries recently graduated from Ducks Unlimited de México's (DUMAC) internationally recognized RESERVA training course. This intensive, two-month continuing education experience is designed to provide advanced training in the ecology and management of wetlands and other natural resources to practicing professionals from across Central and South America.

Graduates came from Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Mexico.

Based at DUMAC's John E. Walker Research and Training Center in Celestun, the RESERVA course includes 540 hours of classes and field exercises provided by a diverse array of experts from universities, agencies and organizations from Mexico and Central and South America. The RESERVA course has received academic accreditation by the University of Yucatan.

As part of the RESERVA training, students enlisted input and assistance from 300 people in communities near conservation areas. Through sessions similar to focus groups, they assessed the local citizens' knowledge of the conservation challenges facing these world-class wetland systems and their awareness of the relationships between the ecological health of the systems and their daily lives.

The RESERVA students integrated this human dimensions information with ecological information about these ecosystems to develop a proposal entitled, "Environmental Education Projects for the Biosphere Reserves of the Yucatan Peninsula: Ria Celestun and Ria Lagartos." At the graduation ceremony, this proposal was presented to an audience including high-level conservation and education leaders from the University of Yucatan, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, the Yucatan Watershed Council and the state Secretary of Urban Development and the Environment. The response of these leaders indicated their intention to evaluate the potential for implementing some of the specific action items presented by the RESERVA students in their proposal.

"The geographic breadth of the nations that these natural resource professionals call home is a good illustration of the influence that DUMAC has on conservation across the Latin American region through RESERVA," said Eduardo Carrera, National Executive Director and CEO of DUMAC. "Through our commitment to educational efforts, we can extend DUMAC's footprint and impact on migratory bird conservation well beyond what we could affect through on-the-ground conservation projects alone. We are very proud of everyone involved in RESERVA, from the professors who teach the classes to the students who take this knowledge home and apply it to improve natural resource management in the areas for which they are responsible."

Since 1989, RESERVA has graduated 575 natural resource managers from 23 countries in Latin American and the Caribbean region and one nation from Africa.

Approximately 20 percent of the North America's waterfowl winter in Mexico. This includes 85 percent of the continent's Pacific brant, 35 percent of redheads, 20 percent of northern pintails, 15 percent of northern shovelers and 10 percent of green-winged teal. Eighty percent of blue-winged teal either winter in or pass through Mexico.

**Established in 1974, Ducks Unlimited de México (DUMAC) has restored and enhanced more than 1.9 million acres important to wintering waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species. DUMAC has classified 27 million acres of wetlands and uplands as part of the Wetlands Inventory Program. These activities and the information generated help guide DUMAC's efforts to support DU's shared conservation vision and mission.**

**Ducks Unlimited Inc. is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 14 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. For more information on our work, visit [www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org).**

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