

Spring Banding of American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) at Long Point, Ontario

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Waterfowl banding programs in Ontario are traditionally conducted in the summer when many species are readily caught and the age and sex can be easily determined. Some species however, like the American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) occur in low concentrations in southern Ontario at this time and consequently the effort and cost to band sufficient numbers of Black Ducks to answer key questions regarding distribution, philopatry, and condition related mortality is substantial. This is problematic given the long-term decline in the continental population of Black Ducks. The Canadian Wildlife Service and the Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Fund embarked on a pilot project in the spring of 2000 and determined that that large numbers of Black Ducks could be readily caught. A method was developed using wing feather replacement to accurately age and sex the birds. With the increased banding effort, accompanied with the taking of weights and measurements as indices of condition we expect to be better determine the distribution of these birds and make temporal, age, sex and species-specific comparisons of condition.