



# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

“... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them.”

affiliated with



Res. No. 1A, 2010

## **SUBJECT: BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCKS**

WHEREAS, the Black-Bellied Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), also called the Black-Bellied Tree Duck, once rare in Louisiana, has become a common sight, expanding its home range with ever increasing numbers of local birds throughout many southern and central parishes of our state, and

WHEREAS, Black-Bellies are somewhat similar to native Wood Ducks and share the same habitat needs for food, shelter and most importantly wooden caverns such as natural tree hollows, abandoned woodpecker holes, and especially, man made nesting boxes for egg laying and brooding, and

WHEREAS, Black-Bellies have multiplied in our state rapidly in recent years, in part, due to their prolific breeding habits, often laying large clutches of eggs with multiple hatches during the spring and summer months, and some argue, competing with native Wood Ducks for suitable nesting accommodations and food sources, and

WHEREAS, Wikipedia online encyclopedia reports: “*The Black-bellied Whistling-duck is a common but wary species. It is highly gregarious, forming large flocks when not breeding, and is largely resident apart from local movements. It usually nests in hollow trees. The habitat is quiet, shallow freshwater ponds, lakes and marshes, cultivated land or reservoirs with plentiful vegetation, where this duck feeds mainly at night on seeds and other plant food. Its global population is estimated at 1,550,000 birds. Black-bellied Whistling-duck populations are currently stable or increasing. It has expanded its range significantly in the latter half of the 20th century, and has benefited in recent years from the placement of nest boxes across key portions of the north of its range. **Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Count** both confirm that populations of this species have increased significantly over the past 30 years*”., and

WHEREAS, the fall season sees the highest number of Black Bellies widely distributed throughout their new found range in Louisiana with families of mature adults and adolescent birds that congregate in large numbers as social groups prior to winter flight to other food sources, and

WHEREAS, this “time of plenty” also coincides with the annual Blue and Green Wing Teal migrations and fall (September) Teal season, during which, at present, the State of Louisiana does not allow the taking of Black-Bellied Tree Ducks, and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of these local Black-Bellies have developed a pattern of intrastate shuffle, typically relocating to artificial food sources in late fall, gathering by the thousands, near grain elevators, river docks, lakes and ponds close to commercial or urban locations that do not allow hunting opportunities, then returning to their nesting grounds in early spring, to complete their annual cycle, well after the “regular” duck season has ended, and

(More)

WHEREAS, the harvest of Black-Bellied Tree Ducks is currently allowed in the State of Louisiana during the “regular” winter waterfowl season; however, this elusive internal shuffle works well to protect and propagate the species, and certainly prevents the opportunity for most sportsmen to utilize a blossoming resource that many hunters would cherish, especially in times of declining numbers of other species of ducks in our state.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to approve the harvest of Black-Bellied Whistling Ducks during the annual (September) Teal season, in the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges that this (Fall) season be in addition to, and not interfere with, current harvest regulations for the “regular” winter waterfowl season and that Black Bellied Tree Ducks taken during the annual September Teal season be considered “bonus” bag, in addition to allotted Teal limits, beginning with a two (2) duck limit to allow utilization of the resource, with annual assessments to determine appropriate bag limits for subsequent years.

*Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in convention assembled, February 28, 2010 at Cypress Bend Resort, Many, Louisiana.*