



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

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Resolution 3, 2026

SUBJECT: Addressing the Practice of Hunting Migratory Waterfowl Over Intentionally Flooded Standing Crops

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) is dedicated to the conservation, wise management, and sustainable use of Louisiana's wildlife and wildlife habitat for the benefit of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has historically served as a critical wintering area for migratory waterfowl within the Mississippi Flyway, supporting ecological integrity, outdoor traditions, and significant economic activity; and

WHEREAS, LWF has observed a substantial decline in fall and winter waterfowl migration into Louisiana over the past two decades, particularly involving mallard ducks, despite stable or increasing continental waterfowl populations; and

WHEREAS, in January 2026 United States Senator John Kennedy urged the US Fish and Wildlife Service to initiate a formal study to evaluate the impact of flooded corn on migratory waterfowl behavior, wintering distributions, and associated economic outcomes in the Mississippi Flyway, and noted that Louisiana experienced an approximate 95 percent decline in mallard harvest between 1999 and 2021, which is a greater decline than any other state in the Mississippi Flyway; and

WHEREAS, federal regulations governing waterfowl hunting have long distinguished between unlawful baiting and lawful hunting over standing crops and flooded standing crops; however, federal enforcement prior to 1999 often treated certain flooded crop conditions as baiting or manipulation, creating regulatory uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, regulatory changes finalized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1999 were intended to protect legitimate agricultural practices by clarifying enforcement standards related to baiting and by allowing hunting over standing or flooded crops planted and managed in accordance with normal agricultural practices and planted for the purpose of harvest; however, those changes did not establish clear standards for evaluating intent to harvest or repeated use, resulting over time in expanded practices that function primarily to concentrate waterfowl for hunting; and

WHEREAS, LWF recognizes that weather patterns, habitat conditions, and current agricultural practices within Louisiana all influence wintering waterfowl populations; however, LWF further finds that the repeated and intentional use of standing flooded crops within the Mississippi Flyway also contributes to altered migration timing, shortened migration distances, increased wintering concentrations farther north, and an overall reduction in waterfowl numbers reaching traditional wintering habitats in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the growing practice of intentionally flooding standing, unharvested agricultural crops, including but not limited to corn and other row crops, to attract waterfowl for hunting has raised concerns that artificial and predictable food sources may be altering migratory behavior and contributing to the short-stopping of waterfowl in northern flyway states; and

WHEREAS, the intentional flooding of standing, unharvested crops for the primary purpose of attracting waterfowl differs substantively from traditional wetland habitat management and from normal agricultural practices intended for harvest; and

WHEREAS, LWF acknowledges that many hunters view the practice of hunting over intentionally flooded standing crops as inconsistent with traditional fair-chase principles and comparable in effect to other forms of baiting that are prohibited under federal law; and

WHEREAS, the reduction in fall and winter waterfowl migration into Louisiana has resulted in direct and measurable harm to Louisiana duck hunters and to the local and rural economies that depend on waterfowl season.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation recognizes the need for improved understanding of the impacts of intentionally flooded standing crops on migratory waterfowl behavior, wintering distributions, and associated ecological and economic outcomes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in coordination with state wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, and accredited universities, to study, document, and evaluate the extent, frequency, and impacts of hunting migratory waterfowl over intentionally flooded standing crops.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such studies should include consideration of migratory redistribution, fair-chase concerns, disease risk, waterfowl health, economic impacts to southern flyway states, and consistency with conservation-based wildlife management principles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if scientific evaluation demonstrates that intentionally flooded standing crops are being used primarily to manipulate waterfowl behavior and unfairly impact migratory distribution, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation supports prohibiting the hunting of migratory waterfowl over such practices and urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to review and revise federal regulations accordingly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation commits to working collaboratively with federal and state agencies, universities, conservation organizations, and hunters to promote responsible waterfowl management that protects migratory birds as a shared public trust.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled on February 28, 2026, in Lafayette, Louisiana.