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Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Movements and Resource Utilization of Four Species of Ducks Captured in the Mid-Parana River Basin, Entre Rios and Corrientes Provinces, Argentina

- ***The Challenge:*** Large populations of ducks, a variety of species, and liberal bag-limits make Argentina a popular destination for both North American and European waterfowl hunters. However, little is known about the Argentine waterfowl or their habitat. This study, utilizing satellite radio telemetry, is aimed at filling information gaps for four duck species common in the hunter's bag: the rosy-billed pochard (*Netta peposaca*), white-faced whistling duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*), black-bellied whistling duck (*D. autmnalis*), and the fulvous whistling duck (*D. bicolor*).

- ***The Science:*** One hundred ducks were instrumented during a three-year period (2008, 2009, 2010). A USGS veterinarian implanted a 26g PPT 100 transmitter into each duck's abdominal (coelemic) cavity. Analyses of the habitat used by the ducks (based on locations) during the three years following release revealed that artificial wetlands (rice fields) formed the highest percentage of habitat used by the ducks. Seasonal movements of the ducks appeared to be random and did not appear to be similar to the well-documented northerly and southerly migrations that North American ducks conduct each year. Differences could be related to the fact that South America was not as profoundly influenced by glaciers during the ice age due to less land mass surrounded by warmer waters of the South American oceans.

- ***The Future:*** In addition to the wealth of new movement and habitat data that was generated, an added advantage of this study has been the collaboration with South American researchers. Training exercises are planned as part of a workshop in Argentina to teach capture and telemetry techniques to South American biologists so that they can conduct this type of research in the future. Further satellite telemetry studies with additional species (especially teal) could be conducted in the future to better understand the distribution of South American ducks throughout the year in different habitats and the factors related to their distribution.

Contact: Matthew C. Perry at (301)497-5622 or mperry@usgs.gov