



**Patuxent Wildlife Research Center**  
**Science Brief for Resource Managers**

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*Science Brief PWRC 2003-32*

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## **Variables affecting the black duck decline and current status of black ducks and mallards in southern Ontario**

### **Description:**

Objectives: This study will revisit several data bases relating to mallard and black duck occurrence and harvest in Southern Ontario during the period of the black duck decline from the late 1960s to 1983.

### **Progress to Date:**

Several data sets on black duck and mallard harvest, sex ratios, age ratios, hunter opportunity, and season regulations regarding length and bag limit were obtained and evaluated. Preliminary results suggested that some differences existed in harvest of sex cohorts of black ducks and mallards that might explain divergent population changes in southern Ontario from the 1960s to 1980s. Since this preliminary work was completed data on changes in human population size in southern Ontario were obtained. Because of adjustments in survey strata over years, attempts to reconcile these changes were initiated.

### **Management Implications:**

Completion of the data evaluation is expected to show what has been determined in related studies of black ducks and mallard, that is, mallards are more abundant than black ducks in areas of habitat disturbance and urbanization.

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