



*By 2025, restore, enhance and preserve wetland habitats that support a wintering population of 100,000 black ducks, a species representative of the health of tidal marshes across the watershed. Refine population targets through 2025 based on best available science.*

### **Why is this outcome important?**

The American black duck has been called the “gold standard” of eastern waterfowl. Historically, the black duck was the most abundant dabbling duck in eastern North America and comprised the largest portion of the region’s waterfowl harvest. Despite its importance to hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, the black duck population declined by more than 50 percent between the 1950s and 80s. The mid-Atlantic region, which includes the Chesapeake Bay watershed, supports the largest portion of eastern North America’s wintering black duck population and preserving habitat here is critical to the long-term sustainability of the species.

### **Current Conditions:**

Between 2007 and 2009, mid-winter aerial surveys conducted by the Atlantic Coast and Appalachian Joint Ventures counted 37,158 black ducks in the watershed. Between 2009 and 2011, these surveys counted 47,269 black ducks in the watershed.

### **How was the outcome derived? Who came up with it?**

Black duck numbers in the watershed are estimated annually as part of the mid-winter waterfowl surveys conducted by the Black Duck Joint Venture. The number of wintering ducks depends on the availability of food—like vegetation, tubers and bivalves—that supports them. This means that protecting, restoring and improving wetland habitats will be part of achieving the black duck outcome.



### **What was the basis or baseline?**

The target is based on a continental breeding population goal from the [North American Waterfowl Management Plan \(NAWMP\)](#), based on 1990 population estimates and revised in 2004, of 640,000 black ducks. Because the core of the wintering black duck population resides in the mid-Atlantic, biologists believe that having 100,000 wintering black ducks in the Chesapeake region will help meet the larger continental goal and remove black ducks from the [Birds of Management Concern \(BMC\)](#) list.

### **For More:**

[http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/american\\_black\\_duck](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/american_black_duck)

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