

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 73

BY REPRESENTATIVE COUSSAN

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to collaborate and contribute their knowledge and expertise with the Louisiana Waterfowl Working Group in an effort to improve waterfowl habitats on private, state, and federally owned lands.

WHEREAS, Louisiana has a long and distinguished history of consistent, reliable wintering waterfowl habitat for generations; and

WHEREAS, waterfowl biologists estimate seed production in moist-soil wetlands located along migration routes and at wintering sites to calculate duck-energy days; and

WHEREAS, duck-energy days are the number of dabbling ducks that potentially can be sustained energetically in a wetland for a specified duration; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana portion of the Chenier Plain Initiative area (CPIA) has a midwinter population objective of over eight hundred and eighty-eight thousand Gadwall and three hundred seventy-eight thousand Blue-winged teal duck-energy days; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana portion of the west gulf coastal plain has a population goal of one million seven-hundred thousand duck-energy days of all species; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi River Coastal Wetlands Initiative area (MRCWIA) encompasses important wintering waterfowl habitats including Pass A Loutre, Atchafalaya Delta Wildlife Management Area, Marsh Island, and Delta National Wildlife Refuge; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana portion of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture has a total duck-energy day objective of one-hundred twenty million nine hundred thousand duck-energy days based on a one hundred ten day wintering period from early November to late February; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana supports over half of the breeding population of western gulf coast mottled ducks; and

WHEREAS, over four hundred seventy-five thousand acres of rice were planted by Louisiana farmers in 2020, down from a high of six hundred seventy thousand acres in 1981; and

WHEREAS, the Gulf Coast Joint Venture has also determined that coastal marshes in the CPIA and MRCWIA are deficient in providing habitat to support their waterfowl population objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) owns and manages more than one million six hundred thousand acres of Louisiana's land and waterways as wildlife management areas, refuges, and conservation areas; and

WHEREAS, the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior of the United States (FWS) manages twenty three national wildlife refuges within Louisiana, covering more than five hundred fifty thousand acres throughout twenty-nine parishes; and

WHEREAS, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (NRCS) has a long record of working with private landowners to implement conservation practices and programs for the benefit of Louisiana's farms, wetlands, and wildlife habitats; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Waterfowl Working Group (LWWG) is comprised of a diverse group of landowners, managers, business owners, and professionals who share a common interest and concern over the direction Louisiana's waterfowl stock is heading; and

WHEREAS, the LWWG's mission is to ensure that waterfowl habitat remains a focal point for policy makers and stakeholders at all levels.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the National Resources Conservation Service, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to collaborate and contribute their knowledge and expertise with the Louisiana Waterfowl Working Group in an effort to improve waterfowl habitats on private, state, and federally owned lands.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWWG shall submit an annual written report to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and Senate Committee on

Natural Resources detailing the results of its collaborative efforts to improve waterfowl habitats on private, state, and federally owned lands.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report should consider meaningful updates on habitat trends, policy recommendations, and other relevant topics related to Louisiana waterfowl, and the habitats they depend upon.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, Louisiana State Conservationist, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Region 4 Director, and the officers of both houses of the United States Congress and each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE