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## **GENETIC VARIATION AMONG GRAVID FEMALE AMERICAN WOODCOCK IN EASTERN TEXAS DURING WINTER**

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**Abstract:** We investigated genetic variability in gravid female American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) from two eastern Texas counties during late January 1997-1999. We amplified and sequenced a 750 base pair fragment of the mitochondrial cytochrome *b* gene for 20 gravid females collected on winter range. We observed 13 unique haplotypes among the 20 individuals with an average haplotype divergence of 0.63%. The high level of haplotype diversity ( $h = 0.009474$ ) and low nucleotide diversity ( $\pi = 0.00509$ ) are consistent with genetic variation in woodcock collected on the traditional summer nesting range. Our results suggest considerable admixture among woodcock populations on wintering grounds. If winter breeding is common, it may provide a mechanism for preventing genetic differentiation of woodcock populations from different flyways, and this lack of differentiation has implications for the proper designation of management units for woodcock.

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