

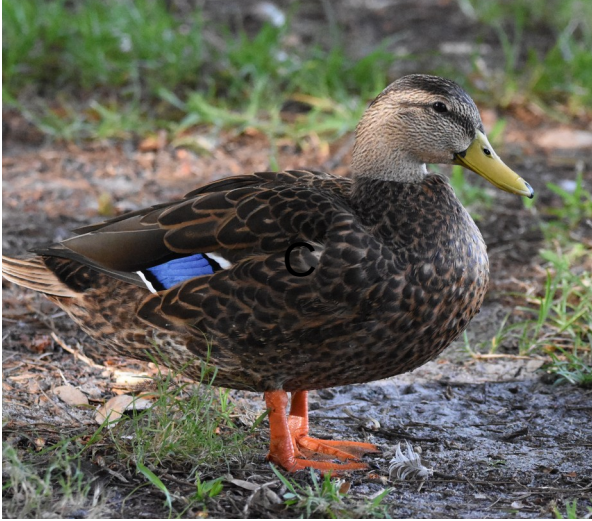
Initial MODU Volunteer Training

Welcome!

Icebreaker:

- What is your Name and Major?
- What do you hope to learn / do as part of the project?
- (optional) What is an animal fact that you like?

What is a MODU?



Mottled Duck

- Banding code: MOttled DUck (MODU)
- Non-migratory duck native to peninsular Florida, the gulf coast, and the Atlantic coast as far north as S. Carolina
- Prefers emergent wetlands (characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes, excluding mosses and lichens) and brackish wetlands.
- In general, individuals select water < 15 cm deep with an abundance of emergent vegetation. (Fogarty and LaHart 1971, Johnson et al. 1991a, Gray 1993b, Johnson 1973e, Bielefeld 2002)



Confounding Species

- Confounding species are species that are not MODU that are liable to be trapped along with them.
 - The worst of these will accidentally spring the trap or crowd out the MODU
- Areas with large populations of confounding species could render a site unsuitable for tapping

Confounding Species – White Ibis

- Often seen in groups, nest in large mixed species colonies
- Most distinctive feature is decurved beak
- Not always white, juveniles are brown
- Note their black wing tips
- Not particularly bright - will trap themselves



Confounding Species – Muscovy Duck

- Large, docile
- History of domestication makes them unafraid of humans
- Not particularly violent to other birds
- Except in cases of “forced copulation”
 - Usually, but not always, within species



Confounding Species – Greylag Goose

- Violent assholes
- Would kill you if they could
- Not accountable to the laws of man nor God
- Thankfully not native to Florida and rare outside of downtown Orlando
- Satan?



What makes a good trapping site?

- Few, preferably no, confounding species
- Publicly accessible and safe location
 - Parking space nearby to allow for quick unloading of gear/traps
- Away from pedestrian traffic
- Presence of MODU – preferably a half dozen at least
- 10 x 5 ft flat area at the edge of a body of water where substrate is thick enough to pound stakes about 1 ft long
- Predators are not present
- Urban or suburban area

Site Suitability Score (S^3)

- 0 – Off Limits: Determined to be unsafe or inaccessible
- 1 – Very Unsuitable: No suitable body of water nearby
- 2 – Unsuitable: Either an extreme presence/lack of negative/positive factors
- 3 – Suitable: MODU sighted, negative factors are manageable

Site Suitability Score (S³ cont)

- 4 – Very Suitable: MODU presence is considerable, negative factors are slight
- 5 – Ideal: MODU presence considerable, no significant drawbacks
- 6 – Burned Population: MODU were trapped at this location before and last observation indicated a wary population
- 7 – Targeted Site: Location has not been scouted, but should be

How to survey a site

- First, determine if the site is safe and accessible. If you do not feel safe or are at risk of trespassing leave immediately!
- Make a note of the date AND time that you arrive at and leave a site. Site suitability may be dependent on time of day.
- Look for MODU – always start with the shores of the largest bodies of water as this is where they are most likely to be found. Keep a count of total MODU to the best of your ability.
- Unless the site is small enough to survey all at once, take time to walk around the site, particularly any bodies of water. Survey times may range considerably, but between 15 to 45 minutes will likely be sufficient.

How to survey a site (cont)

- Keep a count of each confounding species. This is less important than the number of MODU, but still quite important.
- Keep an eye out for flat 10 x 5 ft patches by the water. If you are unsure if a patch is suitable it may help to take a picture so others can weigh in.
- What is parking like? What is pedestrian traffic like? (especially if people are near the edge of the water)

How to survey a site - Predators

- The following mammals (in rough order of likelihood of finding, most unlikely) prey on all MODU:
 - **feral domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*), and cats (*Felis domesticus*)**
 - raccoons (*Procyon lotor*)
 - river otters (*Lutra canadensis*)
 - striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*)
 - coyotes (*Canis latrans*)
 - mink (*Mustela vison*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)
- Avian predators: Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) and Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) (both unlikely to be found in urban / suburban areas)
- Alligators eat ducklings and molting/flightless adults

Reporting Checklist

- Datetime of arrival – Date times should be accurate to the minute
- Datetime of departure
- Number of MODU
- Confounding species present (rough counts acceptable, but accuracy is always a +)
- GPS coordinates (where you parked, in DD (Decimal Degrees))
- S3
- Any additional notes, questions, concerns, predator sightings – this is also where a short justification of S3 should go (eg. “Areas around water mostly inaccessible due to thick vegetation, parking accessible and close to site, little pedestrian traffic”)

Tools

- Reporting sheet, clipboard, and pen
- GPS app – (such as GPS Coordinates on Android or My GPS Coordinates on iPhone)
 - IF you *absolutely* can't use this please make sure to provide the most accurate description of the address so that it can be mapped to a GPS coordinate
- Camera – pictures may be useful in cases where ID's are uncertain
- Ebird – If you do decide to perform an ebird checklist, please share this with brotherjack1877@gmail.com. This will require you to ID all birds in the area as best as possible (which is why I am not recommending this)
- Sunscreen, bug spray, water – You live in Florida, don't forget this

Finally

- Make sure to record vital data for a site, even when the result is that the site is inaccessible or no MODU were found. Negative results are important!
- Don't worry too much about S^3 being "correct". The scores will naturally vary from person to person, and thus should likely take on a normal distribution. Also, you will become more comfortable with this rather quickly.
- You will occasionally forget to include a piece of data (eg. datetime of departure). That's not the end of the world. Keeping a checklist can help make this less likely.
- If you have a question, feel free to text me: 407-492-4243.
- Have fun! Go see some ducks!