The decline of waterfowl hunters in the United States: Human dimensions assessments on why and what can be done.

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The number of active waterfowl hunters in the US. has declined since the 1980s, despite relatively abundant waterfowl populations and hunting opportunities. The decline in participation has negatively affected habitat conservation revenue and may lead to further erosion of political support for waterfowl management and wetland conservation. In response to the decline in waterfowl hunters, the 2012 revision to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan added a third goal that explicitly identified the importance of increasing the number of waterfowl hunters, birders, and other waterfowl and wetland conservation supporters. Since the establishment of this third goal, considerable state and flyway-level efforts are underway to increase waterfowl conservation support, including attempts to increase hunter numbers through college student recruitment programs and experimental regulations. Despite these efforts, research is needed to better understand this social-ecological system. Dr. Chizinski will describe some recent human dimensions inquiries and computational analytical approaches to better understand what is influencing the decline in waterfowl hunters and what can be done to increase support for waterfowl conservation.