



## Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program

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### *Scolopax minor* American Woodcock

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Photo courtesy of Don Chalfant

**Identification:** A plump brown bird with a very long bill; large eyes; short neck; coloring is brown with patterned wings and back. Both sexes have the same coloration pattern. Females larger than males (27-31cm vs. 25-28 cm).

**Voice:** Nasal “beezp”; wings make a whistling sound as bird ascends and warbling sound as bird descends

**Taxonomic comments:** No recognized subspecies.

**Status:** Global rank is **G5** and state rank is **S1B** and **S3S5N**.

**Habitat:** Wooded habitats including wet thickets, moist woods, and brushy swamps during the day; fields and pastures at night.

**Range:** Lives from southeastern Canada to the Gulf States. Winters in southeastern United States including Louisiana

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**Food habits:** principally invertebrates, particularly earthworms; plant foods relatively minor.

**Life expectancy:** Maximum life span reported to be 8 years.

**Reproduction:** Begins to nest in early spring. Nests are made of leaves gathered in a depression on the ground and typically consist of 4 eggs spotted with brown flecks. Young leave nest almost immediately after hatching although female still cares for and feeds chicks. Chicks can independently search for food at 1 week of age.

**Reason for decline:** Loss of habitat

**Interesting facts:** In 1974 the largest wintering congregations were found in the Atchafalaya Basin. Over the course of 7 years 16,000 individuals from this area were caught and marked.

**Known distribution in Louisiana:**



**Dates of documented observations are:** 1987, 1997, and 2000

**References**

Lowery, G. H. Jr. 1974. Louisiana Birds. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Kingsport Press, Tennessee.

Peterson, R.T., and V.M. Peterson. 1980. A field guide to the birds: A completely new guide to all the birds of Eastern and Central North America. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.

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