

## **Société d'aménagement de la baie Lavallière inc. (Paul Messier, Managing Director)**

### **Provincial network of nesting boxes for Wood Ducks**

Since May 1989, the non-profit organisation Société d'aménagement de la baie Lavallière inc. (SABL) has been involved in the protection and development of the largest natural wetlands in eastern North America. Our mission is the restoration and conservation of wetlands, including Baie Lavallière. Since our beginnings, the SABL has introduced about a hundred nesting boxes for Wood Ducks in Baie Lavallière. In addition, since 1995, in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited Canada, we have been managing a provincial network of nesting boxes for Wood Ducks. To date, this network consists of 2,800 active nesting boxes in nearly one hundred municipalities in Quebec. In the Lake Saint-Pierre region, our employees and volunteers monitor nearly 300 nesting boxes per year. Our annual bulletin, *la bande à Branchus*, reports on the occupation rates of the bird boxes. According to the data supplied by our volunteers (schools, birdwatching clubs, aboriginal peoples, and private individuals) in 2007, an average of four ducklings were nesting in each box, and the numbers keep growing.

The Wood Duck was endangered in the 1920s, and meanwhile, our program is helping to minimize the harsh impact of deforestation on this arboreal duck. The network's objectives are to make an inventory of sites suitable for Wood Duck reproduction, restore wetlands by introducing networks of nesting boxes, monitor and maintain the nesting box networks from year to year, implement a tagging program for the Eastern Screech Owl, and carry out an annual census of the Wood Duck population.

These nesting boxes are also of benefit to other species of ducks (Hooded Merganser, Common Goldeneye) and birds (Common Starling, Northern Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher), birds of prey (Eastern Screech Owl, American Kestrel, Northern Saw-whet Owl), mammals (red, grey, and flying squirrels), and insects (wasps, bees). A sponsorship program has also been successfully introduced for the nesting boxes in Baie Lavallière, with approximately half of the boxes now being sponsored by people from all over Quebec.