



January 10, 2024 Weekly Waterfowl Report

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

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The following report is a compilation of public and private land reports and habitat assessments during the week ending January 7, 2024.

Early January in Mississippi has ushered in some much needed rain across the state, and although much more is needed to provide waterfowl habitat, many areas have benefited from additional water. Runoff has helped to maintain or increase water levels many seasonal wetlands, but many more areas still need significant rainfall to begin holding surface water. Up to this point in the waterfowl hunting season, general weather patterns across the U.S. have still not been sufficient to cause significant numbers of waterfowl to migrate into the Southeast. However, the forecast for this week predicts continued development of a winter storm as it moves toward the Southeast, potentially bringing more rain followed by well-below freezing temperatures by this weekend. The long-range forecast predicts continued extreme cold in Mississippi throughout the next week as well. These weather conditions are expected to cause increased migration of waterfowl from northern and mid-latitude areas into the Southeast.

While hunting success remained relatively low over the past week, waterfowl harvest reports on several public and private lands showed some improvements in harvest per hunter success. Biologists suspect these modest increases could be early results of new birds migrating into the state ahead of the developing harsh winter weather. Gadwall, northern shovelers, and green-winged teal continue to make up a large proportion of hunter harvest. Availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will continue to influence waterfowl harvest as winter continues along. Hunters should plan ahead for dealing with bitter cold conditions, both from a safety perspective and from a hunting perspective as low temperatures are anticipated to create icy conditions, especially on shallow water wetlands.

The early January aerial waterfowl survey experienced several weather delays last week and into this week, but will be completed soon. Mississippi typically observes peak waterfowl numbers during January, and biologists are hopeful this trend will continue. As soon as the survey report is completed, it will be posted online and on MDWFP social media accounts to show comparisons to previous surveys, as well as waterfowl distribution maps. For more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, visit our website at www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl or call us at (601) 432-2199. The Waterfowl Program web page lists links to hunting regulations, migration reports, and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state.

Table 1: Waterfowl harvest and WMA visits reported over the past week for Wildlife Management Areas where harvest of at least one bird was reported. Note: this data does not necessarily represent the total number of hunters and harvest for each WMA. Hunters are reminded of the requirement to check in prior to hunting and to check out upon leaving the WMA. Waterfowl hunters are also reminded to review all regulations and any applicable draw hunt procedures for any WMA they plan to hunt.

WMA	WMA Visits	Waterfowl Harvest	Avg. Birds/Hunter/Day
Bienville	25	13	0.52
Black Prairie	10	5	0.50
Canal Section	140	56	0.40
Charlie Capps	12	27	2.25
Chickasaw	3	4	1.33
Divide Section	22	29	1.32
Howard Miller	118	132	1.12
John Bell Williams	13	9	0.69
Lake George	28	11	0.39
Mahannah	207	165	0.80
Malmaison	99	63	0.64
Muscadine Farms	105	105	1.00
Nanah Waiya	27	10	0.37
Okatibbee	42	14	0.33
O'Keefe	66	52	0.79
Old River	28	9	0.32
Pascagoula River	310	161	0.52
Pearl River	31	37	1.19
Phil Bryant	28	15	0.54
Shipland	8	2	0.25
Sky Lake	22	18	0.82
Stoneville	5	2	0.40
Sunflower	65	29	0.45
Tuscumbia	8	9	1.13
Twin Oaks	21	35	1.67
Upper Sardis	9	2	0.22
Ward Bayou	97	52	0.54
William C. (Billy) Deviney	52	65	1.25