



January 5, 2021 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 3, 2021

Jackson, MS – A nice cold front moved into Mississippi to start the New Year. Heavy rain and a drop in temperature produced a push from southerly migrating ducks into Mississippi. Wetland habitat availability in the Mississippi Delta increased dramatically for the time being. The Mississippi River and its tributaries have begun to rise, which will increase the wetland habitat availability throughout most of the Delta. The extended forecast shows more rain midweek with the low temperatures dipping below freezing. As a result, weather severity index models predict that dabbling ducks (including mallards) could have a strong migration southward due to weather for the upcoming week.

Reports seem to indicate an increase in mallard numbers from last week in the Mississippi Delta. Recent harvest reports from public and private lands have included an increase in mallard harvest as well. With temperatures dipping below freezing at nights, deep-water habitat, such as catfish ponds or oxbow lakes should become more important to ducks if shallow flooded fields ice over. As shallow sheets of ice melt throughout the day, waterfowl will typically return to these areas quickly to feed. This in turn could prove for some nice afternoon hunting opportunities.

The early January aerial waterfowl survey is currently underway. As soon as surveys are completed, a full report will be available on www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl. This site also includes much more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, including links to hunting regulations, migration reports, and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state. With the second half of the hunting season remaining, hunters are looking forward to peak waterfowl numbers to begin the new year.

Table 1: Waterfowl harvest and hunter effort reported over the past week for Wildlife Management Areas.

| | WMA Visits | Harvest | Avg. Harvest/Day |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Delta Region | | | |
| Charlie Capps | 20 | 8 | 0.40 |
| Howard Miller | 146 | 310 | 2.12 |
| Lake George | 78 | 51 | 0.65 |
| Mahannah | 234 | 429 | 1.83 |
| Muscadine Farms | 28 | 9 | 0.32 |
| O'Keefe | 92 | 35 | 0.38 |
| Phil Bryant | 82 | 121 | 1.48 |
| Shipland | 15 | 25 | 1.67 |
| Sky Lake | 30 | 27 | 0.90 |
| Sunflower | 280 | 349 | 1.25 |
| Twin Oaks | 27 | 53 | 1.96 |
| William "Billy" C. Deviney | 38 | 11 | 0.29 |
| East Central Region | | | |
| Nanah Waiya | 69 | 65 | 0.94 |
| Okatibbee | 29 | 3 | 0.10 |
| Trim Cane | 3 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Yockanookany | 7 | 1 | 0.14 |
| Northeast Region | | | |
| Canal Section | 158 | 85 | 0.54 |
| Chickasaw | 9 | 5 | 0.56 |
| Divide Section | 20 | 5 | 0.25 |
| John Bell Williams | 16 | 1 | 0.06 |
| Tuscumbia | 38 | 32 | 0.84 |
| Northwest Region | | | |
| Malmaison | 145 | 189 | 1.30 |
| Upper Sardis | 26 | 6 | 0.23 |
| Southeast Region | | | |
| Old River | 25 | 5 | 0.20 |
| Pascagoula River | 255 | 192 | 0.75 |
| Ward Bayou | 76 | 46 | 0.61 |
| Southwest Region | | | |
| Bienville | 15 | 12 | 0.80 |
| Caney Creek | 2 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Pearl River | 18 | 7 | 0.39 |
| Tallahala | 9 | 7 | 0.78 |

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2020-21 Waterfowl Season

Due to prolonged backwater flooding the last two growing seasons, water control structures in the green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will not be closed to capture water for the 2020-21 hunting season on Sunflower WMA. However, hunters are reminded that there are approximately 5,200 acres of low-lying sloughs, lakes, and other wetlands scattered across Sunflower WMA. Most of these areas have water control structures in them and will be the first areas to flood on the WMA. These natural, low-lying areas often provide better habitat and hunting opportunities than the GTRs. GTRs may also eventually flood from winter rainfall and backwater. A map of Sunflower WMA wetland areas can be found here: <http://www.mdwfp.com/media/256111/sunflower-wma-gtrs-and-slough-areas.pdf>