



Weekly Waterfowl Report
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
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December 2, 2015 Edition

The following report is a compilation of WMA reports and habitat assessments during the week ending November 29, 2015.

Jackson, MS – Duck season opened with the Thanksgiving weekend, and mixed harvest reports were received from public and private lands in Mississippi. As the weekend moved on, temperatures began to increase, rain moved across much of the state, and overall hunting success declined. Warmer temperatures and rainfall typically affect waterfowl in several ways. Primarily, warmer weather may cause a reduction in daily waterfowl movements, as birds are not forced to feed heavily for energy production. Secondly, some waterfowl may have shifted back northward, which is typical with warming and cooling cycles. Rainfall has added additional flooded habitat, which allows birds to move away from hunting pressure and find food in areas where risk is reduced. The long-range forecast predicts cooler and drier weather for the remainder of the week, which could result in improved waterfowl hunting conditions. However, temperatures reaching northward into the Midwest are forecasted to remain relatively mild, providing little or no incentive for ducks to migrate southward.

Many state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) across the Mississippi Delta are still holding ducks, and several intensively managed WMAs reported high harvest for the opening weekend. Gadwall and teal have made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. A few small flocks of snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese have been observed as well.

The third draw period for WMA waterfowl draw hunts is now open for applications. Goose seasons are currently open statewide. The December aerial waterfowl survey is scheduled to be flown the week of December 14. As soon as aerial waterfowl surveys are completed, the results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website. The Waterfowl Program website (www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl) lists links to regulations and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state, as well as other general waterfowl information as it becomes available.

Table 1: Water levels and general duck abundance ratings for selected Wildlife Management Areas.

WMA	Water Levels*	Bird Abundance
Charlie Capps	100%	Medium
Howard Miller	100%	High
Indianola	100%	Medium-High
Mahannah	100%	Low-Medium
Malmaison**	80%	Low-Medium
Muscadine Farms	80%	Low-Medium
O'Keefe	90%	Low-Medium
Twin Oaks	100%	Low
Trim Cane	50%	Low
Tuscumbia	60%	Low

*Indicates percentage of impoundments with water levels sufficient enough to hunt.

**Malmaison WMA green-tree reservoir is being managed at a lower water level than in past years.