



**Weekly Waterfowl Report**  
**Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks**  
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**December 6, 2016 Edition**

The following report is a compilation of public and private land reports and habitat assessments during the week ending December 4, 2016.

Jackson, MS – The second duck hunting season segment opened last weekend, and harvest reports from public and private lands continued to be good. Last week's weather began with relatively warm temperatures, but by mid-week temperatures decreased and much needed rainfall returned, which once again improved hunting conditions heading into the weekend. Wetland habitat availability increased throughout the weekend, and the long-range forecast predicts the season's first true "arctic blast" to move in from the north later this week. Biologists and waterfowl hunters are hopeful this upcoming weather pattern will produce an increase of ducks migrating into the state to go along with newly flooded wetlands. Although wetland habitat is increasing, shallowly flooded wetland habitat availability is currently still below average for the majority of the state. Significant amounts of rainfall will be required to fill many of the state's low-lying areas before natural flooding can occur along most rivers and small tributaries. However, water levels in many river systems are on the rise.

Waterfowl hunters should remember that as habitat conditions change, bird concentrations and behaviors will most likely change as well. When newly flooded habitat becomes available, waterfowl will typically exploit the newly flooded areas, and hunters may need to adjust hunting locations or tactics to keep success rates high. However, if cold fronts continue to push southward, newly arriving migrant waterfowl should also be arriving to take advantage of Mississippi's wetlands. Many state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) across the Mississippi Delta continue to hold ducks, and several intensively managed WMAs reported continued hunting success over the second weekend of the season. Gadwall and green-winged teal have made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports, but several WMAs reported hunters filling their daily bag limits of mallards, and several WMAs have experienced a significant increase in mallard numbers recently. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence early season waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

The third draw period for WMA waterfowl draw hunts is still open for applications. Hunters are encouraged to apply for any WMAs and dates they may be interested in hunting. The December aerial waterfowl survey is scheduled to be flown the week of December 19. 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](http://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.

<b>WMA</b>	<b>Water Levels*</b>	<b>Bird Abundance</b>
Charlie Capps	100%	High
Howard Miller	100%	High
Indianola	100%	Medium-High
Mahannah	100%	Medium
Malmaison**	100%	Medium
Muscadine Farms	90%	Medium
O'Keefe	90%	Low
Twin Oaks	100%	Low
Trim Cane	5%	Low
Tuscumbia	5%	Low

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

\*\*Malmaison WMA green-tree reservoir is being managed at a lower pumped water level than in past years. Rainfall will also be captured by water control structures throughout the winter. Water levels do not include the McIntyre Scatters portion of the WMA, which will vary by rainfall and river levels.