



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 November 20, 2016.

Jackson, MS – The first aerial waterfowl survey of the season was flown last week, and the survey report is posted online at www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl. Overall, duck numbers were relatively high compared to the long-term average for November surveys in the Mississippi Delta, and this trend also held for November waterfowl surveys in Louisiana. Surveys conducted in Arkansas found below average duck numbers for November.

In contrast to last November, shallowly flooded wetland habitat availability is well below average for the majority of the state. Some landowners and managers with pumping capabilities are currently providing critical wetland habitat, and are expecting quality hunting opportunities early in the hunting season. In the weeks leading up to the waterfowl hunting season, managers of many WMAs across the state have been pumping shallow water into waterfowl impoundments. Charlie Capps, Indianola, Malmaison, O'Keefe, Muscadine Farms, Mahannah, and Howard Miller WMAs are just a few of these areas, and recent field reports indicate that ducks are using many of these areas. Mallard numbers are average for this time of year in the Delta, and most mallards have been observed mostly using managed moist-soil areas, followed closely by flooded agriculture. Aerial waterfowl survey results showed mallard numbers split between these two habitat types. A few public land managers have reported high numbers of ducks for this time of year on properties across the state, which is likely a result of limited habitat availability elsewhere in the state. Duck numbers may have increased across Mississippi recently as a result of the cold front which passed through over the weekend, combined with a winter storm in the upper Midwest and Great Lakes regions of the country. A few migrant geese have begun to enter the Mississippi Delta, but so far numbers are very low for this time of year. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence early season waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

The first youth waterfowl hunting day of the season was Saturday, November 19. Most harvest reports from WMAs and managed private lands were very good, with many different species being harvested. The primary species reported in the harvest was green-winged teal. The regular duck season opener will be Friday, November 25, and the extended weather forecast for opening weekend appears to be relatively cool and clear.

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	80%	Medium
Howard Miller	90%	Medium-High
Indianola	80%	Medium
Mahannah	70%	Low-Medium
Malmaison**	50%	Low-Medium
Muscadine Farms	70%	Medium
O'Keefe	70%	Medium
Twin Oaks	60%	Low
Trim Cane	0%	Low
Tuscumbia	0%	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.