



January 2, 2019 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 December 28, 2018.

Jackson, MS – Warm and rainy conditions once again dominated last week’s weather. Heavy rainfall was received over much of the state, continuing to increase the already above-average wetland conditions in many areas. This week’s forecast predicts more heavy rain with a slight and brief cooling period for the weekend. Water levels in the Mississippi River and many other river systems still remain high and are rising with recent rainfall. Despite relatively warm weather in Mississippi, weather severity index models predict some southward movements of dabbling duck species this week from the Great Lakes and upper Midwest regions as a winter storm moves east from the Great Plains.

Waterfowl hunting success on many public and private lands has continued to be below average. However, some areas have experienced localized success. Mallards, green-winged teal, and gadwall have made up a significant portion of recent waterfowl harvest reports. Very large flocks of snow, blue, Ross’s, and white-fronted geese are still being observed using agricultural fields and wetlands across the Delta, and some waterfowl hunters have shifted their focus to goose hunting setups. With sustained mild weather conditions and high wetland habitat availability, waterfowl hunters are encouraged to adapt their hunting methods and locations when possible in order to find success. The availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will continue to influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands as Mississippi’s hunting season continues.

The fifth and final draw period for MDWFP Wildlife Management Area waterfowl draw hunts is currently open. Hunters are encouraged to apply for any WMAs and dates they may be interested in hunting. The December aerial waterfowl survey has been completed, and the report and corresponding distribution maps is posted on the MDWFP’s website. The early January survey is scheduled to be flown the week of January 7. 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 general waterfowl information as it becomes available.

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

WMA	Water Levels*	Duck Abundance
Charlie Capps	100%	Low
William C. "Billy" Deviney	100%	Low
Howard Miller	100%	Medium-High
Lake George	90%	Low
Mahannah	100%	Medium
Malmaison**	90%	Low
Muscadine Farms	90%	Low
O'Keefe	90%	Low
Pearl River	100%	Low
Sky Lake	80%	Low
Sunflower	70%	Low
Twin Oaks	90%	Low
Trim Cane	60%	Low
Tuscumbia	100%	Low

*Indicates percentage of water coverage in all wetland areas. Most managed impoundments are intentionally allowed to gradually fill to capacity over the course of the winter.

**Malmaison WMA green-tree reservoir is being managed at a lower pumped water level than in past years to better manage the existing bottomland hardwoods in the area. Rainfall will also be captured to supplement pumping throughout the winter to gradually flood the area. Water level rating includes the McIntyre Scatters portion of the WMA.

Table 2: Waterfowl harvest and man-days reported from December 22-28, 2018 for selected MDWFP Wildlife Management Areas.

WMA	Man-Days	Waterfowl Harvest	Avg. Birds/Hunter/Day
Charlie Capps	8	9	1.1
Howard Miller	157	427	2.7
William C. "Billy" Deviney	13	5	0.4
Mahannah	146	101	0.7
Malmaison	252	169	0.7
Muscadine Farms	61	54	0.9
Okatibbee	16	16	1.0
Old River	29	18	0.6
Pearl River	86	80	0.9
Sky Lake	3	5	1.7
Trim Cane*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tuscumbia	53	38	0.7
Twin Oaks	7	26	3.7

*Trim Cane WMA will hold its first waterfowl hunt of the season on January 9.