



December 3, 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 1, 2019.

Jackson, MS – The first segment of the duck hunting season occurred over the weekend, and harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water were good overall. Just like last year's opening weekend, Mississippi experienced a warming trend with rain and south winds sweeping over much of the state. Wetland habitat availability is still ahead of "normal" levels for this time of year across much of Mississippi, but great potential still exists for adding shallow, managed water across the Mississippi Delta. Waterfowl numbers, particularly mallards, in the Mississippi Delta region appear to be increasing this week as a new cold front has arrived. While the extended forecast predicts a warm and rainy end to the week here in Mississippi, weather severity index models predict that dabbling ducks other than mallards should continue to push southward from mid-latitude areas throughout the week.

Several state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta reported great hunting success for the opening weekend. Green-winged teal, northern shovelers, and blue-winged teal made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. Several properties in the South Delta are still holding well above average numbers of blue-winged teal for this time of year. Large flocks of snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese continue to enter the state, using complexes of large agricultural fields. Biologists and managers are hopeful that waterfowl numbers will increase during the current split in the hunting season, and newly arriving birds will be settled into the state when the season resumes on Friday, December 6. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

The December aerial waterfowl survey is currently planned for the week of December 16. As soon as surveys are completed, the results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website. The third round of WMA waterfowl draw hunt applications is currently open online at <https://xnet2.mdwfp.com/drawings/public/WmaDrawingsV3.aspx>. For more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, visit our website at www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl or call us at (601) 432-2199. The Waterfowl Program website lists links to hunting regulations, migration reports, and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state.

Table 1: Waterfowl harvest and man-days reported from November 16 – November 30, 2019 for selected Wildlife Management Areas.

WMA	Avg. Birds/Hunter/Day
Canal Section	1.25
Charlie Capps	2.00
Howard Miller	3.43
William “Billy” C. Deviney	3.00
Mahannah	3.55
Malmaison	2.13
Muscadine Farms	2.91
Okatibbee	0.00
O’Keefe	1.58
Old River	1.67
Pascagoula	0.42
Pearl River	1.74
Shipland	2.00
Trim Cane	0.00
Tuscumbia	0.62
Twin Oaks	0.00

*Trim Cane and Tuscumbia Unit 2 have not yet been hunted for waterfowl. These areas have a delayed start each year to ensure sufficient water levels before hunting.

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2019-20 Waterfowl Season

Due to prolonged backwater flooding throughout most of the spring and summer of 2019, water control structures in the green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will not be closed to capture water for the 2019-20 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. A map of Sunflower WMA wetland areas can be found here:

<http://www.mdwfp.com/media/256111/sunflower-wma-gtrs-and-slough-areas.pdf>