



## January 7, 2020

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Houston Havens (662) 299-0273, email: [houston.havens@wfp.ms.gov](mailto:houston.havens@wfp.ms.gov)

Darrin Hardesty (662) 588-2596, email: [darrin.hardesty@wfp.ms.gov](mailto:darrin.hardesty@wfp.ms.gov)

The following report is a compilation of public and private land waterfowl hunting reports and wetland habitat assessments during the week ending January 5, 2020.

Jackson, MS – Not much has changed from the previous week, as far as weather conditions and habitat are concerned. Prolonged mild weather with rain events each week have provided less than ideal conditions for waterfowl migration to occur. With relatively warm temperatures and more rain in the forecast, weather severity index models continue to predict little to no large-scale weather-induced southward movements of dabbling ducks in the coming week. The Mississippi River is expected to rise over the coming weeks, approaching flood stage for multiple locations. Water levels in Steele Bayou have risen over the last four days and the current water level for the Steele Bayou (landside) gauge is 83.71 feet as of 5:00pm on January 6. When the water level in Steele Bayou is at or above 82 feet, waterfowl hunting on the Ten Point and Goose Lake units of Phil Bryant Wildlife Management Area will be allowed daily.

Hunting reports from state WMAs and private lands across the Mississippi Delta were very similar to last week's reports with a slight decrease in harvest on most of the reported WMAs, however quality hunting opportunities still remain in some areas. Green-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall made up a large portion of waterfowl harvest reports. Several large flocks of snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese are still being observed across the Delta region. Some of the diehard waterfowl hunters have begun to shift gears to taking advantage of the goose hunting opportunities. The availability of quality waterfowl habitat and weather conditions will continue to influence harvest in the coming weeks.

For more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, visit our website at [www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl](http://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. The mid-December aerial waterfowl survey has been completed, and the results and distribution maps are now posted on MDWFP's Waterfowl Program web page. The early January waterfowl survey is currently underway this week, and a new report is expected to be ready early next week.

**Table 1:** Average waterfowl harvest per man-day reported over the past week for selected Wildlife Management Areas.

<b>WMA</b>	<b>Avg. Birds/Hunter/Day</b>
Canal Section	0.76
Charlie Capps	1.67
Howard Miller	1.09
William "Billy" C. Deviney	0.54
Mahannah	1.72
Malmaison	1.68
Muscadine Farms	0.79
Okatibbee	0.62
O'Keefe	1.15
Old River	0
Pascagoula	0.23
Pearl River	0.26
Phil Bryant	2.22
Shipland	0.89
Trim Cane	0.55
Tuscumbia	0.67
Twin Oaks	1.82

### **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>**