



December 8, 2020 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 6, 2020.

Jackson, MS – The second segment of the Mississippi duck hunting season occurred over the weekend, and harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water remained good overall, with several reports of increased bird numbers. Weather across the state turned a bit more seasonal after a warm season opener, which likely helped to push more ducks southward into Mississippi last week. Wetland habitat availability is still below the normal levels for this time of year across much of the state, causing waterfowl to concentrate in areas with intensively managed habitat. The Mississippi River and interior Delta river systems are also well below flood stage currently. The extended forecast predicts a warming trend here this week, leading to a rainy weekend followed by another cold front. Weather severity index models predict that dabbling ducks (including mallards) should continue to push southward from mid-latitude areas due to the cold system pushing from the north this weekend. Additionally, habitat conditions in the Midwest and Great Lakes regions are relatively dry, which could help to speed up migration into areas further south.

Several state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta continued to report good hunting success for the second weekend. Green-winged teal and gadwall made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports last weekend. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese have continued to increase in numbers recently, using complexes of large agricultural fields. As newly arriving waterfowl continue to enter the state, changes in water levels and distribution of wetland habitat will impact where birds congregate.

Hunters are reminded that Mississippi's waterfowl seasons will resume on Wednesday, December 9 and will continue through January 31. The December aerial waterfowl survey is currently planned for the week of December 14. As soon as surveys are completed, the results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website. 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 hunter effort reported over the past week for Wildlife Management Areas.

	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Delta Region			
Charlie Capps	14	46	3.29
Howard Miller	58	157	2.71
Lake George	38	19	0.50
Mahannah	81	273	3.37
Muscadine Farms	26	8	0.31
O'Keefe	96	56	0.58
Phil Bryant	3	6	2.00
Shipland	20	24	1.20
Sky Lake	27	39	1.44
Sunflower	241	321	1.33
Twin Oaks	33	35	1.06
William "Billy" C. Deviney	37	21	0.57
East Central Region			
John W. Starr	4	1	0.25
Nanah Waiya	40	36	0.90
Okatibbee	29	23	0.79
Yockanookany	4	3	0.75
Northeast Region			
Canal Section	93	84	0.90
Chickasaw	3	2	0.67
Divide Section	4	0	0.00
John Bell Williams	9	3	0.33
Tuscumbia*	12	0	0.00
Northwest Region			
Calhoun County	1	2	2.00
Malmaison	83	112	1.35
Upper Sardis	21	7	0.33
Southeast Region			
Old River	56	20	0.36
Pascagoula River	97	28	0.29
Ward Bayou	22	6	0.27
Southwest Region			
Bienville	4	2	0.50
Caney Creek	11	5	0.45
Copiah County	2	2	1.00
Pearl River	27	8	0.30
Sandy Creek	1	0	0.00
Tallahala	6	10	1.67

*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 2020-21 Waterfowl Season

Due to prolonged backwater flooding the last two growing seasons, water control structures in the green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will not be closed to capture water for the 2020-21 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. GTRs may also eventually flood from winter rainfall and backwater. A map of Sunflower WMA wetland areas can be found here: <http://www.mdwfp.com/media/256111/sunflower-wma-gtrs-and-slough-areas.pdf>