



December 15, 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 13, 2020.

Jackson, MS – The main stretch of the Mississippi duck and goose hunting seasons are now underway and will continue through January 31. Over the past week, harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water declined overall, but we received several reports of increased bird numbers over the weekend. Weather across the state last week remained relatively seasonal early and then gradually warmed up by mid-week. Wetland habitat availability is still below the normal levels for this time of year across much of the state, but many areas have received enough rainfall to continue gradually increasing wetland size. The Mississippi River and interior Delta river systems are also still well below flood stage currently. The extended forecast predicts another short-duration cold front this week, followed by mild temperatures by the weekend. Weather severity index models predict that dabbling ducks (including mallards) should continue to push southward from mid-latitude areas due to the cold weather system and increasing snow cover early to mid-week. Wetland conditions in the Midwest and Great Lakes regions are still relatively dry, which may help to encourage migration into areas further south.

State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta reported a decline in hunting success over the last week, but some good reports were received over the weekend. Green-winged teal and gadwall again made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports, but mallard harvest has begun to increase. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese have continued to increase in numbers, and very good reports of white-fronted goose (or speckle-bellied goose) hunting have been received recently. As newly arriving waterfowl continue to enter the state, changes in water levels and distribution of wetland habitat will impact where birds congregate.

The December aerial waterfowl survey is underway this week. 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	25	39	1.56
Howard Miller	84	332	3.95
Lake George	26	35	1.35
Mahannah	113	237	2.10
Muscadine Farms	30	27	0.90
O'Keefe	44	7	0.16
Phil Bryant	40	130	3.25
Shipland	20	37	1.85
Sky Lake	22	44	2.00
Sunflower	186	309	1.66
Twin Oaks	6	10	1.67
William "Billy" C. Deviney	43	26	0.60
East Central Region			
Black Prairie	2	1	0.50
Choctaw	2	0	0.00
John W. Starr	1	6	6.00
Nanah Waiya	39	44	1.13
Okatibbee	23	11	0.48
Yockanookany	5	7	1.40
Northeast Region			
Canal Section	89	83	0.93
Chickasaw	7	1	0.14
Divide Section	4	0	0.00
John Bell Williams	9	3	0.33
Tuscumbia*	34	25	0.74
Northwest Region			
Malmaison	89	114	1.28
Sardis Waterfowl	1	0	0.00
Upper Sardis	8	10	1.25
Southeast Region			
Old River	63	151	2.40
Pascagoula River	140	125	0.89
Red Creek	2	0	0.00
Ward Bayou	32	19	0.59
Southwest Region			
Bienville	11	8	0.73
Caney Creek	18	9	0.50
Pearl River	33	14	0.42
Tallahala	12	17	1.42

*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>