



January 24, 2023 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 January 22, 2023.

Jackson, MS – We are in the final stretch of the 2022-23 waterfowl hunting season, and the forecast looks cold and wet to finish out the regular season. Snowfall is predicted in the northern latitude states through the week and over the weekend, and wetland habitat availability slightly increased with a rain event early in the week. Temperatures are not predicted to dip below freezing; however, hunting success could improve as temperatures begin to drop.

As we move into the end of January, waterfowl are beginning to use different habitat types in contrast to what they were using earlier in the season. Typically, during late winter, waterfowl begin to use more densely covered areas as shelter from the harsh winter elements. These areas also provide isolation for pair bonding with potential breeding mates. Waterfowl hunters should keep an eye out for birds using densely vegetated habitats or flooded timber if they are not being successful in the usual, more open wetland habitats. Hunters should also look for newly flooded areas after this week's rainfall, as ducks will be seeking out new food resources.

By late January, most waterfowl have seen many hunting tactics, and can become very wary and call shy. Often times these birds do not commit to a decoy spread, or they may flare off at the first sound of a duck call. Successful hunters may have to become adaptable in order to maintain success through the last week of the season. Many Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) across the Mississippi Delta are still holding birds and are still producing successful hunting opportunities. Harvest reports on WMAs continue to be dominated by green-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall. The late January Aerial waterfowl survey was recently completed and survey results and distribution maps will soon be posted on MDWFP's website and social media platforms.

Mississippi's regular duck and goose hunting seasons will end on Tuesday, January 31st. Hunters are reminded that a youth, veteran, and active military waterfowl hunting weekend will follow the regular season on February 4th and 5th. 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 web page 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 WMA visits reported over the past week for Wildlife Management Areas where harvest of at least one bird was reported. Note: this data does not necessarily represent the total number of hunters and harvest for each WMA. Hunters are reminded of the requirement to check in prior to hunting and to check out upon leaving the WMA. Waterfowl hunters are also reminded to review all regulations and any applicable draw hunt procedures for any WMA they plan to hunt.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	11	8	0.73
Black Prairie	8	1	0.13
Canal Section	88	64	0.73
Caney Creek	4	1	0.25
Charlie Capps	28	32	1.14
Chickasaw	7	3	0.43
Divide Section	9	7	0.78
Howard Miller	121	317	2.62
John W. Starr	5	4	0.80
Lake George	11	15	1.36
Mahannah	199	375	1.88
Malmaison	89	150	1.69
Muscadine Farms	56	55	0.98
Nanah Waiya	33	30	0.91
Okatibbee	21	16	0.76
O'Keefe	68	94	1.38
Old River	21	18	0.86
Pascagoula River	95	41	0.43
Pearl River	29	42	1.45
Phil Bryant	13	7	0.54
Shipland	16	29	1.81
Sky Lake	15	15	1.00
Sunflower	3	4	1.33
Sunflower	94	65	0.69
Tallahala	7	7	1.00
Trim Cane	15	22	1.47
Tuscumbia	32	69	2.16
Twin Oaks	22	9	0.41
Upper Sardis	17	9	0.53
Ward Bayou	29	16	0.55
William C. Billy Deviney	38	52	1.37

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2022-23 Waterfowl Season

Water control structures in the Long Bayou and Dowling Bayou green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will be closed to capture water for the 2022-23 hunting season on Sunflower WMA. 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. Other 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>