



December 14, 2021 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 12, 2021.

Jackson, MS – The main portion of Mississippi's duck hunting season has begun, and harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water are still reporting relatively high hunting success. Mississippi continues to experience warm temperatures which extend far northward up the Mississippi Flyway. While these conditions are not favorable for continued migration of waterfowl into the state, the birds that are here are largely concentrated due to wetland habitat levels that are well below normal. These congregations of waterfowl observed in some areas are resulting in good early season hunting. Current conditions are likely to continue, as some areas of the state may receive some rain late in the week or over the weekend, but rainfall amounts are currently predicted to be minimal. Water levels in the Mississippi River are currently rising but are still well below normal levels for this time of year. This week's national weather outlook shows some potential for snowfall in the northern reaches of the Mississippi Flyway, but no weather events that are likely to cause a large southern migration into the magnolia state.

Many state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta again reported high hunting success over the past week. Green-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall have consistently made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese have significantly increased in number in the Mississippi Delta this week. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

Mississippi's regular waterfowl seasons are currently open, and will continue through January 31. The December aerial waterfowl survey is currently underway this week. Early indications are that local waterfowl numbers appear to be increasing in portions surveyed thus far. Recent survey efforts from Arkansas reported total duck and mallard numbers well below their long-term averages for this time of year. As soon as Mississippi's surveys are completed, the results and distribution maps are 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 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 selected Wildlife Management Areas. 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.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	4	2	0.50
Black Prairie	8	20	2.50
Canal Section	60	30	0.50
Caney Creek	1	1	1.00
Charlie Capps	8	22	2.75
Copiah County	3	0	0.00
Divide Section	7	12	1.71
Howard Miller	74	182	2.46
John Bell Williams	5	3	0.60
John W. Starr	4	7	1.75
Lake George	12	11	0.92
Mahannah	135	398	2.95
Malmaison	68	93	1.37
Marion County	2	0	0.00
Muscadine Farms	83	192	2.31
Nanah Waiya	23	81	3.52
Okatibbee	17	5	0.29
O'Keefe	42	33	0.79
Old River	35	12	0.34
Pascagoula River	130	72	0.55
Pearl River	17	13	0.76
Phil Bryant	33	74	2.24
Sandy Creek	2	0	0.00
Shipland	13	6	0.46
Sky Lake	14	14	1.00
Stoneville	1	1	1.00
Sunflower	133	174	1.31
Tallahala	12	2	0.17
Tuscumbia*	17	8	0.47
Twin Oaks	9	14	1.56
Upper Sardis	21	15	0.71
Ward Bayou	31	14	0.45
William C. Billy Deviney	41	66	1.61
Yockanookany	1	0	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 2021-22 Waterfowl Season

Water control structures in the Long Bayou and Dowling Bayou green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will be closed to capture water for the 2021-22 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>