



January 18, 2022 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 16, 2022.

Jackson, MS – Last week, Mississippi experienced a return of more mild temperatures, followed by a rainy Saturday and a snowy Sunday in many areas as the remains of Winter Storm Izzy reached the deep south. Wetland habitat increased incrementally in some areas over the week, but most of the state is still below normal levels for this time of year. The Mississippi River level has come to a standstill recently, and although it is still below flood stage, water levels have reached into some areas preferred by both ducks and duck hunters. River systems in the interior Delta have continued to fluctuate, but remain within their banks. This week's weather outlook for Mississippi predicts a warm and rainy midweek, followed by colder temperatures lasting into the weekend. Waterfowl hunters looking for late-season winter weather at northern and mid latitudes could find what they're looking for this week as temperatures take another dip across the Midwest.

Hunting reports declined last week, even as waterfowl numbers have increased across the Mississippi Delta, overall. Ducks and geese have been observed spreading out into newly flooded wetland habitat, perhaps impacting hunting success. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese remain very high in number in the Mississippi Delta, and hunters continue to report success in harvesting geese, even when hunting over setups that are focused on ducks. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

Approximately two weeks remain in Mississippi's regular waterfowl hunting seasons. The early January waterfowl aerial survey has recently been completed, and survey results and distribution maps are now posted on MDWFP's website and social media platforms. There was a significant increase in duck numbers observed during the early January survey, and biologists and hunters are hopeful that another increase will occur to finish the hunting season on a high note. The last survey of the season is underway this week, and a report will be available soon after completion. 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	9	2.25
Black Prairie	5	11	2.20
Canal Section	93	72	0.77
Charlie Capps	35	54	1.54
Copiah County	2	2	1.00
Divide Section	4	2	0.50
Howard Miller	61	71	1.16
Lake George	22	9	0.41
Mahannah	166	193	1.16
Malmaison	87	114	1.31
Muscadine Farms	49	43	0.88
Nanah Waiya	10	6	0.60
Okatibbee	23	6	0.26
O'Keefe	50	36	0.72
Old River	30	27	0.90
Pascagoula River	102	77	0.75
Pearl River	32	20	0.63
Phil Bryant	32	26	0.81
Sandy Creek	2	2	1.00
Shipland	22	12	0.55
Sky Lake	9	16	1.78
Stoneville	8	2	0.25
Sunflower	98	85	0.87
Tallahala	16	11	0.69
Trim Cane	10	2	0.20
Tuscumbia	32	36	1.13
Twin Oaks	14	8	0.57
Upper Sardis	18	11	0.61
Ward Bayou	42	26	0.62
William C. Billy Deviney	36	24	0.67

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>