



January 5, 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 January 3, 2021

Jackson, MS – A nice cold front moved into Mississippi to start the New Year. Heavy rain and a drop in temperature produced a push from southerly migrating ducks into Mississippi. Wetland habitat availability in the Mississippi Delta increased dramatically for the time being. The Mississippi River and its tributaries have begun to rise, which will increase the wetland habitat availability throughout most of the Delta. The extended forecast shows more rain midweek with the low temperatures dipping below freezing. As a result, weather severity index models predict that dabbling ducks (including mallards) could have a strong migration southward due to weather for the upcoming week.

Reports seem to indicate an increase in mallard numbers from last week in the Mississippi Delta. Recent harvest reports from public and private lands have included an increase in mallard harvest as well. With temperatures dipping below freezing at nights, deep-water habitat, such as catfish ponds or oxbow lakes should become more important to ducks if shallow flooded fields ice over. As shallow sheets of ice melt throughout the day, waterfowl will typically return to these areas quickly to feed. This in turn could prove for some nice afternoon hunting opportunities.

The early January aerial waterfowl survey is currently underway. As soon as surveys are completed, a full report will be available on www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl. This site also includes much more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, including links to hunting regulations, migration reports, and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state. With the second half of the hunting season remaining, hunters are looking forward to peak waterfowl numbers to begin the new year.

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	20	8	0.40
Howard Miller	146	310	2.12
Lake George	78	51	0.65
Mahannah	234	429	1.83
Muscadine Farms	28	9	0.32
O'Keefe	92	35	0.38
Phil Bryant	82	121	1.48
Shipland	15	25	1.67
Sky Lake	30	27	0.90
Sunflower	280	349	1.25
Twin Oaks	27	53	1.96
William "Billy" C. Deviney	38	11	0.29
East Central Region			
Nanah Waiya	69	65	0.94
Okatibbee	29	3	0.10
Trim Cane	3	0	0.00
Yockanookany	7	1	0.14
Northeast Region			
Canal Section	158	85	0.54
Chickasaw	9	5	0.56
Divide Section	20	5	0.25
John Bell Williams	16	1	0.06
Tuscumbia	38	32	0.84
Northwest Region			
Malmaison	145	189	1.30
Upper Sardis	26	6	0.23
Southeast Region			
Old River	25	5	0.20
Pascagoula River	255	192	0.75
Ward Bayou	76	46	0.61
Southwest Region			
Bienville	15	12	0.80
Caney Creek	2	0	0.00
Pearl River	18	7	0.39
Tallahala	9	7	0.78

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>