



January 26, 2021 Weekly Waterfowl Report

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Houston Havens (662) 299-0273, email: houston.havens@wfp.ms.gov

Darrin Hardesty (662) 588-2596, email: darrin.hardesty@wfp.ms.gov

The following report is a compilation of public and private land reports and habitat assessments during the week ending January 24, 2021.

Jackson, MS – The final week of Mississippi's waterfowl hunting season is here. Last week's hunting reports from both public and private lands improved slightly from the previous week overall but hunting success has not been consistent in many areas of the state. Last week's local weather began with cool temperatures, but quickly gave way to mild conditions which have persisted into this week. However, the forecast for the remainder of the season predicts one more short duration cold front by midweek, with low temperatures reaching the freezing point prior to a warm and rainy weekend. The Mississippi River and its tributaries throughout the interior Mississippi Delta remain well below their flood stages again this week, with no expectations of over bank flooding. Weather severity index models do not predict significant southern movements of mallards or other dabbling ducks for this week in the Mississippi Flyway.

Reports of mallards using forested wetlands remained high again this week, which is typical for late-season mallard behavior as they seek dense cover for escaping inclement weather, avoiding hunting pressure, and isolating for pair bonding. However, if new shallow water becomes available, mallards and other ducks often quickly respond to newly flooded food resources. This can cause ducks to become very site-specific in their habitat usage, so hunters are encouraged to note duck behavior and adjust hunting setups or locations when possible. Goose numbers have remained high across the Mississippi Delta for several weeks now, and hunters have been reporting successful mixed bag hunts with a variety of geese and ducks.

The regular waterfowl seasons will remain open through January 31. The light goose conservation order will resume on February 1 and will continue through February 5, then there will be a youth, veteran, and active military waterfowl weekend February 6 and 7. Afterwards, the conservation order will pick back up on February 8 and will run through March 31. Landowners and managers are encouraged to keep wetland habitat available on their properties after the hunting season ends so waterfowl can use these important habitats prior to their spring migration. In many cases, partially drawing down water levels can help to concentrate remaining food resources in wetlands, particularly aquatic invertebrates which ducks will feed on heavily in the coming weeks. The late January aerial waterfowl survey report will be available soon 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.

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	15	28	1.87
Howard Miller	39	62	1.59
Lake George	40	18	0.45
Leroy Percy	1	0	0.00
Mahannah	165	459	2.78
Muscadine Farms	22	12	0.55
O'Keefe	53	38	0.72
Phil Bryant	37	69	1.86
Shipland	13	14	1.08
Sky Lake	12	12	1.00
Sunflower	272	417	1.53
Twin Oaks	21	26	1.24
William "Billy" C. Deviney	7	4	0.57
East Central Region			
Black Prairie	10	16	1.60
John W. Starr	4	4	1.00
Nanah Waiya	17	14	0.82
Okatibbee	16	21	1.31
Trim Cane	9	3	0.33
Yockanookany	3	1	0.33
Northeast Region			
Canal Section	65	63	0.97
Chickasaw	4	2	0.50
Divide Section	12	8	0.67
John Bell Williams	4	4	1.00
Tuscumbia	25	22	0.88
Northwest Region			
Malmaison	78	124	1.59
Upper Sardis	26	15	0.58
Southeast Region			
Old River	30	6	0.20
Pascagoula River	139	115	0.83
Ward Bayou	29	11	0.38
Southwest Region			
Bienville	4	2	0.50
Caney Creek	3	0	0.00
Pearl River	21	26	1.24
Sandy Creek	1	3	3.00
Tallahala	12	7	0.58

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>