



Weekly Waterfowl Report
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
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The following report is a compilation of WMA reports and habitat assessments during the week ending December 20, 2015.

Jackson, MS – After an unseasonably warm start to the week, a welcomed cold front swept through Mississippi over the weekend, and a noticeable increase in waterfowl harvest reports resulted. However, the weather forecast for the remainder of this week predicts near-record or record high temperatures with high chances of rain. While rainfall could improve wetland habitat conditions across the state, warm temperatures are likely to cause ducks to sit tight without being forced to feed heavily to keep energy supplies high.

Aerial waterfowl surveys for December revealed an increase in duck numbers since last month, but duck estimates are still below average for this time of year in the Mississippi Delta. Hunters on some Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) across the Mississippi Delta are still harvesting ducks, with the primary species harvested being gadwall and green-winged teal. Several WMAs are still slowly increasing flooded habitat in order to provide maximum food resources later in winter as peak waterfowl numbers are expected to arrive. Abundance of wetland habitat across the Delta remains relatively high for this time of year. Migrant goose numbers, especially white-fronted geese, have continued to increase over the last week, and could be related to the “green-up” experienced in many agricultural fields as a result of warm temperatures. Deep water habitats such as active catfish ponds and oxbow lakes continue to hold abundant northern shovelers and a variety of abundant diving ducks.

The regular waterfowl season continues through January 31. The fourth draw period for WMA waterfowl draw hunts is currently open for applications. The December aerial waterfowl survey was completed last week, and the results and distribution maps are now posted on MDWFP’s website and social media. The Waterfowl Program website (www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl) lists links to regulations and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state, as well as other general waterfowl information as it develops.

Table 1: Water levels and general duck abundance ratings for selected Wildlife Management Areas.

WMA	Water Levels*	Bird Abundance
Charlie Capps	100%	Medium
Howard Miller	100%	Medium-High
Indianola	100%	Medium
Mahannah	100%	Low-Medium
Malmaison**	80%	Low
Muscadine Farms	80%	Low
O'Keefe	90%	Low-Medium
Sunflower	90%	Low
Twin Oaks	100%	Low
Trim Cane	60%	Low
Tuscumbia	60%	Low

*Indicates percentage of impoundments with water levels sufficient enough to hunt.

**Malmaison WMA green-tree reservoir is being managed at a lower water level than in past years.