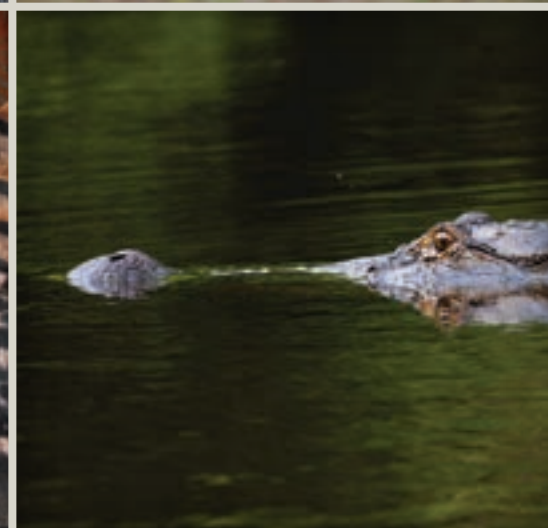
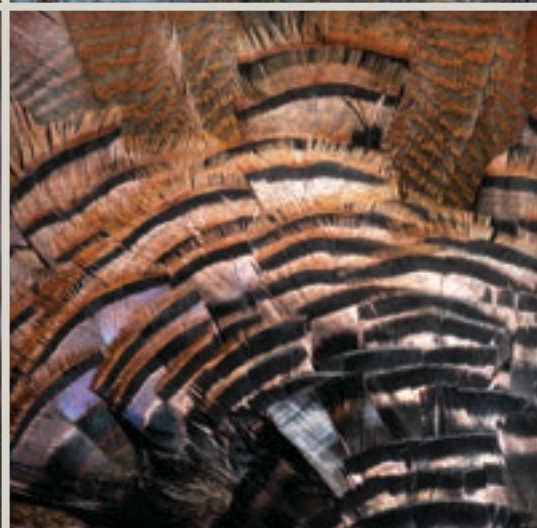


MISSISSIPPI WILD

A CONSERVATION SNAPSHOT





THE WILDLIFE BUREAU

vision is fulfilling the charge of conserving Mississippi's wildlife and their habitats on public and private lands through science-based information and applied management techniques. We currently have more than 90 wildlife biologists and land managers that carry out core function duties of monitoring wildlife (game and non-game) populations and managing their habitat.

Hunting license revenue and funds from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts) are the primary funding sources for wildlife management efforts.

Mississippi Wild: A Conservation Snapshot is an effort to provide hunters, land managers, and the public a status report on some of Mississippi's wildlife and their conservation efforts by MDWFP. This snapshot is telling the story of your conservation contribution.

MDWFP IS DEDICATED TO CONNECTING YOU WITH THE TOOLS, INFORMATION, AND RESOURCES THAT PROTECT OUR STATE'S RICH NATURAL HERITAGE. SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SPECIES, PROGRAMS, AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS FEATURED IN THIS BOOKLET — AND DISCOVER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED.

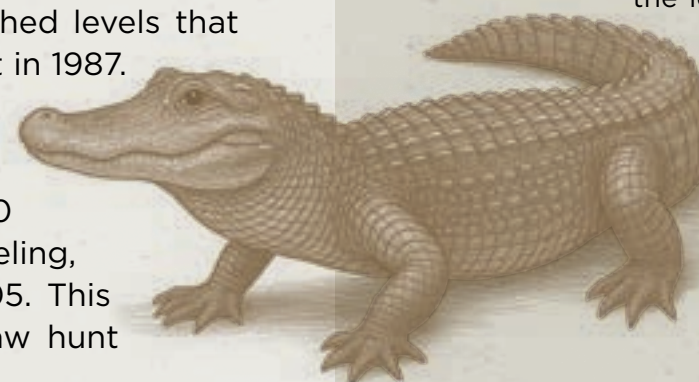


STATUS OF THE GATOR

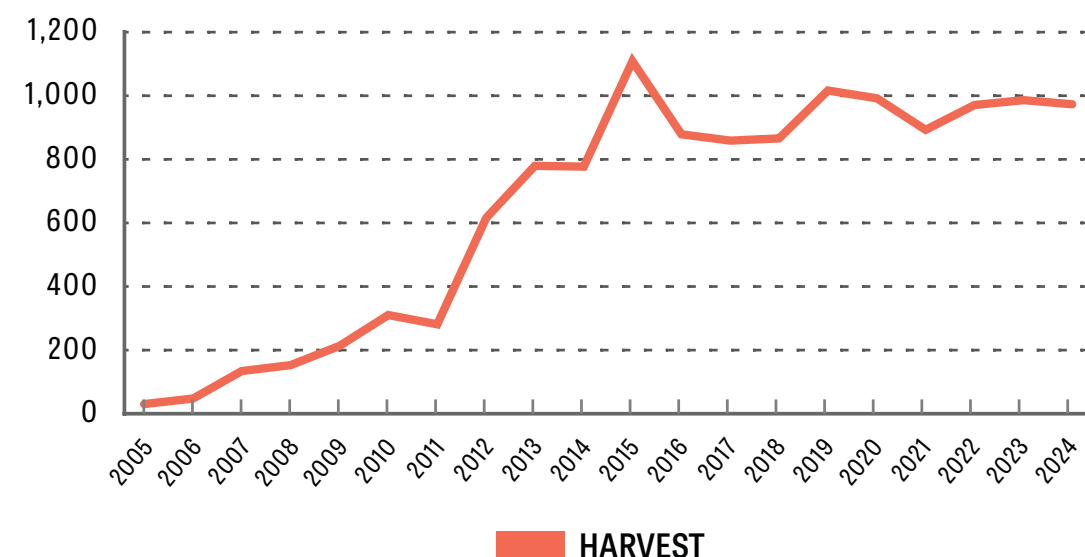


The **AMERICAN ALLIGATOR** is an iconic species with a remarkable comeback story. Once nearly wiped out in the early 1900s due to commercial harvesting for their hides, alligators were listed as endangered in 1967. By then, they were believed to be gone from much of their range in the Southeast. However, after decades of conservation efforts, populations in Mississippi reached levels that allowed it to be removed from the state's endangered species list in 1987. Today, Mississippi's alligator population is considered stable.

Since the early 2000s, MDWFP has conducted annual surveys from May through June along 12 routes covering more than 300 miles of public waters. This data, combined with population modeling, led to the establishment of a regulated alligator season in 2005. This hunting season has continued every year and is a popular draw hunt opportunity among hunters.



ANNUAL ALLIGATOR HARVESTS



- Annual harvest data is analyzed each year to assess harvest by zone and size class trends. This data is a key indicator for ensuring alligator hunting is a sustainable opportunity for current and future generations.

HOT TOPIC // PELAHATCHIE BAY HUNTING SEASON

In Pelahatchie Bay, off the Ross Barnett Reservoir, strong habitat conditions have supported a dense breeding population. A special season was specifically implemented there to lower the overall population by removing female alligators early in the breeding season. A population reduction lessens human-wildlife conflicts and nuisance alligator complaints. Further, this season allows hunters additional recreational opportunities while directly contributing to wildlife management efforts. The 2025 Pelahatchie Bay alligator season yielded a total of 20 alligators. Of those harvested, 16 were identified as breeding females. Notable captures this season included the longest male, measuring 10'6",

and the longest female, measuring 9'6". These statistics demonstrate that the hunting season effectively targets breeding females, which is essential for keeping the alligator population



in Pelahatchie Bay in check. MDWFP continues to monitor and survey alligator populations in Pelahatchie Bay to assess the efficacy of this special hunting season. Initial findings have shown a decline in alligator complaints from residents living around the bay, a strong indicator that the hunting initiative is reducing alligator density.



CONSERVATION EFFORTS

NEST STUDIES

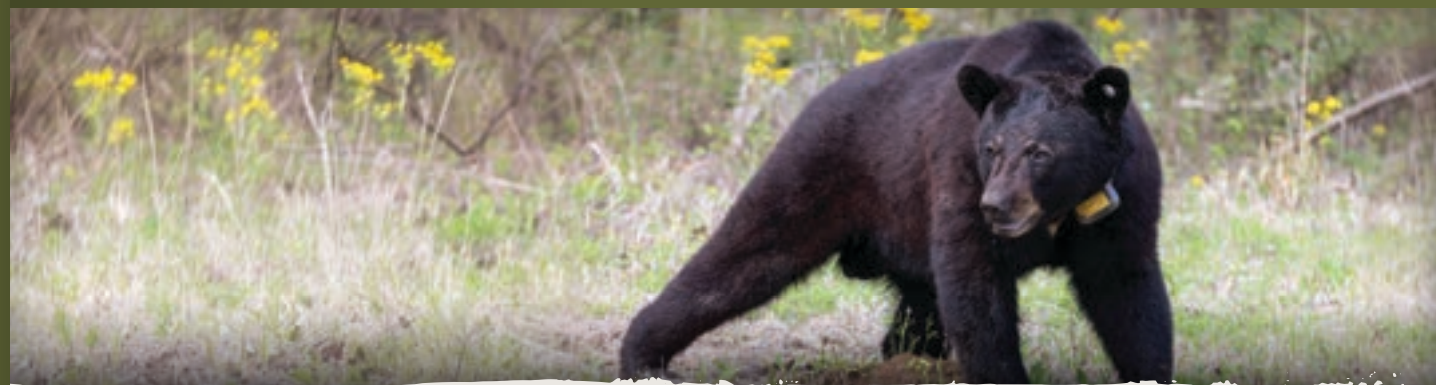
The Alligator Program will conduct intensive nest studies across the state using cameras to better understand average hatch times. Data collected from these camera studies will help determine whether adjustments to alligator season frameworks are needed.



ANNUAL SURVEYS

Each summer, MDWFP staff conduct alligator surveys on public waters and waterways across the state. These surveys provide a population index to monitor changes through time.

STATE OF THE BLACK BEAR

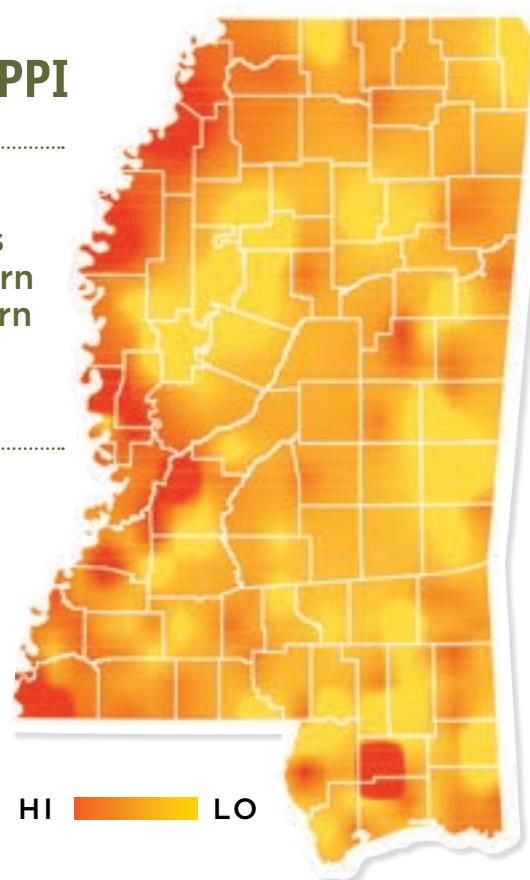


A species once plentiful through the 1800s and before, the **BLACK BEAR** began to see a marked decline in the early 20th century. By the 1930s, statewide estimates of black bear in the state were as low as a dozen. Through conservation efforts by state and federal agencies, black bears in the Magnolia State began their slow but steady rebound. Contrary to popular belief, Mississippi has never restocked black bears from other states — this recovery is the result of natural expansion and conservation, not relocation. This population growth combined with the natural dispersal of bears from Louisiana and Arkansas into Mississippi have bolstered the recovery. Bear sightings have been reported in about 90% of Mississippi's 82 counties, but the densest populations can be found along the western and southeastern portions of the state. MDWFP is currently working with Mississippi State University to get an updated population estimate.

BEAR SIGHTINGS IN MISSISSIPPI

90%
of Mississippi
Counties have
reported Black
Bear Sightings

Most Sightings
are along Western
and Southwestern
Counties



HOT TOPIC // AVOIDING CONFLICT

AVOIDING CONFLICT

As bears become more common around our state, it is more important for the public to know how to minimize conflict. Bears have an incredible sense of smell which makes them able to easily locate and capitalize on food sources. Things like trash, bird feeders, grills and smokers, and pet food can draw a bear onto your property. Almost all bear conflict can be avoided by keeping any food sources sealed, secured, and locked away.



SCAN FOR MORE
INFO ABOUT LIVING
WITH BEARS

TIPS TO STAY BEARWISE



NEVER FEED
OR APPROACH
BEARS



NEVER LEAVE
PET FOOD
OUTDOORS



SECURE FOOD,
GARBAGE &
RECYCLING



CLEAN &
STORE GRILLS



REMOVE BIRD
FEEDERS WHEN
BEARS ARE ACTIVE



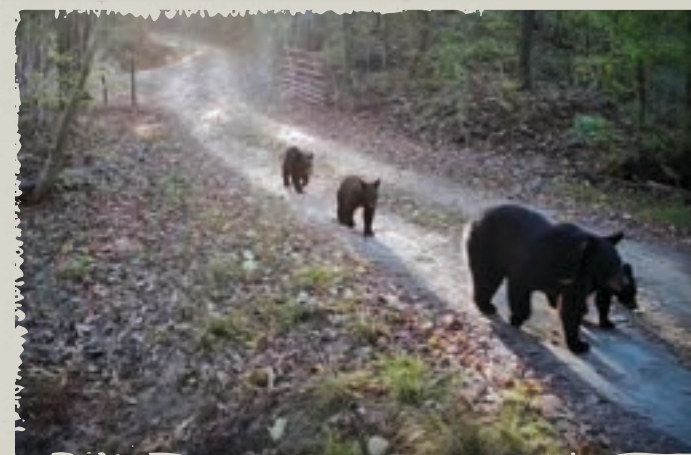
ALERT YOUR
NEIGHBORS TO
BEAR ACTIVITY



CONSERVATION EFFORTS

HAIR SNARE RESEARCH WITH MSU

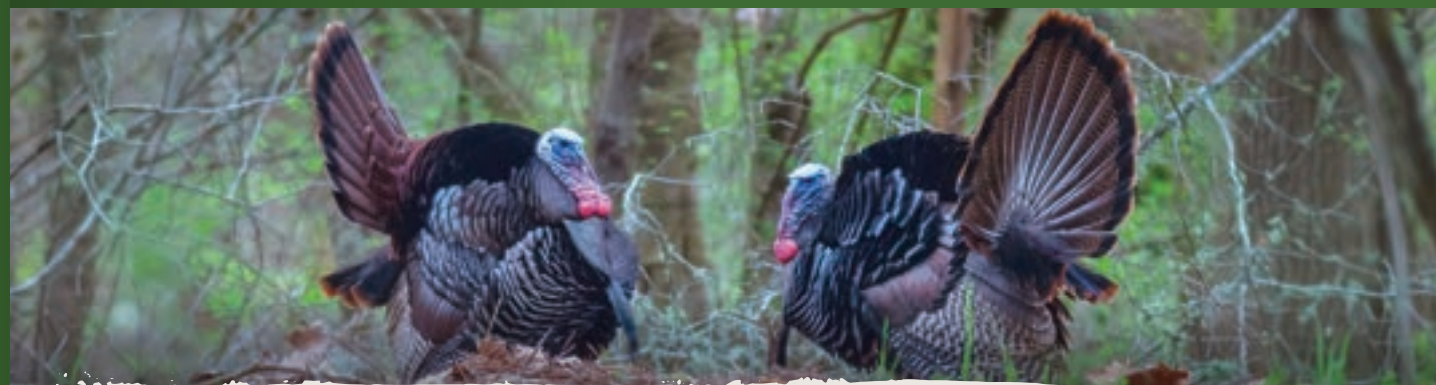
As a part of collaborative research, MSU has been systematically sampling different regions of the state using hair snares. Hair snares are made up of two strands of barbed wire (usually secured around 3-4 trees) with bait suspended in the center. When the bear brushes across the barbed wire to investigate the bait, a tuft of hair is snagged. The hair is then collected and submitted to a lab for genetic analysis. This research can be used to estimate bear density, recognize individuals, and identify where bears are from such as Arkansas or Louisiana.



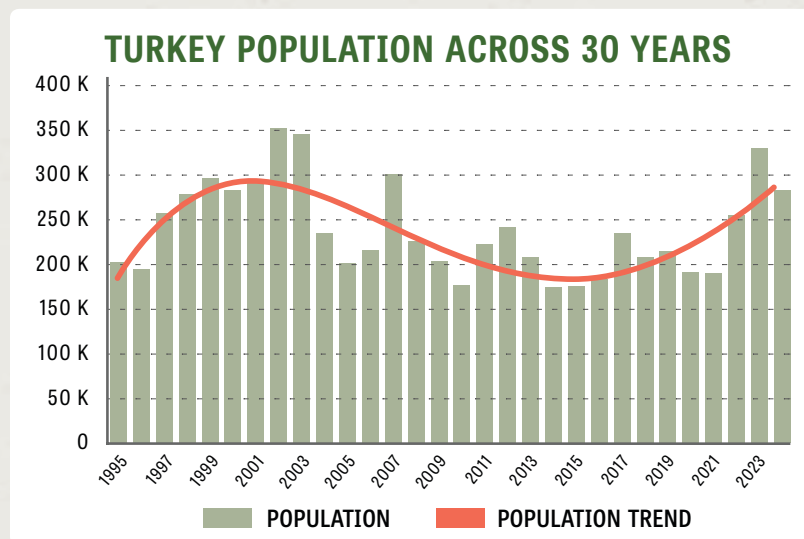
ANNUAL SPRING DEN CHECKS

In early spring, MDWFP performs den checks to collect reproductive information on collared female bears. If the female has cubs, she is sedated while the cubs are weighed, sampled, and PIT tagged (a small capsule inserted under the skin) for future identification. This data is critical for gaining a deeper understanding of the Mississippi black bear population.

STATE OF THE FLOCK



The **EASTERN WILD TURKEY** is a treasured gamebird with a storied history in the Magnolia State. Saved from the brink of extinction in the early 20th century, wild turkey populations began to rebound across the state thanks to extensive conservation efforts starting in the mid-1950s. By the 1980s, Mississippi was home to one of the most abundant wild turkey populations in the nation and became known as a blue-ribbon state for turkey hunting.



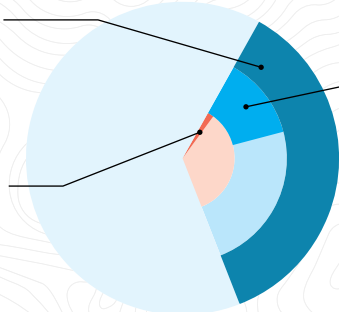
MDWFP RELIES ON OBSERVATIONS GATHERED FROM TURKEY HUNTERS TO HELP FORMULATE POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR WILD TURKEYS.

Today, Mississippi's turkey population annually fluctuates up and down based on each spring's hatch. After apparent declines during the early 2000s, the statewide population has appeared to rebound due to a succession of good hatches beginning around 2018.

MISSISSIPPI TURKEY HUNTING BY THE NUMBERS

36% of hunting license holders annually pursue turkeys.

Less than 6% of turkey hunters harvest their full 3-bird limit each spring.



Only about **1 in 3** turkey hunters successfully bag a bird each spring.

► During the 2024 spring season, an estimated **36,337** total turkeys were harvested, and turkey hunters amassed an estimated **691,849** days afield - a new record!

HOT TOPIC // HUNTING SEASON FRAMEWORKS

Does hunting season length and structure impact wild turkey populations? With 55 days of hunting opportunity—including youth season—Mississippi offers one of the nation's longest turkey seasons. While jakes are legally protected from adult hunters as a conservation measure, some worry the liberal season may pressure flocks. Striking the balance between hunter opportunity and turkey conservation is key.

To better understand the impact, MDWFP and Mississippi State University launched a two-part study: one tested shorter, later seasons on select Wildlife Management Areas; the other analyzed harvest data and hunter reports across various scenarios. The takeaway? Season length and structure has little effect on turkey population swings. Instead, the path to stronger flocks lies in boosting hen survival and improving hatch success.



CONSERVATION EFFORTS

WILD TURKEY HABITAT

To attract wild turkeys, your land must offer the right habitat. In some areas, regular low-intensity prescribed burns help create the forest and field conditions turkeys need. Mississippi research shows hardwood availability strongly predicts turkey numbers. So, maintaining or enhancing mast-producing hardwoods should be a priority.



FIRE ON THE LANDSCAPE



Since 2011, MDWFP's Fire on the Forty campaign has helped private landowners use prescribed fire to improve over 82,000 acres of turkey habitat in Mississippi through cost-sharing support. The program has also hosted dozens of workshops, educating 1,000+ landowners on the benefits of prescribed burning for wildlife like turkeys.

PARTNERSHIPS

MDWFP works with many partners to conserve Mississippi's turkey population. Two key groups— The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) and Turkeys for Tomorrow — focus specifically on wild turkeys and their habitat. NWTf funds statewide habitat projects through its Hunting Heritage Super Fund and supports landowners by backing Fire on the Forty and creating cost-share opportunities for timber improvements through the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund. Turkeys for Tomorrow helps fund critical research, including a project exploring the link between turkey population density, habitat quality, and disease.

GET INVOLVED!

MDWFP depends on hunters to help track turkey populations across Mississippi. Mandatory Game Check reports provide vital harvest data, while the long-running Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey gathers key insights on turkey numbers and gobbling activity. Every turkey hunter's input makes a difference—get involved and help shape the future of our flocks.



STATE OF SMALL GAME

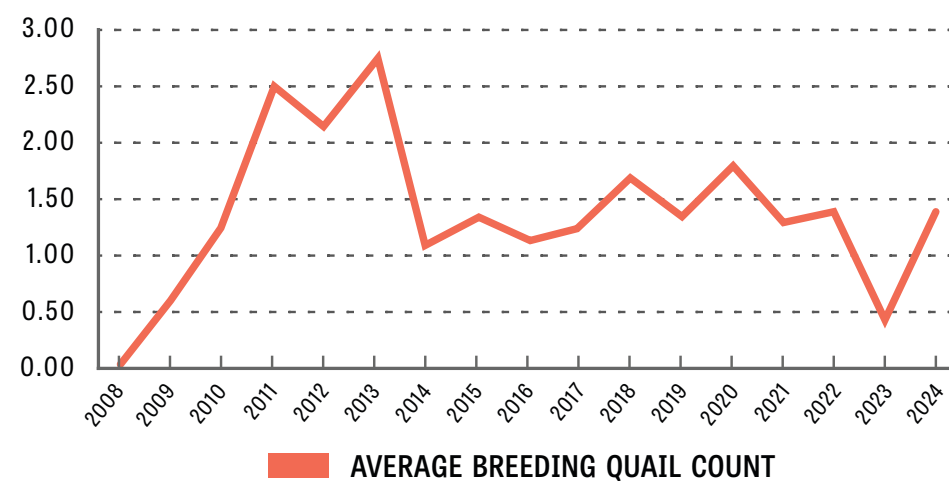


Mississippi's native **SMALL GAME** species—bobwhite quail, cottontail and swamp rabbits, and gray and fox squirrels—have long been an integral part of the state's hunting tradition. These species once thrived across the rural landscape, benefiting from farming, fire, and a mix of woodlands and fields. However, since the 1980s, shifts in land use, agriculture, and forestry have drastically altered the landscape. Bobwhite quail have faced steep declines, with wild populations now too low for consistent hunting. Rabbits, though still widespread, also suffer from the loss of brushy cover and field edges.



Gray squirrels remain abundant statewide, but fox squirrel populations are more variable. Populations of the Delta fox squirrel are stable in the Delta region, while Bachman fox squirrel populations have become more fragmented due to the loss of open woodlands. These differences show the need for habitat-specific management. While squirrels are more adaptable overall, intentional habitat work is now essential for sustaining or restoring populations of quail and rabbits. Managing for small game today requires thoughtful planning and a focus on habitat diversity at meaningful scales.

EXAMPLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA QUAIL SURVEY



This graph demonstrates the “new ground” effect. Bobwhite numbers showed a great response to initial habitat restoration, but then “leveled out” based on what the habitat could support. The population continues to show a positive response to habitat management efforts.

HOT TOPIC // MANAGING HABITAT

Managing land for small game species presents unique challenges across Mississippi. Quail and rabbits, in particular, require early successional habitat—open, low vegetation with a mix of grasses, forbs, and



shrubs. Historically, this type of habitat was created coincidentally through farming and natural disturbance. Today, it must be created and maintained intentionally using habitat management, such as prescribed fire, over large areas. Sustaining a huntable quail population, for example, may require thousands of acres or coordinated efforts can support some birds for the benefit of keeping some quail around.

Rabbits benefit from similar habitat conditions, including young forests, field edges, and cutover timber stands. However, access is a growing concern for rabbit and squirrel



hunters alike. Many private lands are leased for deer hunting throughout much of the small game season, limiting opportunity.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

PRESCRIBED BURNING

Prescribed burning — championed through the Fire on the Forty Initiative — is one of the most effective tools for restoring early successional habitat critical to bobwhite quail and rabbits. It also enhances food and cover for species like the Bachman fox squirrel, which depend on open pine woodlands and patchy landscapes.



HABITAT RESTORATION



Habitat and access improvements for small game — such as grassland habitat enhancement, edge management, and forest stand improvement — are conducted across multiple WMAs each year.

ADVANCED MONITORING

MDWFP monitors quail populations on WMAs with quail habitat management potential to track population trends over time through whistle count surveys. The public is encouraged to submit observations through the Bobscares app to contribute to the knowledge of quail population distributions throughout the state. MDWFP is cooperating with Mississippi State University to implement new research to learn more about quail population dynamics in present-day landscapes.

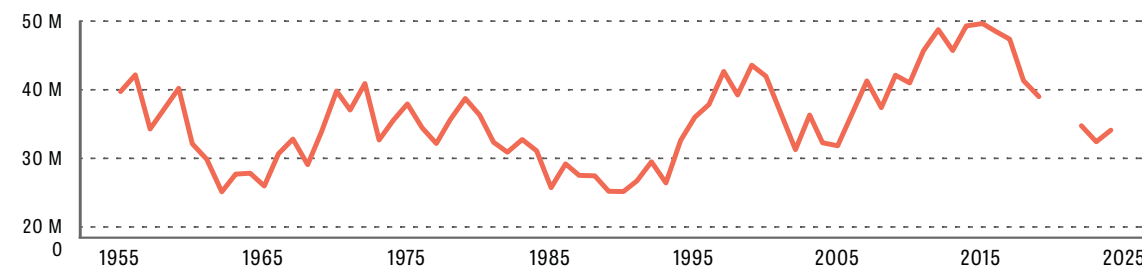


STATUS OF DUCK POPULATIONS



Each spring, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surveys breeding duck populations to inform hunting regulations and to provide a trend comparison to past years. Duck populations cycle up and down largely due to the quantity of quality breeding habitat (wetlands and grasslands) during spring and summer. Waterfowl hunters continue to be a vital funding source for critical habitat protection, enhancements, and restoration through duck stamp and hunting license sales.

BREEDING DUCK POPULATION ESTIMATES



2024 HARVEST ESTIMATES AND HUNTER EFFORT STATISTICS

1.04 M

Total Ducks Harvested

213 K

Mallards Harvested

619 K

Total Days Ducks Hunted

11.9

Days Per Hunter on Average

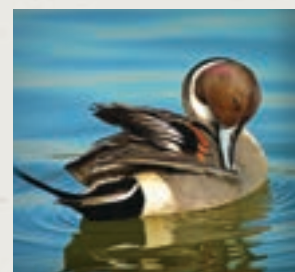
1.99

Ducks Harvested Per Day Hunted

20.1

Ducks Harvested Per Hunter Per Season

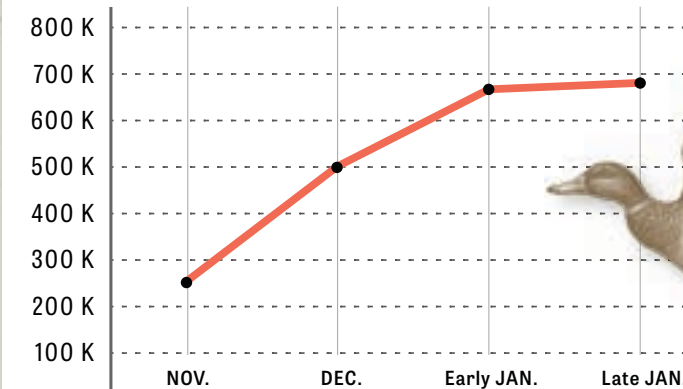
WATERFOWL STAMPS



Mississippi state waterfowl stamp sales continue to show an increasing trend as waterfowl hunting has remained a very popular outdoor activity. Funds generated from state waterfowl stamp sales are used to manage wetland habitat here in Mississippi, protect critical breeding habitat in the northern United States and Canada, monitor wintering waterfowl populations, and to conduct research that informs future management of wetlands.

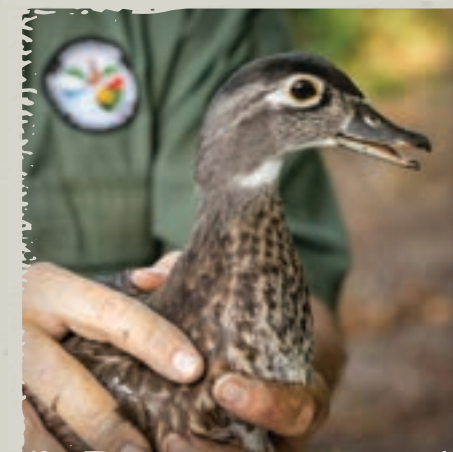
HOT TOPIC // WHERE ARE THE DUCKS?

TOTAL DUCKS LONG-TERM AVERAGES



Waterfowl hunting in Mississippi is still a favorite opportunity for sportsmen and women. Further, funds contributed by hunters not only help manage habitat in the breeding grounds of U.S. and Canada but also overwintering habitat in Mississippi. MDWFP biologists conduct aerial waterfowl surveys each fall and winter, counting and collecting locations of observed waterfowl and what types of wetlands they're found using. Summary reports with distribution maps are posted for the public on www.mdwfp.com and long-term trends are tracked to compare from year to year.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

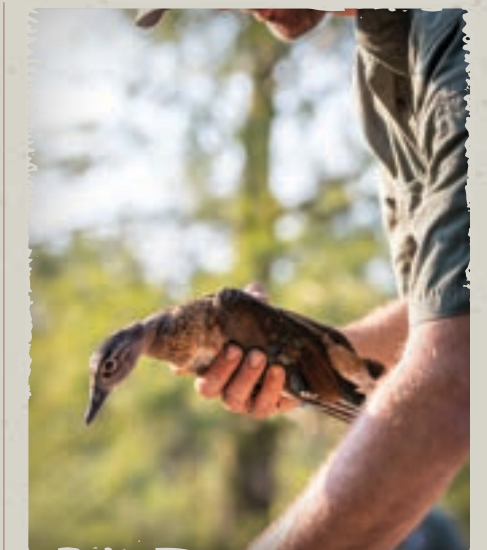


WOOD DUCK BANDING

MDWFP biologists trap and band resident wood ducks each summer. This pre-season banding provides information on birds that breed and raise young in Mississippi. Banding is important because it yields data from individual birds on their dispersal and migrations, life spans, and survival rates. Because most bird species are banded at such a low rate in relation to the entire wild population, the rarity of harvesting or observing a banded bird is considered a trophy experience.

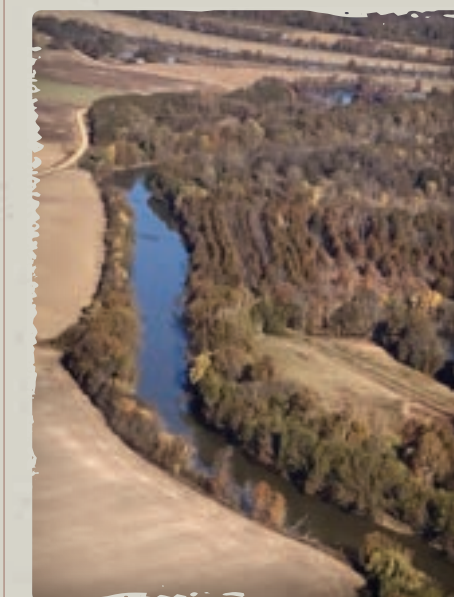
MSU WATERFOWL RESEARCH

Mississippi State University researchers have partnered with MDWFP to conduct in-depth analyses on our aerial waterfowl survey data. This study will help to inform timing of waterfowl migrations into the state, long-term changes in waterfowl numbers, and what might influence the distributions of birds wintering in Mississippi.



AVIAN INFLUENZA MONITORING

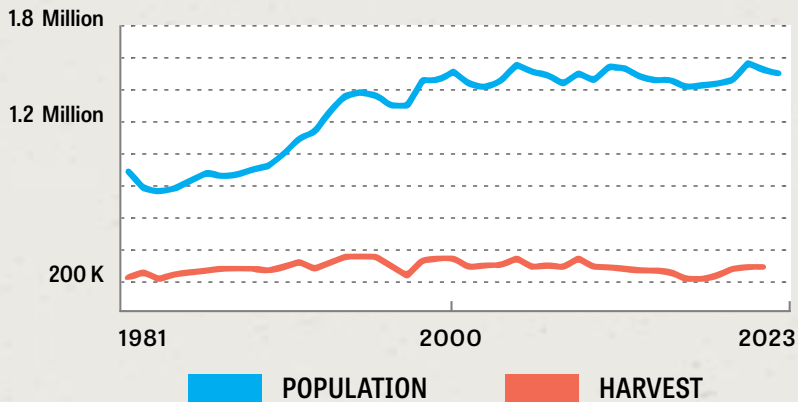
Over the last few years, MDWFP biologists have assisted USDA APHIS Wildlife Services with monitoring wild bird populations for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Identifying the prevalence and distribution of this disease in wild migratory birds like ducks and geese helps to inform potential risks to other wildlife and the domestic poultry industry.



STATE OF THE HERD



WHITE-TAILED DEER are a favorite among Mississippi hunters. Since the late 1980s, Mississippi has seen a steady increase in the deer population. Many people have enjoyed this increase in population over the years for not only the increased hunting opportunity, but also the joy in simply seeing these animals on their property. In contrast, there are many challenges that come with the increased population. Without additional harvest, the population will continue to increase leading to an influx in deer-vehicle collisions, agricultural impacts, and opportunity for disease spread.

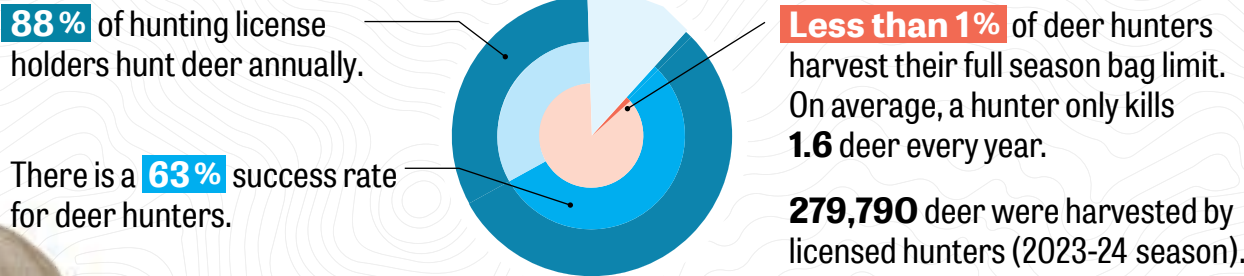


DEER POPULATION & HARVEST ESTIMATE

AS DEER HARVESTS DECREASE, POPULATION INCREASES. IN ORDER TO HAVE A BALANCED DEER POPULATION, HUNTERS NEED TO HARVEST MORE DEER ANNUALLY.

HUNTERS ARE THE KEY TO MANAGING OUR DEER HERD FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

MISSISSIPPI DEER HUNTING BY THE NUMBERS

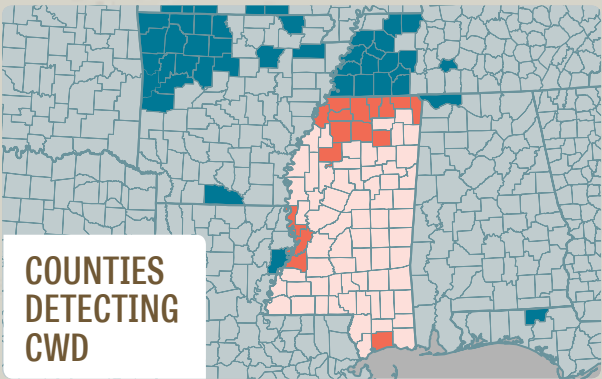


► In Mississippi there are **141 days** of deer season. That's over **one-third** of a year. Hunters have ample opportunity to hunt deer. MDWFP encourages you to use your bag limit!

HOT TOPIC // CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?

CWD is a highly contagious and fatal illness affecting white-tailed deer in North America (along with other members of the cervid family). CWD attacks the nervous system through fatal prions and is transmitted via animal-to-animal contact as well as through contact with areas that have been contaminated with infected saliva, urine, or feces. There is currently no cure or treatments for this disease.



48,103

CWD Samples*

317

Positive CWD Samples*

16

Counties with CWD Detection*

6

New Counties in 2023-24

GET MORE INFO.

* TOTAL NUMBERS SINCE THE FIRST DETECTION OF CWD IN MISSISSIPPI IN FEBRUARY 2018.

MDWFP participates in multiple CWD research projects with Mississippi State University. Topics including new environmental sampling methods, prion strain typing, economic impacts, and risk factors for transmission. Continued research is fueled by hunter participation. Submit your CWD

samples at one of the 59 public drop-off freezers located across the state or ask your processor if they collect CWD samples. MDWFP partners with 67 participating taxidermists across the state that collect samples for testing.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

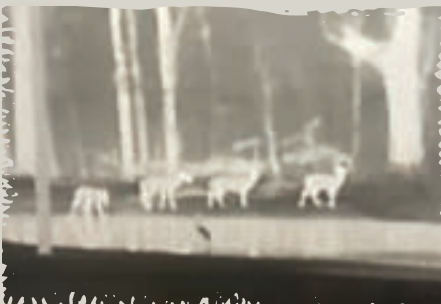


NEW PROJECTS ABOUT POPULATION & HARVEST

Mississippi is currently the only state without a mandatory form of harvest reporting or tagging for white-tailed deer. Harvest data provides valuable population trend information at the county level. In the absence of this information, MDWFP and Mississippi State University are developing techniques using thermal cameras and hunter harvest information to assess population trends, particularly in CWD Management Zones.

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP WITH MSU

CWD continues to threaten the health of white-tailed deer, which may have population level impacts. We are working with MSU to assess how it may be affecting populations in CWD Management Zones. Further, we are researching other factors that may contribute to the spread of CWD, such as supplemental feeding and wildlife interactions (e.g., wild hogs).



THERMAL SURVEYS

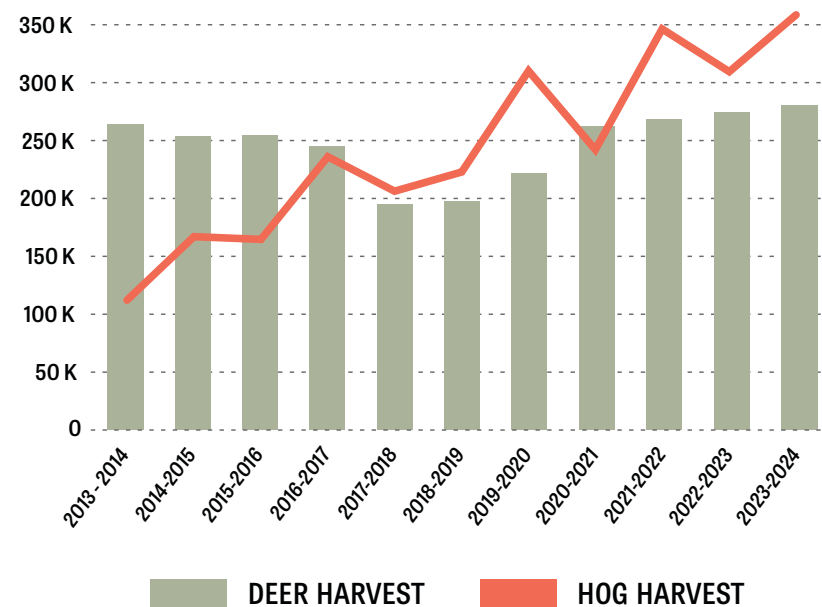
Thermal cameras provide MDWFP biologists with innovative technology for assessing deer density at broad and/or fine scales. Staff are currently using these cameras to conduct annual surveys to assess deer density changes on multiple WMAs. Further, MDWFP is working with MSU to develop protocols for county-level surveys.

STATUS OF WILD HOGS



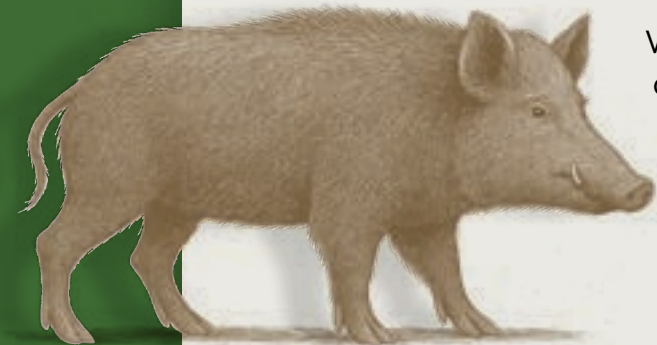
WILD HOGS remain one of the most destructive species in Mississippi — despite aggressive efforts by federal, state, local, and private partners — including landowners. These animals continue to negatively affect landowners, resource managers, and outdoor enthusiasts. Data from MDWFP’s Mississippi Hunter Harvest Survey confirms the growing problem.

WILD HOG HARVESTS VS. DEER HARVEST



Over the past decade, wild hog harvests in Mississippi have surged—surpassing deer in recent years. In 2023–2024 alone, hunters took an estimated 356,701 wild hogs, compared to 279,790 deer. This trend underscores the growing impact of Mississippi’s wild hog problem.

While hunter harvests are high, traditional hunting alone does not effectively control wild hog populations. The most effective method is large-scale trapping of entire sounders (family groups), which helps restore habitats and slow population growth.



HOT TOPIC // MANAGING POPULATIONS WITH TOXICANTS

As hog damage reaches record levels, many states are testing advanced control methods. Even with research-based best practices, reducing populations is difficult, and true eradication is rare. Without constant monitoring, hogs often return to areas once cleared. To manage rising populations, some states like Texas and Oklahoma have approved warfarin-based toxicants under restricted use. Sodium nitrite, used internationally, remains unapproved by the Environmental Protection

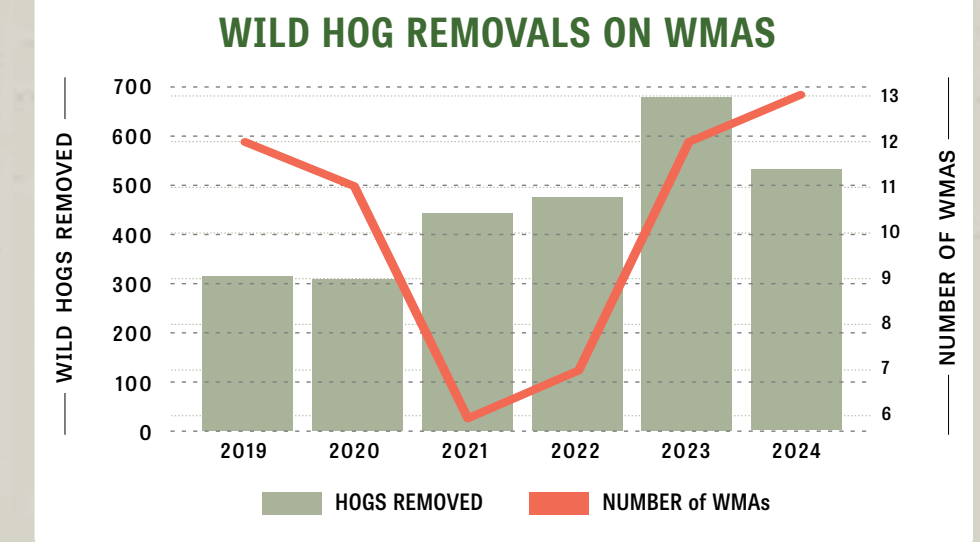
Agency (EPA) in the U.S., though new delivery systems from LSU aim to improve safety and species targeting. While Mississippi hasn’t approved toxicants, we’re closely tracking national research. Future EPA decisions and ongoing field trials will shape the role of toxicants in large-scale hog management. Balancing effectiveness with environmental safety remains critical. MDWFP remains committed to efforts that control hog populations and minimize habitat damage.



CONSERVATION EFFORTS



MDWFP faces many of the same wild hog challenges as Mississippi’s landowners. These invasive animals damage both private and public lands, making coordinated control efforts essential. For years, MDWFP has expanded trapping operations across Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), refining techniques that have proven effective over time.



One of the most important tools in this effort is the Wild Hog Recording System (WHRS) — a statewide platform that allows MDWFP staff to collect, store, and analyze trapping data remotely. This system has helped improve coordination, track success, and prioritize future efforts across regions.

With proven success on public lands, MDWFP with assistance from a Mississippi Outdoor

Stewardship Trust Fund grant will be launching a Private Lands Cooperative Program in 2025, starting near Trim Cane WMA. This pilot will provide trap systems and build partnerships with nearby landowners to expand hog control beyond WMA boundaries, especially in areas ineligible for other assistance programs. MDWFP remains committed to efforts that control hog populations and minimize habitat damage.

STATE OF PRIVATE LANDS



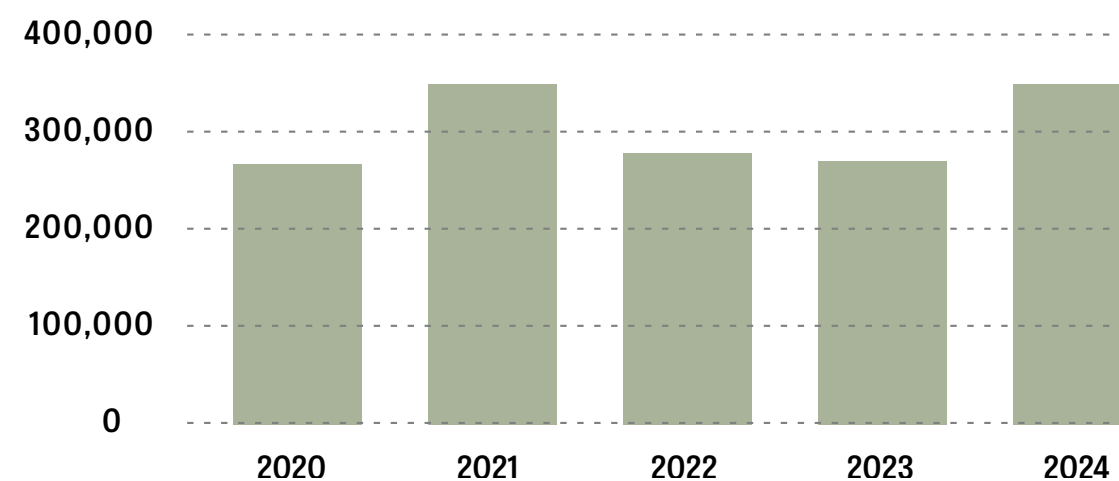
The **PRIVATE LANDS PROGRAM** (PLP) provides science-based guidance to private landowners and leaseholders to help them make informed decisions about managing wildlife and natural resources. PLP annually conducts hundreds of site visits impacting more than 200,000 acres. This consistent trend indicates private landowners remain actively engaged in habitat and wildlife management across Mississippi. Technical assistance is free and available to all Mississippi residents, regardless of property size or ownership type.

Most landowners served through the program manage properties around 200 acres in size, and many are new landowners seeking support within their first five years of ownership. Follow-up surveys show high satisfaction rates, with the majority of participants implementing at least one recommended conservation practice.

PLP biologists also help implement the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP), which supports habitat and herd management on more than 1.8 million acres of public and private land annually. In addition to one-on-one site visits, PLP staff engage with the broader community through public presentations, workshops, and educational media that promote responsible land stewardship across Mississippi.



TOTAL ACRES IMPACTED BY DMAP



HOT TOPIC // FIRE ON THE LANDSCAPE

PRESCRIBED FIRE

Prescribed fire is one of the most effective tools for landowners to manage forests and improve wildlife habitat. This controlled, intentional burning mimics nature's way of clearing underbrush, recycling nutrients, and promoting the growth of native plants. Used responsibly, it restores timberlands, supports game and non-game species, and reduces the risk of destructive wildfires. Through the Private Lands Program, MDWFP helps landowners use fire to build healthier, more resilient ecosystems.



80%
of Mississippi
Land Base
is Private

90%
of Hunting Days
Occur on Private
Land on Average

413
Properties Were
Involved in
PLP Last Year

200
Acres is the
Median Tract Size
Per Owner

CONSERVATION EFFORTS



COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE

Cost-share programs help private landowners implement habitat restoration practices by reducing financial barriers to conservation. Through initiatives like Fire on the Forty and other federally funded grants, landowners receive support for practices such as prescribed burning, invasive species control, and native vegetation management. These programs have impacted tens of thousands of acres across Mississippi, improving forest health and wildlife habitat while strengthening landowner engagement in conservation. With millions of dollars in cost-share funds invested since their inception, these efforts continue to be a powerful tool for promoting stewardship on private lands.

LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE

Since 2012, the MDWFP, along with its partners, has conducted **36 workshops** instructing more than 1,200 landowners on the safe implementation of prescribed fire. Using funds from a Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund project, the MDWFP purchased and outfitted two **prescribed burn trailers** to help private landowners implement prescribed fire.



STATE OF WMAs



MDWFP actively monitors wildlife populations and harvest trends across all **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS** (WMAs). Habitat management remains a central focus to ensure that the year-round needs of various species—such as nesting cover, brood habitat, and winter food sources—are consistently met. Hunting seasons and regulations on WMAs are carefully structured to maintain sustainable harvest levels, preventing overharvest and ensuring long-term resource conservation.

53
Wildlife
Management Areas
Across Mississippi

650k +
Acres Encompass
the WMA Footprint



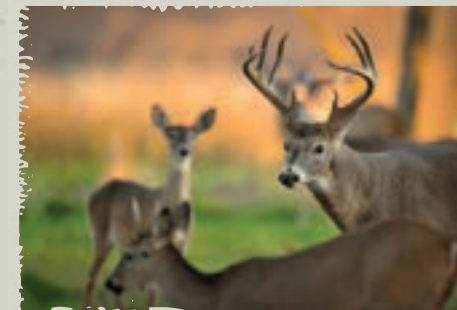
Recent survey data indicates that wildlife populations remain stable or are improving in many WMAs. Notably, wild turkeys have shown encouraging signs of recovery, with several consecutive years of strong hatches resulting in visible population increases across several regions. These trends underscore the effectiveness of current habitat and population management strategies.



HOT TOPIC // REFINING MANAGEMENT

HUNTER PARTICIPATION IN CWD ZONES

Several WMAs in Mississippi are located within Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Zones. Active participation from hunters continues to be essential for monitoring CWD, as tissue samples from harvested deer provide critical data for tracking the disease's presence and spread. This cooperative surveillance effort helps ensure informed decision-making and timely management responses.



CHANGING PINE FOREST HABITAT

Pine forests in northeast and southwest Mississippi have suffered significant damage from recent drought conditions and southern pine beetle infestations. These stressors have altered habitat conditions, prompting MDWFP to implement targeted reforestation and habitat restoration initiatives. These projects are vital for long-term forest health and the wildlife species that depend on these ecosystems.

TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES MANAGEMENT

MDWFP is incorporating cutting-edge technology to enhance its management capabilities. Thermal imaging cameras are being used to improve accuracy in population surveys. Drones are now deployed for aerial monitoring, habitat assessment, and even precise herbicide applications—tools that offer increased efficiency while minimizing disturbance to sensitive habitats.



CONSERVATION EFFORTS

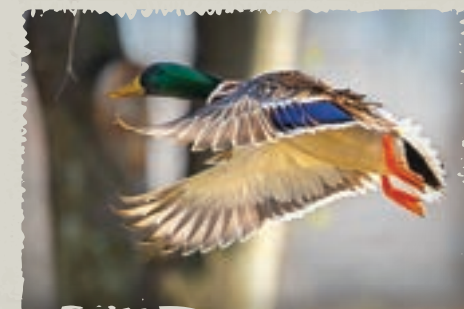


PRESCRIBED FIRE

Prescribed fire remains one of the most effective tools for managing and restoring native wildlife habitats in southeastern ecosystems. MDWFP staff conducted prescribed burns on over 6,000 acres across multiple WMAs in the past year, promoting diverse plant communities and improving habitat conditions for game and non-game species alike.

OVERWINTERING WATERFOWL

Mississippi, particularly the Delta region, plays a critical role in supporting overwintering waterfowl. MDWFP manages more than 9,000 acres of moist-soil habitat within WMAs, providing essential food resources that support migratory birds during winter months and contribute to overall flyway conservation goals.



MECHANICAL MULCHING

Mechanical mulching is another innovative practice used to reclaim habitat overtaken by dense thickets of undesirable vegetation or young saplings. Mechanical mulching followed by herbicide application in some cases, was used to improve access, visibility, and space for native flora and fauna on over 400 acres of degraded WMA habitat.



MISSISSIPPI'S CONSERVATION SUCCESS IS FUNDED BY YOU

Mississippi's forests, wetlands, and waterways are filled with life — from the thunder of wild turkeys in spring to the quiet rhythm of a rod and reel. These experiences are made possible by the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation — a proven approach that restored populations of species like deer, turkey, and waterfowl after decades of decline.

This model ensures wildlife is managed in the public trust, guided by science — not profit — and accessible to all. It's powered by the American System of Conservation Funding, which channels support from hunters, anglers, and related industries into science-based management.

Conservation is a partnership. When you hunt, fish, or simply enjoy the outdoors, you play a vital role in sustaining Mississippi's wildlife and wild places for future generations.



THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF CONSERVATION FUNDING powers Mississippi's success. This system rests on three key pillars:

1

LICENSE SALES
for
HUNTING & FISHING

2

EXCISE TAXES
on
GUNS, AMMUNITION,
& SELECT ARCHERY
EQUIPMENT
(Wildlife Restoration Program)

3

EXCISE TAXES
on
FISHING EQUIPMENT AND
BOAT FUEL
(Sport Fish Restoration Program)

Each year, millions of dollars for conservation are generated from license sales, recreational shooters, hunters, anglers, and outdoor industries. These user-driven investments ensure that those who enjoy the outdoors directly support its future. Every dollar supports programs that make Mississippi's wild places healthier, such as:



RESTORING HABITAT
FOR GAME AND
NON-GAME SPECIES



MANAGING WILDLIFE
POPULATIONS THROUGH
SCIENCE



EDUCATING YOUTH
AND NEW HUNTERS
AND ANGLERS



IMPROVING PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE LANDS AND ACCESS
FOR ALL OUTDOOR USERS



COMBATING INVASIVE SPECIES
AND CONSERVING AT-RISK
WILDLIFE



YOUR LICENSE IS YOUR LEGACY

Wildlife face growing challenges like habitat loss and declining outdoor participation — but the solution remains the same: active support through engagement, education, and getting involved. By purchasing a license, you're not only unlocking outdoor adventure —you're helping secure the future of Mississippi's natural resources.



**GET YOUR
LICENSE TODAY.**





MDWFP.COM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MDWFP WILDLIFE BUREAU AND THE EFFORTS BEING MADE TO ENSURE MISSISSIPPI'S NATURAL RESOURCES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.