



# MDWFP Aerial Waterfowl Survey Report

January 22 - 24, 2013



## WATERFOWL PROGRAM

Prepared by:

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Biologists completed the late January MDWFP aerial waterfowl survey during the week of January 22 – 24. Although a large amount of flooded habitat remains, flood waters had receded since the early January survey. Some areas are still deeply flooded at or above their optimum levels. These conditions provide many options for ducks seeking undisturbed areas across the Delta landscape, which can sometimes lead to difficult hunting conditions or poor success.

Although peak duck numbers were observed during this survey, overall, late January duck estimates were significantly below average compared to the same surveys in previous years (Table 1 and Figure 1). All groups of ducks surveyed (e.g. mallards, other dabblers, and divers) followed the same trend, with estimates below the past averages for this time of year. Mallards were the most abundant species observed, followed closely by northern shovelers and gadwall.

The northern portion of the Delta contained the greatest abundance of ducks overall, as well as the greatest amount of managed wetland habitat on the landscape. The northwestern region of the Delta contained the greatest abundance of mallards and other dabblers, followed closely by the northeastern region. The southeastern region contained the highest abundances of diving ducks.

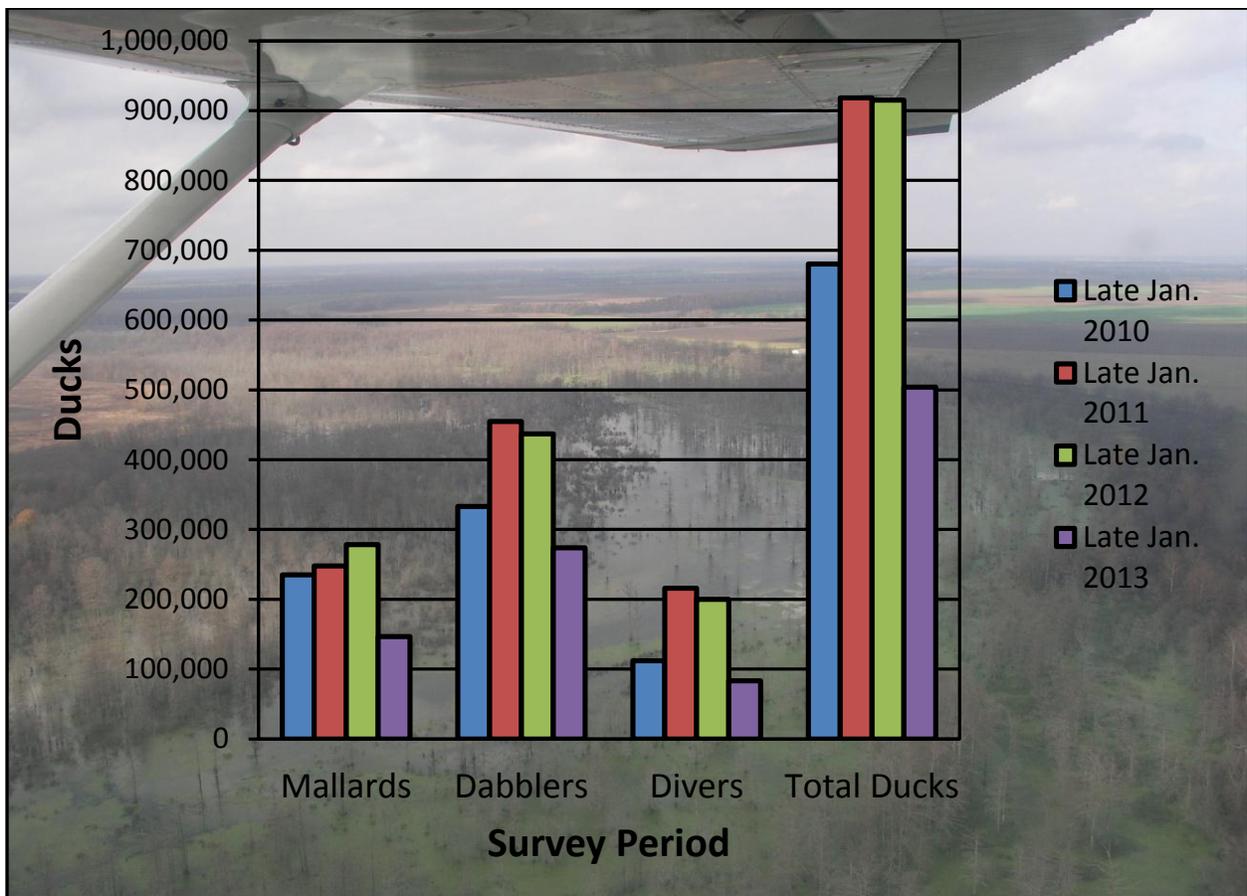
Most mallards and other dabblers were again observed using large expanses of flooded habitat along the shallow edges. Flooded agricultural fields held the greatest abundances of mallards and other dabblers. Also, an increase in the use of forested wetlands by mallards and other dabblers was observed in all regions of the Delta. Most diving ducks were observed using large fish pond complexes. Most ducks using large flooded fields were again observed in the shallow “leading” edges of water or in the centers of fields. This is likely due to ducks exploiting newly flooded food resources at proper depths, while also avoiding levees and tree lines where hunters can easily hide.

All regular waterfowl seasons will end on Sunday, January 27, but hunters are reminded that the light goose conservation order will be open January 28 – February 1. The conservation order will close during the Youth Waterfowl Weekend on February 2 – 3, and will open again from February 4 – March 31. For more information on the MDWFP Waterfowl Program or regulations for the Youth Waterfowl Weekend and light goose conservation order, visit our website at <http://mdwfp.com/waterfowl>.

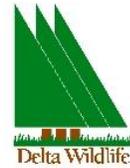
**Table 1.** Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the late January survey period, 2010-2013.

| Species            | Survey Period  |                |                |                |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                    | Late Jan 2010  | Late Jan 2011  | Late Jan 2012  | Late Jan 2013  |
| Mallards           | 234,937        | 247,913        | 278,205        | 146,782        |
| Dabblers           | 333,240        | 454,578        | 436,996        | 273,905        |
| Diving Ducks       | 112,167        | 215,821        | 199,926        | 83,119         |
| <b>Total Ducks</b> | <b>680,344</b> | <b>918,313</b> | <b>915,127</b> | <b>503,806</b> |

**Figure 1.** Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the late January survey period, 2010-2013.



## Distribution of Mallards in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 22 - 24, 2013

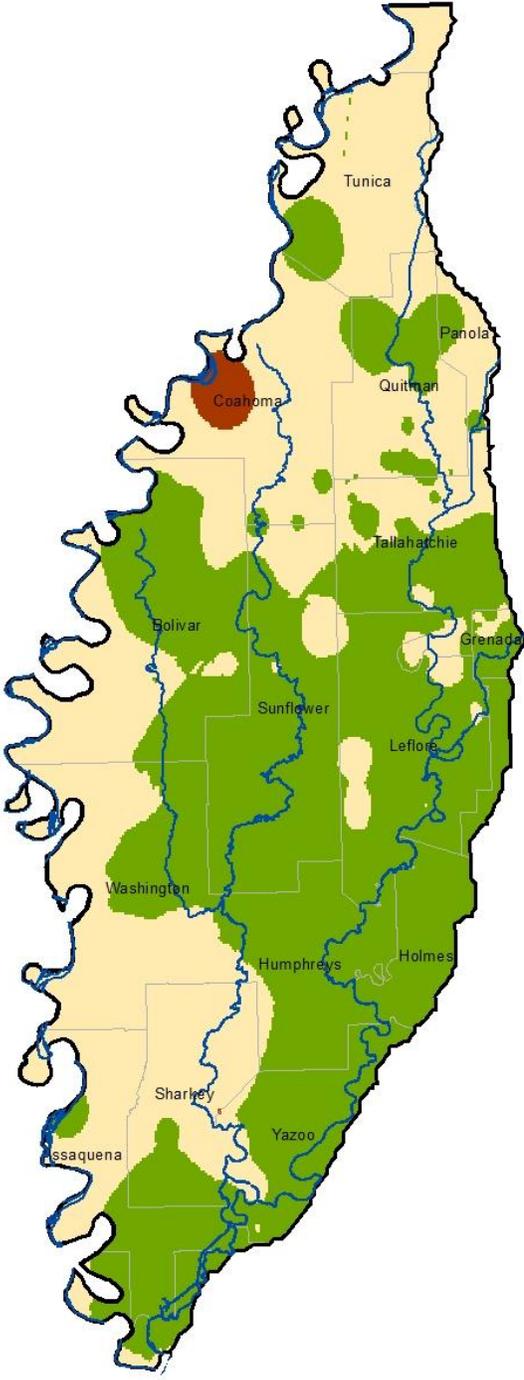


### Description

- Low (<12/mi<sup>2</sup>)
- Medium (12-115/mi<sup>2</sup>)
- High (>115/mi<sup>2</sup>)



# Distribution of Total Ducks in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 22 - 24, 2013

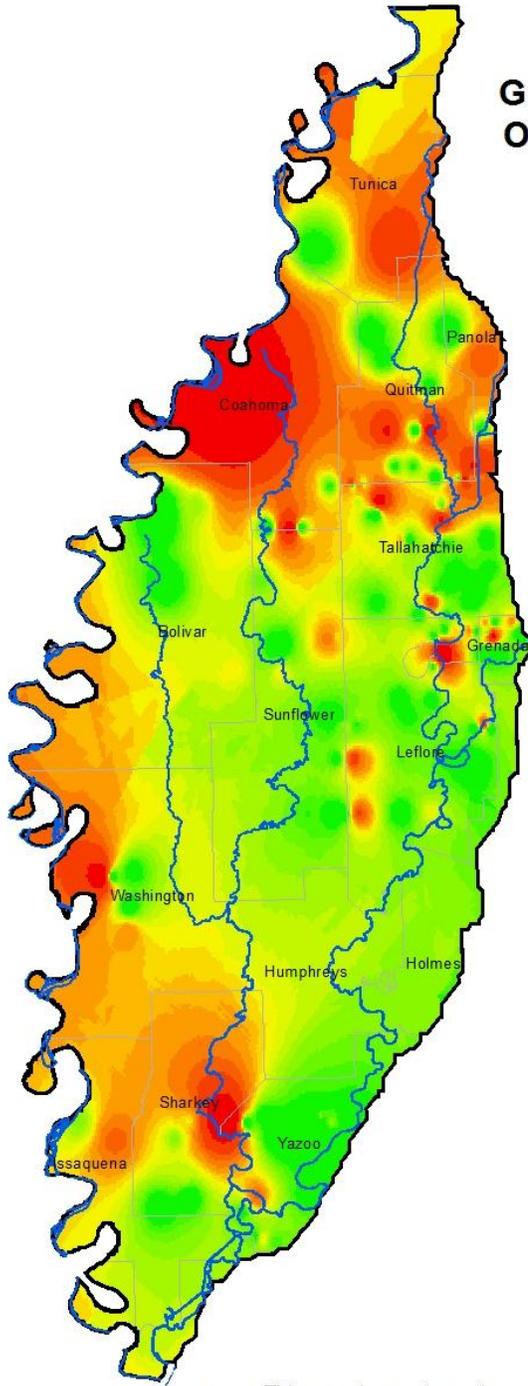


### Description

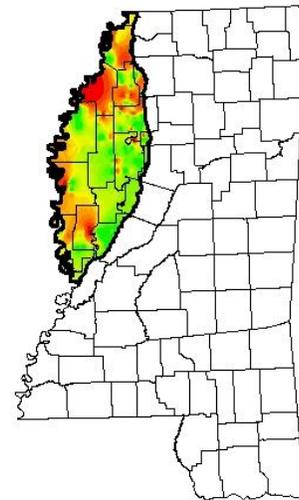
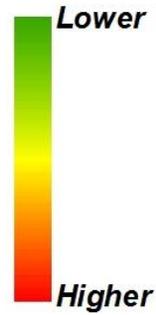
- Low (<12/mi<sup>2</sup>)
- Medium (12-115/mi<sup>2</sup>)
- High (>115/mi<sup>2</sup>)



# Greatest Concentrations of Ducks Observed in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 22-24, 2013



## Description

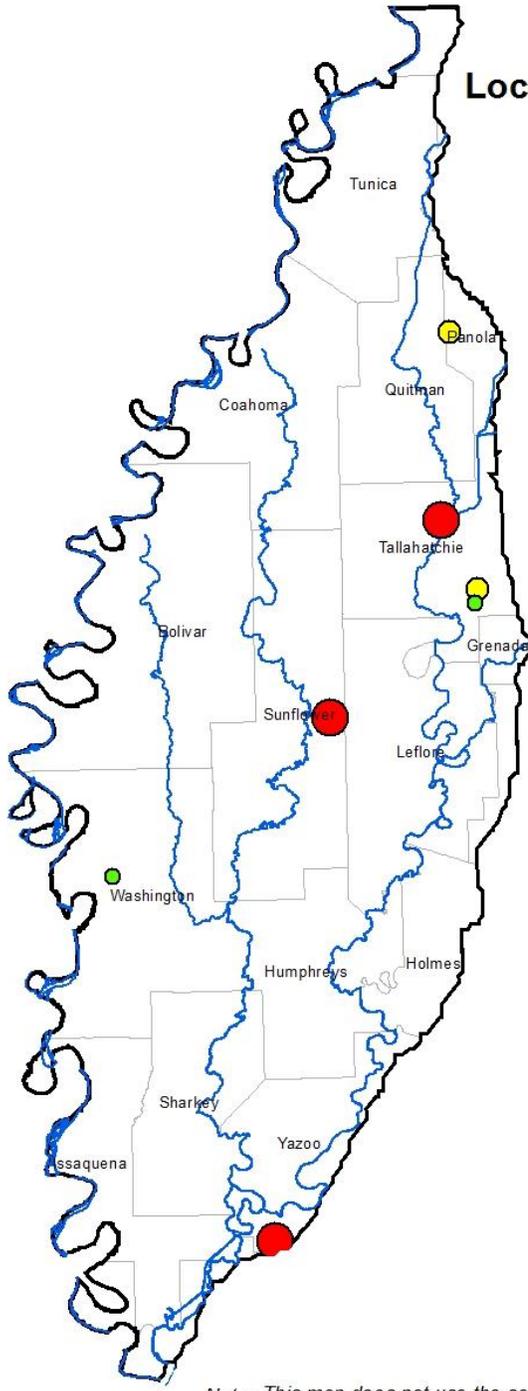


*Note: This map does not use the same area calculations as previously published maps and is intended to illustrate major concentrations of ducks in the Mississippi Delta.*

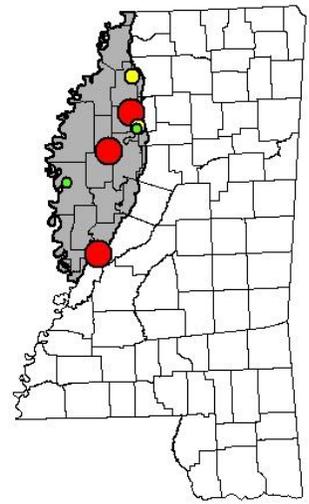
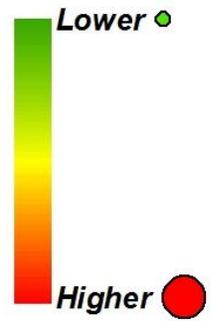
Prepared by MDWFP  
GIS Lab 29, Jan. 2013



## Locations and relative size of light goose flocks in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 22-24, 2013



### Description



*Note: This map does not use the same area calculations as previously published maps and is intended to illustrate some locations of light geese in the Mississippi Delta.*

Prepared by MDWFP  
GIS Lab 29 Jan. 2013

