



# MDWFP Aerial Waterfowl Survey Report

December 10 - 12, 2014



**WATERFOWL PROGRAM**

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The mid December MDWFP aerial waterfowl survey occurred during December 10 – 12. Waterfowl habitat availability was much lower than past Decembers. A lack of pumped, managed water was still a common observation across the Mississippi Delta, especially in the northwest and southern regions. Similar to recent years, flooded habitat generally increased as survey transects moved further northeast.

Total duck estimates were up approximately 25% from last month's survey, while mallard estimates remained unchanged. Overall, duck estimates were lower than recent years' December estimates (Table 1 and Figure 1). Mallard numbers were lower than estimates in December of 2012 and 2013. Dabbling ducks (other than mallards) estimates were also down from last year, but were average compared to past December surveys. Dabblers other than mallards comprised over half of all duck observations with northern shovelers and gadwall making up the majority of these observations. Diving duck estimates were very similar to December estimates in recent years.

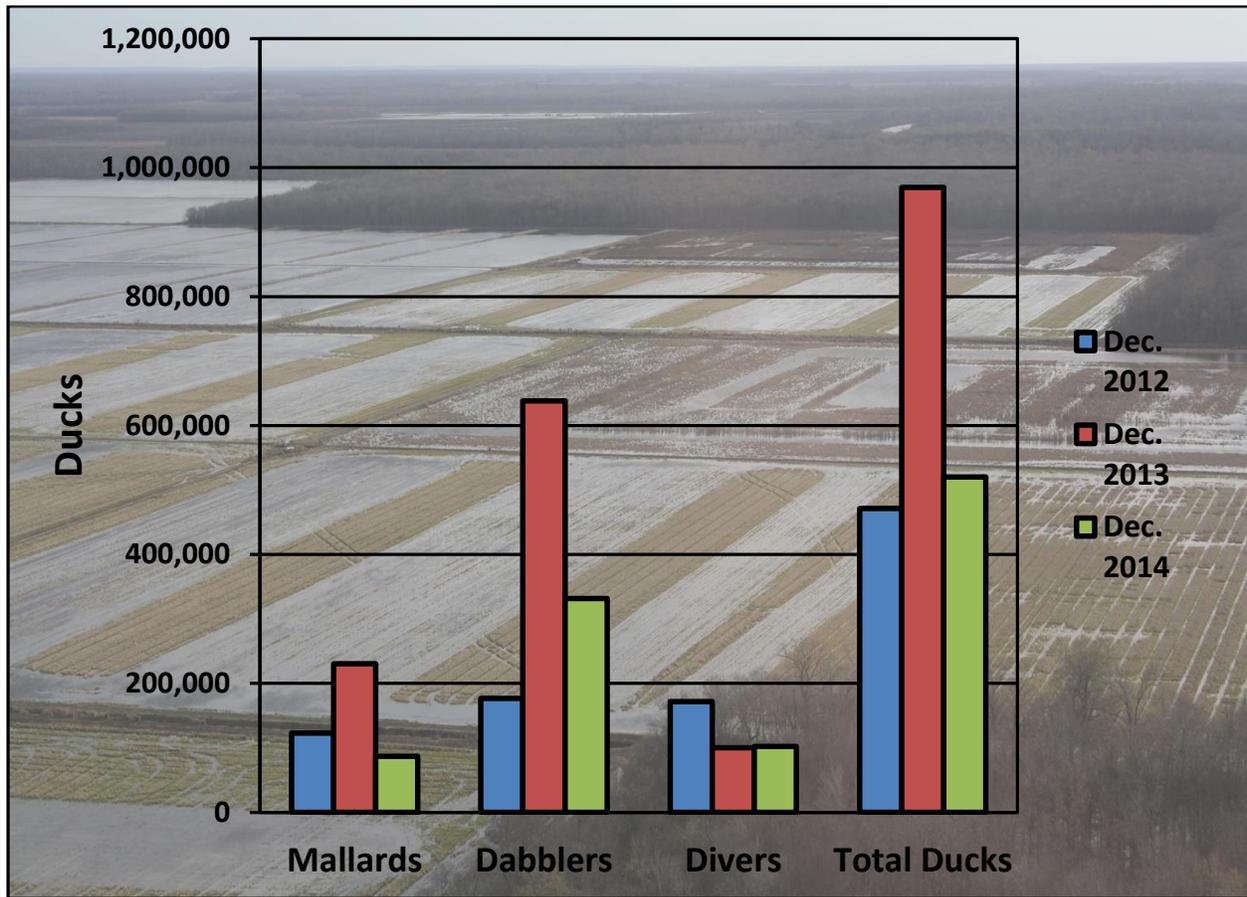
The northeastern portion of the Delta contained the greatest abundance of ducks overall, as well as the greatest amount of flooded habitat across the landscape. Mallards were more abundant in this region than other portions of the Delta. The northeastern region of the Delta also contained the greatest abundances of dabbling ducks other than mallards. The southeastern region of the contained the greatest abundances of diving ducks.

Most mallards were observed using flooded moist-soil habitat (natural vegetation, shallowly flooded), followed by forested wetlands. Most other dabblers and diving ducks were observed using large catfish pond complexes, agricultural wetlands, and permanent wetlands such as oxbow lakes and sloughs. For the most part, habitat use was similar to that of the November survey, with few ducks observed using isolated patches of habitat. Ducks continued to be highly concentrated within large contiguous complexes of flooded habitat. However, mallard habitat use did change significantly from the November survey. Mallards were observed using forested habitats to a much greater extent than in November.

The next aerial waterfowl survey is scheduled to begin January 5, 2015. Hunters are reminded that weather not only impacts migration of birds into the state, but also influences daily movements of birds that are already present. The warm conditions experienced over the past few weeks have not required birds to feed as heavily as if it were cold. These conditions can influence habitat use as well. For more information on the MDWFP Waterfowl Program, visit our website at <http://mdwfp.com/waterfowl>.

**Table 1.** Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the mid-December survey period, 2012-2014.

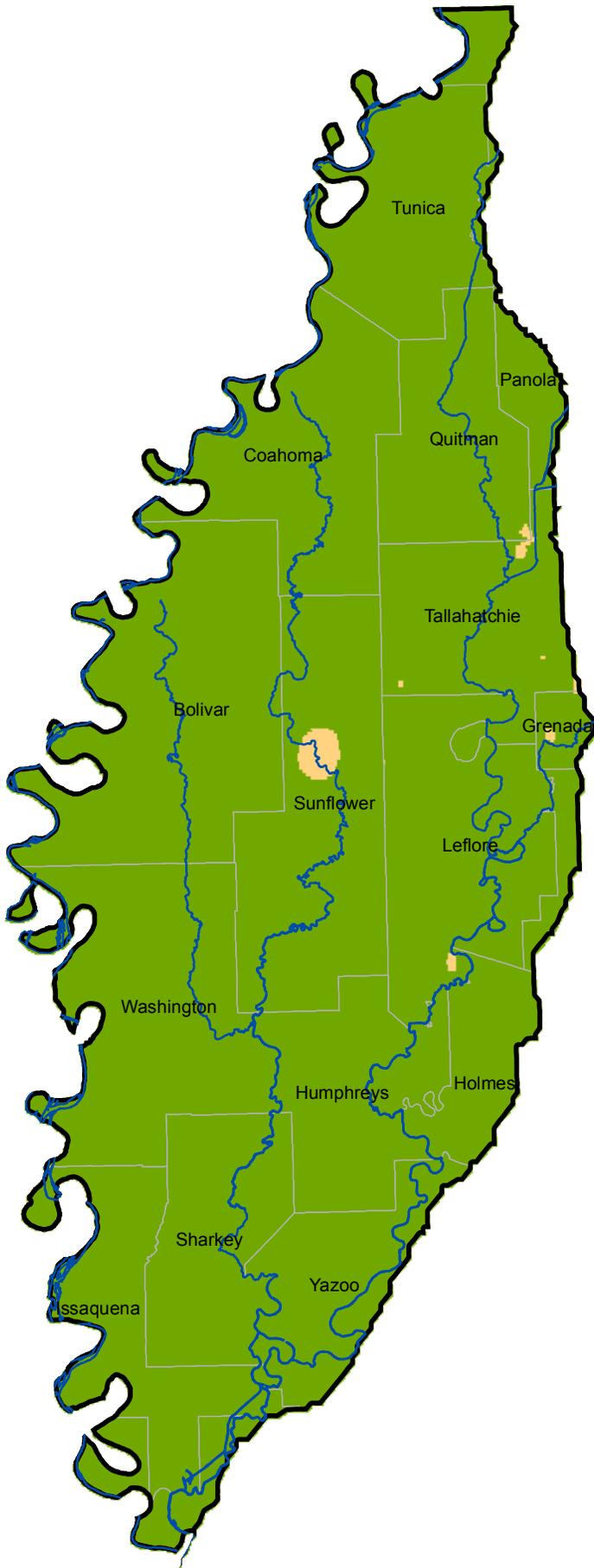
Species	Survey Period		
	December 2012	December 2013	December 2014
Mallards	122,779	230,634	86,838
Dabblers	176,950	638,386	331,460
Diving Ducks	171,542	100,412	102,117
<b>Total Ducks</b>	<b>471,271</b>	<b>969,432</b>	<b>520,415</b>



**Figure 1.** Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the mid-December survey period, 2012-2014.

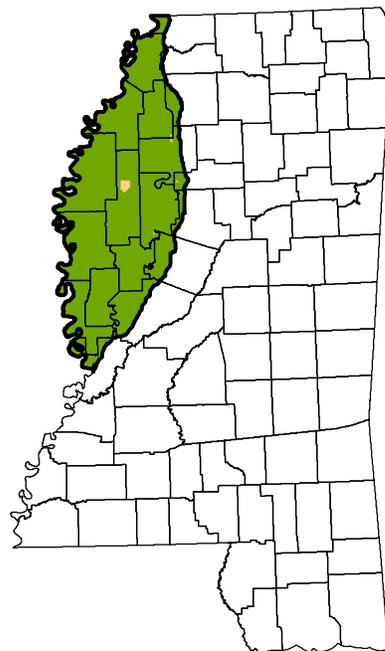
# Distribution of Mallards in the Mississippi Delta

## Dec.10 - 12, 2014



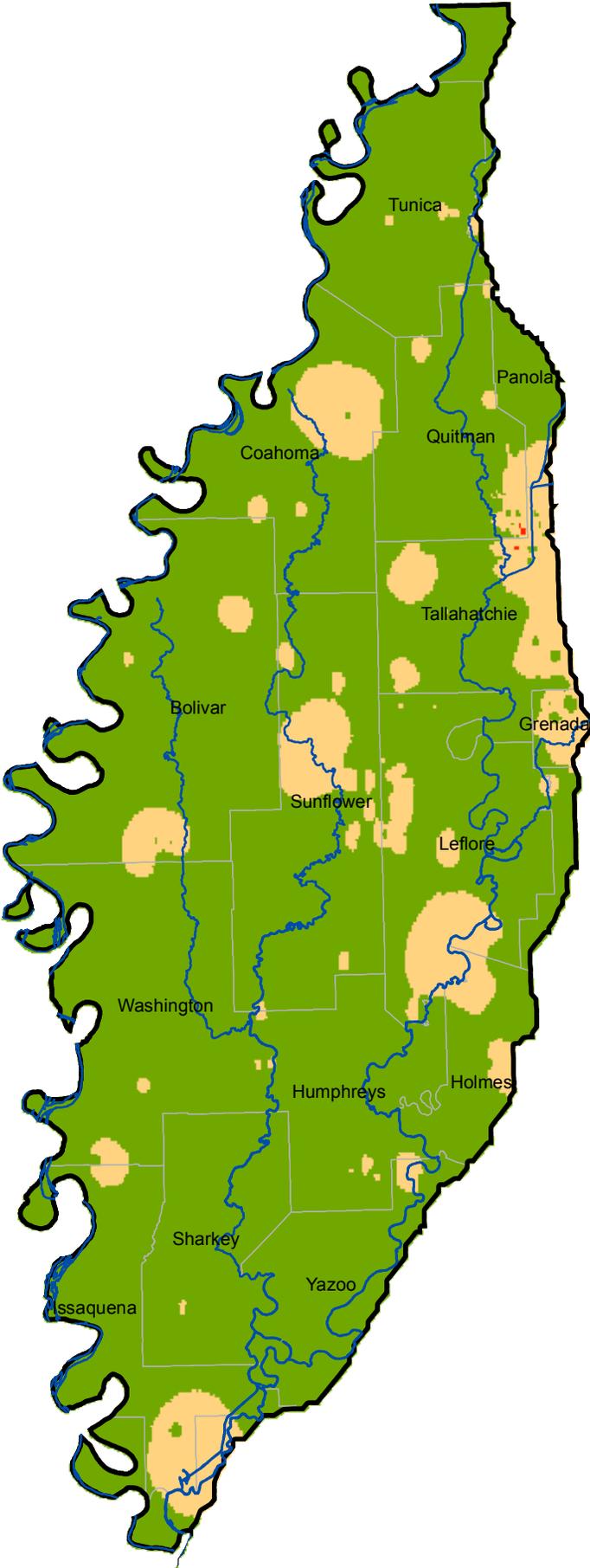
### Description

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



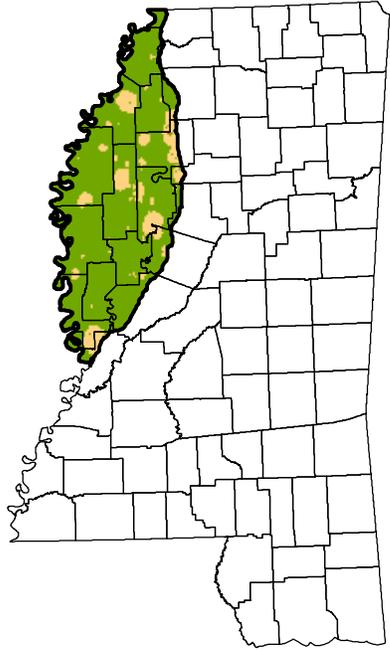
# Distribution of Total Ducks in the Mississippi Delta

## Dec.10 - 12, 2014

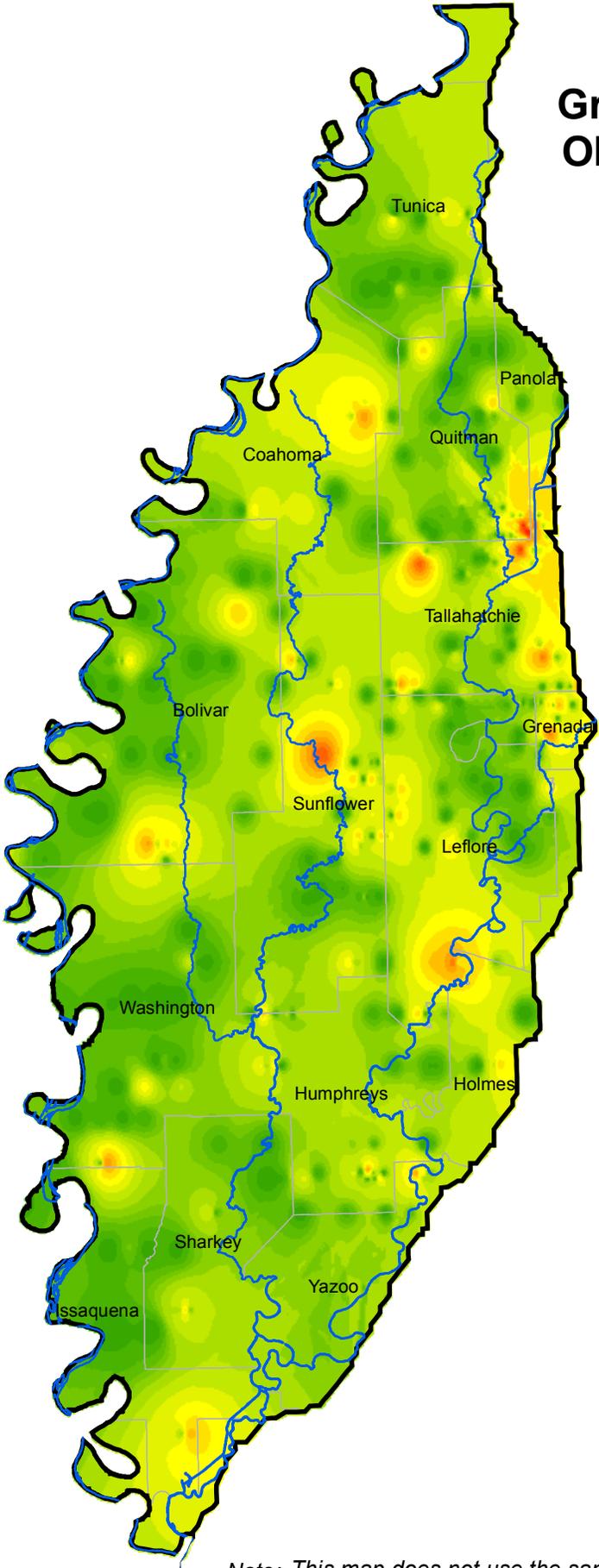


### Description

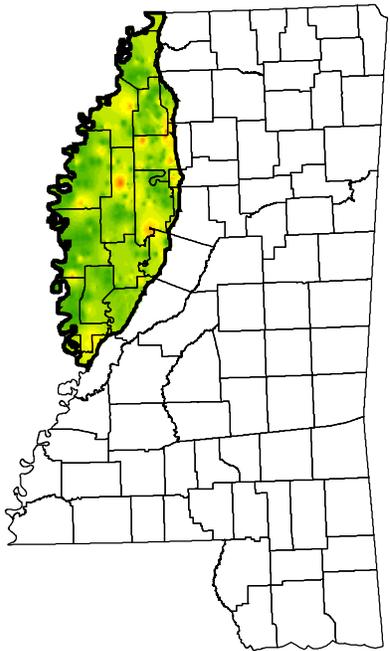
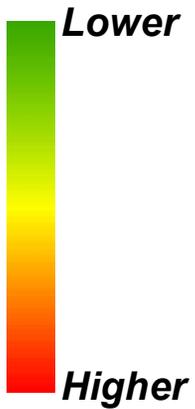
- Low (<12/mi2)
- Medium (12-115/mi2)
- High (>115/mi2)



# Greatest Concentrations of Ducks Observed in the Mississippi Delta Dec. 10 - 12, 2014



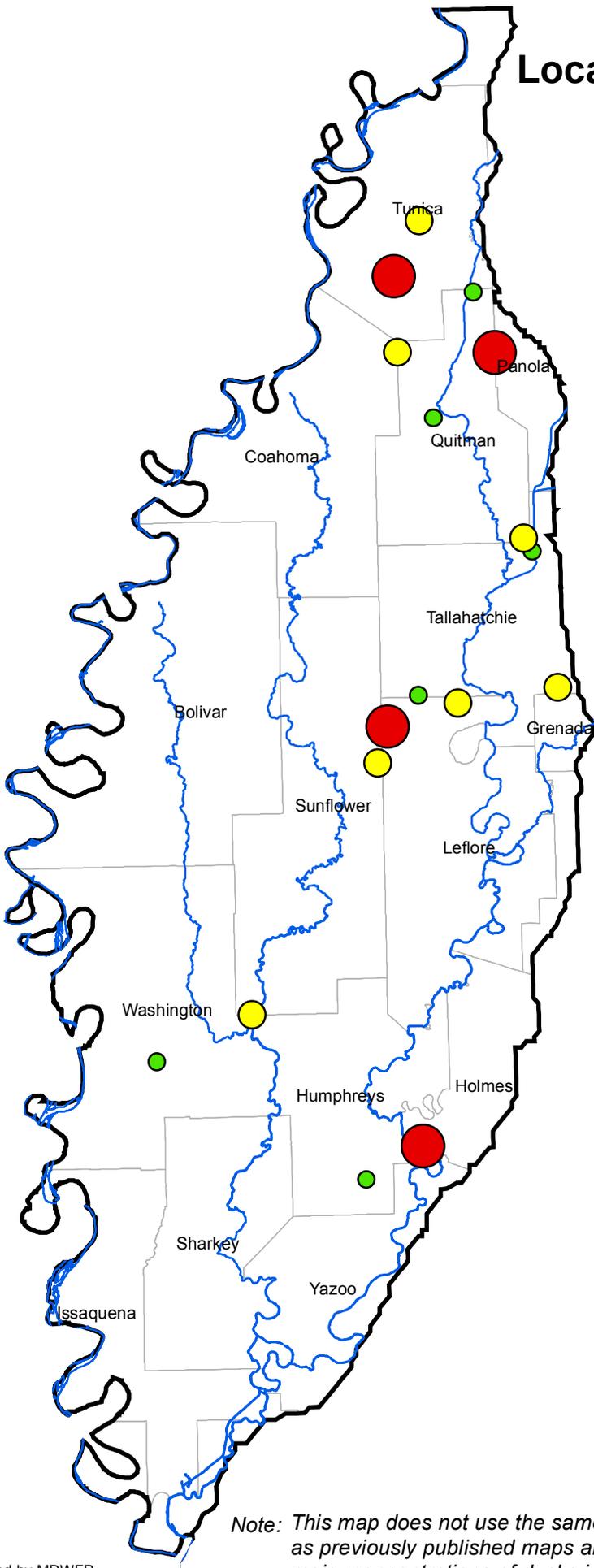
## Description



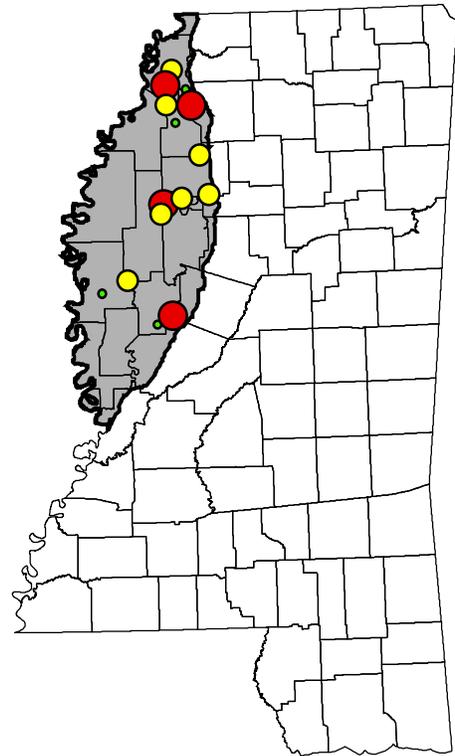
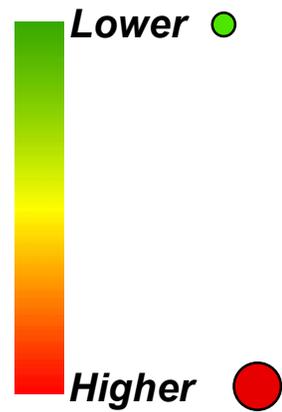
*Note: This map does not use the same area calculations as previously published maps and is intended to illustrate major concentrations of ducks in the Mississippi Delta.*



# Locations and relative size of light goose flocks in the Mississippi Delta Dec. 10 - 12, 2014



## 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.*