



MDWFP Aerial Waterfowl Survey Report

January 19 - 21, 2015



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The 2015 late January MDWFP aerial waterfowl survey occurred during January 19 – 21. Wetland habitat availability has remained similar to that observed during the midwinter survey. As in early January, managed water generally increased as survey transects moved further northeast.

Peak waterfowl estimates for the 2014-15 hunting season were observed during this survey. Overall, late January duck estimates were above those from the 2013 estimate (the late January survey was not flown in 2014 due to technical difficulties), but were below estimates from the same surveys in previous years (Table 1 and Figure 1). All groups of ducks followed this trend (i.e., mallards, other dabblers, and divers). Mallards were the most abundant species observed followed by gadwall and northern pintail.

The northeastern 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 north Delta also contained the greatest abundance of mallards.

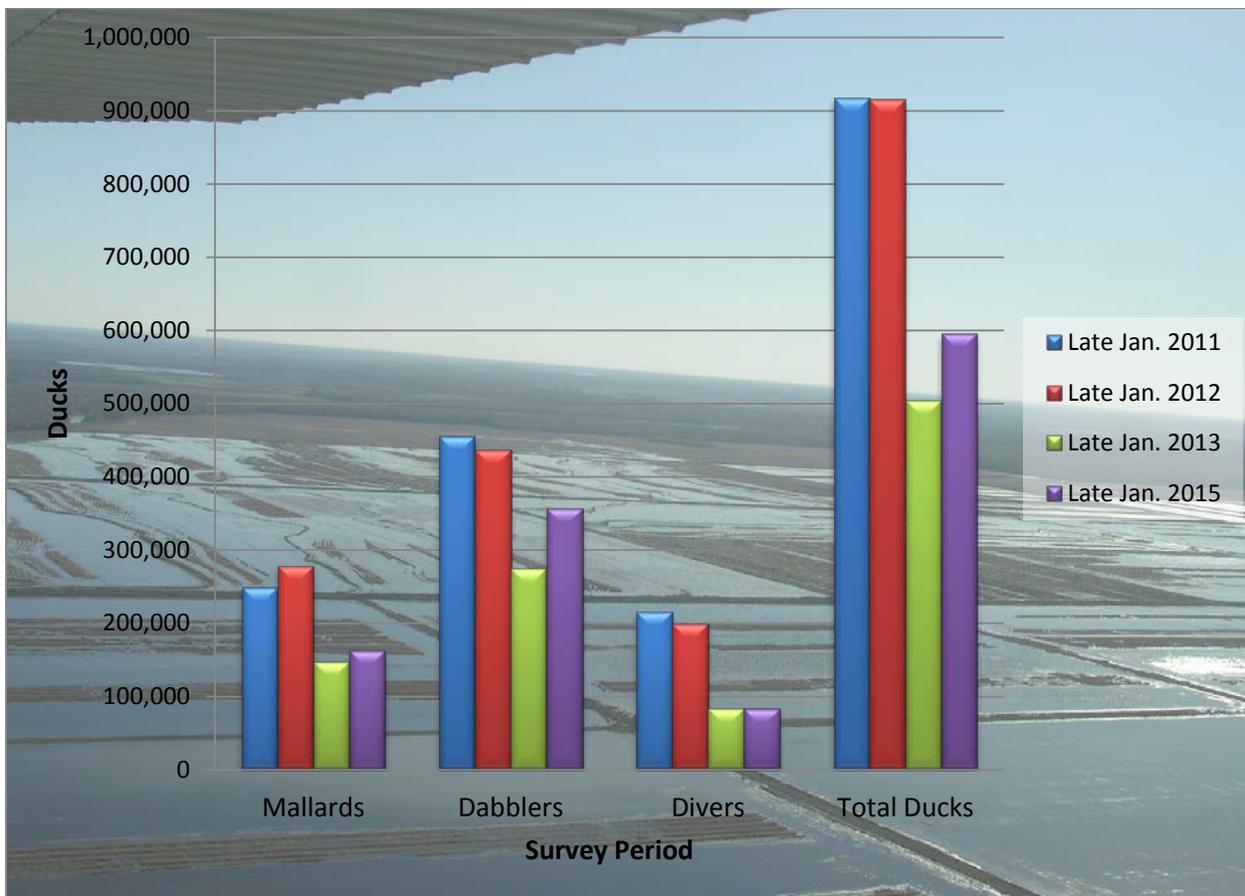
Most mallards and other dabblers were observed using large expanses of flooded habitat along the very interior and shallow “leading” edges of these wetlands. This is likely due to ducks exploiting newly flooded food resources at proper depths, while also avoiding levees and tree lines where hunters can easily hide. Flooded agricultural fields held the greatest abundances of mallards and other dabblers, followed closely by flooded moist-soil wetlands. 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 permanent wetlands and aquaculture complexes.

All regular waterfowl seasons will end on Sunday, January 25, but hunters are reminded that the light goose conservation order will be open January 26 – January 30. The conservation order will close during the Youth Waterfowl day on January 31, and will open again from February 1 – 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, 2011-2015.

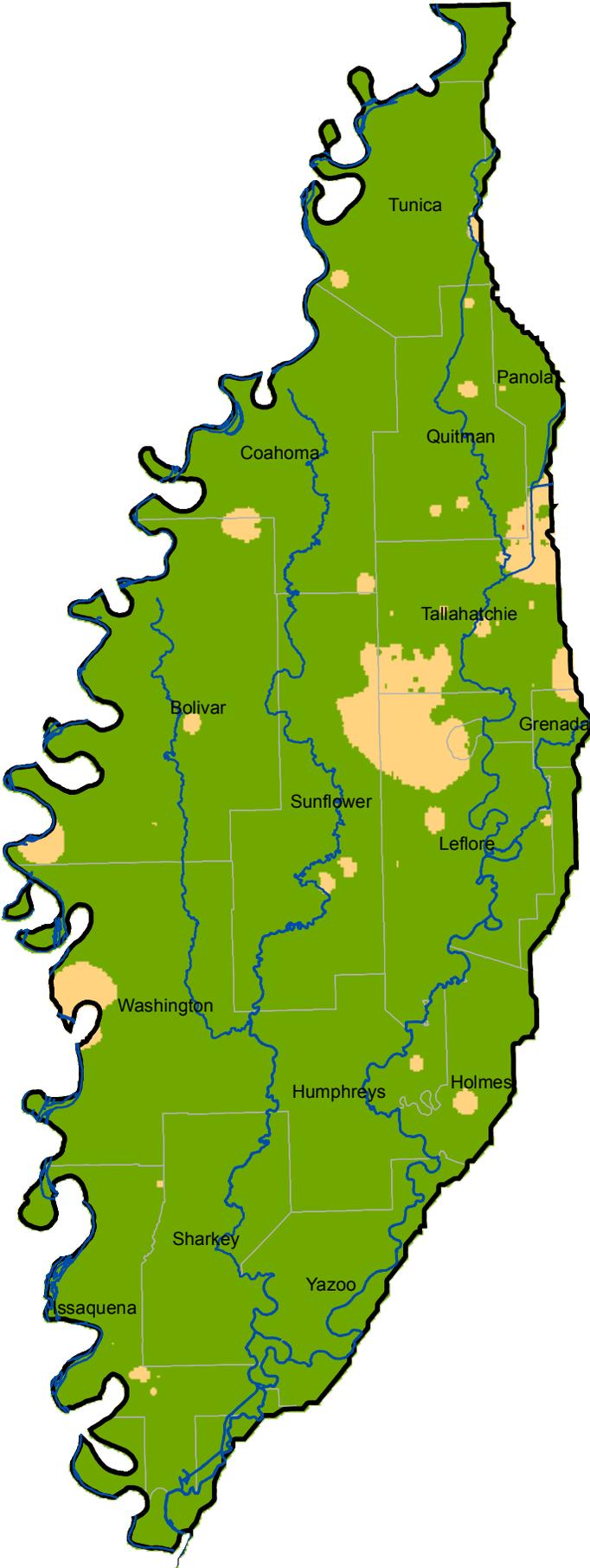
Species	Survey Period			
	Late Jan. 2011	Late Jan. 2012	Late Jan. 2013	Late Jan. 2015
Mallards	247,913	278,205	146,782	162,098
Dabblers	454,578	436,996	273,905	356,993
Diving Ducks	215,821	199,926	83,119	82,733
Total Ducks	918,313	915,127	503,806	596,092

Figure 1. Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the early January survey period, 2011-2015*.



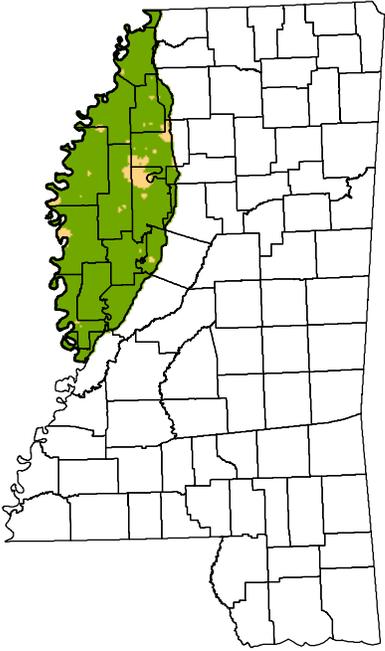
*Survey was not conducted in late January 2014 due to technical difficulties.

Distribution of Total Ducks in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 19 - 21, 2015



Description

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



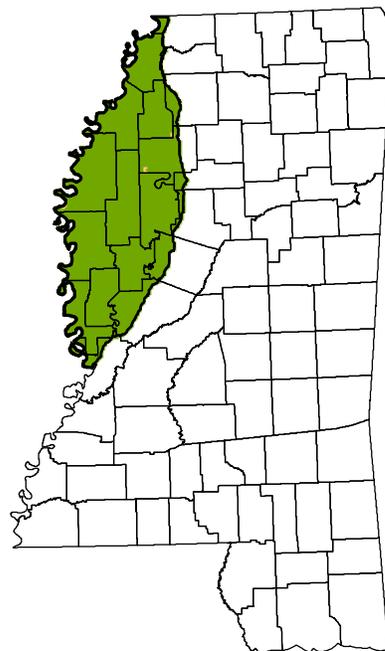
Distribution of Mallards in the Mississippi Delta

Jan. 19 - 21, 2015

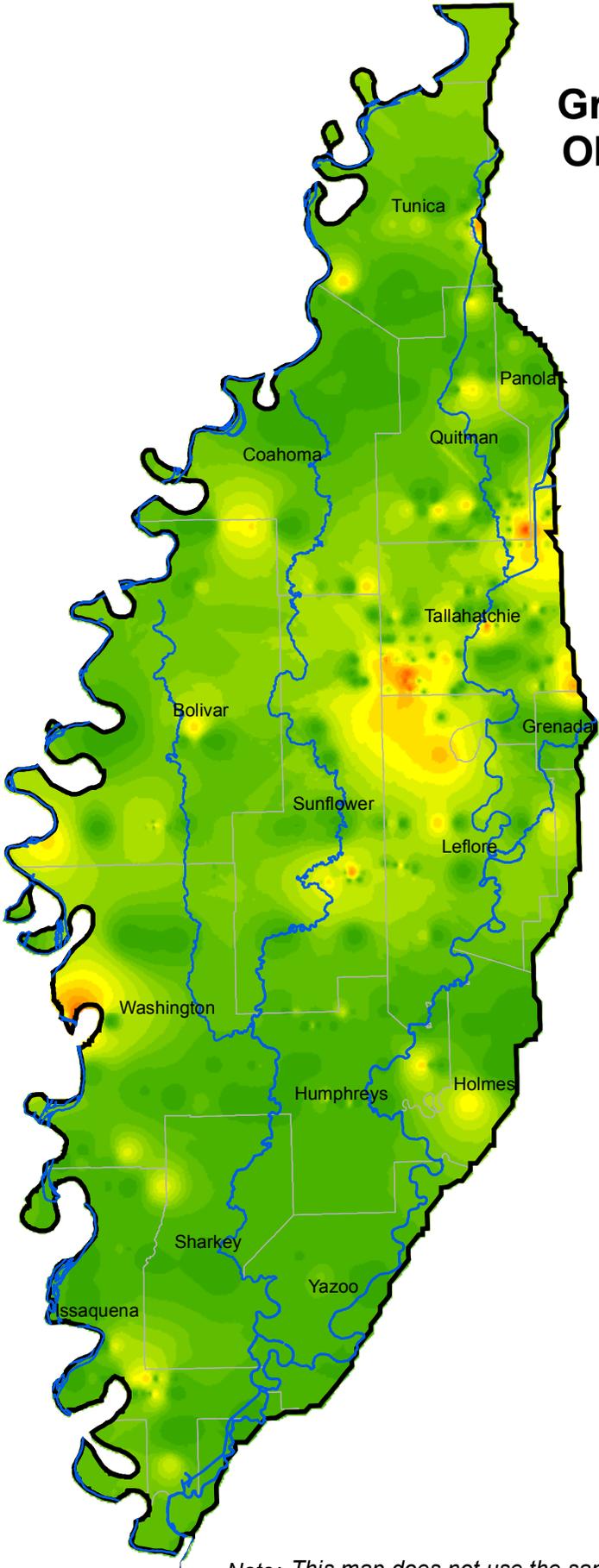


Description

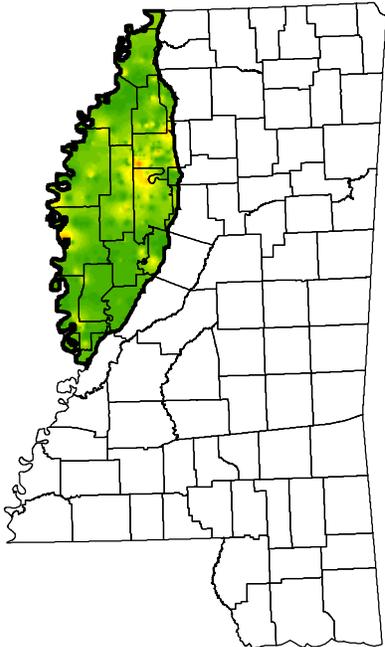
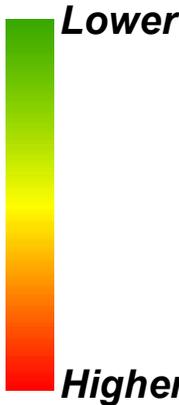
- Low (<12/mi²)
- Medium (12-115/mi²)
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Greatest Concentrations of Ducks Observed in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 19 - 21, 2015



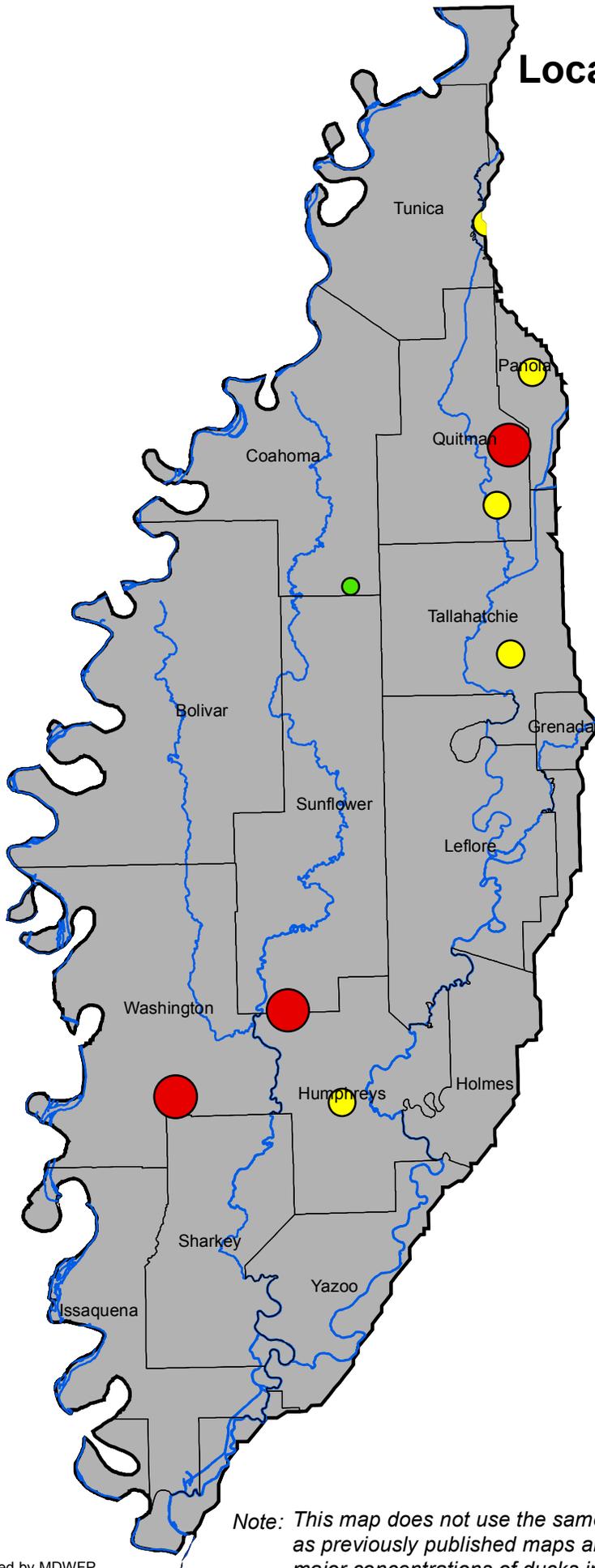
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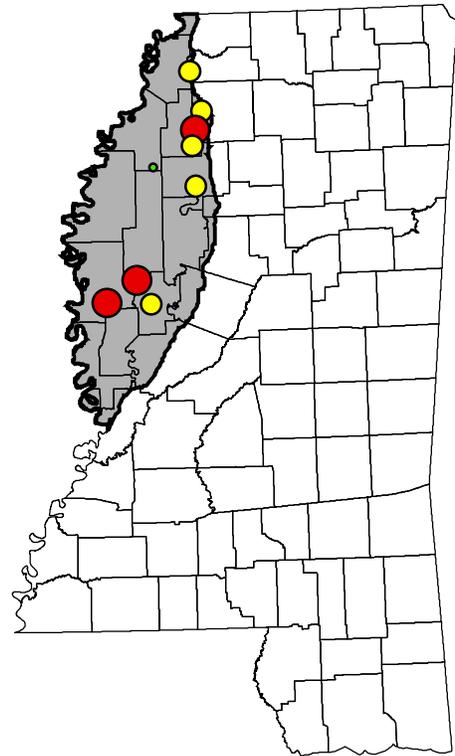
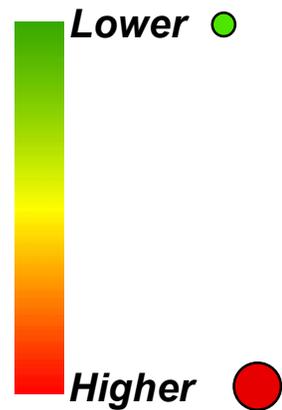
Note: This map does not use the same area calculations as previously published maps and is intended to illustrate major concentrations of ducks in the Mississippi Delta.



Locations and relative size of light goose flocks in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 19 - 21, 2015



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.