



Weekly Waterfowl Report
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
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January 5, 2016 Edition

The following report is a compilation of WMA reports and habitat assessments during the week ending January 3, 2016.

Jackson, MS – After another unseasonably warm start to the week, temperatures fell to the near-average range by mid-week, with low temperatures reaching below freezing by the weekend. This weather has apparently produced a southerly migration of ducks into Mississippi, as harvest reports have improved. The weather forecast for the remainder of this week predicts a mid to late week warm up, followed by another cold front by the weekend. Wetland habitat is readily available due to recent rainfall and rising of the Mississippi River and smaller tributaries. Hunters are reminded to use extreme caution during this time of high, sometimes swift-flowing water.

Aerial waterfowl surveys for early January are currently underway, and early reports seem to indicate an increase in mallard numbers in the Mississippi Delta. Recent harvest reports from private and public lands have included an increase in the proportion of mallards harvested. Gadwall and green-winged teal continue to make up a large proportion of hunter harvest as well. Migrant goose numbers have continued to remain high in the Mississippi Delta. Deep water habitats such as active catfish ponds and oxbow lakes are still holding abundant northern shovelers and a variety of diving ducks. These deeper wetlands could become more important for all ducks if low temperatures cause ice to form over shallow wetlands this weekend and into next week. If shallow wetlands such as agricultural and moist-soil impoundments freeze, waterfowl will typically return to these areas quickly after thawing to feed on the high food abundances found in these habitats.

The regular waterfowl season will continue through January 31. The fifth draw period for WMA waterfowl draw hunts is currently open for applications. The early January aerial waterfowl survey results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website and social media as soon as it is completed. 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-High
Howard Miller	100%	Medium-High
Indianola	100%	Medium
Mahannah	100%	Low-Medium
Malmaison**	100%	Low-Medium
Muscadine Farms	90%	Low
O'Keefe	100%	Medium
Sunflower	100%	Medium
Twin Oaks	100%	Low
Trim Cane	80%	Low
Tuscumbia	100%	Low-Medium

*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.