



MDWFP Aerial Waterfowl Survey Report

November 14 - 19, 2011



WATERFOWL PROGRAM

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The mid November MDWFP aerial waterfowl survey occurred during November 14 – 19. As expected after a dry late summer and fall, dry conditions were observed across the Mississippi Delta in general for the second year in a row. A general lack of managed flooding (i.e., pumping) was a common observation in most of the Mississippi Delta, especially the northwest region. Also, a large number of harvested agricultural fields have been disked as a result of a dry fall. Flooded habitat generally increased as survey transects moved further northeast.

Overall, duck estimates were considerably higher than recent years' November estimates (Table 1 and Figure 1). Mallard numbers were especially high compared with the early winter trend of recent years. Dabbling duck (other than mallards) estimates were also higher than those from November 2009 and 2010, comprising over half of all duck observations. Northern shovelers comprised the majority of other dabbling duck observations. Diving duck estimates were very similar to November 2009 and 2010.

The northeastern portion of the Delta contained the highest abundance of ducks overall, as well as the highest amount of flooded habitat across the landscape. Mallards were distributed relatively evenly among the northeastern and northwestern survey regions. The northeastern region of the Delta contained the highest abundances of dabbling ducks other than mallards, as well as diving ducks.

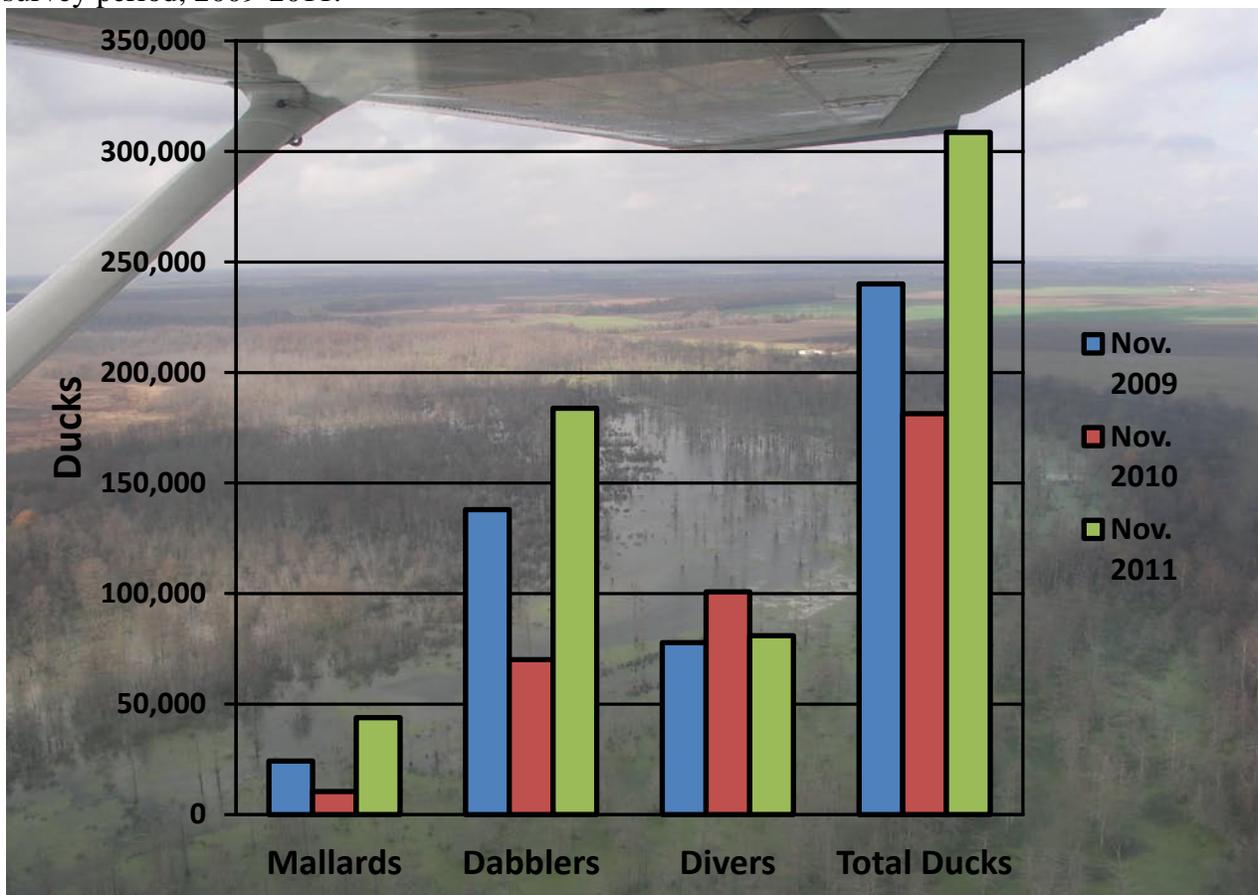
Most mallards were observed using moist-soil habitat (natural vegetation, shallowly flooded), followed closely by flooded agricultural fields. Most other dabblers and diving ducks were observed using large catfish pond complexes and permanent wetlands such as oxbow lakes and sloughs.

The regular duck season will begin on November 25, 2011. Hunters are reminded that quality waterfowl habitat is in relatively short supply during this time of year. Although there are many factors influencing waterfowl migration, this shortage in habitat may cause ducks to be concentrated in certain areas, which could lead to excellent hunting. For more information on the MDWFP Waterfowl Program, visit our website at <http://home.mdwfp.com/wildlife/species/waterfowl/default.aspx>.

Table 1. Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the late November survey period, 2009-2011.

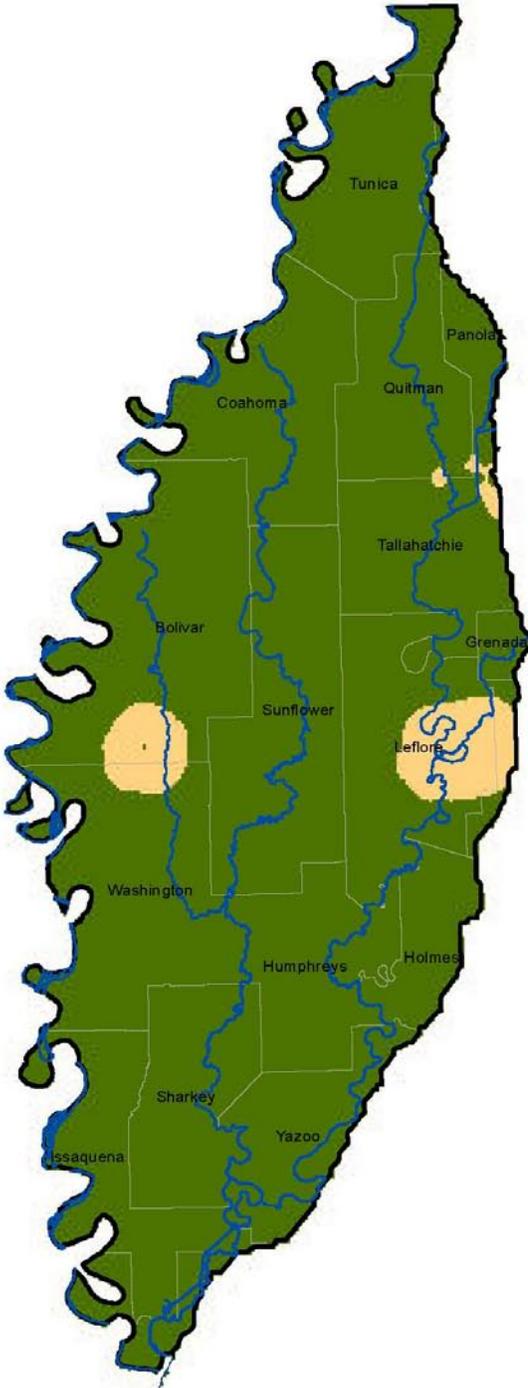
Species	Survey Period		
	Late November 2009	Late November 2010	Late November 2011
Mallards	24,281	10,481	43,845
Dabblers	137,996	70,123	183,823
Diving Ducks	77,839	100,740	80,928
Total Ducks	240,117	181,344	308,596

Figure 1. Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the late November survey period, 2009-2011.



Distribution of Mallards in the Mississippi Delta

Nov. 14 - Nov. 19, 2011



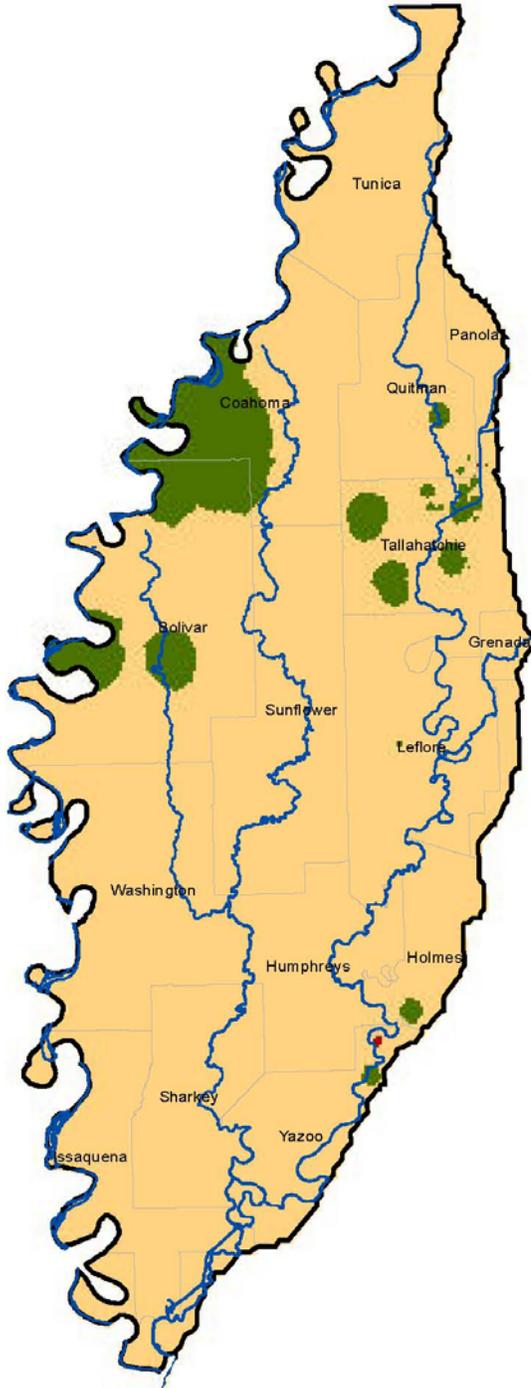
Description

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



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Distribution of Total Ducks in the Mississippi Delta Nov. 14 - Nov. 19, 2011

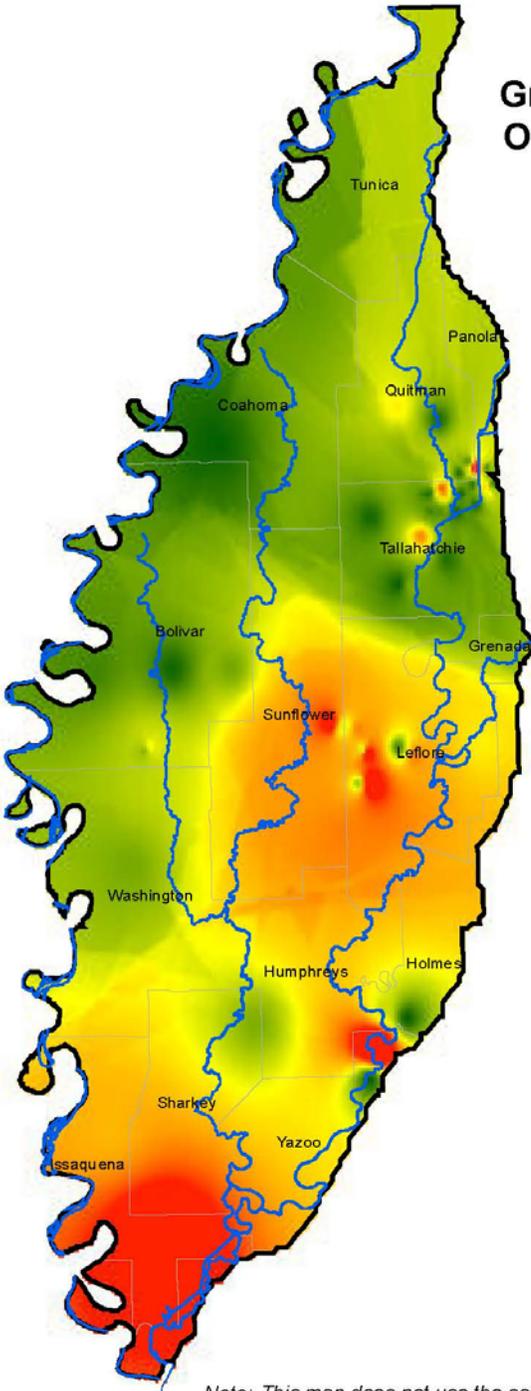


Description

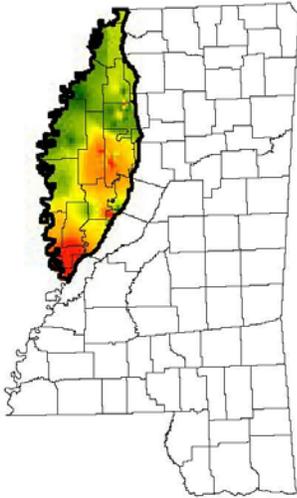
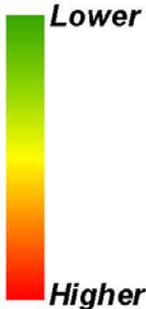
- Low (<12/mi²)
- Medium (12-115/mi²)
- High (>115/mi²)



**Greatest Concentrations of Ducks
Observed in the Mississippi Delta
Nov. 14 - Nov. 19, 2011**



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.

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