



MDWFP Aerial Waterfowl Survey Report

January 23 - 30, 2012



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The late January MDWFP aerial waterfowl survey occurred during January 23 – 30. Waterfowl habitat availability remained relatively high during this period. As in previous surveys, managed water generally increased as survey transects moved further northeast, while natural flooding was greatest in the southwest.

Overall, late January duck estimates were greater than those observed during the early January survey, which is typical for Mississippi in most years. Estimates were very similar to late January estimates from 2011 and were greater than estimates from late January 2010 (Table 1 and Figure 1). Mallards, other dabblers, and diving ducks individually followed a similar trend. These relatively high estimates are likely due to a late front moving ducks into Mississippi from more northern latitudes. Northern shovelers and green-winged teal appeared to comprise the majority of other dabbling duck observations.

The northeast portion of the Delta contained the greatest abundance of mallards and total ducks, as well as the greatest amount of flooded habitat on the landscape. Estimates of dabbling ducks other than mallards and diving ducks were greatest in the northeast and southeast portions of the Delta.

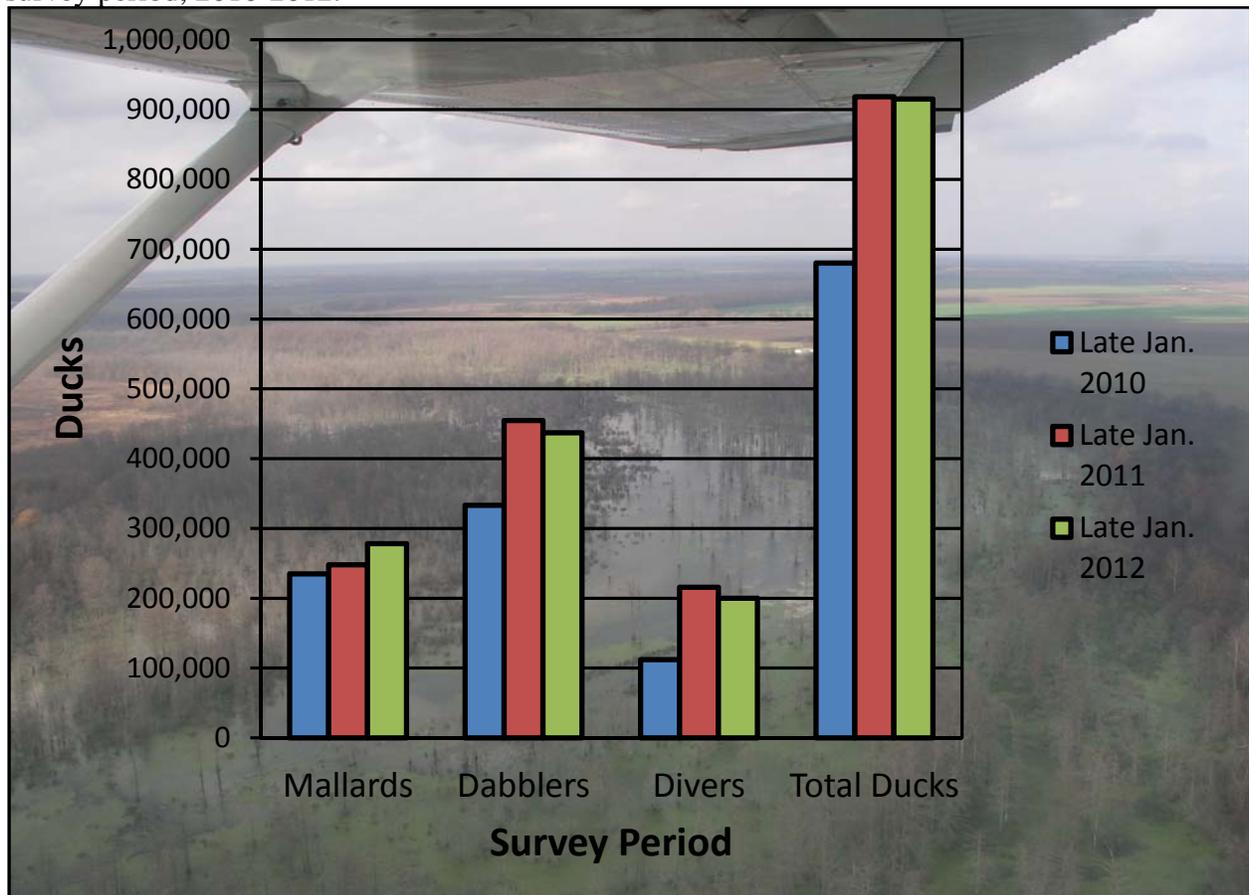
Most mallards and other dabblers were observed using large expanses of flooded agricultural fields, followed by moist-soil habitat. Mallards and other dabblers were seen using open areas of fields, likely to avoid hunting pressure. Most diving ducks were observed using large catfish pond complexes. While duck numbers were high during this period, ducks were not stressed by low temperatures or harsh winter weather. Rather than feeding all day to meet energy demands, ducks were able to be more selective in the types of habitats used, likely negatively impacting hunting success.

Although the regular waterfowl season has ended, waterfowl hunting opportunity is still available. The Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend will be February 4-5, and Wildlife Management Areas will be open for youth hunting. Also, the Light Goose Conservation Order will be open through March 31, except it will be closed during the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend. Light goose numbers have remained steady in the Delta, which should provide plenty of opportunity. For more information on the MDWFP Waterfowl Program, visit our website at <http://home.mdwfp.com/wildlife/species/waterfowl/default.aspx>.

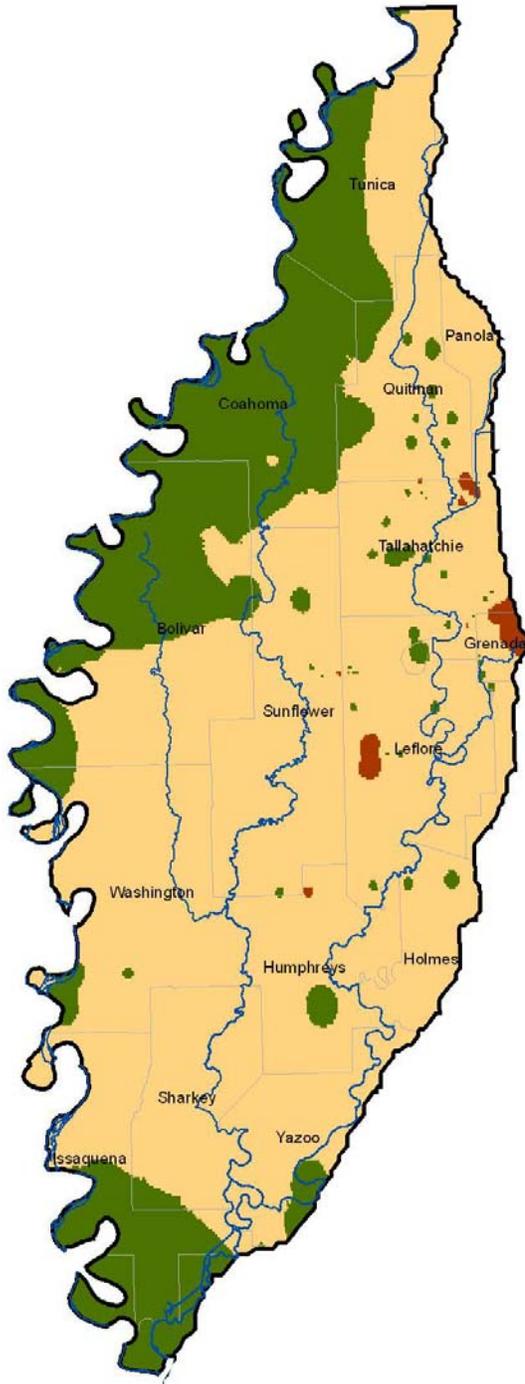
Table 1. Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the late January survey period, 2010-2012.

Species	Survey Period		
	Late January 2010	Late January 2011	Late January 2012
Mallards	234,937	247,913	278,205
Dabblers	333,240	454,578	436,996
Diving Ducks	112,167	215,821	199,926
Total Ducks	680,344	918,313	915,127

Figure 1. Waterfowl abundance estimates in the Mississippi Delta during the late January survey period, 2010-2012.



Distribution of Total Ducks in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 25, 27 & 30, 2012

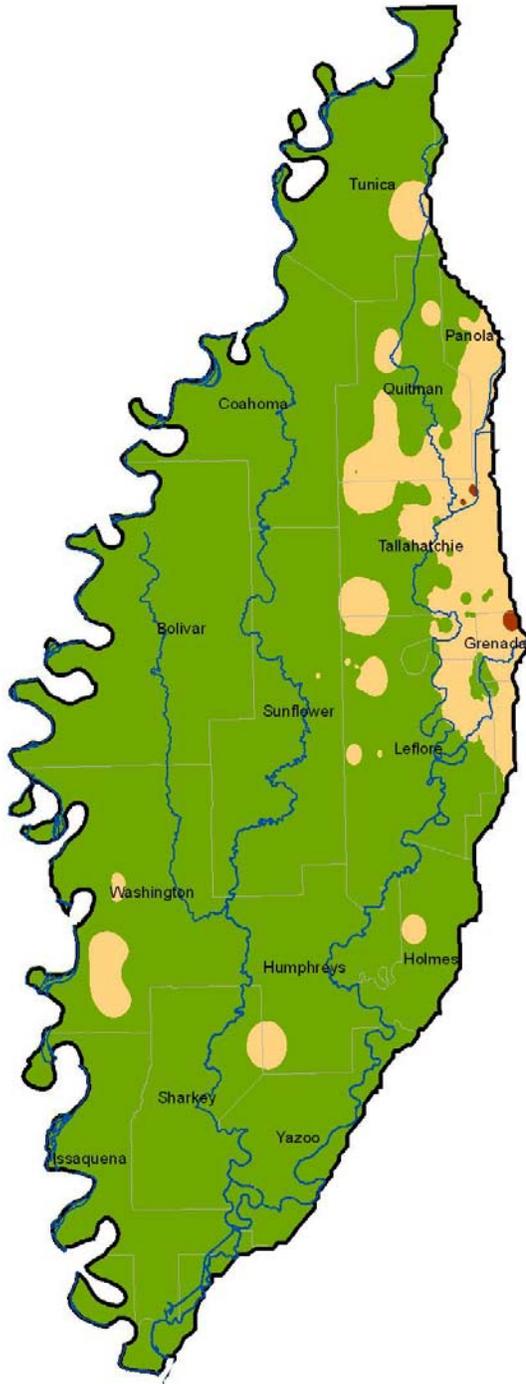


Description

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



Distribution of Mallards in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 25, 27 & 30, 2012

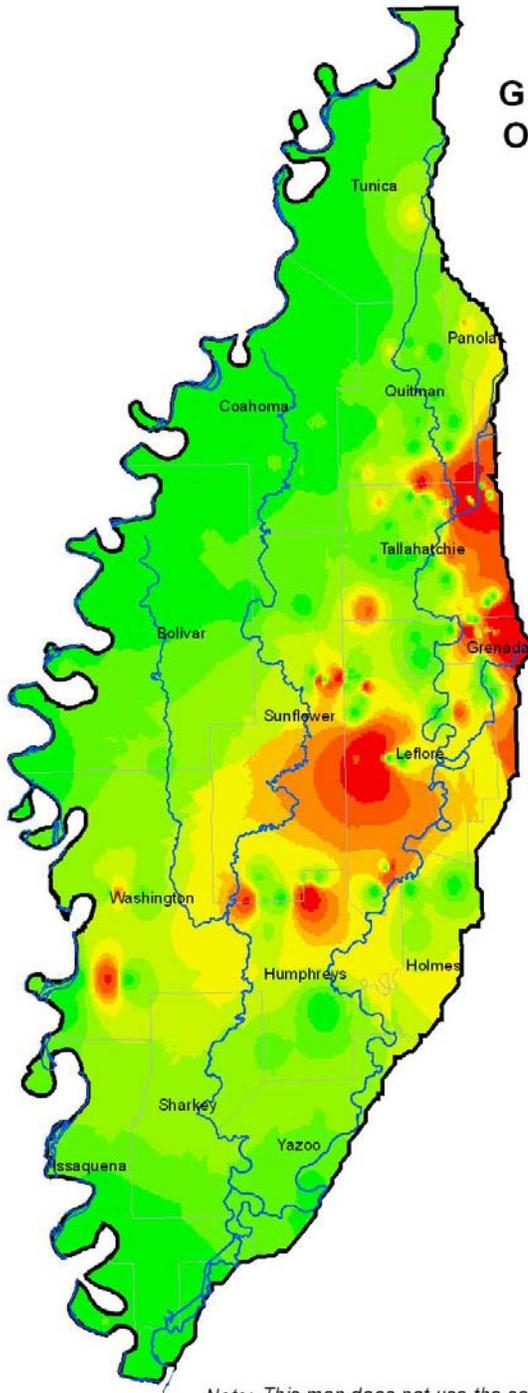


Description

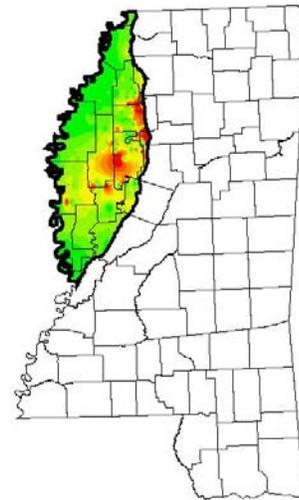
- Low (<12/mi²)
- Medium (12-115/mi²)
- High (>115/mi²)



Greatest Concentrations of Ducks Observed in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 25 , 27 & 30 , 2012



Description

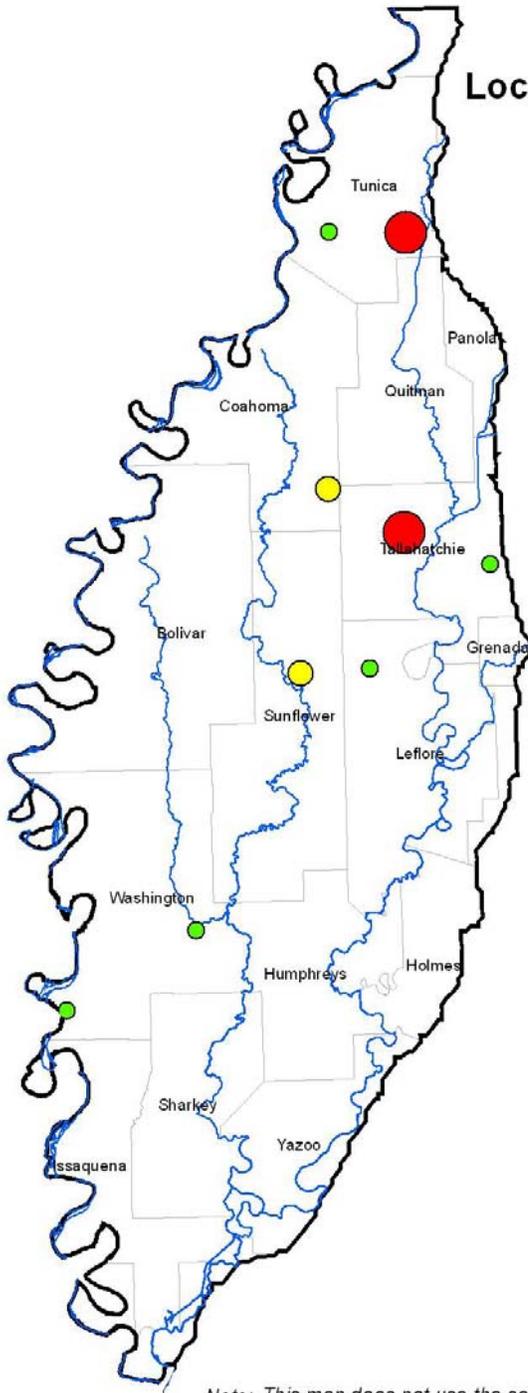


Note: This map does not use the same area calculations as previously published maps and is intended to illustrate major concentrations of ducks in the Mississippi Delta.

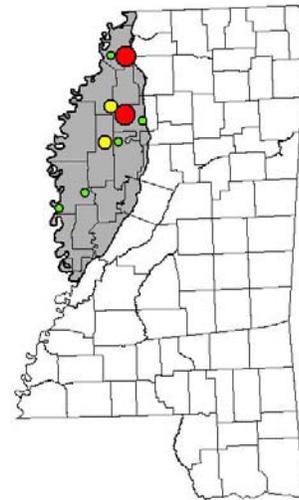
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GIS Lab 1 Feb. 2012



Locations and relative size of light goose flocks in the Mississippi Delta Jan. 25, 27 & 30, 2012



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.

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