



Weekly Waterfowl Report

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Houston Havens (662)299-0273, email: houstonh@mdwfp.state.ms.us

November 24, 2015 Edition

The following report is a compilation of public and private land reports and habitat assessments during the week ending November 22, 2015.

Jackson, MS – The first aerial waterfowl survey of the season was flown last week, and the survey report is posted online at www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl. Overall, duck numbers were relatively low compared to past years' November surveys, and this trend also held for November waterfowl surveys in Louisiana and Arkansas. However, there were still areas observed holding high numbers of ducks, particularly areas with intensively managed habitat.

Due to recent rainfall, shallowly flooded wetland habitat availability is well above average for mid to late November. Some landowners and managers have taken advantage of the abundant rainfall, and were able to catch natural runoff to begin flooding wetlands. These properties, along with areas with pumping capabilities, should provide some quality hunting early in the hunting season. In the weeks leading up to the waterfowl hunting season, managers of many WMAs across the state have been pumping shallow water into waterfowl impoundments. Charlie Capps, Indianola, Malmaison, O'Keefe, Muscadine Farms, Mahannah, and Howard Miller WMAs are just a few of these areas, and recent field reports indicate that ducks are beginning to use these areas. Mallards in the Mississippi Delta appear to be most abundant on flooded agriculture and managed moist-soil areas, and aerial waterfowl survey results showed mallard numbers split very evenly between these two habitat types. A few public land managers have reported high numbers of ducks for this time of year on properties across the state. Duck numbers may have increased across Mississippi recently a result of the cold front which passed through over the weekend, combined with a winter storm in the upper Midwest and Great Lakes regions of the country. A few migrant geese have begun to enter the Mississippi Delta, but so far numbers appear to be well below average for this time of year. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence early season waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

The first youth waterfowl hunting day of the season was Saturday, November 21. Most harvest reports from WMAs and private lands were very good, with many different species being harvested. The regular duck season opener will be Friday, November 27. The extended weather forecast for opening weekend appears to be warm and rainy.

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 becomes available.

Table 1: Water levels and general duck abundance ratings for selected Wildlife Management Areas.

WMA	Water Levels*	Bird Abundance
Charlie Capps	80%	Medium
Howard Miller	100%	Medium-High
Indianola	100%	Medium-High
Mahannah	90%	Medium
Malmaison**	80%	Low-Medium
Muscadine Farms	70%	Medium
O'Keefe	80%	Medium-High
Twin Oaks	80%	Medium
Trim Cane	50%	Low
Tuscumbia	50%	Low

*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.