



January 19, 2021 Weekly Waterfowl Report

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

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The following report is a compilation of public and private land reports and habitat assessments during the week ending January 17, 2021.

Jackson, MS – Mid-January is upon us, and in most years, this means peak waterfowl numbers for the year should be arriving soon. Last week's reports from both public and private land managers remained similar to the previous week, with some areas maintaining high hunting success while others had little. Although there may not have been a large migration of new ducks entering Mississippi, local weather was cool enough to keep birds actively moving and feeding, which likely helped to boost harvest. In contrast, the forecast for this week includes warmer temperatures and significant chances of rain. With coming rainfall, wetland habitat availability is expected to continue increasing, which could cause bird concentrations to shift to newly flooded areas. The Mississippi River and its tributaries throughout the Mississippi Delta remain well below their flood stages again this week. Weather severity index models do not predict significant southern movements of mallards this week, but there could be a weather-induced increase of other dabbling ducks at southern latitudes.

Reports of mallards using forested wetlands remain high again this week, which is typical for late-season mallard behavior as they seek dense cover for escaping inclement weather, avoiding hunting pressure, and isolating for pair bonding. However, when new shallow water becomes available, mallards and other ducks often quickly respond to newly flooded food resources. Hunters are reminded to keep an eye on areas that may become flooded after this week's rainfall. Goose numbers have remained high across the Mississippi Delta for several weeks now, and hunters are reporting successful mixed bag hunts when preparing to take geese while hunting ducks.

The regular waterfowl seasons will remain open through January 31. The late January aerial waterfowl survey is underway and is planned to be completed this week if weather allows. A full report will be available upon completion on www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl. This site also includes much more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, including links to hunting regulations, migration reports, and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state.

Table 1: Waterfowl harvest and hunter effort reported over the past week for Wildlife Management Areas.

	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Delta Region			
Charlie Capps	19	18	0.95
Howard Miller	64	142	2.22
Lake George	71	52	0.73
Leroy Percy	4	7	1.75
Mahannah	167	338	2.02
Muscadine Farms	25	35	1.40
O'Keefe	56	50	0.89
Phil Bryant	44	92	2.09
Shipland	32	49	1.53
Sky Lake	17	5	0.29
Sunflower	277	428	1.55
Twin Oaks	15	23	1.53
William "Billy" C. Deviney	24	7	0.29
East Central Region			
John W. Starr	6	12	2.00
Nanah Waiya	28	37	1.32
Okatibbee	11	12	1.09
Trim Cane	3	0	0.00
Yockanookany	2	0	0.00
Northeast Region			
Canal Section	91	99	1.09
Divide Section	18	8	0.44
John Bell Williams	4	0	0.00
Tuscumbia	26	17	0.65
Northwest Region			
Malmaison	114	158	1.39
Upper Sardis	13	9	0.69
Southeast Region			
Old River	18	10	0.56
Pascagoula River	194	143	0.74
Ward Bayou	31	10	0.32
Southwest Region			
Bienville	4	3	0.75
Caney Creek	6	2	0.33
Pearl River	25	29	1.16
Tallahala	11	10	0.91

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2020-21 Waterfowl Season

Due to prolonged backwater flooding the last two growing seasons, water control structures in the green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will not be closed to capture water for the 2020-21 hunting season on Sunflower WMA. However, hunters are reminded that there are approximately 5,200 acres of low-lying sloughs, lakes, and other wetlands scattered across Sunflower WMA. Most of these areas have water control structures in them and will be the first areas to flood on the WMA. These natural, low-lying areas often provide better habitat and hunting opportunities than the GTRs. GTRs may also eventually flood from winter rainfall and backwater. A map of Sunflower WMA wetland areas can be found here: <http://www.mdwfp.com/media/256111/sunflower-wma-gtrs-and-slough-areas.pdf>