



December 7, 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 December 5, 2021.

Jackson, MS – The second segment of Mississippi's duck hunting season occurred over the weekend, and harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water remained positive, overall. Unlike the opening weekend, Mississippi experienced warmer weather, which may have slightly decreased waterfowl movements. Wetland habitat availability remained well below the normal levels for this time of year across much of Mississippi, but rainfall early this week may help to add some water to the landscape. Water levels in the Mississippi River are also still below normal levels for this time of year. These below-average water levels are likely causing congregations of waterfowl in some areas, resulting in good early season hunting. Although the local forecast calls for warm temperatures this week, waterfowl numbers in Mississippi could see an increase due to a cold weather system moving across the upper Mississippi and Ohio valleys.

Many state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta again reported high hunting success over the weekend. Green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall continued to make up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese have increased in number over the last week. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

Hunters are reminded that Mississippi's waterfowl seasons are currently closed, but the light goose conservation order is open. The remaining dates for the regular waterfowl seasons in Mississippi are December 9 – January 31. The November aerial waterfowl survey has been completed, and Mississippi duck abundance estimates were near their long-term averages for this time of year, overall. Survey efforts from some Midwest states indicate that duck migration overall may currently be a little behind its normal timing. The December survey is currently planned for the week of December 13. As soon as surveys are completed, the results and distribution maps are posted on MDWFP's website. For more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, visit our website at www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl or call us at (601) 432-2199. The Waterfowl Program website lists links to hunting regulations, migration reports, and habitat information for specific WMAs and other public lands throughout the state.

Table 1: Waterfowl harvest and WMA visits reported over the past week for selected Wildlife Management Areas. Note: this data does not necessarily represent the total number of hunters and harvest for each WMA. Hunters are reminded of the requirement to check in prior to hunting and to check out upon leaving the WMA.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	7	6	0.86
Canal Section	127	140	1.10
Caney Creek	9	0	0.00
Charlie Capps	14	44	3.14
Copiah County	3	4	1.33
Divide Section	19	34	1.79
Howard Miller	43	134	3.12
John Bell Williams	7	6	0.86
John W. Starr	2	1	0.50
Lake George	12	1	0.08
Mahannah	85	246	2.89
Malmaison	97	97	1.00
Muscadine Farms	39	122	3.13
Nanah Waiya	20	8	0.40
Okatibbee	22	10	0.45
O'Keefe	33	34	1.03
Old River	23	17	0.74
Pascagoula River	96	42	0.44
Pearl River	16	20	1.25
Shipland	11	6	0.55
Sky Lake	7	7	1.00
Sunflower	117	138	1.18
Tallahala	11	11	1.00
Tuscumbia*	5	3	0.60
Twin Oaks	3	3	1.00
Upper Sardis	30	32	1.07
Ward Bayou	38	35	0.92
William C. Billy Deviney	17	71	4.18
Yockanookany	1	0	0.00

*Trim Cane and Tuscumbia Unit 2 have not yet been hunted for waterfowl. These areas have a delayed start each year to ensure sufficient water levels before hunting.

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2021-22 Waterfowl Season

Water control structures in the Long Bayou and Dowling Bayou green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will be closed to capture water for the 2021-22 hunting season on Sunflower WMA. 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. Other 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>