



December 21, 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 19, 2021.

Jackson, MS – Mississippi's weather for much of last week left a lot to be desired for waterfowl hunters, and harvest reports from many areas reflected these conditions. Wetland habitat availability in the Mississippi Delta is slowly increasing as the hunting season moves along, but still lags behind normal levels for this time of year. The Mississippi River level has remained relatively unchanged throughout the season and is still well below flood stage. Interior Delta river systems have fluctuated some with recent local rainfall but have also stayed well within their banks. This week's national weather outlook shows a brief cooling off early in the week, followed by another warmup with near record high temperatures expected for Christmas. This warming trend is expected to extend well north of Mississippi, providing very unfavorable conditions for waterfowl to push southward over the coming week. The extended forecast predicts more seasonable temperatures after the first of the new year.

Although hunting success has declined, several state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta still reported decent hunting success over the past week. Green-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall continue to make up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese have significantly increased in number in the Mississippi Delta, and some hunters have diversified their approach to try to capitalize on these birds. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

Mississippi's regular waterfowl seasons are currently open, and will continue through January 31. The December aerial waterfowl survey was recently completed, and similar to recent survey efforts in Arkansas and Louisiana, total duck and mallard numbers were well below their long-term averages for this time of year. Full survey results and distribution maps will soon be 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 web page 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	8	5	0.63
Black Prairie	6	13	2.17
Canal Section	117	126	1.08
Caney Creek	7	4	0.57
Charlie Capps	33	73	2.21
Copiah County	6	1	0.17
Divide Section	29	30	1.03
Howard Miller	88	49	0.56
John Bell Williams	8	6	0.75
John W. Starr	6	5	0.83
Lake George	16	13	0.81
Mahannah	282	399	1.41
Malmaison	101	156	1.54
Mason Creek	1	1	1.00
Muscadine Farms	86	87	1.01
Nanah Waiya	28	17	0.61
Okatibbee	20	47	2.35
O'Keefe	34	57	1.68
Old River	29	10	0.34
Pascagoula River	158	91	0.58
Pearl River	32	16	0.50
Phil Bryant	87	172	1.98
Shipland	7	8	1.14
Sky Lake	23	8	0.35
Sunflower	155	223	1.44
Tallahala	9	11	1.22
Tuscumbia*	25	27	1.08
Twin Oaks	5	10	2.00
Upper Sardis	31	25	0.81
Ward Bayou	46	20	0.43
William C. Billy Deviney	55	34	0.62

*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>