



January 10, 2023 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 8, 2023.

Jackson, MS – As the month of January moves along, warmer weather conditions have become the new trend. Reports of successful hunting trips have continued in spite of the warmer temperatures that moved in quickly after the Christmas freeze. There have been many recent reports from across the state of waterfowl hunters filling their lanyard and having quality hunts. Some reports indicate ducks have been using flooded agriculture fields early in the morning and shifting more to forested wetland habitat by mid-day. The forecast for the upcoming week shows warm weather at the beginning of the week with nighttime lows that dip to below freezing leading into the weekend. Looking into next week, another warm and rainy stretch is forecast for much of the state.

Mallards, gadwall, and northern shovelers made up the majority of the harvest on many public and private land hunts last week. Large numbers of white-fronted geese have also been reported throughout many parts of the Delta. Waterfowl hunters are encouraged to adapt their hunting methods and locations when possible in order to keep finding success when hunting late in the season. The availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will continue to influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands as Mississippi's hunting season continues. Hunters are reminded to keep an eye on potentially newly flooded areas if significant rainfall is received next week, as late season ducks will often move to newly flooded food resources when available.

As we move into the last few weeks of the season, biologists look for waterfowl numbers to remain similar to current levels and for hunters to continue to be successful in the field. The early January survey was completed, and survey results and distribution maps will soon be posted on MDWFP's website and social media platforms. The late January survey is scheduled to begin next week. Mississippi typically experiences peak waterfowl numbers during the month of January, and hopefully this trend will continue. 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 Wildlife Management Areas where harvest of at least one bird was reported. 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. Waterfowl hunters are also reminded to review all regulations and any applicable draw hunt procedures for any WMA they plan to hunt.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	13	7	0.54
Black Prairie	9	8	0.89
Canal Section	128	81	0.63
Caney Creek	9	10	1.11
Charlie Capps	28	40	1.43
Chickasaw	11	6	0.55
Copiah County	12	17	1.42
Divide Section	9	1	0.11
Howard Miller	116	249	2.15
John W. Starr	3	6	2.00
Lake George	32	33	1.03
Leroy Percy	6	2	0.33
Little Biloxi	1	1	1.00
Mahannah	282	452	1.60
Malmaison	102	202	1.98
Muscadine Farms	101	100	0.99
Nanah Waiya	39	18	0.46
Okatibbee	39	6	0.15
O'Keefe	73	85	1.16
Old River	30	20	0.67
Pascagoula River	102	72	0.71
Pearl River	37	41	1.11
Phil Bryant	41	25	0.61
Shipland	32	18	0.56
Sky Lake	16	17	1.06
Stoneville	3	3	1.00
Sunflower	138	147	1.07
Tallahala	7	8	1.14
Trim Cane	7	3	0.43
Tuscumbia	34	49	1.44
Twin Oaks	19	24	1.26
Upper Sardis	16	3	0.19
Ward Bayou	46	26	0.57
William C. Billy Deviney	49	44	0.90

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2022-23 Waterfowl Season

Water control structures in the Long Bayou and Dowling Bayou green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will be closed to capture water for the 2022-23 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>