



December 12, 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 December 10, 2023.

Jackson, MS – Mississippi’s waterfowl hunting seasons are now in full swing, and harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water were very “hit or miss” over the past weekend. This is often the trend for early December waterfowl hunting in Mississippi. A spell of warm, muggy, and often rainy weather lasted the majority of last week. Waterfowl are affected by warmer weather typically by reducing energy needs, which decreases the amount of movement in their daily patterns. And sometimes if warm temperatures are long lasting, waterfowl will even make a shift back to the north to find abundant, quality habitat. However, recent weather and the coming week’s forecast should provide a shift back to cooler temperatures with the lows dipping into the low 30’s. Biologists are hopeful to see winter weather systems developing to the north to send large numbers of waterfowl further south as winter continues, but the long-term forecast does not currently predict weather severe enough to cause significant southward migrations.

Wetland habitat availability is still very far below normal levels for this time of year across much of Mississippi but parts of the state received some much needed rainfall over the weekend, totaling 1 inch or more. Land managers are reminded to monitor water levels as more rainfall is received and to maintain water levels at optimum foraging depths for dabbling ducks of around 12 – 18 inches. Water levels in the Mississippi River are also extremely low currently. Many of the state’s Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and other public lands have provided successful hunting experiences this season. As wetland habitat availability continues to be relatively low, WMAs and other intensively managed lands will continue to influence the early season waterfowl harvest.

Northern shovelers, green-winged teal, gadwall, and wood ducks made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports again last week. However, some areas still reported successful hunts with mallards and pintails in the bag. Snow, blue, Ross’s, and white-fronted goose numbers have started to increase across the Mississippi Delta. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

The December aerial waterfowl survey is underway this week. As soon as the survey is completed, results and distribution maps will be made available on MDWFP's website and social media platforms. 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. Birds/Hunter/Day
Bienville	13	13	1.00
Black Prairie	11	22	2.00
Canal Section	93	194	2.09
Caney Creek	2	3	1.50
Charlie Capps	24	56	2.33
Choctaw	3	2	0.67
Divide Section	39	30	0.77
Howard Miller	36	205	5.69
John Bell Williams	7	4	0.57
Lake George	20	10	0.50
Little Biloxi	2	4	2.00
Mahannah	196	609	3.11
Malmaison	56	49	0.88
Muscadine Farms	48	177	3.69
Nanih Waiya	22	7	0.32
Okatibbee	24	7	0.29
O'Keefe	72	79	1.10
Old River	28	8	0.29
Pascagoula River	186	189	1.02
Pearl River	19	5	0.26
Phil Bryant	43	31	0.72
Sky Lake	30	15	0.50

Stoneville	1	1	1.00
Sunflower	97	59	0.61
Tallahala	1	3	3.00
Tuscumbia	10	8	0.80
Upper Sardis	6	2	0.33
Ward Bayou	86	113	1.31
William C. (Billy) Deviney	29	52	1.79