



January 2, 2024 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 31, 2023.

As we have now passed the half-way mark for Mississippi's regular waterfowl hunting season, many hunters are hoping to see new weather patterns and new birds as the new year gets started. Although last week's weather was an improvement, with some snowfall in the Midwest and cooler temperatures here, general weather patterns across the U.S. have not been sufficient to cause significant numbers of waterfowl to migrate into the Southeast. Additionally, local weather patterns have not produced adequate rainfall for runoff to help flood many seasonal wetlands that are typically flooded by this time of year. However, the forecast for this week includes some potential for a winter storm to produce freezing temperatures and snow at mid-latitudes, with high chances of rain in the Southeast by this weekend. The long-range forecast predicts near-average temperatures for the foreseeable future in Mississippi.

Waterfowl harvest reports have recently declined on most public and private lands after a good first few weeks of the season. Biologists suspect many of the birds in Mississippi currently have settled into safe areas and/or behavior patterns and have become more difficult to hunt (a condition many hunters refer to as "stale" birds). Gadwall, northern shovelers, and green-winged teal continue to make up a large proportion of hunter harvest. Availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will continue to influence waterfowl harvest as winter continues along. Currently, a weather-induced southern migration will be needed for hunting success to improve.

The early January aerial waterfowl survey is underway this week. Mississippi typically observes peak waterfowl numbers during January, and biologists are hopeful this trend will hold this year. As soon as the survey report is completed, it will be posted online and on MDWFP social media accounts. 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	Waterfowl Harvest	Avg. Birds/Hunter/Day
Bienville	25	15	0.60
Black Prairie	8	3	0.38
Canal Section	208	80	0.38
Caney Creek	6	4	0.67
Charlie Capps	14	10	0.71
Chickasaw	2	1	0.50
Copiah County	1	3	3.00
Divide Section	31	9	0.29
Howard Miller	113	126	1.12
John Bell Williams	14	1	0.07
Lake George	17	19	1.12
Mahannah	209	198	0.95
Malmaison	131	144	1.10
Muscadine Farms	132	124	0.94
Nanah Waiya	34	6	0.18
Okatibbee	34	19	0.56
O'Keefe	122	67	0.55
Old River	45	10	0.22
Pascagoula River	393	240	0.61
Pearl River	50	18	0.36
Phil Bryant	37	29	0.78
Shipland	10	2	0.20
Sky Lake	11	8	0.73
Sunflower	132	107	0.81
Theodore A. Mars, Jr.	3	4	1.33
Tuscumbia	19	6	0.32
Twin Oaks	11	5	0.45
Upper Sardis	16	3	0.19
Ward Bayou	116	63	0.54
William C. (Billy) Deviney	58	64	1.10