



January 17, 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 January 14, 2024.

As we enter the last two weeks of the regular waterfowl season, the winter weather we have all been patiently waiting for has arrived. The quality of waterfowl hunting in Mississippi is significantly related to extreme cold weather events. In order to get a big “push” of new birds, it takes a large increase in snowfall and ice buildup in the northern and mid-latitude states. For the majority of this waterfowl season we have experienced rather mild and very dry weather, which is not conducive to attracting ducks to our region. At the beginning of last week, the temperatures were fairly mild for this time of year and much of the Delta remained dry. Over the weekend, a large winter blast moved across much of the southeast, blanketing much of the state with ice and snow. According to field reports, both duck and goose numbers have increased as a result. However, habitat availability remained limited due to extreme temperatures freezing all the shallow water areas. Ducks were reported as concentrating on deep-water wetlands that remain open, which can change daily. Many private landowners and several public land properties turned on pumps to provide some open water during this time. Water levels in the Mississippi river are beginning to rise and starting to provide areas for waterfowl hunters to utilize. We urge hunters to be careful and practice extreme caution during this time of harsh weather.

Mallard numbers appear to be increasing and reports from hunters having greater success are becoming more the norm. Waterfowl will utilize forested and deep-water wetlands during the current and upcoming extreme cold events, as they seek cover from the harsh winter weather and isolation for pair bonding. Species commonly being harvested are mallard, gadwall, northern shoveler and green-winged teal. An increase in light geese and greater white-fronted geese are being reported and many hunters have shifted gears to harvesting these species.

Our late January aerial waterfowl survey is scheduled for the week of January 22. As soon as the survey is completed, the results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website and released through social media. 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.

Table 1: Waterfowl harvest and WMA visits reported over the past week for WMAs 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.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	10	3	0.30
Black Prairie	12	10	0.83
Canal Section	101	51	0.50
Charlie Capps	26	25	0.96
Choctaw	4	4	1.00
Copiah County	5	5	1.00
Divide Section	23	10	0.43
Howard Miller	97	131	1.35
John Bell Williams	11	7	0.64
Lake George	30	14	0.47
Mahannah	219	155	0.71
Malmaison	92	83	0.90
Muscadine Farms	77	55	0.71
Nanih Waiya	27	23	0.85
Okatibbee	15	9	0.60
O'Keefe	81	98	1.21
Old River	26	8	0.31
Pascagoula River	163	43	0.26
Pearl River	30	22	0.73
Phil Bryant	8	6	0.75
Shipland	10	2	0.20
Sky Lake	21	9	0.43
Sunflower	88	71	0.81
Tuscumbia	17	26	1.53
Twin Oaks	25	28	1.12
Upper Sardis	23	6	0.26
Ward Bayou	71	26	0.37
William C. Billy Deviney	45	51	1.13