



December 1, 2020 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 November 29, 2020.

Jackson, MS – The first segment of the duck hunting season occurred over the weekend, and harvest reports from public and private lands with managed water were good overall. Similar to the previous two seasons' opening weekends, Mississippi experienced a warming trend with rain sweeping over much of the state. Wetland habitat availability is still behind the "normal" levels for this time of year across much of Mississippi, but rainfall over the weekend in the range of two to three inches has helped in some areas. Waterfowl numbers in the Mississippi Delta region are expected to increase this week as a new cold front has arrived. The extended forecast predicts relatively cool weather to remain throughout the week, and weather severity index models predict that dabbling ducks other than mallards should continue to push southward from mid-latitude areas due to a cold system pushing from the north.

Several state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta reported good hunting success for the opening weekend, despite rain events which may have somewhat hindered hunter participation. Green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. After a slow start, snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese continue to enter the state, using complexes of large agricultural fields. Biologists and managers are hopeful that waterfowl numbers will increase during the current split in the hunting season, and newly arriving birds will be settled into the state when the season resumes on Friday, December 4. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

Hunters are reminded that Mississippi's waterfowl seasons are currently closed. The remaining dates for waterfowl seasons are December 4 – 6 and December 9 – January 31. The November aerial waterfowl survey has been completed, and the December survey is currently planned for the week of December 14. As soon as surveys are completed, the results and distribution maps will 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 website 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 man-days reported over the past week for selected Wildlife Management Areas.

WMA	Man Days	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	10	1	0.10
Black Prairie	1	5	5.00
Canal Section	172	211	1.23
Caney Creek	20	15	0.75
Charlie Capps	15	69	4.60
Chickasaw	10	0	0.00
Choctaw	2	3	1.50
Copiah County	7	17	2.43
Divide Section	16	14	0.88
Howard Miller	28	74	2.64
John Bell Williams	13	14	1.08
John W. Starr	1	3	3.00
Lake George	31	56	1.81
Leaf River	1	1	1.00
Mahannah	87	311	3.57
Malmaison	114	129	1.13
Muscadine Farms	38	62	1.63
Nanah Waiya	47	24	0.51
Okatibbee	46	27	0.59
O'Keefe	135	288	2.13
Old River	40	25	0.63
Pascagoula	173	82	0.47
Pearl River	24	16	0.67
Phil Bryant	4	3	0.75
Shipland	29	38	1.31
Sky Lake	9	26	2.89
Sunflower	215	367	1.71
Tallahala	10	7	0.70
Theodore A. Mars, Jr.	2	2	1.00
Trim Cane*	NA	NA	NA
Tuscumbia*	24	6	0.25
Twin Oaks	26	55	2.12
Upper Sardis	23	4	0.17
Ward Bayou	25	27	1.08
William "Billy" C. Deviney	20	14	0.70
Yockanookany	4	0	0.00

*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 2020-21 Waterfowl Season

Due to prolonged backwater flooding the last two growing seasons, water control structures in the green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will not be closed to capture water for the 2020-21 hunting season on Sunflower WMA. However, 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. 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>