



December 17, 2024 Weekly Waterfowl Report

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Houston Havens (662) 299-0273, email: houston.havens@wfp.ms.gov

Darrin Hardesty (662) 588-2596, email: darrin.hardesty@wfp.ms.gov

The following report is a compilation of public and private land reports and habitat assessments during the week ending December 15, 2024.

Jackson, MS – Mississippi’s waterfowl hunting seasons are now in full swing, and harvest reports from public and private lands were very “hit or miss” over the past week, which is often the trend for early December waterfowl hunting in Mississippi. This time of year, is often referred to as a “December Lull”. Hunters will often state that they are hunting “stale ducks” as early migrant ducks have been hunted for a couple of weeks. Last week the temperatures were relatively mild, with a brief midweek cooldown before warming back up by the weekend. Waterfowl typically react to the warmer weather by decreasing the amount of movement in their daily patterns due to reduced energy requirements. And sometimes if warm temperatures are long lasting, ducks may make northward shifts to find abundant, quality habitat. This week’s weather has been more of the same so far, but another relatively brief cold front is forecasted for this weekend. Waterfowl migration forecasts predict continued southward movements of most dabbling duck species other than mallards this week. However, reports from mid-latitude states show that mallard numbers are above average for this time of year, suggesting that there is high potential for continued mallard migration into Mississippi as winter continues.

While hunting success on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) declined last week (see tables below), some of these areas across the Delta are still holding ducks and having some hunting success. Tremendous numbers of snow geese have now made their way to the Mississippi Delta, along with increasing numbers of greater white-fronted geese. Wetland habitat availability is greater than this time last year, but still relatively low across much of the state. Hunters are encouraged to keep an eye out for newly flooded wetland habitat after rain events, as ducks will often quickly respond to freshly flooded food resources.

The December aerial waterfowl survey was recently completed, and survey results will be posted on MDWFP's website and social media platforms soon. 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 and habitat information for WMAs and other public lands throughout the state.

Table 1: Duck 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	7	7	1.00
Black Prairie	8	2	0.25
Canal Section	76	34	0.45
Caney Creek	8	8	1.00
Charlie Capps	37	39	1.05
Chickasawhay	4	4	1.00
Howard Miller	103	66	0.64
Lake George	32	15	0.47
Mahannah	223	338	1.52
Malmaison	110	71	0.65
Muscadine Farms	134	132	0.99
Nanih Waiya	31	5	0.16
Okatibbee	55	16	0.29
O'Keefe	57	32	0.56
Old River	64	29	0.45
Pascagoula River	295	196	0.66
Pearl River	40	34	0.85
Phil Bryant	20	8	0.40
Sandy Creek	2	3	1.50
Shipland	18	6	0.33
Sky Lake	17	1	0.06
Sunflower	136	505	3.71
Tuscumbia	65	129	1.98
Twin Oaks	13	9	0.69
Upper Sardis	9	2	0.22
Ward Bayou	68	32	0.47
William C. (Billy) Deviney	92	164	1.78
Totals for the Week	1724	1887	1.09

Table 2: Season totals to date for duck harvest on WMAs during the 2024-25 season. Hunters are reminded of the requirement to check in prior to hunting and to check out upon leaving the WMA.

WMA	Season Total Harvest
Bienville	31
Black Prairie	13
Canal Section	244
Caney Creek	13
Charlie Capps	100
Chickasaw	9
Divide Section	31
Howard Miller	430
John Bell Williams	15
John W. Starr	1
Lake George	55
Leaf River	2
Mahannah	873
Malmaison	379
Marion County	1
Muscadine Farms	501
Nanih Waiya	18
Okatibbee	111
O'Keefe	201
Old River	46
Pascagoula River	471
Pearl River	71
Phil Bryant	18
Red Creek	8
Shipland	52
Sky Lake	126
Sunflower	797
Tallahala	2
Tuscumbia	140
Twin Oaks	102
Upper Sardis	82
Ward Bayou	55
William C. (Billy) Deviney	547