



December 19, 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 17, 2023.

Last week began the third and final duck hunting season segment and will continue through January 31, 2024. There has not been much change from the previous week as far as weather conditions and habitat. The harvest reports from public land and private lands last week began to show a slow drop in average harvest. Still, some areas are having good overall success. This trend is fairly typical for early – mid December in Mississippi. Most “seasoned” waterfowl hunters refer to it as the “December Lull”. One noticeable change is an overall increase in the average number of hunters utilizing the public hunting lands in Mississippi. Hunters are concentrating on areas with reliable water due to the extreme dry conditions across the state. This has caused for several of the standby option Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) to be very competitive with several groups being turned away each draw.

WMAs across the Mississippi Delta are still holding good numbers of ducks. The harvest reports from this past week were similar to the long-term average considering the overall current weather patterns. Harvest consisted primarily of gadwall, wood ducks, northern shoveler, and teal. Snow and greater white-fronted geese continued to increase across the state over the past week. Aquaculture ponds are continuing to hold higher numbers of northern shovelers and a variety of diving ducks.

Waterfowl hunters should keep in mind that as weather conditions and habitat conditions change, bird concentrations and behaviors will most likely change as well. The forecast for the upcoming week shows a drop in temperatures and rain towards the end of the week. Waterfowl will exploit newly flooded areas as they become available and hunters may need to adjust their hunting locations and tactics as the season progresses.

The December aerial waterfowl survey was conducted this past week and the results and distribution maps are now posted on the MDWFP's Waterfowl Program webpage. The early January aerial waterfowl survey will be conducted the first week of January. 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 webpage 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.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	32	29	0.91
Black Prairie	26	23	0.88
Canal Section	211	244	1.16
Caney Creek	5	6	1.20
Charlie Capps	46	107	2.33
Choctaw	10	5	0.5
Divide Section	72	48	0.67
Howard Miller	150	521	3.47
John Bell Williams	12	5	0.42
John W. Starr	2	5	2.50
Lake George	28	12	0.43
Little Biloxi	2	4	2.00
Mahannah	367	1153	3.14
Malmaison	144	99	0.69
Muscadine Farms	155	330	2.13
Nanah Waiya	36	12	0.33
Okatibbee	70	15	0.21
O'Keefe	139	107	0.77
Old River	60	33	0.55
Pascagoula River	509	420	0.83
Pearl River	42	13	0.31
Phil Bryant	75	69	0.92
Red Creek	3	3	1.00
Shipland	10	0	0.0
Sky Lake	51	19	0.37
Sunflower	199	86	0.43
Tallahala	4	3	0.75

Tuscumbia	23	32	1.39
Twin Oaks	30	6	0.20
Upper Sardis	14	3	0.21
Ward Bayou	189	155	0.82
William C. Billy Deviney	143	202	1.41