



December 6, 2022 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 4, 2022.

Jackson, MS – The second of three season segments for Mississippi’s waterfowl hunting season occurred over the weekend, and harvest reports from public and private lands declined overall from the season opener. Warm, foggy, and sometimes rainy weather has been the trend over the past week, especially Saturday when dense fog covered large portions of the state until late morning. Wetland habitat availability is well below normal levels for this time of year across much of Mississippi, but more rainfall late this week should help to add some water to the landscape. Water levels in the Mississippi River are also well below normal levels for this time of year. This week’s weather outlook for Mississippi predicts unseasonably warm temperatures with rain likely over the weekend and into early next week.

Several state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and intensively managed private lands across the Mississippi Delta reported good hunting success last weekend. Green-winged teal, gadwall, and wood ducks still made up a significant portion of waterfowl harvest reports. Several reports of high numbers of wood ducks have been received this season. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands. More wetland habitat is certainly needed across the state to “set the table” for large numbers of wintering waterfowl. However, the short-term effect of rainfall adding more water on the landscape, combined with warm temperatures, could make duck hunting conditions a bit more difficult as birds spread out into newly flooded areas. Fortunately, the long range forecast does show potential for more normal conditions later this month, which could mean better chances for new migrations.

Hunters are reminded that Mississippi’s regular waterfowl seasons are currently closed again, but the light goose conservation order is open. The final (and longest) stretch of Mississippi’s regular duck and goose hunting seasons will begin Friday, December 9 and will conclude on Tuesday, January 31. The December aerial waterfowl survey is scheduled to be flown next week, and survey results and distribution maps will be available on MDWFP’s website and social media platforms soon after completion. 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.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Black Prairie	2	2	1.00
Canal Section	89	68	0.76
Canemount	1	3	3.00
Caney Creek	7	12	1.71
Charlie Capps	7	7	1.00
Copiah County	3	4	1.33
Divide Section	15	6	0.40
Howard Miller	24	72	3.00
John Bell Williams	8	3	0.38
John W. Starr	9	15	1.67
Little Biloxi	2	1	0.50
Lake George	15	13	0.87
Mahannah	73	158	2.16
Malmaison	60	62	1.03
Muscadine Farms	46	89	1.93
Nanih Waiya	39	61	1.56
Okatibbee	42	22	0.52
O'Keefe	74	130	1.76
Old River	27	20	0.74
Pascagoula River	92	59	0.64
Pearl River	32	36	1.13
Phil Bryant	4	2	0.50
Sky Lake	14	20	1.43
Sunflower	124	152	1.23
Tallahala	4	5	1.25
Tuscumbia	27	52	1.93
Twin Oaks	4	3	0.75
Upper Sardis	24	11	0.46
Ward Bayou	32	17	0.53
William C. Billy Deviney	22	77	3.50
Wolf River	3	5	1.67

Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2022-23 Waterfowl Season

Water control structures in the Long Bayou and Dowling Bayou green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will be closed to capture water for the 2022-23 hunting season on Sunflower WMA. 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. Other 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>