



## **December 28, 2021 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 26, 2021.

Jackson, MS – Last week's temperatures started out as somewhat mild, and transitioned to very warm by late week and through the weekend. Wetland habitat availability in the Mississippi Delta has again reached a stand-still with the lack of rainfall, and still lags well behind normal levels for this time of year. The Mississippi River level has risen some over the last week, but has again started to fall and is still well below flood stage. Interior Delta river systems have fluctuated some throughout the season but have also stayed well within their banks. This week's weather outlook for Mississippi shows a continued stretch of very warm weather through New Year's day. However, this warm weather also carries the potential for much needed rainfall for most of the week. A cold weather system from the north is expected to reach Mississippi over the weekend. This system could be significant enough to cause migration of waterfowl from the northern portions of the Mississippi Flyway into mid or southern latitudes.

Hunting success has declined for the second straight week overall, as temperatures have increased significantly. Warm temperatures can impact waterfowl hunting in several ways. First, Mississippi is unlikely to see increases in waterfowl migrating into the state when weather systems from the north are not creating a need for large numbers of birds to migrate south. Secondly, the birds that have been in the state for several weeks are not pressed to feed heavily for maintaining body reserves. Instead, birds are able to sit in areas where they can avoid disturbances and can quickly visit areas with high quality food sources to gain all the energy they need in a short amount of time. Duck harvest reports continue to be dominated by "early migrating" species like green-winged teal, northern shovelers, and gadwall. Snow, blue, Ross's, and white-fronted geese remain high in number in the Mississippi Delta, and some hunters have diversified their approach to take advantage of the opportunity. As always, availability of quality wetland habitat and weather conditions will greatly influence waterfowl harvest on both private and public lands.

Mississippi's regular waterfowl seasons are currently open and will continue through January 31. The early January waterfowl aerial survey is scheduled to be flown next week. After completion, full survey results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website and social media platforms. For more information regarding waterfowl in Mississippi, visit our website at [www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl](http://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 selected Wildlife Management Areas. 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.

<b>WMA</b>	<b>WMA Visits</b>	<b>Harvest</b>	<b>Avg. Harvest/Day</b>
Black Prairie	6	9	1.50
Canal Section	178	214	1.20
Caney Creek	5	4	0.80
Caston Creek	1	2	2.00
Charlie Capps	28	50	1.79
Chickasawhay	1	3	3.00
Choctaw	4	4	1.00
Copiah County	2	1	0.50
Divide Section	14	21	1.50
Howard Miller	90	95	1.06
John Bell Williams	10	3	0.30
Lake George	10	7	0.70
Little Biloxi	1	2	2.00
Mahannah	207	278	1.34
Malmaison	149	243	1.63
Marion County	4	8	2.00
Muscadine Farms	53	53	1.00
Nanah Waiya	40	27	0.68
Okatibbee	39	13	0.33
O'Keefe	41	37	0.90
Old River	47	29	0.62
Pascagoula River	228	160	0.70
Pearl River	22	9	0.41
Phil Bryant	75	89	1.19
Shipland	5	1	0.20
Sky Lake	7	10	1.43
Stoneville	2	2	1.00
Sunflower	106	120	1.13
Tallahala	18	25	1.39
Tuscumbia	30	31	1.03
Upper Sardis	19	12	0.63
Ward Bayou	76	81	1.07
William C. Billy Deviney	32	43	1.34
Yockanookany	3	3	1.00

## **Sunflower WMA Flooding for 2021-22 Waterfowl Season**

Water control structures in the Long Bayou and Dowling Bayou green-tree reservoirs (GTRs) will be closed to capture water for the 2021-22 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>**