January 4, 2022 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 January 2, 2022.

Jackson, MS –After what was considered a decent start to the 2021-22 waterfowl season, was followed by a lull in waterfowl numbers, some waterfowl hunters may have become discouraged, wondering why Mother Nature is not cooperating. The warm weather patterns that the Lower Mississippi flyway has been experiencing have not been favorable to most waterfowl hunters here is Mississippi. Mississippi hunters have experienced record highs of 81 degrees on a Friday and high temperatures of 35 degrees on a Saturday. As fast as the winds shifted from the south to the north, so have the duck numbers. As the weather begins to turn into what seems like a normal winter and with several recent rain events, reports of an increase in duck numbers have begun to come in.

This past week's harvest numbers were low in comparison to past weeks; however, with the recent cold front that moved in, harvest has the potential to increase in the coming weeks. The early January aerial survey is currently underway, and preliminary reports seem to indicate an increase in mallard and pintail numbers. With the low temperatures dipping into the mid-twenties, some shallow water wetlands may ice over. Deeper wetlands such as sloughs, catfish ponds, and old oxbows could prove to be productive. Once shallow wetlands, such as agriculture fields and moist soil impoundments thaw out, waterfowl should quickly return to these locations to feed.

The early January aerial waterfowl survey results and distribution maps will be posted on MDWFP's website and social media as soon as they are complete. 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 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.

WMA	WMA Visits	Harvest	Avg. Harvest/Day
Bienville	4	2	0.50
Black Prairie	1	3	3.00
Canal Section	149	167	1.12
Caney Creek	4	0	0.00
Charlie Capps	20	29	1.45
Chickasaw	3	0	0.00
Choctaw	1	1	1.00
Copiah County	3	9	3.00
Divide Section	12	16	1.33
Howard Miller	58	101	1.74
John Bell Williams	5	4	0.80
Lake George	6	4	0.67
Mahannah	144	212	1.47
Malmaison	82	101	1.23
Muscadine Farms	53	81	1.53
Nanih Waiya	34	15	0.44
Okatibbee	26	3	0.12
O'Keefe	53	48	0.91
Old River	51	41	0.80
Pascagoula	208	212	1.02
Pearl River	18	26	1.44
Phil Bryant	31	59	1.90
Shipland	7	0	0.00
Sky Lake	5	4	0.80
Sunflower	88	96	1.09
Tallahala	18	38	2.11
Tuscumbia	27	31	1.15
Twin Oaks	1	2	2.00
Upper Sardis	18	11	0.33
Ward Bayou	57	38	0.63
William "Billy" C. Deviney	31	123	0.35

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