

Weekly Waterfowl Report for December 20, 2006

Keith Stephens (501) 223-6342, e-mail: kastephens@agfc.state.ar.us

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's waterfowl report for Dec. 20, 2006.

The following report is a compilation of state reports and waterfowl surveys from across Arkansas. This report provides a look at habitat conditions across the state.

Weather Forecast:

Today: Periods of rain and possibly a thunderstorm. High near 59. Southeast wind around 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 100 percent. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half an inch possible.

Tonight: Periods of rain and possibly a thunderstorm, mainly before 2 a.m., then a chance of rain and thunderstorms after 4 a.m. Low around 48. South-southeast wind 10 to 15 mph becoming west. Chance of precipitation is 100 percent. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

Thursday: A 40 percent chance of rain and thunderstorms, mainly before 11 a.m. Mostly cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 62. Southwest wind around 10 mph. New rainfall amounts of less than a tenth of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 44. West-southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Friday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 54. Northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 34. North-northwest wind around 5 mph.

Saturday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 53. North-northeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 35. North-northeast wind around 10 mph.

Sunday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a high near 47. North-northeast wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Sunday Night: A 30 percent chance of rain. Cloudy, with a low around 34.

Christmas Day: A 30 percent chance of rain. Partly cloudy, with a high near 47.

Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 32.

Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 46.

NORTHEAST ARKANSAS –

Dave Donaldson Black River WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent in the GTRs and 100 percent in the moist soil units. The Black River was at 10.4 feet at Corning on Dec. 20, Hubble gauge was at 269.25 MSL, and Brookings was at 267.9 MSL. The Upper Reno gauge was at 261.0 MSL, the Lower Reno was at 267.8 MSL, and Winchester was at 262 MSL.

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather Conditions: The week will remain warm. Highs for the week will range from 49 to 62 degrees. Lows for the week will range from 36 to 52 degrees.

Duck Abundance: Moderate numbers are on the area. Lake Ashbaugh has high numbers. Ducks are not moving off the lake until later in the mornings or after the noon hour. This week more ducks have been in the fields than in the woods, but it is day to day on where they are going to be.

Hunter activity/Success: Fair to moderate success depending on location. Great hunting toward the end of last week, then it dropped off during the weekend. Heavy hunting pressure late last week and over the weekend, with varying levels of success.

Shirey Bay-Rainey Brake WMA:

Percent Flooded: The Adam's Brake GTR and Rainey Brake GTR are 100 percent flooded. The Phase III, River Field, Charles Crisp and Ward Field moist soil units are 100 percent flooded.

Habitat Conditions: Good mast crop.

Weather: Rain likely.

Migrations/Observations: No new ducks have been observed moving into the area this week.

Duck Abundance: Fair.

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunter activity has been moderate with good success.

St. Francis Sunken Lands WMA:

Percent Flooded: The Snowden Waterfowl Rest Area is 70 percent flooded and the Payneway WRA is 10 percent flooded.

The St. Francis River level at Oak Donnick was 213.34 MSL on Dec. 20.

Habitat Conditions: The Snowden WRA has a good stand of smartweed, panic grass, millet, and sedges. The Payneway WRA has a higher abundance of smartweed within the borrow areas. Acorn production within the floodways is considered good.

Weather Conditions: Temperatures will reach the mid 50s to lower 60s for much of the week with rain predicted Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. Colder temperatures are expected next week.

Migrations/Observations: No new migrations of ducks have been seen.

Duck Abundance: Poor.

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunting pressure slowed over the weekend because of warmer temperatures.

Earl Buss Bayou DeView WMA:

Percent Flooded: The Thompson and South Oliver Tracts are 100 percent flooded with current gauge readings at 1.25 feet and 1.72 feet, respectively.

Habitat Conditions: Acorn production is good. A good stand of smartweed and sedges is located within the natural sloughs and along the edges of Lake Hogue Waterfowl Rest Area.

Weather Conditions: Mostly cloudy with highs in the low 60s and lows in the mid 30s throughout the week. Rain is expected Wednesday and Thursday.

Migrations/Observations: A few ducks, with most utilizing adjacent agricultural fields.

Duck Abundance: Low on the WMA.

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunting pressure is low with fair success.

Big Lake WMA:

Percent Flooded: The area is 100 percent flooded in the timber. Ditches are 100 percent flooded. Target is 235.5 MSL in the north woods with a present reading of 235.9 MSL. The target is 234.5 MSL in the south woods with a present reading of 235.0 MSL. The Simmons Field unit is 100 percent flooded.

Habitat Conditions: Acorn production is good in the timber. The Simmons Field units have millet and sorghum in the 80-acre north field on the east side. There is millet, smartweed and sedges scattered throughout.

Weather Conditions: Clear and sunny throughout the week. Highs in the 60s. Lows in the upper 30s to low 40s.

Migrations/Observations: No new ducks observed over the past week.

Duck Abundance: Fair.

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunting pressure low. Success is fair.

EAST-CENTRAL ARKANSAS -

Henry Gray Hurricane Lake WMA

Percent Flooded: 100 percent. White River at Augusta was at 23 feet on Dec. 20 and 12.2 feet at Georgetown.

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.

Weather: Mild and wet conditions are expected throughout this week.

Migrations/Observations: Low number of ducks.

Duck Abundance: Low.

Hunter Activity/Success: Low.

General Comments: Forecast rain could affect water levels.

North GTR:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.

Weather: Mild conditions are expected throughout this week.

Migrations/Observations: Low population of ducks.

Duck Abundance: Low.

Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.

South GTR:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.

Weather: Mild conditions are expected throughout this week.

Migrations/Observations: Low duck numbers.

Duck Abundance: Low.

Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.

Steve N. Wilson Raft Creek Bottoms WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.

Habitat Conditions: White River is currently 12.2 feet at Georgetown. The area is now 100 percent flooded.
Weather: Mild and wet conditions are expected throughout this week.
Migrations/Observations: No new flights have been reported.
Duck Abundance: Moderate.
Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate number of hunters having fair success.
General Comments: A quota permit draw (two hours before official shooting hours) is held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday throughout waterfowl season. Approximately 23 holes will be available during the general draw. A computer online draw has been established for 5 stations and 1 mobility-impaired blind throughout the season.

Rex Hancock Black Swamp WMA:
Percent Flooded: 90 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.
Weather: Mild and wet conditions are expected throughout this week.
Migrations/Observations: A few new flights noted this weekend.
Duck Abundance: Fair.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.
General Comments: The Cache River at Patterson was at 8.8 feet and falling on Dec. 20.

Dagmar WMA:
Percent Flooded: 20 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.
Weather: Mild and wet conditions are expected for most of the week.
Migrations/Observations: No new flights observed.
Duck Abundance: Few ducks observed.
Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate to poor.
General Comments: A few mallards are being reported. Bayou DeView is falling. Cache River at Cotton Plant was at 10.1 feet and falling on Dec. 20.

Mud Slough GTR:
Percent Flooded: 98 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.
Weather: Mild conditions.
Migrations/Observations: No new flights.
Duck Abundance: A few wood ducks being harvested.
Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate/poor.
General Comments: Very few mallards are being reported. Water level is .4 feet below maximum flood pool.

Apple Lake Rest Area:
Percent Flooded: 50 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.
Weather: Mild and wet conditions.
Migrations/Observations: A variety of waterfowl species are using the lake.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Closed.
General Comments: Apple Lake will remain closed to access until after waterfowl season.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS -

Bell Slough WMA:
Percent Flooded: 70 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Moderate mast crop.
Migrations/Observations: Several new flights seen.
Duck Abundance: Very few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Hunter success has been sporadic.
Rest Area:
Percent Flooded: 60 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good seed production.
Migrations/Observations: None.
Duck Abundance: Few ducks.

Holland Bottoms WMA:

Percent Flooded: 20 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good mast crop.
Migrations/Observations: Fair numbers of wood ducks in the ditches.
Duck Abundance: Very few.
Hunter Activity/Success: None noted.
General Comments: Rainfall required for overflow flooding.
Rest Area:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Moderate seed production.
Migrations/Observations: A few mallards have been seen on the rest area.
Duck Abundance: Few.

Harris Brake WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Moderate mast crop.
Migrations/Observations: A few new flights of ducks.
Duck Abundance: Plenty of wood ducks.
Hunter Activity/Success: Early shooting with poor success.
General Comments: Closed Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Lake Conway:

Percent Flooded: 60 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Normal.
Migrations/Observations: Few ducks seen.
Duck Abundance: Very few ducks.
Hunter Activity/Success: None noted.
General Comments: Lake drawdown in progress through Jan. 1. Only Pierce and Dix Creeks are open to waterfowl hunting.

SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS -

Bayou Meto WMA:

General Comments: Cannon Brake is 60 percent flooded at 174.9 MSL.

Upper Vallier:

Percent Flooded: 80 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Low.

Lower Vallier:

Percent Flooded: 99 percent flooded at 179.4 MSL.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Low.

Government Cypress:

Percent Flooded: 90 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Low.

Buckingham Flats:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Low.

Temple Island:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.

Migrations/Observations: Low
Duck Abundance: Low
Hunter Activity/Success: Low.
Halowell Rest Area:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Wrape Plantation:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

Cut-Off Creek WMA:
Open Area
Percent Flooded: 95 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Excellent.
Migrations/Observations: A few more ducks.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair number of hunters with moderate success.
General Comments: Deep Slough is at 131.0 MSL.
Rest Area:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Excellent.
Migrations/Observations: A few more ducks.
Duck Abundance: Few.

Seven Devils WMA:
Percent Flooded: 50 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Fair.
Migrations/Observations: A few more ducks.
Duck Abundance: Few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair number of hunters with a little success.
General Comments: 129.5 MSL. Water is still too low for good boating access.

Trusten Holder WMA at Arkansas River:
Percent Flooded: River water only with variable levels of backwater flooding.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Migrations/Observations: Few ducks.
Duck Abundance: Few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.
General Comments: Arkansas River gauge at Pendleton Ferry was at 26.2 feet on Dec. 18.

Choctaw Island WMA:
Percent Flooded: River water only with variable levels of backwater flooding.
Habitat Conditions: Fair.
Migrations/Observations: Low.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Comments: Mississippi River gauge at Arkansas City was at 11.7 feet on Dec. 18.

Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita WMA:
Percent Flooded: 0 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Fair.
Migrations/Observations: A few wood ducks.
Water Levels: 52.6 feet above sea level below the Felsenthal Lock and Dam. The area will begin to flood when water levels exceed 65 feet above sea level.
Duck Abundance: A few small groups of wood ducks have been reported by hunters.

Hunter Activity/Success: Low.

General Comments: A few pockets of water have formed from the recent rain. Water levels are up 1 foot from normal.

SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS

Dr. Lester Sitzes, III Bois d' Arc Lake Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 80 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Good.

Weather: Mild.

Migrations/Observations: No new ducks observed.

Duck Abundance: A few mallards and wood ducks.

Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

General Comments: Lake is closed to duck hunting.

Dr. Lester Sitzes, III Bois d' Arc WMA:

Red Slough Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 5 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Poor.

Weather: Warm.

Migrations/Observations: Few wood ducks.

Duck Abundance: Poor.

Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

General Comments: Rest area closed to duck hunting.

Greentree Reservoir:

Percent Flooded: 5 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Good mast crop. Conditions should improve with rain and cooler weather.

Weather: Warm.

Migrations/Observations: A few mallards and gadwalls.

Duck Abundance: Poor.

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.

General Comments: Walk in hunting only. The water is too low for boat access.

Little Grassy:

Percent Flooded: Dry.

Habitat Conditions: Poor.

Weather: Mild.

Migrations/Observations: No ducks.

Duck Abundance: Poor.

Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.

General Comments: Walk-in access only.

Millwood Lake:

Percent Flooded: 259.47 MSL.

Habitat Conditions: Water level rising slowly.

Weather: Mild.

Migrations/Observations: Diving duck numbers are starting to increase.

Duck Abundance: Moderate.

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.

General Comments: A few limits are still being taken.

Sulphur River WMA:

Mercer Bayou:

Percent Flooded: 50 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Water level is stable. Habitat is poor due to drought conditions.

Weather: Cooler temperatures predicted.

Migrations/Observations: No new ducks observed.

Duck Abundance: Few. Mostly wood ducks, gadwalls, blue-winged and green-winged teal, as well as a few mallards.

Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.

Henry Moore Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 75 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Good. Seed production in the moist soil openings has been good.
Weather: Cooler temperatures predicted.
Migrations/Observations: No new ducks observed.
Duck Abundance: Good number of ducks.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Ed Gordon Point Remove WMA:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Some cells have been planted with millet and others have natural vegetation.
Weather: Rain and cooler weather expected.
Migrations/Observations: Very few.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: Quite a few hunters taking a few ducks.
General Comments: No new migrations.

Arkansas River Valley:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week with highs in the upper 60s and lows in the 40s.
Migrations/Observations: No new migrations.
Duck Abundance: Fair.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.
General Comments: Ducks are scattered.

Dardanelle WMA:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Moist soil units are 100 percent flooded. High-energy seeds are scattered throughout the WMA.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week with highs in the upper 60s and lows in the 40s.
Migrations/Observations: No new migrations.
Duck Abundance: Fair.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.
General Comments: Ducks are scattered.

Ozark Pool:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Moist soil units are flooded. Good millet crop and moist soil plants.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week, with highs in the upper 60s and lows in the 40s.
Migrations/Observations: New migrations last week.
Duck Abundance: Fair.
Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate.
General Comments: Still seeing new migrations.

Dyer Lake Cells:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good habitat conditions. Moist soil units produced excellent food along with a good millet crop.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week, with highs in the upper 60s and lows in the 40s.
Migrations/Observations: No new migrations.
Duck Abundance: Poor.
Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.
General Comments: Need cold weather and new migrations.

Arkansas River Pool 9:
Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good. Agricultural fields along the river have good water.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week with highs in the upper 60s and lows in the 40s.
Migrations/Observations: No new migrations.

Duck Abundance: Few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair.

Petit Jean WMA:
Percent Flooded:

Black Lands Moist Soil Units -100 percent.
Slaty Crossing Moist Soil Units- 100 percent.
Pullen Pond - 100 percent.
Pond Creek - 100 percent.
Slaty Pond - 100 percent.
Santa Fe - 100 percent.

Habitat Conditions: Excellent hard mast crop in the timber and millet did well in Black Lands fields.
Weather: Highs in the 60s and lows in the low 40s.
Migrations/Observations: Very few ducks.
Duck Abundance: Few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.
General Comments: Need cold weather to push ducks into the area.

Lake Nimrod WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Excellent hard mast crop in the timber and millet did well in field systems.
Weather: Mostly sunny. Highs in the 60s and lows in the low 40s.
Migrations/Observations: None.
Duck Abundance: Few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.
General Comments: Need cold weather and new migrations.

Galla Creek WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Fair mast crop with higher water due to heavy rain.
Weather: Rain and cooler weather expected.
Migrations/Observations: Very few.
Duck Abundance: Low.
Hunter Activity/Success: A few hunters are having some success.

Johnson County Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 60 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week with highs in the 60s and lows in the 40s.
Duck Abundance: Fair.
Hunter Activity/Success: N/A
General Comments: No hunting.

Frog Bayou WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent.
Habitat Conditions: Good stands of native vegetation.
Weather: Scattered showers throughout the week with highs in the 60s and lows in the 40s.
Migrations/Observations: No new migrations over the weekend.
Duck Abundance: Few.
Hunter Activity/Success: Poor.
General Comments: Need cold weather and new migrations.

*Information on river levels can be found at: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lmrfc/> or <http://water.usgs.gov/realtime.html> or http://www.agfc.com/education/waterlevels_details.html
Sunrise/sunset tables are available at: http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.html and in the Arkansas Waterfowl Regulations Guide.