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Hunting



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Weekly Waterfowl Report

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

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The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's waterfowl report for Dec. 19, 2007.

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...Mostly sunny. Areas of fog in the morning. Highs in the lower 60s. Northeast winds 5 mph in the morning...becoming east in the afternoon.

Tonight...Mostly cloudy. Not as cool. A chance of showers and isolated thunderstorms during the night. Lows in the upper 40s. East winds 5 to 10 mph in the evening...decreasing to 5 mph after midnight. The chance of precipitation 50 percent. Average rainfall less than 1/10 inch.

Thursday...Mostly cloudy. A chance of showers in the morning. Isolated thunderstorms during the day. A slight chance of showers in the afternoon. Highs in the lower 60s. East winds 5 mph in the morning...shifting to the northwest in the afternoon. The chance of precipitation 50 percent in the morning...decreasing to 20 percent in the afternoon. Average rainfall 1/10 to 1/4 inch.

Thursday Night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s. West winds 5 mph in the evening...shifting to the south after midnight.

Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 60s. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.

Friday Night...Mostly cloudy. A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 40s. The chance of precipitation 50 percent.

Saturday...Showers and thunderstorms likely in the morning... Then a chance of showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon. Highs in the lower 60s. Temperatures falling into the mid 50s in the afternoon. The chance of precipitation 60 percent.

Saturday Night...Mostly cloudy in the evening...becoming partly cloudy. Breezy...colder. A slight chance of rain in the evening. Lows in the lower 30s. The chance of precipitation 20 percent in the evening.

Sunday...Mostly sunny. Cooler. Highs in the upper 40s.

Sunday Night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 20s.

Monday...Mostly sunny. Highs around 50.

Monday Night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s.

Christmas Day...Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 50s.

NORTHEAST ARKANSAS-

Dave Donaldson Black River WMA:

Percent Flooded: Lower Reyno GTR is approximately 80 percent flooded with a gauge reading of 267.5 MSL. The Upper Reyno GTR is 95 percent of capacity with a gauge reading of 267.1 MSL. The LowerIsland is 100 percent flooded with a gauge reading of 269.4 MSL. The UpperIsland is 100 percent flooded with a gauge reading of 270.5 MSL. The Winchester GTR is 85 percent with a gauge reading of 265.4 MSL. Hubble Gauge on Little River is at 269.2 MSL and Brookings gauge for Big Black River is at 267.4 MSL. The current Corning stage is 11.51 feet.

Habitat Conditions: Good, with moderate abundance of mast crop within the GTRs.

Weather Conditions: Highs for the week will range from 49 to 56 degrees. Lows for the week will range from 32 to 46 degrees.

Duck Abundance: Moderate numbers have been observed on the WMA and moist soil unit.

Hunter activity/Success: Low numbers have been harvested in the timber, but moderate to good numbers have been taken in the surrounding fields.

Comments: Please remember to keep all boats off the levees, so AGFC personnel can access the area. Boats that are blocking access will be moved.

Shirey Bay-Rainey Brake WMA:

Percent Flooded: The Adam's Brake GTR and the Rainey Brake GTR are 100 percent flooded. The Phase III and Charles Crisp moist soil units are 100 percent flooded. The Ward Field and River Field moist soil units are not flooded.

Habitat Conditions: Fair mast crop.

Weather: The highs this week will be in the mid 40s and mid 50s with lows in the mid 30s and mid 40s. There is a good chance for rain on Friday.

Migrations/Observations: A few ducks have been observed flying into the area this week.

Duck Abundance: Poor

Hunter Activity/Success: A few limits were taken over the weekend but overall hunter success remains poor. The hunter activity was moderate over the weekend.

St. Francis Sunken Lands WMA:

Percent Flooded: The Snowden Waterfowl Rest Area is 40 percent flooded, and Payneway WRA is 45 percent. The current St. Francis River level at Oak Donnicks is 213.86.

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 barrow areas.

Acorn production within the floodways is good.

Weather Conditions: Partly cloudy during the week with highs in the mid to upper 50s. A 30 percent chance of rain is expected on Thursday and a 40 percent chance of thunderstorms is predicted for Saturday.

Migrations/Observations: Several geese are flying over the area, but no new ducks have been seen.

Duck Abundance: Moderate numbers are still on the WMA.

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair

Earl Buss Bayou DeView WMA:

Percent Flooded: The current Thompson Tract gauge reading is 3.1 feet, with the South Oliver Tract gauge reading at 2.6 feet. Water levels are much higher because of recent rains.

Habitat Conditions: Acorn production is fair. 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: Temperatures are expected to range around the high 50s during the day and high 30s at night. A 30 to 40 percent chance of rain is expected Thursday through Saturday.

Migrations/Observations: A fair number of ducks with most utilizing adjacent agricultural fields.

Duck Abundance: A few ducks are using the timbered areas.

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunter activity has decreased with poor success.

Big LakeWMA:

*Percent Flooded:*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 236.3 MSL. Target is 234.5 MSL in the south woods with a present reading of 236.7 MSL. Simmons Field unit is 100 percent flooded.

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather Conditions: Highs will be in the high 40s to mid 50s and lows will be in the upper 30s to low 40s for the week.

Migrations/Observations: Fair numbers of ducks are being seen flying over the area to the north and east and then returning to Big Lake NWR.

*Duck Abundance:*Moderate

Hunter Activity/Success: Average number of hunters having moderate success. There were a high number of hunters having moderate success over the weekend.

General Comments: Be aware of logs near the surface in the ditches. Be careful of launching at the Simmons structure with stop logs being removed because of high water. There is extremely high water on the area and water levels are on the rise.

EAST-CENTRAL ARKANSAS-

Dagmar WMA:

Percent Flooded: 0 percent

Habitat Conditions: Bayou DeView is rising and habitat conditions are improving with the recent rains.

Weather: Mild conditions.

Migrations/Observations: No new flights observed.

Duck Abundance: Few ducks observed, mostly wood ducks and gadwalls.

*Hunter Activity/Success:*Fair

*General Comments:*Only permanent water available on Dagmar. Most sloughs are full, but very little water in any timber.

Mud Slough GTR:

Percent Flooded: 10 percent

Habitat Conditions: Improving with recent rains. Good acorn crop

Weather: Mild conditions.

Migrations/Observations: No new flights.

Duck Abundance: A few wood ducks in the slough pockets and some mallards reported being harvested.

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair

*General Comments:*CacheRiver is presently at 12.8 feet at Cotton Plant and rising. Conditions should continue to improve over the next week with recent rains.

AppleLake Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 50 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop

Weather: Mild conditions

Migrations/Observations: A few wood ducks using the lake

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Closed to access.

General Comments: Low water conditions.

HenryGrayHurricaneLake WMA

Percent Flooded: 30 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.

Weather: Average temperatures.

Migrations/Observations: Low numbers of ducks.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Low

General Comments: Water conditions are improving and the area should be at or above flood pool within the next week because of the recent rains. White River at Augusta is at 26 feet and Georgetown is at 12.8 feet.

North GTR:

Percent Flooded: 45 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.

Weather: Average temperatures.

Migrations/Observations: Low population of ducks.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Low

General Comments: Water conditions are improving and the GTR should be at or above flood pool within the next week because of rains this weekend.

South GTR:

Percent Flooded: 45 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop.

Weather: Average temperatures.

Migrations/Observations: Low duck numbers.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Low

General Comments: Water conditions are improving and the GTR should be at or above flood pool within the next week because of rains this weekend.

RexHancockBlackSwamp WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good acorn crop

Weather: Average temperatures.

Migrations/Observations: New flights noted

Duck Abundance: Good

Hunter Activity/Success: Good

General Comments: The CacheRiver at Patterson is presently at 10.5 feet and rising.

Steve N. Wilson Raft Creek Bottoms WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Main impoundments are at full pool.

Weather: Average temperatures.

Migrations/Observations: No new flights reported.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair

General Comments: A quota permit draw (two hours before official shooting hours) is held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturday and Sundays throughout waterfowl season. Approximately 18 permits will be drawn. A computer online draw has been established for five stations and one mobility-impaired blind throughout the season. Hunting stations within impoundments D and A can be accessed by boat. Hunting stations not within impoundments D and A are walk-in access. White River stage at Georgetown is 12.8 feet and rising.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS -**BellSlough WMA:**

Percent Flooded: 65 percent

Habitat Conditions: Moderate mast crop.

Migrations/Observations: A few large groups of ducks reported in the area.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunter activity has pushed most of the ducks out of the area.

General Comments: Waiting on rainfall to complete the flooding of the area.

Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 50 percent

*Habitat Conditions:*Excellent seed production.

*Migrations/Observations:*None

*Duck Abundance:*Few ducks.

General Comments: Waiting on rainfall.

Holland Bottoms WMA:

Percent Flooded: 35 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good mast crop.

Migrations/Observations: None noted.

*Duck Abundance:*Very few.

Hunter Activity/Success: None

General Comments: Area floods by overflow.

Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

*Habitat Conditions:*Excellent seed production.

Migrations/Observations: Plenty of mallards using the rest area.

*Duck Abundance:*High

Harris Brake WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Moderate mast crop.

Migrations/Observations: None

Duck Abundance: Few

Hunter Activity/Success: Very few hunters seen on the area last week.

Lake Conway:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

*Habitat Conditions:*Normal

*Migrations/Observations:*Several large groups of diving ducks seen on the lake.

Duck Abundance: Few

Hunter Activity/Success: Hunters are killing a few ducks.

General Comments: Only Pierce and Dix Creeks are open to waterfowl hunting.

SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS-

Bayou Meto WMA:

General Comments: Cannon Brake is 100 percent flooded

Upper Vallier:

Percent Flooded: 85 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Migrations/Observations: Good

Duck Abundance: Good

Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate activity and good success rates.

Lower Vallier:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Migrations/Observations: Good

Duck Abundance: Good

Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate activity and good success rates.

Government Cypress:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Migrations/Observations: Good

Duck Abundance: Good

Hunter Activity/Success: Moderate activity and good success rates.

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: 80 percent
Habitat Conditions: Good
Migrations/Observations: Good
Duck Abundance: Moderate
Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

Wrape Plantation:

Percent Flooded: 80 percent
Habitat Conditions: Good
Migrations/Observations: Moderate to fair.
Duck Abundance: Fair
Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

Cut-Off Creek WMA:

Open Area

Percent Flooded: 20 percent
Habitat Conditions: Good
Migrations/Observations: Few
Duck Abundance: Low
Hunter Activity/Success: Poor
General Comments: Deep Slough is at 128.5 MSL with a slow rise.

Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 20 percent
Habitat Conditions: Good
Migrations/Observations: Few
Duck Abundance: Low
Hunter Activity/Success: N/A.

Seven Devils WMA:

Percent Flooded: 20 percent
Habitat Conditions: Good
Migrations/Observations: Few
Duck Abundance: Low
Hunter Activity/Success: Poor
General Comments: Still no boating access at this time.

Trusten Holder WMA at Arkansas River:

Percent Flooded: River water only with variable levels of backwater flooding.
Habitat Conditions: Good
Migrations/Observations: Few
Duck Abundance: Fair
Hunter Activity/Success: Fair
General Comments: Arkansas River gauge at Pendleton Ferry is at 26.54 feet.

Choctaw Island WMA:

Percent Flooded: River water only, with variable levels of backwater flooding.
Habitat Conditions: Fair
Migrations/Observations: Moderate
Duck Abundance: Moderate
Hunter Activity/Success: Good

Comments: Mississippi River gauge at ArkansasCity is at 17.41 feet.

Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita WMA:

Percent Flooded: 0 percent

Habitat Conditions: Fair

Migrations/Observations: Very few ducks seen on or off the WMA.

Weather Conditions: Wednesday to Sunday, low temperatures range from 37 to 54 degrees. High temperatures range from 59 to 65 degrees, with a 30 to 40 percent chance of rain Wednesday and Thursday and 10 to 20 percent Friday to Sunday.

Water Levels: 66.4 feet MSL above and 52.8 feet MSL below the Felsenthal Lock and Dam.

Duck Abundance: Low numbers of ducks seen on Felsenthal (north of the WMA).

Hunter Activity/Success: Poor

General Comments: The area will begin to flood when water levels exceed 65.0 feet MSL below the dam. The water levels are rising at 0.1 feet per day above the dam.

SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS-

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

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Cool

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: 80 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Cold front moved in over this past weekend.

Migrations/Observations: Few mallards and wood ducks

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

General Comments: Rest area is closed to hunting.

Greentree Reservoir:

Percent Flooded: 75 percent

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

Weather: Cold front moved in over this past weekend.

Migrations/Observations: Some mallards and gadwall.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair

Little Grassy:

Percent Flooded: 60 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Cold front moved in over this past weekend.

Migrations/Observations: Few ducks

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair

General Comments: Walk in only.

MillwoodLake:

Percent Flooded: 257.00 MSL

Habitat Conditions: Water level rose slightly because of the recent rain.

Weather: Cold front moved in over this past weekend.

Migrations/Observations: Very low duck numbers because of drawdown.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Low

General Comments: Caution should be used when navigating on the lake because of submerged stumps and logs. Paraloma, Cotton Shed, Saratoga and Beards Bluff ramps are unusable.

Sulphur River WMA:

Mercer Bayou:

Percent Flooded: 75 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Recent rains have improved habitat conditions.

Migrations/Observations: No new flights.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Poor

General Comments: Habitat is in good shape because of summer rains.

Henry Moore Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: 80 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Recent rains have improved habitat conditions

Migrations/Observations: No new flights to report.

Duck Abundance: Moderate.

Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

General Comments: Habitat is in very good shape with good seed production.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS-

Ed Gordon Point Remove WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: An abundance of natural vegetation

Weather: Clear with above-average temperatures.

Migrations/Observations: Some new ducks on the area

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Some hunters taking a few ducks

General Comments: Better boat access because of rain

Galla Creek WMA:

General Comments: The area will not be flooded this year because of channel restoration in progress.

Petit Jean WMA:

Percent Flooded:

Black Lands Moist Soil Units – 100 percent

Slaty Crossing Moist Soil Unit – 100 percent

Pullen Pond – 90 percent

Pond Creek – 25 percent

Slaty Pond – 50 percent

Santa Fe – Fluctuating with PetitJeanRiver level.

Habitat Conditions: Fair amount of red oak hard mast crop in the timber and millet did well in Blacklands fields.

Weather: Highs in the 40s to 60s and lows in the 30s to 40s.

Migrations/Observations: Seeing several new flights of mallards, gadwall, teal and divers coming down with the cooler winds from the north. Ducks are feeding heavily at night and leaving the fields early, before shooting light, in search of areas to loaf during daylight hours.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Most hunters are concentrating on the moist soil units, but with the PetitJeanRiver at 20 feet and falling, the flooded hardwood flats will attract feeding and loafing ducks during daylight hours. Success is fair with most hunters staying until noon.

General Comments: Over the last week, the WMA received 4.2 inches of much needed rain. Cooler weather in the northern states has pushed ducks into the area. The area could use a few more inches to fill the remaining partially filled units.

Lake Nimrod WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Fair. Red oak hard mast crop in the timber and native grasses did well in field systems.

Weather: Highs in the 40s to 60s and lows in the 30s to 40s.

Migrations/Observations: Average number of mallards, better numbers of wood ducks, gadwalls, teal and divers. Ducks are leaving the fields early and concentrating in the timber after sunrise.

Duck Abundance: Low to fair.

Hunter Activity/Success: Most hunters with boats are launching at either end of the levee and staying till noon to bag their birds, not many with limits. Walk-in hunters are concentrating on the northwest accesses off of the Upper Duck Pond Road. Success for both is poor to fair.

General Comments: Cooler weather in the northern states has pushed ducks into the area. Over the last week, the WMA received 4.2 inches of rain, which could lead to minor flooding of area roads and boat accesses. It is best to check with the Corps of Engineers at their LakeNimrod office (479) 272-4324 for lake levels and local conditions.

Arkansas RiverValley:

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Mild

Migrations/Observations: Over the weekend, new flights of mallards and geese were reported. The migrations began Saturday afternoon along with the arriving cold front.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Low number of hunters reported Saturday with some hunters taking limits of mallards Sunday morning.

General Comments: New ducks are continuing to arrive with the push of cold from the North.

Dardanelle WMA:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent of capacity.

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Clear and mild. Recent rains didn't produce run-off because of the dry conditions.

Migrations/Observations: New flights of mallards and geese were reported Saturday and Sunday. Canvasbacks were reported on the Arkansas River Saturday morning.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Few hunters were out over the weekend with some taking limits of ducks.

Comments: New ducks are continuing to arrive with the push of cold from the North.

Ozark Pool:

Percent Flooded: 100 percent

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Clear and mild.

Migrations/Observations: New flights were reported over the weekend.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Some hunters are taking their limits of mallards.

General Comments: New ducks are continuing to arrive with the push of cold from the North.

DyerLakeCells:

Percent Flooded: Moist soil units are 100 percent flooded.

Habitat Conditions: Good

Weather: Rain brought some moisture, but the area needs several inches to put sheet water in surrounding fields.

Migrations/Observations: Some movement of ducks with last week's rain.

Duck Abundance: Low

Hunter Activity/Success: Low

General Comments: Need continued rain and cold weather to push ducks into the area.

JohnsonCounty Rest Area:

Percent Flooded: More than 65 percent flooded.

Habitat Conditions: Moist soil units are good.

Weather: Cloudy, light rain over weekend. Didn't produce run off because of dry conditions.

Migrations/Observations: New ducks are continuing to arrive on the rest area.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: N/A

General Comments: No hunting.

Frog Bayou WMA:

Percent Flooded: 90 percent

Habitat Conditions: Golden millet planted in three units.

Weather: Mild

Migrations/Observations: Few ducks have been observed moving into the management area.

Duck Abundance: Fair

Hunter Activity/Success: Fair

General Comments: Plenty of water and good habitat conditions.

* 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.

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