

September 13th, 2013 – Aerial Waterfowl Inventory Blog

The weather finally allowed us to get the 2nd teal flight in last Friday the 13th. Excessive temperatures prevented the flight early in the week, and fog was an issue on Thursday. Our flights start shortly after sunrise and take 6 to 8 h to complete; depending on how many ducks are here. If you're ever wondering why a flight hasn't been posted, please consider what the weather was like over the entire survey route (Pekin to Grafton; Grafton to the Quad Cities; cut across country to Hennepin, and back to Pekin). Wind is an issue too, as I have a hard time counting ducks when the wind approaches or exceeds 20 mph. Waterfowl numbers will be distributed as soon as I get them tallied, and Michelle Horath, former observer of the INHS waterfowl flights, posts them to our web page (www.bellrose.org) after I tally the location data.

Not much changed between the 3rd and the 13th of September. Teal numbers in the Illinois River valley increased by only 4% from the previous week; however, there was a more even mix of blue-wings and green-wings. Teal numbers on the Mississippi increased (66%), but there were fewer than 7,000 teal recorded at Mississippi River refuges. On a brighter note, several duck clubs and refuges started pumping water in anticipation of fall migration. Hopefully the cooler weather and north winds will increase the number of ducks along both rivers before the last weekend of teal season. Finally, the 3rd teal flight will be late again this week. Mechanical issues with the airplane will prevent the flight until at least Wednesday, September 18th.