

November 7th, 2017 – Aerial Waterfowl Inventory Blog

We flew the waterfowl inventory of the Mississippi River on Monday, November 6th. We had some electrical issues with the plane at the start of the survey, preventing us from getting the Illinois River flight completed. I hope to fly the Illinois River on Friday, November 10th.

Total ducks on the Mississippi River were staggering at 146% above the 10-yr average and 86% above last week's count. We had an influx of divers throughout the Mississippi River bordering Illinois, and we estimated 38,500 bluebills on Pool 19 this week. Most noteworthy was the number of birds in confluence region of the Illinois & Mississippi rivers. Swan Lake, which is part of Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge, was holding ~324,000 ducks. This number is very large for the first week of November. In fact, this was the 3rd largest duck count at Swan Lake since the inception of the waterfowl surveys back in 1948; only to be beaten by December 5th, 1955 (581,495 ducks) and November 28th, 1952 (341,595 ducks). It was the largest count of northern pintail, gadwall, and ring-necked ducks ever recorded at Swan Lake, and the 65,400 gadwall at Swan Lake was the largest number recorded at one location along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers over the 69-yr history of the waterfowl survey. Enjoy them while they're here!

For more information about the waterfowl survey, check out our webpage at www.bellrose.org. Stay tuned for more updates next week.....

