

November 12th, 2014 – Aerial Waterfowl Inventory Blog

We have had several movements of ducks into and out of the Illinois River valley (IRV) since my last blog on November 5th. On the evening of November 6th, we lost those spectacular numbers of ducks from the IRV; however, it was evident from hunting reports that we had new ducks on Saturday, November 8th. Waterfowling was especially good on Veteran's Day as migrating mallards arrived along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. Nevertheless, weather radar noted a big emigration of ducks at sunset on the 11th. Duck abundance in the IRV was noticeably lower on Wednesday's (November 12th) waterfowl survey, and duck numbers in the IRV were down 54% from the previous week and 11% below the 10-yr average for the second week of November (www.bellrose.org). This same trend was not evident along the Mississippi River as duck abundance on many of the refuges skyrocketed; namely Dardenne, Cannon, and Shanks refuges. Duck numbers along the Mississippi increased 29% from the previous week and were 74% above the 10-yr average.

Temperatures have plummeted with the arrival of the polar vortex and our lakes and marshes are freezing fast. Many hunters along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers have started downsizing their decoy spreads and some have pulled their decoys and blinds completely. Let's hope we thaw out sooner than later and before the mallards head south.

Be safe and happy hunting! Stay tuned for more updates next week.....