

## **December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 – Aerial Waterfowl Inventory Blog**

We flew the waterfowl inventory on Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. The Illinois River was 45% above the 10-yr average for total ducks. However, we have been hovering around 325,000 ducks for a couple of weeks now. The Illinois River had 172,090 mallards, but they were only up 1% from last week. The Mississippi River was 61% above the 10-yr average, and mallards were up 109% from last week and estimated at 402,800 birds. I'm not sure what was going with the big increase in mallards on the Mississippi. Based on hunting reports, I don't think we had a major influx of migrant mallards. Maybe these ducks have been around the area for several weeks and have finally moved into the refuges counted from the air. Over the past 10 years, Illinois River mallard numbers have peaked on November 30<sup>th</sup>, with the Mississippi River being slightly later on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Hopefully, all we need is weather and little ice to make them move around on the landscape. The weather forecast indicates we might just get those colder temperatures around Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Let's hope so because these ducks are stale.

For more information about the waterfowl survey, check out our webpage at [www.bellrose.org](http://www.bellrose.org). Stay tuned for more updates next week.....

