

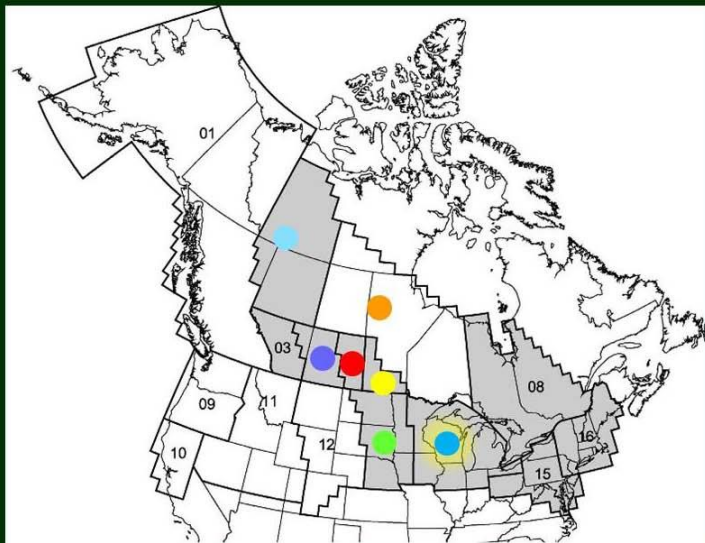
November 20, 2013 – Aerial Waterfowl Inventory Blog

There are still a bunch of ducks along both the Illinois and Mississippi rivers with 600,330 and 597,335 total ducks, respectively. These numbers are very similar to what was here last week. Actually, I think these ducks have been here for a couple weeks now. Many duck clubs and public land hunters are telling me that the harvest has dropped off over the last several days. Hunters like to call these birds “stale”. In other words, they have been in the area for too long and have figured out where the refuges are. They are duck blind, decoy, and call shy. Duck hunting is best when we have many smaller duck migrations into Illinois. These new influxes of ducks every 4 or 5 days create a situation where new birds are mingling around the various wetlands trying to find food and refuge. Therefore, they are more naïve and hutable than ducks that have been around for a while.

Speaking of harvest, where do you think our mallards come from? The accompanying slide shows where mallards harvested in Illinois breed. Band recovery data from the 1990’s shows that while we still get a lot of our birds from the prairies, the percentage of mallards coming from the Great Lakes states has increased substantially since the 1960’s. Over 28% of our mallard harvest comes from ducks reproducing in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, and yes, right here in Illinois. Let’s hear it for the Conservation Reserve Program for putting grasslands back on the landscape!

Good Luck in the deer stand this weekend and stay tuned for more updates next week.....

Illinois Mallard Harvest Derivation



	<u>1961-1975</u>	<u>1990-1997</u>
1	1.5	0.1
2	9.7	1.4
3	0.8	0.0
4	18.2	5.7
5	12.0	10.5
6	7.7	7.6
7	23.1	23.9
8	1.1	0.3
9	0.0	0.0
10	0.0	0.0
11	0.0	0.0
12	0.6	3.0
13	16.4	18.9
14	8.7	28.2
15	0.2	0.4
16	0.0	0.0

Zuwerink and Gates 1999