

# MIGRATION REPORTS – NOVEMBER 2016

NOVEMBER 8, 2016



**Bluewings Still The Predominant Bird Harvested In Texas**

Our next major delivery of waterfowl will occur this week. A major front is sweeping down the Central Flyway dropping overnight temperatures into the 30's from Montana all the way to Northern Kansas. The Houston forecast calls for north winds for all of this week into next with our temperatures finally giving us the taste of Fall - highs in the 70's and lows in the 50's. Regarding rainfall, we are not alone in the extreme patterns that materialized over the past 3 months; across the Mid-west they are experiencing bouts of major flooding followed by severe droughts. The long term forecast calls for below average rainfall and a mild La Nina leading to cooler temperatures in December and January. This sets the stage for pushing waterfowl out of the Mid-west and into our great habitat.

Waterfowl are finally on the move, Canada has lost their major concentrations of birds and they are spilling over into the States. As of late last week the Sand Lake NWR in South Dakota is holding half a million ducks. Squaw Creek NWR saw their Gadwall and Greenwing numbers increase last week. Up in Kansas they have lost their bluewings for the most part, but have gained some hefty numbers of Gadwalls, Greenwings, and Redheads. Geese are strong in the Dakotas.

NOVEMBER 16, 2016



OK this *Global Warming* bit is getting out of control with setting records, enough! We are a week away from carving the big bird and we have a possible tropical storm formation below Cuba to be called Otto, rampant wildfires in Carolina's and Georgia, record high temperatures across many Southern States all the way up to the Canadian border, and in the Great Plains no snow - zippo, nada, zilch for this Fall. In fact this is the least amount of snow cover the Mid-west has seen in the last 13-years! And on top of that we have had only three cold fronts of any significance since September! On a normal year - which I am convinced no longer exists - we should have two cold fronts a week in November, all not good for waterfowl hunting along the coast of Texas.

But that all is about to change...at least for a few days, currently a Pacific front is barreling across the Rockies meeting a blast of Artic air from the north. Heavy snowfall is predicted - in places over a foot - from the Dakota's into Nebraska and at this moment Yellowstone National Park is getting hammered. Saturday morning freezing temperatures greet the Northern States; South Dakota in the teens, Omaha and Amarillo in the 20's. Sunday morning the northern parts of Houston will experience low temps in the 30's. The Jetstream dips down into Texas catalyzing a major bird migration into our area. The Dakota's through Northern Texas will experience winds in excess of 30 M.P.H., couple this with snow to the north and the Grand Passage of waterfowl will be well underway. Friday evening the cold front hits Thunderbird. Not only will birds be riding the strong tailwinds, birds will be pushed off of the open bays, lakes, and large open ponds seeking shelter in leeward areas and protected ponds.

Reports I received from Kansas yesterday was a major influx of birds, mainly Gadwalls, Green-winged teal, Shovelers, and Redheads, had hit the Sunflower State with still larger numbers of birds to the north. One refuge in South Dakota as of Monday was holding over 100,000 Snow Geese and over a quarter million ducks, mainly Pintails and Green-winged Teal. Birds are probably on the move as you read this.

If you had one day to hunt waterfowl this season, do it this coming Saturday!

## NOVEMBER 27, 2016



By all accounts the migration of waterfowl in our area may be over a month late, but as we face warmer and warmer weather with fewer and fewer fronts early in the season this may be the new norm for the future. So far we have had only 5-6 cold fronts since September 1, none giving us any water-pumping relief. But that may change starting late this week as a Pacific Front that made a messy weekend over much of the West will bring snow and strong winds to the upper Plains to start the week, currently western Nebraska is getting hammered by snow. Two fronts are forecast to hit our area next week; the first one mid-week and the second, a more powerful front aided with a southward plunge in the jet stream, by the weekend. Also associated with the second front is much-needed moderate to heavy rains for our area and strong "bird-delivering" winds from the North.

Although we got a good push of birds last week there are still plentiful waterfowl in the States

to our North. North Dakota is finally starting to see their shallow wetlands freeze over. From South Dakota all the way down to Kansas temps are or will be freezing shallow wetlands, meaning the fair weather ducks have to move to the south. Big question is will they shortstop in Oklahoma or northern Texas where conditions are still relatively dry. My guess is many birds will over-flight the dry areas and visit us, however we are dry as well. Will the ducks stick along the coast of Texas or keep moving?

As of late last week waterfowl numbers are dropping in North Dakota, and fair-weather ducks have left South Dakota. Both duck and goose numbers are building in Missouri with Squaw Creek NWR doubling their duck count from 33K to 68K. Upwards of 50,000 ducks and 75,000 geese have pushed into the Cheyenne Bottoms Refuge in Southwest Kansas, and over in Southeast Kansas the Marais Des Cygnes Refuge has over 35,000 ducks, the Neosho Refuge with 20,000 ducks. This swath across the Mid-west seems to be holding the vast majority of the ducks as of late last week. Over to our Cajun-neighbors to the east they are reporting a 150% increase in ducks from last year and they are voicing the same sediments as we are, horrible weather conditions and unspectacular habitat conditions, however they have ducks and it is a mystery why per Todd Masson with the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Perhaps a nice strong lateral East wind will push some of their Gads and GWT our way!