

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES
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Waterfowl Population Estimates
in Louisiana's Coastal Zone Below
U.S. Highway 90 and on Catahoula Lake

Date: Coastal Zone: Sept. 8-10, 2010
Catahoula Lake: Sept. 8, 2010

September 14, 2010

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Estimates made from Aircraft

SPECIES	SOUTHWEST	SOUTHEAST	CATAHOULA LAKE	TOTALS
MALLARD				0
MOTTLED	33,000	7,000		40,000
GADWALL				0
WIGEON				0
GW TEAL				0
BW TEAL	155,000	11,000	49,000	215,000
SHOVELER	**		**	0
PINTAIL	3,000		**	3,000
TOTAL DABLERS	191,000	18,000	49,000	258,000
SCAUP				0
RINGNECKED				0
CANVASBACK				0
TOTAL DIVERS	0	0	0	0
TOTAL DUCKS	191,000	18,000	49,000	258,000
COOTS				0

**Less than 1,000

COMMENTS:

The estimated 215,000 blue-winged teal on this survey is less than half the 457,000 estimated the last time the September survey was completed in 2008, but is only 15% lower than the long-term average of 252,000. In 2009, 4 transect lines in southeast Louisiana could not be completed so comparable numbers from last year are not available for the entire survey area. However, the 155,000 estimated in SW Louisiana this year is 56% higher than the 99,000 estimated in September

2009, and the 49,000 counted at Catahoula Lake is over 5 times the 9,000 counted last year. Despite completing all transects in southeast Louisiana on this survey, the estimated 11,000 bluewings is nearly 40% below last year's 18,000 estimated from an incomplete survey.

The 40,000 estimated mottled ducks is higher than the 34,000 estimated in 2008 and the 36,000 estimated in 2007, but is much lower than the 53,000 estimated from the incomplete survey last September. It is about 10% below the 44,000 average of the 5 most recent completed September surveys.

The largest concentration of bluewings seen on the survey was at Catahoula Lake where large numbers were using the shallow flooded *Sagittaria sp.* along the edge of the conservation pool. On the coastal survey, the largest concentration was noted northwest of Welsh, north of I-10 between transect lines and thus was not included in the estimate. Good numbers were also seen on Lacassine NWR, both west of and on Rockefeller Refuge, and in scattered agricultural fields between Gueydan and Abbeville in southwest Louisiana. In southeast Louisiana, the only concentration was noted in the Caernarvon area, which is an extra transect used to monitor effects of that freshwater diversion and also is not included in this estimate.

Habitat conditions in the coastal marsh appear excellent. There is good growth of seed-producing annuals in most locations in southwest Louisiana and more submerged aquatic vegetation was noted compared to the last few years. Growth of submerged aquatics is outstanding across southeast Louisiana in fresh to brackish marshes. So barring any hurricanes as we saw in 2008 or excessive flooding as we saw last year, migrating ducks should find good foraging conditions. Food production at Catahoula should be at least average unless the early, deep flooding of the past 2 years recurs. Conditions in the agricultural habitats are dry except for managed water, which is characteristic in September.