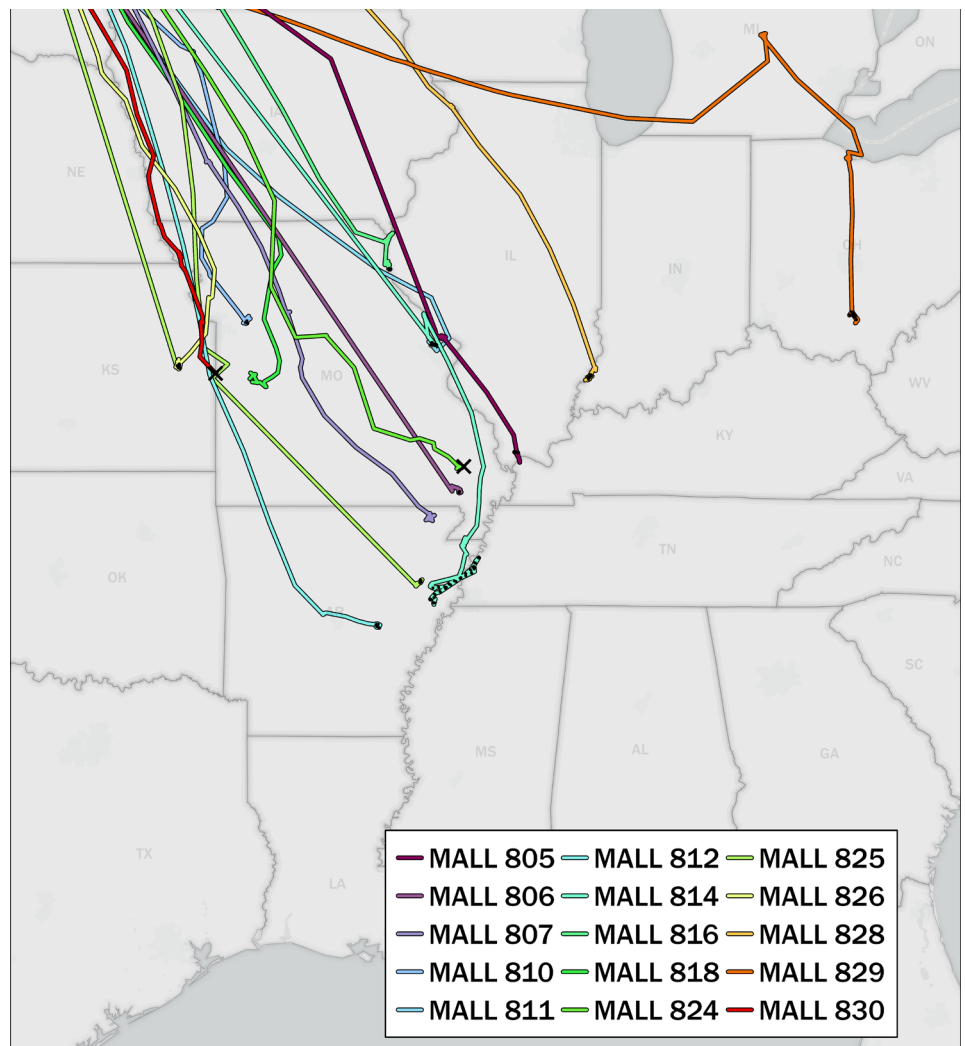
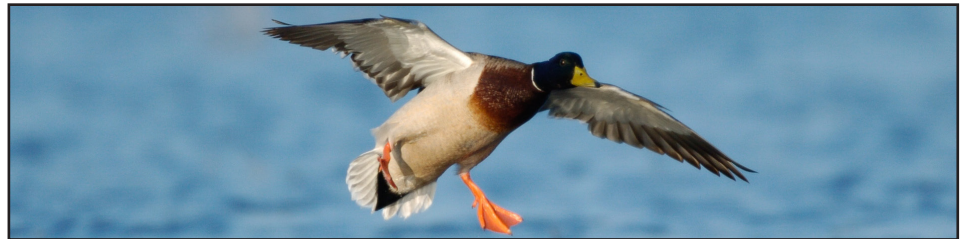


Mississippi Flyway Dabbler Tracking

Feb. 4, 2022 Report

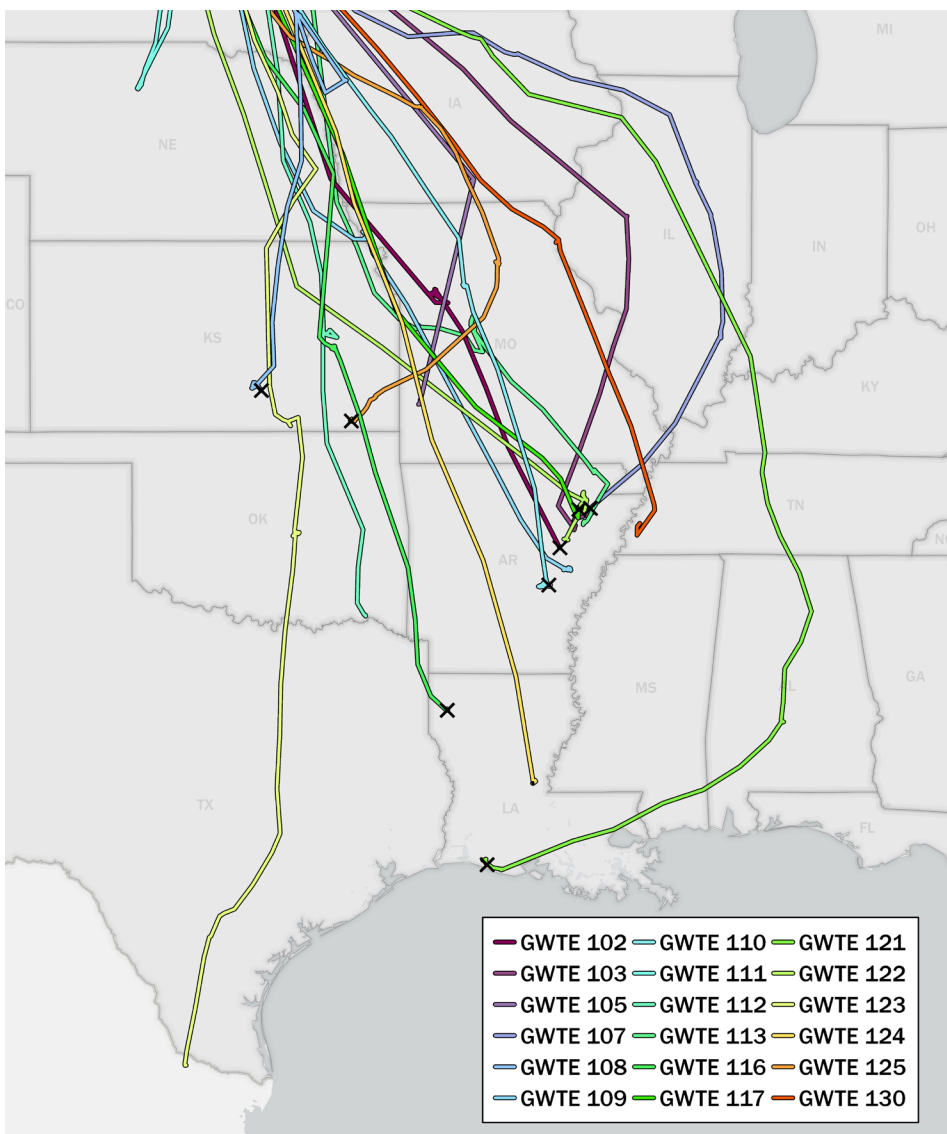
In 2019, Delta Waterfowl initiated a study of migration and wintering ground habits of dabblers in the Mississippi Flyway. We partnered with Dr. Douglas Osborne of the University of Arkansas, and master's degree students Starla Phelps and Daniel Odin, to put radios on mallards, wigeon and green-winged teal during the winters of 2019-2020, and again in 2020-2021 in east-central Arkansas. In September 2021, 60 additional radios were affixed to mallards and green-winged teal in South Dakota. The shift to marking in the north is an effort to learn more about the choices ducks make in the fall regarding migration routes, timing, and settling at wintering areas. Following are recently recorded duck movements, but note that not all ducks in the study will transmit location data during each reporting period.

We timed this report to show the major movements during the time of year when hunters universally ask, "Where are the ducks?" Map 1 shows the migration paths of our September marked mallards as well as their location on the last day of duck seasons in Southern States. Our next report will focus on fine-scale movements to attempt to answer most hunters second question: "What are the ducks doing?"



Map 1 - Migration paths for mallards marked in September 2021 as of Jan. 31, 2022.

Solid lines are trails prior to the last report (Jan. 10) and ticked lines are recent movements. An X denotes the end of a trail for any duck that died naturally or was shot.



Map 2 - Migration paths for green-winged teal marked in September 2021 as of Jan. 31, 2022.

All paths are from our report on Jan. 10, as the only two birds still reporting did not move. Solid lines are trails prior to the last report (Jan. 10) and ticked lines are recent movements. An X denotes the end of a trail for any duck that died naturally or was shot.

Over the past three weeks of open hunting seasons in the south, only one of the 10 mallards that updated their locations since the last report made a movement of more than 5 miles. (Map 1) This sedentary tendency was in spite of some cold weather patterns. These findings support what we saw last season: Once ducks settle into a potential wintering area in December, weather systems don't seem to push them farther south. Four of our mallards are still quite far north, settling in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, while four mallards are stationary in Missouri and Kansas, and only two ducks have made it as far south as Arkansas. Relatively warm fall and winter weather appears to have allowed birds to stay farther north than usual.

One additional mallard marked in November 2020 sent locations since the last report. Similar to the other mallards in the study, the hen is where she was three weeks ago in southeast Arkansas.

Only two green-winged teal provided locations for this update, and neither bird moved any distance since our last report (Map 2). Both teal have established routines of moving the same short distances every day. It appears they have found places that provide predictable safety and food. One teal is in Arkansas, the other in Louisiana.

It will be interesting to see if upcoming winter storm systems push ducks farther south. Likewise, we will see if local movements change following the closing of duck hunting seasons.