

## Slow start, then barrel-melter

Written by Brian Albert Broom

Sep. 21, 2013 |

clarionledger.com

---

There was excitement in the air as teal hunters kept an eye on the weather forecast for the opening day of early teal season. A cold front was coming through, and most hunters were confident it would bring birds with it.

Blake Ward of Jackson had been monitoring the situation at his South Delta Hunting Club and said he saw the numbers for his club in Onward climb from a handful of birds earlier that week to about 90 by Sept. 13.

On opening day, Sept. 14, the numbers hadn't improved. Some hunters managed to bag their six-bird limit, but from the Mississippi Delta down into Louisiana, the reports were the same: very few teal.

Ramsey Russell of Brandon, owner of Getducks.com, hunted five days in both Louisiana and Mississippi and like most other hunters had little to show for his efforts. But things were about to change.

### 'On like Donkey Kong'

Standing in the dark while the rain pelted them Saturday morning in Satartia, Russell and his hunting party could hear wings and chatter but couldn't see the birds. When the light finally penetrated the clouds, Russell said, "It was on like Donkey Kong."

"It was epic, man! It was truly epic," said Russell. "I've never seen anything like it here in Mississippi."

Coming from a guy who has hunted waterfowl around the globe and is about as rabid a teal hunter as they get, those are strong words.

"They're here, and they're flying. We could have 10 more guys standing next to us, and they would have all limited out," said Russell. "They (teal) were late for their own funeral."

Russell's son, Forrest Russell, 16, also got in on the barrel-melting action. "The beginning of the season was slow, and there weren't any teal. They came in pairs or groups of five or six," said the younger Russell. "This morning, they came in huge flocks."

"We heard they would come in with this front, and they came in flocks of 50 to 100," said Matt Stanton, 16, of Brandon, who also was hunting in Satartia.

"It only took about 30 minutes for everybody to kill their limit. It couldn't have been a better hunt."

### One-two punch

J.T. Mallette of Madison had a similar experience while hunting in Belzoni. On Friday, Mallette

saw only about 40 teal on the property he hunts. On Saturday, it was a different ball game.

“It was one of the best teal hunts I’ve ever seen,” said Mallette. “We shot six limits in less than 30 minutes.”

According to Mallette, it was a combination of events that had teal pouring into the Deep South this weekend. “The reason we had such a big push was the front, the big rain from the northwest, but also the full moon,” he said. “A lot of people don’t realize the effect of the moon phase.”

“It’s almost a signal,” said Mallette. “When there is a full moon this time of year, it’s signaling that it’s time to head south, and when they pick up on a cold front like that at the same time, they’re all coming.”

**To contact Brian Albert Broom, call (601) 961-7225 or follow The Clarion-Ledger Outdoors on Facebook or @BrianBroom on Twitter.**