KENTUCKY PERIODIC WATERFOWL INVENTORY Conducted January 3-4 2018

The Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey was flown this year in the middle of a polar vortex that brought below freezing temperatures to Kentucky for 14 consecutive days prior to the flight. The high fall and early winter temperatures combined with dry weather plagued KY and the mid-latitude Flyway states this year, and seems to have interrupted migration somewhat prior to the survey. Moist soil units, beaver impoundments and ponded depressions in crop fields were 100% frozen on the days the surveys were flown, unless influenced by well outlets or ice-eaters. All lakes were at least 50% frozen during the survey, and many had ice cover of 90%-100%. All the ice did serve to congregate waterfowl, and thus the following survey is a very accurate number of on a specific area, and likely in the region. Waterfowl habitat across the state looked better than average. Flooded crops and moist soil units appeared to have an abundance of high quality food still available to ducks and geese. Listed below is the survey data obtained during our Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey across the state. As always... stay safe and happy hunting!

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Western Kentucky - Purchase Region

Flown by: Pat Hahs on January 3, 2018

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total	Canada	Snows/Blues	WF	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill
			Ducks	geese		Geese			Crane
Bayou De Chien	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mayfield Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reelfoot NWR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballard	37,525	0	37,525	75	12,000	2,500	0	0	0
Boatwright WMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Wickliffe-	18,000	0	18,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Paducah)									
Ohio R. (Paducah-	3,820	400	4,220	0	0	0	0	0	0
Golconda)									
Barkley Lake (N of	2,500	0	2,500	350	0	0	0	0	0
68)									
Barkley Lake (S of 68)	750	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
duck Island	215	0	215	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky Lake	450	2,820	3,270	70	0	0	0	0	0
Kaler Bottoms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birdsville Islands	2,508	0	2,508	350	0	0	0	0	0
Doug Travis WMA	6,800	0	6,800	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek (Travis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slough tract)									

Obion Creek (L.E.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Schaaf tract)									
Totals	72,568	3,220	75,788	845	12,000	2,500	0	0	0

Notes from Pat... Waterfowl numbers at the time of the survey were near normal for this time of year. Species observed were typical of a cold, early January period, though some warmer weather species (shovelers, wood ducks, buffleheads) were observed only a week prior to the survey. Some of the largest numbers of goldeneye were noted on Kentucky Lake. Goldeneye in significant numbers typically signal the end of birds from the north. Precipitation amounts are below average for the fall and early winter and any water areas are typically from previous or ongoing pump activity. The levels of the big rivers are well below average for this time of year. All water areas in small and/or sheltered areas were covered with ice. The air temperature at survey time was approximately 10 degrees below average. Temperatures overall since just after Christmas have been nearly 25 degrees below average. The Mississippi River had significant ice flows moving through, though the Ohio River was ice free in all but the smaller chutes. Most bays within Kentucky and Barkley lake were frozen, though most of the main lake areas were still ice free. Any adjacent flats or pooled areas of the tributary streams such as Mayfield Creek, Obion Creek, and Bayou de Chien were completely frozen. Interior portions of Duck Island refuge of the Lake Barkley WMA were completely ice covered, but a few ducks were loafing on the ice within the refuge. Some birds were observed in open water edges near island to the south. Because of the large percentage of thick ice in the shallow, protected areas, overall habitat conditions were poor relative to food availability on a large scale. It is likely some feeding activity by waterfowl has been in dry fields or utilizing portions of private or public land areas that have been kept open by bird activity or by pump / agitation resources.

Lower Ohio River & Western Coalfield

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 9, 2017

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total	Canada	Snows/Blues	WF	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill
			Ducks	geese		Geese			Crane
Ohio R. (Owensboro-	54	0	54	12	0	0	0	1	0
Green River)									
Ohio R. (Green River-	12	0	12	5	0	0	0	1	0
Henderson)									
Ohio R. (Henderson-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sloughs WMA)									
Sloughs WMA	5,338	200	5,538	3,300	500	3,600	0	3	0
Ohio R. (GPPL &	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JHHC)									
Ohio R. (Uniontown-	100	150	250	12	0	0	0	1	0
Shawneetown)									
Ohio R.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Shawneetown-									
Tradewater R.)									

Ohio R. (Tradewater	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RE. end of									
Hurricane Isl.)									
Ohio R. (Hurricane	2	0	2	12	0	0	0	0	0
IslGolconda)									
Hovey Lake WMA	40	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Indiana)									
Pond River-White	100	0	100	324	0	0	0	0	0
City WMA									
Tradewater River	85	0	85	72	0	0	0	0	0
Peabody Coal	2,823	810	3,633	1,050	0	0	0	1	0
Property									
Totals	8,554	1,160	9,714	4,787	500	3,600	0	7	0

Rough River - Yellowbank WMA

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 5, 2016

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total	Canada	Snows/Blues	WF	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill
			Ducks	geese		Geese			Crane
Rough River	12	0	12	150	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowbank WMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Brandenburg - Owensboro)	206	85	291	796	0	0	0	5	0
Totals	218	85	303	946	0	0	0	5	0

Notes from Thomas... This survey was conducted with clear sunny skies and mild winds <5 mph, daytime temperatures ranged from 12 degrees at start to 19 by mid-day. Ohio River and it's tributaries have experienced extremely low water with little water throughout most of the survey route. Extremely cold conditions below 32 degrees have persisted for more than 14 days straight prior to survey. All moist soil units were ice except a couple holes kept open by waterfowl or well outlets on Slough's Refuge.

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Central and Easterm KY

Flown by: Wes Little on January 3-4, 2017

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total	Canada	Snows	WF	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill
			Ducks	geese	Blues	Geese			Crane
Herrington Lake	269	17	286	904	1	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	157	45	202	50	0	0	0	4	0
Lake Cumberland	298	40	347	677	2	0	0	2	0
Dale Hollow Lake	619	671	1,290	154	1	0	0	0	0
Barren River Lake	0	6	6	47	0	0	0	0	688
Green River Lake	1,004	68	1,072	175	0	0	0	0	0
Taylorsville Lake	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central Ohio	4,379	474	4,853	10,795	36	0	0	0	0
River									
Blue Grass Army	220	15	235	500	10	0	60	0	0
Depot									
Licking River	106	0	106	66	0	0	0	4	0
(Southern)									
Cave Run Lake	691	359	1,050	1,049	3	0	0	0	0
Grayson Lake	47	0	47	98	0	0	0	0	0
Yatesville Lake	13	0	26	34	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River-	9	20	55	216	0	0	0	0	0
(Ashland to									
Scioto R.)									
Scioto River	119	14	119	40	0	0	0	0	0

Ohio River	2,997	477	3,581	4,753	158	0	0	6	0
(Scioto R. to									
Licking R.)									
Licking River	29	0	29	222	0	0	0	1	0
(Northern)									
Campbell County	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake									
Kincade Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	10,968	2,192	13,411	19,780	211	0	60	17	688

Notes from Wes... The Eastern survey was flown on Jan. 3rd, with mostly sunny skies and mild winds <10 mph. Daytime temperatures ranged from 3° to 27° by mid-day. The Central survey was conducted on Jan. 4th, with partly cloudy skies and mild winds <10 mph, daytime temperatures ranged from 8° degrees at start to 23° by mid-day. 14-straight days of sub-freezing temperatures left most of the landscape frozen and covered in ice. All small basins and shallow waters were frozen. The only open water was the main segments of the big lakes, the Ohio River, and the power plant ponds. Campbell County Lake and Kincade Lake were 100% ice covered. Barren River Lake, which typically has low winter pool depths, appeared to have more exposed mud flats and dried up coves or oxbows than normal. The only open water on Barren was from Baily's Point to the dam. Taylorsville lake also was nearly 80% covered in ice. Most other lakes ranged from 40%-70% ice coverage, mainly in the upper fingers and areas out of the wind or without much flow. The Ohio River appeared to be quite low, possibly close to summer pool. The farther east we traveled on the Ohio, and especially closer to the lower ends of the pools, ice was more frequent. At Ashland, KY, it appeared that the Ohio was frozen from KY to Ohio. Cave Run Lake had good vegetation coverage; however, the large concentrations of gadwall normally seen were not there. There were larger than average counts of both snow geese and swans, so be sure to pay attention when shooting at large white birds.

In the central region, the most abundant dabbling ducks were Mallards (5121) followed by American Black duck (778) and Green-winged Teal (601). Mallards and Black ducks were easily the most wide spread dabbling duck in the central region occurring throughout the region in varying group sizes. Teal were only seen in large numbers on Dale Hollow Lake and the Ohio River, with smaller groups seen on Cedar Creek Lake and Lake Cumberland. The most abundant diving ducks were Ring-necked ducks (545) followed by Bufflehead (335) and Scaup (275). Bufflehead were easily the most wide spread diver in the central region, noted on every location except Taylorsville lake. Ring-necked ducks and Canvasbacks (76) were found on 50% of survey locations. Canada Geese (6,978) observations were higher than average, mostly due to the ice coverage across the region. Canada geese were noted on every location other than Taylorsville lake, with majority of observations (84%) coming from the Ohio River.

In the eastern region, the most abundant dabbling duck was Mallards (3532). Black duck (426) was the second most abundant puddle duck followed by Gadwall (126) and Green-winged Teal (137). The most abundant diving ducks were Bufflehead (510) followed by Scaup (154) and Ring-necked ducks (131). The only diver observations occurred on the Ohio River and on Cave Run Lake. Canada Geese (12,802) observations were much higher than average, mostly due to the ice coverage across the region. The majority of observations came from the Ohio River (75%) and Cave Run Lake (15%). Also noted in the survey were 171 snow geese and 28 swans. I hope everyone had a great holiday season, and enjoy the remainder of your duck and goose season!