

December 6, 2018 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter-waterfowl ground count survey for December 3-7, 2018. The second segment of the duck season began this week, and hunting reports varied across the state. Geese in central Kentucky are still scattered, and are still moving around to feed. Along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, flood waters have scattered the ducks around the landscape, making them harder to hunt. There are still a lot of birds to our north, so hope for more cold and snow to send them to us. Unfortunately, weather models are still predicting that the early cold experienced in Nov/Dec, will give way to the same mild and dry conditions that we experienced last winter. Let's all hope those predictions are wrong!

After one of the wettest summers on record, Kentucky waterfowl hunters can expect favorable water conditions for hunting this year. Most of the states wetlands are in above average condition. Moist soil plants look great across the state. Crops favored well in most places, although many areas struggled to get corn planted. Overall, conditions for ducks are good, and we are set to manage as needed throughout the season.

The Kentucky 2018-19 duck and goose seasons open Thursday, November 22. The first duck season segment closed on Sunday, November 25. The second segment of duck and season opened December 3 and the duck season will remain open until Sunday, January 27. The goose season will remain open until Friday, February 15, 2019. Good luck to all waterfowl hunters, and remember to be safe enjoy your time afield this hunting season.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA	27,870 Ducks 50 CA geese 4,000 WF geese	99% Mallard, 1% Gadwall, ring-neck, goldeneye, wood duck, wigeon, pintail and hooded merganser.	Habitat looks excellent. Ohio River is beginning to flood the area. Birds seem to be scattered due to high water.
Boatwright WMA	Survey not possible due to flooding.		
Duck Island	Not Surveyed		
Barren River Lake WMA	Not Surveyed		
Doug Travis WMA	2,200 ducks	2000 Mallards, 100 GW teal, 100 assorted dabblers. ***Ground survey is incomplete, as the area south of Fish Lk Road is not accessible by vehicle.	Some boat launches are now inaccessible by road. Based on Mississippi River forecast, water may be across Fish Lake Road and Laketon Road by Thursday or Friday. Hunters are cautioned to check road and boat ramp conditions by wading before driving vehicles through water.
Cave Run Lake	185 Ducks	80% bufflehead and hooded merganser, 20% mallard,	Expect the ACOE to start letting it down to

	100 coots	black duck, gadwall, and unknown species.	prepare for incoming precipitation. Hydrilla was treated with herbicide in many areas this year in an effort to control the nuisance species. The recent booms have been knocked back, leaving "normal" habitat conditions. The flats area of the lake, as well as some coves still have decent vegetation.
Peabody WMA	666 ducks 175 CA geese	352 puddlers (95% Mallard), 314 divers (95% ring-necked duck)	
Sloughs WMA	12,235 Ducks 79 CA geese 9,835 WF geese 7,200 Snow geese 126 Swans	85% mallard, 15% mix of gadwall, northern pintail, green-winged teal, black duck, ring-necks and northern shoveler.	Recent rains have both the Pond Creek marsh and the Ohio River slowly rising. The river is predicted to crest at J.T. Meyers at 35' on Thursday, which will provide some favorable water conditions on Highland Creek and Grassy Pond/Powell's Lake. Again, the ducks were concentrated within the Pond Creek marsh complex, with the birds capitalizing on freshly flooded food sources. The remaining ducks were found in Doriott Slough, Hardy Slough complex, and Muddy Slough. Snow geese continue to transition between the WMA and fields across the Ohio River in Indiana. White fronted geese were scattered in large groups in several locations within the refuge.
Yellowbank WMA	675 Ducks	85% mallard, 5% wood duck, 5% gadwall, 5% other puddle ducks	Most moist-soil units are at 85% water capacity, but there are several units with little

			water due to soybeans still in fields.
Blue Grass Army Depot	54 ducks 8 CA geese	36 mallards and 18 black ducks	The moist soil unit is 100% full. The beavers have extended the flooded woodland a considerable distance upstream of the head of Lake Vega.
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		