

January 24, 2019 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter-waterfowl ground count survey for January 21-25, 2019. The extremely wet season has continued, bringing high water levels across the state. We did get some snow and colder temps, but had some mild days mixed in with them. Ducks continue to be scattered across the landscape when the temps are mild, utilizing all the habitat made available by river floods or in low spots that collect water. Hunting reports did pick up in many places. The cold to the north seems to have birds moving south, and many hunters were out to take advantage of the newly arrived birds. I hope that we can all end the season well.

Ballard WMA is closing once again. This flood event is predicted to last through the youth weekend. Most of the lakes across the state are still well above winter pool. Most of the state's wetlands are still in above average condition. Moist soil food is still in abundance across the state, and crops are still providing food on most areas. 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 opened 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 and enjoy your time afield this hunting season.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA	Not Surveyed due to flood.	A good push of birds arrived late last week, and possibly this week as well. Birds are scattered all over the area, and the count was not possible.	Ballard WMA <i>is closed</i> due to flooding, until further notice. By regulation, Ballard WMA becomes entirely refuge during backwater events.
Boatwright WMA	Not Surveyed		Survey not possible due to flooding. Boatwright WMA hunters must still check in each day, as the area remains open during backwater. See the hunting guide online for specific backwater rules on the area.
Duck Island	Not surveyed		
Doug Travis WMA	Not Surveyed		
Sloughs WMA	Ducks: 18,637 CA geese: 272 WF Geese: 9,860 Snow Geese: 4,540 Swans: 129	98% mallards, 2% mix of pintail, black duck and gadwall.	Many of the less cold-hardy duck species have left the area, however, a new push of mallards have arrived, along with large flocks

			<p>of geese. At the time of the survey, nearly all open water was frozen, with the exception of the main channel of Pond Creek and pockets of the Pond Creek marsh complex where large numbers of waterfowl have kept water open. Reported snow goose numbers may be underestimated, as several thousands were seen yesterday evening returning to the refuge to roost. Canada goose numbers also are likely underestimated, as Canadas were mixed with large flocks of white-fronted geese, which made counting difficult following large flushes. Once again, the Ohio River is rising, with prediction of nearly 39' at JT Meyer by Saturday.</p>
<p>Barren River Lake WMA</p>	<p>Ducks: 785 CA Goose: 235 Sandhill Cranes: 3,003</p>	<p>75% mallards and black ducks, 25% redhead, bufflehead, scaup, ring-necked duck, & goldeneye.</p>	<p>Peters Creek MSU 80% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 100% and units above and below the main spring 80-100%% full. Milo, corn, soybeans, and moist soil plants in excellent condition and in standing water. MSUs off hwy 100 are 70-100% full, with soybeans, and MSU plants in great condition. Lake is 17.7' above winter pool, at 545.7' (1/22/19).</p>

Peabody WMA	Not Surveyed		
Yellowbank WMA	815 ducks	85% mallard, 5% black duck, 5% pintail, 5% other dabbling ducks	Most moist-soil units/ flooded fields are at maximum water capacity.
Cave Run Lake	216 ducks 800 CA goose	70% divers, mostly Canvasback and bufflehead. 20% puddle ducks and 10% mergansers.	Lake levels still high and the river is full and flowing hard as they pull water from the lake.
Blue Grass Army Depot	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		