

## January 29 – February 2, 2018 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter waterfowl ground count for January 29-February 2, 2018. Water levels are rising on most of our areas, following the rains and ice melts, and birds are taking advantage of the newly available habitat. Moist soil impoundments across the state are still providing above average food, and planted crops are still hanging in as well. Some winter wheat fields have been hit hard, but plenty of other food is still available. River levels are predicted to stay high enough to keep water levels manageable at Ballard, Boatwright and Doug Travis WMA's, and snowmelt has recharged some wetlands at the Slough's WMA, bringing water levels closer to where they should be. The warm weather has scattered birds quite a bit, so I suspect that the counts given are not representative of the actual number of birds in the area.

The second and last segment of the duck season is now closed. The goose season will remain open until Monday, February 15, 2018. The Western KY youth waterfowl dates are February 3-4, 2018. Remember that adults that are taking youth out for the youth hunt can still hunt geese, but may not take any ducks. The future of the sport will always be reliant on kids being introduced to waterfowling. Please try to take a kid hunting whenever possible. Good luck to all, and remember to be safe whenever you are out pursuing birds this hunting season.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard	Not Surveyed		
Boatwright	Not Surveyed		
Birdsville Island	Not surveyed		
Kentucky/Barkley Lakes	Not surveyed		
Duck Island	Not surveyed		
Barren River Lake	Not surveyed		
Doug Travis WMA	6,537 ducks	5150 mallards, 1200 greenwings, 150 pintail, 15 wigeon, 13 gadwall, 5 wood ducks, 4 black ducks	Conditions were good, but balmy and sunshine had some birds packed into buckbrush, sesbania, and corn patches where they are hard to see. I would consider these numbers at best the low end of what we are really holding.

Cave Run Lake	346 Ducks 50 CA geese	100 Canvasback, 140 Scaup, 50 bufflehead, 50 ring-necked duck & 6 Mallards.	
Clear Creek WMA	Not surveyed		
Peabody WMA	657 Ducks 95 CA Geese	500 puddle ducks and 157 diving ducks	
Sloughs WMA	36,275 Ducks 2,175 CA geese 4,035 WF geese 13,875 Snow geese 55 Swans	95% mallard, 5% mix of northern pintail, green- winged teal, black duck, and northern shoveler.	A 20-year employee commented that today was the most ducks he has ever seen on the WMA. It truly was astounding the number of ducks on the refuge today. The Pond Creek Marsh has dropped by about 6 inches, but remains above normal pool for this time of year. Consequently, a majority of the ducks observed were concentrated in recently flooded timber and buttonbush swamps within the Pond Creek Marsh complex and on the south end of Doriott Slough. Several other large concentrations of ducks were seen in the Hardy Slough moist-soil impoundments as well as within flooded willow thickets in Muddy Slough. Canada geese were found scattered across the

			refuge, typically in groups of 20-50 birds. Snow geese were observed throughout the count flying in from the north. Over a third were seen loafing on Pond Creek Marsh, and the remainder were found loafing on ridges adjacent to Muddy Slough. Now that the Pond Creek Marsh is ice-free, several Tundra Swans have returned to the area.
Yellowbank WMA	2,600 ducks	75% mallard, 10% pintail, 5% black duck 5% Gadwall & 5% assorted dabbling ducks.	Most units are at 100% water capacity.
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	3 Ducks	1 Ring-necked duck, 1 bufflehead & 1 Mallard.	...but they were all drakes.
Taylorville Lake	Not surveyed		
Cedar Cr./Dix R. WMA	Not surveyed		
Green River WMA	Not surveyed		