

## November 29, 2018 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter-waterfowl ground count survey for November 26-30, 2018. Last week started the 2018-19 waterfowl season, and hunting reports varied across the state from excellent to fair. Geese in central Kentucky are still scattered, but are moving around to feed. Ducks are also scattered, needing some cooler weather to congregate them. Several wood ducks were harvested, but they will soon be leaving us for warmer wintering grounds. Look for a fresh push of birds fleeing the heavy snow predicted to our North. Below freezing temps locked up most shallow water areas during the survey this week, but rain and warmer temps are predicted for the weekend. Unfortunately, weather models are predicting that the early cold 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 will close on Sunday, November 25. The second segment of duck and season will open 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	29,217 Ducks 51 CA geese 2,500 WF geese 200 Snow geese	97% Mallard, 2% Gadwall, 1% mix of GW Teal, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Pintail, Black Duck and Ring-necked.	Most shallow water was frozen during the survey. Habitat conditions look great. There is an abundance of moist soil vegetation and grain. Winter wheat is up and growing in most units that were planted.
Boatwright WMA	18,789 Ducks 20 CA geese 600 WF geese	99% Mallard, 1% Wood duck, GW teal and black duck.	Shallow water was frozen during the survey. Floodwaters are still receding. The Swan Lake unit was difficult to survey due to water levels. There is an abundance of grain and moist soil habitat available.

Duck Island	3,210 Ducks 275 CA geese	Mallards – 2700, GWT – 250, Pintail – 75, Gadwall – 125, Ringneck – 60, Wigeon – 90	Habitat is excellent. Milo planted this year did well, and moist soil vegetation is excellent. Fall rains have resulted in pool levels a bit higher than optimal for this time of year, but water is available for management of all impoundments.
Barren River Lake WMA	300 ducks 20 CA geese 0 Sandhill cranes	50/50 small divers and mallards.	All moist soil units were frozen during the survey. Peters Creek MSU 60% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 50% and units above and below the main spring 0% because soybeans not harvest yet by farm tenant, MSUs off hwy 100 are 50-75% full, with soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Barren River Lake level: 547.9'
Doug Travis WMA	6,000 ducks		Mississippi River backwater has been present on the WMA for several weeks, but is now falling and is forecast to fall to the low-to-mid 30's on the Cairo gage by the next opener on 12/3. The present river forecast should allow vehicle access to all boat ramps and parking sites on the 12/3 opener, although roads will be muddy in many places from silt deposited during the recent flood event. Mobility Impaired blind 19 is now constructed and available to hunt.

Cave Run Lake	134 Ducks 30 CA geese 100 coots	90% bufflehead and hooded merganser, 10% teal, common merganser, unknown ducks & wood duck.	Expect the ACOE to start letting it down to 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	919 ducks 140 CA geese	752 puddlers (95% Mallard), 167 divers (95% ring-necked duck)	
Sloughs WMA	9,500 Ducks 36 CA geese 8,000 WF geese 5,000 Snow geese 147 Swans	85% mallard, 15% mix of gadwall, northern pintail, green-winged teal, black duck, ring-necks and northern shoveler.	Any water shallower than 1 foot was frozen at the time of the survey. Water levels in the sloughs and Pond Creek Marsh complex have receded over the past week, affording excellent foraging opportunities for ducks. Most ducks seen were concentrated in the Pond Creek Marsh complex and Doriott Slough. The remaining ducks were scattered between Hardy Slough complex, Gentle Pond, and Muddy Slough. Snow geese continue to move between the WMA and north in to Indiana throughout the day. White fronted geese were found either loafing on Muddy Slough or on the Pond Creek marsh complex.
Yellowbank WMA	640 Ducks	80% mallard, 10% wood duck, 5% black duck & 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	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		