

KENTUCKY PERIODIC WATERFOWL INVENTORY

Conducted January 4-11 2021

This is the 2021 Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey, flown January 4-11. The week started with mild temperatures and sunny skies in the west, and ground clouds (fog) and low cloud ceilings that made flying surveys difficult in the central and eastern portions of the state. The western and coalfield routes started around 35° and warmed into the 40's° during the survey. The central and eastern route began at or slightly below 30° and moved up during the day, and temps cooled down slightly as the week/weekend went on. Weather has been considerably mild again this year, and most areas are somewhat dryer than normal. There has been enough rain to fill small oxbows and wet areas to 75%-100% capacity, but the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers have mostly stayed within their banks this season. Most reservoirs across the state are at or just slightly above winter pool. Moist soil units, beaver impoundments and ponded depressions in crop fields have provided ample habitat again this year, and these areas were free of ice during most of the survey. The Eastern Route, flown on January 11 found most shallow and protected water frozen unless kept open by ducks. Some eastern reservoirs also were at least partially frozen. The rest of the survey areas did not note any frozen water. Waterfowl habitat across the state looked better than average. Moist soil units appeared to have an abundance of high quality food still available to ducks and geese, especially in areas that are dryer than normal.

Listed below, are the individual survey data obtained during our Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey across the state. We wish you the best during the remainder of the hunting season. As always... stay safe and happy hunting!

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Western Kentucky - Purchase Region

Flown by: Pat Hahs on January 4, 2021

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Bayou De Chien	125	0	125	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek	150	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mayfield Creek	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reelfoot NWR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballard	26,822	4,950	31,772	0	3,500	8,800	0	0	0
Boatwright WMA	9,520	900	10,420	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Wickliffe-Paducah)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Paducah-Golconda)	2,800	0	2,800	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barkley Lake (N of 68)	35	680	715	25	0	0	0	0	0
Barkley Lake (S of 68)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
duck Island	3,155	0	3,155	75	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky Lake	95	120	215	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kaler Bottoms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birdsville Islands	3,325	0	3,325	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doug Travis WMA	185	0	185	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek (Travis Slough tract)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek (L.E. Schaaf tract)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	46,237	6,650	52,887	100	3,500	8,800	0	0	0

Notes from Pat... Overall, low numbers. Total number of birds on Barkley and KY lakes were noticeably lower than average. Puddle ducks were almost non-existent and divers in any decent number were not detected (small groups largely scattered). Temperatures were generally average for the date. Rainfall has been average to slightly below average. Upstream precipitation has been minimal with little runoff. Frozen precipitation upstream also has not been significant as of the survey date. The amount of water on the landscape is lower than normal, other than units with pumped water. The big rivers are not in flood stage, though there was very low level flooding of the lower Ohio River, which was just barely creeping up into the lowest flats.

Lower Ohio River & Western Coalfield

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 6, 2021

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Ohio R. (Owensboro-Green River)	89	0	89	0	250	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Green River-Henderson)	40	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Henderson-Sloughs WMA)	50	12	62	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sloughs WMA	3,313	100	3,413	25	800	1,400	0	3	0
Ohio R. (GPPL & JHHC)	355	0	355	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Uniontown-Shawneetown)	162	77	239	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Shawneetown-Tradewater R.)	75	0	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Tradewater R.-E. end of Hurricane Isl.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Hurricane Isl.-Golconda)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hovey Lake WMA (Indiana)	234	110	344	0	0	0	0	1	0
Pond River-White City WMA	175	0	175	50	0	0	0	0	0
Tradewater River	294	0	294	0	0	0	200	0	0
Peabody Coal Property	740	90	830	325	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	5,527	389	5,916	400	1,050	1,400	200	4	0

Rough River – Yellowbank WMA

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 7, 2020

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Rough River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowbank WMA	71	0	71	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Brandenburg - Owensboro)	40	0	40	150	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	111	0	111	150	0	0	0	0	0

Notes from Thomas... The mid-winter survey flew in mostly cloudy skies in temps just above average for the region. Large concentrations of ducks or geese were not present in the majority of the survey area. Temps began near 40° and stayed there all day. Habitat within the survey route was good to excellent, finding all moist soil and shallow hunting units open and full. The Ohio River and its tributaries were at minor flood levels, and were stable throughout most of the route. Happy hunting.

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Central and Eastern KY

Flown by: Wes Little on January 7, 8 and 11, 2021

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Herrington Lake	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Cumberland	21	0	21	0	0	0	0	3	0
Dale Hollow Lake	7	6	13	0	0	0	50	1	0
Barren River Lake	15	13	28	19	0	0	0	1	0
Green River Lake	70	8	78	0	0	0	0	2	0
Taylorville Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central Ohio River	545	58	603	617	0	0	0	3	0
Blue Grass Army Depot	207	117	324	73	0	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Southern)	363	0	363	87	0	0	0	0	0
Cave Run Lake	181	108	289	72	0	0	0	1	0
Grayson Lake	9	0	9	39	0	0	0	0	0
Yatesville Lake	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River- (Ashland to Scioto R.)	6	0	6	46	0	0	0	3	0
Scioto River	352	6	358	0	0	0	0	2	0
Ohio River (Scioto R. to Licking R.)	1,304	129	1,433	1,526	1	0	0	7	0
Licking River (Northern)	17	0	17	99	0	0	0	0	0
Campbell County Lake	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0
Kincaid Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	3,123	445	3,568	2,576	1	0	50	23	0

Notes from Wes... The Central flight was flown on Jan 7, and the Eastern flight was conducted on Jan 8 and Jan 11, 2021. We flew in mostly cloudy, with calm winds and fairly low cloud ceilings. Fog and freezing rain halted and postponed efforts, dragging the survey out over several days. Temperatures began each day below freezing, and did not get much warmer than 35° on Thursday and Friday. Monday's temps stayed at or below freezing all day. Temperatures have been fairly mild this hunting season, mirroring the past several duck seasons. The season's rainfall/precipitation has been slightly below average, and most of the major rivers have not been out of their banks. Wetland conditions are slightly drier than normal, but most noted ample water for hunting and bird use. Habitat conditions were excellent in natural wetlands and flooded hunt units, with the exception of South Shore WMA, which is still less than 50% capacity. No ice noted during the central survey, and the first leg of the eastern survey. The final leg of the eastern survey found most shallow and protected areas completely frozen (unless kept open by birds) and portions of the reservoirs were also frozen. Yatesville Lake, Campbell County Lake, and Kincaid Lake were all 100% frozen. Most reservoirs were either at or just slightly above winter pool. The Ohio River was mostly calm and well within the riverbank. Most fields with low areas and oxbows around the rivers showed good moist soil or flooded crop habitats, but were slightly drier than an average year.

The most abundant dabbling ducks were mallards and black ducks. Gadwall and green-winged teal were the only other noted puddle duck. Very few divers were seen this year, with Bufflehead and Ring-necked ducks the most abundant. Other diving ducks noted were redhead, canvasback, scaup and goldeneye, as well as a pair of Long-tail ducks found on the Ohio River. The Canada goose total was much lower than average, especially on the Central Route where they were only noted on the Ohio River. Waterfowl numbers on the central route were extremely low at every survey area. The eastern route had low to average numbers, possibly due to the amount of ice cover along the route concentrating the birds in the open waters. I wish you the best for the remainder of your season.