

January 7, 2021 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count for January 4-8, 2021. The weather continues to fluctuate, and the harvest reports show it. Our northern neighbors are reporting freeze up finally in the northern regions of their states, however they are still experiencing mild temps in their southern regions. The upper Mississippi and Illinois River (IL) surveys showed a pretty good drop in numbers with the freeze, however central and southern MO is still holding 500k birds and experiencing the same fluctuations in temps. We are still fairly dry in western KY, with little to no backwater. The OH River at Cairo is predicted to crest at 34' before falling again.

Habitat across the state continues to look excellent in moist soil units and good to excellent habitat over all. Water levels are mostly right where we want them, but we are adding water where possible to keep food available in the hunt units. Overall, wetland conditions and food availability are excellent.

Duck season began on Thanksgiving Day, with the first segment running from November 26 – 29. The second segment of duck season opened on December 7, and will run until January 31, 2021. Goose season opened November 26, 2020 and will remain open until February 15, 2021. The western zone youth hunt will be February 6-7, 2021. Also new this year, is the daily bag limit reduction for Scaup (blue bills). The new Scaup bag limit is one bird November 26-29, and December 7-18, 2020 and two birds December 19, 2020 through January 31, 2021. All other bag limits remain the same.

We wish everyone great luck this year. Be safe, and enjoy your time afield.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard <i>12/23/2020</i>	41,407 ducks 108 CA goose 6,250 WF goose 5,005 Snow goose	90% Mallard, 4% Gadwall, 3% Ring-neck, 3% Wigeon, GW teal, Shoveler, Redhead, Pintail, Canvasback, Wood Duck, Goldeneye, Scaup, Bufflehead and Hooded Merg.	Habitat looks great. Big pump is running and we are adding new water and units to draw. The river is predicted to reach 34, and that helps us hold water in spots that soak in quickly. Small cold front is pushing this way, hopefully will make birds get up and move around.
Boatwright <i>12/23/2020</i>	5,725 Ducks	58% Mallard, 24% GW teal, 17% Scaup, 1% Pintail, Gadwall, Wood Duck and Canvasback.	Habitat looks great, abundance of moist soil and planted crops are flooded where possible.
Duck Island <i>12/29/2020</i>	4,500 ducks 75 CA goose	70% mallard, 28% GW teal, 2% wigeon, pintail, gadwall, ringneck, and black duck.	Habitat conditions are excellent. Planted crops and moist soil plants did well this summer. Water levels are great.

Doug Travis WMA <i>1/4/2021</i>	3,070 Ducks	86% Mallard, 13% Ringneck, and 1% GW teal	The Mississippi River level at Cairo is forecast to crest at 34.0 feet on 1/6. This level will cause the water to rise in the Town Creek impoundment (blinds 18 & 19), as well as low lying areas south of blind 17. Impacts to water levels from blinds 16/17 and farther north should be minimal, if any. Last week's rainfall helped raise water in Baldy's Woods, Milner Tract, and Ward Tract walk-in units. All blind sites also have huntable water.
Sloughs WMA <i>12/28/2020</i>	9,840 ducks 113 CA goose 6,200 WF goose 6,500 Snow goose 98 Tundra Swan	70% Mallard 20% pintail, 10% shoveler, GW teal and gadwall	At time of survey, ice covered over 50% of the area. Jenny Hole and hunt units on Sauerheber were at normal pool levels, however much of the area is drier than last week's survey. An increase of ducks were found over much of the refuge from previous survey.
Peabody WMA <i>1/4/2021</i>	584 ducks 145 CA goose	80% Mallard, 20% mixed species	
Yellowbank WMA <i>12/30/2020</i>	600 Ducks	70% mallard, 10% wood duck, 10% black duck, 5% gadwall, 5% diver ducks	Most units are above 50% water capacity.
Barren River WMA <i>1/5/2021</i>	30 ducks 115 CA geese 2,840 Sandhill Cranes	50%diver/50% dabblers redheads, mallards, ringneck, buffelhead	Peters Creek MSU 90% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 100% and units above and below the main spring 85-100%, MSUs off hwy

			100 are 85-100% full, with corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Lake @ 531.7'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		
Cave Run Lake 1/5/2021	212 Ducks 65 CA geese 100 coots	29 mallard, 88 bufflehead, 11 canvasback, 2 ruddy duck, 4 redhead, 5 scaup, & 73 unknown.	Lake level – 727.7' Cold, drizzling rain, overcast with fog over the lake, very windy on and around water. Birds observed tended to be out in the water, geese were close to or on shore, and most birds were out in open water.