

## November 24, 2020 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the first waterfowl ground count of the 2020/2021 wintering period. November has proven to be mostly warmer than usual, but a slight cool front has dropped in this week. Weather for the first split is predicted to be mild. There are loads of ducks being reported to our north. Missouri reported 600,000 ducks, although no significant migrations were noticed in the last couple weeks. Snow geese however, did start to show up. Illinois is also reporting good numbers of ducks. Most areas in KY are reporting numbers that are close to average or slightly below average for November. Hopefully that means there are plenty of ducks still to come.

Habitat across the state varies, but most are reporting excellent moist soil habitat, and good to excellent habitat over all. Most areas were able to plant crops this year, and water levels are good. As always, there are some units that still need some water, but overall, wetland conditions and food availability are set for a productive waterfowl season.

Duck season will begin on Thanksgiving Day, with the first segment running from November 26 – 29. The second segment of duck season opens on December 7, and will run until January 31, 2021. Goose season will open 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	7,366 ducks 4 CAGO 20 White-fronts	85% Mallard, 7% Gadwall, 7% Ring-neck, 1% Wood Duck and Wigeon.	Overall, habitat is looking great. There is an abundance of moist soil vegetation throughout the entire area. We have pumped for just over a week with the big pump up until Nov 8. Good water levels on most of the area.  Ducks were holding tight to brush cover this morning. Observations were a little difficult.
Boatwright	2,648 Ducks	79% Mallard, 18% Green-wing teal, 2% Scaup, 1% Gadwall, Wigeon and Ruddy	Habitat is looking great, abundance of moist soil vegetation; some crops have water on them as well. Birds were using shallow water areas that have good cover, and tucked into thick brush and cypress trees.

Duck Island	~ 3,950 ducks 60 Canada geese	75% Mallards 25% gadwall, GW teal, pintail, ringneck, shoveler, wigeon, ruddy duck, black duck and wood duck.	Habitat conditions are excellent. Planted crops and moist soil plants did well this summer.
Doug Travis WMA	2,600 Ducks	95% Mallard, 5% mixed dabblers	11/22: All 3 wells are running. We have hunnable water at all seasonally drawn sites. Milner WRP walk- in units are over 50% full. Baldy's Woods walk-in unit is at 40% capacity and gaining daily with pumping. Ward Tract walk-in unit has water in the woods below Goose Pond, but little in the main field. Fish Lake GTR has little water since we are using the #3 Well to flood moist soil pools in Indian Camp Rest Area and Baldy's Woods walkin.
Sloughs WMA	2,425 ducks 185 CA geese 3,100 WF geese 1,000 snow geese 128 Tundra Swans		Water conditions and habitat are good to excellent across the area. Cypress slough systems including Jenny Hole are at normal to slightly above normal conditions. There is an abundance of moist soil vegetation made available from late summer rains. All hunt units have available water.
Peabody WMA	237 ducks 137 Canada geese	60% Mallard	Moist soil units are lower than usual due to limited rainfall. WMA lake and vicinity river

			levels are slightly above normal pool.
Yellowbank WMA	225 Ducks	75% mallard, 20% wood duck, 5% other dabbling ducks	Excellent moist soil plant response in most units. A couple units are holding water from recent rains. Pumps are running filling units where crops have been harvested. MSU's are being flooded but limited surface water with beans still in field.
Barren River WMA	20 ducks,	Redheads and Mallards	Habitat looks great on the WMA, with corn/soybeans and moist soil plants in great condition going into the season. Peters Creek MSU 10% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 70% and units above and below the main spring 0-50%, MSUs off hwy 100 are 0% full. 11/18: Lake 536.3
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		
Cave Run Lake	161 Ducks, 437 Canada geese 2 Snow geese 200 coots	56% bufflehead, 21% mallard, 15% ruddy duck, 8% ringneck, redhead, gadwall, and wood duck.	11/18: lake level – 725.5'