

December 3, 2020 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

Snow is still on the ground from a nice cold front that broke the warm fall weather up, and just in time for the second segment of duck season! Many shallow water impoundments froze this week, but the abundant sun and above freezing temps should leave some open water. Reports from our northern neighbors indicate that there are still lots of ducks from Missouri to Ohio, and especially in Missouri and Illinois. States to their north are at the tail end of migration, with only small numbers of Canada geese and mallards persisting. Although Missouri is still below the long-term averages, they still reported nearly 1 million ducks & geese. Illinois reports along the big rivers are well above the long-term average. All of our northern neighbors report a late drought, leaving habitat a little dry, so hopefully the cold weather will continually push birds down.

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. Overall, wetland conditions and food availability are right where it needs to be.

Duck season began 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 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	14,686 ducks 61 CA goose 700 WF goose	85% Mallard, 7% Gadwall, 6% Ring-neck, 2% Green wing, Scaup, Pintail, Wood Duck, Bufflehead, Goldeneye and Ruddy.	Overall, habitat is looking great. There is an abundance of moist soil vegetation throughout the entire area. Good water levels on most of the area, and we are still pumping and running wells where needed.
Boatwright	4,360 Ducks 3 CA goose	82% Mallard, 14% Green wing, 3% Scaup, 1% Gadwall, Wood Duck, Canvasback and Black Duck.	Habitat is looking great, abundance of moist soil vegetation; some crops have water on them as well. Water depths are looking good overall, but we are still running wells where possible.
Duck Island <i>11/18/2020</i>	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	550 Ducks	85% Mallard, 15% mix of pintail, gadwall, and green-winged teal	Continuing to pump water as fast as we can but not seeing significant progress with the low river level. Blinds 13 and 14 are at full pool now.
Sloughs WMA	4,500 ducks 24 CA goose 3,000 WF goose 4,300 Snow goose 150 Tundra Swan		Water conditions and habitat is still good to excellent across the area following modest rains prior to Thanksgiving Holiday. Cypress slough systems including Jenny Hole are at normal to slightly above normal conditions. There is an abundance of moist soil vegetation. All hunt units have available water. The first couple days of December, morning low's dipped in the 20's with ice forming on most shallow water impoundments.
Peabody WMA	488 ducks 28 CA goose	75% Mallard	
Yellowbank WMA	250 Ducks	60% mallard, 30% wood duck, 5% other dabbling ducks, 5% diver ducks	Excellent moist soil plant response in most units. A couple units are holding 50% water capacity from recent rains. Pumps are filling units where crops have been harvested. Upper Flood MSU still has soybeans to be harvested.
Barren River WMA 11/24/2020	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	321 Ducks, 407 CA geese 300 coots	56% bufflehead, 21% mallard, 15% ruddy duck, 8% ringneck, redhead, gadwall, and wood duck.	11/18: lake level – 725.5'