

December 30, 2020 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count for December 28-30, 2020. With the New Year's holiday this week, not all areas were surveyed. Last week's cold front made hunting much better. Many areas experienced an increase in waterfowl numbers, and harvest reports were better for it. We have experienced mild weather again, and the up and down temps continue.

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>	43,975 ducks 118 CA goose 350 WF goose	77% Mallard, 14% Ring-neck, 3% Gadwall, 3% Green wing and 3% Wigeon, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Pintail, Black Duck, Bufflehead and Hooded Merganser	Finally beginning to pick up a good mixed bag of species. Strong winds out of the south today, birds are in overhead cover and in large groups in open water impoundments. Habitat looks great, moist soil abundance, planted crops are flooded where possible. River is holding in low to mid 20's. Wells are running where possible. Hunting is closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
Boatwright <i>12/23/2020</i>	2,303 Ducks	78% Mallard, 20% Ring-neck, 2% Green wing, Canvasback, Wigeon and Wood Duck	Counting was difficult this morning due to roadwork in Swan. Birds were pushed out of refuge areas. 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>12/29/2020</i>	3,582 Ducks *Most ducks in Beaver Pond and Willow Slough were holding in and under thick flooded timber and buckbrush (likely taking advantage of thermal benefit from overhead cover). Numbers reported from these sites are only what flushed and should be considered a minimum number present.	85% Mallard, 10% mixed dabblers,5% divers	Lakes with blind sites had open water except for remnants in corners. Water has risen in Black Lake and Number 4 Lake to levels allowing boats to launch. Low river levels are affecting our ability to spread water on the DTWMA landscape. We are holding huntable pools at blind sites and Baldy's Woods and Ward Tract walk-ins, but not gaining water even with all 3 wells pumping continuously. There is good water in natural vegetation on the west side of the Indian Camp Rest Area and at the Willow Slough area, but other impoundments have little or no water. Forecast rain on 12/30 and 31 should provide a needed boost to flooding of additional habitat.
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>12/14/2020</i>	785 ducks 56 CA goose	75% Ring neck, 20% Mallard, 5% other	
Yellowbank WMA <i>12/22/2020</i>	425 Ducks	65% mallard, 10% wood duck, 10% gadwall, 10% black duck, 5% diver ducks	Most units are above 50% water capacity.
Barren River WMA <i>12/28/2020</i>	80 ducks 175 CA geese 3,680 Sandhill Cranes	50%diver/50% dabblers redheads, pintails, mallards	Peters Creek MSU 75% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 100% and units above and below the main spring 75-100%, MSUs off hwy 100 are 75-100% full, with corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition, rain and cooler temps in the 10 day forecast should bring/hold more waterfowl Lake @ 528.7'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		
Cave Run Lake <i>12/28/2020</i>	420 Ducks, 75 CA geese	100 mallard, 80 bufflehead, 75 canvasback, 50 ruddy duck, 35 merganser, 80 unknown.	Lake level – 724.5'