

January 24, 2020 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 21-24, 2020. The week started with temps that stayed below freezing for a few days, but is ending with more rain and mild temps. There have been individual reports of hunter success through the week, but these have been scattered and localized. Likewise, there are reports of large concentrations of waterfowl that are not captured on this survey, as most of the WMA's along the lower Ohio and Mississippi rivers are still underwater. Lake levels continue to remain high; many remain well above normal levels. There is an abundance of backwater habitat also still present.

Ballard WMA closed on Saturday, 1/4, and will remain closed until it is safe for hunters to access. We will advertise details on the department webpage, the Ballard WMA Facebook page, and the KDFWR main Facebook page. Hunters may also call the Ballard Waterfowl Hotline, 270-224-2244 ext. 1 to get updates. Doug Travis and Boatwright WMA's have roads effected by backwater, so be careful trying to access these WMA's and be aware of the rules that apply during floodwater conditions. See the waterfowl guide online for more info, available on our website.

Habitat across the state is still holding on strong. There was ample moist soil vegetation on most areas and hunt units going into the season, and most of these are still full of food.

Duck season began on Thanksgiving Day, with the first segment running from November 28 – December 1. The second segment of duck season opened on December 7th, and NEW THIS YEAR, will run until January 31, 2020. Goose season opened November 28, 2019 and will remain open until February 15, 2020. The western zone youth hunt will be February 1-2, 2020. Also new this year, is the daily bag limit reduction from 2 birds to 1 for Northern Pintail. 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 1/10/2020	<i>not surveyed due to floods</i>		Due to water being over roads at Boatwright and Ballard, we did not do a count today.
Boatwright 1/10/2020	<i>not surveyed due to floods</i>		Due to water being over roads at Boatwright and Ballard, we did not do a count today. .
Duck Island	<i>not surveyed</i>		
Doug Travis WMA 1/10/2020	<i>not surveyed due to floods</i>		No survey this week due to high water. All access is by boat until the river recedes below ~41ft.
Sloughs WMA 1/22/2020	10,050 ducks 262 CA geese 6,845 WF geese 75 snow geese 5 Tundra swans	92% Mallard, 8% GW teal, Widgeon, Black Ducks and Pintail.	Birds were active most of the day with a low ceiling and heavy cloud cover. A cold weather front is pushing through the region with lows expected in the upper teens to lower 20's.

			Habitat on Sloughs is good with Pond Creek Marsh elevated making food readily available. During our survey period, birds were seen in pockets of open water with ice covering over 75% of the area. White Fronted Geese and Snow geese continue to trade back and forth in the area feeding on waste grain and adjacent fields with an abundance of each using the area at any given time. River Stages have receded from previous flood conditions and stable. As of Monday, roads were open leading to Grassy Pond/Powell's Lake and Highland Creek Units. Happy hunting.
Peabody WMA	<i>not surveyed</i>		All moist soil units are full of water.
Yellowbank WMA <i>1/23/2020</i>	925 Ducks 30 CA geese	75% Mallard, 10% gadwall and 5% black duck, 5% pintail and 5% other	90 percent of units still have ice but are melting. Several groups of ducks are using small creeks off the river.
Barren River Lake WMA <i>1/22/2020</i>	105 ducks 0 CA geese	80% mallards, shoveler, wood ducks, 20% scaup and redhead	Lake is at 559.3' (+31.5') Moist Soil units frozen
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	<i>not surveyed</i>		
Herrington Lake	<i>not surveyed</i>		
Green River Lake <i>1/6/2020</i>	Low numbers being seen, though finding them is difficult with all the flooded habitat available.		Green River Lake level is currently 24 feet above summer pool and is expected to rise with predicted rain starting Friday. Most blind sites in the bottoms are

			<p>already under water, as are the sites on the lake.</p> <p>There are not many options for launching a boat as most boat ramps are closed due to flooding.</p>
<p>Cave Run Lake</p> <p><i>1/17/2020</i></p>	<p>279 ducks/coots</p> <p>10 CA goose</p>	<p>200+ Large group rafted up consisting of mainly Canvasback, with Ruddy Duck, Ringneck, Scaup, and Coot. 40-Mallard, 15-Ruddy ducks, 7-Bufflehead, and 2-gadwall.</p>	<p>Lake level is 735.4, Outflow – 4,276 at 6 a.m. Lake levels made it to survey. The mallards all came out of flooded timber. My assumption is that there is more around the lake with this cool weather front.</p>