

December 3, 2021 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count for November 29 through December 3, 2021. The first 4-day segment of duck season is passed, but goose season remains open. In Central KY, especially around the Lexington area, Canada geese are moving around and have been more visible than in previous weeks. Missouri posted their waterfowl report this week, and though they are approaching the peak of the statewide total, they are still counting high numbers of early migrants like gadwall, shovelers, and pintails. They also experienced a large influx of arctic geese last week. Mild conditions to the north and the lack of snow have not yet triggered a large push of mallards, but they are starting to trickle down.

Dry conditions are still continuing across the state, and water levels remain lower than we would like in units that cannot be mechanically filled. Water levels in hunt units are mostly right where we want them, but we are adding water where possible to maintain proper foraging depth as well as adequate hunting water. Planted crops and moist soil food are very abundant, and most areas report ample forage available for ducks this season. Overall, wetland conditions and food availability are excellent, but slightly dry.

Duck season began on Thanksgiving Day and ending November 28. The second segment of duck season opens on December 7 and will run until January 31, 2022. Goose season opens November 25, 2021 and will remain open until February 15, 2022. The western zone youth hunt will be February 5-6, 2022. All bag limits remain the same as last season. Check out the waterfowl hunting [web page](#) for more details.

Good luck hunting this year. Be safe and enjoy your time afield.

| Location | Number | Species Composition | Comments |
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| Ballard <i>12/1/2021</i> | 18,791 ducks 2,300 WF geese 137 CA geese | 90% mallard 3% gadwall 3% ring-necked duck 2% GW teal 2% shoveler, wigeon, & wood duck | Moist soil and row crops look great, and wells and pumps are running where possible. The river level is too low to use the River pump, but water levels in most units are on schedule. |
| Boatwright <i>12/1/2021</i> | 1,087 ducks 62 CA geese | 79% mallard 12% GW teal 5% ring-necked duck 3% gadwall | Moist soil and row crops look great, however dry conditions persist leaving many areas dryer than we would like. Pumps are running everywhere possible. Ducks were counted across the Area mostly in moist soil units and loafing areas. |

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| Duck Island | | <i>Not surveyed</i> | Habitat conditions are excellent. Planted crops and moist soil plants did well this summer. |
| Doug Travis WMA <i>12/1/2021</i> | 1,050 Ducks | 90% Mallard 10% mixed dabblers -Green-wing teal, Ringnecks, Wood ducks | Water levels remain low due to low river levels. Most blind spots have some water in their respective impoundments, however most walk-in units do NOT have huntable water yet. Use caution getting to boat-in spots. DISCLAIMER: Well 2 was struck by lightning last week and is currently inoperable; Blinds 11-14 (including Mobility-Impaired blind 13) do not have water pumping into their impoundments and are losing water. |
| Sloughs WMA <i>11/29/2021</i> | 6,500 ducks 8,200 WF goose 3,000 Snow goose 35 Tundra Swan | 80% mallard 15% gadwall and widgeon 5% shoveler | Habitat conditions continue to be extremely dry except for units that have pumping capabilities. Water levels within most of the hunt units on the WMA and Jenny Hole were low but huntable. Birds were concentrated around the few refuge areas with water. Pond creek marsh along with other natural wetland areas have little to no water. |
| Peabody WMA <i>12/1/2021</i> | 150 ducks 80 CA goose 1 Snow goose | 80% Mallard 20% Ringneck and other species | Lake and river levels are starting to rise from normal levels. River bottoms within the WMA still have planted crops available. MSU water levels are still low but filling quickly. |

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| | | | Planted crops in MSU's are available, but at slightly lower yields than river bottoms. |
| Yellowbank WMA <i>11/29/2021</i> | 530 Ducks | 80% mallard 10% other dabblers 5% GW teal 5% black duck | Excellent moist soil plant response and row crops in most units. Moist-soil units are a little above 50% water capacity. |
| Barren River WMA <i>12/1/2021</i> | 40 ducks 75 CA geese 231 Sandhill cranes | Shovelers, mallards and pintails | Lake Level: 529.3 Peters Creek MSU 25% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 70% and units above and below the main spring 0-50%, MSUs off hwy 100 are 0- 50%% full, with corn and MSU plants in great condition |
| Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) | Not surveyed | | |
| Cave Run Lake <i>12/1/2021</i> | 188 Ducks, 501 CA geese 327 coots | 23 Mallard 107 Bufflehead 17 Canvasback 2 Wigeon 37 Ruddy duck 2 Hooded Merganser | Lake level – 724.4' |