

January 12, 2018 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter waterfowl ground count for January 8-12, 2018. We have finally had a week or so of warm temps and a little rain this week, melting some of the ice left by the two week long freeze that locked up most of the state's wetlands. Our WMA's are running wells and ice eaters if available, in an effort to open up some hunt units, but with 4-6 inches of ice it is a slow process. Ducks have found the newly open holes of water and are using them to feed and loaf. Moist soil plants still look great across the state. Planted crops favored well in most places, and there is still plenty of food available to ducks and geese, other than what is still covered by ice. Some of the winter wheat fields planted on our WMA's were heavily used during the freeze, but plenty of other food sources are still available. Another freeze is forecast to hit Friday night and persist through next week. Expect many holes to refreeze. When hunting this week and next week, plan for the cold, and take extra precautions to stay safe. Getting wet in these conditions can prove deadly. If you are hunting from a boat, be sure you have and are using your life jackets!

The second segment of duck season is now open and will remain open until Sunday, January 28. The goose season will remain open until Monday, February 15, 2018. The Western KY youth waterfowl dates are February 3-4, 2018. Remember that adults that are taking youth out for the youth hunt can still hunt geese, but may not take any ducks. The future of the sport will always be reliant on kids being introduced to waterfowling. Please try to take a kid hunting whenever possible. Good luck to all, and remember to be safe whenever you are out pursuing birds this hunting season.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA	38,135 Ducks 115 CA geese 2,005 WF geese 12,020 Snow geese	99% Mallard, 1% ring-neck, Black Duck, Wigeon and Wood Duck.	The area still has a lot of ice around, but conditions are improving. Ice has softened and has helped hunting conditions. Temps are expected to drop again, so we do expect some hunt units to freeze again this weekend. All efforts will be made to keep water open where we can. During the freeze, geese and ducks were able to utilize winter wheat and standing crops. There is still an abundance of MSU food as well.

Boatwright WMA	1,303 Ducks	99% Mallard, 1% Pintail Fog on Swan Lake prevented a complete count. A multitude of ducks could be heard, but not seen, for an accurate count.	There is still a lot of ice on the area, but conditions are improving and providing opportunities for waterfowl to use the area. There is still a lot of food available, although some it is still covered by ice. Moist soil plants and planted crops are still available in abundance. Expect freezing conditions to return again this weekend.
Birdsville Island	Not surveyed		
Kentucky/Barkley Lakes	Not surveyed		
Duck Island	Not surveyed		
Barren River Lake	4,171 Sandhill Cranes		Lake is 60% frozen but thawing.
Doug Travis WMA	10,902 ducks 50 CA goose 25 coots	98% mallards and 2% mix of green-winged teal, ring-necked ducks, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, and black ducks.	Most lakes still have ice cover during the survey but are thinning/melting. We have open water in standing corn and moist-soil veg at Indian Camp Rest Area. We also have open huntable water in corn and/or moist soil at Blinds 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17.
Cave Run Lake	Not Surveyed		
Clear Creek WMA	Not surveyed		
Peabody WMA	1,170 Ducks 100 CA Geese	700 Mallards, 470 divers (mostly ring-necked ducks).	

Sloughs WMA	22,187 Ducks 606 CA geese 9,165 WF geese 21,000 Snow geese 0 Swans	98% mallard, 2% mix of green-winged teal, northern shoveler, pintail, and black ducks.	Despite warming temperatures and rainfall Sunday night, much of the area remains frozen, with 3-4 inches of ice still present on areas of shallow water. However, several small pockets of open water have emerged across the WMA, with waterfowl concentrating heavily on these newly thawed food sources. Several thousand mallards were also seen dry-feeding on standing corn alongside white-fronted and snow geese. While winter wheat fields are in poor condition because of the recent cold snap, geese continue to feed on areas of the refuge where standing corn is still present. Aside from Anderson Pond, all of the natural cypress sloughs remain frozen. Over the past two days waterfowl activity has been high throughout the day, as both ducks and geese are actively searching for recently thawed areas to feed and loaf.
Yellowbank WMA			
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	220 ducks 2,000 CA geese	90% Mallard, 10% Ring-necked duck.	50% Ice cover on KU pond.
Taylorsville Lake	Not surveyed		

Cedar Cr./Dix R. WMA	Not surveyed		
Green River WMA	179 Ducks 100 Mergansers 200 CA Geese 35 WF Geese.	100 Mergansers (Hooded and Red-breasted), 75 Mallards, 4 Shoveler.	Lake is 60% frozen.