

December 15, 2017 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter waterfowl ground count for December 11-15, 2017. We finally received some winter weather, and there are some fresh birds this week to prove it. Hopefully everyone was able to get out over the weekend to take advantage of the weather. With a small cold front that hit on Thursday, we may see some increases across the state. Most waterfowl WMA's are reporting a fair number of birds still, especially considering the warmer weather experienced the last two weeks. There are still impressive numbers of ducks being reported from aerial surveys on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers; however, the numbers decreased from last week's flight. Hopefully the cold front has some of those heading to us.

Overall, most of the states wetlands are doing ok, but we are considerably dry for this time of year. Moist soil plants still look great across the state. Crops favored well in most places, and conditions for ducks should only improve with additional precipitation.

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	23,685 Ducks 87 CA geese 1,500 WF geese 5 Snow geese	88% Mallard, 6% GW Teal, 2% Gadwall, 2% Ring Neck, 2% Pintail, Shoveler, Wigeon, Black Duck and Wood Duck.	Water levels are holding pretty consistent in hunt units except for the river side in Terrel Field, which is falling as the river levels continuing to drop. Plenty of food in all units, with more available as we add water later in the season.
Boatwright WMA	15,260 Ducks	76% Mallard, 8% Gadwall, 7% GW Teal, 6% unknown dabbler and 3% Ring-necked duck.	
Birdsville Island	Not surveyed		
Kentucky/Barkley Lakes	Not surveyed		
Duck Island	Not surveyed		Overall habitat is good. Planted crops are poor, but moist-soil vegetation is good to excellent. Water levels

			are right on schedule at approximately 50% of full pool.
Barren River Lake	250 Ducks 5 CA Geese 349 Sandhill Cranes	50% divers (50% hooded mergansers, 40% scaup, 10% redheads) 50 % dabblers (90% mallards, 5% gadwalls, 5% black ducks)	Moist Soil Units are extremely Dry. Peters Creek MSU is 20% full. Long Creek- Calvert Springs main units are full, but units above and below the main spring are only 50% full. All other units are dry. Winter wheat planted this year on Long Creek Unit looks good. All units have good moist soil vegetation, as well as corn, millet, milo, & buckwheat that was planted.
Doug Travis WMA	2,550 Ducks	90% mallards, 5% gw teal, 5% mix of dabblers and ringnecks	The area is 70% flooded.
Cave Run Lake	467 Ducks 32 CA Geese 2000+ Coots	70% divers (200 Ring-necked duck, 54 Hooded merganser, 17 bufflehead, and various other or unknown divers) & 30% Puddle ducks (77 mallard, 59 gadwall, 3 Pintail and 2 Wood duck)	
Clear Creek WMA	Not surveyed		
Peabody WMA	582 Ducks 62 CA Geese	210 Mallards, remaining were divers	
Sloughs WMA	7,520 Ducks 129 CA geese 7,200 WF geese 13,100 Snow geese 204 Swans	60% Mallard, 40% mix of gadwall, ring-necked duck, green-winged teal, pintail, and widgeon.	We are still extremely dry in the area natural slough levels have not raised and if anything they have lowered slightly. Ducks were hard to count today, as they were tucked away in the bushes to escape the cold. Ice is beginning to form.

			White Fronted nad Snow Goose numbers remain really high. Though not seen during the survey period, at least 50,000 snows were seen being spotted consistently on the area.
Yellowbank WMA	525 Ducks	75% Mallard, 15% Wood Duck, 5% Pintail, 5% other dabbling ducks.	Most units have sheet ice except for refuge where ducks are keeping open water.
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	30 Ducks	28 Mallards and 2 Black ducks.	
Taylorsville Lake	Not surveyed		
Cedar Cr./Dix R. WMA	Not surveyed		
Green River WMA	Not surveyed		