

December 28, 2017 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter waterfowl ground count for December 26-27, 2017. Many of our staff are out for the holidays, so not all areas will be surveyed this week. I will update numbers next week as data arrives. An arctic blast hit Kentucky this week, bringing below freezing temps to stay for an extended time. Much of the state had enough wind to keep larger bodies of water open, but most small and shallow water is frozen. This will congregate ducks, and should bring some new birds into the state. Overall, most of the states wetlands are doing good. The rain we received prior to the cold front helped recharge some of the dry and low sloughs and units that cannot be pumped. River levels rose to allow some of our WMA's to gain water they previously could not get. 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. 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	45,314 Ducks 95 CA geese 1,375 WF geese 15,100 Snow geese	91% Mallard, 7% ring-neck, 2% GW teal, gadwall, shoveler, black duck and pintail.	Water levels looking great in most hunt units. With the river coming back up, we are able to add water to units, in hopes of adding new blinds that have been dry. Moist soil units have an abundance of food as well as units with planted crops. Area is beginning to freeze up with artic front that has pushed through since yesterday. Birds are grouping up and keeping large holes open. We are running wells where we have them to help hold

			water open. The big pump was turned on today, hopefully we will be able to keep birds spread out for hunter success.
Boatwright WMA	11,444 Ducks	97% Mallard and 3% GW teal	Moist soil units have an abundance of food, although some units are still a little dry if wells are not available. Planted crops are still plentiful in rest areas and hunt units as well.
Birdsville Island	Not surveyed		
Kentucky/Barkley Lakes	Not surveyed		
Duck Island	Not surveyed		.
Barren River Lake	200 Ducks 4,286 Sandhill Cranes		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	2,100 ducks	95% mallards, 5% gw teal, black duck, shoveler, hooded merganser and ring-necked ducks.	All 3 wells are running. Impoundments were approximately 60% iced up, although open water was available in the Indian Camp Rest Area, at Blinds 11-12 and 16-19, and in the Willow Slough and

			Beaver Pond Rest Areas. All lakes were still ice-free as of the time of the count. Ducks were tucked into areas with some thermal cover, and I suspect that several were not counted.
Cave Run Lake	422 Ducks 200 CA Geese 2000+ Coots	57% divers (100 Bufflehead, 50 Ring-necked duck, 20 Scaup and various other or unknown divers) & 43% Puddle ducks (70 mallard, 65 gadwall, 1 Pintail and 3 shoveler), and 100 unidentified ducks	
Clear Creek WMA	Not surveyed		
Peabody WMA	861 Ducks 220 CA Geese 25 Snow Geese	550 Mallards, remaining were divers	
Sloughs WMA	23,000 Ducks 520 CA geese 8,500 WF geese 500 Snow geese 150 Swans	95% mallard 5% gadwall, pintail, shoveler, & green wing teal.	With recent rains our water levels on natural slough complexes are getting closer to normal, but overall are still low. Most of the ducks and geese were on areas of natural sloughs where they were able to keep water open. These areas had thousands of birds packed so close together that counting them was extremely difficult. This number is a conservative estimate, and could be larger. There were also large numbers of ducks of near well outlets where the water was open. The area has ice anywhere the birds have not kept it open.

Yellowbank WMA	1,050 Ducks	70% Mallard, 10% Wood Duck, 10% Gadwall, 5% Pintail and 5 % other dabbling ducks.	
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	20 Mallards		
Taylorville Lake	Not surveyed		
Cedar Cr./Dix R. WMA	Not surveyed		
Green River WMA	Not surveyed		