

December 14, 2018 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the winter-waterfowl ground count survey for December 10-14, 2018. Hunting reports were fairly weak from the last 7 days or so, as freezing conditions, shallow backwaters, and generally low bird numbers combined forces to challenge Kentucky hunters. Along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, floodwaters have crested and started falling. There are increasing reports of frozen lakes and snow cover to the north; however, the upper Mississippi and Illinois River waterfowl surveys reported more than 600,000 mallards still hanging on.

Most of the states wetlands are in above average condition. Moist soil food is still in abundance across the state. Crops favored well in most places, although many areas struggled to get corn planted. Overall, conditions for ducks are good, and we are set to manage as needed throughout the season.

The Kentucky 2018-19 duck and goose seasons open Thursday, November 22. The first duck season segment closed on Sunday, November 25. The second segment of duck and season opened December 3 and the duck season will remain open until Sunday, January 27. The goose season will remain open until Friday, February 15, 2019. Good luck to all waterfowl hunters, and remember to be safe enjoy your time afield this hunting season.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA	23,981 Ducks 122 CA geese 3,500 WF geese 200 Snow geese	98% Mallard, 1% Gadwall, & 1% wigeon, ring-neck, goldeneye, black duck and hooded merganser.	Habitat looks good. Ohio River is falling out, and water levels are dropping to more favorable conditions in the hunting units. Birds are not moving around much.
Boatwright WMA		Survey not possible due to flooding.	
Duck Island	2,900 ducks	55% Mallard, 40% GW teal, 3% Ring-necked duck & 2% pintail, gadwall, wigeon and black duck.	
Doug Travis WMA	9,000 ducks***	95% Mallards and 5% assorted dabblers and ring- necked duck. ***Ground survey is an estimate, as the survey area is not accessible by vehicle.	As of 12/12, water is off off Fish Lake Road. #4 Lake and Indian Camp Slough boat ramps are not accessible by vehicle.
Sloughs WMA	18,911 Ducks 116 CA geese 9,725 WF geese 200 Snow geese 173 Swans	90% mallard, 10% gadwall, green-winged teal, black ducks, shovelors	Except where waterfowl had kept it open, all shallow water on the refuge was frozen at the time of the survey. However, rain and a warming

			<p>temperatures over the next week should have most of the area ice-free by the the time hunting starts again on Thursday. Water levels remain relatively low for the season in both the Pond Creek marsh area and Muddy Slough, affording excellent feeding opportunities for the birds. Over the last few days, large numbers of ducks continue to leave daytime loafing areas on the Pond Creek marsh to roost on surrounding moist-soil impoundments.</p>
Barren River Lake WMA	<p>65 ducks 572 Sandhill Cranes</p>	<p>50/50 mix of dabblers and divers, mostly mallard, bufflehead, and wood ducks.</p>	<p>Moist Soil Units were frozen on edges during the survey. Peters Creek MSU 60% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 50% full, and units above and below the main spring are still not being flooded. This is due to the soybeans that have not yet been harvested. MSUs off hwy 100 are 50-75% full, with soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Lake levels are finally low enough to expose some mud flats for cranes to use.</p>
Peabody WMA	Not Surveyed		
Yellowbank WMA	310 Ducks	<p>90% mallard, 5% black duck, 5% other puddle ducks</p>	<p>Most moist-soil units are at 85% water capacity.</p>

Cave Run Lake	901 Ducks 400 CA goose 100+ coots	50/50 divers and dabblers. Dabblers: 66% mallard, 10% GW teal, 24% gadwall, black duck and unknowns. Divers: 40% hooded merganser, 25% bufflehead, 15% canvasback, & 20% rin-necked duck, scaup or unknowns.	Expect the ACOE to start letting it down to prepare for incoming precipitation. Hydrilla was treated with herbicide in many areas this year in an effort to control the nuisance species. The recent booms have been knocked back, leaving "normal" habitat conditions. The flats area of the lake, as well as some coves still have decent vegetation.
Blue Grass Army Depot	Not surveyed		
Herrington Lake	Not surveyed		