

KENTUCKY PERIODIC WATERFOWL INVENTORY

Conducted January 4,5, & 6 2023

This is the 2023 Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey, flown January 4, 5 & 6. The survey period followed a heavy rain event earlier in the week. All four survey areas were completed on time this year; however, we do not have all the data compiled yet. This report will be updated when the final report is complete.

We flew in mostly mild to average temperatures throughout the week. The effects from the fall drought were still noticeable, despite the recent rains. November was unseasonably cold, but December has been considerably mild again this year, except for a major freeze that occurred Christmas weekend. The recent rains filled small oxbows and wet areas that previously had been dry and sent the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers slightly out of their banks in a couple places. Localized flooding on smaller tributary streams varied across the state. Most reservoirs across the state were at slightly above winter pool, though a couple had received ample rain and were above summer pool or higher. We still do not have a lot of flooded timber and cropland. Moist soil units, beaver impoundments and ponded depressions in crop fields provided ample habitat again this year. These areas were free of ice during all surveys. All the lakes and most waterbodies were free of ice for most of the surveys. Waterfowl habitat across the state looked better than average, despite the dry conditions in the fall and early winter. Food plots and moist soil units appeared to have an abundance of high-quality food still available to ducks and geese, especially in areas that were dry in December.

Listed below, are the individual survey data obtained during our Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey across the state. We wish you the best during the remainder of the hunting season. As always... stay safe and happy hunting!

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Western Kentucky - Purchase Region

Flown by: Pat Hahs on January 3, 2022

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Bayou De Chien	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Obion Creek	555	0	555	70	0	0	0	-	0
Mississippi River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Mayfield Creek	890	0	890	0	0	0	0	-	0
Reelfoot NWR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Ballard	19,635	875	20,510	25	9,700	2,950	0	-	0
Boatwright WMA	3,425	800	4,225	35	0	0	0	-	0
Ohio R. (Wickliffe-Paducah)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Ohio R. (Paducah-Golconda)	350	775	1,125	0	0	0	0	-	0
Barkley Lake (N of 68)	25	1,465	1,490	0	0	0	0	-	0
Barkley Lake (S of 68)	0	30	30	0	0	0	0	-	0
duck Island	697	0	697	0	0	0	0	-	0
Kentucky Lake	60	925	985	0	0	0	0	-	0
Kaler Bottoms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Birdsville Islands	2,725	0	2,725	0	0	0	0	-	0
Doug Travis WMA	90	0	90	0	0	0	0	-	0
Obion Creek (Travis Slough tract)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Obion Creek (L.E. Schaaf tract)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Totals	28,452	4,870	33,322	130	9,700	2,950	0	-	0

Notes from Pat... Extremely bitter temperatures were present approximately 10 days before this survey, giving way to slightly above average temps during the survey. Recent rains have scattered birds from where they had been concentrated during the cold. The Obion Creek system had birds in the backwaters. Overall species distribution was normal. Both cold and warmer weather species were present. The amount of water on the landscape is lower than normal, other than units with pumped water. Overall habitat conditions were good where water was available. The dry Fall had made pumping large areas difficult.

Notes from Thomas...

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Central KY

Flown by: Wes Little on January 7, 8 and 11, 2021

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Herrington Lake	15	0	15	68	0	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	136	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Cumberland	33	166	199	30	0	0	0	0	0
Dale Hollow Lake	220	22	242	2	0	0	0	0	0
Barren River Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green River Lake	6	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
Taylorville Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Central Ohio River	533	281	814	637	1	0	0	0	30
Blue Grass Army Depot	248	200	448	156	1	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Southern)	125	0	125	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cave Run Lake	38	26	64	0	0	0	50	1	0
Grayson Lake	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yatesville Lake	35	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River (Ashland to Scioto R.)	167	50	217	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scioto River	967	2	969	0	0	0	0	3	0
Ohio River (Scioto R. to Licking R.)	417	0	417	557	0	0	0	3	0
Licking River (Northern)	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0
Campbell County Lake	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
Kincaid Lake	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	1,694	178	1,881	1,628	2	0	0	10	196

Notes from Wes... Temps were fairly mild for this time of year, and despite a major rain event earlier in the week, conditions were still dry for the season. During the survey there were some smaller tributaries that had been or were out of their banks. Taylorsville lake was much higher than normal, and the northern licking river was out of its banks in places. Most of the reservoirs in Central KY were very murky. Ducks appeared to be actively avoiding the muddy water. Many of the muddy lakes had low numbers, and the ducks that were counted were located in clearer waters. Habitat conditions were excellent in natural wetlands and flooded hunt units, though some still were not at full pool. Moist soil units and oxbows around the rivers showed good moist soil or flooded crop habitats, and there is still a lot of food for ducks on the landscape.

The most abundant dabbling ducks were mallards and black ducks. Gadwall and green-winged teal were the only other noted puddle duck. Very few divers were seen this year, but all species were accounted for. Ring necked ducks and scaup were most abundant. Bufflehead, which are normally very abundant were hard to find, and canvasbacks and goldeneye were almost nonexistent during the survey. The Ohio River held most of the ducks and Canada geese counted. All other areas showed fairly low numbers. Waterfowl numbers on the central route were much lower than previous years. Some areas of the eastern route also showed lower than average numbers.

Stay safe, and I wish you the best for the remainder of your season.