

KENTUCKY PERIODIC WATERFOWL INVENTORY

Conducted January 7-11 2019

This is the 2020 Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey, flown Jan. 6-8. The week started with mild days that began around 30° and quickly moved up into the upper 40°s, and warmed as the week went on. Clear and sunny skies dominated the week, with calm winds early that changed to a stiff south wind as more rain moved toward the state. This year's weather has mirrored last year. Weather has been considerably mild, since the November cold front that had many hopeful for a good duck season. This year has also been another wet year. Most of the major rivers have been well outside of their banks at least at some point, and the Mississippi and Ohio have remained high for weeks. The recent rains have left ample amounts of sheet water, filling small oxbows and wet areas to full capacity. The recent rains have most of the reservoirs across the state well above winter pool, and many are well above summer pool. The amount of water across the landscape has scattered the ducks and geese across the state. Moist soil units, beaver impoundments and ponded depressions in crop fields have provided ample habitat again this year, and these areas were free of ice during most of the survey. The Central Route, flown on Monday, found only the shallowest and most protected water frozen with a small skim of ice that quickly melted with the sunrise. The rest of the week did not note any frozen water. Waterfowl habitat across the state looked better than average. Moist soil units appeared to have an abundance of high quality food still available to ducks and geese.

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 6, 2020

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	0
Obion Creek	350	0	350	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi River	14,065	170	14,310	75	0	0	0	0	0
Mayfield Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reelfoot NWR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballard	14,310	0	14,310	0	5,500	1,800	0	0	0
Boatwright WMA	520	1,500	2,020	40	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Wickliffe-Paducah)	200	0	200	0	4,500	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Paducah-Golconda)	2,140	0	2,140	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barkley Lake (N of 68)	0	1,190	1,200	85	0	0	0	0	0
Barkley Lake (S of 68)									
duck Island									
Kentucky Lake	8	925	933	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kaler Bottoms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birdsville Islands	890	250	1,140	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doug Travis WMA	1,670	75	1,745	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obion Creek (Travis Slough tract)									
Obion Creek (L.E. Schaaf tract)									
Totals	34,153	4,110	38,263	200	10,000	1,800	0	0	0

Notes from Pat... Overall, low numbers. Generally, most of the puddle ducks are mallards, though there was a noticeable influx of pintails into the Mississippi River bottoms near Hickman. The big rivers are in a moderate flood event. Waterfowl numbers for Ballard are likely a bit low with several birds observed in the timber and buttonbush areas. Many are unobservable from the plane when utilizing those habitats. No major concentrations of ducks were observed at Boatwright and the surrounding private lands.

Lower Ohio River & Western Coalfield

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 7, 2020

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Ohio R. (Owensboro-Green River)	345	24	369	0	3,900	500	0	6	0
Ohio R. (Green River-Henderson)	150	0	150	5	4,100	0	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Henderson-Sloughs WMA)	25	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sloughs WMA	3,507	0	3,507	45	3,200	2,800	0	2	0
Ohio R. (GPPL & JHHC)	32	0	32	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Uniontown-Shawneetown)	470	0	470	0	350	950	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Shawneetown-Tradewater R.)	4,975	100	5,075	12	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Tradewater R.-E. end of Hurricane Isl.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Hurricane Isl.-Golconda)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hovey Lake WMA (Indiana)	87	0	87	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pond River-White City WMA	22	0	22	12	0	0	0	0	0
Tradewater River	139	0	139	12	0	0	0	0	0
Peabody Coal Property	75	10	85	191	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	9,827	134	9,961	277	11,550	4,250	0	11	0

Rough River – Yellowbank WMA

Flown by: Thomas Young on January 7, 2020

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Rough River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowbank WMA	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Brandenburg - Owensboro)	75	0	75	12	0	0	0	2	0
Totals	85	0	85	12	0	0	0	2	0

Notes from Thomas... The mid-winter survey flew in bluebird skies on a calm sunny Tuesday for the region. Birds were not active, with most birds observed loafing in previously flooded backwater and isolated pockets from the Ohio River. A warm weather front was pushing through the region with highs in the upper 40's to low 50's with high probability of rain beginning late Thursday. Habitat within the survey route was good to excellent, with elevated water and ponding in areas up and down the Ohio River. River Stages have receded from elevated conditions but are expected to increase again with the possible 3-4 inches of rain predicted through Saturday. Happy hunting.

Mid-Winter Survey Report for Central and Eastern KY

Flown by: Wes Little on January 6 and 8, 2020

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Herrington Lake	22	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	19	0	19	10	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Cumberland	43	209	267	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dale Hollow Lake	125	0	125	0	0	0	100	1	0
Barren River Lake	150	3	153	19	0	0	0	1	0
Green River Lake	68	0	68	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taylorville Lake	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	1	0
Central Ohio River	512	292	804	833	25	0	0	0	0
Blue Grass Army Depot	210	250	460	132	0	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Southern)	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cave Run Lake	33	0	33	124	0	0	0	0	0
Grayson Lake	19	0	19	211	0	0	0	0	0
Yatesville Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River- (Ashland to Scioto R.)	195	0	195	35	0	0	0	0	0
Scioto River	143	0	143	10	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River (Scioto R. to Licking R.)	425	18	449	1159	0	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Northern)	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Campbell County Lake	6	0	6	169	0	0	0	0	0
Kincade Lake	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	2,001	772	2,779	2,680	25	0	100	3	0

Notes from Wes... The Central flight was flown on Jan 6, and the Eastern flight was conducted on Jan 8, 2020. We flew in clear and sunny skies, with calm winds on the eastern route and 5-20 mph west winds on the central route. Temperatures began around freezing on Monday, but were in the upper thirties on Wednesday. Both days temps climbed towards fifty degrees throughout the day. Temperatures have been very mild this hunting season, with very few below freezing days in the last few weeks. The season's rainfall has been well above average, putting most major rivers out of their banks multiple times this hunting season, and leaving sheet water pooling in low places across the landscape. No ice noted during the survey, except for slight skims of ice on the shallowest and most protected water Monday morning. Most reservoirs were either at or above summer pool. Green River Lake was way out of its banks. Barren River Lake was above summer pool, and no mudflats were exposed. This left zero roosting habitat for Sandhill cranes. Fog covered most of Dale Hollow Lake, making the survey mostly impossible. Cave Run Lake was well above summer pool, and dabbling ducks were nearly non-existent there. The Ohio River was barely within the riverbank. River current was very strong and the color was a dark brown from the mud, leaving most ducks found adjacent to the river. The Licking River was also extremely high and fast. Most fields with low areas and oxbows around the rivers showed good moist soil or flooded crop habitats, and were full of water. Many soybean fields and some cornfields have still not been harvested, providing ample food for waterfowl. With the lack of ice and abundance of water throughout the state, combined with the mild temperatures this winter, waterfowl numbers on this survey were extremely low again this year.

The most abundant dabbling duck was Mallards (1152). Green-winged teal (366) were the second most abundant puddle duck, followed by Black duck (318) and Gadwall (110). Very few divers were seen this year, with Bufflehead (486) and Ring-necked ducks (186) the most abundant. Other diving ducks noted were Redhead (36), Canvasback (30), Scaup (25) and Goldeneye (9). There were 2,712 Canada geese counted total, which is much lower than average. I hope everyone had a great holiday season, and I wish you the best for the remainder of your duck and goose season.