

# KENTUCKY PERIODIC WATERFOWL INVENTORY

## Conducted January 2,3 & 4, 2024.

This is the 2024 Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey, flown January 2, 3 & 4. The survey was flown in average temperatures throughout the week; however, this was the first bit of cold weather this winter. The season has been abnormally mild for Kentucky, as well as the rest of the Mississippi Flyway states and Canadian provinces. Virtually all surveys in states to our north are recording record high numbers of mallards and geese, and southern states are experiencing record low numbers of mallards, compared to the 10 year and long-term values. Kentucky has also had another dry year, and effects from the drought are still noticeable. The recent rains improved conditions somewhat, however small oxbows and wet areas in the flood plains of many of the creeks and rivers in the survey area were still lacking water. Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were both much lower than normal. Several islands and bars were visible that normally are not. Most reservoirs across the state were below winter pool, and many boat ramps were not usable. Western surveys flown on Jan. 2 did not report any ice, however the central and eastern route found most shallow ponds and protected areas completely covered in light ice. All the lakes were free of ice for most of the surveys. Waterfowl habitat across the state looked pretty good, other than the lack of water. There is still a lot of food waiting to be flooded, but food is still holding out in areas that do have water. Hunting activity was noticeable low during the survey, which is expected with the weather and duck numbers that we have.

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 2, 2024*

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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Mississippi River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Mayfield Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Reelfoot NWR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Ballard	20,360	4,700	25,060	35	5,400	6,500	0	-	0
Boatwright WMA	2,535	380	2,915	80	0	0	0	-	0
Ohio R. (Wickliffe-Paducah)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Ohio R. (Paducah-Golconda)	4,330	0	1,125	105	0	0	0	-	0
Barkley Lake (N of 68)	695	2,135	2,830	0	0	0	0	-	0
Barkley Lake (S of 68)	275	0	275	0	0	0	0	-	0
duck Island	1,315	1,600	2,915	0	0	0	0	-	0
Kentucky Lake	10	1,530	1,540	0	0	0	0	-	0
Kaler Bottoms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Birdsville Islands	4,662	1,500	6,162	0	0	0	0	-	0
Doug Travis WMA	365	0	365	0	0	0	0	-	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34,547</b>	<b>11,845</b>	<b>46,392</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>5,400</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>

**Notes from Pat...** Weeks prior to this survey were defined by unusually dry and warm weather. Reports indicate that lots of birds are still well north of the survey area. Temperatures at the time of survey were generally seasonable if not slightly above average. Ringnecks were obvious at several sites, though they are usually south of here by now. Surprisingly, the goldeneye numbers on the lakes were strong despite the persistence of the mild weather prior to survey period. Very dry conditions exist throughout the survey route. Only pumped/managed water was apparent within the route. Creeks and river levels are well below average.

**Lower Ohio River & Western Coalfield**

*Flown by: Thomas Young on January 2, 2024*

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows/Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Ohio R. (Owensboro-Green River)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Green River-Henderson)	60	0	60	50	0	2	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Henderson-Sloughs WMA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sloughs WMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Ohio R. (GPPL & JHHC)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Uniontown-Shawneetown)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ohio R. (Shawneetown-Tradewater R.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	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	1	0
Hovey Lake WMA (Indiana)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Pond River-White City WMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tradewater River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peabody Coal Property	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rough River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowbank WMA	253	0	253	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio R. (Brandenburg - Owensboro)	20	0	20	77	0	0	0	4	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>

**Notes from Thomas...** The Ohio River and its tributaries had very low water levels throughout the survey route. Most moist soil units on Sloughs WMA were full. Natural systems were extremely low from lack of rainfall throughout survey route.

## Mid-Winter Survey Report for Central and Eastern KY

*Flown by: Wes Little on January 3 & 4, 2024 (Central flown on Jan. 3, East on Jan. 4)*

Site	Dabblers	Divers	Total Ducks	Canada geese	Snows Blues	WF Geese	Coots	Eagles	Sandhill Crane
Herrington Lake	28	0	28	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Lake	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Cumberland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dale Hollow Lake	21	141	162	0	0	0	0	1	0
Barren River Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24
Green River Lake	31	4	35	0	0	0	0	5	0
Taylorville Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Central Ohio River	387	162	549	833	0	0	0	1	0
Blue Grass Army Depot	196	190	386	111	0	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Southern)	30	0	30	100	0	0	0	1	0
Cave Run Lake	3	33	36	20	0	0	0	3	0
Grayson Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yatesville Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River (Ashland to Scioto R.)	17	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scioto River	54	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River (Scioto R. to Licking R.)	246	0	246	1119	1	0	0	0	0
Licking River (Northern)	0	0	0	65	0	0	0	1	0
Campbell County Lake	0	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	0
Kincaid Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>2,307</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>

**Notes from Wes...** Dry conditions continue throughout the survey area. Most reservoirs were well below winter pool, and many boat ramps were unusable. Habitat conditions were excellent in natural wetlands and flooded hunt units, though many still were not at full pool. Moist soil units and oxbows around the rivers had very little water.

The most abundant dabbling ducks were mallards and black ducks. Gadwall and green-winged teal were the only other noted puddle ducks. Ring necked ducks and Bufflehead were the most noted diving ducks. The Ohio River level was much lower than normal for this time of year, but the river held most of the ducks and Canada geese counted.