

January 05, 2024 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 01 – January 05, 2024. Kentucky has been very dry since late summer however we did get some rain the first couple weeks of December. We had a good growing season for our crops and moist soil habitats throughout most of the state. At the start of the waterfowl hunting season habitat is mainly limited to areas that have the capacity to pump water, which is limited, due to the low levels in the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. This means our waterfowl areas like Ballard, Boatwright and Doug Travis are struggling to keep water. Limited water is forcing us to limit hunting areas available on some of these WMAs.

Avian Influenza is present in Kentucky, so hunters should use common sense when handling/cleaning harvested waterfowl. See page two of the [KY Waterfowl Guide](#) for recommendations for the safe handling and disposal of your birds. After cleaning waterfowl, hunters are encouraged to place the remains in trash bags and dispose of them through trash collection or a permitted landfill. Bald eagles and other raptors are particularly susceptible to avian influenza. This simple action could help prevent bald eagle and other raptor mortalities.

The second segment of duck season opens on December 7 and will run until January 31, 2024. Goose season opened Thanksgiving Day and will remain open until February 15, 2024. The second day of Special Youth Waterfowl Season is Saturday, February 11, 2024. The second day of Special Veteran's Waterfowl Season is on Sunday February 11, 2024. All bag limits remain the same as last season. Check out the 2023-2024 Waterfowl hunting guide or visit the waterfowl hunting web page for more details. Good luck hunting this year. Be safe and enjoy your time afield.

Good luck hunting this year. Be safe and enjoy your time afield and Happy Holidays!

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard <i>01/04/2024</i>	36,481 ducks 25 CA geese 11,100 WF geese 12,000 Snow geese	70% Mallard 12% Gadwall 11% Ring-Necked 3% Shoveler 2% green winged teal 1% wigeon 1% black duck, pintail, wood duck	Lack of cold weather has birds loafing more than usual for this time of year. Predictions of colder weather and more precipitation in the valley should increase migration movements of waterfowl.
Boatwright <i>01/04/2024</i>	2195 ducks	99% Mallard 1% gadwall, wood duck	
Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Doug Travis WMA <i>01/03/2024</i>	1,000 ducks	80% mallard 10% wood ducks 10% green winged teal >1% hooded mergansers, pintail, gadwall	Still struggling with low river and soil moisture. All 3 wells are pumping at reduced rates due to low groundwater table.

			Huntable water at blind sites 1-6, 10-11, 13, and 16-19. Water increasing at 16 and 17 with new pump and motor on Well #1. Baldy's Woods walk in unit also has huntable water.
Sloughs WMA <i>01/03/2024</i>	4,400 ducks 24,000 snow geese and WF geese 22 Tundra Swan	95% Mallard 5% mixed dabblers – gadwall, shovelers, green winged teal, black ducks	
Peabody WMA <i>01/03/2024</i>	289 ducks 142 CA geese	50% mallard 40% ring-necked 10% gadwall	Water levels continue to be low providing little shallow water habitat. The forecasted rain for this area is drastically needed.
Yellowbank WMA <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Barren River WMA <i>01/02/2024</i>	40 ducks 120 CA geese	50% diver 50% dabblers mergansers, coots, scaup/mallard, gadwalls	Extremely dry conditions with cold weather this week. Peters Creek MSU 10% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 90% and units above and below the main spring 0-60%, MSUs off hwy 100 are 0% full. Corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition Lake Level: 528.0'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Cave Run Lake <i>01/04/2024</i>	34 Ducks 20 other	65% hooded merg. 30% mallard 5% pintail 70% common loon 30% pied-billed grebes	