

January 05, 2024 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 08 – January 12, 2024. Kentucky has been very dry and warm since late summer however we have seen a cold front and gotten some rain this past week. More cold weather is predicted for next week. 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>01/09/2024</i>	63,265 ducks 450 WF geese 29 Snow geese	65% Mallard 19% Ring-Necked 7% Gadwall 4% Shoveler 3% wigeon 1% pintail 1% green winged teal, wood duck	We are starting to see an upward trend in waterfowl utilizing the area and hunter success rates have trended upwards.
Boatwright <i>01/10/2024</i>	2594 ducks 15 CA geese	78% Mallard 21% unknown duck 1% gadwall, wood duck	More flooding in fields from recent rain. More food availability from rain.
Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Doug Travis WMA <i>01/11/2024</i>	~5,500 ducks	Mallards, green winged teal, a few wood ducks	Incomplete survey: Soft and muddy levels prevented access to much of the WMA. There are substantial

			<p>numbers of ducks using the flooded cypress and buckbrush in the Beaver Pond Rest Area.</p> <p>Water levels and resulting habitat conditions have improved due to heavy rainfall and rising river levels.</p>
<p>Sloughs WMA</p> <p><i>01/08/2024</i></p>	<p>9,400 ducks</p> <p>31,000 snow geese and WF geese</p>	<p>80% Mallard</p> <p>20% mixed dabblers – pintail, gadwall, wigeon, northern shoveler, black duck, ringneck</p>	<p>Recent rains and colder weather have pushed new birds into the area as birds were seen using areas that were previously unused this fall. Most birds were still focused on the Muddy Slough/Southwood’s rest area.</p>
<p>Peabody WMA</p> <p><i>01/10/2024</i></p>	<p>381 ducks</p> <p>267 CA geese</p>	<p>80% ringneck</p> <p>20% mallard and gadwall</p>	<p>Water levels in shallow areas have risen due to the recent rainfall. More rain is needed to bring many shallow water impoundments to full capacity.</p>
<p>Yellowbank WMA</p> <p><i>01/08/2024</i></p>	<p>230 Ducks</p>	<p>90% mallard</p> <p>5% black duck</p> <p>5%gadwall</p>	<p>Units are slowly gaining sheet water- still at 30% water capacity on most units. Larger units that have access to pumps are at maximum capacity.</p>
<p>Barren River WMA</p> <p><i>01/10/2024</i></p>	<p>20 ducks</p> <p>120 CA geese</p>	<p>50% diver</p> <p>50% dabblers: mergansers, ringnecks, scaup/mallard, shovelers</p>	<p>Dry conditions, finally some runoff rain this week and more rain Friday, cold weather next week.</p> <p>Peters Creek MSU 25% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 90% and units above and below the main spring 40-60%, MSUs off hwy 100 are 10% full.</p>

			Corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Lake Level: 529.1.0'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Cave Run Lake <i>01/11/2024</i>	23 Ducks 9 CA geese 12 other	44% common merg. 25% hooded merg. >1% canvasback 58% pied-billed grebes 42% common loon	