

February 02, 2024 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 29 – February 02, 2024. This week gave us some rain and colder temps early in the week. The waterfowl hunting season habitat has been 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 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. The recent rain has been helping.

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 ran 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!

| Location | Number | Species Composition | Comments |
|--|--------------|---------------------|--|
| Ballard <i>Not surveyed</i> | | | |
| Boatwright <i>Not surveyed</i> | | | |
| Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i> | | | |
| Doug Travis WMA <i>02/01/2024</i> | ~9,500 ducks | | The rising level of the Mississippi River has reached the point that it is "backing in" through the Town Creek Moist Soil Unit and inundating most of the shrub/scrub timber between Town Creek MSU and the Beaver Pond Rest Area. Large numbers of ducks were seen working and going down in this area, |

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| | | | although we were unable to estimate numbers via ground count. |
| Sloughs WMA <i>02/02/2024</i> | 1,100 ducks 75 CA geese 350 Snow/WF geese | 90% mallard 10% mixed dabbling – pintails, green winged teal | |
| Peabody WMA <i>01/31/2024</i> | 347 ducks 396 CA geese | 50% mallard 33% ring-neck 17% gadwall, northern shoveler | Water levels in shallow areas are full due to the recent rainfall and have created plenty of backwater for the Pond and Tradewater rivers. |
| Yellowbank WMA <i>01/31/2024</i> | 900 Ducks | 90% mallard 5% black duck 5% gadwall | All waterfowl units are at or near maximum water capacity. The Ohio River has around 200 additional acres flooded on WMA. |
| Barren River WMA <i>01/29/2024</i> | 75 Ducks 120 CA geese 35 Snow geese | 50% diver 50% dabblers: mergansers, ringnecks, scaup/mallards, black ducks, wood ducks | Peters Creek MSU 85% full. Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 90% full. Units above and below the main spring 75-90% full. MSUs off hwy 100 are 80% full. Corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition |
| Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>Not surveyed</i> | | | |
| Cave Run Lake <i>02/02/2024</i> | 58 ducks 15 CA geese 21 other | 93% bufflehead 7% hooded merganser 57% Pied-billed grebe 43% common loon | |