

January 26, 2024 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 22 – January 26, 2024. This week gave us rain with warmer temperatures following a week of our coldest temperatures yet. We expect another cold front this coming week leading into the last weekend of our second segment of duck season. 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 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.

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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>01/24/2024</i>	~5,500 ducks	70% Mallard 30% mixed dabblers – green-winged teal, gadwalls, and pintails, shovelers, wood ducks	Partial survey conducted due to muddy conditions and foggy skies. All 3 wells are running, and the local area has received around 2.5" of rain in the last 48 hours, improving water levels in several impoundments and helping to thaw ice that had covered most wetlands and lakes.

			Blind sites 11, 13, 14, and 17 have open water currently, with more blinds and the oxbow lakes expected by this weekend.
Sloughs WMA <i>01/22/2024</i>	4,600 ducks 7,900 snow geese and WF geese	95% Mallard 5% mixed dabblers – black ducks, shoveler, pintail, green-winged teal	The area remains 99% covered with ice. Waterfowl are concentrated on the refuge near well outlets where water can be kept open. Warmer temps and rain should help water become more accessible as the week goes on.
Peabody WMA <i>01/24/2024</i>	169 ducks 13 CA geese	70% mallard 30% gadwall, green-winged teal, wigeon, ring-neck	Water levels in shallow areas have risen due to the recent rainfall and created plenty of backwater for the Pond and Tradewater rivers. Many non-flowing shallow areas are still frozen, although everything should be thawed by the weekend.
Yellowbank WMA <i>01/25/2024</i>	350 Ducks	85% mallard 5% black duck 5% pintail 5% gadwall	All waterfowl units are at or near maximum water capacity. Ice is still present on most of the units.
Barren River WMA <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Cave Run Lake <i>01/25/2024</i>	17 Ducks 13 CA geese 10 other	71% bufflehead 12% hooded merg. 6% common merg. 6% mallard 60% pied-billed grebes 40% common loon	