

**December 5, 2025**  
**Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey**

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the weeks of November 17-21 and December 1-5, 2025.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opens December 7, 2025 and is open until January 31, 2025. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA <i>11/19/2025</i>	381	70 in SCBC, 311 in PC. Cranes feeding close to lake in corn fields. Lake 536.5(3.5) down 0.8ft in the last 24 hours. 0 inches of rain last 24 hours. Lake being drained fast (2997cfs).
Barren River Lake WMA <i>12/2/2025</i>	311	11 in SCBC and 300 in PC. Lake 528.2(0.2) down 0ft in the last 24hrs. 0.6 inches of rain last 24 hours. Lake being drained slow (403cfs).

Figure 1. Four sandhill cranes with a group of great blue herons at Barren River Lake WMA on December 2, 2025.



## December 19, 2025 Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of December 8-15-19, 2025. Several large waves of cranes in flight have been observed across Kentucky over the last week or so, including but not limited to Frankfort, Lexington, Richmond, and Henderson. Muscatatuck NWR in southeast Indiana observed 76,044 cranes last week, and it's likely the cold front over the weekend pushed many of these birds south into Kentucky.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and is open until January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA <i>12/15/2025</i>	2265	821 in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 370 in Peters Creek, 11 in Walnut Creek. Saw cranes all day flying around. Immature and adult eagles present. Lake 528.4(0.4) down 0.0ft in the last 24hrs. 0in rain last 24hrs. Lake being drained slow (404CFS).
Hardin County (Cecilia) <i>12/15/2025</i>	480	Several groups of cranes observed in flight heading south of the fire department on KY-86 to roost. 125 observed roosting on a frozen farm pond about a mile southwest of fire department. Most farm ponds and shallow waters frozen – maybe one or two larger bodies have a small hole open.
Larue County (Hodgenville) <i>Not surveyed</i>		

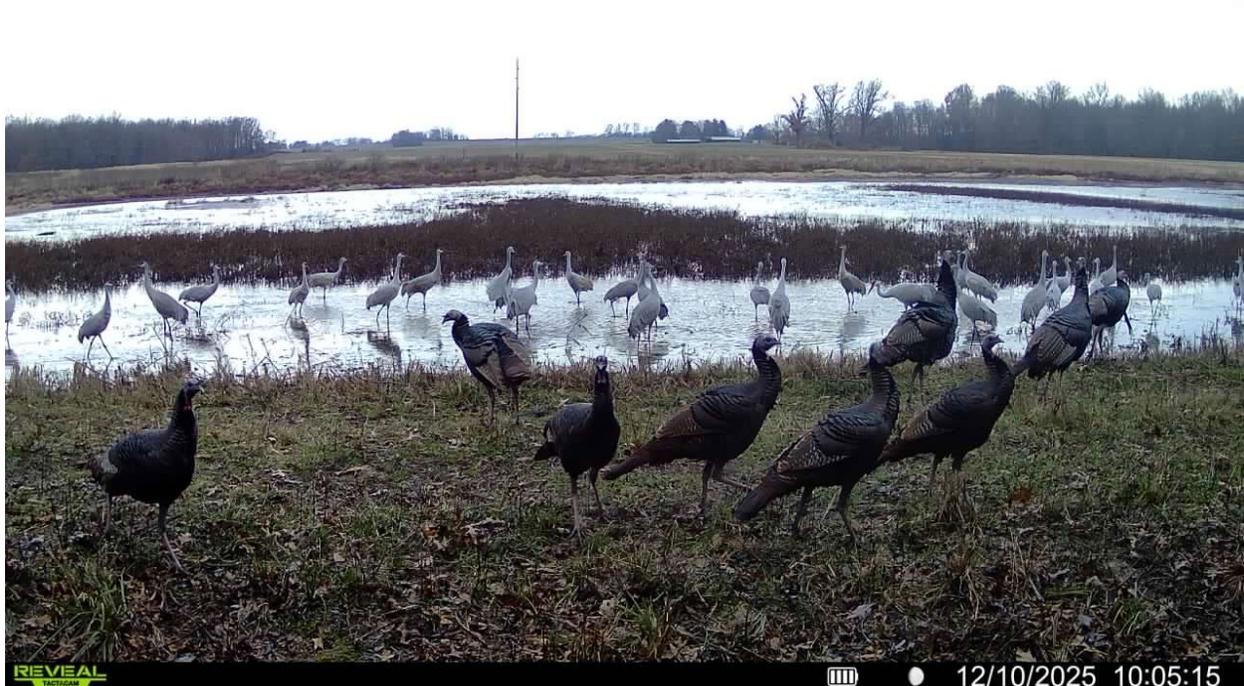
## December 12, 2025 Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of December 8-12, 2025.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and is open until January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA <i>12/9/2025</i>	2265	2028 cranes in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 237 in Peters Creek, 0 in Walnut Creek. Saw cranes all day flying around, observed hundreds of cranes in several waves over the weekend. Immature and adult eagles present. Lake 528.1(0.2) down 0.0ft. in the last 24 hours. 0.0 inches of rain last 24 hours. Lake being drained slowly (403CFS).
Hardin County <i>Not surveyed</i>		

Figure 1. Sandhill cranes and turkeys. McLean County.



**January 12, 2026**  
**Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey**

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of January 12-16, 2026.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and is open until January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA <i>1/12/2026</i>	2926	2926 in Skaggs Creek/ Beaver Creek, 0 in Peters Creek, 0 in Walnut Creek. Saw a few flocks flying around. Several eagles, few boats and bank fisherman. Cranes partially roosted up in woods near Indian Point subdivision. Lake 528.4(0.4) down 0.1ft. in the last 24 hours. 0.3 inches of rain last 24 hours. Lake being drained slow(404CFS).
Hardin County <i>Not surveyed</i>		

**January 23, 2026**  
**Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey**

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of January 19-23, 2026.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and is open until January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Barren River Lake WMA <i>1/20/2026</i>	3972	3972 in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 0 in Peters Creek, 0 in Walnut Creek. Saw a few flocks flying around, several eagles, few white pelicans. Lake 528.6(0.6) up 0.1ft in the last 24hrs. 0.0in rain last 24hrs. Lake being drained slow (404cfs).
Cecilia Hardin County <i>1/21/2026</i>	12	Survey was started late due to hazardous road conditions, so any large movements of birds from roosting to foraging grounds were likely missed.

## February 6, 2026 Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of February 2-6, 2026.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and closed January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA  <i>2/2/2026</i>	1,702	1655 in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 47 in Peters Creek, 0 in Walnut Creek. Cranes flew into roost until it was too dark to see them, Maybe because of snow reflection made it brighter than normal. 2 inches of ice/snow on the ground so they can't feed easily in the fields. Not many were calling. The lake is frozen but creeks/river still have open water. 600+ Canada Geese came into roost too. Lake 529.7(1.7) down 1.1ft in the last 24hrs. 0in of rain last 24hrs. Lake being drained fast (3341 CFS).
Hardin County  <i>Not surveyed</i>		

**February 13, 2026**  
**Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey**

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of February 9-13, 2026.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and closed January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Barren River Lake WMA <i>2/9/2026</i>	12,767	12,767 in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 0 in Peters Creek. Lots of pairs staging and heading north soon, lots of calling. Lake 529.1(1.1) down 0.1ft in the last 24hrs. 0in of rain last 24hrs. Lake being drained middling (1552CFS).
Hardin County <i>Not surveyed</i>		

## January 30, 2026 Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of January 26-30, 2026.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and is open until January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA <i>1/28/2026</i>	3771	3760 in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 11 in Peters Creek, 0 in Walnut Creek. Roads are in bad shape (ice), so access is limited and count is incomplete. Several eagles observed. Cranes flew into roost until it was too dark to see them, maybe because of snow reflection made it brighter than normal. 2 inches of ice/snow on the ground so they can't feed easily in the fields. Not many were calling. Temps have been below freezing for a week so 80% of the lower lake is iced over. River and creeks are still ice free. Lake 533.7(5.7) up 0.8ft. in the last 24 hours. 0.0 inches of rain last 24 hours. Lake being drained slow(425CFS).
Hardin County <i>Not surveyed</i>		

Figure 1. Sandhill crane captured on trail camera in Magoffin County on January 26, 2026.



## February 6, 2026 Kentucky Sandhill Crane Survey

This is the Sandhill Crane ground count survey for the week of February 2-6, 2026.

The Kentucky 2025-26 Sandhill Crane season opened December 7, 2025 and closed January 31, 2026. This is concurrent with the second segment of duck season. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable time afield.

Location	Number	Comments
Barren River Lake WMA  <i>2/2/2026</i>	1,702	1655 in Skaggs Creek/Beaver Creek, 47 in Peters Creek, 0 in Walnut Creek. Cranes flew into roost until it was too dark to see them, Maybe because of snow reflection made it brighter than normal. 2 inches of ice/snow on the ground so they can't feed easily in the fields. Not many were calling. The lake is frozen but creeks/river still have open water. 600+ Canada Geese came into roost too. Lake 529.7(1.7) down 1.1ft in the last 24hrs. 0in of rain last 24hrs. Lake being drained fast (3341 CFS).
Hardin County  <i>Not surveyed</i>		