

December 6, 2024
Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for December 2-6, 2024. The region experienced fluctuating weather, with highs in the upper 50s early in the week and lows around 20°F by midweek. Light precipitation, including rain and occasional snow showers, occurred Monday and Tuesday, but snow accumulation was minimal. Freezing conditions became widespread later in the week, with lows dipping into the low 20s and highs in the 30s to low 40s. Drought conditions have improved, and water levels on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers have stabilized following earlier fluctuations.

The second segment of duck season will open on December 7 and run until January 31, 2025. Goose season will open on November 28, 2024 and run until February 15, 2025. All bag limits will remain the same as the previous season. Check out the [2024-2025 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.

Avian Influenza is present in Kentucky, so hunters should use common sense when handling/cleaning harvested waterfowl. See page two of the [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.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard <i>12/5/2024</i>	13,533 ducks 1,800 WF geese 6,400 snow geese	45% ring-necked duck 32% mallard 23% unknown duck <1% gadwall, wigeon, shoveler, pintail	Bitter cold front on the previous night – very windy. Waterfowl are looking for cover to get out of this high wind right now.
Boatwright <i>12/5/2024</i>	226 ducks 5 eagles	73% mallard 27% unknown duck	Strong cold front pushing in. Low water in some areas.
Duck Island <i>12/4/2024</i>	4,200 ducks 75 Canada geese 40 WF geese	45% mallard 15% pintail 15% GW teal 12% gadwall 10% ring-necked 3% shoveler <1% black ducks, canvasback, ruddy ducks	Current water level is ideal. Habitat conditions are fair/good.
Doug Travis WMA <i>12/2/2024</i>	1,500 ducks	85% mallard 15% mixed dabblers	We experienced a breakdown of well #3 on November 26 and are awaiting diagnosis from contractor. We are currently unable to pump water into Indian Camp Rest Area or Baldy's Woods Walk-in Unit with this well down. Wells #1 and 2 are running,

			and there is huntable water at blind sites 11-14 and 16-17.
Sloughs WMA <i>12/3/2024</i>	9,995 ducks 42 Canada geese 2,730 WF geese 8,190 snow geese 128 swan	80% mallard 3% gadwall 6% pintail 5% teal 6% misc dabbler <1% misc diver	Significant portions of the area are freezing up but most hunt units with wells have some water being held open as well as the refuge
Peabody WMA <i>12/3/2024</i>	184 ducks 52 Canada geese	44% mallard 30% gadwall 24% ring-necked 2% pintail & GW teal	Water levels are good in most wetlands and shallow water impoundments. Very shallow water has been freezing over the last couple of days due to low temperatures.
Yellowbank WMA <i>12/4/2024</i>	760 ducks	80% mallard 5% wood duck 5% gadwall 5% pintail 5% black duck	Most MSU's are at 50% water capacity. Units without pumps are starting to lose water due to the lack of precipitation. Units protected from wind have sheet ice.
Barren River WMA <i>12/2/2024</i>	355 ducks 150 geese	90% divers – bufflehead, ring-necked, ruddy, scaup 10% dabblers - mallards	Lake at 529.1. Peters Creek MSU 40% full. Long Creek - Calvert Springs main unit 90% and units above and below the main spring 0-20%. MSUs off Hwy 100 are 0-20% full, with corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Tenant farmer got beans out this past weekend. Dry conditions. 2 mature Bald Eagle fighting over Mason Island territory. 50 white pelicans on Goose Island point. Loons, mergansers, grebes present. Started putting water on Units above and below Calvert Springs today. Geese/ducks on pond, ducks in moderate sized rafts throughout the lake and tributaries, no waterfowl on MSUs.
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>12/2/2024</i>	405 ducks 20 Canada geese	50% ring-necked duck 16% mallard 16% black ducks 7% hooded merganser 6% gadwall 2% ruddy duck ≤1% pied-billed grebes, shovelers, and buffleheads	Recent cold fronts with north winds have brought a lot of waterfowl in compared to past weeks. Expect numbers to climb as more cold weather is anticipated in the coming days.

<p>Cave Run Lake <i>12/4/2024</i></p>	<p>119 ducks 143 Canada geese 30 unknown</p>	<p>50% hooded merganser 27% bufflehead 10% coot 6% lesser scaup 5% pied-billed grebe <1% common goldeneye, common loon</p>	<p>Most of the smaller wetlands are iced over but could be easily broken. The lake and Licking River have open water.</p>
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