

**December 13, 2024**  
**Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts**

This is the ground count survey for December 9-13, 2024. The region experienced typical early winter conditions this week, receiving light precipitation and snowfall with minimal snow accumulation. Overnight temperatures frequently dipped below freezing, leading to ice formation on some water bodies, pushing waterfowl into more open waters. Kentucky has largely recovered from summer drought conditions, and water levels on major rivers are normal or slightly below normal for this time of year.

The second segment of duck season opened on December 7 and will run until January 31, 2025. Goose season opened on November 28, 2024 and will 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.

[Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza was recently confirmed](#) in samples from several dead snow geese at Sloughs WMA (December 11, 2024), and dead geese have also been observed at Ballard WMA. 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. Please let WMA staff know if you observe any sick or dead birds.

Location	Number	Species Composition (listed most to least)	Comments
Ballard 12/10/2024	15,467 ducks 36 Canada geese 700 WF geese	34% mallard 30% ring-necked 23% gadwall 5% wigeon 4% shoveler 4% pintail < 1% wood duck, unknown dabbler	Weather has warmed, coming off from a freezing event. Ducks do not have a strong need to feed right now. Minimal hunting activity since season just began. Low water conditions on most of area. <i>Note: several snow geese were observed dead in impoundments that geese usually sit in. Please let staff know if you observe any sick or dead birds.</i>
Boatwright 12/11/2024	5,610 ducks 2 Canada geese	89% ring-necked 10% mallard 1% unknown duck	Minor fluctuations in temps recently but nothing abnormal. No noteworthy waterfowl activity since last week.
Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Doug Travis WMA <i>Not Surveyed</i>			
Sloughs WMA 12/9/2024	9,251 ducks 30 Canada geese	85% mallard 7% misc dabbler 5% northern pintail 2% gadwall	Habitat conditions across the area are the same as previous weeks. Duncan 3 and 4 hunt units are now pumped for the first time in at least 4 years due to new well

	5,050 Snow geese 176 swans	1% teal < 1% misc diver	being functional. <i>Note: highly pathogenic avian influenza was confirmed to have killed several snow geese at the WMA over the course of the last week. Please let staff know if you observe any sick or dead birds.</i>
Peabody WMA 12/12/2024	194 ducks 183 Canada geese	48% mallard 32% ring-necked 10% gadwall 10% misc – GW teal, pintail, wigeon	Conditions at Peabody are fair. Water levels are a little below average for this time of year. Hunting pressure remains steady and most of the waterfowl observed were on large bodies of water and sheltered shallow water that was not frozen. Expected rain over the weekend into the first part of next week should help to improve conditions.
Yellowbank WMA 12/10/2024	940 ducks	70% mallard 10% wood duck 5% gadwall 5% black duck 5% northern pintail 5% ring-necked	Most units are at 75% water capacity. Excellent moist-soil plants and row crops in hunting units. Pumps are running into hunting units.
Barren River WMA 12/11/2024	105 ducks 150 Canada geese	90% diver – bufflehead, ring-necked, goldeneye, merganser  10% dabbler – mallard, wood duck	Peters Creek MSU 70% full, Long Creek-Calvert Springs main unit 90% full, units above and below the main spring 30-70% full. MSUs off Hwy 100 are 0-20% full with corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Dry conditions. 50 white pelicans at Narrows campground point; loons, mergansers, and grebes present. Few fishermen. Geese/ducks on pond, ducks in small sized rafts throughout the lake and tributaries. Dabblers on MSUs.
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) 12/9/2024	260 ducks 15 Canada geese	26% black ducks 24% ring-necked 19% coots 15% mallards 4% buffleheads 4% ruddy ducks 4% canvasback 2% shovelers < 1% pied-billed grebes, merganser, gadwall	Recent cold fronts have pushed birds down but warmer days have caused a lot of birds to move around locally. Expect numbers to fluctuate in the coming days.
Cave Run Lake <i>Not surveyed</i>			