

**January 17, 2025**  
**Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts**

This is the ground count survey for January 13-17, 2025. The region experienced a significant drop in temperatures due to a polar vortex, resulting in temperatures significantly below average. Conditions were clear but frigid, with many smaller water bodies and shallow wetlands completely frozen over, reducing available open water for waterfowl. Larger bodies of water with moving currents, such as rivers and managed impoundments, have remained partially open and have attracted concentrations of waterfowl seeking open water and food sources. Be cautious of icy conditions both on water and on land.

The second segment of duck season opened on December 7, 2024 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 first confirmed in samples from several dead snow geese at Sloughs WMA in early December 2024, and has since been detected in 5 additional counties, with results in another 5 counties still pending. 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	Comments
Ballard <i>1/15/2025</i>	40,635 ducks 9,100 WF geese 13,420 snow geese	93% mallard 3% gadwall 2% ring-necked 1% pintail 1% wigeon ≤ 1% shoveler, canvasback, GW teal, wood duck	Most shallow water units are still covered in ice. Large/deep bodies of water still remain open. Large numbers of snow geese present in area.
Boatwright <i>1/15/2025</i>	36,351 ducks 2,510 WF geese 36,400 snow geese 5 Canada geese	87% mallard 9% ring-necked 4% unknown	Vast majority of waterfowl was holding open water in loafing areas in refuge. Shallow pool areas remain frozen.
Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Doug Travis WMA <i>1/15/2025</i>	2,000-2,5000 ducks	> 95% mallard < 5% misc	Most ducks are concentrated in Beaver Pond rest area, with a few scattered in the Twin Ponds/Willow Slough area. We saw a strong movement of snow and WF geese coming from the

			<p>Missouri bootheel, but none were seen on the ground at DTWMA. All blind sites are at pool, although some are iced over. Well #3 is now repaired and pumping into the Baldy's Woods walk-in hunt unit and into "Upper Lake Erie" on the Indian Camp Rest Area. The field portion of Baldy's Woods now has huntable water, and Upper Lake Erie should be full by the end of this week and then will spill into the lower compartment behind Blind Site #6. Attached below is a photo of ducks in an "ice hole" in the Beaver Pond Rest Area during cold conditions, taken from a drone at 90 meters altitude.</p>
<p>Sloughs WMA <i>1/13/2025</i></p>	<p>10,930 ducks 18 Canada geese 4,000 WF geese 11,000 snow geese 130 swans</p>	<p>85% mallard 9% misc dabbler 5% gadwall 1% misc diver</p>	<p>Most hunting units with wells have open water. The timber unit within Jenny Hole is accessible but Fishtrap and Little Jenny boat ramps are frozen. Ducks seem to be roosting in hunt units overnight and returning to the refuge during daylight resulting in varied harvest success.</p>
<p>Peabody WMA <i>1/16/2025</i></p>	<p>502 ducks 272 Canada geese</p>	<p>47% ring-necked 26% mallard 15% gadwall 12% pintail, black duck, wigeon</p>	<p>Colder weather and temperatures have led to most shallow water areas being frozen. Most ducks and geese were observed on deep water lakes and feeding areas.</p>
<p>Yellowbank WMA <i>1/13/2025</i></p>	<p>655 ducks</p>	<p>90% mallard 5% gadwall 5% black duck</p>	<p>All hunting units have thick ice.</p>
<p>Barren River WMA <i>1/14/2025</i></p>	<p>230 ducks 30 Canada geese</p>	<p>70% divers – bufflehead, redhead, scaup, ring-necked, goldeneye 30% dabblers – mallard, teal, gadwall, black duck</p>	<p>The lake is at 531.5, down 0.6ft, and draining fast. Peters Creek MSU is 90% full. Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit is at 90%, and units above and below the main spring are at 60-70%. MSUs off hwy 100 are 50-100% full, with corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Dry conditions, even large ponds are locked up with ice. Great hunting for next several days on the lake. Geese/ducks are on the lake, ducks are also in back of coves on the lake and tributaries, shady banks, and frozen MSUs.</p>

<p>Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>1/13/2025</i></p>	<p>200 ducks 156 Canada geese</p>	<p>37% ring-necked 23% mallard 20% gadwall 10% black duck 5% pintail 4% GW teal &lt;1% common merganser, hooded merganser</p>	<p>Cold front has locked up all small bodies of water with the main lake remaining open in small pockets. Expect numbers to fluctuate with more freezing temps forecasted.</p>
<p>Cave Run Lake <i>Not surveyed</i></p>			

Figure 1. Ducks in an ice hole at DTWMA 1-15-25

