

January 24, 2025
Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 20-24, 2025. A strong arctic air mass settled over the region this week, leading to exceptionally cold conditions, with temperatures well below average and subzero nighttime lows with wind chill. The region remained mostly dry, with no significant precipitation or snowfall reported. The cold, dry air mass limited moisture availability, resulting in clear skies and frigid temps. Most smaller water bodies and shallow wetlands froze over, reducing available open water for waterfowl. Larger bodies of water with moving currents, spring-fed waters, and some waters exposed to the wind have remained partially open, particularly where waterfowl are concentrated and have helped keep ice holes open.

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 WMA <i>1/23/2025</i>	100,854 ducks 59,500 WF geese 96,500 snow geese	60% mallard 14% gadwall 10% ring-necked 7% pintail 4% wigeon 3% shoveler 2% GW teal ≤1% redhead, ruddy duck	Large flocks of snow geese and white fronts have helped to open large holes of water in refuge areas for duck use. There was several areas where the birds heavily congregated.
Boatwright WMA <i>1/22/2025</i>	30,023 ducks 150 snow geese	73% mallard 27% unknown	Arctic front has frozen most of the impoundments and water bodies in the area. The water continues to remain open from waterfowl usage on swan.
Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Doug Travis WMA <i>Not Surveyed</i>			

<p>Sloughs WMA <i>1/20/2025</i></p>	<p>17,403 ducks 35 Canada geese 16,276 WF geese 20,844 snow geese 337 swans</p>	<p>95% mallard 2% teal 1% gadwall 1% pintail 1% misc dabbler <1% misc diver</p>	<p>Conditions remain the same across the area with the majority of water being frozen. Birds are hanging around in large concentrations on the refuge, mainly Pond Creek Marsh.</p>
<p>Peabody WMA <i>1/23/2025</i></p>	<p>567 ducks 298 Canada geese</p>	<p>57% gadwall 31% mallard 10% ring-necked 2% canvasback, GW teal, pintail</p>	<p>Ducks and geese were observed on large deep lakes in unfrozen areas and shallow water areas with moving water. Most bodies of water on the WMA are frozen with very limited open water and available access.</p>
<p>Yellowbank WMA <i>1/22/2025</i></p>	<p>24 ducks</p>	<p>100% mallard</p>	<p>All hunting units have thick ice.</p>
<p>Barren River WMA <i>1/21/2025</i></p>	<p>1,545 ducks 290 Canada geese</p>	<p>50% divers – high diversity of all species – bufflehead, redhead, scaup, ring-necked, goldeneye 50% dabblers – mallard, teal, gadwall, black duck</p>	<p>Lake 528.2 down 0.3ft. Peters Creek MSU 90% full. Long Creek-Calvert Springs main unit at 90%. Units above and below the main spring at 60-70%. MSUs off Hwy 100 are 50-100% full, with corn/soybeans and MSU plants in great condition. Very dry conditions. Even large ponds are locked up and the lake is over half locked up in ice. Great hunting for next several days on lake. About 50 white pelicans on Mason's Island. Geese/ducks are on the lake and one pond. There are rafts of ducks all over the lake and flying around. Ducks huddled wing to wing in large groups on ice and tributaries. There are ducks at CS MSU.</p>
<p>Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>1/22/2025</i></p>	<p>379 ducks 178 Canada geese 1 trumpeter swan</p>	<p>34% mallards 17% black ducks 12% gadwall 11% ring-necked 6% GW teal 5% pintail 3% ruddy, bufflehead, redhead 2% common merganser, canvasback 1% hooded merganser <1% grebes</p>	<p>Frigid temps have left all small bodies of water frozen, some pockets of open water remain on Lake Vega. Expect numbers to decrease as more water freezes on the lake.</p>

Cave Run Lake <i>Not surveyed</i>			
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