

January 31, 2025
Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for January 27-31, 2025. The region experienced a warming trend, with highs in the mid-40s to mid-50s and lows in the upper 20s to mid-30s, leading to ice thawing in many areas. A significant rain event on January 30 brought over 2” of precipitation in some areas, increasing water levels in wetlands and expanding available waterfowl habitat. Waterfowl have continued to disperse with the warming temperatures. We apologize for the delay in updating last week’s waterfowl counts and hunt data. The function to publish new reports on our web system was down.

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. The youth-only waterfowl hunt is on Saturday, February 8th and the military-only waterfowl hunt is on Sunday, February 9th. 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>1/30/2025</i>	20,301 ducks 73 Canada geese 5039 WF geese 9580 snow geese	54% mallard 42% ring-necked 2% gadwall < 2% black duck, wigeon, teal, shoveler, pintail, canvasback, ruddy duck, hooded merganser, unknown duck	Warm up over the weekend and early week allowed a lot of iced-over areas to thaw, although there is still sheet ice in shallower waters and places not exposed to much sun/wind. Lots of waterfowl dispersed due to warmer weather. Big weather system with heavy rain moved in mid-week.
Boatwright <i>1/29/2025</i>	12,570 ducks 17 Canada geese 95 WF geese 70 snow geese		Lots of birds dispersed with warming temps.
Duck Island <i>Not surveyed</i>			
Doug Travis WMA	8,500 ducks	See notes	The warmer temperatures have resulted in portions of the DTWMA thawing

<p>1/29/2025</p>			<p>over the last several days, with ducks responding to the “new water” provided. There were 6,000 ducks found using buckbrush/cypress habitat in the Beaver Pond Rest Area, with 90% of these being mallards, and the remaining 10% a mix of pintails, gadwalls, green winged teal, and wood ducks. With the repairs to Well #3 in Indian Camp Rest Area, we have achieved full pool in “Upper Lake Erie,” and “Lake Erie” is nearing full pool. These impoundments held 2,500 ducks, about an even mix of mallards and pintails. A steady trickle of ducks, mainly pintails, was arriving from the south and going into these pools as we surveyed. We are also pumping the Baldy’s Woods walk-in hunt unit with Well #3, and it is at capacity in the corn field, while the woods is still gaining water. We are at full pool around blinds 11-14 in Upper Goose Pond, and around blinds 16-17 in Twin Ponds. All lake blind sites have huntable water, although some ice is still present in shaded areas. We plan to keep the wells running through the youth/veterans’ weekend following the closure of regular duck season. Blind owner rights at the designated blind sites will still be in effect for the late weekend.</p>
<p>Sloughs WMA 1/27/2025</p>	<p>5,879 ducks 40 Canada geese 11,806 WF geese 7,662 snow geese 357 swans</p>	<p>90% mallard 5% teal 2% gadwall, misc dabbler 1% pintail <1% misc diver</p>	<p>Slow thawing has begun and should be accelerated with rains Thursday and Friday. Much of the area is still frozen over and evidenced by increased dry field feeding by all waterfowl.</p>
<p>Peabody WMA 1/29/2025</p>	<p>612 ducks 71 Canada geese</p>	<p>43% ring-necked 22% mallard 22% mix of redhead, black duck 13% gadwall</p>	<p>All waterfowl observed were on deep lakes on areas that were not frozen. Geese that were using refuge areas have spread out over other areas as warmer temperatures have made more open water and food available.</p>
<p>Yellowbank WMA <i>Not Surveyed</i></p>			
<p>Barren River WMA</p>			

<i>Not Surveyed</i>			
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>1/27/2025</i>	229 ducks 2 Canada geese	51% mallard 35% black duck 6% gadwall 4% ruddy 4% greater scaup	Waterfowl have been restricted to moving water in creeks following the past negative temps, expect numbers to increase as more water continues to open up with the warmer forecasted temps.
Cave Run Lake <i>Not surveyed</i>			