

December 12, 2025

Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

The second segment of duck season opened on Sunday December 7, 2025 and will run until January 31, 2026. Goose season opened on Thursday November 27, 2025 and will run until February 15, 2026. All bag limits will remain the same as the previous season, except that hunters may now harvest three pintails daily. Check out the [2025-26 Kentucky 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.

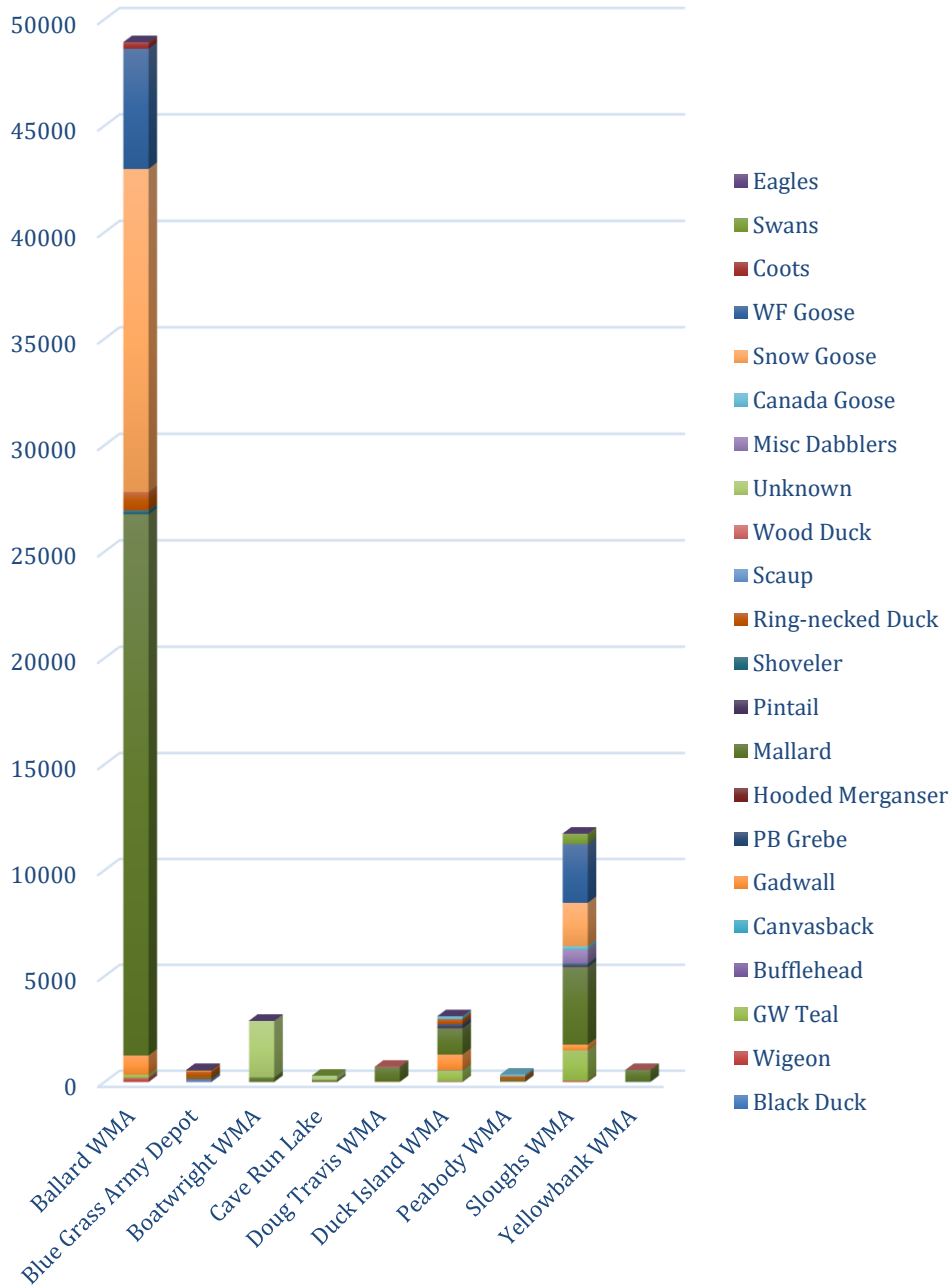
Highly pathogenic avian influenza is present in Kentucky. As of November 20, 2025, it has only been detected in raptors for the 2025-26 migratory season. Visit the KDFWR Avian Influenza webpage to view an up-to-date map of detections. Hunters should use common sense when handling/cleaning harvested waterfowl. 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	Date	Ducks	Geese	Duck Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA	12/12/2025	27798 total 25505 Mallard 905 Gadwall 845 Ring-necked 178 Wigeon 170 Shoveler 160 GW teal 15 Wood duck 12 Pintail 8 Black duck	20825 total 15175 Snow 5650 Wf Goose	Mallard 92% Gadwall 3% Ring-necked 3% Wigeon <1% Shoveler <1% GW teal <1% Wood duck <1% Pintail <1% Black duck <1%	Due to low Ohio River levels and a lack of seasonal precipitation, waterfowl have largely concentrated in refuge areas. We are focused on increasing surface water in hunt areas.
Barren River Lake WMA	12/09/2025	340 total	199 total		50% diver, 50% dabblers. Mallard, bufflehead, hooded merganser, ring-necked duck, Canada goose. Peters Creek MSU 50% full. Long Creek-Calvert Springs main unit 100%. Units above and below the main spring 20-60%. MSUs off Hwy 100 are 0-20% full. Dry conditions. Thin coat of ice on shllow/small ponds, but good waterfowl weather in the extended forecast. Loons and grebes present. Saw waterfowl during crane survey as well. Ducks on many ponds. Geese on pond/lake, divers in tight rafts on main lake, dabblers in large/med raft on big water, mergansers on creeks, nothing on MSUs. Lake 528.1(0.0) down 0.0 ft 403cfs. 0.0 inches rain last 24 hrs.
Blue Grass Army Depot	12/08/2025	533 total 262 Ring-necked 92 Black duck 69 Mallard 31 Hooded merganser 30 Unknown 24 Bufflehead 20 Gadwall 4 PB Grebe	2 Canada	Ring-necked 49% Black duck 17% Mallard 13% Hooded merganser 6% Unknown 6% Bufflehead 5% Gadwall 4% PB Grebe <1% Pintail <1%	Big push of birds have come in following recent weather events. Large diversity of species present. All bodies of water are currently open for the time being, this will change as colder temps move through as the week progresses. Expect good number of birds to continue coming into the area.

		1 Pintail			
Boatwright WMA	12/11/2025	2886 total 2663 Unknown 223 Mallard	0 total	Unknown 92% Mallard 8%	Ducks are starting to disperse on/around WMA. Freezing temps and low water levels observed in units.
Cave Run Lake	12/11/2025	282 total 188 Unknown 60 Mallard 10 Bufflehead 10 Ring-necked 10 Scaup 1 Canvasback 1 PB Grebe 1 Hooded merganser 1 Pintail	20 Canada	Unknown 67% Mallard 21% Bufflehead 4% Ring-necked 4% Scaup 4% Canvasback <1% PB Grebe <1% Hooded merganser <1% Pintail <1%	
Duck Island WMA	12/11/2025	2977 total 1250 Mallard 750 Gadwall 500 GW teal 230 Ring-necked 150 Pintail 45 Shoveler 18 Wigeon 18 Canvasback 9 Black duck 7 Ruddy duck	143 total 131 Canada 12 Wf Goose	Mallard 42% Gadwall 25% GW teal 17% Ring-necked 8% Pintail 5% Shoveler 2% Wigeon <1% Canvasback <1% Black duck <1% Ruddy duck <1%	Habitat conditions on the island are good/excellent. Water levels are optimum. Notable numbers of GWT. Pintail numbers have declined while mallard numbers increased.
Doug Travis WMA	12/10/2025	725 total 665 Mallard 20 GW teal 20 Wood duck 10 Hooded merganser 10 Ring-necked	0 total	Mallard 92% GW teal 3% Wood duck 3% Hooded merganser 1% Ring-necked 1%	All 3 wells are running, but we are at best holding water levels even in impoundments due to lack of rainfall and very low water levels in Mississippi River.
Peabody WMA	12/11/2025	270 total 144 Ring-necked 87 Mallard 27 Gadwall 12 PB Grebe	85 Canada	Ring-necked 53% Mallard 32% Gadwall 10% PB Grebe 4%	Water is dropping in most shallow water impoundments due to lack of significant rainfall. Shallow water continues to freeze most nights, but has typically thawed by the afternoon.
Sloughs WMA	12/08/2025	5591 total 3661 Mallard 1450 GW teal 270 Gadwall	4990 total 2775 Wf Goose 2050 Snow 165 Canada	Mallard 65% GW teal 26% Gadwall 5% Pintail 2%	Most ducks concentrated in marsh and muddy slough. 73 sandhill crane observed flying overhead during count.

		85 Pintail 75 Shoveler 50 Wigeon		Shoveler 1% Wigeon <1%	
Yellowbank WMA	12/08/2025	575 total 550 Mallard 20 Black duck 5 Wood duck	0 total	Mallard 96% Black duck 3% Wood duck <1%	Most waterfowl hunting units are at 40% water capacity. Excellent moist-soil plants and row crops in hunting units. River bottoms units have been significantly impacted by the pheasant quota hunt.

Waterfowl Counts at Waterfowl Use Areas in Kentucky for Dec. 8-12, 2025



Duck Species Composition (% of Total) at Waterfowl Use Areas in Kentucky for Dec. 8-12, 2025

