

November 21, 2025

Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for November 17-21, 2025. From Sunday through Thursday, Kentucky experienced cooler than average conditions: daytime highs ranged from low 40s to mid 60s, with overnight lows dropping toward freezing. Skies were mostly overcast with occasional light rain or drizzle, resulting in damp ground and slowly rising wetland levels—ideal for waterfowl staging. Some areas reported gusty winds from cold fronts moving through, which increased bird movement during morning flights. Looking ahead toward the weekend and the special youth/veteran hunts, the forecast calls for a moderate warming trend: daytime highs in the 50s and 60s with lighter winds and a mix of sun and clouds. Overnight temperatures should remain above freezing, reducing the likelihood of surface ice. Wetland and impoundment conditions are expected to improve for ducks and geese with predicted rain, but birds may become less active midday with the milder air.

The first day of Special Youth Waterfowl Season is Saturday November 22, 2025. The first day of Special Veteran's Waterfowl Season is Sunday November 23, 2025. The first segment of duck season will open on Thursday November 27, 2025 and run until Sunday November 30, 2025. Goose season will open on Thursday November 27, 2025 and 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	Ducks	Geese	Duck Species Composition	Comments/Conditions
Barren River Lake WMA 11/20/2025	20 total 10 bufflehead 10 wood duck	169 Canada	50% bufflehead 50% wood duck	Lake 536.5(3.5) down 0.8 ft 2997cfs. Peters Creek MSU 30% full. Long Creek - Calvert Springs main unit 90% and units above and below the main spring 0-40%. MSUs off Hwy 100 are 0-20% full, with all MSU plants in weeds this year due to all time record summer flood. Dry conditions, but raining for the next two days. Dozen fishing boats on the lake. Beavers on MSUs. Loons and grebes present. Geese on pond, a few divers on main lake and next to bank. Wood ducks on MSUs.
Bluegrass Army Depot 11/20/2025	259 total 36 black duck 16 bufflehead 40 gadwall 5 grebe 17 mallard 6 pintail 26 redhead 80 ring-necked 9 scaup 24 wood duck	70 Canada	31% ring-necked 15% gadwall 14% black duck 10% redhead 9% wood duck 7% mallard 6% bufflehead 3% scaup 2% grebe 2% pintail	Recent weather fronts have brought in much needed rain. Moist Soil Units are ~60% full and beginning to really draw in ducks. All lakes and larger ponds are starting to raise water levels back to normal pool. Most of the ducks have shown up in the last week while geese have been fairly consistent over the last few weeks.
Doug Travis WMA 11/19/2025	540 total 20 merganser 500 mallard 20 wood duck	0	4% merganser 92% mallard 4% wood duck	400 mallards at Indian Camp Rest Area, everything else at Beaver Pond Rest Area. Low river levels, lack of precipitation, and resulting low water table have made pumping and holding water a challenge. All 3 wells have been pumping since 10/21/2025. The forecast for several inches of rain on 11/20 and 11/21 should greatly help conditions.
Duck Island WMA 11/17/2025	3114 total 2 black duck 22 canvasback 800 gadwall 325 GW teal 950 mallard 450 pintail 425 ring-necked	150 Canada 4 WF goose	31% mallard 26% gadwall 14% pintail 14% ring-necked 10% GW teal 2% wood duck 1% shoveler	Water levels are normal. Moist soil habitat is good/excellent. There were approximately 4000 ducks a week earlier.

	25 shoveler 40 wigeon 75 wood duck		1% wigeon 1% canvasback <1% black duck	
Peabody WMA 11/20/2025	12 total 4 grebe 3 mallard 2 wigeon 1 misc diver	5 Canada	33% grebe 25% mallard 17% wigeon 8% misc diver	

Figure 1. Mallard with suspected spontaneous sex reversal spotted at Duck Island WMA November 2025. PC: Pat Hahs.



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