

**November 28, 2025**

## **Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts**

This is the ground count survey for November 24-28, 2025. From Sunday through Tuesday, much of Kentucky saw daytime highs in the upper 50s to low 60s, with overnight lows dipping into the upper 30s to low 40s. The start of the week featured widespread fog into Monday morning that faded to partly sunny skies. Mid-week included periods of rain and showers — partly reversing the dry trend typical of late fall — that likely helped boost wetland and impoundment water levels. By Thursday highs fell into the 30s–40s with overnight lows near or below freezing in some areas. For waterfowl habitat and activity, the cool, damp early-week conditions combined with rainfall maintained or slightly elevated water levels, improving staging potential.

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.*

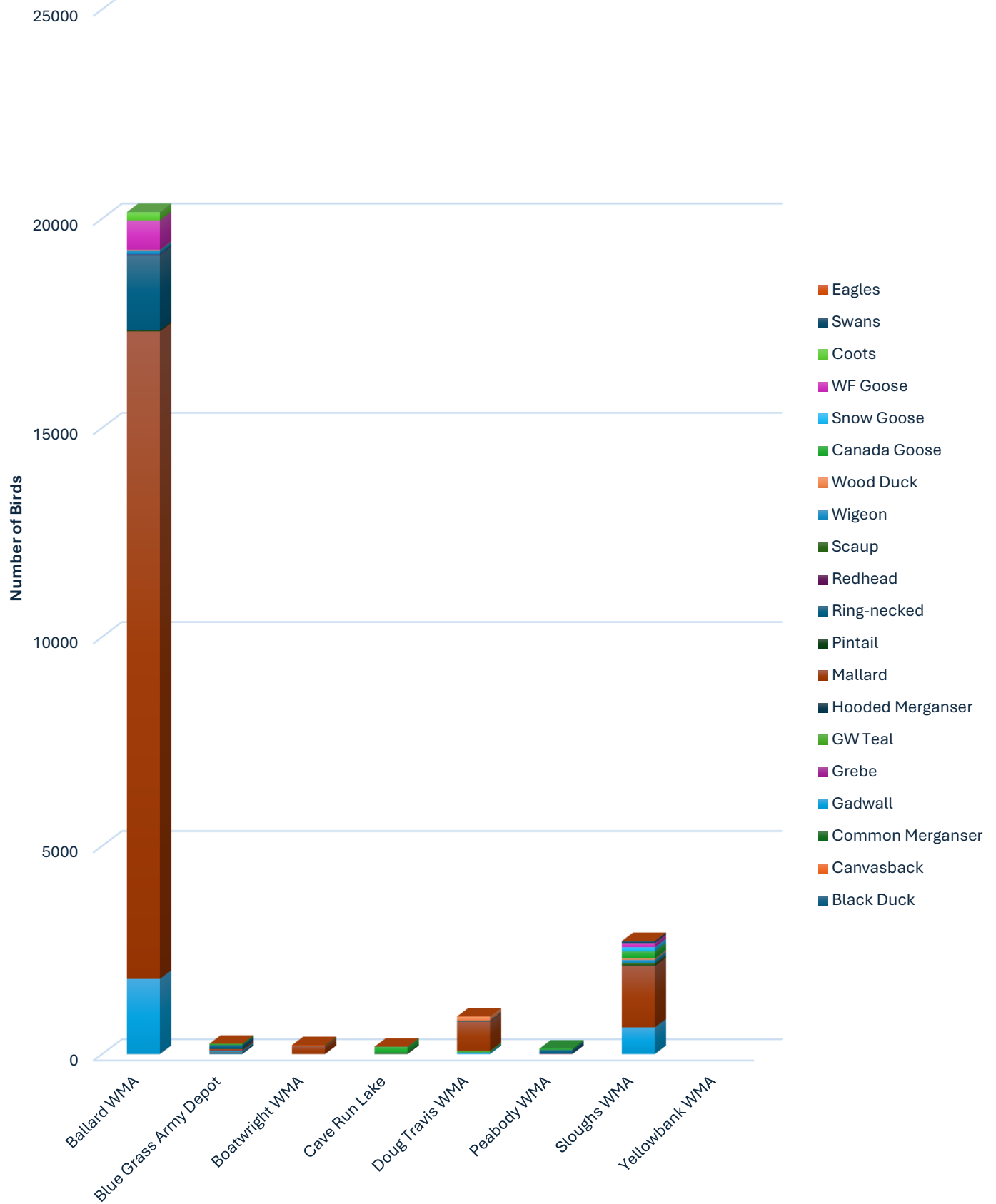
Location	Ducks	Geese	Duck Species Composition	Comments/Conditions
Ballard WMA 11/26/2025	<b>19,315 total</b> 5 black duck 1800 gadwall 15,500 mallard 30 pintail 10 redhead 1800 ring-necked 60 shoveler 100 wigeon 10 wood duck	700 WF geese	80% mallard 9% gadwall 9% ring-necked <1% black duck <1% pintail <1% redhead <1% shoveler <1% wigeon <1% wood duck	Early season birds are congregated in certain rest areas, but seem to be slowly expanding into the rest of refuge and hunt units. 200 coots.
Blue Grass Army Depot 11/24/2025	<b>215 total</b> 45 black duck 6 canvasback 32 gadwall 6 grebe 34 mallard 2 pintail 90 ring-necked	32 Canada	42% ring-necked 21% black duck 16% mallard 15% gadwall 3% canvasback 3% grebe 1% pintail	Past rain events have brought most lakes and ponds back to normal pool. Moist soil units are still holding at ~60% capacity. Expect bird numbers to bump up slightly over the next week with cooler forecasted weather. 1 eagle.
Boatwright WMA 11/26/2025	189 mallard	13 Canada	100% mallard	12 eagles.
Cave Run Lake 11/26/2025	<b>26 total</b> 17 common mergansers 8 pied-billed grebe 1 hooded merganser	150 Canada	65% common merganser 31% pied-billed grebe 1% hooded merganser	1 eagle.
Doug Travis WMA 11/26/2025	<b>900 total</b> 40 gadwall 40 GW teal 700 mallard 20 ring-necked 100 wood duck	0	78% mallard 11% wood duck 4% gadwall 4% GW teal 2% ring-necked	All 3 wells are running, and with the rise in river level they are producing more water than earlier in November. Town Creek MSU, Fish Lake, and Indian Camp Slough have huntable water for blind sites, along with Baldy's Woods walkin unit. Other blind sites may or may not have huntable water, sites 11-14 are gaining water daily through pumping. Lake Erie in Indian Camp Reast area is 90% flooded, with abundant moist-soil veg. Beaver

				<p>Pond Rest Area is 80% flooded, and was holding almost all ducks found during this survey. Ducks were holding tight in flooded buckbrush in Beaver Pond Rest Area today, if anything I'd guess my numbers may be on the low side. There MIGHT have been some "new" ducks showing up, I saw a couple small groups of mallards drop in from very high altitude while I was there. 4 eagles.</p>
<p>Peabody WMA</p> <p>11/24/2025</p>	<p><b>97 total</b> 3 grebe 4 mallard 93 ring-necked</p>	<p>31 Canada</p>	<p>96% ring-necked 4% mallard 3% grebe</p>	<p>Recent rains have helped to put water in moist soil units. Most units are at least half full. Rain in the forecast for next week should benefit the wetland habitat.</p>
<p>Sloughs WMA</p> <p>11/24/2025</p>	<p><b>2293 total</b> 80 wigeon 640 gadwall 1478 mallard 25 pintail 40 scaup 30 wood duck</p>	<p><b>375 total</b> 175 Canada 100 snow 100 white-fronted</p>	<p>64% mallard 28% gadwall 3% wigeon 2% scaup 1% pintail 1% wood duck</p>	<p>Ducks concentrated in marsh, willow/buttonbush thickets, and Anderson Pond. More in thick brush making counting difficult. Plentiful water on the landscape in both the refuge and hunt units. Spring flooding/rains combined with summer drought took a major toll on crops, and on natural vegetation to a lesser extent. Seed production is "poor to fair" across the landscape with a few "good" exceptions. 44 swans. 4 eagles.</p>
<p>Yellowbank WMA</p> <p>11/24/2025</p>	<p>0 ducks</p>	<p>0 geese</p>		<p>See Figure 1 for photo of water level and habitat conditions at the refuge. We'll keep this current water level until the first week of December, then start increasing water level with pump. Rain water might do it for us before the pump is turned on. We're currently pumping up several of our hunting units in the bottoms with the same pump.</p>

Figure 1. Habitat conditions at Yellowbank WMA on Monday November 24, 2025. PC: Ryan Taylor.



## Waterfowl Counts at Waterfowl Use Areas in Kentucky for Nov. 24-28, 2025



### Duck Species Composition (% of Total) at Waterfowl Use Areas in Kentucky for Nov. 24-28, 2025

