

December 26, 2025

Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

The second segment of duck season opened Sunday December 7 and will run through January 31, 2026. Goose season opened on Thursday November 27, 2025 and will run through 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	12/23/2025	34550 total 31975 Mallard 1600 Ring-necked 490 Gadwall 300 Shoveler 130 Wigeon 34 Wood duck 10 GW teal 2 Black duck 1 Ruddy duck 1 Unknown	20730 total 17500 Snow 3200 Wf Goose 30 Canada	Mallard 93% Ring-necked 5% Gadwall 1% Shoveler <1% Wigeon <1% Wood duck <1% GW teal <1% Black duck <1% Ruddy duck <1% Unknown <1%	7 Hooded Mergansers
Barren River Lake WMA		20 total	179 total		Normal conditions, finally got a good runoff rain event this weeks, lots of fishermen on the lake and bank, lots of eagles, warm weather moved the ducks out
Blue Grass Army Depot	12/23/2025	1551 total 546 Mallard 453 Black duck 275 Ring-necked 108 Gadwall 46 GW teal 24 Pintail 17 Ruddy duck 16 Unknown 10 Hooded merganser 10 Shoveler	117 total 117 Canada	Mallard 35% Black duck 29% Ring-necked 18% Gadwall 7% GW teal 3% Pintail 2% Ruddy duck 1% Unknown 1% Hooded merganser <1% Shoveler <1%	A large number of waterfowl are still present after the cold snap we had last week. Most ducks are using the moist soil units or shallow flats on Lake Vega.
Boatwright WMA	12/26/2025	31110 total 1821 Unknown 1289 Mallard	263 total 203 Snow 60 Canada	Unknown 6% Mallard 4%	
Doug Travis WMA	12/23/2025	175 total 140 Mallard 50 Gadwall	0 total	Mallard 80% Gadwall 29% Ring-necked 11%	Beaver Pond Rest Ares was not surveyed due to muddy levees.

		20 Ring-necked 15 Wood duck		Wood duck 9%	We are still battling dry conditions. Some hunt units have lost water even with wells running.
Sloughs WMA	12/22/2025	2834 total 1705 Mallard 912 Misc Dabblers 110 Gadwall 107 Shoveler	17260 total 14450 Snow 2687 Wf Goose 123 Canada	Mallard 60% Misc Dabblers 32% Gadwall 4% Shoveler 4%	
Yellowbank WMA	12/22/2025	645 total 600 Mallard 20 Gadwall 15 Black duck 10 Wood duck	0 total	Mallard 93% Gadwall 3% Black duck 2% Wood duck 2%	