

January 16, 2026

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 January 8, 2026, it has been detected in waterfowl in Mercer, Green, Warren, and Henderson counties 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	01/14/2026	17716 total 16990 Mallard 450 Ring-necked 118 Gadwall 70 Pintail 57 Shoveler 20 Wigeon 9 Canvasback 1 Hooded merganser 1 Wood duck	33120 total 22508 Snow 10587 Wf Goose 25 Canada	Mallard 96% Ring-necked 3% Gadwall <1% Pintail <1% Shoveler <1% Wigeon <1% Canvasback <1% Hooded merganser <1% Wood duck <1%	
Barren River Lake WMA	01/12/2026	105 total	30 total		Lake 528.4(0.4) down 0.1 ft 404cfs. 0.3 inches rain last 24 hrs. 70% diver, 30% dabblers. Hooded merganser, bufflehead, mallard, Canada goose. Peters Creek MSU 70% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 90% full, and units above and below the main spring 20-40% full. MSUs off hwy 100 are 0-20% full. Very dry conditions. Lots of fishermen on the lake and banks. Lots of eagles and gulls. Warm weather moved the waterfowl out. Canada geese on lake, ducks on pond and lake coming in at dusk, nothing on MSUs.
Blue Grass Army Depot	01/13/2026	442 total 192 Mallard 104 Black duck 56 Gadwall 52 Ring-necked 30 GW teal 7 Shoveler 1 Hooded merganser	0 total	Mallard 43% Black duck 24% Gadwall 13% Ring-necked 12% GW teal 7% Shoveler 2% Hooded merganser <1%	Continued usage of moist soil units have yielded the largest concentration of ducks. Expect forecasted temps in the teens to start to concentrate numbers of waterfowl once ice forms on smaller bodies of water.

Boatwright WMA	01/14/2026	1834 total 1045 Mallard 539 Unknown 250 GW teal	19 Canada	Mallard 57% Unknown 29% GW teal 14%	
Doug Travis WMA	01/14/2026	1080 total 900 Mallard 50 Wood duck 45 GW teal 35 Ring-necked 30 Pintail 20 Hooded merganser	0 total	Mallard 83% Wood duck 5% GW teal 4% Ring-necked 3% Pintail 3% Hooded merganser 2%	Survey is incomplete as Beaver Pond Rest Area was inaccessible due to wet levees. All 3 wells running. Most ducks were found in flooded moist-soil veg in Indian Camp Rest Area.
Sloughs WMA	01/12/2025	7712 total 5394 Mallard 1926 Misc Dabblers 385 Pintail 7 Black duck	28768 total 24092 Snow 4425 Wf Goose 251 Canada	Mallard 70% Misc Dabblers 25% Pintail 5% Black duck <1%	
Yellowbank WMA	01/12/2026	340 total 280 Mallard 40 Pintail 10 Black duck 10 Gadwall	0 total	Mallard 82% Pintail 12% Black duck 3% Gadwall 3%	Most waterfowl hunting units are at 40% water capacity. Units are drying each week without significant rainfall. The refuge pump is running refill hunting units in Chenault Bottoms. The Flood Tract pump piping is currently being repaired due to freezing and thawing weather changes shifting piping.