

January 08, 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 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	01/07/2026	10172 total 9185 Mallard 500 Ring-necked 250 Gadwall 160 Shoveler 101 Unknown 22 Canvasback 20 GW teal 11 Wigeon 10 Wood duck 8 Pintail	34054 total 25515 Snow 8500 Wf Goose 37 Canada	Mallard 90% Ring-necked 5% Gadwall 2% Shoveler 2% Unknown <1% Canvasback <1% GW teal <1% Wigeon <1% Wood duck <1% Pintail <1%	6 Hooded Mergansers
Barren River Lake WMA	01/06/2026	35 total	169 total		Very dry conditions, lots of fishermen on the lake and banks, lots of eagles and gulls, warm weather moved the ducks out, rain coming on Friday
Blue Grass Army Depot	01/05/2026	705 total 240 Ring-necked 202 Mallard 171 Black duck 25 GW teal 20 Gadwall 18 Pintail 12 Hooded merganser 12 Unknown 5 Wigeon	9 total 9 Canada	Ring-necked 34% Mallard 29% Black duck 24% GW teal 4% Gadwall 3% Pintail 3% Hooded merganser 2% Unknown 2% Wigeon <1%	Continued warm trend has led to a significant number of birds leaving the area. Ducks can be found on most bodies of water with a strong correlation of usage to moist soil units.
Boatwright WMA	01/07/2026	1625 total 859 Unknown 766 Mallard	8 total 8 Canada	Unknown 53% Mallard 47%	
Doug Travis WMA	01/05/2026	1945 total 1800 Mallard 60 Ring-necked 40 Wood duck 20 Hooded merganser	0 total	Mallard 93% Ring-necked 3% Wood duck 2% Hooded merganser 1%	All 3 wells are running but fighting against dry conditions and low river levels. Ducks were dispersed

		10 Gadwall 5 GW teal 5 Pintail 3 Wigeon 2 Black duck		Gadwall <1% GW teal <1% Pintail <1% Wigeon <1% Black duck <1%	today in flooded buckbrush and moist- soil habitat. Very little hunting pressure on 1/5/26.
Sloughs WMA	01/05/2025	6757 total 4400 Mallard 1552 Misc Dabblers 240 Pintail 202 Shoveler 165 Gadwall 85 Wigeon 70 Ring-necked 39 GW teal 4 Black duck	37601 total 31443 Snow 5955 Wf Goose 203 Canada	Mallard 65% Misc Dabblers 23% Pintail 4% Shoveler 3% Gadwall 2% Wigeon 1% Ring-necked 1% GW teal <1% Black duck <1%	
Cave Run Lake	01/07/2026	320 total 170 Unknown 50 Bufflehead 30 Canvasback 30 Redhead 20 Hooded merganser 20 Scaup	0 total	Unknown 53% Bufflehead 16% Canvasback 9% Redhead 9% Hooded merganser 6% Scaup 6%	4 Common Mergansers