November 25, 2026

Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count report for November 16-27, 2026. From November 17-24, Kentucky experienced higher than average November temperatures. Day time temperatures ranged from high 30s-low 70s. Very minimal rain this week (0.01 in. in Ballard County). With above average temperatures and little to no rain, waterfowl staging is limited, so you may expect slower movement of waterfowl. With lower temperatures in the upper 30s and possibilities of rain and snow showers, waterfowl staging may increase.

The first day of the Special Youth Waterfowl Season was Saturday November 21, 2026. The first day of the Special Veteran's Waterfowl Season is Sunday November 22, 2026. The first segment of duck season will open on Thursday November 26, 2026 and run until Sunday November 29, 2026. Goose season will open on Thursday November 26, 2026 and run until February 15, 2027. Check out the 2026-27 Kentucky Waterfowl Hunting Guide or visit the waterfowl hunting webpage for more details.

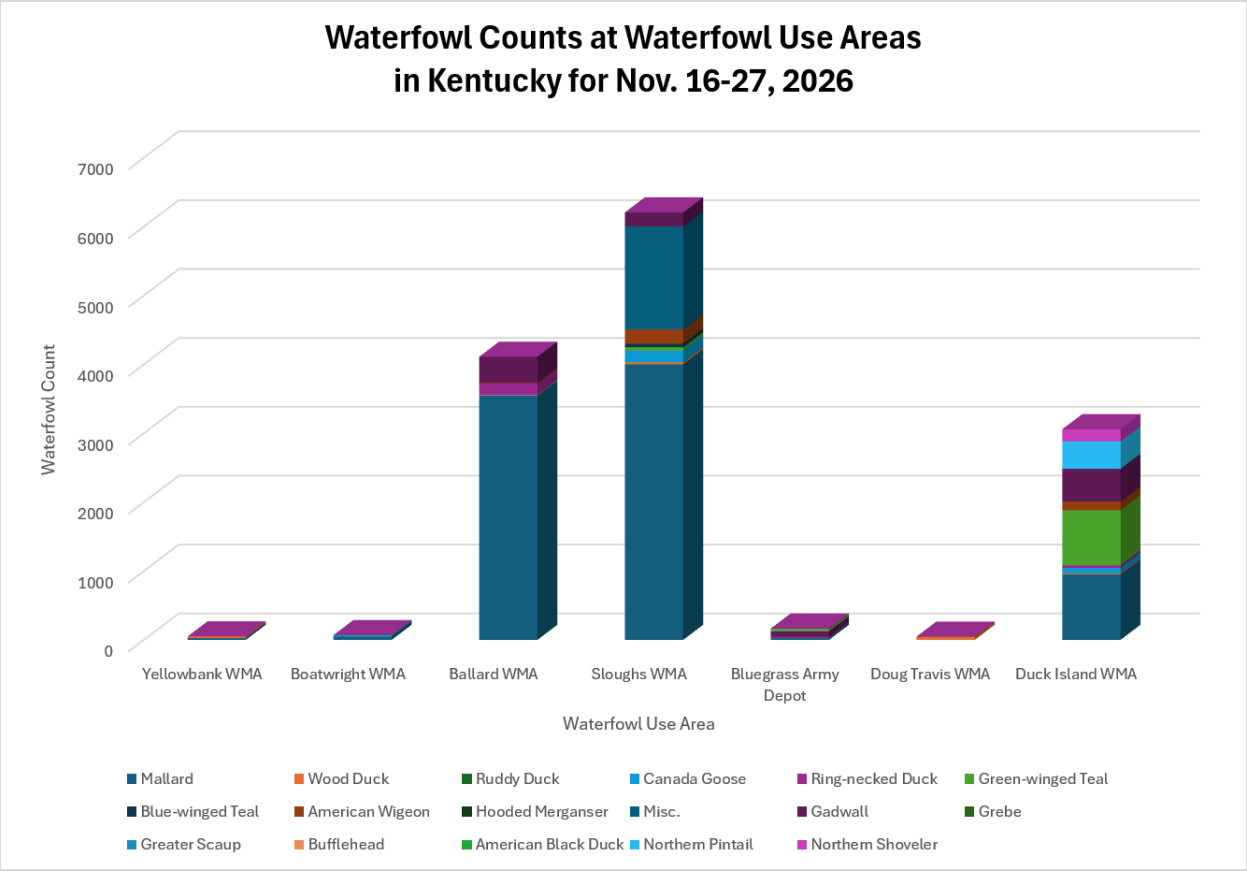
Good luck hunting this year, be safe and enjoy your time afield!

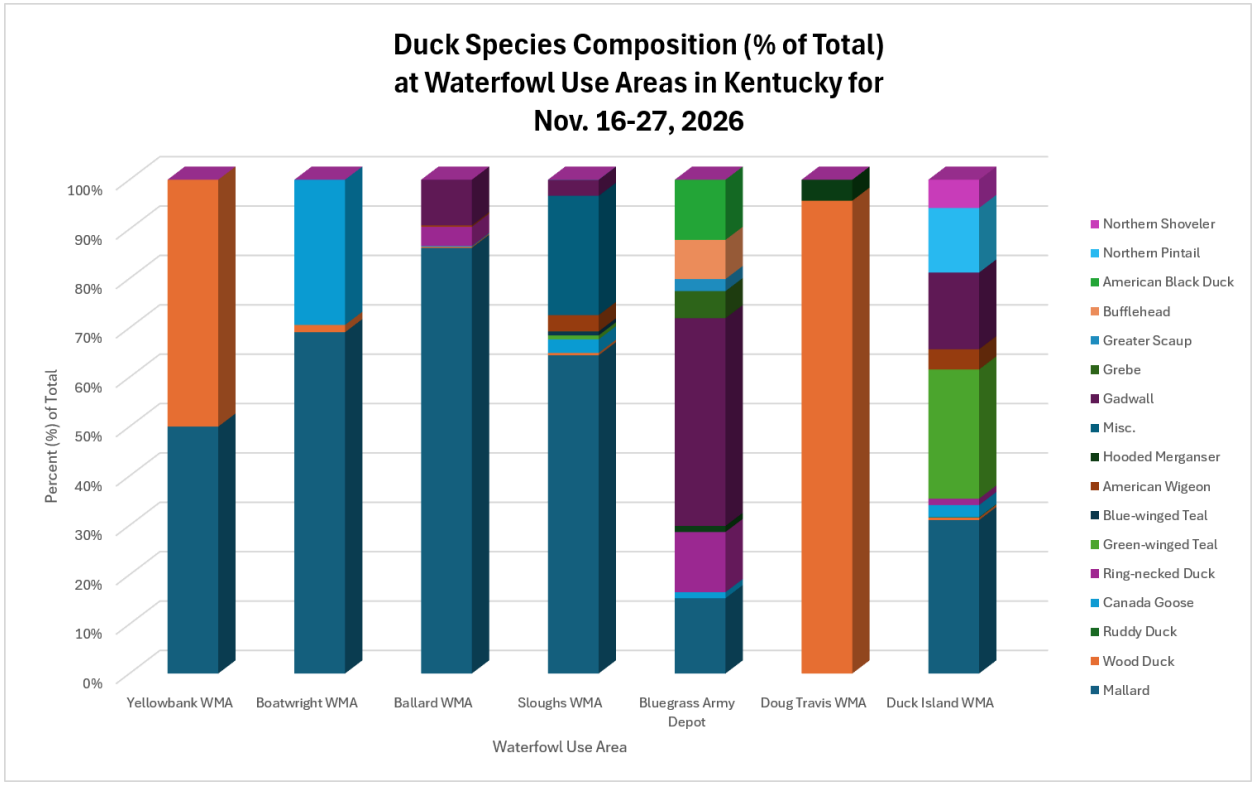
Highly pathogenic avian influenza is present in Kentucky. As of fall 2026, Kentucky has had its first detections of avian influenza in wild waterfowl. Visit the KDFWR Avian Influenza webpage for more details. Hunters should use common sense when handling/cleaning harvested waterfowl. See page two of 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
Ballard WMA 11/20/26	Total: 4104 3543 Mallard 380 Gadwall 160 Ring-necked Duck 12 American Wigeon 9 Wood Duck	Total: 6 Canada Geese	86% Mallard 9% Gadwall 3% Ring-necked Duck <1% American Wigeon <1% Wood Duck	
Bluegrass Army Depot 11/24/26	Total: 160 69 Gadwall 47 Mallard 20 American Black Duck 13 Bufflehead 9 Common Grebe 2 Hooded Merganser	Total: 2 Canada Geese	43% Gadwall 29% Mallard 12% American Black Duck 8% Bufflehead 5% Common Grebe 1% Hooded Merganser	
Boatwright WMA 11/19/26	Total: 48 47 Mallard 1 Wood Duck	Total: 20 Canada Geese	98% Mallard 2% Wood Duck	
Doug Travis WMA 11/24/26	Total: 47 45 Wood Duck 2 Hooded Merganser	0	96% Wood Duck 4% Hooded Merganser	All 3 wells have been running since early October at DTWMA, but fighting dry conditions. We have huntable water at blind sites 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17. Conditions on boat-in sites varies by individual site. There is also huntable water at Baldy's Woods walkin unit, although Ward Tract walkin is dry. We have good water in moist-soil vegetation in "Lake Erie" in Indian Camp Rest Area behind blind sites 5 &6. There is some residual water in Beaver Pond Rest Area, and rainfall is necessary to provide water in that impoundment. Very few ducks were found on the DTWMA, perhaps due to birds being dispersed across the

				landscape with little hunting pressure so far. The forecasted rainfall over the next few days will hopefully improve water conditions on the DTWMA and across the area in general.
Duck Island WMA 11/24/26	Total: 2983 950 Mallard 800 Green-winged Teal 475 Gadwall 400 Northern Pintail 175 Northern Shoveler 125 American Wigeon 40 Ring-necked Duck 15 Wood Duck 3 Ruddy Duck	Total: 75 Canada Geese	31% Mallard 26% Green-winged Teal 15% Gadwall 13% Northern Pintail 5% Northern Shoveler 4% American Wigeon <1% Ring-necked Duck <1% Wood Duck <1% Ruddy Duck	
Sloughs WMA 11/23/26	Total: 6037 4000 Mallard 1500 Misc. 205 American Wigeon 200 Gadwall 50 Green-winged Teal 50 Blue-winged Teal 30 Wood Duck 2 Greater Scaup	Total: 250 170 Canada Geese 20 Snow Geese 60 White-fronted Geese	66% Mallard 24% Misc. 3% American Wigeon 3% Gadwall <1% Green-winged Teal <1% Blue-winged Teal <1% Wood Duck <1% Greater Scaup	

Yellowbank WMA 11/17/26	Total: 50 25 Mallard 25 Wood Duck	0	50% Mallard 50% Wood Duck	Very dry conditions. Pumps are running to create sheet water on six units. Permanent water bodies on WMA are low but still have water.




Duck Species Composition (% of Total) at Waterfowl Use Areas in Kentucky for Nov. 16-27, 2026
Percent (%) of Total
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Yellowbank WMA
Boatwright WMA
Ballard WMA
Sloughs WMA
Bluegrass Army Depot
Doug Travis WMA
Duck Island WMA
Waterfowl Use Area
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
American Black Duck
Bufflehead
Greater Scaup
Grebe
Gadwall
Misc.
Hooded Merganser
American Wigeon
Blue-winged Teal
Green-winged Teal
Ring-necked Duck
Canada Goose
Ruddy Duck
Wood Duck
Mallard