

December 16, 2022 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for December 12-16, 2022. The first two weeks of the season have been good (check local listings). Many WMA's are reporting excellent hunter success, especially following the cold front in November. Warm temps, coupled with hunting pressure have slowed the action some, but a little cold weather this week will hopefully liven things back up. River levels continue to improve conditions, but several areas are still dryer than normal. Conditions at Boatwright and Doug Travis continue to be much drier than normal, impacting several of our hunt units and blind sites.

Avian Influenza is present in Kentucky, so hunters should use common sense when handling/cleaning harvested waterfowl. See page two of the [KY 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.

Duck season began on Thanksgiving Day, and ran from November 24 – 27. The second segment of duck season opened on December 7 and will run until January 31, 2023. Goose season opened November 24, 2022 and will remain open until February 15, 2023. New this year, youth season is Saturday, November 19, 2022, and Saturday, February 11, 2023. There is also a new veteran's hunt on Sunday, November 20, 2022, and Sunday February 12, 2023. All bag limits remain the same as last season. Check out the 2022-2023 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.

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard 12/13/2022	26,651 ducks 275 CA goose 350 WF goose 0 Snow Geese	96% Mallard, 1% Gadwall, 3% Ring-necked, Green Wing Teal, Shoveler, Wood Duck, Pintail	Warm Dec. weather patterns had the bird dispersed across the area. Significant increase in the amount of surface acres of water has also spread the ducks out to some degree. The highest densities of birds were observed using moist soil impoundments.
Boatwright 12/15/2022	2,278 ducks 14 CA geese 61 Snow geese	56% Mallard, 15% Blue Wing 26 % Ring-necked and other divers, 3% Pintail etc	Recent rains have partially filled new areas increasing available waterfowl habitat. This in turn correlated to more duck use. Hunting activity has been moderate throughout

			the week and heavy on the weekends. Low water levels still remain across much of the area even with the observed recent rainfall.
Duck Island <i>11/22/2022</i>	5,100 ducks 50 CA geese	90 % mallard 10% gadwall, ringneck, GW teal, pintail, wigeon and black ducks.	Habitat conditions at the moment are excellent with heavy use of the moist-soil habitat in the lowest area. We stockpiled water in the north impoundment in August as usual, but evaporation since that time has been dramatic.
Doug Travis WMA <i>12/14/2022</i>	662 Ducks	95% mallard 5% GW teal	Water conditions are improving on the area, but it still marginal overall. Lack of groundwater will not allow wells to pump at full output. PLEASE NOTE: Anyone hunting from a numbered blind spot must have a waterfowl blind permit on their person while hunting. These permits are found on the website on the Waterfowl Quota Hunts page, or at the information kiosk located next to the Doug Travis office.
Sloughs WMA <i>12/12/2022</i>	4,500 ducks 60 CA geese 4,500 WF geese 8,000 Snow geese 8 Tundra Swan		The region continues to be dry with local sloughs and drainages still with little available water and poor habitat conditions. With available pumping capabilities, most of the

			hunt units and the refuge has water. Duck numbers decreased from the previous week along with Snows and White Fronted geese. Pond creek marsh is still dry.
Peabody WMA <i>12/11/2022</i>	261 ducks 224 CA goose	74% ring-necked ducks, 26% mallard and gadwall	Water conditions are starting to improve with recent rainfall.
Yellowbank WMA <i>12/12/2022</i>	690 Ducks	85% mallard 5% wood duck 5% gadwall 5% black duck	Excellent moist-soil plant response and crop production in waterfowl units.
Barren River WMA <i>12/12/2022</i>	55 ducks 65 CA geese 1,103 Sandhill cranes		Peters Creek MSU 10% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 100% and units above and below the main spring 50%, MSUs off HWY 100 are 70% full. Food in abundance, with both corn and moist soil plants in great condition. Lake level: 531.3'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>Not Surveyed</i>			
Cave Run Lake <i>12/7/2022</i>	33 Ducks 117 CA geese 119 unknowns	20, bufflehead, 11 mallard, 2 northern shoveler	Extremely dense fog across the entirety of the lake and warm temperatures. Birds were unable to be seen unless very close to the shore due to fog. Lake level: 724.2'