

December 22, 2022
Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

Merry Christmas from the KDFWR!

This is the ground count survey for December 19-22, 2022. Survey numbers didn't change much overall this week. A strong cold front is coming tonight with rain, snow, freezing temps and strong winds. Weather has been fairly mild this month, so hopefully this will shake things up and get birds moving. The deep snows and subzero temps to the north is certainly sending the last of the ducks south. Expect small and shallow bodies of water to freeze, but hopefully the winds will keep some open water on the larger water bodies. Warmer temps will follow the cold, so be ready to get out when the ice begins to break.

**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.

The second segment of duck season 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>Not surveyed</i>		
Doug Travis WMA 12/20/2022	392 Ducks	90% mallard 10% misc. dabblers	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 12/19/2022	5,300 ducks 45 CA geese 5,500 WF geese 10,000 Snow geese 85 Tundra Swan		The region finally received several inches of rain, improving habitat conditions. Local sloughs and drainages have some available water with lower bottoms still mostly dry. With available pumping capabilities, all of the hunt units and the refuge has water. Duck numbers increased slightly

			from the previous week along with Snows and White Fronted Geese. Pond creek marsh now has 8-10 inches of water but remains extremely low.
Peabody WMA <i>12/11/2022</i>	439 ducks 240 CA goose	46% ring-necked ducks, 39% mallard 19% gadwall	Water conditions are starting to improve with recent rainfall.
Yellowbank WMA <i>12/19/2022</i>	520 Ducks	90% mallard, 5% other puddle ducks, 5% diving ducks	Excellent moist-soil plant response and crop production in waterfowl units.
Barren River WMA <i>12/19/2022</i>	224 ducks 65 CA geese 2,367 Sandhill cranes	50%diver/50% dabblers mergansers, mallards, wood ducks, scaup, redheads, ringnecks, gadwalls, high diversity	Peters Creek MSU 10% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 100% and units above and below the main spring 80%, MSUs off HWY 100 are 80% full. Food in abundance, with both corn and moist soil plants in great condition. Lake level: 529.1'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>Not Surveyed</i>			
Cave Run Lake <i>12/21/2022</i>	170 Ducks 246 CA geese 24 unknowns	28 bufflehead, 64 mallard, 4 black ducks, 22 hooded mergansers.	Lake level: 724.2'