

December 2, 2022 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count survey for November 28 – December 2, 2022. We continue to struggle with water in our hunt units. Rains last week did allow for pumps and wells to be ran for a time, however lack of rain since caused Ohio and Mississippi River levels to drop again. River levels have not reached a sustained elevation to increase water levels in some of our units. Ballard WMA does have enough water now to hunt all 14 parties when it opens on December 7. Boatwright WMA is offering fewer than normal hunting sites due to lack of water.

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 opens on December 7 and will run until January 31, 2023. Goose season opens 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 <i>12/1/2022</i>	44,495 ducks 28 CA goose 100 WF goose 300 Snow Geese	95% Mallard, 2% Green wing, 1% Wigeon, 2% Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked, Blue-Winged Teal, Wood Duck, Hooded Merg.	Ducks were concentrated along banks where open water and overhead cover was present. Sheet Ice filled most of the small impoundments within hunt units. Impoundments with grain planted seemed to be holding heavier concentrations of feeding waterfowl. Large rafts of (Wigeon, Pintail, Teal) were present on Mitchell Lake Moist Soil impoundment along with many mallards and geese.

<p>Boatwright</p> <p>12/1/2022</p>	<p>478 ducks</p>	<p>83% Mallard, 13% Ring-neck, 4% Other</p>	<p>Many of the shallow impoundments were covered in sheet ice. Drought conditions and freezing temps have concentrated birds in available open water.</p>
<p>Duck Island</p> <p>11/22/2022</p>	<p>5,100 ducks 50 CA geese</p>	<p>90 % mallard 10% gadwall, ringneck, GW teal, pintail, wigeon and black ducks.</p>	<p>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 be dramatic.</p>
<p>Doug Travis WMA</p> <p>11/30/2022</p>	<p>900 Ducks</p>	<p>90% mallard 10% misc. dabblers including wood ducks, teal and gadwall.</p>	<p>A tree fell onto the line supplying power to wells 2 and 3 this weekend, well 2 was turned back on Monday and well 3 back on Wednesday; as a result, the majority of the water supplied by those wells soaked into the ground. There is hope that blinds 11,12,13,14 and Baldy's Woods walk-in will have huntable water again for the December opener.</p> <p>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</p>

			on the Waterfowl Quota Hunts page, or at the information kiosk located next to the Doug Travis office.
Sloughs WMA <i>11/30/2022</i>	1,700 ducks 50 CA goose 4,150 WF goose 7,000 Snow goose 155 Tundra Swan 13 Sandhill cranes	75% mallard 25% gadwall and widgeon	The region continues to be dry. Local sloughs and drainages have little available water and poor habitat conditions. With available pumping capabilities, water is available within most of the hunt units and the refuge. Duck numbers decreased substantially from the previous week, while snow and white fronted geese increased. Pond creek marsh is still dry.
Peabody WMA <i>11/29/2022</i>	127 ducks 156 CA goose	70% Mallard and gadwall, 20% ring-necked ducks, 10% other	Conditions are much drier than usual. Lakes are very low and moist soil units are still without water at this time due to the lack of rain.
Yellowbank WMA <i>11/28/2022</i>	425 Ducks	80% mallard 10% wood duck 5% gadwall 5% black duck	Excellent moist-soil plant response and crop production in waterfowl units. Recent rains have added a small amount of water to most of the hunt units.
Barren River WMA <i>11/30/2022</i>	80 ducks 121 CA geese 924 Sandhill cranes	50% divers/50% dabblers Scaup, mallards, & wood ducks.	Very dry conditions persist. Peters Creek MSU 10% full, Long Creek- Calvert Springs main unit 80% and units above and below the main spring 25%, MSUs off HWY 100 are 0% full. Food in abundance, with both corn and moist soil plants in great condition.

			Lake level: 529.5'
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds) <i>11/21/2022</i>	397 ducks	161 ring-necked duck 85 mallard 52 GW teal 31 gadwall 27 black ducks 16 ruddy ducks 12 wood duck, bufflehead & hooded merganser	Moist soil habitat looks great. All lakes and impoundments have water.
Cave Run Lake <i>11/30/2022</i>	21 Ducks 273 CA geese 120 unknowns	9 mallard, 6 buffelhead, 6 northern shoveler	Survey conditions were poor, high winds, rain, and warmer temperatures. The lake was very choppy, and ducks were hard to distinguish even when closer to the bank due to water movement. Most of the ducks were in rafts out further into the lake. Lake level: 724.8'