

## November 26, 2021 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

This is the ground count for November 22-26, 2021. Though dryer than we had hoped, we are set for a good opener this year. Loads of ducks came in ahead of a couple of nice cold fronts in the last two weeks. Ballard WMA, though counts could not be conducted, is holding more ducks than have been seen in November for many years. Many other WMA's are reporting good numbers as well. Opening day weather forecasts are calling for a good North wind and temperature drops throughout the day. Hopefully this sets the stage for great hunting during the first segment of the season.

Many of you will have heard about the drought throughout the Prairie Pothole region this year, which made production of young ducks almost a goose-egg for the year. Hunters should expect to notice fewer numbers of young birds this season, in species like Mallard, Gadwall and Teal. The Boreal Forest, however, had one of the wettest seasons on record, leaving more breeding habitat for species like Wigeon and Ring-necks, that favor that region. Gadwall, Teal and Mallard also will use the Boreal some as well.

In Kentucky, growing conditions this summer were favorable for both planted crops and moist soil plants. Most areas report ample food available for ducks this season. The ample summer rains did give way to dryer conditions this fall however, meaning water levels remain lower than we would like in units that cannot be mechanically filled. Water levels in hunt units are mostly right where we want them, but we are adding water where possible to keep adequate hunting water. Overall, wetland conditions and food availability are excellent.

Duck season begins on Thanksgiving Day, with the first segment running from November 25 – 28. The second segment of duck season opened on December 7 and will run until January 31, 2022. Goose season opens November 25, 2021 and will remain open until February 15, 2022. The western zone youth hunt will be February 5-6, 2022. All bag limits remain the same as last season. Check out 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>Not surveyed</i>
Boatwright			<i>Not surveyed</i>
Duck Island		<i>Not surveyed</i>	Habitat conditions are excellent. Planted crops and moist soil plants did well this summer.
Doug Travis WMA  <i>11/22/2021</i>	1,500 Ducks	90% Mallard 10% mixed dabblers	Habitat conditions are excellent. Overall, water levels are low due to low river levels. Most blind spots have some water in their respective impoundments,

			<p>however most walk-in units do NOT have huntable water yet. Use caution getting to boat-in spots. DISCLAIMER: Well 2 was struck by lightning last week and is currently inoperable; Blinds 11-14 (including Mobility-Impaired blind 13) do not have water pumping into their impoundments and are losing water.</p>
<p>Sloughs WMA <i>11/23/2021</i></p>	<p>3,500 ducks 25 CA goose 6,200 WF goose 200 Snow goose  24 Tundra Swan</p>	<p>80% mallard 15% gadwall and widgeon 5% shoveler</p>	<p>Overall, habitat conditions on the area are extremely dry except in units that have pumping capabilities. Water levels within most of the Crenshaw and Duncan tract hunt units and Jenny Hole are low but huntable. Birds are concentrating around the few refuge areas with water. Pond creek marsh along with other natural wetland areas have little to no water.</p>
<p>Peabody WMA <i>11/23/2021</i></p>	<p>250 ducks 100 CA goose</p>	<p>90% Mallard 10% other species</p>	<p>Lake and river levels are starting to rise from normal levels. River bottoms within the WMA still have planted crops available. MSU water levels are still low, but filling quickly. Planted crops in MSU's are available, but at slightly lower yields than river bottoms.</p>
<p>Yellowbank WMA <i>12/9/2020</i></p>	<p>410 Ducks</p>	<p>80% mallard 10% wood duck 5% gadwall 5% black duck</p>	<p>Excellent moist soil plant response and row crops in most units. Moist-soil units are a</p>

			little above 50% water capacity.
Barren River WMA	Not Surveyed		
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	Not surveyed		
Cave Run Lake  <i>11/18/2021</i>	127 Ducks, 385 CA geese 360 coots	33 Mallard 76 Bufflehead 18 Canvasback	Lake level – 725.2'