



# KENTUCKY HUNTING & TRAPPING GUIDE

*Regulations Summary* • AUGUST 2025 – MARCH 2026

*Take Someone Hunting!*



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**Fish & Wildlife:**  
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**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES**

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(July 2025)**

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- 3rd District: Matthew Rhodes, Prospect
- 4th District: Greg Cecil, Munfordville
- 5th District: Josh Cummins, Owenton
- 6th District: vacant
- 7th District: Chuck Meade, Staffordsville
- 8th District: Fred Shortridge, Mount Sterling
- 9th District: Walter Robertson, Russell Springs

Fish, wildlife and boating regulations are recommended by the Commission (board) and approved by the Kentucky legislature. Commission members are experienced and active anglers and hunters, who serve 4-year terms after being publicly nominated by peers in their geographic districts, appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the Kentucky Senate.

Learn more or contact your district Commission member at [fw.ky.gov/More/Pages/Commission.aspx](http://fw.ky.gov/More/Pages/Commission.aspx)

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Fish and Wildlife office hours:  
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM ET  
#1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601  
1-800-858-1549

# NEW THIS YEAR

Changes from last season are printed in **bright blue** throughout this guide to assist you in noticing those changes. Some of the most notable are listed below.

**DEER HUNTING**

Henderson, Union and Webster counties have been added to Kentucky's CWD Surveillance Zone. There are now 14 counties with special regulations for CWD surveillance. This year, surveillance counties will include a special modern gun season for antlerless deer only Sept. 27-28. This special season does not apply to counties outside of the surveillance zone.

West Kentucky WMA, Green River State Forest and Reelfoot Lake National Wildlife Refuge are closed to the antlerless only season. Big Rivers WMA and State Forest: Union County portion open for the antlerless only season, firearms permitted. Mandatory CWD testing required. Crittenden County portion is outside the surveillance zone and not open for this season.

During this special weekend season, all hunters in the surveillance zone, including archery and crossbow hunters, may only take antlerless deer (does and button bucks). Hunters may not take antlered deer by any method in surveillance zone counties during this special season. Hunters must wear orange. See the deer section for additional sampling requirements in the CWD Surveillance Zone.

The youth-only modern gun season for deer has been expanded to nine days.

**BEAR HUNTING**

Clinton and Wayne counties form a new Bear Zone 3. Season dates are the same as Zone 2, with the exception of an expanded archery/crossbow season.

**MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING**

Dove hunters may not use decoys on department-controlled lands during the month of September.

**WATERFOWL HUNTING**

Teal hunting season reduced to five days; begins the third Saturday in September.

The daily harvest limit for pintail ducks is three birds.

**PUBLIC LANDS**

University of the Cumberland's WMA: Firearms not permitted for hunting bear, deer or coyotes; night hunting prohibited for coyote and raccoon; closed to elk hunting; WMA otherwise open under statewide regulations.

Pocahontas WMA is open under statewide regulations.

Ownership of Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area being transferred; check [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) online for latest regulations.

Tract 1, Tract 1A and portions of Tract 7A at West Kentucky WMA are now closed to public use. Refer to online maps at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) for current configurations.



August 2025 – March 2026



# KENTUCKY HUNTING & TRAPPING GUIDE

Obie Williams photo

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**ABOUT THIS GUIDE:** This is a summary of the laws regarding hunting and trapping, intended solely for informational use. It is not a reprint of any referenced Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) or Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) in its entirety and should not be used as such. The exact wording of Kentucky's hunting and trapping laws can be viewed online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Click on Enforcement, then Regulations, then scroll down to Administrative Regulations.

Throughout the year, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife also produces regulation guides for fishing and boating, and spring hunting. These guides are available free wherever licenses are sold, and are posted online.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## LICENSES and PERMITS

### GENERAL HUNTER LICENSING

Persons who take or attempt to take game are considered hunters and therefore subject to licensing requirements. Unless license exempt, hunters and trappers must obtain and carry while in the field proof of license or permit purchase whether printed, electronic or department authorization number while performing any act authorized by the license or permit.

Persons who cannot show they are licensed properly while hunting risk being issued a citation.

Each hunter and trapper must have his or her own license or permit unless exempt. Paper licenses and permits must be signed before the hunter goes afield.

### LICENSE-EXEMPT HUNTERS

In some cases, a resident hunter may not be required to buy a hunting license or game permits. Here are those situations:

- Children younger than 12 (resident or nonresident) are not required to purchase licenses and permits, except the elk hunt drawing application. Hunters eligible to participate in the free youth hunting and trapping week or

### *Lose your license or permit?*

Reprint your licenses or permits free any time in "My Profile" at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

### *Other laws apply!*

Hunters exempt from buying licenses and permits are required to follow hunting season laws, bag limits, comply with the hunter orange clothing law, and follow hunter harvest recording, checking and tagging requirements. Kentucky landowners, their legal dependents and their tenants are subject to the usual license requirements anytime they hunt somewhere other than their own lands.

free youth deer hunting weekend, and adults who accompany a youth hunter but are not hunting themselves, are not required to have a license or permit during these seasons. Daily and season limits for hunters younger than 12 follow statewide hunting regulations.

- Kentucky resident owners of farmlands, their spouses and dependent children hunting upon their own farmlands during an open season
- Tenants, their spouses and dependent children hunting on farmlands where they reside and work
  - Kentucky residents on military leave of more than three days in this state who carry identification and papers verifying their leave status
  - Members of the U.S. Armed Forces based in Kentucky engaged

in sport hunting or fishing on these Kentucky National Guard properties: Hidden Valley Training Area in Powell County, and the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center in Muhlenberg County

### SHOOTING PRESERVE LICENSE

A shooting preserve license, available online only at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov), is valid for one license year only, and only at the shooting preserve indicated at the time of purchase.

### HIP SURVEYS

In addition to purchasing a migratory bird/waterfowl permit, or any license that includes it, hunters who intend to hunt migratory birds must go online and fill out the Harvest Information Program (HIP) questions before they are legal migratory bird hunters. Only those who plan to hunt migratory birds need to complete the HIP survey.

The process takes less than five minutes. On the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife webpage at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov), click on the "My Profile" tab. This takes you to a page that asks for some basic information to confirm your identity. After completing the HIP questions, you will receive a confirmation number that must be written on your hunting license or Kentucky migratory bird/waterfowl hunting permit.

## HOW TO BUY LICENSES and PERMITS

It is the hunter's responsibility to know what type of license or permit is needed. You must provide your date of birth and Social Security number to buy a license or permit. Questions? Call Kentucky Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-858-1549, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time).

### ONLINE

Purchase licenses and permits online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Accepted payment methods include Visa, Mastercard, American Express or Discover card, or a Kentucky Fish and Wildlife gift certificate. Gift certificates are sold online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Paper copies of licenses and permits will not be mailed to hunters. However,

hunters may print their own copy from the My Profile section of the department website. Hunters must carry this copy or their license/permit authorization number and a picture ID while hunting.

### IN PERSON

Go to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) to find locations to purchase licenses and permits in person.

	LICENSE / PERMIT	Resident fee	Nonresident fee
LICENSES	<b>Annual Fishing</b>	\$23	\$55
	<b>Joint Married Couple Annual Fishing</b>	\$42	Not available
	<b>1-Day Fishing</b>	\$7	\$15
	<b>3-Year Fishing</b> (available online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> only)	\$55	Not available
	<b>Nonresident 7-Day Fishing</b>	Not available	\$35
	<b>Trout Permit</b>		\$10
	<b>Annual Hunting</b>	\$27	<b>\$160</b>
	<b>1-Day Hunting</b> (not valid for deer, elk, turkey or bear)	\$7	\$25
	<b>7-Day Hunting</b> (not valid for deer, elk, turkey or bear)	Not available	\$65
	<b>Annual Youth Hunting</b> (ages 12-15 only)	\$6	\$10
	<b>Shooting Area License</b> (available online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> only)		\$5
	<b>Annual Trapping</b>	\$20	\$130
	<b>Annual Landowner/Tenant Trapping</b>	\$10	Not available
<b>Annual Youth Trapping</b> (ages 12-15)	\$5	Not available	
COMBOS	<b>Annual Combination Hunting/Fishing License</b>	\$42	Not available
	<b>Sportsman's License*</b> (Includes combination hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits, Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit and trout permit.)	\$95	Not available
	<b>Senior/Disabled Sportsman's License*</b> (Includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license. For residents age 65 or older, OR with disability license authorization.)	\$12	Not available
	<b>Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License*</b> (Must maintain Kentucky residency; includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license. For residents age 65 or older.)	\$180	Not available
	<b>Youth</b> (ages 12-15) <b>Sportsman's License*</b> (Includes hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits and Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit.)	\$30	Not available
DEER	<b>Statewide Deer Permit</b> (four deer)	\$35	<b>\$235</b>
	<b>Youth</b> (ages 12-15) <b>Deer Permit</b> (four deer)	\$10	\$15
	<b>Additional Deer Permit</b> (two deer)		\$15
BIRDS	<b>Spring Turkey Permit</b> (statewide) (two turkeys)	\$30	<b>\$110</b>
	<b>Youth</b> (ages 12-15) <b>Turkey Permit</b> (one turkey, spring or fall)	\$10	\$15
	<b>Fall Turkey Permit</b> (statewide)(two turkeys)	\$30	<b>\$110</b>
	<b>Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit</b>		\$15
	<b>Federal Duck Stamp</b> (available at post offices and online at <a href="http://www.duckstamp.com">www.duckstamp.com</a> )		\$25
	<b>Pheasant Quota Hunt Permit</b> (if drawn)		\$25
	<b>Sandhill Crane Permit</b> (quota hunt, apply in Sept. at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> )	\$3	\$3
ELK	<b>Elk Hunt Drawing Application</b> (deadline April 30)		\$10
	<b>Youth Elk Drawing Application</b> (ages 15 and under)		\$10
	<b>Quota Bull Elk Firearm Permit</b> (if drawn)	\$100	\$550
	<b>Quota Cow Elk Firearm Permit</b> (if drawn)	\$60	\$400
	<b>Quota</b> (either sex) <b>Archery/Crossbow Permit</b> (if drawn)	\$100	\$550
	<b>Quota Youth</b> (ages 12-15) <b>Elk Permit</b> (if drawn; youth drawn for other permits pay full cost)	\$30	\$200
	<b>Out-of-Zone Elk Permit</b>	\$30	\$400
BEAR	<b>Bear Permit</b>	\$30	\$250
	<b>Youth Bear Permit</b> (ages 12-15)	\$10	\$100
	<b>Bear Chase Permit</b>	\$30	\$50
	<b>Youth Bear Chase Permit</b> (ages 12-15)	\$10	\$15
	<b>Combination Bear Permit</b> (includes Bear Permit and Bear Chase Permit)	\$50	Not available
AREAS	<b>Ballard WMA 1-Day Waterfowl Permit</b>		\$15
	<b>Peabody WMA User Permit</b>		\$15
	<b>Land Between The Lakes (LBL) Hunter Use Permit</b>		\$25
	<b>Land Between The Lakes (LBL) Hunt/Backcountry Camp</b>		\$50
	<b>Otter Creek ORA Admission Fees</b> (per person)	Check online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> for current status of all Otter Creek fees	
<b>Otter Creek ORA Special Activity Fees</b> (per person, for use of horse trails, mountain bike trails and shooting range)			
OTHER	<b>Bobcat Permit</b> (required for hunters)		Free
	<b>Temporary Hunter Education Exemption Permit</b> (Hunter Apprentice Opportunity; available online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> only)		Free

\*Peabody, LBL and Otter Creek permits, elk drawing application, elk quota hunt permit, out-of-zone elk permit, bear permit, federal duck stamp and trapping license not included. An additional deer permit is not included with a Sportsman's License. Kentucky's license year begins March 1 and continues through the last day of February. New licenses are required annually, except for the 3-year fishing license and the Lifetime Sportsman's License. A 1-day or 7-day hunting or fishing license is valid only for the period shown on license. Resident and nonresident youths under the age of 12 are not required to purchase licenses or permits (except the elk hunt drawing application).

## RESIDENT SENIOR OR DISABLED SPORTSMAN'S LICENSES

Seniors and persons with qualified disabilities may purchase discounted licenses to hunt and fish. These are only available for Kentucky residents. The senior and disabled sportsman's licenses include: annual fishing and hunting licenses, permits for deer, spring and fall turkeys, migratory bird/waterfowl and trout.

**Senior sportsman's license:**

Available to Kentucky residents 65 or older. (Seniors may also purchase the senior lifetime sportsman's license.)

**Disabled sportsman's license:**

Available to Kentucky residents who meet the disability criteria in state law and obtain a disability authorization.

Note: Disabled residents 65 and older can purchase a senior sportsman's license instead of the disabled sportsman's license. The senior sportsman's license only requires proof of age. Both licenses cost the same and include the same licenses and permits.

**How to get a disabled sportsman's license:**

1. Obtain proof of disability allowed by state law
2. Submit disability proof to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife
3. Obtain disability authorization
4. Buy license online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or anywhere licenses are sold

**1 OBTAIN PROOF OF DISABILITY THROUGH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES**

- **Federal Social Security Administration:** Obtain a Benefit Verification Letter certifying you are disabled and receive benefits. Forms should not be more than 6 months old. To get a Benefit Verification Letter: Contact your local Social Security office, call 1-800-772-1213 or go online to [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

Benefit letters must show disability qualification and include your name, address, date of birth, the last 4 digits of your social security number and the benefit amount.

- **Veterans Affairs:** Obtain letter verifying that you are at least 50 percent disabled as a result of a service-connected disability. The letter must include your current address and Social Security number.
- **State Workers' Compensation Board:** Request an application from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife and send the completed form to the state Workers' Compensation Board.
- **U.S. Railroad Retirement Board:** Obtain letter stating you are permanently and totally disabled and show current address.
- **Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System:** Obtain written documentation stating you are on disability retirement and show a current address.
- **U.S. Office of Personnel Management:** Obtain certification of employment, certification of 100 percent disabled from a recognized authority, and show a current address.

**2 SEND PROOF OF DISABILITY TO KENTUCKY FISH AND WILDLIFE:**

- Online: Visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Select "MyProfile." Select "Disability Authorization." Upload your file.
- By mail: KDFWR Disabled License, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601
- By fax: (502) 564-9845
- Questions? Call 1-800-858-1549 or email [Info.Center@ky.gov](mailto:Info.Center@ky.gov)

**3 OBTAIN DISABILITY AUTHORIZATION**

**Disability authorization.** You will receive disability authorization once your proof of disability is verified. This authorization is necessary to purchase a disabled sportsman's license. This authorization is valid for 3 years. It is not a hunting or fishing license. While

you must carry a license while you are hunting or fishing, you do not need to carry proof of disability authorization. This is why Kentucky Fish and Wildlife no longer mails disability authorization cards. Residents may still print their own copy of a disability authorization card by going online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and clicking on MyProfile.

**Approval notification.** Check your application status by accessing your "My Profile" account at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

**Disability authorizations are only valid for 3 years.** Go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and access "MyProfile" to see your authorization expiration date. Repeat these steps to reapply. However, if you received your disability authorization through Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board or U.S. Office of Personnel Management, you may call Kentucky Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-858-1549 to renew over the phone.

**4 BUY LICENSE**

Once you have the disability authorization, you may buy your discounted disabled sportsman's license online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. You cannot buy this license if your disability authorization has expired. Disabled sportsman's licenses are valid through the end of February each year. The disability authorization, which you need in order to obtain a license, stays in effect for three years. Use the "MyProfile" tab online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) to view, print or reprint your license at home anytime for free.

## WHICH LICENSE OR PERMIT DO I NEED?

The tables below provide a quick overview of current licensing requirements. See the rest of this section for exemptions and complete residency, licensing and hunter education requirements. Licenses and permits for the species below are not required for children younger than 12.

KENTUCKY RESIDENTS	Ages 12-15	Ages 16-64	Ages 65 and older OR Disabled
<b>Deer</b>	Youth Hunting License* + Youth Deer Permit*	Annual Hunting License† + Statewide Deer Permit†	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License
<b>Fall Turkey</b>	Youth Hunting License* + Youth Turkey Permit*	Annual Hunting License† + Fall Turkey Permit†	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License
<b>Spring Turkey</b>	Youth Hunting License* + Youth Turkey Permit*	Annual Hunting License† + Spring Turkey Permit†	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License
<b>Small Game &amp; Furbearer</b>	Youth Hunting License*	Annual† or 1-Day Hunting License	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License
	Bobcat permit required for bobcat hunters		
<b>Trapping</b>	Annual Youth Trapping License	Annual or Landowner/Tenant Trapping License	Annual or Landowner/Tenant Trapping License
<b>Migratory Birds</b> (dove, snipe, woodcock, rails, gallinules, sandhill cranes)	Youth Hunting License*	Annual† or 1-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/ Waterfowl Permit†	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License
<b>Waterfowl</b> (ducks, geese, coots and mergansers)	Youth Hunting License*	Annual† or 1-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit† + <b>Federal Duck Stamp</b>	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License + <b>Federal Duck Stamp</b>

\*Included in Youth Sportsman's License

†Included in Resident Sportsman's License

NONRESIDENTS (must buy nonresident licenses/permits)	Ages 12-15	Ages 16 and older
<b>Deer</b>	Youth Hunting License + Youth Deer Permit	Annual Hunting License + Statewide Deer Permit
<b>Fall Turkey</b>	Youth Hunting License + Youth Turkey Permit	Annual Hunting License + Fall Turkey Permit
<b>Spring Turkey</b>	Youth Hunting License + Youth Turkey Permit	Annual Hunting License + Spring Turkey Permit
<b>Small Game &amp; Furbearer</b>	Youth Hunting License	Annual, 1-Day or 7-Day Hunting License
	Bobcat permit required for bobcat hunters	
<b>Trapping</b>	Annual Trapping License	Annual Trapping License
<b>Migratory Birds</b> (dove, snipe, woodcock, rails, gallinules, sandhill cranes)	Youth Hunting License	Annual, 1-Day or 7-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit
<b>Waterfowl</b> (ducks, geese, coots and mergansers)	Youth Hunting License	Annual, 1-Day or 7-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit + <b>Federal Duck Stamp</b>

## LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

### RESIDENT LICENSING

A resident is any person who has established permanent domicile and legal residence, and has resided in Kentucky for 30 days prior to buying a license, full-time students enrolled in a Kentucky

educational institution for at least six months, or military service personnel on permanent assignment in Kentucky.

### NONRESIDENT LICENSING

A person who does not meet the

definition of a Kentucky resident is considered a nonresident and must purchase nonresident licenses and permits. Nonresident youth hunters are subject to the same license and permit requirements as resident youth hunters. A non-

resident who owns land in Kentucky must purchase nonresident licenses and permits.

### YOUTH LICENSING

Resident and nonresident hunters younger than 12 are not required to purchase licenses and permits, except they must apply for quota hunts.

Resident and nonresident hunters ages 12-15 are eligible to purchase discounted youth licenses and permits, which are valid for the entire license

year if they are purchased before the youth is 16.

Persons 15 years of age and younger who hunt turkey, elk, deer or bear with a firearm must always be accompanied by an adult. Persons under 12 years old, who have passed a hunter education course, may hunt small game, furbearers and migratory birds/waterfowl without being accompanied by an adult.

The annual youth hunting license authorizes the holder to hunt all small game species, furbearers and migratory

bird species. Hunters 15 and younger are exempt from purchasing a state migratory bird/waterfowl permit, and a duck stamp.

A youth deer permit allows the hunter to take four deer. To harvest more than four deer, a youth hunter must purchase an additional deer permit. The youth turkey permit may be used during any turkey season. The resident-only youth sportsman's license includes the same licenses and permits as the standard sportsman's license.

## RECORDING, CHECKING, TAGGING and TRANSPORTING

The following regulations apply to all deer, elk, turkey, bear, bobcat and otter taken by hunters or trappers, including landowners and other license-exempt hunters.

### HARVEST LOG

All successful hunters and trappers, including those who are license exempt, must fill out a harvest log as soon as the animal is harvested and prior to moving the carcass. Information that must be written on the harvest log includes the species and sex of animal taken, date and county where taken. A telecheck confirmation number must be obtained and recorded on the harvest log. A harvest log is included with any paper license or permit purchased from a license agent. A printable harvest log is accessible by clicking the "Hunt" tab on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife online homepage and choosing "Hunting Home" from the dropdown menu.

License-exempt hunters, children younger than 12 years old, and those who only have a license authoriza-

tion number may create their own harvest log by writing the information on a piece of paper or index card. Hunters and trappers must have the completed harvest log in their possession whenever afield during the current season.

### TELECHECK

#### 1-800-CHK-GAME (1-800-245-4263)

All deer, turkey, elk, bobcat, river otters and sandhill cranes harvested must be telechecked through the toll-free, automated check-in system. Hunters may also check in harvested animals online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Entering false information is unlawful. Multiple animals may be telechecked during the same call.

Hunters who harvest a bear during any bear hunting season must telecheck the bear by 8 p.m. Eastern time the day that it was harvested, and also call 1-800-858-1549 within 24 hours of harvest to arrange for a physical check of the animal and receive a tag issued by the department. All other harvested animals must be telechecked by midnight on the day the animal is recovered and prior to processing the carcass. Bobcats and river otters must be telechecked prior to leaving Kentucky.

If the hide or head is removed from the carcass of a harvested deer or elk before the animal is telechecked, the hunter must demonstrate proof of the sex of the deer or elk. See the deer and elk hunting sections in this guide for details.

Telecheck is available 24 hours a day while hunting seasons are open. Listen to each question carefully and pro-



vide the requested information using the keypad on any touch tone phone.

Callers will be asked their Social Security number and code for the county in which the animal was taken. All youth hunters must use their Social Security number when telechecking an animal.

Callers must also indicate the animal's species and sex. Deer hunters who take male fawns (button bucks) should check the deer as "male" and then choose "no visible antler" when prompted.

Next, callers will be asked about the type of equipment they used to harvest the animal, whether the land was private or public, and the type of license they used.

Youths under 12, youths who check deer during the Free Youth Deer Hunting Weekend, or license exempt military personnel should select "statewide license."

Once the harvest information has been entered correctly, the caller will be asked to hold for several seconds while the system submits the survey information. The hunter then will be given a confirmation number, which is proof that the harvested animal was legally reported. This number must be recorded on the hunter's log and retained throughout the season.

### CARCASS TAG

A hunter shall attach a handmade tag to the carcass of any harvested deer, elk, turkey, bear, bobcat, or otter if transferring possession of the harvested animal to another person.

For example, a carcass tag is required if the hunter gives the animal to another

**Q:** Due to a cell phone dropped call, a hunter loses a confirmation number. Should the animal be checked in again?

**A:** Try again until you get the confirmation number, and then contact the department at 1-800-858-1549 the next business day to report the incident.

**KENTUCKY COUNTY CODE NUMBERS FOR TELECHECK**

001	Adair	021	Carroll	041	Grant	061	Knox	081	Mason	101	Robertson
002	Allen	022	Carter	042	Graves	062	LaRue	082	Meade	102	Rockcastle
003	Anderson	023	Casey	043	Grayson	063	Laurel	083	Menifee	103	Rowan
004	Ballard	024	Christian	044	Green	064	Lawrence	084	Mercer	104	Russell
005	Barren	025	Clark	045	Greenup	065	Lee	085	Metcalfe	105	Scott
006	Bath	026	Clay	046	Hancock	066	Leslie	086	Monroe	106	Shelby
007	Bell	027	Clinton	047	Hardin	067	Letcher	087	Montgomery	107	Simpson
008	Boone	028	Crittenden	048	Harlan	068	Lewis	088	Morgan	108	Spencer
009	Bourbon	029	Cumberland	049	Harrison	069	Lincoln	089	Muhlenberg	109	Taylor
010	Boyd	030	Daviess	050	Hart	070	Livingston	090	Nelson	110	Todd
011	Boyle	031	Edmonson	051	Henderson	071	Logan	091	Nicholas	111	Trigg
012	Bracken	032	Elliott	052	Henry	072	Lyon	092	Ohio	112	Trimble
013	Breathitt	033	Estill	053	Hickman	073	McCracken	093	Oldham	113	Union
014	Breckinridge	034	Fayette	054	Hopkins	074	McCreary	094	Owen	114	Warren
015	Bullitt	035	Fleming	055	Jackson	075	McLean	095	Owsley	115	Washington
016	Butler	036	Floyd	056	Jefferson	076	Madison	096	Pendleton	116	Wayne
017	Caldwell	037	Franklin	057	Jessamine	077	Magoffin	097	Perry	117	Webster
018	Calloway	038	Fulton	058	Johnson	078	Marion	098	Pike	118	Whitley
019	Campbell	039	Gallatin	059	Kenton	079	Marshall	099	Powell	119	Wolfe
020	Carlisle	040	Garrard	060	Knott	080	Martin	100	Pulaski	120	Woodford

er person, drops it off to be processed, or takes the head and cape to a taxidermist.

A harvested animal in a hunter's possession is assumed theirs, unless the carcass tag states otherwise.

The carcass tag must include the hunter's name, phone number and telecheck confirmation number.

Hunters who harvest a bear during any bear season must attach a department-issued carcass tag after having the bear inspected by department personnel. Call 1-800-858-1549 within 24 hours of harvest to arrange for the bear carcass to be inspected and the carcass tag to be issued.

**CITES TAG**

A Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) tag, issued by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, must be attached immediately upon receipt to the raw fur, pelt or unskinned carcass of any bobcat or river otter taken in Kentucky if the hunter or trapper intends to sell it or export it

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Kentucky Fish & Wildlife is collecting lower jaws from hunted and trapped bobcats and river otters for a population study. Please contact the department at 1-800-858-1549 to request a sample packet and instructions.



internationally.

To request a CITES tag, log on to "My Profile" at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

CITES tags must immediately be attached to the animal or pelt per the instructions included with the mailed tag and remain attached until it is processed or exported outside the United

States. Possession of an unused CITES tag is prohibited.

**TRANSPORTING HARVESTED ANIMALS**

Hunters may not return to Kentucky with whole carcasses of deer, elk, moose or caribou harvested in another state. Deboned meat and cleaned skulls/antlers are allowable. See page 11 for additional requirements.

An unchecked animal taken in Kentucky may not be transported out of Kentucky.

Raw furs and hides may only be sold to a licensed fur buyer, fur processor or taxidermist.

Butchers, meat processors, and licensed taxidermists shall dispose of any unused cervid carcass material or waste product by proper burial, removal by a duly licensed rendering establishment, or deposit into a contained landfill approved pursuant to KRS Chapter 224 (KRS 150.722).

**GENERAL HUNTING REGULATIONS**

**LANDOWNER PERMISSION**

A person shall not enter upon the lands of another to shoot, hunt, trap and fish or for other wildlife-related recreational purposes without the verbal or written permission of the landowner, tenant, or person who has authority to grant permission. Those who fail to obtain permission are subject to arrest and prosecution. Railroad tracks and rights-of-way

are privately owned property and permission to hunt, trap or fish must be obtained prior to entry. Landowners are under no obligation to allow hunters to retrieve game or hunting dogs from their property.

**HUNTER EDUCATION**

Persons born on or after Jan. 1, 1975 must carry proof of valid hunter education certification. Hunters may use

hunting licenses or electronic documentation with proof of identity. Persons not required to have licenses or permits are exempt from hunter education certification. Go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and search under the keywords "hunter education" for exemptions to the live fire training portion of the program. Hunter education courses are available online and held throughout the state. Pre-registra-

tion must be done online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). More information about the registration process is available on the website or by calling Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. Children must be at least 9 years old to take the hunter education test. Hunter education documents issued by other states are valid in Kentucky. Children younger than 12 years old are exempt from hunter education certification, but must be accompanied by an adult who meets the hunter education requirement. The adult must be in a position to take immediate control of the bow or firearm at all times while hunting. One adult cannot accompany more than two hunters younger than 12 years old at the same time.

### APPRENTICE HUNTING OPPORTUNITY

Persons new to hunting who have not taken the hunter education course may obtain a one-time temporary hunter education exemption permit online for free at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

This one-time permit allows new hunters in Kentucky to hunt for one year without taking hunter education courses. The permit must be carried while hunting and requires its holder to hunt with a licensed, adult hunter (at least 18 years old) who meets the hunter education requirement. The adult shall be in a position to take immediate control of the exempted hunter's bow or firearm at all times while hunting. This law applies even if the exemption permit holder is an adult.

After the hunter education exemption permit expires, the hunter is no longer exempt and must successfully complete a hunter education course.

The temporary hunter education exemption permit is valid only in Kentucky. It is not accepted at Blue Grass Army Depot or Fort Campbell.

Resident landowners, spouses and dependent children, tenants, their spouses and their dependent children are only hunter education exempt on property they own, or the property where they reside and work. When hunting elsewhere, they must comply with Kentucky's hunter education law.

### REPLACEMENT HUNTER EDUCATION CARDS

Free replacement hunter education cards can be printed online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). On the homepage, click on the "Educa-

tion" tab and select the "Hunter Education" box, and click the Hunter Education/Boater Education Card Print link.

### HUNTER ORANGE CLOTHING LAW

All hunters, and persons accompanying them, must wear outer garments of hunter orange color visible from all sides on the head, back and chest when hunting during daylight hours for any species during modern gun, muzzle-loader and youth firearm deer seasons, or a firearm elk or firearm bear season.

Waterfowl and dove hunters are exempt from this requirement.

Hunter orange garments can be of mesh type material, as long as openings in the mesh weave are no wider than one-quarter inch by any measurement. Garments may display a small portion of another color.

The following are common examples of violations related to hunter orange clothing:

- Wearing camouflage-patterned hunter orange garments without additional solid hunter orange clothing on the head, back and chest.
- Taking off hunter orange clothing while on a stand or in a blind.
- Not wearing hunter orange while hunting squirrel, rabbit or quail during an open firearms deer or elk season.

Hunters using archery or crossbow equipment during deer firearms seasons must wear hunter orange clothing.

Whenever gun deer hunting is allowed on a wildlife management area or state park, a person who will be hunting from inside a ground blind must first attach a hat or vest made of solid, unbroken hunter orange material to the blind so it is visible from all sides. Hunter orange clothing requirements still apply for anyone inside the blind.

Hunters are not required to wear hunter orange clothing or display hunter orange on ground blinds during a firearms season on a state owned or managed WMA where firearms hunting for deer, elk or bear is prohibited.

### SHOOTING HOURS

Unless otherwise noted, shooting hours for most species in this guide are 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset. Exceptions include waterfowl, migratory birds, raccoons, coyotes, turtles and frogs. Hunters may be in the field outside of shooting hours.

Raccoons and opossums may be taken day or night, except during modern gun deer season when raccoon and opossum hunting is permitted only at night.

Exceptions also apply for coyotes. See the Furbearer Hunting & Trapping section.

### HUNTING METHOD EXEMPTIONS

The department grants exemptions to hunters with certain physical disabilities to hunt with a crossbow during archery-only seasons, or to use a stationary vehicle as a hunting platform. Hunters with a qualifying physical disability must have an exemption form completed and signed by a licensed physician certifying why the exemption is necessary.

Forms are available online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). A completed exemption form serves as the hunter's exemption permit. It should not be returned to the department. Persons with an exemption must carry the form in the field, in addition to the appropriate hunting license and permits.

### PROHIBITED HUNTING METHODS

- No person shall discharge any firearm, bow and arrow, crossbow or similar device, upon or across any public roadway.
- No person shall take or attempt to take any wildlife, protected or unprotected, from an automobile, or other vehicle, except as prescribed by regulation. Hunting from boats is permitted for small game and furbearers.
- No person shall use an aircraft to: harass wildlife, shoot or attempt to shoot with the purpose of capturing or killing wildlife.
- A person shall not pursue, chase or take a deer, elk or turkey (during the spring turkey season) with the aid of dogs; while on horseback; or when a deer, elk or bear is swimming. Dogs may be used to locate and flush turkeys during the fall turkey seasons only.
- It is illegal to feed bears directly or indirectly for any reason.
- No person shall take wildlife with the aid of fire, explosives, smoke or gas.
- Baiting is prohibited on all WMAs, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Daniel Boone National Forest, Jefferson National Forest, Land Between The Lakes and state parks open to hunting.
- Deer and elk hunters shall not use electronic decoys or electronic calls.
- No person shall take a turkey when

the turkey is roosting. A roost is the place, typically a tree, where a turkey spends the night.

- Live wild turkeys cannot be used as decoys.
- Wild turkey or bears shall not be hunted by the aid of bait, nor shall areas be hunted where bait is present. This includes private lands baited for deer. An area is considered baited for 30 days after all bait has been removed.
- A baited area is any place where feed, grains or other substances capable of luring game animals have been placed. An area where grains or other feeds exist as the result of a bona fide agricultural practice or manipulation of a crop (food plot) for wildlife management purposes is legal for hunting.

### **CONCEALED CARRY DEADLY WEAPONS**

Anyone who may legally possess firearms may carry any legal firearms while hunting, but only legal methods may be used to take game.

### **CONVICTED FELONS**

A person convicted of a felony is prohibited from possessing or hunting with a firearm in Kentucky. Breech and muzzle-loading rifles, shotguns and handguns are all considered firearms. The prohibition on handguns applies to those convicted after Jan. 1, 1975. The prohibition on other firearms applies to those convicted after July 15, 1994. See KRS 527.040 for more details, or contact your County Attorney.

### **SPOTLIGHTING**

No person may deliberately cast the rays of a spotlight or other artificial light into any field, pasture, woodlands or forest, whether public or private, where wildlife or domestic livestock may reasonably be expected to be located. Shining artificial lights into private residences or other structures also is prohibited.

This does not apply to: headlights of vehicles engaged in a normal course of travel; lights being used in legitimate agricultural activities; anyone involved in activities legitimate to his or her business or occupation; circumstances including lawful hunting activities; or any landowner, his or her immediate family, or any paid employee while working on his or her land at that time.

No person shall take wildlife, except

raccoons, opossums, coyotes, frogs and fish, using lights or other means designed to blind wildlife or make wildlife visible at night. Exceptions apply for coyotes. See the Furbearer Hunting & Trapping section.

### **GAME CALLING DEVICES and RESTRICTIONS**

- Hand or mouth-operated calls may be used in hunting all species.
- A hunter may use electronic calls or attracting devices for furbearers during the furbearer season.
- Mechanical or electronic calls may be used to take crows during crow season.
- Deer, turkey and elk hunters shall not use or possess electronic calling devices.

### **TRANSPORTATION and HOLDING OF LIVE NATIVE WILDLIFE**

A person may not take, possess or transport live wildlife without a permit when prescribed by regulation.

A person shall not hold live native wildlife in captivity that was not legally taken or possessed. Persons shall not buy or sell, offer to buy or sell, trade, or barter native wildlife or parts thereof obtained from the wild, unless in possession of the proper up-to-date commercial or non-commercial captive wildlife permit per each holding facility. Wildlife without legal permits may be confiscated and the holder fined.

Orphaned wildlife may only be possessed by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Persons transporting live deer, elk or moose (cervids) without proper documentation or permits, or holding live deer captive in unpermitted facilities or pens, may be fined. Animals may be confiscated or destroyed.

Legally trapped rabies vector species shall be dispatched before being moved unless immediately released at the capture site. Permit holders shall report all bites and exposure to their local county health department within twelve (12) hours. If a legally obtained native mammal in possession bites a person or shows symptoms of a rabies infection, the animal shall be dispatched immediately. Permit holders shall immediately submit the animal heads for testing to an approved laboratory.

### **DOG TRAINING and HUNTING WITH DOGS**

Hunters may run or train dogs

for rabbits, foxes, coyotes, raccoons and opossums year-round. Game may only be harvested during an open hunting season.

Some WMAs have special restrictions on using dogs. All members of the party must have a valid hunting license (unless license-exempt) to pursue rabbits or furbearers, even when training dogs without taking game.

Dogs may not be used to chase or hunt deer and elk. Dogs may be used to chase or hunt bears if a legal season is open.

Dogs are permitted for locating and flushing turkeys during the fall turkey season only. Dogs on leash may track and locate wounded deer, elk and bear. Except during the hunting season, raccoon and opossum hunters shall not use any device to force a raccoon or opossum from trees or dens. Raccoon squallers may be used year-round.

### **BOBWHITE SHOOT-TO-TRAIN SEASON**

For the purpose of bird dog training on private lands only, pen-reared bobwhite quail may be harvested Aug. 15 through May 15 (excluding bobwhite hunting season), provided that prior to shooting a person must:

- Submit a completed application to the department
- Possess a valid hunting license, or be license-exempt
- Possess proof of the sale/ownership of the birds
- Possess a captive wildlife permit for pen-reared bobwhite if more than 100 birds are in possession, or if kept for more than 10 days
- Make sure that the training area is free of wild quail
- Band pen-reared birds before release with No. 7 leg bands or department-supplied bands.

### **HUNTING WITH A SUPPRESSOR**

A person with a federal permit for a firearm noise suppressor (silencer) may use it to hunt legal game animals. A valid hunting license is required.

### **WANTON WASTE**

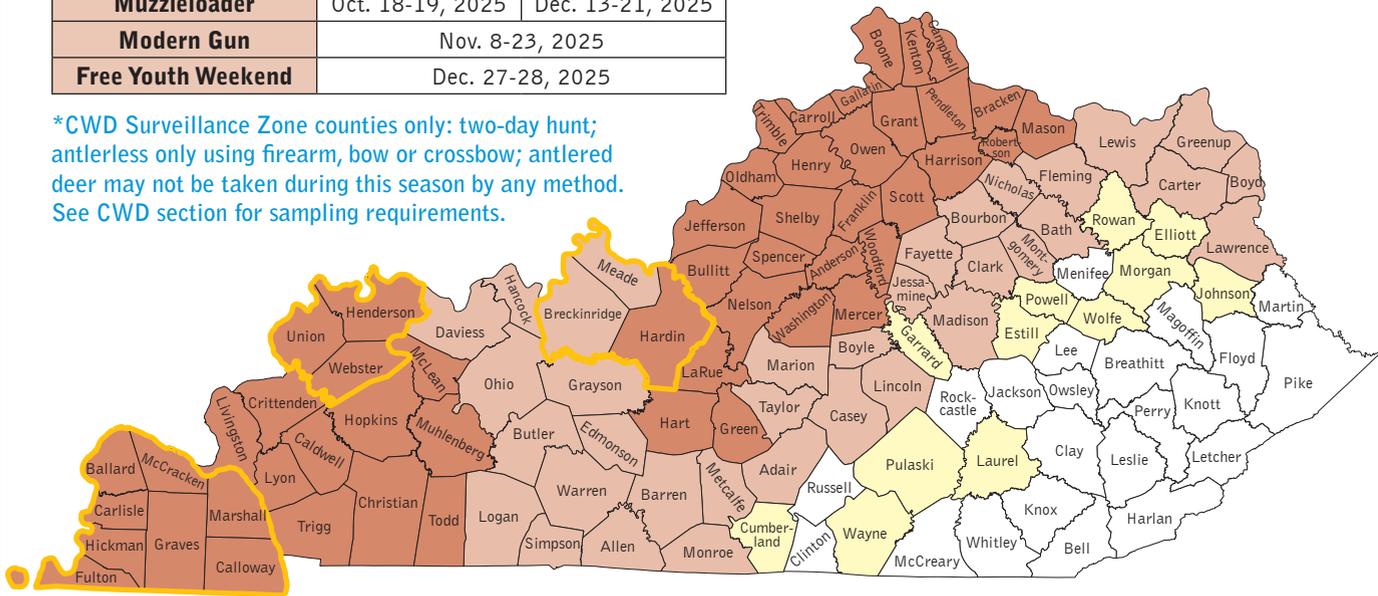
Hunters are required to make a reasonable effort to recover big game and upland birds harvested, including removal of edible parts from the field.

# DEER HUNTING

## 2025-26 DEER HUNTING ZONES and SEASONS

DEER	Early Season	Late Season
Archery	Sept. 6, 2025 - Jan. 19, 2026	
Youth/Senior Crossbow	Sept. 6, 2025 - Jan. 19, 2026	
Crossbow	Sept. 20, 2025 - Jan. 19, 2026	
Special season*	Sept. 27-28, 2025	
Youth-only Gun	Oct. 11-19, 2025	
Muzzleloader	Oct. 18-19, 2025	Dec. 13-21, 2025
Modern Gun	Nov. 8-23, 2025	
Free Youth Weekend	Dec. 27-28, 2025	

\*CWD Surveillance Zone counties only: two-day hunt; antlerless only using firearm, bow or crossbow; antlered deer may not be taken during this season by any method. See CWD section for sampling requirements.



CWD Surveillance Zone, see pg. 13 Zone 1 Zone 2 Zone 3 Zone 4

DEER BAG LIMITS	
Only one antlered deer may be harvested statewide, regardless of zone or method.	
<b>ZONE 1</b>	A hunter may harvest an unlimited number of antlerless deer in Zone 1 using the statewide deer permit and additional deer permits.
<b>ZONE 2</b>	A hunter may harvest no more than four deer in Zone 2.
<b>ZONE 3</b>	A hunter may harvest no more than four deer in Zone 3. A firearm or air gun cannot be used to take more than one antlerless deer.
<b>ZONE 4</b>	A hunter may harvest no more than two deer in Zone 4. Only one can be antlerless. Antlerless deer cannot be harvested during the modern gun season, the early muzzleloader season or the first six days of the late muzzleloader season. The statewide bag limit of one antlered deer still applies.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- The statewide deer permit and youth deer permit allow for the harvest of up to four deer. Hunters may take up to one antlered deer and three antlerless deer, or four antlerless deer using the statewide deer permit.
- A hunter may take as many deer as allowed in each zone. In order to take more than four deer statewide, an additional deer permit must be purchased.
- Each additional deer permit allows a hunter to take up to two additional deer. Zone bag limits apply. Using an additional deer permit, a hunter who did not harvest an antlered deer using a statewide or youth deer permit can take either: one antlered deer and up to one antlerless deer; or two antlerless deer.
- Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.
- Hunters must claim any deer they harvest as their own.

**BAG LIMITS**

Bag limits and harvest restrictions apply to all hunters. There is no daily bag limit on deer. A person may take no more than one (1) deer with visible antlers, excluding male fawns (button bucks). However, on some federally controlled areas, including Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, Fort Campbell and Fort Knox military reservations and Blue Grass Army Depot, a bonus antlered deer may be taken, as determined by the governing agency for each area.

**CHECKING and TAGGING**

All deer must be telechecked. Hunters must call 1-800-245-4263 or complete the online check-in process at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). See the “Recording, Checking, Tagging and Transporting” portion of this guide’s “General Information” section for full details.

If the hide or head is removed before the harvested deer is checked in – to quarter the animal, for example – it is necessary to demonstrate proof of sex by retaining the head and the genitalia attached to the carcass. In such cases, it is still necessary to fill out the harvest log immediately after harvest and telecheck the animal before midnight on the day the deer is harvested or recovered.

A carcass tag is required if a harvested deer leaves the hunter’s possession for any reason.

**STATEWIDE DEER PERMIT**

All deer hunters ages 16 and older, unless license exempt, must first buy and carry proof of purchasing an annual

*Carry proof*

Hunters who buy their license or permit by phone or internet must carry while hunting: a picture ID and proof of purchase (an authorization number, paper license or computer print out). Paper licenses/permits must be signed and all information completed before hunting.

hunting license and a statewide deer permit while deer hunting. The permit allows a hunter to take four deer: one antlered and three antlerless, or four antlerless. It does not matter if the antlered or antlerless deer is taken first.

**ADDITIONAL DEER PERMIT**

To take more than four deer, an additional deer permit must be purchased. The additional deer permit is valid for deer of either sex. The additional deer permit allows a hunter to take up to two additional deer beyond those allowed by the statewide permit in the following combinations: one antlered and one antlerless, or two antlerless. Regardless of what permit a deer hunter carries, the statewide season limit for antlered deer is one per hunter. The additional deer permit is not valid unless the hunter has first purchased an annual hunting license and statewide deer permit and is able to show proof of that in the field. A statewide or additional deer permit may be used on public and private land, and during some quota hunts.

**CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE**

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is fatal to white-tailed deer, elk and other members of the deer family. CWD has been detected in Kentucky.

**STATEWIDE CARCASS IMPORTATION RESTRICTIONS**

It is illegal to bring whole carcasses or parts containing brain material of any member of the deer family into Kentucky from outside the state. Hunters can only bring back the following: deboned meat, antlers, antlers attached to clean skull cap, clean skulls, clean teeth, hides and finished taxidermy products.

**GET INVOLVED**

Hunters can get their Kentucky-harvested deer tested for CWD during the season by:

- Dropping off deer heads at a CWD Sample Drop-off site (see page 14). Heads may be caped out or skull capped, but must include 5 inches of neck.
- Contacting a local biologist by calling 1-800-858-1549.
- Using the “DIY” CWD mail-in kit. Visit [fw.ky.gov/CWD](http://fw.ky.gov/CWD) for more information.

Updated news regarding CWD can be found at [fw.ky.gov/CWD](http://fw.ky.gov/CWD).

**HUNTING EQUIPMENT RESTRICTIONS**

**MODERN GUN SEASON**

During modern gun deer season, hunters may hunt with any centerfire rifle or pistol, including air guns of .35 caliber or larger charged by an external tank, muzzleloaders, and archery and crossbow equipment, and must follow season restrictions, zone guidelines and other hunting requirements.

All hunters, including archery and crossbow hunters, and persons accompa-

nying hunters, must wear hunter orange clothing during modern gun season.

Persons ages 15 and younger hunting deer with a firearm must be accompanied by an adult who shall be in a position to take immediate control of the youth’s firearm at all times.

**ARCHERY SEASON**

Hunters using archery equipment during a deer, elk or bear firearms sea-

*Antler traps*

Devices designed to entangle or trap the antlers of a deer cannot be used.

son must follow all firearms deer season restrictions, zone guidelines and other hunting requirements, and must wear hunter orange clothing. The only exception is on state-owned or managed WMAs where firearms hunting for deer or elk is prohibited.

**CROSSBOW SEASON**

Hunters using crossbows during a deer, elk or bear firearms season must

follow all firearms deer season restrictions, zone guidelines and other hunting requirements, and must wear hunter orange clothing. The only exception is on state-owned or managed WMAs where firearms hunting for deer or elk is prohibited.

A legal resident hunter age 65 years or older and a youth hunter age 15 or younger may hunt deer with a crossbow from the first Saturday in September through the third Monday in January.

## MUZZLELOADER SEASON

Muzzleloaders, archery and crossbow equipment may be used during this season. All hunters must comply with the hunter orange clothing law. Youths ages 15 and younger hunting deer with a muzzleloader must be accompanied by an adult who shall remain able and in a position to take immediate control of the youth's muzzleloader at all times.

## TREE STANDS

Construction and use of tree stands on private lands is regulated by landowners.

### *Hunter orange required!*

During any firearms season for deer, bear or elk: Hunters, trappers and those accompanying them in counties where these seasons are open must wear solid, unbroken hunter orange visible from all sides on the head, back and chest. However, hunter orange is not required while hunting waterfowl or doves, or when hunting furbearers at night during a furbearer season.

### SUBMIT IMAGES OF YOUR DEER'S JAW BONE FOR AGING

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife would like to age your harvested deer. Visit the webpage "Deer Hunting" at [fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Deer.aspx](http://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Deer.aspx) for more information.

## LEGAL DEER HUNTING EQUIPMENT

Scopes are allowed on all hunting equipment (used for statewide seasons).

### MODERN GUN EQUIPMENT

- Any caliber centerfire rifle or centerfire handgun.
- Rifle, handgun or shotgun magazines may not be capable of holding more than 10 rounds.
- Rifles or handguns may not be fully automatic (capable of firing more than one round with one trigger pull).
- Full metal jacketed or tracer bullet ammunition is prohibited.
- Shotguns, no larger than 10-gauge, shooting slug ammunition only (includes sabot bullets).
- Muzzle-loading rifles, handguns, or shotguns shooting round balls, conical bullets, or sabot bullets.
- Air guns of .35 caliber or larger charged by an external tank, shooting single projectile ammunition designed to expand upon impact.

### ARCHERY EQUIPMENT

- Longbows, recurves and compound bows of any draw weight (no minimum).

- Wood, carbon or metal arrows, but arrows may not be chemically treated.
- Fixed blade or mechanical broadheads at least 7/8" wide (when blades extended), but broadheads may not be chemically treated.

### CROSSBOW EQUIPMENT

- Crossbows of any draw weight (no minimum), with a working safety.
- Wood, carbon or metal arrows (bolts), but arrows (bolts) may not be chemically treated.
- Fixed blade or mechanical broadheads at least 7/8" (when blades extended), but broadheads may not be chemically treated.

### MUZZLELOADING EQUIPMENT

- Muzzle-loading rifles or handguns of any caliber, shooting round balls, conical bullets or sabot bullets.
- Muzzle-loading firearms equipped with open sights or telescopic sights (scopes).
- Muzzle-loading shotguns no larger than 10-gauge, shooting round balls, conical bullets or sabot bullets.

## YOUTH DEER HUNTING

### YOUTH DEER HUNTING

Youths may hunt deer during any open season, including two special deer seasons for resident and nonresident hunters who have not reached their 16th birthday.

Adults accompanying youth deer hunters during either of these hunts may not use firearms to take deer.

Adults accompanying youth hunters are not required to possess a hunting license or deer permit if the adult is not deer hunting, but by law, the hunter and the accompanying adults must wear hunter orange clothing.

### YOUTH-ONLY GUN SEASON/ FREE YOUTH DEER HUNTING WEEKEND

The first special youth deer season **begins on the second Saturday in October for nine days.** Youth hunters may

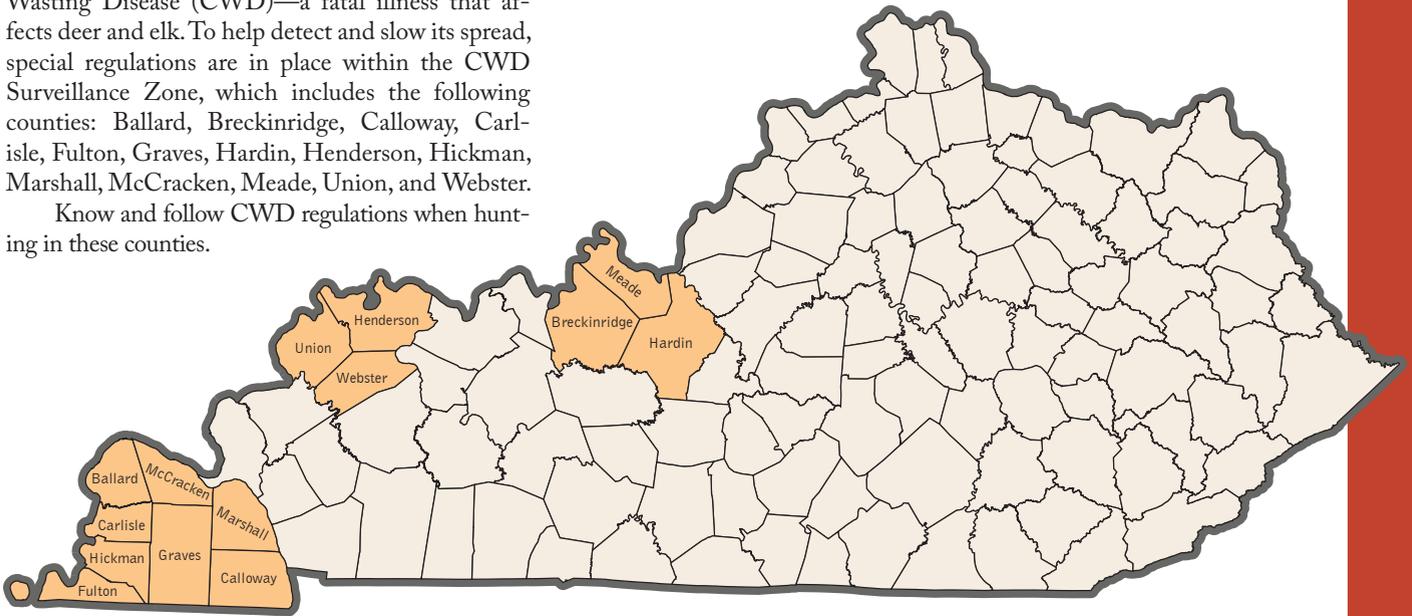
take deer with firearms, or any other legal method, statewide. During the October youth-only firearms season, the appropriate hunting license and deer permits are required for hunters ages 12-15. Youth hunters younger than age 12 are not required to have a hunting license or deer permit. On the first weekend following Christmas, resident and nonresident youth 15 years of age and younger, who are accompanied by an adult, are eligible to participate in the free youth weekend. Youth hunters may hunt deer with firearms, or any other legal method, statewide without a hunting license or deer permit. During these seasons, youth hunters may harvest antlered or antlerless deer regardless of zone but must still abide by all bag limits and other deer hunting requirements.

# SPECIAL DEER REGULATIONS

affecting Ballard, Breckinridge, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hardin, Henderson, Hickman, Marshall, McCracken, Meade, Union and Webster counties

Kentucky is actively monitoring for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)—a fatal illness that affects deer and elk. To help detect and slow its spread, special regulations are in place within the CWD Surveillance Zone, which includes the following counties: Ballard, Breckinridge, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hardin, Henderson, Hickman, Marshall, McCracken, Meade, Union, and Webster.

Know and follow CWD regulations when hunting in these counties.



## BAITING and FEEDING RESTRICTIONS

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to allow the use of grain, feed, mineral blocks, salt blocks, and other baits to attract deer within the CWD Surveillance Zone, provided that bait is not distributed through a contact feeder (e.g., trough, funnel feeders and gravity feeders without broadcasting capabilities). This decision, implemented

under the authority of the commissioner for the 2025–2026 deer season, overrides the previous ban on baiting deer within the CWD Surveillance Zone. Hunters' ability to use products that are not ingested by deer, such as scent attractors and deer urine products, will remain unchanged.

of any member of the deer family (deer, elk, moose, or caribou, etc.) into Kentucky from other U.S. states or Canadian provinces. All carcasses must be completely deboned before being transported into the state.

## CWD SURVEILLANCE ZONE SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS

Henderson, Union and Webster counties: Mandatory sample submittal for deer taken Sept. 27-28 and Nov. 8-10.

Ballard, Breckinridge, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hardin, Hickman, Marshall, McCracken and Meade counties: Mandatory sample submittal for deer taken Sept. 27-28.

## CARCASS TRANSPORTATION RESTRICTIONS

*What may be taken outside of the CWD Surveillance Zone*

**✗ Prohibited:** Whole deer carcasses, high-risk parts including head, intact skull or skull cap with brain material, or spine.

**✓ Allowed:** Deboned meat, antlers and antlers attached to a clean skull cap, clean skulls and teeth, hides, and finished taxidermy products.

## STATEWIDE DEER CARCASS IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

It is illegal to bring whole carcasses or high-risk parts (head, intact skull or skull cap with brain material, or spine)

### *Know before you go*

Before hunting, note your harvest location – whether it's a grid number, GPS coordinates, or an address. You'll need to provide this information at check stations or drop-off sites. To find your grid square number, visit [fw.ky.gov/CWD](http://fw.ky.gov/CWD).

### *Need more information?*

- Visit [fw.ky.gov/CWD](http://fw.ky.gov/CWD)
- Call 1-800-858-1549 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Eastern) weekdays
- Email: [info.center@ky.gov](mailto:info.center@ky.gov)

# CWD SAMPLING REQUIREMENTS

Hunters are required to submit samples for CWD testing in all CWD Surveillance Zone counties during the antlerless season on the last weekend in September (Sept. 27–28). Additionally, in Henderson, Union, and Webster counties, sample submission is also required during the first three days of

modern gun season (Nov. 8–10).

If you are hunting when sampling is required, you must:

- Bring your deer carcass or head to a staffed check station or use a CWD sample drop-off site. Staffed check stations are only available during modern gun in Henderson, Union,

and Webster counties. See table for details.

- All hunters must comply – including landowners, youth, and license-exempt hunters.
- Telecheck your deer before arriving at a check station or drop-off site.

CWD SURVEILLANCE ZONE COUNTIES – MANDATORY SAMPLING DATES		
County	Sept. 27-28	Nov. 8-10
Ballard	Use sample drop-off site	
Breckinridge	Use sample drop-off site	
Calloway	Use sample drop-off site	
Carlisle	Use sample drop-off site	
Fulton	Use sample drop-off site	
Graves	Use sample drop-off site	
Hardin	Use sample drop-off site	
Henderson	Use sample drop-off site	Visit staffed check station or use sample drop-off site
Hickman	Use sample drop-off site	
Marshall	Use sample drop-off site	
McCracken	Use sample drop-off site	
Meade	Use sample drop-off site	
Union	Use sample drop-off site	Visit staffed check station or use sample drop-off site
Webster	Use sample drop-off site	Visit staffed check station or use sample drop-off site

## STAFFED CWD CHECK STATIONS

Open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time on November 8-10.

**Counties:** Henderson, Union, Webster

**What you can bring:** An intact deer, field-dressed deer, or the head.

**What to provide:** Telecheck and license information, harvest location (GPS points, address, or Know Before You Go grid square number), taxidermist or processor information, if applicable.

## STAFFED CHECK STATION LOCATIONS

County	Location Name/Address	City
Henderson	Henderson Co. Extension Office, 3341 Zion Rd.	Henderson
Henderson	Sloughs WMA, 9956 KY 268	Corydon
Union	Higginson-Henry WMA, 6440 KY 56 East	Morganfield
Union	Union Co. Extension Office, 1938 US 60 West	Morganfield
Webster	Southern States, 1112 US 41	Sebree
Webster	Webster Co. Extension Office, 1118 US 41-A South	Dixon
Webster	S&S Salvage, 501 US 41-A North	Providence

## CWD SAMPLE DROP-OFF SITES

Drop-off sites are available statewide, 24/7 throughout deer season. Find a drop-off site location at [fw.ky.gov/CWD](http://fw.ky.gov/CWD).

- If your deer was harvested within the CWD Surveillance Zone, use a drop-off site located in the same zone. If your deer was harvested outside the CWD Surveillance Zone, use any statewide drop-off site.

### What to drop off:

- The head with at least 5 inches of neck attached
- Remove antlers before submission

(Caped/skull-capped heads are acceptable)

**What to provide:** Telecheck confirmation, hunting license information, harvest location (GPS points, address, or Know Before You Go grid square number), contact information. **Keep the tear-off tag provided at the drop-off site for your records.**

**Note:** Deer heads left at drop-off sites will not be returned. Each sample enters the hunter into the Shoot for Samples giveaway: [fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/shootforsamples.aspx](http://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/shootforsamples.aspx)

## STATEWIDE CWD TESTING

- CWD testing is strongly encouraged in counties that don't have a mandatory check requirement.
- Use a CWD sample drop-off site (locations online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov); available throughout deer season) or request a CWD Sample Mail-in Kit.
- Testing is free.

To learn more visit [fw.ky.gov/CWD](http://fw.ky.gov/CWD), scan the QR code, or call 1-800-858-1549.





**184 1/8**  
**James Harden**  
 Barren County  
 Typical  
 Modern Gun

# KENTUCKY'S TOP BUCKS

## HOW TO GET ON NEXT YEAR'S TOP DEER LIST

To be eligible for next year's list a hunter must take a white-tailed deer in Kentucky this season that officially net scores 160 or higher typical, or net scores 185 or higher non-typical, as determined by the Boone and Crockett scoring system. Velvet deer scored under Pope and Young Club system must meet these minimums for list inclusion.

No later than May 1, send the completed and signed score sheet with a photo to Kentucky Hunting & Trapping Guide, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601. Include the county in which the deer was taken, and the equipment used to harvest the deer. Please send a copy as score sheets and photos will not be returned. Emailed submissions to [info.center@ky.gov](mailto:info.center@ky.gov) also will be accepted. To get a list of official Boone and Crockett Club scorers in Kentucky visit: [www.boone-crockett.org](http://www.boone-crockett.org).

Lists only include Kentucky-harvested bucks reported to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

BOONE & CROCKETT / POPE & YOUNG 2024 SEASON - TYPICAL			
SCORE	Hunter	County	Method
184 1/8	James Harden	Barren	Modern Gun
179	James Dyer	Cumberland	Modern Gun
175 3/8	Chase Higdon	Grayson	Muzzleloader
174 3/8	Bryan D. Miller	Henderson	Archery
171 4/8	Charles R. Casciola	Shelby	Archery
171 2/8	Brandon Burman	Nelson	Archery
170	Andrew Farmer	Breathitt	Archery
168	Ross Burton	Pulaski	Crossbow
167 6/8	Anthony J. Cornelius	Lincoln	Modern Gun
166 4/8 (velvet)	Adam Patton	Montgomery	Archery
165 4/8	Jon Rose	Jackson	Modern Gun
163 5/8	Claryce A. Eigel	Franklin	Modern Gun
163 3/8	Drake S. Wright	Todd	Crossbow
163	Sean T. Cummins	Anderson	Crossbow
162 6/8	Peter P. May	Lincoln	Archery
162 5/8	Mike Anderson	Fayette	Crossbow
162 4/8	James Coffey	Wayne	Archery
162	William Deakins	Anderson	Modern Gun
161 5/8	Andrew R. Moore	Christian	Archery
160 6/8	Cody Cooper	Lawrence	Muzzleloader
160 3/8	Carlos Combs	Breathitt	Modern Gun
160 3/8	Terry "Red" Boarman	Daviess	Modern Gun

BOONE & CROCKETT / POPE & YOUNG 2024 SEASON - NON-TYPICAL			
SCORE	Hunter	County	Method
241 3/8	Adam White	Perry	Pickup
236 6/8	Clint C. Stith	Scott	Modern Gun
219 6/8	Mark Peterson	Henry	Crossbow
214 3/8	Virgil Boggs	Laurel	Modern Gun
214	Tim Hannah	Hardin	Crossbow
212 2/8	Andrew J. Simmons	Hancock	Modern Gun
212 1/8	Jason A. Hunt	Mason	Crossbow
211 5/8	Ryan Doss	Adair	Crossbow
208 6/8	Andrew C. Morris	Nelson	Modern Gun
206 1/8 (velvet)	Kevin Cottrell	Hart	Archery
204 1/8	Douglas D. Ford	Oldham	Crossbow
203 5/8	Billy Keith Hunt	Mason	Crossbow
197 2/8	Herlie Joe Blanton	Grayson	Modern Gun
194 5/8	Gage Sargent	Morgan	Modern Gun
194 3/8	Steven W. Davis	Hickman	Archery
194 3/8	David Whitaker	Jackson	Modern Gun
191 7/8	Jeffrey Wade Barber	Muhlenberg	Modern Gun
190 3/8	Alex Hayes	Christian	Modern Gun
189	Kevin Cloyd	Bourbon	Crossbow
186 1/8 (velvet)	Jake Bailey	Perry	Archery
185 5/8	Scott N. Kaufman	Jefferson	Crossbow
185 4/8	Frank A. Morrow	Wayne	Archery
185 3/8 (velvet)	Bob McCabe	Russell	Archery
185 1/8	Michael "Tom" Robinson	Garrard	Modern Gun
185	Trey Benson	Woodford	Modern Gun

# BEAR HUNTING

## SEASON DATES and RESTRICTIONS

BEAR	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Chase-Only*	June 1 - Aug. 31 and Sept. 9-30, 2025		
Hunt with Dogs**	Oct. 20-24, 2025	Oct. 20-24 and Oct. 30 - Nov. 7, 2025	Oct. 20-24 and Oct. 30 - Nov. 7, 2025
Archery/Crossbow	Oct. 25-27, 2025	Oct. 25-29, 2025	Sept. 20 - Oct. 3 and Oct. 25-29, 2025
Firearm	Dec. 13-15, 2025	Dec. 13-17, 2025	Dec. 13-17, 2025

\*Bear chase only is not permitted on WMAs until the third Saturday in August. However, Hensley-Pine Mountain WMA is closed to bear chase and all bear hunting seasons.

\*\*Any legal equipment may be used during the Hunt with Dogs.

Note: Baiting for bears is prohibited in Kentucky.

### CHASE-ONLY SEASON WITH DOGS

Participants must purchase and possess proof of a valid combination bear permit, bear chase permit or youth bear chase permit in addition to fulfilling annual hunting license requirements.

Chase-only and hunt with dogs seasons are closed in the Daniel Boone National Forest, Beaver Creek WMA, Cane Creek WMA, Hensley-Pine Mountain WMA, Mill Creek WMA, Miller-Welch Central Kentucky WMA, Pioneer Weapons WMA, Redbird WMA, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.

Bears can be chased during legal daylight hours only. Hunters cannot chase bears from a baited area while bait is present or for 30 days after the bait has been removed.

The bear hunt with dogs season also is open as a chase-only season for any person with a valid bear chase permit.

### HUNTING SEASONS

All bear hunters and bear chase participants must purchase and possess proof of the appropriate valid bear permit(s) in addition to fulfilling annual hunting license requirements.

Hunters who harvest a bear during any bear hunting season must telecheck it by 8 p.m. (Eastern). Prior to moving

### LEGAL BEAR HUNTING EQUIPMENT

- A modern rifle of 6.5 mm (.264 caliber) or larger, with a magazine capable of holding no more than 10 rounds
- A muzzle-loading rifle of .45 caliber or larger
- A muzzle-loading or breech-loading shotgun no larger than 10-gauge, and no smaller than 20-gauge, firing a single projectile (slug, round ball, conical bullet or sabot bullet) only
- A handgun loaded with center-fire cartridges with a case length of 1.285 inches or larger, firing bullets of 6.5 mm (.264 caliber) or larger designed to expand upon impact
- Firearms may not be fully automatic (capable of firing more than one round with one trigger pull)
- Full metal jacketed or tracer bullet ammunition is prohibited
- Archery and crossbow equipment that is legal for deer hunting
- During the bear hunt with dogs season, hunters may only harvest a bear using a legal weapon assisted by dogs that are actively pursuing, chasing, baying or treeing a bear prior to harvest. Dogs must be included on the department-approved breed list for bear season, found online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

harvested bears from the Bear Zone, hunters must call 1-800-858-1549 within 24 hours of harvest to arrange for a physical check of the animal and receive a tag issued by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. Bears physically checked during any hunting season must include a carcass or an intact hide that contains the skull and proof of sex (i.e. intact hide or genitalia attached to removed hide).

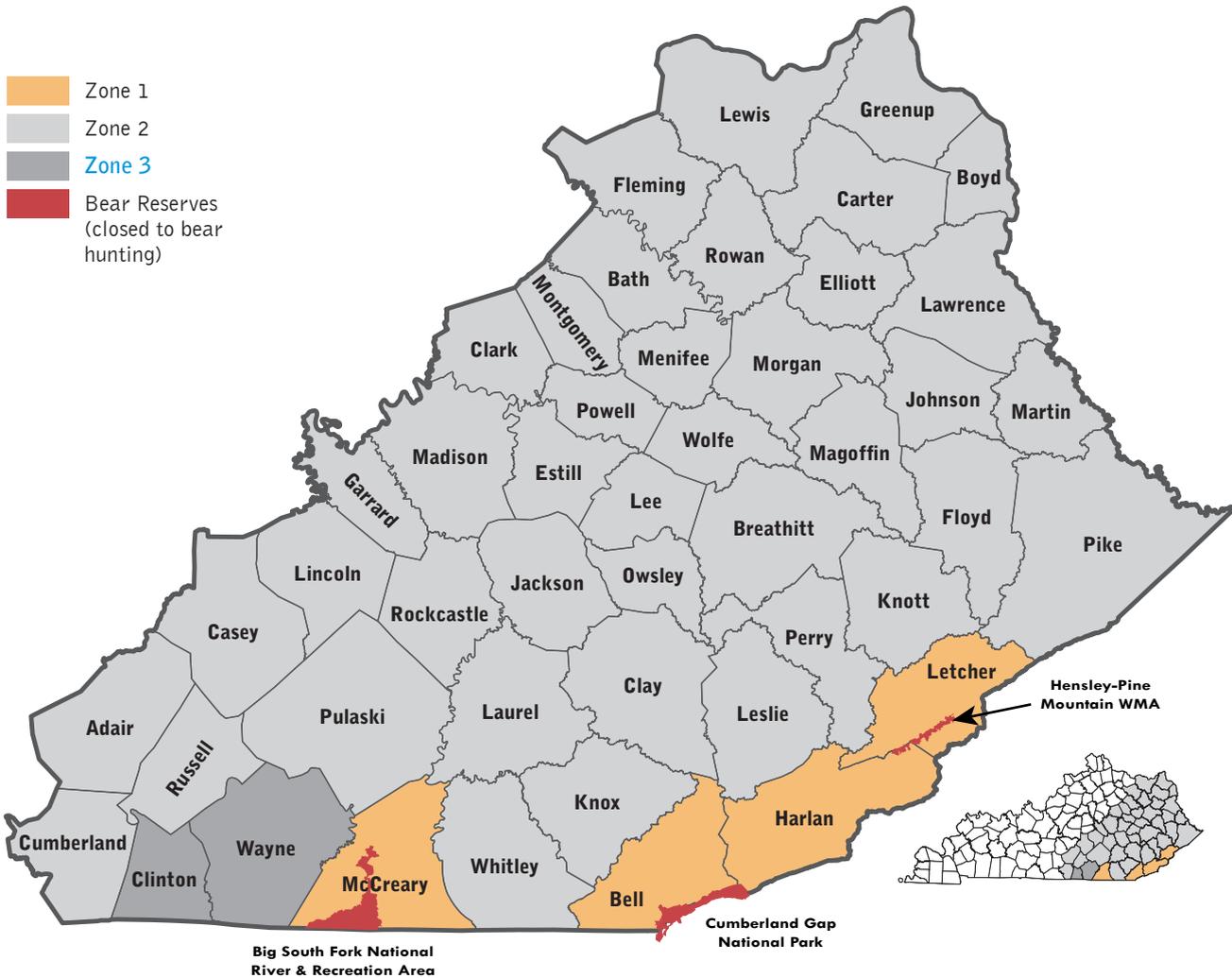
Bear hunters may harvest bear with archery/crossbow and muzzleloader

equipment during bear firearm season.

### Note

Prior to moving harvested bears out of the Bear Zone, hunters must call 1-800-858-1549 within 24 hours of harvest to arrange for a physical check of the animal and receive a tag issued by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

# BEAR HUNTING ZONES



## HUNTER RESTRICTIONS

- The bag limit is one bear per person per license year, regardless of season.
- Hunters and houndsmen may not disturb or take bears from dens.
- Bear hunting and bear chase is prohibited in the following areas within the bear zone: Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Cumberland Gap National Historical

Park, Kingdom Come State Park, and the Hensley-Pine Mountain WMA.

- The chase-only and bear hunt with dogs seasons are closed in the Daniel Boone National Forest, Miller-Welch Central Kentucky WMA, Beaver Creek WMA, Cane Creek WMA, Mill Creek WMA, Pioneer Weapons WMA and Redbird WMA.
- Hunters may not take female bears with cubs, or any bear weighing less than 75 pounds.
- Hunters may not use bait or other substances capable of luring black bears. Predator calls and decoys are legal equipment.
- Dogs may not be used to hunt bears during the archery/crossbow or mod-

ern gun seasons, but leashed tracking dogs may be used to recover wounded bears.

- Hunters 15 years old and younger who use a firearm must be accompanied by an adult, who shall remain in a position to take immediate control of the youth's firearm.

## HUNTER ORANGE REQUIREMENT

Bear hunters and those who accompany them, or any other person hunting on public or private lands in the bear hunting zones during a firearm season for bears, must comply with the hunter orange clothing law. This requirement also applies to any person chasing bears during the bear hunt with dogs season.

**Q:** Is it legal to shoot a bear that is feeding at a trash can or dumpster?

**A:** No. Garbage is considered bait.

# MIGRATORY BIRDS and WATERFOWL

## HUNTING SEASONS

MIGRATORY BIRDS (WEBLESS)	Season Dates	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
<b>Dove</b>	Sept. 1 - Oct. 26; Nov. 27 - Dec. 7 and Dec. 20, 2025 - Jan. 11, 2026*	15	45
<b>Virginia &amp; Sora Rail</b>	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9, 2025	25 singly or combined	75
<b>Woodcock</b>	Oct. 25 - Nov. 7 and Nov. 10 - Dec. 10, 2025	3	9
<b>Snipe</b>	Sept. 17 - Oct. 26 and Nov. 27, 2025 - Feb. 1, 2026	8	24
<b>Common &amp; Purple Gallinule</b>	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9, 2025	3 singly or combined	9
<b>Sandhill Crane</b>	Dec. 7, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026	1 or 2†	3

\* Dove fields leased by the department from private landowners are open to hunting on Sept. 1 and from Sept. 6 - Oct. 26. These fields are closed from Sept. 2-5 to rest them. This provides better hunting opportunities for the second weekend of dove season.

† The daily bag limit for sandhill cranes is 2 cranes for permit holders with 2 or more tags, or 1 crane for hunters with one tag. Sandhill Crane permits available only through quota hunt drawing in September at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Sandhill crane hunters will be issued printable tags attached to hunting permits, accessible through the online sandhill crane app at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Hunters must possess printed or electronic proof of a valid crane hunting permit.

WATERFOWL	Season Dates	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
<b>Teal &amp; Wood Duck</b>	Sept. 20-24, 2025	6; may include no more than 2 wood ducks	18; may include no more than 6 wood ducks
<b>Sept. Canada Goose, Western Zone</b>	Sept. 1-15, 2025	5	15
<b>Sept. Canada Goose, Eastern Zone</b>	Sept. 16-30, 2025	5	15
<b>Duck</b>	Nov. 27-30 and Dec. 7, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026	6; may include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 of which may be hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 red-heads, 3 pintails, 2 black ducks, and 2 canvasback. 1 scaup Nov. 27-30 and Dec. 7-17; and 2 scaup Dec. 18 - Jan. 31.	Triple the daily bag limit
<b>Coot</b>		15	45
<b>Merganser</b>		5; only 2 may be hooded	Triple the daily bag limit
<b>Canada/Cackling Goose, White-Fronted Goose &amp; Brant</b>	Nov. 27, 2025 - Feb. 15, 2026	5 combined; 3 Canada geese, 2 white-fronted geese and 1 brant	Triple the daily bag limit
<b>Snow Goose (including Ross' Goose)</b>		20	60
<b>Youth-only Waterfowl</b>	Nov. 22, 2025; Feb. 14, 2026	Same as regular season. Scaup limit is 2 scaup daily.	
<b>Military/Veteran-only Waterfowl</b>	Nov. 23, 2025; Feb. 8, 2026		
<b>Falconry (ducks, coots &amp; mergansers)</b>	Nov. 27, 2025 - Feb. 22, 2026	3	9
<b>Falconry (geese)</b>	Nov. 27, 2025 - Feb. 15, 2026	Same as regular season	
<b>Light Goose Conservation Order</b>	Feb. 16 - Mar. 31, 2026	none	none

Notes: The Northeast Goose Zone now mirrors the rest of the state. The Cave Run Lake refuge area remains closed to goose hunting. See the "Quota Hunts" section in this guide for waterfowl hunting information pertaining to public lands and blind drawings.

**DAILY BAG and POSSESSION LIMITS**

Daily limit refers to the number of birds which may be taken during a one-day period. Possession limit applies to transporting birds after two or more days of hunting but does not permit a double daily bag limit in the field.

**MILITARY, YOUTH-ONLY WATERFOWL SEASONS**

Seasons are statewide. Youths must be under the age of 16 on the day

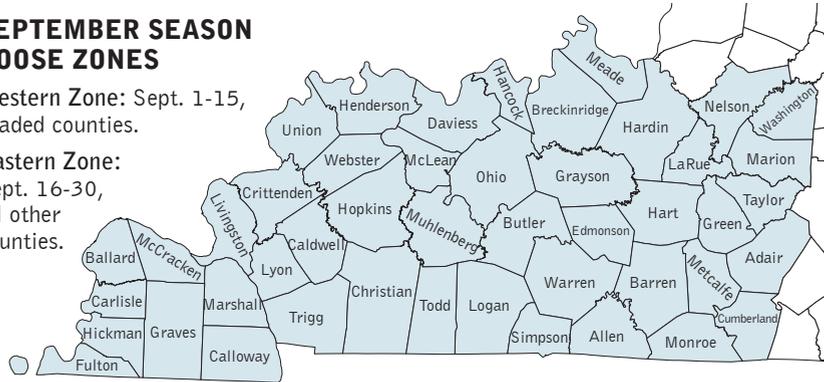
of the hunt. Military seasons are for military on active duty and honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces only. Per federal rule, National Guard members and reservists are only

eligible if they are on active duty. Participants must have proper license and permit, including federal duck stamp. Check the 2025-26 waterfowl guide for more information.

**SEPTEMBER SEASON GOOSE ZONES**

Western Zone: Sept. 1-15, shaded counties.

Eastern Zone: Sept. 16-30, all other counties.



SHOOTING HOURS (WATERFOWL)	
<b>Regular</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
<b>Exceptions:</b>	
<b>Snow Goose Conservation Order</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset
<b>Wildlife Management Areas</b>	One half-hour before sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise noted in the Waterfowl Hunting Guide, available in fall online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> .

SHOOTING HOURS (MIGRATORY BIRDS)	
<b>Dove, private land</b>	<b>Sept. 1 only: 11 a.m. to sunset.</b> Remainder of dove season: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset
<b>Dove, public land (WMAs, leased fields)</b>	<b>Sept. 1 - Oct. 26: 11 a.m. to sunset (when fields are open).</b> Second and third segments of dove season: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset
<b>Sandhill crane</b>	Sunrise to sunset (quota hunt only)
<b>All other species</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Note: Dove and waterfowl hunters must complete the HIP migratory bird harvest survey before hunting each year. Visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) (see "My Profile") for details.

# ELK HUNTING

## DATES, RESTRICTIONS and HOW TO APPLY

QUOTA ELK	Bull (antlered)	Cow (antlerless)
<b>Firearms</b>	<b>Week 1:</b> Sept. 27 - Oct. 1, 2025 <b>Week 2:</b> Oct. 4-8, 2025	<b>Week 1:</b> Nov. 29 - Dec. 3, 2025 <b>Week 2:</b> Jan. 3-7, 2026
<b>Archery / Crossbow (either sex)</b>	Sept. 13-26 and Dec. 6-12, 2025	
<b>Youth-only Quota (either sex)</b>	All seasons as noted above	

Note: Out-of-zone elk hunters must follow deer season regulations and use only the legal elk hunting equipment described on this page to take elk from any county not included in the 16-county elk zone, and must have an Out-of-Zone Elk Permit.

**HOW THE QUOTA HUNTS WORK**

- Applications go on sale Aug. 1 for the following year's Kentucky elk hunts.

Hunters must buy their elk quota hunt applications before midnight (Eastern) on April 30 of the hunt year.

- Elk quota hunt applications can be purchased online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or anywhere licenses are sold. A person who

## Elk hunt deadlines

**Aug. 1:** First day to apply for an elk hunt (for the following year)

**April 30:** Last day to apply for an elk hunt (for that year's hunt)

**June 15:** Deadline for drawn hunters to buy permit; unclaimed permits redistributed for elk loyalty redraw

**June 30:** Deadline for elk loyalty redraw winners to buy permit

**June 30:** Deadline to apply for hunting unit; unit assigned to those who do not apply

does not have access to the department's website to apply for any quota hunt may contact the department toll free at 1-800-858-1549 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) for assistance.

- Residents and nonresidents are eligible to apply for each of the three permit types (bull firearm, cow firearm or either sex archery/crossbow) but can only be drawn for one.
- Each application costs \$10. Only individuals may purchase elk applications, not a party of hunters together.
- Hunters 15 years of age and younger may apply for a youth-only quota hunt during the same application period as for the regular elk quota hunt drawing.
- Applicants for the youth-only hunt may also purchase elk applications for the regular elk quota hunts. A youth may not be drawn for the youth-only quota hunt and the regular quota hunt for elk in the same year, and if drawn for the youth-only hunt, will be permanently blocked from applying for the youth-only hunt again.
- If an applicant is drawn for a youth-only permit, they will purchase the applicable quota youth elk permit. If a youth applicant is drawn for the regular quota hunts, the youth will be required to purchase the full price antlered or antlerless elk permit.
- A random computer drawing is held in May to select the drawn hunters. Applicants may check to see if they were drawn on [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).
- It is the hunter's responsibility to find a place to hunt in the unit they are assigned to hunt. Hunters must get landowner permission to hunt on private land.

- There is no limit to the number of assistants an elk hunter may take into the field, but only the permit holder is allowed to hunt.
- Quota elk permits must be purchased from the department's website ([fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov)) or through any license vendor before midnight June 15. Un-purchased permits will be reassigned to the new Elk Loyalty Redraw program, a secondary elk permit drawing for leftover permits. Resident hunters who have applied to the elk draw for the most years without being drawn will be automatically entered.
- Unless license exempt, hunters drawn for a quota elk permit are required to buy an annual hunting license. All elk hunters must purchase a quota elk permit.
- Hunters awarded an elk permit will be blocked from reapplying for three years.
- Up to three drawn hunters may apply for their unit choices as a party. Those applying for a regulated area must do so individually, not as a party.

## QUOTA HUNTS WITHIN THE ELK ZONE

The elk zone includes the following 16 counties: Bell, Breathitt, Clay, Floyd, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, McCreary, Perry, Pike and Whitley. Inside this 4.1 million-acre zone, elk may only be taken by hunters drawn for a quota hunt as previously described. All elk hunters must display a department-issued hang tag in their vehicles while hunting.

## BAITING

Hunting over a baited area within 30 days of bait being removed is prohibited. Baiting for elk remains prohibited on public lands.

## CALLING

A person shall not mimic the sound of an elk on public land open to elk hunting from Sept. 1 until the opening of the elk archery/crossbow season.

## SHOOTING HOURS

Elk may only be hunted during daylight hours, from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.

## BAG LIMIT/HUNTER ORANGE

The season bag limit on elk is one per hunter per season, regardless of permit type. Hunters may not take an elk during a quota elk hunt and also take an elk out-of-zone during the same season. Elk hunters and those who accompany them, or any other person hunting public or private lands in the elk zone during firearm elk seasons, must comply with the hunter orange clothing law.

## ELK HUNTING OUTSIDE THE ELK ZONE

Elk may be taken from any county outside the zone by hunters who possess an annual Kentucky hunting license and an Out-of-Zone Elk Permit. These hunters must follow deer season regula-

## LEGAL ELK HUNTING EQUIPMENT

- A modern rifle of .270 caliber or larger with a magazine capable of holding no more than 10 rounds
- A muzzle-loading rifle of .50 caliber or larger
- A muzzle-loading or breech-loading shotgun no smaller than 20-gauge, firing a single projectile (slug, round ball, conical bullet or sabot bullet) only
- A handgun loaded with centerfire cartridges with a case length of 1.285 inches or larger, firing bullets of .270 caliber or larger designed to expand upon impact
- Firearms may not be fully-automatic (capable of firing more than one round with one trigger pull)
- Full metal jacketed or tracer bullet ammunition is prohibited
- Crossbows or archery equipment (long bows, recurves or compound bow) loaded with a fixed blade or mechanical broadheads at least 7/8" wide (when blades extended), but broadheads may not be chemically treated. Crossbows must have a working safety.
- Note: Hunters may use archery or crossbows during the bull or cow firearms hunts.

tions and use only the legal elk hunting equipment outlined above, but are not required to possess a Statewide Deer Permit.

**CHECKING and TAGGING**

All elk must be telechecked. Hunters must call 1-800-245-4263 and report the harvest. See the “General Information” section for details.

Once an elk is harvested, a hunter may remove the head of the animal to facilitate its removal from the field prior to the elk being telechecked. It is still necessary to fill out the harvest log immediately after harvest and telecheck the animal before midnight on the day the elk is harvested or recovered. If the hide or head of the elk is removed in the field – to quarter the animal, for example – it is necessary to demonstrate proof of

sex by retaining the head or keeping the genitalia attached to the carcass.

A carcass tag is required if a harvested elk leaves the hunter’s possession for any reason.

**VOUCHER COOPERATOR ELK PERMIT PROGRAM**

An access program by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has created additional elk hunting opportunity for drawn elk hunters.

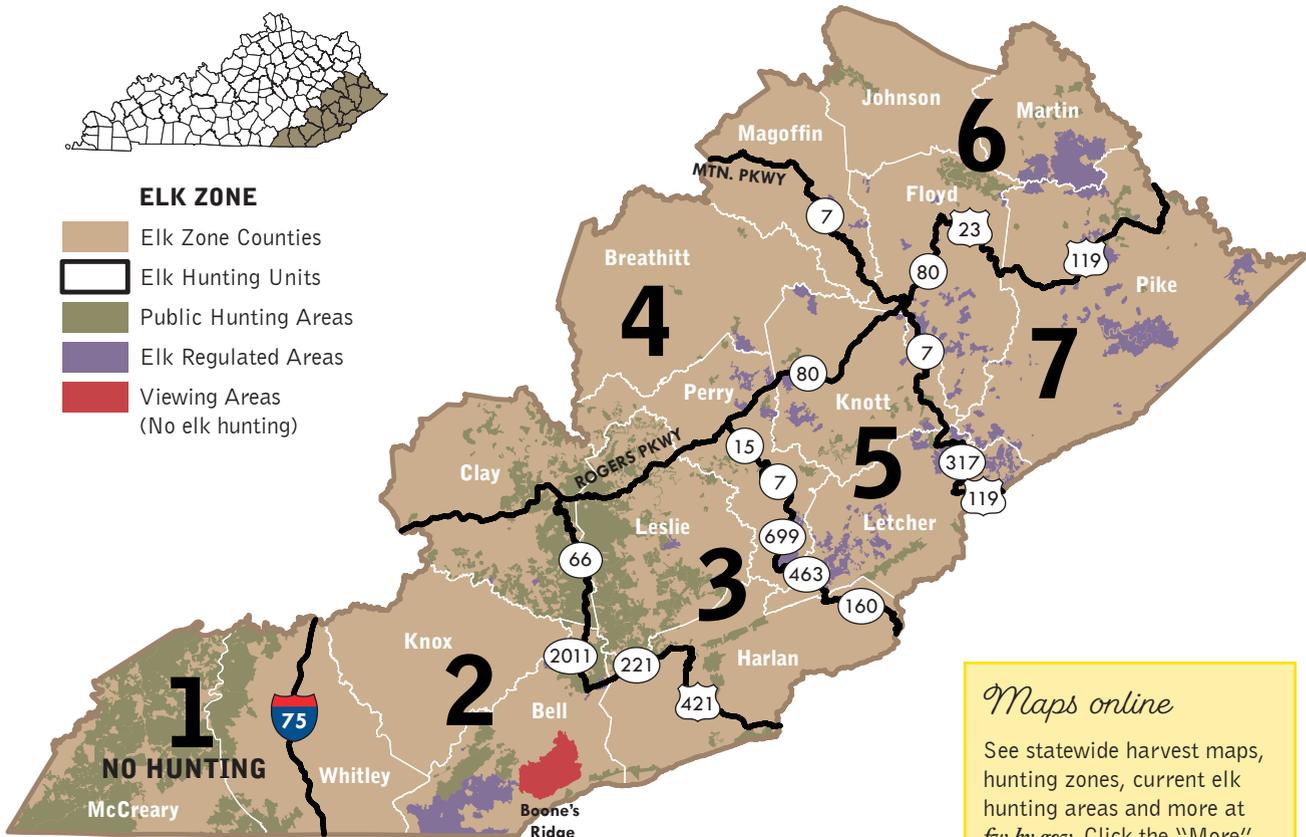
The Voucher Cooperator Elk Permit Program links people who own or lease elk hunting land with hunters who have drawn an elk permit. Hunter access is accomplished by offering landowners/lessees an elk permit when they accumulate 10 points (harvested bull = 1 point, harvested cow = 1 point). Interested landowners and lessees may

contact Kentucky Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-858-1549 to learn more about the Voucher Cooperator Elk Permit Program.

**POST-SEASON ELK HUNTING SURVEY**

All elk hunters (including any applicant selected for a permit in the drawing) must complete and submit a post-season elk hunting survey no later than the last day of February. The post-season survey will be accessible to elk hunters through the “My Profile” feature on the department’s website. Any elk hunter who fails to complete and submit the post-season survey will be ineligible to apply for any quota hunt or no-hunt option the following year.

**WHERE TO HUNT ELK**



# FALL TURKEY HUNTING

## SEASON DATES and RESTRICTIONS

FALL TURKEY	Shotgun	Archery	Crossbow
	Oct. 25-31 and Dec. 6-12, 2025	Sept. 6, 2025 - Jan. 19, 2026	Oct. 1-19 and Nov. 8 - Dec. 31, 2025

### BAG LIMITS

- Two (2) turkeys per season.
- One (1) turkey with a beard at least three (3) inches long.
- One (1) turkey with no visible beard or a beard shorter than 3 inches.
- One (1) turkey per day.

### PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

**Adult hunters:** Unless exempt, all fall turkey hunters ages 16 and older must carry with them in the field proof of purchase of a valid Kentucky hunting license and a valid fall turkey permit. Short-term (1- or 7-day) hunting licenses are not valid for turkey hunting. The fall turkey permit is valid for the fall archery, crossbow and shotgun turkey seasons and allows a hunter to harvest up to the fall season bag limit of turkeys.

### LEGAL FALL TURKEY HUNTING EQUIPMENT

- Breech-loading or muzzle-loading shotguns no larger than 10 gauge and no smaller than .410.
- Breech-loading shotguns must be plugged to hold a maximum of three shells (two in magazine and one in chamber)
- Lead or non-toxic shot no larger than No. 4
- Longbows, recurve bows and compound bows of any draw weight (no minimum).
- Crossbows of any draw weight (no minimum) with a working safety device.
- Non-barbed broadheads with a minimum cutting diameter of 7/8-inch, whether expandable or non-expandable.

**Youth hunters:** Youths younger than 12 are exempt from license and turkey permit requirements. Youths ages 12-15 are eligible to purchase a youth turkey permit, which is valid during any turkey season for one turkey. Youth hunters must abide by season bag limits and harvest restrictions but can use the youth permit throughout the license year. The youth sportsman's license includes two (2) youth turkey permits. Anyone may call turkeys, or assist in the hunt. Callers and assistants are not required to possess a hunting license or turkey permit, and may carry equipment while in the field.

### OTHER RESTRICTIONS

Hunters may not use bait or any substance capable of luring wild turkeys. Fall turkey hunters shall not hunt within

600 feet of a baited site nor for thirty (30) days after bait is removed. This prohibition does not apply to bona fide agricultural practices or planted food plots. Turkey hunters may not use firearms to take turkeys during archery or crossbow-only seasons. On some WMAs, special equipment restrictions may apply.

### YOUTH SUPERVISION

Firearm turkey hunters 15 years old and younger must be accompanied by an adult, who shall remain in a position to take immediate control of the youth's firearm at all times.

### HARVEST RECORDING and TAGGING REQUIREMENTS

The process and requirements for recording, checking and tagging harvested turkeys are the same

## ATTENTION TURKEY HUNTERS!



You can help the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' efforts to manage the wild turkey resource by participating in the **Summer Brood Survey**. In July and August, record all observations of turkeys, including broods (hens and poults) and gobblers.

Visit the department's website at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) for more details about this survey, which will help Kentucky Fish and Wildlife better track trends in turkey populations. Enter "Turkey Brood Survey" in the search box on the department's homepage. Only summarized results will be reported.

as for deer and elk. See the “Recording, Checking, Tagging and Transporting” guidelines in the “General

Information” section of this guide. To help researchers, hunters who harvest wild turkeys with leg bands should re-

port the band number online at [fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/TurkeyBand.aspx](http://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/TurkeyBand.aspx).

# FURBEARER HUNTING and TRAPPING

## SEASON DATES and RESTRICTIONS

FURBEARERS	Hunting	Trapping
<b>Raccoon &amp; Opossum</b>	Oct. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026, day* or night (exceptions apply)	Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026
<b>Coyote</b>	Year-round, day or night (exceptions apply)	
<b>Bobcat</b>	Nov. 15, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026† (daylight hours only)	
<b>River Otter, Muskrat, Mink, Beaver, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Weasel &amp; Striped Skunk</b>	Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026 (daylight hours only)	
<b>Free Youth Hunting &amp; Trapping Week</b>	Dec. 27, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026	

FURBEARER BAG LIMITS	
<b>Raccoon &amp; Opossum</b>	No limit
<b>Coyote</b>	No limit
<b>Bobcat</b>	5; no more than 3 of which shall be taken with a gun†
<b>River Otter</b>	10; only 6 of which can be taken from Otter Zone 2
<b>Muskrat, Mink, Beaver, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Weasel &amp; Striped Skunk</b>	No limit

\*See exception in Special Hunting Restrictions  
 † Bobcat permit required for bobcat hunters

### SPECIAL HUNTING RESTRICTIONS

(Daylight hours are defined as 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.)

During modern gun deer season, raccoon and opossum hunters may not hunt during daylight hours. Night hunt-

ing on Friday, Nov. 7, 2025 shall conclude by 30 minutes before sunrise on Saturday, Nov. 8, which is when shooting hours open for modern gun deer season.

A hunter shall not use a light from a boat to take raccoon or opossum.

A person shall not use the following while chasing raccoon or opossum from noon on March 1 through September 30: a firearm, a slingshot, tree climber or any device to kill, injure, or force a raccoon or opossum from a tree or den.

Coyotes may be hunted year-round, day or night, with no bag limit. Hunters may only use artificial light or other means designed to make wildlife visible at night from Dec. 1 - March 31 and May 16 - June 30. Artificial light or other means designed to make wildlife visible at night cannot be connected to or cast from a mechanized vehicle. Coyote hunters with valid Mobility-Impaired Access Permits or Hunting Methods Exemption Vehicle Permits may use a

stationary vehicle as a hunting platform, and may use lights or other means designed to make wildlife visible at night so long as the means used are not connected to the vehicle.

On public land after daylight hours, a person shall not use any equipment other than a bow, crossbow, or shotgun loaded with a multiple-projectile shell. On private land after daylight hours, coyote hunters may only use a bow, crossbow or shotgun loaded with multiple projectiles, except from Dec. 1 - March 31, and May 16 - June 30, hunters on private land at night may also use any breech-loading rifle or pistol of any caliber, a shotgun firing a single projectile or a muzzleloader of .54-caliber or less.

Night hunting shall not be allowed in a county or area where a deer or elk firearm or muzzleloader season is open.

Night hunting for coyotes is prohibited on Kentucky lands managed by Big South Fork National River and Rec-

### RIVER OTTER ZONES

**ZONE 1:** Anderson, Ballard, Bath, Boone, Bourbon, Bracken, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Caldwell, Calloway, Campbell, Carlisle, Carroll, Christian, Crittenden, Daviess, Fayette, Fleming, Franklin, Fulton, Gallatin, Grant, Graves, Grayson, Hancock, Hardin, Harrison, Henderson, Henry, Hickman, Hopkins, Jefferson, Kenton, LaRue, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, Mason, Meade, McCracken, McLean, Muhlenberg, Nelson, Nicholas, Ohio, Oldham, Owen, Pendleton, Robertson, Rowan, Scott, Shelby, Spencer, Trigg, Trimble, Union, Webster and Woodford. **ZONE 2:** All other counties.

## LEGAL METHODS and EQUIPMENT FOR HUNTING FURBEARERS

(see Special Hunting Restrictions section for exceptions)

- Centerfire or rimfire gun
- Muzzle-loading rifle or handgun
- Muzzle-loading or breech-loading shotguns no larger than 10 gauge. Breech-loading shotguns must be plugged to hold a maximum of three shells (two in magazine and one in chamber). There is no limit on shot size. Shotguns must be shoulder fired
- Shot shells with a single projectile may only be used during daylight hours
- Bow and arrow or crossbow
- Air guns with pellets that are at least .22 caliber in size
- Manual or electronic calls, or attracting devices
- Falconry
- Dogs

recreation Area, Daniel Boone National Forest, George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area, Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge and Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, including Beaver Creek, Cane Creek, Mill Creek, Pioneer Weapons and Redbird wildlife management areas (WMAs).

Hand or mouth-operated calls and electronic calls that imitate wounded prey or coyote calls are legal. It is legal to hunt coyotes over animal carcasses. Animal carcasses are considered bait. A hunter shall not place or distribute bait or otherwise participate in baiting wildlife on all WMAs, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Daniel Boone National Forest, Jefferson National Forest, Land Between The Lakes and state parks open to hunting.

Bobcat hunters must carry a valid hunting license (unless license exempt) and a valid bobcat hunting permit while hunting. Bobcat permits are free. Permits are available online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) in the license purchase section. Hunters and trappers are asked to submit jaws of all harvested bobcats for population studies. Bobcat age will be provided to the har-

## LEGAL METHODS and EQUIPMENT FOR TRAPPING FURBEARERS

Trappers may use lights from boats or vehicles to check traps.

Traps may not be placed in trails or paths commonly used by people or domestic animals.

There are no restrictions on the size or type of trap used as a water set, except that any body-gripping trap greater than 20 inches wide must be placed so the trap is completely submerged under water. A water set is a trap placed in the water of a river, stream, pond, lake, wetland or other body of water so that a portion of the trap body is underwater.

The following equipment is permitted for dry land sets. A dry land set is a trap placed so that no portion of the trap touches the water of a river, stream, pond, lake, wetland or other water course.

- Deadfall
- Wire cage or box trap
- Foothold traps with a maximum inside jaw spread of 6 inches measured perpendicular to the hinges
- On private land, a body-gripping trap with a maximum inside jaw

spread of 7½ inches measured parallel with the trigger

- On wildlife management and outdoor recreation areas, a body-gripping trap with a maximum inside jaw spread of 5¼ inches
- Snare. A snare means a wire, cable, or string with a knot, loop, or a single piece closing device, the deployment of which is or is not spring-assisted, but any spring-assisted device is not for the purpose of applying tension to the closing device

On wildlife management and outdoor recreation areas, dry land sets may not be placed closer than 10 feet apart.

On private land, dry land sets may not be placed closer than 10 feet apart unless the person trapping has written permission from the landowner or the landowner's designee, except there shall not be more than three traps placed within any 10-foot spacing. The trap spacing requirement does not apply to wire cage or box traps or on properties of 5 acres or less.

vester. A hunter or trapper who submits lower jaws from all their harvested bobcats in a single season to the department may receive one (1) additional bobcat to the bag limit for the following season for every two bobcats harvested. Jaw samples from all harvested bobcats must be received by the department by March 15 per instructions provided to qualify for the increased bag limit. Increased bag limits are non-transferable. Hunters and trappers must confirm an increased bag limit for the following season through "My Profile" at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

### SPECIAL TRAPPING RESTRICTIONS

- All traps must bear a metal tag giving either the name and address of

the trapper, or a wildlife identification number for trap tags issued by the department as well as the 1-800-25-ALERT phone number.

- Any trap found without a tag can be immediately confiscated by the department without a court order.
- All traps must be visited at least once every twenty-four (24) hours and all animals removed.
- Coyotes can only be trapped during furbearer trapping seasons.
- Trappers must harvest furbearers upon capture, unless they possess a captive wildlife permit from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.
- Spotted skunks are protected year round and may not be taken or possessed. Report incidental trappings to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.
- It is illegal to intentionally obstruct or disrupt the right of a person to lawfully take wildlife by trapping.

### TELECHECK and CITES TAGGING

Harvested bobcats and otters must



Sample trap tags

be telechecked by calling 1-800-245-4263, or online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) by midnight on the day the animal is recovered, before processing the carcass and before transporting the raw fur, pelt or unskinned carcass out of Kentucky. A hunter or trapper who wants to have a bobcat or otter mounted shall provide his or her name, telephone number and telecheck confirmation number to the taxidermist. Taxidermists cannot legally accept an unchecked otter or bobcat for mounting.

A Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) tag, issued by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, must be attached to the raw fur, pelt or unskinned carcass of any bobcat or river otter taken in Kentucky if the hunter or trapper intends to sell or ex-

port internationally.

To request a CITES tag, log on to "My Profile" online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

A CITES tag must be attached to the raw fur, pelt or unskinned carcass of any bobcat or river otter taken in Kentucky immediately upon receipt of the tag from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife per the instructions provided by the department and remain attached until it is processed or exported outside the United States.

Possession of an unused bobcat or otter CITES tag is prohibited.

A person who transfers, but does not sell, a river otter or bobcat to another person or taxidermist, is not required to request a CITES tag. But, this person must attach a handmade carcass tag to the animal that contains the telech-

eck confirmation number and the hunter or trapper's name and phone number.

### BUYING and SELLING HIDES

There is no time restriction on the holding of raw furs of furbearers by a trapper or hunter after the close of furbearer season. Raw furs may be sold only to licensed taxidermists, licensed fur buyers or licensed fur processors.

### FREE YOUTH WEEK

Resident and nonresident youth hunters and trappers ages 15 and younger may hunt and trap applicable game and furbearers, and hunt migratory birds in season without a hunting or trapping license for seven consecutive days starting the Saturday after Christmas.

Please refer to the hunter orange clothing law section (pg. 8) for guidelines.

Youth hunters must comply with all equipment regulations and bag limits for furbearers when hunting or trapping. Hunter education is not required for license-exempt hunters. Adults accompanying youth hunters/trappers during the free youth hunting and trapping week do not need a license if they are not hunting/trapping.



### FURBEARER HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS: WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Kentucky Fish & Wildlife is collecting lower jaws from hunted and trapped bobcats and river otters for a population study. Please contact the department at 1-800-858-1549 to request a sample packet and instructions. Thank you for your contribution to furbearer management.

# SMALL GAME HUNTING and TRAPPING

## SEASON DATES and RESTRICTIONS

SMALL GAME		Hunting	Trapping
Squirrel		Aug. 16 - Nov. 7 and Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026	Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026
Rabbit	Eastern Zone	Nov. 1-7 and Nov. 10, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026	Nov. 10, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026
	Western Zone	Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 10, 2026	Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 10, 2026
Quail	Eastern Zone	Nov. 1-7 and Nov. 10, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026	No trapping
	Western Zone	Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 10, 2026	
Grouse*		Nov. 1-7 and Nov. 10, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2026	
Falconry		Sept. 1, 2025 - March 30, 2026	
Free Youth Hunting & Trapping Week		Dec. 27, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026	

\* In Grouse Hunting Zone only. Information about grouse hunting on public areas is available online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

### SMALL GAME

The following animals are considered small game: squirrels, rabbits,

northern bobwhite (quail) and grouse.

Only rabbits and squirrels may be trapped. Quail and grouse may not

be trapped. Hunting bag limits apply. Trapping equipment and restrictions are the same as those listed in the fur-



# OTHER SPECIES

## SEASON DATES and RESTRICTIONS

OTHER SPECIES	Hunting
<b>Crow</b>	Sept. 1 - Nov. 7, 2025 and Jan. 4 - Feb. 28, 2026
<b>Bullfrog</b>	Noon May 16 - Midnight Oct. 31, 2025
<b>Groundhog</b>	Year-round
<b>Turtles*</b>	Year-round, day or night

\* Alligator snapping turtles may not be harvested.

### CROW SEASON

A hunting license is required unless the hunter is license exempt. A Migratory Bird/Waterfowl permit or completion of the HIP survey is not required.

Electronic or mechanical calling devices may be used during the open seasons. Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise until sunset.

There is no daily or possession limit on crows.

### BULLFROG SEASON

The daily limit (noon to noon) is 15. The possession limit is 30. If bullfrogs are taken by gun or bow and arrow, a hunting license is required. If taken by pole and line, a fishing license is required. If frogs are taken by gig or by hand, either a hunting or fishing license is valid.

It is illegal to possess a gig on a stream or lake, or in a boat, from Nov. 1 through Jan. 31.

### GROUNDHOGS

Groundhogs may be hunted statewide, year-round, with no bag limit. A hunting license is required unless the hunter is license exempt. Shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.

### TURTLES

Snapping turtles (except alligator snapping turtles) and soft shell turtles may be taken year-round with no bag limit but may not be harvested for commercial purposes.

A hunting license is required if tur-

tles are taken by gun or bow and arrow. Consult the Kentucky Fishing & Boating Guide for information on other legal means of harvest.

### BIRDS

- English sparrows and starlings may be hunted year-round, with no bag limit, but a hunting license is required, unless license exempt.
- See the Quota Hunts page for information about pheasant hunting seasons at Green River Lake WMA, Yellowbank WMA and Clay WMA.
- All birds of prey and native songbirds are protected under state and federal laws and may not be taken.

### WILD PIGS

As part of an ongoing effort to encourage the eradication of invasive wild pigs through trapping groups instead of shooting individual pigs, Kentucky no longer permits hunting for wild pigs.

Trapping is a proven, effective means of removing feral pigs from the landscape. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, in partnership with USDA Wildlife Services, offers free professional trapping services to anyone experiencing damage from wild pigs. Landowners may still shoot any wild pig damaging their property; any take of a wild pig must be reported to a game warden within 24 hours. See Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Chapter 150.170 for more information; find this online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Wild pigs destroy wildlife habitat,

### *Report game violations*

Anonymous tips about suspected illegal activity related to fish, wildlife or boating can be submitted through the KFWLaw smartphone app. For non-smartphones with texting capability, text the keyword "KFWLAW" along with your tip to 847411 (tip411).

decimate wildlife food sources such as acorns, and eat eggs of ground-nesting birds. They drive deer and turkey away from hunting areas. Wild pigs hamper Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's decades-long management of native game species.

Report wild pig sightings, damage or the release of wild pigs to the department by calling 1-800-858-1549 or visiting [fw.ky.gov/wildpigs](http://fw.ky.gov/wildpigs).

### HOOFED STOCK (OTHER THAN WHITE-TAILED DEER and ELK)

- Exotic, non-native hooped stock may be hunted year-round.
- No license required.
- No bag limit or checking requirement.
- Fallow deer are not legal to hunt on Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area.

### MAMMALS and OTHER WILDLIFE

- The spotted skunk, a rare species found in eastern Kentucky, is protected and may not be taken.
- All federally threatened or endangered species are protected under state and federal laws and may not be harvested.



Spotted Skunk - Protected Statewide

# PUBLIC LANDS HUNTING

## OVERVIEW

The Wildlife Management Area & Public Lands Search feature on [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) is a go-to source for information about where to hunt, fish, hike and more in Kentucky.

### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife owns, leases or manages more than 85 wildlife management areas (WMAs) for public use. It also has agreements to provide public access on certain privately owned lands, known as Hunting Access Areas. Many public-use areas have special regulations and hunting season dates that are different from statewide seasons. On some public-use areas, a user permit is required. Go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and search under “public lands hunting” for additional information.

The information here applies to users of all WMAs owned or managed by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. If you intend to hunt (or otherwise visit) public lands listed under “Wildlife Management Areas,” you must comply with the following guidelines.

1. For game listed in this guide, go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and search for “public lands hunting” for information specific to a WMA.
2. County zone deer bag limits apply to all WMAs unless otherwise noted under the area listing.
3. Quota deer hunters may take up to two (2) deer on a quota hunt in Zones 2, 3 and 4, only one of which may be antlered, unless otherwise noted under the area listing. See the deer quota hunt listings on page 36 for more details.
4. Squirrel, rabbit, quail, grouse and furbearer hunting is closed the first two days of modern gun deer season on WMAs.
5. Unless otherwise noted, persons shall

not allow unleashed dogs on WMAs from March 1 until the third Saturday in August, except if squirrel hunting during spring squirrel season, or during department-authorized field trials, or when training a retriever or other water dog if the activity is authorized by a sign at the body of water. The dog must remain leashed except while training, or within 100 feet of the water, or as stated under the area listing or posted on the WMA.

6. Quota hunts for pheasant, deer, waterfowl and elk hunts require advance application. (Refer to “Quota Hunts” and “Elk Hunting” sections.) Advance application is not required for other listed hunts.
7. Camping is permitted only in designated areas. Check WMA maps online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or call the WMA office for camping availability through Kentucky Fish and Wildlife or other campgrounds. Parking must be confined to designated parking areas if such areas exist. If no parking area is designated, parking is generally allowed alongside maintained roads in such a manner that does not block a road or gate or prevent access to a portion of the area. Unless otherwise authorized by the department, mechanized vehicles (excluding wheelchairs) are permitted only on maintained roads open to public use. It is unlawful to cut trees or fences, dump trash or litter, or damage any property or habitat in any fashion.
8. Before trapping on a WMA, a Public Area Trapping Registration Form must be completed. The form is available at department offices and online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Click the “Hunt” tab on the homepage and choose “Trapping” from the dropdown menu.
9. Hunters shall not enter or hunt in areas that have been designated closed by signs.
10. A person shall not discharge a fire-

### *During quota hunts...*

During a WMA deer quota hunt, and the open youth firearm deer hunt at Grayson Lake WMA, only participating hunters and accompanying non-hunting assistants (limit one per hunter) are allowed to be on those WMAs, except waterfowl hunters in some areas that may be open, or if a part of the WMA is otherwise open as noted in the following area listings. Non-hunting assistants must check in and check out with the quota hunter that they are accompanying and abide by hunter orange requirements.

arm within 100 yards of a residence or occupied building located on or off the area.

11. A person shall not distribute or place bait, hunt over bait or otherwise participate in baiting wildlife on a WMA.
12. A group of ten (10) or more people who gather for any event or organized activity on a WMA shall apply to the department at least 30 days before the date of the event. Groups shall apply on a form provided by the department. The department shall retain the authority to deny events, or otherwise restrict, institute additional requirements for, or direct the rescheduling of, any event to avoid user conflicts or for other legitimate reasons. Permit requests for events that do not meet WMA user guidelines shall be denied, and events may be canceled in progress if participants fail to comply with user guidelines or create hazards or disruption for others.
13. Horseback riding is permitted on some WMAs during certain times of the year and under certain restrictions. Unless hunting, horses shall

only be ridden on designated horse riding trails or a maintained public road open to vehicular traffic. Horses may not be ridden on WMAs during firearms seasons for turkey, deer, bear or elk unless participating or assisting in a legal elk hunt.

14. On all WMAs and Daniel Boone National Forest, a person shall not use a nail, spike, screw-in device, wire, or tree climber for attaching a tree stand or climbing a tree. A portable stand or climbing device that does not injure a tree may be used. Stands must be marked with the hunter's name and address, placed no more than two (2) weeks before the opening of the season and removed within one (1) week following the last day of each hunting period. A person shall not use an existing permanent tree stand.
15. Whenever gun deer hunting is allowed on a wildlife management area or state park, a person who will be hunting from inside a ground blind must first attach a hat or vest made of solid, unbroken hunter orange material to the blind so it is visible from all sides. Hunter orange clothing requirements still apply for anyone inside the blind.
16. Hunters are not required to wear hunter orange clothing or display hunter orange on ground blinds during a firearms season on a state owned or managed WMA where firearms hunting for deer, elk or bear is prohibited.
17. For information about migratory bird and waterfowl hunting on public lands, please visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

**MOBILITY-IMPAIRED HUNTER ACCESS TO WMAs**

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife offers special exceptions to hunting and fishing regulations for persons who are mobility-impaired and want to hunt and fish on select WMAs. (Eligibility requirements appear in the Quota Hunts section.) Persons interested in applying for a mobility-impaired access permit should contact the department for an application or print one from the agency's website at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Applicants for a mobility-impaired access permit shall fill out the required information on the application and obtain the attestation and signature from a

*Hunter orange required!*

During any firearms season for deer, bear or elk: Hunters, trappers and those accompanying them in counties where these seasons are open must wear solid, unbroken hunter orange visible from all sides on the head, back and chest. However, hunter orange is not required while hunting waterfowl or doves, or when hunting furbearers at night during a furbearer season.

licensed physician describing the mobility impairment. A mobility-impaired individual shall have a completed mobility-impaired access permit application on his or her person at all times while participating in such activities, along with the appropriate hunting licenses and permits. Mobility-impaired access areas have been designated on portions of the following WMAs: Barren River (Goose Island Unit), Green River Lake, Griffith Woods, Kentucky River, Lake Cumberland, Mill Creek, Miller Welch-Central Kentucky, Mullins, Peabody (Sinclair Unit), Redbird, Taylorsville Lake, West Kentucky, Yatesville Lake and Yellow-bank WMAs. The mobility-impaired access permit allows the following activities by a mobility-impaired individual:

- Discharge of a firearm or other legal hunting device from a motor vehicle when the vehicle is motionless and has its engine turned off. The motor vehicle shall be used as a place to wait or watch for game and shall not be used to chase, pursue, or drive game.
- May operate electric wheelchairs, ATVs, and other passenger vehicles on or off gated, ungated or open-gated roads otherwise closed to vehicular traffic, but only on designated tracts of designated WMAs.
- Roads may be accessed March 1 through the third Friday in August.
- Tracts designated as mobility-impaired access areas shall be posted with signs.
- Vehicular access shall not be permitted on fields, openings, roads, paths, or trails planted with annual grains or agricultural crops.
- It shall be permissible to access areas which are not roads the third Saturday of August until the end of February.
- ATV users shall adhere to manufacturer recommendations including wear-

ing a helmet, wearing safety glasses, and restricting riding to one (1) person, while using ATVs on WMAs.

A person with a mobility-impaired access permit may designate one (1) qualified assistant. The assistant may:

- Track and dispatch a wounded animal, retrieve an animal, or render other assistance in accordance with all other Kentucky Fish and Wildlife and WMA laws and regulations.

A qualified assistant shall not:

- Operate his or her own ATV; or hunt or shoot from an ATV.

**STATE PARK and OTHER OPEN DEER HUNTS**

Open deer hunts are offered on the following state parks on the following dates. Contact the host state park for complete details, including the number of available slots, equipment restrictions, bag limits and check-in and check-out procedures.

- **Yatesville Lake State Park and Lawrence County Recreation Area (606-673-1492):** Muzzleloader starting the third Monday of December for three consecutive days.

**Other open deer hunts**

- **Jenny Wiley State Resort Park (1-800-325-0142):** Open the first Saturday of January for two consecutive days, limit two deer, only one of which may be antlered. Limited to the first 15 mobility-impaired hunters who check in at the park the day before the hunt. Hunters must meet mobility-impaired eligibility requirements. (Mobility-impaired access permit required at check-in.) Hunters must also check in and out on hunt days, and must telecheck deer taken. Hunters may be accompanied by another person, but that person will not be permitted to hunt.
- An open youth hunt is held at **Grayson Lake WMA** on the first Saturday in November for two consecutive days and is limited to youths ages 15 and younger.

The "My Profile" feature at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) provides fast and easy access to your Kentucky Fish and Wildlife records. Scan this symbol with your smartphone to access it.



# KENTUCKY'S PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS: CATEGORIES & WMA MANAGEMENT LEVELS

Every public lands property in Kentucky is unique – varying by location, ownership, land and water features, local wildlife, and recreational opportunities. To help you find the right spot for your intended outdoor activities – anywhere, anytime – the information below explains what to expect based on different public lands designations.

To ensure the most enjoyable time afield possible, take some time to research the opportunities, regulations and boundaries of possible destinations. Always consult Kentucky's hunting and fishing guides because regulations differ between areas and sometimes change. Be aware of applicable hunting seasons or quota (drawing) hunts, which could impact your plans. If you have additional questions, call 1-800-858-1549, email [Info.Center@ky.gov](mailto:Info.Center@ky.gov), or call your local public lands office.

Scan this QR code for detailed information about Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and maps.



areas offer a wilder experience to those seeking it. The new system does not rate how good an area is for hunting or wildlife watching; low intensity areas may offer better hunting due to less pressure.

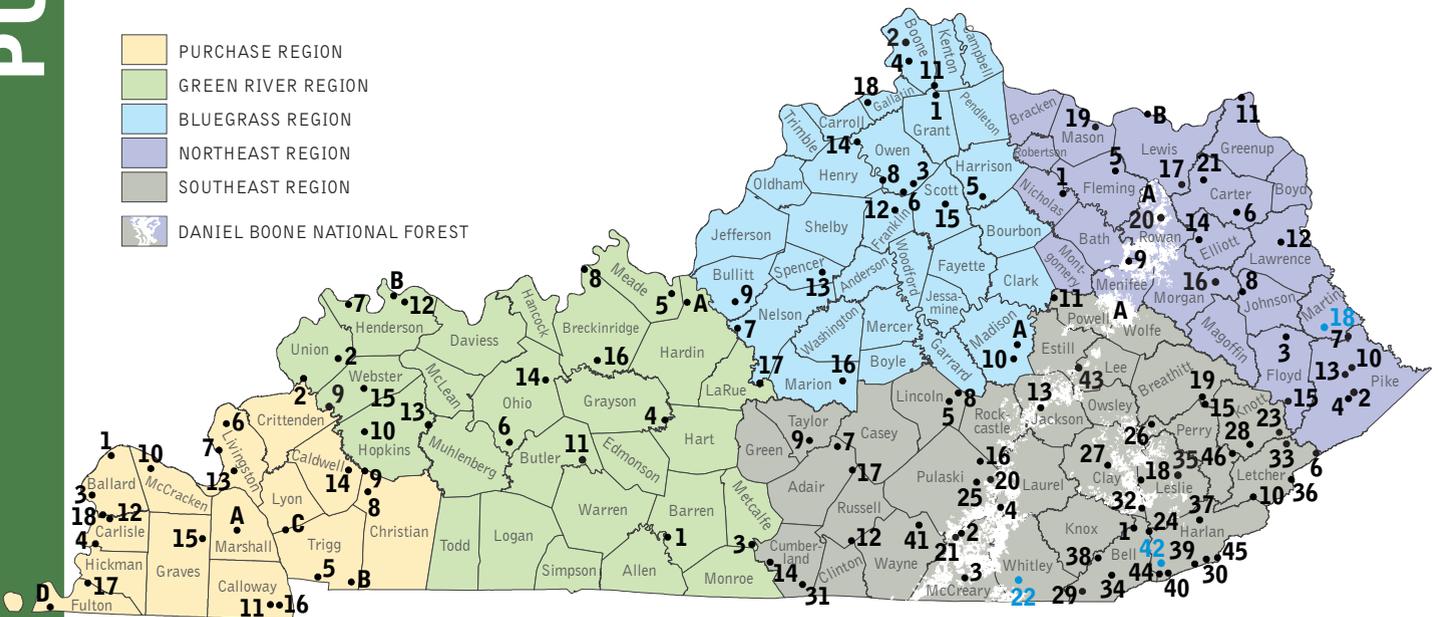
## HIGH MANAGEMENT LEVEL

These areas are continually managed and typically have onsite staff, infrastructure, marked access sites and parking lots. These areas tend to be larger and are either owned or leased long-term by the department.

Fields may be managed by planting native grasses, wildflowers, clover or annual grains. Fields may also be managed through mowing, disking, or prescribed fire, controlling invasive species, or leasing to local farmers for row crops or hay. Wetlands may be managed by planting,

## Wildlife Management Areas

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are properties owned or managed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources for conservation and public access. They are categorized into high, moderate and low intensity management levels. High intensity typically includes areas with offices and active management, such as dove fields or food plots. Low intensity



H=High Management Level M=Medium Management Level L=Low Management Level

### PURCHASE REGION

1. Ballard WMA - H
2. Big Rivers WMA & State Forest - H
3. Boatwright WMA - H
4. Doug Travis WMA - M
5. Lake Barkley WMA - L
6. Livingston County WMA & SNA - M
7. Ohio River Islands WMA - L

8. Pennyrile State Forest
9. Tradewater WMA - L
10. West Kentucky WMA - M
11. Beechy Creek WMA - L
12. Coil Estate WMA - L
13. Ferguson Creek WMA - L
14. Jones-Keeney WMA - L
15. Kaler Bottoms WMA - L

16. Kentucky Lake WMA - L
17. Obion Creek WMA - L
18. Winford WMA - L
- A. Clarks River Nat. Wildlife Refuge
- B. Fort Campbell Military Reservation
- C. Land Between The Lakes NRA
- D. Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge

disking, mowing or managing water levels. Forests may be managed by prescribed burns, forest stand improvement, harvests, tree plantings or the control of invasive species.

“High” level management WMAs may have onsite staff and resources and a direct point of contact for current conditions and management activities. You are welcome to stop by to talk to the friendly and informative staff to get information; but be aware that employees are often out managing the land and are not always in the office.

### MODERATE MANAGEMENT LEVEL

WMAs that are managed at a “moderate” level are obviously not as intensively managed, and staff are typically not on-site. Management is limited to habitat maintenance through prescribed fire, mowing, upkeep of access sites and boundaries and long-term habitat work such as forest stand

improvement or wetland development and manipulation. Several of the Moderate Level WMAs plant and prepare fields for dove hunting opportunities as well. These areas are owned or leased by the department and offer ample acreage for hunting, fishing, hiking and sight-seeing throughout the state.

### LOW MANAGEMENT LEVEL

WMAs designated as “low” management intensity level are typically remote and receive little or no active management. Practices are limited to general maintenance and marking boundaries, though some long-term habitat work may be ongoing. These areas may be difficult to access, with terrain more demanding for visitors to traverse. However, these areas can provide excellent hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities, sometimes because they may attract less attention or be less accessible.

## Other Public Lands

### HUNTER ACCESS AREAS (HAAs)

These areas are accessible through agreements with landowners to provide public hunting access. Some HAAs may only be open to certain activities. Special regulations may be in place for hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities on particular HAAs.

### SHOOTING SPORTS AND DOG TRIAL AREAS

Three of the WMAs in the moderate management level category are primarily used for shooting sports, dog training and field trials: Curtis Gates Lloyd WMA, Miller Welch-Central Kentucky WMA and West Kentucky WMA. Although some hunting is allowed on these areas, activities are strictly managed to minimize conflicts between hunters, anglers and other WMA user groups.

### GREEN RIVER REGION

1. Barren River Lake WMA - H
2. Higginson-Henry WMA - H
3. Marrowbone State Forest & WMA - M
4. Nolin River Lake WMA - L
5. Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area
6. Peabody WMA - H
7. Sloughs WMA - H
8. Yellowbank WMA - H
9. Blackford Oaks WMA - L
10. Clear Creek WMA - L
11. Gabbard Branch WMA - L
12. Green River State Forest
13. Harris-Dickerson WMA - M
14. L.B. Davison WMA - L
15. Lee K. Nelson WMA - L
16. Rough River Lake WMA - L
- A. Fort Knox Military Reservation
- B. Green River National Wildlife Refuge

### BLUEGRASS REGION

1. Curtis Gates Lloyd WMA - M
2. Decker WMA - L
3. Dr. James R. Rich WMA - M
4. Dr. Norman & Martha Adair WMA - L
5. Griffith Woods WMA - M
6. John A. Kleber WMA - M
7. John C. Williams WMA - L
8. Kentucky River WMA - H
9. Knobs State Forest & WMA - L
10. Miller Welch-Central Ky. WMA - M
11. Mullins WMA - L
12. T. N. Sullivan WMA - M
13. Taylorsville Lake WMA - H
14. Twin Eagle WMA - L
15. Veterans Memorial WMA - M
16. Marion Co. WMA & State Forest - L
17. Rolling Fork WMA - M
18. Stephens Creek WMA - L
- A. Bluegrass Army Depot

### NORTHEAST REGION

1. Clay WMA - H
2. Continental Hunting Access Area
3. Dewey Lake WMA - M
4. Fishtrap Lake WMA - L
5. Fleming WMA - M
6. Grayson Lake WMA - H
7. Legacy-LLC WMA - L
8. Paintsville Lake WMA - M
9. Pioneer Weapons WMA - L
10. RH Group Hunting Access Area
11. South Shore WMA - M
12. Yatesville Lake WMA - M
13. Betterment Wildlife Hunting Access
14. Ed Mabry-Laurel Gorge WMA - L
15. Elk Horn Coal Hunting Access Area
16. Horse Mill Branch WMA - L
17. Old Trace Creek WMA - L
18. Pocahontas WMA - L
19. Simon Kenton WMA - L
20. Sunny Brook WMA - L
21. Tygarts State Forest
- A. Daniel Boone National Forest
- B. Ohio R. Islands Nat. Wildlife Refuge

### SOUTHEAST REGION

1. Asher Hunting Access Area
2. Beaver Creek WMA - H
3. Big South Fork NRR
4. Cane Creek WMA - M
5. Cedar Creek Lake WMA - L
6. Continental Hunting Access Area
7. Dennis-Gray WMA - M
8. Dix River WMA - L
9. Green River Lake WMA - H
10. Hensley-Pine Mountain WMA - L
11. Hidden Valley Training Area
12. Lake Cumberland WMA - M
13. Mill Creek WMA - M

14. Mud Camp Creek WMA - L
15. Paul Van Booven WMA - M
16. Ping-Sinking Valley WMA - M
17. R. F. Tarter WMA - L
18. Redbird WMA - L
19. Robinson Forest WMA - L
20. Rockcastle River WMA - M
21. RH Group Hunting Access Area
22. University of the Cumberlands WMA - L
23. Betterment Wildlife Hunting Access
24. Boone Forestlands WMA - M
25. Buck Creek WMA - M
26. Buckhorn Lake WMA - L
27. Burchell-Beech Creek WMA - L
28. Carr Creek Lake WMA - L
29. Cumberland Forest WMA - M
30. Cranks Creek WMA - L
31. Dale Hollow Lake WMA - L
32. Elk Forest WMA - M
33. Elk Horn Coal Hunting Access Area
34. Fortner-Davis WMA - L
35. Hoskins WMA - L
36. Jefferson National Forest
37. Kentenia State Forest
38. Kentucky Ridge Forest WMA/  
Kentucky Ridge State Forest - M
39. Martins Fork Lake WMA - L
40. Martins Fork WMA & SNA - L
41. Meadow Creek WMA - L
42. Pocahontas WMA - L
43. Ross Creek WMA - L
44. Shillalah Creek WMA - L
45. Stone Mountain WMA & SNA - L
46. Wells Hunting Access Area
- A. Daniel Boone National Forest

# PUBLIC LANDS AREAS QUICK REFERENCE

Charts of public lands regulations are now available online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) instead of in the guide. Scan this QR code to access the online charts.



## KEYWORD SEARCH

Use keywords to find the information you need fast when you go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Type the words highlighted below into the search bar and you're on your way.

## Quota Hunts

Information about quota hunts offered in Kentucky. These limit the num-

ber of hunters allowed on a property during certain dates. Species include deer, waterfowl, pheasants and doves. This page includes detailed information about deer quota hunt choices on public land throughout the state.

## WMA Maps

This includes links to a number of resources, including lists, acreages and contact information for managers of various properties around the state. The "get directions" tabs on the "Wildlife Management Area and Public Lands Search" link takes you to road maps and satellite images of each area.

## Deer Reports

These annual reports provide a

wealth of information for hunters about deer in Kentucky. Statistics include deer population estimates, county-by-county deer harvest results, quota hunt results, deer permit sale trends and more.

## Harvest Results

Breakdown of harvest results for deer, turkey, elk, bear, bobcat, otter and sandhill cranes. Deer hunters can see harvest totals of each county and all public lands.

## Learn to Hunt

Find basic information about how to hunt squirrel, deer, dove, turkey and elk. Links include hunter education courses and how to prepare your harvest for the table.

# QUOTA HUNTS

## OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife conducts quota hunts for deer, pheasant and migratory birds (waterfowl and mourning doves). Quota hunts control the number of hunters in an area to provide quality hunting opportunities and regulate harvests at specific areas.

Some hunts are mentored hunts for youth and accompanying adults. Some hunts are open to mobility-impaired hunters only.

Any resident or nonresident may apply for quota hunts. Only the person(s) successfully drawn for quota hunts may hunt. Substitutions are not allowed.

**Complete details for all quota hunts are available online. Click the "Hunt" tab on [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov), choose "Quota Hunts" from the dropdown menu and scroll to the appropriate hunt.**

Applicants drawn for quota hunts must purchase applicable licenses and permits to legally hunt during the quota hunts.

### HOW TO APPLY

Quota hunt applications are available online only at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Apply for dove quota hunts Aug. 4-15. Apply for deer, pheasant and waterfowl quota hunts Sept. 1-30. Hunters may apply for multiple quota hunts for different species at the same time.

The non-refundable application fee is \$3 per hunter for each hunt.

To see if you were drawn for a hunt, go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and check under the "MyProfile" section. You may also call Kentucky Fish and Wildlife weekdays 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time) at 1-800-858-1549.

### QUOTA DEER HUNTS

Deer quota hunts are held on 16 WMAs, and five state parks (Dale Hol-

### *Follow the rules!*

Hunters who do not comply with quota hunt requirements are ineligible to apply for any quota hunt the following year (including deer, pheasant and waterfowl), and will lose any accumulated preference points.

low Lake, Greenbo Lake, Green River Lake, Kenlake, Kincaid Lake). Additionally there are quota deer hunts for mobility-impaired hunters on Green River Lake WMA, Taylorsville Lake WMA and Zilpo-Twin Knobs Campgrounds (on Cave Run Lake).

If applying for a deer quota hunt as a group, each applicant's preference points will be used to calculate an average point total for the group. A group with a higher preference point average will be randomly selected before a group with a lower preference point average.

A maximum of 10 percent nonresi-

dents can be drawn in each deer quota hunt pool.

Drawn quota hunters may bring one non-hunting person along on their hunt. The non-hunting person is not required to have applied for the quota hunt but must check in and check out with the drawn quota hunter. Participants must abide by hunter orange requirements.

Ground blinds used during gun quota hunts for deer must have a hat or vest made of solid, unbroken hunter orange material attached to the blind so that it is visible from all sides. Hunter orange clothing requirements still apply for any persons inside the blind.

**PHEASANT QUOTA HUNTS**

Pheasant quota hunts are held on Yellowbank WMA, Green River Lake

WMA and Clay WMA. See the “Public Hunting Areas Quick Reference” charts for dates. All drawn pheasant hunters must buy (regardless of attendance) and carry while hunting a pheasant quota hunt permit, which is \$25 and may be purchased online or from license vendors anytime before the hunt. Permits are not transferrable.

**DOVE QUOTA HUNTS**

Youth hunters and an accompanying adult may participate in quota mentored dove hunts on a limited number of public fields. Apply online at *fw.ky.gov* from Aug. 4-15.

Locations of mentored hunts will be published in the Dove and Early Waterfowl Guide, available at *fw.ky.gov* in early August. The one-day quota mentored hunts are held in September.

Kentucky will also offer general quota dove hunts Sept. 1 and Sept. 6. Participants must be drawn for these hunts. Any legal hunter may apply online from Aug. 4-15 at *fw.ky.gov*.

**MOBILITY-IMPAIRED QUOTA HUNTS**

Persons with severe mobility restrictions may apply for a mobility-impaired quota hunt. At check in, drawn hunters must show a WMA Mobility-Impaired Access Permit, available in advance of the hunt date from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. Criteria are available online at *fw.ky.gov* by searching under the keywords, “mobility access permit,” or by calling Kentucky Fish and Wildlife at 800-858-1549.

**WATERFOWL QUOTA HUNTS**

**WATERFOWL/MIGRATORY BIRD QUOTA HUNTS**

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is migrating much of its waterfowl and migratory bird hunting information to its website. Find information not covered in this printed guide online at *fw.ky.gov*, including a form downloadable to smartphones. This page covers basic information.

Season-long blind drawings are available at Barkley Lake, Barren River Lake, Doug Travis and Green River Lake. Drawings are typically held from August through October. These are separate from general quota hunt drawings held in September. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife announces dates and locations for these waterfowl blind drawings in August. Check online at *fw.ky.gov* for more information.

**PUBLIC LAND HUNTING**

**Ballard WMA (Ballard County)**

Hunters are not required to hunt from blinds maintained by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. Hunters will be drawn for one of 14 hunting units. The party who draws that unit can hunt anywhere within the unit.

- Hunts available through quota draw for individual dates only.

- Apply for quota hunts Sept. 1-30 online at *fw.ky.gov*.

**Sloughs WMA - Sauerheber Unit (Union and Henderson counties)**

Successfully drawn hunters will be assigned one of 12 hunting units. The hunter who draws that unit can hunt anywhere within the unit, except in specified units where you must hunt from a blind.

- Hunts available through quota draw for individual dates only.
- Apply for quota hunts Sept. 1-30 online at *fw.ky.gov*.
- Hunters must check-in the Sunday prior to the hunt.

**Sloughs WMA - Jenny Hole Unit (Henderson County)**

Unit is a quota hunt-only area.

- Hunting spots (10) assigned by weekly drawings held Monday evenings at Sloughs WMA office. Only one member of a hunting party needs to be present at the drawing. Two spots available through quota draw for individual dates only.
- Apply for quota hunts Sept. 1-30 online at *fw.ky.gov*.
- Access is limited to drawn hunters only, and only on quota hunt days, with no access after 2 p.m. (local time).

**MENTOR/MOBILITY-IMPAIRED HATCHERY HUNTS**

**Minor Clark and Pfeiffer Fish Hatcheries (Rowan and Franklin counties)**

- Open to mobility-impaired hunters with access permit, and youths under the age of 16 accompanied by an adult mentor. A mentor may hunt.
- Hunters must apply online between Nov. 1-15.
- Hunt dates available Jan. 3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 and Jan. 31 (2026).
- Mentor/youth hunt groups limited to four hunters, with no more than two hunting adults.

**Doug Travis WMA Mobility-impaired Hunt (Carlisle and Hickman counties)**

- Two blinds available.
- Applications accepted by mail, Sept. 1-30.

**SANDHILL CRANES**

- Apply in September at *fw.ky.gov* for the Sandhill Crane permit drawing.
- Hunters may be drawn for up to three permits a season.
- Portions of Green River Lake and Barren River Lake are refugee areas and closed to crane hunting.
- Hunters must pass a migratory bird identification test before receiving their sandhill crane permit.

# 2025-26 DEER QUOTA HUNT CHOICES

WMA - Outdoor Recreation Area choices		Dates	# of slots	Min. # pref. pts. of 2024 participants		Hunt Remarks (Quota hunts are for either sex deer unless otherwise noted)
				All	Non Res.	
1	Ballard WMA	Nov. 1-2	100	2	3.3	Hunters awarded one preference point for each antlerless deer harvested, up to four. Scouting permitted through Oct. 14.
2	Beaver Creek WMA	Nov. 1-2	330	0	0	Antlered deer only.
3	Big Rivers WMA & State Forest #1	Oct. 20-Nov. 30	130	1	4	Archery and crossbow only. Closed during the two-day quota hunt that starts the first Saturday in November. Department issued hang tags required. Must telecheck harvested deer.
4	Big Rivers WMA & State Forest #2	Nov. 1-2	100	1	3	
5	Clay WMA	Nov. 1-2	225	1	1	Limit four, only one of which may be antlered, during quota hunt. Hunters awarded one preference point for each antlerless deer harvested, up to four.
6	Dewey Lake WMA	Nov. 1-2	150	0	0.6	Limit one during quota hunt.
7	Fishtrap Lake WMA	Nov. 22-23	200	0	0	Limit one during quota hunt.
8	Green River Lake & Dennis-Gray WMAs	Nov. 1-2	400	0	0.5	
9	Green River Lake & Dennis-Gray WMAs Mobility-Impaired*	Nov. 1-2	15	0	0	Open only to mobility-impaired persons.
10	Higginson - Henry WMA #1	Oct. 20-Nov. 30	60	1.6	4	Archery and crossbow only. Closed during the two-day quota hunt that starts the first Saturday in November. Department issued hang tags required. Must telecheck harvested deer.
11	Higginson - Henry WMA #2	Nov. 1-2	45	1.6	4	
12	Kentucky River WMA	Nov. 1-2	65	0	0	
13	Kleber and Rich WMAs #1	Nov. 1-2	200	0	0	
14	Kleber and Rich WMAs #2	Dec. 6-7	200	0	0	
15	Paintsville Lake WMA	Nov. 1-2	125	0	0	
16	Pennyrile State Forest/Tradewater WMA	Nov. 1-2	300	0	1	
17	Taylorville Lake WMA #1	Nov. 1-2	268	0.75	0.8	Hunters awarded one preference point for each antlerless deer harvested, up to four.
18	Taylorville Lake WMA Mobility-Impaired* #1	Nov. 1-2	7	0	0	Open only to mobility-impaired persons. Hunters awarded one preference point for each antlerless deer harvested, up to four.
19	Taylorville Lake WMA #2	Dec. 6-7	268	0	0	Hunters awarded one preference point for each antlerless deer harvested, up to four.
20	Taylorville Lake WMA Mobility-Impaired* #2	Dec. 6-7	7	0	0	Open only to mobility-impaired persons. Hunters awarded one preference point for each antlerless deer harvested, up to four.
21	Veterans Memorial WMA	Nov. 1-2	50	0.8	1	
22	West Kentucky WMA	Nov. 22-25	135	0	0	Shotgun and muzzleloader only. <a href="#">Tract 1 is closed to public access.</a>
23	West Kentucky WMA youth mentor	Nov. 22-25	10	0	0	Shotgun only, youth mentor hunt on portions of "A" tracts. Only youth hunters apply. No more than two youth hunters may accompany an adult mentor. No more than one adult can mentor a youth hunter. An adult mentor may take a deer during the hunt.

WMA - Outdoor Recreation Area choices		Dates	# of slots	Min. # pref. pts. of 2024 participants		Hunt Remarks (Quota hunts are for either sex deer unless otherwise noted)
				All	Non Res.	
24	Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park #1	Nov. 3-7	60	0	0	Archery and crossbow only. Must telecheck harvested deer.
25	Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park #2	Dec. 13-14	40	0	0	Youth only. Must telecheck harvested deer.
26	Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park #3	Jan. 3-4	50	0	0	Must telecheck harvested deer.
27	Greenbo Lake State Resort Park #1	Nov. 7-9	40	0	0	Archery and crossbow only. Must telecheck harvested deer.
28	Greenbo Lake State Resort Park #2	Nov. 14-16	40	0	0	Archery and crossbow only. Must telecheck harvested deer.
29	Greenbo Lake State Resort Park #3	Jan. 6-7	20	0	0	Must telecheck harvested deer.
30	Green River Lake State Park #1	Dec. 11-14	55	0.5	0.8	Archery and crossbow only. No check in or out. Must telecheck harvested deer.
31	Green River Lake State Park #2	Dec. 18-21	55	0	0	Archery and crossbow only. No check in or out. Must telecheck harvested deer.
32	Kenlake State Resort Park #1	Nov. 13-16	20	0	1	Archery and crossbow only. Must telecheck harvested deer.
33	Kenlake State Resort Park #2	Jan. 3-4	20	0	0	Archery and crossbow only. Must telecheck harvested deer.
34	Kincaid Lake State Park #1	Dec. 4-7	10	1.3	0	Must telecheck harvested deer.
35	Kincaid Lake State Park #2	Dec. 11-14	10	1	0	Must telecheck harvested deer.
36	Twin Knobs Mobility-Impaired*	Dec. 13	12	0	0	Open only to mobility-impaired persons.

\*Only hunters who are mobility-impaired as described on page 29 can apply and be drawn for this hunt. Antlered deer taken during quota hunts count against the statewide limit of one antlered deer per hunter, per season.



**Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry (KHFH)** is a nonprofit, volunteer organization that encourages hunters to harvest and donate deer each season for distribution to homeless shelters and food banks throughout the state.

Hunters in Zone 1 counties have a unique opportunity to help. They may take an unlimited number of antlerless deer so long as they have purchased the appropriate additional deer permits.

Donated deer must be properly field dressed, recorded and telechecked. KHFH covers processing fees for donated deer. Hunters can find approved deer processors participating in the program and full instructions online at the KHFH website.



Detailed instructions about how to donate your deer and a list of participating processors are available online at

[kyhuntersforthehungry.info](http://kyhuntersforthehungry.info)