



NOTE: The following is a summary of action taken by the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission at its special called meeting on Feb. 18, 2022. Official meeting minutes will be reviewed at a future meeting. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources provides this summary to enhance the public's awareness about potential changes to hunting, fishing, boating or other related regulations.

FRANKFORT, Ky. — In a special called video teleconference meeting on Feb. 18, the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously approved two research projects and proposed a provision to allow a resident elk hunter in the military to defer the use of an elk hunting permit for up to two years due to a deployment or reassignment.

The meeting was live-streamed on Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's YouTube channel and [a replay](#) is available on demand.

The current provision for deferral of an elk permit covers only drawn hunters who have experienced a death of a spouse, child or legal guardian. Commission members, the Kentucky Elk Guides Association and other sportspeople raised the idea of adding a deferral provision for U.S. service members.

In a unanimous vote at the Feb. 18 meeting, the Commission recommended adding to [301 KAR 2:132](#) an elk permit deferral option for service members who are deployed or restationed outside of Kentucky after they have purchased an elk permit but before the scheduled date of their assigned hunt. The option could be extended automatically for a second time if the hunter was also unable to hunt in the second year because of a military assignment outside of Kentucky.

Service members using the deferral option would be required to provide official military assignment papers to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's elk program between May 1 and the start date of their assigned hunt to defer their permit. To later use the permit, the service member would need to contact the department's elk program to have the permit reauthorized for the hunt year to which they deferred their permit.

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission is a [nine-member board](#), comprised of volunteers who serve four-year terms. It recommends hunting, fishing and boating

regulations on behalf of the sportspersons of the Commonwealth.

Commission recommendations are reviewed by legislative committees with jurisdiction over particular topics. By statute, proposed regulations are subject to a public comment period before being reviewed by a legislative committee. Recommendations must receive legislative approval before they become law.

In other business, the Commission approved a Wildlife Division proposal to collect and contribute samples from Kentucky deer to a national surveillance effort led by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services](#) to determine persistence and circulation of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, among white-tailed deer. The risk of deer spreading the virus to people is considered low.

As part of the effort, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife will collect nasal and blood samples from as many as 1,000 wild deer in the state, primarily from March 2022-February 2023. Efforts will be made to obtain samples from deer in rural and urban areas, either through hunter harvest, herd health checks or damage management activities.

Data will be comparable across states, including several participating neighboring states. The USDA would fully reimburse Kentucky Fish and Wildlife for its part of the project, estimated to cost no more than \$25,000.

The Commission also approved the renewal of a \$20,000 contract with Murray State University to continue a long-term study of [alligator gar](#) to better understand movement patterns, habitat use and spawning patterns of the species. Sixty-five percent of the contract cost is reimbursable through the [State Wildlife Grant Program](#).

The Commission then entered executive (closed) session to receive an update about litigation with the Kentucky Open Government Coalition, recent court decisions, related appeals and the Commission's appeal rights. The Commission returned to open session and voted to proceed with the advice of legal counsel and approve invoices as they were presented by legal counsel to the Commission.

The date of the Commission's next quarterly meeting and the agenda for that meeting will be posted on the department's website when available.