

# BEAR HUNTING

## SEASON DATES and RESTRICTIONS

| BEAR             | Zone 1                                | Zone 2                               |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chase-Only*      | June 1 - Aug. 31 and Sept. 9-30, 2023 |                                      |
| Hunt with Dogs** | Oct. 23-27, 2023                      | Oct. 23-27, 2023 and Nov. 2-10, 2023 |
| Archery/Crossbow | Oct. 28-30, 2023                      | Oct. 28 - Nov. 1, 2023               |
| Firearm          | Dec. 9-11, 2023                       | Dec. 9-13, 2023                      |

\*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: Hunters may participate in the chase-only season even if they have harvested a bear.

### 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

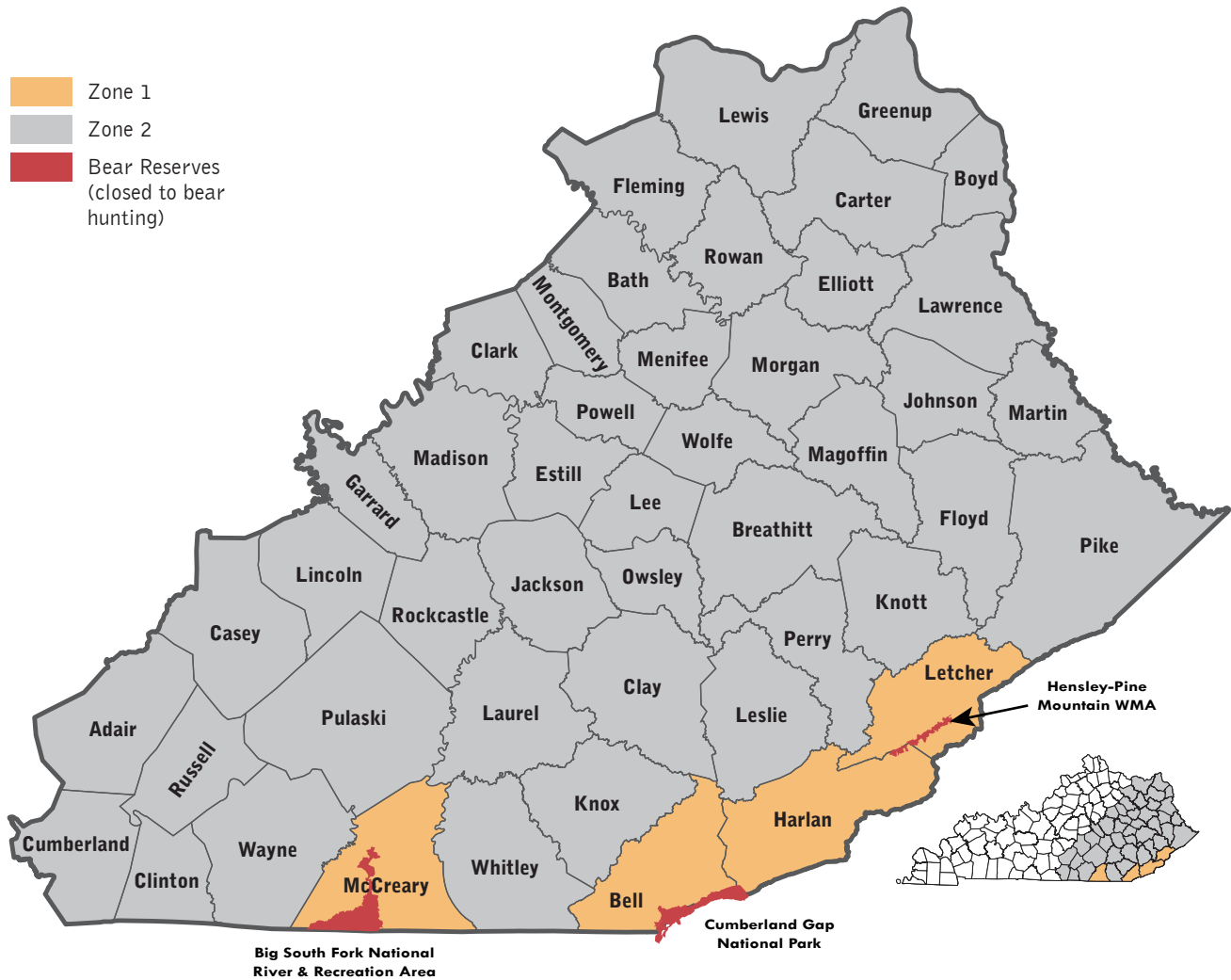
equipment during bear firearm season.

### 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

- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Bear Reserves  
(closed to bear hunting)



## 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.