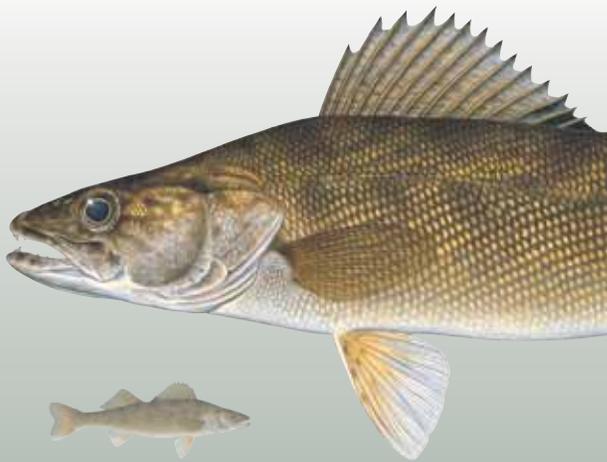




Fish & Wildlife

OUT-DOOR NEWS



Walleye begin their annual spawning runs with the inflow of rains as early as Valentine's Day. Walleye fishing peaks in March below locks and dams, and in the headwaters of Lake Cumberland.

RICK HILL ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by Kevin Kelly, Lee McClellan and Dave Baker



Records fall during 2015-16 deer season

HUNTERS IN KENTUCKY took 155,705 deer – a new overall harvest record – during a 2015-16 campaign that saw records broken at just about every turn.

“The herd is healthy and deer are reproducing,” said Gabe Jenkins, deer program coordinator for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. “We had a couple of bad winters but we had good mast that got us through. It’s all come together.”

The previous record harvest of 144,409 deer occurred during the 2013-14 season. After a slight dip to 138,898 white-tails during the 2014-15 season, hunters took advantage of their opportunities this past season.

Other season superlatives:

- Hunters set new monthly har-

vest records for September, October, November, December and January.

- Of the record 105,440 deer taken during modern gun season in November, the 44,314 deer harvested over its opening weekend also set a record.
- Hunters took a record 5,558 deer during the statewide youth firearms weekend in October.
- Black powder hunters harvested a record 10,956 deer during the late muzzleloader season in December. The 8,262 deer taken during the October muzzleloader weekend was the second highest total for the early season.

Roughly 300,000 people hunt deer each year in Kentucky, and the state’s deer herd was estimated to number 1 mil-



TIM SLONE PHOTO

Shelbyville's Susan Saufley with her first deer. Hunters had a record 2015-16 season.

lion before archery season opened in early September.

Good weather helped hunters during key hunting timeframes while a spotty mast crop put deer on the move and made them more vulnerable.

"A big harvest leaves hunters happy and is good for the economy," Jenkins said. "We also have to realize there are a lot of deer on the landscape and we need to continue to manage the resource properly.

"We're reaping a lot of rewards as far as the quality of the deer herd, but the quantity can get out of hand pretty quickly, which can decrease the quality of the herd. We want to make sure we're good stewards of the resource by managing our numbers."

DEER SEASON DATES AND ZONE CHANGES FOR 2016-17

Hunters planning to take time off for the coming 2016-2017 deer seasons can get a jump on those plans by knowing the dates and the zone changes. Here are the deer season dates and a few zone changes on tap for this fall and winter. All dates are 2016 unless otherwise noted.

Archery: Sept. 3, 2016 – Jan. 16, 2017

Crossbow: Oct. 1-16; Nov. 12 – Dec. 31

Early Youth Weekend: Oct. 8-9

Early Muzzleloader: Statewide: Oct. 15-16

Modern Firearms: Zones 1 and 2: Nov. 12-27
Zone 3 and 4: Nov. 12-21

Late Muzzleloader: Statewide: Dec. 10-18

Late Youth Weekend: Dec. 31, 2016 – Jan. 1, 2017

There are three deer zone changes for the 2016-2017 seasons. All allow hunters to take more female deer.

Hardin and Webster counties have changed from Zone 2 to Zone 1.

Marion County has moved from Zone 3 to Zone 2.



MIKE HARDIN PHOTO

New fishing access opens at Meldahl Dam on the Ohio River

THE OHIO RIVER is long known as the best water to catch sauger in Kentucky. The roiling waters below Meldahl Lock and Dam in Bracken County consistently produce sauger from fall through spring.

Considered one of the most productive bank fishing spots on the river, the area below Meldahl Lock and Dam recently reopened after undergoing installation of a new hydroelectric structure.

"It looks great," said Mike Hardin, assistant director of fisheries for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "Not only do you have the tailrace for good fishing, but you have the new sandy beach area below the lock and dam for fishing. This is someplace to access easily for bank anglers and place them on good fishing spots."

The area now has a sturdy fishing pier, multi-level fish-

ing platforms for varying river levels and a mobility-impaired concrete fishing ramp that leads to an excellent fishing spot. An alarm warns anglers to any sudden changes in the river levels and the piers have life preservers on hand in case of an accident.

Workers also installed shoreline undulations 50 feet apart both above and below the fishing pier to provide current breaks that hold fish. Northeastern Fisheries District Biologist Tom Timmermann said the area not only holds sauger, but provides excellent fishing for hybrid striped bass, crappie, bluegill, catfish and black bass such as largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass.

The new fishing area also has improved parking, new bathroom facilities and picnic areas. Meldahl Lock and Dam is located off KY 8, just east of Foster, Kentucky.

Give someone suffering from hypothermia a regular soft drink instead of water. The energy derived from the sugar in the soft drink boosts the chances of survival.