

**UPDATED RESPONSES AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2011
APPEAR IN RED**

**RESPONSES TO TOWN HALL MEETING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS
December 6, 2010 – January 11, 2011**

**District 9
North Laurel High School, London**

Fishing Related

No place to launch boats on Laurel Lake during tournaments (9)

Access in this lake is under the control of the Forest Service.

Laurel Lake- Smallmouth/ KY Bass and Crappie in Lake, stock Hybrid to reduce shad (9)

Due to the fact that the department stocks trout into the lake, stocking hybrid striped bass would not be a good option. Hybrid striped bass will feed heavily on rainbow trout. The department implemented a remedial largemouth bass stocking program to increase numbers in the lake in years when natural recruitment is low, and the bass feed primarily on shad.

Brickyard ponds in Barbourville – is KDFWR managing those ponds?(9)

Yes, it is a lake that is in the department's Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINS) program and gets stocked with trout and bass multiple times throughout the year.

What necessitates a \$50 fee for a tournament and the requirement for insurance?

This is a Forest Service invoked fee which does not involve the KDFWR.

Bass fishing is pitiful on Laurel.

Fisheries data collected by the Department shows stable numbers of all three species of black bass in the lake. Water clarity and steep, rocky shorelines can make this a tough lake to fish. The Department has had a remedial largemouth bass stocking program for those years when bass in the reservoir experience poor spawning success.

Wildlife/ Hunting

Sand Hill Cranes – not open to hunting; protect them (1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)

KDFWR Commission unanimously passed the proposed season at the June Commission meeting. The USFWS approved Kentucky's hunt plan at their June meeting. Public comments were received and a KDFWR response was prepared and the regulation was submitted to the legislative Administrative Regulation and Review Subcommittee. This regulation received no

objection and is now scheduled for the final legislative committee, Interim Natural Resources Committee in November 2011.

KDFWR is ignoring that we have big cats. Can we kill them if we see them? (9)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formally announced on March 2, 2011 the findings from a 5-year review of all biological data and officially concluded the eastern mountain lion or cougar to be extinct. This, of course, does not apply to the small remaining lion population in Florida as this is a distinct subspecies. In addition, KDFWR biologists have never documented either a carcass or photograph of a wild mountain lion in the Commonwealth. As such, a mountain lion in Kentucky is considered an escaped or released animal and may be shot due to human safety concerns. However, the shooter must immediately contact the KDFWR as the carcass **MUST** be surrendered to the KDFWR for DNA sampling to determine the origin. Lastly, anyone who considers shooting a large cat in Kentucky should be absolutely certain that is what they are shooting as they would be criminally and financially liable for inadvertently shooting a domestic pet.

Drawings for deer quota hunts need to be earlier in the year instead of waiting until 2nd week of October. (9)

Drawing must wait until waterfowl season laws and hunt dates are finalized. Having same application and draw period for all types of quota hunts saves sportsmen's dollars.

Are we working to correct the problems with bear populations across the state? (9)

The range of resident black bears in Kentucky is primarily confined to areas east of Daniel Boone National Forest. Annually, over 65% of all bear complaints are related to their access to human-related foods. As such, public education and technical guidance is an important component of bear management in Kentucky. Educational advice and technical guidance can be easily found on the KDFWR website and by speaking to any of 16 KDFWR employs across eastern Kentucky whose duties are to work with landowners and businesses to resolve human-bear conflicts.

Food plot assistance – what programs are available? (9)

We often have limited amounts of free seed available in the spring. The best approach is to contact your local private lands biologist (call – (800) 858-1549 for contact info) to get a management plan for your property. He can make you aware of various food plot options and programs.

Deer population has decreased (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9)

Current statewide deer population trends are nearly stable to slightly decreasing. Over the past few years deer zones in many counties have been made more restrictive to try to boost the deer population. KDFWR deer biologists look at each county's deer population trend every year. Based on that population trend a county's zone can be changed to better manage the deer population in the county. A county's deer zone is determined by a combination of many things. Along with the population model, deer vehicle collision numbers, crop damage complaints, and hunter satisfaction are all taken into account when determining what a county's zone should be.

Changing the zone has really helped the county's deer herd. (9)

When a zone is changed, KDFWR needs at least 3 years to allow enough time for the restrictions to have an effect. If the herd is slightly decreasing usually a zone change for 3 years will bring the herd back up to a more desirable level.

Extending gun season for Zone 3 & 4 – hunt bucks only. (9)

Opposes extending the deer season in zones 3 & 4. (9)

The addition of 6 days of buck only hunting at the end of the 10 day season for zones 3 & 4 was proposed by the Commission at the December 2010 Commission Meeting. It was passed in December then was tabled for reconsideration in February. It was revisited during the March 2011 Commission meeting and the vote was to not add 6 additional days of buck only hunting in zones 3 & 4.

Size limits on antlers in Bell County (9)

Because a hunter is allowed to harvest one buck during the firearms season, adding an antler size restriction on top of that would greatly limit the number of harvestable bucks. Such a restriction would take away opportunity for those zone 4 deer hunters who are not primarily interested in trophy bucks.

Reduction of the deer herd, attribute to telecheck and KDFWR needs to change it. (9)

Current statewide deer population trends are nearly stable to slightly decreasing. Over the past few years deer zones in many counties statewide have been lowered to try to boost the deer population back to acceptable levels. This decrease is not attributed to Telecheck. KDFWR had a study conducted to determine the compliance rate of hunters using Telecheck. Results indicated that deer hunters were more compliant using Telecheck than they were at check stations. It is much easier to make a call than it is to load a deer and drive it to a check station. Also from the study, KDFWR was able to determine a non-compliance rate for hunters who were not Telechecking deer. That rate was incorporated into the deer population models to account for both legal and illegal harvest each year.

QDM statewide on public and private.

KDFWR seeks to provide maximum hunting opportunity on public land. Some public areas have minimum antler spread restrictions (a core Quality Deer Management (QDM) practice) already to provide a variety of public land for hunters. The removal of the bonus buck tag on WMA's is intended to increase buck quality by encouraging hunters to decide if they wish to use their statewide buck tag on a young/small buck and to encourage hunters to make the 2nd deer they harvest in a season a doe, which helps keep buck:doe ratios low.

Make it illegal to shoot a small buck. (9)

All 9th District counties are zone 4. Antler restrictions in a zone 4 county would greatly limit the number of available deer to harvest. Taking away so much opportunity for zone 4 deer hunters is unfair, since not all hunters are interested in trophy management.

Expand bear season in KY (6, 7, 9)

Continued research and overall management efforts indicate that Kentucky's bear population can sustain harvest mortality. While Kentucky's bear population continues to grow, harvest of females should remain relatively conservative as our population status is not that of our neighboring Southern Appalachian states. However, the KDFWR does plan to include more counties in the bear zone, likely offer an archery-only hunt, increase the overall quota for bears, and increase the length of the December gun hunt. For 2011, the bear season has been moved forward one week

and will occur on the first weekend of December; this was done in an attempt to escape inclement weather and increase hunter participation in this quota hunt.

Coyotes are a problem (1, 4, 7, 8, 9)

Coyotes are a detriment to our fawn populations. (9)

Coyotes are extremely intelligent animals and night hunting tends to make animals even more wary of humans and more difficult to remove. More importantly, hunting coyotes at night poses serious human safety concerns. An errant shot fired by a high caliber rifle at night can have fatal consequences as the shooter rarely has sight of humans, human dwellings or livestock in the far distance. Typically, coyote problems are resolved by removing the particular offending animal(s)- rather than every coyote on your property. Landowners experiencing coyote problems may contact the KDFWR website or Info Center to locate a trapper who will trap coyotes for no charge during the trapping season. Landowners should also contact their local KDFWR private lands biologist to receive detailed technical guidance and advice regarding coyotes.

Concerns on decline of small game & seasons (rabbits, quail, grouse) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9)

The Department shares the concern for decline of small game. The seasons continue to be a popular debate with overlap of deer seasons and creating a single season that ends sometime in February. KDFWR has been one of the national leaders in restoration for bobwhite (management will also benefit rabbits). We also continue to move towards a more active forest management program on WMAs and through private lands efforts that will benefit ruffed grouse.

KDFWR is working to create a cooperative program for private land owners to support small game management practices, which will include evaluating cost-benefit of existing tactics and developing critical measures of success.

Decrease in grouse population – need more emphasis on grouse habitat. (7, 9)

The department is preparing an annual report for December 2011 to highlight forest management activities.

No quail. (9)

Bobwhite quail are struggling in KY and across the vast majority of their range. Please review our restoration plan on the website to better understand how we hope to change the tide. Log on to fw.ky.gov for details.

Beaver Creek – what are the plans for management? (9)

We continue to manage the forest openings on the area with annual grain or legume plantings and doing invasive species removal in and around these open lands. We are continuing general operations and maintenance including boundary marking, gates and signage, administration of quota hunts and species specific research. This area is owned by the US Forest Service and any management KDFWR does on this area must comply with their forest management plan. Future plans to be discussed include timber stand improvement and prescribed burning.

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Problems on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)

Our regulation 301 KAR 3:010 -Public Use of Wildlife Management Areas specifically prohibits use of mechanized vehicles on our owned areas except on a maintained road open to public use or in a designated parking area.

Additionally this regulation addresses Wildlife Management Areas not owned by the Department. **ATV use is allowed on some Eastern KY Wildlife Management areas under a lease agreement, since the landowner has agreed to this use. Similarly the owner of some leased land may prohibit ATV use on maintained roadways; therefore, ATV use is not allowed on these areas.** The above provision does not apply if:

Conservation officers routinely enforce all fish and wildlife regulations including the above **regulation.**

Stop farming soybeans and corn on WMA's, not suitable breeding habitat nor good cover. (9)

On some WMAs, agriculture leases provide a significant revenue stream that allows KDFWR to implement other management objectives on the property. Cropland does provide food for wildlife and cover at certain time of the year. **Cropping is done in balance with other habitat management objectives and provides a piece of the overall management puzzle on the area. WMA plans being completed by the end of the year will further evaluate the management needs of our areas.**

Change youth season (2, 4, 7, 9)

Youth season for deer – September doe hunt. (9)

No change to youth seasons is currently recommended. Current youth seasons are the best compromise at this point.

Why are folks getting drawn more than once? (9)

The elk drawing is completely random and all applicants in the past were given equal chance. Beginning in 2010, once someone is drawn for a bull tag, they cannot be drawn for another bull tag for the next 3 years.

Doesn't like the online application and credit card payment only for permit. (9)

The current online system is the most efficient method and allows us to gather more information from the hunters that are drawn. Under the old point of sale system, only names were available and we had to look up every drawn hunter in the phone book for a contact number. The new system allows us to obtain the list of applicants and their addresses quicker and more accurately. We can then use our website to notify those that are drawn and already have the information needed to send them their permit.

Too many elk in Leslie County. (9)

If you are having problems with elk in your area, you need to contact your local officer or private lands biologist. **The KDFWR Law Enforcement Division can be contacted via 800-25-ALERT 24/7. The name and number for biologists and LE officers is available by calling 800-858-1549.**

Law Enforcement Related

Alcoholic drinks on the lake – please go back and look at the issue. You are the law on the water. Folks are holding up beer and making fun of the officers.

Our primary responsibility on the water is to enforce Chapter 235-Safe Boating Act and Chapter 150-Fish and Wildlife laws. Drinking alcohol in public (including waterways) is a violation of KRS 222.202. . However, boating under the influence will be strictly enforced under our statutory authority in Chapter 235.

Boaters need to refuse to let a bunch of drunks rule the water.

KDFWR is the primary state law enforcement agency charged with enforcing boating laws and regulations. As such, the department recognizes that “Drinking alcohol in public” represents a violation of KRS 222.202, and that all waterways in Kentucky are, by definition, considered public places. Because of this statutory mandate, the department’s law enforcement division continues to utilize both education and enforcement strategies to help ensure safe and enjoyable boating opportunities in the Commonwealth.

Judges are throwing out tickets – they are letting folks go and are not prosecuting.

The courts are the ultimate decision maker in regards to penalties that are enforced. The officers can only make suggestions and present evidence in court. However, the department is always seeking new methods and opportunities to educate local courts, other governmental agencies, and our customers on the seriousness and lasting impact of wildlife violations.

Drinking on the water – Boating safety, boating and drinking, Drinking in public, we must police this issue.

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Regulations are too complicated, hard to understand and confusing. Need to be simplified

At the March, 2010 Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting, the Commission voted to “establish a two-year cycle for amendments to applicable KDFWR regulations”, in support of Strategic Plan Objective 3.1.a. KDFWR expects this significant change in process will assist with getting regulations processed, guides published and the public more informed.

Other

The department needs to target 7th & 8th grade kids and make conservation programs mandatory for high school kids. (9)

The department offers regular conservation education programs to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. Approximately 70,000 students receive conservation programs during the school year or at conservation camp. The Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources conservation programs are voluntary. Individual schools decided if they want to receive the programs.

**Need more places to hunt (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
Purchase as much land as possible for WMA's (9)**

Over the last four years and with the commitment of \$1million per year, KDFWR has increased, by close to 10 thousand acres, the amount of land owned by the department and now available for public access. Within these newly owned areas, the department has now made available nearly 4,000 acres, specifically located in and around the state's most populous area (i.e., the Golden Triangle of Louisville, Lexington and Northern Kentucky). Further, the department averages each year approximately 150 thousand acres in private landowner access agreements, which makes even more land available to the public. Aside from new hunting opportunities, KDFWR has also developed 13 new bank access sites and more than 30 boating access sites in the last four years; whereas the department now offers 34 new lake fishing opportunities in and around Kentucky's urban areas through our Fishing in Neighborhoods program.