

COVID-19 and Kentucky Fish & Wildlife: Frequently Asked Questions



In response to state and federal guidance in the effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, many changes have been made by government agencies and businesses in how services are delivered.

At the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, it's no different. We are making changes based on the ongoing guidance we receive, in order to help protect the public and our staff. While changes are being made as necessary, some things remain business as usual. We're as committed as ever to conserving the Commonwealth's fish and wildlife resources, and providing as much opportunity as possible for everyone to enjoy the outdoors.

We have received many questions about the virus and how it is affecting Kentucky's fish and wildlife. The following are some recurring questions we've recently received, and our answers:

- ***Are department offices closed?***

Department offices are closed to in-person services until further notice. Our staff is still working, but is providing public services without direct interaction with the public to minimize risks to all of us. Please visit fw.ky.gov, call us at 1-800-858-1549, or email us at Info.Center@ky.gov to obtain information about programs and services. Field staff continues to work out of local offices and facilities but will not be directly interacting with the public, except for law enforcement and to provide other essential services.

- ***Is the department continuing to stock trout and catfish?***

Yes. At this time, the department is continuing to stock fish in our [Fishing in Neighborhoods lakes](#). Catfish were stocked this month. Stockings for April are still being determined. Through this spring, planned [stocking dates](#) will not be posted on the website as those dates may change with staff availability. We will announce dates online sometime after stockings are completed.

Before going fishing, be sure to buy your 2020 Kentucky fishing license at fw.ky.gov. In keeping with current public health guidelines, please practice social distancing of 6 feet or more from others while enjoying the outdoors.

- ***Is the department closing any of its fishing access points, boat ramps or wildlife management areas?***

No. All department-owned and managed [fishing access points](#), boat ramps, and wildlife or hunter access areas remain open for anglers, boaters and hunters. You can find [maps](#) and other access information online at fw.ky.gov.

However, the department is canceling organized events of 10 people or more on the areas. Also, until further notice, offices are closed to in-person services with limited exceptions.

- ***Is the department postponing or canceling fishing tournaments?***

The department doesn't directly regulate [fishing tournaments](#). For any tournament questions, please contact tournament organizers.

- ***Are conservation camps still taking applications? Will camps be canceled?***

At this time, we are still accepting [conservation camp](#) applications at fw.ky.gov and hope to hold camps this summer. Expect a final decision about the status of the camps by mid-April. If camps are canceled, parents and guardians will be notified by email and a full refund will be issued. Anyone who has already enrolled a child for camp and does not feel comfortable sending that child to camp can obtain a full refund.

- ***Are Hunter Education classes and range days still open for participants?***

In-person Kentucky hunter education classes and range days are temporarily suspended. If you have registered for a class that is affected by this change, you will be notified by email. Please keep checking our website for the next available in-person class.

Online options for completing the classroom portion of Kentucky's hunter education are available. This includes a new, free online course. Visit our fw.ky.gov home page, select "Education" and then click on "Hunter Education."

A virtual range day option is currently available in lieu of in-person range days to meet certification requirements. Complete information is available on the department's Hunter Education [webpage](#), including [how-to](#) and [sample](#) "virtual range day" videos. This information can also be found by visiting the department's [website](#) and searching the keywords "hunter education."

Please also note that the department recognizes state-approved Hunter Education certifications from all other states, regardless of their course format.

- ***Is the department waiving the requirements for hunter education because of canceled classes?***

No. If you are required to have a [hunter education card](#) to hunt in Kentucky, you will still be required to do so.

The department has a one-year [Hunter Education exemption permit](#) available for those who can't obtain their Hunter Education card in time for a hunting season; this permit allows people of any age to hunt with an adult mentor who has completed Hunter Education or was born before 1975. To obtain this permit, start by clicking [here](#).

- ***Will coronavirus affect wildlife populations?***

Department biologists do not believe there will be an impact on our wildlife populations.

- ***Is the department considering opening up hunting seasons early, or changing bag or daily catch limits?***

No. Kentucky's [hunting seasons](#) and fishing regulations have not been expanded. These seasons and limits remain set by regulation for their regular time and length in order to conserve our fish and wildlife populations for the present and future, and to provide maximum sustainable recreation opportunities for the public.

- ***Are we waiving license and permit fees?***

No. [Hunting and fishing licenses and permits](#) are required to fish and hunt as always. The new license year started March 1. Licenses and permits can be purchased online at fw.ky.gov, in many retail stores, or by phone at 877-598-2401.

NOTE: Guidance that is being provided by public health experts to maximize public safety and minimize the spread of the [coronavirus](#) is subject to change weekly or even daily. We may have to make further changes.

Please continue to check our website, fw.ky.gov, for updates. We'll also keep you informed by posting updates to our Facebook page ([@kdfwr](#)) and on Twitter ([@kyfishwildlife](#)). If you have additional questions, please call our Information Center at 1-800-858-1549 or send us an email at info.center@ky.gov.

We encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Go fishing, hunting or wildlife watching. You can purchase hunting and fishing licenses and permits [online](#). Register your boat through your local county clerk's office and get out on the water. Take your family outdoors for a hike. Meet a friend at a public fishing access site or wildlife area. Listen for gobbling turkeys or try to identify migrating songbirds. Kentucky offers almost endless outdoor opportunities. Let's get out and enjoy them today.