

2020-2021 Ballard WMA Waterfowl Hunting Fact Sheet

Familiarize yourself with changes mandated by the COVID-19 pandemic before you apply for a quota waterfowl hunt at Ballard WMA.

Key Points

- COVID-19 pandemic is forcing change this season.
- No daily drawings at the office.
- No stand-by hunters.
- Blinds assigned to hunting parties by random drawing each week.
- Hunting areas may be pits, blinds, walk-in access or boat-in access. Hunters may not choose their option.

Background:

A great deal of uncertainty exists for the upcoming duck season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some aspects of hunting at Ballard must change. In past seasons, as many as 75 hunters and staff crowded into a small room each morning to select blinds the day of their hunts. A better method was needed to allow for social distancing to prevent the potential risk of spreading COVID-19.

For the 2020-2021 waterfowl season, there will not be an in-person check-in the morning of your hunt. The reason for this is twofold. First, it protects you and the department staff from potential transmission due to a crowded room. Second, the unstaffed hunting area selection process helps protect against a potential shutdown of hunts if the staff is quarantined.

Please note this plan is subject to change with little notice due to weather, flooding or other factors. Hunters should periodically check the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at fw.ky.gov for updates.

The 2020-2021 Process:

Each hunting party will be assigned a number upon application. Each weekend, Ballard staff will identify the best available units for each hunting day of that week. Each Monday, the department will use a computer program to randomly assign a party number to each of those units. Assignments and party numbers will be listed on the department's website, fw.ky.gov.

Assigned areas could include traditional pits, stand-up blinds, walk-in areas or boat-in access. Hunters may not choose the type of access or amenities. Hunters could be assigned any one of these options. **If you cannot utilize a unit that requires a boat or the ability to walk-in to areas without blinds, we recommend you choose the "No Hunt" option for the 2020-2021 season. Please also note, department blinds do not allow space for appropriate social distancing of more than two non-related hunters. Hunters can maintain social distancing by hunting outside of blinds, or adjusting hunting party size.**

Your Hunt:

Go online to your “My Profile” page at fw.ky.gov and download your hunt information before you go to Ballard. There will be links to a pdf document for your hunting unit. That document will provide driving directions and a map of the unit. Please follow the directions to your unit carefully as it is easy to get lost if you are not familiar with the area. There will also be signs on the area to help guide you.

Familiarize yourself with rules specific to hunting at Ballard WMA. Each member of your party will also need to pay your \$15 daily use fee for each day you hunt via our licensing system. Finally, you will need to print out the check-in and check-out pages and bring those with you.

Points to remember

- You may enter the area any time after 5 a.m. (Central time).
- There will be 3 access points.
- Each access point will have a drop-box that you will pass when entering. Each party must completely fill out their check-in page and drop it in the box upon arrival.
- In order not to hold up other parties or create a concentration of hunters, please have the form filled out before arriving.
- If someone is already at the box, please allow them time to finish.
- Do not get out of your vehicle and approach the box until it is unattended.
- Please remember to have all appropriate hunting licenses and have paid the \$15 daily use fee.

As you enter the area, please utilize the driving directions to your unit available on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website. Park in the designated parking area for each unit. Place the check-out page on the dashboard of your vehicle while you are hunting.

When you have completed your hunt, please drop the check-out page in the same box you used when entering. Please remember you must be finished hunting and off of the WMA by 2 p.m. (Central). Hunters have until 3 p.m. (Central) to deliver the check-out sheet. Failure to check in or out could result in the loss of hunting privileges in future seasons.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife encourages all hunters to be mindful of the pandemic while hunting. Please use face coverings when near other hunters. Maintain social distancing by hunting outside of blinds, or adjust your party size. Please note that the department is not able to sanitize blinds daily. For the latest information on best COVID-19 practices, please visit the Kentucky COVID-19 website at: covid19.ky.gov.