KENTUCKY HUNTING GUIDE
for MIGRATORY BIRDS and WATERFOWL

Regulations Summary • **SEPTEMBER 2026 – MARCH 2027**

FISH & WILDLIFE:
1-800-858-1549 • *fw.ky.gov*

Report Game Violations:
1-800-25-ALERT

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES
Serving People, Conserving Fish & Wildlife

STOP THE SPREAD OF BIRD FLU

Waterfowl hunters should take some basic precautions to help prevent the spread of high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), commonly known as bird flu. The disease, which can be carried by migrating waterfowl, has been found in Kentucky. It can sicken or kill other birds, including chickens.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) considers the risk of human infection as low. Still, if you experience flu-like symptoms after handling birds, let your healthcare provider know.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife recommends some simple steps to help stop the spread of this disease.

FIELD DRESS BIRDS OUTSIDE OR IN A WELL-VENTILATED AREA

Infected birds spread the virus through saliva, mucous and feces. Wear gloves when processing birds and avoid handling entrails. **Don't feed carcasses to your dog or let your dog handle a bird beyond carrying it back to you.** Breasting out your birds is the safest way to prepare your ducks and geese. Remember that if you transport waterfowl, each bird must retain a wing or head for identification purposes.

KEEP IT CLEAN

You can transmit the disease by handling carcasses. Do not eat, drink or smoke while cleaning game. Wash hands with soap and warm water after handling wild birds. Disinfect any surfaces (knives, equipment and tables) that contact dead birds. Use dedicated tools for cleaning game.

COOK UNTIL DONE

Thoroughly cook all game to an internal temperature of 165 degrees. Properly cooked game is safe to eat.

PROTECT YOUR DOMESTIC BIRDS

You can pass the disease onto your chickens and domestic birds, so don't wear your hunting clothes and boots around your domestic birds. If you suspect avian influenza in your domestic or farm birds, call the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Sick Bird Hotline: 866-536-7593.

DISPOSE OF CARCASSES PROPERLY

Double bag carcasses for pickup in your garbage or bury them deeply enough that animals will not dig them up.

REPORT CLUSTERS OF BIRD CARCASSES OR WATERFOWL ACTING STRANGELY

Do not handle carcasses of birds found already dead. Avoid harvesting game birds that appear sick. Diseased birds may appear unsteady or act strangely. Report clusters of dead or sick birds through the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife online reporting system. Go to *fw.ky.gov*, then search under the keywords, "avian influenza."

REPORT DEAD OR DISEASED BIRDS: https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/AvianInfluenza.aspx

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Rachel Cummings photo

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NEW THIS YEAR

Changes from last season are printed in **bright blue** throughout this guide to assist you in noticing those changes. Some of the most notable are listed below.

LICENSES

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources will now sell the Federal Duck E-stamp at the department website license portal at *fw.ky.gov*.

WATERFOWL HUNTING

Hunters may use modern or muzzle-loading shotguns for waterfowl hunting on Barren River Lake WMA including the primitive weapons area known as the "Peninsula Unit."

The drawing time for the youth, veteran's and Thanksgiving Day waterfowl quota hunts at Boatwright Wildlife Management Area may be different than the normal drawing time for daily waterfowl hunts. Please consult the Waterfowl Quota Hunts page at *fw.ky.gov* a few weeks before these hunts for the correct drawing time.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE: This is a summary of the laws regarding migratory bird and waterfowl hunting, intended solely for informational use. It is not a reprint of any referenced Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) or Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) in its entirety and should not be used as such. The exact wording of Kentucky's hunting and trapping laws can be viewed online at *fw.ky.gov*. Click on Enforcement, then Regulations, then scroll down to Administrative Regulations.

	LICENSE / PERMIT	Resident fee	Nonresident fee
LICENSES	**Annual Fishing** (Shooting range permit included, must register.)	$24.31	$58.14
	Joint Married Couple Annual Fishing	$44.38	Not available
	1-Day Fishing	$7.40	$15.86
	3-Year Fishing	$58.14	Not available
	7-Day Fishing Nonresident	Not available	$37
	Trout Permit	$10.57	
	Annual Hunting (Shooting range permit included, must register.)	$28.54	$169.12
	1-Day Hunting (not valid for deer, elk, turkey or bear)	$7.40	$26.43
	7-Day Hunting (not valid for deer, elk, turkey or bear)	Not available	$68.71
	Youth Annual Hunting (ages 12-15 only)	$6.34	$10.57
	Shooting Preserve Hunting (available online at *fw.ky.gov* only)	$5.29	
	Annual Trapping	$21.14	$137.41
	Annual Landowner/Tenant Trapping	$10.57	Not available
	Youth Annual Trapping (ages 12-15)	$5.29	Not available
COMBOS	**Combination License (Annual Combination Hunting/Fishing License)**	$44.39	Not available
	Sportsman's License* (Includes combination hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits, Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit and trout permit. Shooting range permit included, must register.)	$100.42	Not available
	First Time Buyer Sportsman's License* (Includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license)	$37	Not available
	Senior OR Disabled Sportsman's License* (Includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license)	$12.68	Not available
	Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License* (Must maintain Kentucky residency; includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license. For residents age 65 or older.)	$190.26	Not available
	Youth (ages 12-15) **Sportsman's License*** (Includes hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits and Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit)	$31.71	Not available
DEER	**Deer Permit** (statewide, four deer)	$37	$248.40
	Youth (ages 12-15) **Deer Permit** (four deer)	$10.57	$15.86
	Additional Deer Permit (two deer)	$15.86	
BIRDS	**Spring Turkey Permit** (statewide) (two turkeys)	$31.71	$116.27
	Youth (ages 12-15) **Turkey Permit** (one turkey, spring or fall)	$10.57	$15.86
	Fall Turkey Permit (statewide)(two turkeys)	$31.71	$116.27
	(Kentucky) Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit	$15.86	
	Federal Duck Stamp (E-stamp available at *fw.ky.gov*, physical stamp at post offices)	$25	
	Pheasant Quota Hunt Permit (if drawn)	$26.43	
	Sandhill Crane Hunt Drawing (quota hunt, apply in Sept. at *fw.ky.gov*)	$3	$3
ELK	**Elk Hunt Drawing Application** (deadline April 30)	$10	
	Youth Elk Drawing Application (ages 15 and under)	$10	
	Elk Quota Bull Permit (if drawn)	$105.70	$581.35
	Elk Quota Cow Permit (if drawn)	$63.42	$422.80
	Elk Quota Archery/Crossbow Permit (bull or cow, if drawn)	$105.70	$581.35
	Youth Elk Quota Permit (if drawn; ages 12-15; youths drawn for other permits pay full cost)	$31.71	$211.40
	Out of Zone Elk Permit	$31.71	$422.80
BEAR	**Bear Permit**	$31.71	$264.25
	Youth Bear Permit (ages 12-15)	$10.57	$105.70
	Bear Chase Permit (bear dog training permit)	$31.71	$52.85
	Youth Bear Chase Permit (ages 12-15) (bear dog training permit)	$10.57	$15.86
	Combo Bear/Chase Permit (bear hunting/bear dog training permits)	$52.85	Not available
AREAS	**1-Day Ballard Waterfowl Permit**	$15.86	
	Peabody WMA Permit	$15.86	
	Land Between The Lakes Hunt Permit	$25	
	Land Between The Lakes Hunt/Backcountry Camp	$50	
OTHER	**Bobcat Permit** (required for hunters)	$10.57	
	Annual Shooting Range Permit (Free upon registration to those with an annual hunting or fishing license; includes resident sportsman's license)	$26.43	
	1-Day Shooting Range Permit (Free upon registration to those with an annual hunting or fishing license; includes resident sportsman's license.)	$5.29	
	Temporary Hunter Education Exemption Permit (One-time permit valid for 1 year only; available online at *fw.ky.gov* only)	Free	

*Peabody and LBL permits, elk drawing application, elk quota hunt permit, out-of-zone elk permit, bear permit, federal duck stamp and trapping license not included. An additional deer permit is not included with a Sportsman's License.

Kentucky's license year begins March 1 and continues through the last day of February. New licenses are required annually, except for the 3-year fishing license and the Lifetime Sportsman's License. A 1-day or 7-day hunting or fishing license is valid only for the period shown on license. Resident and nonresident youths under the age of 12 are not required to purchase licenses or permits (except the elk hunt drawing application).

LICENSES and PERMITS

HUNTING LICENSE

Unless license-exempt, all hunters must possess a valid Kentucky hunting license when waterfowl or migratory bird hunting. Persons using a license authorization number must carry the number and a photo ID while hunting. All Kentucky residents 65 years of age and older, and younger Kentucky residents who are certified totally and permanently disabled by the Federal Social Security Administration, by a state Workers Compensation Board, by the Kentucky Teacher's Retirement System, by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, by the United States Railroad Retirement Board, or Kentucky resident veterans who have a permanent 50 percent disability as the result of military related injuries, must purchase and carry the Senior/Disabled hunting and fishing license while hunting or fishing on property other than their own.

KENTUCKY MIGRATORY BIRD/ WATERFOWL PERMIT

Any person required to possess a hunting license must also possess a Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit while taking or attempting to take any species of migratory bird including doves, sandhill cranes and waterfowl. All sportsman's licenses include this permit.

FEDERAL DUCK STAMP

Hunters over the age of 15, including those who are license exempt or hunting on their own property, also must have a valid federal duck stamp to hunt waterfowl. Hunters ages 12-15 are not required to have a federal duck stamp or state Migratory Bird/Waterfowl permit. This age group must have a hunting license, however. Hunters with a physical duck stamp must sign it before going afield.

E-STAMPS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also offers an electronic duck stamp (E-stamp), available online at *fw.ky.gov*. E-stamps will be valid from the date of purchase through June 30. Participants in the e-stamp program must carry a digital or hard copy of their e-stamp certificate when hunting. A physical Federal Duck Stamp will be mailed to each e-stamp purchaser after March 10.

HIP SURVEY REQUIRED

Before hunting, waterfowl and migratory bird hunters must complete a 5-minute Harvest Information Program (HIP) survey. Go online to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at *fw.ky.gov*, then click on the "My Profile" tab, followed by the "HIP Migratory Bird Survey" tab. After completing the HIP survey, you will receive a confirmation number that must be written on your hunting license or Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit before you go hunting.

HUNTER EDUCATION

All hunters born on or after Jan. 1, 1975, must carry proof of valid hunter education certification or the one-time hunter education exemption permit while hunting, in addition to the appropriate Kentucky hunting license, federal duck stamp and state waterfowl permit. Hunters not required to have a hunting license are exempt from hunter education certification. Hunters under the age of 12 may hunt without course completion, but must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age who remains in a position to take immediate control of the youth's firearm.

WHICH LICENSE OR PERMIT DO YOU NEED?

NOTE: Licenses and permits are not required for kids under the age of 12. Crow hunters only need a hunting license.

KENTUCKY RESIDENTS	Ages 12-15	Ages 16-64	Ages 65 and over OR Disabled
Migratory Birds (dove, snipe, woodcock, rails, gallinules, sandhill cranes)	Youth Hunting License*	Annual† or 1-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/ Waterfowl Permit†	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License
Waterfowl (ducks, geese, coots and mergansers)	Youth Hunting License*	Annual† or 1-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit† + Federal Duck Stamp	Senior/Disabled or Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License + Federal Duck Stamp

NONRESIDENTS (must buy nonresident licenses/permits)	Ages 12-15	Ages 16 and over
Migratory Birds (dove, snipe, woodcock, rails, gallinules, sandhill cranes)	Youth Hunting License	Annual, 1-Day or 7-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit
Waterfowl (ducks, geese, coots and mergansers)	Youth Hunting License	Annual, 1-Day or 7-Day Hunting License + Kentucky Migratory Bird/ Waterfowl Permit + Federal Duck Stamp

*Included in Youth Sportsman's License
†Included in Resident Sportsman's License

HIP survey is mandatory for all migratory bird and waterfowl hunters before hunting. Includes those hunting their own property.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS for MIGRATORY BIRDS and WATERFOWL

Note

The material here is only a summary. Each hunter should also consult the complete federal regulations, which may be found in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20.

In addition to state regulations, the following federal laws apply to the taking, possession, shipping, transporting and storing of migratory game birds.

RESTRICTIONS

No person shall take migratory game birds:

- With a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than a 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance;
- With a shotgun capable of holding more than three shotshells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler which is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun: (except during the Snow Goose Conservation Order season where there is no restriction on numbers of shotshells).
- From a sink box (a low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water);
- From or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance, or any aircraft, except that paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may take from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance. "Paraplegic" means an individual afflicted with paralysis of the lower half of the body with involvement of both legs, usually due to disease of or injury to the spinal cord;
- From or by means of any motor boat or sail boat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sail furled, and its progress therefrom has ceased;
- By the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting, and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such tame birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl;
- Using records or tapes of migratory bird calls, or sounds, or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls (except electronic calls may be used during the Snow Goose Conservation Order);
- By driving, rallying or stirring birds with any motor-driven land, water or air conveyance or any sail boat to put them in the range of the hunters; or
- By the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement), or on or over any baited area. Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait. Mature wildlife food plots grown to attract doves are legal hunting areas, as long as no additional attractants have been placed on these areas.
- Areas manipulated for dove hunting **are not** legal for waterfowl hunting.
- Over areas where farmers feed livestock or areas where grain is stored, such as grain bins and elevators.

CLOSED SEASON

No person shall take migratory game birds during the closed season.

SHOOTING HOURS

No person shall take migratory game birds except during the hours open to shooting as prescribed.

DAILY BAG LIMIT

The total limit of a specific migratory game bird species that may be taken during legal shooting hours for one calendar day, regardless of state boundaries.

FIELD POSSESSION LIMIT

No person shall possess more than one daily bag limit while in the field or while returning from the field to one's car, hunting camp, home, etc.

POSSESSION LIMIT

The total limit of a specific migratory game bird species that may be in your possession at anytime, whether on your person or stored in another location (including your home or taxidermist). Note: Migratory birds taken in another state count toward a hunter's daily and possession limits.

Caution

More restrictive regulations may apply to National Wildlife Refuges open to public hunting. For more information on Federal Regulations, consult Assistant Regional Director - LE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 4839, Atlanta, Georgia, 30302-4839; or call (404) 331-5872.

WANTON WASTE

All migratory game birds shall be retrieved, if possible, and retained in the custody of the hunter in the field.

TAGGING

No person shall put or leave any migratory game birds at any place or in the custody of another person unless the birds are tagged by the hunter with the following information: a) the hunter's signature; b) the hunter's address; c) the total number of birds involved, by species; d) the dates such birds were killed.

Tagging is required if the birds are being transported by another person for the hunter, or if the birds have been left for cleaning, storage (including temporary storage), shipment or taxidermy services.

POSSESSION OF LIVE BIRDS

Wounded birds reduced to possession shall be immediately killed and included in the daily bag limit.

FIELD DRESSING

When field dressing, or otherwise preparing for transportation, any of the species in this guide, except doves, one fully feathered wing or the head must be left on each bird for identification.

SHIPMENT

No person shall ship migratory game

birds unless the package is marked on the outside with: a) the name and the address of the person sending the birds; b) the name and the address of the person to whom the birds are being sent; c) the number of birds, by species, contained in the package.

IMPORTATION

For information regarding the importation of migratory birds killed in another country hunters should consult 50 CFR 20.61 through 20.66. One fully feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory game birds being transported between the port of entry and one's home, or to a migratory bird preservation facility. No person shall import migratory game birds killed in any foreign country, except Canada, unless such birds are dressed (except as required in 20.63), drawn, and the head and feet are removed. No person shall import migratory game birds belonging to another person.

DUAL VIOLATION

Violation of state migratory game bird regulations is also a violation of federal regulations.

DOVE and MIGRATORY BIRDS

HUNTING SEASONS and REGULATIONS

MIGRATORY BIRDS (WEBLESS)	Season Dates	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
Dove (Mourning or white-winged)	Sept. 1 - Oct. 26; Nov. 26 - Dec. 6 and Dec. 19, 2026 - Jan. 10, 2027*	15	45
Virginia & Sora Rail**	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9, 2026	25 singly or combined	75
Woodcock	Oct. 24 - Nov. 13 and Nov. 16 - Dec. 9, 2026	3	9
Snipe	Sept. 16 - Oct. 25 and Nov. 26, 2026 - Jan. 31, 2027	8	24
Common & Purple Gallinule	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9, 2026	3 singly or combined	9
Sandhill Crane	Dec. 7, 2026 - Jan. 31, 2027	1 or 2†	3
Crow	Sept. 1 - Nov. 7, 2026 and Jan. 4 - Feb. 28, 2027	none	none

* Dove fields leased by the department from private landowners are open to hunting on Sept. 1 and from Sept. 5 - Oct. 26. These fields are closed from Sept. 2-4 to rest them. This provides better hunting opportunities for the second weekend of dove season.

† Season take is the number of permits issued to hunter. Daily limit of sandhill cranes is 2 birds. Hunters must apply for permits online in September at *fw.ky.gov*. Drawn hunters can use this website to print tags and permits for hunting. Hunters must possess printed or electronic proof of permit while in field.

** King rails are protected and cannot be hunted in Kentucky.

SHOOTING HOURS (MIGRATORY BIRDS)	
Dove, private land	**Sept. 1 only: 11 a.m. to sunset.** Remainder of dove season: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset
Dove, public land (WMAs, leased fields)	**Sept. 1 - Oct. 26: 11 a.m. to sunset (when fields are open).** Second and third segments of dove season: one-half hour before sunrise to sunset
Sandhill crane	Sunrise to sunset (quota hunt only)
All other species	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Note: Dove and waterfowl hunters must complete the HIP migratory bird harvest survey before hunting each year. Visit *fw.ky.gov* (see "My Profile") for details.

DAILY BAG and POSSESSION LIMITS

Daily limit refers to the number of birds which may be taken during a one-day period (midnight to midnight). Possession limit applies to the total number of birds in a hunter's possession, including at home or being transported after two or more days of hunting. It does not permit the hunter to have more than a daily limit while in the field hunting.

HUNTING LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Unless license exempt, hunters must possess a valid Kentucky hunting license

when hunting the species listed in this guide. A Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Hunting Permit authorizes the holder to hunt all types of migratory game birds including waterfowl (ducks, geese, coots, mergansers). Waterfowl hunters must possess a federal duck stamp in addition to a hunting license and Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit. The Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit and federal duck stamp are not required for hunting crows. **Before hunting migratory birds, hunters must go online and fill out the Harvest Information Program (HIP) survey before they are legal migratory bird hunters.**

The process takes less than 5 minutes. Go to "My Profile" to fill out the survey. This takes you to a page that asks for some basic information to confirm your identity. After completing the HIP survey, you will receive a confirmation number that must be written on your hunting license or Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Hunting permit.

NON-TOXIC SHOT

Only USFWS-approved non-toxic shot may be possessed and used to hunt doves, gallinules, rails, woodcock, snipe or other migratory birds on Ballard, Boatwright, Doug Travis, Duck Island, Kaler Bottoms, Kentucky River, Ohio River Islands, Sloughs, South Shore, Yatesville Lake WMAs and Clarks River NWR and other areas as posted by signs.

Possession or use of any lead shot while hunting or attempting to take waterfowl or sandhill cranes is prohibited statewide. Non-toxic shot is required to hunt waterfowl. Most major manufacturers offer non-toxic shotshells. A list of non-toxic shot currently approved by the USFWS can be found at *https://go.usa.gov/xSUvE*.

DOVE

Eurasian collared doves resemble mourning doves but possess a black slash across the back of their necks. There is no limit on Eurasian doves (leave head and/or wing on during transport for ID). Because dove species are difficult to determine on the wing, hunters should stop after reaching their 15-bird limit of mourning doves and/or white-winged doves.

Eurasian collared dove

SANDHILL CRANE SEASON

The sandhill crane permitting process is available online only. Permit applications are only accepted during the month of September at *fw.ky.gov*; a $3 fee is charged. Depending on the number of applicants, all hunters are eligible to receive one to three tags. Hunters may harvest one bird per tag. All hunters must pass a species identification test before they can receive a permit. Hunters must print out their own permit and tags from the sandhill crane webpage at *fw.ky.gov*. See the "Licensing and Permits" section for additional licensing requirements. All hunters must complete the post-season survey or they cannot receive a permit the following season.

Applicants must have a valid Kentucky hunting license or be license exempt when they apply. Results are posted to individual applicants online following the drawing. Drawn hunters must pass an online identification exam before receiving a sandhill crane hunting permit.

Hunters must attach a department issued tag to the leg of a harvested sandhill crane before moving the carcass. Hunters must telecheck harvested birds on the day taken.

Hunters participating in the sandhill crane hunting season must complete a post-season survey by Feb. 14 or lose eligibility to apply the following year.

CROW

Mechanical devices and electronic attracting devices may be used for crow hunting during open seasons. Federal law no longer allows for the shooting of depredating crows outside of legal hunting seasons without specific federal authorization. Persons experiencing depredation problems with crows may apply for authorization online by clicking this **link** to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, email *PermitsR4MB@fws.gov*, or call (404) 679-7070 for more information.

REPORTING BIRD BANDS

To report bird bands, go online to *www.reportband.gov*. The previous toll-free number is no longer operable. Hunters who harvest banded birds with the toll free number must still go online to report.

Banding plays a critical role in the management of migratory bird species. The data you provide by reporting bands gives wildlife biologists information on harvest rates and movements of migratory game birds. Please report the bands you recover.

PUBLIC LAND HUNTING for DOVES

FIND DOVE FIELDS

Click or scan this QR code for public dove fields. Online, go to *fw.ky.gov* and search under the keywords, "dove fields."

All public dove fields will be closed to all access from August 15 until sunrise on September 1.

The use of decoys, both motorized and static, is prohibited on public dove fields before Oct. 1.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

WMAs are open during regular seasons under statewide regulations unless otherwise specified in this guide. Field conditions may vary considerably, even on the same WMA. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife recommends hunters scout fields listed below to ensure they are ready for the time you plan to hunt. From August 15 until sunrise on September 1, there is no access allowed in the dove fields. All scouting must be done from the road or parking lot.

COOPERATIVE DOVE FIELD PROGRAM

Private fields in the Cooperative Dove Field Program are open for public dove

hunting Sept. 1 and Sept. 5 - Oct. 26, 2026. They are closed Sept. 2-4. Private cooperative fields are closed to public access except on the dates listed above. Prior to the season, hunters may drive by private cooperative fields but may not leave their vehicles to scout.

When hunting a public area, hunt safely and be courteous of others. Do not leave trash behind. The future of the cooperative dove field program depends on you.

QUOTA DOVE HUNTS

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife will offer quota dove hunts for drawn hunters Sept. 1 and Sept. 5 at Big Rivers WMA and at the Roberts Tract of Kentucky River WMA. Quota hunt fields are closed, except to drawn hunters, September 1-5. Apply online at *fw.ky.gov* from 8 a.m. Aug. 3 through 4:30 p.m. (Eastern) Aug. 21.

Special rules for quota hunts include:

- Drawn hunter may bring one guest hunter
- Drawn hunter and guest must check in prior to hunting
- No hunting before 1 p.m. (Eastern)
- Carry a copy of the selection letter (notification). This applies to both drawn and guest hunter.
- Drawn hunter must be present for guest to hunt
- Hunters must have exited the field by 6 p.m. (Eastern)
- Check out by completing post hunt survey
- Not possess more than 50 shells

MENTOR / YOUTH QUOTA DOVE HUNTS

MENTOR/YOUTH DOVE HUNTS

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife has set aside four fields for Mentor/Youth quota dove hunts on Sept. 5. Apply online for these hunts from Aug. 3 until 4:30 p.m. (Eastern) Aug. 21. Locations include Barren River WMA, Mullins WMA, Clark's River NWR (non-toxic shot only) and a private land cooperator field in Lincoln County. Go online to *fw.ky.gov*, then type in keywords "quota dove hunt" for application information. Unreserved slots will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Fields reopen to public Sept. 6.

MENTOR/YOUTH HUNT RULES

1. Open only to adults accompanied by a youth (ages 15 and under), though not necessary for the youth to hunt.
2. Both mentor and youth can hunt, but must do so from the same field location (stake). All hunters must stay within 15 feet of their assigned shooting location except when retrieving downed doves. One adult may take two youths to these hunts. Two shotguns are allowed per stake. Each hunter is allowed 15 doves.
3. The number of hunters in Mentor/Youth Hunt fields will be strictly limited to ensure a safe and quality hunt.
4. Field slots will be available only by advanced registration online from 8 a.m. (Eastern) Aug. 3, until 4:30 p.m., Aug. 21. Unreserved slots will be available on a first come, first served basis at the field on the day of the hunt until all slots are filled. Drawing Aug. 26.
5. Hunting groups must check in prior to hunting and check out prior to leaving the field with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff.
6. After the field is filled no new hunting groups will be allowed in.
7. Hunting groups in the field may move to different staked sites when the assigned group vacates that site.
8. Hunters must leave their guns at their shooting location (stake) when retrieving downed birds.
9. Shooting hours limited to 2-7 p.m., local time. All hunting groups must be out of the field by 7:30 p.m., local time.
10. All hunters will be responsible for cleaning up their shooting location (including empty shells) prior to leaving the field.
11. Mentors and youths must conduct themselves in a safe manner and abide by these and other rules posted at the hunt field. Failure to do so will result in termination of hunting privilege for that field that day.
12. Hunter education and licensing requirements apply.

SPECIAL WMA RESTRICTIONS for MIGRATORY BIRDS

Wildlife Management Areas not listed here or in the "Closed Areas" section are open under statewide regulations.

BALLARD WMA and SWAN LAKE PORTION of BOATWRIGHT WMA

(Ballard County)

Dove: Sept. 1 - Oct. 13, 2026
Snipe: Sept. 16 - Oct. 13, 2026
Rails, Moorhens, Gallinules:
Sept. 1 - Oct. 13, 2026

No woodcock hunting permitted. Areas designated by signs are closed to all hunting.

MILLER WELCH-CENTRAL KENTUCKY WMA

(Madison County)

Dove: Sept. 1 - Oct. 13, 2026
Snipe: Sept. 16 - Oct. 13, 2026

No woodcock hunting permitted.

WEST KENTUCKY WMA

(McCracken County)

Dove, snipe and woodcock: Open under statewide seasons, except closed during deer gun seasons. (*WMA closed to September Canada goose season.)*

CLOSED AREAS

CLOSED TO MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

1) The main block of Robinson Forest WMA; 2) the portion of Grayson Lake WMA within three-quarters of a mile of the dam, the Deer Creek Branch, the shores of Camp Webb and the state park; 3) the Greenbrier Creek Branch of Yatesville Lake, including all islands, north of the mouth of Greenbrier Creek Branch; 4) Land Between The Lakes NRA from Sept. 30 - Nov. 30.

OTHER HUNTING AREAS

See page 16 for a list of other public hunting areas available; special regulations apply.

WATERFOWL

HUNTING SEASONS and REGULATIONS

WATERFOWL	Season Dates	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
Teal & Wood Duck	Sept. 19-23, 2026	6; may include no more than 2 wood ducks	18; may include no more than 6 wood ducks
Sept. Canada Goose, Western Zone	Sept. 1-15, 2026	5	15
Sept. Canada Goose, Eastern Zone	Sept. 16-30, 2026	5	15
Duck	Nov. 26-29 and Dec. 7, 2026 - Jan. 31, 2027	6; may include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 of which may be hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 3 pintails, 2 black ducks, and 2 canvas-back. 1 scaup Nov. 26-29 and Dec. 7-17; and 2 scaup Dec. 18 - Jan. 31.	Triple the daily bag limit
Coot		15	45
Merganser		5; only 2 may be hooded	Triple the daily bag limit
Canada/Cackling Goose, White-Fronted Goose & Brant	Nov. 26, 2026 - Feb. 15, 2027	5 combined; 3 Canada geese, 2 white-fronted geese and 1 brant	Triple the daily bag limit
Snow Goose (including Ross' Goose)		20	60
Youth-only Waterfowl	Nov. 21, 2026; Feb. 13, 2027	Same as regular season. Scaup limit is 2 scaup daily.	
Military/Veteran-only Waterfowl	Nov. 22, 2026; Feb. 14, 2027		
Falconry (ducks, coots & mergansers)	Nov. 26, 2026 - Feb. 21, 2027**	3	9
Falconry (geese)	Nov. 26, 2026 - Feb. 15, 2027**	Same as regular season	
Light Goose Conservation Order	Feb. 16 - Mar. 31, 2027 ††**	none	none

SHOOTING HOURS (WATERFOWL)	
Regular	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
Exceptions:	
Snow Goose Conservation Order	One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset
Wildlife Management Areas	One half-hour before sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise noted in the Public Hunting section of this guide.

†† Mandatory FREE permit required for hunting snow geese during this period, log on to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's homepage at *fw.ky.gov* or call 1-800-858-1549 to obtain a permit. Everyone who obtains the Snow Goose Permit must report hunting activity by April 10, 2027.

**Pit and blind restrictions in effect for some wildlife management areas (WMAs) do not apply to hunters during Snow Goose Conservation Order season. These restrictions also do not apply to falconers hunting waterfowl during periods when gun and archery waterfowl seasons are not open.

DAILY BAG and POSSESSION LIMITS

Daily limit refers to the number of birds which may be taken during a one-day period. Possession limit applies to transporting birds after two or more days of hunting but does not permit a double daily bag limit in the field.

SHOT SIZE, TYPE, SHOTSHELL LENGTH RESTRICTIONS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved nontoxic shot no larger than size "T" is required for all waterfowl and sandhill crane hunting. Shot larger than size "T," or shotshells longer than 3.5 inches, may not be possessed or used while hunting waterfowl or sandhill cranes. Currently, steel, bismuth, tungsten and certain tungsten com-

WATERFOWL ZONES

SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE

September Canada Goose hunting includes two zones (Eastern and Western) with separate season dates. See map below. The following areas are closed during this season:

1. Cave Run Lake
2. Ballard Zone. Private lands in this zone are open to this season, public lands remain closed.
3. West Kentucky WMA: This wildlife management area is closed to the September Canada Goose season.

Areas manipulated for dove hunting are not legal for waterfowl hunting.

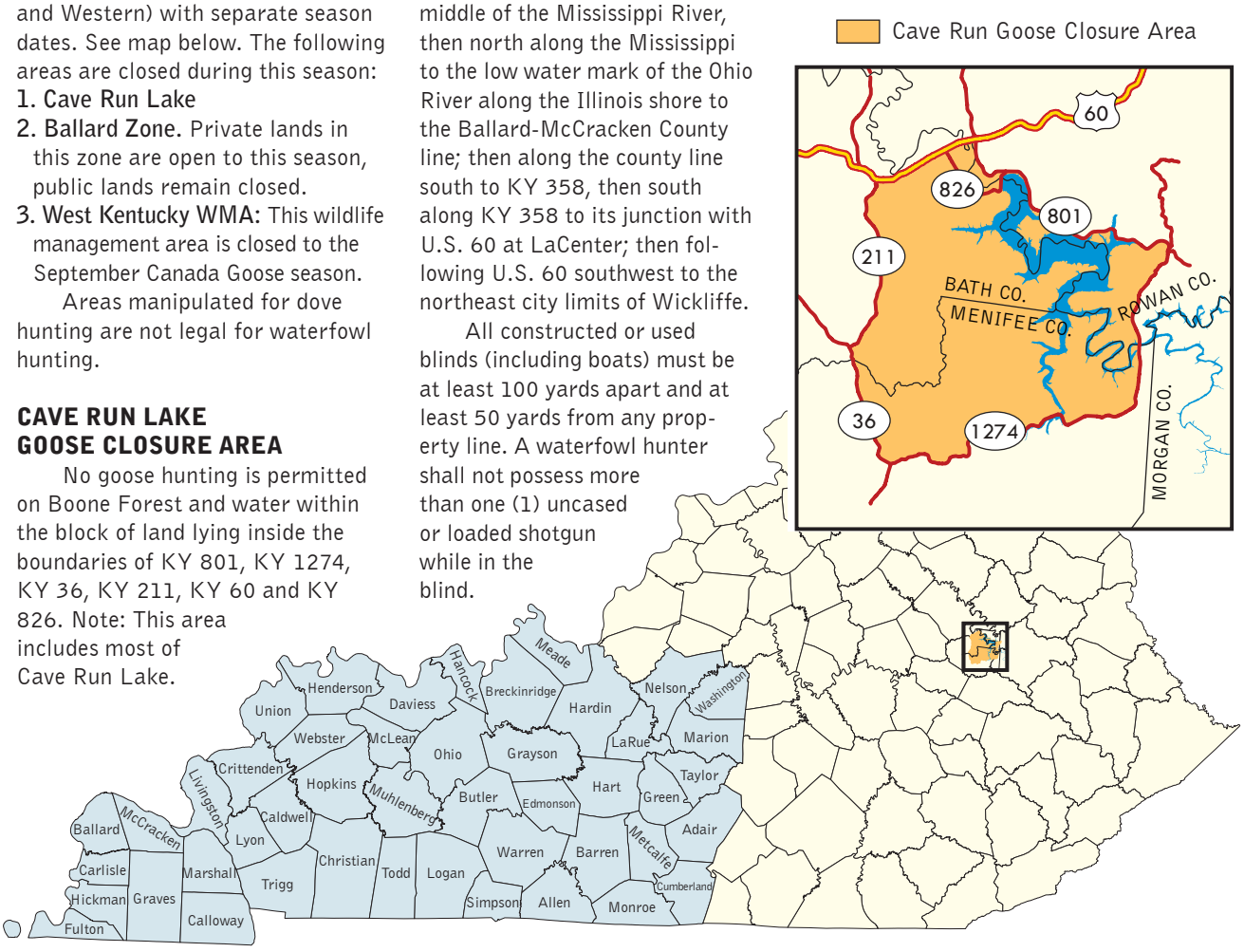
CAVE RUN LAKE GOOSE CLOSURE AREA

No goose hunting is permitted on Boone Forest and water within the block of land lying inside the boundaries of KY 801, KY 1274, KY 36, KY 211, KY 60 and KY 826. Note: This area includes most of Cave Run Lake.

BALLARD ZONE BOUNDARY

Starting at the northwest city limits of Wickliffe in Ballard County to the middle of the Mississippi River, then north along the Mississippi to the low water mark of the Ohio River along the Illinois shore to the Ballard-McCracken County line; then along the county line south to KY 358, then south along KY 358 to its junction with U.S. 60 at LaCenter; then following U.S. 60 southwest to the northeast city limits of Wickliffe.

All constructed or used blinds (including boats) must be at least 100 yards apart and at least 50 yards from any property line. A waterfowl hunter shall not possess more than one (1) uncased or loaded shotgun while in the blind.



SEPTEMBER CANADA GOOSE SEASON DATES

Western Zone: Sept. 1-15, blue shaded counties. **Eastern Zone:** Sept. 16-30, all other counties.

posite shotshells are approved for use. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may approve other types of nontoxic shot which, if approved, will be permitted for waterfowl and sandhill crane hunting. Possession or use of any lead shot or any shot not approved by USFWS while hunting or attempting to take waterfowl or sandhill cranes is prohibited statewide. For more information visit *www.fws.gov/story/2022-04/nontoxic-shot-regulations-hunting-waterfowl-and-coots-us*

YOUTH- AND MILITARY-ONLY WATERFOWL SEASONS

Kentucky has eliminated zones for the youth-only waterfowl seasons and created special seasons for veterans and active duty members of the military. These special seasons are statewide.

- Youth-only waterfowl season includes the Saturday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 21, 2026) and the second Saturday in February (Feb. 13, 2027).
- The veteran/active-duty military season includes the Sunday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 22, 2026) and the second Sunday in February (Feb. 14, 2027).

Unless license exempt, participants in the military-only waterfowl days must have a valid Kentucky hunting license and migratory bird/waterfowl permit. All hunters must have a signed, current federal duck stamp, and have completed a HIP survey.

Hunters eligible to participate in the veterans/active-duty military special waterfowl hunt days include those on active duty with all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. "Veteran" means a person who served in the active military, naval, air or space service, and

Survey required

Dove and waterfowl hunters must complete the HIP migratory bird harvest survey before hunting each year. Visit *fw.ky.gov* (see "My Profile") for details.

who was honorably discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Per federal rule, National Guard members and reservists are only eligible if they are on active duty.

Veterans/active-duty military must carry proof of that status in the field.

Youth hunters must be under the age of 16 on the day of the hunt. Youths must be accompanied by an adult. The adult must remain in a position to take immediate control of the youth's firearm. An adult who is not hunting does not need to possess a hunting license or waterfowl permits.

An adult cannot hunt waterfowl during the November youth-only season, as the regular waterfowl seasons are not yet open. An adult accompanying a youth during the youth-only season in February may hunt geese, as the regular goose season is still open. (Ballard WMA requires the purchase of a 1-day permit for participants, regardless of whether they are hunting.)

CONSERVATION ORDER SEASON

Special Conservation Order season for snow geese and Ross' geese Feb. 16-March 31, 2026. Hunters must obtain a free special permit online at *fw.ky.gov* prior to hunting. Current Kentucky hunting license, state Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit and Federal Duck Stamp required. Special regulations: No harvest limit, no capacity restrictions for shotguns, electronic calls may be used and hunters may hunt until ½ hour past sunset. Post-season survey required.

REPORTING BIRD BANDS

To report bird bands, go online to *www.reportband.gov*. The previous toll-free number is no longer operable. Hunters who harvest banded birds with the toll free number must still go online to report.

PUBLIC LAND HUNTING for WATERFOWL

Kentucky offers waterfowl hunters multiple options for public lands. These include drawings for season-long hunting blinds, open wildlife management area (WMA) hunts utilizing temporary blinds and drawn quota hunts at select WMAs.

Season-long hunting blinds are available at four locations. Hunt sites must be registered on a permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or Kentucky Fish & Wildlife before the blind is constructed: Barkley Lake, Barren River Lake, Doug Travis WMA and Green River Lake. An applicant may designate one other person as a partner and shall not hold more than one permit per area. Permittees shall not lock blinds to prevent use by other hunters in absence of the permittee. Hunt sites on the above listed areas must be constructed by Nov. 20 and removed within 30 days of the close of the season. Permittees who fail to remove their blind as stated will forfeit the opportunity to obtain a blind the following year.

On Barkley, Barren River, Doug Travis and Green River Lake WMAs, hunters who want hunt sites must register and be selected by random drawing. Drawings are held August through October. Applicants must be 18 years of age and show a valid Kentucky hunting license, a Kentucky waterfowl permit and a Federal migratory bird stamp at that time. Each person drawn may select a partner of the hunt site for hunting in the absence of the person drawn. Partners must be present at the drawing. Drawn hunters may use their hunt site the entire season and may use a boat or a portable blind or construct a permanent blind. Each hunt site must be pinned with a permanent marker identifying the permit holders for the hunt site. If drawn hunters do not occupy a blind or hunt site by one-hour before sunrise that day, the blind or hunt site is open to other hunters on a first-come, first-served basis.

GENERAL WMA RULES

Unless otherwise stated in this guide, the following applies to all open WMAs:

- Unless permitted, permanent blinds are not allowed;
- decoys and temporary blinds must be removed from the WMA at the end of each hunting day; except parties assigned a multi-day hunt may leave decoys in place for the duration of the hunt.
- no more than 4 persons shall make up a hunting party;
- designated recreation areas and access points are closed to all waterfowl hunting;
- discharge of firearms is prohibited within 100 yards of a residence or occupied building whether or not the building is on the WMA.

SPECIAL WMA RULES

Not all lands managed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) are open to state-

SEASON-LONG BLIND DRAWING DATES

- **Doug Travis WMA, Carlisle and Hickman counties:** 10 a.m. (Central), Saturday, Aug. 29. The drawing will be at the WMA office, 1/2-mile south of Berkley on KY 123. Registration starts at 9 a.m.
- **Lake Barkley WMA, Trigg and Lyon counties:** 8 a.m. (Central), Monday, Sept. 21. The drawing will be at the shelter on the east side of the Cumberland River at Lake Barkley Dam, off U.S. 62 near Lake City. Participants should use the powerhouse entrance and then turn right toward the drawing location.
- **Green River Lake WMA, Taylor and Adair counties:** 10 a.m. (Eastern), Saturday, Sept. 26. The drawing will be at the Green River Lake U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office off KY 55, approximately 7 miles south of Campbellsville. Registration starts at 9 a.m.
- **Barren River Lake WMA, Allen and Barren counties:** 9 a.m. (Central), Saturday, Oct. 3. The drawing will be at the Barren River Lake Corps of Engineers office, at the Barren River Lake dam off KY 252. Registration begins at 7 a.m.

wide seasons and bag-limits for waterfowl hunting. This section will list any special season dates, limits and requirements that are in effect for the following areas. If specific season dates are given for an area, then that is the only time waterfowl hunting is permitted. Otherwise, hunting is open under statewide season dates. This section also lists any areas that are closed to hunting or public access. **Areas owned or managed by the KDFWR that are not listed below are open to statewide seasons and limits.**

BALLARD WMA
Ballard County

Ballard WMA is open exclusively for quota waterfowl hunting from Oct. 15 to March 15. Ballard is closed to all other types of hunting or access during this period. Quota hunts are held Wednesdays through Sundays of the second duck season segment. Ballard is closed to all access on Mondays, Tuesdays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Hunting methods available at Ballard include hunting from an in-ground pit or above ground blind, free-lance hunting within a designated hunt unit or boat-in hunting for designated areas only. Hunt units mostly consist of harvested grain fields and seasonally flooded crops, moist soil units, and natural depressions or "sloughs," that are lined with shrubby cover and trees. Chest waders should be used to hunt in the water on all units. Woody vegetation, unsure footing and fast elevation changes are a possibility on all waterfowl hunting units. There are also two blinds available for mobility-impaired hunters. These mobility-impaired blinds are wheelchair accessible. Hunters must draw a daily hunt permit available through the online quota hunt system. Each drawn hunter may bring up to three guests.

- The $15 Ballard WMA 1-Day Waterfowl Permit must be purchased online at *fw.ky.gov* prior to your hunt. Payment of any kind will not be taken at the check station.
- On all hunt units, legal shooting time starts one-half hour before sunrise, and all hunters must be off the area by 2 p.m. daily.
- Drawn hunters must be present for the party to hunt.
- Hunters must stay within 25 feet of another party member and the furthest members of the party can be no more than 75 feet apart.
- Hunters are limited to 25 shells/person per day. Bag limit and possession limit are the same as statewide limits. At least one person in a hunt party must be 18 years of age or older.
- The Ohio River from 50 yards upstream of the north border of Ballard WMA to 50 yards downstream of the southern border of Ballard WMA is closed to waterfowl hunting Oct. 15 – Mar. 15.
- Ballard WMA is open for early wood duck and teal seasons with no daily drawing. Ballard WMA is closed for the Thanksgiving segment of the season, as well as the Snow Goose Conservation Order season.
- Hunters must complete the Daily Post Hunt Survey provided and place in the drop box located check station parking lot by 3 p.m.

Checking in at Ballard

All hunters drawn to hunt at Ballard WMA must check in the morning of their hunt at the WMA check station by 5 a.m. Central time (Doors open at 4:30 a.m.). The check station is located at 864 Wildlife Lodge Road, LaCenter, Ky.

- Hunters in party must have all necessary licenses/permits in their possession; drawn hunter must have driver's license.
- Anyone not checked in by 5 a.m. forfeits the right to hunt that day.
- Random drawing for hunting units will be held at 5 a.m.
- Hunters will have the ability to select their hunting unit for that day from available units based on the order of the drawing.
- Unclaimed units will be entered into a stand-by drawing.
- Stand-by hunters must check in by 5 a.m.
- Waterfowl hunters cannot apply for standby hunts for the same day at both Ballard or Boatwright WMAs. Standby hunters may only apply for one of these hunts on a given day.

Ballard weather closures

Public hunting areas will close when floodwaters prevent safe entry to hunting fields by wheeled vehicles on roads. Prolonged drought may also mean areas are not available to hunt and force closure. Notice will be given at least 24 hours in advance via the department's website at *fw.ky.gov*. Hunters should always check the website before heading to their hunt.

BARREN RIVER LAKE WMA
Allen & Barren counties

- Hunters may use **modern or muzzleloading** shotguns for waterfowl hunting on Barren River Lake WMA including the primitive weapons area known as the "Peninsula Unit."
- A person shall not hunt sandhill cranes within 100 yards of the normal summer pool level of 552 feet in the following embayments: Beaver Creek, Skaggs Creek and Peters Creek.

Also, see page 10.

BIG RIVERS WMA
Union & Crittenden counties

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

BLACKFORD OAKS WMA
Webster County

Shooting hours are from one-half

WATERFOWL QUOTA HUNTS

Kentucky offers a variety of limited access hunts for ducks on public lands.

- **September Quota Hunt Applications:** Kentucky offers duck hunting opportunities at Ballard WMA and Sloughs WMAs; apply Sept. 1-30 (online only) at *fw.ky.gov*. Hunters may apply for specific days or blocks of days at each WMA.
- **Boatwright Online Quota hunts:** Boatwright WMA offers up to 50 hunting spots daily (depending on water conditions). Apply online at *fw.ky.gov* from Wednesday through Sunday for the following week.
- **Standby Drawings:** Drawings for unclaimed quota hunt spots are available at Ballard, Boatwright and Sloughs WMAs. See the section on each for more details.

hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

BOATWRIGHT WMA
Ballard County
including Peal, Olmsted, 400 Acre & Swan Lake units:

Boatwright WMA is open for waterfowl hunting, Wednesdays - Sundays, during the regular waterfowl season. Boatwright WMA is closed to waterfowl hunting on Mondays, Tuesdays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Hunting methods available at Boatwright include hunting from an in-ground pit or above ground blind, layout blind hunting, walk-in hunting within a designated hunt unit, or boat-in hunting. All hunters are limited to 25 shells/person per day. Bag limit and possession limit are the same as statewide limits. All decoys and gear must be removed at the end of each day's hunt and may not be left unattended. Areas identified by signs are closed to all access Oct. 15 – Mar. 15.

Note the following rules for the opening segment of duck season.

- All regular season duck hunts, including Thanksgiving week, will now require hunters to be drawn via the Boatwright Online Quota Hunt App or by in-person standby drawings.
- Beginning Dec. 1 annually, boating will be limited to only those drawn for that day's quota hunt. All boats must be off the water by 2 p.m. and boating is not permitted on days that quota hunts are not held.
- Hunters will now be assigned hunting units within Boatwright; they are no longer restricted to blinds and may hunt most locations within that unit. Hunting parties may still use department blinds or move within the unit. Hunting parties must remain at least 50 yards away from a property boundary and 200 yards from another hunting party.
- If the unit allows use of a boat, it may also be used as a blind.

All hunters must be assigned a hunt unit each day through a drawing held either online or in-person at the check station. Online applications are taken each Wednesday through Sunday, the week before you plan to hunt. Each Monday, a random drawing will select hunters and assign a hunt unit for each day of that week. Hunt dates must be applied for individually. Successful online hunters must still check in at the check station before 4:45 a.m. each day, or forfeit their spot. Spots reserved for in-person drawings as well as forfeited online spots, will be available in the in-person drawing each morning. Waterfowl hunters cannot apply for standby hunts for the same day at both Ballard or Boatwright WMAs. Standby hunters may only apply for one of these hunts on a given day. To apply online and for more information, go to *https://app.fw.ky.gov/HuntDraw*.

The check station is located at 362 Broadway Street, Barlow, Ky. Hunters may not enter the area to hunt until after they have checked in and are in possession of the daily Waterfowl Hunt Permit. Doors to the check-in station will open at 4:15 a.m. Central time. Hunt drawings will begin at 4:45 a.m. Central time. Shooting hours begin ½ hour before sunrise, and all hunters and equipment must be off the area by 2 p.m. Central time.

The drawing time for the youth, veteran's and Thanksgiving Day waterfowl quota hunts may be different than the normal drawing time for daily waterfowl hunts. Please consult the Waterfowl Quota Hunts page at the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at *fw.ky.gov* a few weeks before these hunts for the correct drawing time.

Daily Drawing Rules and Procedures: When hunting assigned hunt sites through the waterfowl drawings, hunters must follow these rules.

- Hunters participating in random drawings for hunt units can only draw one unit per day.
- The waterfowl permit holder may invite up to 3 guests to form a hunt party. The waterfowl permit holder must be present for the party to hunt. All hunt party members must report at the check station the morning of the hunt prior to going to the assigned unit.
- Hunters must stay within 25 feet of another party member and the furthest members of the party can be no more than 75 feet apart.
- Hunt parties shall not hunt within 200 yards of another hunt party and shall not hunt within 50 yards of property line.
- Boats must be less than 22 feet long and operate at idle speed only.
- Hunters must complete the Daily Post Hunt Survey provided and place in box by 3 p.m.

Any unit open to hunting during the regular waterfowl season is also open for snow goose hunting during the Snow Goose Conservation Order season.

CAVE RUN LAKE AREA

No goose hunting is permitted on public lands or waters within the block of land lying inside the boundaries of KY 801, KY 1274, KY 36, KY 211, U.S. 60 and KY 826. See map on page 9.

CEDAR CREEK LAKE WMA
Lincoln County

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

CLEAR CREEK WMA
Hopkins County

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

DIX RIVER WMA
Lincoln County

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

DOUG TRAVIS WMA
Carlisle & Hickman counties

Doug Travis WMA is open to statewide regulations for hunting except the portions of the WMA as identified by signs, which are closed to the public from Nov. 1 to March 15. Waterfowl hunting opportunities at Doug Travis WMA include walk-in, boat-in and season-long blind drawings. There are also two blind locations available for Mobility-Impaired hunters. One blind, blind 13, is an above ground blind that can be driven to, and is wheel chair accessible. The other blind, blind 19, is a boat-in blind location. Hunters must hunt from their boat within 10 yards of the blind location. Both, blinds 13 and 19, are available

Floodwater note

Hunting on Boatwright WMA during periods of flooding is allowed as long as it is deemed safe by the area manager. Online applications will be suspended during flooding and permit is by in-person drawing only. Floodwaters are dangerous and should be attempted only by experienced hunters and boaters. Notice will be given at least 24 hours in advance via the department's website at *fw.ky.gov*. Hunters should monitor the website when flooding is expected.

through a mail-in preseason draw. Hunters who wish to draw a season-long blind must register and be selected by random drawing the last Saturday in August. Certain regulations apply on this area and are listed below. For more details, see page 10.

Hunt units on this area mostly consist of harvested grain fields and seasonally flooded crops, moist soil units, and natural depressions or "sloughs" that are lined with shrubby cover and trees. Chest waders should be used to hunt in the water on all units. Woody vegetation, beaver runs, and rapid changes in elevation are a possibility on all waterfowl hunting units. Mississippi River levels should be closely monitored to determine if a boat is needed to access and hunt the area. Mississippi River levels exceeding 35 feet at the Cairo, Illinois river gauge indicate the potential loss of road access to some areas of the WMA. Typically, river levels above 41 feet on the Cairo gauge cut off road access on both ends of the Berkley - Fish Lake Road, making a boat necessary to access most of the area. On all hunt units, shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until 2 p.m. CST. **Hunters must exit the area by 2 p.m. daily.** Hunters may not enter a hunt area until 4 a.m. CST daily.

Special WMA Regulations

- On Forked Lake, Indian Camp Lake, Fish Lake, Number Four Lake, Black Lake, Upper Goose Pond Field, Twin Ponds Field, and Town Creek Moist Soil Unit, all waterfowl hunting after Nov. 1 will be from Kentucky Fish & Wildlife-designated sites assigned by preseason drawing; even during periods of Mississippi River flooding. Hunters may walk in or boat in to hunt any units not mentioned in this list, except for the areas closed Nov. 1 – March 15.
- Individuals must be at least 18 and possess a valid Kentucky Hunting License, Kentucky Waterfowl Permit and Federal Migratory Bird (Duck) Stamp when applying for designated hunt sites.
- All blinds must remain within 10 yards of the designated numbered location.
- Permanent blinds, if constructed, must be in place by Nov. 20 and removed within 30 days of the close of the season.
- Persons who fail to remove their blind after the season will forfeit the opportunity to obtain a blind site the following year.
- Persons drawn for a designated site (blind owners) may name one other person as a co-owner who may also claim the site each day. Blind owners and co-owners may not have more than one designated permanent blind site on the area each year.
- All selected sites must be marked with the blind owner's name and permit number.
- Blind sites that are not claimed by the blind owners one hour before sunrise, may be claimed by other hunters on a first-come first-served stand-by basis.
- Hunters at designated blind sites may leave decoys out at their own discretion and risk, although this does not guarantee rights to a particular spot for following days (unless hunters are the blind owner or co-owner of a season-drawn blind site).
- All hunting parties, both at designated blind sites and those walk-in/boat-in hunting, must be at least 200 yards apart.
- No more than four persons shall occupy a single blind at any time.
- The WMA road into the Twin Ponds Field is closed during waterfowl season. Potential stand-by hunters for Blinds 16 and 17 may enter the area on foot. This is to avoid disturbance of hunters using Blinds 16 and 17.
- **There are two mobility-impaired blinds available via quota hunts.** See page 16 for more details.

Don't lose your points!

Hunters who do not comply with quota hunt requirements are ineligible to apply for any quota hunt the following year (including deer, pheasant and waterfowl), and will lose any accumulated preference points.

Quota hunters must apply for a hunt or apply for the "do not hunt" option every year to avoid losing preference points. Applicants who were unsuccessful in the quota hunt drawing or applied for the do not hunt option will be automatically awarded 1 preference point. Only 1 point can be acquired per hunt species annually.

GRAYSON LAKE WMA
Carter & Elliott counties

The following portions are closed to all waterfowl hunting: within three-quarters of a mile of the dam site marina, the shores of Camp Webb and Deer Creek Fork of Grayson Lake. All other portions are open.

GREEN RIVER LAKE WMA
Taylor & Adair counties

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

A person shall not hunt sandhill cranes within 100 yards on the normal summer pool level of 675 feet, east of the Hwy. 551 Bridge in the following embayments:

Green River to the Snake Creek Boat ramp; Casey Creek to the Hwy. 76 Bridge.

Also, see page 10.

HARRIS-DICKERSON WMA
Hopkins County

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

J.C. WILLIAMS WMA
Nelson County

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

KALER BOTTOMS WMA
Graves County

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

KENTUCKY RIVER WMA
Henry & Owen counties

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

LAKE BARKLEY WMA
Trigg, Lyon & Livingston counties

- Refuge areas **closed** to all hunting, fishing, boating and molesting of all species listed in this guide are:
  a) within an area west of the main river channel between river mile 51 (Hayes Landing Light) and the TVA power transmission lines at river mile 55.5, closed Nov. 1 – Feb. 15; and
  b) the area west of a line from the north point of the mouth of Fulton Bay to the south point of the mouth of Honker Bay, closed Nov. 1 – Mar. 15.
- Boating is allowed but hunting is prohibited on and within 200 yards of Duck Island from October 15 – March 15.
- Permanent blinds must remain within 10 yards of the assigned numbered blind marker within the two areas de-

scribed as follows:

a) Beginning at the mouth of Donaldson Creek and proceeding south along the east side of the old Cumberland River channel as marked by buoys, to a point due west of the boat ramp at Linton, then east to the Linton boat ramp, then north along the east shore of Lake Barkley to the mouth of Donaldson Creek;

b) Beginning at Pryor's Creek Light extending south along the western shore of Barkley Lake to the boat ramp at the end of Land Between The Lakes Road 204, then to the west side of the Cumberland River channel, marked with buoys, to river mile 73.5, then north along the west side of the Cumberland River channel, marked with buoys, to Pryor Creek Light.

- All other blinds within this described area shall be temporary. See page 10.

LAKE CUMBERLAND WMA
Pulaski County

Wesley Bend, the area bounded to the north, west and south by Fishing Creek and to the east by Beech Grove Road and Fishing Creek Road is closed to the public Oct. 15 – March 15;

Yellowhole, the area bounded to the west by Fishing Creek Road and the south by Hickory Nut Road is closed to the public Oct. 15 – March 15.

LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES
Trigg & Lyon counties

Long Creek Pond, the eastern one-third of Smith Bay and the eastern two-thirds of Duncan Bay on Kentucky Lake are closed to all activity Nov. 1 – March 15, as indicated by a visible marker on the south corner. The Environmental Education Center and Energy Lake are closed to all waterfowl hunting. **LBL permit required**. No waterfowl hunting permitted on inland areas during quota gun deer hunts. Permanent blinds are prohibited on inland areas and along Kentucky Lake shoreline area. Decoys and blinds must be removed at the end of each hunting day.

Maps available

Go online to *fw.ky.gov* and search under the keywords, "WMA Maps" for more information.

MILLER WELCH-CENTRAL KENTUCKY WMA
Madison County

- Duck, coot and merganser season is Jan. 15-31.
- Goose season is Jan. 15 – Feb. 15.
- Areas marked by signs are closed to all hunting.

OBION CREEK WMA
Carlisle, Hickman & Fulton counties

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

OHIO RIVER ISLANDS WMA
Livingston County

The portion of the Ohio River from Smithland Lock and Dam upstream to the powerline crossing at river mile 911.5 is closed to hunting.

Stewart (Birdsville) Island is closed to public access Oct. 15 – March 15, except for October muzzleloader season. Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

OHIO RIVER
Ballard County

in vicinity of Ballard WMA from 50 yards upstream of the north border of Ballard WMA to 50 yards downstream of the southern border of Ballard WMA:

Closed to all waterfowl hunting Oct. 15 – March 15.

PEABODY WMA
Ohio, Hopkins & Muhlenberg counties

- Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. **on those portions open to hunting**. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.
- Persons entering the area for any purpose must obtain a Peabody WMA user permit ($15).
- **Sinclair Unit**: That portion as bounded by KY 176, S1 road and Goose Lake Rd., (including Goose Lake) and as posted by signs, is closed Oct. 15 – March 15.
- **Ken Unit**: That portion as bounded by Wysox Rd., H2 road, H1 road and H6 road (including Island and South lakes) and as posted by signs, is closed Oct. 15 – March 15.

(The two refuge areas mentioned above are shown on the Peabody WMA map which hunters may obtain at *fw.ky.gov*.)

PIONEER WEAPONS WMA
Bath & Menifee counties

Hunters may use breech or muzzle-loading shotguns for **duck hunting** along the Cave Run Lake shoreline bordering the area. Hunters may use muzzle-loading shotguns (or archery equipment) elsewhere on the area.

ROBINSON FOREST WMA
Breathitt, Perry & Knott counties

Main block:

Closed to all hunting.

SLOUGHS WMA
Henderson & Union counties

Waterfowl hunting can be found on the Sauerheber, Jenny Hole, Highland Creek and Grassy Pond/Powell's Lake units of Sloughs WMA. Waterfowl hunting opportunities at Sloughs WMA include online quota hunt draws and weekly on-site drawings. There is also walk-in hunting available on large portions of the WMA. Hunt units consist of a diverse mix of seasonally flooded grain crops, natural "moist soil" vegetation, natural marsh, seasonally flooded bottomland forest, and natural depressions or "sloughs," that contain flooded stands of bald cypress lined with buttonbush thickets. Waders should be used to hunt in the water on all units. Woody vegetation, beaver runs, and rapid changes in elevation are a possibility on all waterfowl hunting units. Hunting the Jenny Hole Unit typically requires a boat or canoe. Ohio River levels should be closely monitored to determine if a boat is needed to access and hunt the remaining hunt units at the Sloughs. Ohio River levels exceeding 30 feet at the Evansville and/or J.T. Meyer gauge indicate the potential loss of road access to some areas of the WMA. There is one blind available for mobility impaired hunters on the Sauerheber Unit. The blind is wheelchair accessible. On all hunt units, shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until 2 p.m. CST. **Hunters must exit the area by 2 p.m. daily.** Hunters may not enter a hunt area until 4 a.m. CST daily. Each unit has specific information that can be found below.

Sauerheber, Crenshaw and Duncan II Units: During duck season (Nov. 26-29 and Dec. 7, 2026 – Jan. 31, 2027), waterfowl hunting is available on the Crenshaw and Duncan tracts through an online Quota Hunt drawing. Hunting is permitted only within designated hunt unit boundaries or blinds. The remainder of the Sauerheber Unit is closed to all public ac-

cess from Nov. 1 – March 15. The quota hunt application period is Sept. 1-30. Results of the drawing will be available in mid-October. Successful applicants will be assigned a hunt unit or a specific hunting blind. If you draw a hunt unit, you may hunt anywhere within the defined hunt unit boundary (See Sloughs WMA: Sauerheber Hunt Unit Maps). Two of the twelve available units are blind locations only. You cannot hunt outside of the blind on these two units.

Hunters selected for a Sauerheber Quota Hunt must check-in on the Sunday prior to their hunt by sending an email to *sloughsquotahunt@ky.gov.* In the email, please include your name, hunt unit, hunt dates, and hunt confirmation number. If the permit holder fails to check-in the Sunday prior to the hunt, you will not have the necessary permit to hunt and could be cited.

Prior to hunting, all parties must fill out a pre-hunt survey and submit it at a department designated drop point to check in. At the completion of your hunt, parties must complete and submit the Daily Post-Hunt Survey provided by the Department by 3 p.m. CST each day. Failure to complete these surveys will result in the permit holder being ineligible to hunt at Sloughs WMA for the remainder of the current and following waterfowl season. Survey cards and drop-box will be located next to the kiosk in front of the Sloughs WMA office on KY 268.

Quota hunt permits are not transferable. No hunt unit/blind site may be hunted unless the hunter selected for that hunt unit/blind site, for that specific date(s) is present and has on their person a valid Hunt Confirmation Number issued by KDFWR.

Quota permit holders may bring up to three (3) additional hunting (or non-hunting) guests per party. Hunters are allowed 25 shells per day on the Crenshaw/Duncan tracts. All hunters must have a photo ID and all appropriate licenses and permits. Hunters must hunt in close proximity to other hunt party members so that each member of the party is within 25 feet of another party member and no two party members are more than 75 feet apart.

The entire Sauerheber Unit is closed to all public access on Mondays and Tuesdays during waterfowl season.

Grassy Pond-Powells Lake, Highland Creek Units: Walk in hunting is available on this unit, but walk in hunters must remain a minimum of 200 yards from other hunting parties.

Jenny Hole Unit: During duck season (Nov. 26-29 and Dec. 7, 2026 – Jan. 31, 2027), waterfowl hunting on the Jenny Hole Unit is allowed by permit only. A person or party that wishes to hunt waterfowl on the Jenny Hole Unit must attend a weekly on-site drawing at the Sloughs WMA office or apply using the online quota hunt system. The drawing will be held each Monday prior to a hunt week, at 6 p.m. CST during duck season; unless Monday falls on the Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve or New Year's Day holiday, in which the drawing will be postponed until the following Tuesday night. Two hunt parties will be allocated using the online quota hunt system. Ten spots will be drawn on-site each week. Hunt permits will be issued for 3-Day periods (Wednesday – Friday) or 2–Day periods (Saturday and Sunday). The successful online drawing participant must check-in on the Sunday prior to their hunt by sending an email to *sloughsquotahunt@ky.gov*. In the email, please include your name, hunt unit, hunt dates, and hunt confirmation number.

The Jenny Hole Unit is closed to waterfowl hunting on Mondays and Tuesdays during waterfowl season. The Jenny Hole Unit is closed to ALL boats from Thanksgiving Day through the last Sunday in January, except for hunters with a valid Jenny Hole Hunt Permit. Trappers who wish to trap the Jenny Hole Unit during this time must obtain a special permit from the Sloughs WMA office. Hunters drawn for the Jenny Hole Unit may NOT access the unit except during the dates listed on their hunt permit(s). Therefore, scouting in the afternoon or prior to hunt dates is NOT allowed.

Prior to hunting, all parties must fill out a pre-hunt survey and submit it at a department designated drop point to check in. At the completion of the hunt, hunters must complete and submit the Daily Post-Hunt Survey provided by the Department by 3 p.m. CST each day. Failure to complete these surveys will result in the permit holder being ineligible to hunt at Sloughs WMA for the remainder of the current and following waterfowl season. Survey cards and drop-boxes are located at two sites within the Jenny Hole Unit.

SOUTH SHORE WMA
Greenup County

Closed to all hunting and trespassing Nov. 15, 2026 - Jan. 15, 2027, except for dove and waterfowl hunting. Open to waterfowl and dove hunting during other times of the year according to statewide regulations. Use of waterfowl blinds at South Shore WMA is on a first-come, first-served basis.

TAYLORSVILLE LAKE WMA
Anderson, Spencer & Nelson counties

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter the area until 4 a.m.

Hunters may hunt waterfowl from temporary blinds on a first-come basis.

YATESVILLE LAKE WMA
Lawrence County

The Greenbriar Creek Branch, and Yatesville Lake, including all islands, north of the mouth of Greenbriar Creek Branch are **closed** to waterfowl hunting, except for Yatesville Lake State Park.

YELLOWBANK WMA
Breckinridge County

Areas designated by signs and markers on Tract 1 are closed Oct. 15 – March 15.

All waterfowl hunting is prohibited within the pheasant hunt units for 4 consecutive days beginning first Friday of December.

Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 p.m. Hunters may not enter area until 4 a.m.

MENTOR / YOUTH and MOBILITY-IMPAIRED WATERFOWL HUNTS

MINOR CLARK and PFEIFFER FISH HATCHERIES

Open for Mentor/Youth waterfowl quota hunts in January. Dates for 2027 include: Jan. 2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24 and 30-31.

- Hunts by advance online registration only. No standby hunting. Only youths and mobility-impaired hunters may apply.
- Mentor hunt only, limited to youths under 16.
- Youth(s) must be accompanied by an adult (mentor) at least 18 years or older.
- Hunters drawn to hunt must carry postcard notification with them during the hunt.
- Limited to 4 hunters with no more than two hunting adults. One mentor may have two youth but one youth may not have more than 1 mentor in a blind.
- Hunters cannot enter blinds until 5:30 a.m.
- Bag limits same as statewide.
- Hunting only permitted from established blinds assigned by random preseason draw.
- Hunters may only discharge firearms from the blind.
- Hunters may not change blinds.
- Hunters may only have 15 shotshells each.
- Hunters must immediately retrieve downed birds. Chasing or harassing waterfowl outside the blinds is strictly prohibited.
- Firearms must be encased when traveling to and from the blind.
- Hunting ends at noon and hunters must be off the area by 1 p.m.
- All decoys and equipment must be removed at the end of each day's hunt.
- Hunters must report harvest immediately after their hunt at the designated location by submitting hunt permit with the harvest results recorded on it.
- Those participating in a KDFWR waterfowl quota hunt must follow state and federal regulations or the hunter will be prohibited from participating in any other waterfowl quota hunts that year and the following year.
- Mobility-impaired hunters are also eligible to participate in the Minor Clark Mentor Hatchery Hunt. Hunters must supply a copy of their mobility-impaired access permit from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife when applying for the hunt and must abide by hunt rules. Mobility-impaired hunters may only have one assistant.

HUNT APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Individuals wishing to be drawn for one or more of the hatchery waterfowl hunts **must apply online on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at *fw.ky.gov* between Nov. 1 and Nov. 15.** A youth may apply for more than one date. A mentor and youth selected may invite two additional youth or one youth and one mentor to hunt with them. The names of guests do not have to be listed on the application. By the end of November, individuals selected will be mailed a quota hunt permit for the date(s) they are drawn, a map showing hatchery location, blinds and other instructions concerning the hunt. Unsuccessful applicants will not be notified. An individual drawn for one quota hunt during a season will have lower preference to be drawn for a second quota hunt during the same season. Duplicate applications for the same hunt day will result in disqualification.

DOUG TRAVIS WMA MOBILITY-IMPAIRED QUOTA HUNTS (Carlisle and Hickman counties)

- Quota hunts offered: Nov. 26-29, Dec. 7-10, 11-13, 14-17, 18-20, 21-24, 25-27, 28-31, Jan. (2027) 1-3, 4-7, 8-10, 11-14, 15-17, 18-21, 22-24, 25-28, 29-31.
- Apply in September
- For more details visit *https://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Waterfowl-Quota-Hunts.aspx*

CLOSED AREAS

CLOSED TO WATERFOWL HUNTING

All designated goose refuge lakes within the Western Kentucky coalfields region are closed to all waterfowl hunting.

WATERFOWL REFUGES

The following areas are waterfowl refuges: portion of Lake Cumberland WMA including Wesley Bend (bounded by Fishing Creek, Fishing Creek Road and Beech Grove Road) and Yellowhole (bounded by Fishing Creek Road and Hickory Nut Road) are closed to the public Oct. 15 - March 15. Ohio River Waterfowl Refuge (From Smithland Lock and Dam upstream to powerline crossing at river mile 911.5) is closed to hunting Oct. 15 - March 15 and Stewart Island is closed to the public Oct. 15 - March 15. On Peabody WMA, portions of Sinclair and Ken Units as marked by signs are closed to the public Oct. 15 - March 15. On Sloughs WMA, the Sauerheber Unit is closed to the public Nov. 1 - March 15 except the Crenshaw and Duncan tracts which are open for waterfowl hunting only. The area of Yellowbank WMA posted by signs is closed to the public Oct. 15 - March 15.

OTHER HUNTING AREAS

The following areas have special seasons and regulations for all hunting. Contact the individual areas at the addresses and telephone numbers listed below.

FORT KNOX MILITARY RESERVATION

Hunt Control Office
4916 Wilson Road, Building 9297
Fort Knox, KY 40121
(502) 624-7311 or (502) 624-2712
ftknox.isportsman.net

FORT CAMPBELL MILITARY RESERVATION

6645 101st Airborne Division Road
Fort Campbell, KY 42223
(270) 798-9824
ftcampbell.isportsman.net

GREEN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

8029 Green River Road #2
Henderson, KY 42420
(270) 527-5770
fws.gov/refuge/green-river

LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

100 Van Morgan Drive
Golden Pond, KY 42211
(270) 924-2000
landbetweenthelakes.us

OHIO RIVER ISLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

3982 Waverly Rd.,
Williamstown, WV 26187
(304) 375-2923, ext. 117
fws.gov/refuge/ohio-river-islands

REELFOOT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

4343 Hwy. 157, Union City, TN 38261
(731) 538-2481
reelfoot.fws.gov

CHANGES IN REPORTING BIRD BANDS for WATERFOWL

Reporting numbers listed on leg bands of harvested birds is voluntary. To report waterfowl with a band, hunters must now go online and report the band at

www.reportband.gov

The toll-free number found on some bird bands can no longer be used for reporting a band number.

Those who call the toll-free number will be directed to the www.reportband.gov website.

Hunters who harvest waterfowl with a leg band that lists an address and/or a toll-free phone number should instead go online and report the band number at *www.reportband.gov*.

Migratory bird biologists use the data collected from bird band returns to accurately assess harvest, bird movement and survival. Managers use this information to set season dates, bag limits and the length of hunting seasons.

BE LEGAL!
FILL OUT YOUR HIP SURVEY!

KENTUCKY DEPT. OF FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

FW.KY.GOV

My Profile

If you hunt for doves, ducks or any other migratory birds, you are required to fill out a HIP Migratory Bird Survey before you go hunting. To take the quick survey just log into your My Profile page on our website FW.KY.GOV

Scan this QR code and sign into your My Profile account or go to

fw.ky.gov/myprofile