

Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources



Commission Meeting

March 20, 2026 | 8:30 AM (ET)

In-person: Salato Wildlife Education Center – Schaaf Room

#1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601

Livestream: [YouTube.com/FishandWildlifeKY](https://www.youtube.com/FishandWildlifeKY)

AGENDA

Opening

- Call to Order and Welcome
- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call
- Chair's Remarks
- Commissioner's Remarks

Informational Items:

- Quarterly Financial Reports
Attachment I-1

Action items:

- Minutes from December 5, 2025 Quarterly Commission Meeting
Attachment A-1
- Promulgation of a new regulation regarding procurement
 - Promulgate new regulations under 301 KAR Chapter 11 to provide transparency in purchasing policies
 - Itemize procurement procedures, contracts and other related administrative services policies
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Fall Turkey Archery and Crossbow Seasons
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:144](#) to remove hens from legal take during fall archery season and fall crossbow season
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity
- Spring Turkey Season
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:142](#) to remove bearded hens from legal take during spring turkey season
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity
- Modify bear season
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:300](#) Black bear seasons and requirements
 - Remove the physical check requirement for harvested bears and require hunters to submit a tooth of any harvested bear to KDFWR
 - Expand the chase-only season beginning the day after spring turkey season through the end of September
 - Prohibit bear chase on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) within the elk hunting zone during the month of September to not conflict with elk archery and gun seasons
 - Expand archery and modern gun seasons in bear zone 1 to run a full five days for each season (currently 3 days each)
 - Establish a youth only bear season opening the second Saturday in October and running two days (overlaps the first two days of youth deer) in bear zones 1, 2, and 3
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity
- Attachment A-2

Discussion Items:

- Overlap of youth-only gun deer season and early muzzleloader season
 - CWD Working Group requested revisiting the overlap of these two deer hunting seasons in [301 KAR 2:172](#)
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity
- Create a new January 3-day antlerless firearms hunt in Zone 1-3 counties
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:172](#) Deer hunting seasons, zones, and requirements
 - Create an antlerless only firearms hunt the last 3 days of Kentucky's deer season (Martin Luther King holiday weekend) in deer zones 1-3
 - Remove references to disposal permits to conform with [301 KAR 2:176](#)
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Non-Resident Hunting License
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) to bundle the Non-Resident Hunting License to also include a Non-Resident Fishing License
 - Increase the cost of a Non-Resident Hunting License by \$35 from \$169.12 to \$204.12
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Modifications of Regulations Controlling Land and Water Use at Department Lakes
 - Amend [301 KAR 1:016](#) – Use of lands and waters on lakes owned or controlled by the department
 - Merge the Shoreline Use Permit with the Boat Dock Permit
 - Align the permit expiration dates
 - Clarify other requirements
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

New Business Item:

- Modifications of Regulations to Allow Seines for the Harvest of Invasive Carp
 - Amend [301 KAR 1:146](#) – Commercial Fishing Gear
 - Add hoop net and seine with construction and method specifications as a legal commercial fishing gear for invasive carp
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Modifications of Regulations Pertaining to the Harvest of Invasive Carp
 - Amend [301 KAR 1:152](#) – Harvest and sale of invasive carp
 - Add reporting of the timeframe of when fishing activities will occur and the commercial fishing gear to be employed to the required call in information
 - Increase harvest ratio of invasive carp to scaled rough fish from 65/35 to 75/25
 - Recommend eliminating the waiver of commercial fishing license fees for invasive carp only harvest
 - Include hoop net and seine with construction specifications as allowable commercial fishing gear in the Invasive Carp Harvest Program and provide methods requirements
 - Remove requirement for daily harvest summary card and require additional data to be reported on monthly commercial fishing report
 - KDFWR to update list of program participants monthly instead of weekly

- Remove waterbody list for Experimental Commercial Fishing Methods Program
 - Require Experimental Commercial Fishing Methods License within 30 days of selection for the program
 - Add language to require minimum participation requirement to remain in the Experimental Commercial Fishing Methods Program
 - Broaden program suspension language
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity
- Modifications of Regulations Pertaining to Commercial Fishing Harvest Reporting and Overharvest Protections
 - Amend [301 KAR 1:155](#) – Commercial Fishing Requirements
 - Transition to online application and reporting of commercial fishing harvest
 - Clarify language regarding commercial fishing license suspensions
 - Add the following to list of convictions requiring suspension of commercial fishing licenses:
 - Violation of any size or daily limit
 - Violation of harvesting fish out of season
 - Violation of fishing in any closed waters
 - Except for invasive carp, fish harvested by commercial fishing license holders must stay in the vessel or attached to the vessel until offloaded at the boat ramp
 - Clarify Lower Ohio River Trophy Catfish harvest permit program suspension language
 - Must harvest 10,000 pounds of catfish from the mainstem of the Ohio River
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity
- Committee Meeting Structure
 - Establish Committee Meeting structure, including committee purpose, oversight, and responsibilities
- Creation of a habitat stamp
 - Amend [301 KAR 3:010](#) to require a habitat stamp for users of a WMA
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) to create fee amounts for residents and non-residents
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Commercial activity on WMAs related to wildlife recovery
 - Amend [301 KAR 3:010](#) to allow for commercial activity for wildlife carcass recovery on a WMA. Require an individual to obtain a commercial activity permit for their recovery service
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) to create fee amounts for a WMA commercial recovery permit
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Establish an annual, weekly, and one-day dog training permit issued by the department and evaluate and designate tract(s) as Dog Training Area(s) at West Kentucky WMA
 - Amend [301 KAR 3:010](#) - Public Use of Wildlife Management Areas
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) – License, tag, and permit fees
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:049](#) – Small game and furbearer hunting and trapping on public areas
 - Require a Dog Training Permit (annual, weekly, one-day) for all trainers at West Kentucky WMA
 - Require a per-day fee for groups that hold a valid WMA Use Permit for a sporting dog or associated event at West Kentucky WMA
 - Exempt participants from the Dog Training Permit when participating in a department authorized event approved through the WMA Use Permit
 - Establish that unleashed dogs shall be allowed within the boundaries of a designated dog training area year-round, except for one week prior to September 1 through the first weekend of mourning dove season, youth statewide turkey season, opening weekend of statewide turkey season, and if applicable WMA deer quota hunts
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

- Special Youth and Veteran’s Waterfowl Seasons Date Change
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:221](#) Waterfowl Seasons and Limits
 - Change the Special Youth Waterfowl Season dates from the Saturday before Thanksgiving and the second Saturday in February to the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in February
 - Change the Special Veterans and active Military Personnel Waterfowl Season from the Sunday before Thanksgiving and the second Sunday in February to the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in February
 - Cleanup any other regulations as necessary for conformity

Public Comments¹

Set a date for the next Quarterly Commission Meeting

Closed Session - Discussion Items

- Commissioner's Annual Performance Evaluation

Adjourn

¹Public comments regarding New Business Items or Discussion Items on the agenda may be submitted by email to FW.PublicAffairs@ky.gov. Emailed comments received by 5pm (Eastern) two days preceding the meeting date will be distributed to all Commission members on the day prior to the meeting and read by KDFWR staff during the Commission meeting for up to 3 minutes total per commenter, time permitting and at the discretion of the Commission chair. Emailed comments allow Commission members adequate time for consideration and correspondence if necessary, and they allow the Commission to conduct business more efficiently during meetings. Note: A commenter's contact information is not required for emailed comments, but will be necessary if a response is requested, and other than name and affiliation it will not be publicly disclosed if provided. Anonymous comments will be distributed to the Commission members but may not be read during the meeting. The Commission chair reserves the right to not read publicly any comments that are libelous, profane, derogatory of others, not pertaining to business items on the meeting agenda, or redundant with other comments. Questions will receive an email response. Commenters should include "Commission meeting" in their email subject line and include in their email message their first and last name(s), Kentucky county(s) of residence (or state of residence if a nonresident), and organizational affiliation and position if they are an officer or official representative for a particular organization. In-person attendees of meetings may also request to speak up to 3 minutes total per commenter on New Business Item(s) or Discussion Item(s) on the agenda, but will be required to sign-in on the public comment request form on the table/counter at the meeting room entrance by 9:00am (Eastern) on the day of the meeting, and provide name, county and state of residence, organization represented and official position (if applicable), and agenda items being addressed. Commenters who speak in person will not have their emailed comments read publicly at the meeting and are asked to avoid voicing comments that are redundant with others speaking prior to them during the allotted public comments timeframe.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

INFORMATIONAL ITEM

DATE: March 20, 2026

Item: Quarterly Financial Statements

Please refer to draft financial statements document

Attachment A-1

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: March 20, 2026

Item: Minutes from December 5, 2025, Quarterly Commission Meeting

Please refer to draft minutes document

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: March 20, 2026

Item: Modify Bear Season

- Amend 301 KAR 2:300 to amend bear season as follows:
 - Remove the physical check requirement for harvested bears and require hunters to submit a tooth of any harvested bear to KDFWR via mail
 - Expand the chase-only season beginning the day after spring turkey season through the end of September
 - Prohibit bear chase on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) within the elk hunting zone during the month of September to not conflict with elk archery and gun seasons
 - Expand archery and modern gun seasons in bear zone 1 to run a full five days for each season (currently 3 days each)
 - Establish a youth only bear season opening the second Saturday in October and running two days (overlaps the first two days of youth deer) in bear zones 1, 2, and 3

Justification:

Kentucky has a robust population of black bears that have shown a high level of resiliency to increased pressure by hunters. Population goals for many of our core counties have been to hold the growth rate at or slightly above a 0% annual increase. Areas outside the core have experienced bear expansion and population growth even when faced with the potential for consumptive harvest. Bear managers in the Wildlife Division have taken a conservative approach where harvest regulations are slowly liberalized and their subsequent impacts on harvest considered prior to any additional changes. Currently, the Wildlife division recommends liberalizing the bear season incrementally by adding two days to both archery and modern gun season in Zone 1, as well as by adding a two-day youth-only modern gun season to overlap with the first weekend of youth deer season in October. This will add six total days to bear season for 2026 and represents an incremental adjustment that can be evaluated as the season unfolds.

Additionally, houndsmen have requested more opportunity to train their dogs during the chase-only season. We propose adding an additional month of chase time to the beginning of the season in May. Due to conflicts with elk hunters, the Wildlife Division proposes prohibiting chase season on wildlife management areas (WMAs) within the elk zone, during the month of September. Finally, with the overall number of bears being harvested in the fall increasing and considering additional priorities facing bear program staff, the Wildlife Division proposes removing the requirement to have harvested bears physically checked and instead require a tooth to be submitted. We would like to request mandatory tooth submission, with the penalty for failure to submit a tooth being a loss of bear hunting privileges the following year. Program staff will develop materials and provide training on how to pull the needed tooth as well as make available pre-paid envelopes for returning the tooth to KDFWR. We are highly successful with our elk tooth mail-in program and the necessary bear tooth is much easier to identify and remove.