

Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources



Commission Meeting

May 21, 2025 | 8:30 AM (ET)

In-person: #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
- Election of Vice Chair and Secretary

Informational Items:

- Quarterly Financial Reports
Attachment I-1
- Informational update - Spring 2025 Turkey Season
- Informational update on Black Bass Genetics and Thoroughbred Bass program

Action items:

- Minutes from December 6, 2024 Quarterly Commission Meeting Attachment A-1
- Minutes from March 21, 2025 Quarterly Commission Meeting Attachment A-2
- Create definitions and regulations to define the waterbodies and the area of some waterbodies where wakesports will be allowed
 - Amend [301 KAR 6:001](#) – Definitions for 301 KAR Chapter 6.
 - Define wakeboat and wakesports
 - Amend [301 KAR 6:030](#) – Waterway safety requirements.
 - Use standard minimum distances of at least 300 feet from shore on all sides, and at least 300 feet from a commercial dock or moorage harbor, to delineate zones at least 300 feet wide, and is a minimum of ¼ mile in length to inform decisions on waterbodies and areas of waterbodies where wakesports will be permitted.
 - Add a provision that wakeboat users shall drain the ballast tanks of their boats to the fullest extent practicable upon leaving a body of water and before leaving the ramp area.
 - Wakesports eligible waters shall be: Mississippi River, Ohio River, Kentucky Lake, Lake Cumberland, Lake Barkley, Barren River Lake, Green River Lake, Cave Run Lake, Dale Hollow Lake, Laurel River Lake, Nolin River Lake, Rough River Lake, Taylorsville Lake, Herrington Lake, Yatesville Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Dewey Lake, Paintsville Lake, Lake Beshear, Lake Malone, and Lake Linville. All other waters in Kentucky shall be ineligible for wakesports.

Attachment A-3

- Update license purchasing regulation to use current terminology in other regulations or statutes and clarify or update other unclear or outdated provisions
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:030](#) - Purchasing licenses and permits
 - Replace “combination” with “sportsman’s,” “disability” with “disabled” in license names
 - Clarify distinctions between disability authorization and license or permit authorization numbers
 - Clarify that refunds may be made to credit card accounts
 - Clarify that an electronic harvest log on a mobile device meets the required documentation in the regulation if in possession of the hunter and can be presented to an officer upon request
 - Add bear, bobcat, and sandhill crane to list of species permits referenced
- Black Bass
 - Commission member Meade would like to propose the stocking of 5,000 F1 Florida-strain bass on Paintsville Lake, funded by the department.

- Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area (OCORA) deed transfer to Meade County Fiscal Court
 - Amend: [301 KAR 5:022](#) License, tag, and permit fees
 - Amend: [301 KAR 3:012](#) Public use of Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area
 - Amend: [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer Hunting on Wildlife Management Areas, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Amend: [301 KAR 2:142](#) Spring wild turkey hunting
 - Amend: [301 KAR 2:049](#) Small game and furbearer hunting and trapping on public areas
 - Amend: [301 KAR 1:201](#) Taking of fish by traditional fishing methods
 - Meade County Fiscal Court would like to assume ownership of OCORA
 - Deed language would solidify KDFWR public access and available acreage for hunting and fishing (no net loss in public access or available acreage) in perpetuity
 - KDFWR will retain the gun and archery shooting ranges and approximately 40 acres surrounding the ranges; exact acreage to be confirmed by survey

Attachment A-4

- Wildlife Causing Damage
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:176](#) Deer Control tags, deer destruction permits and landowner designee and change regulation title to “Wildlife Causing Damage and Landowner Designee Process”
 - Define terms for disposal tag, destruction tag and control tag
 - Clarify terms for damage, department representative and designee
 - Establish parameters for usage of a destruction tag and control tag and require individuals using either tag carry approved authorization on their person while afield
 - Establish requirements for designees and designee denial parameters
 - Require individuals who receive a control tag or destruction tag for deer in a CWD Surveillance Zone county to turn the head of a harvested deer over to the Department for CWD sampling
 - Require control tag users to have a statewide hunting license and/or necessary permits
 - Require designees and individuals using destructions tags and control tags to have hunter education if required as established in [301 KAR 2:185](#)
 - Clarify that if a trap is used to capture wildlife causing damage using a destruction or control tag that the trap must be tagged and checked as required in [KRS 150.400](#) and [KRS 150.410](#)
 - Clarify that to be eligible to receive control tags that a department representative must determine inadequate control of wildlife through the established hunting/trapping seasons is insufficient and additional wildlife should be taken for damage abatement
 - Clean up regulation to:
 - Remove definitions of deer control tag and deer destruction tag
 - Replace “deer” with “wildlife”
 - Replace “conservation officer” with “game warden”
 - Remove parameters for qualifying for deer control tags

- Remove language requiring a tag be affixed to the carcass until processing
 - Update Forms Incorporated by Reference
 - Require individuals using a destruction permit to telecheck if the animal destroyed has a telecheck requirement for hunting
 - Amend [301 KAR 3:120](#) (Commercial Nuisance Wildlife Control)
 - Allow take of deer for NWCO
 - NWCO can only work in an area or location that has been deemed to be experiencing deer damage by a department representative via the process as outlined in [301 KAR 2:176](#)
 - Prohibit take via trapping; firearm or archery/crossbow equipment only
 - All inedible parts must be destroyed
 - Require submission of biological samples as determined by department representative
 - NWCOs must adhere to [301 KAR 2:245](#) with regards to carcass disposal
 - Update the materials incorporated by reference documents to include deer
 - Remove all references to the word “nuisance” in [301 KAR 3:120](#) and [301 KAR 5:022](#), which would change operators’ title to “Wildlife Control Operators”
 - Modifications to furbearer regulations
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:251](#) Hunting and trapping seasons and limits for furbearers
 - Allow furbearers to be trapped in March using water sets as defined in regulation.
- Attachment A-5
- Modifications to regulations related to rehabilitation of wildlife
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:075](#) Wildlife rehabilitation permit
 - Worked with permitted wildlife rehabilitators to recommend changes to the permitting and rehabilitation process as follows:
 - Create mechanism to allow volunteers to assist permitted wildlife rehabilitators via a sub-permit
 - Remove specific county names from regulation and instead reference the current USDA Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Zone and incorporate by reference the map
 - Allow the release of rabies vector species back into the county of capture OR any adjacent county (outside of the enhanced rabies surveillance zone)
 - Allow an exemption to hold wildlife for longer than 180 days
 - Designate bats as rabies vector species
- Attachment A-6
- Increase hunter opportunities and simplify quota hunts on selected WMAs
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) - Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Barren River Lake WMA: Open the Peninsula Unit (Narrows, Goose, and Grass Islands) to deer hunting under statewide regulations including modern firearms season

- Big Rivers and Higginson-Henry WMA archery quota hunts: Revise annual hunt start date - October 25 and add a one-day break on Friday before first Saturday (i.e., start of quota gun hunt)
- Cane Creek WMA: Establish quota hunts as follows and remove muzzleloader hunts: Unstaffed archery quota hunt beginning Monday following third Saturday in October until November 30, but closed for 3 days beginning Friday before first Saturday of November; unstaffed firearms quota hunt beginning first Saturday of November for two consecutive days
- Curtis Gates Lloyd WMA: Establish 2, 8-day unstaffed quota hunts on the WMA during modern firearms season
- Dewey Lake WMA: Establish a 2-deer limit (1 antlered and 1 antlerless) per year
- Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Grayson Lake, Griffith Woods, Kleber, Rich, Knobs State Forest, Kentucky River, Mullins, Paintsville Lake, T.N. Sullivan, Taylorsville Lake, Twin Eagle, Williams, and Yellowbank WMAs: Open during early muzzleloader season for added hunter opportunity
- Green River Lake WMA: Open to deer hunting for late muzzleloader season
- Green River Lake and Pennyryle State Forest WMAs: Reward hunters for harvesting antlerless deer (quota hunts only) by awarding a preference point per antlerless deer taken (maximum 4 preference points per year)
- Miller Welch-Central Kentucky WMA: open to archery and crossbow deer hunting under statewide regulations
- Mud Camp Creek and R.F. Tarter WMAs: open to deer hunting under statewide regulations
- Yatesville Lake WMA: Allow deer hunting for entire modern firearms season

Attachment A-7

- Add language to specify that hunting access on public lands may be controlled by signage as needed
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Add signage language to section 2 to become consistent with [301 KAR 3:010](#)

Attachment A-8

- Add newly acquired properties to public lands regulation
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Decker WMA

Attachment A-9

- Update deer zones for selected counties where deer densities have increased in recent years
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:172](#) Deer hunting seasons, zones, and requirements
 - Update from zone 4 to 3: Clinton, Jackson, Martin, Meniffee, Pike, Rockcastle, and Russell
 - Update from zone 3 to 2: Cumberland, Elliot, Garrard, Johnson, Morgan, and Rowan
 - Update from zone 2 to 1: Adair, Boyd, Breckenridge, Butler, Carter, Daviess, Grayson, Greenup, Hancock, Lawrence, Lewis, Logan, Marion, Meade, Metcalfe, Ohio and Taylor

Attachment A-10

- Update regulatory language
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:083](#) Holding and intrastate transportation of captive cervids
 - Remove “and number” on the permit when issuing captive cervid permits

Attachment A-11
- Modifications to deer hunting on State Parks
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Revise language to allow Kentucky Department of Parks to administer hunts as desired on its properties within the statewide deer season framework

Attachment A-12
- Deer and turkey hunting on Green River National Wildlife Refuge
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:111](#) Deer and turkey hunting on special areas
 - Add provision to allow deer and turkey hunting on the new national wildlife refuge as is already provided to other federal properties within the state
- Removal of Mobility impaired hunt on Camp Webb
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Remove the provision of requiring a mobility impaired deer hunt for the first weekend in October on Camp Webb on Grayson Lake WMA
 - Note: This is a clean-up and provision to allow this type of hunt is under [301 KAR 3:130](#) - Public use of conservation camp properties
- Removal of Tract 1 of West Kentucky WMA for the open shotgun/muzzleloader quota hunt
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
 - Remove Tract 1 from the areas available to be hunted during the open shotgun/muzzleloader quota hunt
 - Note: This is a clean-up as the property is no longer owned by the department
- Department owned or managed lands that are not wildlife management areas
 - Create language dealing with public access to land that is owned or managed by the department, but is not a WMA (hatcheries, hunting access areas, buffers around lakes etc.)
 - Combine and simplify other regulations dealing with department land other than WMAs
 - Add provisions for property set aside for other uses (such as office space, equipment storage, boat ramps, etc.)
 - Add provisions that allow closure by signage as outlined in Section 1 of [301 KAR 3:005](#)- Public use of newly acquired or newly managed lands
 - Modify the title of [301 KAR 3:130](#)- Public use of conservation camp properties to include provisions of this recommendation

- Recodify language in [301 KAR 3:012](#)- Public Use of Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area in this proposed regulation and repeal 301 KAR 3:012
- ❖ Approve a fully funded elk research project conducted in a partnership with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation that will evaluate the efficacy of habitat work within the Kentucky elk zone by evaluating nutritional metrics from elk scat
Attachment A-13
- CWD update and recommendations for the 2025-26 deer season

Discussion Items:

- Adjust bag limits for river otter and bobcat
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:251](#) Hunting and trapping seasons and limits for furbearers
 - The Wildlife Division proposes to increase the otter bag limit to the following: 15 per season, only 10 of which can be taken from Otter Zone 2.
 - The Wildlife Division proposes to increase the bobcat bag limit to the following: 10 per season, only 3 of which shall be taken with a gun/by hunting.
- Attachment D-1
- Establish a permit for rabbit hunting enclosures
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:041](#) Shooting areas, dog training areas, commercial foxhound training enclosures, and bobwhite shoot-to-train season.
 - Establish requirements for acreage, fencing, and containment
 - Establish requirements for animal holding and treatment, quarantine procedures, and disease reporting and testing
 - Establish requirements for permits, inspections, record keeping and reporting, possession of wildlife, and create definitions for rabbit training enclosure permits
 - Expand revocation and denial section for standardization across permits
 - Define species allowed in shooting areas
 - Standardize naming of shooting area between [301 KAR 2:041](#) and [301 KAR 5:022](#)
 - Standardize shooting area permit transfer requirements
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:081](#) Transportation and holding of live native wildlife.
 - Establish requirements for permitting, possession, and transfer of native rabbits to rabbit training enclosures
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) License, tag, and permit fees.
 - Create a rabbit training enclosure permit for \$25
 - Standardize naming of shooting area between [301 KAR 2:041](#) and [301 KAR 5:022](#)

Attachment D-2

- Modify Chapter 6 regulations to comply and comport with United States Coast Guard amendments and NASBLA recommendations
 - Amend [301 KAR 6:001](#) - Definitions to include the following definition:
 - Law enforcement vessel
 - Public safety vessel
 - Engine cut-off switch link
 - Engine cut-off switch
 - Wireless cut-off system
 - Incorporate other definitions included in Chapter 6 regulations
 - Amend [301 KAR 6:020](#) - Boating Safety Equipment to add a section regarding engine cut-off switch requirements
 - Amend [301 KAR 6:030](#) - Waterway Safety Requirements to include: Section 2 (4) to add wording “coast guard approved”
 - Add Section 6 to include language regarding enforcement and public safety vessel operations distance passage “Move Over Law” requirement(s)
- 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

New Business Items:

- Committee Meetings
 - Commission member Meade requested a discussion on the potential formation of a limited number of committees
- Turkey Bag Limits
 - Commission member Raymer requested the ability to adjust turkey bag limits across the state as needed
- Clarify that the guiding of hunters for profit constitutes commercial activity and would therefore be prohibited under the current Wildlife Management Area regulations ([301 KAR 3:010](#))
- Modify deer hunting regulations to allow hunting on properties owned by county or local governments
 - Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on wildlife management areas, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas
- Amend and incorporate by reference applications and reporting forms for Resident Fur Buyer, Resident Fur Processor, Non-Resident Fur Buyer, and Non-Resident 3 Day Fur Buyer Licenses
 - Amend [301 KAR 4:090](#) Taxidermy and the buying and selling of inedible wildlife parts.

- Marion County WMA emergency management tower construction
- Update the special fundraising permits drawing regulation
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:210](#) Special agency fundraising permits
 - Remove reference to “sweepstakes”
 - Add “grandchild” and “dependent child” to definition of immediate family
 - Modify end date for application period to May 31
 - Update terms referenced based on market research, incorporating:
 - “Bluegrass Bonus Big Game Hunt Drawing” and “Kentucky Super Tags”
 - Elk Hunt-of-a-Lifetime Permit, Super Slam Permit & Grand Slam Permit
 - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) for conformity
- Modifications of Black Bass Size and Daily Limits, Shovelnose Sturgeon Daily Limit, Skipjack Herring Daily Limit, and Additions to the Fishing in Neighborhoods Program
 - Amend [301 KAR 1:201](#) – Taking of fish by traditional fishing methods.
 - Apply a 12-15 inch protective slot limit on Largemouth Bass; 18-inch minimum size limit on Smallmouth Bass; 10 fish aggregate daily limit on black bass at Paintsville Lake.
 - Remove the slot limit on Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass on Otter Creek in Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area
 - On all waterbodies with a black bass protective slot limit, change the black bass aggregate daily limit from 6 fish to 10 fish.
 - Add a daily limit of 2 fish for Shovelnose Sturgeon.
 - Add a daily limit of 100 fish for Skipjack Herring.
 - Add two small lakes to the Fishing In Neighborhoods (FINs) Program. The following two lakes would be added to the “List of Special Lakes and Ponds” that is material incorporated by reference and thus would be managed under FINs Program regulations.
 - Owens’ Lake – 8.6-acre lake in Boone County owned by the City of Walton
 - Harry T. Clark Community Park Pond – 1.2-acre county-owned lake in Rowan County

Closed Session - Discussion Items

Action Items

Public Comments¹

Set a date for the next Quarterly Commission Meeting

Adjourn

Next Quarterly Commission Meeting Date: TBD

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: May 21, 2025

Item: Quarterly Financial Statements

Please refer to draft financial statements document

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Minutes from the December 6, 2024 quarterly Commission meeting.

Please refer to draft minutes document

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Minutes from the March 21, 2025 quarterly Commission meeting.

Please refer to draft minutes document

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Create definitions and regulations to define the waterbodies and the area of some waterbodies where wakesports will be allowed

Amend [301 KAR 6:001](#) – Definitions for 301 KAR Chapter 6.

Amend [301 KAR 6:030](#) – Waterway safety requirements.

Regulations 301 KAR 6:001 is the definition regulations for Chapter 6. Regulation 301 KAR 6:030 prohibits certain unsafe practices on the waterways of the Commonwealth

KDFWR proposes the following definitions:

- “Wakeboat” shall be defined as a motorboat that has one or more ballast tanks, ballast bags or other devices or design features used to increase the size of the motorboat’s wake.
- “Wakesports” shall be defined as:
 - operating a wakeboat with ballast tanks, bags, or other devices or design features engaged to increase the size of the boat’s wake; or
 - using a surfboard, wakeboard, hydrofoil, or similar device to ride on or in the wake:
 - directly behind a wakeboat without a rope; or
 - directly behind a wakeboat with or without a rope, when the wakeboat has ballast tanks, bags, or other devices or design features engaged as described above.
- “Wakesports zone” means an area of reservoir or river that is at least 300 feet from shore on all sides, and at least 300 feet from a commercial dock or moorage harbor, and at least 300 feet wide and is a minimum of ¼ mile in length.

KDFWR proposes the following amendments to 301 KAR 6:030:

- Create a list of lakes and rivers where wakesports activities would be permitted. Wakesports would be prohibited elsewhere.
- Create “wakesports zones” on each waterbody where the activity is permitted. The wakesports zones would follow the definition: 300 ft from shore on all sides, and at least 300 feet from a commercial dock or moorage harbor, and at least 300 feet wide and is a minimum of ¼ mile in length. Note: These areas would still be open to all users and are not exclusive to wakesports. Maps would be created of the wakesports zones of waterbodies where the activity is allowed.
- Wakeboat users shall drain the ballast tanks of their boats to the fullest extent practicable upon leaving a body of water and before leaving the ramp area.
- Wakesports will only be allowed on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and on the

following 19 reservoirs in Kentucky:

- Kentucky Lake
 - Lake Cumberland
 - Lake Barkley
 - Barren River Lake
 - Green River Lake
 - Cave Run Lake
 - Dale Hollow Lake (KY)
 - Laurel River Lake
 - Nolin River Lake
 - Rough River Lake
 - Taylorsville Lake
 - Herrington Lake (Zones 1-7)
 - Yatesville Lake (Zones 1, 4, 5, and 6 only)
 - Fishtrap Lake (Zones 5 and 6 only)
 - Dewey Lake (Zones 1, 3, 4, and 5 only)
 - Paintsville Lake (Zone 2 only)
 - Lake Beshear (Zone 2 only; main channel side of island)
 - Lake Malone (Zones 1 and 2 only)
 - Lake Linville (Zone 1)
- Wakesports shall not be allowed on any other water body.

Participation in wakesports are becoming more popular among recreational boaters. Wakeboats possess special design features intended to create bigger wakes of sufficient size that a person may surf on the wake (without a tow rope). Waves can be 2-3 times larger than regular boats and contain much more energy and power. Research has shown that a wakeboat wave must be at least 500 ft from shore to have the same energy as a wake from other boats 200 ft from shore. These larger wakes have been shown to have the following negative effects: pose a danger to other boaters, damage property (boats, docks, etc), cause habitat destruction in shallow waters, erode shorelines, resuspend nutrients leading to harmful algal blooms, and spread aquatic invasive species in ballast water. KDFWR has received complaints or staff have expressed concerns on many of these issues. A number of other states have already begun regulating these activities. We propose the above regulations for the safety and enjoyment of all recreational users on Kentucky waters.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area (OCORA) deed transfer to Meade County Fiscal Court

Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) - License, tag, and permit fees

Amend [301 KAR 3:012](#) - Public use of Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area

Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) - Deer Hunting on Wildlife Management Areas, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas

Amend [301 KAR 2:142](#) - Spring wild turkey hunting

Amend [301 KAR 2:049](#) - Small game and furbearer hunting and trapping on public areas

Amend [301 KAR 1:201](#) - Taking of fish by traditional fishing methods

- Meade County Fiscal Court would like to assume ownership of OCORA. Deed language would solidify KDFWR public access and available acreage for hunting and fishing (no net loss in public access or available acreage) in perpetuity
- KDFWR will retain the gun and archery shooting ranges and approximately 40 acres surrounding the ranges; exact acreage to be confirmed by survey

Justification: Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area (OCORA) is a 2,261-acre property in Meade County. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) took ownership of the property in 2011 from Louisville Metro Parks and has managed the property for hunting, fishing and public recreation since that time. While the area provides good opportunities for public access for hunting and fishing, other park-oriented public uses like campgrounds, multi-use trail systems for hiking, biking and horseback riding, disk golf, a YMCA camp and others are not within the mission of the Department, making the property poorly suited overall for management by KDFWR.

In 2024, the Meade County Fiscal Court entered a partnership with KDFWR to oversee all operations of the OCORA campground. To date, this partnership has been very successful. Recently, Meade County expressed interest in assuming ownership of the entire OCORA property with the caveat that KDFWR would retain all public hunting and fishing access at current levels and acreage in perpetuity through deed restrictions. KDFWR would also retain deeded “First Right of Refusal” for any future sale of the property based on accumulated improvement value.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Modifications to furbearer regulations

Amend [301 KAR 2:251](#) Hunting and trapping seasons and limits for furbearers

- Allow furbearers to be trapped through March using water sets as defined in regulation.

Justification: Beavers are abundant throughout Kentucky to the extent that damage issues are becoming a significant challenge to landowners and municipalities statewide. Concerns are related to flooding of roadways, timber, and crops. Beaver dams and bank dens cause roads to flood and collapse, resulting in road closures. The Department also receives concerns of pond spillway damming, destruction of trees (including orchards and new plantings), damage in/around city water reservoirs, flooding of water treatment plants, and flooding of golf courses. Managing moist soil units is a challenge both on public wildlife management areas and private land. The department receives numerous reports of beaver damage in March, when young beavers begin to disperse and establish their own territories.

The Wildlife Division proposes extending the trapping season for traps set as water sets through the end of March. While beaver is a main focus, issues with muskrat arise, and allowing these other furbearer species to be trapped along with beaver will allow incidental catches to be legally harvested and sold, rather than discarded and wasted.

Attachment A-6

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Modifications to regulations related to rehabilitation of wildlife

Amend [301 KAR 2:075](#) – Wildlife rehabilitation permit.

[Create a mechanism to allow volunteers to assist permitted wildlife rehabilitators via a sub-permit.](#) Justification: A sub-permit for volunteers would be subject to fewer requirements but would work under a permitted wildlife rehabilitator. Any violations by the sub-permit holder would be applicable to the main license holder, thereby holding the main license holder accountable for regulatory compliance of their volunteers.

[Remove specific county names from regulation and instead reference the current USDA Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Zone and incorporate by reference the map.](#) Justification: By utilizing the current USDA Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Zone map, the number of counties currently included in regulation would decrease which would provide more opportunity to rehabilitate animals. Anytime the USDA Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Zone changes, KDFWR would utilize this new map.

[Allow the release of rabies vector species back into the county of capture OR any adjacent county \(outside of the enhanced rabies surveillance zone\).](#) Justification: Allowing release into adjacent counties would provide more opportunity for rehabilitators while still minimizing disease risk.

[Allow an exemption to hold wildlife for longer than 180 days.](#) Justification: At times, wildlife needs to be held and rehabilitated longer than 180 days but currently rehabilitators do not have that option. (Commissioner's Exemption is what we have in mind)

[Designate bats as rabies vector species.](#) Justification: While bats are a known rabies vector species, they are currently not included in the KDFWR list of rabies vector species. Options should be discussed to include a "grandfather" clause to allow bats currently being held to remain under the care of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Attachment A-7

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Increase hunter opportunities and simplify quota hunts on selected WMAs

Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) - Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas

[Barren River Lake WMA: Open the Peninsula Unit \(Narrows, Goose, and Grass Islands\) to deer hunting under statewide regulations including modern firearms season.](#) Justification: Previous restrictions on modern firearms deer hunting in this unit are no longer necessary. Opening this unit to modern firearms will provide more opportunity and simplify hunting regulations on this WMA.

[Big Rivers and Higginson Henry WMA archery quota hunts: Revise annual hunt start date - October 25 and add a one-day break on Friday before first Saturday \(i.e., start of quota gun hunt\).](#) Justification: Changes would allow for gun hunters to scout the property before the beginning of gun quota hunts and provide a consistent start date for quota hunts.

[Cane Creek WMA: Establish quota hunts as follows and remove muzzleloader hunts: Unstaffed archery quota hunt beginning Monday following third Saturday in October until November 30, but closed for 3 days beginning Friday before first Saturday of November; unstaffed firearms quota hunt beginning first Saturday of November for two consecutive days.](#) Justification: Changes are aimed at increasing buck survival and age structure to develop a trophy-quality WMA in a region of the state where deer habitat is not optimal. After multiple iterations of trail camera surveys, there appears to be a high mortality of bucks on the property. Changes would limit hunter numbers during the rut period, allowing bucks to reach an older age class.

[Curtis Gates Lloyd WMA: Establish 2, 8-day unstaffed quota hunts on the WMA during modern firearms season.](#) Justification: Few hunting opportunities during modern firearms season are available on public lands throughout Kentucky, yet this is the season that most hunters look forward to participating in. Much of the modern firearms opportunity has historically been during 2-day quota hunts held before modern firearms season. As a result, drawn quota hunters push deer to private property, and the inverse happens during modern firearms as private land hunters push deer onto WMAs. Establishing this hunt during the modern firearms season should evenly distribute hunting pressure, creating better hunts on both public and private properties. It will also provide a hunter with their own place to hunt when there is otherwise limited opportunity. Curtis Gates Lloyd was selected as the pilot location due to its historic use and location in proximity to large urban centers.

[Dewey Lake WMA: Establish a 2-deer limit \(1 antlered and 1 antlerless\) per year.](#) Justification: Currently there is a 1 deer limit on the property. Deer density is estimated at 30 deer per square mile and could withstand additional harvest. Abomasal Parasite Count (APC) survey results >2000; optimum range is <1000. Data suggests the population is in excess of the

carrying capacity and can handle additional harvest. Increasing harvest would help maintain a healthy deer herd and provide more hunter opportunity.

Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Grayson Lake, Griffith Woods, Kleber, Rich, Knobs State Forest, Kentucky River, Mullins, Paintsville Lake, T.N. Sullivan, Taylorsville Lake, Twin Eagle, Williams, and Yellowbank WMAs: Open during early muzzleloader season for added hunter opportunity

Justification: Many WMAs offer muzzleloader hunting opportunities for the December season, but none for the 2-day season in October when more hunters look to go afield. This change would offer additional hunting opportunity for the 2-day October muzzleloader season on select WMAs in Kentucky. Participation in the December muzzleloader seasons on public lands has proven to be safe and effective. Allowing hunters to utilize the early season should increase harvest and provide more opportunity during a desirable hunting period.

Green River Lake WMA: Open to deer hunting for late muzzleloader season. Justification: Trail camera surveys on the property show high deer densities and suggest added harvest is warranted. Adding a late muzzleloader hunt will help meet increased harvest goals and provide for more hunter opportunities with a firearm.

Green River Lake and Pennyriple State Forest WMAs: Reward hunters for harvesting antlerless deer (quota hunts only) by awarding a preference point per antlerless deer taken (maximum 4 preference points per year). Justification: Pennyriple State Forest and WMA Abomasal Parasite Count (APC) survey results = >2000; optimum range is <1000. Trail camera surveys on Green River WMA indicate high deer densities. Data points from both WMAs suggest herd reduction is warranted. Awarded preference points for antlerless deer should incentivize hunters to harvest more deer on the properties.

Miller Welch-Central Kentucky WMA: open to archery and crossbow deer hunting under statewide regulations. Justification: High deer densities are creating poor habitat conditions including damage to dove field sunflower and cover crops due to over-browsing. Hunting is currently allowed Monday – Thursday. Opening hunting the remaining days will create more opportunities to harvest deer.

Mud Camp Creek and R.F. Tarter WMAs: open to deer hunting under statewide regulations Justification: Both WMAs are remotely located and experience minimal use, making them good options to provide more opportunity to hunters.

Yatesville Lake WMA: Allow deer hunting for entire modern firearms season. Justification: Currently deer hunters are only allowed to hunt the first 10 days of modern firearms season. Surveys report a deer density of 66 deer per square mile observed on area which is very high. Abomasal Parasite Count (APC) survey results = >1500; optimum range is <1000. Data suggests that this population is increasing, and an added 6 days of modern firearms hunting can be used to help stabilize growth and provide more opportunity to hunters.

Attachment A-8

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Add language to specify that hunting access on public lands may be controlled by signage as needed

Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas.

- Add signage language to section 2 to become consistent with [301 KAR 3:010](#)

Justification: Update is necessary as Section 2 of 2:178 requires any property to be open under statewide regulations unless described differently in Section 6 of 2:178. However, 301 KAR 3:010 provides area managers with the flexibility to apply special hunting restrictions (mainly area closures) by placing signage delineating the closed area. Staff need the ability to close an area to deer hunting without having to codify it in regulation. The ability to close portions of an area via Section 2 of 2:178 would be beneficial as closures can be supported in regulation as it relates to deer hunting and provides flexibility to area managers.

Attachment A-9

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Add newly acquired properties to public lands regulation

Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas.

- [Decker WMA](#)

Justification: Some newly acquired properties are too small for hunting under statewide regulations and could need to be managed differently. Any property that has deer hunting regulations other than “statewide” are required to be listed in 2:178. If they are not listed there, then those properties are assumed open under “statewide regulations.”

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Update deer zones for selected counties where deer densities have increased in recent years

Amend [301 KAR 2:172](#) Deer hunting seasons, zones, and requirements

- Update from zone 4 to 3: Clinton, Jackson, Martin, Menifee, Pike, Rockcastle, and Russell.
- Update from zone 3 to 2: Cumberland, Elliot, Garrard, Johnson, Morgan, and Rowan
- Update from zone 2 to 1: Adair, Boyd, Breckenridge, Butler, Carter, Daviess, Grayson, Greenup, Hancock, Lawrence, Lewis, Logan, Marion, Meade, Metcalfe, Ohio, and Taylor

Justification: Deer population trend metrics--including population models, numbers of damage permits issued, vehicle collisions, herd health checks, and thermal surveys- indicate that deer populations in these counties have increased and warrant zone updates. More antlerless firearms opportunity, including the ability to harvest an antlerless deer with a modern firearm is desired.

Attachment A-11

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Update regulatory language

Amend [301 KAR 2:083](#) Holding and intrastate transportation of captive cervids

- Remove “and number” on the permit when issuing captive cervid permits

Justification: The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) maintains a record of animals (e.g., number of each species, ID number, etc.) inside the facility. KDFWR does not maintain these lists, but the regulation states that KDWFR will issue a permit for the species permitted in the facility and number of the same.

Attachment A-12

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Modifications to deer hunting on State Parks

Amend [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas

[Enable the Department of Parks to conduct deer quota hunts at its discretion within the framework of the statewide deer season and other applicable deer hunting regulations.](#)

Justification: State parks quota hunts are handled differently than WMAs in regulation, with varying provisions such as hunting scheduling, methods allowed, etc.. This amendment will allow the Department of Parks to administer deer hunts as desired on state park properties across Kentucky, statewide deer season.

Attachment A-13

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

ACTION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Approve an elk research project that will evaluate the efficacy of habitat work within the Kentucky elk zone by evaluating nutritional metrics from elk scat

With cooperation and monetary support from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), the Department is seeking Commission approval to evaluate the efficacy of various habitat treatments used within the Kentucky Elk Zone by investigating nutritional metrics from elk scat.

Since the winter of 2022, KDFWR's elk program and regional staff have applied prescribed fire to 10,248 acres within the Kentucky elk zone. Additionally, RMEF has funded \$355,585 in competitive grants awarded to the KDFWR elk program for aerial herbicide applications and fire line construction. In total, 3,846 acres of overgrown mineland have been sprayed via helicopter through these RMEF grants.

With this considerable input of capital and sweat equity, we would like to investigate the quantifiable impacts to the actual elk using these improved landscapes. While the areas manipulated with prescribed fire and herbicide look better to the trained and untrained eye, it is how the elk perceive these management activities that really matters. With this in mind, we have developed a paired experiment where fecal samples from treated areas (fire and or herbicide) will be compared to control areas with similar, yet unmanipulated habitat to accomplish the three objectives below:

1. Determine whether fecal sampling can detect changes in diet composition and nutritional quality following habitat treatments
2. Compare fecal nitrogen levels and diet composition in treated vs. untreated areas during late summer to assess short-term nutritional effects
3. Assess the feasibility of fecal sampling as a monitoring tool for eastern elk

This project will be fully funded and analyzed by the RMEF, with on-the-ground support provided, as needed, by the KDFWR elk program.

Attachment D-1

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Adjust bag limits for river otter and bobcat

Amend [301 KAR 2:251](#) Hunting and trapping seasons and limits for furbearers

- The Wildlife Division proposes an increase in the otter bag limit to the following: 15; only 10 of which can be taken from Otter Zone 2.
- The Wildlife Division proposes an increase in the bobcat bag limit to the following: 10; only 3 of which shall be taken with a gun/by hunting.

Once extirpated or rare in many states, the river otter and bobcat have recovered throughout their native ranges. River otter and bobcat are valuable furbearers; their fur is utilized for luxury garments in the fashion industry with Kentucky pelts averaging \$100 each during peak markets. They are valued in the taxidermy market for mounts and the sale of tanned hides. Hunters and trappers also enjoy river otter and bobcat as trophy harvests. Various markets and predator hunting make the river otter and bobcat much sought after species; therefore, abundance and harvest are monitored. The department has received concerns related to the utilization of fur upon harvest, and we encourage harvesters to responsibly utilize, sell or donate pelts of harvested furbearers to fur buyers, rather than it being discarded and wasted.

Hunting opportunity for bobcats was recently expanded to add an extra week to the hunting season beginning in the 2021-2022 season. We now recommend additional opportunity for trappers by an increase to the trapping bag limit.



Attachment D-2

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: May 21, 2025

Item: Establish a permit for rabbit hunting enclosures

- Amend [301 KAR 2:041](#) Shooting areas, dog training areas, commercial foxhound training enclosures, and bobwhite shoot-to-train season.
 - Establish requirements for acreage, fencing, and containment
 - Establish requirements for animal holding and treatment, quarantine procedures, and disease reporting and testing
 - Establish requirements for permits, inspections, record keeping and reporting, possession of wildlife, and create definitions for rabbit training enclosure permits
 - Expand Revocation and Denial section for standardization across permits
 - Define species allowed in shooting areas
 - Standardize naming of shooting area between [301 KAR 2:041](#) and [301 KAR 5:022](#)
 - Standardize shooting area permit transfer requirements
- Amend [301 KAR 2:081](#) Transportation and holding of live native wildlife.
 - Establish requirements for permitting, possession, and transfer of native rabbits to rabbit training enclosures
- Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) License, tag, and permit fees.
 - Create a rabbit training enclosure permit for \$25
 - Standardize naming of shooting area between [301 KAR 2:041](#) and [301 KAR 5:022](#)

These enclosures have existed for many years in the state, however due to past changes in other wildlife permits, many have been found to be operating outside the current permitting processes. Wildlife Division staff reached out to stakeholders over the last few months and developed a permitting process to bring current rabbit pens into a legal permitting process while maintaining critical animal health standards and limiting the potential for future wildlife and zoonotic disease outbreaks in these pens.