

# Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources



## Commission Meeting

September 19, 2025 | 8:30 AM (ET)

In-person: Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm – Meeting  
Room A

1525 Mills Ln, 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
- Update on National Archery in the Schools Program, NASP
- Wild Turkey Surveys and Research Updates

### Action items:

- Minutes from May 21, 2025 Quarterly Commission Meeting  
Attachment A-1
- Voting on qualifying nonprofit organizations' applications for 2026 Special Commission Permits for Black Bear, Deer, Turkey, Elk & Waterfowl for fundraising to support projects in Kentucky

- Request for a commercial pontoon rental on Lake Beshear by All Aboard Boat Rentals, LLC dba All Aboard Pontoon Rentals
- ❖ Expand the Mississippi State University deer scrape study into Breckinridge County CWD Surveillance zone
- 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 A-2

- 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 A-3

- 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)

### Discussion Items:

- 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.
    - Propose that wakesports will only be permitted at least 300 feet from shore on all sides, and at least 300 feet from a commercial dock or moorage harbor on eligible waterbodies.
    - Propose 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, Dewey Lake, Lake Beshear, and Lake Linville. All other waters in Kentucky shall be ineligible for wakesports.

### Attachment D-1

- 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
- 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 at Cave Run Lake and enact that there will be no size limit on Largemouth Bass and the aggregate daily limit on black bass will be 10 fish (18-inch minimum size limit on Smallmouth Bass will remain).
  - Remove the slot limit on Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass on Otter Creek in Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area.
  - On the following waterbodies with a black bass protective slot limit, change the black bass aggregate daily limit from 6 fish to 10 fish. The lakes are: Beaver Lake, Bert Combs Lake, Beulah Lake, Boltz Lake, Carter Caves State Park Lake, Cave Run Lake, Corinth Lake, Elkhorn Creek, Elmer Davis Lake, General Butler State Park Lake, Grayson Lake, Lake Blythe, Lake Malone, Lake Pennyryle, Lincoln Homestead State Park Lake, McNeely Lake, Panbowl Lake, Wood Creek Lake.
  - 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
- 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 on a WMA for profit constitutes commercial activity and would therefore be prohibited and clarify that fishing tournaments that launch at a WMA boat ramp is not a commercial activity under the current Wildlife Management Area regulations ([301 KAR 3:010](#)), define commercial activity and modify the group definition in ([301 KAR 3:001](#))

#### Attachment D-2

- 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

#### Attachment D-3

- 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.

#### Attachment D-4

- Marion County WMA Emergency Management tower construction
  - Marion County has requested permission to place a tower for first responders on approximately 0.7 acres of department property within a management area.
- Update the special fundraising permits drawing regulation
  - Amend [301 KAR 5:210](#) Special agency fundraising permits
  - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) for conformity
  - Modify definitions
  - Re-order of permit drawing sequence

#### Attachment D-5

### Informational Items:

- Announcement of recipients of the 2026 Special Commission Permits for Black Bear, Deer, Turkey, Elk & waterfowl for nonprofits' fundraising for projects in Kentucky and elk unit draw

### New Business Items:

- Promulgation of a new regulation regarding procurement
- Restrict travel of Florida Bass, requested by Commission member Chuck Meade
  - Amend [301 KAR 1:122](#)
- Overlap of youth-only gun deer season and early muzzleloader season
  - CWD Working Group Commission members requested revisiting the overlap of these two deer hunting seasons in [301 KAR 2:172](#)

- 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 via mail
    - Expand the chase-only season beginning the day after spring turkey season through the end of September
    - Prohibit bear chase on public land 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

## **Closed Session - Discussion Items**

- 25-W/F-002 / 25-W/F-003

## **Action Items**

- 25-W/F-002 / 25-W/F-003

## **Public Comments<sup>1</sup>**

## **Set a date for the next Quarterly Commission Meeting**

## **Adjourn**

Next Quarterly Commission Meeting Date: TBD

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<sup>1</sup>Public comments regarding New Business Items or Discussion Items on the agenda may be submitted by email to [FW.PublicAffairs@ky.gov](mailto: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.

## **Attachment I-1**

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

DATE: September 19, 2025

**Item:** Quarterly Financial Statements

Please refer to draft financial statements document

## **Attachment A-1**

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

### **ACTION ITEM**

DATE: September 19, 2025

**Item:** Minutes from May 21, 2025 Quarterly Commission Meeting

Please refer to draft minutes document



# Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

## ACTION ITEM

DATE: September 19, 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.



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

**ACTION ITEM**

DATE: September 19, 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.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

**DISCUSSION ITEM**

DATE: September 19, 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” could 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” could 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.

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

- Propose that wakesports will only be permitted at least 300 feet from shore on all sides, and at least 300 feet from a commercial dock or moorage harbor on eligible waterbodies.
- Create a list of lakes and rivers where wakesports activities would be permitted. Wakesports would be prohibited elsewhere.
- 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 16 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
  - Yatesville Lake
  - Dewey Lake
  - Lake Beshear
  - Lake Linville
- 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

## Attachment D-2

### Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

#### DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: September 19, 2025

**Item:** Clarify that the guiding of hunters on a WMA for profit constitutes commercial activity and would therefore be prohibited and clarify that fishing tournaments that launch at a WMA boat ramp is not a commercial activity under the current Wildlife Management Area regulations (301 KAR 3:010), define commercial activity and modify the group definition in (301 KAR 3:001)

Commercial activity, with limited exceptions outlined in regulation, is prohibited on wildlife management areas (WMAs) per 301 KAR 3:010 - Public Use of Wildlife Management Areas. Pertinent regulation excerpts are listed below:

*Section 4. Prohibited Activities. Except as authorized by the department, on a WMA a person shall not:*

*(14) Engage in an activity which:*

*(a) Is commercial in nature and intent unless specified in Section 6(3) of this administrative regulation;*

*Section 6(3)(b). An activity prohibited in Section 4 of this administrative regulation except that a commercial activity may be permitted if it is:*

- 1. An informational booth;*
- 2. A food vendor;*
- 3. For collecting registration or entrance fees;*
- 4. A similar ancillary activity authorized by the event permit; or*
- 5. An ecotourism event approved by the department.*

At some point in the Department's history, a legal opinion was tendered that allowed guiding for elk to occur on WMAs. At this point, guiding on WMAs in the elk zone became commonplace even with the regulation remaining unchanged and generally prohibiting all commercial activity. This set up a clear discrepancy between those WMAs within the elk zone and all other WMAs in the state.

The Department's current legal opinion is that commercial guiding on WMAs is not permissible. It was verified that no other references in regulation or statute would grant the ability to commercially guide on WMAs.

Clarify that fishing tournaments that launch from a WMA boat ramp is not a commercial activity and modify group permit requirement to exempt the requirement for fishing tournaments at boat ramps on WMAs. Lastly, amend [301 KAR 3:001](#) to include a definition of commercial activity and modify the group definition to exempt fishing tournaments that launch from WMA boat ramps.

## Attachment D-3

### Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

#### **DISCUSSION ITEM**

DATE: September 19, 2025

**Item:** 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.

Wildlife Division staff have received requests to assist with the development and management of deer hunting on several tracts of property owned by local or county governments. There is currently not a process for these areas to be legally hunted given that they are publicly owned areas seeking public hunting access. This amendment to the administrative regulation will allow for local and county governments to conduct controlled deer hunts on their properties and establish a hunting framework.

## Attachment D-4

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

### DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: September 19, 2025

**Item:** 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.

The current applications and fur buyer reporting forms are outdated and in need of revision. These forms also need to be incorporated by reference within regulation.



## Attachment D-5

### Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

#### DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: September 19, 2025

**Item:** Update the special fundraising permits drawing regulation

- Amend [301 KAR 5:210](#) Special agency fundraising permits
- Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) for conformity
- Modify definitions
- Re-order of permit drawing sequence

301 KAR 5:210 establishes the requirements for the issuance and use of Special Agency Fundraising Permits.

KDFWR proposes the following changes to 301 KAR 5:210:

- Change the title of administrative regulation to “Agency fundraising permits” to further distinguish these permits as different from other special permits; and amend the rest of the regulation for conformity.
- Rename the “Elk hunt sweepstakes permit” to “Elk Expedition permit”; rename the “Premium combination big game permit” to “Grand Slam permit”; rename the “Special Agency Fundraising Permit” to “Agency Fundraising Permit”; rename the “Standard combination big game permit” to “Big Game Pursuit permit”; and amend subsequent references to these permits for conformity.
- Change the application period deadline from May 30 to May 31
- Change the order of drawing sequence to:
  1. Grand Slam permit
  2. Elk Expedition permit
  3. Big Game Pursuit permit

301 KAR 5:022 establishes fees and terms for licenses, permits, and tags:

- KDFWR proposes to amend 301 KAR 5:022 for conformity