

# 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)

## Minutes

**Call to Order and Welcome** (Video 4:55)

**Invocation** (Video 5:12) Josh Cummins, 5<sup>th</sup> District Commission Member

**Pledge of Allegiance** (Video 5:44) Matt Rhodes, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Commission Member

**Roll Call** (Video 6:03) Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Chuck Meade, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson.

**Chair's Remarks** (Video 6:49)

**Commissioner's Remarks** (Video 9:29)

**Election of Vice Chair and Secretary** (Video 15:42) Staff Attorney Steven Fields provided clarification on the Commission's current leadership structure. In March, the Commission lost both its sitting Chair and Secretary. Upon reviewing the Commission's Bylaws, which incorporate Robert's Rules of Order, Fields explained that if a leadership position other than Chair becomes vacant, a new member must be elected to serve the remainder of the term. In accordance with these rules, the Vice Chair assumes the role of Chair. As such, Commission Member Cecil assumed the role of the Chair position.

Commission member Meade ***made a motion to hold annual leadership elections***. He noted that a majority of the previous leadership is no longer serving on the Commission and emphasized that over 70% of the current members are new and have not had the opportunity to vote for Commission leadership.

Chairman Cecil responded that the Commission's leadership elections have traditionally taken place in December. Meade countered that the Bylaws do not specify a required month, and that such elections have previously been held in June. Fields clarified that the Commission shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary annually from its members; however, there is no specific timeline mandated for this election. He further explained that according to Robert's Rules of Order, if an officer other than the Chair resigns, dies, or is removed from office, a replacement must be elected to serve the remainder of the current term.

Commission member Shortridge stated that he would second the motion if needed, based on the information presented by Steven Fields.

Chairman Cecil expressed his understanding that the Commission has consistently elected its leadership at the December meeting. He mentioned that he is more than willing to transition from Vice Chair to Chair and fulfill that role for the duration of the term. At that point, new leadership can be elected.

Meade formally restated his ***motion to hold an annual meeting of the Commission to vote on its leadership*** and called for a roll-call vote, noting that a second was provided.

Fields asked for clarification on what positions were listed on the meeting agenda. Chairman Cecil replied that only the election of Vice Chair and Secretary was listed.

Meade asserted that the Commission has the authority to determine its leadership and to call for an annual meeting.

Fields advised that officer elections are subject to a notice requirement, which could be waived by a two-thirds vote of those present.

Commission Member Rhodes questioned whether Meade objected to Cecil continuing as Chair under the succession process. Meade clarified that he had no objection if the Commission voted to confirm Cecil in that role. Rhodes noted that it has been common practice for the Vice Chair to assume the Chair position when vacated. Fields stated he could not confirm the last occurrence of that practice.

Meade reiterated his concern about the loss of two leadership positions, combined with a largely new commission (over 70%), warranting an annual leadership vote. He ***restated his motion*** and again called for a roll-call vote.

Fields expressed uncertainty about the proper procedural course and requested additional time to review the matter. Chairman Cecil agreed and asked Fields to investigate further, stating that he had been elected Vice Chair and was currently fulfilling that role as Chair until the end of the term in December.

**(Video 24:35) The Commission recessed.**

(Video 59:13) After returning from recess, Staff Attorney Steven Fields reported findings regarding past Commission officer elections, which occurred on the following dates: December 6, 2024; December 1, 2023; December 2, 2022; and September 3, 2021. He noted that on April 13, 2022, the Commission nomination process was amended. Prior to this amendment, new members assumed their seats immediately upon receiving the Governor's nomination, which may explain the April date adjustment for elections that year.

Fields clarified that while the Bylaws require annual elections, they do not define the term length or specify a particular time of year. He emphasized that, per the Bylaws, officer elections must be publicly noticed, but the notice requirement can be waived by a two-thirds vote of all the Commission members.

Commission Member Meade inquired about the nature of the notice and who must receive it. Fields responded that for a quarterly meeting, officer elections must be listed on the agenda. Meade claimed he had notified the board via email of his intent to seek the Chairmanship. Commission Member Rhodes pointed out that such communication must occur in a public forum in compliance with Kentucky's Open Meetings Act. Meade disagreed, asserting that the Commission has the right to elect leadership at any time and that the Chair seat is vacant, not absent.

**Meade restated his motion** and again called for a roll-call vote. Chairman Cecil expressed concern with using email for such communications, referencing past open records requests and lawsuits. Meade stated he was comfortable with any open records requests involving his communication. He reiterated that he had notified members. **Meade restated his motion** and stated that he had noticed all the members via email and that he had a second for a roll-call vote.

Rhodes responded that the concern was not personal, but rooted in transparency: all formal Commission business must be conducted publicly. Rhodes asked Fields whether the term "annually" implied that officers serve for one year. Meade interjected, citing Fields's earlier statement that the Bylaws do not define a timeframe. Rhodes argued that if elections are held annually, it implies a one-year term.

Fields admitted he had not previously considered that implication but confirmed the Bylaws state: *"The Commission shall elect annually from its members a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary."* He noted that elections have traditionally occurred in December, though no specific date is required.

Rhodes commented on the application of Robert's Rules, noting that, typically, the Vice Chair serves in the Chair's absence, either temporarily or permanently, and asked if that was the assumption guiding current practice. Fields distinguished between temporary service during absence and permanent succession. He stated that his assumption was that Cecil was currently serving as Chair, and the question at hand was whether to hold an election for that position.

Commission Member Cummins asked if Meade's email constituted a formal notice and, if not, whether the Commission could proceed by waiving the notice requirement with a two-thirds vote.

Rhodes suggested the Commission should consider updating the Bylaws for greater clarity on this issue.

Meade restated his ***motion for an annual meeting to elect leadership***, which Shortridge had seconded, and called for a roll-call vote.

Chairman Cecil stated that, before proceeding, the Commission would need to vote on whether to waive the public notice requirement. Meade reiterated his belief that sufficient notice had been given. Rhodes emphasized that under the Open Meetings Act everything be disclosed to the public, not just Commission members.

Chairman Cecil proposed seeking an opinion from the Attorney General before proceeding with a vote, expressing concern over potential legal repercussions. Rhodes supported the idea, stating he didn't want to prolong the debate unnecessarily. Cecil reiterated his position, noting he did not want to move forward without legal clarity from the Attorney General regarding the legal basis of Meade's notice. Fields advised based on his reading of Robert's Rules that formal notice, to be effective, needed to be issued at the prior Commission meeting and listed on the agenda, but that the notice requirement could be waived with a two-thirds vote.

Cecil then asked the Commission whether they preferred to seek an Attorney General's opinion or vote to waive the notice requirement. Commission member Cummins made a ***motion to waive the notice requirement for officer elections***, seconded by Jay Smith. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Josh Cummins (explained his vote: "not kicking the can further down the road, and seems like we are at an impasse, and we might as well deal with it now"), Chuck Meade, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson. No: Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil. *The motion carried.*

Chuck Meade renewed his ***motion to have an annual election for leadership***, seconded by Fred Shortridge. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Chuck Meade, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Jay Smith ***nominated Chuck Meade for Chairman***, seconded by Chuck Meade. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Chuck Meade, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson.

Matt Rhodes ***nominated Greg Cecil for Chairman***, seconded by Josh Cummins. Votes were as follows: Yes: Matt Rhodes, Josh Cummins.

Commissioner Meade assumed the Chair position and made remarks. (Video 1:26:00)

Chuck Meade ***nominated Jeff Raymer for Vice Chair***, seconded by Fred Shortridge. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Chuck Meade, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*

Jeff Raymer ***nominated Jay Smith for secretary***, seconded by Chuck Meade. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Chuck Meade, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*

Commission Member Matt Rhodes asked for the opportunity to speak. For the record, he expressed concerns regarding the process of electing a new Chairman, stating that he felt there may have been discussions outside of the official body. He emphasized that the Open Meetings Law requires all formal matters of the governing body to be discussed in public. He voiced his concerns that this process might have caused some issues, but he is committed to fulfilling his responsibilities on the Commission with due diligence. Greg Cecil seconded Matt Rhodes' statement.

### Informational Items:

- Quarterly Financial Reports (Video 1:28:00)
  - Melissa Trent, Director of Administrative Services, presented the quarterly financial reports.
  - Matt Rhodes ***made a motion to accept the quarterly financial reports as presented***, seconded by Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Informational update - Spring 2025 Turkey Season (Video 1:38:14)
  - Zak Danks, Turkey and Grouse Program Coordinator, provided an update on the spring 2025 turkey harvest. The 2025 spring turkey harvest total was 30,661. Zak also provided an update on the turkey banding research project that has been ongoing since 2022.
- Informational update on Black Bass Genetics and Thoroughbred Bass program (Video 1:52:48)
  - Dave Dreves, Director of Fisheries, provided an update on the Black Bass genetics and the Thoroughbred Bass program. Samples have now been collected and tested from thirty lakes, of which twenty-six show that over 95% of the largemouth bass in those populations are pure native fish. The Thoroughbred Bass program aims to identify trophy markers in largemouth bass. Biologists have been sampling for the past two seasons to find bass weighing more than five pounds. From last fall to this spring, 264 fish have been sampled with a fin clip, out of which only 150 are needed. The top 150 fish weigh 5.5 pounds or more and will qualify as the target group. Biologists will then sample smaller fish from the same locations where the top 150 were collected. These samples will be sent to the genetics lab, which will conduct genome sequencing to identify common traits present only in trophy fish, differentiating them from other fish. Once trophy markers are identified, a panel is developed to screen brood fish at hatcheries.
  - Commission member Smith asked if the department could provide the commission with a list of potential lakes they would like to stock at the next meeting.

### Action items:

- Minutes from December 6, 2024 and March 21, 2025 Quarterly Commission Meeting (Video 2:08:08)
  - Jay Smith ***made a motion to approve the December 6, 2024 and March 21, 2025 Quarterly Commission meeting minutes***, seconded by Matt Rhodes. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Create definitions and regulations to define the waterbodies and the area of some waterbodies where wakesports will be allowed (Video 2:08:56)
  - Dave Dreves, Director of Fisheries and Colonel Jeremy McQueary, Director of Law Enforcement, proposed amending [301 KAR 6:001](#) Chapter Definitions. The amendments are as follows:
    - 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.
  - Commission member Raymer ***motioned to table this item to a discussion item for the next meeting to allow for additional research on the matter.*** He requested that all lake maps be completed before proceeding further. The motion was seconded by Fred Shortridge. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Update license purchasing regulation to use current terminology in other regulations or statutes and clarify or update other unclear or outdated provisions (Video 2:26:00)
  - Steven Fields, Staff Attorney, proposed amending [301 KAR 5:030](#) - Purchasing licenses and permits. The amendments would be as follows:
    - 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 the list of species permits referenced
- Commission member Cecil **made a motion to approve this item as written**, seconded by Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Black Bass (Video 2:27:11)
  - Chairman Meade asked for a motion for stocking 5,000 F1 Florida-strain bass (4 - 8 inches) on Paintsville Lake, the study would be funded by the department.
  - Dave Dreves, Director of Fisheries, urged the Commission to vote against the proposal to stock F1 Hybrid Florida bass in Kentucky waters, calling it one of the most consequential decisions for the state's fisheries. He emphasized that the division's opposition is rooted in sound science and professional expertise, not opinion, and warned that the proposal is based on cherry-picked data and misinformation. Dreves highlighted concerns from neighboring states (Ohio and West Virginia), and noted that even a leading F1 bass producer (Red Hills Fisheries) does not recommend stocking them in this region, and advocated instead for the ongoing Thoroughbred Bass Project as a better and cheaper alternative. He concluded by stating that approving the proposal could cause irreversible harm to Paintsville Lake and urged the Commission to stand with the Fisheries Division in protecting Kentucky's aquatic resources.
  - Chairman Meade stated that this proposal pertains to Paintsville Lake of 5,000 4-8 inch F-1 fish to be studied over a 5-year period and asked if there was any discussion.
  - Commission member Cecil asked if there was a cost associated with the study. He also noted that this was the first time he had seen the proposal specifying 4–8 inch fish, as it was not included in the printed agenda. Dreves responded that he had spoken with two different producers of F1 hybrid bass, and the availability and size of the fish depend on the timing of the order. He noted that feed-trained fish from American Sport Fish are available in September and October at 6–8 inches in length, with a cost of five dollars per fish. Additionally, the stocking of F-1 bass would have to happen every year.
  - Chairman Meade asked for a motion and a second on the item stating that discussion is over. Commission members Cecil and Rhodes raised additional questions that they would like answered regarding this study.
  - Commission member Rhodes asked Chairman Meade what experimental design he would request the department implement for this study. Chairman Meade stated that he has asked for a five-year study on the functionality of the F1s to survive and grow in Kentucky, and he believes they will.

- Commission member Rhodes again asked Chairman Meade what specific experimental design he is proposing the department utilize. Chairman Meade then called for a motion.
- Rhodes expressed concern, stating that no commission member has the qualifications or credentials to administratively obligate the department to take on this research project. He added that if the Commission is not qualified to do it, then they should not be directing the department to do it.
- Chairman Meade declared that both Rhodes and Cecil were out of order.
- Commission member Cecil voiced concern about the study and the expenditure of \$125,000 of the department's funds over five years, questioning why the Commission could not have further discussion on the matter.

**(Video 2:37:49) The Commission recessed.**

**(Video 2:47:35) The Commission returned from recess.**

- After returning from recess, Chairman Meade called for a motion to conduct a five-year study on Paintsville Lake, which would include stocking 5,000 F1 fish at a minimum size of 4–8 inches.
- Commission member Cecil asked if his earlier question could be answered. Chairman Meade reiterated that the debate was over and again called for a motion.
- Commission member Smith requested to amend the motion to include a contribution study conducted by the department on the F1 stocking at Paintsville Lake, with a growth analysis study to be performed in the fifth year.
- Chairman Meade asked Staff Attorney Steven Fields whether debate on the item could be ended. Fields responded by asking if a motion had been made to end debate. Chairman Meade responded that he had. Fields then inquired if there had been a second, which there wasn't. Fields advised that the motion did not carry, but the motion could be renewed. The Commission continued debating.
- Chairman Cecil asked how much the study would cost the department. Commissioner Storm responded that Dreves' proposal of \$5 per fish was only an estimate. By law, the department would be required to put the project out for bid. Once bids are received, the department has the authority to accept or reject them, but the normal procurement process must be followed. The Commissioner also recommended that the motion clarify whether the discretion to proceed after receiving bids lies with the department or with the Commission.
- Dreves stated that if the department were to receive a bid of \$5 per fish for 5,000 fish over a five-year period, it would total a minimum of \$125,000 per year.
- Commission member Shortridge asked whether the proposal was to stock F1s for five years or to study F1s for five years. Chairman Meade responded that it would involve both stocking and studying.
- Commission member Cummins noted that the study would also incur additional costs for the department, as the department would be responsible for conducting



- it. Dreves explained that a research biologist would need to be assigned to carry out the study and sampling, along with additional genetic work to analyze which fish caught are F1s and which are not, in order to properly evaluate the F1 contribution. Dreves stated he could not yet provide a cost estimate, as he would need to “put pen to paper, as there are a lot of things to add up.”
- Commission member Cecil voiced concern about the department spending a minimum of \$125,000 to stock the fish, in addition to the cost of involving multiple biologists over a five-year period.
  - Commission member Rhodes expressed concern about having an existing research project on Thoroughbred bass at Paintsville Lake while starting a new research project involving the stocking of F1s. Dreves responded that the department would not stock Thoroughbred bass in Paintsville Lake if F1s were to be stocked.
  - For the record, Commission member Rhodes stated that he was adamantly opposed to the Commission attempting to direct biologists on how to do their jobs. He added that if the Commission wanted to advise the department to take on a study, and the department later advised that it was not in the best interest of the fisheries or the Commonwealth, the Commission should follow that guidance.
  - Commission member Shortridge asked if there were currently any F1s in Kentucky lakes. Dreves responded that the department has not found any F1s in Kentucky waters, noting that F1s are defined as the first-generation hybrid of a Florida bass and a largemouth bass.
  - Commission member Shortridge then asked if, were the study to be deemed successful, this effort would be expanded across Kentucky. Dreves replied that there is not enough funding within the department to implement this statewide.
  - Chairman Meade called for a motion and a second on the item.
  - Commission member Smith made a **motion to stock 5,000 4–8-inch F1 bass annually for 5 years. Conduct a study related to growth rates after 5 years, performed by KDFWR biologists. Have a contribution study to be performed annually**, seconded by Fred Shortridge. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Fred Shortridge, Walter Robertson. No: Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins. *The motion carried.*
- Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area (OCORA) deed transfer to Meade County Fiscal Court (Video 3:01:19)
    - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed the following amendments:
      - 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
  - Commission member Rhodes **motioned to approve this item with a continued partnership between Fish and Wildlife and the Meade County Fiscal Court to ensure habitat improvement and beautification of the property and use for sportsmen and women**, seconded by Jeff Raymer. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Fred Shortridge, and Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Wildlife Causing Damage (Video 3:05:58)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [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” as follows:
    - 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”
- Commission member Rhodes asked if language could be added to recommend that harvested deer meat be donated to food banks.
- Commission member Raymer inquired about nuisance animals on farms and asked whether landowners are permitted to set hard traps out of season, and if so, whether they are still required to tag those traps. Deputy Commissioner Jenkins recommended consulting with legal counsel on this matter and following up with Commission member Raymer to clarify the applicable law. He noted that statutes address both the trapping of wildlife causing damage and landowner rights and protections.
- Commission member Matt Rhodes **motioned to approve the action item with the caveat that harvested deer meat be recommended for donation to food banks**, seconded by Josh Cummins. Jenny Gilbert, Legislative Liaison, informed the Commission that the term “recommendation” cannot be included in a regulation. Wildlife Director Ben Robinson added that it would be the department’s responsibility to provide education and promote the donation of harvested deer meat to food banks. Commission member Rhodes agreed and clarified that his intent was not to include the recommendation in regulation, but for the department to promote food bank donations as part of their outreach efforts. **He restated his motion to accept this item as submitted, with the understanding that the department will recommend distribution of harvested deer meat to food banks.** Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg

Cecil, Josh Cummins, Fred Shortridge, and Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*

- Modifications to furbearer regulations (Video 3:18:46)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife proposed amending [301 KAR 2:251](#) Hunting and trapping seasons and limits for furbearers as follows:
    - Allow furbearers to be trapped in March using water sets as defined in regulation.
- Modifications to regulations related to rehabilitation of wildlife (Video 3:19:47)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife proposed amending [301 KAR 2:075](#) Wildlife rehabilitation permit as follows:
    - 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
- Increase hunter opportunities and simplify quota hunts on selected WMAs (Video 3:20:56)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) - Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
    - 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 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)
  - 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
- (Video 3:26:18) Commission member Cummins made a **motion to approve the previous three action items: modifications to furbearer regulations, modifications to regulations related to rehabilitation of wildlife, and increase hunter opportunities and simplify quota hunts on selected WMAs, with the modification to change Lloyd WMA to a 1, 8-day quota hunt during the first half of the season**, seconded by Jay Smith. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Fred Shortridge, and Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*
  - Add language to specify that hunting access on public lands may be controlled by signage as needed (Video 3:30:47)
    - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
      - Add signage language to section 2 to become consistent with [301 KAR 3:010](#)
  - Add newly acquired properties to public lands regulation (Video 3:31:23)
    - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
      - Decker WMA
  - Update deer zones for selected counties where deer densities have increased in recent years (Video 3:32:07)
    - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:172](#) Deer hunting seasons, zones, and requirements as follows:

- 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
- Update regulatory language (Video 3:33:05)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:083](#) Holding and intrastate transportation of captive cervids as follows:
    - Remove “and number” on the permit when issuing captive cervid permits
- (Video 3:33:40) Commission member Jay Smith made a **motion to accept the previous four action items as written: add language to specify that hunting access on public lands may be controlled by signage as needed, add newly acquired properties to public lands regulation, and update deer zones for selected counties where deer densities have increased in recent years**, seconded by Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Modifications to deer hunting on State Parks (Video 3:34:38)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
    - Revise language to allow the Kentucky Department of Parks to administer hunts as desired on its properties within the statewide deer season framework
- Deer and turkey hunting on Green River National Wildlife Refuge (Video 3:35:13)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
    - 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 (Video 3:35:58)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
    - 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 (Video 3:36:33)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on WMAs, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas as follows:
    - 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
- (Video 3:39:06) Commission member Jeff Raymer made a **motion to approve the previous four action items**, seconded by Fred Shortridge. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- Department owned or managed lands that are not wildlife management areas (Video 3:39:52)
  - Gabe Jenkins, Deputy Commissioner, proposed creating 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
  - Commission Member Josh Cummins made a **motion to approve this item**, seconded by Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- ❖ 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 (Video 3:41:49)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, requested Commission approval on a fully fund elk research project conducted in partnership with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The department has been using prescribed fire within the elk zone to help maintain open lands, remove invasive species, and create more pasture-like habitat for elk. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has offered to fund a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of this habitat work by analyzing nutritional

metrics from elk scat. There would be no cost to the agency except for staff time spent assisting with and collecting samples.

- Commission member Greg Cecil made a **motion to approve**, seconded by Josh Cummins. *The motion carried unanimously.*
- CWD update and recommendations for the 2025-26 deer season (Video 3:43:26)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, provided the Commission with a CDW update and recommendations for the 2025-26 deer season.
  - The 2024-25 season overview was 9,101 deer sampled statewide, 4,483 deer sampled in two surveillance zones, 103 elk sampled, and no new wild detections.
  - The 2025-26 Season recommendations were as follows:
    - Ballard Surveillance Zone:
      - Voluntary Check Station at Heavy-Use Processors
      - Participating Taxidermist/Processor Partners
      - Voluntary Sampling Options
        - CWD Sample Drop-off Sites
        - CWD Sample Mail-In Kits
      - Hunter Hotline
        - On-call sampling opportunities throughout the Modern Gun Season
      - Goal: increase harvest and no mandatory checks
    - Breckinridge Co. Surveillance Zone:
      - Voluntary Check Station at Heavy-Use Processors
      - Participating Taxidermist/Processor Partners
      - Voluntary Sampling Options
        - CWD Sample Drop-off Sites
        - CWD Sample Mail-In Kits
      - Goal: Increase sampling around captive facility detection
    - Posey County, Indiana Overview:
      - A new detection of CWD was detected in Posey County, IN, within two miles of KY border.
      - Response plan - sample wild deer close to know positive in IN
      - Creation of CWD surveillance zone for 3 or 5 counties
        - Once the CWD surveillance zone is established, there will be a baiting and feeding ban and a prohibition on fawn rehabilitation.
      - Mandatory check stations: The department recommends running mandatory check stations in the surveillance zone during the first three days of modern gun deer season.
  - Robinson provided an update to the Commission on the CWD Working Group, which was formed following the last quarterly Commission meeting. He reported that the group is up and running and is comprised of district Commission



members from areas directly impacted by CWD, along with department staff. He noted that the group had a few key points they wished to present to the Commission for discussion and approval:

- Early antlerless firearm weekend in the CWD surveillance zone
  - CWD Surveillance zones only, requiring sampling through drop-off sites
  - Last weekend in September
  - Archery/crossbow hunter could only harvest antlerless deer
- Baiting and feeding ban in surveillance zones
  - Allow baiting in CWD Surveillance Zone counties as an option to increase harvest
  - Restrict “contact” feeders
  - Recommend broadcast feeding
- Robinson noted that for these recommendations to be effective for the fall 2025 season, the department would need the Commissioner’s authority as provided under KRS 150.025, KRS 150.105, and 301 KAR 3:040.
- Robinson summarized that the items up for Commission discussion or approval today are as follows: designation of a CWD Surveillance Zone in response to the positive case in Posey County, IN (considering either a 3-county or 5-county zone), establishment of an early antlerless firearm weekend within the CWD surveillance zones (proposed for the last weekend in September), and regulations related to baiting within the surveillance zone.
- Commission member Raymer went on record to say that he was in support of establishing a 3-county surveillance zone in regard to the CWD positive case in Posey County, Indiana.
- Commission member Rhodes went on record stating that he believes captive deer testing positive for CWD should be treated differently than cases found in the wild herd. He also expressed support for allowing baiting, noting that the primary objective is to increase deer harvest, and baiting helps hunters achieve that. Additionally, he mentioned receiving significant pushback from constituents about the prohibition on baiting. Rhodes also raised concerns about the captive cervid facility in Breckinridge County, specifically regarding the depopulation effort that was supposed to be underway. He stated that he believes the Commission and department have been as deliberate and thoughtful as possible in working toward a good outcome on this matter, and he is fully supportive.
- Commission member Cecil stated that he believes hunters would comply if asked to spread their grain feed, and that he is supportive of allowing baiting.
- Commission member Raymer suggested moving the early September season to the week of Christmas, when children are out of school. Commission member Cecil noted that when this was discussed previously, the concern was that colder temperatures during that time would discourage parents from taking their children out to hunt.

- Commission member Smith requested antler harvest data for December and asked for Law Enforcement's perspective on the possibility of allowing continued antler harvest with crossbow while limiting modern firearms to antlerless harvest only. Colonel Jeremy McQueary responded that overlapping seasons can increase the opportunity for those with bad intentions to break the law. He explained that regulations are designed for those who follow the rules, but overlapping can make it easier for wrongdoers to harvest a deer with a rifle and falsely report it as taken with a bow, which creates additional challenges for law enforcement.
- Gabe Jenkins, Deputy Commissioner, advised the Commission to be cautious about adding an additional season at this point. He explained that the Wildlife Division has thoroughly evaluated the current proposal, which is supported by science, and expressed concern about introducing additional hunting opportunities without giving staff adequate time to fully investigate them. He also raised the question of whether the Commission wants this proposal implemented for the 2025 season using the Commissioner's authority, or if it should wait until the 2026 season.
- Commission member Jay Smith **made a motion to establish a three-county CWD Surveillance Zone in Henderson, Union, and Webster; implement Commissioner's Authority for the 2025-26 deer season to allow baiting in CWD Surveillance zones, restricting contact feeders; and to establish a 2-day September firearm antlerless season in CWD surveillance zones with required CWD sampling**, seconded by Fred Shortridge. Votes were as follows: Yes: Jay Smith, Jeff Raymer, Matt Rhodes, Greg Cecil, Josh Cummins, Fred Shortridge, and Walter Robertson. *The motion carried unanimously.*

**(Video 4:24:04) The Commission recessed**

**(Video 5:00:35) The Commission returned from recess**

### **Public Comments:**

The following public comments were made in person (Video 5:01:04)

"Good afternoon, gentleman. Is it working? Uh, my name is Thomas Ballinger, Director of Second District League Sportsmen. Uh, one of the biggest things that came out from talking with people the last two weeks, y'all followed the writing guidelines of what most of them were wanting. Nobody's going to get everything, so I applaud you for that. You know, y'all were having to compromise on a lot of issues also. But a lot of the sportsmen would also like to have the small groups back, get sportsmen in with the small groups you're talking about, having the biologist and the commissioners there. Bring somebody in from the sportsman side of the house and let them sit on the committees also. That's the only thing I've got. Thank you all." – Thomas Ballinger

"Good afternoon, gentlemen. Uh, I'm just here representing, I guess, myself. I can wear a lot of hats, but I'm requesting on some turkey information. I know Mr. Raymer has got

some comments on it, but you know, we use zones and stuff for turkeys, I mean for all other animals and species across the state. I don't know why we don't use it with turkeys. Just because I know some counties seem to be doing okay, but other counties, such as mine, don't seem to be doing as well or at least my area is not doing as it used to.

There were three legal turkeys killed in 1990. My dad, Larry Severs, and Ronnie killed those. My family's been hunting turkeys in that same holler since then. Uh, with the exception of a few years in the late '90s when Dad was trying to get me a turkey before tripods, blinds, and the decoys that we have now that make it so much easier for use to get birds. We had to run and gun like we enjoy.

And this is the first year that, with the exception of the one my son killed, we didn't kill any turkeys out of that holler. Uh every morning when I hunted, there was one, occasionally two turkeys across the 300-ish acres that we own in that holler. You know, we own 500 roughly acres, pertaining to crop ground and forest ground. So, saying that ag ground or forest ground is the issues, I don't think it is. Predators I don't feel is the issue, because I'm hard on those guys, mainly using thermal at night to eradicate all species that are legal.

You know, I don't think there's a predator issue. I feel that the only thing that I keep coming back to is a season issue. I think we're opening it maybe too early. Some counties, you know, some of the western counties maybe are fine opening early like they are. But I think opening ours at the same time as everybody else's is counterproductive. I don't think you're getting that 80% breeding done before the disruption happens.

You know, if a turkey doesn't hatch out until June, I think the likelihood of those poults surviving is way less than one that hatches out the first of May. You know the foliage is too thick. The bugs are not there. You know, so, I think there's a whole lot of things against them. I think we need to look at zoning for turkeys, you know, not splitting the state in half like we did with the geese, because that really hurt us. You know, Meade County should be in the eastern goose zone that opens up the 15th of September versus the 1st of September, because we don't harvest silage until after the 1st of September. So, we've got the last two days of the season to kill geese by the time they find the fields.

But I think my main focus was on turkeys today. I think we need to approach it in zones, just like we have with everything else. It increased the bear population. You know it's increased the deer population. Elk's another story. But I think if we look at turkeys in a zone manner, then we can probably increase their population again as well." – Trey Webb

"My name is Anthony Brown. As we just talked about, I'm from Meade County, but I want to talk a little bit about turkeys. I mean, I don't have any complaints about the turkeys, how they're handled, our seasons, anything like that. I just kind of wonder if we shouldn't. I know Commissioner Raymer's talked about maybe adjusting some of the limits, and

I've got some close friends that I hunt with, and I've hunted with them for years, and they're probably not going to be very favorable about what I'm going to say.

But if they determined that we need to take a turkey away, or we need to take a week off our season, I'm fine with that. If I don't kill another turkey the rest of my life, I've killed plenty. I mean, I guide in Florida. I guide down there for five weeks out of the year. Florida's gone to on their public hunting grounds now, they're initiating a program where, starting next year, non-residents cannot hunt those public grounds for the first nine days of their season. I'm not saying we need to do something that drastic, but you've got all the states around us. You've got Illinois, Iowa you're drawing for non-resident tags. Nebraska, they do an allotment, and when they're gone, they're gone.

I mean, these guys want to come to Kentucky, and they buy them up early. That's fine. But I mean, we do all this predator control. I mean, we do, but not everybody has access to do that. And you know, we kill turkeys. I mean, I spent probably 20 days out of the season in the woods, you know, taking Dad and other guys hunting. I saw several turkeys die. But there are several areas that I hunt, and I've been hunting for 30 years, the turkeys aren't there. I mean, you can tell me the turkeys are up. I'm telling you, they're not there.

I spend more time in the woods, and I've probably seen more turkeys die than most people have seen alive. And that's not bragging that's just, I've been lucky to do that for 30 years of my life. And if you all bring that up and decide that we need to move season, take away the first week, take away a bird, I'm good with it. But there's a lot more stuff that needs to be looked into.

And I know Commissioner Cummins said he was going to ask about this, but I had a question about on baiting and the early September gun season. Archers can't kill a buck that weekend. Now, I live right next to Yellow Bank Management Area. Does that mean you can't kill a buck on that, because that's bow-only? I'm just throwing that out there." - Anthony Brown

Lisa Jackson, Public Information Office Supervisor, read the following statement regarding public comments:

"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). Email comments received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time two days prior to the meeting date will be distributed to all Commission members on the day prior to the meeting and read by agency staff during the Commission meeting for up to three minutes total per commenter, time permitting and at the discretion of the Commission Chair. Anonymous comments will be distributed to the Commission members but may not be read during the meeting. The Commission Chair reserves the right not to 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. In-person attendees of meetings may also request to speak for up to three minutes total per commenter on new business items or discussion

items on the agenda, but will be required to sign in on the public comment request form on the table at the meeting room entrance by 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time on the day of the meeting and provide name, county of residence, organization represented, official position (if applicable), and the 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.”

“My name is Todd Blevins. I am a resident of Madison County and serve as the Kentucky State Director for Humane World for Animals. On behalf of our members and supporters in Kentucky, I am writing in opposition to the proposed amendments to 301 KAR 2:251 increasing the bag limits for bobcats and river otters.

The first and second tenets of the North American Model of Wildlife Management are: 1) Wildlife resources are conserved and held in trust for all citizens; and 2) Commerce in dead wildlife is eliminated. This proposal contravenes both of these principles.

In the agenda materials for this week’s Commission meeting, the justification for this proposal contains no mention of any conservation purpose. Rather, the justification is simply to provide even more opportunities for a tiny percentage of Kentuckians to profit off of the public’s wildlife by selling furs to Chinese, Russian, and other overseas markets. This is not sound wildlife management, and Kentucky’s wildlife is not a commodity.

The current bag limits for bobcat and river otters are already high, and the trap types allowed subject animals to unimaginable suffering. Even the types of traps recommended under so-called “best management practices” by wildlife management organizations are extremely inhumane. For example, a 2021 study evaluating river otters captured in three different, commonly-used models of leghold traps found that nearly all exhibited injuries. Other scientific studies warn that river otters are often the victims of misstrikes or prolonged suffering in body-gripping traps. Due to their fast swimming and slender body, river otters often suffer a nonlethal strike to the torso. River otters have highly muscular necks that reduce the likelihood of a quick kill, even if they are struck in the neck.

The snares and leghold traps commonly used for bobcats are also extremely cruel. In their attempts to free themselves, bobcats and other animals caught in snares may endure cycles of near-asphyxiation, recovering only to struggle again, sometimes for hours, until they die or are killed by the trapper. Snares can also catch animals by their limb or abdomen. Steel-jawed leghold traps can leave animals with injuries that may not be visible without a necropsy as they continuously struggle against the trap, as well as dental injuries, lacerations, and fractures. A recent study in West Virginia found that

roughly 10% of trapped bobcats had trap debris in their stomachs from fighting against the trap.

Some trapped animals may chew off or twist off a limb caught in the trap in an effort to escape.

In conclusion, the proposed increase in bag limit for bobcats or river otters violates sound conservation principles, disregards the views of the majority of Kentuckians who value the ethical and humane treatment of wildlife, and would serve only to increase the exploitation of Kentucky's wildlife for the private profit of a small group of individuals. Please reject the proposed amendments to 301 KAR 2:251."

### Discussion Items:

- Adjust bag limits for river otter and bobcat (Video 5:13:45)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:251](#) Hunting and trapping seasons and limits for furbearers as follows:
    - Increase the otter bag limit to the following: 15 per season, only 10 of which can be taken from Otter Zone 2.
    - Increase the bobcat bag limit to the following: 10 per season, only 3 of which shall be taken with a gun/by hunting.
  - Commission member Raymer asked why the bobcat bag limit couldn't be increased to 10 total per season, eliminating the requirement of only 3 being taken by hunting/gun. Director Robinson stated that the department doesn't currently have sound data on bobcats. Thus, would like to remain conservative on this issue until we have better data.
  - No objections were made to passing this item on to an action item.
- Establish a permit for rabbit hunting enclosures (Video 5:17:05)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:041](#) Shooting areas, dog training areas, commercial foxhound training enclosures, and bobwhite shoot-to-train season as follows:
    - 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](#)
- No objections were made to passing this item on to an action item.
- Modify Chapter 6 regulations to comply and comport with United States Coast Guard amendments and NASBLA recommendations (Video 5:20:49)
  - Col. Jeremy McQueary, Director of Law Enforcement, proposed amending [301 KAR 6:001](#) - Definitions to include the following definition as follows:
    - 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)
  - No objections were made to passing this item on to an action item.
- Modifications of Regulations Controlling Land and Water Use at Department Lakes (Video 5:23:46)
  - Dave Dreves, Director of Fisheries, proposed amending [301 KAR 1:016](#) – Use of lands and waters on lakes owned or controlled by the department as follows:
    - Merge the Shoreline Use Permit with the Boat Dock Permit
      - Align the permit expiration dates
    - Clarify other requirements
  - Dreves requested that the Commission table this item and carry it forward as a discussion item for the next meeting to allow time to gather additional information on the matter.
  - No objections were made to tabling this item as a discussion item at the next meeting.

### **New Business Items:**

- (Video 5:25:10) Commission member Shortridge requested to discuss the possibility of changing or eliminating the slot limit at Cave Run Lake at the next meeting. No objections were made to passing this item on to a discussion item at the next meeting.

- Committee Meetings (Video 5:26:46)
  - Chairman Meade requested a discussion on the potential formation of a limited number of committees. Meade stated he thinks forming committees to discuss difficult issues would be helpful to the commission.
  - Commission member Smith asked for clarification on the difference between committee meetings and the working group model. Commissioner Storm explained that the discussion portion of quarterly Commission meetings replaced the traditional committee meetings, where only assigned members could participate. The current model allows all Commission members to engage in discussions for greater efficiency. He noted that working groups are in addition to these discussions and bring together the Commission, biologists, the public, and others as needed. Commissioner Storm highlighted that committees become subject to open meeting requirements and that the Commission will need to decide whether all members want to participate as part of a single group or form smaller groups with alternate meeting dates.
  - Commission member Raymer stated that he would like to keep the current three-step process but suggested forming a group to work out the details and then bring recommendations to the Commission as a suggestion or discussion item to move through the process. Commissioner Storm noted that this is what the workgroup has done through this process.
  - Commission member Rhodes stated that part of the challenge is the concern voiced by sportsmen that no outside entities are represented on the working groups. He suggested there may need to be an effort to engage and include them. Commissioner Storm pointed out that the Commission is appointed by sportsmen to represent the interests of sportsmen in their districts, and ultimately, the relationship and conversations between the Commission and the sportsmen are what's most important.
  - Chairman Meade stated that his concerns were for the sportsman and ensuring their voices were heard.
  - Deputy Commissioner Jenkins noted that during his tenure he has served on several working groups, and the majority of them have included individual stakeholders not associated with the agency. He emphasized that this is a complex issue that needs to be discussed collectively. Jenkins added that typically, the first few meetings should be internal to get everyone on the same page before involving external stakeholders.
  - Commission member Cecil opposed moving this item onto a discussion item.
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.
- Turkey Bag Limits (Video 5:42:11)
  - Commission member Raymer requested the ability to adjust turkey bag limits across the state as needed.
  - Commission member Raymer proposed setting a one-turkey limit west of I-65, eliminating the take of bearded hens during the spring season, and leaving the fall season unchanged.



- Commissioner Storm recommended not to use an interstate as a dividing line but rather by county.
- Commission member Smith asked if we could form a working group on this matter.
- This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.
- 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) (Video 5:45:31)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed clarifying that the guiding of hunters for profit constitutes commercial activity and would therefore be prohibited under the current Wildlife Management Area regulations.
  - Robinson stated that, as the department currently understands the public lands regulation, guiding is considered a commercial activity and is therefore prohibited on public lands, although it is currently occurring.
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.
- Modify deer hunting regulations to allow hunting on properties owned by county or local governments (Video 5:46:57)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 2:178](#) Deer hunting on wildlife management areas, state parks, other public lands, and federally controlled areas.
  - Chairman Meade asked if this would include the Jenny Wiley golf course.
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.
- 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 (Video 5:48:48)
  - Ben Robinson, Director of Wildlife, proposed amending [301 KAR 4:090](#) Taxidermy and the buying and selling of inedible wildlife parts.
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.
- Marion County WMA emergency management tower construction (Video 5:49:50)
  - Commissioner Storm noted that Marion County has requested permission to place a tower for first responders on approximately 0.7 acres of department property within a management area. While this is not an uncommon request, it raises broader questions about potential commercial use, such as whether entities like Verizon or others might seek to use the tower, and whether income would be generated. Commissioner Storm emphasized the importance of ensuring that if there is a financial gain, the department would be a partner in that. Additional details will be gathered, and further conversations with local officials in Marion County will be pursued, pending the Commission's willingness to consider next steps.
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.

- Update the special fundraising permits drawing regulation (Video 5:53:32)
  - Kevin Kelly, Director of Information & Education and Marketing proposed amending [301 KAR 5:210](#) Special agency fundraising permits as follows:
    - Amend [301 KAR 5:022](#) for conformity
    - Modify definitions
    - Re-order of permit drawing sequence
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.
- Modifications of Black Bass Size and Daily Limits, Shovelnose Sturgeon Daily Limit, Skipjack Herring Daily Limit, and Additions to the Fishing in Neighborhoods Program (Video 5:54:50)
  - Dave Dreves, Director of Fisheries, proposed amending [301 KAR 1:201](#) – Taking of fish by traditional fishing methods as follows:
    - 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
  - This item moved on to a discussion item at the next meeting.

**Set a date for the next Quarterly Commission Meeting** (Video 5:58:38)

- The next Quarterly Commission meeting will be held on September 19, 2025.

**Adjourn** (Video 6:00:04)