



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission Quarterly meeting – Dec. 3, 2021 Recap of Key Actions

Elk, wild turkeys and some of the state's most sought-after sport fish species were the focuses of several actions taken by the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission at its quarterly meeting on Dec. 3, 2021.

The virtual meeting was livestreamed on the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' YouTube channel, where [a replay of the meeting](#) is available on demand.

The Commission is a nine-member volunteer board that represents hunters, anglers and other wildlife-related recreationists in the Commonwealth. It recommends hunting, fishing and boating regulations. Recommended changes to regulations must receive legislative approval before they become law.

The following is a summary of key actions taken by the Commission at the December meeting and is provided by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to enhance the public's awareness about potential changes to hunting, fishing, and boating regulations. Official meeting minutes will be reviewed at a future meeting. Details of proposed regulations and division recommendations are provided in attachments to Commission meeting [agendas](#).

OTTER CREEK OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA

The Commission proposed opening Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area in Meade County to the public during spring turkey hunting season. If approved, this change could take effect for the 2023 spring season.

POTENTIAL MEASURES to ENHANCE WILD TURKEY RECRUITMENT

The Commission recommended amending regulations related to hunting wild turkeys and furbearers. If approved, these changes could take effect for the 2022-2023 hunting seasons:

- Institute a bag limit of one turkey per hunter per wildlife management area per season.
- Eliminate harvest of non-bearded turkeys during fall hunting seasons.
- Extend the prohibition of baiting of wildlife from May 31 to July 31. Bait piles promote artificially high concentrations of predators and turkeys at bait sites, which likely increases predation and health risks to turkeys.
- Extend the night-time coyote hunting with rifles season through June 30, except the season would be closed April 1-May 15. Hunters on private lands could use any legal modern firearm, both centerfire and rimfire.

ELK POPULATION MODELING RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The Commission voted in favor of the department pursuing an agreement with University of Kentucky wildlife researchers to evaluate existing elk population parameters and data, develop an updated statistical population reconstruction model and provide recommendations on next steps for research and model refinement.

ELK PERMIT QUOTAS FOR 2022

The Commission proposed maintaining the current number of elk quota hunt permits (594 total) and allocation of permit types for 2022.

The allocation by permit type includes:

- 175 either-sex archery/crossbow permits
- 150 bull firearm permits
- 244 cow firearm permits
- 25 youth permits

ELK HERD EXPANSION to McCREARY COUNTY

The Commission approved the relocation of 25-50 elk to the Daniel Boone National Forest and other suitable habitats in McCreary County from other areas elsewhere in the 16-county elk zone using grant funding from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. McCreary County will remain closed to elk hunting for the time being, with limited hunting opportunities being offered there as soon as possible.

ELK HUNT APPLICATION PERIOD and “LOYALTY REDRAW”

Looking at a potential effective date of August 2023, the Commission proposed a pair of amendments to the state regulation for elk hunting seasons, permits, zones and requirements.

It proposed opening the Elk Hunt Drawing application window on Aug. 1 of the year immediately preceding a hunting season and implementing a “loyalty redraw” to reward long-time applicants who have never been drawn for an elk permit.

Fewer than 100 people who have applied for the Kentucky elk hunt drawing every year since its inception still haven’t been drawn, and that number shrinks each year.

Under the Commission’s proposal, the redraw would consist of a second random drawing for elk permits that were left unpurchased by applicants selected in the first drawing. This would have the double benefit of rewarding long-time applicants and increasing overall elk hunting opportunity. About 10 percent of elk permits go unpurchased each year.

LICENSING

The Commission tabled one action item aimed at updating regulations pertaining to license issuance and administration. Proposed changes would accommodate modernization efforts in licensing and related IT solutions to enhance customer service and enhance functionality of current and future license delivery solutions. The board plans to revisit the topic at [a special-called meeting](#), once more information has been provided to the Commission to aid its deliberation and response to inquiries from stakeholders.

SPORT FISHING REGULATIONS

In Fisheries-related business, the Commission proposed simplifying, updating and adding or removing special regulations for black bass, trout, catfish and muskellunge.

If approved, these changes could take effect in 2023:

- Remove special regulations and revert to statewide regulations of a 12-inch minimum size limit and a 6-fish daily creel limit for largemouth and smallmouth bass on the following waters:
 - Prather Pond and the 15-acre and 6-acre ponds on Kentucky River WMA in Henry County.
 - Paintsville Lake (Johnson and Morgan counties)
 - Marion County Lake (Marion County)
 - Fagan Branch Lake (Marion County)
 - Shanty Hollow Lake (Warren County)
- Adopt a 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit on largemouth bass with a 6-fish daily creel limit on the following lakes:
 - Beaver Lake (Anderson County)

- Boltz Lake (Grant County)
 - Corinth Lake (Grant County)
 - McNeely Lake (Jefferson County)
 - General Butler State Park Lake (Carroll County)
 - Lincoln Homestead State Park Lake (Washington County)
 - Cave Run Lake (Bath, Menifee, Morgan and Rowan counties)
 - Panbowl Lake (Breathitt County)
 - Bert T. Combs Lake (Clay County)
 - Beulah Lake (Jackson County)
 - Smoky Valley Lake at Carter Caves State Park (Carter County)
 - Lake Pennyrite (Christian County)
- Institute a 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass with a 6-fish daily creel limit on the following waters:
 - Otter Creek (Hardin and Meade counties) – only 1 fish in the daily creel may be longer than 15 inches
 - Mainstem of Elkhorn Creek (Franklin County) – only 2 fish in the daily creel limit may be longer than 15 inches
 - Wood Creek Lake (Laurel County)
- Change the daily creel limit on largemouth bass to 6 fish and maintain a 15-inch minimum length limit on the following waters:
 - Doe Run Lake (Kenton County)
 - Lake Shelby (Shelby County)
 - New Haven Optimist Lake (Nelson County)
 - Willisburg Park Pond (Washington County)
 - Mill Creek Lake (Powell and Wolfe counties)
- Change the regulation to a 15-inch minimum size limit and 6-fish daily creel limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass on the following waters:
 - Floyd's Fork Creek from U.S. 60 downstream to U.S. 150 (Jefferson County)
 - Nolin River Lake (Edmonson, Grayson and Hart counties)
 - Rough River Lake (Breckinridge and Grayson counties)
 - Barren River Lake (Allen and Barren counties)
- Implement a 15-inch minimum size limit on smallmouth bass on the following waters:
 - Barren River and all tributaries upstream of Barren River Lake; downstream of Barren River Lake Dam to Lock and Dam 1 and all tributaries (Allen, Barren, Monroe, Simpson and Warren counties)
 - Cumberland River upstream of Cumberland Falls and all tributaries (Bell, Harlan, Knox, Letcher, McCreary and Whitley counties)

- Kentucky River upstream of Lock and Dam 14, the North Fork and tributaries including Carr Fork below Carr Creek Lake as well as the South and Middle Forks and all tributaries (Breathitt, Clay, Harlan, Knott, Knox, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Owsley, Perry and Wolfe counties).

Trout

- Remove special regulations for brook trout on Poor Fork of Cumberland River (Harlan County).
- Remove special regulations for trout in Paintsville Lake tailwater (Johnson County).
- Change the seasonal catch and release season on Swift Camp Creek to October 1 through March 31 to match the other streams in the program.

Catfish

- Implement a 15-fish daily creel limit with only 1 fish may be longer than 25 inches for blue and channel catfish on Carr Creek Lake (Knott County).

Muskellunge

- Increase the minimum size limit from 36 inches to 40 inches for muskellunge on Cave Run Lake (Bath, Menifee, Morgan and Rowan counties), Dewey Lake (Floyd County) and Green River Lake (Adair and Taylor counties).

The next quarterly meeting of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission is scheduled for March 4, 2022. Agendas will be posted at fw.ky.gov when available.