



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission proposes regulation changes *Board also awards 2023 special commission permits*

NOTE: The following is a summary of actions taken by the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission at its quarterly meeting held Aug. 26, 2022. Official meeting minutes will be reviewed at a future meeting. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources provides this summary to enhance the public's awareness about potential changes to hunting, fishing, boating or other related regulations.

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 1, 2022) — The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission recommended changes to turkey and bear regulations at its quarterly meeting on Aug. 26 and also awarded special commission permits to several charitable organizations that conduct wildlife conservation and related participation programs or projects in Kentucky for fundraising.

The 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 anglers, hunters and other fish and wildlife-related recreationists of the Commonwealth. The board recommends hunting, fishing and boating regulations. Any recommendations must receive legislative approval before they become law.

If approved by legislators, proposed changes are anticipated to take effect by fall 2023.

Revisiting a proposed regulation concerning fall turkey bag limits that it had tabled at its previous meeting, the Commission on Aug. 26 recommended a reduction of the fall turkey bag limit to two turkeys, only one of which may be a female or beardless turkey and only one of which may have a beard three inches or longer.

Under the administrative regulation currently in place through the 2022 seasons, hunters can harvest up to four birds in the fall but only one can have a beard of 3 inches or longer. Female turkeys (hens) accounted for 63.9 percent of the 1,577 turkeys harvested by hunters last fall.

The Commission then made a recommendation to clarify for hunters and conservation officers specifically what constitutes unlawful baiting for fall turkey hunting. Under its proposal, hunters shall not knowingly hunt wild turkeys in fall within 200 yards (600 feet) of any bait or feed on their property or the property upon which they have permission to hunt. The restriction would not cross property lines. In addition, [KRS 150.710](#) prohibits intentional obstruction or disruption of lawful hunting.

The recommendations followed previous Commission action to proactively address concerns about wild turkey numbers in Kentucky and declines across their range. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is involved with research projects to study nesting success and survival rates of young birds as well as the impact hunting has on the flock.

In bear-related business, the Commission proposed that all participants in a bear chase must possess a valid Kentucky bear chase permit and any valid Kentucky hunting license. Those attempting to harvest a bear during bear chase season must have a valid Kentucky bear hunting permit, a valid bear chase permit and an annual Kentucky hunting license.

The Commission also recommended creation of three new, non-resident bear permits. These would include a \$50 non-resident bear chase permit, a \$15 non-resident youth bear chase permit and a \$100 non-resident youth bear hunting permit. Commission members also recommended combining the resident bear chase permit and resident bear hunting permit into a single \$50 resident bear chase and hunting permit, for a savings of \$10 if bought separately.

The proposed effective timeframe for the bear-related recommendations is fall 2023.

In other business, the Commission recommended extending falconry duck season by moving the closing date from Feb. 15 to the last Sunday of February. The board also proposed removing the requirement to use metal tags for harvested sandhill cranes, instead providing an avenue on the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website for printable tags. These changes are expected go into effect for the 2023-2024 waterfowl and sandhill crane seasons, if approved.

Commission members tabled a proposed regulation concerning the use of drones and other aircraft for taking fish or wildlife, in order to allow Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff additional time to gather more information on the topic before the next scheduled quarterly Commission meeting in December.

The Commission awarded [Special Commission Permits](#) for 2023 to several non-profit conservation organizations in Kentucky for fundraising.

By [state law](#), the Commission may award up to 10 hunting permits per year for deer, wild turkey, waterfowl and elk to qualifying organizations to support projects that enhance fish and wildlife resources or participation in related activities within the Commonwealth.

Recipients of 2023 special commission permits were:

- Camp Hero, Inc. (waterfowl)
- Carr Creek Fish and Game Club (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- Kentucky Ducks Unlimited (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- Kentucky Elk Guide Association, Inc. (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- Kentucky Field Trial Association, Inc. (elk)
- Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- Kentucky Houndsmen Association Foundation for Sportsmen's Rights, Inc. (deer, turkey, elk)
- Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- Kentucky River Longbeards NWTF Chapter (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- National Deer Association (deer, turkey, elk)
- Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (waterfowl)
- The Nature Conservancy (deer, turkey, waterfowl, elk)
- Wildlife Women (deer, turkey, waterfowl).

The next quarterly meeting of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission is scheduled for Dec. 2, 2022. Agendas will be posted at fw.ky.gov when available.

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