

Annual Report of Law Enforcement Professional Standards

Report Required by KRS 235:312



Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

September 16, 2025

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' mission is to conserve, protect and enhance Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources and provide outstanding opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, shooting sports, wildlife viewing, and related activities.

In the 2014 Regular Legislative Session, the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation that included a provision in law that the department shall provide to the Legislative Research Commission a report detailing the continued training measures that the department has undertaken during the past year for law enforcement officers. The report shall cover areas of enforcement policy and professionalism training to enhance the public's experience in interacting with the department's officers and in enjoying outdoor activities while maintaining a safe and lawful environment. Lastly, the report shall also include any changes that the department implemented during the past year regarding its law enforcement practices and interactions with the public.

In compliance with KRS 235:312 the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' Law Enforcement Division is pleased to report the following:

- The Law Enforcement Division recently completed an entire promotional process that included the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, and Major. All Sergeants and Lieutenants are required to complete leadership trainings at the Department of Criminal Justice Training that includes the Academy of Police Supervision and Criminal Justice

Executive Development courses. In addition to these courses, all Game Warden Sergeants complete the KDFWR Game Warden Sergeant academy.

- The Law Enforcement Division executive leadership ranks have attended multiple training courses across the Southeast United States regarding the North America Wildlife Law Enforcement Association (NAWLEA) accreditation program. In the Spring of 2025, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife was accepted into the NAWLEA accreditation program and has formed a committee who will oversee the process. Accreditation is a three-year commitment, and it is a goal of the Division to become an accredited law enforcement agency by year 2027. Once accreditation is attained, an audit occurs annually, and it is a requirement of the Agency to follow NAWLEA standards to maintain accreditation.
- The Law Enforcement Division recently re-organized its Special Investigations Unit (SIU). This specialized group of Game Wardens work a variety of cases across the state but is mission-driven to ensure the integrity of fish and wildlife resource commercialization. Their enforcement efforts and productivity have been phenomenal and as Game Warden personnel increases, it is the goal of the Law Enforcement Division to increase personnel numbers within this unit.
- The Law Enforcement Division has partnered with the Kentucky Mountain Regional Recreation Authority to assist in trail patrols throughout the First Frontier Appalachian Trail Authority system. Wardens are actively patrolling the trail system and as the footprint of trail riding in East KY continues to grow, so will the need for increased law enforcement presence. Our efforts to grow enforcement personnel within the Agency will directly impact our ability to continue to be a vital part of first response and enforcement with trail riding activities.
- The Law Enforcement Division responded to two major weather events that impacted the Commonwealth this year. The flooding and tornado disasters that devastated East KY required specialized response that was ready-made for the training and equipment our Game Wardens possess. Unfortunately, these types of weather-related disasters are increasing within our state, and it is first responders who are prepared and ready to answer the call. Our Wardens expertise and desire to protect and serve allows KDFWR to play a major role during natural disasters. It is the goal of the Law Enforcement Division to continue to broaden our response efforts, but our capability to do so will be directly affected by increased personnel and funding availability.

- The Law Enforcement Division policy manual continues to be fluid to ensure the requirements of our ever-changing profession are met and that best practices for law enforcement are up to date. Quarterly meetings are scheduled with a policy working group to guarantee current issues facing law enforcement are discussed and needed changes are made. The committee continues to be thorough and efficient through adaptation and development of new and existing policy and procedure. Our team has placed a specific focus on our Professional Standards section and its policies and procedures, and we are continuing to evolve in this area.

- The Law Enforcement Division recently added 4 patrol boats and 20 patrol trucks to our fleet. The addition of these patrol vehicles will help aid in the adequacy of our ability to effectively protect and serve the Commonwealth.

- The Law Enforcement Division recently invested in a cloud-based system that will revolutionize our management process. Power DMS is a compliance and organization management program that manages policies, training, and accreditation processes. It is designed specifically for public safety and healthcare entities and aims to reduce risk and liability while increasing efficiency. Our Division specifically uses this platform for NAWLEA accreditation, policy and procedure management, records maintenance and retention, and training.

- The Law Enforcement Division graduated six recruits from Academy Class 28. Each of them successfully completed the Department of Criminal Justice Training 20-week police academy and the 14-week KDFWR Game Warden Academy. Two of the six recruits were already peace officer certified and are actively patrolling the Commonwealth, and the other four recruits are in the KDFWR field training program and will begin self-patrols in the field this Fall.

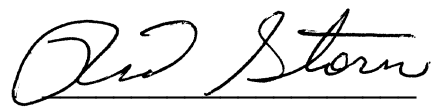
- The Law Enforcement Division is set to hire 30 new recruits this fall as Academy Classes 29 and 30. With over 850 applicants, Our Agency received the highest application rate in recent years. Upon graduation in 2026, these new game wardens will be assigned geographically across the state, targeting specific areas of need. Hiring game wardens and properly training them is an ongoing focus for our Department.

- The Law Enforcement Division recently transitioned to ArcGIS Survey 123, which is a simple and intuitive form-centric data gathering program. This program was being successfully utilized by other divisions within the KDFWR and allowed the LE Division to be able to internally share information with agency focused staff. The coexistence and

sharing of this information are a more efficient and effective way to identify problems and compile data to better serve our constituents and manage resources. Survey 123 also serves as a storing house for law enforcement activity reporting and recording and real-time patrol management.

- The Law Enforcement Division K-9 program has proven to be a great asset to the Department and its mission. After dissolving the program in the mid 2000's, its revitalization in 2023 has been extremely rewarding. Our three K-9/handler teams have single handedly taken thousands of dollars in drugs from Kentucky's recreation areas, located fugitives and criminal evidence, found lost/missing persons, and been a part of hundreds of public relation events across our state. It is the goal of the Law Enforcement Division to increase our Warden K-9 teams across the State to continue to protect and serve our citizens and resources. This goal will be directly impacted by the ability to increase personnel numbers and Division funding.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Division strives to provide a professional, well trained, and competent game wardens to serve the sportsmen and sportswomen that enjoy the resources of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our wardens are often recognized for their efforts across the state by citizens that we have impacted in some way. Our wardens have a passion for conservation law enforcement and the mission of the Department.



Rich Storm, Commissioner