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Expanding Kentucky's Crossbow Deer Hunting Season



Many sportsmen and sportswomen have asked for an expanded crossbow season for deer in our state.

The expansion proposed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources taps into crossbow hunting's growing popularity and its potential to recruit new hunters, keep hunters afield longer and help manage Kentucky's deer herd.

Surveys of Kentucky's hunters repeatedly have shown strong support for the use of crossbows during the entire archery season. Since 2005, an average of 70 percent of deer hunters supported or did not oppose fully concurrent crossbow and archery seasons.

With its proposal, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife seeks an expansion of crossbow deer hunting opportunity. It is not proposing fully concurrent seasons, but rather a compromise between full concurrence as requested by many hunters and the current season framework, preferred by some traditional archery proponents.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL?

- **Enhance Crossbow Hunter Opportunity:** Crossbow season for deer would open the third Saturday in September and continue through the third Monday in January, equating to an increase of about 52 hunting days.
- **Maximize Youth Opportunity:** Full concurrence for youth hunters, mirroring what the department already has in place for Kentucky residents who are ages 65 and older.
- **No Impact on Archery Opportunity:** The length of the regular archery deer season would remain the same – approximately 140 hunting days – opening the first Saturday in September and continuing through the third Monday in January.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS?

- **Recommended by Stakeholder Groups:** The proposed amendments went through a multi-year public input period and were addressed by a department review board and an external public review board consisting of multiple stakeholders.
- **Supported in Open, Web-Based Public Input:** In 2016, the department solicited public input via an open web survey concerning deer management. Every deer hunter had the opportunity to participate.
- **Approved Unanimously by Commission:** In June 2018, the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously approved season expansion for crossbows. The Commission approved the crossbow season proposal again in a September meeting in an effort to remove any doubt surrounding the legality of the crossbow season expansion approved at the June meeting.

- **Strongly Supported in Public Comment Periods:** The department posts all meeting announcements and agendas online and it offers far more opportunity for the public to comment than is required by state law.
- **Positive Response to Public Notices on Social Media with Video:** In February, the department posted on its Facebook page a video explaining the proposed crossbow season expansion and outlining ways the public could participate in the public comment period. The video has been viewed more than 29,000 times.

THE PROPOSAL PROVIDES MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR MANAGING KENTUCKY'S DEER HERD

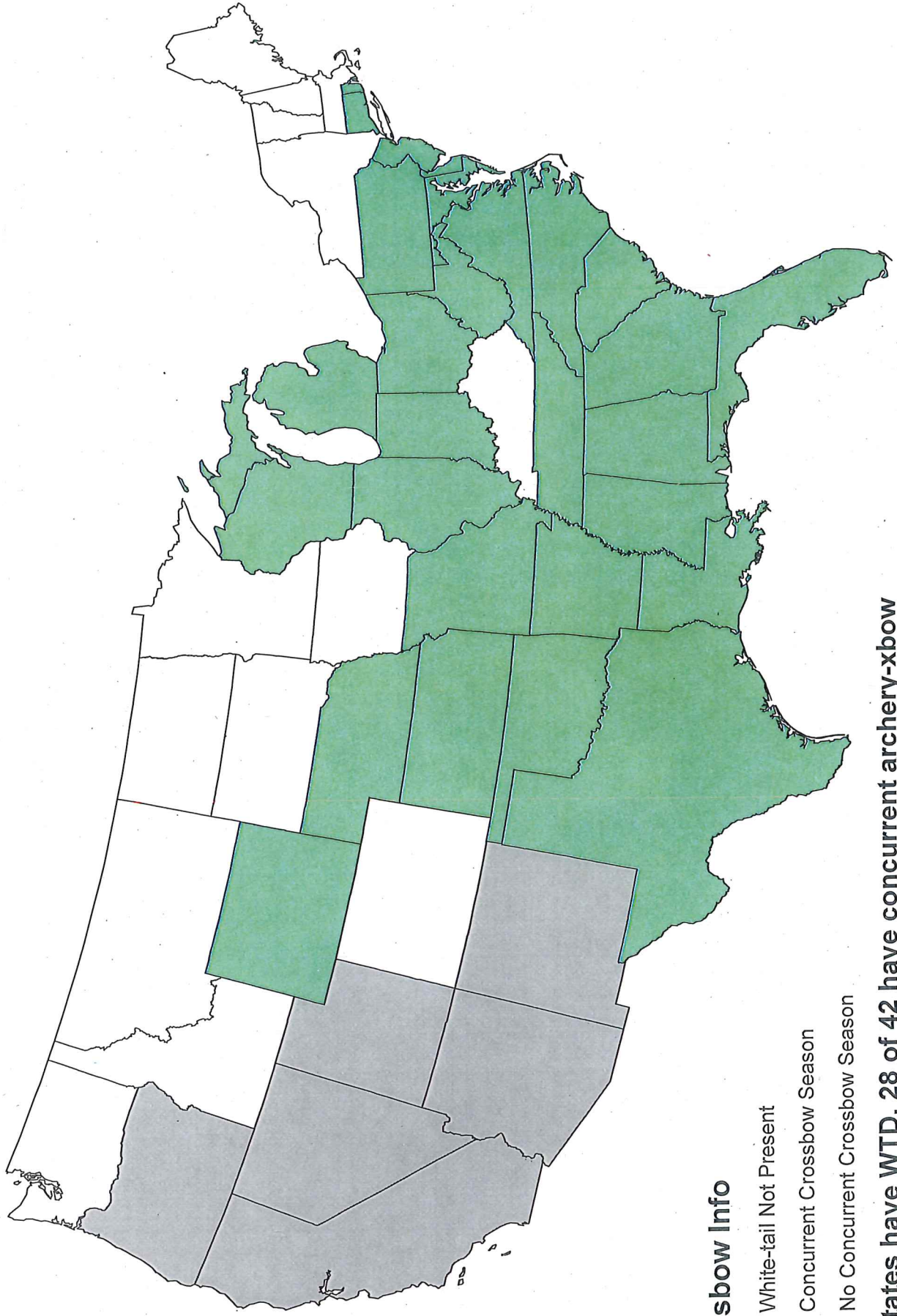
- **Many Counties Are Above Deer Population Objectives:** More than 80 percent of Kentucky counties meet or exceed targeted deer population levels. The remaining counties have an annual antlerless bag limit of one per hunter, thus protecting deer herds from overharvest.
- **Total Bag Limits Will Not Change:** Any concerns about overharvest are not warranted because hunter harvest is regulated by county-specific bag limits and those limits are analyzed each year.
- **One-Buck Limit Will Not Change:** Any additional bucks harvested will not significantly affect the quality of Kentucky's deer herd. Regardless of weapon type, hunters will remain limited to one antlered deer annually.

HOW DOES THIS PROPOSAL COMPARE TO SURROUNDING STATES?

- **Most States Have Fully Concurrent Crossbow Seasons:** Every surrounding state, all southeastern states and 28 of the 42 states nationwide with white-tailed deer have a fully concurrent crossbow and archery season.
- **Ohio – Four Decades with No Adverse Effects:** Ohio has had a concurrent archery and crossbow season since 1976 and has not experienced any negative results to its deer herd due to a fully concurrent crossbow season.
- **West Virginia – Three Years with No Adverse Effects:** West Virginia did not allow deer hunting with crossbows until 2015 when it implemented fully concurrent crossbow and archery seasons. The legalization of crossbows during the archery season did not significantly impact the overall harvest of deer in that state. Rather, West Virginia saw a shift in weapon choice; last year, about half of the deer harvested during West Virginia's concurrent archery-crossbow deer season were harvested with a crossbow.
- **Experts from Border States Confirm No Adverse Effects:** Deer program coordinators from Ohio, Wisconsin, Virginia, Missouri and West Virginia all indicated to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife that increased crossbow harvest resulted in no harmful impacts to their states' deer herds. They found that crossbow effectiveness differed little from compound bows and have not recommended reducing crossbow hunting days.



White-Tailed Deer Archery and Crossbow Season



Crossbow Info

- White-tail Not Present
- Concurrent Crossbow Season
- No Concurrent Crossbow Season

42 States have WTD, 28 of 42 have concurrent archery-xbow

STATEMENT OF CONSIDERATION
Relating to 301 KAR 2:172, Deer hunting seasons, zones and requirements
(Not Amended After Comments)

I. The public hearing on 301 KAR 2:172, scheduled for February 25, 2019, in the Commission Room at the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources was held and comments were received at the hearing. Written comments were also received during the public comment period.

II. The following individuals attended the public hearing or submitted written comments:

<u>Name and Title</u>	<u>Agency/Organization/Entity/Other</u>
Mike Abell	
Travis Abney	
Erik Akers	
Bryan Akin	
Trent Allman	
Randy Bailey	
John Ballard	
Paul Blandford	
Pete Blandford	Quality Deer Management Association
Gilbert Berry	
Gene Bellau	
Chris Biddle	
Tom Black	
Chris Brady	
Garrett Bridges	
Jason Bryan	
Donald Buckner	
Daniel Caldwell	
Eric Caldwell	
Augustus Campbell	
Jeffrey Campbell	
Shawn Canada	
Jimmy Cantrell	Appalachian Outdoorsmen Association
Billy Carder	
Josh Carter	
Daniel Cernekee	

Bill Clark
Ryan Clark
Denny Conley
Shelia Connelly
Will Connelly
Chris Cooper
Will Corbett
Chris Cordle
Jeffrey Corder
Shaine Corder
Bill Cox
Sidney Covey
Jackie Cradick
Gregory Cundiff
Eric DeLodder
Mark Castlen
Harold Craycraft
Kurt Davis
Michael Ford
Greg Gaddie
Robbie Gaddis
Walter Grant
John Hall
Stephen Hardesty
Derrick Henson
Lonnie Hourigan
Stacy House
Douglas Johnson
Phil Johnson
Glenn Lancaster
Jason Lancaster
Kenneth Lancaster
Aaron Lasley
Chris Lee
Paul Lewis
Liz Lindsey
Greg Lobb
Jordan Logan
Bob Long
Jeff Lyle
Michael Marraccini
Perry McClure
Mark McGuffey
Jeff McIntosh

Vice President, KY Crossbow Federation

President, KY Crossbow Federation

Nathan Meade
Greg Meyer
Brian Miller
Ethan Miller
Jamie Miller
Chris Minor
Jim Morrow
Chris Nelson
Mark Nethery
Timothy Newton
Mike Ohlmann
Daymond O'Neil
Terry Partin
Brian Petway
Rocky Pruitt
Rich Prewitt
Ryan Raulerson
Scott Record
Robert Rice
Judy Roberts
Michael Roberts
Chris Rogers
Larry Richards
Stan Ritchie
Jeffrey Rowland
Jeff Sharp
Charles Shelton
Derek Simpson
Tyler Skala
David Skidmore
Greg Smith
Jean Ellen Spieles
Steven Stidham
Bradford Stokes
Brad Sutherland
Bobby Turner
Daniel Turner
J.J. Underwood
Jim Von Hoene
John VanMeter
Gary Waddle
David Walker
Shane Wall
Shelley Wall

United Bow Hunters of Kentucky

Safari Club International, Kentuckiana Chapter

Joseph Walsh
Donnie Wayne
Melissa Wayne
Dale Weddle
Dave Weaver
Dale Weiter
Michael Wells
Ed Wiget
David Wix
Gary Williams
Bobby Winchek
John Workman
Mark Young
Name Unknown #1
Name Unknown #2
Name Unknown #3
Name Unknown #4
Name Unknown #5
Name Unknown #6

III. The following people from the promulgating administrative body responded to the comments:

Name and Title

Mark Cramer, Wildlife Program Coordinator
Gabe Jenkins, Wildlife Program Coordinator

IV. Summary of Comments and Responses

(1) Subject Matter: General Support of the Proposed Regulation

Commenters: Aaron Lasley, Shaine Corder, Timothy Newton, Jeffrey Corder, Chris Nelson, Glenn Lancaster, Perry McClure, Eric DeLodder, Chris Minor, Melissa Wayne, Paul Blandford, Pete Blandford, Jeffrey Campbell, Steven Stidham, Walter Grant, Donald Buckner, Kurt Davis, Jim Morrow, Bill Clark, Jackie Cradick, Ryan Clark, Gary Waddle, John VanMeter, Jeff Lyle, Jeff Sharp, Shelia Connelly, Paul Lewis, Chris Cordle, Chris Biddle, Chris Brady, Stan Ritchie, Shelley Wall, Shane Wall, Daniel Cernekee, Michael Marraccini, Eric Caldwell, Bradford Stokes, Greg Smith, Joseph Walsh, Jeff McIntosh, Will Connelly, Harold Craycraft, Brad Sutherland, Charles Shelton, Greg Meyer, Augustus Campbell, Daniel Turner, Liz Lindsey, Derek Simpson, Ryan Raulerson, Bryan Akin, Greg Gaddie, Randy Bailey, Terry Partin, Stephen Hardesty, Brian Petway, Bobby Turner, Shawn Canada, Phil Johnson, Jamie Miller, Tom Black, Robbie Gaddis, Gregory Cundiff, Mark Young, Dale Weiter, Derrick Henson, Bobby Winchek, Jason Bryan, Bill Cox, Sidney Covey, Douglas Johnson, Ed Wiget, Daniel Caldwell, Gilbert Berry, Jordan Logan, Michael Wells, David Skidmore, Tyler Skala, Denny Conley, Chris Cooper, Brian Miller,

Daymond O'Neil, Mark McGuffey, Donnie Wayne, Jim Von Hoene, J.J. Underwood, Chris Rogers, Name Unknown #4, Name Unknown #5, Unknown #6

(a) Comment: The commenters express support of the proposed regulation.

(b) Response: The department acknowledges the above support of the proposed regulation.

(2) Subject Matter: General opposition to the proposed regulation

Commenters: Gary Williams, Dale Weddle, Gregg Lobb, Chris Lee, Robert Rice, Erik Akers, David Wix, Gene Bellau, Judy Roberts, Mark Nethery, Scott Record, Will Corbett, Garrett Bridges, Travis Abney, Bob Long, Jason Lancaster, Jeffrey Rowland, Dave Weaver, Kenneth Lancaster, Billy Carder, Trent Allman, Ethan Miller, Josh Carter, John Ballard, Rich Prewitt, Rocky Pruitt, Michael Roberts, Nathan Meade, Stacy House, Jean Ellen Spieles, Name Unknown #1, Name Unknown #2

(a) Comment: The commenters are generally opposed to the proposed regulation.

(b) Response: The department continues to support the proposed amendments to the regulation. The proposed amendments went through a multi-year public input period and were addressed by a department review board and an external public review board. Additionally, these amendments were discussed at multiple department Commission meetings, and in 2018 the Commission unanimously approved the proposed amendments. In 2018, the League of Kentucky Sportsman (LKS) also passed a resolution that amended their stance on the crossbow issue to support a concurrent crossbow and archery season. The proposed regulation will not change the archery deer season. Archery deer hunters will continue to enjoy the longest season of all hunters, including exclusive access to "velvet bucks" during the first two weeks of September.

Deer populations remain strong, and any concerns of overharvest are not warranted because hunter harvest is regulated by county-specific bag limits. The department receives hundreds of requests from hunters each year through calls, emails, letters, social media posts and direct messages supporting an expansion of the crossbow season. Surveys conducted by the department and Cornell University over the last two decades indicated a high support for the use of crossbows during archery season. In 2002, 71% of the respondents supported or did not oppose crossbows during the entire archery season. In 2005, 63% of the respondents supported expanding crossbow season during the entire archery deer season. In the 2016 survey, 75% of the respondents supported or did not oppose crossbows during the entire archery season. Public support for allowing crossbows during the entire archery season remains high.

(3) Subject Matter: Increased opportunity

Commenters: Aaron Lasley, John Workman, Shaine Corder, Timothy Newton, Jeffrey Corder, Chris Nelson, Glenn Lancaster, Perry McClure, Eric DeLodder, Chris Minor, Melissa Wayne, Paul Blandford, Pete Blandford, Jeffrey Campbell, Bill Clark, Ryan Clark, Gary Waddle, John VanMeter, Jeff Lyle, Shelia Connelly, Chris Brady, Michael Marraccini, Eric Caldwell, Joseph Walsh, Jeff McIntosh, Will Connelly, Harold Craycraft, Augustus Campbell, Daniel Turner, Ryan Raulerson, Bryan Akin, Greg Gaddie, Randy Bailey, Terry Partin, David Walker, Shawn Canada, Robbie Gaddis, Mark Young, Derrick Henson, Ed Wiget, Daniel Caldwell, Gilbert Berry, Mark McGuffey

(a) Comment: The commenters are in support of the proposed regulation because it will offer more recreational hunting opportunity.

(b) Response: The department acknowledges the above support for more deer hunting opportunity. The department strives to provide as much deer hunting opportunity as possible as long as it does not negatively impact the resource. Hunting numbers are declining in Kentucky and nationally due to demographic and cultural changes. Reducing barriers to participation and providing new opportunities are critical for sustaining this tradition and the funding it provides for science-based fish and wildlife management and recreation. Every surrounding state and 11 other southeastern states have a fully concurrent crossbow and archery season. Public support for allowing crossbows during the entire archery season also remains high.

(4) Subject Matter: Impact on the deer herd

Commenters: Greg Lobb, Erik Akers, Gene Bellau, Mark Nethery, Will Corbett, Ethan Miller, Stacy House, Jimmy Cantrell, Jean Ellen Spieles, Rich Prewitt, Rocky Pruitt, Larry Richards

(a) Comment: The proposed regulation will result in a negative impact to the deer herd and/or will result in too many bucks being killed before the breeding season.

(b) Response: Kentucky's deer herd is healthy, and any additional harvest that might result from an expanded crossbow season would not negatively impact the population. Approximately 82% of the state's counties meet or exceed targeted deer population levels. The remaining 18% of the counties have an annual antlerless bag limit of one per hunter, thus protecting deer herds from overharvest.

Approximately 76% of Kentucky's deer harvest occurs during modern gun season, which is the peak time to harvest a deer in Kentucky. The remaining 24% of the harvest is divided among muzzleloader, archery, and crossbow hunters. Furthermore, 81% of the buck harvest occurs during the modern gun season, which is during the peak of the breeding season. Any additional bucks that are harvested before the modern gun season will not significantly impact Kentucky's deer herd.

Regardless of the weapon type used to harvest deer, the statewide harvest average for successful deer hunter is 1.3 deer annually. This has been static for over a decade, which suggests that the majority of hunters are either unwilling or unable to harvest more deer in a season.

Not all wildlife management decisions are made as a result of biological necessity. Many regulation amendments are societal in nature that reflect hunting opportunity, user group requests, and logistical and economic feasibility, to name a few. The proposed crossbow season expansion is an example of a social adjustment that should have negligible impact on the wildlife resource.

(5) Subject Matter: Too much crossbow season expansion

Commenter: Aaron Lasley

(a) Comment: The commenter favors some expansion of the crossbow season, but the current proposal expands the season too much.

(b) Response: Even if the crossbow season was fully concurrent with the archery season, the department is confident it would not negatively impact the quality of Kentucky's deer herd (See subject matter (3) and (4)).

(6) Subject Matter: Land leasing

Commenter: Mark Nethery

(a) Comment: The proposal will result in increased land leasing by nonresidents and outfitters.

(b) Response: The department has no evidence to suggest that the proposed regulation will increase private land deer hunting leases for nonresidents and outfitters.

(7) Subject Matter: June Commission meeting

Commenter: Judy Roberts

(a) Comment: The amendments passed at the June 2018 Commission meeting were illegal. The amendments were supposed to be rescheduled, but that did not happen; therefore, the seasons should remain the same.

(b) Response: In an effort to remove all doubt surrounding the legality of the crossbow season expansion approved at the June 2018 Commission meeting, the Commission again approved the crossbow season proposal at the September Commission meeting on September 28, 2018.

(8) Subject Matter: Crossbows vs. archery equipment

Commenters: Dale Weddle, Greg Lobb, David Wix, Scott Record, Bob Long, Jason Lancaster, Dave Weaver, Kenneth Lancaster, Trent Allman, Josh Carter, Jean Ellen Spieles

(a) Comment: Crossbows are not archery equipment, and they are more efficient weapons than archery equipment.

(b) Response: The department acknowledges that the two weapons are different. Some crossbow opponents misrepresent the capabilities of crossbows. Despite marketing claims, the effective range for crossbows is 40-50 yards for most hunters and crossbow models. The International Hunter Education Association and the Kentucky Hunter Education Association standards advise hunters that crossbows are limited to short-range weapons just like archery. However, crossbows are easier to use by a wider audience, which makes them an attractive method of choice for hunter recruitment efforts, new hunters, and hunter retention.

The department also acknowledges that crossbows can be a more efficient weapon than archery equipment; however, the term archery is an all-encompassing term used to describe multiple types of bows. A top-of-the-line compound bow with fiber optic sights illuminated with a black light is easily more efficient than a recurve bow or many other compound bows. A top-of-the-line crossbow with modern accessories is still considered a short-range weapon, like archery equipment. The efficiency of crossbows still do not approach the efficiency of modern guns or muzzleloaders and will not decimate Kentucky's deer herd.

(9) Subject Matter: Hunter recruitment

Commenters: Dale Weddle, Jean Ellen Spieles

(a) Comment: The proposed regulation will not recruit new hunters.

(b) Response: The above comment may not be accurate. The expansion of the crossbow season will provide greater opportunities for hunter recruitment programs in Kentucky. The department, along with partner organizations such as the Quality Deer Management Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, and local conservation groups, have used crossbows in several new hunter recruitment programs, with very favorable responses from participants. Furthermore, the proposed amendments may play an important role with hunter retention and reactivation. Regardless, the department supports breaking down possible barriers to participation and furthering hunter opportunity when feasible.

(10) Subject Matter: Archery and crossbow seasons in other states

Commenters: Dale Weddle, Jean Ellen Spieles, Michael Roberts

(a) Comment: Some states that have a concurrent archery and crossbow season are considering reducing the number of crossbow hunting days.

(b) Response: Wyoming is currently the only state considering a reduction in crossbow hunting days for elk and deer hunting. Wyoming is drastically different than Kentucky. Wyoming has severe winters, more snow, large predators such as grizzly bears and mountain lions, very few white-tailed deer, and stable to decreasing herds of mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope. They also have Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in their deer and elk populations. Their harvest proposals need to be monitored and adjusted differently than Kentucky.

Biologists from Ohio, Wisconsin, Virginia, Missouri, and West Virginia all indicated to the department that increased crossbow harvest resulted in no harmful impacts to the their states' deer herds. They found that crossbow effectiveness differed little from compound bows, and it has not been their recommendation to reduce crossbow hunting days.

(11) Subject Matter: Archery-only season

Commenters: Gary Williams, Dale Weddle, Jean Ellen Spieles, Stacy House, Jimmy Cantrell

(a) Comment: The commenters support an archery-only season.

(b) Response: The department has proposed a season that contains an archery-only component for two weeks beginning on the first Saturday of September. Crossbow season would not begin until the third Saturday in September under the current proposal.

(12) Subject Matter: The 2006 compromise

Commenters: Michael Roberts, Dale Weddle

(a) Comment: In 2006, a compromise was reached between the department, archery hunters, members of the state legislature, and other hunting groups that added additional days of crossbow hunting. There was an understanding that no further crossbow season expansion would occur.

(b) Response: The department never agreed that any changes made to the deer regulation in 2006 would be permanent. In fact, department regulations are always open to discussion and consideration at each quarterly Commission meeting. Furthermore, the department welcomes and considers all public input at all times. Issues such as hunting and fishing season durations, bag and creel limits, and methods of take have been modified and tweaked for over 60 years. The department fully expects that fish and wildlife issues will continue to be analyzed, discussed, considered, and modified based on sound biological and social considerations for decades to come.

(13) Subject Matter: In favor of full concurrence

Commenters: Pete Blandford, Timothy Newton, Jim Morrow, Chris Cordle, Chris Brady, Michael Ford, Greg Smith, Charles Shelton, Randy Bailey, Mark Castlen, David Walker, John Hall, Brian Petway, Lonnie Hourigan, Larry Richards, Gregory Cundiff, Douglas Johnson, Daniel Caldwell, Jordan Logan, Tyler Skala, Name Unknown #3

(a) Comment: The commenters favor a crossbow season that is 100% concurrent with the archery season, similar to surrounding states.

(b) Response: The department agrees with this comment; however, as a compromise position to hunters who disagree with such a system, the department has proposed an archery-only season for 2 weeks prior to legal crossbow season.

(14) Subject Matter: Youth and senior hunters

Commenters: Robert Rice, Josh Carter, John Workman, Nathan Meade

(a) Comment: The commenters support a fully concurrent season for youth and senior hunters only.

(b) Response: A fully concurrent crossbow and archery season has already been legal for resident seniors, and the current regulation proposal will add youth hunters as well. However, the department also supports the expansion of the crossbow season for all other adults (see subject matter (2)).

(15) Subject matter: Youth hunters

Commenters: Chris Lee, Travis Abney

(a) Comment: The commenters support a concurrent crossbow and archery season for youth only, with no change for adults.

(b) The current proposal includes a concurrent crossbow and archery season for youth hunters. However, the department also supports the expansion of the crossbow season for all other adults (see subject matter (2)).

(16) Subject Matter: Wounding rates

Commenter: Dave Weaver

(a) Comment: The expansion of the crossbow season will be responsible for increased wounding rates in deer.

(b) Response: The department has no evidence or statistical data in Kentucky to suggest that an increase in wounding rates will occur. However, a recent survey conducted by the Ohio Division of Wildlife found that crossbow hunters hit their target 6% more of the time than a compound bow hunter, and 16% more than traditional bow hunters. The average shot distance was shorter for crossbow hunters than it was for compound bow hunters. Additionally, the recovery rate of a shot animal was 4% higher for crossbow hunters than it was for compound bow hunters. Thus, crossbow hunters did a better job of making lethal shots than compound bow hunters. Ohio has had a concurrent archery and crossbow season since 1976.

(17) Subject Matter: Public comment system

Commenters: Michael Abell, Mike Ohlmann

(a) Comment: Less than 1% of the hunters had an opportunity to comment, and the current public comment system is flawed and is in need of change by the legislature.

(b) Response: All hunters and non-hunters alike have the opportunity to comment on any regulatory amendment proposed by the department. In fact, the department offers far more public comment opportunities than what state law requires. In addition to the legislative requirements of Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) Chapter 13A that offer a month-long written comment period (allowing both mailed comments and email comments) and a public hearing that may be requested by citizens, the department holds quarterly committee meetings and quarterly Commission meetings that address issues and proposals that are open to public comment. In 2016, the department solicited public input via an open web survey concerning deer management. Respondents were asked their opinions regarding a concurrent crossbow and archery season. Furthermore, any changes to KRS Chapter 13A would necessitate legislative action by the Kentucky General Assembly.

(18) Subject Matter: Committee and commission meetings

Commenter: Michael Abell

(a) Comment: Under the current system, the majority of public meetings are held during the workweek, requiring sportsmen and women to take off work to have their voices heard.

(b) Response: There are various ways for sportsmen and women to have their voices heard. In addition to attending committee and Commission meetings that are held on weekdays, public input can be provided through: a) Contacting department district commissioners; (b) Contacting representatives or leadership of Kentucky conservation organizations that attend committee and commission meetings; (c) Written comments submitted to the department via mail or email during the public comment period; or

(d) Requesting a public hearing during the comment period month.

(19) Subject Matter: Non-resident hunters

Commenter: Scott Record

(a) Comment: The proposed regulation will increase the number of nonresident hunters on public land.

(b) Response: The department has no evidence or data to suggest that the number of non-resident deer hunters will increase on public land. The department currently tracks resident and nonresident deer permit sales, as well as the number of deer killed on private or public land by weapon type. The department does not track nonresident hunting participation rates on public land. Regardless, nonresident hunters pay significantly higher license and permit fees in order to enjoy the same public land access as resident hunters.

(20) Subject Matter: Reduction of bow hunters

Commenters: Jean Ellen Spieles, Gary Williams

(a) Comment: The proposed regulation will result in an overall reduction in the number of bow hunters in Kentucky.

(b) Response: It is unknown whether this comment will be true for Kentucky hunters. It is possible that bow hunter harvest could decrease, but this should be offset by increased crossbow harvest. Regardless, the department supports additional hunter opportunity as long as it is not at the expense of the resource. Bow hunters will still have the longest deer hunting season available in Kentucky, and each person has a freedom of choice as to the weapon they prefer to hunt with in the appropriate season.

(21) Subject Matter: Trial period

Commenters: Jimmy Cantrell, Larry Richards

(a) Comment: The commenters would have preferred an experimental or trial crossbow expansion period in a county or two, a region of the state, or in Zone 1 counties only to illustrate whether the proposed season would have a negative impact on deer populations.

(b) Response: It is the department's opinion that a fully concurrent crossbow and archery season statewide will not negatively impact the deer population, regardless of the region, county, or harvest zone (see subject matter (4) and (5)).

V. Summary of Statement of Consideration and Action
Taken by Promulgating Administrative Body

The public hearing on 301 KAR 2:172, scheduled for February 25, 2019, at the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources was held and comments were received at the hearing. Written comments were also received during the public comment period. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has reviewed and considered both written comments submitted during the public comment period and verbal comments received during the public hearing and has responded to these comments in the above Statement of Consideration. The department will not be amending the regulation following the above comments.

