

TOURISM, ARTS AND HERITAGE CABINET
Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
(Amended at ARRS Committee)

301 KAR 2:225. Dove, wood duck, teal, and other migratory game bird hunting.

RELATES TO: KRS 150.330, 150.340, 150.603

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 150.025(1), 150.360, 150.600(1), 50 C.F.R. 20, 21

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 150.025(1) authorizes the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to promulgate administrative regulations to establish open seasons for the taking of wildlife, to regulate bag limits and methods of take, and to make these requirements apply to a limited area. KRS 150.360 authorizes the department to restrict methods for the taking of wildlife. KRS 150.600(1) authorizes the department to regulate the taking of waterfowl on public and private land. This administrative regulation establishes the requirements for the taking of migratory game birds within reasonable limits and within the frameworks established by 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

Section 1. Definitions.

- (1) "Cooperative dove field" means a tract of land controlled by the department through lease, license, or cooperative agreement specifically for hunting doves.
- (2) "Decoy" means an artificial representation of a bird meant to entice birds within range of a hunter.
- (3) "Dove" means mourning dove or white-winged dove.
- (4) "Drawn hunter" means a hunter who applied for a quota hunt and was selected by the department to participate in the hunt.
- (5) "Experienced hunter" means an adult hunter who has hunted during more than two (2) prior license years.
- (6) "Guest hunter" means a hunter invited by a drawn hunter to participate in a quota hunt.
- (7) "Mentored hunter" means a hunter who:
 - (a) Has hunted during no more than two (2) prior license years; and
 - (b) Hunts with experienced hunters on department sponsored dove hunts.
- (8) "Migratory game bird" means mourning dove, white-winged dove, wood duck, teal, Canada goose, common gallinule, woodcock, snipe, purple gallinule, Virginia rail, or sora rail.
- (9) "Teal" means green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, or cinnamon teal.
- (10) "Wildlife Management Area" or "WMA" means a tract of land:
 - (a) Controlled by the department through ownership, lease, license, or cooperative agreement; and
 - (b) That has "Wildlife Management Area" or "WMA" as part of its official name.
- (11) "Youth" means a person who has not reached his or her 16th birthday.

Section 2. September Goose Hunting Zones.

- (1) The Western goose zone shall include all counties west of and including Hardin, Nelson, Washington, Marion, Taylor, Adair, and Cumberland counties.
- (2) The Eastern goose zone shall include Bullitt County in its entirety and all other counties not included in the Western goose zone.

Section 3. Season Dates.

- (1) A person shall not hunt a migratory game bird except during a season established in this administrative regulation, 301 KAR 2:221, or 301 KAR 2:228.

(2) The seasons established in paragraphs (a) through (g) of this subsection shall apply to migratory bird hunting.

(a) Dove, beginning on:

1. September 1 for fifty-six (56) consecutive days;
2. Thanksgiving Day for eleven (11) consecutive days; and
3. The Saturday before Christmas for twenty-three (23) consecutive days;

(b) Woodcock, beginning on the fourth Saturday in October for forty-seven (47) consecutive days, except that the season shall be closed during the first two (2) days of modern gun deer season, as established in 301 KAR 2:172;

(c) Snipe, beginning on:

1. The third Wednesday in September for forty (40) consecutive days; and
2. Thanksgiving Day for sixty-seven (67) consecutive days;

(d) Wood duck, beginning on the third Saturday in September for five (5) consecutive days;

(e) Teal, beginning on the third Saturday in September for five (5) consecutive days;

(f) Virginia rail, sora rail, common gallinule, and purple gallinule, beginning on September 1 for seventy (70) consecutive days; and

(g) Canada goose:

1. Eastern goose zone beginning September 16 for fifteen (15) consecutive days; and
2. Western goose zone beginning September 1 for fifteen (15) consecutive days.

Section 4. Bag and Possession Limits. A person shall not exceed the limits established in subsections (1) through (8) of this section for seasons established in Section 2 of this administrative regulation.

(1) Dove. There shall be a:

- (a) Daily limit of fifteen (15); and
- (b) Possession limit of forty-five (45).

(2) Eurasian collared dove. There shall not be a limit, except that a hunter, if in the field or during transport, shall keep attached to the bird:

- (a) The head; or
- (b) A fully-feathered wing.

(3) Woodcock. There shall be a:

- (a) Daily limit of three (3); and
- (b) Possession limit of nine (9).

(4) Snipe. There shall be a:

- (a) Daily limit of eight (8); and
- (b) Possession limit of twenty-four (24).

(5) Virginia and sora rail, singly or in aggregate. There shall be a:

- (a) Daily limit of twenty-five (25); and
- (b) Possession limit of seventy-five (75).

(6) Common and purple gallinule, singly or in aggregate. There shall be a:

- (a) Daily limit of three (3); and
- (b) Possession limit of nine (9).

(7) Wood duck and teal. There shall be a:

- (a) Daily limit of six (6), which shall not include more than two (2) wood ducks; and
- (b) Possession limit of eighteen (18), which shall not include more than six (6) wood ducks.

(8) Canada goose.

(a) For the Canada goose seasons beginning in September, there shall be a:

1. Daily limit of five (5); and
2. Possession limit of fifteen (15).

(b) Bag and possession limits for all remaining Canada goose seasons shall be as established in 301 KAR 2:221.

Section 5. Shooting Hours. A person shall not take a migratory game bird except during the times established in this section.

- (1) If hunting dove on WMA land or cooperative dove field, a person shall hunt:
 - (a) Between 11 a.m. and sunset during the September and October portion of the season, as established in Section 2 of this administrative regulation; and
 - (b) Between one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise and sunset during the remainder of the season, as established in Section 2 of this administrative regulation.
- (2) If hunting dove on private land, a person shall hunt:
 - (a) Between 11 a.m. and sunset on September 1; and
 - (b) Between one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise and sunset during the remainder of the season, as established in Section 2 of this administrative regulation.
- (3) Other species listed in this administrative regulation shall be taken between one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise and sunset.

Section 6. Hunter Orange. A person shall be exempt from hunter orange requirements pursuant to 301 KAR 2:132 and 2:172 if:

- (1) Hunting waterfowl or doves; or
- (2) Accompanying a person hunting waterfowl or doves.

Section 7. Exceptions to Statewide Migratory Game Bird Seasons.

- (1) A person shall not:
 - (a) Hunt wood duck or teal on an area closed to waterfowl hunting as established in 301 KAR 2:222;
 - (b) Hunt in an area marked by a sign as closed to hunting;
 - (c) Enter an area marked by a sign as closed to the public; or
 - (d) Hunt geese during September on:
 1. Public land in the Ballard Zone, as established in 301 KAR 2:221;
 2. Cave Run Lake and the public land inside the boundary formed by Highways 801, 1274, 36, 211, U.S. 60, and Highway 826; and
 - (e) Use a decoy while hunting doves on WMA land or cooperative dove field prior to October 1.
- (2) A person hunting migratory birds on any of the areas established in paragraphs (a) through (k) of this subsection shall only use or possess nontoxic shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21:
 - (a) Ballard WMA;
 - (b) Boatwright WMA;
 - (c) Doug Travis WMA;
 - (d) Duck Island WMA;
 - (e) Kaler Bottoms WMA;
 - (f) Kentucky River WMA;
 - (g) Ohio River Islands WMA;
 - (h) Sloughs WMA;
 - (i) South Shore WMA;
 - (j) Yatesville Lake WMA; and
 - (k) A WMA wetland management unit that is posted by sign.
- (3) At Ballard WMA and the Swan Lake Unit of Boatwright WMA, a person shall not hunt:
 - (a) Dove, Virginia rail, sora rail, common gallinule, purple gallinule, or snipe after October 13; or
 - (b) Woodcock.

- (4) At Miller Welch - Central Kentucky WMA, a person shall not hunt:
 - (a) Dove or snipe after October 13; or
 - (b) Woodcock.
- (5) At Grayson Lake WMA, a person shall not hunt:
 - (a) Within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile from the dam including the no-wake zone of the dam site marina;
 - (b) On Deer Creek Fork; or
 - (c) On Camp Webb property or the state park, except for participants drawn for any department-sponsored quota dove hunt on Camp Webb property in September.
- (6) At Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, a person shall not hunt a migratory game bird between the last Saturday in September and November 30.
- (7) At West Kentucky WMA, a person shall not hunt Canada geese during the September season.
- (8) At Yatesville Lake, the following areas shall be closed to waterfowl hunting, unless authorized by Yatesville Lake State Park:
 - (a) The Greenbrier Creek embayment; and
 - (b) The lake area north of the mouth of the Greenbrier Creek embayment to the dam, including the island.
- (9) At Robinson Forest WMA, a person shall not hunt a migratory game bird on the main block of the WMA.

Section 8. Youth and Mentored Hunter Dove Hunts.

- (1) There shall be department-sponsored youth and mentored hunter dove hunts in which participants shall be selected by a random computerized drawing.
- (2) A youth or mentored hunter shall:
 - (a) Apply on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov between the first Monday in August and the third Friday in August; and
 - (b) Carry a department provided selection notification letter on the day of the hunt.
- (3) Each youth or mentored hunter shall be accompanied by an experienced hunter.
- (4) At the youth or mentored hunter hunts:
 - (a) Each youth or mentored hunter shall not be accompanied by more than one (1) experienced hunter;
 - (b) One (1) experienced hunter may accompany two (2) youths or mentored hunters; and
 - (c) A maximum of two (2) shotguns are allowed per party.
- (5) A person shall:
 - (a) Hunt within fifteen (15) feet of the assigned location stake; and
 - (b) Not change locations unless another location has been vacated by the assigned hunter.
- (6) A person shall only discharge a firearm within fifteen (15) feet of the assigned location stake.
- (7) A person shall leave their firearm at the assigned location stake when retrieving birds.
- (8) A hunter participating in youth or mentored hunter hunts shall:
 - (a) Check-in prior to hunting;
 - (b) Not begin hunting before 2 p.m.;
 - (c) Cease hunting by 7 p.m.;
 - (d) Exit the area by 7:30 p.m.; and
 - (e) Check out before exiting the field.

Section 9. Dove Quota Hunts.

- (1) A person applying to hunt doves on a department dove quota hunt shall:
 - (a) Apply on the department's web site at fw.ky.gov between the first Monday in August and the third Friday in August; and

- (b) Not apply for more than one (1) quota hunt.
- (2) A person drawn to hunt on a dove quota hunt may bring up to one (1) additional guest hunter.
- (3)
 - (a) A hunter need not apply for the quota hunt to participate as a guest.
 - (b) Checking in prior to or participating in the quota hunt shall not constitute applying for the quota hunt.
- (4) A person hunting doves on department quota hunt shall:
 - (a) Check in prior to hunting;
 - (b) Not begin hunting before 1 p.m. in the Eastern Time Zone and by 12 p.m. in the Central Time Zone;
 - (c) Carry a copy of his or her department provided selection notification letter on the day of the hunt, except a guest hunter shall carry a copy of his or her host hunter's selection notification letter;
 - (d) Not hunt as a guest hunter unless the drawn hunter who invited them is present in field;
 - (e) Cease hunting and exit the field by 6 p.m. in the Eastern Time Zone and by 5 p.m. in the Central Time Zone;
 - (f) Check out of the area by accurately completing the Dove Quota Post-hunt Hunter Survey provided by the department and submitting the survey at the department designated drop point before exiting the field; and
 - (g) Not possess more than fifty (50) shotshells.

Section 10. Incorporation by Reference.

- (1) "Dove Quota Post-hunt Hunter Survey", First Edition, 2022, is incorporated by reference.
 - (2) This material may be inspected, copied, or obtained, subject to applicable copyright law, at the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
 - (3) This material may also be found on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov.
- (22 Ky.R. 1174; eff. 2-12-1996; 23 Ky.R. 2536; 2972; eff. 2-12-1997; 24 Ky.R. 1359; 1670; eff. 2-17-1998; 25 Ky.R. 1095; eff. 1-19-1999; 26 Ky.R. 1190; 1534; eff. 2-14-2000; 28 Ky.R. 1683; 2017; eff. 3-18-2002; 29 Ky.R. 1319; eff. 1-16-2003; 30 Ky.R. 995; eff. 1-5-2004; 31 Ky.R. 826; eff. 1-4-2005; 33 Ky.R. 1111; eff. 12-7-2006; 34 Ky.R. 1113; eff. 2-1-2008; 35 Ky.R. 1005; eff. 1-5-2009; 36 Ky.R. 965; 1199; eff. 12-11-2009; 37 Ky.R. 1029; eff. 1-3-2011; 38 Ky.R. 821; eff. 1-6-2012; 39 Ky.R. 838; eff. 1-4-2013; 40 Ky.R. 653; 1045; eff. 11-7-2013; 41 Ky.R. 859; eff. 1-5-2015; 42 Ky.R. 1325; eff. 1-4-2016; 42 Ky.R. 2944; eff. 8-4-2016; 43 Ky.R. 2199; eff. 8-3-201; 45 Ky.R. 752, 1184; eff. 12-7-2018; 49 Ky.R. 882, 1418; eff. 2-2-2023; 51 Ky.R. 988, 1445; eff. 5-6-2025.)

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CONTACT PERSON: Jenny Gilbert, Legislative Liaison, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, 1 Sportsman's Lane, phone (502) 564-3400, fax (502) 564-0506, email fwpubliccomments@ky.gov.