

**TOURISM, ARTS AND HERITAGE CABINET**  
**Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources**  
**(Amendment)**

**301 KAR 2:228. Sandhill crane hunting requirements.**

RELATES TO: KRS 150.010, 150.305, 150.340, 150.990

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 150.025(1), 150.170(3), (4), 150.330, 150.603(2), 50 C.F.R. 20, 21

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, pursuant to statutory authority to promulgate administrative regulations to carry out the provisions of KRS Chapter 150 as established in KRS 150.025 and as an independent department of state government within the meaning of KRS Chapter 12 as established in KRS 150.021(1), promulgated by the Commissioner with approval of the Commission in accordance with KRS 150.010(1), does hereby certify this administrative regulation is promulgated in compliance with Section 8 of 2025 RS HB6.

NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 150.025(1) authorizes the department to promulgate administrative regulations to establish open seasons for the taking of wildlife and to regulate bag limits. KRS 150.170(3), (4) authorizes license exemptions for people under twelve (12) and resident owners of farmlands, including their spouses and dependent children who hunt on those farmlands. KRS 150.330 authorizes take and possession of migratory birds when in compliance with the provisions of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and authorizes hunting of migratory birds with the appropriate permits. KRS 150.603(2) requires a person sixteen (16) years or older to possess a hunting license and a Kentucky migratory game bird and waterfowl permit in order to hunt migratory birds. This administrative regulation establishes the requirements for taking sandhill cranes within reasonable limits and within the frameworks established by 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

Section 1. Definitions.

- (1) "Crane" means a sandhill crane.
- (2) "Wildlife Management Area" or "WMA" means a tract of land that:
  - (a) Is controlled by the department through ownership, lease, license, or cooperative agreement; and
  - (b) Has "Wildlife Management Area" or "WMA" as part of its official name.

Section 2. Applications and Permits.

- (1) To apply for a crane hunting permit a person shall:
  - (a) Complete the online application process, not more than once per calendar year, on the department's Web site at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) between September 1 and September 30;
  - (b) Possess a valid hunting license by September 30, unless the applicant is license exempt as established in KRS 150.170; and
  - (c) Pay a fee as referenced at <https://fw.ky.gov/Licenses/Pages/Fees.aspx> and established in 301 KAR 5:022~~[three (3) dollar application fee]~~.
- (2) The department shall:
  - (a) Rank each applicant with a random electronic draw from all qualified applicants;
  - (b) Issue a crane hunting permit and one (1) printable crane tag to all ranked applicants up to the maximum number of crane tags allowed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for that season, as established in 50 C.F.R. 20, except that if the number of applicants:
    1. Exceeds the maximum number of tags, then those applicants ranking higher than the maximum shall not receive a permit; or

2. Is less than the maximum number of tags available, then the additional tags shall be assigned to applicants in the order of ranking until all tags are assigned;
- (c) Disqualify an applicant who does not possess a hunting license prior to September 30, unless the applicant is license exempt as established in KRS 150.170.
- (3) A person who does not have access to the internet may call the department's toll-free number at 1-800-858-1549 for assistance in applying.
- (4) A crane hunting permit shall not be transferable.
- (5) A person selected to receive a permit shall pass a bird identification test provided by the department prior to receiving a permit.
- (6) A permit recipient shall complete and submit a post-season crane hunting survey on the department's Web site no later than fourteen (14) days after the close of the season.
- (7) A person who fails to complete the post-season survey by the date specified in subsection (6) of this section shall be ineligible to be drawn the following year.

### Section 3. Season, Bag Limits, and Hunting Requirements.

- (1) Unless license exempt as established in KRS 150.170, a person shall not hunt a crane without a:
  - (a) Valid Kentucky hunting license;
  - (b) Valid Kentucky crane hunting permit; and
  - (c) Kentucky migratory game bird and waterfowl permit.
- (2) A permit recipient shall possess a printed or electronic copy of a valid crane hunting permit, available via the customer's profile on the department's Web site at <https://app.fw.ky.gov/Myprofile/default.aspx> or mobile application:
  - (a) While crane hunting; and
  - (b) When in possession of a harvested crane.
- (3) The season shall be from December 7 through January 31.
- (4) The bag limit shall be:
  - (a) Two (2) cranes daily for permit holders with two (2) or more crane tags; or
  - (b) One (1) crane for permit holders with one (1) tag.
- (5) A person shall only hunt cranes from sunrise to sunset.
- (6) A person who has harvested a crane shall attach a department-issued printable tag to the leg of the crane prior to moving the carcass. The department-issued tags shall be available for print via the customer's profile on the department's Web site at <https://app.fw.ky.gov/Myprofile/default.aspx> or mobile application.
- (7) A person shall check a harvested crane on the day the crane is harvested by:
  - (a) Calling 800-245-4263 and providing the information requested by the automated check-in system; or
  - (b) Completing the check-in process on the department's Web site at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov); and
  - (c) Recording and retaining the check-in confirmation number for the rest of the current season.
- (8) A hunter who has harvested a crane shall possess the check-in confirmation number when in the field during the current season.
- (9) A person shall not knowingly falsify the harvest of a crane on the automated check-in system.
- (10) A person hunting cranes shall not use or possess a shotgun shell containing:
  - (a) Lead shot; or
  - (b) Shot not approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for waterfowl hunting.
- (11) A person shall not use the following to take cranes:
  - (a) A shotgun larger than ten (10) gauge;
  - (b) A shotgun shell larger than three and one-half (3 1/2) inches; or
  - (c) A shotgun shell with shot larger than size "T".

(12) A person hunting a crane on a Wildlife Management Area shall comply with the applicable WMA waterfowl hunting requirements, as established in 301 KAR 2:222, except that on:

(a) Barren River WMA crane hunting shall be prohibited within 100 yards of the normal summer pool level of 552 feet in the embayments established in subparagraphs 1. through 3. of this paragraph:

1. Beaver Creek;
2. Peters Creek; and
3. Skaggs Creek; and

(b) Green River Lake, crane hunting shall be prohibited within 100 yards of the normal summer pool level of 675 feet, east of the Hwy 551 bridge in the embayments established in subparagraphs 1. and 2. of this paragraph:

1. Green River to the Snake Creek Boat Ramp; and
2. Casey Creek to the Hwy 76 bridge.

*APPROVED by the Fish and Wildlife Commission  
RICH STORM, Commissioner*

APPROVED BY AGENCY: MAY 14, 2026

FILED WITH LRC: May 15, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT PERIOD:** A public hearing on this administrative regulation shall be held on July 30, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., at KDFWR Administration Building, 1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. Individuals interested in being heard at this hearing shall notify this agency in writing by five workdays prior to the hearing, of their intent to attend. If no notification of intent to attend the hearing was received by that date, the hearing may be cancelled. A transcript of the public hearing will not be made unless a written request for a transcript is made. If you do not wish to be heard at the public hearing, you may submit written comments on the proposed administrative regulation. Written comments shall be accepted through July 31, 2026. Send written notification of intent to be heard at the public hearing or written comments on the proposed administrative regulation to the contact person.

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

## REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS AND TIERING STATEMENT

Contact Person: Jenny Gilbert, Phone: 502-564-3400, Email: fwpubliccomments@ky.gov

Subject Headings: Fish and Wildlife, Hunting, Conservation

**(1) Provide a brief summary of:**

**(a) What this administrative regulation does:**

This administrative regulation establishes sandhill crane hunting seasons, bag limits, permit requirements, and hunting requirements on public and private lands within federal migratory bird hunting frameworks established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

**(b) The necessity of this administrative regulation:**

This administrative regulation is necessary to establish annual sandhill crane hunting requirements in accordance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service frameworks and department management objectives.

**(c) How this administrative regulation conforms to the content of the authorizing statutes:**

KRS 150.025(1) authorizes the department to promulgate administrative regulations establishing open seasons for wildlife and regulating bag limits. KRS 150.360 authorizes the department to restrict methods for the taking of wildlife. KRS 150.600 authorizes the department to regulate the taking of waterfowl and migratory game birds on public and private land. This administrative regulation establishes procedures for the taking of migratory game birds within the federal frameworks established in 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

**(d) How this administrative regulation currently assists or will assist in the effective administration of the statutes:**

By establishing sandhill crane hunting seasons, permit requirements, and area-specific hunting requirements, this administrative regulation assists the department in maintaining migratory game bird conservation programs consistent with state, national, and international management objectives.

**(2) If this is an amendment to an existing administrative regulation, provide a brief summary of:**

**(a) How the amendment will change this existing administrative regulation:**

This modification changes the fee structure for applying for a sandhill crane hunting permit. The new fee will be prescribed in 301 KAR 5:022.

**(b) The necessity of the amendment to this administrative regulation:**

All KDFWR fees are found in 301 KAR 5:022.

**(c) How the amendment conforms to the content of the authorizing statutes:**

This amendment conforms to KRS 150.025(1), KRS 150.360, and KRS 150.600 by establishing hunting seasons, harvest limits, permit procedures, and methods of take for migratory game birds.

**(d) How the amendment will assist in the effective administration of the statutes:**

This amendment improves administrative efficiency, simplifies season administration and enforcement, and provides hunting opportunity consistent with federal migratory bird management frameworks.

**(3) Does this administrative regulation or amendment implement legislation from the previous five years? No.**

**(4) List the type and number of individuals, businesses, organizations, or state and local governments affected by this administrative regulation:**

Approximately 40,000 migratory bird hunters in Kentucky may be affected by this administrative regulation. The Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Wildlife and Law Enforcement Divisions will also be affected in the administration and enforcement of this administrative regulation.

**(5) Provide an analysis of how the entities identified in question (4) will be impacted by either the implementation of this administrative regulation, if new, or by the change, if it is an amendment, including:**

**(a) List the actions that each of the regulated entities identified in question (4) will have to take to comply with this administrative regulation or amendment:**

Hunters participating in sandhill crane hunting seasons will be required to comply with season dates, permit requirements, harvest limits, tagging requirements, reporting requirements, and area-specific hunting restrictions established by this administrative regulation.

**(b) In complying with this administrative regulation or amendment, how much will it cost each of the entities identified in question (4):**

No significant additional costs are anticipated as a result of this amendment.

**(c) As a result of compliance, what benefits will accrue to the entities identified in question (4):**

Hunters will benefit from a simplified predictable system for fee structure change.

**(6) Provide an estimate of how much it will cost the administrative body to implement this administrative regulation:**

**(a) Initially:**

No significant additional administrative costs are anticipated.

**(b) On a continuing basis:**

No significant additional administrative costs are anticipated.

**(7) What is the source of the funding to be used for the implementation and enforcement of this administrative regulation or this amendment:**

The Kentucky State Fish and Game Fund.

**(8) Provide an assessment of whether an increase in fees or funding will be necessary to implement this administrative regulation, if new, or by the change if it is an amendment:**

No increase in fees or additional funding will be necessary to implement this administrative regulation.

**(9) State whether or not this administrative regulation establishes any fees or directly or indirectly increases any fees:**

This modification does establish a structure for changing fees in the future.

**(10) TIERING: Is tiering applied?**

Tiering is not applied because the same requirements and restrictions apply equally to all persons participating in sandhill crane hunting activities regulated under this administrative regulation.

## FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**(1) Identify each state statute, federal statute, or federal regulation that requires or authorizes the action taken by the administrative regulation:**

KRS 150.025(1), KRS 150.360, KRS 150.600, and 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

**(2) State whether this administrative regulation is expressly authorized by an act of the General Assembly, and if so, identify the act:**

This administrative regulation is authorized by KRS 150.025(1), KRS 150.360, and KRS 150.600.

**(3)(a) Identify the promulgating agency and any other affected state units, parts, or divisions:**

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Wildlife Division and Law Enforcement Division.

**(b) Estimate the following for each affected state unit, part, or division identified in (3)(a):**

**1. Expenditures:**

**For the first year:No significant additional expenditures are anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:No significant additional expenditures are anticipated.**

**2. Revenues:**

**For the first year:No significant additional revenues are anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:No significant additional revenues are anticipated.**

**3. Cost Savings:**

**For the first year:No significant cost savings are anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:No significant cost savings are anticipated.**

**(4)(a) Identify affected local entities (for example: cities, counties, fire departments, school districts):**

No local governmental entities are expected to be directly affected.

**(b) Estimate the following for each affected local entity identified in (4)(a):**

**1. Expenditures:**

**For the first year:None anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:None anticipated.**

**2. Revenues:**

**For the first year:None anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:None anticipated.**

**3. Cost Savings:**

**For the first year:None anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:None anticipated.**

**(5)(a) Identify any affected regulated entities not listed in (3)(a) or (4)(a):**

Migratory bird hunters participating in Kentucky sandhill crane hunting seasons.

**(b) Estimate the following for each regulated entity identified in (5)(a):**

**1. Expenditures:**

**For the first year:No significant additional expenditures are anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:No significant additional expenditures are anticipated.**

**2. Revenues:**

**For the first year:None anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:None anticipated.**

**3. Cost Savings:**

**For the first year:None anticipated.**

**For subsequent years:None anticipated**

**(6) Provide a narrative to explain the following for each entity identified in (3)(a), (4)(a), and (5)(a)**

**(a) Fiscal impact of this administrative regulation:**

This administrative regulation is not anticipated to create significant additional fiscal impact on state agencies, local governments, or regulated entities.

**(b) Methodology and resources used to reach this conclusion:**

The department evaluated anticipated administrative and enforcement requirements associated with the amendment and determined that implementation can be accomplished using existing personnel and funding resources

**(7) Explain, as it relates to the entities identified in (3)(a), (4)(a), and (5)(a):**

**(a) Whether this administrative regulation will have a "major economic impact", as defined by KRS 13A.010(14):**

This amendment will not have any significant fiscal impact.

**(b) The methodology and resources used to reach this conclusion:**

The department evaluated anticipated compliance costs, administrative costs, and impacts on regulated entities and determined that the amendment will not result in significant economic impact.

## FEDERAL MANDATE ANALYSIS COMPARISON

**(1) Federal statute or regulation constituting the federal mandate.**

50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21 establish federal migratory bird hunting frameworks and requirements.

**(2) State compliance standards.**

Kentucky establishes hunting seasons, permit requirements, harvest limits, and area-specific restrictions within the federal frameworks established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**(3) Minimum or uniform standards contained in the federal mandate.**

Federal regulations establish maximum allowable season frameworks, harvest limits, methods of take, and migratory bird management requirements.

**(4) Will this administrative regulation impose stricter requirements, or additional or different responsibilities or requirements, than those required by the federal mandate?**

Yes. Kentucky establishes permit requirements, application procedures, area-specific hunting restrictions, tagging requirements, and season structures specific to management objectives within the Commonwealth.

**(5) Justification for the imposition of the stricter standard, or additional or different responsibilities or requirements.**

Additional state-specific requirements are necessary to ensure proper harvest management, hunter administration, conservation objectives, enforcement capability, and compliance with annual federal harvest allocations.