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

301 KAR 2:222. Waterfowl hunting requirements on public lands.

RELATES TO: KRS 150.010(42), 150.305(1), 150.330, 150.340(1), (3), 150.990
STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 150.025(1), 150.360, 150.600(1), 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 150.360 authorizes the department to restrict methods of taking wildlife. KRS 150.600(1) authorizes the department to regulate the taking of waterfowl on public and private land. This administrative regulation establishes requirements for the taking of waterfowl within reasonable limits and within the frameworks established by 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

Section 1. Definitions.
(1) "Blind" means a:
(a) Concealing enclosure;
(b) Pit; or
(c) Boat.
(2) "Department blind" means a permanently fixed blind structure built by the department.
(3) "Drawn hunter" means a hunter who applied for a limited-access hunt and was selected by the department to participate in the hunt.
(4) "Guest hunter" means a hunter invited by a waterfowl permit holder to participate in a limited-access hunt.
(5) "Hunt site" means a specific location where waterfowl hunting is allowed, as assigned by the department or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and marked with a sign.
(6) "Hunt unit" means a tract of land with defined boundaries where a party may hunt waterfowl as approved by the department.
(7) "Limited-access hunt" means a hunting opportunity where public access is limited by the department to those who are selected in a random drawing.
(8) "Party" means:
(a) A person hunting alone; or
(b) Two (2) to four (4) people who share a department blind, hunt unit, or hunt site.
(9) "Permanent blind" means a blind left in place by a waterfowl hunter longer than twenty-four (24) hours.
(10) "Quota hunt" means a class of limited-access hunt that includes the word quota in the name of the hunt as established in administrative regulation.
(11) "Regular waterfowl season" means the open waterfowl season that does not include the Light Geese Conservation Order season, special youth waterfowl season, special veterans and active military personnel waterfowl season, or the September wood duck, teal, and Canada goose seasons as established in 301 KAR 2:221 and 2:225.

(12) "Special commission waterfowl permit holder" means a person who has been assigned a special commission permit for waterfowl, issued pursuant to 301 KAR 3:100, which allows the permit recipient to participate in the waterfowl quota hunt and receive priority selection for hunting dates during hunts at Ballard and Sloughs WMAs.

(13) "Waterfowl permit holder" means a special commission waterfowl permit holder or drawn hunter who has been assigned to a limited-access department blind, hunt unit, or hunt site by the department or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

(14) "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.

Section 2. Waterfowl Seasons on Wildlife Management Areas.

(1) Waterfowl season provisions shall apply, as established in 301 KAR 2:221 and 301 KAR 2:225, except as established in this section or in Section 3 of this administrative regulation.

(2) On a wildlife management area, a person hunting waterfowl shall not:

(a) Establish or hunt from a permanent waterfowl blind;

(b) Hunt within 200 yards of another legal waterfowl hunting party;

(c) Hunt in a designated recreation area or access point;

(d) Hunt on an area marked by sign as closed to hunting;

(e) Enter an area marked by signs as closed to public access; or

(f) Hunt a species on an area marked by signs as closed to hunting for that species.

(3) More than one (1) party shall not occupy a waterfowl blind or hunt site.

(4) A party shall remove decoys and personal items daily, except that a party assigned a multi-day hunt may choose to leave decoys in place for the duration of the hunt.

(5) A permanent blind, department blind, or blind site not occupied by the waterfowl permit holder one (1) hour before sunrise shall be available to another hunter on a first-come, first-served basis.

(6) Restrictions established in this section shall not apply to a falconer if regular waterfowl season, special youth waterfowl season, or special veteran's active military personnel season, as established in 301 KAR 2:221, are not open.

Section 3. Wildlife Management Area Requirements.

(1) The provisions of this section shall not apply to a waterfowl hunting season that opens prior to October 15, as established in 301 KAR 2:225.

(2) On wildlife management areas in Ballard County:

(a) The shotgun shell possession limit shall be twenty-five (25);

(b) At least one (1) person in each party shall be eighteen (18) years of age or older; and

(c) A person hunting waterfowl shall:

1. Not hunt on Monday, Tuesday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or New Year's Day;

2. Hunt in a party that includes a waterfowl permit holder;

3. Hunt in the department blind, hunt unit, or hunt site assigned to that waterfowl permit holder through a drawing as established in Section 4 of this administrative regulation;

4. Not be assigned to more than one (1) department blind, hunt unit, or hunt site in a day;

5. Hunt in close proximity to other party members so that each member of the party is within twenty-five (25) feet of another party member and no two (2) party members are more than seventy-five (75) feet apart;

6. ~~[5.]~~ Stop hunting and exit the hunting area by 2 p.m. during the regular waterfowl season, except as authorized by the department as necessary due to flooding, weather, or other safety concerns; and

7. ~~[6.]~~ Check out of the area by accurately completing the Daily Post-hunt Survey provided by the department and submitting the survey at the department-designated drop point by 3 p.m. the day of the hunt or be declared ineligible to hunt in a department limited-access waterfowl hunt for the remainder of the current and following waterfowl season.

(3) Ballard WMA.

(a) Ballard WMA shall be closed to the public from October 15 through March 15, except for persons participating in department-managed activities.

(b) During periods of high water or flood, the public shall not enter upon the premises of the Ballard WMA by boat for any purpose. High water or flood conditions shall not affect or change the management area boundary.

(c) A person hunting waterfowl shall not hunt waterfowl on the Ohio River from fifty (50) yards upstream of the northern border of Ballard WMA to fifty (50) yards downstream from the southern border of Ballard WMA from October 15 through March 15.

(4) Boatwright WMA.

(a) The Swan Lake Unit shall be closed to the public from October 15 through March 15, except for persons participating in department-managed activities.

(b) The area open to hunting during the regular waterfowl season shall be open for the Light Geese Conservation Order season as established in 301 KAR 2:221.

(c) Blind, hunt unit, or hunt site restrictions shall not apply to the Light Geese Conservation Order season.

(d) Boatwright WMA shall be closed to boats from December 1 through January 31, except for persons participating in department-managed activities.

(5) Lake Barkley WMA.

(a) A permanent blind shall only be established within ten (10) yards of a hunt site.

(b) Waterfowl refuge areas:

1. The area west of the Cumberland River channel, as marked by buoys, between river mile 51, at Hayes Landing Light, south to the Tennessee Valley Authority's power transmission lines at river mile 55.5, shall be closed from November 1 through February 15; and

2. The area within Honker Bay and Fulton Bay, as marked by buoys and signs, shall be closed from November 1 through March 15.

(c) A person shall not hunt from October 15 through March 15:

1. On Duck Island; or

2. Within 200 yards of Duck Island.

(6) ~~[Barren River Lake WMA. A person hunting waterfowl:]~~

~~[(a)] [May use a breech-loading shotgun along the shoreline of the Peninsula Unit; and]~~

~~[(b)] [Shall not use a breech-loading firearm elsewhere on the area.]~~

~~[(7)]~~ Big Rivers WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(7) Blackford Oaks WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(8) Cedar Creek WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(9) Miller Welch-Central Kentucky WMA. A person shall not hunt waterfowl from October 15 through January 14.

(10) Clear Creek WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(11) Lake Cumberland WMA. The following sections shall be closed to the public from October 15 through March 15:

(a) The Wesley Bend area, bounded by Fishing Creek, Beech Grove Road, and Fishing Creek Road; and

(b) The Yellowhole area, bounded by Fishing Creek Road and Hickory Nut Road.

(12) ~~[(11)]~~ Dix River WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(13) ~~[(12)]~~ Doug Travis WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(c) A person hunting waterfowl shall stop hunting and exit the hunting area by 2 p.m. during the regular waterfowl season, except as authorized by the department as necessary due to flooding, weather, or other safety concerns.

(d) On Black Lake, Fish Lake, Forked Lake, Indian Camp Lake, Number Four Lake, Town Creek Moist Soil Unit, Twin Ponds Moist Soil Unit, and Upper Goose Pond Field, all waterfowl hunting shall be from a permanent blind or within ten (10) yards of a hunt site assigned by the department through a drawing as established in Section 4 of this administrative regulation.

(14) ~~[(13)]~~ Grayson Lake WMA. A person shall not hunt waterfowl:

(a) Within the no-wake zone at the dam site marina;

(b) From the shore of Camp Webb;

(c) On Deer Creek Fork; or

(d) Within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile from the dam.

(15) ~~[(14)]~~ Green River Lake WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(16) Harris-Dickerson WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(17) ~~[(15)]~~ Kaler Bottoms WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(18) ~~[(16)]~~ Kentucky River WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(19) ~~[(17)]~~ Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area.

(a) The following portions shall be closed to the public from November 1 through March 15:

1. Long Creek Pond;
2. The eastern one-third (1/3) of Smith Bay, as marked by buoys; and
3. The eastern two-thirds (2/3) of Duncan Bay, as marked by buoys.

(b) The following portions shall be closed to waterfowl hunting:

1. The Environmental Education Center; and
2. Energy Lake.

(c) A person shall possess an annual Land Between the Lakes Hunting Permit if hunting waterfowl:

1. Inland from the water's edge of Kentucky Lake or Barkley Lake; or

2. From a boat on a flooded portion of Land Between the Lakes when the lake level is above an elevation of 359 feet.

(d) A person shall not hunt waterfowl on inland areas during a quota deer hunt.

(e) A person shall not establish or use a permanent blind:

1. On an inland area; or

2. Along the Kentucky Lake shoreline of Land Between the Lakes.

(20) ~~[(18)]~~ Obion Creek WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(21) ~~[(19)]~~ Ohio River Islands WMA.

(a) A person shall not hunt from October 15 through March 15 on the Kentucky portion of the Ohio River from Smithland Lock and Dam upstream to the power line crossing at approximately river mile 911.5.

(b) Stewart Island shall be closed to public access from October 15 through March 15.

(c) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(d) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(22) ~~[(20)]~~ Peabody WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(c) The following areas, as posted by signs, shall be closed to the public from October 15 through March 15:

1. The Sinclair Mine area, bounded by Hwy 176, the haul road, and Goose Lake Road; and

2. The Ken area, bounded by Wysox Road, H2 Road, H1 Road, and H6 Road.

(23) ~~[(21)]~~ Pioneer Weapons WMA. A person hunting waterfowl:

(a) May use a breech-loading shotgun along the shoreline of Cave Run Lake; and

(b) Shall not use a breech-loading firearm elsewhere on the area.

(24) ~~[(22)]~~ Robinson Forest WMA. The main block of the WMA shall be closed to waterfowl hunting.

(25) ~~[(23)]~~ Sloughs WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(c) A person hunting waterfowl shall stop hunting and exit the hunting area by 2 p.m. during the regular waterfowl season, except as authorized by the department as necessary due to flooding, weather, or other safety concerns.

(d) If hunting waterfowl on the Crenshaw and Duncan Tracts of the Sauerheber Unit or the Jenny Hole Unit:

1. A person shall not hunt on a Monday or Tuesday~~[or Wednesday]~~;

2. A person shall not possess more than twenty-five (25) shotgun shells;

3. At least one (1) person in each party shall be eighteen (18) years of age or older;

4. Hunt in a party that includes a waterfowl permit holder;

5. Hunt in the department blind, hunt unit, or hunt site assigned to that waterfowl permit holder through a drawing as established in Section 4 of this administrative regulation;

6. Hunt in close proximity to other hunt party members so that each member of the party is within twenty-five (25) feet of another party member and no two (2) party members are more than seventy-five (75) feet apart;~~[and]~~

7. Check into the area before hunting by completing the Daily Pre-hunt Survey provided by the department and submitting the survey at the department-designated drop point; and

8. Check out of the area by accurately completing the Daily Post-Hunt Survey provided by the department and submitting the survey at the designated drop point by 3 p.m. the day of the hunt or be ineligible to hunt in department limited-access waterfowl hunts for the remainder of the current and following waterfowl season.

(e) The Sauerheber Unit shall be closed to the public from November 1 through March 15, except for persons participating in department-managed activities.

(f) The Jenny Hole Unit shall be closed to boats from Thanksgiving Day through January 31, except for persons participating in department-managed activities.

(g) The area open to hunting during the regular waterfowl season shall be open for the Light Geese Conservation Order season as established in 301 KAR 2:221.

(h) Blind, hunt unit, or hunt site restrictions shall not apply to the Light Geese Conservation Order season.

(26) ~~[(24)]~~ South Shore WMA. The WMA shall be closed to hunting from November 15 through January 15, except for waterfowl and dove hunting.

(27) ~~[(25)]~~ Taylorsville Lake WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(28) ~~[(26)]~~ Yatesville Lake WMA. 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 from the mouth of the Greenbrier Creek embayment to the dam, including the island.

(29) ~~[(27)]~~ Yellowbank WMA. The area designated by a sign and painted boundary marker shall be closed to the public from October 15 through March 15.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

(30) ~~[(28)]~~ J.C. Williams WMA.

(a) Shooting hours shall be one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise until 2 p.m.

(b) A person shall not enter a hunting area prior to 4 a.m. daily.

Section 4. Limited-Access Waterfowl Hunts.

(1) Permanent waterfowl blinds or hunt sites on Lake Barkley, Barren River Lake, Green River Lake, or Doug Travis Wildlife Management Area.

(a) The department shall announce the time and location of drawings on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov at least two (2) weeks prior to the drawing.

(b) Applicants:

1. Shall apply in person;

2. Shall fill out the provided index card with the requested information completely and accurately;

3. Shall not mark or mutilate the index card in an attempt to increase the probability of being selected;

4. Shall not apply more than once per drawing;

5. Be at least eighteen (18) years of age; and

6. Possess:

a. A valid Kentucky hunting license;

b. A valid Kentucky migratory game bird and waterfowl permit; and

c. A valid federal duck stamp.

(c) Drawing.

1. The department or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shall conduct a random drawing of applicants.

2. A drawn hunter shall choose from available hunt sites before the next drawn hunter may select a hunt site.

3. Selected hunt sites shall not be available for the next drawn hunter.

4. If a drawn hunter is not present, or does not select a hunt site, then the next drawn hunter may select a hunt site.

5. The drawing shall continue until all available hunt sites are selected or all applicants have been drawn.

(d) The department or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers shall designate the drawn hunter as the waterfowl permit holder for the selected hunt site.

(e) The drawn hunter may designate one (1) additional applicant to be a waterfowl permit holder for the selected hunt site.

(f) An applicant shall not be a waterfowl permit holder for more than one (1) permanent blind or hunt site at Doug Travis WMA.

(g) Waterfowl permit holders for hunt sites shall:

1. Construct permanent blinds, if desired, before the start of any special or regular waterfowl season as established in 301 KAR 2:221;

2. Not lock a waterfowl blind; and

3. Remove the blind and blind materials within thirty (30) days after the close of the regular waterfowl season or be ineligible for a permit the following year unless an extension of time is granted by the department due to weather or water level conflicts.

(h) Waterfowl permit holders may take guest hunters to their assigned permanent blind or hunt site, but the total number of people in the party shall not exceed four (4).

(i) A permanent blind or blind site not occupied by a waterfowl permit holder one (1) hour before sunrise shall be available to another hunter on a first-come, first-served basis.

(2) Ballard WMA and Sloughs WMA waterfowl quota hunts.

(a) General procedures. A person applying to hunt in waterfowl quota hunts on Ballard WMA or Sloughs WMA shall:

1. Apply by completing the Ballard or Sloughs Waterfowl Quota Hunt online application on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov;

2. Apply from September 1 through September 30;

3. 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 for each application]~~;

4. Select preferred hunts or select the no-hunt option; and

5. Not apply more than one (1) time for each hunt.

(b) Preference points.

1. A quota hunt applicant who is not selected shall be given one (1) preference point.

2. A quota hunt applicant who selects the no-hunt option shall be given one (1) preference point.

3. A person who applies for the no-hunt option shall not be drawn for a waterfowl quota hunt.

4. An applicant may accumulate preference points across years.

5. For each hunt:

a. A random selection of applicants with the highest number of preference points shall be made; and

b. If there are still openings, a random selection of applicants with the next highest number of preference points shall be made.

6. If selected for a quota hunt, a person shall lose all accumulated preference points.

7. A person shall forfeit all accumulated preference points if the person does not apply or is ineligible to apply for:

a. A waterfowl quota hunt; or

b. The no-hunt option.

(c) If technical difficulties with the automated application system prevent applications from being accepted for one (1) or more days during the application period, the commissioner may extend the application deadline.

(d) Ballard WMA waterfowl quota hunts.

1. A drawn hunter and special commission waterfowl permit holder shall check in the morning of their hunt in person by 5 a.m. CST.

2. A drawn hunter and special commission waterfowl permit holder shall fill out the Daily Pre-Hunt Survey~~[provided check-in]~~ card completely and accurately.

3. A random drawing of all drawn hunters and special commission waterfowl permit holders shall begin after the check-in period.

4. A selected drawn hunter or special commission waterfowl permit holder shall choose from available hunting units or department blinds before the next applicant is drawn.

5. A drawn hunter or special commission waterfowl permit holder who selects a hunting unit or department blind becomes the waterfowl permit holder for that hunting unit or department blind.

6. Waterfowl permit holders may take up to three (3) guest hunters.

7. Selected hunting units or department blinds shall not be available for the next drawn hunter.

8. Waterfowl hunt units or department blinds not claimed by drawn hunters shall be available in a stand-by drawing.

(e) Sloughs WMA waterfowl quota hunts.

1. A drawn hunter shall be assigned a department blind or hunting unit and become waterfowl permit holders at the time of the drawing.

2. A waterfowl permit holder shall check in by midnight CST on the Sunday prior to their hunt by sending an email to sloughsquotahunt@ky.gov that includes the waterfowl permit holder's name, hunt unit, hunt dates, and hunt confirmation number or forfeit their spot.

3. A waterfowl permit holder may take up to three (3) guest hunters.

4. Waterfowl hunt units or department blinds forfeited by waterfowl permit holders shall be available in a stand-by drawing.

(3) Boatwright WMA limited-access waterfowl hunts.

(a) A person applying to hunt waterfowl on Boatwright WMA shall:

1. Apply by completing the online Boatwright WMA Waterfowl Quota Hunt Form process on the department's Web site at https://app.fw.ky.gov/HuntDraw/Index;

2. Apply during the period Wednesday through Sunday before their intended hunt period; and

3. Be eighteen (18) years of age or older.

(b) A drawn hunter shall be assigned a department blind or hunting unit and become a waterfowl permit holder at the time of the drawing.

(c) A waterfowl permit holder may surrender a Boatwright WMA department blind or hunting unit on the department's Web site at https://app.fw.ky.gov/HuntDraw/Index.

(d) A surrendered department blind or hunting unit shall be available in a stand-by drawing~~[assigned by the department to a new drawn hunter]~~.

(e) A waterfowl permit holder shall check in the morning of their hunt in person by 4:45 a.m. CST.

(f) A waterfowl permit holder shall fill out the provided Daily Pre-Hunt Survey~~[check-in]~~ card completely and accurately.

(g) A waterfowl hunt unit or department blind not claimed by a drawn hunter shall be available in a stand-by drawing.

(h) A waterfowl permit holder may take up to three (3) guest hunters.

(4) Stand-by drawings.

(a) Ballard WMA.

1. An applicant shall apply in person before 5 a.m. CST the day of their intended hunt.

2. An applicant shall fill out the provided Daily Pre-Hunt Survey~~[check-in]~~ card completely and accurately.

3. A random drawing for unclaimed department blinds or hunting units shall be conducted following the drawing for drawn hunters.

4. A selected applicant shall choose an available department blind or hunting unit and be designated as a waterfowl permit holder.

(b) Boatwright WMA.

1. An applicant shall apply in person at a time specified on the department's Web site at https://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Waterfowl-Quota-Hunts.aspx~~[before 4:45 a.m. CST the day of their intended hunt]~~.

2. An applicant shall fill out the provided Daily Pre-Hunt Survey~~[check-in]~~ card completely and accurately.

3. A random drawing for an unclaimed department blind or hunting unit shall occur after the application period closes~~[4:45 a.m. CST]~~.

4. Selected applicants shall choose an available department blind or hunting unit and be designated waterfowl permit holder.

(c) Sloughs WMA.

1. An applicant shall apply in person before 6 p.m. CST the Monday before their intended hunt.

2. An applicant shall fill out the provided Daily Pre-Hunt Survey~~[check-in]~~ card completely and accurately.

3. A random drawing for an unclaimed department blind or hunting unit shall occur after 6:00 p.m. CST.

4. Selected applicants shall choose an available department blind or hunting unit and be designated as a waterfowl permit holder.

~~[(5)] [A person shall be declared ineligible to hunt in department limited-access waterfowl hunts during the remaining portion of the regular waterfowl season and declared ineligible to hunt in or apply for any department limited-access hunt or department quota hunt the following year if the hunter violates state or federal regulations while waterfowl hunting on WMAs during a limited-access waterfowl hunt.]~~

Section 5. State Parks. Waterfowl hunting shall be prohibited, except there shall be an open waterfowl hunt December 7 through January 31 on designated areas of state parks at:

(1) Greenbo Lake;

(2) Nolin Lake;

(3) Paintsville Lake; and

(4) Yatesville Lake.

Section 6. Youth-Mentor and Mobility-Impaired Waterfowl Hunts.

(1) There shall be youth-mentor waterfowl hunts on the Minor Clark and Peter W. Pfeiffer fish hatcheries each Saturday and Sunday in January.

(2) There shall be a mobility-impaired waterfowl hunt at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery that is held concurrently with each youth-mentor hunt.

(3) There shall be a waterfowl blind at Doug Travis WMA assigned by a random pre-season electronic drawing among all mobility-impaired applicants.

(4) A youth or mobility-impaired person shall:

(a) Apply on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov between November 1 and November 15; and

(b) Carry a department-provided selection notification on the day of the hunt.

(5) A mobility-impaired person shall carry a mobility-impaired access permit pursuant to 301 KAR 3:026.
(6) Each youth shall be accompanied by an adult who is eighteen (18) years or older.
(7) At the youth-mentor hunts:
(a) Each youth shall not be accompanied by more than one (1) adult; and
(b) One (1) adult may accompany two (2) youths.
(8) A person shall:
(a) Hunt from an established blind; and
(b) Not change blinds.
(9) A blind shall not be used by more than four (4) individuals.
(10) A person shall only discharge a firearm from a blind.
(11) A person shall not possess more than twenty-five (25) shotshells.
(12) A waterfowl hunter, mentor, or assistant shall immediately retrieve downed birds.
(13) A person shall encase a firearm if traveling to or from a blind.
(14) A hunter at Minor Clark or Peter Pfeiffer Fish Hatcheries shall:
(a) Cease hunting by noon; and
(b) Exit the area by 1 p.m.
(15) All decoys and equipment shall be removed at the end of each day's hunt.
(16) A hunter at Minor Clark or Peter Pfeiffer Fish Hatcheries shall report harvest by depositing a completed hunt permit at the designated location.

Section 7. Incorporation by Reference.
(1) The following material is incorporated by reference:
(a) "Daily Pre-Hunt Survey", 2026 edition;
(b) ~~[(a)]~~ "Daily Post-hunt Survey", 2023 edition;
(c) ~~[(b)]~~ "Ballard or Sloughs Waterfowl Quota Hunt Form", 2014 edition;
(d) ~~[(c)]~~ "Boatwright WMA Waterfowl Quota Hunt Form", 2023 edition;
(e) ~~[(d)]~~ "Hatcheries Youth-Mentor/Mobility-Impaired Canada Goose Hunt Application", 2017 edition; and
(f) ~~[(e)]~~ "Doug Travis WMA Mobility-Impaired Waterfowl Hunt Application", 2017 edition.
(2) This material may be inspected, copied, or obtained, subject to applicable copyright law, at the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(3) This material may also be found on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov.

APPROVED by the Fish and Wildlife Commission
RICH STORM, Commissioner

APPROVED BY AGENCY: June 12, 2026
FILED WITH LRC: June 15, 2026 at 9:30 am.
PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT PERIOD: A public hearing on this administrative regulation shall be held on August 28, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., at KDFWR Administration Building, 1 Sportsmanâ€™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 August 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 Sportsmanâ€™s Lane, (502) 564-3400, fax: (502) 564-0506, email: 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 waterfowl seasons, bag limits and requirements on public lands within federal migratory bird hunting frameworks established in 50 C.F.R. Part 20 and 21 according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

(b) The necessity of this administrative regulation:

The necessity of this administrative regulation is to establish the waterfowl hunting requirements on public lands in accordance with the USFWS 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 establish hunting season dates, bag limits and other hunting requirements. KRS 150.360 authorizes the department to restrict methods and hunting hours for taking wildlife. KRS 150.600(1) authorizes the department to regulate the taking of waterfowl on public and private land.

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

This administrative regulation assists the above statutes by managing waterfowl populations and hunting opportunity consistent with state and national management requirements and strategies.

(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:

Functional changes to the regulation include 1) Limits public land hunters in Ballard County to applying for/being assigned to a single hunting unit, 2) Removes primitive weapons restrictions for waterfowl hunters at Barren River Lake WMA, 3) Adds a 2pm closure of hunting and limits entry before 4 am daily on Blackford Oaks, Clear Creek, and Harris-Dickerson WMAs, 4) Changes closed rest days at Sloughs WMA from Tuesday and Wednesday to Monday and Tuesday, 5) Requires hunters hunting on Sloughs WMA to check into the area before hunting each day, 6) Removes the automatic online assignment of surrendered blinds at Boatwright WMA, 7) Changes the time people shall apply for stand-by drawings at Boatwright WMA, and 8) Removes the forfeiture of hunting privileges and the ability to apply for limited access hunts for anyone cited for violating state of federal law while participating in a limited access waterfowl hunt.

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

This amendment is necessary to improve the experience of waterfowl hunters utilizing public land hunts in Kentucky. It will also rules by making more WMAs similar in rules. Also, to provide quality public hunting opportunity with minimal area use conflict that is consistent with meeting state and federal waterfowl management objectives.

(c) How the amendment conforms to the content of the authorizing statutes:
See 1(c) above.

(d) How the amendment will assist in the effective administration of the statutes:
See 1(d) above.

(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:
There are approximately 20,000 waterfowl hunters in Kentucky that may be affected by this administrative regulation. There should be no impact on businesses or local governments.

(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 will need to comply with all application procedures and hunting requirements established for public lands in 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):
There will be no additional or amended costs to those identified in question (4).

(c) As a result of compliance, what benefits will accrue to the entities identified in question (4):
This amendment keeps hunters from applying for multiple hunting areas in Ballard County and then choosing the perceived â€œbestâ€ spot and leaving the perceived â€œlesserâ€ spot to be empty. Now the spot that would have not been hunted may be claimed by someone who would like to use that spot. Addition of closure thresholds (2pm) allows rest time for the ducks and has been proven to improve the overall quality of hunts. Limiting access before 4am keeps individuals from going in extremely early and staking out the best hunting spots. Changing closed/rest days at Sloughs WMA makes it similar to Ballard County WMAs that also have closed days. Requiring hunters to check in at Sloughs allows the Department to know how many people are utilizing the area and to better understand harvest. Finally, removing the loss of hunting privileges and ability to apply for future quota hunts removes an extra penalty for those hunters which have already received a citation.

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

(a) Initially:
There will not be an additional cost to the agency to implement this administrative regulation initially.

(b) On a continuing basis:
There will not be an additional cost to the agency on a continuing basis.

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

It will not be necessary to increase a fee or funding to implement this administrative regulation.

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

This administrative regulation does not establish any fees nor does it indirectly increase any fees.

(10) TIERING: Is tiering applied?

Tiering is not applied because the same requirements and restrictions apply equally to all persons participating in waterfowl 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), 150.360, 150.600(1), 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:
The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

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

1. Expenditures:

For the first year:No additional expenditures

For subsequent years:No additional expenditures

2. Revenues:

For the first year:No additional revenues

For subsequent years:No additional revenues

3. Cost Savings:

For the first year:No expected cost savings

For subsequent years:No expected cost savings

(4)(a) Identify affected local entities (for example: cities, counties, fire departments, school districts):
No local entities should be impacted by the changes to this regulation.

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

1. Expenditures:

For the first year:N/A

For subsequent years:N/A

2. Revenues:

For the first year:N/A

For subsequent years:N/A

3. Cost Savings:

For the first year:N/A

For subsequent years:N/A

(5)(a) Identify any affected regulated entities not listed in (3)(a) or (4)(a):
None expected.

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

1. **Expenditures:**

   For the first year:N/A

   For subsequent years:N/A

2. **Revenues:**

   For the first year:N/A

   For subsequent years:N/A

3. **Cost Savings:**

   For the first year:N/A

   For subsequent years:N/A

(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:
None Expected.

(b) Methodology and resources used to reach this conclusion:
Experience and assessment of professional KDFWR staff.

(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):
These amendments will not have a â€œMajor Economic Impactâ€

(b) The methodology and resources used to reach this conclusion:
Experience and assessment of professional KDFWR staff.

FEDERAL MANDATE ANALYSIS COMPARISON

(1) Federal statute or regulation constituting the federal mandate.
Wildlife and Fisheries, Federal Code of Regulations, 50 C.F.R. Part 20, Migratory Bird Hunting; Part 21, Migratory Bird Permits.

(2) State compliance standards.
The Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources sets migratory bird hunting seasons within the frameworks established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and published in 50 C.F.R. Parts 20 and 21.

(3) Minimum or uniform standards contained in the federal mandate.
50 C.F.R. Part 20 contains season frameworks for the earliest opening and latest closing date, the maximum number of days a species is open to hunting, and daily bag and possession limits. 50 C.F.R. Part 21 defines permits and the necessary requirements to hold and possess migratory game birds before, during and after periods open for hunting.

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

(5) Justification for the imposition of the stricter standard, or additional or different responsibilities or requirements.
The federal mandate defines the regulatory frameworks that a state may allow. States are permitted to be more restrictive but not more liberal in their respective regulations. State management objectives necessitate more restrictive regulations to protect local, regional and/or state populations of birds important to Kentuckyâ€™s migratory bird hunters. Restricting bag limits provides the state the ability to protect populations that may be of concern on the state level but not on a national scale. The greatest concentrations of migratory birds and the greatest hunting pressure often occur on public lands managed by the Department. The Department imposes more restrictive regulations on these lands in effort to meet migratory bird management objectives while still providing quality hunting opportunity.