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

301 KAR 1:410. Taking of fish by nontraditional fishing methods.

RELATES TO: KRS 150.010, 150.170, 150.175, 150.235, 150.445, 150.620, 150.990
STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 150.025(1), 150.440, 150.470, 235.280
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 Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to promulgate administrative regulations regarding the buying, selling and transporting of fish and wildlife, the restriction of places where taking is permitted, and the application of administrative regulations to a limited area or to the entire state. KRS 150.440 requires the department to promulgate administrative regulations for establishing open seasons and limits for rough fish by gigging, grabbing, snaring, and snagging. KRS 150.470 requires the department to promulgate administrative regulations for daily limits and size limits for fish. KRS 235.280 requires the department to promulgate administrative regulations to govern the fair, reasonable, equitable, and safe use of all waters of the state. This administrative regulation establishes the procedures for taking sport and rough fish by nontraditional fishing methods.

Section 1. Private Lakes and Ponds.
(1) A bona fide owner of private land in Kentucky who is also a resident of the Commonwealth shall:
(a) Not be subject to any limits or restrictions established in Sections 2 through 8 of this administrative regulation for daily limit, possession, size, or method of take for the fish in the private landowner's private lake or pond;
(b) Be able to extend the privileges in subsection (1)(a) of this section in written or electronic form to any other person who has a valid fishing license; and
(c) Include the bona fide landowner's address and telephone number in any written or electronic permission extended to another person under subsection (2) of this section.
(2) An individual utilizing take privileges extended by a bona fide owner pursuant subsection (1) of this section, shall have in their possession and shall be able to furnish the bona fide landowner's written or electronic permission to a game warden upon request.

Section 2. ~~[Section 1.]~~ General Provisions.
(1) A person using nontraditional fishing methods shall observe the daily limits and size limits established in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this subsection:
(a) The daily limit for catfish using any non-traditional fishing method shall not include more than one (1) trophy catfish of each species, except as established in Section 6(3) of this administrative regulation.
(b) The paddlefish daily limit shall be two (2) with no size limit.
(c) The shovelnose sturgeon daily limit shall be two (2) with no size limit.
(d) The invasive carp daily limit shall be unlimited with no size limit.
(2) The possession limit for paddlefish, trophy catfish, and shovelnose sturgeon shall be two (2) times the daily limit for each species.

(3) Shovelnose sturgeon shall not be harvested from the Mississippi River and shall be immediately released.

(4) A person shall release any:

(a) Lake sturgeon;

(b) Pallid sturgeon; or

(c) Alligator gar.

Section 3. ~~[Section 2.]~~ Skin Diving, Scuba Diving, and Underwater Spear Fishing.

(1) Skin diving or scuba diving shall be prohibited in all lakes owned by the department, except as established in subsections (2), (3), and (4) of this section.

(2) Skin diving and scuba diving shall be allowed in salvage operations if the diver receives prior written permission from:

(a) The department's Division of Law Enforcement; or

(b) The local game warden who is assigned to the particular department-owned lake.

(3) Skin diving or scuba diving shall be permitted anytime without prior authorization in cases of emergency involving the possibility of saving human life or in the recovery of a drowning victim.

(4) Skin diving and scuba diving shall be allowed in Greenbo Lake:

(a) In a designated cove marked with signage and buoys;

(b) From April 1 through October 31; and

(c) From 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily.

(5) A person who is skin diving or scuba diving in a designated cove as established in subsection (4) of this section shall display an international diving flag as established in 301 KAR 6:030.

(6) Recreational boating and angling shall be prohibited in the designated cove marked with signage and buoys during the times open to skin diving and scuba diving as established in subsection (4) of this section if an international diving flag is present in the cove.

(7) Underwater spearing of fish with a hand-held spear or mechanically propelled spear shall be legal throughout the year in lakes 1,000 surface acres in size or larger, as measured at the normal summer pool level as established in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subsection.

(a) An angler who is spearing fish shall:

1. Be completely submerged in the water where spearing takes place; and

2. Only spear rough fish.

(b) The daily limit shall be fifteen (15) rough fish, no more than five (5) of which shall be catfish.

Section 4. ~~[Section 3.]~~ Sport Fishing Trot Lines, Jug Lines, and Set Lines.

(1) Each sport fishing trot line, jug line, or set line shall be permanently labeled or tagged with the customer identification number found on the current sport fishing license of the person using it.

(2) Each sport fishing trot line shall be permanently labeled or tagged as established in subsection (1) of this section at both ends of the line.

(3) Each trot line, jug line, or set line shall be checked by the owner at least once every twenty-four (24) hours, at which time the owner shall:

(a) Bait all hooks; and

(b) Remove all caught fish.

(4) A trot line, set line, or jug line shall be confiscated if it is not:

(a) Properly labeled or tagged; or

(b) Checked or baited at least once every twenty-four (24) hours.

(5) An angler shall not use more than:

(a) Two (2) sport fishing trot lines;

(b) Twenty-five (25) set lines; or
(c) Fifty (50) jug lines.

(6) Multiple anglers in one (1) boat shall not use more than fifty (50) jug lines per boat.

(7) An angler using a sport fishing trot line shall:
(a) Set the trot line at least three (3) feet below the water's surface;
(b) Not have more than fifty (50) single or multi-barbed hooks; and
(c) Have all hooks at least eighteen (18) inches apart on the trot line.

(8) A person shall not use a jug line or set line with more than one (1) single or multi-barbed hook.

(9) A sport fishing trot line, jug line, or set line shall not be used in the waters established in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this subsection:
(a) In the Tennessee River within 700 yards of Kentucky Lake Dam;
(b) In the Cumberland River below Lake Barkley Dam to the Highway 62 bridge;
(c) In any lake less than 500 surface acres owned or managed by the department, except:
1. Ballard Wildlife Management Area lakes, Ballard County;
2. Peal Wildlife Management Area lakes, Ballard County; and
3. Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area lakes, Ballard County; or
(d) In the areas of the Ohio River established in subparagraphs 1. through 8. of this paragraph:
1. Smithland Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall;
2. J. T. Meyers Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall and that portion of the split channel around the southern part of Wabash Island from the fixed weir dam to the first dike;
3. Newburgh Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall;
4. Cannelton Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall;
5. McAlpine Dam downstream to the K & I railroad bridge;
6. Markland Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall;
7. Meldahl Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall; or
8. Greenup Dam downstream to a line perpendicular to the end of the outer lock wall.

(10) An angler using a trot line, jug line, or set line shall follow all sport fish daily limits, possession limits, and size limits as established in 301 KAR 1:201.

Section 5. ~~[Section 4.]~~ Temporary Aquatic Areas and Temporary Pools.

(1) The department, with consent of the landowner, may delineate temporary aquatic areas and temporary pools where anglers may take rough fish by any method except:
(a) Poison;
(b) Electrical devices;
(c) Firearms; or
(d) Explosives.

(2) The department shall be authorized to establish the exact dates and times when rough fish may be taken in temporary aquatic areas and temporary pools.

(3) A person with a valid commercial fishing license may use nets and seines if the nets and seines are appropriately tagged, as established in 301 KAR 1:146.

(4) A person shall first obtain the permission of the landowner before taking rough fish from a temporary pool.

Section 6. ~~[Section 5.]~~ Gigging and Snagging.

(1) Gigging and snagging season shall be February 1 through May 10, except as established in subsections (8) and (10) of this section.

(2) It shall be illegal to possess a gig, of any type, while in a boat, or on or in a stream or lake, from November 1 through the last day of January of the following year.

(3) A person shall not:

(a) Gig or snag a sport fish, as established in 301 KAR 1:060, except as established in subsections (8) and (10) of this section;

(b) Gig or snag from a platform;

(c) Gig from a boat in any lake less than 500 surface acres;

(d) Gig at night from a boat; or

(e) Snag from a boat.

(4) A snagging rod shall be equipped with:

(a) Line;

(b) Guides;

(c) A reel; and

(d) One (1) single hook or treble hook attached to the line, except that five (5) hooks, either single or treble, may be used while snagging in:

1. The Green River and its tributaries; or
2. The Rolling Fork River and its tributaries.

(5) A person who accidentally gigs or snags a sport fish shall immediately return the fish to the water, except as established in subsections (8) and (10) of this section.

(6) A person shall not gig or snag in the areas or bodies of water established in paragraphs (a) through (g) of this subsection:

(a) The Cumberland River below Wolf Creek Dam downstream to the Tennessee line, including Hatchery Creek;

(b) Any tributary of the Cumberland River below Wolf Creek Dam to the Tennessee line from the junction of the tributary with the Cumberland River to one-half (1/2) mile upstream;

(c) The Cumberland River below the Lake Barkley Dam to the U.S. 62 bridge;

(d) The Middle Fork of the Kentucky River, from Buckhorn Lake Dam downstream to the Breathitt County line in Perry County;

(e) The Rough River, below Rough River Lake Dam downstream to the State Highway 54 bridge in Breckinridge and Grayson counties;

(f) Cave Run Lake; or

(g) Within 200 yards of any dam on a river or stream, except as established in subsection (8) of this section.

(7) A person shall not gig in the Tennessee River below Kentucky Lake Dam.

(8) A person may snag sport fish or rough fish in the Tennessee River below the Kentucky Lake Dam to the U.S. 62 bridge:

(a) For twenty-four (24) hours a day from January 1 through May 31; and

(b) From sunset to sunrise from June 1 through December 31.

(9) A person shall not snag in that section of the Tennessee River from the U.S. 62 bridge to the Interstate 24 bridge.

(10) A person may snag sport fish or rough fish year-round in the section of the Tennessee River from the Interstate 24 bridge to the Ohio River.

(11) A person shall not snag on the Tennessee River:

(a) Under the U.S. 62 bridge;

(b) Under the P & L Railroad bridge; or

(c) From any fishing pier or jetty.

(12) There shall not be a daily limit for rough fish except the daily aggregate limit for snagging of rough and sport fish in the Tennessee River below Kentucky Lake Dam shall

be eight (8), except there shall not be a daily limit on invasive carp.

(13) There shall not be a size limit for sport fish snagged in the Tennessee River below Kentucky Lake Dam.

(14) A person shall immediately retain, and not release or cull, any gigged or snagged paddlefish.

(15) All snagged fish in the Tennessee River below Kentucky Lake Dam shall be immediately retained, and not released or culled, except for invasive carp, shad, or herring.

(16) All gigged or snagged rough fish in the Cumberland River below Lake Barkley Dam shall be immediately retained, and not released or culled, except for invasive carp, shad, or herring.

(17) A person shall immediately cease snagging if:

(a) A daily limit of paddlefish is reached;

(b) A daily limit of shovelnose sturgeon is reached;

(c) A daily limit of sport fish has been caught in the Tennessee River below Kentucky Lake Dam, even if the daily limit for that sport fish is less than eight (8); or

(d) A trophy catfish is snagged.

Section 7. ~~[Section 6.]~~ Grabbing.

(1) The grabbing season for rough fish shall be June 1 to August 31 during daylight hours.

(2) Grabbing shall not be permitted in any lake less than 500 surface acres owned or managed by the department, except:

(a) Ballard Wildlife Management Area lakes, Ballard County;

(b) Peal Wildlife Management Area lakes, Ballard County; and

(c) Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area lakes, Ballard County.

(3) The daily limit for grabbing shall be fifteen (15) fish, no more than five (5) of which may be catfish, except anglers grabbing at Barren River Lake, Carr Creek Lake, Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Taylorsville Lake, or Yatesville Lake may only harvest one (1) blue or channel catfish over twenty-five (25) inches.

Section 8. ~~[Section 7.]~~ Bow Fishing.

(1) An angler using archery equipment, a crossbow, or a pneumatic arrow launching device shall not take:

(a) Sport fish;

(b) Alligator gar;

(c) More than five (5) catfish daily; or

(d) Lake sturgeon.

(2) Any paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, or catfish shot with archery equipment, a crossbow, or a pneumatic arrow launching device shall:

(a) Be immediately retained, and not released or culled; and

(b) Count toward a person's daily limit.

(3) Bow fishing shall be open statewide, except:

(a) In the Cumberland River below Wolf Creek Dam downstream to the Tennessee line including Hatchery Creek;

(b) In any tributary of the Cumberland River below Wolf Creek Dam to the Tennessee line, from the junction of the tributary with the Cumberland River to one-half (1/2) mile upstream;

(c) In:

1. Carpenter Lake (Daviess County);
2. Clear Creek Lake (Bath County);
3. Greenbo Lake (Greenup County);
4. Lake Carnico (Nicholas County); and

5. Lake Reba (Madison County); or

(d) From a boat in restricted areas below navigation, power generating, or flood control dams.

Approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission
RICH STORM, Commissioner

APPROVED BY AGENCY: July 13, 2026

FILED WITH LRC: July 15, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT PERIOD: A public hearing on this administrative regulation shall be held on September 30, 2026, at 12:30 p.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 September 30, 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: fw.publicaffairs@ky.gov

REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS AND TIERING STATEMENT

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

Subject Headings:Fishing, Fish and Wildlife, Conservation

(1) Provide a brief summary of:

(a) What this administrative regulation does:
This administrative regulation establishes the procedures for taking sport and rough fish by nontraditional fishing methods.

(b) The necessity of this administrative regulation:
This administrative regulation is necessary to effectively manage the fish populations of Kentucky and to provide for reasonable recreational fishing opportunities.

(c) How this administrative regulation conforms to the content of the authorizing statutes:
KRS 150.025(1) authorizes the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to promulgate administrative regulations regarding the buying, selling, and transporting of fish and wildlife, the restriction of places where taking is permitted, and the application of administrative regulations to a limited area or to the entire state. KRS 150.440 requires the department to promulgate administrative regulations for establishing open seasons and limits for rough fish by gigging, grabbing, snaring, and snagging. KRS 150.470 requires the department to promulgate administrative regulations for daily limits and size limits for fish. KRS 235.280 requires the department to promulgate administrative regulations to govern the fair, reasonable, equitable, and safe use of all waters of the state.

(d) How this administrative regulation currently assists or will assist in the effective administration of the statutes:
This administrative regulation will assist in the administration of the statutes by authorizing the methods used to take fish, the areas open for such take, and the seasons and limits to be used when taking fish by nontraditional methods.

(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 amendment allows bona fide owners of private land in Kentucky who are also residents of the Commonwealth to not be subject to any limits or restrictions established in this administrative regulation for daily limit, possession, size, or method of take for the fish in the private landowner's private lake or pond when using non-traditional fishing methods. It also allows the bona fide landowner to extend these privileges in written or electronic form to any other person who has a valid fishing license and requires individuals utilizing extended privileges to provide written or electronic documentation from the bona fide landowner to game wardens upon request. These amendments conform with recent statute changes from the 2026 legislative session (26 RS SB 39/EN).

(b) The necessity of the amendment to this administrative regulation:
This amendment was necessary to conform with recent statute changes from the 2026 legislative session (26 RS SB 39/EN).

(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?Yes. This amendment implements changes made pursuant to 26 RS SB 39/EN which was signed by the Governor on 4/10/2026 (Acts Ch. 93).

(4) List the type and number of individuals, businesses, organizations, or state and local governments affected by this administrative regulation:
Bona fide owners of private land in Kentucky who are also residents of the Commonwealth who own a private lake or pond, as well as any individual granted permission to fish their pond will be affected.

(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:
The regulated entities in question (4), by following these new amendments, will not be subject to limits or restrictions pertaining to daily limits, possession limits, size limits, or methods of take for the fish in the private landowner's private lake or pond when using non-traditional fishing methods.

(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 cost to comply with the amendments to this regulation.

(c) As a result of compliance, what benefits will accrue to the entities identified in question (4):
Compliance with these amendments will allow the entities in question (4) to not be subject to limits or restrictions pertaining to daily limits, possession limits, size limits, or methods of take in these private lakes and ponds when using non-traditional fishing methods.

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

(a) Initially:
There will be no cost to implement these regulatory amendments initially.

(b) On a continuing basis:
There will be no continuing costs to implement these amendments.

(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:
No increase in fees or funding will be necessary.

(9) State whether or not this administrative regulation establishes any fees or directly or indirectly increases any fees:
No direct or indirect fees will be established.

(10) TIERING: Is tiering applied?

No tiering is applied. This regulation applies to all bona fide owners of private land in Kentucky who are also residents of the Commonwealth who own a private lake or pond, as well as any individual granted permission to fish the private lake or pond.

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 150.440, 150.470, and KRS 235.280.

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

This amendment is not expressly authorized by an act of the General Assembly but is promulgated pursuant to KRS 150.025 and 150.195.

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

The Department's Divisions of Fisheries and Law Enforcement will be impacted.

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

1. Expenditures:

For the first year:No expenditures will be experienced to administer this administrative regulation during the first year.

For subsequent years:No expenditures will be experienced to administer this administrative regulation in subsequent years.

2. Revenues:

For the first year:No revenue will be generated by this administrative regulation during the first year.

For subsequent years:No revenue will be generated by this administrative regulation in subsequent years.

3. Cost Savings:

For the first year:No cost savings will be generated by this administrative regulation during the first year.

For subsequent years:No cost savings will be generated by this administrative regulation in subsequent years.

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

N/A

(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):
N/A

(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:
This amendment will not have any significant fiscal impact.

(b) Methodology and resources used to reach this conclusion:
This amendment does not increase any fees or otherwise create a financial burden to state or local government agencies or to regulated entities.

(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 a major economic impact.

(b) The methodology and resources used to reach this conclusion:
This amendment does not increase any fees or otherwise create a financial burden to state or local government agencies or to regulated entities.