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

301 KAR 2:228. Sandhill crane hunting requirements.

RELATES TO: KRS 150.010, 150.170, 150.305, 150.340, 150.990, 16 U.S.C. 703-712, 50 C.F.R. 20, 21

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 150.025(1), 150.170, 150.330, 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 of Fish and Wildlife Resources to promulgate administrative regulations reasonably necessary to implement or carry out the purposes of KRS Chapter 150, establish open seasons for the taking of wildlife, and regulate bag limits. KRS 150.170 authorizes the department to promulgate administrative regulations establishing licensing and permit requirements. KRS 150.330 authorizes take and possession of migratory birds if in compliance with the provisions of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. 703-712, and authorizes hunting of migratory birds with the appropriate permits. 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 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.

(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; and

(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 while:

(a) Crane hunting; and

(b) 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)

1. Calling 800-245-4263 and providing the information requested by the automated check-in system; or

2. Completing the check-in process on the department's Web site at fw.ky.gov; and

(b) 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.

(301 KAR 002:228. 38 Ky.R. 168; 789; eff. 11-3-2011; 44 Ky.R. 2380; 45 Ky.R. 341; eff. 8-6-2018; 47 Ky.R. 2469; eff. 8-5-2021; 49 Ky.R. 1350, 1764; eff. 5-30-2023; 52 Ky.R. 2154; 53 Ky.R. 507; eff. 11-5-2026.)

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