

150.170 Requirement of hunting, fishing, trapping, or guide's license -- Exceptions -- Rights and privileges of resident owners of private land and bodies of water -- Taking of wildlife causing damage -- Reporting requirements -- Reciprocity with adjoining states -- Exception for active duty or reserve members on military property -- Exemption from live-fire hunter education course component for military or peace officers.

- (1) Except as provided in the following subsections of this section, and subject to administrative regulations promulgated under this chapter, no person, resident, or nonresident shall do any act authorized by any kind of license or permit or assist in any way any person in doing any act provided for in this chapter with respect to wildlife unless he or she holds the kind of license or permit, resident or nonresident, that authorizes the act. It shall be the specific purpose of this chapter to prohibit the taking or pursuing of any wildlife, protected or unprotected, or the fishing in any stream or body of water whether public or private, without first procuring the license provided for in KRS 150.175, except to the extent as may be otherwise provided in this section.
- (2) A person under sixteen (16) years of age may, without a sport fishing license, take fish by angling, or take minnows by the use of a minnow seine, minnow trap, or dip net.
- (3) A person under twelve (12) years of age shall be exempt from being required to obtain a sport hunting or sport trapping license as required by this chapter.
- (4) An owner of farmlands who is a resident of the Commonwealth or his or her spouse or dependent children shall, without procuring any sport hunting or sport fishing licenses, have the right to take fish or hunt during the open season, except trapping, on farmlands of which they are bona fide owners. Tenants or their dependent children residing upon these farmlands shall have the same privilege.
- (5) (a) A bona fide owner of private land in Kentucky who is also a resident of the Commonwealth shall:
 1. Not be subject to any limits or restrictions established in this chapter or the administrative regulations promulgated under this chapter for creel, possession, size, or method of take for the fish in the private landowner's private lake or pond;
 2. Be able to extend the privileges in subparagraph 1. of this paragraph in written or electronic form to any other person who has a valid fishing license; and
 3. Include the landowner's address and telephone number in any written or electronic permission extended to another person under this paragraph.
- (b) Except for restrictions on the stocking of invasive fish, a bona fide owner of private land shall:
 1. Not be subject to any state requirements regarding the stocking of private lakes or ponds located in the private landowner's property; and
 2. Provide written or electronic permission to any person allowed to obtain and transport live fish from the bona fide owner's private pond or lake to another location. The person granted permission to transport the fish

from the bona fide landowner's lake or pond shall, while transporting the live fish, keep and be able to furnish the bona fide landowner's written permission to a game warden. The written or electronic permission shall detail the species of fish, the amounts allowed to be in his or her possession, and the bona fide landowner's address and phone number.

- (c) There shall not be any restriction on the stocking of first filial (F1) largemouth bass or Florida (*Micropterus salmoides floridanus*) bass in a bona fide landowner's private lakes and ponds.
 - (d) Paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subsection shall not apply to private lakes and ponds located within the one hundred (100) year floodplain.
- (6) Residents or nonresidents observing and participating in field trials, training exercises, or other competitions as authorized by the department may observe and participate without obtaining a hunting or guide's license so long as game is not taken.
- (7) Any resident serviceman on furlough of more than three (3) days in this state may, without any Kentucky sport hunting or sport fishing licenses, do any act authorized by the licenses, but while so doing he or she shall carry on his or her person proper identification and papers showing his or her furlough status.
- (8) (a) A bona fide landowner or his or her spouse or dependent children:
- 1. May take or trap on their lands any wildlife causing damage to the lands or any real or personal property situated thereon during periods other than the open season for the particular species, without a hunting or trapping license;
 - 2. May dispose of the carcass on site;
 - 3. Shall request a carcass tag from the department before transporting the carcass from the property upon which it was taken; and
 - 4. Shall report the destruction of any wildlife under this paragraph to the department within twenty-four (24) hours of the take.
- (b) A tenant that resides on the landowner's land and is engaged in work upon the landowner's farm or land, or his or her spouse or dependent children:
- 1. May take or trap on the lands any wildlife causing damage to the lands or any personal property situated thereon during periods other than the open season for the particular species, without a hunting or trapping license;
 - 2. May dispose of the carcass on site;
 - 3. Shall request a carcass tag from the department before transporting the carcass from the property upon which it was taken; and
 - 4. Shall report the destruction of any wildlife under this paragraph to the department within twenty-four (24) hours of the take.
- (c) A person who has been designated by a bona fide landowner as a designee for the purposes of this subsection:
- 1. Shall hold a valid Kentucky hunting license or trapping permit in accordance with the method of take;

2. Shall be approved by the department, if eligible;
 3. Shall be issued a destruction tag by the department in order to take or trap on the landowner's land any wildlife causing damage to the landowner's lands or the landowner's real or personal property situated thereon, during periods other than the open season for the particular species;
 4. May dispose of the carcass on site;
 5. Shall request a carcass tag from the department before transporting the carcass from the property upon which it was taken; and
 6. Shall report the destruction of any wildlife under this paragraph to the department within twenty-four (24) hours of the take.
- (9) (a) Any designee selected by the landowner and approved by the department whose landowner's land or real or personal property has been damaged by wildlife may request a destruction tag from the department. Within fifteen (15) days of receiving the request, the department shall inspect and confirm any damage to the lands or personal property caused by wildlife. Upon confirmation of damage, the department shall issue to the designee a minimum of five (5) destruction tags each year for the duration of a two (2) year period. The destruction tag shall authorize the designee to take antlerless deer outside of an established hunting season for a period of two (2) years from the date of confirmation of damage to the lands or personal property.
- (b) The department shall grant immediate renewal of a destruction tag if the designee provides verification of continued damage to the lands or personal property by submitting a:
1. Time- and date-stamped electronic image; or
 2. Current crop production report documenting evidence of the damage.
- (c) Any approved designee who has been issued a destruction tag by the department in the consecutive three (3) year period prior to April 14, 2026, under administrative regulations promulgated by the department may request renewal of an existing destruction tag by providing verification of continued damage to the lands or personal property by submitting to the department a:
1. Time- and date-stamped electronic image; or
 2. Current crop production report documenting evidence of the damage.
- (10) (a) Upon destruction of any wildlife by individuals specified in subsection (8) of this section, the act shall be reported to the department through a reporting mechanism established by the department, as promulgated by administrative regulation, within twenty-four (24) hours of the take. Individuals wishing to transport the carcass from the property upon which it was taken shall contact personnel of the department as designated by administrative regulation to request a carcass tag or other authorization. Inedible parts from wildlife taken under the authorization of this section shall not be utilized for any purpose and shall be destroyed or left on the property on which the taking occurred.
- (b) The department shall promulgate administrative regulations establishing procedures for the designee appointment process, including request and

approval deadlines.

- (11) If a reciprocal agreement is entered into by the commissioner, with the approval of the commission, and promulgated as an administrative regulation by the department and similar action is taken by the appropriate authority in Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, or Illinois, persons holding a resident or nonresident fishing or a resident or nonresident hunting license issued in these states shall be permitted to perform the acts authorized by the license upon certain contiguous waters and land areas adjacent to the common boundaries of the above-mentioned states and the State of Kentucky. A resident of the State of Kentucky shall purchase a proper Kentucky license to conform with the reciprocal agreement.
- (12) Any member of the Kentucky Army or Air National Guard, active duty or Reserve Component, in any branch in the United States Armed Forces that is based in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, shall have the right to take fish or hunt on any military property belonging to the Commonwealth without procuring any sport hunting or sport fishing license.
- (13) A person not otherwise exempted from hunter safety education or from procuring any sport hunting or sport fishing license shall be exempt from the department-sanctioned live-fire exercise component of the hunter education course requirement if he or she:
 - (a) Is a current member of the Armed Forces of the United States;
 - (b) Has served in the Armed Forces of the United States and was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable; or
 - (c) Is a peace officer certified pursuant to KRS 15.380 to 15.404.
- (14) Any person found in violation of administrative regulations promulgated under this chapter for creel, possession, size, or method of take when checked by a game warden on public lakes, rivers, or streams shall not claim as a defense any right or privilege conferred to a landowner under subsection (5)(a) of this section for fishing in a private lake or pond on the landowner's private land.
- (15) As used in this section, "private lake or pond" means a lake or pond that is:
 - (a) Not connected by surface water to any public waters;
 - (b) Not accessible to fish from other public bodies of water; and
 - (c) Not located within the one hundred (100) year floodplain.

Effective: April 14, 2026

History: Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 93, sec. 1, effective April 10, 2026; and ch. 174, sec. 1, effective April 14, 2026. -- Amended 2024 Ky. Acts ch. 2, sec. 1, effective February 29, 2024; and ch. 159, sec. 14, effective July 15, 2024. -- Amended 2023 Ky. Acts ch. 139, sec. 17, effective March 29, 2023. -- Amended 2022 Ky. Acts ch. 142, sec. 1, effective July 14, 2022. -- Amended 2014 Ky. Acts ch. 19, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2014. -- Amended 2011 Ky. Acts ch. 12, sec. 1, effective June 8, 2011. -- Amended 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 42, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2008. -- Amended 2002 Ky. Acts ch. 173, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2002. -- Amended 1998 Ky. Acts ch. 274, sec. 1, effective March 1, 1999. -- Amended 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 112, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1996; and ch. 133, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1996. -- Amended 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 181, sec. 99, effective April 4, 1994. -- Amended 1992 Ky. Acts ch. 353, sec. 1, effective July 14, 1992. -- Amended 1990 Ky. Acts ch. 40, sec. 1,

effective July 13, 1990; and ch. 90, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1990. -- Amended 1986 Ky. Acts ch. 7, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1986; ch. 265, sec. 7, effective July 15, 1986; and ch. 273, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1986. -- Amended 1984 Ky. Acts ch. 320, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1984. -- Amended 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 386, sec. 29. -- Amended 1972 Ky. Acts ch. 273, sec. 2. -- Amended 1970 Ky. Acts ch. 92, sec. 27. - - Amended 1968 Ky. Acts ch. 38, sec. 7; and ch. 95, sec. 1. -- Amended 1966 Ky. Acts ch. 256, sec. 1. -- Amended 1956 Ky. Acts ch. 115, sec. 10. -- Amended 1952 Ky. Acts ch. 200, sec. 24. -- Amended 1948 Ky. Acts ch. 78, sec. 7. -- Amended 1946 Ky. Acts ch. 84, sec. 2. -- Amended 1944 Ky. Acts ch. 110, sec. 1; and ch. 124, sec. 2. -- Amended 1942 Ky. Acts ch. 68, sec. 17. -- Recodified 1942 Ky. Acts ch. 208, sec. 1, effective October 1, 1942, from Ky. Stat. sec. 1954d-13.

Legislative Research Commission Note (4/14/2026). This statute was amended by 2026 Ky. Acts chs. 93 and 174, which do not appear to be in conflict and have been codified together.