



# KENTUCKY FISHING & BOATING GUIDE

Regulations Summary • MARCH 2026 - FEBRUARY 2027

Take Someone Fishing!



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Photo courtesy Phillip Garrard Jr.

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

*Serving People, Conserving Fish & Wildlife*



**Commonwealth of Kentucky**  
Andy Beshear, Governor

**FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION**  
(January 2026)

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- 2nd District: Jeff Raymer, Morgantown
- 3rd District: Matthew Rhodes, Prospect
- 4th District: Greg Cecil, Munfordville
- 5th District: Josh Cummins, Owenton
- 6th District: vacant
- 7th District: Chuck Meade, Staffordsville
- 8th District: Fred Shortridge, Mount Sterling
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Fish, wildlife and boating regulations are recommended by the Commission (board) and approved by the Kentucky legislature. Commission members are experienced and active anglers and hunters, who serve 4-year terms after being publicly nominated by peers in their geographic districts, appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the Kentucky Senate.

Learn more or contact your district Commission member at [fw.ky.gov/More/Pages/Commission.aspx](http://fw.ky.gov/More/Pages/Commission.aspx)

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**FISHING AND BOATING GUIDE**

- Editor: Lee McClellan
- Art/Design Director: Adrienne Yancy
- Contributors: Dane Balsman, Dave Dreves, Josh Pennington, Jeff Ross

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is funded through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, boat registration fees and related grants. The Department conserves, protects and enhances all fish and wildlife species, their habitats, public wildlife areas and waterways for the benefit of those resources and for public enjoyment.

Have a suggestion or question? Kentucky Fish and Wildlife welcomes your questions or input.

Fish and Wildlife office hours:  
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM ET  
#1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601  
1-800-858-1549 • [Info.Center@ky.gov](mailto:Info.Center@ky.gov)  
[fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov)

# NEW THIS YEAR

The items highlighted **in bright blue throughout this guide** are a quick overview of the changes to this year's regulations.

- **The fishing reciprocal agreements with surrounding states concerning bordering waters are back in place. See page 15 of this guide for more details.**
- **License, permit and boat registration fees will be adjusted every two years based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as determined by the federal government. Fees will be adjusted based on the combined inflation rate of the previous two years. These will be added to the existing costs.**
- **Anglers may not use aircraft to take fish.**
- **Clear Fork (Logan and Warren counties): Removed the catch and release only regulation for this stream. Clear Fork is now under statewide regulations for all species.**
- **Kentucky River WMA-Boone Tract (Henry County): Removed the 15-fish daily limit on sunfish and 4-fish daily limit on catfish. All lakes and ponds are now under statewide regulations for all species.**
- **Nolin River Lake (Grayson, Edmonson and Hart counties): Crappie minimum size limit is now 10 inches.**
- **Rockcastle River and tributaries: There is now a 2-fish daily limit and an 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit on walleye. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.**
- **Rough River Lake (Breckinridge and Grayson counties): Crappie minimum size limit is now 10 inches.**

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Rachel Cummings photo

## LICENSE FEE CHANGES

Beginning in January 2026, Kentucky implemented an inflation-based system to adjust its license, permit and boat registration fees during even-numbered years. Pricing is based on the existing cost, plus the combined inflation rate (based on the Consumer Price Index) of the previous two years. The new system adds transparency and avoids sudden and substantial rate increases. This will help the department maintain programs such as fish stocking, wildlife management and research by keeping up with inflation costs while keeping the amount of an increase lower.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This is a **SUMMARY** of the laws regarding fishing and boating. This guide is intended solely for informational use. It is not a reprint of any referenced statute or regulation in its entirety and should not be used as such. Questions about the information contained in this guide should be directed to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources **BEFORE** engaging in the activities referenced. Actual wording of any Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) or Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) can be viewed at [legislature.ky.gov](http://legislature.ky.gov).

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# LICENSES & PERMITS

LICENSE / PERMIT		Resident fee	Nonresident fee
LICENSES	Annual Fishing	\$24.31	\$58.14
	Joint Married Couple Annual Fishing	\$44.38	Not available
	1-Day Fishing	\$7.40	\$15.86
	3-Year Fishing	\$58.14	Not available
	7-Day Fishing Nonresident	Not available	\$37
	Trout Permit		\$10.57
	Annual Hunting	\$28.54	\$169.12
	1-Day Hunting (not valid for deer, elk, turkey or bear)	\$7.40	\$26.43
	7-Day Hunting (not valid for deer, elk, turkey or bear)	Not available	\$68.71
	Youth Annual Hunting (ages 12-15 only)	\$6.34	\$10.57
	Shooting Preserve Hunting (available online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> only)		\$5.29
	Annual Trapping	\$21.14	\$137.41
	Annual Landowner/Tenant Trapping	\$10.57	Not available
	Youth Annual Trapping (ages 12-15)	\$5.29	Not available
COMBOS	Combination License (Annual Combination Hunting/Fishing License)	\$44.39	Not available
	First Time Buyer Sportsman's License* (Includes combination hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits, Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit and trout permit.)	\$37	Not available
	Sportsman's License* (Includes combination hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits, Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit and trout permit.)	\$100.42	Not available
	Senior OR Disabled Sportsman's License* (Includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license. For residents age 65 or older, OR with disability license authorization.)	\$12.68	Not available
	Senior Lifetime Sportsman's License* (Must maintain Kentucky residency; includes same licenses and permits as standard sportsman's license. For residents age 65 or older.)	\$190.26	Not available
	Youth (ages 12-15) Sportsman's License* (Includes hunting/fishing license, statewide deer permit, spring and fall turkey permits and Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit.)	\$31.71	Not available
DEER	Deer Permit (statewide, four deer)	\$37	\$248.40
	Youth (ages 12-15) Deer Permit (four deer)	\$10.57	\$15.86
	Additional Deer Permit (two deer)		\$15.86
BIRDS	Spring Turkey Permit (statewide) (two turkeys)	\$31.71	\$116.27
	Youth (ages 12-15) Turkey Permit (one turkey, spring or fall)	\$10.57	\$15.86
	Fall Turkey Permit (statewide)(two turkeys)	\$31.71	\$116.27
	(Kentucky) Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Permit		\$15.86
	Federal Duck Stamp (available at post offices and online at <a href="http://www.duckstamp.com">www.duckstamp.com</a> )		\$25
	Pheasant Quota Hunt Permit (if drawn)		\$26.43
	Sandhill Crane Hunt Drawing (quota hunt, apply in Sept. at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> )	\$3	\$3
ELK	Elk Hunt Drawing Application (deadline April 30)		\$10
	Youth Elk Drawing Application (ages 15 and under)		\$10
	Elk Quota Bull Permit (if drawn)	\$105.70	\$581.35
	Elk Quota Cow Permit (if drawn)	\$63.42	\$422.80
	Elk Quota Archery/Crossbow Permit (bull or cow, if drawn)	\$105.70	\$581.35
	Youth Elk Quota Permit (if drawn; ages 12-15; youths drawn for other permits pay full cost)	\$31.71	\$211.40
Out of Zone Elk Permit	\$31.71	\$422.80	
BEAR	Bear Permit	\$31.71	\$264.25
	Youth Bear Permit (ages 12-15)	\$10.57	\$105.70
	Bear Chase Permit	\$31.71	\$52.85
	Youth Bear Chase Permit (ages 12-15)	\$10.57	\$15.86
	Combo Bear/Chase Permit (includes bear hunting and chase permits)	\$52.85	Not available
AREAS	1-Day Ballard Waterfowl Permit		\$15.86
	Peabody WMA Permit		\$15.86
	Land Between The Lakes Hunt Permit		\$25
	Land Between The Lakes Hunt/Backcountry Camp		\$50
	Otter Creek ORA Admission Fees (per person)		
	Otter Creek ORA Special Activity Fees (per person, for use of horse trails, mountain bike trails and shooting range)	Check online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> for current status of all Otter Creek fees	
OTHER	Bobcat Permit (required for hunters)		\$10.57
	Temporary Hunter Education Exemption Permit (Hunter Apprentice Opportunity; available online at <a href="http://fw.ky.gov">fw.ky.gov</a> only)		Free

\*Peabody, LBL and Otter Creek permits, elk drawing application, elk quota hunt permit, out-of-zone elk permit, bear permit, federal duck stamp and trapping license not included. An additional deer permit is not included with a Sportsman's License. Kentucky's license year begins March 1 and continues through the last day of February. New licenses are required annually, except for the 3-year fishing license and the Lifetime Sportsman's License. A 1-day or 7-day hunting or fishing license is valid only for the period shown on license. Resident and nonresident youths under the age of 12 are not required to purchase licenses or permits (except the elk hunt drawing application).

# LICENSES & PERMITS

## WHO NEEDS A LICENSE?

(KRS 150.010, 150.170)

All persons must fill out and carry the proper license and permit to fish any Kentucky waters **except the following** (for permit requirements see "Trout Permit" on this page):

- The bona fide resident owners of farmlands, their spouses and dependent children may fish on their farmlands without a license. Tenants, their spouses and dependent children may fish without a license on farmlands where they live and work.
- Resident servicemen on furlough for more than three days may fish statewide without a license, but must carry proper identification and papers showing furlough status.
- Residents and nonresidents ages 15 and younger.
- Persons fishing on the first Saturday and Sunday in June (**June 6-7, 2026**) during Free Fishing Days are not required to have a license or permit. All other fishing regulations still apply.
- Persons fishing within the boundaries of Mammoth Cave National Park.

A resident is anyone who has established permanent and legal residence in Kentucky and resided here at least 30 days immediately

### *License expiration*

Annual license/permit authorization numbers are valid from the date of purchase through the last day in February. New licenses are required annually March 1. A temporary fishing license is valid for the period shown on the license. KRS 150.175

prior to applying for a license. Full-time students enrolled in a Kentucky educational institution for at least a six-month term and service personnel on permanent assignment in Kentucky are also classified as residents.

All others are considered non-residents for licensing purposes.

### **TROUT PERMIT** (301 KAR 1:201)

Unless license exempt, anglers who intend to keep trout must have a trout permit. A trout permit is included with the resident senior/disabled sportsman's license and resident sportsman's license. All licensed anglers fishing the portion

### *Lose your license or permit?*

Reprint your licenses or permits free any time in "My Profile" at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

of the Cumberland River from Wolf Creek Dam to the Tennessee state line, its tributaries up to the first riffle and all of Hatchery Creek are required to possess a trout permit. (See the Trout section in this guide for details and for a complete list of waters where trout are present.)

## **RESIDENT SPORTSMAN'S LICENSE**

Available to Kentucky residents only, the Sportsman's License includes a combination hunting and fishing license, spring turkey permit, fall turkey permit, statewide deer permit, state waterfowl permit (which also covers dove and other migratory bird hunting) and trout permit. Peabody and LBL permits, trapping license, an elk drawing application, elk quota hunt permit (if drawn), out-of-zone elk permit, bear permit and bonus deer permits must be purchased separately. A federal duck stamp (available at post offices) is required for waterfowl hunting.

## **PAY LAKES** (KRS 150.660)

A person fishing in a pay lake licensed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources needs either a Kentucky fishing license or a free permit issued by the operator.

## HOW TO BUY LICENSES and PERMITS

When buying a license or permit the angler's date of birth and Social Security number must be provided.

If you have licensing questions, call Kentucky Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-858-1549, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time).

### **ONLINE**

All Kentucky hunting and fishing licenses and permits can be purchased through the secured Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Anglers purchasing licenses or permits online must pay with a Visa, Mastercard, American Express or Discover card, or a Kentucky Fish and Wildlife gift certificate. Gift certificates are sold online only at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Anglers who buy licenses or permits online will not be mailed a paper license or permit but will receive an authorization number. The authorization number or a computer printout of the license or permit and a picture ID must be carried in the field while fishing.

### **IN PERSON**

Licenses and permits can be purchased at various locations throughout the state. A list of license agents can be viewed online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

### **BY PHONE**

Licenses and permits are not currently available by phone. Please go online to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) for updates.

## RESIDENT SENIOR OR DISABLED SPORTSMAN'S LICENSES

Seniors and persons with qualified disabilities may purchase discounted licenses to hunt and fish. These are only available for Kentucky residents. The senior and disabled sportsman's licenses include: annual fishing and hunting licenses, permits for deer, spring and fall turkeys, migratory bird/waterfowl and trout.

### Senior sportsman's license:

Available to Kentucky residents 65 or older. (Seniors may also purchase the senior lifetime sportsman's license.)

### Disabled sportsman's license:

Available to Kentucky residents who meet the disability criteria in state law and obtain a disability authorization.

Note: Disabled residents 65 and older can purchase a senior sportsman's license instead of the disabled sportsman's license. The senior sportsman's license only requires proof of age. Both licenses cost the same and include the same licenses and permits.

### How to get a disabled sportsman's license:

1. Obtain proof of disability allowed by state law
2. Submit disability proof to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife
3. Obtain disability authorization
4. Buy license online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or anywhere licenses are sold

## 1 OBTAIN PROOF OF DISABILITY THROUGH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES

### • Federal Social Security

**Administration:** Obtain a Benefit Verification Letter certifying you are disabled and receive benefits. Forms should not be more than 6 months old. To get a Benefit Verification Letter: Contact your local Social Security office, call 1-800-772-1213 or go online to [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

Benefit letters must show disability qualification and include your name, address, date of birth, the last 4 digits of your social security number and the benefit amount.

- **Veterans Affairs:** Obtain letter verifying that you are at least 50 percent disabled as a result of a service-connected disability. The letter must include your current address and Social Security number.
- **State Workers' Compensation Board:** Request an application from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife and send the completed form to the state Workers' Compensation Board.
- **U.S. Railroad Retirement Board:** Obtain letter stating you are permanently and totally disabled and show current address.
- **Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System:** Obtain written documentation stating you are on disability retirement and show a current address.
- **U.S. Office of Personnel Management:** Obtain certification of employment, certification of 100 percent disabled from a recognized authority, and show a current address.

## 2 SEND PROOF OF DISABILITY TO KENTUCKY FISH AND WILDLIFE:

- Online: Visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Select "MyProfile." Select "Disability Authorization." Upload your file.
- By mail: KDFWR Disabled License, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601
- By fax: (502) 564-9845
- Questions? Call 1-800-858-1549 or email [Info.Center@ky.gov](mailto:Info.Center@ky.gov)

## 3 OBTAIN DISABILITY AUTHORIZATION

**Disability authorization.** You will receive disability authorization once your proof of disability is verified. This authorization is necessary to purchase a disabled sportsman's license. This

authorization is valid for 3 years. It is not a hunting or fishing license. While you must carry a license while you are hunting or fishing, you do not need to carry proof of disability authorization. This is why Kentucky Fish and Wildlife no longer mails disability authorization cards. Residents may still print their own copy of a disability authorization card by going online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and clicking on MyProfile.

### You will receive an email notifying you of your approval.

You may also check your application status by accessing your "My Profile" account at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

### Disability authorizations are only valid for 3 years.

Go online to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and access "MyProfile" to see your authorization expiration date. Repeat these steps to reapply. However, if you received your disability authorization through Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board or U.S. Office of Personnel Management, you may call Kentucky Fish and Wildlife at 1-800-858-1549 to renew over the phone.

## 4 BUY LICENSE

Once you have the disability authorization, you may buy your discounted disabled sportsman's license online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. You cannot buy this license if your disability authorization has expired. Disabled sportsman's licenses are valid through the end of February each year. The disability authorization, which you need in order to obtain a license, stays in effect for three years. Use the "MyProfile" tab online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) to view, print or reprint your license at home anytime for free.

# FISHING REGULATIONS

## STATEWIDE REGULATIONS

Some waterbodies have different size and daily limits, so please refer to the "Special Fishing Regulations" section on page 6 for more details. All fish not meeting size limit requirements must be released immediately. There are no size or daily limits for rough fish, unless statewide or special regulations apply.

For daily limit and fishing license purposes, one fishing day equals one calendar day. Except for trout, anglers may cull fish of a particular species until reaching the daily limit. Any additional fish caught in excess of the daily limit must be released immediately.

FISH SPECIES		Daily Limit	Possession Limit	Minimum Size Limit
BLACK BASS	Largemouth Bass	6*	12*	12"
	Smallmouth Bass	6*	12*	12"
	Kentucky (Spotted) Bass	6*	12*	none
	Coosa Bass	6*	12*	none
Rock Bass		15	30	none
Redear Sunfish		20	40	none
Walleye, Sauger, and their Hybrids		6*	12*	14"
Muskellunge		1	2	30"
Chain Pickerel		5	10	none
White & Hybrid Striped Bass		15**	30**	none**
Striped Bass		5	10	15"
Yellow Bass		none	none	none
Crappie (Black & White)		20*	40*	none
Paddlefish		2	4	none
Rainbow Trout		8	16	none
Brown Trout		1	2	16"
Cutthroat Trout		1	2	20"
Brook Trout		Catch and release only***		
Lake Sturgeon		Catch and release only		
Alligator Gar		Catch and release only		
TROPHY CATFISH	Channel Catfish 28" and above	1	2	28"
	Blue & Flathead Catfish 35" and above	1 each	2 each	35"
	Channel Catfish below 28"	none	none	none
	Blue & Flathead Catfish below 35"	none	none	none

\* Singly or combined; a total of these species \*\* No more than 5 fish in the daily limit may be more than 15 inches long.

\*\*\* Except for the Cumberland River downstream of Wolf Creek Dam and the upper section of Hatchery Creek, see Special Regulations section for details.

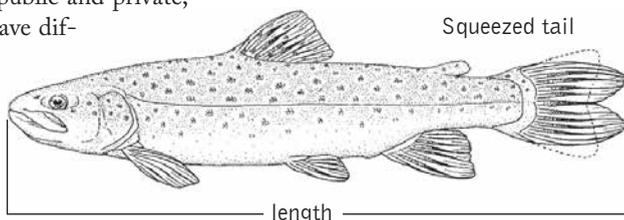
### STATEWIDE SIZE and DAILY LIMITS (301 KAR 1:060, 1:201; KRS 150.010)

Fishing season is open year-round in Kentucky, except on waterfowl refuges and as otherwise noted in this guide. Statewide size and daily limits apply to all Kentucky waters, public and private, except some waters have different limits (see "Special Fishing Regulations").

### MEASURING FISH (301 KAR 1:201)

Measure all fish from the tip of the lower jaw (closed) to the tip of the tail with fish laid flat on rule with tail lobes squeezed together. Fish not of legal size must be returned immediately to the

waters from which they were taken in the best possible physical condition.



**Q:** How is a daily limit different than a possession limit?

**A:** The daily limit is the number of a particular sport fish species you may keep in one day's fishing. A possession limit is two times the daily limit for all fish species with a daily limit, excluding previously processed fish.

# SPECIAL FISHING REGULATIONS

(301 KAR 1:080, 1:180, 1:201, 2:222 4:100, KRS 150.010, 150.025)

## SPECIAL REGULATION WATERS LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

The public waters listed below have different size and/or daily limits than statewide regulations allow. Statewide size and daily limits apply unless otherwise mentioned below. Special boating

regulations are listed in the Boating section of this guide.

Some privately owned waters may have special size and daily limits as posted by signs.

## FINs LAKES:

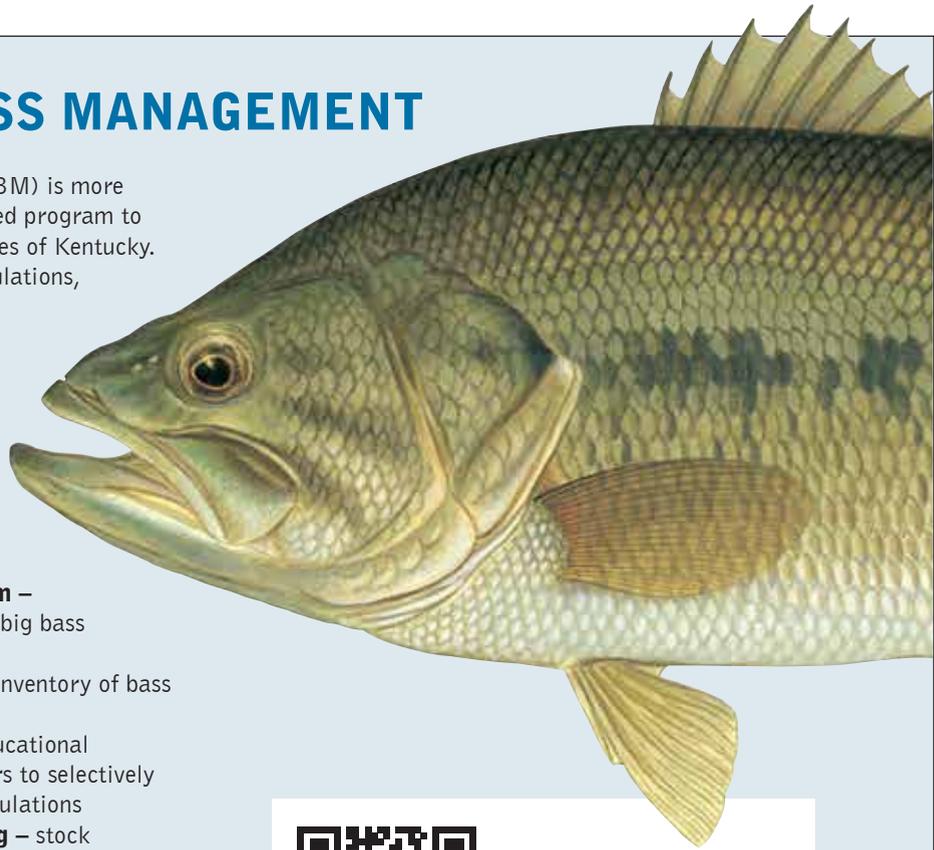
Lakes in the Fishing In Neighborhoods (FINs) program have uniform regulations for size and daily limits:

- **Rainbow Trout:** 5-fish daily limit. No culling of trout. Trout stamp required if you intend to keep trout.
- **Catfish:** 4-fish daily limit.
- **Sunfish:** 15-fish daily limit.
- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit, 1-fish daily limit.
- Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

FINs LAKES	COUNTY	# OF TROUT STOCKED				# OF CATFISH STOCKED			
		Feb.	March	Oct.	Nov.	March	Apr.	May	June
Anderson County Community Park Lake	Anderson	500	500		500	200	200	200	200
Camp Ernst Lake	Boone	1,500	1,500		1,500	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250
Millennium Park Pond	Boyle	500	500		500	400	400	400	400
Alexandria Community Park Lake	Campbell	1,500	1,500		1,500	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400
Robert J. Barth Lake	Campbell	750	750		750	700	700	700	700
Southgate Lake	Campbell	500	500		500		400		400
Panther Creek Park Lake	Daviess	750	750	750			800		800
Waymond Morris Park Lake	Daviess	1,500		1,500			1,000		1,000
Yellow Creek Park Lake	Daviess	750	750	750		600	600	600	600
Jacobson Park Lake	Fayette	3,000	3,000	3,000		2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Kentucky Horse Park Rolex Lake	Fayette	1,500			1,500		1,100		1,100
Flemingsburg Old Reservoir	Fleming	1,500			1,500		1,100		1,100
Lower Sportsman's Lake	Franklin	500	500	500		600	600	600	600
Upper Sportsman's Lake	Franklin	1,500	1,500	1,500		1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Lake Pollywog	Grant	750	750		750		700		700
Leary Lake	Grant	1,500	1,500		1,500		900		900
Kess Creek Park Lake	Graves	500	500	500		400	400	400	400
James D. Beville Park Lake	Grayson	750	750	750			600		600
Kingdom Come State Park Lake	Harlan	500	500	500			500		500
Rotary Park Lake	Hickman	500	500	500		200	200	200	200
Madisonville City Park Lake South	Hopkins	1,500	1,500	1,500			1,250		1,250
Cherokee Park Lake	Jefferson	750	750	750			800		800
Fisherman's Park Lake #3	Jefferson	500	500	500			400		400
Fisherman's Park Lake #4	Jefferson	500	500	500			400		400
Tom Wallace Park Lake	Jefferson	1,500	1,500	1,500		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Waverly Park Lake	Jefferson	1,500	1,500	1,500		900	900	900	900
William F. Miles Angler Lake	Jefferson	750	750	750		700	700	700	700
William F. Miles Green Heron Lake	Jefferson	500	500	500		200	200	200	200
Lake Mingo	Jessamine	500	500	500		500	500	500	500
Southland Church Lake	Jessamine	500	500	500		500	500	500	500
Middleton Mills Long Pond	Kenton	500	500	500		300	300	300	300
Middleton Mills Shelterhouse Pond	Kenton	500	500	500		300	300	300	300
Prisoners Lake	Kenton	750	750	750			800		800
Brickyard Pond	Knox	1,500			1,500	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Logan Hubble Park Lake	Lincoln	1,500	1,500		1,500		900		900
Whitehall Park Lake	Madison	1,500	1,500	1,500		1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Mike Miller Park Lake	Marshall	750	750	750			800		800
Maysville-Mason County Rec. Park Lake	Mason	1,500			1,500		1,150		1,150
Lake Montgomery	McCracken	1,500	1,500	1,500		1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Carlson Lake (Ft. Knox)	Meade						1,400		1,400
Easy Walker Park Pond	Montgomery	500	500		500	400	400	400	400
Bloomfield Park Lake	Nelson	500	500		500		500		500
Lusby Lake	Scott	500	500		500	500	500	500	500
Scott County Park Lake	Scott	500	500		500	500	500	500	500
Jesse W. Thornton Lake	Warren	1,500	1,500		1,500	1,450	1,450	1,450	1,450

# QUALITY BASS MANAGEMENT

Quality Bass Management (QBM) is more than a name... It is a dedicated program to enhance the black bass fisheries of Kentucky. With a focus on genetics, regulations, stocking, habitat, and forage, QBM will utilize science-based strategies and foster partnerships to achieve healthy and abundant quality bass fisheries.



## INITIATIVES:

- Thoroughbred Bass Program** – selective breeding to increase big bass potential
- Genetic Sampling** – genetic inventory of bass populations
- Selective Bass Harvest** – educational campaign to encourage anglers to selectively harvest overcrowded bass populations
- Supplemental Bass Stocking** – stock fingerling bass to compensate for poor spawns
- Habitat Enhancement** – strategic habitat replacement or enhancement
- Selective Bass Removals** – removal of small bass via electrofishing from overcrowded populations



Visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or scan this symbol for more information!

### *It's the law*

It is illegal for *any* person to stock *any* species of fish, from *any* source, into the public waters of Kentucky.

### **BARK CAMP CREEK** Whitley County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

### **BARKLEY, KENTUCKY LAKES** (and their connecting canal)

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

### **BARKLEY TAILWATER** – See Cumberland River

### **BARREN RIVER and all tributaries including Barren River Lake**

- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

### **BARREN RIVER LAKE**

The boundaries of Barren River Lake are from the dam upstream to the KY 100 bridge, Long Creek to the KY 100 bridge, Beaver Creek to the KY 1297 bridge, Skaggs Creek to the Matthews Mill Road bridge and Peter Creek to the Peter Creek Road bridge.

- **Blue and Channel Catfish:** 15-fish aggregate daily limit, only 1 fish may be longer than 25 inches.
- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-

inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.

### **BEAVER CREEK from the KY 90 bridge upstream to the KY 200 bridge** Wayne County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

### **BEAVER LAKE** Anderson County

- Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.
- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

### **BEECH FORK RESERVOIR** Powell County

- **Bluegill:** 15-fish daily limit.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

## **BERT COMBS LAKE** Clay County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **BEULAH LAKE** Jackson County

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **BIG BONE CREEK** Boone County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **BOLTZ LAKE** Grant County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **BRIGGS LAKE** Logan County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

## **BUCKHORN LAKE**

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Muskellunge:** 40-inch minimum size limit.
- **Crappie:** 9-inch minimum size limit.

## **CANE CREEK** Laurel County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **CARNICO LAKE** Nicholas County

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Bluegill and other sunfish:** 15-fish daily limit.

## **CARR CREEK LAKE**

- **Crappie:** 9-inch minimum size limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Blue and Channel Catfish:** 15-fish aggregate daily limit, only 1 fish may be longer than 25 inches.

## **CARTER CAVES STATE PARK LAKE (also called Smoky Valley Lake)**

Fishing during daylight hours only. Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **CASEY CREEK** Trigg County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **CAVE RUN LAKE**

Gigging and snagging prohibited in lake and all tributaries up to the first riffle or upper boundary as listed below. Lake upper boundaries: Scott's Creek to the KY 801 culvert; Beaver Creek to the KY 1274 culvert; North Fork Creek to the confluence of Craney Creek; Ramey Creek to include pool of water north of KY 801; Licking River to KY 722 bridge.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be released immediately.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 18-inch minimum size limit.
- **Muskellunge:** 40-inch minimum size limit.

## **CEDAR CREEK LAKE** Lincoln County

- **Largemouth Bass:** 20-inch minimum size limit, 1-fish daily limit.

## **CHIMNEY TOP CREEK** Wolfe County

Only artificial baits may be used.

## **CLEAR CREEK** Bell County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately

released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **CORINTH LAKE** Grant County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

(301 KAR 1:035)

Special fishing regulations are in effect on Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. For complete fishing information on this area contact: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, P.O. Box 1848, Middlesboro, KY 40965, phone (606) 248-2817.

## **CUMBERLAND RIVER upstream from Cumberland Falls and all tributaries:**

- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

## **CUMBERLAND RIVER from Wolf Creek Dam to the Tennessee state line**

All licensed anglers must possess a trout permit on this portion of Cumberland River. This includes Hatchery Creek and all tributaries up to the first riffle.

Anglers may not attract or chum trout with bait, corn or other attractants designed to draw numbers of trout to a specific area. This includes all tributaries up to the first riffle and in Hatchery Creek. For additional regulations on Hatchery Creek, refer to the Hatchery Creek section on page 10.

- **Brown Trout or Cutthroat Trout:** 20-inch minimum size limit, 1-fish daily limit, also applies to all tributary streams, except Hatchery Creek.
- **Rainbow Trout:** 15- to 20-inch protective slot limit. All trout caught between 15 and 20 inches in length must be immediately released. Five fish daily limit, only one rainbow trout may be longer than 20 inches. Also applies to all tributary streams, except Hatchery Creek.

- **Brook Trout:** 1-fish daily limit with a 15-inch minimum size limit. Also applies to all tributary streams, except Hatchery Creek.
- **Lake Sturgeon:** Catch and release only.

## **CUMBERLAND RIVER from Lake Barkley Dam downstream to confluence with Ohio River**

Gigging and snagging regulations along with special regulations for the Cumberland River below Lake Barkley can be found on page 14. Fishing prohibited at the mouth of the lock chamber at Barkley Dam as designated by signs.

## **DALE HOLLOW LAKE**

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit, 15-fish daily limit.
- **Black Bass:** includes largemouth, smallmouth and Kentucky (spotted) bass – 5 fish daily limit on black bass singly or combined, only two of which may be smallmouth bass.
- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 16- to 21-inch protective slot limit. One fish over 21 inches and one fish under 16 inches may be kept daily.
- **Sauger:** 10-fish daily limit.
- **Rainbow and Brown Trout:** 7-fish aggregate daily limit.
- **Walleye:** 16-inch minimum size limit, 5-fish daily limit.

## **DEWEY LAKE**

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Blue and Channel Catfish:** 15-fish aggregate daily limit, only 1 fish may be longer than 25 inches.
- **Muskellunge:** 40-inch minimum size limit.

## **DIX RIVER from Herrington Lake Dam downstream for two miles** Only artificial baits shall be used.

## **DOE RUN LAKE** Kenton County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Channel Catfish:** Four fish daily limit.

## **DOG FORK** Wolfe County

Only artificial baits with a single

hook shall be used. Brook trout must be immediately released.

## **EAST FORK INDIAN CREEK** Menifee County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **ELKHORN CREEK in Franklin County from confluence of North and South forks downstream to Kentucky River**

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. Largemouth and smallmouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.
- For regulatory purposes, the boundary of Elkhorn Creek is a permanent marker just below the first shoal upstream from its confluence with the Kentucky River.

## **ELK SPRING CREEK** Wayne County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **ELMER DAVIS LAKE** Owen County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **FISHTRAP LAKE**

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Crappie:** 9-inch minimum size limit.
- **Blue and Channel Catfish:** 15-fish aggregate daily limit, only 1 fish in the daily limit may be longer than 25 inches.
- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.

## **FLOYD'S FORK from U.S. 60 bridge downstream to U.S. 150 bridge** Jefferson County

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Rainbow Trout:** All trout caught from

Oct. 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## **GENERAL BUTLER STATE PARK LAKE** Carroll County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.
- **Channel Catfish:** 4 fish daily limit.

## **GOLDEN POND (Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area)**

- **Channel Catfish:** 15-inch minimum size limit, 5-fish daily limit.

## **GRAYSON LAKE**

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth and smallmouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## **GREENBO LAKE** Greenup County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Bluegill and other sunfish:** 15-fish daily limit.
- Areas marked by signage and buoys near the Jesse Stuart Lodge are periodically closed to fishing.

## **GREEN RIVER LAKE**

Lake upper boundaries: Green River to Snake Creek Boat Ramp; Robinson Creek to KY 76 bridge; Casey Creek to Arnolds Landing Boat Ramp.

- **Crappie:** 9-inch minimum size limit.
- **Muskellunge:** 40-inch minimum size limit.

## **GREEN RIVER LAKE TAILWATER from Green River Lake Dam and extending downstream to the end of the concrete wall** Taylor County

Fishing shall be limited to rod in

### *Did you know?*

Camping is prohibited on KDFWR owned or managed lakes except as designated by signs.

hand using either: (a) An artificial bait with a single hook; or (b) Live bait attached to a single hook.

### **GUNPOWDER CREEK** **Boone County**

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

### **HATCHERY CREEK** **Russell County**

All licensed anglers must possess a trout permit to fish Hatchery Creek.

- **Brook, Rainbow, Cutthroat and Brown Trout: Upper section:** As designated by signs, 5-trout aggregate daily limit, no minimum size limit.
- **Lower section:** Catch and release only and only artificial baits may be used. The lower boundary of Hatchery Creek is delineated as a straight line between opposite points where Hatchery Creek meets the main stem of the Cumberland River.

### **HIGHSPLINT LAKE** **Harlan County**

- **Largemouth bass:** 20-inch minimum size limit; 1-fish daily limit.

### **KENTUCKY, BARKLEY LAKES** **(and their connecting canal)**

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

### **KENTUCKY LAKE TAILWATER –** **see Tennessee River**

### **KENTUCKY RIVER, upstream of** **Lock and Dam 14, the North Fork** **and tributaries including Carr Fork** **below Carr Creek Lake along with** **the Middle and South Forks and all** **tributaries**

- **Walleye:** 2 fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

### **LAKE BLYTHE** **Christian County**

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

### **LAKE CHUMLEY** **Lincoln County**

Fishing during daylight hours only.

### **LAKE CUMBERLAND**

The boundaries of Lake Cumberland are defined as Cumberland Falls on the Cumberland River, Devils Jump on the Big South Fork, the Narrows of Rockcastle River and Laurel River Lake Dam on Laurel River.

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit.
- **Lake Sturgeon:** Catch and release only.
- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 18-inch minimum size limit.
- **Striped Bass:** 22-inch minimum size limit, 2-fish daily limit.

### **LAKE JERICO** **Henry County**

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

### **LAKE MALONE**

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

### **LAKE PENNYRILE** **Christian County**

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

### **LAKE REBA** **Madison County**

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

### **LAKE SHELBY** **Shelby County**

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Channel Catfish:** 4 fish daily limit.

### **LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES** **NATIONAL RECREATION AREA** (301 KAR 1:031)

Special fishing regulations are in effect for ponds and small lakes within Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area. For complete fishing information on this area, go online

to [landbetweenthelakes.us](http://landbetweenthelakes.us) or call (270) 924-2000.

### **LAUREL RIVER LAKE**

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Smallmouth Bass:** 18-inch minimum size limit, 2 fish daily limit.
- **Crappie:** 9-inch minimum size limit, 15-fish daily limit.

### **LEVISA FORK and all tributaries** **upstream of Fishtrap Lake**

- **Walleye:** 2 fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.

### **LINCOLN HOMESTEAD STATE** **PARK LAKE** **Washington County**

Fishing during daylight hours only. Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Channel Catfish:** 4 fish daily limit.
- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

### **MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK**

Special fishing regulations are in effect for ponds, streams and Green River within Mammoth Cave National Park. For complete fishing information on this area, anglers should contact: (270) 758-2180.

### **MARION COUNTY LAKE**

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

### **MARTIN'S FORK LAKE and all** **tributaries**

- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.

### **MCNEELY LAKE** **Jefferson County**

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## MILL CREEK LAKE

### Powell and Wolfe counties

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

## NEW HAVEN OPTIMIST LAKE

### Nelson County

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Channel Catfish:** 4 fish daily limit.

## NOLIN RIVER LAKE

Lake upper boundary is the Wheelers Mill Road bridge in the Nolin River arm and to the KY 728 bridge in the Bacon Creek arm.

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

## OHIO RIVER

- **White Bass, Striped Bass and their Hybrids:** 30 fish daily limit, only 4 fish may be 15 inches or longer.

## OTTER CREEK

### Meade County

#### Otter Creek inside Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area:

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth and smallmouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.
- All trout caught in Otter Creek Park from Oct. 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

**Q:** Is fishing allowed around a dock or a marina?

**A:** It depends. Public marinas on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lakes have contractual agreements that address lease space on public waters. The Corps presently allows the marina owners or operators to post signs that prohibit fishing within 150 feet of their floating structures. These agreements do not prohibit a person from fishing in their boat rental slip. This policy does not apply to privately owned boat docks on Corps lakes.

**Otter Creek inside Fort Knox:** Anglers fishing Otter Creek within Fort Knox must check in, purchase a fishing permit and follow the fishing regulations at the Fort Knox iSportsman website at [fknnox.isportsman.net](http://fknnox.isportsman.net).

## PANBOWL LAKE

### Breathitt County

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

## PARCHED CORN CREEK

### Wolfe County

Only artificial baits with single hook shall be used. Brook trout must be immediately released.

## PEABODY WMA LAKES

In addition to a fishing license, a \$15.00 user permit is required of persons age 16 and over while on Peabody WMA. Permits can be purchased where fishing licenses are sold. Fishing open March 16 - Oct. 14 on Goose, Island and South Lake, all other lakes open year-round.

## PIKEVILLE CITY LAKE

### Pike County

- **Largemouth Bass:** All largemouth bass caught must be immediately released.

## ROCK CREEK from Tennessee state line downstream to Bell Farm bridge McCreary County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## ROCKCASTLE RIVER and all tributaries

- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.

## ROCKCASTLE RIVER WMA

### Pulaski County

#### All Ponds Collectively:

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit, 1-fish daily limit.
- **Bluegill and other Sunfish:** 10-fish daily limit.
- **Catfish:** 4-fish daily limit.
- **Crappie:** 15-fish daily limit.

## ROUGH RIVER LAKE

Lake upper boundary: Rough River to the KY 84 bridge.

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

## SHANTY HOLLOW LAKE

### Warren County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

## SHILLALAH CREEK

### Bell County

Outside the Cumberland Gap National Park as posted, only artificial baits with single hook shall be used. Brook trout must be immediately released.

## SPORTSMAN'S LAKES

### Franklin County

Fishing during daylight hours only.

## SPURLINGTON LAKE

### Taylor County

Possession or use of live shad for bait is prohibited.

## SWIFT CAMP CREEK

### Clifty Wilderness, Wolfe County

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be released immediately and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

## SYMPSON LAKE

### Nelson County

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.

## TAYLORSVILLE LAKE

Lake upper boundary is Dry Dock Road on Salt River.

- **Crappie:** 10-inch minimum size limit, 15-fish daily limit.
- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Blue and Channel Catfish:** 15-fish aggregate daily limit, only 1 fish may be longer than 25 inches.

## TENNESSEE RIVER from Kentucky Lake Dam downstream to confluence with Ohio River

Gigging and snagging regulations along with special regulations for the Tennessee River below Kentucky Lake can be found on page 14.

**TRAMMEL CREEK**  
**Allen County**

All trout caught from October 1 through March 31 must be immediately released and only artificial baits shall be used during this period.

- **Rainbow Trout:** 5-fish daily limit.

**WILLISBURG PARK POND**  
**Washington County**

- **Channel Catfish:** 4-fish daily limit.

- **Largemouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Sunfish:** 15-fish daily limit, no minimum size limit.

**WOOD CREEK LAKE**  
**Laurel County**

- **Largemouth Bass:** 12- to 15-inch protective slot limit. All largemouth bass caught between 12 and 15 inches in length must be immediately released.

- **Walleye:** 2-fish daily limit; 18- to 26-inch protective slot limit. All walleye caught from 18 to 26 inches long must be immediately released.

**YATESVILLE LAKE**

- **Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass:** 15-inch minimum size limit.
- **Blue and Channel Catfish:** 15-fish daily limit in aggregate, only one fish may be longer than 25 inches.

## OTHER SPECIES

**BULLFROGS** (301 KAR 1:082)

The taking season for bullfrogs opens at noon on the third Friday in May (**May 15, 2026**) and runs through Oct. 31. If a gun or bow and arrow are used, a hunting license is required. If frogs are taken by pole and line, a fishing license is required. If frogs are taken by gig or by hand, then either a hunting or fishing license is valid. The daily noon-to-noon limit for bullfrogs is 15. The possession limit is 30.

**TURTLES** (301 KAR 1:058)

Anglers may take snapping turtles (except alligator snapping turtles) and softshell turtles year round by the same methods legal for taking rough fish species or with a turtle trap. Commercial fishing gear may not be used to take turtles. A hunting license is required when taking turtles by gun or by bow and arrow. Otherwise a fishing license is required. Turtles cannot be sold.

Turtle traps may be one of two kinds: either a barrel or drum with a tilting trigger board or a floating log raft with an enclosed twine or wire mesh bag. Turtle traps must be inspected daily. All turtles must be removed daily except one decoy turtle may remain. Any other species (except soft shelled and snapping turtles) caught in a turtle trap must be released unharmed.

**GRASS CARP HARVEST PROHIBITED** (301 KAR 1:201)

Harvesting grass carp is prohibited in any lake owned or managed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Anglers who catch a grass carp from one of these lakes must immediately return the fish to the water

where it was caught. Grass carp are used to control aquatic vegetation.

**LIVE BAIT FOR PERSONAL USE**  
(301 KAR 1:130, 1:122)

No live fish, live bait fish or live bait organisms that are not native or established in Kentucky waters shall be bought, sold, possessed, imported, or in any way used or released into waters of this Commonwealth. Blueback herring are not native to Kentucky and may not be imported or possessed in this state.

Holders of sport fishing licenses may take live bait from public waters and may possess up to 500 live bait fishes which include shad (except on lakes where possession or use of live shad is prohibited) and herring, 500 crayfish, 25 spring lizards or dusky salamanders, 5 frogs (other than bullfrogs), 5 tadpoles, 100 native lampreys, 500 other aquatic invertebrate organisms other than mussels, and any number of unshelled Asiatic clams. **Live wild caught invasive carp, herring and shad, as well as the species mooneye and goldeye, may only be used in the waters from which they were collected and cannot be transported by roadway.** A commercial license is required to take live bait from public waters open to commercial fishing for the purpose of selling.

Regardless of size or how obtained, it is illegal to use sport fish for bait, except for redear sunfish less than 6 inches long. Native rough fish including minnows, suckers, skipjack herring, catfish, and bluegills may be used for live bait. It is unlawful to use for live bait any federally threatened or endangered species or species with special state protection, including palezone shiner, blackside dace,

Cumberland darter, Kentucky arrow darter, relict darter and tuxedo darter. Search “wildlife diversity” at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) and click on “threatened and endangered species” for a list with pictures of these protected fish species.

Live bait may be taken with the following gear:

- **Dip Nets:** Maximum size of 3 feet in diameter is legal statewide.
- **Minnow Traps:** Maximum legal size statewide: 3 feet long, 18 inches in diameter, 1-inch openings for catching.
- **Seines:** Maximum legal size statewide: 10 feet long, 4 feet deep, ¼-inch bar mesh. Maximum legal size in the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and Kentucky and Barkley lakes: 30 feet long, 6 feet deep and ¼-inch bar mesh.
- **Sport Cast Nets:** Maximum sport cast net size is 20 feet in diameter with maximum 1-inch bar mesh statewide except in the following waters. Sport cast nets are prohibited in: 1) lakes having fewer than 500 surface acres, 2) within 200 yards below a dam, 3) Hatchery Creek in Russell County.

All sport fish incidentally taken while capturing live bait with seines, dip nets, cast nets or minnow traps must be released immediately unharmed into the water. Special regulations may apply to some waters.

# NON-TRADITIONAL FISHING METHODS

The following species regulations apply statewide for non-traditional fishing methods unless different limits are referenced in the gear-specific sections below:

- There shall be no harvest of sport fish, lake sturgeon, pallid sturgeon, or alligator gar.
- Only 1 trophy catfish of each species is allowed per day.
- At Barren River Lake, Carr Creek Lake, Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Taylorsville Lake and Yatesville Lake, there is a 15-fish daily aggregate limit on channel and blue catfish and only one fish over 25 inches is allowed per day.
- Only 2 paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon (each) are allowed per day, except there shall be no harvest of shovelnose sturgeon from the Mississippi River.
- Unless specified below, there is no size or daily limits on other rough fish.

## SPORT FISHING TROT LINES, JUG LINES and SET LINES (LIMB LINES) (301 KAR 1:410; KRS 150.010)

A sport fishing trotline is a line with no more than 50 single or multi-barbed baited hooks that must be at least 18 inches apart. A sport fishing trotline must be set at least three feet below the water's surface. Jugging is fishing with a single baited line attached to any floating object. A jug line may have no more than one single or multi-barbed hook. A set line is a line with one single or multi-barbed hook. It may be attached to a tree limb, tree trunk, bank pole or other stationary object on the bank of a stream or impoundment.

One person may use no more than two sport fishing trotlines or 50 jug lines or 25 set lines at any one time. Each boat may not use more than 50 jug lines, but each occupant may use two sportfishing trotlines or 25 set lines. Each sport fishing trotline, jug line or set line must be: 1) permanently labeled with the customer identification number provided on fishing licenses; 2) baited, checked and all fish removed at least once every 24 hours; 3) removed from water, bank or tree when fishing ceases. Sport fishing trotlines must be permanently labeled

on both ends of the line.

Sport fish harvest is allowed with sport fishing trotlines, jug lines, and set lines, but anglers must follow all traditional fishing methods size and daily limits (301 KAR 1:201).

**Prohibited Areas:** Sport fishing trotlines, jug lines or set lines may not be used within 200 yards below any dam. Sport fishing trotlines, jug lines or set lines are not allowed in Department owned/managed lakes having less than 500 surface acres, except those located on Ballard, Peal, and Swan Lake WMAs. No sport fishing trotlines are allowed within 700 yards below Kentucky Dam, the area between Barkley Dam and U.S. 62 bridge, or below the following Ohio River dams from the face of the dam to the end of the outer lock wall: Smithland, Newburgh, Cannelton, Markland, Meldahl and Greenup; McAlpine downstream to the K&I railroad bridge; J.T. Meyers (Uniontown) 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.

## TICKLING and NOODLING (hand grabbing) (301 KAR 1:410; KRS 150.010)

Tickling and noodling means taking fish directly by hand, or with the aid of a handled hook. The statewide tickling and noodling season for rough fish is June 1 through August 31, dur-

### Q: What is legal equipment for sport fish?

A: Anglers may legally take sport fish by hook and line in hand, rod in hand, jugging, set line or sport fishing trotline. There is no limit on number of rods/poles per angler.

*No firearms or aircraft for fishing*

Fish may not be taken with use of a firearm or any aircraft.

ing daylight hours only. Tickling and noodling is not allowed in Department owned/managed lakes having less than 500 surface acres, except those located on Ballard, Peal, and Swan Lake WMAs. The rough fish daily limit is 15 fish of which only 5 may be catfish. The 5-fish daily catfish limit also applies to Barren River Lake, Carr Creek Lake, Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Taylorsville Lake and Yatesville Lake.

## BOW FISHING (301 KAR 1:410)

Rough fish (except alligator gar, lake sturgeon and pallid sturgeon) may be taken year-round by long bow, crossbow, compound bow, recurve bow or pneumatic air arrow launching device. There is a daily aggregate limit of 5 catfish. The 5-fish daily catfish limit also applies to Barren River Lake, Carr Creek Lake, Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Taylorsville Lake and Yatesville Lake.

Arrows must have a barbed or retractable style point that has a line attached for retrieval. Bow fisherman may fish within 200 yards of a dam, except they cannot fish by boat in boat restricted areas. Bow fishing is prohibited on the Cumberland River below Wolf Creek Dam downstream to the Tennessee line, including Hatchery Creek and all tributaries for ½ mile upstream of their confluence with the Cumberland River. Bow fishing is also prohibited in Lake Carnico (Nicholas County), Carpenter Lake (Daviss County), Clear Creek Lake (Bath County), Greenbo Lake (Greenup County), and Lake Reba (Madison County).

Persons using a bow and arrow for fishing must have the appropriate fishing license and may take rough fish from bank or boat. Bow anglers cannot sell paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon or their roe taken by bow and arrow. Paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon and catfish taken by bow and arrow must be taken into immediate possession and cannot be culled. Fish taken by bow must not be discarded on the bank. Bank disposal is littering and subject to a fine.

## SPEAR FISHING (301 KAR 1:410)

Underwater spearing of rough fish with hand-held or mechanically pro-

pelled spear is permitted year-round, but only in lakes having 1,000 surface acres or more. All participants in this sport must be completely submerged while spear fishing and the appropriate fishing license is required. The rough fish daily limit is 15 fish of which only 5 may be catfish. The 5-fish daily catfish limit also applies to Barren River Lake, Carr Creek Lake, Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Taylorsville Lake and Yatesville Lake.

## **GIGGING and SNAGGING FISH STATEWIDE** (301 KAR 1:410)

Gigging means spearing or impaling fish on any pronged or barbed instrument attached to the end of any rigid object. Snagging means taking fish or other aquatic animals by a rapid drawing motion (rather than enticement by bait) using a hand-held rod and attached line with one single or treble hook. A rod legal for snagging must be equipped with line, guides and a reel.

The statewide season for gigging and/or snagging rough fish is from February 1 through May 10. It is illegal to possess a gig on a stream or lake or in a boat from November 1 through January 31. A person may gig or snag fish from the bank of a stream during the day or night. Gigging and snagging is not legal from a platform or boat, except that gigging is legal from a boat on lakes 500 surface acres or larger and only during daylight hours. Persons may gig rough fish through the ice any time the surface is frozen thick enough to stand upon. The gigger must gig while supported by the ice. Disposal of giggered or snagged fish on the bank is considered littering and subject to a fine. All giggered or snagged paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon (except shovelnose sturgeon in the Mississippi River) must be taken into possession and cannot be culled or released. Anglers must cease gigging or snagging once they attain either a paddlefish or shovelnose sturgeon daily

limit. It is illegal to sell paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon or their roe taken by gigging or sportfish snagging. Also, when snagging, anglers may only harvest 1 trophy catfish per day and must cease snagging once a trophy catfish (of any species) is taken. When gigging, an angler may take 1 trophy catfish of each species per day. Regardless of condition, all sport fish as well as alligator gar and lake or pallid sturgeon taken by gigging and snagging must be immediately returned to the water.

## **SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR GREEN RIVER, ROLLING FORK RIVER AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES**

- Up to five single or five treble hooks may be used for snagging.

## **SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR TENNESSEE RIVER (below Kentucky Lake)**

- Gigging is prohibited in the Tennessee River downstream of Kentucky Dam year-round.
- The area from Kentucky Dam to the new U.S. 62 bridge is open to snagging 24 hours per day from January 1 through May 31 and from sunset to sunrise from June 1 through December 31.
- The area from the I-24 bridge downstream to the Ohio River is open to snagging year-round.
- The area from the new U.S. 62 bridge to the I-24 bridge is closed to snagging year-round.
- Snagging is prohibited under the U.S. 62 bridge, under the P&L railroad bridge, and from any fishing pier or jetty.
- Daily snagging limit of 8 fish in aggregate excluding invasive carp.
- Sport fish harvest is allowed but anglers must cease snagging if the daily limit of any sportfish with a daily limit less than 8 fish is reached.
- No size limit for snagged sport fish.
- Snagged shad, herring or invasive carp may be released, but all other species, including paddlefish and sport fish must be taken into possession and not be culled, regardless of size.

## **SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR CUMBERLAND RIVER (below Lake Barkley)**

- Gigging and snagging only permitted downstream of U.S. 62 bridge.

- Harvest of sportfish prohibited (snagged sportfish must be released).
- Non-traditional fishing methods statewide size and daily limits apply for all species.
- Snagged shad, herring or invasive carp can be released, but all other species, including paddlefish must be taken into possession and not be culled.

## **GIGGING AND SNAGGING ARE PROHIBITED IN THE FOLLOWING WATERS OR AREAS:**

- Cave Run Lake including all tributaries up to the first riffle or upper boundary as listed below. Lake upper boundaries: Scott's Creek to the KY 801 culvert; Beaver Creek to the KY 1274 culvert; North Fork Creek to the confluence of Craney Creek; Ramey Creek to include pool of water north of KY 801; Licking River to KY 722 bridge.
- Cumberland River, below Wolf Creek Dam downstream to the Tennessee line including all of Hatchery Creek and all tributaries for ½ mile upstream of their confluence with the Cumberland River.
- Within 200 yards of a dam, except below Kentucky Dam.
- Cumberland River, below Barkley Dam downstream to the U.S. 62 bridge.
- Tennessee River, below Kentucky Dam from the new U.S. 62 bridge to I-24 bridge.
- Middle Fork of Kentucky River from Buckhorn Lake downstream to the Breathitt County line.
- Rough River, below Rough River Dam to KY 54 bridge.
- In the Tennessee River below Kentucky Dam, gigging prohibited year-round.

**Q:** May you clean your fish while on the water?

**A:** Anglers shall not remove any part of the head or tail of any fish for which there is a size or daily limit until finished fishing and off the water.

## BORDERING WATERS

All resident Kentucky anglers who fish reciprocal waters must have a valid Kentucky fishing license.

### OHIO RIVER

(KRS 150.170)

Kentucky anglers licensed in Kentucky may fish the entire main stem of the Ohio River from a boat, or a bordering state's bank without buying the other state's license (bordering states include Illinois, Indiana and Ohio).

This does not apply if fishing a bordering state's embayments or tributaries, which begin at a straight line between opposite points where the tributary or embayment connects with the main stem of the river.

Anglers shall abide by the regulations of the state by which they are licensed, except that when fishing from the bank, anglers shall follow the regulations of the state in which they are fishing.

Reminder: snagging is not permitted for any fish species on the Indiana side or in any Indiana waters of the Ohio River. In Kentucky, a person may not snag within 200 yards below any dam on the Ohio River.

### MISSISSIPPI RIVER

(KRS 150.170)

Kentucky anglers licensed in Kentucky may fish Missouri portions of the Mississippi River bordering Kentucky without buying a Missouri fishing license. The river is defined as the main channel and immediate side or secondary channels and chutes. It does not include oxbow or floodplain lakes or any tributary streams. A tributary is delineated by the straight line between opposite points where the tributary connects with the main body of the Mississippi River. Furthermore, the river does not include backwaters that extend onto the floodplain or tributaries when the river exceeds 33 feet at the gauging station at Cairo, Illinois.

Sport fishing license or permit holders may fish from, or attach any device or equipment to land along the river under the jurisdiction of the other state. Landowner permission is required to fish from the bank.

Sport fishing license holders shall

abide by the regulations of the state in whose waters they are fishing and when fishing in waters they are not licensed to fish, shall comply with the most restrictive of the two state's regulations.

### DALE HOLLOW LAKE

Kentucky anglers licensed in Kentucky may fish all Tennessee portions of the Wolf River arm of Dale Hollow Lake beginning at a line crossing the Wolf River at its mouth where it joins the Obey River and the main part of the lake without buying a Tennessee fishing license.

Anglers shall abide by the regulations of the state by which they are licensed, except that when fishing from the bank, anglers shall follow the regulations of the state in which they are fishing.

### KENTUCKY LAKE

Kentucky anglers licensed in Kentucky may fish all Tennessee waters on the portion of Kentucky Lake from Eggner's Ferry Bridge (U.S. 68 and KY 80) in Kentucky south to the Governor Ned McWhorter Bridge (U.S. 79 and TN 76) in Tennessee without buying a Tennessee fishing license. This includes all embayments and tributaries on this portion of the lake. Tennessee anglers: please note that Blood River is not included in the bordering waters zone and will require a Kentucky non-resident fishing license to fish.

Anglers shall abide by the regulations of the state by which they are licensed, except that when fishing from the bank, anglers shall follow the regulations of the state in which they are fishing.

### BIG SOUTH FORK OF THE CUMBERLAND RIVER

Kentucky anglers licensed in Kentucky may fish all Tennessee waters on the portion of the Big South Fork from the Leatherwood Ford bridge (TN 297) in Tennessee to the KY 92 bridge at Yamacraw, Kentucky without buying a Tennessee fishing license.

Anglers shall abide by the regulations of the state by which they are licensed, except that when fishing from the bank, anglers shall follow the regulations of the state in which they are fishing.

### BIG SANDY and TUG FORK RIVERS

Kentucky anglers licensed in Kentucky may fish the entire main stem of the Big Sandy and Tug Fork rivers from the confluence of the Ohio and Big Sandy Rivers upstream to the Virginia state line. Kentucky anglers can fish from a boat or on West Virginia's bank without buying a West Virginia fishing license.

This does not apply to fishing West Virginia's tributaries or embayments, which begin at a straight line between opposite points where the tributary or embayment meets the main stem of the river.

Anglers shall abide by the regulations of the state by which they are licensed, except that when fishing from the bank, anglers shall follow the regulations of the state in which they are fishing and must obtain landowner consent.

### OTHER BORDERING WATERS

On all other bordering waters, boundaries are set by state lines. Obey the laws of the state in which you are fishing.



TAKEMEFISHING™.org



The Take Me Fishing website at [www.takemefishing.org](http://www.takemefishing.org) is a bountiful resource for anglers just learning to fish as well as intermediate anglers looking to improve their knowledge.

## DEFINITIONS

**Angling** means taking or attempting to take fish by hook and line in hand, rod in hand, jugging, set line or sport fishing trotline.

**Artificial baits** are lures or flies made of wood, metal, plastic, hair, feathers, preserved pork rind or similar inert materials. In artificial bait-only waters, anglers may not use organic baits including dough bait, putty or pastes designed to attract fish by taste or smell.

**Authorization number** is the number assigned to a person in lieu of fishing or hunting license when the license is purchased over the phone or Internet.

**Black bass** includes largemouth, smallmouth, Kentucky (spotted) and Coosa bass.

**Catfish:** A catfish means a blue, channel or flathead catfish. Bullheads are not included in this definition.

**Culling:** Replacing a live fish in the daily limit with another fish of the same species.

**Daylight hours** begin one-half hour before sunrise and end one-half hour after sunset.

**Daily limit** means the maximum num-

ber of a particular species or group of species a person may legally take in one (1) calendar day while fishing.

**Fishing** is taking or attempting to take fish in any manner, whether or not fish are in possession.

**Lake** means impounded waters, from the dam upstream to the first riffle on the main stem river and tributary streams or as specified in regulation.

**Length** means the distance from the front tip of a fish's lower jaw with mouth closed to the tip of its tail with the fish laid flat on a rule with its tail lobes squeezed together.

**Organic baits** are insects, minnows, fish eggs, worms, corn, cheese, cut bait or similar substances used as a lure.

**Possession limit** means the maximum number of unprocessed fish a person may hold after two (2) or more days of fishing.

**Regulation** is an official rule of Kentucky law applying to particular activities or circumstances.

**Release** means return of the fish, in the best possible condition, immediately after removing the hook, to the water from

which it was taken in a place where the fish's immediate escape shall not be prevented.

**Resident** is anyone who has established permanent and legal residence in Kentucky and residing here at least 30 days.

**Rough fish** are those fish species not listed as sport fish in the regulation 301 KAR 1:060.

**Size limit** is the legal length a fish must be if it is in possession. (Fish length is measured from the tip of the closed lower jaw to the tip of the tail with fish laid flat on rule and tail lobes squeezed together.)

**Slot limit** means fish within a specified minimum and maximum size range must be released.

**Single hook** is a hook with only one point.

**Tenant** is any resident sharecropper or lessee who lives and works on farmland owned by his/her landlord.

**Trophy catfish** is a blue or flathead catfish 35 inches or longer or a channel catfish 28 inches or longer.

Kentucky's largest salamander: Eastern Hellbender

# HAVE YOU SEEN ME?



*Can grow up to 24" long  
Completely aquatic  
Not aggressive or poisonous  
Long lived (up to 30 yrs.)*

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is very interested in all location records for the eastern hellbender. If you see this giant salamander, please e-mail Courtney Hayes ([courtney.hayes@ky.gov](mailto:courtney.hayes@ky.gov)) or Michaela Rogers ([michaela.rogers@ky.gov](mailto:michaela.rogers@ky.gov)) with location information and a photograph, if possible.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

Kentucky is blessed with a myriad of productive fishing waters with 17 major reservoirs, dozens of smaller, state owned lakes, large rivers as well as smaller streams perfect for floating. The waters of Kentucky contain warm water species such as largemouth bass, catfish and crappie as well as cool water species such as muskellunge, trout and walleye. An angler can run the gamut of fishing possibilities from catching slab crappie from Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley in far western Kentucky to landing large rainbow trout in the Cumberland River below Lake Cumberland in southeastern Kentucky.

Buy your Kentucky fishing license and get in on the great fishing in our state.

## Fishing Forecast

Use our Fisheries Biologists as your guide to your next fishing spot. The forecast provides anticipated fishing success based on current fish surveys and other historical data. Visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) to download your copy.

## FISHING TOURNAMENTS

Fishing event organizers are strongly urged to use the Tournament website at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) to register and report on their events. Tournament planners can avoid space conflicts with other previously registered events by adjusting the date, time, specific launch areas or weigh-in site for their activities.

Other recreational anglers and boaters can check the website to see when and where fishing events are scheduled. This will assist them in planning their activities and also help avoid potential space conflicts. Additional permits may be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service or Kentucky State Parks.

## Bigger tournaments

Fishing tournaments involving more than 100 boats must register with the Division of Law Enforcement, 1-800-858-1549.

If the launch site for your tournament involves using a marina ramp, please contact the marina operator before scheduling your tournament.

Check the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) for more information on tournaments and keeping your bass alive.

## HABITAT

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife regularly creates and maintains fish attractors and habitat structures in lakes across Kentucky. The fish habitat/attractors are made in a variety of shapes and sizes and include material from trees, rocks, logs, wooden pallets, and even commercially made plastic structures. These structures are typically dense in nature with tree limbs and shade producing cover. Rock piles and gravel beds create spawning grounds for many species and brush piles provide much needed shelter for young fishes. All of these structures also provide stable substrates for the attachment of aquatic plants that provide the basis of the food chain in lakes. In general, more habitat just means more fish.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife also collects trees for habitat with our annual Christmas tree drive. Every year after the holiday season, we collect and recycle thousands of discarded natural trees into brush piles for habitat.

All of the habitat sites created are published and made available to the public via Google Maps. They can be accessed by using the Find a Place to Fish feature or on the Lakes with Fish Attractors page at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

The Lakes with Fish Attractors



## NEED A PLACE TO FISH?

The Fish Boat KY app will help inform anglers and boaters from any place in Kentucky. A few clicks on a cell phone will bring users valuable information on waterbodies, current fishing reports, ramps and access sites, fishing and boating regulations as well as access to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website. Use the QR code above to access the Fish Boat KY app webpage.

page also has downloadable GPX files for importing in to the depth finder of your boat. Most brands of depth finders will allow for upload of GPX files, but you may have to consult your owners manual. YouTube is also a good source for instructional videos on how to import and convert these files.

Once you know where the sites are, fishing them can be rewarding. Lake habitat sites will vary in depth and may include areas in the backs of creeks, large flats, small pockets, and even main lake points. Many of these sites are located away from the bank in deeper water, so depth finders will help in identifying these offshore locations.

**Q:** Can you sell fish caught while possessing only a valid Kentucky sport fishing license?

**A:** No. It is illegal to sell any fish (except invasive carp) caught without the proper commercial fishing license and gear.

# FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

The Kentucky Departments for Environmental Protection, Health Services and Fish and Wildlife Resources jointly issue a fish consumption advisory to the public when fish are found contaminated. Trace contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), mercury and chlordane are found in some fish in Kentucky. An advisory cautions people about potential health problems that may result from eating fish caught from a particular area. An advisory does not ban eating fish; it is a guide to reduce your risk. This guide provides information on how often fish may be safely eaten. Most fish are healthy to eat and are an excellent source of low-fat protein.

## CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES

Consumption rates for specific fish have been developed based on a meal of ½ pound of fish (before cooking) eaten by a 150-pound individual. Following these guidelines and spacing your meals of those fish species will limit your health risks by reducing your total exposure. See table on the next page.

Fish consumption advisories now delineate between predatory fish, bottom feeder fish, panfish and **other fish** species including invasive carp, trout,

### *Sensitive population*

Women of childbearing age, children 6 years of age or younger, pregnant and nursing women and women who plan to become pregnant should follow the advisories in the "Sensitive Population" category.

## REDUCE YOUR RISK

Risks from eating contaminated fish can be reduced by the following:

- fillet the fish, remove the skin and trim all fat
- do not eat fish eggs
- broil, grill or bake the fillets instead of frying or microwaving
- do not eat or reuse juices or fats that cook out of the fish.

## PARASITES and GRUBS IN FISH

Kentucky anglers will occasionally clean a fish and find a white or yellowish color worm in the fish's flesh that is about the size of a grain of rice. Or, when stream fishing, an angler will encounter a smallmouth bass or sunfish with small black specks on its belly or across its body.

This is a parasitic fluke that requires different host animals to complete its life cycle: a fish eating bird, a snail and a fish. The grub matures and produces eggs inside a host fish-eating bird such as a Great Blue Heron. The eggs enter the water from the bird's droppings

or from its mouth. The eggs hatch and tiny larvae of the parasite burrow into a snail. After a time in the snail, the parasite changes form and swims to its next host, a fish. Inside the fish, the parasite changes to a grub form and waits for the fish to be eaten. Then, the cycle repeats.

The angler's first instinct is to discard any fish with either the grubs in the flesh or black specks on the body. Grub-infested fish are safe to eat. Grubs do not infect people. Remove any grubs found and prepare the fish as you normally would.

minnows, etc. **Predatory fish** include black bass (smallmouth, largemouth and spotted), white bass, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, sauger, saugeye, walleye, muskellunge, flathead and blue catfish, yellow bass, chain pickerel and all gars.

**Panfish** include bluegill, crappie, rock bass as well as green, longear and redear sunfish. **Bottom feeder fish** include the bullheads, buffalo species, channel catfish, common carp, redhorse species, shovelnose sturgeon, drum, creek chub as well as carpsuckers and white, spotted and northern hog suckers.

## STATEWIDE

All waters are under advisory for mercury. Women of childbearing age and children 6 years of age or younger should eat no more than six meals per year of predatory fish. They should eat no more than one meal per month of panfish, bottom feeder fish and no more than one meal per week of fish in the "other fish" category. The general population should eat no more than one meal per month of predatory fish and no more than one meal per week of panfish and bottom feeder fish. There is no advisory for the general population for fish in the "other fish" category. However, brown trout over 17 inches are more predatory and have the potential to build up higher contaminant levels when compared to

smaller brown trout.

Organic mercury occurs naturally in the environment and does not affect swimmers, skiers or boaters. Fish accumulate low levels of mercury by eating plankton and other small aquatic creatures.

In 2021, state officials began testing fish from Kentucky waters to determine the prevalence of PFAS or polyfluoroalkyl substances. These substances are found in non-stick cookware, firefighting foam, stain resistant carpets and some food packaging and break down slowly in the environment. PFAS chemicals can be found in water, air, soil, fish, and wildlife and can build up in organisms such as fish over time.

From 2021 to 2022, fish from seven streams and a separate lake study were tested for PFAS and all samples had detectable levels of PFAS. Health officials are still evaluating the risks posed by these chemicals. However, to lower potential health risks from PFAS, officials recommend following the same consumption guidelines for mercury while consuming fish from Kentucky waters. The Department for Environmental Protection continues to monitor and evaluate the occurrence of PFAS in Kentucky.

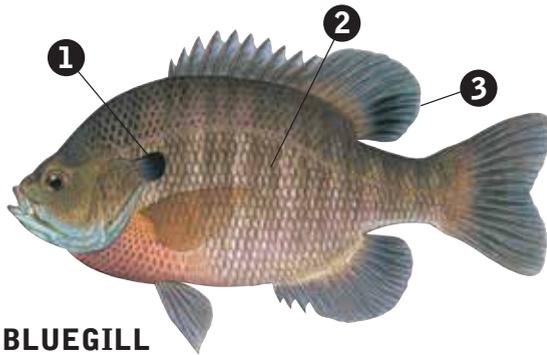
# FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

NUMBER OF MEALS PER SPECIES		General Population	Sensitive Population
STATEWIDE	<b>Predatory fish</b> (mercury and PFAS)	1/month	6/year
	<b>Bottom feeders and panfish</b> (mercury and PFAS)	1/week	1/month
	<b>Other fish</b> (mercury and PFAS)	No advisory	1/week
<b>DRAKES CREEK</b> (from dam on W. Fork at Franklin, KY downstream to confluence with Barren River)	<b>All species</b> (PCB)	No consumption	
<b>FISH LAKE, Ballard Co.</b> (from lake headwaters to outflow of Shawnee Creek)	<b>Bottom feeders</b> (mercury)	1/month	6/year
<b>FISHTRAP LAKE, Pike Co.</b> (from VA/KY state line to Fishtrap Lake dam)	<b>Bottom feeders and hybrid striped bass</b> (PCB)	1/month	6/year
<b>GREEN RIVER LAKE</b> (from lake headwaters to dam)	<b>Bottom feeders</b> (PCB and mercury)	1/month	6/year
<b>KNOX CREEK, Pike Co.</b> (from VA/KY state line to Tug Fork River)	<b>Flathead catfish</b> (PCB and mercury)	No consumption	
	<b>Bottom feeders</b> (PCB)	6/year	No consumption
	<b>Predatory fish (PCB) and panfish</b> (PCB and mercury)	1/month	6/year
<b>LITTLE BAYOU CREEK, McCracken Co.</b>	<b>All species</b> (PCB)	No consumption	
<b>METROPOLIS LAKE, McCracken Co.</b>	<b>All species</b> (PCB and mercury)	No consumption	
<b>MUD RIVER, Logan Co.</b> (from headwaters to Wolf Lick Creek)	<b>Bottom feeders</b> (PCB)	No consumption	
	<b>Predatory fish and panfish</b> (PCB)	1/month	6/year
<b>MUD RIVER, Butler and Muhlenberg cos.</b> (from Wolf Lick Creek to Green River)	<b>Bottom feeders</b> (PCB)	1/month	6/year
	<b>Panfish</b> (PCB)	1/week	1/month
<b>TOWN BRANCH, Logan Co.</b>	<b>All species</b> (PCB)	No consumption	

The Ohio River has different advisories than other Kentucky waters.  
Any fish species not listed in the table below falls under a 1 meal per week advisory for mercury.

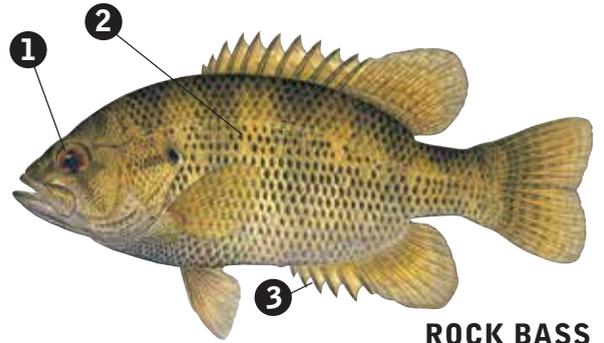
<b>OHIO RIVER, UPPER and MIDDLE REACH</b> (Mouth of the Big Sandy River to J.T. Meyers L&D)	<b>Common carp</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Channel catfish under 18 inches long</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Channel catfish 18 inches and longer</b> (PCB)	6/year	6/year
	<b>Flathead catfish</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Striped and hybrid striped bass</b> (PCB)	6/year	6/year
	<b>White bass</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>All suckers</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Freshwater drum</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
<b>OHIO RIVER, LOWER REACH</b> (J.T. Meyers L&D to mouth of Ohio River)	<b>Black bass (largemouth, smallmouth and spotted)</b> (mercury)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Common carp 22 inches and longer</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Blue catfish 20 inches and longer</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Channel catfish 18 inches and longer</b> (PCB)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Flathead catfish</b> (PCB and mercury)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Striped and hybrid striped bass</b> (PCB and mercury)	1/month	1/month
	<b>White bass</b> (mercury)	1/month	1/month
	<b>Freshwater drum 14 inches and longer</b> (mercury)	1/month	1/month
<b>Black bass (largemouth, smallmouth and spotted)</b> (mercury)	1/month	1/month	
<b>Sauger</b> (mercury)	1/month	1/month	

# ANGLER'S FISH IDENTIFICATION GUIDE



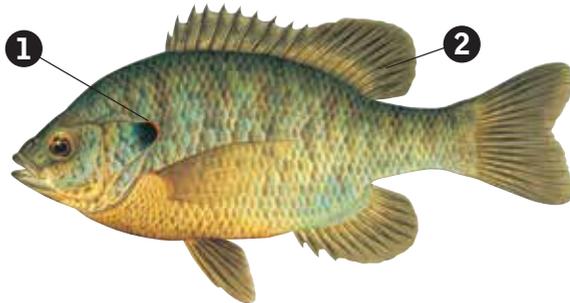
**BLUEGILL**

- 1. Gill flap black, 2. Vertical bars on side, 3. Dark blotch at rear of soft dorsal fin



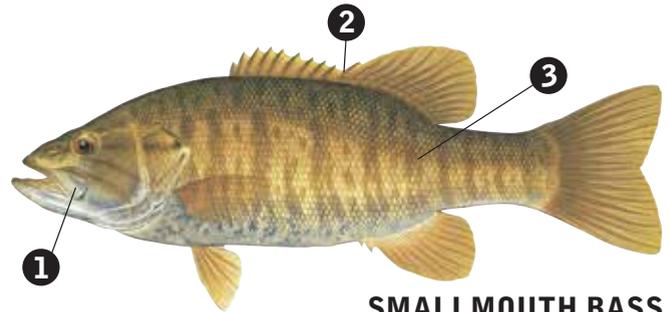
**ROCK BASS**

- 1. Eye rimmed in red, 2. Most scales have a dark spot, 3. Anal fin has five or six spines



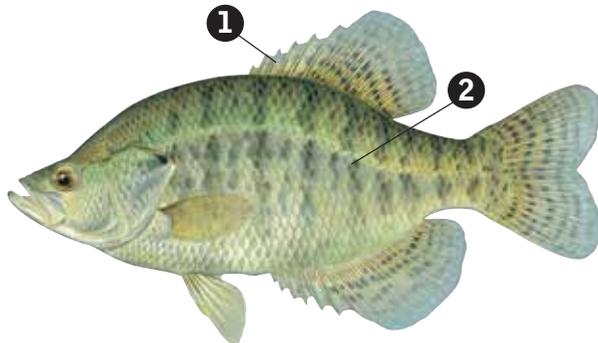
**REDEAR SUNFISH**

- 1. Gill flap black with orange or red margin, 2. No dark blotch at rear of soft dorsal fin



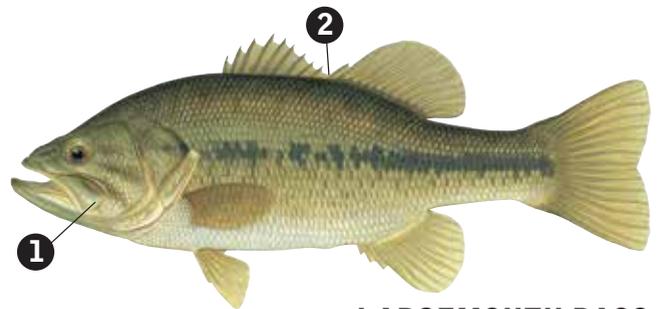
**SMALLMOUTH BASS**

- 1. Upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye, 2. Shallow notch between dorsal fins, 3. Bronze colored with vertical bars on side



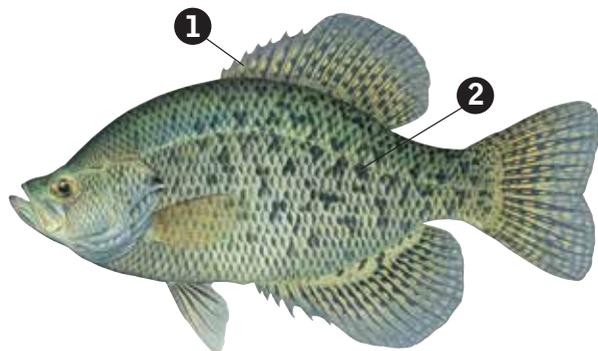
**WHITE CRAPPIE**

- 1. Dorsal fin has five or six spines, 2. Vertical bars on side



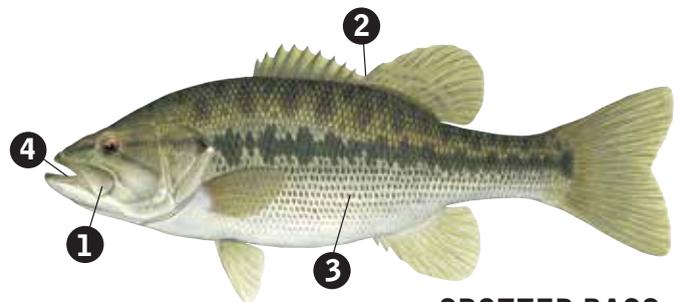
**LARGEMOUTH BASS**

- 1. Upper jaw extends beyond back of eye, 2. Dorsal fins separated by deep notch



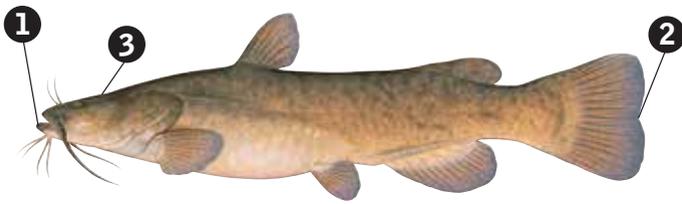
**BLACK CRAPPIE**

- 1. Dorsal fin has seven or eight spines, 2. Irregular black blotches on side



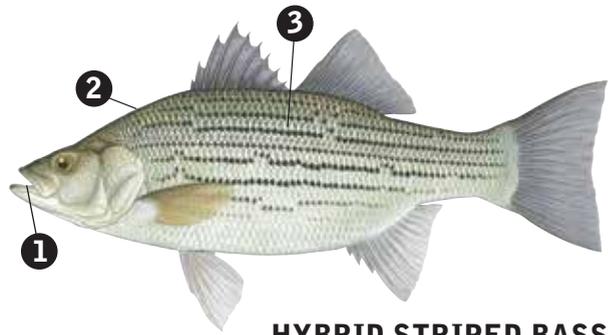
**SPOTTED BASS**

- 1. Upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye, 2. Shallow notch between dorsal fins, 3. Rows of dark spots below lateral line, 4. Single tooth patch on tongue



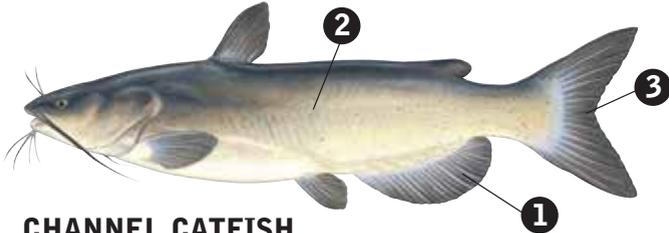
**FLATHEAD CATFISH**

1. Lower jaw projects far beyond upper jaw, 2. Tail fin not deeply forked, 3. Head is compressed on flathead catfish



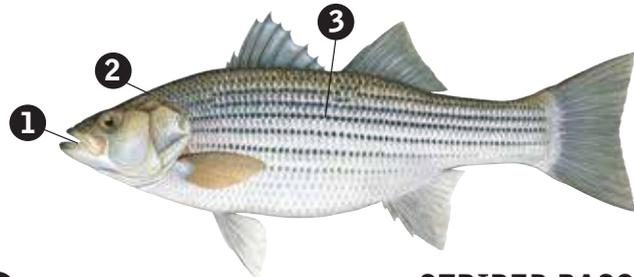
**HYBRID STRIPED BASS**

1. Tooth patch on tongue consists of two rows of teeth, often partially joined, 2. Back moderately arched, 3. Most stripes are broken, many more than once



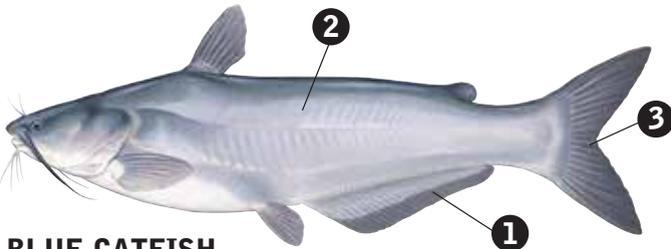
**CHANNEL CATFISH**

1. Outer margin of anal fin rounded, with 24 to 29 rays, 2. Dark spots usually on body, 3. Tail fin deeply forked



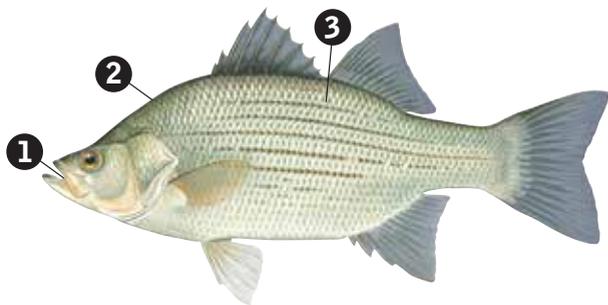
**STRIPED BASS**

1. Tooth patch on tongue consists of two distinctly split, parallel rows of teeth, 2. Back slightly arched, more streamlined, 3. Stripes very distinct and most extend fully onto tail



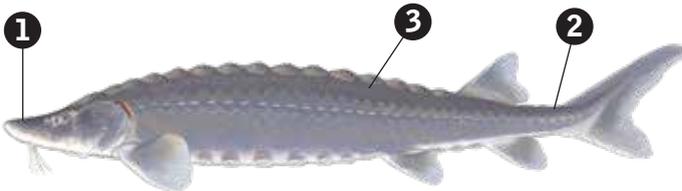
**BLUE CATFISH**

1. Outer margin of anal fin straight, with 30 to 35 rays, 2. Body without dark spots, 3. Tail fin deeply forked



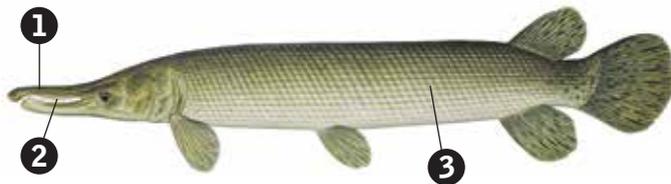
**WHITE BASS**

1. Single tooth patch on tongue, 2. Back arched, 3. Stripes often faint and irregular



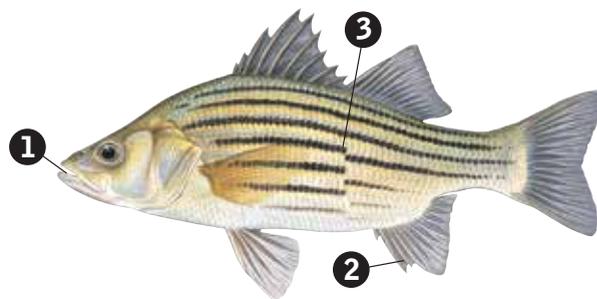
**LAKE STURGEON**

1. Short cone-shaped snout, 2. Short caudal peduncle, 3. Rows of bony plates (scutes)



**ALLIGATOR GAR**

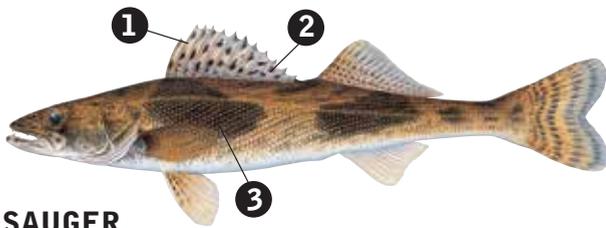
1. Short, broad snout when compared to other gar species, 2. Numerous large teeth, 3. Heavy body and large size (adults can reach 9 feet and 300 pounds)



**YELLOW BASS**

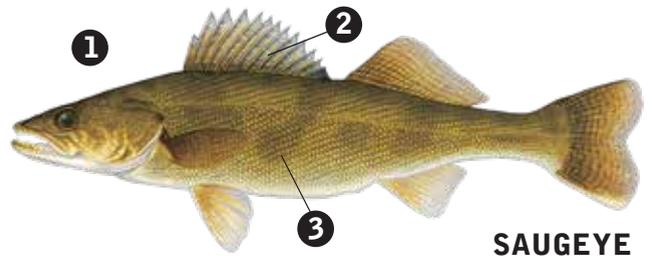
1. No tooth patch on tongue, 2. Second and third anal spines nearly same length, 3. Stripes distinct and broken above anal fin

Lake sturgeon and alligator gar may not be harvested statewide. Alligator gar are part of a restoration effort in western Kentucky. Lake sturgeon are part of a restoration effort in the upper reaches of Lake Cumberland. If you see or catch these fish, please report the catch or sighting to Matt Thomas at (502) 892-4463.



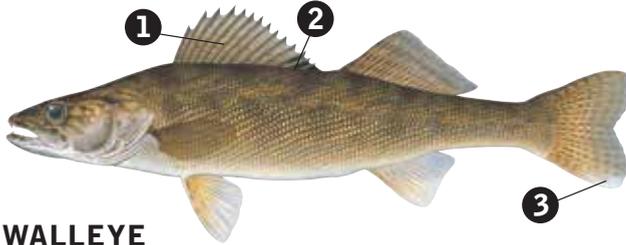
**SAUGER**

1. Rows of dark spots on spiny dorsal fin, 2. No dark blotch at rear of spiny dorsal fin, 3. Dark saddle-like blotches which extend onto the sides of the body



**SAUGEYE**

1. Intermediate in appearance between walleye and sauger, 2. May have dark streaks or blotches on spiny dorsal fin, 3. Dark blotches on side, but smaller than those on sauger



**WALLEYE**

1. Dark streaks or blotches on spiny dorsal fin, but not distinct spots, 2. Dark blotch at rear of spiny, dorsal fin, 3. White spot on lower lobe of tail fin



**MUSKELLUNGE**

1. Duck-like bill with sharp teeth, 2. No scales on lower half of cheek and gill flap

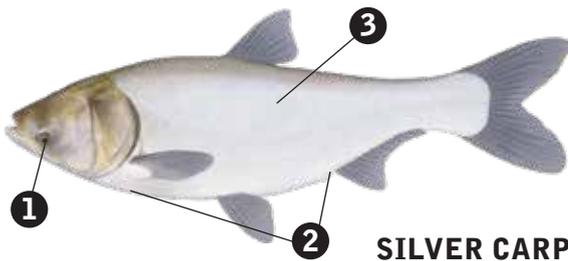
**AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES**

**INVASIVE CARP**

Four species of invasive carps (big-head, silver, black and grass) are reproducing and threaten Kentucky's aquatic ecology. These fish may outcompete na-

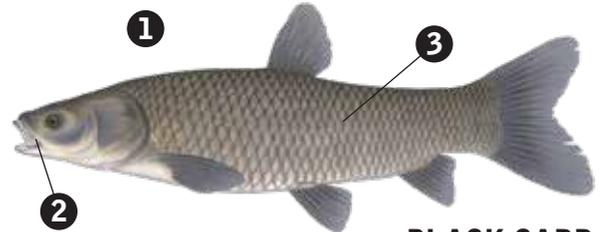
tive fishes for forage and their populations in some areas are expanding at an alarming rate. KDFWR supports commercial fishing of invasive carps (301 KAR 1:152 Harvest and sale of invasive

carp). There are restrictions on the use of live-caught shad and herring to prevent the movement of invasive carp. **Do Not Move Carp** - Learn more about invasive carp at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).



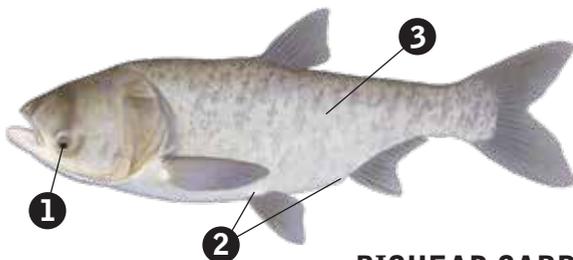
**SILVER CARP**

1. Eye located below midline of head, 2. Keel extending from the anus to the origin of the pectoral fins, 3. Silvery in color, very small scales.



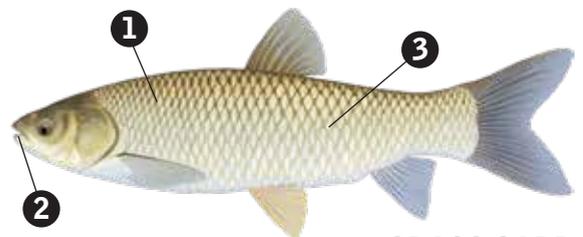
**BLACK CARP**

1. Body shape similar to grass carp, 2. Pharyngeal teeth (teeth in the throat) look like human molars, 3. Large scales and dark in color



**BIGHEAD CARP**

1. Eye located below midline of head, 2. Keel extending from the anus to the middle of the pelvic fins, 3. Dark gray body with blotches, very small scales.



**GRASS CARP**

1. Large, dark-edged scales, 2. Mouth terminally located and lacks barbels, 3. Color is dark olive above, with greenish-yellow sides, and white belly

*It's the law*

No live fish, live minnow, or live bait organisms not native or established in Kentucky (except aquarium species) shall be bought, sold, possessed, imported, or in any way used or released into Kentucky waters.

**ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

Economic impacts can include increased costs to businesses and individuals due to interference with normal operations or infrastructure. In addition, tourism dollars are lost when recreational experiences such as hunting, hiking, fishing, swimming, and boating are no longer possible or pleasant. For example, invasive zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*) clog pipes, cover shoreline access, and encrust boat hulls and motors. Their impacts alone have cost the U.S. billions of dollars in damage control.

**ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS**

Aquatic nuisance species ecological impacts include the degradation of

*Report aquatic nuisance species*

If you have questions or think you have observed an aquatic nuisance species, contact Jeff Herod at (270) 978-5377 or [jeffrey.herod@ky.gov](mailto:jeffrey.herod@ky.gov). Information provided in your report should include a location, contact phone and email, and a photograph.

native habitats and ecosystem function, reduced abundance of native species, and the loss of biodiversity (the community of unique organisms within specific habitats). Consider the invasive aquatic weed hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*). Hydrilla is a submerged plant that spreads rapidly while choking out native vegetation and altering the physical and chemical composition of the lakes and ponds where it is introduced. This can lead to reduced foraging habitat, alter the flow and mixing of the water column, and disrupt access for boating, fishing, swimming, and even block the withdrawal of water for agricultural irrigation or power generation in many water bodies.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

**Anglers and Water Recreationists**

- Clean your boat, trailer, anchor, and other items that may have been submerged in water.
- Do not move fish you caught to new lakes, streams, or ponds.
- Empty the water from the vessel, live well and buckets before leaving the boat ramp.
- **Do not dump leftover bait! Dispose of unwanted bait, including minnows, leeches, crayfish and worms, in the trash. Dumping of bait is a major pathway that allows nuisance species to spread between waterways.**

**Aquarium and Water Garden Owners**

Do not release or dump pet fish, plants, or live bait. Your action could be harmful to native fish and wildlife. Some alternatives to release include:

- Give/trade with another aquarist or

water gardener.

- Donate to a local aquarium society, school, or aquatic business.
- Contact a veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance on humane disposal of animals.

**DIDYMO**

Didymo (*Didymosphenia germinata*) has been documented in the Cumberland River. This invasive species is a white, gray, light brown, or beige mass that forms thick mats covering the rocks and stream bottom. This crowds native insects that trout feed on. Clean Drain Dry for gear. Remove algae and plant material from your gear. Clean with water or a 2% bleach solution and dry for 2 days.



Didymo



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**

Be A Good Steward. Clean. Drain. Dry.  
[StopAquaticHitchhikers.org](http://StopAquaticHitchhikers.org)

**DON'T MOVE FISH! ALABAMA BASS: A THREAT TO BASS POPULATIONS**

Alabama bass pose a major threat to the bass fisheries in Kentucky. Alabama bass have rapidly displaced and outcompeted the native largemouth bass in areas of North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and South Carolina where they have been illegally introduced by anglers hoping for trophy fish. Instead, Alabama bass rarely get larger than 1 to 2 pounds outside of their native range.

Alabama bass will readily hybridize with smallmouth bass and spotted bass and have nearly eliminated those species through genetic mixing in invaded lakes. For example, an Alabama bass introduction would mean a total loss of Kentucky's official state fish, the "Kentucky" spotted bass or potentially the loss of the premier smallmouth bass fishery at Dale Hollow Lake.

Research in other states suggests

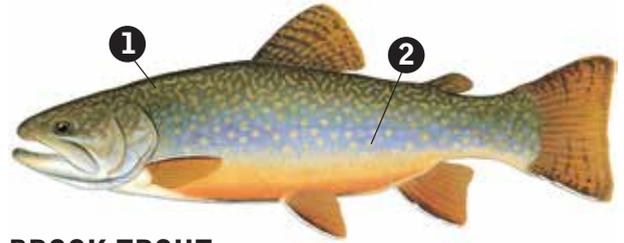
that even introducing small numbers of Alabama bass can lead to a collapse in the native bass numbers in less than 10 years. Once established, no state has successfully been able to reduce Alabama bass numbers or their negative effects on native bass populations. To prevent the introduction of Alabama bass into Kentucky, do not move any bass species between waterbodies. It is illegal!

# TROUT WATERS



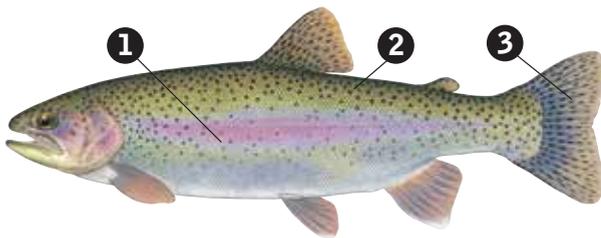
## BROWN TROUT

1. Dark spots and orange or red spots with blue halos,
2. Few spots on tail fin



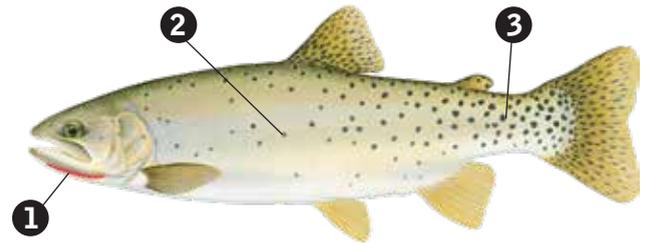
## BROOK TROUT

1. Worm-like markings (vermiculations) on upper body,
2. Pale spots on dark background



## RAINBOW TROUT

1. Pink to red stripe on side,
2. Back and sides heavily speckled,
3. Spots on tail fin



## CUTTHROAT TROUT

1. Orange/red "slash" on lower jaw,
2. May have pink hue along centerline, but typically pale,
3. Spots may be more concentrated towards rear of fish

## TROUT STOCKING

### TAILWATERS

The following tailwaters receive rainbow and brown trout. Stocking begins in spring and continues into the late fall; monthly totals will vary. Monthly schedules are available through Kentucky Fish and Wildlife by calling 1-800-858-1549 or logging on to [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

#### *Leave a note*

When planning a boating trip, leave a note, or float plan, with someone to let them know where you are. Include your departure and expected return times, the waters where you will be boating, a description and/or license number of the vessel and where you can be reached in case of emergency.

TAILWATERS	Total Rainbows	Total Browns	Months
Buckhorn	5,000	0	4,5,6,10,11
Carr Creek	4,000	0	4,5,10,11
Cave Run	6,000	0	4,5,6,10,11
Cumberland*	192,400	42,000	3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12
Dewey	4,000	0	4,5,10,11
Fishtrap	10,000	0	4,5,6,10,11
Grayson	5,000	0	4,5,6,10,11
Herrington	4,500	300	3,5,6,7,8,11
Laurel River	500	250	3,4,5,6,10
Martins Fork	3,750	0	4,5,6,10,11
Nolin River	8,000	250	3,4,5,6,7,10,11,12
Paintsville	14,000	0	4,5,6,7,9,10,11
Taylorville	3,000	0	4,5,6,11
Yatesville	3,000	0	4,5,10,11

\*Stocking dates for Cumberland River (Lake Cumberland tailwater) will not be announced. Brook trout are stocked in March.

## STREAMS

The streams listed on the following pages are stocked with rainbow trout by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the months indicated. Brown trout are stocked once each year in some streams

for a put-grow-take fishery. All trout are produced at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. Visit [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) for a list of monthly trout stockings.

ble have a catch and release season (no harvest) from Oct. 1 through March 31. During the catch and release season, only artificial baits shall be used and all trout caught must be immediately released.

### CATCH and RELEASE STREAMS

Some streams indicated in the ta-

STATEWIDE STREAMS	County	Total Rainbows	Months	Total Browns	Catch and Release (No Harvest) Season
<b>Bark Camp Creek*</b>	Whitley	3,750	3,4,5,6,10	500	Oct. 1 - March 31; 3.9 miles
<b>Beaver Creek</b>	Wayne	1,500	4,5,10		Oct. 1 - March 31; Hwy 90 bridge upstream to Hwy 200 bridge – 2.8 miles
<b>Big Bone Creek</b>	Boone	1,600	3,4,10,12		Oct. 1 - March 31; inside the Big Bone Lick State Park – 2.1 miles
<b>Big Caney Creek</b>	Elliott	2,500	4,5,10	250	
<b>Black Lick Creek</b>	Logan	1,250	3,5,6,7,10		
<b>Casey Creek</b>	Trigg	8,000	2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	250	Oct. 1 - March 31; 3.6 miles
<b>Chimney Top Creek*</b>	Wolfe	450	9		
<b>Clear Creek</b>	Bell	1,200	4,10		Oct. 1 - March 31; Hwy 190 bridge down stream to mouth – 4.5 miles
<b>Craney Creek*</b>	Rowan	1,000	9		
<b>East Fork, Indian Creek*</b>	Menifee	4,000	3,4,5,9	400	Oct. 1 - March 31; 5.3 miles
<b>East Fork, Little Sandy River</b>	Boyd	2,400	3,4,10		
<b>Elk Spring Creek</b>	Wayne	1,600	4,5,6,10		Oct. 1 - March 31; 2.8 miles
<b>Floyds Fork</b>	Jefferson	12,000	2,3,4,10,11,12		Oct. 1 - March 31; US 60 downstream to US 150 – 20 miles
<b>Fort Campbell</b>	Christian	2,400	2,4	3,250	
<b>Greasy Creek</b>	Leslie	900	4,11		
<b>Gunpowder Creek</b>	Boone	1,600	3,4,10,12		Oct. 1 - March 31; 1.5 miles
<b>Hatchery Creek (upper)</b>	Russell	32,100	monthly		
<b>Jennings Creek</b>	Warren	7,000	3,5,6,7,8,9,10	500	
<b>Laurel Creek</b>	Elliott	2,750	4,5,10	250	
<b>Looney Creek</b>	Harlan	1,500	4,5,10	700	
<b>Lynn Camp Creek</b>	Hart	2,500	4,5,6,7,10		
<b>Middle Fork, Red River*</b>	Powell/Wolfe	2,700	3,4,5,9		
<b>North Fork, Triplett Creek*</b>	Rowan	1,050	3,4,5		
<b>Otter Creek, Fort Knox Otter Creek ORA</b>	Meade	6,500 6,250	3,4,5,9,10,11 1,3,4,5,10,11	500 (fort only)	Oct. 1 - March 31; Ft. Knox Military Reservation and Otter Creek ORA – 12.4 miles
<b>Right Fork, Beaver Creek</b>	Floyd	2,000	4,5,10,11		
<b>Right Fork, Buffalo Creek</b>	Owsley	500	4,5		
<b>Rock Creek*</b>	McCreary	15,125	3,4,5,6,9,10, 11,12		Oct. 1 - March 31; Tennessee border downstream to Bell Farm bridge – 9.8 miles
<b>Round Stone Creek</b>	Hart	2,800	3,5,6,7,8,9,10	200	
<b>Russell Fork</b>	Pike	2,250	4,5,10		
<b>Sinking Creek</b>	Breckinridge	1,200	4,5,11		
<b>Station Camp Creek</b>	Estill	750	4		
<b>Sturgeon Creek</b>	Lee	400	4		
<b>Sulphur Spring Creek</b>	Simpson	3,000	3,5,6,7,8,9,10	200	

STATEWIDE STREAMS (continued)	County	Total Rainbows	Months	Total Browns	Catch and Release (No Harvest) Season
Swift Camp Creek*	Wolfe	1,000	3,9		Oct. 1 - March 31; within Clifty Wilderness Area – 8.0 miles
Trammel Creek	Allen	7,000	3,5,6,7,8,9,10	600	Oct. 1 - March 31 – 3.5 miles
Triplett Creek	Rowan	1,200	3,4,5		
War Fork*	Jackson	2,500	3,4,5,6,10		
West Hickman Creek (Veteran's Park)	Fayette	1,000	2,10		
Wolf Creek	Martin	2,000	4,11		

\*Daniel Boone National Forest stream; stockings are not announced.

## LAKES

The lakes below are stocked with trout in the months indicated. January-March stockings are scheduled based on weather and road conditions. See FINs lakes trout stocking table on page 6.

LAKES	Acres	Rainbow Trout	Brown Trout	Months
Bert Combs Lake	36	4,000		1,4,5,10
Beulah Lake	87	4,000		1,4,5,10
Boulder Pond, Parklands	1	800		3,10
Cannon Creek Lake	243	6,000	3,000	2,3,10
Cranks Creek Lake	219	5,000		1,4,5,10
Eagle Lake	19	2,000		2,3,10,11
Fagan Branch Lake	126	1,500	1,000	3,11
Fishpond Lake	32	4,000		1,4,5,10
Grant's Branch Lake	22	4,500		1,3,11
Greenbo Lake	181	11,000	2,000	2,10
Highsplint Lake	6	2,250		1,10
Ky. River WMA Boone Tract, Six Acre Lake	6	2,000		2,10
Laurel River Lake	5,600		6,000	3
Martin Co. (Milo) Lake	5	2,750		2,11
Metcalfe Co. Lake	22	500		3
Mill Creek Lake (Powell/Wolfe Co.)	41	6,000		1,3,5,10
Morton's Lake, Higginson/Henry WMA	1	500		2
Paintsville Lake	1,139	10,000	4,000	2,3
Panbowl Lake	75	6,000		1,3,5,10
Peabody WMA, Access Pond	1	2,250		1,11
Peabody WMA, Flycatcher Pond	1	1,500		1,11
Peabody WMA, Rob's Pond	11	1,500		1,11
Pikeville City Lake	24	2,500		3,11
Sandy Watkins Park Lake	3	1,000		2,10
Wood Creek Lake	672	8,000		2,10
Vastwood Park Lake	20	3,000		1,10,11

## OTHER AREAS

### FORT CAMPBELL and FORT KNOX

Little West Fork and Fletchers Fork on Fort Campbell (Tennessee portion) and Otter Creek on Fort Knox (Bullitt, Meade and Hardin counties) military reservations are stocked with rainbow or brown trout. Special fishing regulations apply and a post fishing permit is required in addition to a valid Kentucky fishing license and trout permit. Contact Community Recreation Division, Hunting and Fishing Unit, Fort Campbell, KY 42223-5000; phone: (270) 798-9824. For Fort Knox, log on to [fknnox.isportsman.net](http://fknnox.isportsman.net).

### CATCH and RELEASE BROOK TROUT

- Shillalah Creek – Bell County, outside the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park is catch and release only year-round, and only artificial flies and lures with a single hook may be used.

*Get permission*

Many of the streams listed in this guide are located on, or adjacent to, privately owned lands. Anyone entering upon or crossing private property must have the permission of the land owner.

# TROPHY FISH



Rachel Cummings photo

## TROPHY FISH/MASTER ANGLER AWARD PROGRAM

Anglers who catch, by pole and line, any fish species meeting the minimum length requirements shown on this page may qualify for the Trophy Fish/Master Angler Awards Program. When an angler submits their first qualifying trophy fish, they will receive an initial Trophy Fish Award patch and sticker as well as a Fish Species patch and sticker depicting the species caught. The self-printable Trophy Fish certificate will be available on the angler's My Profile account. For each additional submission of qualifying trophy fish of a different species, an angler will receive a Fish Species patch and sticker for those fish. Additional fish of the same species will not receive additional patches and stickers, but the angler may still print out a Trophy Fish certificate for each qualifying fish.

After an angler submits their third different species of qualifying fish and it is approved, they are eligible to apply for the coveted Master Angler Award. Anglers will receive the Master Angler Award patch and sticker as well as the ability to print the Master Angler Award certificate. There is no time limit in which the three different species must be caught, but each catch must be docu-

ELIGIBLE SPECIES	Minimum length
Blue Catfish	35"
Bluegill	10"
Bowfin	25"
Brook Trout	15"
Brown Trout	20"
Bullhead Catfish	14"
Common Carp	35"
Chain Pickerel	24"
Channel Catfish	28"
Crappie	15"
Flathead Catfish	35"
Freshwater Drum	25"
Gar	40"

mented and registered as a trophy fish with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife since the program began in 1987.

Anglers will apply for Trophy Fish and Master Angler awards through their My Profile account on [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov). Each submission must include a clear, identifiable photograph of the fish (side view) and fish submissions must be received within 60 days of the catch to qualify for the respective award(s). The department may use submitted photos for pro-

Hybrid Striped Bass	23"
Kentucky (Spotted) Bass	16"
Largemouth Bass	22"
Muskellunge	40"
Rainbow Trout	20"
Redear Sunfish	10"
Redbreast Sunfish	10"
Rock Bass	10"
Sauger	18"
Saugeye	23"
Smallmouth Bass	20"
Striped Bass	36"
Walleye	25"
White Bass	16"
Yellow Perch	10"

motional purposes. Fish from pay lakes, hatcheries, or taken from commercial propagation facilities are not eligible.

Submissions are reviewed throughout the month, and you will receive an email notification once it's reviewed. Patches and stickers will be mailed out after approval.

Complete details are available by calling 1-800-858-1549 or online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

# STATE RECORD FISH PROGRAM

To qualify for the state record fish program, fish must be caught in Kentucky waters by a rod and reel or pole and line only and weigh a minimum of 0.10 pounds. Fish taken on commercial gear, by trotlines, limb lines, jugging, gigging, snagging, by hand or bow fish-

ing are not eligible.

Fish need to be weighed on a scale certified for legal trade and witnessed by three people who must sign the record application. The intact fish (not filleted, gutted or cut up) must be identified in person by a KDFWR fishery biologist

or the manager of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery.

Applications for the state record fish program are available by calling 1-800-858-1549 or online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov) or from your District Fisheries Office listed below.

## WESTERN FISHERY DISTRICT

Adam Martin or Nick Simpson  
Murray, (270) 753-3886

## NORTHWESTERN FISHERY DISTRICT

Jeremy Shiflet or Maddy Ruble  
Calhoun, (270) 273-3117

## SOUTHWESTERN FISHERY DISTRICT

Eric Cummins or Kayla Boles  
Bowling Green, (270) 746-7127

## CENTRAL FISHERY DISTRICT

David Baker  
Frankfort, (502) 892-4464

## NORTHEASTERN FISHERY DISTRICT

Tom Timmermann or Nathan Hayes  
Morehead, (606) 783-8650

## EASTERN FISHERY DISTRICT

Jason Russell or Emily Watling  
Prestonsburg, (606) 889-1705

## SOUTHEASTERN FISHERY DISTRICT

Marcy Anderson or Bradley Hartman  
Somerset, (606) 677-4096

## MINOR CLARK FISH HATCHERY

Rod Middleton, Pete Besant,  
Scott Barrett or Logan Robinson  
Morehead, (606) 783-8650

## PFEIFFER FISH HATCHERY

Noah Nelson, Graham Howell or  
Andy Redden  
Frankfort, (502) 564-4957

## WOLF CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY

James Gray, (270) 343-3797

SPECIES	Weight	Caught By	Location	Date
<b>ANCIENT FISH</b>				
<b>Bowfin</b>	15.08 lbs.	Norman Moran, Lexington, KY	Green River	05/31/99
<b>Longnose Gar</b>	40 lbs.	Kelsie Travis, Jr., Paducah, KY	Ohio River	08/08/56
<b>Paddlefish (Spoonbill)</b>	106 lbs.	William Chumbler, Calvert City, KY	Ohio River	03/23/04
<b>Lake Sturgeon (current regulations do not allow harvest of Lake Sturgeon)</b>	36.5 lbs.	Barney Frazier, Corbin, KY	Lake Cumberland	10/03/54
<b>BLACK BASS</b>				
<b>Kentucky (Spotted) Bass</b>	7.63 lbs.	A.E. Sellers, Louisville, KY	Private lake, Nelson Co.	06/13/70
<b>Largemouth Bass</b>	14.59 lbs.	Mark Ward, Evarts, KY	Highsplint Lake	04/19/19
<b>Smallmouth Bass*</b>	11.94 lbs.	David L. Hayes, Leitchfield, KY	Dale Hollow Lake	07/09/55
<b>Coosa Bass</b>	1.21 lbs.	Seth Goodin, Smith, KY	Martins Fork River	05/25/13
<b>TEMPERATE BASS</b>				
<b>Striped Bass (Rockfish)</b>	58.25 lbs.	Roger Foster, Somerset, KY	Lake Cumberland	12/11/85
<b>Hybrid Striped Bass</b>	20.5 lbs.	Mark Wilson, Louisville, KY	Barren River	04/27/91
<b>White Bass</b>	5 lbs. (TIE)	Lorne Eli, Dawson Springs, KY	Kentucky Lake	07/11/43
		B.B. Hardin, Mt. Eden, KY	Herrington Lake	06/03/57
<b>Yellow Bass</b>	1.4 lbs.	William Hinton, Central City, KY	Cumberland River, Lake Barkley tailwaters	03/19/09
<b>CARP/SUCKER</b>				
<b>Bighead Carp</b>	65.06 lbs.	Eddie Young, Versailles, KY	Kentucky River	07/18/20
<b>Blue Sucker</b>	8.34 lbs.	Stacy L. Boik, Evansville, IN	Ohio River	11/22/09
<b>Buffalo (Smallmouth)</b>	55 lbs.	Clinton Roby, Waddy, KY	Kentucky Lake	03/23/00
<b>Common Carp</b>	54.88 lbs.	Ricky Vance, Paris, KY	South Fork, Licking River	03/13/71
<b>Creek Chub</b>	0.59 lbs	Joshua Scott, Louisville, KY	Otter Creek, Hardin Co.	03/26/06

SPECIES (cont.)	Weight	Caught By	Location	Date
<b>Golden Redhorse</b>	4.31 lbs.	Leif Meadows, Stanton, KY	Red River	04/22/98
<b>Grass Carp</b>	58.5 lbs.	Robert Marsh, Erlanger, KY	Cemetery Lake, Kenton Co.	06/17/09
<b>Northern Hog Sucker</b>	1.75 lbs.	Larry Salchli, Stanton, KY	Slate Creek, Bath Co.	04/07/05
<b>River Redhorse</b>	9.06 lbs.	Denny Hatfield, London, KY	Rockcastle River	09/20/03
<b>Silver Carp</b>	17.34 lbs.	Brian Montgomery, Louisville, KY	Ohio River	02/27/23
<b>Silver Redhorse</b>	5.38 lbs.	Justin Collins, London, KY	Rockcastle River	04/17/10
<b>White Sucker</b>	1.63 lbs.	Larry Salchli, Stanton, KY	Slate Creek, Montgomery Co.	03/19/98
<b>CATFISH</b>				
<b>Blue Catfish</b>	106.9 lbs.	Glynn Grogan, Arlington, KY	Ohio River	10/20/18
<b>Bullhead Catfish</b>	5.5 lbs.	Randy Kirk, Maysville, KY	Private Pond, Mason County	07/06/13
<b>Channel Catfish</b>	32 lbs.	Kyle Estep, South Point, OH	Ohio River	05/26/04
<b>Flathead Catfish</b>	97 lbs.	Esker Carroll	Green River	06/06/56
<b>White Catfish</b>	5.27 lbs.	Ethen Vest, Frankfort, KY	Guist Creek Lake	10/11/16
<b>DRUM</b>				
<b>Freshwater Drum</b>	42.81 lbs.	Alan Cooper, Morgantown, KY	Dale Hollow Lake	04/26/21
<b>HERRING</b>				
<b>Skipjack Herring</b>	3.10 lbs.	Joey Dixon, Elizabethtown, KY	Ohio River	04/14/06
<b>MOONEYE</b>				
<b>Goldeye</b>	2.64 lbs.	Mark Smith, Lexington, KY	Kentucky River	04/21/01
<b>Mooneye</b>	0.63 lbs.	Samir Bajric, Bowling Green, KY	Barren River	08/23/19
<b>PERCH</b>				
<b>Sauger</b>	7.44 lbs.	Rastie Andrew, Jamestown, KY	Cumberland River	04/28/83
<b>Saugeye</b>	9.03 lbs.	Wolfgang Kratzenberg, Verona, KY	Bullock Pen Lake	03/21/21
<b>Walleye</b>	21.5 lbs.	Abe Black, Shaker Heights, OH	Lake Cumberland	10/01/58
<b>Yellow Perch</b>	1.44 lbs.	Klint Thaxton, Ashland, IL	Kentucky Lake	03/12/10
<b>PIKE</b>				
<b>Chain Pickerel</b>	5.38 lbs.	Tommy Thompson, Bardwell, KY	Forked Lake, Carlisle Co.	07/08/83
<b>Grass Pickerel</b>	0.63 lbs.	Gerald Gallagher, Louisville, KY	Wilson Creek, Bullitt Co.	07/17/89
<b>Muskellunge</b>	47 lbs.	Sarah Terry, Mt. Sterling, KY	Cave Run Lake	11/02/08
<b>Northern Pike</b>	10.53 lbs.	Derek Cowden, Corbin, KY	Laurel River Lake	10/29/06
<b>Tiger Muskie (Muskellunge Hybrid)</b>	19.56 lbs.	Wayne Joslin, Winchester, KY	Private lake, Clark Co.	04/25/07
<b>SUNFISH</b>				
<b>Bluegill</b>	4.19 lbs.	Phil Conyers, Madisonville, KY	Strip Mine Lake, Hopkins Co.	08/05/80
<b>Crappie (White or Black)</b>	4.87 lbs.	Penny Hopper, Crofton, KY	Watershed Lake, Christian Co.	05/08/05
<b>Green Sunfish</b>	1.59 lbs.	David Gibson, Hawesville, KY	Farm pond, Hancock Co.	05/20/13
<b>Longear Sunfish</b>	0.83 lbs.	Anthony Lynch, Salyersville, KY	Strip Mine Pond, Magoffin Co.	06/23/94
<b>Redbreast Sunfish</b>	0.88 lbs.	Tim King, Stearns, KY	Marsh Creek, McCreary Co.	09/01/97
<b>Redear Sunfish</b>	3.06 lbs.	Betty Truax, Finchville, KY	Farm pond, Shelby Co.	05/24/82
<b>Rock Bass</b>	1.63 lbs.	H.S. White, Cadiz, KY	Casey Creek, Trigg Co.	05/26/75
<b>Warmouth</b>	1.39 lbs.	Jon Hoover, Louisville, KY	Private pond, Jefferson Co.	07/21/03
<b>TROUT</b>				
<b>Brook Trout</b>	3.65 lbs.	Wyatt Hoefler, Louisville, KY	Cumberland River	03/15/15
<b>Brown Trout</b>	21 lbs.	Thomas Malone, Crofton, KY	Cumberland River	04/30/00
<b>Lake Trout</b>	5.31 lbs.	John McDonogh, Jeffersontown, KY	Cumberland River	04/04/83
<b>Rainbow Trout</b>	14.38 lbs.	Jim Mattingly, Somerset, KY	Cumberland River	09/10/72

Note: Line class records are not maintained by the KDFWR.

\* All tackle world record

# BOATING

## BOATING REGULATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

This publication provides basic information for most boaters and answers the most commonly asked questions. However, it is not all inclusive. For further information, please contact the Division of Law Enforcement, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601 or call 1-800-858-1549.

For emergencies, game wardens may be contacted by dialing 1-800-252-5378, or local law enforcement agency or through the nearest Kentucky State Police post. One may use marine channel 16 to contact a local marina.

### REGISTRATION

(301 KAR 6:001, 6:010)

All mechanically powered vessels used primarily in this state must have a Kentucky registration. Boats are registered at the county clerk's office. Persons may register in the county of their residence or the county of principal use. Boat registrations expire April 30 each year.

Boats registered in other states may be used for up to 60 consecutive days in Kentucky without registering here.

All boats operated in Kentucky must have the registration certificate on board. Boats that are rented from a marina or boat livery must have a lease agreement on board.

### DISPLAY OF NUMBER and DECAL

Once boats are assigned a registration number and decals, they must be displayed correctly. The number assigned, and no other, shall be displayed on the bow, or forward half, of each side of the vessel, read from left to right, and in a position to be distinctly visible. The letters and numbers must be of a plain block design, at least three (3) inches in height, and of a color that will provide maximum contrast to the background (light numbers on a dark hull or vice versa).

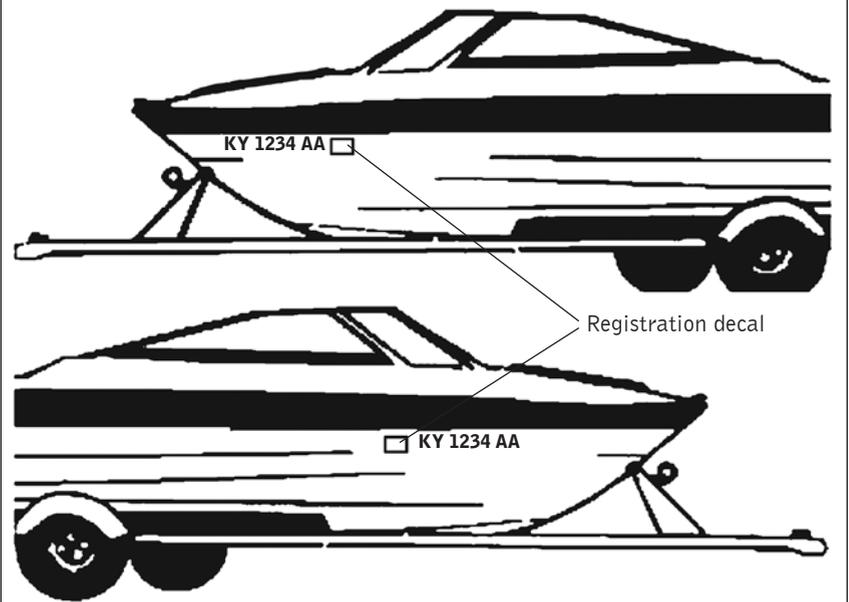
There must be a letter size space be-

### MOTORIZED BOAT REGISTRATION FEES

<b>Class A Vessels</b> (less than 16' in length)	<b>\$22.20</b>
<b>Class 1 Vessels</b> (16' to less than 26' in length)	<b>\$42.28</b>
<b>Class 2 Vessels</b> (26' to less than 40' in length)	<b>\$52.85</b>
<b>Class 3 Vessels</b> (over 40' in length)	<b>\$68.71</b>

The above costs do not include property taxes, clerks fees, titling fees or any other applicable charges. (301 KAR 5:022)

### PROPER DISPLAY OF NUMBERS AND DECALS



tween letter and number groups:

Correct: KY 1234 AA  
Incorrect: KY1234AA

Registration decals are to be placed within six inches behind (aft) and in line with the registration number. Upon renewal every year, old registration decals are to be removed and the current ones applied.

### TRANSFER, DESTRUCTION OR ABANDONMENT

When ownership of a currently registered boat changes, it is the respon-

sibility of the purchaser to take the endorsed title to the county clerk and have the boat transferred into the name of the new owner. This procedure must be done upon completion of the transaction.

Whenever a vessel is transferred, the seller shall, within 15 days, give the county clerk notice of the transfer of his interest in the vessel.

Whenever a vessel is destroyed or abandoned, the owner shall, within 15 days, give notice to the county clerk to terminate the registration. The owner shall remove the numbers and decals from the vessel.

## BOAT, MOTOR and LAKE USAGE

### *Bordering waters*

Kentucky boaters on the Ohio River may also be subject to the laws of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and the U.S. Coast Guard.

(301 KAR 1:012, 1:015)

Boat motor and lake usage regulations apply on many small public fishing lakes. (For boat size limits see box on this page.)

### MOTOR SIZE RESTRICTIONS:

**Operation of electric or internal combustion motors prohibited:** Lake Chumley, Dennie Gooch Lake and Kingdom Come Lake.

**Operation of internal combustion motors prohibited – electric trolling motor only:** Bert T. Combs Lake, Briggs Lake, Carpenter and Kingfisher lakes, Carter Caves State Park Lake (a.k.a. Smoky Valley Lake), Fagan Branch Lake, Fishpond Lake, all Kentucky River WMA Boone Tract lakes (except Benjy Kinman Lake), Lincoln Homestead State Park Lake, McNeely Lake, Marion County Lake, Martin County Lake, Metcalfe County Lake, Mauzy Lake, Mill Creek Lake (Powell

and Wolfe counties), Lake Reba, Spurlington Lake, Washburn Lake, Pikeville City Lake.

**Motors larger than 10 HP must operate at idle speed** at all times on Beaver Lake, Boltz Lake, Bullock Pen Lake, Corinth Lake, Cranks Creek (Herb Smith) Lake, Elmer Davis Lake, Kincaid Lake, Martins Fork Lake and Shanty Hollow Lake.

**Idle Speed Only:** Ballard WMA lakes, Benjy Kinman Lake, Boatwright WMA lakes, Beulah Lake, Carnico Lake, Greenbo Lake, Panbowl Lake, Wilgreen Lake and all Peabody WMA lakes including Goose, Island and South lakes.

### WATER-SKIING

Water skiing is the act of riding in or upon water skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or similar devices propelled by a boat's wake or while riding on or in a boat's wake directly behind a vessel that is under way. This applies whether the person is holding a rope attached to the boat or not. Water-skiing is only allowed between sunrise and sunset. Additionally, it is illegal to manipulate skis, surfboards, etc. while intoxicated or under the influence of any other substance that impairs one's operating ability.

Both the operator and skier should be alert to the areas of a lake or river marked as "no ski." Persons shall not ski within 100 feet of a commercial boat dock, a moorage harbor or a swimming area or within 2,000 feet of a lock or dam.

Skiers who ski too close to other boats, docks and obstructions are showing poor judgement. Many of the complaints game wardens receive while patrolling the water are those about skiers skiing too close.

Persons being towed by any device must wear a Type I, II or III PFD or its equivalent buoyancy. Boats (including personal watercraft) towing skiers must have, in addition to the operator of the boat, an observer 12 years of age or older or a wide angle rearview mirror mounted so that the operator can check on the skier but still give full attention to traffic ahead. There must be adequate seating for all riders.

**Boats towing kites and similar air-**

### borne devices must:

- Have, in addition to the operator, an observer 12 years or older (mirror will not suffice),
- Stay 500 feet from commercial docks and ramps,

### ON ALL KENTUCKY FISH & WILDLIFE-OWNED/ MANAGED LAKES:

- Boaters must use idle speed (slowest speed possible to maintain maneuverability of a boat) when passing another boat with an occupant actively engaged in fishing.
- The centerline of boats on the water cannot exceed 22 feet as measured on deck or bow to stern on all lakes owned or managed by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, except on Guist Creek Lake where monohull boats with a centerline of 24 feet and 8 person capacity are allowed.
- On Cedar Creek Lake, Lake Beshear and Lake Malone only, pontoon boats may have decking and pontoons up to 30 feet; on Guist Creek Lake pontoon max length is 24 feet. There is no size restriction on canoes.
- Houseboats are not permitted.
- Personal watercrafts are prohibited on Cedar Creek Lake.
- Swimming is permitted only in designated areas when a qualified lifeguard is on duty.
- Skin or scuba diving is not permitted.

Water-skiing permitted as designated by signs on Guist Creek Lake and Lake Beshear from 10:00 a.m. to sunset beginning the third Thursday in May ([May 21, 2026](#)) through September 30. Similarly, water-skiing is permitted on Lake Malone beginning the third Thursday in May ([May 21, 2026](#)) through October 31. Water-skiing and tubing are prohibited on Cedar Creek Lake.

### AGE RESTRICTIONS

A person must be 12 years or older to operate a motorboat (including personal watercraft) over 10 horsepower on Kentucky public waters. A person 12-17 years old shall possess a Kentucky Safe Boating Certificate Card or a certificate showing successful completion of a NASBLA approved boater education course. For information about Kentucky's Boater Education program, call 1-800-858-1549 or on the internet, log on to [fw.ky.gov](#). Persons under 12 years of age must wear a personal flotation device (lifejacket) while in the open portion of a boat that is under way.

- Limit the tow rope to 150 feet or less,
- Have no more than two persons being towed.

### PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

A “personal watercraft” (PWC) means a vessel which uses an internal combustion engine to power a jet pump for its primary source of propulsion and is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing or kneeling on the vessel rather than by a person sitting or standing inside the vessel. In addition to being governed by the same laws that apply to all boats, the following laws apply to personal watercraft:

- Personal watercraft can only be operated between sunrise and sunset.
- Personal watercraft without self-circling capability must have a lanyard-type engine kill switch attached to the operator when the craft is underway.
- Operators and passengers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) for that activity.

Because of their small size and low profile, operators of PWCs should exercise defensive driving. These craft are highly responsive and capable of quick turns. In fact, this is part of the fun of their operation. However, this kind of operation is reckless if done in congested areas of boat traffic.

### SKIN and SCUBA DIVING

(301 KAR 1:410, 6:030)

Skin or SCUBA diving is prohibited in all lakes owned or managed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, except during emergencies, on Greenbo Lake and during salvage operations when the diver has written permission from the regional director or local game warden assigned to

### DIVERS DOWN FLAGS

Boaters should exercise caution



**Alpha Flag** (left): Blue with a silver stripe, displayed on vessel with restricted mobility because of diving operation. **Diver's Flag** (right): Red flag at least 12" x 12" with diagonal stripe at least three inches wide, displayed where diver is submerged.

the specific body of water in which the diving is to take place.

Persons diving or submerging with the aid of a mechanical breathing apparatus in an area where boats might be required by law to display the diver's flag.

This flag should be put on a buoy, boat or other floating platform so boaters will readily see it. Approaching boats must stay outside of a 100-foot radius of the flag. Divers must surface within a 50-foot radius unless there is an emergency.

Divers shall not dive in established traffic lanes nor interfere with anyone fishing unless emergency operations are in progress.

### SWIMMING

Swimming in any lake owned or managed by the KDFWR is prohibited except in areas specifically set aside for swimming at which a qualified lifeguard is on duty. Kentucky law specifically prohibits swimming at any boat launching ramp. Swim in marked and super-

vised areas. If you are a nonswimmer or a poor swimmer, wear a PFD. Remember, PFDs are not just for boaters.

Refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages when swimming. Alcohol greatly reduces a person's reflexes and strength when in the water. For persons who have had alcoholic beverages a PFD is the difference between life and death.

Persons who wish to swim a long distance should swim parallel to the shore instead of across a river or lake. Boaters don't normally expect to see swimmers in the middle of a lake or river and may run over them.

### INFLATABLES

Air mattresses, inner tubes and other similar devices are generally used as recreational items by persons swimming or sunbathing. Use of these items should be restricted to designated or generally recognized swimming areas and not be used in areas of boat traffic. Nonswimmers or poor swimmers should not depend on these devices to save their life. These items can be punctured and lose their buoyancy – wear a PFD!

### LITTERING

(KRS 433.757)

The operator of any motorboat or vessel is responsible for any litter thrown into the water. Litter is not only unsightly, but can be dangerous to humans and animals. For example, fishing line discarded into the water can be hazardous to wildlife and to a boat's lower unit. Animals can be ensnared in the line and die. Fishing line caught on a prop shaft can cause seal leaks and lower unit failure. Trotlines and limb lines can snare animals and other anglers in boats.

## BOAT OPERATION

### RECKLESS OPERATION

The operator of a watercraft is responsible for damage caused by negligent operation. The following actions are considered reckless operation and are therefore against the law:

- weaving through traffic;
- following watercraft too closely that is towing an individual on waterskis, a

- surfboard or any water sport device;
- jumping the wake of another craft in a way that endangers human life, physical safety or property;
- cutting between a boat and the individual(s) being towed by the boat;
- crossing the path of another boat when visibility is obstructed;
- steering toward an object or individual

in the water and turning sharply at close range.

Persons shall not operate a motorboat or personal watercraft within 50 feet of a commercial vessel and its tow that is in operation on a waterway, except if the operator of the commercial vessel has given consent.

When operating in a busy area, re-

duce speed and allow plenty of room for avoidance maneuvers. Even in areas that are not marked as idle speed, excessive wake can still be dangerous. Operators of larger craft should be aware of the wake their vessels are throwing.

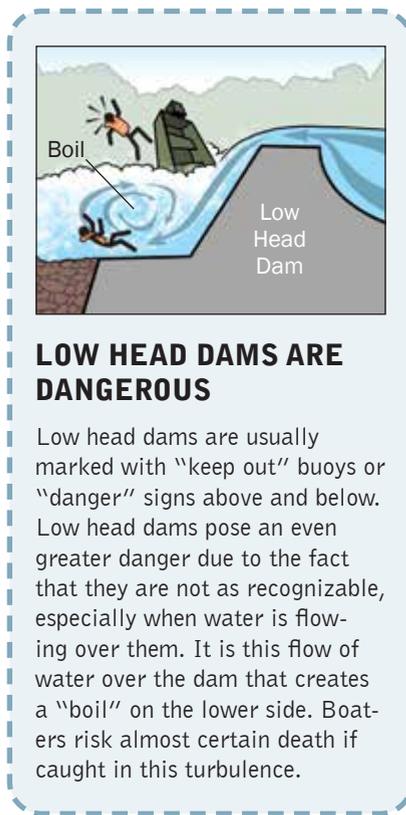
**IDLE SPEED**

Kentucky law defines idle speed as the “slowest speed possible to maintain maneuverability” of a boat. Generally speaking for a properly adjusted boat, this is the speed when a boat is put into gear without advancing the throttle. Wakes can capsize small boats or cause damage to boats moored at marinas and docks. It is extremely important that boat operators be aware of their speed and the resulting wake. Operators are liable for any injuries or damage caused by their boat’s wake.

Boaters may see buoys or signs that say “No Wake.” This means that boats must be at idle speed.

**LOCKS AND DAMS**

Boaters in Kentucky may encounter lock and dam systems. Generally, these will be on the Green, Ohio and Kentucky Rivers (for the first four locks upstream to Frankfort, KY), but a few impoundments have a lock and dam. Locks are a relatively simple method of raising or lowering boats from one water level to another. If lockage is desired, boaters should signal the lock operator by using the pull chain on each end of the lock or call on marine channel 13. If the lock is not immediately available, boaters should position their vessels a safe distance from the approach chan-



**LOW HEAD DAMS ARE DANGEROUS**

Low head dams are usually marked with “keep out” buoys or “danger” signs above and below. Low head dams pose an even greater danger due to the fact that they are not as recognizable, especially when water is flowing over them. It is this flow of water over the dam that creates a “boil” on the lower side. Boaters risk almost certain death if caught in this turbulence.

nel to avoid personal injury or damage to their boat from wakes caused by commercial tows entering or leaving the locks. Never moor a vessel in the lock approach channels.

Dams associated with the locks can be very dangerous. Below all locks and dams, boat occupants must wear a personal flotation device (lifejacket) upstream of danger signs and open-diamond buoys or within 150 feet of the downstream lock and dam wall. **Anglers**

**should never fish from or stand on lock and dam structures.**

Boaters should be alert for these structures. Dams are either conventional or “low head” type. Conventional dams are easily recognizable with their spillways and power installations.

**RESTRICTED ZONES**

(KAR 6:030)

Kentucky law prohibits boats from operating within restricted areas as posted above or below navigation, power generating or flood control dams.

No fish is worth risking your life. Be aware of trespassing and danger zones. Wear a PFD when entering any area above or below a dam.

**OPERATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE**

(KRS 235.240)

It is against the law to operate a boat or vessel including personal watercraft, manipulate water skis, surfboard or other similar device while intoxicated or under the influence of any other substance that impairs one’s driving ability. Any person who operates a vessel on Kentucky waters is considered to have given consent to a test or tests to determine his alcohol concentration or the presence of other drugs. The tests shall be administered at the direction of a game warden who has probable cause to believe that the operator is intoxicated. An operator refusing the test shall be in violation of the law and subject to the same penalties.

Anyone who operates a boat, PWC,

**SMALL CRAFT PRECAUTIONS**

Statistics show that approximately half the boat-related fatalities involve boats that are less than 16’ in length. These boats are usually unstable and can tip over, throwing the occupants overboard. Also, these boats can be easily swamped, especially if used on a large body of water where the wind can cause high waves. When using such craft, be aware of the hazards. Wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) is strongly recommended.

**BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT CHART**

Body Weight (in pounds)	Number of Drinks in a Two Hour Period									
	12 oz. beer = 5 oz. wine = 1 oz. 80 proof liquor									
100	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
120	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
140	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
160	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
180	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
200	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
220	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
240	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

**BAC to .05%** - Be careful. Loss of judgement and coordination.

**BAC .05% to .07%** - Abilities impaired. Chance of accident increased.

**BAC .08% and over** - Do not operate a boat. High risk of accident, subject to arrest.

skis, surfboard or similar device while intoxicated with a blood alcohol level of 0.08 or higher or while under the influence of any substance that impairs the operator's driving ability may be subject to fines and possible jail time if convicted.

## DRINKING IN PUBLIC and PUBLIC INTOXICATION (KRS 222.202)

Kentucky law specifically prohibits the drinking of alcoholic beverages in public places (this excludes establishments licensed to sell such beverages) and the waterways of this state are considered public places.

Further, in a public place, persons who are manifestly under the influence

of alcoholic beverages to the extent that they may unreasonably annoy or endanger themselves or others shall be subject to arrest.

## PROHIBITED RIDING

Approximately half of boat related fatalities result from falls overboard. When operating a motorboat above idle speed the operator or passengers shall not ride on an enclosed bow, outside protective railing of a pontoon or houseboat, on a seat which extends six inches above the plane of the gunwales, nor shall they ride on the sides, back, engine cover, back of seat, or any other obviously dangerous position which could lead to falling overboard.

## RULES OF THE ROAD

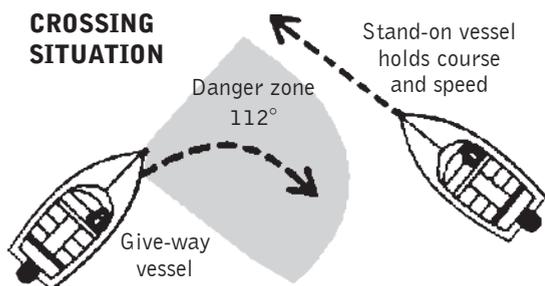
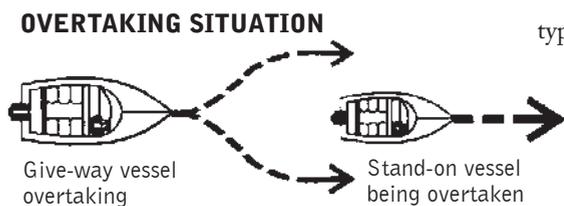
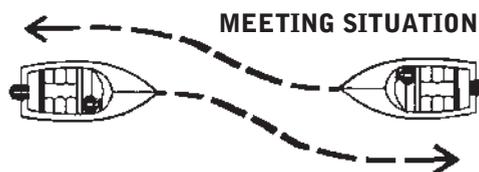
On the water there are no painted lines to mark where boats must go. In order to provide an orderly flow of traffic, there are "rules of the road" that boaters should learn and practice.

Boaters on the water encounter three situations: meeting, crossing and overtaking. The following diagrams should give a clear explanation of who has the right of way (stand-on vessel) and who must give way (give-way vessel). However, in an emergency, all ves-

sels must give way to avoid a collision. At night, a boat's navigation lights give an indication of right of way (see page 36).

The above rules cover most traffic situations, but a few other situations exist. Sailboats under sail have the right of way except when they are the overtaking vessel. Rowboats and paddle powered boats have the right of way over motorboats. All recreational craft should yield the right of way to large commercial craft (towboats, barges). Such vessels have large blind spots and will be unable to see smaller crafts in front of them.

On small or narrow bodies of water, all traffic should stay to the right of mid-channel and not "cut corners".



## BUOYS

Buoys are the most common types of navigational aid, and they serve the same purpose as traffic signs on the highway. Failure to obey buoys can result in enforcement action, or worse, a loss of property or lives. When boating in unfamiliar waters, slow down and look for any regulatory or channel-marking buoys. Remember that it is possible for these buoys to drift out of position. Kentucky law prohibits from tying up to any buoy except designated mooring buoys.

## UNIFORM STATE WATERWAY MARKING SYSTEM

**Boats Keep Out!**  
Nature of danger may be placed outside crossed diamond, e.g., waterfalls, swim areas or rapids.



**Danger!**  
Nature of danger may be indicated inside the diamond shape, e.g., rocks, reefs, dams, construction or snags.



**Caution!**  
Controlled Areas as indicated in circle, e.g., speed limit, no fishing, no anchoring, ski-only, slow-no wake, no ski or no prop boats.



**Information**  
Tells directions, distances, places such as food, repair, supplies and other non-regulatory messages.



**Obstruction Marker**  
Do not pass between shore and buoy.



**Mooring Buoy**  
White with reflective blue band. May have white light or reflector.



**Channel Marker**  
Keep buoy on right facing upstream.



**Channel Marker**  
Keep buoy on left facing upstream. Marker may be green or black.



# REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

(301 KAR 6:020 Sect. 4); KRS 235.203

For each person onboard a vessel, federal as well as state law requires a Type I, II, or III personal flotation device (PFD) or its equivalent buoyancy on all boats. Boats 16 feet and over, except canoes and kayaks, must also carry one Type IV throwable PFD. Operators and passengers of personal watercraft must wear a PFD. Persons under 12 years of age must wear a PFD while in the open part of a boat that is under way.

## PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife strongly recommends wearing PFDs while boating, especially by children and nonswimmers. In order for PFDs to be legal, the following requirements must be met:

- **Coast Guard approved:** A label with an approval number will be on the PFD. Check the label on inflatable types of PFDs. Some older models meet Coast Guard approval only when worn.
- **Serviceability:** All straps, buckles, zippers, stitching, must be intact and the fabric should not be rotted. Some PFDs contain airtight bags filled with a fibrous material. Squeeze the bags. If air escapes, destroy the PFD and replace it with a new one.
- **Size:** PFDs must fit properly. Read the label to determine size and weight restrictions.
- **Accessibility:** PFDs must be readily available for immediate use by all occupants of a vessel. It is advisable for each person to try on their PFD before departing so that they are familiar with the fastening devices and to assure it is adjusted to the person. PFDs shouldn't be stored in the plastic bags in which they were sold. This limits access and can promote rotting.

## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Kentucky law requires that all boats equipped with a petroleum product (gasoline, kerosene, propane, etc.) consuming device (engines, lanterns, stoves, etc.) shall have a hand portable fire extinguisher in serviceable

## TYPES OF PFDs

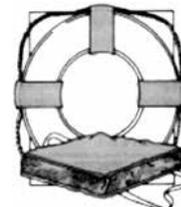
Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) will now have a new style of label on the inside. Going forward, these devices will be referred to as either "throwable" or "wearable" and have a performance category indicated by an icon instead of the Type I, II, III, IV and V used previously. It will take many years for the older style of labels to be completely phased out and both styles will be in stores, on boats and in use for many years to come. Any PFD with the old label that is still serviceable will continue to be legal for use.



**TYPE I (above) and TYPE II (right)**  
These devices are designed, when worn properly, to turn a person who is unconscious and face down in the water to a vertical or slightly backward face up position.

**TYPE III**  
These are special purpose devices that include ski vests, fishing vests and float coats. They are not designed to turn a person's face out of the water, but they do have the same buoyancy as the type I and II PFDs and are more comfortable to wear.

**TYPE IV**  
These PFDs are designed to be thrown to persons in the water who can hold on to them until help arrives. They are not designed to be worn, and could cause drowning if worn on the back.



**TYPE V**  
These special use devices are to be worn for specific activities that will be described on the PFD's label. To be effective, Type V PFDs must be used according to these specifications, and many must be worn at all times in order to qualify as a PFD.



condition and located for immediate use. Disposable (non-rechargeable) dry chemical fire extinguishers must be removed 12 years after the date of manufacture. These fire extinguishers generally have their year of manufacture stamped on the bottom or next to its UL label. A rechargeable extinguisher does not need removal from service after 12 years, but must be maintained annually by a technician. The best fire protection is well maintained equipment and proper safety habits.

MINIMUM NUMBER OF B-1 FIRE EXTINGUISHERS		
Vessel/size	No Fixed Fire Extinguisher System	Fixed Fire Extinguisher System Installed
Class A	1	0
Class 1	1	0
Class 2	2	1
Class 3	3	2

MARINE FIRE EXTINGUISHER CLASSIFICATION				
Coast Guard Classes	UL Listing	Foam (gals.)	CO2 (lbs.)	Dry Chemical (lbs.)
B-I	5B	1.25	4	2
B-II	6B*	2.5	15	10
—	10B	none	10	2.5
—	20B	2.5	50	4.5 - 6

\* UL rating 6B is no longer used.



Above: foam, CO2 and dry chemical fire extinguishers

## BACKFIRE FLAME ARRESTERS

Internal combustion engines may backfire. To safeguard against fire, all motorboats with enclosed engines and engines originally equipped with a flame arrester, (except outboards and diesels) must have an approved carburetor backfire flame arrester system on each carburetor.

## VENTILATION

Most fires on a boat are due to ignition of fuel vapors. Gasoline is heavier than air. It can collect in the bilge or engine compartment and any spark can ignite it. Therefore, Kentucky law requires boats to have adequate ventilation of areas where flammable vapors can accumulate.

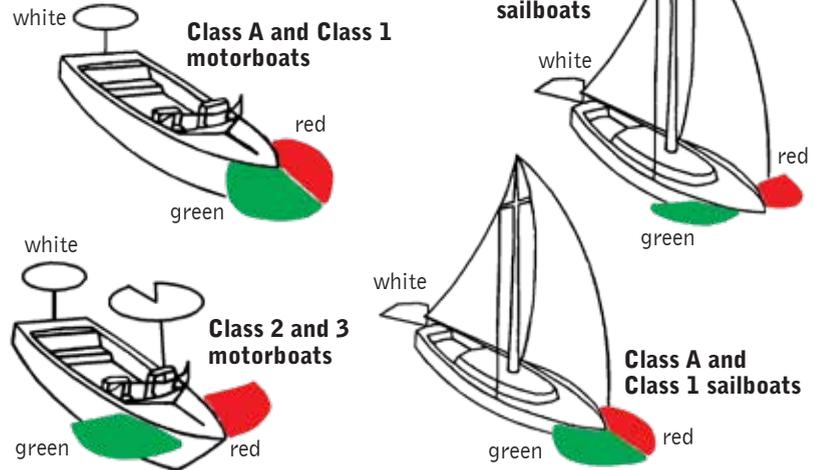
Most boats are equipped with adequate ventilation systems when they come from the factory. Usually, this is a combination of active and passive systems. Active systems use electrical blowers to exhaust flammable vapors from the bilge and other areas. Passive systems are ducts and cowls that ventilate areas when the boat is moving. Almost all inboards will have an electrical blower installed in the engine compartment. Operators should run the blower for several minutes before starting the engine. If the blower is inoperable it should be repaired or replaced immediately. Many boat fires take place after refueling, so care should be taken to avoid spilling fuel in the vessel.

## NAVIGATION LIGHTS

All vessels when underway between sunset and sunrise must display proper navigation lights. Navigation lights on boats are restricted to the colors of red, green and white.

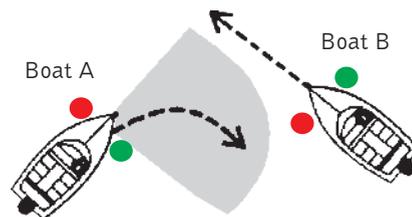
From sunset to sunrise in an area where other boats navigate, or in poor visibility conditions, all vessels at anchor shall display a steady white light visible

## DISPLAY OF NAVIGATION LIGHTS



360 degrees at all times. Manually propelled vessels shall carry a white light to display in sufficient time to avoid a collision.

The purpose of the red and green navigation lights at night is to show if your boat is in a meeting, crossing or overtaking situation. The red and green lights must be displayed from sunset to sunrise whenever a boat is underway. They will give some indication of the size and speed of vessels. The red and green bow lights are especially helpful in determining right of way in crossing situations. In the diagram below, boat B sees the green bow light of boat A, and has the right of way to continue on course. Boat A sees the red bow light of boat B and must stop or pass astern of boat B. In special circumstances, such as towing, refer to 33 CFR 83 (Inland



Navigation Rules).

## SIGNALING DEVICES

Kentucky law states that all boats 16 feet in length or longer must have a hand-, mouth- or power-operated signaling device capable of producing a blast for two seconds or more and audible for one-half mile for class 1 vessels,

one mile for class two vessels and one and one-half miles for class three vessels. This does not exempt vessels from any other signaling device as may be required by federal law when operating on navigable waters of this state.

Navigation law also requires the following maneuvering and warning signals:

- One long blast: Warning signal (coming out of slip)
- One short blast: Pass on my port side (left)
- Two short blasts: Pass on my starboard (right)
- Three short blasts: Engines in reverse
- Five or more blasts: Danger signal

## MUFFLING DEVICES

Kentucky law requires all boats to be equipped with effective exhaust muffling devices. Usually, boats and motors that come direct from the manufacturer are adequately muffled. However, there may be instances of high performance boats that have been modified by the owners that are not in compliance with the law. Additionally, there may be federal and/or local regulations restricting boats with an over-the-transom exhaust system.



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## MARINE SANITATION DEVICES (KRS 235:420)

Motorboats with marine toilets are not allowed on public waters unless the toilet is equipped with a Type I, II or III marine sanitation device (MSD.) Type I

and II MSDs chemically treat sewage. Type III MSDs are holding tanks for raw sewage.

Raw sewage shall not be discharged in any public waters. Treated sewage may be discharged from a marine toi-

let into legal “discharge” waters. Those waters are Barkley and Kentucky lakes, Lake Cumberland and any of the major river systems. Type I and II MSDs must be sealed or locked while the vessel is on “no discharge” waters.

# ACCIDENTS

(301 KAR 6:030, KRS 235.250)

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If any of the following conditions occur as the result of a boating accident, collision, etc., a Boating Accident Report must be made:

- death or disappearance of a person;
- injury to a person which requires medical attention or incapacitates that person for 24 hours or more;
- loss or damage to property (including the vessel) in an amount of \$500 or more.

The operator of a vessel is required to complete the report. If the operator is not capable of filing the report and is not the owner of the vessel, then the owner shall be required to fill out a boating accident report.

**Note 1:** Even if a game warden fills out a boating accident report, this does not exempt the operator from filing a report.

**Note 2:** The reports filed by operators of vessels are confidential and are not available as public record (KRS 235.250). However, reports made by game wardens are available for review.

Accidents involving death or serious injury must be submitted to the Division of Law Enforcement within 48 hours. All others must be submitted within five days.

Boating accident report forms are available from game wardens or by writing to Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Division of Law Enforcement, #1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601, calling 1-800-858-1549, or online at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

## RENDERING AID

An operator of a vessel involved in a boating accident shall render aid to other persons and vessels as long as it doesn't endanger his crew, passengers or vessel. Also, the operator of any vessel involved in an accident shall give his name, address, and identification of his vessel, in writing, to any person that is injured or to the owner of any property that is damaged.

## FIRST AID

This section includes suggestions that may save a life. First, boats should be equipped with a first aid kit. This kit should be able to provide treatment for burns, insect bites, cuts and abrasions.

Second, boaters should take a first aid course so they know how to treat victims with sprains, broken bones and shock.

Third, boaters should know how to perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in case they encounter victims of near drowning, heart attack or trauma from boating accidents. In many cases, emergency medical help is further away on the water than on land. Interested persons should contact their local chapter of the American Red Cross for information on first aid and CPR training.

## HYPOTHERMIA

Four elements cause hypothermia – cold, moisture, wind and exhaustion. Symptoms of hypothermia are uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, stumbling, blue skin, decreased heart and breathing rate, weak pulse and unconsciousness.

All hypothermia symptoms demand immediate attention. As soon as possible, a victim of hypothermia should be brought out of the weather. Wet clothing should be replaced with dry clothing. If the victim shows mild symptoms, get them near a fire or other heat source or put them in a warm sleeping bag. For victims with advanced symptoms of hypothermia, seek immediate medical attention. Never give alcohol to the victim.

The best cure for hypothermia is prevention. Monitor weather reports when you plan to be in the outdoors. Dress in layers and always have foul-weather gear handy.

## FATIGUE

Boaters should be aware of the factors that induce fatigue while on the water. The wind, sun, engine noise and constant motion of the boat can greatly reduce a person's reaction time.

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