

Spring turkey hunting season opens in April

Strong population of 2-year-old birds anticipated

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Love is in the air for Kentucky's growing turkey population, kicking off what wildlife experts expect to be a strong spring season for eager gobblers.

Higher-than-usual turkey brood surveys – summertime observations of young turkey poults hatched that year - signal healthy populations of gobblers for hunters to pursue in the commonwealth this season, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife announced.

"All evidence suggests turkey numbers have improved over the past five years," said Zak Danks, turkey-grouse program coordinator for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. "We share many hunters' concerns about the turkey population, but the more we learn about our flock, the more excited we can be about the future."

The spring hunting season kicks off with a youth-only weekend, April 4-5, followed by the 23-day general season starting April 18. Hunters with proper permits can harvest two birds during the season but only one a day. Legal birds are male or have a beard.

In 2025, hunters telechecked 30,661 birds, less than in 2024 and 2023 but more than in 2022 and 2021. Biologists say this year's season has the potential for another high harvest, given numbers related to reproductive success two years ago:

- Brood surveys from 2024 showed 70% of hens with poults,



Sarah A. Miller

Kentucky's turkey season opens for a youth-only weekend April 4-5, followed by a 23-day regular season.

compared to 62% in 2023. Male poults hatched in 2024 will be vocal 2-year-olds this spring.

- The average number of poults per hen increased between 2023 and 2024 not only statewide (from 2.3 to 2.7) but also in all three regions of the state. The increases in poults per hen were most significant in the east (from 1.78 to 2.28) and west (from 2.62 to 3.11).

• Last summer's brood survey showed 3.5 poults per hen statewide. Production was greatest in the east (3.8) and in central Kentucky (3.6). Hunters should see an uptick in jakes this spring.

Danks said the optimistic brood survey data was backed up by a three-year study of nests, brood habitat use and hen behavior in three counties in western Kentucky that

used transmitters resembling backpacks to track movement of more than 230 turkeys.

Preliminary estimates from that study showed the survival rate for adult hens was 70% to 74% and greater than 75% for juvenile hens – better than biologists predicted.

In addition, the higher-than-usual number of successful nests and higher poult survival rates in those three counties in 2024 showed the tremendous impact of the emergence of the 13-year Brood XIX cicadas in western Kentucky that year.

A separate four-year research study that involved capturing and leg banding nearly 1,300 male birds showed Kentucky's annual harvest rate was 29% for mature gobblers and 6% for juveniles (jakes). The average year-to-year sur-

vival rate was 56% for gobblers and 78% for jakes.

"Harvest rates did not exceed the 30% to 35% threshold that past research indicated could be unsustainable, so we're right where we want to be providing opportunities to hunters while protecting the flock long term," Danks said. "We haven't had such comprehensive numbers in decades."

Hunters should familiarize themselves with the regulations before going afield. Basics include:

- Dates: General season, April 18-May 10. Youth season for hunters ages 15 and younger is April 4-5.
- Shooting hours: 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.
- Requirements: Annual hunting license and spring turkey permit

(or all-in-one Sportsman's License). Hunters 12 to 15 years old need a youth hunting license and youth turkey permit (or a Youth Sportsman's License). Hunters 11 and under are license-exempt. Hunters under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

- Legal birds: Turkeys that are male or have visible beard.

• Bag Limits: Two per spring season, but only one per day. A limit of one bird per wildlife management area per season applies. A youth turkey permit allows hunters 12 to 15 years old to take one bird in either the spring or fall seasons.

- Clothing: Hunter orange not required; recommended if carrying a harvested bird.

• Tagging, recording: Fill out the Harvest Log before moving harvested bird and telecheck it by phone or online by midnight of the day it is recovered. Birds dropped off to a taxidermist or butcher must have a handmade tag with hunter's name, phone and Telecheck confirmation number.

• Leg bands: Harvested turkeys with leg bands should be reported to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife on the Turkey Band reporting webpage.

- Baiting/feeding: Illegal to hunt turkey over bait.

• Callers/Assistants: Callers and assistants who are not hunting do not need licenses or permits.

For all regulations, general information and videos on turkey hunting and processing, see the Spring Turkey Hunting page or the Kentucky Spring Hunting Guide, both online at the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website (fw.ky.gov).

All NCKC Basketball Teams named

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Two Carroll County boys and one from Trimble and two Trimble County girls and one from Carroll have been named to the All-NCKC Basketball Teams for 2025-26.

BOYS TEAM

Carroll County's Rylan Kinman, a junior guard, and Hunter Dalton, a sophomore small forward, and Trimble County's Drake Pennix, a freshman guard, were named to the All-NCKC Boys Basketball Team

The Panthers compiled a 16-12 record in 2025-26 while Trimble was 7-22. Henry County (20-12) claimed the 2025-26 NCKC boys basketball title.

Other All-NCKC Boys Basketball Team honorees were:

Henry County: MVP-Baylor Nolin, Drew Cole, Landen Tingle, Ethan Keller.

Owen County (14-13): Michael Smith, Harper Duvall, Briton Stafford.

Eminence (15-15): Brady White.

Gallatin County (11-21):

Nick Skidmore, Layne Souther.

GIRLS TEAM

Trimble County's Kendra Mahoney, a junior forward, and Ainslie Stark, a junior guard, and Carroll County's Mya Hall, an eighth grade shooting guard, were named

to the All-NCKC Girls Basketball Team

The Raiders compiled a 10-15 record in 2025-26 while Carroll was 11-17. Owen County (19-9) claimed the 2025-26 NCKC girls basketball

title. Other All-NCKC Girls Basketball Team honorees were:

Owen County: MVP-Kylee Steffen, Hannah Mason, Cloie McGuire, Khloe Dempsey.

Eminence (19-11): Brooklyn Smith, Victoria Spiegel.

Gallatin County (16-11): Lucy McVey, Audrina Doolin, Chloe Franks.

Henry County (8-18): Morgan McElfresh.

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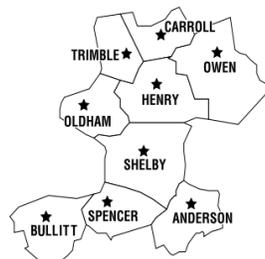
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Carrollton Utilities Office
P.O. Box 269, 900 Clay Street
Carrollton, Kentucky 41008

Sealed Bids for the **Gas ROW Mowing 2026 Project** will be received by Carrollton Utilities at the Carrollton Utilities Office, 900 Clay Street, Carrollton, Kentucky, until 2:00 p.m. (E.S.T.), April 10th, 2026, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud. Proposals should be labeled with the name of the proposer and Gas ROW Mowing 2026 Project on the outside of the proposal envelope.

Project overview: Carrollton Utilities is seeking Bids to complete a Gas Right of Way Mowing Project in Carroll County until 2:00PM on April 10th, 2026. The project includes mowing and Right of Way clearing on the Owner's Gas Transmission Line from the Wrights Ridge Purchase Station to the Kentucky River Crossing, ending at the Kentucky River Crossing. This includes all mowing, clearing, removal of brush and woody vegetation, and disposal of debris along the Gas Transmission Line Right of Way. The length of the clearing project is approximately 4.1 miles.

Carrollton Utilities will award the project based on the lowest and most qualified bid. The Contract Documents, consisting of the bid Form, Plans, and Addenda (if any), may be examined, or picked up at the following locations:

Carrollton Utilities Office
900 Clay Street
Carrollton, Kentucky 41008

The OWNER reserves the right to waive any informality or to reject any or all proposals. No BIDDER may withdraw his proposal within thirty (30) consecutive calendar days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

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