

Kentucky's fall hunting seasons await

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

FRANKFORT — From doves and deer to bobcat and bear, fall brings many options for hunters in Kentucky to fill their freezers or take on new challenges.

Although the first day of squirrel season started Aug. 15, many consider Sept. 1 – the opening day of dove season – as the symbolic kick-off of fall hunting. The opening of these two seasons unleashes a steady progression of opportunities for hunters.

No matter what draws hunters to the fields and forests, whether it's meat for the freezer, antlers for the wall, spiritual rejuvenation or a stronger bond with their children, “there's something for everyone,” said Wildlife Division Director Ben Robinson of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. “The good old days of hunting in Kentucky are happening right now.”

Season dates and bag limits can be found on Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's website at fw.ky.gov. The website is filled with everything from new regulations, harvest data and a license and permit store, to tutorials on hunting, quota hunt applications, Hunter Education classes, and maps of public dove fields and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). It also includes an individualized My Profile page.

The website provides downloadable and printable versions of the 2026-27 Kentucky Hunting and Trapping Guide and the 2026-27 Kentucky Hunting Guide for Migratory Birds and Waterfowl. The hunting and trapping guide is also available at license vendors.

Special note: Hunters and trappers should consult species-specific pages at fw.ky.gov or the online hunting guides before going afield. Proposed regulation changes are awaiting final review and could alter seasons this fall.

Some hunting opportunities, more or less in calendar order, follow.

Squirrel: Fall squirrel

hunting – which began Aug. 15 – is the perfect introduction to hunting for youths and newcomers. To find eastern gray squirrels, which make up nearly 90 percent of the harvest, look for large trees in mature forests, especially oaks and hickories.

Doves and more: Friends and family will hit dove fields Sept. 1, the traditional start to the first of dove season's three segments. The action can be fast, furious and fun in one of the rare hunting opportunities that's considered “a social thing.” Check out Migratory Birds for lists of public dove fields and quota hunts.

Hunters will need a valid Kentucky hunting license and a Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl permit, plus they must also have their Harvest Information Program (HIP) confirmation number prior to heading afield. To get their confirmation number, hunters must visit the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at fw.ky.gov, click the My Profile tab and answer a brief survey about their migratory bird hunting activities during the previous year. This number must appear on their printed license or can be written on the hunting license or Kentucky Migratory Bird/Waterfowl Hunting permit.

Mid-September will begin opportunities for early wood ducks, teal and Canada geese. Regular waterfowl seasons for ducks and geese open on Thanksgiving Day, providing opportunities to hunt through January or February. Sandhill crane season runs from early December through the end of January. Hunters wishing to take sandhill cranes must apply for a quota hunt permit Sept. 1-30, 2026, at My Profile, and are required to complete a post-season survey within 14 days of the close of the season.

Deer: Roughly 300,000 hunters will target white-tailed deer through 136 days of hunting, including an archery season that kicks off Sept. 5, a nine-day youth-only season Oct. 10-18, 2026, and the modern firearms season Nov. 14-29, 2026.

More than 145,000 deer were harvested last year. While Kentucky ranks No. 6 in entries on the Boone and Crockett Club trophy list, wildlife officials are encouraging a higher harvest of does.

Thirty counties were rezoned to allow more generous bag limits, and a special antlerless season in 23 counties being monitored for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was expanded from two days to four days to manage deer densities. Mandatory drop-off and sampling requirements in the CWD Surveillance Zone are spelled out online and in the hunting guide.

Black bears: Hunters can buy permits over the counter to pursue bears in 47 counties using firearms, bows, crossbows and with the aid of dogs during various seasons that begin Sept. 19 and end Dec. 16, 2026. More than 200 bears were taken each of the past two seasons, with about 10 percent of hunters being successful.

Elk: A lucky 500 hunters were selected for permits in May during Kentucky's annual elk permit drawing for the right to hunt the state's largest game animal in the southeastern mountains. Didn't get picked? Apply now for the 2027 Kentucky Elk Draw through My Profile.

Fall turkey: Spring brought a record turkey harvest, but successful hatches the past two years suggest the various fall seasons could be productive as well. Hunters can use bows beginning Sept. 5, followed by various crossbow and shotguns seasons.

Other small game: Hunters can target both rabbits and quail beginning Nov. 16, with a separate 13-day season beginning Nov. 1 in the Eastern Zone only.

Both species are habitat-specific, so finding the right habitat is step No. 1. Many rabbit and quail hunters love the species because it gives them a chance to work their dogs.

Furbearers: Furbearers offer diverse opportunities

for hunters and trappers alike, including predators like coyotes, bobcats and foxes; water-based animals like river otters, beavers and muskrats; and the commonly seen raccoons and striped skunks. Pay attention to the details: most species have very specific rules regarding equipment and season dates, and season dates typically differ

by method of take (hunting and trapping). In addition, some species cannot be taken during deer firearms seasons.

Remember that hunters born after 1974 must be hunter education certified, unless they are Kentucky residents hunting on their own property. For other exceptions and hunter safety

course schedules, see the Hunter Education webpage.

For general information, hunters can contact the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Information Center by emailing info.center@ky.gov or calling (800) 858-2549, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern) Monday through Friday, except holidays.



LEGAL NOTICE

CITY OF MILTON, KENTUCKY
ORDINANCE NO. 4, SERIES 2026

AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO THE USE, RESERVATION AND RENTAL OF MILTON CITY PARK

WHEREAS, the City of Milton ("City") is the owner of the Milton City Park, which, from time to time, persons desire to reserve for their own use for special events; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to establish certain rules and parameters concerning the use and reservation of Milton City Park, including the use of the park for special events:

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City of Milton, Kentucky, as follows:

SECTION 1. ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED

No person other than officers or employees of the City shall cause, promote, permit, allow, aid, assist, encourage or engage in any of the following activities or occurrences within the Milton City Park:

- (A) The presence of any person within the boundaries of the park anytime after dusk and before dawn, without special authorization from the city commission.
- (B) The discharge or display of any fireworks without all required governmental permits or authorizations.
- (C) Having any open fire in any part of the park.
- (D) The operation or use of any motor vehicle anywhere other than the paved roadway (excluding all walking/hiking trails) and parking lots.
- (E) Swimming or wading in any pond, creek, stream or other impoundment of water.
- (F) Hunting, trapping or in any way injuring or molesting any animal within the park.
- (G) Servicing or repairing any motor vehicle or equipment.
- (H) Bicycling in any area other than the paved parking lot and the paved roadway (excluding all walking/hiking trails).
- (I) The display of anything for sale or trade without specific authorization therefore from the City Commission.
- (J) The possession or service of any alcoholic beverages.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS DEFINED

For purposes of this Ordinance, the following definitions shall apply:

- (A) "Special event" shall mean any meeting, gathering, demonstration, rally, festival, carnival, procession, parade, party, sporting event, production, fundraiser, gala, celebration, race, tournament, activity, or assembly of more than 20 actual or expected attendees that is organized or conducted by any person, including but not limited to individuals, corporations, partnerships, companies, associations, or other entities, involving the use of the Milton City Park or any portions thereof.
- (B) "Revenue-generating special event" shall mean any special event involving the charging, collection, solicitation, or receipt, directly or indirectly, of money or other items of value in connection with admission, registration, participation, concessions, vending, merchandise sales, donations, sponsorships, fundraising, or any other commercial or fundraising activity occurring during or pertaining to the event.

SECTION 3. RENTAL PERMIT REQUIRED

No person shall conduct any special event at the Milton City Park or on any premises therein except after applying for and obtaining a Park Event Permit from the City Clerk, which shall entitle said person to exclusive use of the premises reserved under the permit. Upon receipt of a complete application, the City Clerk shall approve Park Event Permit applications and issue Park Event Permits if:

- (A) The applicant's requested reservation date and time is available for the area(s) of the park which the applicant seeks to reserve;
- (B) The applicant does not appear to be requesting the reservation of a greater portion of the park premises than their special event reasonably requires;
- (C) The applicant's proposed event appears to comply with all regulations set forth herein pertaining to the use of the park premises; and
- (D) All fee, security deposit, licensing, and proof of insurance requirements are satisfied.

Reservations may be made up to, but not more than, one year in advance of the reservation date.

Applicants shall keep a copy of their approved Park Event Permit with them at all times during the special event and, upon request, shall provide proof of same to any City officer or employee during the duration of the special event.

Any person conducting a special event at the Milton City Park remains responsible for complying with all laws, ordinances, and regulations which may apply to the event. The City in no way assumes liability for any loss, injury or destruction to persons or property, whatever the cause may be, arising from any special event occurring at the Milton City Park. Furthermore, no person conducting or organizing a special event on park premises shall be considered an agent, employee, or contractor of the City by virtue of being permitted to conduct a special event at the Milton City Park, including a revenue-generating special event.

SECTION 4. FEES

Payment of a \$200 rental fee shall be required to reserve and use the Milton City Park, in its entirety, for purposes of a revenue-generating special event. The determination of whether a proposed use constitutes a revenue-generating special event shall be made by the City Clerk at the time of permitting, subject to review by the City Commission.

The fee imposed under this Section shall be nonrefundable, except in circumstances in which the City Commission, in its sole discretion, determines that the park premises were not, at the time reserved for use, in a condition reasonably suitable for the permitted use or were not in a condition that the permittee reasonably should have expected. In determining whether to authorize a refund, the City Commission may consider, among other relevant factors, the condition of the facility or premises, the extent to which the condition interfered with the permitted use, whether the condition was caused by the City, weather, vandalism, maintenance issues, utility failure, public safety concerns, or other circumstances beyond the City or permittee's control, and whether the permittee was able to make substantial use of the facility notwithstanding the condition complained of. Any person seeking a refund of this fee shall submit a written request to the City Clerk within ten (10) days following the last day of the reservation, stating the grounds for the request and providing any documentation or other information supporting the request.

There shall be no rental fee required for the reservation of only an athletic field or park shelter within the Milton City Park, nor for the reservation of the park in its entirety for a special event that is not a revenue-generating special event.

SECTION 5. SECURITY DEPOSIT

In addition to the fee imposed in Section 3, a security deposit shall be required to reserve the premises of the Milton City Park for a special event in accordance with the following schedule:

PREMISES	USE	DEPOSIT AMOUNT
Milton City Park (in its entirety)	Revenue-generating special event	\$250
Milton City Park (in its entirety)	Any special event other than a revenue-generating special event	\$50
Any other premises (including an athletic field or park shelter)	Any special event	\$50

The security deposit shall be refunded to the applicant following the event less any charges for damage, additional services, or other costs incurred by City due to any failure by the applicant or the special event's attendees to leave the reserved area in a neat and orderly condition. However, all such costs incurred by the City shall be the responsibility of the applicant, even if the amount exceeds the amount of the security deposit.

SECTION 6. PROOF OF INSURANCE

Any person seeking to use any portion of the Milton City Park for a special event may be required as a condition of approval to provide proof of liability insurance or other insurance coverage for the special event in an amount deemed appropriate by the City based on the nature, scope, and risk of the proposed event, to protect the City from risk of loss. The City may require that the insurance policy name the City, its officers, agents, and employees as additional insureds under the policy of insurance.

SECTION 7. PENALTIES

Each violation and every other failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter shall be a misdemeanor; and each day of the continuation thereof shall be a separate and distinct offense for which:

- (A) Any person convicted thereof in a court of competent jurisdiction shall be sentenced to pay a criminal fine not to exceed the maximum amount of \$500 as set forth in KRS 534.050(2)(a); and
- (B) The offender shall be subject to a civil penalty of \$100 plus the costs of collection thereof, including, without limitation, court costs and reasonable attorney fees, which shall be recovered by the city in a civil action in the nature of debt if not paid by the offender within 30 days after citation for the violation or other failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter or by any other procedure permitted by law.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force when passed, published and recorded according to law.

APPROVED:
/s/ DENNY C. JACKSON
Mayor

ATTEST:
/s/ ANGELA DUNWAY
City Clerk

First Reading July 9, 2026
Second Reading August 13, 2026
Publication: August 28, 2026

COMMISSIONERS VOTING:

FOR	Against
Lee Carson	None
Troy Alexander	
Denny Jackson	
Leah Carson	
Lynn Comeaux	

UK football building depth ahead of season

BY JOSEPH RUSSELL
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

With one more scrimmage remaining until Kentucky starts preparing for its season opener, the Wildcats are spending the final week of fall camp fine-tuning their approach to the 2026 college football campaign.

After bringing in nearly 50 new players, many of them through the NCAA transfer portal, first-year UK head coach Will Stein and his brand new coaching staff are working to iron out the details with their squad — with an emphasis on building depth in an effort to adapt to any changes that come their way.

“I think we have to prepare,” said UK offensive coordinator Joe Sloan, who spent the last two seasons at LSU. “The thing will be: How good is your first 11 to 14 players? But then, throughout the season, you’re going to get challenged based on how your depth is and the development. I think the way we practice, the way we prepare, has allowed a lot of our down-the-line guys to get a ton of reps, which is critical. And then we’ll have to continue that throughout the season.”

Kentucky football fans are no strangers to the injury bug, and this year’s team is already facing its fair share of struggles. Reserve running back Tovani Mizell suffered a season-ending injury during fall camp, wide receiver Hardley Gilmore is expected to miss half the season, and other maladies are likely to pop up during the year. Other players, like wide receiver Nic Anderson and linebacker Sam Greene are working their way back to form.

By preparing ahead of time, Sloan added, the Cats won’t be caught off guard when other problems arise.

“The thing is we’ll always tailor to different things that we’re good at and different ways to compete at a high level,” he added, “but then also different ways to push the ball down the field. We adapt. I think the most interesting thing has just been it probably starts with the run game, what our O-line and our running backs are good at. And then moving back off of that and what makes the quarterback comfortable. And then the last piece is fitting in where



UK Athletics

Kentucky linebacker Sam Greene works through drills during fall camp in Lexington.

we can now put guys in mismatch situations and trying to use different pieces.

“I think we continually adjust, and I think that will be something constant throughout the year based on who’s healthy, who’s available, who’s playing, who’s playing well, and trying to put them in the right situations.”

Facing a similar situation on the opposite side of the ball, Cats defensive coordinator Jay Bateman said he’s “happy with where we’re at right now.”

Playing hard and communicating will be key to the defense’s success, the former Texas A&M coordinator said.

“I think those are the two main things,” he said. “I think the schematic thing gets blown out of whack a little bit. If you play really hard and you communicate and you play physical — those are the non-negotiables.

“I kind of want to see how we’re going to respond when adversity hits. Adversity hits in practice, you go to the next period and reset. So, like how we’re going to respond when adversity hits, how we’re going to communicate in front of 70,000-plus people. I think those are the main things.”