

# Spring turkey hunting season opens in April

BY STAFF REPORTS

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 percent of hens with poults, compared to 62 percent 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 percent to 74 percent and greater than 75 percent 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



Sarah A. Miller

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

capturing and leg banding nearly 1,300 male birds showed Kentucky's annual harvest rate was 29 percent for mature gobblers and 6 percent for juveniles (jakes). The average year-to-year survival rate was 56 percent for gobblers and 78 percent for jakes.

“Harvest rates did not exceed the 30 percent to 35 percent 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).

# Biologists find genes linked to bigger largemouth bass

BY STAFF REPORTS

FRANKFORT — Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources researchers have found the genetic keys to unlocking the potential for bigger largemouth bass, the most popular species sought by anglers.

Biologists with the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Fisheries Division, collaborating with the Center for Aquaculture Technologies, have identified specific genetic markers associated with enhanced size in native largemouth bass.

The discovery was made through the Fisheries Division’s Thoroughbred Bass Program, which has a research goal of selectively breeding Kentucky-origin bass that carry these markers in order to stock public waters in the future with fish that have a higher probability of reaching trophy size.

“For more than 50 years, biologists have been trying to increase the size potential of largemouth bass,” said Adam Martin, Fisheries Division biologist with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. “In many states to our south, that effort involves stocking non-native Florida bass or first generation (F1) hybrids. Stocking Florida bass has increased bass size in many lakes in warmer climates but despite other attempts, it hasn’t worked so far in areas colder than southern Tennessee. More northern states like ours haven’t had any great options for improving their genetics until now.”

Martin said this marks a major advancement in fisheries science and management.

“Modern genetic tools are opening up a whole new world of potential that biologists even 10 years ago could only dream about,” he said. “To the best

of our knowledge, this is the first time such markers have been identified in largemouth bass.”

In a process known as a Genome Wide Association Study, researchers used whole-genome sequencing to identify single genetic markers linked to large size potential. Fisheries biologists clipped fins from 300 largemouth bass statewide to use for genetic testing. The sampled fish included 150 bass weighing more than 5 pounds from 30 different lakes and 150 slow-growing bass under 3.5 pounds from the same lakes. All samples were confirmed as pure largemouth bass before undergoing full genome sequencing. Researchers then analyzed more than 3 million markers per fish to identify the genetic markers common in trophy fish but rare in smaller individuals.

## LADY

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as part of her outing.

Andie Baumann started in the circle for Owen County and suffered the loss.

Following Baumann, Hallie Tirey pitched in relief for the Lady Rebels.

Conner plated 14 runs on only five hits. Bell (one RBI), Kayla Ortiz (two hits, four RBIs), Riley Rosenborough (one hit, three RBIs), Abigail Fuller (one hit, two RBIs), Addison Santiago (one hit), Ryanne Carter (one RBI) and Alexa Hamilton (one RBI) were each instrumental in Conner's offensive attack. Kayla Ortiz homered and doubled while Rosenborough tripled.

Owen County scored 13 runs on eight hits. Baumann (one hit, two RBIs), Tirey (two hits), Abigail Dempsey (two hits, five RBIs), JaiDean Branam (one hit, two RBIs), Peyton Buchanan (one hit, one

RBI) and Sophia Perry (one hit, one RBI) each contributed offensively for the Lady Rebels. Dempsey homered while Branam doubled.

## LADY REBELS ROLL TO WIN OVER LADY BRAVES

DRY RIDGE — Owen County rolled past Grant County 17-2 in five innings in a high school softball season opener on Wednesday, March 18.

Owen County led 9-0 before Grant County plated its first run during the bottom half of the third inning.

The Lady Rebels thrived offensively and defensively.

Hallie Tirey pitched a complete game for Owen County and earned the win in the circle. Tirey recorded six strikeouts.

Caleigh Hammons started in the circle for Grant County and absorbed the loss. Hammons pitched three innings.

Following Hammons,

Emery Hull pitched in relief for the Lady Braves.

Hammons and Hull combined to post six strikeouts.

Owen County scored 17 runs on 17 hits. A balanced offensive attack for Owen County featured Tirey (one hit, one RBI), Lexie Chappell (three hits, two RBIs), Lois Kemper (two hits, three RBIs), Andie Baumann (two hits, two RBIs), JaiDean Branam (two hits), Abigail Dempsey (one hit, two RBIs), Peyton Perkins (one hit, two RBIs), Shaylee Glacken (one hit) and Peyton Buchanan (one hit). Kemper homered while Chappell, Branam and Buchanan each doubled.

Madison Utter (one hit, one RBI), Aubrey Isaacs (one hit), Peyton Gosney (one hit) and Ava Alexander (one RBI) accounted for Grant County's offense.

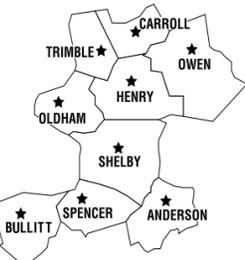
Owen County is slated to host Grant County for a game during the second half of the 2026 high school softball season on Friday, May 1.

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## REBELS

FROM PAGE A4

Anderson County featured Westin Vincent (two hits, one RBI), Blake Johnson (two hits, two RBIs), Hudson Hatfield (two hits, one RBI), Owen Degarmo (one hit, two RBIs), Taylor Grubb (one hit, two RBIs), Tyler Slusher (one hit) and Chase Smith (one hit). Hatfield, Grubb and Westin Vincent each doubled for the Bearcats.

Owen County plated eight runs on a dozen hits. Wright (two hits, two RBIs), Cook (two hits, two RBIs), Brody Hearn (four hits), Trip Allnutt (two hits), Bryson Tirey (two hits) and Hatcher Smith (one RBI) each delivered offensively for the Rebels. Helping his pitching cause at the plate, Cook doubled.

Owen County and Anderson County aren't scheduled to meet again in the 2026 high school baseball season.

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## LEGAL NOTICE

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
UNIFIED COURT OF JUSTICE  
OWEN CIRCUIT COURT  
CIVIL ACTION # 25-CI-045

GERMAN AMERICAN BANK

PLAINTIFF

VS. NOTICE OF SALE

DANIEL ASHER, ETAL.

DEFENDANTS

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By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale rendered in the Owen Circuit Court on the 10th day of March, 2026, I will sell at public auction to the highest and best bidder on the front steps of the Owen County Courthouse, 100 North Thomas Street, Owenton, Kentucky at the hour of 10:00, a.m. on Saturday, April 4, 2026, the following described property:

Two adjoining parcels on the east side of Greenup Road in Owen County, Kentucky and bounded and described as follows as containing 1.00 acres and 0.13 acres and fully described in Deed Book 223, page 468 in the Owen County Clerk's Office.

There is a manufactured home located on this property which has been converted to real estate.

Property Address: 2410 Greenup Road, Owenton, KY 40359  
PIDN: 064-00-00-001.01

The amount of money to be raised and for which this sale is being made is the sum of \$27,409.18 adjudged due to plaintiff on its first lien on the property, together with interest thereon at the rate of 6.0% per annum, from March 10, 2026, until paid, plus court costs and attorneys fees.

The real estate shall be sold on the terms of 10% cash at the time of the sale, with the balance payable within 30 days, except that the deposit shall be waived if plaintiff is the successful bidder. Any purchaser, other than the plaintiff shall be required to execute bond, with surety thereon acceptable to the Master Commissioner, to secure the unpaid balance of the purchase price, and said bond shall bear interest at the rate of 6% per annum from the date of the sale until paid, and shall have the same force and effect as a judgment and shall remain and be a lien on the property until paid. The purchaser shall have the privilege of paying all or part of the balance of the purchase price prior to the 30 day period.

It is further provided that the property sold contains insurable improvements and the successful bidder at said sale shall, at bidder's expense, procure a policy of fire and extended insurance coverage on said improvements in the amount of the appraised value, or the unpaid balance of the purchase price, whichever is less, as a minimum, with a loss payable clause to the Commissioner of the Owen Circuit Court or the plaintiff herein. Failure of the purchaser to effect such insurance shall not affect the validity of the sale or the purchaser's liability thereunder, but shall entitle, but not require the plaintiff to effect said insurance and furnish the policy, or evidence thereof to the Commissioner if it so desires, and the premium thereon or a proper portion thereof shall be charged to the purchaser as purchaser's cost.

When the purchase price is paid in full, title will be conveyed to the purchaser by commissioner's deed.

The aforesaid real property shall be sold free and clear of any and all liens and claims except the following:

- All State and County real estate taxes payable on the property for 2026 and thereafter;
- Easements, restrictions and stipulations of record;
- Assessments for public improvements levied against the property;
- Any facts which an inspection and accurate survey of the property may disclose.

For further information, see the Judgment, Order and pleadings of record in the Office of the Circuit Clerk of Owen County.

/s/ Mark R. Cobb  
MARK R. COBB  
MASTER COMMISSIONER  
OWEN CIRCUIT COURT

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