



**KANSAS**  
WILDLIFE & PARKS

# *Our Mission*

“ TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE  
KANSAS' WILDLIFE AND ITS HABITATS,  
ENSURING CURRENT AND FUTURE  
GENERATIONS APPRECIATE AND ENJOY  
THESE LIVING RESOURCES AND  
ASSOCIATED RECREATION, WHILE  
INFORMING THE PUBLIC OF THE STATUS  
OF KANSAS' NATURAL RESOURCES,  
GAINING UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT  
IN ACHIEVING THIS MISSION. ”

**KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND PARKS**  
**COMMISSION MEETING**  
Thursday, January 30, 2025  
Kansas State University Alumni Center  
Tadtman Boardroom  
1720 Anderson Ave., Manhattan KS 66506

**Virtual Meeting Options**

Zoom: Visit: [https://ksoutdoors.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIqdOqvrjspGN1Lfwusc\\_NxtX5ZB4QRSJS](https://ksoutdoors.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIqdOqvrjspGN1Lfwusc_NxtX5ZB4QRSJS)

- Register by entering your first name, last name, and email address.
- Once registered, you will be emailed a link to “Join the Meeting.”
- You will be muted upon entering the meeting. To comment or ask a question, use the “Raise Hand” feature or type your question in the chat function.

Call in: Dial (877) 853-5257

- When a meeting ID is requested, enter: 844 9206 8160 #
- When a participant ID is requested, enter: #

Live video/audio stream: <https://ksoutdoors.com/commission-meeting>

## AGENDA

- I. Call to Order at 12:00 P.M.
- II. Introduction of Commissioners and Guests
- III. Additions and Deletions of Agenda Items
- IV. Approval of November 2024 Meeting Minutes
- V. Department Report
  - a) Regulations in Promulgation – Kurtis Wiard
    - 115-2-3 – Camping Fees – On hold per HB 2648
    - 115-8-26 – Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting – On hold per HB 2648
    - 115-2-1 – Trout Fee and Senior License Fees – With Dept. of Admin.
    - 115-4-4 – Nonlead Muzzleloader Shot – With Dept. of Admin.
    - 115-1-1; 7-1; 7-2; 7-4; 7-10; and 18-8 – Sport/Nonsport Fish Distinction and Snagging of Invasive Carp – With Dept. of Admin.
    - 115-25-14 - Creel Limits, Size Limits, and Possession Limits – With Dept. of Admin.
    - 115-15-1; 15-2 – Threatened and Endangered Species Downlisting – Notice pursuant to K.S.A. 32-960(c)(1)(C)(ii) sent.
- VI. General Public Comment\*
- VII. Secretary's Remarks
  - a) Agency and State Fiscal Status – Secretary Kennedy
  - b) Legislative Update – Martin de Boer
- VIII. Informational Items
  - a) Commission Big Game Permit Drawing – Stuart Schrag
  - b) Quail Eye-Worm Research – Jeff Prendergast
  - c) Review of Prohibition of Trail Cameras on Public Lands – Ryan Stucky
  - d) Night Vision Coyote Hunting Season – Jon Beckmann

IX. General Discussion

- a) 2025-26 Waterfowl Season Dates, Bag and Possession Limits – Tom Bidrowski

X. Workshop Session

- a) K.A.R. 115-25-9a – 2025 Deer Seasons on Military Units – Levi Jaster
- b) K.A.R. 115-25-9 – Big Game Regulations – Levi Jaster

XI. General Public Comment\*

XII. Old Business

XIII. Other Business

- a) Future Meeting Dates and Locations

XIV. Adjournment

\*All public comments are limited to ten minutes per presenter. Presenters who need additional time may request up to an additional five minutes from the Chair.

If notified in advance, the department will have an interpreter available for the hearing impaired. To request an interpreter, call the Kansas Commission of Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 1-800-432-0698. Any individual with a disability may request other accommodations by contacting the Commission Secretary at (620) 672-5911.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March, 27, 2024 at Noon at the Topeka & Shawnee County Library, 1515 SW 1th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604.

**Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks**

**Commission Meeting**

**Thursday, November 21, 2024**

**Great Plains Nature Center**

**6232 E 29<sup>th</sup> St N, Wichita, KS**

**including a**

**Virtual ZOOM Meeting Option**

Subject to  
Commission  
Approval

The November 21, 2024, meeting of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission was called to order by Chairman Whitney Damron at 12:02 p.m.

**II. INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONERS AND GUESTS**

The Commissioners and Department staff introduced themselves (Attendance Roster – Exhibit A).

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE October 3, 2024, MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Warren Gfeller moved to accept the minutes of the October 3, 2024 meeting, Commissioner Bruce Riedl second. Approved. (Minutes – Exhibit B).

**III. ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO AGENDA ITEMS**

*No changes.*

Mission Statement (Exhibit C) and Agenda (Exhibit D).

## **V. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

### **A. Administrative Rules and Regulation Procedure – Pursuant to K.S.A. 77-421 –**

#### **Public Hearing**

1. KAR 115-25-8 Elk Regulations (permanent regulations) – Matt Peek, research biologist, presented this regulation to the commission (Exhibit E) – Last workshopped in front of commission March 2024. The change to the regulation that you'll be voting on today is the establishment of an additional firearm season on Fort Riley. The new season will last the entire month of January. Unfilled, antlerless elk permits on Fort Riley would already be valid during this new season, as the regulation is currently written. There is some text added on the second page, a little over halfway down, that allows all unfilled, antlerless only permits valid on the Fort to be used at that time as well. So, in a nutshell the changes to this regulation will extend the season on Fort Riley by one month, January, and will allow any unfilled Fort Riley permits to be used during that time.

**Commissioner Warren Gfeller moved to approve KAR 115-25-8 as presented to the Commission. Commissioner Bruce Riedl second.**

**The roll call vote to approve was as follows (Exhibit F):**

<b>Commissioner Carpenter</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Commissioner Cross</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Gfeller</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Lister</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Mark</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Riedl</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Damron</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**The motion to approve KAR 115-25-8 passed 6-0.**

2. KAR 115-25-9a Military Deer Seasons (permanent regulations) – Levi Jaster, big game biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit G). This regulation governs deer seasons on military subunits. We currently have a temporary regulation in place, this is permanent regulation.

**Commissioner Emerick Cross moved to approve KAR 115-25-9a as presented to the Commission. Commissioner Warren Gfeller second.**

**The roll call vote to approve was as follows (Exhibit H):**

<b>Commissioner Carpenter</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Commissioner Cross</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Gfeller</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Lister</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Commissioner Mark</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Commissioner Riedl**

**Yes**

**Commissioner Damron**

**Yes**

**The motion to approve KAR 115-25-9a passed 6-0.**

**V. DEPARTMENT REPORT (continued)**

**B. Regulations in Promulgation (Exhibit I)**

Chief Counsel Kurtis Wiard – You can see we have the list of regulations that are currently in promulgation. I won't go through all of them, because you've all heard them multiple times. However, I did want to point out on 115-2-1 there we had workshopped and talked about the trout fee. I wanted to mention that given the recent situation where we discovered that the senior lifetime pass had expired back in June of 2020. In speaking with the Secretary, we decided to propose three new senior discounted licenses to try to ease the burden. While we continue to go forward and explore all other options, we will come back before the Commission, obviously for approval or denial, as is the Commission's authority, later down the road. The licenses are 5-year senior hunt and 5-year senior fish, both at \$50, and then there will be a 5-year senior combination fishing and hunting license at \$90.

1. KAR 115-2-3 Camping, utility, and other fees -
2. KAR 115-8-26 new Public Lands regulation -
3. KAR 115-4-4 Big game; legal equipment and taking methods –
4. KAR 115-2-1 Trout Permit Cost –



5. KAR 115-25-14 Fishing regulations – (including reference document) –
6. KAR 115-7-1 Kansas River Invasive Carp snagging
7. KAR 115-7-10 – (including Aquatic Invasive Species Designated Waters list) –
8. KAR 115-1-1, 7-1, 7-2, 7-4, 7-7, 18-8 – Sportfish versus non-sportfish regulations -

## **VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Chairman Damron - So at our last meeting we got an individual who traveled a long way and had a lot to say. We appreciate that. We want to encourage that. But for scheduling purposes, if people are going to have a long presentation, we would encourage them to let Sheila or Sheila's successor know so we can manage the calendar a little better. It all worked out fine but for meetings going forward, we encourage people to limit their public comments to no more than 10 minutes unless they can give us some notice.

Chairman Damron - I'm going to take personal privilege and be the first speaker of public comments. I had the opportunity to go to the Milford Fish Hatchery about two weeks ago, and received a tour from hatchery manager Daric Schneidewind, Lieutenant Jesse Gehrt, game warden, and game warden Justin Counts. Had a great tour of the facility and a little interaction with what they do and how they provide service to the state of Kansas. Daric has been at the hatchery for 24 years; Lieutenant Gehrt has been with the department for 19 years. They like what they do, and we appreciate the longevity. Justin has been there about a year, and was excited to come work for Wildlife and Parks.

Rebecca Armstrong, educator at Northeast Magnet School – We have an OWLS (outdoor wildlife learning site), for 4-5 years. We have a nature eco club and have students here today that would like to speak. It is important for children and adults to have access to nature. I am 70 years old, and I see kids don't have that access, they are stuck with cell phones or technology. They don't have access to a place close to their home. They come to school on a bus, stay in school and don't have access. They don't have experience. They are afraid of bugs; they don't know what they are. I watch as the kids come out into nature; they shed that skin and get excited. I started talking about ornate box turtles in my yard. They wanted to save the habitat and create habitat where it is being destroyed. We need to do this because essential for humans to have a connection with that wild world. See kids light up when outside. The kids want to talk and appeal to you to do the best you can to save wildlife and make nature accessible to everyone. Do what you can to save these species and ornate box turtles. Alicia Waterman and her parents are here. When she goes out into the garden, she is the one who sees the bugs, takes pictures and looks them up. She found a baby sparrow learning to fly and I got to watch her go out and try to help it fly. It is heart wrenching to see the joy the kids have. I am really proud of these kids.

Alicia Waterman – NE Magnet, Belair – I came here to address you about declining ornate box turtles, going extinct because of humans. We have to try save them. Some people kidnap them and race them, bet on them, and that is weird. People need to improve behavior on that stuff.

Jeanetta, NE Magnet sophomore - We have an OWLS garden outside our lunchroom and we would like to expand it across our 65-acre property. Last year a duck laid eggs we saw 10 ducklings. I would like to see ornate box turtles live in the wild in Wichita. These turtles are native to the area and prefer grasslands and prairies. They have beautiful shells, and I want to witness one in its

natural habitat. Unfortunately, we are living in an area with limited wilderness, so that might not happen for me. I support conservation efforts to make sure they can thrive for others to enjoy.

Rebecca Armstrong – Thanks for allowing us to talk. Thanks for the work you do. We all have to do what we can to save life here on earth. Chairman Damron – Thanks for doing what you do.

Commissioner Gfeller – I'm happy to hear what you are doing outside your school, which is a fairly recent one. That is a great program and years ago there were over a hundred OWLS sites all across the state that gives kids the chance to participate during school hours. Armstrong – The kids want to expand it. We have 58 acres, but our site is only about 30 acres. It is a major learning opportunity, science, law and art, which is the kind of school Northeast Magnet is. All of those things involve nature. When the kids go outside, they are inspired. Thank you.

### **C. Secretary's Remarks**

Secretary Christopher Kennedy – Happy to be here. After listening to youth, it forced me to rearrange my speech a little bit. Thank you, Mrs. Armstrong, for coming and participating and allowing students to come as well. It is a breath of fresh air. It lets me know the resources we supply are needed by society and we have a strong future ahead of us. When young biologists I did a lot of education programs. One was a workshop for students in a major city. We loaded them on bus and took to a conservation area. We gave them nets to catch invertebrates on a pond. We had about 60 kids and we thought they wouldn't go out in the rain and wouldn't want to get their shoes wet, but they were excited about going out into the pond. That emphasizes the importance of nature on development of children. We need to think about them when building our cities, think about how we can work in schools to help teachers like Ms. Armstrong facilitate that message even further. I have

two daughters of my own and wonder where they would be without outdoor activity and all the times we went fishing, canoeing or kayaking. They are both grown and are both nurses, and there is no boat they can't drive or gun they can't shoot. Those experiences helped their ability to do their jobs. Last weekend, I went on my first pheasant hunt, the Kansas Governor's Ringneck Classic. I joined a group of men that I had never met before and the camaraderie between hunters grew during the day. I roasted my pheasant and ate it that evening. An experience I will never forget. I had my first quail hunt more than 30 years ago, and those cherished memories motivate me do our job today. KDWP has a sacred charge to ensure both current and future generations can enjoy our living resources. We sometimes are bogged down in regulations, which is critically important, and why we are here today, but don't forget our higher purpose. To help Kansas make those outdoor memories and leave a legacy for those that come after us. That is the reason most of us are here. We devote countless years to this profession. Tomorrow is our second of regional meeting for KDWP staff to join leadership team to discuss challenges and opportunities for the future. I continue to ask them to think strategically and help guide our agency and our state's natural resources into the future in a responsible and sustainable way. The first meeting went well and was well attended and productive. I look forward to conversations with our staff in Pratt tomorrow and we will continue meetings around the state in an effort to approve internal communication, garner support and knowledge so we are making decisions that represent the whole agency.

1. Agency and State Fiscal Status Report – Secretary Chris Kennedy, presented this update to the Commission. The fee funds typically include revenues generated from various fees, such as hunting and fishing license, park entrance fees, boating registration fees, and other recreation permits. The Wildlife Fee Fund October revenue was \$1.8 million. Our fiscal year net revenue was \$5.5 million, 14% increase from last year. The cash balance at the end of October was \$22.3

million. The Park Fee Fund October revenue was \$927,000, net revenue of \$4.5 million, a 12% increase from last year and cash balance of \$9.4 million. The Boat Fee Fund October revenue was \$91,000, fiscal year net revenue of \$500,000, a 9% increase and a cash balance of \$2.9 million. Our cabin fund October revenue from cabin rentals was \$82,000, fiscal year net revenue of \$495,000, a 29% increase and cash balance as of the end of October of \$1.7 million. It sounds like a lot of money, but it only outlines revenue generated from fees such as hunting, fishing, license and park fees. While that report shows an increase in revenue, a good indication of how the public feels about the resources and services we provide. However, it doesn't show the full picture of where we are. Reality is that our revenue is not keeping pace with our expenses. Our team is working on fiscal responsibility from all angles, long term, one way we can do that is with public support. By increasing engagement, we will be able to maintain the programs and services we provide. Thanks again to Ms. Armstrong and her students. We look forward with working with you in the future and hopefully something we can provide to help restore that 30-acre area.

2. Legislative Update – Martin deBoer – Post election, similar make up in legislature, majority Republican. Leadership elections are happening on December 2, committee assignments after that. The special committee on legislative budget will meet either December 12 or 13 and will take a look at the agency's budget. On December 16 the joint committee on state building construction will meet and look at capital improvement plan. We continue to have productive conversations with legislators, stakeholder groups and public, engaging people to be proactive in participation with the agency. Chairman Damron – When you worked with legislative research you handled budget issues. The legislature is going to have their budget, and the governor will have hers and that creates interesting times and challenges. We wish you the best navigating that new process. DeBoer - Appreciate that. Commission Gfeller – The December 16 is a hearing? DeBoer –

Yes, JCSBC, a committee meeting. They review the agency's five-year capital improvement plan.

Ours will be presented at that. Commissioner Gfeller – Is it a public meeting. DeBoer – Yes.

Chairman Damron – Or you can watch online as well.

#### **D. General Discussion**

1. Furbearer regulations – Matt Peek, research biologist, presented this regulation to the commission (Exhibit J) – The regulations referencing furbearers are permanent regulations considered as needed rather than annually. We considering changes last year. Starting with KAR 115-5-4, the nonresident bobcat hunting permit, an individual who harvests a bobcat must tag it following harvest, like a deer. Currently we only have a paper option, and we would like to add language to allow electronic tagging option to remain consistent with other big game. This references the permit itself, not pelt tag, which is CITES requirement and is a separate tag. KAR 115-6-1 fur dealer license regulation. The Kansas Fur Harvesters Association holds a fur auction annually after furbearer season. A number of nonresident fur dealers would like to come to the auction to buy fur, but the nonresident fur dealer cost of \$400 to attend single event. They requested the department to consider reduced price auction-only fur dealer permit that would allow an individual to purchase furbearers at any specified auction, not specific to specified auction. However, it is the only one that is offered right now. The intent is to improve the quality of the auction or increase the competition for furs and increase value to the people selling pelts. The department is considering the feasibility, and other states are as well. KAR 115-18-9 is the furharvester license, unlicensed observer and restrictions. This regulation specifies unlicensed observer can attend furharvesting with a licensed individual but cannot carry or use equipment that is used in the activity. There are three parts to this. They may not control or train any dog used for an activity requiring a furharvester license. The third one is they may not assist in any manner that would otherwise require a furharvester license. We are reviewing whether these restrictions are consistent with those applied to other activities. To be more specific, an individual might be able to assist a licensed deer hunter with dragging out a deer, but an unlicensed individual may not assist a licensed raccoon hunter by carrying out a raccoon. The other component of this is what equipment is used in furharvesting activity. Questions have come up on an individual accompanying a licensed houndsman and whether they can carry a flashlight or not. We think there might be some need to clear up language and review it for consistency with other harvest related activities. KAR 115-25-11, open season, bag limits and permits. The department is considering increasing bag limit from 10 to 20 otters. The population is healthy and reproducing well and expanding range into central Kansas, everywhere there is water. We found one road-killed by Meade this year. There are units for otters, and the area in question is SE Kansas, which has the greatest number and demand for additional harvest, particularly related to damage. They can be destructive. A broader comment about their status and furbearer management in general. Muskrat and beaver have unlimited harvest. They are semi-aquatic species but along with river otters are going to be scarce where water is lacking, and we will never have otters in western Kansas. We are considering the units we currently have; we would not anticipate any change or increase in less abundant areas. At some point we would propose something like at open season, like muskrats and beavers, with reality that these species

don't exist where there is no permanent water. They are unlimited in Missouri, and we want to provide opportunities that otter populations can withstand. We also want to be sure before we open things up any wider in central part of state where they exist on edge of the range.

Commissioner Gfeller – Will this be workshopped in January? Peek – Yes. Commissioner Gfeller – I had calls on furbearers and encouraged them to come to Russell meeting. Commissioner Cross – On furbearer regulations are we getting public solicitation to change the number of otters? Peek – It is mostly discussions we have had in furbearer committee and SE reporting increasing damage from otters, especially when feeding catfish, or something like that. Harvest isn't always the solution but is more palatable when people have a local trapper that can address issues when they arise. In some cases, good numbers of otters. It helped in SE Kansas when we increased bag limit to 10, because an individual can catch five on one pond and not be able to help anyone else. They can run in groups of a dozen or so.

Jackie Augustine, Audubon of Kansas, Topeka – Do you do surveys for otters or public input about

what they are seeing? Peek – We primarily rely on where they are taken, we log observations,

particularly outside common areas. Augustine – This season started not too long ago? Peek – It was

2011. Augustine – Was it 10 otters? Peek – It started with two otters with a hundred otter statewide

quota. A couple years ago we went to two otter bag limit and went unlimited. We increased to five,

then 10 several years ago. Augustine – Are you still going to have statewide limit? Peek – There is no

statewide limit, we did it for two years and did away with it. It was mandatory harvest reporting at

that time. Harvest has been a few hundred animals, and a lot of people are maxing out the bag limit.

We anticipate increased harvest is going to be low. Will provide data at next meeting. In early stages

of talking about this. Augustine – My concern is there might be someone who wipes out a whole

population within a county. Peek – That is not possible. In the areas where we did increase in

counties, originally opened the season we made an estimate of otter populations based on total

linear miles of stream within various watersheds. We had a K-State student who had an occupancy

rate within these watersheds and applied that to estimated densities and there is too much water in

those counties and otters travel widely and difficult to catch in general because they are

sporadically present. Otters are notorious amongst trappers for having to leave traps in place for a

month. Augustine – Thank you.

## **E. Workshop Session**

1. KAR 115-25-7 Antelope regulations – Matt Peek, research biologist, presented this regulation to the commission (Exhibit K) – I provided an extensive presentation on pronghorn at the last commission meeting. I will say we don't have any proposed changes for the regulation today, and the main question right now, relative to whether or not there's going to be a change at all to this regulation, is what we will want to do with permit allocations. We like to wait on those until after the winter aerial surveys are completed in January and February.

2. KAR 115-25-8 Elk regulations – Matt Peek, research biologist, presented this regulation to the commission (Exhibit L) – We are in the same situation with elk as we are with pronghorn. I provided a lot of detail on this regulation and elk management at the last meeting. We also don't have any proposed changes to the season structure or things that would be material to the regulation itself, but we are waiting on permit allocations. We do not generally conduct aerial elk surveys; Fort Riley does that in the winter. If they can complete that we will take their findings into account relative to our permit recommendations. The main thing we often use is harvest success, particularly on Fort Riley permits. We will come back sometime later in the year with elk permit allocations.

3. Deer 25-Series Big Game Regulations – Levi Jaster, big game biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit M, PowerPoint N). The deer 25-series regulations set up our statewide seasons and govern our antlerless permit usage across the state. I'm going to talk about some of the potential adjustments we are looking into on antlerless deer permits, specifically whitetail antlerless permits and their seasons. It's been a few years since we adjusted these. In Unit



18, we have no whitetail antlerless only permits. In Units 17, 6, 8, 9, and 10 have only one permit allocated for antlerless whitetail hunting. The rest of the units have the full five allocated in those. Generally, only the first antlerless permit can be used on statewide property. The additional four are valid on private land and WIHA, and generally not on department lands, because we're trying to provide hunting opportunities for as many people as we can. Except on Elk City and Berentz/Dick wildlife areas where they are valid through regulation. With those differences in the permit numbers, we have differences in seasons. In Unit 18, with no whitetail antlerless permits allocated, there is no January antlerless season. In 17, 6, 8, 9, and 10, it's a short season. It varies with the calendar a bit, but generally it is about a weeklong. Then most of the other units. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 14 and 16 all have the medium length season, so approximately two weeks in January for antlerless whitetail hunting. In units 12, 13, 15 and 19 it is a longer season. Unit 19 is a special case; it only directly applies to antlerless deer and was put in place to increase antlerless deer harvest up in urban centers along the I-70 highway corridor. We are looking at potential adjustments. Moving units 1, 2, and 3 into 17 where it would be one antlerless permit the short season. We are currently wrapping up our yearly population surveys and then we will know better what we have for this year. I am going to show you some data from the last few years. There is potential that the western tier of units, 1, 2, and 17 might be considered for no antlerless permits allocated, like Unit 18. Then we would move 6, 8, 9, and 10 into that mid length season, and up the allocation for antlerless permits from one to five in that area. The last couple of changes would be, move units 11 and 14 into the longer season. They already have five antlers permits allocated per hunter. This would give people an additional week or so to harvest. I will run through some quick facts specific to the units where we would be looking at changes, and some population data. We currently are doing our surveys right now, so this is last year's data. We kept the number of antlerless permits up in that area, and most of that west northwest corner of the state for disease management. We have certainly

achieved our population goals, largely due to drought, which likely reduced our deer population pretty well, maybe better than we could have done through hunting alone. Unit 2 is the same way, pretty low these last few years. Unit 3 has not been as low, and is somewhat stable, although from 2022 to 2023, it has gone down a little bit, based on comments from hunters. We were getting some good numbers on the eastern edge of that unit, but the western edge is down. I can tell you, in the Russell area we are significantly lower than we were a year ago, and we will see what happens with our population survey data. I would suspect that we'll probably see that be lower than where it was even last year. And then Unit 6, we are seeing an increase in crop damage complaints, and desire to harvest more antlerless deer so we may be looking at bumping that up. We are certainly trending up there. Same thing in Unit 8. When we look at these numbers, we're working from trends over time, we are not looking from last year's estimate versus the year before. I want to see those changes couple of years. So, it's not just one good year and back to normal, or one bad year and back to normal. In Unit 9, you could draw a straight-line trending up. The same thing with 10. We're getting back up to good numbers in those areas, so good to get folks more opportunity in there. In Unit 11, southeast Kansas, is where we have our highest numbers, flattened out from one year, but we'll see what this year brings. We can give people some more opportunity to hunt antlerless deer there. Same thing with Unit 14, it has been increasing too.

We will come back in January with this year's numbers added to this to see the better picture. I should have our crop damage complaints summarized too by unit to see the complete picture. But those are kind of things we are considering looking into as possible recommendations going forward. Commissioner Gfeller - The earliest any change would be is the 2025/2026 season? Jaster - Have to get with Kurtis and it depends on the promulgation process. We will have to do some evaluation to some of this to see whether this comes in under the economic impact limits or not. Commissioner Gfeller - Going from five to one? Jaster - In units 1, 2, and 3, the ones where we're

seeing the steeper declines, we are thinking of not recommending anything, but maybe a five to one change. Or depending on what our numbers come in as, and potential public thoughts, it could possibly go to none on some of those units. Probably not all of those would change down to that far, but certainly at least reducing it to one antlerless permit per hunter in those areas. Unless we see something surprising in December. We need to string together two, three or four years of good rain out there to really see a change.

4. Big Game 4-Series Permanent Regulations – Levi Jaster, big game biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit O). These regulations include 115-4-2, big game, general provisions, which includes information on carcass tags and moving meat to another person; 4-4, big game, legal equipment, taking methods; 4-6, boundaries of deer management units; 4-11, general application procedures and what happens if we have to establish a priority draw for limited quota permits; 4-13, deer permit descriptions and restrictions; and 4-15, is restitution scoring systems which outlines the measurements that must to taken to determine gross score. We are establishing restitution values of antlered whitetail deer, mule deer, elk and pronghorn. We are not proposing any changes to these regulations going forward, so we will drop them from the agenda at the next meeting.

5. Five-year Review of Threatened, Endangered, and Species in Need of Conservation Lists – Jordan Hofmeier, ecological services assistant director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit P, PowerPoint Exhibit Q). Moving through process. Provide more detail of where we are at and shorten presentation each time as we get closer. Reviewed every five years, through a review of our threatened, endangered and species in need of conservation (SINC) lists. The Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act provides authority to list species.

It describes the process to add or remove species, develop recovery plans, which allows us to permit development projects that might affect listed species or their habitat. It allows us to enter into conservation agreements with landowners that might benefit the species. We have three listing levels in the state. Endangered would be the highest level of imperilment and those species receive protection from take, harm or harassment and protection of critical habitat. Threatened is lower severity but receive same protections as endangered. SINC are lowest categorization and are protected from take but have no habitat protection. We have three species we received petitions for that will move forward. This is largely due to better looking populations than previously understood, or wider ranges or wider habitat uses, largely due to efforts from survey crews and partners. We are proposing to move the shoal chub, broad-headed skink and northern map turtle, downlisting from threatened to SINC. We opened petition process in July of last year, then it goes to science committee of professional conservation and academic professionals to review petitions for scientific merit to determine whether they should move forward or not. After that we solicit species experts to provide expert analysis of where the species should be listed. We are doing public meetings to gather information from the public and to inform them what we are doing. We have been working with legal staff on getting an intent notice posted on the Kansas register, to gather more public comments to better inform the final decision. Once we hit intent posting there will be 90 days of public comment. We will start moving forward with a final proposal to highlight some of the previous engagement. We had five public meeting earlier last winter and a couple of commission meetings so far. We will continue to come to these meetings throughout this process. A couple of minor things we are changing is a date in regulations that specify when people have to have documentation if they possess a specimen of a listed species. This date has not been updated in a long time and it would be a good idea to move to a more durable date like we have in many other regulations. We also take this opportunity to clean up the list of species names because they

change over time. We use Nature-Serve as standard for names we use. Once we get to the Kansas register with that intent posting, there will be an open public comment period. We will also be sending direct letters to neighboring states, federal, local and tribal organizations, to solicit comments from them. And this will be discussed at future commission meetings. We also have a website that has more information about this process as well as a document repository that contains all of the decision documents that we've come through up to this point. Chairman Damron – Are you seeing any significant resistance or opposition to the track you are on? Hofmeier – No. Commissioner Cross – Who did you say determines the final name changes? Hofmeier – Nature-Serve, an organization that acts as data clearing house. Each group of animals has a taxonomic authority, they go through those and come up with standardized list. So, rather than us going through each individually, they already have a list developed. Commissioner Cross – Is it recognized nationally or internationally? Hofmeier – Yes. A lot of states work with them through their natural heritage inventories.

Alicia - Why are you moving the species into SINC? Just because you are seeing more or they are increasing, they are still endangered. That doesn't make sense. Hofmeier – We use science to guide this process. We use experts on these species looking at existing science and data that has been presented. If current listing level is warranted, or they should be moved to a lower categorization. If we have a species on our list that are doing better, we don't need to spend as much effort in conserving those as we doing other species that are doing more poorly. It is a way to prioritize our efforts and focus on species that need it the most. Commissioner Gfeller – How does threatened versus SINC change the way we manage, as landowners? Are we able to enjoy their land or does that change any? Hofmeier – The biggest difference is habitat protection. SINC species do not. So, normal farming and ranching practices are exempt from regulation and average landowner, doing normal activities on their land, isn't affected by our management and regulation of these species.

Commissioner Gfeller – But they run higher risk of becoming threatened again because of what is happening on the land. Hofmeier – There is always potential for that. That is why we continue to do studies and surveys to keep track of those populations. Going to SINC keeps them on our radar and gives us ability to react better if they become imperiled in the future. If they continue to do well, they may become downlisted or unlisted.

Armstrong – The ornate box turtles, in about 2006 when I drove tollway, they highway was littered with them, and I would stop and pick them up to save them. I put them in my yard, which is up against a wetland, and they thrived. Two years I no longer saw any. The ranches in the Flint Hills that exist, turtles would come off those ranches and get into the highway. Is there any way to stop this? In New Jersey, they have terrapins that were ending up dead on the highway and they put tubing along the highway and the turtles can't get over it. Could we put something there to prevent that? We could require of these wealthy ranches to put something there; it wouldn't be that expensive for them. So, you are taking species off endangered. I don't know how they got it done but I was impressed because they did something about it because kids were upset seeing all the dead terrapins. So, maybe there are things ranchers and farmers can do that is simple and doesn't cost a lot of money. I don't see ornate box turtles on the highway anymore. I don't think there is enough of them. Hofmeier – There are some improved best management practices that could be done. But requiring farmers and ranchers to put something like that up is not it. They already provide quality habitat, so that would not be the best way to go. That would be better suited to whatever transportation authority in that area. There are things that can currently be done better and some of that needs to be looked at.

## **F. Informational Items and Updates**

*None*

## **VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*None*

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioner Carpenter – This may have been covered before I got here, but what about senior licenses? Chief Counsel Wiard – We spoke about it earlier. In the context of, given the lapse in those licenses. We discussed that the Secretary has decided to add a few other options. A 5-year hunt, a 5-year fish and a 5-year combo license, which we have legal authority to propose under our regulations. Commissioner Carpenter – The House attorney believes the department has the authority. I have been working on that and I will have a bill introduced the first week of session to correct this. Who enforced that law? It is a victimless crime. Talked to Attorney General Kobach on way down here and he said Secretary had authority. They were continuing to review that. We have that authority already and he is the enforcer. If he is not going to do anything to us for selling those senior licenses, I don't understand why we wouldn't go ahead and do that. Chief Counsel Wiard – I worked there for six years. The question comes up often on who is going to enforce it. That is separate question of whether the Secretary has legal authority in the first place. The Secretary has an independent constitutional duty to abide by the laws, even if there is no threat of enforcement from somebody. We are still under obligation to follow the law as stated. I disagree we have authority to do that exact license, particularly because if you look at the regulation that was adopted, KSA 32-9100, we omitted our regulation. At the bottom it says authorized by and

implementing and it states the specific statutes that they were implementing. If you look back to 2012 or 2013, when we adopted that regulation, it cited specifically 32-9100, saying our legal authority for offering that specific license for \$40. Now the legislature, by its own terms, stated in the statute that expired on June 30, 2020. Therefore, once that date passed, the authority vested in the Secretary expired. Any regulation adopted pursuant to that statute, I called the Secretary of State to confirm this, and they agree, that once statute is no longer in effect, law revokes regulation that implements it. That is the correct legal interpretation. I understand the Attorney General may not seek to stop us from using the broader perceived power or power in our fee statute, but at least on this specific fee we don't think we have the authority to offer that \$40 permit. Commissioner Carpenter – We are going to have to respectfully disagree and that is fine.

Deputy Secretary Schrag – Recognize first a special guest that came in, former Wildlife and Parks commissioner Harrison Williams.

Alright, Sheila Kemmis, would you please come up here for a minute. Today is Sheila's last commission meeting. Sad day for all of us. So, I just like to take a few minutes to recognize her. and I thought I'd start off with a little biography of her time here with Kansas Wildlife and Parks, just some notable notes on Sheila Kemmis. So, Sheila started, correct me if I am wrong, you are really good at correcting me on a daily basis, and I appreciate that, so if I've messed anything up here, please step in. She started with the agency in 1989 on a part-time basis, working both in the fish and wildlife branch of the agency as well as education. They were both kind of part-time jobs at the time. That kind of morphed into a pretty much a full-time job. So that's 35 years with the agency. She's been the Commission Secretary since 2001 for a total of 23 years. Been the Executive Secretary for the Deputy Secretary of Operations for 22 years. Has also has been in charge of the employee newsletter for the past 21 years. That used to be in the Information and Education



section of the agency and when the lead person in charge of that newsletter retired, there was talk of just doing away with it and Sheila stood up and showed how important that employee newsletter is to the agency. It keeps us all connected. Let's everybody know what's going on as agency employees, but also gives a flair for the family feel and what's going on with our employees' personal lives. So, she stood up and said, okay, if nobody else is going to do it, I'll do it. She's been doing that for the last 21 years. And to go along with that, too, and that family connection, she's been in charge of keeping communication with retired employees. Whether that be for events that we have, or just communication on retirees that have passed away, and just keeping that those close connection. She has also utilized past retirees for information that might have been lost somewhere along the way. So that's been a good resource.

She's also been organizing the annual Halloween event that we have there at the Pratt Operations Office. It may not seem like much, but it is well-received event for the Pratt community. It's been a long-standing tradition, and Sheila's been integral in organizing and helping carry out that that event that really does connect us to the local community. She's been doing that for 21 years. So, a lot she started. She started compiling all the agency historical information over 10 years ago. and a lot of that has to do with nothing really on the financial side of the agency. But just the historical records that tells our story. Even clear back to 1878, right? When all we had was a fish warden. We didn't become an official state agency until 1905. So, it's those historical records that she's been maintaining that really gives us a history and shows how we've matured over all these decades. So, we are going to continue to do that because it really does help tell our story. And Secretary Kennedy mentioned this week that it'd be nice to compile all that she has already compiled in a format that's maybe an addition or some kind of thing that we could distribute. It's a pretty neat story to tell. She's been the recording secretary and keeper of the archives for the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies for the past 25 years. 30 years ago, she helped

form the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program or BOW program. This past September she was honored by having the BOW scholarship, renamed as the Sheila Kemmis scholarship for aspiring outdoors women. Her efforts with BOW have placed it on solid ground long into the future. and while KDWP is full of passionate and dedicated employees, some rise to the top as being part of the solid foundation that makes this agency great. This woman is, for sure, one of those employees. When you build a foundation made out of concrete, you put rebar in to support the foundation and maintain its integrity for decades. Sheila's our rebar, her stamp will always be evident, her dedication and passion for the agency and natural resources over the years is an irreplaceable asset that will greatly be missed. She always kept the commission meetings in check, and frankly kept all of us in order and in line. One of my favorite quotes from Teddy Roosevelt is this, the nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value. Sheila has accomplished something very similar over the past 35 years. She is now turning her work over to the next generation of Wildlife and Parks employees which has increased and not impaired the value of this agency. She has impacted every avenue of natural resource management, and the department and our constituents. We are all grateful for her dedication. This past June, many of you know, we hosted the National Bison Association Summer Conference at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge and Sheila put this framed poster together of all of our emblems over the decades that had the bison on it. And so today, I'm giving this to her. I think it really reflects her career over time. She's been here through the changes, whether it be a logo, or administration, or operations, or whatever. And so, Sheila, thank you for your service and congratulations on your retirement.

Sheila Kemmis - Thank you, everybody. I don't know if I can say much after that. I've been thinking about what I'd say at my retirement party, and I thought to myself, well, I always told people I

wanted to go out with a bang, but the state really frowns on you bringing explosives in. So, I thought, maybe I'll just ease out a little bit, but not completely. Just go out quietly. So sorry about that. I've loved my job. The family atmosphere we have. I don't know. I just have loved what I've done for the last 35 years, and I'm one of those behind-the-scenes people. I don't like to be up front and center, but you know I do what I can behind the scenes to make sure things happen. So, I'm one of those people. I'm not really great about being in front of people. But I appreciate all of you, and I have enjoyed meeting everyone over the years and working with a lot of you in different respects and all the different projects I've done. I'm a keeper, I told them at the at the BOW event when I received that award. I said I'm one of those people who grabs on and holds on to things that I do. You know, I'm still a paper person. I like to have a piece of paper in my hand, so I have paper, and I've had to purge. Believe me, I have purged a lot of paper in the last couple months trying to get ready for retirement. I've brought the history up to where it's current, I believe. And it's on the intranet. If you can get into the intranet, you can see it. Reports are there. Everything's there. History's been really important to me. The reason I started that, I was self-appointed, was because it was one of those things I couldn't let go of. I kept seeing with the retirees, all that knowledge and all those reports and things that they did in their long careers went out the door with them. Then when you started looking for something, it's not there. So, I've compiled a whole lot of reports out there, back to 1980 it's pretty firm, anything before that is sketchy. All the annuals are there. All those things are there, and I'm hoping that eventually we'll make them useful, so that the public can see them and maybe use them as reference documents, because there's a lot of it out there. Thank you so much. I really appreciate having worked with all of you, and I'm going to enjoy my retirement. So, it's time. Thank you so much.

Chairman Damron - Thank you very much, Sheila. I know those on the commission, like me, who have been here a very short time, appreciate all of the work you did to get us on boarded and fill out the right documents and everything on track. And it took a number of emails and calls and conversations from you to get it straight. And I know those who've been on here for a number of years have really grown to appreciate all you've done for us.

Thank you for your service.

Secretary Kennedy - Thank you personally, Sheila. You have been awesome to work around the short time that I've been here. A lot of the history that I've learned about this agency has come from Sheila. In fact, I shared a presentation with the commissioners a couple of commission meetings ago about the history of the agency. We can thank Sheila for that information. She took me all the way back to the late 1800s, and I'm a history nut myself. And so, I really appreciated that. And I think you're right, Sheila. I think that history wants to be put in a format that can be shared with the public, commissioners and other interested parties. I look forward to hopefully something coming out here pretty soon. Thank you.

Thank you for your service.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

## **IX. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Future Meeting Locations and Dates**

*January 30 – Fossil Creek Hotel, Russell – **moving closer to Topeka***

*March 27, Topeka (Topeka & Shawnee County Library)*

April ? (last Thursday in April)

Chief Counsel Wiard – I think we might want to move the January meeting. Given the legislative session kicking off, I'd like to have that closer to Topeka. Maybe swap Russell to April. Does the commission have an opinion on that? It is my understanding that historically, in years past, the January meeting was near Topeka and then the subsequent March meeting in Topeka. I want to open it up so that legislators have easier access to our commission meetings. Does the Commission have any thoughts on that? Kemmis – The Russell location has been booked and listed already. Wiard – We can work on updating that. I promise we will come to Russell. *General consensus it was okay to move.*

Commissioner Mark – I wanted to ask that that you please place on the agenda for the next meeting, wherever it is. On January 30, a hearing and an opportunity for public comment on the proposal that I had mentioned before, to expand night vision and light assisted hunting of coyotes all 12 months of the year, with the exception of those days in which rifle deer hunting is permitted. I'm also requesting that you place on the same agenda immediately thereafter a discussion and a vote by the Commission on that matter. Chairman Damron – I would like to defer to the secretary or legal counsel to talk about timing and schedule and comments on that request. Secretary Kennedy - I think we can add that to the January agenda. I don't know if we'll be prepared to make a vote on it that day. But we can definitely have staff provide information on what the department stance is on night vision and coyote hunting. Clarification from legal counsel? Chairman Damron – Mr.

Secretary, would a change in that regard require a new rule and regulation or is it something the commission can do on its own? Chief Counsel Wiard - No, I think the way the statutes are written now the proposal has to come from the secretary on a new rule and regulation. We can certainly put it on the agenda to talk about it, but as far as enacting a new regulation, the Secretary proposes, and the Commission has clearly defined rolls in approving, denying, or modifying. Chairman Damron - So, to make the change that Commissioner Mark requests it would require a rule and regulation? Or could it be done administratively? Commissioner Mark - May I ask Mr. Acting Secretary, is it your position that Commission does not have the authority to vote on wildlife regulations on our own initiative?

Secretary Kennedy – My interpretation doesn't matter, it is what is in statute, it states what roles are. I think it would be a good discussion to open and see if we can come to an agreement on something that we could propose in the future. But I think before we got to the point where we were ready to propose anything, I think it would be wise to call some of our law enforcement game wardens in to discuss some of the implications that allowing coyote hunting year-round or night vision year-round could occur as a result. So, I want you the commission to be privy to that information, and we're happy to embark on the conversation. Commissioner Mark - A couple follow ups, that's why I ask that this be on the agenda for January 20, which would give anyone in the agency, or outside the agency, the opportunity to gather whatever information they thought would be pertinent to that type of a discussion. Then have the commission vote on that immediately after allowing agency and

public comment. Because I guess my question is, if the Commission does not have the authority to unilaterally propose or promulgate legislation or regulation like this. Then the agency itself could just stop any wildlife regulatory reform by just refusing to have your staff propose it. Chief Counsel Wiard - We're certainly open to the discussion. It's the agency's job to propose, it's the commission's job to adopt, modify or deny.

Commissioner Mark - So then my point is well taken. Then, in your opinion, the commission can only vote on what's brought to us by the agency, but we do not have any unilateral power to promote regulations. We can only vote on what your you and your agency bring to us to vote on. Is that your position, sir? Chief Counsel Wiard - It's not a position. That's not the way it's written in statute. My opinion really doesn't matter. It's the way the statute is written. Commissioner Mark - I would ask that to still be placed on the agenda. I'll bring additional information with me for next meeting. Chief Counsel Wiard - Yes, and we can place the discussion on the agenda. Our reading of the statute is the defined roles of the commission, and the Secretary, is that the Secretary proposes the regulation, and then the commission, in addition to its powers of advising the Secretary on certain matters, then has the steps of approving, denying, or modifying. We have to notice this up before, so that the public is aware of what's being voted on, that modification may exceed the notice that was put there. That is our interpretation of the statutes as they stand. Commissioner Mark - That raises another question. If we do put it on the agenda, there are no modifications to what we are asking to be placed on the agenda, then it is your legal opinion that we can go forth and vote on that at that time? Chief Counsel Wiard - No, because in that case the commission would still be the one proposing the regulation. It would have to be the Secretary that proposes the regulation.

Commissioner Mark - Like Mr. Carpenter, I agree to disagree. Chairman Damron - It sounds like we will be discussing this matter in January.

Kurt Ratzlaff – In listening to last conversation, it struck me that Commissioner Mark was proposing to eliminate public comment sections. That is what it sounded like to me. I just want to make sure that the public has the opportunity to continue to comment before it goes into effect. I don't think I heard in the timeline that he was offering, maybe I missed it, but I want to make sure that the public continues to have the ability to comment before changes or any affirmations for that fact are made.

Commissioner Mark – You did mishear that. I did say that we would have immediately after discussion, public comment, and then a vote. Ratzlaff - Yeah, I'm sorry. Maybe I misunderstood, but there still has to be a public notice where we publish in the register the proposed rule and

regulation ahead of time. Chief Counsel Wiard – I think for series-25 regulations it has to be

published in register 30 days, others are 60 days, for public to review. Commissioner Gfeller – As a practice we workshop twice, voting would not happen until third time, at the earliest, to give public

plenty of time to comment. Is that required? Chief Counsel Wiard – It is my understanding that

three is historic number of workshop sessions before voting or going forward. But in reality, the

statute just says that the secretary proposes. So, it's really more of a courtesy step after three

workshop sessions. We want to make sure the commission doesn't have any further questions

before we go into promulgation. The statutory authority is actually the vote to approve, deny, or

modify. So, actually going forward after I've given it more thought on the front end there with the

workshop sessions. When we get to the end, the program person who is speaking on behalf of the

secretary will basically ask, if there are any further questions from the commission, before we move

into promulgation? Clear as mud? Commissioner Gfeller – We prefer to give public plenty of

opportunities to comment, especially on controversial ones. Chairman Damron – I think, we have

had some people in public comments who have requested more detail in public notice. So, if we

put this on the agenda it would clearly state what the issue is to be discussion, and people can

come and give their opinions and comments as proposed to amend a furharvester regulation. I



know that it is a legal requirement but let's go one step further and make sure the people understand what is going to be talked about. Commissioner Mark – Would it be possible Mr. Chairman, to go ahead and have proposed legislation drafted as worded, then we would have something concrete to discuss down the trail, to allow 12 months of year, with exception of deer rifle season, hunting of coyotes with night vision and light? Chairman Damron – I defer to legal counsel if they want to agenda that particular topic in that manner. Secretary – We can discuss in January. We won't be ready for proposal. We need to hear from staff, hear from biologists on the ground and hear from public. This is core information we utilize to develop our regulations. I would be hesitant to alter that process. I'm not saying I am personally not open to what you are proposing. At this point we have a process to establish what regulations are and I don't see any reason to change at this point in time. In fact, if we do so it could put the integrity of the agency in danger. Commissioner Carpenter – I agree. I understand we get impatient, but a lot of times we shoot ourselves in the foot by not notifying the public properly. Even folks that are not aware of the situation. You can cause yourself a lot of grief. Take time, fundamental changes in the way we have done things for years. I understand your impatience but need to get it right. Not everyone agrees with your position, or my position, or anybody else's position. We find that out in workshops. Slow down, get it on the agenda, workshop it and see where it goes.

Commissioner Carpenter – In promulgation process is there a time frame that we use? There was no discussion on the nonresident waterfowl permit. Wiard – We discussed at last meeting what we are running up against with that regulation in HB 2648, which restricts our ability to promulgate a regulation that has a compliance cost of \$1 million over the first five years of its effectiveness. In case of restricting nonresident waterfowl hunters, we would have at least a \$200,000 per year impact on compliance costs, because of the law passed in July 2024. What is required is a

ratification, as the legislature described it. What it means is we have to run a bill asking for the same thing, which defeats the purpose of the regulation, because it could then go into statute. That is one way of saying we are stuck right now, and not moving forward. Commissioner Carpenter – It seems like it may have to be tweaked. These documents are living documents and probably no one thought about trying to get to the bottom of these regulations. They didn't think about how it was going to affect Wildlife and Parks. I will see what I can do about that. What is timeframe for promulgation once it gets to that point? Chief Counsel Wiard – It varies, with different regulations. They can go from 6 to 8 months. Once it goes out of our legal shop a lot depends on Dept of Administration (DOA), AG Budget. The Division of Budget takes a much larger role than they used to with this expanded economic impact statement. We estimate that can be 4-5 months. There are a lot of factors outside our control. Commissioner Carpenter – How long has waterfowl subject been in that? Deputy Secretary Schrag – It was workshopped numerous times, starting back in 2021. It was sent into promulgation, April 24, 2024. We went back and forth with entities Kurtis mentioned with edits to language and various things. Officially started in promulgation then. Chief Counsel Wiard – They approved it June 18, 2024, so a couple of months, then a couple weeks later that new law took effect. Everything is done except for economic impact, then it has to go through DOA legal review and Attorney General's office. Commissioner Carpenter – So first discussed in 2021 and it is three years later? That seems like a long time to discuss an issue. Secretary Kennedy – That concerns me greatly, historically 6-8 months to get through the regulation process, now with added economic information, up to two years. We are presenting data, monitoring wildlife populations on an annual basis. In order for us to be effective on controlling and managing wildlife across the landscape we hope to get it back down to 6-8 months, which is more reasonable. Commission Gfeller – I think it would be helpful to get a schematic of how progress works, step by step. I like having the status of where things are in the promulgation process. If you could add that information

and whose responsibility it is at a given point in the process and what we are waiting on, would be helpful. Chief Counsel Wiard – On the schematic on process, at the Commissioner orientation I provided a sheet about these steps in detail. I would be happy to send it back out. It is detailed with statutory citations for each step. The past agenda stated specifically what stage they were in, but it was difficult for my staff, with information changes daily, to provide accurate information. My intent is to put it back in there. If there is a particular regulation you want to know where it is, ask at meetings and then and I can tell you where it is. Information gets jumbled so easily. Commissioner Carpenter – How hard would it be to get a week before? Would that be difficult? Chief Counsel Wiard – That is what we were doing. Information can change. What you are looking for at the meeting is accurate to where it is. Commissioner Carpenter – What if we didn't hold your feet to fire for accuracy, just had a snapshot? Chief Counsel Wiard – If there is a strong feeling by the commission to at least have a general idea, we can find a middle ground. Commissioner Gfeller – Even if you bring a handout to the meeting. Chief Counsel Wiard – I am happy to do that. Commissioner Carpenter – We field phone calls and emails so we can talk to people and tell them where it was in the process it helps us get information out there. I have had numerous waterfowl calls and it would be nice to have that information to give to the people. Commissioner Cross – Go back to that meeting and look at that because I was looking for a promulgation process flow chart as well. It would help if you had a generic one for the public, or on the website, that this is how the process works and see how it is laid out. I understand it is complex, but helpful to me to let people know how long it takes and process it is going to go through. Get link on website and one you can provide to the public. Chief Counsel Wiard – I think that is a good idea. I will create a simplified version of that flow chart, and we will work out how we communicate that with our chief of public affairs. Deputy Secretary Schrag – I want to clarify that the promulgation process has slowed down regulatory actions. As a state agency trying to manage valuable resources, a two-year time span is

not in the best interest of the resource. On the waterfowl regulation, we did not submit that to the process in 2021, that is when we brought it to the commission for discussion, it was a long process. It was detailed and had legal topics, and we engaged stakeholders and federal partners. We also checked with other state agencies on what they were doing. So, we went into promulgation April 2024. Commissioner Carpenter – Started discussion started in 2021, I get that. I sent information about what Arkansas has done, same problems with nonresidents flooding their public lands. Maybe someone could disseminate that information to the rest of the commissioners. Deputy Secretary Schrag – That was part of that process, we reached out to other states, got input and evaluated each one and then decided what would be good for Kansas. We developed a historical timeline and have more information to share with commissioners on all the steps taken to vet this. We continue to get questions weekly. We are in the heart of waterfowl season right now and we have a lot of passionate residents contacting us on when this will happen. Chairman Damron – The legislature created some uncharted territory for promulgation for regulations. If we hit a certain financial threshold, \$1 million over five years of detrimental cost for implementing the regulation, it has to come to the legislature. We can look at how many licenses the department might, or might not, sell. If they change a law, you can go down a rabbit hole. How much financial impacts there are on hotel rooms, ammunition, guides, boat rentals, etc., that is potential lost cause. That potential cost created uncharted territory for agencies. The DOA is looking at that before they sign off and that really slows work down.

Harold Engle, Farmer/Rancher – I would like to address deer problem in our area. We have 800 acres of farmland, on the Verdigris River, with good habitat and cover. One field we plant for Earl Murphy is 40 acres, planted 3-4 times and had no stand. We called Doug Shoup, crop specialist, and he said deer were eating the crop. Eventually it is harvested, but it cost \$70/acre to replant,

\$35/acre to spray, now \$100. We planted other fields that yielded 50 bushel/acre, that field yielded 30. That is \$200 an acre, over \$10,000 in deer damage. Damage is not just on that 40 acres and we operate 800 acres. We called a biologist in from Emporia, he agreed with damage and gave us 10 damage permits. Depredation permits are fine, but they don't accomplish much. In the summer you can't do anything with the deer, no locker will take them so you can't process them. So, not accomplishing much. We also lease a half section to some Arkansas guys and encourage them to kill does. Told to thin out the does, bucks don't affect much in a population. He didn't get a permit this year, so he can't come to hunt. He would have killed 2-3 does if he could get a permit. But he can't unless he gets a buck permit, which comes with a doe permit. Half of the guys that come also take does, so they are accomplishing what we need done there. I would like to see some effort to increase doe harvest, so the population stabilizes. We had a machine delivered from Beloit, and the driver told us they had no deer hunting anymore because the deer got sick. I don't want to see that happen, we like seeing a few deer. It has reached a point that some effort needs to be taken to control the population. Jaster, big game coordinator, Emporia – The area he described is one we talked about adding days January for antlerless harvest. I agree control permits are a Band-Aid, but they are issued to take care of a problem. There is no requirement to use that permit on the deer control. We issue those at that time of year because it addresses the damage right now. We are looking at expanding the taking of does. The other option we should discuss is potentially entering properties into walk-in hunting. You could get more hunters out there. Additionally for nonresidents, they have to have a buck permit to hunt in buck season, which allows them to take either sex, but starting on December 30, they can buy an antlerless permit over the counter for January hunting of antlerless deer. They can buy up to five permits without having a buck permit first.

Chairman Damron – Thank you all for coming.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

*Adjourned at 2:10 pm.*

**Secretary's**

**Remarks**

## Agency and State Fiscal Status

No briefing book items – possible handout after the meeting



## Legislative Update

No briefing book items – possible handout after the meeting

# **Informational Items & Updates**

## Commission Big Game Permit Drawings

### **Background**

K.S.A. 32-970 allows the Kansas Wildlife & Parks Commission to issue up to seven Commission Big Game Permits each year to raise money for conservation. One elk permit, one antelope permit, or up to seven any deer permits may be issued through a lottery draw to qualifying conservation organizations. The first permits were awarded in January 2006, when seven conservation organization applicants drew one elk and six deer permits.

Only nonprofit conservation organizations and local chapters based or operating in Kansas that actively promote wildlife conservation and the hunting and fishing heritage are eligible. An organization or chapter can receive a permit only once in a three-year period. Winning organizations can then sell the permits to the highest bidders. Once sold, the cost of the permit is subtracted, and 85 percent of the proceeds are sent to KDWP, along with a conservation project proposal. The organization retains 15 percent to spend at its discretion. After the conservation project is approved, the money is sent back to the organization to complete the project.

Since 2006, nearly \$2.1 million has been raised for conservation efforts in Kansas.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>Funds Raised</b>
<b>2006</b>	59	\$49,000
<b>2007</b>	119	\$26,974
<b>2008</b>	113	\$24,200
<b>2009</b>	111	\$34,951
<b>2010</b>	108	\$47,000
<b>2011</b>	100	\$41,700
<b>2012</b>	104	\$41,811
<b>2013</b>	93	\$53,200
<b>2014</b>	101	\$57,515
<b>2015</b>	164	\$53,826
<b>2016</b>	138	\$64,550
<b>2017</b>	142	\$72,850
<b>2018</b>	154	\$77,600
<b>2019</b>	176	\$83,450
<b>2020</b>	209	\$146,080
<b>2021</b>	208	\$218,000
<b>2022</b>	176	\$304,500
<b>2023</b>	203	\$321,000
<b>2024</b>	115	\$367,998
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>2,593</b>	<b>\$2,086,205</b>

In 2024, seven deer permits were issued to three Ducks Unlimited Chapters, State Committee, Southwest Kansas, and Rice County, three Pheasants Forever Chapters, Solomon Valley, Walnut River, and Wheat Country, and to one Kansas Bowhunter's Association Chapter, Northeast. Those

permits sold for a new record average of \$52,571 (previous record was set last year with an avg. of \$45,857), with three of the permits selling for a new record of \$56,666 each.

The highest price ever bid on an elk permit was \$23,000 in 2006. Antelope permits have only been awarded in two drawings, and both were traded for a deer permits.

Organizations have spent the money on projects such as “Bring Back The Bottoms,” the Pheasant Initiative, youth sport shooting programs, and youth special hunt programs.

# Quail Eye-Worm Research

## Kansas Eyeworm infection

Researchers in Texas recently received FDA approval for a medicated feed to treat the parasitic infections of eyeworms in free ranging quail raising questions about what impact these parasites could be having on quail and whether individuals should consider treating for parasites. In 2018 KDWP collected samples of all upland game bird species across the state to evaluate eyeworm infection rates, infection intensity, and distribution. Infection rates were relatively low and most infected individuals had low parasite loads. There is currently no information to suggest that eyeworms are limiting populations. Results from spring calling surveys have shown that bobwhites have maintained the ability to respond to favorable conditions and have generally increased over time. At this time there is not enough evidence to support treating quail for parasites as a tool to increase quail populations. The department maintains that investments into habitat improvements will have greater return on investment than treating for parasites.

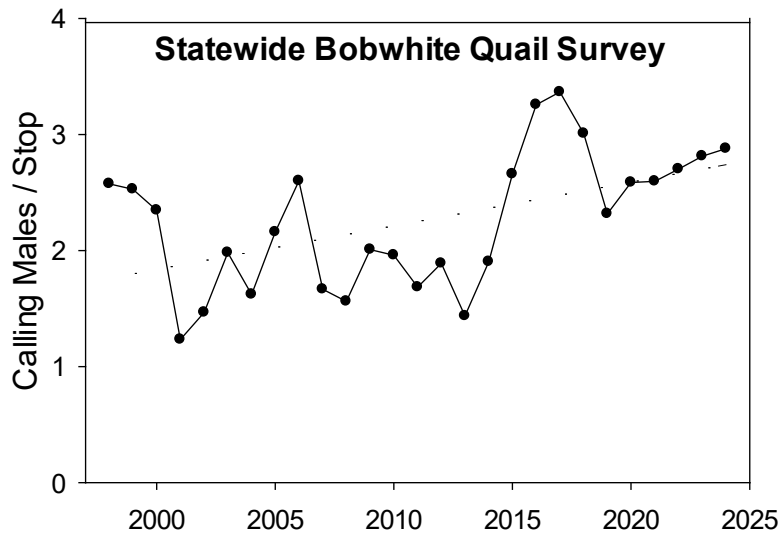


Figure 1. Results from spring bobwhite calling surveys from 1997 – 2024.

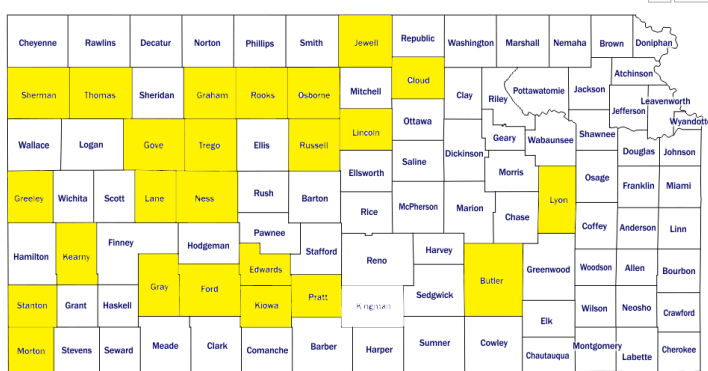


Figure 2. Counties in Yellow had  $\geq 1$  birds that were positive for eyeworm infections.

Review of Prohibition of Trail Cameras on Public Lands

No briefing book items – possible handout after the meeting

Night Vision Coyote Hunting Season

No briefing book items – possible handout after the meeting

# General Discussion



## 2025-26 Waterfowl Season Dates, Bag and Possession Limits

### **BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) annually develops frameworks from which states are able to establish migratory game bird hunting seasons. These frameworks establish maximum bag and possession limits, season lengths, and earliest opening and latest closing dates. States must operate within these frameworks when establishing state-specific migratory game bird seasons. The following is pertinent background material and USFWS frameworks with which Kansas may establish Kansas' 2025-26 waterfowl hunting seasons.

**SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON** - Blue-winged teal are one of the earliest migrating waterfowl, with most migrating through Kansas from August through October, often prior to the opening of general duck seasons. Green-winged teal are also early migrants but are commonly found in Kansas throughout the fall and winter. Cinnamon teal are occasionally found mixed with flocks of blue-winged teal in Kansas. Special teal seasons were initiated to provide additional harvest opportunities for blue-winged and green-winged teal when their populations are above certain thresholds. States can offer a 9-day September teal season when the blue-winged teal breeding population index (BPI) is above 3.3 million and a 16-day season is permitted when the blue-winged teal BPI exceeds 4.7 million. The blue-winged teal breeding population estimate for 2024 is 4.599 million, which supports a 9-day teal season during September for the 2025 hunting season in the Central Flyway. In the High Plains Unit of Kansas (west of Highway 283), the liberal package framework allows for 97 days of general duck season. Coupled with two youth hunting days, the addition of a nine- or 16-day teal season would exceed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act's (MBTA) maximum allowance of 107 annual hunting days for any one migratory species. Thus, when the liberal package for the regular duck season is available and a teal season can be held, it is necessary to either reduce the High Plains Unit teal season to eight days or reduce days in the High Plains Unit general duck season to 96 days in order to not exceed 107-day MBTA limitation. For the past 10 seasons, a nine-day teal season coupled with a 96-day regular duck season has been selected in the High Plains Unit to satisfy this criterion.

**DUCK, MERGANSER, AND COOT SEASONS** - Since 1995, Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) has been adopted for setting duck hunting regulations in the United States. The AHM approach provides the framework for making objective decisions through four regulatory packages listed below. Optimal AHM strategies are calculated using: (1) harvest-management objectives specific to each mallard stock; (2) regulatory alternatives; and (3) current population models and associated weights for midcontinent mallards. The four AHM regulatory alternatives are:

**- Liberal Alternative**

- Season Length: 74-day Low Plains Season, 97-day High Plains Season
- Daily bag limit: 6 birds with various species restrictions.

**- Moderate Alternative**

- Season Length: 60-day Low Plains Season, 83-day High Plains Season

- Daily bag limit: 6 birds with various species restrictions.
- **Restrictive Alternative**
  - Season Length: 39-day Low Plains Season, 51-day High Plains Season
  - Daily bag limit: 3 birds with various species restrictions.
- **Closed Alternative**

GOOSE SEASONS - Harvest prescriptions for the Central Flyway's goose populations are based on population and harvest objectives as specified in population specific management plans.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS - States may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to their regular duck seasons. Youth waterfowl hunting days do not count against framework season dates but the total hunting days for any one migratory species cannot exceed 107 hunting days.

VETERANS AND ACTIVE MILITARY WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS - States may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Veteran and Active Military Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to their regular duck seasons. Veterans and active military waterfowl hunting days do not count against framework season dates but the total hunting days for any one migratory species cannot exceed 107 hunting days.

EXTENDED FALCONRY SEASON - In addition to general waterfowl seasons, falconers may take migratory game birds during the special "extended" falconry season. The combined total number of days of take (i.e., teal season, general waterfowl season, and falconry) cannot exceed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act imposed maximum allowable 107 annual hunting days for any one migratory species. This generally allows for additional 15 hawking days for waterfowl in Kansas Low Plain zones.

CHANGES IN FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS FOR 2025-26 SEASON – There are two changes in the 2025-26 federal frameworks from the previous year. The first change is the reduction in the number of days available for the September Teal season from 16 to 9 days. This reduction is a result of the 2024 blue-winged teal breeding population index of 4.6 million which is below the 4.7 million threshold for a 16-day season. The second change is the increase of the daily bag limit of Northern Pintails from 1 pintail per day to 3 pintails per day. This increase is a result of an interim harvest management strategy. This interim strategy is the result of a collaborative effort among the U.S. Geological Survey and the USFWS, in consultation with the Flyway Councils. The Flyway Councils and USFWS undertook the revision process due to several concerns about the current strategy, including public desires for inclusion of a more liberal regulatory alternative, reliance on outdated modeling techniques and data, and communication challenges associated with the regulatory schedule.

## **2025-26 WATERFOWL FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **SEPTEMBER TEAL SEASON**

- *Season Dates:* Between September 1 and September 30
- *Season Length:* Not to exceed 9 consecutive days
- *Daily Bag Limit:* 6 teal (any combination of teal)
- *Possession Limit:* Three times the daily bag limit
- *Shooting Hours:* One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
- *Zones/ Split:* No zones or splits options

### **DUCK, MERGANSER, AND COOT SEASONS**

- *Season Dates:* Between the Saturday nearest September 24 (September 27) and January 31.
- *Season Length:*
  - *High Plains Mallard Management Unit:* not to exceed 97 days. The last 23 days must run consecutively and may start no earlier than the Saturday nearest December 10 (December 13).
  - *Low Plains Unit:* not to exceed 74 days
- *Daily Bag Limit:*
  - *Duck and Merganser:* any combination of 6 ducks and/or mergansers, with species and sex restrictions as follows: 5 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be female mallards), 3 wood ducks, 3 pintails, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, and 2 scaup.
  - *Coot:* 15 coots
- *Possession Limit:* Three times the daily bag limit.
- *Shooting Hours:* One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
- *Zones/ Split:*
  - *High Plains – no zones and up to two segments*
  - *Low Plains – Three zones with each having up to two segments or no zones with three segments Ducks zones are visited every five years. Next zone configuration window will be in 2026.*

### **GOOSE SEASONS**

- *Season Dates:*
  - *Dark Geese* (all geese except Ross's and snow geese): Between the Saturday nearest September 24 (September 27) and the Sunday nearest February 15 (February 15).
  - *Light Geese* (Ross's and Snow): Between the Saturday nearest September 24 (September 27) and March 10.
  - *Light Goose Conservation Order:* Between January 1 and April 30. (KAR 115-18-16).
- *Season Length:*
  - *Dark Geese:*

- *Canada geese or any other dark goose species except white-fronted geese*: not to exceed 107 days
- *White-fronted geese*: states may select either a season of:
  - Option A: 74 days with a bag limit of 3
  - Option B: 88-day season with a bag limit of 2
- *Light Geese*: not to exceed 107 days
- *Light Goose Conservation Order*: Must be held outside of all other waterfowl seasons

*Daily Bag Limit:*

- *Dark Geese*:
  - Canada geese (or any other dark goose species except white-fronted geese) 8 geese
  - White-fronted geese - states may select either a season of:
    - Option A: 74 days with a bag limit of 3
    - Option B: 88-day season with a bag limit of 2
- *Light Geese*: 50 light geese
- *Light Goose Conservation Order*: No daily bag limit

*Possession Limit:*

- *Dark Geese*: Three times the daily bag limit
- *Light Geese*: No possession limit
- *Light Goose Conservation Order*: No possession limit

*Shooting Hours:*

- *General Goose Seasons*: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
- *Light Goose Conservation Season*: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset

*Zones/ Split:*

- *General Goose Seasons*: No zones and up to two segments
- *Light Goose Conservation Order*: No zones or splits

**SPECIAL YOUTH AND VETERAN/ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS**

- *Season Dates*: The Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days must be held outside any regular duck season on weekends, holidays, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. Both sets of days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds.
- *Season Length*: may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days,” and two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days.” The days may be held concurrently or separately.
- *Daily Bag Limits*: The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, swans, mergansers, coots, moorhens, and gallinules. The daily bag limits are the same as those allowed in the regular season frameworks except in States that are allowed a daily bag limit of 1 or 2 scaup during

different portions of the season, in which case the bag limit is 2 scaup per day. Flyway species and area restrictions would remain in effect.

- *Shooting Hours*: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.
- *Participation Restrictions for Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days*: States may use their established definition of age for youth hunters. However, youth hunters must be under the age of 18. In addition, an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day. Youth hunters 16 years of age and older must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp).
- *Participation Restrictions for Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days*: Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training), may participate. All hunters must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp).

#### **EXTENDED FALCONRY WATERFOWL SEASON**

- *Season Dates*: Between September 1 and March 10
- *Season Length*: For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons must not exceed 107 days for any species or group of species in a geographical area.
- *Daily Bag Limit*: No more than 3 migratory game birds, singly or in the aggregate
- *Possession Limit*: Three times the daily bag limit
- *Shooting Hours*: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
- *Zones/ Split*: Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of three segment

**Table 1.** Kansas September Teal Season Dates and September Teal Harvest from 1992 to 2024

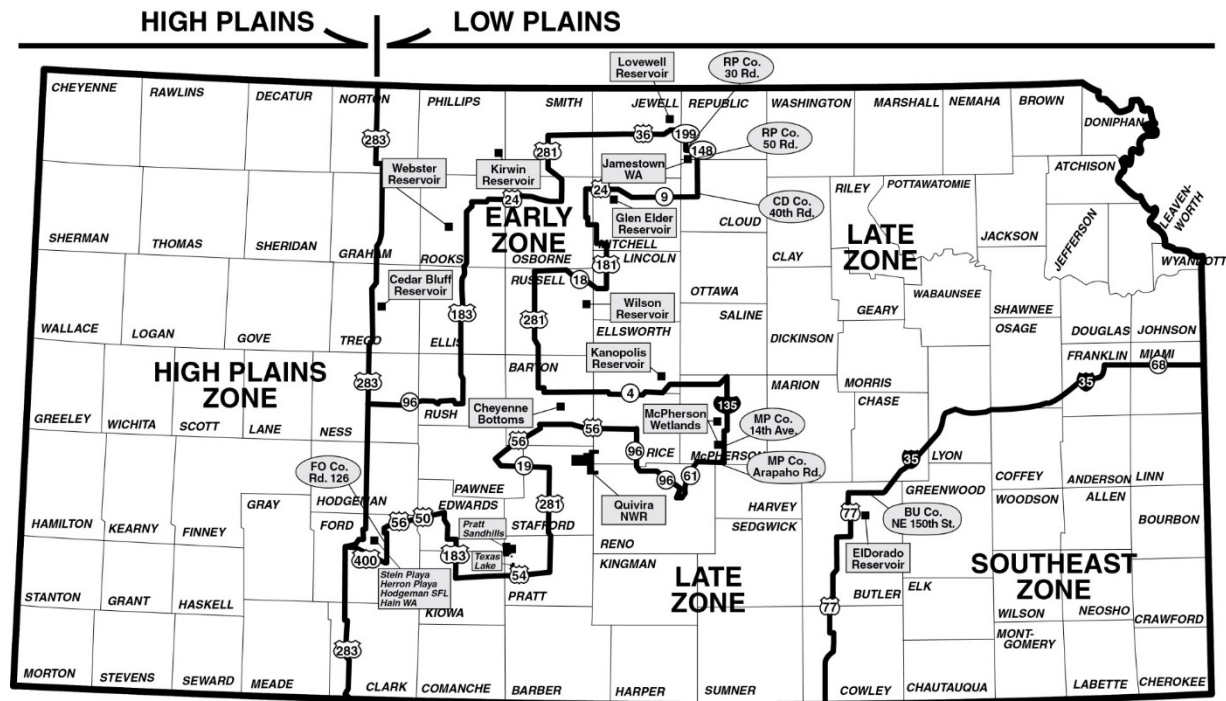
Year	Low Plains Dates	Hunting Days	High Plains Dates	Hunting Days	Bag Limit	Green-winged Teal	Blue-winged Teal	Total Harvest
1992*	Sept 12-20	9	Sept 12-20	9	4	4,267	12,902	17,169
1993*	Sept 11-19	9	Sept 11-19	9	4	1,081	5,604	6,685
1994*	Sept 10-18	9	Sept 10-18	9	4	2,217	7,083	9,300
1995*	Sept 16-24	9	Sept 16-24	9	4	1,896	10,227	12,123
1996*	Sept 14-22	9	Sept 14-22	9	4	1,415	17,115	18,530
1997*	Sept 13-21	9	Sept 13-21	9	4	2,367	14,858	17,225
1998*	Sept 12-27	16	Sept 12-20	9	4	8,454	19,727	28,181
1999	Sept 11-26	16	Sept 11-19	9	4	3,052	28,022	31,074
2000	Sept 9-24	16	Sept 9-16	8	4	4,621	27,724	32,345
2001	Sept 15-30	16	Sept 15-22	8	4	1,790	10,741	12,531
2002	Sept 21-29	9	Sept 21-28	8	4	3,783	8,723	12,506
2003	Sept 13-28	16	Sept 20-27	8	4	9,024	21,393	30,417
2004	Sept 18-26	9	Sept 18-25	8	4	2,901	19,173	22,074
2005	Sept 17-25	9	Sept 17-24	8	4	2,200	10,387	12,587
2006	Sept 9-24	16	Sept 16-23	8	4	4,733	23,664	28,397
2007	Sept 8-23	16	Sept 15-22	8	4	4,534	25,582	30,116
2008	Sept 13-28	16	Sept 13-20	8	4	7,200	15,120	22,320
2009	Sept 12-27	16	Sept 19-26	8	4	2,775	15,165	17,940
2010	Sept 11-26	16	Sept 18-26	9	4	1,812	16,829	18,641
2011	Sept 10-25	16	Sept 17-25	9	4	1,748	22,562	24,310
2012	Sept 8-23	16	Sept 15-23	9	4	4,298	19,420	23,718
2013	Sept 7-22	16	Sept 14-22	9	6	2,323	28,213	30,536
2014	Sept 13-28	16	Sept 20-28	9	6	2,806	36,736	39,542
2015	Sept 12-27	16	Sept 19-27	9	6	3,620	28,504	32,124
2016	Sept 10-25	16	Sept 17-25	9	6	3,172	22,910	26,082
2017	Sept 9-24	16	Sept 16-24	9	6	4,821	13,329	18,150
2018	Sept 8-23	16	Sept 15-23	9	6	3,091	33,918	37,009
2019	Sept 14-29	16	Sept 21-29	9	6	2,240	18,666	20,906
2020	Sept 12-27	16	Sept 19-27	9	6	5,547	36,054	41,601
2021	Sept 11-26	16	Sept 18-26	9	6	9,899	26,868	36,767
2022	Sept 10-25	16	Sept 17-25	9	6	2,984	10,004	12,987
2023	Sept 09-24	16	Sept 16-24	9	6	3,275	24,799	28,074
2024	Sept 14-29	16	Sept 21-29	9	6	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**
<b>1999-2023 Average</b>						<b>4,771</b>	<b>19,568</b>	<b>25,710</b>

\* Years prior to 1999, harvest estimates are based on USFWS Mail Survey Questionnaire.

Harvest estimates from 1999 to current are based on Harvest Information Program (HIP).

\*\* Harvest Data is not available until September.

Figure 1. Kansas Duck Hunting Zones



**Table 2.** Kansas duck hunting season dates by zone from 2011 to 2024

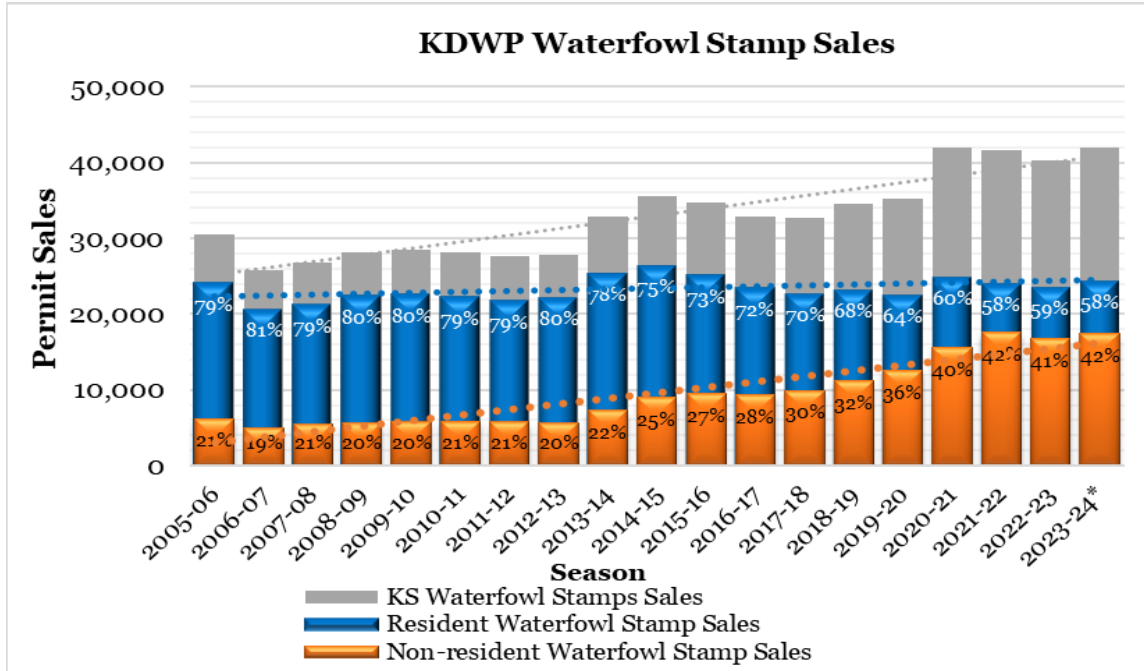
<b>Year</b>	<b>Season Days</b>	<b>High Plains</b>	<b>Low Plains Early</b>	<b>Low Plains Late</b>	<b>Low Plains Southeast</b>
<b>2011</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 8 - Jan 2 Jan 21 - Jan 29	Oct 8 - Dec 4 Dec 17 - Jan 1	Oct 29 - Jan 1 Jan 21 - Jan 29	Nov 5 - Jan 8 Jan 21 - Jan 29
<b>2012</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 6 - Dec 30 Jan 19 - Jan 27	Oct 6 - Dec 2 Dec 15- Dec 30	Oct 27 - Dec 30 Jan 19 - Jan 27	Nov 15 - Jan 27
<b>2013</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 5 - Dec 2 Dec 21 - Jan 26	Oct 5 - Dec 1 Dec 21 - Jan 5	Oct 26 - Dec 29 Jan 18 - Jan 26	Nov 2 – Nov 3 Nov 16 - Jan 26
<b>2014</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 11 - Dec 8 Dec 20 - Jan 25	Oct 11 - Dec 7 Dec 20 - Jan 4	Nov 01 – Jan 04 Jan 17 - Jan 25	Nov 8 – Nov 9 Nov 15 - Jan 25
<b>2015</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 10 – Jan 4 Jan 23 - Jan 31	Oct 10 - Dec 6 Dec 19 - Jan 3	Oct 31 – Jan 3 Jan 23 - Jan 31	Nov 14 – Jan 3 Jan 9 - Jan 31
<b>2016</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 8 – Jan 1 Jan 20 - Jan 29	Oct 8 - Dec 4 Dec 17 - Jan 1	Oct 29 – Jan 1 Jan 21 - Jan 29	Nov 12 – Jan 1 Jan 7 - Jan 29
<b>2017</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 7 – Jan 1 Jan 20 - Jan 28	Oct 7 - Dec 3 Dec 16 - Dec 31	Oct 28 – Dec 31 Jan 20 - Jan 28	Nov 11 – Dec 31 Jan 6 - Jan 28
<b>2018</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 13 – Dec 31 Jan 12 - Jan 27	Oct 13 - Dec 16 Dec 22 - Dec 30	Oct 27 – Dec 30 Jan 19 - Jan 27	Nov 10 – Jan 6 Jan 12 - Jan 27
<b>2019</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 12 – Jan 5 Jan 17 - Jan 26	Oct 12 - Dec 8 Dec 14 - Dec 29	Oct 26 – Dec 29 Jan 18 - Jan 26	Nov 9 – Jan 5 Jan 11 - Jan 26
<b>2020</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 10 – Jan 3 Jan 22 - Jan 31	Oct 10 - Dec 6 Dec 19 - Jan 3	Oct 31 – Jan 3 Jan 23 - Jan 31	Nov 14 – Jan 3 Jan 9 - Jan 31
<b>2020</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 10 – Jan 3 Jan 22 - Jan 31	Oct 10 - Dec 6 Dec 19 - Jan 3	Oct 31 – Jan 3 Jan 23 - Jan 31	Nov 14 – Jan 3 Jan 9 - Jan 31
<b>2021</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 9 – Jan 2 Jan 21 - Jan 30	Oct 9 - Dec 5 Dec 18 - Jan 2	Oct 30 – Jan 2 Jan 22 - Jan 30	Nov 6 – Jan 2 Jan 15 - Jan 30
<b>2022</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 8 – Jan 1 Jan 20 - Jan 29	Oct 8 - Dec 4 Dec 17 - Jan 1	Oct 29 – Jan 1 Jan 21 - Jan 29	Nov 5 – Jan 1 Jan 14 - Jan 29
<b>2023</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 7 – Dec 31 Jan 19 - Jan 28	Oct 7 - Dec 3 Dec 23 - Jan 07	Oct 28 – Dec 31 Jan 20 - Jan 28	Nov 11 – Jan 7 Jan 13 - Jan 28
<b>2024</b>	74 +23 HP	Oct 12 – Jan 5 Jan 17 - Jan 26	Oct 12 - Dec 8 Dec 21 - Jan 05	Oct 26 – Dec 29 Jan 18 - Jan 26	Nov 9 – Jan 5 Jan 11 - Jan 26



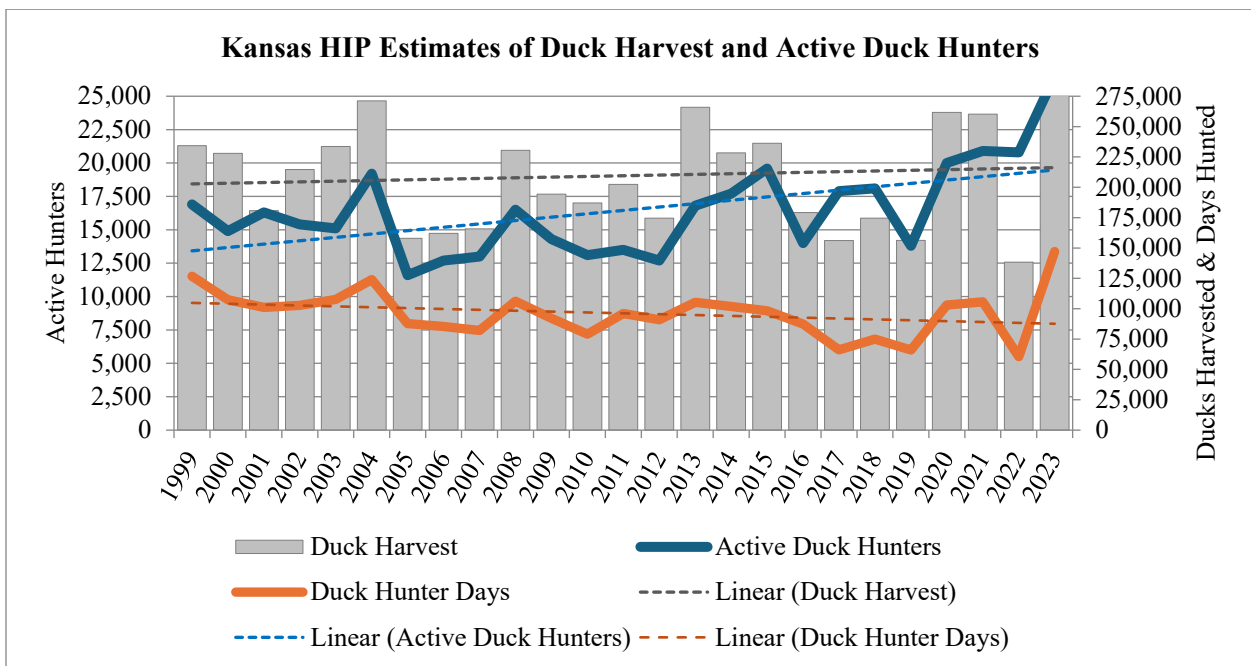
**Table 3.** The 2024 duck population and pond estimate from the annual Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey and comparison to 2023 and long-term average (1955-2023). Numbers are in millions.

Species	2024 (million)	2023 (million)	% Change from 2023	% Change LTA
Mallard	6.5	6.1	+8%	-16%
Gadwall	2.3	2.6	-11%	+11%
American Wigeon	2.9	1.9	+55%	+12%
Green-winged Teal	3.0	2.5	+20%	+38
Blue-winged Teal	4.6	5.2	-12%	-10%
Northern Shoveler	2.7	2.9	-7%	0%
Northern Pintail	2.0	2.2	-11%	-49%
Redhead	0.8	0.9	-16%	+6%
Canvasback	0.6	0.6	-8%	-4%
Scaup	4.1	3.5	+16%	-17%
<b>Total Ducks</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>+5%</b>	<b>-4%</b>
May Pond Counts	5.2	5.0	+4%	-1%

**Figure 2.** Sales of Kansas Waterfowl Permit May 1, 2005 to April 1, 2024.



**Figure 3.** Estimates of active duck hunters, duck hunting days and duck harvest in Kansas from 1999 to 2023 based upon the Harvest Information Program. The 2024 harvest data is not available until September.



**Table 4.** All Seasons (teal and regular) estimates of active duck hunters, season duck harvest, and average duck per hunter, average seasonal bag per hunter, and total duck hunter days in Kansas from 1999 to 2023 as estimated by the Harvest Information Program. The 2024 harvest data is not available until September.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Active Duck Hunters</b>	<b>Duck Harvest</b>	<b>Average Duck Hunter Days</b>	<b>Average Seasonal Duck Bag</b>	<b>Duck Hunter Days</b>
1999	16,900	234,300	7.5	13.9	126,800
2000	14,900	227,900	7.2	15.2	107,400
2001	16,344	180,800	6.2	11.1	100,989
2002	15,426	214,600	6.7	13.9	102,744
2003	15,100	233,600	7.1	15.5	107,600
2004	19,200	271,200	6.5	14.2	124,000
2005	11,600	158,000	7.6	13.7	87,700
2006	12,663	162,100	6.7	12.8	85,416
2007	13,021	165,800	6.3	12.7	82,149
2008	16,531	230,400	6.4	13.9	106,154
2009	14,259	194,400	6.5	13.6	92,081
2010	13,053	187,100	6.1	14.3	79,064
2011	13,534	202,400	7.1	15.0	96,138
2012	12,739	174,600	7.1	13.7	90,851
2013	16,847	265,900	6.3	15.8	105,344
2014	17,700	228,300	5.8	15.9	101,802
2015	19,600	236,200	5.0	12.1	98,300
2016	14,000	179,200	6.2	12.8	87,300
2017	17,900	156,100	3.7	8.7	66,100
2018	18,100	174,600	4.1	9.7	74,900
2019	13,800	156,300	4.8	11.3	66,000
2020	20,000	261,700	5.2	13.1	103,000
2021	20,900	260,200	5.1	12.5	105,600
2022	20,800	138,300	2.9	6.6	60,500
2023	26,500	343,400	5.6	12.9	147,100
<b>1999-2023 Average</b>	<b>16,451</b>	<b>209,496</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>96,198</b>
Change from 2022	27%	148%	91%	95%	143%
Change from LTA	61%	64%	-9%	0%	53%

**Table 5.** Duck species composition in the Kansas regular duck season harvest from 1999 to 2023 and as estimated by the Harvest Information Program. The 2024 harvest data is not available until September.

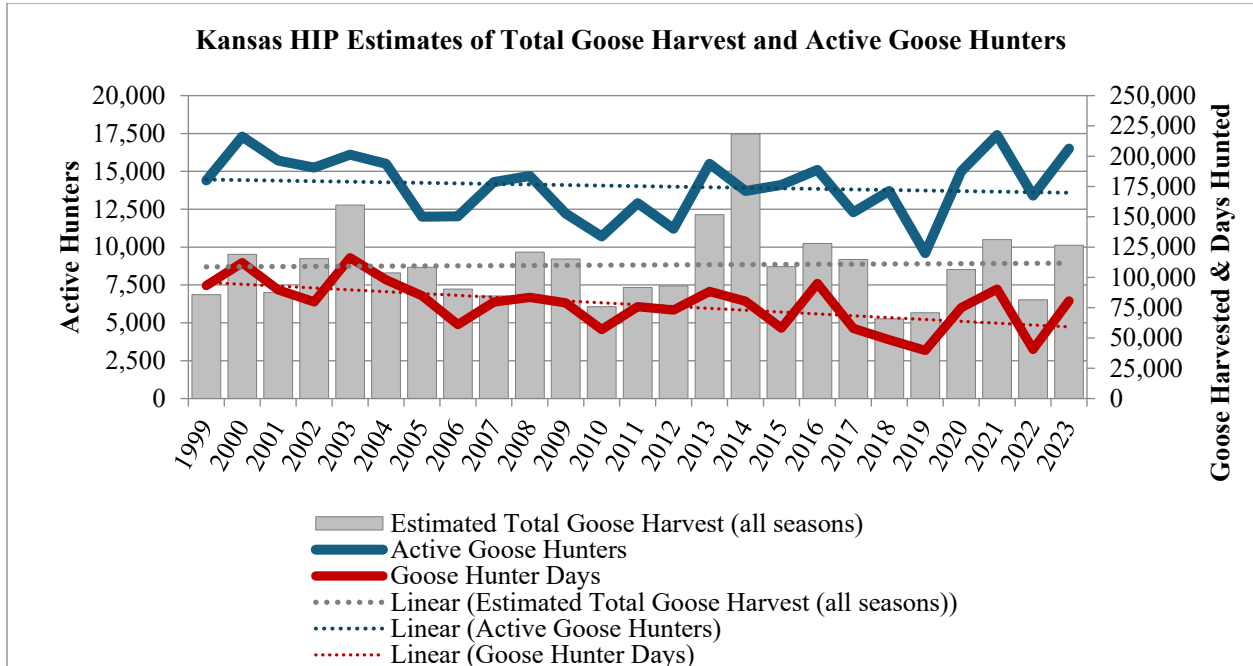
Year	Total Duck Harvest	Mallard	Gadwall	Green-winged Teal	Blue-winged Teal	Northern Pintail	Wigeon	Northern Shoveler	Wood Duck	Diving Ducks*
1999	203,226	114,167	27,189	21,918	6,936	5,410	7,075	4,578	4,439	10,404
2000	195,555	102,846	29,363	27,872	2,385	7,453	12,520	1,789	2,683	7,154
2001	168,267	97,739	19,154	20,049	1,074	7,339	6,265	3,401	3,938	8,055
2002	202,093	93,112	36,572	31,423	3,468	4,624	13,032	3,783	3,153	10,614
2003	203,184	95,711	41,063	24,536	4,258	4,157	15,513	4,258	3,751	8,315
2004	249,126	133,582	41,374	29,012	6,812	3,280	13,371	5,298	3,027	10,595
2005	145,413	84,193	21,629	13,197	1,588	3,666	7,332	4,277	1,589	7,453
2006	133,701	55,780	30,594	11,156	1,183	2,704	7,944	6,254	2,874	14,198
2007	135,523	61,041	27,687	22,182	1,296	2,591	6,638	4,210	1,133	7,125
2008	208,056	98,160	34,080	22,560	3,840	6,872	17,760	2,400	3,600	16,864
2009	176,862	80,574	27,589	23,569	3,654	5,664	11,511	7,674	3,106	11,876
2010	168,422	76,639	30,940	15,276	3,366	5,437	8,415	9,321	3,366	14,369
2011	178,112	85,163	29,553	18,113	4,131	5,243	8,262	8,262	2,224	14,777
2012	150,901	78,157	32,473	9,232	1,910	6,367	7,959	2,706	1,114	9,869
2013	235,335	94,432	34,188	32,861	20,414	12,115	9,460	12,945	2,655	15,435
2014	188,655	114,417	13,648	22,067	11,225	4,847	4,975	4,592	1,531	10,716
2015	204,053	112,358	31,068	17,193	11,312	6,033	9,803	4,524	1,508	8,897
2016	153,083	95,986	13,981	16,566	4,699	5,169	3,760	3,290	1,645	6,578
2017	137,833	65,323	19,380	15,126	3,025	4,160	7,185	7,468	1,512	11,818
2018	137,540	72,553	14,722	18,219	4,636	3,335	4,880	4,474	1,464	10,410
2019	135,394	67,012	17,826	15,960	1,734	3,453	5,600	8,213	2,053	10,132
2020	219,983	89,442	30,623	24,151	9,014	8,667	7,511	13,867	3,467	31,894
2021	223,433	121,261	20,151	32,525	707	7,954	8,838	4,773	5,126	30,581
2022	125,313	55,986	11,232	18,252	1,579	1,580	6,845	2,282	3,686	23,169
2023	315,326	105,754	37,900	17,961	2,807	11,697	21,523	11,230	5,147	16,845
<b>1999-2023 Avg</b>	<b>183,777</b>	<b>90,056</b>	<b>26,959</b>	<b>20,839</b>	<b>4,684</b>	<b>5,593</b>	<b>9,359</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>2,792</b>	<b>13,251</b>
% Change prev.	152%	89%	237%	-2%	78%	640%	214%	392%	40%	5%
% Change LTA	72%	34%	41%	-14%	-40%	109%	131%	92%	84%	-47%

\* Includes redhead, canvasback, ring-necked duck, lesser scaup, greater scaup, goldeneye and ruddy duck

**Table 6.** Kansas goose hunting seasons from 2006 to 2023

<b>Season</b>	<b>Canada Goose</b>	<b>Days/ Daily Bag Limit</b>	<b>Light Goose</b>	<b>Season Days/ Daily Bag Limit</b>	<b>White-fronted Goose</b>	<b>Days/ Daily Bag Limit</b>
2006	Oct 28 - Oct 29 Nov 08 - Feb 18	105/3	Oct 28 - Oct 29 Nov 08 - Feb 18	105/20	Oct 28 - Oct 29 Nov 08 - Jan 07 Feb 10 - Feb 18	72/2
2007	Oct 27 Oct 28 Nov 07 - Feb 17	105/3	Oct 27 Oct 28 Nov 07 - Feb 17	105/20	Oct 27 - Oct 28 Nov 07 - Jan 06 Feb 09 - Feb 17	72/2
2008	Oct 25 - Oct 26 Nov 05 - Feb 15	105/3	Oct 25 - Oct 26 Nov 05 - Feb 15	105/20	Oct 25 - Oct 26 Nov 05 - Jan 04 Feb 07 - Feb 15	72/2
2009	Oct 31 - Nov 08 Nov 11 - Feb 14	105/3	Oct 31 - Nov 08 Nov 11 - Feb 14	105/20	Oct 31 - Nov 08 Nov 11 - Jan 03 Feb 06 - Feb 14	72/2
2010	Oct 30 - Nov 07 Nov 10 - Feb 13	105/3	Oct 30 - Nov 07 Nov 10 - Feb 13	105/20	Oct 30 - Nov 07 Nov 10 - Jan 02 Feb 05 - Feb 13	72/2
2011	Oct 29 - Nov 06 Nov 09 - Feb 12	105/3	Oct 29 - Nov 06 Nov 09 - Feb 12	105/20	Oct 29 - Jan 01 Feb 04 - Feb 12	74/2
2012	Oct 27 - Nov 04 Nov 07 - Feb 10	105/3	Oct 27 - Nov 04 Nov 07 - Feb 10	105/20	Oct 27 - Dec 30 Feb 02 - Feb 10	74/2
2013	Oct 26 - Nov 03 Nov 06 - Feb 09	105/3	Oct 26 - Nov 03 Nov 06 - Feb 09	105/20	Oct 26 - Dec 29 Feb 01 - Feb 09	74/2
2014	Nov 01 - Nov 09 Nov 12 - Feb 15	105/3	Nov 01 - Nov 09 Nov 12 - Feb 15	105/50	Nov 01 - Dec 14 Jan 17 - Feb 15	74/2
2015	Oct 31 - Nov 01 Nov 04 - Feb 14	105/6	Oct 31 - Nov 01 Nov 04 - Feb 14	105/50	Oct 31 - Jan 03 Jan 23 - Feb 14	74/2
2016	Oct 29 - Jan 01 Jan 04 - Feb 12	105/6	Oct 29 - Jan 01 Jan 04 - Feb 12	105/50	Oct 29 - Jan 01 Jan 21 - Feb 12	74/2
2017	Oct 28 – Oct 29 Nov 08 - Feb 18	105/6	Oct 28 – Oct 29 Nov 08 - Feb 18	105/50	Oct 28 – Dec 31 Jan 27 - Feb 18	88/2
2018	Oct 27 – Oct 28 Nov 07 - Feb 17	105/6	Oct 27 – Oct 28 Nov 07 - Feb 17	105/50	Oct 27 – Dec 30 Jan 26 - Feb 17	88/2
2019	Oct 26 – Oct 27 Nov 06 - Feb 17	105/6	Oct 26 – Oct 27 Nov 07 - Feb 16	105/50	Oct 26 – Dec 29 Jan 25 - Feb 16	88/2
2020	Oct 31 – Nov 1 Nov 04 - Feb 14	105/6	Oct 31 – Nov 1 Nov 04 - Feb 14	105/50	Oct 31 – Jan 03 Jan 23 - Feb 14	88/2
2021	Oct 30 – Oct 31 Nov 03 - Feb 13	105/6	Oct 30 – Oct 31 Nov 03 - Feb 13	105/50	Oct 30 – Jan 02 Jan 22 - Feb 13	88/2
2022	Oct 29 – Oct 30 Nov 02 - Feb 12	105/6	Oct 29 – Oct 30 Nov 02 - Feb 12	105/50	Oct 29 – Jan 01 Jan 21 - Feb 12	88/2
2023	Oct 28 – Oct 29 Nov 01 - Feb 11	105/6	Oct 28 – Oct 29 Nov 01 - Feb 11	105/50	Oct 29 – Dec 31 Jan 20 - Feb 11	88/2

**Figure 4.** Estimates of active goose hunters, goose hunting days and goose harvest in Kansas from 1999 to 2023 based upon the Harvest Information Program. The 2024 harvest data is not available until September.



**Table 7.** Estimates of active goose hunters, goose harvest, average goose per hunter, average seasonal bag per hunter, total goose hunter days, and regular season harvest for Canada, light geese, and white-fronted geese in Kansas from 1999 to 2023 based upon the by the Harvest Information Program. The 2024 harvest data is not available until August.

Year	Active Goose Hunters	Total Goose Harvest	Avg. Hunter Days	Avg. Goose Seasonal Bag	Goose Hunter Days	Canada/Cackler Harvest	Light Goose Harvest	White - fronted Goose Harvest	Light Goose Conservation Season
1999	14,400	85,700	6.5	5.9	93,300	66,255	12,048	5,476	11,165
2000	17,300	119,000	6.5	6.9	112,200	98,005	8,164	11,303	11,937
2001	15,715	87,499	5.7	5.6	89,663	72,707	4,405	4,721	35,138
2002	15,248	115,400	5.2	7.6	79,771	80,982	18,222	8,966	17,087
2003	16,100	159,700	7.2	9.9	116,200	123,866	19,263	9,735	65,608
2004	15,500	103,700	6.3	6.7	98,000	80,118	16,481	5,688	25,272
2005	12,000	108,300	7.1	9.1	84,800	99,178	3,689	970	18,802
2006	12,038	90,400	5.1	7.5	60,994	59,566	12,848	2,336	12,711
2007	14,294	84,699	5.6	5.9	79,723	59,968	10,943	13,788	4,260
2008	14,692	120,900	5.7	8.2	83,525	87,067	12,540	16,325	11,924
2009	12,213	115,201	6.5	9.4	78,955	92,267	4,267	12,267	15,244
2010	10,700	75,800	5.3	7.1	56,936	66,494	4,459	4,847	53,863
2011	12,900	91,653	5.9	7.1	75,795	51,900	19,876	19,877	62,092
2012	11,207	92,367	6.5	8.3	73,084	72,204	13,016	7,127	72,447
2013	15,543	151,837	5.7	9.8	88,386	108,657	27,253	15,927	92,825
2014	13,700	218,300	5.9	15.9	80,287	166,812	32,409	19,064	55,271
2015	14,100	108,900	4.1	7.7	58,200	71,175	21,928	15,817	41,416
2016	15,100	127,998	6.3	8.5	95,000	96,863	14,222	16,913	45,501
2017	12,300	114,800	4.7	9.3	57,900	95,786	14,255	4,752	73,295

2018	13,700	65,800	3.5	4.8	48,500	50,579	12,864	2,339	78,285
2019	9,600	70,800	4.1	7.3	39,700	50,037	15,582	5,194	68,238
2020	15,000	106,400	5.0	7.1	75,100	78,030	19,570	8,781	81,671
2021	17,400	131,200	5.2	7.5	90,300	90,108	21,969	6,050	56,674
2022	13,400	81,500	3.0	6.1	40,600	72,608	7,963	937	68,592
2023	16,500	126,500	4.9	7.7	80,600	76,243	40,086	10,218	58,803
<b>1999-2023 Avg</b>	<b>14,024</b>	<b>110,197</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>77,501</b>	<b>82,699</b>	<b>15,533</b>	<b>9,177</b>	<b>46,643</b>
Change from previous	23%	55%	61%	26%	99%	5%	403%	991%	-14%
Change from Average	18%	15%	-11%	-2%	4%	-8%	158%	11%	29%



# Workshop Session

## K.A.R. 115-25-9a – 2025 Deer Seasons on Military Units

### **K.A.R. 115-25-9a. Deer; open season, bag limit, and permits; additional considerations; Smoky Hill ANG, Fort Riley, and Fort Leavenworth**

#### **Background**

This regulation has typically been brought to Public Hearing after statewide season regulations have been set. This later period to finalize the seasons on the Kansas military subunits is necessary as the schedules for military training activities are occasionally unknown at the time KAR 115-25-9 is approved. The regulation has also been used to address needs pertaining to deer hunting that developed after KAR 115-25-9 has been approved.

#### **Discussion**

We address all deer seasons on military subunits under this regulation. Personnel at Smoky Hill ANG, Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth have been contacted and we have received preliminary information on the season dates that they prefer.

Military subunits would follow statewide seasons in KAR 115-25-9 with the following exceptions.

#### **Fort Riley**

- In addition to the pre-rut antlerless white-tailed deer only season specified in K.A.R. 115-25-9, in the Fort Riley subunit 8A an additional antlerless white-tailed deer only season would be November 28, 2025 to November 30, 2025.
- In the Fort Riley subunit, the open firearm season for the taking of deer would be December 13, 2025 through December 21, 2025.
- In the Ft. Riley, subunit the extended firearms season for the taking of antlerless-only white-tailed deer would be January 1, 2026 through January 11, 2026
- Three (3) antlerless-only white-tailed deer permits would be valid in subunit 8A.

#### **Fort Leavenworth**

- In the Fort Leavenworth subunit 10A, the open firearm season for the taking of deer would be November 15, 2025 through November 16, 2025; November 22, 2025 through November 23, 2025; November 27, 2025 through November 20, 2025; December 6, 2025 through December 7, 2025; and December 13, 2025 through December 14, 2025.
- In the Fort Leavenworth subunit, the extended firearms season for the taking of antlerless-only white-tailed deer would be January 1, 2026 through January 18, 2026.
- In the Fort Leavenworth subunit, the extended archery season for the taking of antlerless-only white-tailed deer would be January 19, 2026 through January 31, 2026.
- Five (5) antlerless white-tailed deer permits would be valid in subunit 4A.
- 

#### **Smoky Hill ANG**

- The Smoky Hill subunit 4A would follow statewide seasons for DMU 4.
- Five (5) antlerless white-tailed deer permits would be valid in subunit 4A.

K.A.R. 115-25-9 – Big Game Regulations

**Background**

The regulation contains the following items:

- Dates of deer seasons when equipment such as archery, firearms, or muzzleloader may be used.
- Provisions when seasons may occur on military subunits within management units.
- Dates for a special firearm deer season and extended archery seasons in urban units.
- Dates of deer seasons for designated persons.
  - Dates and units when extended firearm seasons are authorized and the type of permits and changes in the species and antler categories of those permits.
- Limitations in obtaining multiple permits.

**Discussion**

Statewide Deer Season

Season	Open Date	End Date
Designated Persons (Youth/Disabled)	September 6, 2025	September 14, 2025
Archery	September 15, 2025	December 31, 2025
Muzzleloader	September 15, 2025	September 28, 2025
Pre-rut Whitetail Antlerless Only	October 11, 2025	October 13, 2025
Extended Pre-rut Whitetail Antlerless Only (DMU 12 Only)	October 14, 2025	October 19, 2025
Firearms	December 3, 2025	December 14, 2025
Short Whitetail Antlerless Only	January 1, 2026	January 4, 2026
Medium Whitetail Antlerless Only	January 1, 2026	January 11, 2026
Long Whitetail Antlerless Only	January 1, 2026	January 18, 2026
Whitetail Antlerless Only Extended Archery	January 19, 2026	January 19, 2026

Changing deer populations across Kansas require adjusting management of antlerless deer harvest strategies. Spotlight deer population surveys indicate declining deer numbers and poor

recruitment. Multiple years of drought have negatively affected deer habitat in the region resulting in poor reproduction. Comments from landowners and hunter indicate a strong desire to take steps such as reduce harvest pressure to increase deer numbers

Better habitat conditions and lower harvest limits in northeastern and central Kansas have resulted in strong and increasing deer populations as indicated by population surveys and increasing cases of human deer conflict such as crop damage cases and deer vehicle crashes. In southeastern Kansas, strong deer populations and generally good habitat conditions are resulting in continued growth or stability of higher populations. Landowner comments indicate a strong desire to increase hunting opportunities and permits availability specifically for antlerless white-tailed deer.

# **Regulations in Promulgation Process**

**Regulations in Promulgation Process (the items listed below will have no presentation, they have been presented multiple times and are in the promulgation process)**

1. 115-1-1; 115-7-1, 115-7-2, 115-7-4, 115-7-10, and 115-18-8 –  
Sport/Nonsport Fish Distinction and Snagging of Invasive Carp
2. 115-2-1 – Trout Fee and Senior License Fees
3. 115-2-3 – Camping Fees
4. 115-4-4 – Nonlead Muzzleloader Shot
5. 115-8-26 – Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting
6. 115-15-1 and 115-15-2 – Threatened and Endangered Species  
Downlisting
7. 115-25-14 – Creel Limits, Size Limits, and Possession Limits

**115-2-3. Camping, utility, and other fees.** (a) Each overnight camping permit shall be valid only for the state park for which it is purchased and shall expire at 2:00 pm on the day following its effective date.

(b) Any annual camping permit may be used in any state park for unlimited overnight camping, subject to other laws and regulations of the secretary. This permit shall expire on December 31 of the year for which the permit is issued.

(c) Any 14-night camping permit may be used in any state park. This permit shall expire when the permit has been used a total of 14 nights, or on December 31 of the year for which the permit is issued, whichever is first.

(d) Camping permits shall not be transferable.

(e) The fee for a designated prime camping area permit shall be in addition to the overnight, annual, 14-night, or other camping permit fee, and shall apply on a nightly basis.

(f) Fees shall be due at the time of campsite occupancy and by noon of any subsequent days of campsite occupancy.

(g) Fees set by this regulation shall be in addition to any required motor vehicle permit fee specified in K.A.R. 115-2-2.

(h) The following fees shall be in effect for state parks and for other designated areas for which camping and utility fees are required:

We are proposing to adjust to a more market level camping fees and to remove the annual camping permit.

**115-8-26. Nonresident waterfowl hunting.** (a) During any established hunting season for migratory waterfowl, a nonresident shall be restricted to Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays for the hunting and taking of migratory waterfowl at the following locations:

(1) department lands and waters;

(2) federal lands and waters owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Army, U.S. Army Corp of Engineer at the following reservoirs: Big Hill, Clinton, Council Grove, El Dorado, Elk City, Fall River, Hillsdale, John Redmond, Kanopolis, Marion, Melvern, Milford, Perry, Pomona, Toronto, Tuttle Creek, and Wilson; and

(3) federal lands and waters owned by the United States and administered by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation at the following reservoirs: Cedar Bluff, Cheney, Glen Elder (Wakonda Lake), Lovewell, Norton (Keith Sebelius Lake), and Webster.

(4) federal lands and waters owned by the United States and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge, and Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge.

(b) The following definitions shall apply to this regulation:

(1) "Migratory waterfowl" shall have the same meaning as K.S.A. 32-1008(a)(2), and amendments thereto.

(2) "Nonresident" shall have the same meaning as K.S.A. 32-701(1), and amendments thereto, but it shall not include:

(A) a nonresident lifetime license holder, pursuant to K.S.A. 32-930(a)(2), and amendments thereto;

(B) a nonresident active-duty military personnel, pursuant to K.S.A. 32-980(b)(1), and amendments thereto;

(C) an active-duty military personnel and the immediate family members domiciled with such individual, pursuant to K.S.A. 32-980(b)(2), and amendments thereto; or

(D) a nonresident full-time student, pursuant to K.S.A. 32-930(b)(3), and amendments thereto.

(3) "Department lands and waters" shall have the same meaning as K.A.R. 115-1-1(a)(14)

(c) These restrictions shall not apply to the spring snow goose Conservation Order season.

(d) These restrictions shall not apply to property enrolled and designated as either a walk-in hunting access (WIHA) area or an integrated walk-in hunting access (iWIHA) area.

(e) These restrictions shall not apply to the navigable rivers in Kansas which are the Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas rivers.



## **VI. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

### **Regulations in Promulgation Process**

All permanent regulations dealing with big game will be discussed together at this meeting. In recent years these regulations have been brought forward in the General Discussion portion of the Commission Meeting in August to allow public comments and to determine if further review was needed.

#### **a) K.A.R. 115-4-4. Big game; legal equipment and taking methods.**

##### **Background**

This regulation contains the following items:

- Specific equipment differences for hunting various big game species.
- Specifications for bright orange colored clothing, which must be worn when hunting during certain big game seasons.
- Accessory equipment such as calls, decoys, and blinds.
- Shooting hours
- Special restrictions on the use of horses or mules to herd or drive elk.

##### **Discussion**

Recently, questions regarding the materials allowable muzzleloader projectiles may be made from have arisen. Currently the allowable projectiles include only: tumble-on-impact, hard-cast solid lead, conical lead, or sabot bullets. The regulation as written may not allow bullets made from modern nontoxic materials.

##### **Recommendation**

Upon completion of department review, changes may be recommended to the allowable muzzleloader projectiles.

## **Trout Regulations Proposal**

Rainbow trout are purchased from commercial sources and stocked throughout approximately 30 water bodies in the state every winter. The season has been Nov. 1 through April 15th. Trout prices have risen from \$1.50 per fish in 2010 to \$3.50 per fish in 2023. The total cost of the program has risen from \$171,000 in 2010 to \$280,000 in 2023. Unfortunately, during that same timeframe the number of anglers purchasing a trout permit has remained relatively steady, contributing only \$125,000 annually. That equates to approximately 10,000 trout permits sold every year. Due to fiscal concerns, it has become evident that the department needs to make some changes.

In 2023 the Fisheries Division surveyed trout anglers to gain a better understanding of the program and its users. Some of the more significant takeaways from this survey indicate that these anglers are typically not harvest oriented, want to catch fish, and this is not their main fishing activity for the year. Nearly all would still buy an annual fishing license if trout were not available to them. Therefore, this program is an opportunistic one that simply adds to their annual experience of fishing in Kansas. It's a great program to make necessary changes to as the risk seems to be low. However, these changes should be made in a positive way where the opportunity still exists at a reasonable level.

Based on fiscal concerns and using the survey for guidance, we propose constricting the trout season and increasing the cost of the trout permit. We propose changing the trout season from Nov. 1 through April 15 to Dec. 1 through March 31. Many of the survey participants also suggested increasing the cost of a trout permit if it meant maintaining the program. We propose increasing the trout permit cost from \$12.00 to \$17.50. We do not propose increasing the youth trout permit.

### **115-2-1- Amount of fees**

- Increase trout permit fee from \$12.00 to \$17.50.

## Fisheries Regulations

Fishing regulations – statewide regulations and water-body specific regulations

**115-25-14(b)(A)** – Change date of trout season for Type I trout water bodies from November 1 through April 15 to December 1 through March 31. Remove section A from the language.

**115-25-14(b)(B)** – Remove this regulation: “November 1 through October 31: unit number 30, located in the Mined Land Wildlife Area.” Remove section B from the regulation.

### **115-25-14(c) – Type II trout water bodies**

- Change the date of trout season for Type II trout water bodies from November 1 through April 15 to December 1 through March 31.
- Add Shawnee Mission Park Lake and Kill Creek Park Lake, Johnson County, to list of type II trout water bodies.

### **115-25-14(d) – Statewide length limit table**

- Blue Catfish – Change the statewide length and creel limit from no length limit and 5/day creel limit to a 10/day creel limit and only 1 fish greater than 30 inches.
  - All other Blue Catfish regulations currently different than this regulation will remain as exemptions in the reference document.

### **115-25-14 - Reference Document “Kansas special size limits, creel limits, and bait restriction tables”**

- Cheney Reservoir – Saugeye - add 21-inch minimum length limit for Saugeye
- Cheney Reservoir – Crappie - Change from 50/day to 20/day creel limit but maintain 10-inch minimum length limit
- Cheney Reservoir – Blue Catfish – Remove the 5/day and 35-inch minimum length limit
- Lovewell Reservoir – Blue Catfish – Remove the 5/day and 35-inch minimum length limit
- Marion County Lake – Largemouth Bass – Change from 13-18 inch protective slot to the statewide 15-inch minimum length limit.
- Overbrook City Lake – Channel Catfish – Change from 2/day creel limit & 15-inch minimum length limit to a 5/day creel limit and no minimum length limit.
- Perry Reservoir – Blue Catfish – Remove the 5/day and 35-inch minimum length limit
- Wilson Reservoir – Blue Catfish – Remove the 5/day and 35-inch minimum length limit
- Sedgwick County – Slough Creek: Change trout season date to December 1 – March 31.

## **Kansas River Invasive Carp Summary and Proposed Snagging Opportunity**

Invasive bighead carp and silver carp are abundant in the lower Kansas River. Currently, legal rod and reel harvest of these fish is very limited as they are planktivorous filter feeders and are very unlikely to be caught using standard baited-hook fishing methods. We are proposing allowing snagging for bighead carp and silver carp in the lower Kansas River. The proposed KS River Invasive Carp Snagging Opportunity is outlined as such:

- Allow snagging in the Kansas River from the WaterOne Weir downstream to the confluence with the Missouri River (15 river miles)
- Limit harvest to bighead carp and silver carp only (these two invasive carp species are the most ecologically detrimental and readily identifiable invasive fishes present; minimizes harvest of non-target species)
- Require barbless hooks (as is required for our other snagging opportunities; minimizes hook and release mortality of non-target fishes)
- Open year round (maximizes opportunity to catch and remove invasive carp)
- No additional permit needed beyond standard fishing license
- No creel or possession limit on bighead carp or silver carp (current regulation)
- Bighead carp and silver carp may not be possessed live or released live (current regulation)

(KAR 115-7-1)

## **Invasive Species Regulations**

115-7-10. Reference document “Kansas aquatic invasive species designated waters”

- Add Gardner City Lake to list – Zebra Mussels detected here in 2023.

## Sportfish versus Non-sport Fish Regulations

Research from the past ten years is casting new light on the group of fishes currently defined in K.A.R. 115-1-1 as ‘nonsport fish.’ These studies have found many of these species to exhibit life histories that warrant more conscientious management actions than currently afforded by our Kansas regulations unchanged. Montague et al. (2023) state:

*“The native nongame fishes targeted by the sport (bowfishing) have greater conservation value (Rypel et al. 2021) and can be more sensitive to overharvest than previously recognized (Scarnecchia and Schooley 2020; Scarnecchia et al. 2021). Many of these ecologically valuable native nongame species are now known to be long lived with irregular or episodic recruitment and therefore are highly vulnerable to unregulated harvest (Scarnecchia and Schooley 2020; Scarnecchia et al. 2021).”*

As such, the regulation changes proposed in the following pages aim to provide more protections to these fish by simply removing the ‘sport’ and ‘nonsport fish’ labels from the definitions and subsequent references to those definitions. In place of those references a list of species is provided if the regulation does not, or should not, apply to all fishes. In removing the ‘sport’ and ‘nonsport’ labels, these changes clarify that all fishes are protected under possession/wanton waste regulations as stated in K.A.R. 115-7-4 and K.A.R. 115-18-8.

The greatest change from this regulation proposal is the inclusion, or exclusion, of gears exempt from possession as defined in K.A.R. 115-18-8 so long as those fish are released alive. Previously the exemption only applied to ‘*the catch and release of live sport fish.*’ The proposed change suggests ‘*Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the catch and release of live fish caught using hook and line, trotlines, setlines, tip-ups, hand fishing, snagging, and floatlines.*’ This would exclude bowfishing, spearing, and gigging from releasing fish landed with those methods. These methods are assumed to have high mortality associated with the method of capture. Montague et al. (2023) evaluated the mortality of fish shot and released with bowfishing equipment in Oklahoma and found that 208 of 240 (87%) shot fish died because of the activity within 120 hours. Of the shot fish, 60% sustained injuries to internal organs, 17% to the head, and 7% to the spine. These areas were considered critical wounds and fish with those injuries died 96% of the time.

It is assumed that spearing and gigging also expose the fish to increased mortality and thus, the three methods are excluded from the live release exemption to possession. Specifically, fish shot, speared, or giggered with bowfishing gear, spear-gun, or gig would stay in the fisher’s possession until processed for consumption, transported to the individual’s residence, transported to a place of commercial preservation, transported to a place of commercial processing, or given to another person in accordance with K.A.R. 115-7-4 and K.A.R. 115-18-8.

KARs affected:

115-1-1

115-7-1

115-7-2

115-7-4  
115-7-7  
115-18-8