



Conserving Enhancing Protecting Together.

Mike Wilkinson photo provided by The Nature Conservancy

2023 AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS



Administrative Services helped streamline procurement processes and facilitated a clean statutory annual state audit.



The Wetland and Stream Mitigation (FILO) Program acquired two properties totaling over 1,400 acres in the Green River and Cumberland River drainages for major stream and wetland habitat restoration projects on the properties, which were opened to the public as Gabbard Branch (Butler Co.) and Ferguson Creek (Livingston Co.) wildlife management areas for hunting, wildlife viewing and hiking.



In September, opened a new wheelchair-accessible, 11-lane public archery range located on Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's headquarters campus in Frankfort.



Eight new conservation officers completed the 34 weeks of academy training and 12 weeks of field training and are now serving across Kentucky.



Invasive carp harvest programs helped facilitate commercial fishers' efforts to remove more than 10-million pounds of invasive carp from Barkley and Kentucky lakes and the Ohio River.

CUMBERLAND FOREST WMA

Acquired a conservation easement on 55,000 acres for permanent public wildlife recreation access and habitat management in Bell, Leslie and Knox counties. This is a partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, using funding from the federal Wildlife Restoration grants program, a 2022 Kentucky General Assembly appropriation and a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN UPDATED

Working closely with the Kentucky Office of Nature Preserves, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and numerous other partners, the Wildlife, Fisheries and Information & Education divisions completed and published the agency's 10-year plan to help restore and conserve 527 species of greatest conservation need — imperiled or declining native vertebrates, insects and plants — in the Commonwealth.



OTHER NOTABLE CAPITAL PROJECTS

In addition to a variety of routine repair and renovation projects to existing buildings and facilities statewide that are not listed, the following are examples of major capital projects involving new construction or enhancements to public access facilities completed in 2023:

- Wilgreen Lake boat ramp and courtesy dock/kayak launch (Madison Co.) - Built a new ramp and courtesy dock for kayaks or small watercraft.
- Pond River boat ramp (Hopkins Co.) - Constructed new boat ramp on the Pond River for increased public fishing and hunting access.
- Beaver Lake boat ramp rebuild (Anderson Co.) - Built additional second lane to increase boater access to this agency-owned lake.



2023 Agency Highlights (continued)



For the first time, sought civil restitution for the illegal take of wildlife and importation of a diseased animal.



Recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) expanded fishing pole loaner station program. The program now includes 35 state parks, 20 libraries and 5 county extension offices.



Kentucky Wild memberships helped to fund construction of a cave gate in Jackson County to protect a colony of federally endangered Virginia big-eared bats and a captive breeding facility for eastern hellbender salamanders at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery in Rowan County.



Law enforcement enhancements included adoption of Police1 online training resource, additional patrol boats/trucks, steel plate carriers for ballistics vests and bullet and stab-resistant vests for K-9s.



Increased financial assistance to Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry to grow program participation and collected donations of canned goods for the organization's canned food drive.



The spring wild turkey harvest was the second highest on record for Kentucky.



Received 2023 Wildlife Restoration Award from The Wildlife Society for the reintroduction and management of elk in southeastern Kentucky.



Partnered with the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which donated \$75,000 to provide 365 children with scholarships to attend our three summer conservation camps.



Recycled more than 5,500 donated Christmas trees for fish habitat improvement projects in public lakes statewide through our annual "Christmas for the Fishes."



Added and opened the 790-acre Belvedere Tract at Yellowbank WMA for public hunting and related recreation.



Conservation officers responded to and conducted 144 search and rescue missions for lost or missing persons. These efforts led to several families being reunited and multiple lives being saved.



Agency staff filled more than 40 shoeboxes with Christmas gifts for distribution to children in need and provided 14 Salvation Army "Angel Tree" gifts for children and seniors.



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