Seasonal Fishing Opportunities: Kentucky and Barkley Lakes

Spring | April to June
Fishing success is rated excellent. As waters warm, fish move to shallow areas in protected coves to spawn. Fish for crappie, largemouth bass, and a variety of sunfish in areas around any form of cover. Fish for catfish below dams and in main lakes near riprap and large rock banks.

Summer | July to mid-September
Fishing success is rated good. As waters continue to warm, fish move to deeper main lake areas along sand bars and old creek channels. Fish for white bass, catfish, sauger, and largemouth and smallmouth bass near drop-offs in 8 to 20 feet of water. Sunfish can still be caught in shallows near banks. Fish for catfish and rockfish below dams.

Fall | mid-September to mid-November
Fishing success is rated good. Fish move along main lake shorelines and into deeper bays. Fish for crappie and largemouth and smallmouth bass around brush, logs, and other cover near banks in 3 to 10 feet of water. Fish for catfish near river channels or in dam tailwaters.

Winter | mid-November to mid-March
Fishing success is rated fair. Fish for crappie along drop-offs with cover in 10 to 20 feet of water in main lakes or in larger bays. Fish for smallmouth bass in sunny main lake gravel bars and points. Fish 30 to 40 feet deep for catfish near river channels or below dams.

General Guidelines
1. Emergency, dial 911.
2. See something. Say something. Call 270.924.2000 or Law Enforcement at 877.861.2457.
4. You are responsible for your own safety.
5. Bring your own water and supplies.
6. For campfires, use only dead and downed limbs for fuel. Do Not bring firewood from outside Land Between the Lakes which may introduce devastating pests. Attend the fire at all times and follow Smokey’s rules to put the fire out completely. Use existing fire rings in developed campgrounds during high fire danger seasons.
7. Keep all pets on a 6’ or shorter leash at all times.
8. Protect yourself from bug bites and ticks.
9. Firearms strictly prohibited except during established Land Between the Lakes hunting season by legally licensed hunters with permits.
10. Respect the Resource - leave historical items, plants and flowers for others to enjoy. This includes respecting the homes of our wildlife and respecting our trails and roads during wet conditions.

Please remove bait containers, fishing line, and other trash. There are fishing line recycling stations near many Land Between the Lakes boat ramps.

Check Land Between the Lakes Recreation Map (also available online) for wildlife refuge boundaries and closure dates.

Questions about fisheries and wildlife management programs?
Environmental Stewardship Department
Land Between the Lakes
270.924.2065
Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources
800.858.1549
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
615.781.6500
**2019 Fishing Information**

**Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area**

Respective state fishing regulations and limits apply except for those listed in the table below.

### Special Sport Fishing Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Between the Lakes Area</th>
<th>Open Dates</th>
<th>Size Limit Black Bass</th>
<th>Size Limit Crappie</th>
<th>Special Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bards Lake (TN)</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td>15”</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>No wake. No more than 20 shell crackers per day and 15 crappie creel limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Lake (KY)</td>
<td>Year-round, except western third - open Mar 16-Oct 31</td>
<td>15” No size limit for spotted bass in KY</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>No wake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hematite Lake (KY)</td>
<td>Mar 16-Oct 31</td>
<td>None (0)</td>
<td>Special Creel Limit: 10 sunfish 8” and larger; no more than 20 total redear sunfish. No frog gigging or bowfishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Lake (KY)</td>
<td>No boats with gasoline engines</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>None (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honker Lake (KY)</td>
<td>Mar 16-Oct 31</td>
<td>15”</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>No wake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Creek (KY)</td>
<td>Mar 16-Oct 31</td>
<td>15”</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>No frog gigging or bowfishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Creek Pond (KY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Center Pond (KY)</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>None (0)</td>
<td>Special Creel Limit: 5 catfish, 15” min. size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Ponds</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td>KY-12” TN-None (0)</td>
<td>KY-None (0)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Refuges</td>
<td>Mar 16-Oct 31</td>
<td>15”</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>See State Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton Bay (KY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honker Bay (KY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Bay (KY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith Bay (KY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushing Bay (TN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bowfishing and Frog Gigging**

Bowfishing is permitted for nongame fish species along the Land Between the Lakes shoreline of Kentucky and Barkley lakes and in Honker, Energy, and Bards interior lakes when open to fishing. Fishing licenses are required from the respective states where bowfishing is done.

Frog gigging is permitted by gig only (no firearms) in interior ponds, Bards, Energy, and Honker lakes from May 15 through Aug 31. Daily limit is 15. Frog gigging is permitted along the Land Between the Lakes shoreline by gig only in accordance with statewide seasons and regulations. According to Kentucky state law, either a hunting or fishing license may be used for frog gigging. In Tennessee, only a hunting license is valid for frog gigging. Individuals frog gigging in Land Between the Lakes with a hunting license must possess a Land Between the Lakes Hunter Use Permit.

**Monthly Water Levels on Kentucky and Barkley Lakes**

Higher or lower water levels may occur during any season.

**To report illegal fish and wildlife activities call:**
- USDA Forest Service Law Enforcement 877.861.2457
- Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency 800.831.1173
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources 800.252.5378

“Keep it Clean - Keep it Open”