
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.

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



Official Website



Friends of
Land Between the Lakes
Facebook

General Guidelines

1. Emergency, dial 911.
2. See something. Say something. Call 270.924.2000 or Law Enforcement at 877.861.2457.
3. Pack it in. Pack it out. Leave no trace behind.
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.

USDA Forest Service

Land Between the Lakes

National Recreation Area
800.525.7077 or 270.924.2000
www.landbetweenthe lakes.us

Updated June 2020

2020 Fishing ~ Fact Sheet ~

Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area Kentucky and Tennessee

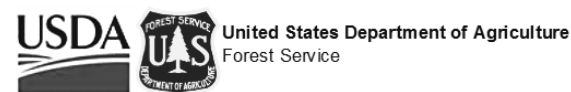


Fishing Licenses

All anglers 16 and older in Kentucky, and 13 and older in Tennessee, must possess a valid fishing license for the state in which they are fishing, except where there is a reciprocal agreement for a portion of Kentucky Lake, as described below. Fishing licenses are sold at many local businesses outside of Land Between the Lakes.

Reciprocal Agreement on Kentucky Lake:

Anglers can fish, with either a Kentucky or Tennessee fishing license, from Eggner's Ferry Bridge (U.S. Hwy 68/80 in Kentucky) south to the Gov. Ned McWherter Bridge (U.S. Hwy 79 in Tennessee) including all embayments, except Blood River in Kentucky. Anglers must abide by each state's size and creel limits when fishing waters in that state.



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2020 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

| Land Between the Lakes Area | Open Dates | Size Limit Black Bass | Size Limit Crappie | Special Regulations |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|---|
| Bards Lake (TN) Trotlines and limblines prohibited. Jug fishing permitted from Oct 1 to Mar 21, with limits of 10 jugs per person. | Year-round | 12" No size limit for spotted bass in TN | 10" | No wake. No more than 20 red-eared sunfish/shell crackers per day and 15 crappie creel limit |
| Energy Lake (KY) | Year-round, except western third - open Mar 14-Nov 1 | 12" No size limit for spotted bass in KY and TN | 10" | No wake |
| Hematite Lake (KY) Duncan Lake (KY) | Mar 14-Nov 1 No boats with gasoline engines | 12" | None (0) | Special Creel Limit: 10 sunfish 8" and larger; no more than 20 total redear sunfish. No frog gigging or bowfishing |
| Honker Lake (KY) | Mar 14-Nov 1 | 12" | 10" | No wake |
| Long Creek (KY) Long Creek Pond (KY) | Mar 14-Nov 1 | 12" | 10" | No frog gigging or bowfishing |
| Visitor Center Pond (KY) | Year-round | 12" | None (0) | Special Creel Limit: 5 catfish |
| Interior Ponds | Year-round | KY-12" TN-None (0) | KY-None (0) TN-10" | None |
| Wildlife Refuges Fulton Bay (KY) Honker Bay (KY) Duncan Bay (KY) Smith Bay (KY) Rushing Bay (TN) Other areas may be closed as indicated by buoys or signs. | Mar 14-Nov 1 | 12" | 10" | See State Regulations |

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 allowed.

Frog gigging is permitted by gig only (no firearms) in interior ponds, Bards, Energy, and Honker lakes from May 16 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.

For current lake levels go to:

<https://www.tva.com/environment/lake-levels>

or download the lake info app

<https://www.tva.com/environment/lake-levels/tva-lake-info-app>



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"