

Weather Record						
Date	1-15	1-16	1-17	1-18	1-19	1-20
High	33.2	40.8	44.4	43.5	54.2	29.4
Low	27	33.2	38.4	36.4	29.6	13.5
Prec	0	0	0.3	0	1.12	0.04

Reporting period for each day runs from midnight to midnight. Statistics from Kentucky Mesonet's Bengal Station.

Kentucky flu activity level raised to widespread

STAFF REPORTS

The Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), now reports “widespread” flu activity in Kentucky for the first time this flu season. Widespread is the highest level of flu activity, which indicates increased flu cases or flu outbreaks in at least half of the Commonwealth’s regions.

“We strongly encourage anyone who hasn’t received a flu vaccine, particularly children six months and older and those people at high risk for complications related to the flu, to get a flu shot,” said Jeff Howard, M.D., commissioner of DPH. “Also remember to cover your cough and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth because germs are spread this way. Be sure to frequently wash your hands with soap and water and stay home if you are sick with flu-like illness.”

DPH reports weekly influenza activity to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The weekly report is located online at <https://healthalerts.ky.gov/Pages/FluActivity.aspx> and is updated each Friday by noon.

Kentucky currently is reporting 1,457 laboratory - confirmed cases of flu. The report consists of laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza that are defined by molecular virus testing and positive virus culture test results. Rapid positive influenza tests are not included in this report, but are used

as an indicator of flu-like illness circulating across the state.

The number of flu cases to date this season (1,457) is comparable to the number of cases at the same time last season (1,411). One of the hardest hit areas currently is Louisville Metro, which has confirmed more than 550 cases recently. Overall, approximately 882 cases have been confirmed in Louisville Metro this flu season, which is up from just 179 cases confirmed at the same time in the previous flu season.

Four adult deaths and one pediatric death have now been linked to the flu in Kentucky this flu season. At this time in the last flu season Kentucky had twelve flu-related deaths, all adults. During the entire flu season there were 333 flu-related deaths in Kentucky last year, five of which were pediatric.

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends flu vaccine for all individuals six months of age and older. People who are strongly encouraged to receive the flu vaccine because they may be at higher risk for complications or negative consequences include:

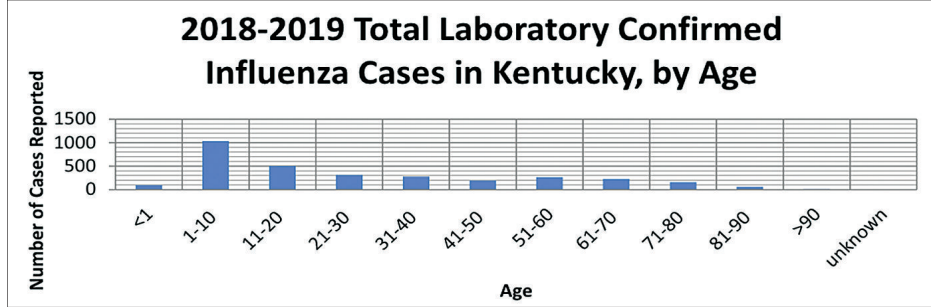
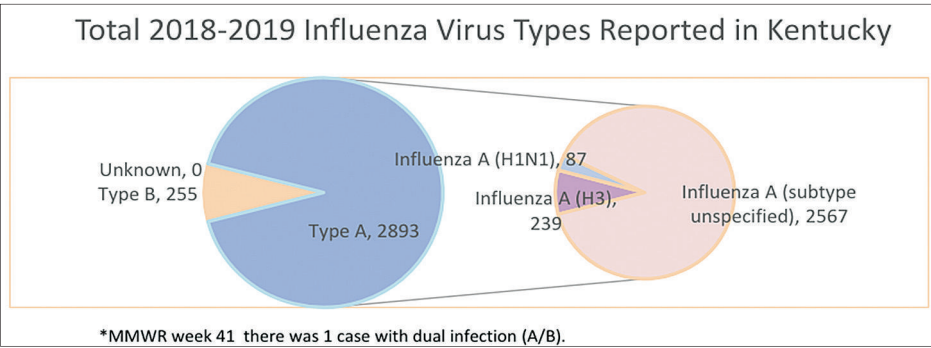
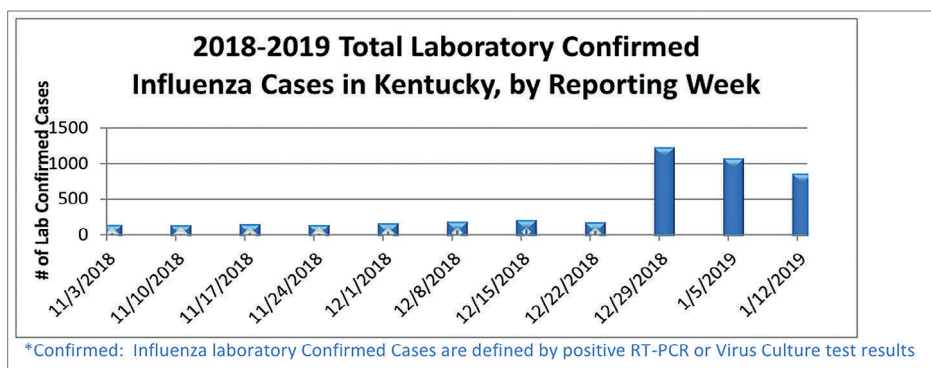
- Children age six months through 59 months;
- Women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Persons 50 years of age or older;
- Persons with extreme obesity (Body Mass Index of 40 or greater);
- Persons aged six months and older with chronic health

problems;

- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities;
- Household contacts (including children) and caregivers of children aged ≤59 months (i.e., aged < five years, particularly contacts of children aged < six months) and adults aged ≥50 years;
- Household contacts and caregivers or people who live with a person at high-risk for complications from the flu; and
- Health care workers, including physicians, nurses, and other workers in inpatient and outpatient-care settings, medical emergency-response workers (e.g., paramedics and emergency medical technicians), employees of nursing home and long-term care facilities who have contact with patients or residents, and students in these professions who will have contact with patients.

Adequate supplies of flu vaccine are available for this year’s season. Vaccinations can be given any time during the flu season but providers are encouraged to administer the vaccine as soon as possible.

During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 influenza seasons, ACIP recommended that Flu Mist not be used because of concerns about low effectiveness against influenza A (H1N1). However, ACIP recommends that Flu Mist once again be an option for vaccination during the 2018-2019 influenza season for persons for whom it is age-appropriate and who have no medical contraindications. The change in recom-



mendation is a result of the influenza A (H1N1) strain being changed in the current FluMist formulation.

Due to the timing of the decision by the ACIP regarding use of FluMist, the Kentucky Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) will not be offering FluMist for VFC or KCHIP patients during the 2018-2019 influenza season.

However, some private providers will offer FluMist this season for their patients.

The flu vaccine is especially important in light of the severe season experienced last year across the U.S.

The CDC reports that more than 900,000 flu-related hospitalizations occurred and more than 80,000 people died as a result of flu. Of the pediatric flu deaths

reported in last year’s season, more than one-third of these occurred among healthy children between the ages of 6 months and 4 years.

It is especially important for pregnant women to be vaccinated before or during pregnancy.

Antibodies cross the placenta and provide immunity to infants up to 6 months of age, when the infant is eligible to receive their dose of flu vaccine.

DPH relies on sites such as doctors’ offices, hospitals and health departments to help track the level of influenza activity in the state and to identify which strains of the flu are circulating in Kentucky. These voluntary sites collect data and report influenza-like illness

(ILI) cases according to age groups each week. This sampling represents only a small percentage of influenza cases for the state, but contributes to the ongoing assessment of flu activity in the Commonwealth and helps determine the weekly level of flu activity.

Infection with the flu virus can cause fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and body aches.

Flu can be very contagious.

For more information on influenza or the availability of flu vaccine, Kentuckians should contact their primary care medical provider or local health department.

Influenza information is also available online at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>.

Kentucky Afield: New Fishing Regulations for 2019

BY LEE MCCLELLAN KENTUCKY AFIELD

An old blues song “High Water Everywhere” lamented the damage caused by the great 1927 Mississippi River flood.

Kentuckians so far this winter can empathize with those sentiments. Many rivers still run high, Lake Cumberland is at summer pool in January and other reservoirs are well above winter pool. The weather forecast calls for more rain, followed by wicked cold.

The spring fishing season seems eons away, but it is not. March will be here in little more than a month, bringing warm winds, a new license year and some new fishing regulations that go into effect March 1.

Walleye, sauger and saugeye, a hybrid of walleye and sauger, now have a 14-inch minimum size limit and a six-fish daily creel limit statewide.

“The main reason for this regulation is to increase the number of larger, older sauger in the Ohio

River,” said Jeff Ross, assistant director of Fisheries for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. “We have combined these three species into a statewide regulation for simplicity.”

A 12-inch minimum size limit on catfish stocked by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is another new regulation for the 2019-2020 license year. “Stocking drives the catfish population in these lakes since there is not enough natural reproduction to sustain a robust population,” Ross said. “We also want larger catfish for our anglers to catch.”

After March 1, paddlefish, sometimes referred to as spoonbills, will be under a two-fish daily creel limit and a four-fish possession limit for traditional and non-traditional fishing methods.

“We wanted to provide a little better protection of paddlefish,” Ross said. “Anglers using traditional methods could use a large hooked bait to catch paddlefish with

no daily creel limit, while snagging anglers could only keep two fish per day under statewide regulations. We wanted to bring all paddlefish regulations in line with statewide regulations.”

A new regulation aimed at helping stem the movement of young Asian carp also goes into effect March 1. Live wild caught fish of the species mooneye and goldeye may only be used in the waters from which they were collected. “They are similar in appearance to young Asian carp,” Ross said. “We don’t want people to move anything that resembles young Asian carp such as shad, herring or these species from waterbody to waterbody.”

Several special regulations on certain waters go into effect March 1. “One of our goals is simplification of regulations when we can,” Ross said. “We also look at the lakes that still require better protection and management of the fisheries with special regulations.”

The largemouth bass in Benjy Kinman Lake in Henry County, Lake Reba in Madison County and Paintsville Lake in Johnson and Morgan counties will revert to statewide regulations of a 12-inch minimum size limit with a six-fish daily creel limit on March 1.

Buckhorn Lake in Perry and Leslie counties will have a 40-inch minimum size limit on muskellunge, while Lake Carnico in Nicholas County will have a 15-fish daily creel limit on sunfish.

All ponds collectively on the Rockcastle River wildlife management area in Pulaski County will be under a 15-inch minimum size limit with a one-fish daily creel limit for largemouth bass and a 10-fish daily creel limit for bluegill and sunfish. These lakes will also have a 15-fish daily creel limit for crappie and a four-fish daily creel limit for catfish.

Also, effective March 1, anglers using non-traditional methods may not harvest lake sturgeon.

Keep these new

regulations in mind in 2019. Anglers should obtain a free copy of the 2019-2020 Kentucky Fishing and Boating Guide available soon wherever fishing licenses are sold and online at the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website at www.fw.ky.gov.

Author Lee Mc-

Clellan is a nationally award-winning associate editor for Kentucky Afield magazine, the official publication of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. He is a life-long hunter and angler, with a passion for smallmouth bass fishing.

New Hours for JANUARY

CLOSED:
Mondays and Tuesdays

OPEN:
Wednesday thru Saturday
8 AM to 2 PM CST

OPEN:
Sundays 10:30-1 PM
for the buffet

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