

Kentucky Wildlife Habitat Education Program Wildlife Challenge Competition

- Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025
- Location: Raven Run Nature Sanctuary, 3885 Raven Run Way, Lexington, KY 40515 (Tenative)
- Contest Organizers: Ashley Osborne, Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development; Laurie Thomas, Extension Forester; Dr. Matt Springer, Extension Specialist for Wildlife Management

Contest Rules:

1. The Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) Wildlife Challenge Contest is open to youth who have enrolled in their county 4-H program and have not participated at the National WHEP Contest previously. In addition, 4-Hers may not participate if they have taken classes or participated in official post-secondary (university, college, junior college, or technical school) competitive events of a similar nature in the same subject matter area. Neither can participants be a member of a post-secondary team undergoing training in preparation for an event. For example, a contestant who has competed in an official collegiate wildlife contest, on or off campus, or taken college courses related to natural resources is ineligible to compete in this contest.
2. There is a Junior Division and Senior Division. Age groups are based on age as of January 1st of the current 4-H program year. Junior 4-Hers must be between the ages of 9-13 years old. Senior 4-H members must be between the ages of 14-18 years old.
3. Youth may participate as part of a team or as an individual.
 - a. A team will consist of no less than three and no more than four official entrants who are Kentucky 4-H members during the current program year.
 - b. Team members must state which team they are a member of at the time of registration.
 - c. Teams can be made up of 4-H members from the same county or members from more than one county.
 - d. If there are not enough members to assemble a team, 4-Hers may enroll and compete as individuals.
4. No electronic devices or talking is allowed during the contest.
5. Anyone caught cheating will be disqualified.
6. The objective of the Wildlife Challenge is to demonstrate knowledge of wildlife identification, wildlife management concepts, terminology, wildlife management practices, and the biology and ecology of wildlife species. The Wildlife Challenge combines wildlife identification and general knowledge. Participants visit stations where they may be presented with a wildlife specimen and questions related to the species. Participants may be asked to identify an animal by specimen or portion of specimen, photo, animal sign, or sound. Alternatively, stations may be located outdoors and questions may be related to various habitat features. The majority of species used in the Wildlife Challenge will be from Kentucky.

Example:

Specimen at station is a bobcat skull.

This species can be a significant source of mortality for which species?

- a) white-tailed deer
 - b) ruffed grouse
 - c) wild turkey**
 - d) eastern cottontail
 - e) northern bobwhite
7. Participants are encouraged to use the following resources to prepare and study for the Wildlife Challenge:
 - a. National WHEP Manual <https://www.whep.org/national-whep-manual/> (specifically the Wildlife Species section and Wildlife Management section)
 - b. Kentucky Snake Identification website <https://kysnakes.ca.uky.edu/>
 - c. Kentucky Amphibians website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Amphibians.aspx>
 - d. Kentucky Frogs and Toads website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Frogs-and-Toads-of-Kentucky.aspx>
 - e. Kentucky Birds website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Birds.aspx>

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- f. Kentucky Fishes website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Freshwater-Fishes.aspx>
 - g. Kentucky Freshwater Mussels and Aquatic Snails website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Freshwater-Mussels-and-Aquatic-Snails.aspx>
 - h. Kentucky Invasive Species website <https://fw.ky.gov/InvasiveSpecies/Pages/default.aspx>
 - i. Kentucky Reptiles website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Amphibians.aspx>
 - j. Kentucky Small Mammals and Bats website <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Small-Mammals-of-Kentucky.aspx>
 - k. Wild Pigs website <https://fw.ky.gov/InvasiveSpecies/Pages/Wild-Pig-Home.aspx>
8. The team score will be the score of the three highest scores in the Wildlife Challenge contest.
 9. Team Awards: First, second, and third place teams will be awarded in the Junior and Senior Division, using Wildlife Challenge scores.
 10. Individual Awards: 1) Overall first, second, and third place will be awarded to individuals in the Junior and Senior Division using Wildlife Challenge scores. Bonus questions answered correctly will be used to break ties for the total scoring of the top three individuals.; 2) All youth will receive a ribbon based on the Danish Ribbon System (Blue, Red, and White) using Wildlife Challenge scores.
 11. The first place team in the Senior Division will be invited to represent Kentucky 4-H at the National WHEP Contest (location and date varies each year). If the first place team is unable to attend, the second place team in the Senior Division will be invited to represent Kentucky 4-H at the national contest. If the second place team is unable to attend, either the third place team will be invited to attend the national contest OR the top two individuals in the Senior Division will be invited to represent Kentucky 4-H at the National WHEP Contest and participate in the individual events only – this determination will be made by the contest organizers.
 - a. Note: The team that represents Kentucky 4-H at the National WHEP Contest is responsible for all National WHEP contest expenses (including but not limited to registration fees, travel, lodging, and meals). Participants are encouraged to fundraise and/or obtain sponsors to help offset costs. In addition, the team must identify at least two adult volunteers (that are approved Kentucky 4-H volunteers in their county) to attend and chaperone at the National WHEP contest. (Note: the Kentucky 4-H Foundation may be able to help offset expenses using Area 2 Funds – additional information will be provided about this to the winning team.)

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