

By: Horne, Robinson (84th)

To: Game and Fish

HOUSE BILL NO. 871

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 EXTEND DEER HUNTING SEASON AND PERMIT DEER HUNTING WITH ANY LEGAL
3 HUNTING WEAPON; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

5 SECTION 1. Section 49-7-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 49-7-31. (1) The open season for game birds and game
8 animals shall be as follows:

9 (a) On bobwhite quail: The season shall open on
10 Thanksgiving day and run through the first Saturday in March next
11 following.

12 (b) On pheasant: There shall be no open season on
13 pheasant.

14 (c) On wild turkey: The commission shall fix the
15 spring season between the Saturday nearest March 20 and May 1 in
16 designated areas. In addition, the commission may fix special
17 fall either-sex seasons.

18 (d) On squirrel:

19 (i) Zone 1: For areas north of Highway 82 plus
20 those portions of Sunflower County and Washington County south of
21 Highway 82 the season shall open on the Saturday nearest October 1
22 and run through February 28.

23 (ii) Zone 2: For areas between Highway 82 and
24 Highway 84, plus such portions of the state south of Highway 84
25 and west of Interstate 55, the season shall open on the Saturday
26 nearest October 15 and run through February 28.

27 (iii) Zone 3: For areas south of Highway 84 and
28 east of Interstate 55 the season shall open on the last Saturday
29 in October and run through February 28.

30 (e) On deer:

31 (i) With or without dogs: December 1 through
32 January 31. Deer hunting is allowed with any legal hunting
33 weapon.

34 (ii) When hunting deer with a gun, a hunter must
35 wear in full view five hundred (500) square inches of solid
36 unbroken fluorescent orange.

37 (iii) In order to set and regulate the deer
38 seasons, the commission may:

39 A. Set and regulate the deer seasons on
40 wildlife management areas which it administers;

41 B. Allow the harvesting of antlerless deer in
42 the districts or zones upon the recommendation of the executive
43 director based upon good and substantial quantitative data and
44 research evaluations that demonstrate that the harvesting is
45 necessary to properly manage the herd. The commission, only upon
46 the recommendation of the executive director, may allow the
47 harvesting of antlerless deer during the deer season with guns and
48 with dogs by a majority vote of the commission. Nothing in this
49 section prohibits the harvesting of either sex deer by landowners
50 or leaseholders on private lands under a deer management program
51 prescribed or approved by the executive director.

52 C. Provide a special permit for the
53 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.
54 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the
55 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may
56 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who
57 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem
58 wildlife.

59 (iv) The commission shall establish a special

60 hunting season for youth under the age of sixteen (16) and for
61 handicapped persons in the Natchez State Park. The commission
62 shall also establish a primitive weapon season in the Natchez
63 State Park. The selection of participants in the primitive weapon
64 season shall be by public drawing from all qualified applications.

65 The commission shall set the number of permits to be issued and
66 the length of the special seasons. The commission may also
67 establish a special hunting season for youth and handicapped
68 persons or a primitive weapon season as provided in this
69 subparagraph in any other state park under the jurisdiction of the
70 department but shall only do so upon the recommendation of the
71 staff of the department as approved by the commission. The
72 commission shall select participants and set the number of permits
73 to be issued and the length of the special seasons in the manner
74 provided in this subparagraph.

75 (v) The commission may establish and regulate
76 special youth hunts for all nonmigratory game birds and animals
77 outside of the open season on wildlife management areas and on
78 private lands.

79 (f) On fur-bearing animals: The commission may fix the
80 open season on fur-bearing animals between November 1 and March 1
81 next following and fix the open season for hunting opossums,
82 raccoons and bobcats with dogs and guns by licensed hunters from
83 October 1 to February 28 next following; but raccoons and bobcats
84 may be run, hunted, chased or pursued throughout the year with
85 dogs by licensed hunters. The commission may establish an
86 additional open season on raccoon from July 1 through October 1,
87 and the bag limit on raccoon during the additional open season
88 shall be one (1) per party, per night.

89 (g) On rabbits: The season shall open on the Saturday
90 nearest October 15 and run through February 28 next following, and
91 when rabbits are depredating or destroying crops, the owner of the
92 crops or his tenants may shoot the rabbits with guns.

93 (h) On predatory animals: The hunting of predatory
94 animals shall be restricted to the open seasons for hunting any
95 game animal or game bird, using only the firearms, ammunition,
96 primitive weapons or archery equipment legal for use during that
97 open season. Landowners, agricultural leaseholders or their
98 designated agents may take predatory animals year-round on lands
99 owned or leased by them. The taking of any animal or animals
100 other than beavers or coyote by the use of a trap or traps is
101 unlawful except during the time the season is open for the taking
102 of fur-bearing animals. Fox and coyote may be run, chased or
103 pursued with dogs except as provided in Section 49-7-32 year-round
104 by licensed hunters.

105 (i) On migratory birds: The open season for migratory
106 birds shall be the season prescribed by the Federal Migratory Bird
107 Treaty regulations.

108 (j) On nongame gross fish: The season for taking
109 nongame gross fish by hand or with grappling tongs shall be from
110 May 1 to July 15.

111 (k) It is unlawful to trap fox after the closed season
112 for trapping of other fur-bearing animals, except on property
113 owned or leased by the person trapping.

114 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the open season
115 for game birds and game animals shall be stabilized unless some
116 unforeseen calamity affecting the resource necessitates earlier
117 change.

118 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
119 and after July 1, 2000.