

By: Senator(s) Posey

To: Wildlife and Fisheries

SENATE BILL NO. 2588

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 DELETE REFERENCE TO NONGAME GROSS FISH; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

6 49-7-31. (1) The open season for game birds and game  
7 animals shall be as follows:

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

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

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

17 (d) On squirrel:

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

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

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

29 (e) On deer:

30 (i) With bow and arrow: October 1 through the  
31 Friday prior to Thanksgiving.

32 (ii) With guns and with dogs: From the Saturday  
33 prior to Thanksgiving through December 1.

34 (iii) With primitive weapons and without dogs:  
35 December 2 through December 15.

36 (iv) With guns and without dogs: December 16  
37 through December 23. However, the commission may allow hunting  
38 statewide or in specific areas with any legal weapon which it may  
39 designate without dogs after the end of the last season for  
40 hunting deer with guns and with dogs, but the season with legal  
41 designated weapons and without dogs shall not extend beyond  
42 January 31.

43 (v) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through  
44 a date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of  
45 thirty-nine (39) days of hunting deer with guns and with dogs when  
46 added to the number of days provided for hunting deer with guns  
47 and with dogs in paragraph (e)(ii).

48 (vi) When hunting deer during any gun season on  
49 deer, a hunter must wear in full view five hundred (500) square  
50 inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange.

51 (vii) In order to set and regulate the deer  
52 seasons, the commission may:

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

55 B. Allow the harvesting of antlerless deer in  
56 the districts or zones upon the recommendation of the executive  
57 director based upon good and substantial quantitative data and  
58 research evaluations that demonstrate that the harvesting is

59 necessary to properly manage the herd. The commission, only upon  
60 the recommendation of the executive director, may allow the  
61 harvesting of antlerless deer during the deer season with guns and  
62 with dogs by a majority vote of the commission. Nothing in this  
63 section prohibits the harvesting of either sex deer by landowners  
64 or leaseholders on private lands under a deer management program  
65 prescribed or approved by the executive director.

66 C. Provide a special permit for the  
67 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.  
68 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the  
69 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may  
70 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who  
71 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem  
72 wildlife.

73 (viii) The commission shall establish a special  
74 hunting season for youth under the age of sixteen (16) and for  
75 handicapped persons in the Natchez State Park. The commission  
76 shall also establish a primitive weapon season in the Natchez  
77 State Park. The selection of participants in the primitive weapon  
78 season shall be by public drawing from all qualified applications.  
79 The commission shall set the number of permits to be issued and  
80 the length of the special seasons. The commission may also  
81 establish a special hunting season for youth and handicapped  
82 persons or a primitive weapon season as provided in this  
83 subparagraph in any other state park under the jurisdiction of the  
84 department but shall only do so upon the recommendation of the  
85 staff of the department as approved by the commission. The  
86 commission shall select participants and set the number of permits  
87 to be issued and the length of the special seasons in the manner  
88 provided in this subparagraph.

89 (ix) The commission may establish and regulate  
90 special youth hunts for all nonmigratory game birds and animals

91 outside of the open season on wildlife management areas and on  
92 private lands.

93 (f) On fur-bearing animals: The commission may fix the  
94 open season on fur-bearing animals between November 1 and March 1  
95 next following and fix the open season for hunting opossums,  
96 raccoons and bobcats with dogs and guns by licensed hunters from  
97 October 1 to February 28 next following; but raccoons and bobcats  
98 may be run, hunted, chased or pursued throughout the year with  
99 dogs by licensed hunters. The commission may establish an  
100 additional open season on raccoon from July 1 through October 1,  
101 and the bag limit on raccoon during the additional open season  
102 shall be one (1) per party, per night.

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

107 (h) On predatory animals: The hunting of predatory  
108 animals shall be restricted to the open seasons for hunting any  
109 game animal or game bird, using only the firearms, ammunition,  
110 primitive weapons or archery equipment legal for use during that  
111 open season. Landowners, agricultural leaseholders or their  
112 designated agents may take predatory animals year-round on lands  
113 owned or leased by them. The taking of any animal or animals  
114 other than beavers or coyote by the use of a trap or traps is  
115 unlawful except during the time the season is open for the taking  
116 of fur-bearing animals. Fox and coyote may be run, chased or  
117 pursued with dogs except as provided in Section 49-7-32 year-round  
118 by licensed hunters.

119 (i) On migratory birds: The open season for migratory  
120 birds shall be the season prescribed by the Federal Migratory Bird  
121 Treaty regulations.

122 \* \* \*

123           (j) It is unlawful to trap fox after the closed season  
124 for trapping of other fur-bearing animals, except on property  
125 owned or leased by the person trapping.

126           (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the open season  
127 for game birds and game animals shall be stabilized unless some  
128 unforeseen calamity affecting the resource necessitates earlier  
129 change.

130           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
131 and after its passage.