

By: Representatives Eaton, Pierce, Gibbs,
Parker, Taylor, Vince

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

HOUSE BILL NO. 934

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 EXTEND THE DEER HUNTING SEASON FOR HUNTING WITH GUNS AND WITH DOGS
3 TO JANUARY 31 OF EACH YEAR; 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 bow and arrow: October 1 through the
32 Friday prior to Thanksgiving.

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

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

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

44 (v) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through
45 January 31.

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

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

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

53 B. Allow the harvesting of antlerless deer in
54 the districts or zones upon the recommendation of the executive
55 director based upon good and substantial quantitative data and
56 research evaluations that demonstrate that the harvesting is
57 necessary to properly manage the herd. The commission, only upon
58 the recommendation of the executive director, may allow the
59 harvesting of antlerless deer during the deer season with guns and

60 with dogs by a majority vote of the commission. Nothing in this
61 section prohibits the harvesting of either sex deer by landowners
62 or leaseholders on private lands under a deer management program
63 prescribed or approved by the executive director;

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

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

87 (ix) The commission may establish and regulate
88 special youth hunts for all nonmigratory game birds and animals
89 outside of the open season on wildlife management areas and on
90 private lands.

91 (f) On fur-bearing animals: The commission may fix the
92 open season on fur-bearing animals between November 1 and March 1

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

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

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

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

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

123 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the open season
124 for game birds and game animals shall be stabilized unless some

125 unforeseen calamity affecting the resource necessitates earlier
126 change.

127 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
128 and after July 1, 2004.