

By: Senator(s) Morgan, Albritton, Gollott,
King, Walley, Dawkins, Robertson, Doxey, Lee
(47th), Dearing, Flowers, Michel, Butler

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2833

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 EXTEND DEER SEASON FOR BUCKS WITH MINIMUM ANTLER SIZE IN CERTAIN
3 COUNTIES; 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. The commission may extend the season for a period of
44 fourteen (14) days beyond January 31 for only bucks with a spread
45 of twelve (12) or more inches in the counties south of and
46 including the following counties adjoining Highway 98: Lamar,
47 Forrest, Perry, George and Greene. If the commission extends the
48 season, the commission may change the opening dates and length of
49 the open seasons within this area.

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

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

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

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

62 B. Allow the harvesting of antlerless deer in
63 the districts or zones upon the recommendation of the executive
64 director based upon good and substantial quantitative data and
65 research evaluations that demonstrate that the harvesting is
66 necessary to properly manage the herd. The commission, only upon
67 the recommendation of the executive director, may allow the
68 harvesting of antlerless deer during the deer season with guns and
69 with dogs by a majority vote of the commission. Nothing in this
70 section prohibits the harvesting of either sex deer by landowners
71 or leaseholders on private lands under a deer management program
72 prescribed or approved by the executive director.

73 C. Provide a special permit for the
74 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.
75 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the
76 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may
77 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who
78 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem
79 wildlife.

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

93 commission shall select participants and set the number of permits
94 to be issued and the length of the special seasons in the manner
95 provided in this subparagraph.

96 (ix) The commission may establish and regulate
97 special youth hunts for all nonmigratory game birds and animals
98 outside of the open season on wildlife management areas and on
99 private lands.

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

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

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

126 (i) On migratory birds: The open season for migratory
127 birds shall be the season prescribed by the Federal Migratory Bird
128 Treaty regulations.

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

132 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the open season
133 for game birds and game animals shall be stabilized unless some
134 unforeseen calamity affecting the resource necessitates earlier
135 change.

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