

By: Representative Cockerham (By Request)

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and  
Parks

## HOUSE BILL NO. 770

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 PROVIDE THAT THE OPEN SEASON ON THE HUNTING OF DEER WITH GUNS AND  
3 WITH DOGS ON HOMOCHITTO NATIONAL FOREST LANDS SHALL BE FROM THE  
4 FIRST SATURDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING THROUGH DECEMBER 1; TO PROVIDE  
5 THAT ONLY LEGAL BUCKS MAY BE HARVESTED; TO PROHIBIT THE HUNTING OF  
6 DEER ON HOMOCHITTO NATIONAL FOREST LANDS DURING ANY OTHER OPEN  
7 SEASON ESTABLISHED FOR HUNTING WITH GUNS AND WITH DOGS; AND FOR  
8 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 49-7-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
11 amended as follows:

12 49-7-31. (1) The open season on deer shall be as follows:

13 (a) With bow and arrow: October 1 through the Friday  
14 prior to Thanksgiving.

15 (b) With guns and with dogs: from the Saturday prior  
16 to Thanksgiving through December 1.

17 (c) With primitive weapons and without dogs: December  
18 2 through December 15.

19 (d) With guns and without dogs: December 16 through  
20 December 23. However, the commission may allow hunting statewide  
21 or in specific areas with any legal weapon which it may designate  
22 without dogs after the end of the last season for hunting deer  
23 with guns and with dogs, but the season with legal designated  
24 weapons and without dogs shall not extend beyond January 31.

25 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season  
26 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from  
27 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway  
28 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any  
29 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this



30 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For  
31 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer  
32 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside  
33 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of  
34 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of  
35 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph  
36 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may  
37 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow  
38 season in subsection (1)(a) in this area.

39 (f) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through a  
40 date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of  
41 thirty-nine (39) days of hunting deer with guns and with dogs when  
42 added to the number of days provided for hunting deer with guns  
43 and with dogs in paragraph (b), except that hunting deer on  
44 Homochitto National Forest lands during this season is prohibited.

45 (g) With regard to the hunting of deer on Homochitto  
46 National Forest lands, the open season on deer, with guns and with  
47 dogs, shall be from the Saturday before Thanksgiving through  
48 December 1 only. Only antlered deer that meet the requirements of  
49 a legal buck, as defined in paragraph (e) of this subsection,  
50 shall be taken in this area during the season established by for  
51 hunting on Homochitto National Forest lands.

52 (2) The commission may set and regulate the deer seasons on  
53 wildlife management areas which it administers.

54 (3) (a) The commission may allow the harvesting of  
55 antlerless deer in the districts or zones upon the recommendation  
56 of the executive director based upon good and substantial  
57 quantitative data and research evaluations that demonstrate that  
58 the harvesting is necessary to properly manage the herd.

59 (b) The commission, only upon the recommendation of the  
60 executive director, may allow the harvesting of antlerless deer  
61 during the deer season with guns and with dogs by a majority vote  
62 of the commission.



63           (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits the harvesting  
64 of either-sex deer by landowners or leaseholders on private lands  
65 under the deer management assistance program prescribed or  
66 approved by the executive director.

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

74           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
75 and after July 1, 2011.

