

By: Senator(s) Michel, Whaley, Butler

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2723

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 ALLOW THE COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS TO EXTEND
3 THE OPEN SEASON ON DEER, WHEN IT ENDS ON A FRIDAY, TO 30 MINUTES
4 AFTER SUNSET ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY; TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31.2,
5 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ALLOW THE COMMISSION TO EXTEND THE
6 OPEN SEASONS ON BOBWHITE QUAIL AND WILD TURKEY, WHEN THEY END ON
7 FRIDAY, TO 30 MINUTES AFTER SUNSET ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY; TO
8 AMEND SECTION 49-7-31.3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ALLOW THE
9 COMMISSION TO EXTEND THE OPEN SEASONS ON SQUIRREL AND RABBITS,
10 WHEN THEY END ON FRIDAY, TO 30 MINUTES AFTER SUNSET ON THE
11 FOLLOWING SUNDAY; TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31.4, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
12 1972, TO ALLOW THE COMMISSION TO EXTEND THE OPEN SEASON ON
13 FUR-BEARING ANIMALS, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL OPEN SEASON ON
14 RACCOON, WHEN IT ENDS ON A FRIDAY, TO 30 MINUTES AFTER SUNSET ON
15 THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

19 49-7-31. (1) The open season on deer shall be as follows:

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

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



24 (c) With primitive weapons and without dogs: December
25 2 through December 15.

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

32 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season
33 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from
34 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway
35 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any
36 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this
37 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For
38 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer
39 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside
40 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of
41 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of
42 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph
43 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may
44 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow
45 season in * * * paragraph (a) in this area.

46 (f) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through a
47 date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of
48 thirty-nine (39) days of hunting deer with guns and with dogs when



49 added to the number of days provided for hunting deer with guns
50 and with dogs in paragraph (b).

51 (g) When the open season on deer ends on a Friday, the
52 commission shall have the authority to extend the season until
53 thirty (30) minutes after sunset on the following Sunday.

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

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

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

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

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



74 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem
75 wildlife.

76 (5) (a) During any open season on deer with primitive
77 weapons after November 30, a person may use any legal weapon of
78 choice on private lands only, if the person is:

79 (i) The title owner of the land;

80 (ii) The lessee of the hunting rights on the land;

81 (iii) A member of a hunting club leasing the
82 hunting rights on the land; or

83 (iv) A guest of a person specified in subparagraph
84 (i), (ii) or (iii).

85 (b) If the person is required to have a hunting
86 license, the person must have a primitive weapon license,
87 Sportsman's License or a Lifetime Sportsman's License.

88 **SECTION 2.** Section 49-7-31.2, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
89 amended as follows:

90 49-7-31.2. The open season for game birds shall be as
91 follows:

92 (a) On bobwhite quail: The season shall open on
93 Thanksgiving Day and run through the first Saturday in March next
94 following. When the open season ends on a Friday, the commission
95 shall have the authority to extend the season until thirty (30)
96 minutes after sunset on the following Sunday.

97 (b) On pheasant: There shall be no open season on
98 pheasant.



99 (c) On wild turkey: The commission may fix the spring
100 season between March 1 and May 15. In addition, the commission
101 may fix special fall either-sex seasons. When the open season
102 ends on a Friday, the commission shall have the authority to
103 extend the season until thirty (30) minutes after sunset on the
104 following Sunday.

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

108 **SECTION 3.** Section 49-7-31.3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
109 amended as follows:

110 49-7-31.3. The open season on game animals except deer shall
111 be as follows:

112 (a) On squirrel: The season shall open on October 1
113 and run through February 28 next following. In addition, the
114 commission is authorized to set a season that shall open not
115 earlier than May 15 and run not later than June 1 next following.
116 When the open season ends on a Friday, the commission shall have
117 the authority to extend the season until thirty (30) minutes after
118 sunset on the following Sunday.

119 (b) On rabbits: The season shall open on the Saturday
120 nearest October 15 and run through February 28 next following, and
121 when rabbits are depredating or destroying crops, the owner of the
122 crops or his tenants may shoot the rabbits with guns. When the
123 open season ends on a Friday, the commission shall have the



124 authority to extend the season until thirty (30) minutes after
125 sunset on the following Sunday.

126 **SECTION 4.** Section 49-7-31.4, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
127 amended as follows:

128 49-7-31.4. (1) The commission may fix the open season on
129 fur-bearing animals between November 1 and March 1 next following
130 and fix the open season for hunting opossums, raccoons and bobcats
131 with dogs and guns by licensed hunters from October 1 to February
132 28 next following; but raccoons and bobcats may be run, hunted,
133 chased or pursued throughout the year with dogs by licensed
134 hunters.

135 (2) The commission may establish an additional open season
136 on raccoon from July 1 through October 1, and the bag limit on
137 raccoon during the additional open season shall be one (1) per
138 party, per night.

139 (3) When the open season on fur-bearing animals, including
140 any additional open season on raccoon, ends on a Friday, the
141 commission shall have the authority to extend the season until
142 thirty (30) minutes after sunset on the following Sunday.

143 **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
144 and after July 1, 2020.

