

By: Representative Bounds

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and  
Parks

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1035

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND  
2 PARKS TO ESTABLISH AND REGULATE SPECIAL HUNTS DURING VELVET  
3 HUNTING SEASON; TO PROVIDE THAT VELVET HUNTING SEASON SHALL BEGIN  
4 ON AUGUST 20 AND END AUGUST 31; TO REQUIRE THE COMMISSION TO  
5 ESTABLISH A SPECIAL HUNTING PERMIT FOR VELVET HUNTING SEASON; TO  
6 AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH RELATES TO  
7 OPEN SEASON ON DEER, TO REQUIRE THE COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH AND  
8 REGULATE SPECIAL HUNTS DURING VELVET HUNTING SEASON; AND FOR  
9 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Mississippi Commission on Wildlife,  
12 Fisheries and Parks shall establish and regulate special hunts  
13 during velvet hunting season, outside of the regular open season  
14 on deer. Velvet hunting season shall begin on August 20, and end  
15 no later than August 31, and shall be for no less than three (3)  
16 consecutive days in length, and for no more than five (5)  
17 consecutive days in length, and only hunting with bow and arrow  
18 shall be allowed during such season.

19 (2) The commission shall establish a special hunting permit  
20 for velvet hunting season. Such special hunting permit for velvet  
21 hunting season shall be authorized for a time period beginning on



22 August 20, and ending no later than August 31, and shall be valid  
23 for no less than three (3) consecutive days in length, and for no  
24 more than five (5) consecutive days in length. The commission  
25 shall select participants, set the cost of permits, if any, the  
26 number of permits to be issued, and the length of the special  
27 permits.

28 **SECTION 2.** Section 49-7-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
29 amended as follows:

30 49-7-31. (1) The open season on deer shall be as follows:

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

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

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

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

43 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season  
44 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from  
45 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway  
46 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any



47 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this  
48 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For  
49 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer  
50 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside  
51 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of  
52 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of  
53 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph  
54 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may  
55 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow  
56 season in paragraph (a) in this area.

57 (f) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through a  
58 date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of  
59 thirty-nine (39) days of hunting deer with guns and with dogs when  
60 added to the number of days provided for hunting deer with guns  
61 and with dogs in paragraph (b).

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

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

67 (3) (a) The commission may allow the harvesting of  
68 antlerless deer in the districts or zones upon the recommendation  
69 of the executive director based upon good and substantial  
70 quantitative data and research evaluations that demonstrate that  
71 the harvesting is necessary to properly manage the herd.



72 (b) The commission, only upon the recommendation of the  
73 executive director, may allow the harvesting of antlerless deer  
74 during the deer season with guns and with dogs by a majority vote  
75 of the commission.

76 (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits the harvesting  
77 of either-sex deer by landowners or leaseholders on private lands  
78 under the deer management assistance program prescribed or  
79 approved by the executive director.

80 (4) The commission may provide a special permit for the  
81 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.  
82 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the  
83 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may  
84 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who  
85 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem  
86 wildlife.

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

90 (i) The title owner of the land;

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

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

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



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

99 (6) The commission shall establish and regulate special  
100 hunts during velvet hunting season, outside of the regular open  
101 season on deer, as provided in Section 1 of this act.

102 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
103 and after July 1, 2022.

