

By: Representative Bounds

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

HOUSE BILL NO. 1035
(As Sent to Governor)

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 SEPTEMBER 10 AND END SEPTEMBER 20; 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 September 10, and
15 end no later than September 20, and shall be for no less than
16 three (3) consecutive days in length, and for no more than five
17 (5) consecutive days in length, and only hunting with bow and
18 arrow or crossbows shall be allowed during such season. The
19 special season shall be open on private lands and any Wildlife
20 Management Areas as deemed appropriate by the department. Only
21 bucks that meet the antler criteria for the respective deer



22 management unit may be harvested. There shall be mandatory
23 reporting of the harvested animal.

24 (2) The commission shall establish a special hunting permit
25 for velvet hunting season. Such special hunting permit for velvet
26 hunting season shall be authorized for a time period beginning on
27 September 10, and ending no later than September 20, and shall be
28 valid for no less than three (3) consecutive days in length, and
29 for no more than five (5) consecutive days in length. The
30 commission shall, set the cost of permits.

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

33 49-7-31. (1) The open season on deer shall be as follows:

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

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

38 (c) With primitive weapons and without dogs: December
39 2 through December 15.

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



46 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season
47 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from
48 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway
49 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any
50 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this
51 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For
52 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer
53 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside
54 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of
55 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of
56 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph
57 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may
58 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow
59 season in paragraph (a) in this area.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

93 (i) The title owner of the land;

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



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

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

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

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

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

