

By: Representatives Eaton, Pierce, Stringer, Miles To: Game and Fish

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 609

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 REQUIRE THE COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS TO
3 AUTHORIZE THE HUNTING OF DEER OVER CORN, GRAIN OR OTHER
4 SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD; TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-33, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
5 1972, IN CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

9 49-7-31. (1) The open season for game birds and game
10 animals shall be as follows:

11 (a) On bobwhite quail: The season shall open on
12 Thanksgiving day and run through the first Saturday in March next
13 following.

14 (b) On pheasant: There shall be no open season on
15 pheasant.

16 (c) On wild turkey: The commission shall fix the
17 spring season between the Saturday nearest March 20 and May 1 in
18 designated areas. In addition, the commission may fix special
19 fall either-sex seasons.

20 (d) On squirrel:

21 (i) Zone 1: For areas north of Highway 82 plus
22 those portions of Sunflower County and Washington County south of
23 Highway 82 the season shall open on the Saturday nearest October 1
24 and run through February 28.

25 (ii) Zone 2: For areas between Highway 82 and
26 Highway 84, plus such portions of the state south of Highway 84
27 and west of Interstate 55, the season shall open on the Saturday
28 nearest October 15 and run through February 28.



29 (iii) Zone 3: For areas south of Highway 84 and  
30 east of Interstate 55 the season shall open on the last Saturday  
31 in October and run through February 28.

32 (e) On deer:

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

35 (ii) With guns and with dog: From the Saturday  
36 prior to Thanksgiving through December 1.

37 (iii) With primitive weapons and without dogs:  
38 December 2 through December 15.

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

46 (v) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through  
47 a 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 (e)(ii).

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

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

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

58 B. Allow the harvesting of antlerless deer in  
59 the districts or zones upon the recommendation of the executive  
60 director based upon good and substantial quantitative data and  
61 research evaluations that demonstrate that the harvesting is



62 necessary to properly manage the herd. The commission, only upon  
63 the recommendation of the executive director, may allow the  
64 harvesting of antlerless deer during the deer season with guns and  
65 with dogs by a majority vote of the commission. Nothing in this  
66 section prohibits the harvesting of either sex deer by landowners  
67 or leaseholders on private lands under a deer management program  
68 prescribed or approved by the executive director.

69 C. 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 (viii) It shall not be unlawful for any person to  
77 hunt deer over corn, grain or other supplemental food during any  
78 deer hunting season in accordance with such rules and regulations  
79 as the commission shall prescribe. This paragraph (e)(viii) shall  
80 stand repealed from and after July 1, 2002.

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



95 to be issued and the length of the special seasons in the manner  
96 provided in this subparagraph.

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

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

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

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



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

130           (j) On nongame gross fish: The season for taking  
131 nongame gross fish by hand or with grappling tongs shall be from  
132 May 1 to July 15.

133           (k) It is unlawful to trap fox after the closed season  
134 for trapping of other fur-bearing animals, except on property  
135 owned or leased by the person trapping.

136           (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the open season  
137 for game birds and game animals shall be stabilized unless some  
138 unforeseen calamity affecting the resource necessitates earlier  
139 change.

140           SECTION 2. Section 49-7-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
141 amended as follows:

142           49-7-33. Except as otherwise provided in Section  
143 49-7-31(1)(e)(viii), it is unlawful to hunt, trap or kill any wild  
144 bird or wild animal of any kind with the aid of bait, recordings  
145 of bird or animal calls, or electrically amplified imitations of  
146 calls of any kind, except a person may use electrically amplified  
147 sound devices for hunting coyote and crow. The commission, in its  
148 discretion, may relax the restrictions regarding the use of lures  
149 or sound devices if a condition arises or exists, as decided by  
150 the State Board of Health or county board of health, that may  
151 endanger persons or livestock in a certain community, county or  
152 area.

153           A person may use liquid scents for any animal or bird.

154           SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
155 and after July 1, 2001.

