

By: Representatives Parker, Bentz,
Fillingane, Lott, Patterson

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

HOUSE BILL NO. 491

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE FOR AN EXTENDED DEER SEASON FOR THE HUNTING OF DEER WITH
3 GUNS AND WITH DOGS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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

10 (b) With guns and with dogs: From the Saturday prior
11 to Thanksgiving through December 1.

12 (c) With primitive weapons and without dogs: December
13 2 through December 15.

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

20 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season
21 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from
22 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway
23 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any
24 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this
25 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For
26 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer
27 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside

28 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of
29 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may delay the opening date
30 and change the length of bow and arrow season in paragraph (1)(a)
31 in this area.

32 (f) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through a
33 date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of
34 forty-five (45) days of hunting deer with guns and with dogs when
35 added to the number of days provided for hunting deer with guns
36 and with dogs in paragraph (b).

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

39 (3) (a) The commission may allow the harvesting of
40 antlerless deer in the districts or zones upon the recommendation
41 of the executive director based upon good and substantial
42 quantitative data and research evaluations that demonstrate that
43 the harvesting is necessary to properly manage the herd.

44 (b) The commission, only upon the recommendation of the
45 executive director, may allow the harvesting of antlerless deer
46 during the deer season with guns and with dogs by a majority vote
47 of the commission.

48 (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits the harvesting
49 of either-sex deer by landowners or leaseholders on private lands
50 under a deer management program prescribed or approved by the
51 executive director.

52 (4) The commission may provide a special permit for the
53 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.
54 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the
55 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may
56 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who
57 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem
58 wildlife.

59 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
60 and after July 1, 2006.