

By: Representative Hood

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

HOUSE BILL NO. 1555

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 EXTEND OPEN SEASON ON DEER TO FEBRUARY 28 FOR HUNTING WITH
3 PRIMITIVE WEAPONS AND WITHOUT DOGS, AND FOR HUNTING WITH GUNS AND
4 WITHOUT DOGS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

8 49-7-31. (1) The open season on deer shall be as follows:

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

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

13 (c) With primitive weapons and without dogs: December
14 2 through * * * February 28.

15 (d) With guns and without dogs: December 16
16 through * * * February 28. However, the commission may allow
17 hunting statewide or in specific areas with any legal weapon which
18 it may designate without dogs after the end of the last season for
19 hunting deer with guns and with dogs, but the season with legal



20 designated weapons and without dogs shall not extend beyond * * *
21 February 28.

22 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season
23 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from
24 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway
25 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any
26 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this
27 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For
28 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer
29 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside
30 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of
31 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of
32 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph
33 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may
34 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow
35 season in paragraph (a) in this area.

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

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



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

46 (3) (a) The commission may allow the harvesting of
47 antlerless deer in the districts or zones upon the recommendation
48 of the executive director based upon good and substantial
49 quantitative data and research evaluations that demonstrate that
50 the harvesting is necessary to properly manage the herd.

51 (b) The commission, only upon the recommendation of the
52 executive director, may allow the harvesting of antlerless deer
53 during the deer season with guns and with dogs by a majority vote
54 of the commission.

55 (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits the harvesting
56 of either-sex deer by landowners or leaseholders on private lands
57 under the deer management assistance program prescribed or
58 approved by the executive director.

59 (4) The commission may provide a special permit for the
60 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.
61 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the
62 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may
63 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who
64 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem
65 wildlife.

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



69 (i) The title owner of the land;
70 (ii) The lessee of the hunting rights on the land;
71 (iii) A member of a hunting club leasing the
72 hunting rights on the land; or
73 (iv) A guest of a person specified in subparagraph
74 (i), (ii) or (iii).
75 (b) If the person is required to have a hunting
76 license, the person must have a primitive weapon license,
77 Sportsman's License or a Lifetime Sportsman's License.
78 (6) The commission shall establish and regulate special
79 hunts during velvet hunting season, outside of the regular open
80 season on deer, as provided in Section 49-7-31.6.

81 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
82 and after its passage.

