

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

Title 40: Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Part 2: Wildlife

Part 2, Chapter 5: Regulations regarding alligators.

RULE 5.3 ALLIGATOR HUNTING SEASON FOR PUBLIC WATERS.

A. An American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) hunting season will be opened in the public waterways of the State of Mississippi and is hereby referred to as the following with described restrictions.

1. Legal public water for public water alligator hunting shall be any “public waterway”, as designated by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and all associated portions of each designated public waterway drainage that are not privately owned and which have navigable access from the designated waterway.

2. Legal public water, as described above, will be open for alligator hunting from 12 p.m. on the last Friday in August and ending at 12 p.m. on the Monday, 10 days thereafter, for persons issued special permits as described below.

3. PUBLIC WATERWAY HUNTING ZONE DESCRIPTIONS:

a. Pearl River/Ross Barnett Zone - The public waters of the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District only within the area north of a line from Fannin Landing to Channel Marker “A” to the Natchez Trace Overlook on the main lake of Ross Barnett Reservoir, and south of Lowhead Dam on the Pearl River (excluding all areas of the main lake that are west of the Natchez Trace, i.e. North Bay and Twin Harbors). All other portions of Ross Barnett Reservoir are closed to alligator hunting including Pelahatchie Bay.

b. Northwest Zone – North of US Hwy. 82 and west of Interstate 55.

c. West Central Zone – South of US Hwy. 82, west of Interstate 55, and north of Interstate 20.

d. Northeast Zone – East of Interstate 55, north of Interstate 20, and excluding the area described as the Pearl River/Ross Barnett Zone. This zone does not include any portion of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, except portions of the Pearl River south of the spillway, north of Lowhead Dam, and Pelahatchie Creek east of Highway 471 are included in the Northeast Zone only. All other portions of Ross Barnett Reservoir are closed to alligator hunting including Pelahatchie Bay.

- e. Southwest Zone – South of Interstate 20 and west of Interstate 55.
- f. South Central Zone – South of Interstate 20, west of MS Hwy 49, east of Interstate 55.
- g. Southeast Zone – South of Interstate 20 and east of MS Hwy 49.

4. Public Waters shall include the following lakes of Mississippi within each of open hunting zones and no other land locked lakes shall be open:

- a. Lake Ferguson (Washington County) in the Northwest Zone
- b. Beulah Lake (Bolivar County) in the Northwest Zone
- c. Lake Bolivar (Bolivar County) in the Northwest Zone
- d. Lake Whittington (Bolivar County) in the Northwest Zone
- e. Eagle Lake (Warren County) in the West Central Zone
- f. Chotard Lake (Warren and Issaquena Counties) in the West Central Zone
- g. Albemarle Lake (Issaquena County) in the West Central Zone
- h. Tennessee Lake (Issaquena County) in the West Central Zone
- i. Lake Washington (Washington County) in the West Central Zone
- j. Bee Lake (Holmes County) in the West Central Zone
- k. Little Eagle Lake (Humphreys County) in the West Central Zone
- l. Dump Lake (Yazoo County) in the West Central Zone
- m. Lake George (Yazoo County) in the West Central Zone
- n. Tchula Lake aka “Tchula Run” (Holmes County) in the West Central Zone
- o. Lake Mary (Wilkinson County) in the Southwest Zone
- p. Okatibbee Lake (Lauderdale County) in the Northeast Zone
- q. Crystal Lake (Rankin County) in the Northeast Zone

5. Public Waters shall include the following Bayous of Mississippi within the Southeast Zone:

- a. Graveline Bayou and all portions thereof and shall not to extend into the

Mississippi Sound. (Jackson County).

b. Fort Bayou and all portions thereof and shall not extend west of HWY 609 or Washington Ave. (Jackson County).

B. APPLICATIONS:

1. Applications will be accepted by an electronic web-based process via the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) website only.

- a. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age or older.
- b. Applicants who possess a Lifetime License are eligible to apply.
- c. Applicants must possess a valid pre-requisite license to apply.
- d. Dates of application acceptance will be announced on the MDWFP website.
- e. An electronic processing fee may be charged.
- f. Persons are limited to one (1) application each.
- g. The applicant is responsible for providing a correct email address during the application process.
- h. The email address provided by the applicant will be the method of notifications from the MDWFP, to notify drawn applicants, and for important messages and documents.

C. PERMITS:

- 1. Only residents of the State of Mississippi who are sixteen (16) years of age or older may purchase an Alligator Possession Permit (Permit) (*see License Requirements*).
- 2. Non-residents may participate as alligator hunting assistants (*see License Requirements*).
- 3. Persons must have a valid resident Mississippi hunting license and a Mississippi Alligator Hunting License to purchase a permit.
- 4. Any Lifetime License holder may purchase a Permit.
- 5. Alligator permits and/or licenses are required of anyone 16 years of age or older. There are no exemptions for over 65 years of age or physical disability.

6. Permits will be available for purchase only by persons who have successfully made application for a permit in a zone and have been drawn by the MDWFP alligator hunting permit drawing system.

7. All persons drawn for a permit will be notified by email, as provided by the applicant, and permits must be purchased electronically as directed by the Department. The applicant is responsible for providing a correct email address during the application process.

8. All permit sales require immediate payment prior to the deadline, as directed by the Department and all sales are non-refundable and non-transferable.

9. Persons are limited to one (1) permit per person.

D. TRAINING COURSE:

The Mississippi Alligator Hunting Training Course is strongly encouraged. The Mississippi Alligator Hunting Training Course is provided online via the MDWFP Alligator Program Webpage at www.mdwfp.com/alligator.

E. HUNTING REGULATIONS: (All Zones)

1. Persons eligible: Only residents of the State of Mississippi who are sixteen (16) years of age or older may apply for an Alligator Possession Permit (*see License Requirements*). Non-residents may participate as alligator hunting assistants (*see License Requirements*).

2. Bag limit: Each person receiving an Alligator Possession Permit will be allowed to harvest two (2) alligators four (4) feet in length or longer, only one (1) of which may exceed seven (7) feet in length.

3. Capture and Dispatch Methods:

a. Use of bait is prohibited.

b. Alligators must be captured alive prior to shooting or otherwise dispatching the animal. It is unlawful to shoot or kill an unrestrained alligator.

c. Restrained is defined as an alligator that has a noose or snare secured around the head, neck, or leg in a manner that the alligator is controlled.

d. Capture methods are restricted to hand-held snares, snatch hooks (hand-held or rod/reel), harpoons (with attached line/buoy), and bowfishing equipment (longbows, recurve bows, compound bows, or crossbows w/ line attached from bow to arrow or line/buoy, bowfishing arrow tips only, no broadheads, and no tips containing cartridges, or other explosive devices).

e. The use of fishing lures or other devices (with hooks attached) for the purpose of catching alligators in the mouth is prohibited.

f. All alligators must be dispatched or released immediately after capture and prior to transporting.

g. Any alligator that is captured with a harpoon or bowfishing equipment must be reduced to the bag and may not be released.

h. Firearms used for dispatching an alligator are restricted to long-barreled, shoulder-fired shotguns with only shot size #6, #7, #7.5, #8, or #9 ammunition and bangsticks chambered in .38 caliber or larger. No pistols or rifles are allowed.

i. All shotguns and bangsticks must be cased and unloaded at all times until a restraining line has been attached to the alligator.

j. No other firearm or ammunition may be in possession of the permittee or hunting party.

k. No firearm or bangstick may be discharged within 100 yards of any residence, building, boat ramp, or occupied campsite.

l. Any person or vessel that possesses equipment used to capture or harvest an alligator must be in the immediate vicinity of a person who possesses a valid Alligator Possession Permit at any time while located in the hunting area. To do otherwise is illegal and considered hunting without a permit.

m. The possession of alcohol or alcoholic beverages is prohibited for any person in the act of alligator hunting, nor may it be contained in any vessel in the act of alligator hunting. It is prohibited to be in the act of alligator hunting while under the influence of intoxicating beverages.

n. Nothing within this Rule shall supersede any other municipal laws, including discharge of firearms within a municipality.

o. No person may hunt alligators within any public lake or pond that the governing entity does not specifically allow alligator hunting (i.e. state parks, state lakes, state wildlife management areas, federal refuges, municipal lakes and parks, etc.). However, public waterways, as designated by the MDEQ, that exist within MDWFP operated WMAs are not closed to alligator hunting, unless specifically noted.

p. The use of drones, UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), or any remotely operated vehicle or vessel to assist in the location, pursuit, and/or take of alligators is prohibited.

F. HARVEST REPORTING AND TAGGING:

1. TAGGING:

a. Two Temporary Possession Tags will be provided with the purchase of an Alligator Possession Permit.

b. The Temporary Alligator Possession Tags are not valid without a current Alligator Possession Permit.

c. A Temporary Alligator Possession Tag must be signed and attached to the alligator's leg immediately after being dispatched and prior to moving or transporting.

d. Alligators must have a federal CITES tag attached before transferring the alligator or alligator parts to the possession of another person/buyer in another state.

2. ONLINE REPORTING:

a. Each permittee must submit an on-line harvest report and survey via www.mdwfp.com.

b. A report must be completed within 24 hours of harvest of any and each alligator.

c. Failure to comply will result in loss of alligator hunting privileges the following year.

d. Federal CITES tags will be mailed to permittees upon receipt of a completed Harvest Report.

G. LICENSE AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Alligator Hunting Permittee:

a. All alligator hunting permittees (permit holder) must purchase and have on their person an Alligator Hunting License and Alligator Possession Permit.

b. In addition, a combination resident hunting/fishing license is required to purchase the Alligator Possession Permit and Alligator Hunting License. For the purpose of this Rule, all Lifetime Licenses are considered a combination hunting/fishing license.

i. Residents 65 years of age or older may possess a Senior Exempt Lifetime License in lieu of a combination hunting/fishing license.

ii. Residents who meet disability license exemptions may possess a Disabled Exempt License in lieu of a combination hunting/fishing license.

iii. Lifetime License holders are exempt from the \$25 Alligator Hunting License

c. The cost of the Alligator Hunting License is twenty-five dollars (\$25).

d. The cost of the Alligator Possession Permit is two hundred dollars (\$200).

e. A “WMA User Permit” is required for all persons, unless otherwise exempt, who are accessing a public waterway via any Department operated Wildlife Management Area.

f. All alligator licenses and permits are non-refundable and non-transferable.

2. Alligator Hunting Assistant:

a. Anyone, any age, resident or non-resident may participate as an alligator hunting assistant of a permit holder, as provided below:

i. All residents in the hunting party who are sixteen (16) years of age or older are required to purchase and have on their person a combination hunting/fishing license and an Alligator Hunting License. For the purpose of this Rule, all Lifetime Licenses are considered a combination hunting/fishing license. There are no exemptions.

ii. Any non-residents in the hunting party who are sixteen (16) years of age or older are required to purchase and have on their person a Non-resident-All Game Hunting License and an Alligator Hunting License. For the purpose of this Admin Rule, all Lifetime Licenses are considered a combination hunting/fishing license. There are no exemptions.

iii. Residents 65 years of age or older may possess a Senior Exempt Lifetime License in lieu of a combination hunting/fishing license.

iv. Residents who meet disability license exemptions may possess a Disabled Exempt License in lieu of a combination hunting/fishing license.

v. Lifetime License holders are exempt from the \$25 Alligator Hunting License

b. A “WMA User Permit” is required for all persons, unless otherwise exempt, who are accessing a public waterway via any Department operated Wildlife Management Area.

c. All alligator licenses and permits are non-refundable and non-transferable.

H. Any person who hunts or attempts to hunt alligators without obtaining a permit and/or is not hunting within the immediate vicinity of a permit holder as per regulations set forth herein shall be guilty of a Class I violation of MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-47 and upon conviction shall be punished as provided in MISS. CODE. ANN. §49-7-141.

I. Any violation of any other provision of this Rule shall be a Class III violation and punishable as provided in MISS. CODE. ANN. §49-7-101.

History: Revised April 2025.

Source: MISS. CODE ANN. §§49-1-29, 49-4-4, and 49-7-47.