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 2: White-tailed Deer

RULE 2.2 WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS.

Note: MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-35, provides, "Whenever the time fixed by statute for the beginning of a game season shall fall on a Sunday, the season shall begin on the preceding Saturday."

A. 2026 – 2027 WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS:

1. Velvet Season (effective July 1, 2022): Consecutive Friday, Saturday, and Sunday between September 10 – 20 on private lands, authorized state and federal lands, and specified Wildlife Management Areas. Dates for 2026 shall be September 11-13.

a. Archery: Longbows, recurves, compound bows, and crossbows. There is no minimum or maximum draw weight. There is no minimum length arrow. Fixed or mechanical broadheads may be used.

b. Only legal bucks for the respective Deer Management Unit may be harvested.

c. The bag limit is one (1) legal buck and count towards the annual antlered deer bag limit.

d. Hunters (including license exempt hunters) must report their harvest by 10:00 PM the day of harvest. Hunters can report via the MDWFP smartphone application or MDWFP web portal.

e. All hunters, unless exempt or have a lifetime license, must possess a valid Velvet Season Permit. The cost of the resident permit shall be ten dollars ($10).

f. All harvested bucks must be submitted for CWD sampling to a MDWFP CWD drop-off freezer or to an MDWFP participating taxidermist within 5 days of harvest.

2. Delta Deer Management Unit – Areas west of I-55 and north of I-20 plus areas south of I-20 and west of U.S. Highway 61. OPEN PUBLIC LANDS include National Forests, Corps of Engineers lands, etc., that have statewide seasons without special

regulations.

a. Archery: October 1 – November 20 (Either-sex on private land and open public land)

b. Early Primitive Weapon: November 9 – 20 (ANTLERLESS DEER ONLY on private land)

i. This special deer hunt is established pursuant to the authority granted the Commission in MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-37(2), (3), & (4).

ii. All deer hunters must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink while this special hunt is in effect.

iii. ONLY ANTLERLESS DEER MAY BE HARVESTED WITH PRIMITIVE WEAPONS DURING THE EARLY PRIMITIVE WEAPONS HUNT.

c. Gun (with dogs): November 21 – December 1 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

d. Primitive Weapon: December 2 – 15 (Either-sex on private and open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

e. Gun (without dogs): December 16 – 23 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

f. Gun (with dogs): December 24 – January 20 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

g. Archery /Primitive Weapon: January 21 – 31 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

3. Hills Deer Management Unit – All areas except the Delta, North Central, and Southeast Deer Management Units. OPEN PUBLIC LANDS include National Forests, excluding the Holly Springs National Forest, Corps of Engineers lands, etc., that have statewide seasons without special regulations.

a. Archery: October 1 – November 20 (Either-sex on private land, open public land, and Holly Springs National Forest)

b. Early Primitive Weapon: November 9 – 20 (ANTLERLESS DEER ONLY on private land)

i. This special deer hunt is established pursuant to the authority granted the Commission in MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-37(2), (3), & (4).

ii. All deer hunters must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink while this special hunt is in effect. ONLY ANTLERLESS DEER MAY BE HARVESTED WITH PRIMITIVE WEAPONS DURING THE EARLY PRIMITIVE WEAPONS HUNT.

c. Gun (with dogs): November 21 – December 1 (Either-sex on private land and Holly Springs National Forest; legal bucks only on open public land)

d. Primitive Weapon: December 2 – 15 (Either-sex on private land, open public land, and Holly Springs National Forest) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

e. Gun (without dogs): December 16 – 23 (Either-sex on private land and Holly Springs National Forest; legal bucks only on all other open public land)

f. Gun (with dogs): December 24 – January 20 (Either-sex on private land and Holly Springs National Forest; legal bucks only on open public land)

g. Archery /Primitive Weapon: January 21 – 31 (Either-sex on private land and Holly Springs National Forest; legal bucks only on open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

4. Southeast Deer Management Unit - Areas south of U.S. Highway 84 and east of MS Highway 35. OPEN PUBLIC LANDS include National Forests, Corps of Engineers lands, etc., that have statewide seasons without special regulations.

a. Archery: October 15 – November 20 (Either-sex on private land and open public land)

b. Gun (with dogs): November 21 – December 1 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

c. Primitive Weapon: December 2 – 15 (Either-sex on private and open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

d. Gun (without dogs): December 16 – 23 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

e. Gun (with dogs): December 24 – January 20 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

f. Archery / Primitive Weapon: January 21 – January 31 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land) and February 1 – 15 (Legal bucks only on private land and open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land;

see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

5. North Central Deer Management Unit – All portions of Alcorn, Benton, Desoto, Marshall, Tate, and Tippah counties. OPEN PUBLIC LANDS include National Forests, Corps of Engineers lands, etc., that have statewide seasons without special regulations.

a. Archery: October 1 – November 20 (Either-sex on private land and open public land)

b. Early Primitive Weapon: November 9 – 20 (ANTLERLESS DEER ONLY on private land)

i. This special deer hunt is established pursuant to the authority granted the Commission in MISS. CODE ANN. §49-7-37(2), (3), & (4).

ii. All deer hunters must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink while this special hunt is in effect.

iii. ONLY ANTLERLESS DEER MAY BE HARVESTED WITH PRIMITIVE WEAPONS DURING THE EARLY PRIMITIVE WEAPONS HUNT.

c. Gun (with dogs): November 21 – December 1 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

d. Primitive Weapon: December 2 – 15 (Either-sex on private and open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

e. Gun (without dogs): December 16 – 23 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

f. Gun (with dogs): December 24 – January 20 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land)

g. Archery /Primitive Weapon: January 21 – 31 (Either-sex on private land; legal bucks only on open public land) (Weapon of choice may be used on private land; see Legal Weapons C.4 below)

6. Youth Deer Hunts:

a. Northeast, North Central, East Central, Southwest, Hills, and Delta Deer Management Units: Private lands: November 7 – January 31.

b. Southeast Deer Management Unit: Private lands: November 7 – February 15.

c. Authorized state and federal lands: Saturday two weeks prior to opening day of Gun season through the Friday prior to Thanksgiving.

d. Authorized state and federal lands include Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U. S. Corps of Engineers managed lands which designate the youth deer season in their regulations and open U. S. Forest Service National Forest lands.

e. Persons eligible to participate in Youth Deer Hunts

i. Children who are fifteen (15) years of age or younger.

ii. A child at least twelve (12) years of age and under sixteen (16) years of age must have a certificate of satisfactory completion of a hunter education course approved by the department before hunting in this state or be in the presence and under the direct supervision of a licensed or exempt hunter at least twenty-one (21) years of age when hunting.

iii. A child under the age of twelve (12) must be in the presence and under the direct supervision of a licensed or exempt hunter at least twenty-one (21) years of age when the child is hunting.

iv. A licensed hunter supervising a child as provided in this section must hold a valid Mississippi license for the species being hunted.

v. Youth may carry and use any firearm with which they can safely hunt, and in compliance with other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

vi. Both youth and adults must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink, except while the hunters are in a fully enclosed deer stand / blind or hunting from a deer stand that is elevated twelve (12) feet or more above the ground. All hunters must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink while traveling to and from the stand / blind.

vii. Archery hunters must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink while these special hunts are in effect, except when the hunter is in a fully enclosed deer stand / blind or hunting from a deer stand that is elevated twelve (12) feet or more above the ground. During these hunts, archery hunters must wear 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or pink while traveling to and from the stand/blind.

viii. Bucks and antlerless deer may be harvested during the Youth Deer Hunts.

ix. Hunters fifteen (15) years of age and younger may harvest any antlered buck regardless of antler size for all three (3) of their three (3) buck bag limit.

B. BAG LIMITS.

1. Antlered Buck Deer: Legal bucks must meet the following antler criteria within the appropriate deer management unit.

a. Hills Deer Management Units Legal Buck: The bag limit on antlered buck deer is one (1) buck per day, not to exceed three (3) per annual season (Oct. 1 – Jan. 31). Southeast Deer Management Unit Legal Buck: The bag limit on antlered buck deer is one (1) buck per day, not to exceed three (3) per annual season (Oct. 15 – Feb. 15). Two antlered buck deer must have either a minimum inside spread of ten (10) inches OR a minimum main beam length of thirteen (13) inches. One of the three (3) bucks may be any antlered deer on Private Land and on the Holly Springs National Forest.

b. Delta Deer Management Unit Legal Buck: The bag limit on antlered buck deer is one (1) buck per day, not to exceed three (3) per annual season (Oct. 1 – Jan. 31). Two antlered buck deer must have either a minimum inside spread of twelve (12) inches OR a minimum main beam length of fifteen (15) inches. One of the three (3) bucks may be any antlered deer on Private Land.

c. North Central Deer Management Unit: On private lands, the bag limit on antlered buck deer is one (1) buck per day, not to exceed four (4) per annual season (Oct. 1 – Jan. 31). The bag limit on antlered buck deer on the portions of Holly Springs National Forest that lies within the North Central Deer Management Unit is one (1) buck per day, not to exceed three (3) per annual season (Oct. 1 – Jan. 31). Legal bucks may be any antlered deer.

d. Statewide: Hunters fifteen (15) years of age and younger may harvest any antlered buck regardless of antler size for all three (3) of their three (3) buck bag limit.

2. Antlerless Deer: The bag limit on antlerless deer is five (5) per annual season (Oct. 1 – Jan. 31), unless otherwise stated below:

a. Antlerless deer are defined as any female deer and any male deer without hardened antler above the hairline. Spotted fawns are not to be killed.

b. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Army managed lands are authorized to harvest antlerless deer on days designated by Federal Regulations. Contact local National Wildlife Refuge, Corps of Engineers, or U.S. Army for details.

c. Holly Springs National Forest, Tombigbee National Forest, Bienville National Forest, and Homochitto National Forest: Bag limit on antlerless deer is one (1) per day, not to exceed five (5) per annual season.

d. Southeast Deer Management Unit, including Desoto National Forest: Bag limit on antlerless deer is one (1) per day, not to exceed three (3) per annual season.

e. North Central Deer Management Unit: Bag limit on antlerless deer is ten (10) per annual season (Oct. 1 – Jan. 31).

C. Legal Weapons for use during the following seasons:

1. Archery: Longbows, recurves, compound bows, and crossbows. There is no minimum or maximum draw weight. There is no minimum length arrow. Fixed or mechanical broadheads may be used.

2. Primitive Weapons: primitive firearms as defined in Part 4, Rule 1.3 of this title and Archery as defined above.

3. Gun: There are no caliber or magazine capacity restrictions on firearms. Primitive firearms as defined in Part 4, Rule 1.3 of this title and Archery as defined above may be used during the gun seasons.

4. During any open season on deer with primitive weapons after November 30, a person may use any legal weapon of choice, including air bows and pre-charged pneumatic weapons, on private lands ONLY, if the person is:

a. The title owner of the land;

b. The lessee of the hunting rights on the land;

c. A member of a hunting club leasing the hunting rights on the land; or

d. A guest of a person specified in subparagraph (a), (b) or (c).

e. If the person is required to have a hunting license, the person must have a primitive weapon license, Sportsman's License, or a Lifetime Sportsman's License.

D. Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP):

1. Management Buck Tags:

a. Any antlered buck deer may be taken by permit if it is necessary to manage deer on lands under the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) or on Wildlife Management Areas.

b. Any antlered deer harvested under this permit must be identified with a tag immediately upon possession.

c. Antlered buck deer taken by permit shall not be subject to the daily bag limit or the annual bag limit on antlered deer.

2. Doe Tags:

a. The annual and daily bag limit on antlerless deer shall not apply to private lands under the DMAP or the Fee-based Antlerless Program (FMAP) as approved by the Department.

b. All harvested antlerless deer that exceed an individual hunter's daily or annual bag limit must be tagged prior to moving with a DMAP or FMAP tag provided by the Department.

E. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). In an effort to detect and contain CWD, MDWFP enacts the following tools:

1. DMAP CWD Management Tags:

a. MDWFP may issue either-sex DMAP CWD Management Tags to participating private lands within a 3-mile radius of any known CWD positive ~~animal~~ detection.

b. The DMAP CWD Management Tags may be used during any open deer season with no weapon restrictions.

c. Any deer harvested with the DMAP CWD Management Tags shall not be subject to the daily or annual bag limit.

d. Use of the tags requires the following:

i. Applications must be submitted prior to tags being issued.

ii. The tag must be affixed to the deer prior to moving.

iii. All deer harvested with these tags must be submitted for CWD sampling within seven (7) days.

iv. At the conclusion of deer season, all properties receiving tags must submit a report prior to March 1 to MDWFP that details total annual deer harvest from the property, including the total number of tags used.

F. Hunting with Dogs on Homochitto National Forest:

1. From November 1, – January 31, all dog hunting groups or individuals hunting with dogs must obtain a permit to use dogs to hunt any animal or to train dogs on areas open to deer hunting with dogs on Homochitto National Forest.

2. There is no cost for this permit. A permit will be issued to the dog hunting group.

3. All hunters hunting with this group must be listed on the permit prior to hunting; except youth 15 years of age and younger.

4. All hunters hunting with dogs or with the dog hunting group must have the permit on their person while hunting.

5. Five (5) guest permits will be available in addition the individuals listed on the permit. Guest permits will be valid for 4 consecutive days and must be filled out with the date, hunter's name, hunting license number, and signed by the hunter prior to use.

6. All guests must have the permit on their person while hunting.

7. Guest permits must be turned in to the USFS Meadville office for replacement guest permits to be issued. When guest permits are turned in, a season permit will be issued for these individuals and replacement guest permits will be issued to the group.

8. Permit numbers must be visually displayed on the back window of all vehicles in the hunting group.

9. A permit number will be provided with each individual permit issued. Hunters must display this permit number using 3-inch, block numbers in contrast to the background color.

10. Permits will be available from the U.S. Forest Service Meadville office. Office location: 1200 Highway 184 East, Meadville, MS 39653. Office hours: 8 am - 4:30 pm (Monday – Friday).

11. Dogs must wear a functional tracking collar and be identified at all times with the permit number and the owner's contact information. Dogs must be kept on the Homochitto National Forest lands that allow deer hunting with dogs.

12. A person who violates any of the provisions of this regulation is guilty of a Class III offense, as provided in Miss. Code Ann. §49-7-101, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than Twenty Five ($25.00) nor more than One Hundred Dollars ($100.00). Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, will be enforced.

13. In addition thereto, an administrative review panel of MDWFP and U.S. Forest Service officials may, upon two (2) convictions or documented evidence of two (2) violations of this regulation within a 3-year period, revoke the dog hunting permit for a period of Twenty (20) days open to hunting deer with dogs. Upon three (3) convictions or documented evidence of three (3) violations of this regulation within a 3-year period, the dog hunting permit may be revoked for a period of one (1) year.

14. Any person who files a false affidavit in justice court alleging a violation or violations of this rule, provides false information regarding a violation of this rule, or facilitates a situation which will cause a violation of this rule to occur may be subject to prosecution for perjury and, if found guilty, punished under the provisions of Miss. Code Ann. §97-9-19, and/or be subject to a civil suit for false prosecution by the person accused of the violation.

History: Updated April 2026.

Source: MISS. CODE ANN. §§49-1-29, 49-4-4, 49-7-31, and 49-7-41.