

# An Act

ENROLLED SENATE  
BILL NO. 922

By: Stephens of the Senate

and

Cornwell of the House

An Act to conditions of fish and wildlife; amending 29 O.S. 2021, Section 5-401, which relates to the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission; requiring a certain number of tags to be issued to Oklahoma residents; updating statutory language; and providing an effective date.

SUBJECT: Fish and wildlife

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 29 O.S. 2021, Section 5-401, is amended to read as follows:

Section 5-401. A. The Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission is authorized to declare an open season on wildlife in any counties or parts of counties of this state where, in the judgment of the Commission, such wildlife exists in sufficient quantity to warrant such open season, and such open season shall be declared by Commission resolution not less than ten (10) days before the season is opened.

B. The Commission may designate any two (2) consecutive days after the open season declared for hunting deer to be senior citizen's hunting days. During those two (2) days only legal residents of ~~Oklahoma~~ this state who are sixty-four (64) years of age or older may hunt deer provided the person has a valid license as otherwise provided by law.

C. The Commission is further authorized to declare an open season on mountain lions and black bears.

D. Except as provided in subsection E of this section, the Commission is further authorized to prescribe rules necessary to the proper conduct and policing of such open season, the amount and kind of wildlife that may be taken, and the dates and time limits of such season.

E. Any bowfishing season set for nongame fish by the Commission for the Upper Illinois River shall include the following:

1. Upstream from the Horseshoe Bend boat ramp to where State Highway 51 crosses the Illinois River, bowfishing is permitted from June 1 to March 31; and

2. Upstream from where State Highway 51 crosses the Illinois River, bowfishing is permitted from December 1 through March 31.

F. The Commission is further authorized to require any person participating in such open season or hunting in open areas during open season to procure, under rules prescribed by the Commission, a special permit or license to participate in such season or hunt in such areas during open season and to charge residents not to exceed Twenty Dollars (\$20.00), nonresidents not to exceed Seventy-five Dollars (\$75.00) and further providing that Five Dollars (\$5.00) of this fee shall be set aside for compensation to Oklahoma surface holders participating in the Acres for Wildlife Program at a rate to be determined by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission. No exemptions shall be permitted.

G. Open seasons, closed seasons, bag limits, catch limits, possession limits and territorial limitations set forth in the statutes of this state, pertaining to wildlife of every sort, are hereby declared to be based on the existence of a normal population of such species of wildlife, compatible with and not damaging to the proper agricultural use of the lands of the state.

H. Such seasons, catch limits, bag limits, possession limits and territorial limitations as set by statute shall prevail and be in full force and effect for each and every species of wildlife to which they pertain so long as the population or numbers of such

wildlife species remain normal or are not damaging or endangering crops or proper agricultural use of the lands of the state.

I. For seasons governed by a mechanism employed by the Commission to limit the number of tags issued for specific game in this state, at least ninety percent (90%) of the total number of issued tags shall go to residents of this state each year.

J. The Commission in session, and after having given ten (10) days' public notice of such meeting being called and the purpose of such meeting, the species of wildlife to be considered and the reasons therefor, shall have the right to determine if there does or does not exist a normal population of the wildlife species under consideration, which does or does not endanger the crops of the state or of any certain areas, or the agricultural use of the lands therein. In the event the consideration is other than statewide, the Commission shall meet at the most convenient place to the people of the area in the area being considered. All meetings shall be open to the public and proper records of those appearing and testifying shall be made. If the Commission, after hearing and after investigation, finds that the populations of the wildlife species under hearing are not normal or that they are not compatible to the agricultural use of the lands or are damaging or endangering the farm crops of the area, they shall, by administrative order, make the necessary changes by either extending, shortening, opening or closing such seasons, and change such bag limits, catch limits and possession limits, and regulate methods or devices for taking, killing or capturing of the wildlife species affected in any area or areas covered by the notice of meeting and hearing, except as otherwise set by the Legislature.

~~J.~~ K. Such administrative order shall take effect after publication in at least one newspaper of general state circulation, or in a newspaper having circulation in the territory affected. A copy of all such orders shall, before publication, be filed with the Secretary of State, and such order shall not be construed as authorizing the Commission to change any penalty for violating any game law or regulation or change the amount of any license established by the Legislature.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2023.

Passed the Senate the 8th day of March, 2023.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 27th day of April, 2023.

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Presiding Officer of the House  
of Representatives

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

By: \_\_\_\_\_