

1 ENGROSSED SENATE
2 BILL NO. 910

By: Stephens and Bullard of the
Senate

3 and

4 Burns of the House

5
6 An Act relating to wildlife; authorizing velvet buck
7 season; setting season and bag limit; specifying
8 means of take; providing for permit, stamp, or
9 license; applying velvet bucks harvest to deer bag
10 limits; directing the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation
11 Commission to promulgate rules; authorizing
12 cancelation for certain conditions; prohibiting
13 certain refunds of fees; requiring valid license,
14 permit, or stamp; providing for enforcement of laws
15 and rules; setting licenses, permits, or stamps by
16 rule; requiring season to be based on normal deer
17 populations; and providing for codification.

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

19 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
20 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-414.1 of Title 29, unless
21 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

22 A. Pursuant to Section 5-401 of Title 29 of the Oklahoma
23 Statutes, the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission is
24 authorized to declare an open season to hunt and harvest velvet
bucks during the time beginning on the Saturday morning prior to the
last weekend of August to the Sunday evening of the last weekend of
August for a total of nine (9) days in those counties or parts of
counties of this state where, in the judgment of the Commission, the

1 population of deer exist in sufficient quantity and health to
2 warrant an open season. An open season to hunt and harvest velvet
3 bucks shall be declared by a Commission resolution not less than ten
4 (10) days before the season is opened and be restricted to a limit
5 of one (1) velvet buck per hunt during the season.

6 B. The Commission shall authorize archery as the sole method
7 for shooting, hunting, killing, wounding, taking, or attempting to
8 shoot, hunt, kill, wound, or take any velvet buck during a declared
9 open season.

10 C. During a declared open season legal residents of Oklahoma
11 and non-residents may hunt velvet bucks provided the person has a
12 valid deer license, velvet buck permit, or stamp as otherwise
13 provided by law in this state. All velvet bucks shot, killed,
14 wounded, taken, and harvested shall count against the licensee's
15 annual bag limit for deer in this state.

16 D. The Commission is authorized to prescribe rules necessary
17 for the proper conduct and policing of a declared open season for
18 the hunting and harvesting of velvet bucks, the velvet antler size,
19 and the kind of bucks that may be taken. The Commission shall be
20 authorized to cancel a declared velvet buck open season for any
21 reason deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, disease,
22 weather, deer population, and herd health. Any cancelation of a
23 declared velvet buck open season shall prohibit the Commission from
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1 refunding or crediting any fees paid for a velvet buck permit,
2 stamp, or license.

3 E. All laws and rules pertaining to velvet bucks in this state
4 shall be enforceable by the Department of Wildlife Conservation and
5 its agents. The Commission shall set velvet buck licenses, permits,
6 and/or stamps by rule; provided, that the Commission shall reward
7 ninety percent (90%) of all velvet buck licenses, permits, and/or
8 stamps to resident hunters of this state.

9 F. The Commission is authorized to require by rule that any
10 person participating in a declared velvet buck open season or
11 hunting in open areas during a declared velvet buck open season to
12 procure a special permit, stamp, or license to participate in a
13 declared velvet buck open season or to hunt in such open areas
14 during a declared velvet buck open season and may charge residents
15 and nonresidents fees and such other compensation for those Oklahoma
16 surface holders participating in the Acres for Wildlife Program.
17 The rate of such fees and compensation shall be determined by the
18 Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission. No exemptions shall be
19 permitted.

20 G. Velvet buck open seasons, closed seasons, bag limits, catch
21 limits, possession limits, and territorial limitations set forth in
22 law or rule are hereby declared to be based on the existence of a
23 normal population of deer prior to the Commission declaring a velvet
24 buck open season. Such seasons, catch limits, bag limits,

1 possession limits, and territorial limitations as set by law or rule
2 shall prevail and be in full force and effect for deer so long as
3 the population or numbers of deer remain normal in areas of this
4 state.

5 H. For purposes of this section:

6 1. "Velvet buck" means a deer with velvet antler; and

7 2. "Velvet antler" means the whole cartilaginous antler is
8 exhibited in a precalcified growth stage of the Cervidae family.
9 The deer antler must be covered in velvet-like hair that is
10 essentially skin that supplies nutrients and blood flow to the
11 growing bone and antler underneath.

12 Passed the Senate the 7th day of March, 2023.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

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16 Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____,
17 2023.

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Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

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