

1 ENGROSSED SENATE
2 BILL NO. 922

By: Stephens of the Senate
and
Cornwell of the House

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6 An Act to conditions of fish and wildlife; amending
7 29 O.S. 2021, Section 5-401, which relates to the
8 Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission; requiring
9 a certain number of tags to be issued to Oklahoma
10 residents; updating statutory language; and providing
11 an effective date.

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

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

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

22 B. The Commission may designate any two (2) consecutive days
23 after the open season declared for hunting deer to be senior
24 citizen's hunting days. During those two (2) days only legal
residents of ~~Oklahoma~~ this state who are sixty-four (64) years of

1 age or older may hunt deer provided the person has a valid license
2 as otherwise provided by law.

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

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

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

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

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

17 F. The Commission is further authorized to require any person
18 participating in such open season or hunting in open areas during
19 open season to procure, under rules prescribed by the Commission, a
20 special permit or license to participate in such season or hunt in
21 such areas during open season and to charge residents not to exceed
22 Twenty Dollars (\$20.00), nonresidents not to exceed Seventy-five
23 Dollars (\$75.00) and further providing that Five Dollars (\$5.00) of
24 this fee shall be set aside for compensation to Oklahoma surface

1 holders participating in the Acres for Wildlife Program at a rate to
2 be determined by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission. No
3 exemptions shall be permitted.

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

10 H. Such seasons, catch limits, bag limits, possession limits
11 and territorial limitations as set by statute shall prevail and be
12 in full force and effect for each and every species of wildlife to
13 which they pertain so long as the population or numbers of such
14 wildlife species remain normal or are not damaging or endangering
15 crops or proper agricultural use of the lands of the state.

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

20 J. The Commission in session, and after having given ten (10)
21 days' public notice of such meeting being called and the purpose of
22 such meeting, the species of wildlife to be considered and the
23 reasons therefor, shall have the right to determine if there does or
24 does not exist a normal population of the wildlife species under

1 consideration, which does or does not endanger the crops of the
2 state or of any certain areas, or the agricultural use of the lands
3 therein. In the event the consideration is other than statewide,
4 the Commission shall meet at the most convenient place to the people
5 of the area in the area being considered. All meetings shall be
6 open to the public and proper records of those appearing and
7 testifying shall be made. If the Commission, after hearing and
8 after investigation, finds that the populations of the wildlife
9 species under hearing are not normal or that they are not compatible
10 to the agricultural use of the lands or are damaging or endangering
11 the farm crops of the area, they shall, by administrative order,
12 make the necessary changes by either extending, shortening, opening
13 or closing such seasons, and change such bag limits, catch limits
14 and possession limits, and regulate methods or devices for taking,
15 killing or capturing of the wildlife species affected in any area or
16 areas covered by the notice of meeting and hearing, except as
17 otherwise set by the Legislature.

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

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

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

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

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8 Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____,
9 2023.

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Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

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