

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

3 SENATE BILL 910

By: Stephens

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5  
6 AS INTRODUCED

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

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

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

24 A. Pursuant to Section 5-401 of Title 29 of the Oklahoma  
25 Statutes, the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission is  
26 authorized to declare an open season to hunt and harvest velvet  
27 bucks during the time beginning on the Saturday morning prior to the  
28 last weekend of August to the Sunday evening of the last weekend of

1 August for a total of nine (9) days in those counties or parts of  
2 counties of this state where, in the judgment of the Commission, the  
3 population of deer exist in sufficient quantity and health to  
4 warrant an open season. An open season to hunt and harvest velvet  
5 bucks shall be declared by a Commission resolution not less than ten  
6 (10) days before the season is opened and be restricted to a limit  
7 of one (1) velvet buck per hunt during the season.

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

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

18 D. The Commission is authorized to prescribe rules necessary  
19 for the proper conduct and policing of a declared open season for  
20 the hunting and harvesting of velvet bucks, the velvet antler size,  
21 and the kind of bucks that may be taken. The Commission shall be  
22 authorized to cancel a declared velvet buck open season for any  
23 reason deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, disease,  
24 weather, deer population, and herd health. Any cancelation of a

1 declared velvet buck open season shall prohibit the Commission from  
2 refunding or crediting any fees paid for a velvet buck permit,  
3 stamp, or license.

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

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

21 G. Velvet buck open seasons, closed seasons, bag limits, catch  
22 limits, possession limits, and territorial limitations set forth in  
23 law or rule are hereby declared to be based on the existence of a  
24 normal population of deer prior to the Commission declaring a velvet  
25

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

6 H. For purposes of this section:

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

8 2. "Velvet antler" means the whole cartilaginous antler is  
9 exhibited in a precalcified growth stage of the Cervidae family.

10 The deer antler must be covered in velvet-like hair that is  
11 essentially skin that supplies nutrients and blood flow to the  
12 growing bone and antler underneath.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2023.

14 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
15 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
16 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
17 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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