

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: S4/7/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1827

By: Representative Wardlaw

By: Senator Irvin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS HUNTING HERITAGE
PROTECTION ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS HUNTING HERITAGE
PROTECTION ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 15-41-303 is amended to read as follows:
15-41-303. Definitions.

As used in this subchapter:

- (1) "Commission" means the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission;
 - (2) "Commission-leased lands" means those lands over which the commission holds a possessory interest under lease or other written agreement that has a term of at least one (1) year and includes public recreational hunting rights;
 - (3) "Commission-managed lands" means those lands that are either commission-owned lands or commission-leased lands+
 - ~~(A) That the commission owns; and~~
 - ~~(B) Over which the commission holds management authority;~~
- and
- (4) "Commission-owned lands" means those lands to which the commission holds title in fee simple; and
 - ~~(3)~~(5) "Hunting" means the lawful pursuit, trapping, shooting, capture, collection, or killing of wildlife or the attempt to pursue, trap,



shoot, capture, collect, or kill wildlife.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 15-41-304 is amended to read as follows:
15-41-304. Recreational hunting.

(a) Subject to valid existing rights, commission-managed lands shall be open to access and use for recreational hunting except as limited by the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission for reasons of ~~public safety or homeland security or as otherwise limited by law~~ fish or wildlife management or as otherwise limited by statutory authority of the commission.

(b)(1) The commission shall exercise its authority consistent with subsection (a) of this section in a manner to support, promote, and enhance recreational hunting opportunities to the extent authorized by law.

(2) The commission is not required to give preference to hunting over other uses of commission-managed lands or over land or water management priorities established by state law.

(c)(1) To the greatest practicable extent, commission land management decisions and actions, including decisions made by private owners to close commission-managed lands, ~~may~~ shall not result in any net loss of habitat land acreage available for hunting opportunities on commission-managed lands that exists on ~~August 12, 2005~~ January 1, 2025.

(2) This subchapter does not apply to commission-owned lands under contract to private persons or entities.

(3) Acreage lost from commission-leased lands due to the expiration or termination of the lease or agreement on the commission-leased lands shall not be counted in the net loss calculation.

(d)(1) The commission shall expeditiously find replacement acreage for hunting to compensate for the closures of any existing hunting land.

(2) To the greatest extent possible, the replacement land required under subdivision (d)(1) of this section shall be:

(A) Located within a reasonable distance from the closed land; and

(B) Consistent with the hunting discipline that the commission allowed on the closed land.

~~(d)(e)~~ (e) On or before ~~October 1~~ July 1 of each year, the commission shall submit to the ~~House and Senate cochairs of the Legislative Council~~ House Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs and the Senate

Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs a written report describing:

(1) ~~The acreage administered by the commission~~ number of acres of commission-managed lands that ~~has been~~ were closed during the previous fiscal year to recreational hunting and the reasons for the closures; and

(2) ~~The acreage administered by the commission~~ number of acres of commission-managed lands that ~~was opened~~ were open to recreational hunting ~~to compensate for the acreage that was closed~~ during the previous fiscal year.

~~(e)~~(f) This subchapter does not compel the opening to recreational hunting of national parks or national monuments administered by the National Park Service.

(g) This subchapter does not prohibit a private landowner from making otherwise legal decisions regarding access to his or her privately owned commission-managed lands.

SECTION 3. DO NOT CODIFY. Report.

The initial report required under Section 2 of this act shall be submitted by July 1, 2025.

/s/Wardlaw