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Animals and Fish - Historical Notes

Dear Reader:

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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The following is a listing of acts that at one time affected, but no longer appear to have any effect on, hunting, fishing or animal control in Meigs County. They are included herein for reference purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Acts of 1889, Chapter 179, made it unlawful for any non-resident of Tennessee to hunt, shoot, kill, catch, or carry away game of any kind in 19 counties named in the law including Meigs County.
2. Acts of 1889, Chapter 244, provided that only citizens of Tennessee could hunt, kill, or capture wild deer, wild turkeys, quail, partridge, or any species of game of fish in 14 counties enumerated in the Bill, including Meigs. Only citizens of the named counties could kill deer for profit but non-county residents of Tennessee could down them for their own use and consumption. The violations of the Act would be subject to fines ranging from \$5.00 to \$25.00 for each offense.
3. Acts of 1893, Chapter 128, amended Chapter 179, Acts of 1889, above, so as to permit a non-resident to hunt and kill deer in Sullivan County at the request of or with the consent of the owner of the land but this Act did not affect any other county in the group.
4. Acts of 1897, Chapter 283, made it lawful to catch fish in Lincoln, Macon, Meigs, and Carroll Counties in every way and at all times except by the use of explosives, poisons, and devices that prevent the free and easy passage of fish up and down the stream.
5. Acts of 1905, Chapter 408, made it illegal to place in any running stream in Meigs County any sawdust, acid, or other substance injurious to the fish in the said streams. The act was declared to be a misdemeanor and to be punished as such.
6. Private Acts of 1909, Chapter 502, declared that a fence constructed of four strands of barbed wire or ribbon wire, or four planks of wood, or a combination of barbed wire and woven wire netting, securely fastened to substantial posts firmly set in the ground no more than 16 feet apart, and eight feet next to corners, shall be a lawful fence along public roads and open lands in Meigs County. The distance between the strands of wire from the ground to the fence top were specified. Any person whose lands were enclosed by such a fence would be compensated in damages by the owner of any trespassing live stock.
7. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 625, is almost a reenactment of the fence requirement listed in the Act above, provided that the bottom wire shall be 12 inches above the ground, the second 12 inches above that one, the third the same, and the fourth the same, all securely fastened to the posts. Fences of barbed wire and woven wire be at least four feet high. This Act made it unlawful for sheep, goats, hogs, swine, geese, and ducks to run at large and applied equally to Houston County.
8. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 274, stated that an election would be held in Meigs County within five days from the passage of this Act to ascertain the will of the voters on a stock law. The election would be held under the election laws of the state with a "For" or "Against" ballot and the results of the same would be certified to the representative in the General Assembly within three days after being held.
9. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 12, called for another referendum on the question of a stock law for Meigs County within 15 days from its passage. All can vote who are qualified to vote in the general election and the results will be certified to the General Assembly within five days of the election.
10. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 654, made it illegal for any owner or keeper of livestock to permit the same to run at large or trespass on the property of another in Meigs County. Any willful or negligent violator shall be subject to fine and the fact that the livestock trespassed against a partition fence is not a defense. The damaged person may take up the stock and have a lien for the cost of keeping them as well as for damages.
11. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 656, made it unlawful for any person in Meigs and Rhea Counties to shoot any fox or destroy the den of any young fox or foxes, or use any snare, trap, or other device which is capable of catching, maiming or otherwise injuring the said animals. The Act did not prohibit hunting or chasing foxes with dogs whereby the fox is caught and killed by the dogs, nor shall the act apply when the fox is a threat to crops or poultry.
12. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 612, declared the open season for hunting quail in Meigs County to be from November 15 to February 1.

13. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 858, exempted Meigs and Rhea Counties from the provisions of Chapter 61, Public Acts of 1919, which was a statewide law regulating the care and keeping of dogs.
14. Private Acts of 1929, Chapter 115, was almost a repetition of Chapter 656, Private Acts of 1917, above, concerning the protection of foxes making those guilty subject to fines from \$25 to \$100 but otherwise containing the same provisions mentioned in that Act. This Act was repealed by the one below.
15. Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 35, repealed expressly and entirely Chapter 115, Private Acts of 1929 which was an act to protect foxes.

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