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Animals and Fish - Historical Notes

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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 Lawrence 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 1873, Chapter 54, provided that no person within the limits of Lewis County, Lawrence County, and Wayne County could hunt or kill a deer lawfully from March 1 until September 1. Upon violation and conviction thereof one could be fined \$10 for each deer killed or hunted. The offender would be prosecuted in the name of the county and the fines exacted of the defendants would be placed in the county treasury. This Act was repealed as to Lawrence and Wayne Counties by Acts of 1877, Chapter 82.
2. Acts of 1889, Chapter 171, was a general statewide game law to which many counties, including Lawrence County were exempted. The Act made it illegal to kill, hunt or trap, deer for profit but all citizens could kill deer for their own consumption between August 1 and January 1. A Tennessee citizen could capture or kill deer for profit only on his own land between August 1 and January 1. It was likewise contrary to the law to kill or capture quail or partridges for profit except on one's own land between November 1 and March 1. Offenders could be fined from \$5 to \$25 for the first offense and \$25 to \$50 for subsequent ones plus up to three months confinement.
3. Acts of 1899, Chapter 295, exempted Lawrence County from the general fish law of the State enacted in 1895 and made it lawful to catch fish in the county in every way and at all times except in April and May of each year, except by explosives, poisons, or by using other devices which would prevent the free passage of fish up and down the stream of the county.
4. Private Acts of 1905, Chapter 212, declared it to be a misdemeanor punishable by fines from \$5 to \$25 to the discretion of the Court for any person who was a non-resident of the counties of Wayne, Lawrence, and Lewis to hunt, take, or kill, game or catch fish in those counties mentioned on the land of anyone without the written permission of the owner or the person having control over the same.
5. Private Acts of 1913 (Ex. Sess.), Chapter 52, made it unlawful in Lawrence County for the owner or the custodian of horses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, or any kind of livestock, to permit them to run at large, for any violation of which the owner or custodian could be fined from \$2 to \$10 for each offense and any damage done to another by the trespassing stock would be a lien on them for the damages done plus the cost of taking them up and caring for them until the owner could claim them.
6. Private Acts of 1917, Chapter 18, stated that it was against the law in Lawrence County for any person owning, or having control over horses mules, donkeys, cattle, goats, sheep, swine, geese, or any other live stock, to permit them knowingly to run at large. All persons who might be damaged by the invasions of their property by said animals would have a lien against them for the amount of damages suffered. Any violation was also a misdemeanor for which those guilty could be fined from \$5 to \$25.
7. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 174, required the Election Commissioners of Lawrence County to hold an election at all the polling places to ascertain the will of the people on the question of a stock law for the county. No poll tax receipt would be needed in order to vote on the ballot which would be a simple "For" or "Against". The election results would be canvassed and certified within five days to the delegation representing Lawrence County in the General Assembly.
8. Private Acts of 1919, Chapter 509, made it a misdemeanor to shoot, or kill by any means, the birds known as quail also known as the Bob White, from January 15 to following November 15 each year, thus making the open season run from November 15 to following January 15. All conflicting laws were repealed.
9. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 405, was an Act in which several counties, including Lawrence County, removed themselves from the provisions of Public Acts of 1919, Chapter 61, which was a rather stringent statewide law on the care, keeping, and licensing of dogs.
10. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 715, declared it to be lawful for the residents of Lawrence County to seine, gig, and grapple for fish in the streams of Lawrence County except during the period from May 1 through June 15 when it would be unlawful to take fish in any manner. Further, it was legal for the residents of Lawrence County to kill squirrels on unenclosed lands of the county during open season without having to secure a hunter's license.
11. Private Acts of 1925, Chapter 305, rendered it lawful to take, catch and kill fish by means of a gig

- and fish basket in all the streams of the counties of Sullivan, Johnson, Hawkins, Claiborne, Williamson, and Lawrence and the legal season for gigging fish would be from November 1 until the following March 1 of each year. The slats on the fish baskets must be at least 1 1/2 inches apart. The required license to gig fish would cost \$1 which would go to the Department of Game and Fish while fines for those convicted of violating this law would range from \$10 to \$25.
12. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 257, stated that after the passage of this Act it would be lawful for any person to hunt, take, snare, trap, shoot, snare, or kill by any other means, rabbits and hares at all times and seasons of the year, but nothing herein would be construed as the authority for any person to hunt upon the lands of another without the owner's permission. It was also lawful to buy and sell, ship or transport rabbits to any point in and out of the State. In Section 2 ten counties, Lawrence County among them, exempted themselves from the application of this law.
 13. Private Acts of 1927, Chapter 711, declared it to be contrary to the law for anyone to shoot, or kill by any means, or to trap foxes in Lawrence County. Nothing in the Act would prohibit farmers, poultrymen, or stock raisers from killing, or trapping, foxes which were actually destroying their stock or crops. Violations of this Act were a misdemeanor with a penalty schedule running from \$10 to \$25 over which any Justice of the Peace in the county would have jurisdiction.
 14. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 673, made it unlawful for any person to kill, wound, hunt, chase, or knowingly permit a dog to chase, deer, or for a person to otherwise catch, wound, or destroy deer, or have one in his possession knowing it to have been killed or captured in violation of this Act, nor could one hunt, wound, kill, or capture wild turkeys, in Lawrence County. Anyone doing so was guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, could be fined from \$100 to \$250 and imprisoned in jail for no less than 30 days nor more than 6 months. Any owner, or person in possession, of land could not lawfully grant permission for anyone to kill deer or wild turkeys on his land or they, too, were guilty of violating this Act.
 15. Private Acts of 1933, Chapter 869, declared it illegal in Lawrence County for anyone to hunt, trap, or kill ringneck and mongolian pheasants. Offenders were subject to fines of \$10 to \$25 for each offense.
 16. Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 753, provided that in Lawrence County all real property leased by the Tennessee Department of Game and Fish would be exempt from taxation. Wherever it had been established to the satisfaction of the Tax Assessor that certain property has been so leased, the same would not be assessed for taxation. These properties would also be relieved of any county taxes which had become a lien upon them.
 17. Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 326, made it unlawful to take and kill red fox in Lawrence County.
 18. Public Acts of 1970, Chapter 479, made it unlawful to hunt or take deer in Lawrence County other than with a shotgun using ammunition loaded with one solid ball, or slug, or with bow and arrow. This Act was repealed by Public Acts of 1971, Chapter 82. Neither of these Acts were codified in Tennessee Code Annotated.
 19. Private Acts of 1985, Chapter 29, repealed Private Acts of 1955, Chapter 326.

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