



April 02, 2025

Animals and Fish - Historical Notes

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

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 Hancock County. They are included herein for reference purposes. Also referenced below are acts which repeal prior law without providing new substantive provisions.

1. Public Acts of 1893, Chapter 59, made it unlawful to hunt, kill or capture any wild deer in Hancock County, from December 1st to September 30th of each year. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1978, Chapter 204.
2. Public Acts of 1899, Chapter 379, made it unlawful to catch fish by the use of explosives and also prohibited any fishing from March 15th to June 1st of each year. This act was repealed by Private Acts of 1978, Chapter 204.
3. Private Acts of 1901, Chapter 454, allowed the citizens of Hancock County to catch fish in any of the streams of said county with traps and gigs.
4. Acts of 1903, Chapter 400, allowed Hancock County residents to catch fish for their own use by any means they chose, except dynamite or seines or nets with meshes of less than 1¼".
5. Acts of 1905, Chapter 299, was the first stock law for Hancock County, making the owner of livestock liable for damages done by his stock which were allowed to run at large.
6. Private Acts of 1911, Chapter 114, was the next attempt to impose restrictions on roaming livestock in the county. This law made it unlawful to allow stock to roam at large and subjected the owner to the payment of damages, but this act specified that it was lawful for livestock owners to use unfenced lands in Hancock County for summer range, if the stock were under the care of a herdsman.
7. Private Acts of 1913, Chapter 180, established a lawful fence law in Hancock County.
8. Private Acts of 1915, Chapter 279, allowed fishing in any manner, except dynamite or poison.
9. Private Acts of 1921, Chapter 405, exempted Hancock County from the general law regulating the ownership of dogs.
10. Private Acts of 1937, Chapter 230, provided that county residents who went hunting within the county and during the open season for rabbits, foxes and squirrels did not require a license, nor were county residents required to purchase a fishing license if their fishing was recreational and not for profit.
11. Private Acts of 1961, Chapter 313, attempted to prohibit the use of firearms for hunting on Sundays in Hancock County, but the provisions of this act were rejected by local authorities and it never became law.
12. Private Acts of 1992, Chapter 216, would have repealed Private Acts of 1953, Chapter 374, however, according to the Hancock County Attorney, this act was never ratified by the Hancock County and therefore never became law.

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