

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Code Book

The regulations in this Code Book are hereby adopted by the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission under authority of Amendment 35 to the Constitution of the State of Arkansas. All laws, rules, regulations, or orders in conflict with the regulations in this Code Book are hereby repealed by the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission.

31.00 Fresh-Water Mussel Regulations

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31.01 Mussel Shell Taker/Seller And Shell Buyer License And Reporting Requirements

It is unlawful to take, attempt to take, buy, sell, or offer for sale freshwater mussels for commercial purposes without a current Resident Shell Taker/Seller License, a Resident Shell Buyer License, or a Nonresident Shell Buyer License. A person with a Shell Taker's Helper Permit may harvest or assist only in the immediate presence of a licensed shell taker. Licensed resident or nonresident shell buyers may purchase up to four Shell Buyer's Agent Permits which may be transferred between employees of the licensed shell buyer. Only residents can hold an agent permit, and agents can purchase only for their licensed buyer. For the purposes of this chapter, "resident" means any person who has established a bona fide residence in Arkansas for at least 12 months and declares themselves a citizen of Arkansas.

BUYERS: Quarterly reports of mussel-buying transactions must be submitted by shell buyers on or before the 1st of January, April, July, and October on forms provided by the Commission.

SELLERS: Shell Taker/Seller License holders shall furnish the Commission the number of pounds of each species of mussels taken in Arkansas and sold out of state on or before February 1 on forms provided by the Commission. Failure to maintain accurate reports will result in license revocation and no renewal. These records shall be maintained monthly and made available for inspection by authorized Commission personnel at any reasonable time.

PENALTY: Class 3

31.02 Mussel Shell Size Restrictions

It is unlawful to take, attempt to take, sell, or offer for sale mussels or mussel shells of sizes less than minimum diameter or length as follows:

- A. Mussel shells shall be measured by minimum diameter except for elongated shells.
- B. The minimum diameter shall be 4 inches for washboards, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches for mapleleaf and threeridge, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches for hickorynut, threehorn wartyback and monkeyface, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches for all other round shells. Minimum length shall be 4 inches for bleufers, yellow sandshell, muckets, pistolgrip, spike, Ouachita kidneyshell and bankclimber.
- C. All undersized shells, western fanshell, black sandshell, and rabbitsfoot must be immediately returned to the water.

PENALTY: Class 1

31.03 Mussel Taker Tackle Restrictions

- A. It is unlawful to take or attempt to take mussels with any method other than handpicking and crowfoot bars 20 feet or less in length, or to possess any tackle or equipment on the water for taking mussels except as specified.
- B. It also is unlawful for any person to operate more than 1 boat while taking or attempting to take mussels.
- C. It also is unlawful for any person to operate a boat under power equipped with more than 4 crowfoot bars for the taking of mussels for commercial purposes.

EXCEPTION: Only handpicking is allowed for mussel harvest in the St. Francis River, its tributaries, and diversion ditches.

PENALTY: Class 1

31.04 Nonresident Mussel Buyer Requirements

It is unlawful for any nonresident to purchase mussels without a current Nonresident Shell Buyer Permit (Code [30.02](#)).

PENALTY: Class 1

31.05 Harvest Of Mussels Restricted To Daylight Hours

It is unlawful to take, attempt to take, or kill mussels from sunset to sunrise.

PENALTY: Class 1

31.06 Diver's Flag Requirement

- A. It is unlawful to take or attempt to take mussels by diving without displaying a standard diver's flag (no less than 12 inches wide and 12 inches long, red and white diagonal stripe) from the boat or other flotation device at least 12 inches above the surface of the water.
- B. It also is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take mussels by diving more than 300 feet from a diver's flag.

PENALTY: Class 1

31.07 Mussel Harvest Restrictions

A. Waters in the following counties (including Arkansas waters between the main levees of the Mississippi River) are open year-round to commercial musseling (unless closed as noted in Cbelow):

1. Arkansas,
2. Ashley,
3. Bradley,
4. Calhoun,
5. Chicot,
6. Cleveland,
7. Clay,
8. Columbia,
9. Craighead,
10. Crittenden,
11. Cross,
12. Dallas,
13. Desha,
14. Drew,
15. Grant,
16. Greene,
17. Hempstead,
18. Jackson,
19. Jefferson,
20. Lafayette,
21. Lawrence,
22. Lee,
23. Lincoln,
24. Little River,
25. Lonoke,
26. Miller,
27. Mississippi,
28. Monroe,
29. Nevada,
30. Ouachita,
31. Phillips,
32. Poinsett,
33. Prairie,
34. Pulaski,
35. Randolph,
36. St. Francis,
37. Union,
38. White and
39. Woodruff.

B. The following counties are closed to commercial musseling:

1. Baxter,
2. Benton,
3. Boone,
4. Carroll,
5. Clark,

6. Cleburne,
7. Conway,
8. Crawford,
9. Faulkner,
10. Franklin,
11. Fulton,
12. Garland,
13. Hot Spring,
14. Howard,
15. Independence,
16. Izard,
17. Logan,
18. Johnson,
19. Madison,
20. Marion,
21. Montgomery,
22. Newton,
23. Perry,
24. Pike,
25. Polk,
26. Pope,
27. Saline,
28. Scott,
29. Searcy,
30. Sebastian,
31. Sevier,
32. Sharp,
33. Stone,
34. Van Buren,
35. Washington and
36. Yell.
37. **EXCEPTIONS:** In the counties closed above, mussels may be taken year-round for commercial purposes in the following river/stream segments:
 - i. ARKANSAS RIVER from the Pulaski County line upstream to the Oklahoma state line (including all waters of Dardanelle Lake, Ozark Lake and Pool 13).
 - ii. PETIT JEAN RIVER from its mouth upstream (including Blue Mountain Lake) to Arkansas Highway 217.
 - iii. FOURCHE LA FAVE RIVER from its mouth (including Nimrod Lake) upstream to the Arkansas Highway 27 bridge.
 - iv. CADRON CREEK from its mouth upstream to Arkansas Highway 287 on its east fork in Faulkner County.
 - v. NORTH CADRON CREEK from its mouth upstream to Arkansas Highway 285 in Faulkner County.
 - vi. POINT REMOVE CREEK from its mouth upstream to Kissire Bridge in Conway County.
 - vii. WHITE RIVER from the Jackson/Independence County line upstream to 100 yards below Dam No. 1 at Batesville.

- viii. STRAWBERRY RIVER from the Lawrence/Sharp County line upstream to the Arkansas Highway 58 bridge in Sharp County.
 - ix. All lakes, bays or other bodies of water, other than tributary streams, connected to waters specified above, when accessible by boat from the main channel. When a river or stream forms the boundary between open and closed counties, that boundary segment shall be open.
- C. The following waters are closed to commercial musseling:
- 1. LAKE ERLING including all tributaries upstream from 100 yards below Lake Erling Dam to Arkansas Highway 360 in Lafayette County.
 - 2. All lakes owned and/or operated by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, the USDA Forest Service, Commission-owned waters (excluding Grand Lake and all natural channel scar lakes on WMAs in open counties).
 - 3. BAYOU METO in compliance with Code [38.01](#).
 - 4. COLUMBIA COUNTY LAKE in Columbia County.
 - 5. HORSESHOE LAKE in Crittenden County.
 - 6. LAKE WALLACE in Drew and Chicot County.
 - 7. UPPER and LOWER LAKE CHICOT from Connerly Bayou Dam to the Ditch Bayou Damin Chicot County.
 - 8. LAKE MAUMELLE in Pulaski County.
 - 9. BLACK RIVER in Randolph County closed from 100 yards above Old Davidsonville State Park downstream to 100 yards below the park's lower boundary.
 - 10. All lakes in Hot Springs Village in Saline County.
- D. NWRs may have further restrictions. Check with the refuge manager.

PENALTY: Class 1

31.08 Mussel Sanctuary Zone

It is unlawful to take, attempt to take, or possess mussels in the following river segments:

- A. BLACK RIVER in Clay County from ¼ mile upstream to ¼ mile downstream of the U.S. Highway 62 bridge.
- B. OUACHITA RIVER upstream from the U.S. Highway 79B bridge at Camden.
- C. SPRING RIVER upstream of the U.S. Highway 62 bridge at Imboden.
- D. ST. FRANCIS RIVER in St. Francis County from I-40 bridge downstream to the Arkansas Highway 50 bridge at Madison.
- E. ST. FRANCIS RIVER from the mouth of the Tyronza River to the operational railroad bridge.
- F. WHITE RIVER in Monroe County from the mouth of Roc Roe Bayou 3½ miles downstream to the mouth of Big Creek.
- G. WHITE RIVER from Cooper Bend (river mile 232.3) in Jackson County for 2.3 miles downstream to Shaden Bend (river mile 230) in Woodruff County.
- H. CACHE RIVER from the mouth of Bayou DeView to the confluence with the White River.

PENALTY: Class 1