**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 50‑5‑15, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO TERMS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS CONTAINED IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA MARINE RESOURCES ACT OF 2000, SO AS TO PROVIDE A DEFINITION FOR THE TERM “SOUTHERN COBIA MANAGEMENT ZONE”; AND TO AMEND SECTION 50‑5‑2730, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO CERTAIN FEDERAL FISHING REGULATIONS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THESE REGULATIONS DO NOT APPLY TO COBIA LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN COBIA MANAGEMENT ZONE.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 50‑5‑15 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 72 of 2013, is further amended by adding the following appropriately numbered item at the end:

“( ) ‘Southern Cobia Management Zone’ means all waters of this State south of 032° 31.0´ N latitude, the approximate latitude of Jeremy Inlet, Edisto Island.”

SECTION 2. Section 50‑5‑2730 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 83 of 2013, is further amended to read:

“Section 50‑5‑2730. (A) Unless otherwise provided by law, any regulations promulgated by the federal government under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (PL 94‑265) or the Atlantic Tuna Conservation Act (PL 94‑70) which establishes seasons, fishing periods, gear restrictions, sales restrictions, or bag, catch, size, or possession limits on fish are declared to be the law of this State and apply statewide including in state waters.

(B) This provision does not apply to:

(1) black sea bass (Centropristis striata) whose lawful catch limit is five fish per person per day or the same as the federal limit for black sea bass, whichever is higher. The lawful minimum size is thirteen inches total length. Additionally, there is no closed season on the catching of black sea bass (Centropristis striata); or

(2) cobia (Rachycentron canadum) located in the Southern Cobia Management Zone. Subject to the size limit established by federal regulation, possession of cobia caught in the Southern Cobia Management Zone is limited to one person per day, and no more than three per boat per day, from June 1 to April 30. It is unlawful to take and possess cobia in the Southern Cobia Management Zone from May 1 to May 31, and at any time federal regulations provide for the closure of the recreational cobia season in the waters of the South Atlantic Ocean.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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