**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 50‑9‑1120, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE POINT SYSTEM FOR THE VIOLATIONS OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF LAW, SO AS TO ESTABLISH A FOURTEEN POINT VIOLATION FOR TAKING OR POSSESSING MORE THAN THE LEGAL LIMIT OF BLUE CATFISH; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑13‑640, RELATING TO THE POSSESSION OF BLUE CATFISH, SO AS TO ALTER THE POSSESSION AND SIZE LIMITS; AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE BLUE CATFISH FISHERY IN THE SANTEE AND COOPER RIVER SYSTEMS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 50‑9‑1120(3) of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately lettered subitem at the end to read:

“( ) taking or possessing more than the legal creel or size limit of blue catfish: 14.”

SECTION 2. Section 50‑13‑640 of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 50‑13‑640. (A) It is unlawful to possess more than ~~one~~ two blue catfish (Ictalurus furcatus) greater than ~~thirty‑six~~ thirty‑two inches in length in any one day in Lake Marion, Lake Moultrie, or the upper reach of the Santee River, and the Congaree and Wateree Rivers.

(B) It is unlawful to take more than twenty‑five blue catfish (Ictalurus furcatus) in any one day in Lake Marion, Lake Moultrie, and the upper reach of the Santee River.

(C) A person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than three hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both.”

SECTION 3. The Department of Natural Resources shall conduct a study of the blue catfish fishery in the Santee and Cooper River systems and make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning the fishery on or before January 1, 2025.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑