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FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT ADOPTED -- NOT PRINTED

June 8, 2021

**H. 3957**

Introduced by Reps. Hewitt, Kirby, Bailey, and G.M. Smith

S. Printed 5/4/21--S.

Read the first time March 17, 2021.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTIONS 50‑5‑1705 AND 50‑5‑1710, BOTH AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO CATCH AND SIZE LIMITS FOR THE TAKING, POSSESSING, LANDING, SELLING, OR PURCHASING OF CERTAIN FISH FROM THE STATE’S WATERS, SO AS TO DECREASE THE CATCH LIMIT AND INCREASE THE SIZE LIMIT FOR FLOUNDER; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑9‑540, RELATING TO RECREATIONAL SALTWATER FISHING LICENSES AND CHARTER FISHING VESSELS, SO AS TO INCREASE CERTAIN FEES AND TO CREATE AND ELIMINATE CERTAIN LICENSES; TO AMEND SECTION 50‑9‑920, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO REVENUES GENERATED BY CERTAIN LICENSES, SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT A PORTION BE USED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A FLOUNDER STOCKING PROGRAM; AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES PROVIDE A REPORT ON SOUTH CAROLINA’S STOCK OF FLOUNDER.

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

SECTION 1. Section 50‑5‑1705(G) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(G) It is unlawful for a person to take or possess more than ~~ten~~ five flounder (Paralichthys species) taken by means of gig, spear, hook and line, or similar device in any one day, not to exceed ~~twenty~~ ten flounder in any one day on any boat.”

SECTION 2. Section 50‑5‑1710(B)(2) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(2) flounder (Paralichthys) of less than ~~fifteen~~ sixteen inches total length;”

SECTION 3. Section 50‑9‑540(A) and (D) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(A) For the privilege of recreational statewide fishing in saltwater:

(1) a resident must purchase:

(a) a fourteen-day temporary saltwater fishing license for ~~five~~ ten dollars, one dollar of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;

(b) an annual saltwater fishing license for ~~ten~~ fifteen dollars, one dollar of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;

(c) a three-year saltwater fishing license for ~~thirty~~ forty‑five dollars, one dollar of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;

(d) a lifetime statewide saltwater fishing license for three hundred dollars at designated licensing locations; or

(e) any other license which grants saltwater fishing privileges;

(2) a nonresident must purchase:

(a) a one‑day temporary saltwater fishing license for ten dollars, one dollar of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;

(b) a ~~fourteen~~ seven-day temporary saltwater fishing license for ~~eleven~~ thirty‑five dollars, one dollar of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;

~~(b)~~(c) an annual saltwater fishing license for ~~thirty‑five~~ seventy‑five dollars, one dollar of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;

~~(c)~~ ~~a three year saltwater fishing license for one hundred five dollars, three dollars of which the issuing sales vendor may retain;~~ or

(d) any other license which grants saltwater fishing privileges.

(D) For the privilege of operating a charter fishing vessel in the salt waters of this State, the owner or operator must purchase an annual charter vessel license for each vessel. For a vessel:

(1) to carry six or fewer passengers, the fee is ~~one hundred fifty dollars~~ two hundred seventy‑five dollars for residents and five hundred fifty dollars for nonresidents;

(2) to carry seven but no more than forty‑nine passengers, the fee is ~~two hundred fifty dollars~~ four hundred fifty dollars for residents and nine hundred dollars for nonresidents;

(3) to carry fifty or more passengers, the fee is ~~three hundred fifty dollars~~ six hundred fifty dollars for residents and one thousand three hundred dollars for nonresidents.”

SECTION 4. Section 50‑9‑920(C) of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 263 of 2018, is further amended to read:

“(C) Revenue generated from the sale of recreational and commercial marine licenses, permits, and tags shall be deposited to the Marine Resources Fund. Revenue generated from the sale of recreational licenses, permits, and tags must be distributed in accordance with the provisions of Sections 50‑9‑960 and 50‑9‑965, provided that a minimum of five dollars from the sale of each recreational saltwater fishing license must be used for the development and implementation of a flounder stocking program.”

SECTION 5. SECTION 1 of this act is repealed on June 30, 2024, and the text amended by that SECTION shall revert back to the language contained in the South Carolina Code of Laws as of January 1, 2020.

SECTION 6. The Department of Natural Resources shall furnish a written report to the General Assembly on South Carolina’s stock of flounder by December 31, 2023. The report must provide future projections.

SECTION 7. This act takes effect on July 1, 2021.

/s/Sen. George E. “Chip” Campsen III /s/Rep. Phillip Dean Lowe

/s/Sen. Stephen L. Goldfinch Jr. /s/Rep. William Lee Hewitt III

/s/Sen. J. Thomas McElveen III /s/Rep. Marvin R. Pendarvis

On Part of the Senate. On Part of the House.

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