AN ACT

To enact R.S. 56:325.5, relative to the commercial menhaden fishery; to provide for commercial menhaden harvest reporting; to provide for required data; to provide for confidentiality; to provide for reports to legislative committees; to provide for the powers and duties of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission; to provide for a definition; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 56:325.5 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§325.5. Commercial menhaden harvest reporting

A. The commission shall promulgate rules and regulations, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, that requires companies taking menhaden by vessels equipped with purse seines to report monthly, beginning in May 2023, commercial menhaden harvest reports. The rules and regulations shall provide for the following:

(1) Monthly reporting shall include the following data for each set:

(a) Location data in degrees, minutes, seconds, with a defined datum, determined by global positioning satellite (GPS) navigational instrument...
(b) Estimated weight of harvest.

c) Length of the menhaden estimated based on a sample of the harvest.

In addition, the rule shall provide for the size of the sample and the method used to estimate the length.

(2) The form, manner, and the date of the month the department receives the monthly report.

(3) Procedures to preserve the confidentiality of any data, information, or statistics submitted or collected to comply with federal procedures as set forth by the United States Department of Commerce or its agencies for confidentiality of fishing statistics collected from individuals or firms by the Department of Commerce or its agencies. Any information the department provides to the public shall not indicate the captain, vessel, or company.

B. Beginning February 10, 2024, the department shall annually report to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and the House Committee on Natural Resources the commercial menhaden harvest from the prior year based upon the aggregated data from the monthly reports.

C. For the purposes of this Section, a "set" means when a purse seine is deployed and encircles a school of menhaden, regardless of whether those fish are reduced to possession by transferring to the mother ship or steamer.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Tyler S. McCloud.
Proposed law requires, beginning February 10, 2024, the department to annually report to the oversight committees the commercial menhaden harvest from the prior year based upon the aggregated data from the monthly reports.

Proposed law provides a "set" means when a purse seine is deployed and encircles a school of menhaden, regardless of whether those fish are reduced to possession by transferring to the mother ship or steamer.

(Adds R.S. 56:325.5)