
DIGEST

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HB 576 Original

2023 Regular Session

Orgeron

Abstract: Provides limits on annual tonnage of commercial menhaden catch for reduction and exclusion zones where the taking of menhaden is prohibited.

Present law provides that anyone legally taking menhaden cannot have in their possession more than five percent, by weight, of any species of fish other than menhaden and herring-like species.

Proposed law retains present law and provides the total menhaden catch for the purpose of reduction fishing in La. territorial water can be no more than 266,000 metric tons annually.

Proposed law further gives the secretary of the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries the authority to close the harvest within La. territorial waters when the total catch meets 266,000 metric tons.

Proposed law further provides that any set occurring once the harvest is closed shall result in reduced harvest in total annual tons in subsequent years. In addition, the LDWF may assess specific fines and penalties to captains and/or companies for annual tonnage violations.

Proposed law creates an exclusion zone which extends from the coastal boundary between Texas and La. to the coastal boundary between Mississippi and La. extending one half mile seaward from land where the taking of menhaden is prohibited. Proposed law further provides that from Aug. 1st through Oct. 31st each year, this exclusion zone shall be extended from one half mile to one mile.

Proposed law prevents the use of vessels and any equipment used for the specific purpose of taking menhaden in the exclusion zone.

Proposed law provides for the following special exclusion zones, which are measured independently from the default exclusion zone and which apply year round without additional distance added during redfish spawning season:

- (1) From the western edge of Timbalier Island to the eastern edge of Grand Terre, the exclusion zone shall be one mile seaward from land.
- (2) From Caminada Pass to Baratavia Pass, the exclusion zone shall be three miles seaward from land.
- (3) For Breton and Chandeleur Sounds the exclusion zone shall be one half mile seaward from the double rig line as defined in present law.
- (4) For the Chandeleur Islands, the exclusion zone shall extend one half mile seaward in all directions.

Proposed law clarifies that the exclusion zone applicable to the Chandeleur Islands may not interfere with any federally designated sanctuary, preserve, or protected waters.

(Amends R.S. 56:324; Adds R.S. 56:325.7)