DIGEST

HB 1033 Reengrossed   2022 Regular Session   Orgeron

Abstract: Provides additional regulations on the commercial menhaden fisheries.

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 for the following restrictions and requirements:

(1)   All commercial menhaden companies utilizing vessels equipped with purse seines operating in La. territorial waters for the purpose of reduction fishing can land no more than 260,000 metric tons, or 573,000,000 pounds, of menhaden from within those waters on an annual basis.

(2)   Of the 260,000 metric tons, or 573,000,000 pounds harvested within state waters, a maximum of 52,000 metric tons or 115,000,000 pounds can be caught, or no more than 2,650 individual sets can be made, within one mile off the shore within a calendar year. Additionally, a maximum of 104,000 metric tons or 229,000,000 pounds can be caught, or no more than 5,250 individual sets can be made between one and two miles off the shore within a calendar year.

(3)   All commercial menhaden companies utilizing vessels equipped with purse seines for the purpose of reduction fishing are required to report daily set locations via GPS on a weekly basis, reading in degrees, minutes, seconds, with a defined datum; length at catch in centimeters based on the length of a subset of 50 individuals; estimated tonnage per set; and date and time of each set, to the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) before the close of business each Monday for the preceding week.

Proposed law provides that the distance from shore is calculated using the inside-outside line described in present law and includes the area of Breton and Chandeleur Sound within the calculations of sets and tonnage, with the definition of the area as an estimated line denoting approximate average marsh edge on the northern and western boundary of Breton and Chandeleur Sound, and using the shrimp inside-outside line defining the southern and eastern boundary of Breton and Chandeleur Sound, stopping at the state line between Louisiana and Mississippi, excluding any portion of Lake Borgne.

Proposed law further requires the LDWF to compile, evaluate, and make totals publicly available by 12:00 pm central time every Monday following receipt of the data. Further gives the LDWF the

authority to close zones 0-1 and 1-2 when total sets or tons are expected to meet the established set or catch limits in each zone respectively, and to re-open one or all zones should the set or catch limit not be met or keep zones closed should the catch or set limit be met.

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

(Amends R.S. 56:324)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1.   Make technical changes.

2.   Require all commercial menhaden companies utilizing vessels equipped with purse seines for the purpose of reduction fishing to report daily set locations via GPS on a weekly basis.

3.   Require commercial menhaden companies to report certain information to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries before the close of business each Monday for the preceding week.

4.   Require the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to compile, evaluate, and make totals publicly available by 12:00 pm central time every Monday following receipt of the data.