

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2339

As Reported By House Committee On:
Fisheries & Wildlife

Title: An act relating to the creation of a combined recreational fishing and hunting license document.

Brief Description: Revising fees and procedures for recreational fishing and hunting licenses.

Sponsors: Representatives King, Foreman and Orr; by request of the departments of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, January 25, 1994, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives King, Chair; Orr, Vice Chair; Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Foreman; Quall; and Scott.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: The departments of Fisheries and Wildlife will merge into a single agency, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, effective July 1, 1994. Currently, there are differences between the departments' sport licensing criteria and fees. The departments have determined that standardizing certain fees and licensing requirements will result in less confusion for the public once the agencies merge.

Residency Requirements

In order to qualify as a resident for purposes of obtaining a fishing or hunting license from the Department of Wildlife, one must have lived in Washington for at least 90 days immediately preceding the license application. In order to qualify as a resident for purposes of obtaining a fishing license from the Department of Fisheries, one must have lived in Washington for "the preceding 90 days."

Angling Gear

The statutory definition of angling gear limits the gear to no more than two single hooks or one artificial bait and not more than four multiple hooks.

Steelhead Licenses

Currently, steelhead licenses do not exist; rather, a catch record card exists which accompanies a game fish license.

Free Licenses: Disability Criteria for Veterans

In order to qualify for a free game fish or hunting license from the Department of Wildlife, a person must be 65 or older and an honorably discharged veteran with a service-connected disability, and has to have resided in Washington for five years.

In order to qualify for a free food fish license from the Department of Fisheries, a person must be an honorably discharged veteran with a 30% service connected disability and who has resided in Washington for at least one year; or is an honorably discharged veteran, a resident of the state of Washington, with any service-connected disability and who is 65 years of age or older.

Free Licenses: Expiration

Currently, free licenses issued by the Department of Fisheries are issued in perpetuity except to persons with certain disabilities, for which these licenses are issued for five years. Free licenses issued by the Department of Wildlife are issued in perpetuity.

Fees

Under current law, a game fish license issued by the Department of Wildlife is not required for those under age 15, and a free food fish license is issued by the Department of Fisheries to those age 70 and over.

Short-Term Fishing Licenses

Under current law, the Department of Fisheries issues a two-day fishing license, while the Department of Wildlife issues a three-day fishing license.

Seaweed Licensing

SSB 5056 was enacted in 1993, creating harvest limits for seaweed for personal use, and authorizing the Department of Fisheries to enforce these limits. The Department of

Fisheries believes that a seaweed license requirement would assist its enforcement efforts.

Duplicate Licenses

The Department of Fisheries currently provides no duplicate license. The Department of Wildlife provides duplicate licenses for \$10.00.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Residency Requirements

Residency requirements for food fish licenses are made compatible with those for game fish and hunting licenses; i.e., one must have been a resident of Washington for 90 days preceding the license application date in order to qualify.

Angling Gear

The number of hooks as part of the angling gear definition is deleted.

Steelhead Licenses

Steelhead licenses are created to replace the catch record cards, without a change in fees.

Free Licenses: Disability Criteria for Veterans

The five year residency requirement for honorably discharged veterans of 65 years of age or older, with a service connected disability, is removed for the purposes of obtaining a free game fish or hunting license. Honorably discharged veterans with a service connected disability of 30% or more may be issued free game fish or hunting licenses.

The one year residency requirement for honorably discharged veterans with a service-connected disability of 30% or more is removed, for purposes of obtaining a free food fish license.

Free Licenses: Expiration

Free licenses must be renewed every five years.

Fees

Nonresidents under age 15 will be charged \$20.00 for a game fish license.

Persons age 70 and over will be charged \$3.00 for a resident food fish license.

The regional fisheries enhancement group surcharge of one dollar is reflected in the personal use food fish license prices.

Short-Term Fishing Licenses

The term of the short-term fishing license is increased from two days to three days. A one-day game fishing license is created, at a cost of \$3.00 for residents and \$7.00 for nonresidents.

Seaweed Licensing

A seaweed license requirement is imposed for personal use seaweed harvest, as part of the "shellfish and seaweed" license. Fees for this license are established as follows: \$5.00 for residents 15-69 years of age, \$3.00 for residents 70+ years of age, \$20.00 for nonresidents, and \$5.00 for a 3-day license.

Duplicate Licenses

The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to adopt rules to establish conditions for issuing duplicate licenses. The fee for a duplicate license is the cost of the license up to a maximum of \$10.00.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: A one-day game fishing license is created.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: January 1, 1995, except for Section 12, which takes effect July 1, 1994.

Testimony For: The bill provides consistency and parity in licensing requirements for game fish and hunting licenses. The combined hunting and fishing license has long been desired by hunters and fishers, and will improve the department's service to the public by eliminating confusion and overlap in licensing requirements.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Lembit Ratassepp, Department of Wildlife (pro); Loren Stern, Department of Fisheries (pro); Joe LaTourrette, Washington Wildlife Federation (pro); and Jack Swanberg, Northwest Marine Trade Association (pro, with concerns: bill fails to address problem with the use of identification

tags for enforcement in northern Puget Sound and other areas).