

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6125

As Passed House - Amended
March 3, 1994

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

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

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Owen, Haugen, Sellar, Spanel and Winsley; by request of Department of Fisheries and Department of Wildlife).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 24, 1994, DPA;
Revenue, February 28, 1994, DPA(FW).
Passed House - Amended, March 3, 1994, 80-18.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives King, Chair; Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Sehlin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Chappell; Foreman; Quall and Scott.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Fisheries & Wildlife. Signed by 15 members: Representatives G. Fisher, Chair; Holm, Vice Chair; Foreman, Ranking Minority Member; Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Brown; Caver; Cothorn; Leonard; Romero; Rust; Silver; Talcott; Van Luven and Wang.

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 reduce public confusion after the agencies merge and that creating a single license document for recreational hunting and fishing activities will result in more efficient service to the public.

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, an honorably-discharged veteran with a service-connected disability, and 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 percent service-connected disability who has resided in Washington for at least one year; or be an honorably-discharged veteran who is a resident of the state of Washington, 65 years of age or older, and with any service-connected disability.

Free Licenses: Expiration

Currently, free licenses are issued by the Department of Fisheries 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 believes that a seaweed license requirement would assist its enforcement efforts.

Shellfish Licensing

Under current law, a license is required for taking shellfish for personal use from state waters or offshore waters.

Duplicate Licenses

The Department of Fisheries currently provides no duplicate license. The Department of Wildlife provides duplicate licenses for \$10.

Summary of Bill: The sport recreational license is created as a single document, including provisions for the personal-use food fish, game fish, hunting, hound, and eastern Washington upland bird licenses, as well as three-day game fish and food fish licenses, one-day game fish licenses, and, a new warm-water game fish surcharge.

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 percent or more may be issued free game fish or hunting licenses. Honorably-discharged veterans confined to a wheelchair shall be issued a free hunting license.

The one-year residency requirement for honorably discharged veterans with a service-connected disability of 30 percent 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 for a game fish license. Persons age 70 and over will be charged \$3 for a resident food fish license. The regional fisheries enhancement group surcharge of \$1 is reflected in the personal use food fish license prices.

Short-Term Fishing Licenses

The term of the short-term fishing license for food fish is increased from two days to three days. A one-day license is created for game fish, at a cost of \$3 for residents and \$7 for nonresidents.

Seaweed and Shellfish 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 for residents 15-69 years of age, \$3 for residents 70+ years of age, \$20 for nonresidents, and \$5 for a 3-day license.

There is no license requirement for taking crawfish (*Pacifastacus sp.*) for personal use.

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.

A warm water game fish surcharge on fishing licenses is required to fish for the following warm water species: largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, black and white crappie, channel catfish and tiger musky. Except for persons under the age of 15 and residents 70 years of age or older, holders of an annual fishing license pay a \$5 surcharge, and holders of a temporary fishing license pay a \$2 surcharge. Residents 70 years of age or older pay a \$1 surcharge.

The appropriated Warm Water Game Fish Account is created within the Wildlife Fund. The account is funded by the warm water game fish surcharge.

The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife shall make every effort to proportionally divide game fish license revenues among game fish programs.

Moneys in the Warm Water Game Fish Account are subject to legislative appropriation and shall be used to fund a Warm Water Game Fish Enhancement Program in the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The enhancement program shall improve warm water fishing opportunities and shall include:

- ∅ necessary research;
- ∅ the development of new ponds and lakes that will not increase undesirable fish;
- ∅ efficiency and cost-effectiveness;
- ∅ coordination with the Department of Natural Resources to reclaim surface mines and develop fish ponds;
- ∅ coordination with the conservation of cold water fish;
- ∅ fish culture programs in conditions where they will prove to be cost-effective, with consideration of urban area put-and-take opportunities and introduction of exotic strains of warm water game fish;
- ∅ fish culture for stocking high-value species;
- ∅ population management of undesirable fish;
- ∅ habitat improvement, with secondary benefits to other species; and
- ∅ involvement of cooperative groups and organized warm water fishing clubs in the program.

The surcharge takes effect January 1, 1995. The Warm Water Game Fish Enhancement Program and the Warm Water Game Fish Account take effect July 1, 1994.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Section 15 of the bill, which requires the new Department of Fish and Wildlife to recognize the licenses issued by each of the two predecessor agencies until the license expiration date, takes effect July 1, 1994. The warm water game fish enhancement program and warm water game fish account take effect July 1 1995. The remainder of the bill takes effect July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: (Fisheries & Wildlife) This bill is necessary for accomplishment of the new, merged agency's mission. The warm water game fish enhancement program is needed to prepare for increased pressure on warm water game fish from game fishers shifting from the declining steelhead and salmon recreational fisheries. Last year's legislation that created the shellfish license may not have intended to include crawfish; it seems silly to require a license for taking crawfish, so this bill eliminates the requirement. The bill ought to incorporate the provisions of EHB 2292, under which free hunting licenses would be issued to honorably-discharged veterans confined to wheelchairs, to avoid a conflicting double amendment to RCW 77.32.230.

(Revenue) None.

Testimony Against: (Fisheries & Wildlife) None.

(Revenue) None.

Witnesses: (Fisheries & Wildlife) Senator Owen, prime sponsor (pro); Keith Sherman, Veterans Legislative Coalition (pro); and Loren Stern, Department of Fisheries (pro).

(Revenue) None.