

House Bill 173

By: Representatives Lane of the 146th and Morris of the 155th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 1 of Article 4 of Chapter 4 of Title 27, relating to general provisions relative
2 to seafood, so as to change the minimum size allowable for possession of tarpon; to define
3 a certain term; to prohibit the taking of Atlantic bill fish; to provide an effective date; to
4 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 Part 1 of Article 4 of Chapter 4 of Title 27, relating to general provisions relative to seafood,
8 is amended by striking subsection (b) of Code Section 27-4-130.1, relating to open seasons,
9 creel and possession limits, and minimum size limits for certain finfish species, and inserting
10 in lieu thereof the following:

11 "(b) The board shall establish open seasons and creel and possession limits within the
12 maximums specified in this subsection and shall establish minimum sizes within the range
13 specified in this subsection; provided, however, that it shall be unlawful to have in ones
14 possession or take from the salt waters of this state any red drum in excess of 27 inches in
15 total length. After October 1, 1989, it shall be unlawful to take the following salt-water
16 finfish species at any time except during the open seasons so established for such species
17 or to take or possess the following salt-water finfish species except in accordance with the
18 creel and possession limits and minimum sizes so established for such species:

1	<u>Species</u>	<u>Maximum</u> <u>Open</u> <u>Season</u>	<u>Maximum</u> <u>Daily</u> <u>Creel and</u> <u>Possession</u> <u>Limit</u>	<u>Range of</u> <u>Minimum</u> <u>Sizes</u>
2	(1) Spanish mackerel	Mar. 16 – Nov. 30	40	10 – 18 inches
3	(2) King mackerel	All year	15	15 – 35 inches
4	(3) Cobia	Mar. 16 – Nov. 30	10	20 – 40 inches
5	(4) Red snapper	All year	20	12 – 20 inches
6	(5) Gag grouper	All year	20	12 – 36 inches
7	(6) Amberjack	Mar. 16 – Dec. 31	10	20 – 50 inches
8	(7) Black sea bass	All year	35	8 – 15 inches
9	(8) Bluefish	Mar. 16 – Nov. 30	25	12 – 20 inches
10	(9) Sheepshead	All year	50	8 – 16 inches
11	(10) Sailfish <u>Reserved</u>	All year	5	50 – 80 inches*
12	(11) Blue marlin	All year	5	75 – 90 inches*
13	<u>Reserved</u>			
14	(12) White marlin	All year	5	55 – 80 inches*
15	<u>Reserved</u>			
16	(13) Tarpon	Mar. 16 – Nov. 30	5	20 – 40 <u>65 – 90</u> inches
17	(14) Atlantic sturgeon	Jan. 1 – June 30	5	24 – 86 inches
18	(15) Red drum	All year	25	14 inches
19	(16) Dolphin	All year	15	12 – 24 inches
20	(17) Sand tiger shark	No open season	1	87 – 140 inches
21	(18) Small sharks	All year	4	30 – 54 inches
22	<u>composite</u>			
23	<u>composite</u>			
24	(Atlantic			
25	sharpnose,			
26	bonnethead, and			
27	spiny dogfish)			
28	(19) Sharks	All year	2	48 – 120 inches

1 (20) Red porgy All year 10 12 – 28 inches
2 ~~*lower jaw-fork length*~~

3 **SECTION 2.**

4 Said part is further amended by inserting immediately following Code Section 27-4-130.1
5 a new Code section to read as follows:

6 "27-4-130.2.

7 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'Atlantic billfish' means Atlantic blue marlin and
8 Atlantic white marlin harvested from all waters of the Atlantic Ocean, including without
9 limitation the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, and Atlantic sailfish harvested from
10 the waters of the North and South Atlantic Oceans, including without limitation the Gulf
11 of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, west of 30 degrees west longitude.

12 (b) It is unlawful for a person to have in his or her possession any Atlantic billfish or to
13 take from the waters of the state any Atlantic billfish except for the catch and release of
14 such fish into the waters from which they were taken."

15 **SECTION 3.**

16 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
17 without such approval.

18 **SECTION 4.**

19 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.