

House Bill 491 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Chastain of the 7th, Rhodes of the 124th, Howard of the 71st, Mathis of the 133rd, Ridley of the 6th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 3 and Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 27 of the Official Code
2 of Georgia Annotated, relating to hunting and noncommercial fishing, respectively, so as to
3 modify an exception for the use of air guns to hunt wildlife; to revise provisions concerning
4 the taking of catfish by bow and arrow; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
5 laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
9 hunting, is amended in Code Section 27-3-4, relating to legal weapons for hunting wildlife
10 generally, use of silencers and suppressors prohibited, and penalty for violations, by revising
11 paragraph (9) of subsection (a) as follows:

12 "(9) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'air gun' means any pistol, handgun, or
13 shoulder-held device, each of not less than 0.30 caliber, or air bow that propels a
14 projectile in the form of a slug, shot, or arrow equipped with a broadhead utilizing
15 unignited compressed air or gas. Air guns are legal weapons for hunting big game only
16 during primitive weapon hunts, primitive weapon seasons, and firearm seasons. This

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paragraph shall stand repealed effective July 1, ~~2025~~ 2030, unless continued in effect by the General Assembly prior to that date. At its ~~2025~~ 2030 regular session, the General Assembly shall review this paragraph to determine whether it should be continued in effect."

SECTION 2.

Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to noncommercial fishing, is amended in Code Section 27-4-34, relating to fishing with bow and arrow, by revising subsection (d) as follows:

"(d) It shall be unlawful to take ~~channel catfish and flathead~~ any catfish ~~anywhere in the Savannah River, including its tributaries and impoundments within the Savannah River Basin,~~ species from the waters of this state by means of bow and arrow, except under the following conditions:

(1) Each person using a bow and arrow shall have on his or her person a valid state resident or nonresident fishing license;

(2) All arrows used pursuant to this subsection must be equipped with barbs or contain devices on the point to act as a harpoon for recovering fish and must be attached to the person or bow by a rope, line, or cord sufficient for recovering the arrow and channel catfish or flathead catfish;

(3) Arrows with poisonous or exploding heads are illegal;

(4) It shall be unlawful to discharge arrows into waters nearer than 150 feet to anyone engaged in any other means of recreation; and

(5) The taking of ~~channel catfish and flathead~~ any catfish ~~in the Savannah River, including its tributaries and impoundments within the Savannah River Basin,~~ species from the waters of this state by bow and arrow shall be legal at any time of the day and at night by the use of a light."

42

SECTION 3.

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